Twin Cities by Mitchell De Jarnett

In the first year of our schooling, we got each other sorted out quickly. Our priorities were openly advertised in how we dressed, and in the musical choices that we inflicted upon ourselves and our neighbors. Despite the advertising, people at first grouped in studio based on incomplete information, and it wasn't long before some neighbors relocated to form more congenial and homogeneous neighborhoods of taste, within the otherwise undivided studio space of our forced creativity.

"my god, do you realize this is THE INTERSECTION....

THE INTERSECTION In the SONG.... THE SONG in the movie THAT WE JUST SAW?"

to listen to artists that the various nations (of our now musically balkanized architecture studio) could agree upon. My nation went to hear Tom Waits at the Wiltern for what was later to become known as the "Big Time" tour. Well, it was quite a show, and one of a handful of musical presentations I've witnessed that broke through the "membrane" of show business, chopped the "membrane" into bit sized pieces, and fed them back to the audience who, like baby birds, chewed, swallowed, and gratefully digested the entire unctuous mass. We left the Wiltern forever changed. That show affirmed that ART was possible, while also making it abundantly clear that we all had a long way to go before we could start making any claims ourselves.

Years later, I had to go to Minneapolis for two weeks to oversee the installation of a museum show at the Walker Art Center upon which I had worked for my employer. It was November and winter was bearing down. I was living in a generic Hilton and, though I immediately fell in love with the twin cities, outside of my work, I was bored and isolated. Towards the end of my visit, my employers husband came to check up on me, and the progress of the install. We had not really been well acquainted before this, and I was unsure of what to expect.

I have never been so grateful for the company

of another human. To my ever-lasting wonder, the man revealed himself to be one of the few true Bodhisattvas I have ever been blessed to meet on this sad and beautiful little globe of ours. It was just a couple days of meals and movies in a strange city, but I made a friend for life, I continue to esteem and aspire to emulate. Towards the end of the trip, I invited my new friend to go see the film of the "Big Time" tour which was playing over at a third-run movie theater in what seemed to be the slums of Minneapolis/Saint Paul. It was an interesting neighborhood with syringes on the sidewalk and lots of blood banks. It was the coldest day of the trip so far, snow was falling and melting were useless on such a night, and we were wet and freezing. All the lights and electric signs in this part of the city seemed abnormally bright against the dark sky and even blacker puddles that were forming on the wet pavement.

When we came out after the movie it was even colder, darker, and wetter. I was telling my companion with pride about how half of the movie had been filmed at the show that I had attended at Wiltern years before. He was quiet and polite;

my impression was that he did not share my musical tastes but was happy to bear witness to my youthful enthusiasm for these youthful things.

I was walking him up to the corner to catch a cab (unlike me, he was staying with friends out in the suburbs) when I looked up and saw that we were at the corner of 9th and Hennepin.

I stopped, grabbing him by the arms, and said,

"WE ARE HERE...!"

and said, "Of course we are..."

"9th & Hennepin" by Thomas Alan Waits

All the donuts have names that sound like prostitutes

And the moon's teeth marks are on the sky like a tarp thrown over all this And the broken umbrellas like dead birds

And the steam comes out of the grill like the whole goddamned town is ready to blow

And the bricks are all scarred with jailhouse tattoos

And everyone is behaving like dogs

And the horses are coming down Violin Road

And you take on the dreams of the ones who have slept here

And I'm lost in the window I hide in the stairway I hang in the curtain

And no one brings anything small into a bar around here, they all started out with bad directions

And the girl behind the counter has a tattooed tear, one for every year he's away she said

Such a crumbling beauty, but there's nothing wrong with her that \$100 won't fix She has that razor sadness that only gets worse

With the clang and the thunder of the Southern Pacific going by As the clock ticks out like a dripping faucet till you're full of rag water and bitters and blue ruin

And you spill out over the side to anyone who'll listen

And I've seen it all through the yellow windows of the evening train

And I've seen it all through the yellow windows of the evening train

And I've seen it all through the yellow windows of the evening train

Op-Ed by Morgan Woolsey

I recently finished teaching a general education college course on listening: a mode of attention associated with the sense of hearing. Though primarily understood as the perception of sound, the term "listening" is also used to describe many forms of non-sonic attention directed at phenomena that share some of sound's not-necessarily-sonic qualities (invisibility, ephemerality, motion, tactility, complexity, etc.). This kind of figurative thinking is what allows us to describe listening to feelings, ideas, our bodies, and a wide range of other nonverbal communication and abstract concepts.

I like teaching through this capacious definition

of listening (a perceptual modality for engaging self, others, and the world as well as a specialized skill for producing, consuming, and analyzing music and other sound-based phenomena). Invoking hearing in the classroom valorizes vulnerability; listening, intersubjectivity and interdependence. As a set of practices, listening requires an active receptivity to the unseen and an active awareness of the unheard. And when approaching listening in itself (as an object/ event for analysis), we must slow down ephemeral moments of perception and the seemingly-reflexive responses produced therein. This slowing-down is challenging because "normal" hearing is a complex and blisteringly fast sensory process, and it is often conflated with the equally fast and complex processes of attention and interpretation we call "listening." Though the two function simultaneously, teasing them apart is a useful exercise.

sound waves) and neurological (the transfer of electric signals in the brain). At a temperature of 68 degrees Fahrenheit, in a relatively dry atmosphere (the conditions in my apartment in mid-city Los Angeles as I write), sound travels at roughly 768 mph. It moves instantaneously from

Hearing is physical (the vibration of mechanical

its source (say, my purring cat) to my ear, and then travels to my brain in one twentieth of a second. I'm not a scientist, so this process (and the speed at which it occurs) seems like magic to me. But it's a magic that can be slowed down and translated, making it more intelligible to a layperson such as myself. I'll demystify it for you now: ~120 words to describe in the most skeletal of terms a process that takes a fraction Sound energy enters the outer ear as waves (where

it vibrates the eardrum) and travels to the middle ear (where it vibrates the auditory bones). Next, these vibrations move through the fluid of the inner ear, or cochlea (where they move bundles of tiny hair-like structures [stereocilia] protruding from the thousands of hair cells [cilia] that line the cochlea). This motion causes pores in the stereocilia to slide open, allowing ions to rush in and stimulate the release of neurotransmitters (glutamate) within the cell. The neurotransmitters bind to the cell's auditory nerves, producing an electrical signal. The signal is then carried via the auditory nerve to the brain (the temporal lobe). From there we interpret and understand the signal as sound.

When teaching, I like to demonstrate how active and complex a process hearing is, to understand it on its own terms. This is because hearing is frequently represented through comparisons with seeing and in many of these comparisons the receptivity hearing engenders is cast as undesirable: passive, vulnerable, feminine, primal, it, and it continues to stun me every time I irrational, involuntary. Even though seeing—like hearing—involves the body's penetration by waves of energy, it is very rarely discussed in such anxious and tactile terms as hearing. Instead, seeing is characterized as active, agentive,

Sound theorist Jonathan Sterne calls this compulsive opposition of seeing and hearing the "audiovisual litany," a recitation of the supposed differences between seeing and hearing. In his view, this repetition "elevates a set of cultural prenotions about the senses (prejudices, really) to the level of theory²." The audiovisual litany delinks and hierarchizes the senses. To see is associated with power and its exercise: to hear

with powerlessness and the absence of meaningful action. If hearing is characterized as passive

and powerless, so too, by extension, is listening, which is figured as lack (the inverse of gazing, a receptacle for speech). But it isn't. Listening simply presents a paradox for dichotomous thinking: present absence, active receptivity, intersubjectivity.

The presence, action, and relationality of listening aren't always acknowledged or understood as such, and to do so requires the kind of breaking down I performed earlier in relation to hearing. However, where it was easy enough for me to describe hearing dispassionately in a single paragraph, it would be much more challenging to similarly describe listening. This is because listening encompasses the physical and neurological processes of hearing within its own labyrinthine-overlapping, co-constructing, and often recursive—processes, unfolding in a series of context-specific modes that each deserve their own paragraph. And the structures of meaning that govern the listening modes (their speed, trajectories, and patterns) are too numerous to count. Film sound theorist Michel Chion usefully defines three such listening modes, which may or may not occur simultaneously and in varying proportion: Causal (listening to gather information about a sound's source), semantic (listening for meaning), and reduced (listening to the traits of the sound itself, "independent of its cause and of its meaning").3 But there are many, many more; intellectual, emotional, aesthetic, psychological, social, political, ideological, and historical patterns conditioning

each and every instance of listening.

see with power M

its exerci

Speaking of emotion (a non-sonic, figurative object of listening), the ever-lucid Sara Ahmed reminds us that the immediacy of a reaction should not be taken as an indicator of that emotion's being unmediated. I was stunned by the simplicity and depth of this statement the first time I read

consider it, every time I reproduce it in my own thought and writing. So in lieu of the efficient and dispassionate paragraph on listening I could not produce, I'll conclude by asking you to apply Ahmed's observation to your own varied practices, masculine, invulnerable, controlled, directional. and produce paragraphs of your own based on the questions that arise.

> to hear with powerlessness &

> > of meaningful action

the absence



for Printed Matter's New York Art Book Fair in September. "As much "I was thinking about how this portion of architects' creative work

York, takes the conversation about architecture outside of the

Review: Practicing Spaces

By: Liz Ohanesian

a track listing that includes work from Michael Meredith, Benjamin Bratton, Mariana Ibañez & Simon Kim and others. Inspired by the

played with the Chilean psychedelic rock group Föllakzoid, and, more For others, their musicianship is a perhaps a lesser-known talent.

to post-rock to hip-hop on here - but cohesive in its sense traditional songwriting. Instead, these are often pieces that look at music-making as an exercise in sound design and construction and an exploration of how space and sound feed off each other.

of the creative process.

from **private** ideas from **public** presentations



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CONTRIBUTORS

Morgan Woolsey teaches, researches, writes about, and performs music in the Los Angeles area. She is a lecturer in LGBTQ Studies and Musicology at LICLA and teaches online coursework in music for Chaffey College with a focus on race, gender, and sexuality in music, music and its relationship to other media, and critical listening strategies. Her research and writing explore the interaction of music and other media in the representation of marginalized identities, and argues for the importance of the soundtrack as an affective archive in the study of processes of cultural liberation. Morgan is also a singer, and is currently serving as facilitator and board chair for C3LA: The Contemporary Choral Collective of Los Angeles, a group of choral singers, conductors, and composers committed to fostering collaboration, experimentation, and innovation in choral music.

Jesus Abril Jr. is an East Los Angeles based designer, builder, artist, professor, and activist. He is a licensed general construction contractor and operates COAB Development, providing design, remodeling and construction services. He is an adjunct professor at East Los Angeles College Department of Architecture, and teaches college courses at Woodrow Wilson High School. His background in urban planning and chicano studies at UCLA paved the way for his interest in community development and architecture. Jesus recently established ESMAAS, the East Side Music, Arts, and Architecture Studio, working with local musicians, artists, designers, and builders in cultivating a strong communal sense for a changing East Side.

Jen Hofer is a Los Angeles-based poet, translator, social justice interpreter, teacher, knitter, book-maker, public letter-writer, urban cyclist, CantoMundo fellow, and co-founder of the language justice and language experimentation collaborative Antena Aire and the local language justice advocacy collective Antena Los Ángeles. She publishes poetry, essays and translations with numerous small independent presses, most recently Kenning Editions, Les Figues Press, and Ugly Duckling Presse, and in various DIY/DIT incarnations. Antena Aire collaborative writing is forthcoming from The Operating System and Tripwire. Jen teaches writing and translation at Otis College of Art + Design and Occidental College, and works supporting community groups in creating effective cross-language communication. Elana Mann creates artwork that brings a greater consciousness to the

listening and speaking we practice in everyday life, with the goal of building equanimity in ourselves and increasing equity in our world. She is a recipient of the 2019 Stone & DeGuire Contemporary Art Award and is a 2019 Artist-in-Residence at the Los Angeles Clean Tech Incubator. Mann has presented her work in museums, galleries, and city parks in the U.S. and abroad. In addition, Mann curates, collaborates, organizes, and writes. She co-edited, with John Burtle, the anthology "Propositional Attitudes: What do we do now?" (Golden Spike Press: 2018). Mitchell De Jarnett graduated from the UCLA Graduate School

of Architecture and Urban Planning. He has practiced in the USA, France, Germany, India and Egypt where he managed the design of the interiors for the Library of Alexandria for Snohetta Architects. His current practice spans public art, exhibit curation, and landscape/architectural design. His past projects include a large public plaza / environmental artwork (with partner Lita Albuquerque) at the California State Capitol in Sacramento. He has served on the Board of Directors of the Grand Central Art Forum and has taught at SCI-Arc, Otis, UCLA, and the Cal Poly Pomona.

Aaron Cayer is an ethnographer, historian, and educator of architecture. He received his Ph.D. in Architecture from UCLA and is currently an Assistant Professor of Architecture History at the University of New Mexico. Prior to New Mexico, he taught architecture history and theory at Cal Poly Pomona, and he was a Senior Research Associate at cityLAB, an urban research center at UCLA, from 2012-2017. Also in Los Angeles, he co-founded the Los Angeles chapter of The Architecture Lobby in 2016. His current research focuses on histories of postwar corporate architecture practices as they intersect with those of labor, capitalism, and urban political economies.

Liz Ohanesian is an L.A.-based writer who specializes in entertainment and pop culture with an emphasis on fan communities and behind-thescenes stories. Liz's work has appeared in numerous publications including LAWeekly, KCET Artbound, Boing Boing, Topless Robot, Hi-Fructose, Paper and Paste. When she's not on deadline, you can find Liz DJing across



Wendy Gilmartin and Steven Chodoriwsky

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EM: Well, so much of art and architecture training is about formalism, even though context, history, community, and experience are vitally important to how a work is received and what gives it meaning. When I was studying art at Cal Arts, most of my professors were not interested in socially engaged art. This made many of the conversations about

my work quite limiting.

JA: Yes, and because of that when it came to my thesis, professors were telling me oh, your idea is outdated. That was until I met Coy Howard who kind of vibed out. The energy was cool and mutual, Now there are more classes and programs in and he really helped me out. His idea of aesthetic and building up something that expresses some sort of uniqueness or something that adapts with time taught me to appreciate the process and I ran with about different techniques of social engagement,

Just because I went to school for eight years of any position higher than them. So, I feel it's my responsibility now to take all that and sort of package it to some kind of service to say yeah, I'm a social worker, yeah I'm a designer, yeah, I'm a contractor, I'm an architect... (hopefully in the future once I pass my exams), but I'm more than that. I'm a person as well. I'm not a robot. I'm not just going to plop something here. I'm going to create something. Something that can grow with the community as the community changes, that can still be relevant through those changes, you know, it's not just a one use deal and it ends there. Part of the thing that I carry with me now is also that there's a history in these spaces and a lot of that history is being forgotten.

EM: It's classic L.A.

JA: Definitely! Wipe it clean! But I think it's best to tell that story. I think it's best to pay homage to that story. You don't have to replicate it—but it's about becoming aware of it.

EM: So, in school you learned a lot about design, about aesthetics - and I feel like that is just another tool in your toolkit that you can use. Community engaged work can be also aesthetically challenging and experimental and interesting. But sometimes people feel like there's not that possibility somehow because you have to please people, or you have to be more easily digestible. I don't think that's true.

JA: It's not, not anymore.

EM: There's a disconnect depending on who you're talking to because—kind of like what you were describing formalism within design school — there are a lot of people in the art world who are really only interested in formal aspects.

EM: Artists are trained to work individually, they're not trained to work communally at all, which I think is a real lack because, as an artist, you always have to work with people

about what are the potentials of art socially, politically, and interpersonally?

Art spaces are valuable more than ever right now, because there are so few spaces that function like that we're engaged in every day, like social media, TV, the news, or at our jobs or whatever. Sadly, art spaces can be so inaccessible for so many people: some of them are really expensive, they're live, and a lot of the perspectives that galleries and museums show are not from everyday people. How can the access to aesthetics and art be opened up?

socially engaged art, but at the time I was in like nonviolent communication. I learned this type of organized conversation called council, which was developed by a center in Ojai — it's about getting groups of people to tell stories from the heart. The Center for Council took a lot $% \left\{ 1\right\} =\left\{ 1\right\}$ of inspiration from Native American traditions of talking — and eastern and western traditions and brought them all together. Now they use council in prisons and schools.

I also took a workshop in IWW (International Workers of the World) community organizing, like how a to organize workers to unionize. Now I'm doing this deep listening certification program,

JA: The community workshop component in our studio was like that — giving the students additional skills and an opportunity to engage with community. area of Pasadena and it is still struggling more EM: Where was the project?

biotech corridor of Los Angeles in El Sereno. Now, it's a very sensitive subject. It starts questions of gentrification and then you have discussions of displacement and right away students were asking, "What's going to happen to the people who live here?"

Are we designing something for the people or are we designing something for the medical/biotech field, and who is our client? And I kind of left it open-ended for them, like, you decide what do you want to do. I'm not going to force anything on you, but I am going let you know we are going talk to them and just being in that circle and being aware of what's going on, I felt a responsibility to let people know. Even though it was a hypothetical project, the students were still treating it as if it was something real.

EM: Just getting people to a meeting is a challenge. Did people show up?

JA: Yeah, we were surprised. We had a packed house and the techniques that James Rojas showed us were and the dialogue are much more powerful than any rendering that's going to be put out about this future space. So, that was the focus - their stories — and there were a lot of stories about people growing up in Mexico or somewhere and

as a child having access to fruit and herbs and the neighborhood on the maps. For example, this

That led to a discussion about community gardens, people talking about plazas and communal space. So, the students started developing ideas for green areas. So it's not asking communities specifically what color would you want for this to be, but what uses should be there, what kind of activities should happen there? The students who have mastered or familiarized themselves with these techniques were able to take that and do renderings or do something with it and I think that's crucial. So, the students were able to take that and make boards and make their projects. Our final presentation for the course was held in El Sereno down the street at El Sereno Graphics. The Pasadena City council was forced to listen, It's a printing shop and I had met the owner and "Yeah, I'm up for it." So, he let us use the space.

EM: Sounds like a pedagogy for the community members as much as it is for the students. Like a public pedagogy.

JA: And I've always wanted to do something with that. I've always wanted to go against the system - you know it's like all right go against the system...make something of your own.

So tell me about a project where you used all your listing skills you had acquired?

EM: One project where I directly used my listening to each other more, voice our concerns, be more skills was called "Listening as a Movement." It was commissioned by a community arts organization, happened was really awesome. Side Street Projects, who wanted me to create an artwork that amplified the voices of the neighborhood of Northwest Pasadena. At the time, Northwest Pasadena was an economically depressed than other neighborhoods in Pasadena.

I ended up connecting with an organization called, Day One, which is a youth advocacy organization. Day One didn't want to only paint a mural or do some one-off art project; they wanted to teach their kids actual leadership skills. I also started JA: It's work. attending the Northwest Commission meetings, which is the local neighborhood council. The EM: It is work. neighborhood council was like, "We just want people to show up for our meetings, we just want more community engagement." So, both organizations had different aims.

I decided to connect these two groups by inviting Day One students to present to the neighborhood council in a big public event. I decided to use my artwork as publicity to draw people in.

JA: ...and they get people at the meeting.

EM: ...and they get people at the meeting! And these kids get to practice leadership skills. Day One did this community mapping project with the students. It was kind of similar to what you were describing going to community meetings and people being like, "Whoa, I had no idea this is happening in my neighborhood," where the teenagers were like, "Whoa, I never looked at my neighborhood this way, I never evaluated what are the assets

Day One printed out these big maps and the kids put stickers and notes with their comments about

Any of you try it and you will see what

a difficult thing it is to listen to anything and everything in the way any one is telling anything and at the same time while you are listening to be telling inside yourself and outside yourself anything that is happening everything that is anything.



is an empty lot and it's awful, this a community center that helps women, which is good — and they

One of the things that came up was street lamps.

They were like, "It's dark and it's scary to walk home at night." They're just kids and you feel really bad for them because it's awful that a kid

was that the Northwest Commission had been working

on the street light issue for years without any

made this whole summer long program for teens.

EM: When you are an artist going into a community

I wasn't sure what was going to happen. I thought

pedagogy like you were talking about. I'll just plant the seeds that we need to speak more, listen

civically engaged and that'll be it. But what

There are other issues that came up with the

months, or a year, and I didn't get paid at all.

I mean there was some money to build large-scale

sculptures, but I got no payment for my labor.

in these kinds of projects, whereas if you work for the city, you have a salary. I'm super

passionate about the outcome but-

kind of impact, rather than having the project

be just plop art.

has to experience that. What the youth didn't know neighborhood council.

traction. City council people from the rest of

Pasadena are there, too, and they're listening to EM: Yes, but I used it for other things too,
this and I'm sure that they had egg on their faces. 'cause there were other workshops that happened

and so new street lamps were put in. And they also I also built this sculpture that was based on WWI

presented that to the neighborhood council.

citizenry we are more often being asked to listen. As professionals and amateurs alike we're asked to listen to our comrades and to our stakeholders, to the voiceless and to the seemingly boundless in voice. Through each of our media outlets and each of the ways we cross the street we're asked to listen to the truths of inequality, to separate science (or silence) from noise, and square what we hear with our senses of service and resolve. We want to honor these requests and use our mouthpieceour publications—towards a quieter space of consideration: an index finger to the lips. How well are we listening to our families, our bodies, our neighborhoods? How well are we reporting back what we hear, through text or action, the petitions for improvement? And with what will for the reparative do we recast the fruits of listening into new balms, new assets, and new structures for us and ours? Included here are practitioners of listening:

As architects, workers, educators, and

those who listen differently, reassemble worlds strangely, reassemble them anew. Jen Hofer, Elana Mann, Aaron Cayer and Jesus Abril speak (and listen) to each other in two interviews. Musicologist and activist Morgan Woolsey makes the case for listening versus hearing, architect Mitchell De Jarnett wrestles with the unequal weight we give to our listened sounds, and rock writer Liz Ohanesian breaks recently-released mix tape of architect-made music. Our LP "centerfold" serves as a listening tool that reconnects us to the city. When we take out the earbuds, silence the podcast, and get out of the car-this is L.A. all around us.

dishes that were all painted different colors.

People would literally stop in the middle of the road. It was Fair Oaks, which is this big

That was the space where the students put up their environmental scans and had dialogues wit community members before the meeting with the

would use when that was the height of technology.

People would listen with these giant horns and it

This was also right around the time when Edward

Snowden was releasing all of his information to

WikiLeaks, so there was like a lot of stuff about

Side Street Projects found these giant horns that had been used in the Rose Bowl Parade — again

to project voices. A lot of these early listening

technologies both amplify and receive. So, I put

bizarre sculptures. But people in the surrounding area weren't dismissive, they were kind of like, instead of: "Oh, this is interesting and cool."

playing the sculptures and people just started

but they just started banging on the sculptures along with the musicians.

EM: I love Lincoln Heights and El Sereno. I've had

JA: So, what do you think about El Sereno and

came and there's this burger joint across the

We love George, the owner of Dino's — he's so

nice — he's talking to my friends and it turns out

George is from the same small Greek village that

is such an amazing mix of cultures. It's really

walking around our space all the time, knocking on our door. I worry about what's going happen to

people that live there now, and whether they're

going be displaced. Another case of what happened

JA: It is. It's such a multi-faceted problem. But

I definitely think, like what I was talking about

in Echo Park or Highland Park.

changing though. I don't know how much longer

street called Dino's that I always go to.

We had an opening event where there were musicians

before electronic amplification was invented -

doing?" They'd start screaming at me!

JA: Within that space?

during the project.

airplanes coming.

Lincoln Heights?

listening just in the air.

Elana Mann and Jesus Abril Interview:

EM: Both of us work with listening ingrained in both our process and product. I am interested in hearing more about what the listening process looks like to you?

JA: A listening process is very active, it's bringing community together in a physical space, talking to them, allowing them to voice their visions, voice their concerns, voice their ideas of how they would want to see their neighborhood change or how they would want to see their neighborhood evolve, and happening in an actual physical space within the community.

In the case of my class, my studio with Cal Poly Pomona and the students from East Los Angeles College, it involved the students organizing a day making flyers, using social media, using the local community organizations, community groups and neighborhood councils, spreading the word and then to come together again.

Allowing the students also to come into that environment, to physically walk those streets and to physically meet those people within their space and get an idea of what the space looks like. To us that listening meant taking notes, creating sketches, taking walking tours of the community, photographing and sharing those images with the community members, and seeing what they had to say about those spaces. But it also meant reaching out to other professionals in the field who might give us some feedback.

In this case it was James Rojas, an urban planner, who trained my students on how to use his

their memories, to speak about their communities in ways that they were comfortable speaking about their environment, and to voice the things that they knew firsthand, their lives on an everyday

neighborhood from a point of view that maybe they

allowing them to understand that layout from a different point of view. This was a combination studying Urban Planning and Chican@ studies, and stuff I learned later on in architecture school. Ouring my time spent in architecture school

to designing. The more I got involved in architecture and the more I started asking these questions, professors are telling me you can't do that-There's no way you can do that. Like, you're going to accommodate 10 people

and piss off 50 other people? You can't do that! That's not what architecture is! And I had the hardest time in architecture school really finding my voice, or establishing my aesthetic, or establishing my point of view because professors

earlier, these people need to voice themselves

point, but its important just to get it out there one way or another or to take their narratives,

EM: I did a project once with government officials,

would give a few minutes heads-up that there were JA: Wow, and this is a judge?

EM: And then there were other people from DWP to respond to them, there's so much that I have

JA: People know they get ignored after a while. People know. Even with community workshops, people were telling me, "What are you doing that for, that ain't going to do anything, that ain't going change shit," and there's this negative attitude that builds up.

joining in. It wasn't intended to be participatory, I'm not trying to be a hero, I'm not trying to be that, hey, maybe one small thing at a time can

> But I do believe we have to, we have to speak the language of whoever's making decisions, whoever's language that is. We have to be able to communicate, and share our vision, our stories.

Jen Hofer and Aaron Cayer Interview: JH = Jen Hofer, AC = Aaron Cayer

AC: How would you characterize your work, and what are some of the ways in which listening practices play a part? **JH:** A lot of my work has to do with thinking about the ways that experimental poetry invites us to listen differently and to approach language as material differently. One of the building blocks of our culture is language. How do we approach that interplay through poetry and what is that different approach, how can that inform the work that I do as a cross-language activist? Or, how can

social justice struggles inform the ways that I approach literary translation or writing and what does bicycling through the city, which has a very particular way of making possible a kind of embodied listening to the space around me and the way I move through the space, what do all of those things have to say to one another? The other thing that I was thinking about in relation to that guestion and just the fact of publishing in an architectural publication, which for you is probably not that outside your practice, but for me is pretty far outside the normal places people might encounter my work, and we can talk about this more later, but it's to think about language justice as a framework and the cross-language practices that I engage as really inviting slash demanding that people re-architect literally the rooms that we sit in when we're having a meeting or a presentation or a conversation and how that room is arranged, so that in order to foreground the full participation of every person present and to really demonstrate and enact in the way the room is set up both conceptually and physically and materially that every voice and every perspective is truly welcome and will be heard. When I was thinking about the way listening resonates with the concept of architecture, which I understand there's a lot that goes into that term, I want to hear what you think about that, those are the things that came

AC: Well, it's interesting to think about your work as a poet versus as a social justice interpreter; I wonder if listening plays a different role or if there are similar kinds of practices in both of those. It seems that interpreting might be a much more passive practice, based on output. I wonder what the relationship between the

JH: I see the relationship between the two not so much in terms of listening but more in terms of utterance, the level of agency. I think how responsibility functions is really different in both of those things. When I'm interpreting, I'm responsible to the absolute best of my ability for transmitting what I have heard as accurately as possible in all of the ways that accuracy pertains, so that might be register, the level that the person is speaking at, word choice, the content of what they're saying, the rhythm of what they're saying, whether they're using an idiomatic expression or a more direct language or all of the things that go into utterance. I feel, like, a very, very deep responsibility to be as accurate as I can in representing what someone else is saying and the responsibility I feel when I write is to be responsible to the world that I live in and the communities I care about; and also the positionality that I inhabit as I say them.

Here's the thing we're gonna cut out in the recording all the

times I say "like"-I am a child of the 70s and 80s, what can I do?! ... So, in terms of how I view both interpreting and writing and literary translation, I see myself as channeling. I see writing as channeling. I don't see it as like there's a blank page and I'm going to be visited by the muse and become very inspired and write something brilliant and heroic and genius. When I'm writing, what I'm trying to do is create an open channel and listen and then almost transcribe what comes through me from wherever that is and that might be from somewhere like very ephemeral or woo-woo or it might be something very concrete like I'm reading these three texts and I'm trying to mash them together and then say my own things through reading those texts or I'm at a protest and I want to write some of the language debris from that into my poem. Interpreting is the kind of channeling where you are literally standing between two people's speech who don't share a language but who share something else, like a passion or an interest or a question, and you're literally letting their language pass through you so that it can be understood by both or all parties involved.

AC: Similarly, I would describe myself as someone who wears a few different, but related hats. As a teacher, a researcher, and an As a researcher, I use ethnographic methods and oral histories

starviouing and listaning to those that are offe

of architecture history: I recently just began a new position at the University of New Mexico and one of the projects has been to listen to various student groups and to help them shape a new studio culture policy. This is also a different kind of listening, but a working values and concerns very specifically. And the result of this culture policy has been a document that celebrates and supports the various lifestyles of students (those with full time jobs, those with tribal or family obligations, etc.). But also thinking about the respect of both students and faculty time: discouraging overworking and unpaid labor outside of the school—whether that's in the form of internships or externships, which has been again another kind of historical oversight in the field. And then thirdly, I guess, as for the organization—I co-founded the Los Angeles chapter and then one chapter I've been working with in New Mexico—there are always a series of local and national projects to engage with and I think part of the listening has to do with identifying what the local conditions, local concerns, or local issues are that practitioners are interested in engaging with. So, in L.A., for example, there were practitioners who wanted to vocalize an opposition to the proposed border wall, and this was all conveyed through a series of publications and roundtable discussions about the nature of architectural practice and the relationship to the proposed border wall. I guess that's a different kind of listening, but also a kind of broader listening practice—a kind of sampling from the profession or sampling from

a kind of conduit for the voices that you're trying to interpret or that you're trying to represent. I think that's similar for ethnographic practices or oral histories: trying to be accurate and trying to be honest about their stories and make visibleor make public—their narratives as carefully as possible.

with your oral history that would be in some ways more similar to how text translation works. So translation is text-based and interpretation is live communication, either spoken or signed. I just say that because a lot of people use the two terms interchangeably and they actually require completely different skills and capacities and also work on a different time frame.

If I'm working on a translation, similarly to you working with

a transcript, if you want exact accuracy you can be like, "oh wait, I didn't hear those couple of sentences very well, let me go back and listen to them again to make sure that I'm getting everything exactly right when I transcribe," and you know you're working from as clean and accurate a document as possible. One of the features of live interpretation is this question, what is exactitude in that context? We have to redefine that and in some ways for someone like me it's a struggle and also an incredible balm to have to screw up and forgive myself 1,000 times over the course of a single job because there's just no way to get it completely exact. There's just no such thing, it can't happen, but then to think about also the responsibility to... I don't know if exactitude is the right word, but to the context. I'm wondering, what relationship is there, so the folks that you're doing oral histories with, how involved are they in the places where those oral histories circulate? If it's a panel discussion are they on the panel, or if it's a publication is that a publication that they also would read or potentially respond to? AC: Yeah, that's a really interesting question and I think it's something that has, at some level, caused me some anxiety, especially the wide distribution of their own very deeply personal stories at some level. With these very large corporations with long

histories, sometimes the people I interview are very frail and very

old, and so I often have to come to them to listen to them. And this

also requires a kind of back and forth in terms of transcribing.

an art studio in Lincoln Heights for eight years.
I had a studio sale the other day and my friends JA: So, real quick, what were the sculptures? EM: I built three sculptures. The organization I was working for, Side Street Projects, is totally JA: Where is your studio it located? off the grid, it's run all through solar power. It's a mobile organization, which works out of EM: Right across from Dino's. trailers and they have this mobile woodworking school bus that goes around to all of the third

graders in Pasadena and teaches them woodworking. JA: That's off the grid as well?

EM: Yes, it's a school bus that's retrofitted with It's crazy, in Lincoln Heights and El Sereno there woodworking stations.

of the process.

EM: It is work.

EM: It's so cool. At the time of my project, they happened to be in this empty lot that was pegged for a retirement development that hadn't happened yet. So, I made this giant satellite dish, and then I worked with an acoustic engineer to build a 20 by 20 foot circular room that would carry sound around it, and I covered it with satellite

> as that rub up against some of our doonest pro deepest biases about whose voices are really important.

JH: I was thinking less about pushback. I mean, if you involve folks AC: That's an interesting question. I think also the kind of spatial

there are interpreters present, but some of the ways that I started doing language justice work was as an interpreter being in a room where everything will be said in English, so the underlying message is that the important ideas are expressed in English, but if you can't access English, we'll provide these interpreters and this interpretation equipment for you—if we're lucky there's equipment To stand at the door at the entrance to a meeting or an event and say "Hi welcome, if you don't speak English, please grab the interpreting equipment, or even worse, Hi, welcome, if you don't speak English please sit over there in the back and the interpreter will come and interpret to you once the event begins," which completely remarginalizes people who already are coming from a marginalized position either because they're the only people is being practiced is what we say as people walk in is, and I'll use the example of Spanish and English but it could be any language combination... "Welcome, this is an event where we're going to be those two languages you're going to want to grab the interpreting equipment." So, we're not making assumptions. We're letting people self-identify about who needs the equipment, but, sadly, often folks who are white folks or especially white male-bodied folks who speak English will say, "Oh no, no, I'm good. I speak

English. I don't need the interpreting equipment," even though I've just said to them this is an event where we're gonna be using both English and Spanish. I'll say again, "Actually this is an event where one of the facilitators is going to be facilitating in Spanish.' "Oh, no, no that's okay I got it," and, one of two things will happen, either as soon as someone starts speaking Spanish that person will

sheepishly come back to the table and grab the equipment, or, and down or critiquing or exposing the inner workings of these very it has happened, I'll see someone just stop listening when English is not being spoken. So, you can see how something as seemingly simple as a meeting where more than one language will be spoken,

It's completely possible that some of the folks you interview, if they were to go to an academic conference would be like, "Why the hell am I here? This is uncomfortable, and I don't like this experience.' So, I'm not suggesting that people should be made uncomfortable, I am asking that people in positions of power should be made uncomfortable. What would happen if those folks were there to speak for themselves rather than to speak through an oral history?

dimensions or the corporeal dimensions of language, as it is affixed to authenticity, is interesting, and I would maybe take that point for me and ask: what would it mean for corporate business leaders to be present at an architectural historian's conference? At some level, I try to make that uncomfortable provocation through my work a little bit, but at the same time, if I were to take what you were describing about multiple languages and think about disciplinary language versus professional language, one of the things that I try to do is really cross the lines and blur them. So, I'm often presenting professional histories to academic audiences—talking about business, business code, and business language, which often is not the most interesting of topics to architectural historians. At the same time. I go to architecture firms and sometimes re-present their own histories about their own founders, which sometimes they are often surprised to hear or learn about. So, I think crossing between those boundaries is important for me, but also to think about the kind of spatial dimensions and locations of those voices as well, which I think is what you're getting at.

JH: There's also something so interesting about making a distinction between disciplinary and professional language. It's almost like the difference between an aestheticized version or an architecture historical approach versus like almost a practical approach or like a practical language and what it's making me think about is, when we're facilitating workshops for instance around language justice, we talk about not English, but Englishes, and so it sounds like a lot of the work you're doing is in English, but you're talking about different ways of talking about even the same topic, right, like you could be talking about the design of the same building but coming at it from different perspectives, almost like you're not speaking the same language.

AC: Absolutely, and I think it has to do with the kind of-I think you used the term pragmatic—the degree of pragmatism or the rhetoric of what's being discussed, which I think is what differentiates one

JH: I mean, what do you think listening to that history in relation to buildings can illuminate for us now, in terms of, like, where we are now in relation to how capitalism is built and establishes itself? I'm thinking specifically of downtown L.A.

AC: Part of it is calling out the structures of power a little bit, but also showing how those dynamics of power are produced and reproduced in practice. But at the same time, to think about history is to, in some ways, explain how these structures were made possible, and so really the core of my work is to take large architecture firms that have really not been studied and say: well, how in the world did they get to this point and what kind of implications might they have for the current built environment and the current state of capitalist production?

JH: It's so important 'cause I feel like it's so easy to forget decisions were made to get us to where we are now. Some of these gigantic monumental-seeming office buildings don't have to look like that and it didn't always look like that, you know, but it's so easy to forget that **AC:** Right, and I think maybe we can shift to the next question because I think this overlaps. Thinking about what happens in practice often is translated or transposed in the built environment So, if there are capitalist and profit motivations in practice, this is translated as power structures that come out in built form in various ways. So, I think that's part of my interest in tearing

JH: The other thing that goes hand in hand with that is the ways that people are disempowered to speak or to act in certain ways or to have autonomy or agency in relation, not just to spaces, but in relation to each other or in relation to the forces that act upon their own lives and I think these things are absolutely related.

AC: Absolutely. And I think even practitioner to practitioner-largescale practitioner to small-scale practitioner—those juxtapositions are also an important thing to consider as well. Maybe to shift to question number two: what motivates your particular interest in listening as a kind of method and how might you, or maybe how did you, arrive at the kinds of work that you're engaged in? JH: When my collaborator JP and I first started thinking we want

to do language justice work together, which eventually became

Antena Aire, we both had solo practice doing social justice

interpreting and kept running up against those situations I was describing before where either English would be privileged in a room by people whose intention was not to remarginalize folks who don't speak English but there just wasn't the thinking about concepts to make language equity possible and how do we, literally, what tools do we use to make that happen? So almost immediately we realized that our poetic and visual arts practice had so much to do with our thinking about language justice. So, we very quickly became, instead of just a language justice collective, a language justice and language experimentation collective. We started asking ourselves, what is radical listening? What practices do we need to put in place to be able to hear something that is other than what is most readily available? Poetry practice for me is about training our ear but also our whole body as a kind of ear to experience the world in a different way than it is presented to us, specifically as it relates to how imbalanced power structures are reproduced

power works through language and that means that I need to be able to listen to things beyond what I can most immediately hear. . I had kind of a weird poetic question for you. Maybe, and feel free not to answer if this sounds really crazy, but... do you have, have you ever... I'm assuming that some of your research and also just your life has you spending time in some of the architectures and buildings you're studying. Do you ever feel like there's something

in language. I mean, there's all kinds of other things you could

say about poetry, but really for me it's about renegotiating how

to hear from the building itself? **AC:** Interesting. **JH:** I guess I'm going back to thinking about how each of our

practices has something to do with channeling in a way; not foregrounding your own voice, but foregrounding your listening... and I'm wondering if there's something in... when you listen to the built environment, what do you hear?

AC: Yes, for example, in a corporate office building, the very repetitive stacking of floor plates, vertical repetition of window plates, or the narrative of standardization and bureaucratic processes is expressed through the form, if that makes sense. So, I think I can hear the narratives of the individuals, but in a kind of flattened and suppressed way: the building tries to flatten, whereas I think the role of listening is to ruffle those feathers so as to not flatten their narratives. I think actually there's a kind of dissonancemaybe to go back to that word-between the listening to individuals and what the building's form suggests that I find really interesting to tease out. I don't know if that poetically answers your question! Do you find that similarly your practices resonate with the built environment in any particular way?

JH: Yeah, I guess I was thinking, related to the language justice work but also to poetry, which is just to constantly ask, does it have to be this way? How is it, how is it now, what do I see or what do I hear and does it have to be this way or how else could it be? What would be made possible if it were different than it s? Which also I think relates really nicely to the dissonance that you're talking about, the listening and what the building suggests that the building might be suggesting one thing, but we're able to hear something else.

(please visit laforum.org to read the unedited interview in its entirety)

advocate, listening plays a part in each of these roles very differently. Do you ever feel like there's something to hear from the building itself?

to study very large corporate and bureaucratic architecture firms, and many of them are the kind of firms that architecture history has long looked over, since they don't produce the kinds of art objects that the discipline has been most interested in, and so this etc. What I try to do is weave these stories very carefully into

archival findings that really animate and bring to life the otherwise

lifeless or sometimes apolitical documents. And then as a teacher document was formed by students who have tried to articulate their advocacy part: for the Architecture Lobby, which is a labor advocacy local practitioners just like I did with students in the academy.

You mentioned this need to be careful in interpreting, as you became

JH: If you are recording interviews and working from a transcription

So, I've been very open with them about letting them alter and get their story as true and as accurate as they want it to be before it's packaged within an academic analysis. Then I also share that analysis—whether it's critical or not of what they're saying—and with disagreement, but I think those disagreements are what make academic work so lively and so fascinating. But as long as I'm being careful about representing their story as accurately as possible, I haven't found any kind of pushback or misinterpretation of any sort, but I am always going back and forth and sharing what I'm writing with them and I find that to be really an important part

at various stages and sort of check back with them, whenever we do that it gives them the space to influence and change the way you might move forward with the work. That also illustrates the way that listening is not unidirectional, you know, that you're affected by what you hear, and they're affected by the experience of sharing their story with you. You are an academic, you have a PhD and you're presenting your work in contexts where, for instance, a draftsperson or finance analyst might not be presenting their work but what happens when that person actually is there to speak for themselves? I can see positives to you being the conduit for that on all kinds of levels and then I can also, from the perspective of the language justice work that I do, the purpose is to make space for people to speak for themselves and interact for themselves and to have people who aren't used to interacting across, in my case, language difference. But language difference also connotes all kinds of racial difference, differences in national origin, cultural differences, sometimes class differences. Language justice includes many elements, but it includes the basic idea that every person has the right to speak, to understand and to be understood in the language or languages in which they feel most comfortable, at heart it's about a collective commitment to creating spaces where two languages or more than two languages can coexist without any one language dominating over the others. It's about making spaces where each person can bring their whole self into the room and can participate fully for themselves ... you'll hear me opening and closing the door cause my cats are like, "I want to come in now, oh no, I want to go out now, oh wait I want to come in."

AC: Nice soundbites. **JH:** I don't know how much time you've spent in spaces where

who have to wear the equipment and they have to interrupt if they want to make a comment or ask a question or even worse because they're segregated at the back of the room with the interpreter, like physically removed from the rest of the group so that they can hear the interpreter. The difference in a context where language justice speaking in both Spanish and English. If you aren't comfortable in

interactive workshop technique.

It gave community members a platform to voice oasis — but it was just that.

and showing them maps and showing them their

hadn't seen before - quite literally an aerial - and diagramming and color-coding certain areas, of techniques, stuff I had learned as an undergrad

t SCI-ARC there wasn't a lot of attention being paid to those social issues when it came

throughway, and they were just like: "what are you I'm not even sure it guarantees anything at that

to developers even if it doesn't guarantee they won't be displaced. These people - developers they do have a responsibility. They have a responsibility to listen, to accommodate and unless the stuff is put out there then I don't think anyone would listen.

having them talk with each other about their listening strategies and how they communicate have an idea before I even enter the courtroom."

or DOT that were like, "I am so overwhelmed with all of the complaints that I don't even know how

JA: "...start ignoring them?" EM: Yes, because it's a cacophony of voices.

accomplish that.

this seriously.