

Love is a Time Based Medium  
*a multimedia installation exploring economies of aural and visual portraiture*

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**Abstract**

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Painting and Drawing

Love is a Time Based Medium

The purpose of this study was to make portraits of my loved ones from life and to record the exchange between artist and model for the archive. A series of portraits were drawn from life, mostly in an environment controlled by the model. The duration of each portrait session was recorded aurally using an iPhone. The audio recordings paired with the images represent two methods of recording time, presented side by side. The viewer steps into a stream of sound and into the intimate space where a drawing is being made. This paper discusses the methodology behind the design of this project as subversively slow, tangible and time based in 2019. Findings show the distortion and caricature of individuals through the lens of this artist's experience in a unique time and place. The work holds memories of experience and meaning for the artist and for the models. The drawings and paintings will be gifted to their subjects at the conclusion of the exhibition at the Henry Art Gallery at the University of Washington in June of 2019.

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Over the last year, I developed and dove into a project in dialogue with the history of portraiture. I asked myself, what does a painting mean, in 2019? What does it mean to create a slow impression of an individual's likeness over time? To ask a person to be still while you draw their mouth...to allow oneself to be looked at and seen. I embarked on a mission to make portraits of my loved ones, by pencil or paint, and to record the exchange between the artist and the model with audio. I have since made fifty odd portraits. Some in a few hours, some over days or weeks of sessions spent sitting nearly knee to knee. It's intimate. For every portrait, there is an audio track that is the length of time that it took to make the picture. For the installation at the Henry the audio recordings have been edited into what I am calling Aural Portraits that play in the gallery through localized directional speakers called Sound Showers. I have mounted the sound showers horizontally (like satellites) at head height in the gallery (the same height as the portraits) so they stand like figures in the space, and like pictures on the wall. When the viewer steps into the stream of sound between the speakers, they are placed between the artist and the model in the time and space where the picture is being made. The piece began with an inquiry into drawing as a time based record (as in, "A line is a dot that went for a walk" -Kandinsky Point to Line to Plane) and a method of "creating meaning"-- thus the title: Love is a Time Based Medium.

Many more questions have since entered the work. Questions regarding an economy of exchange-- the exchange of time for a handmade artifact imbued with memory and experience...the meaning of an image as an object, and an object as a link to a distant time and place. The value of relationships-- what does it mean to spend time? Or to record it? To record it and then transcribe it? Lenses, filters-- how history is written. Questions regarding perception...the way we see ourselves (so narrowly!)...vanity. (The sound of my own voice recorded...)

Context, content, and novelty (sound and picture!) imbue these portraits with individual personality. History can draw constellations of facts and figures-- the date and time, who was in the room and what they ordered to drink-- but the exchange between the artist and the model is a fairly guarded arena in history. It's a secret place. Concealed. Cloaked in the crazed genius of the archetypical mad painter in his crusty studio. There are few records of what was said. John Lord wrote Giacometti Portrait after posing for the artist. He writes of a self loathing work obsessed cranky drunk...(I was later informed, by our visiting artist Vicky Colombet, who had met and known people who had posed for Giacometti, that the artist "just didn't like John Lord and that he was in fact a very charming man"-- I am reticent to believe her.) Martin Gaylord's written record of sitting for Lucian Freud describes a man as single minded as the last. Now I'm immersed in Mary Gabriel's Ninth Street Women, just recently published in 2018 and as thorough of a documentation you will find on the women of the abstract expressionist movement. Still, no

one knows what was said in those rooms. The retelling of history rubs individuals into vague shapes like the ocean grinds down once-sharp seaglass.

I'd like to talk about my current work as a project. Claire Bishop's Artificial Hells describes "A project in the sense I am identifying as crucial to art after 1989 aspiring to replace the work of art as a finite object with an open-ended, post studio, research-based, social process, extending over time and mutable form." (Bishop, 194) My current work is a mash up of practices-- one part Lee Lozano, *Dialogue Piece*, one part euro white male portrait painting from life (freud hockney bacon) and two parts field recorded social soundscape episodic archive with a party (happening, experience) on top.

I question, through the work, and through my process, the value of making a hand drawn portrait. I wonder how these pictures and their context fit into and feed our modern image inundated landscape. The answer, I hypothesize, lies inside of a time based experience, internalized in memory, collective consciousness and archetype. It doesn't matter if the picture is accurate or if the drawings are what some people would call "good". That is irrelevant. The ultimate objective of this media-layering installation is to expand on and articulate the role of artist as facilitator of unique intra personal experiences moving forward.

I am suggesting an alternative economy, one based on an exchange of ideas, information, energy, thought, stories, observations and time. Some alternative universe where there is time to make slow drawings and watch light change and philosophize. (It is a bit like my own version of Richard Linklater's *Waking Life*).

Debord's critique strikes to the heart of why participation is important as a project: it rehumanises a society rendered numb and fragmented by the repressive instrumentalism of capitalist production...given the market's near total saturation of our image repertoire, so the argument goes, artistic practice can no longer revolve around the construction of objects to be consumed by a passive bystander. Instead, there must be an art of action, interfacing with reality, taking steps— however small— to repair the social bond.

(Bishop p. 11)

This paper will describe the project and relevant concerns that arise through the process, from artist model relationships to social practice to language of mark. What does it mean to make a drawing of somebody you love in 2019?

The possibility of a *relational* art (an art taking as its theoretical horizon the realm of human interactions and its social context, rather than the assertion of an independent and *symbolic* private space), points to a radical upheaval of the aesthetic, cultural and political goals introduced by modern art. (Bourriaud,14)

I would not be engaged with this practice if I did not believe it to be radical, subversive, and potentially healing.

I want to draw on Lee Lozano as an artist who used dialogue and private conversation as a mode of producing work. My approach is different in certain ways, but I think what she's doing and what I am doing overlap at the root of it.

Lee used what she called "write-ups" to catalogue her conceptual pieces. She sometimes referred to her write-ups as drawings.

DIALOGUE PIECE (STARTED APRIL 21, 69)

CALL, WRITE OR SPEAK TO PEOPLE YOU MIGHT NOT OTHERWISE SEE FOR THE SPECIFIC PURPOSE OF INVITING THEM TO YOUR LOFT FOR A DIALOGUE.

IN PROCESS PERPETUALLY FROM DATE OF FIRST CALL (APRIL 21, 69). DATE OF FIRST INTEREST IN DIALOGUES — 1948. DATE OF DECISION TO PURSUE (I.E., EXTEND) INVESTIGATION OF DIALOGUES — APRIL 8, 69.

NOTE: THE PURPOSE OF THIS PIECE IS TO HAVE DIALOGUES. NOT TO MAKE A PIECE. NO RECORDINGS OR NOTES ARE MADE DURING DIALOGUES, WHICH EXIST SOLELY FOR THEIR OWN SAKE AS JOYOUS SOCIAL OCCASIONS.

(I have not included her footnotes in my transcription)

There is no script. There is no agenda. There is no survey. My conversations or lack of conversation with my model is not directed. Regardless— the conversations between models intertwine, overlap and construct a narrativized archive of my social network. These are the individuals and conversations I choose to honor and represent in my contribution to this institutional academic archive.

Lozano also documented her network, and emphasized getting particular people of power or status into her piece. She understood the power of the archive and of social connections, and was perhaps tortured by it. In 1969 she dropped out of the art world in her piece, Dropout Piece and followed with the resolve to cease communication with all women, permanently.

"...despite Lozano's idiosyncrasies and exclusions, according to Lucy Lippard she was 'the major female figure' in New York conceptualism during the 1960s — an important distinction given that women artists received short shrift not only then, but also in most subsequent accounts of conceptual art." (Applin 105)

Being a woman is integral to this work.

There are two fundamental parts to this project. The first is the picture, done in graphite or in gouache or in oil, from life, in the presence of the model. The second is an audio recording of the session with the model. The result is an accumulation of portraits and audio tracks of specific shared moments between the artist and the model. All of the models are novice models. They are people with whom I have pre-existing relationships. This includes my family (mother, brother, father), friends (girlfriends, boyfriends, old friends, new friends), collaborators, and colleagues. There are multiple sessions (sketches, tracks) created with each model in an effort to collect an immense volume of data or information for conjuring an image of an individual, or group of individuals for the archive. Audio tracks vary from 27 minutes to 2 hours and 36 minutes. Sketches are made quickly or slowly in response to the environment and circumstance of the session. (The model, model's energy, desires, expectations, and space dictate largely the degree to which the work gets "finished").

...participatory art is perceived to channel art's symbolic capital towards constructive social change. Given these avowed politics, and the commitment that mobilises this work, it is tempting to suggest that this art arguably forms what avant-garde we have today: artists devising social situations as a dematerialised, anti-market, politically engaged project to carry on the avant-garde call to make art a more vital part of life." (Bishop, 13)

Any number of factors determine the outcome of the final image. The impetus in this process is not the final image. The impetus is gifting the work back to the subject. The work does not belong to me (the maker). The work goes out into the world. I have no attachment to what happens to it. I used the process of making the images, and spending time with friends and family, to obtain a masters degree from the University of Washington. The vision for the final installation includes a room filled with people whose portraits are also on the wall. Imagine a room filled with a series of portraits-- mostly classical in composition. They are varied, yet regular. Made by the same hand. They depict human faces, busts and bodies in varying degrees of atmosphere or environment. Some are in rooms filled with objects, others are set against a plane of color or other simplified background.

The paintings and drawings, their figures and perhaps the spaces they sometimes inhabit bring to mind the work of Alice Neel (fig.1).



(fig. 1) Benny and Mary Ellen Andrews By Alice Neel 1972

This image specifically, of Benny and Mary Ellen Andrews from 1972 draws a good comparison to my recent couples portrait of Yasmin & Eric (fig.2) .



(fig. 2) Yasmin & Eric By emily charlotte taibleson 2019

There is present in both, the classic painterly love for stripes and drapery, as well as an emotional quality to the pair of figures that connotes an ennui or anxiety that seems to stem from outside of their relationship to each other. Both couples seem to be perfectly at ease with themselves together-- their relationship is comfortable. Their place in the world is perhaps not. Alice Neel gets recognized for a sense of empathy in her work. Her portraits are described as psychological. My drawings at this stage are often talked about in relationship to her. We are doing many similar things, including painting people from across social spheres of status and occupation. We would both perhaps tend to paint people more on the left, politically, ( in her case members of the communist party) and we both paint in direct response to anti-capitalist, pro-people sentiments. But I wonder how much of being called an empath, or someone who cares about their subject has to do with the fact that we are women.

Conversations in one recording refer to a model from a different portrait. Perhaps they describe an article of clothing from a painting across the room. The soundtrack to one painting may deliver insight into the character or circumstance of individuals depicted in another. It is a multisensory telling of a story, and in effect, this collection of conversations and pictures becomes a (self) portrait of the artist.

In this sense the work is building its episodic nature. The plot thickens. I turn to references of documentary and seek examples of work that pair still imagery with sound. The film *roman*. Chris Marker's *La Jetee* from 1962 creates a moving and near perfect short story within the genre. Utterly gorgeous. I am doing something more longform, and not nearly anywhere close to as beautiful or cinematic. But am in awe of such striking use of portrait (posed snapshot) -- highly composed and beautifully printed photography paired with sound. I turn to Errol Morris as an example of a director whose camera doesn't move. He frames his subjects at a static distance from the lens. Part of the reality of portraiture is that to get the right perspectives and amount of information from the face, the artist must sit quite close to the sitter. It is confrontational. It is a close proximity. The narrative I have begun to conjure, is part Richard Linklater's *Waking Life* (in which the dreamer visits one individual person's world then the next, getting a unique perspective into a private life as well as a philosophy lesson in each vignette) and part *High Maintenance*, a popular youtube series picked up by HBO in 2012 about a cannabis delivery guy who bikes around Brooklyn and delivers weed (still illegal in NYC) to private apartments of eccentric characters who sometimes overlap, and always have absurd predicaments to work out with their drug dealer.

I am interested in talking about pictures in this way because I am concerned about the audience. I want to create a world for my audience to enter whether or not they are academically trained to critique or appreciate painting or drawing in a fine art sense. The audio might be an entry point, or a cheap trick to get someone to look at a picture for more than a few seconds in the year 2019. The audio provides a time-based experience (sound track) for looking at a portrait.

...This desire to activate the audience in participatory art is at the same time a drive to emancipate it from a state of alienation induced by the dominant ideological order — be this consumer capitalism, totalitarian socialism, or military dictatorship. Beginning from this premise, participatory art aims to restore and realise a communal, collective space of shared social engagement. But this is achieved in different ways...." Bishop 275

Portraiture dates back at *least* 5,000 years. Depicting a human's face in two dimensional representation is timeless. In the western tradition, some of the earliest portraits directly in line with the way I was taught to draw (white euro-western tradition) are found in the tombs of Egyptian Romans from circa 50 A.D. (Perl, 72). Throughout history, every time a person has sat for a portrait, there is an

archetypical experience. The artist arranges their things. Observes the light in the room and adjusts it. They tend to their tools. Mix their colors. The sitter waits. Is asked to be still. Is asked to hold, just so. This is a weird and timeless experience. This role play taps into something much greater than ourselves in this place. The sitter is being looked at, observed. Scrutinized, though they can't tell what for. There is distance between the physical self and the mental self that a portrait can begin to capture. One of my models, upon seeing the drawing I had made of him said, "You depicted something in me that you are not supposed to see."

In his book Man with Blue Scarf, Martin Gayford recounts his time spent sitting for a portrait by Lucian Freud. LF is well known for the duration of his portraits. His sitters often sit thousands of hours for him (over the years, three of his models committed suicide(Gayford, 58)). He works incredibly slowly. I wonder where that permission comes from-- the permission to work slowly-- as it relates to both the time LF was born (the moment in history--pre-internet, where perhaps people had less busy-ness about them) as well as his privilege, particularly the privilege of being a man, a man who had class and prestige as the nephew of Sigmund Freud. I am interested in the ritual and perception of time as it relates to making a picture.

Gayford describes LF's unrelenting focus-- or at least the rigor of his schedule, and refers again and again, to Freud's efforts to immerse himself in his work to such a degree as to shut out all other aspects of life. LF really preferred not to be distracted from his painting practice. He built his life and his priorities around that singular focus. Giacometti was similar. In my investigation, role playing the portrait painter, I want to question singularity of mind. I want to bring a more feminine approach to the exchange. I want to consider hospitality. I want to consider the encounter. Gayford also writes again and again in his memoir about the importance of the ritual of having dinner with LF after each painting session.

"The meal after the sitting, like the chat before while LF revs himself up and gets ready to work, is evidently part of the procedure. 'After a sitting I like to join as far as possible in the feelings and emotions of my models. In a way, I don't want to picture to come from me, I want it to come from them.'" (Gayford, 17)



(fig. 3) David Hockney by Lucian Freud

My hypothesis that this practice would be fun and nurturing for everyone involved was proven incorrect. The process and commitment to being present for the length of time it takes to make one of these pictures is in fact fairly vulnerable for both the artist and the model. Most models found themselves, sometimes briefly, extremely uncomfortable. Tensions regarding vanity and self perception presented themselves. Issues regarding expectations of use of time arose. Especially in one particular case. Some found it physically, mentally or emotionally challenging to have themselves drawn even when they enjoyed the *idea* of it at the onset. This was one of my most remarkable findings-- the expectations models had about what the picture and the process was “supposed” to look like. For some, the act of being drawn, of being looked at, or of being seen, was painful.

This work takes interest in taking time. The time it takes to make a drawing. To slow down. To go slower. The time it takes to build a relationship. Values of time within the context of our modern age stress our capacity for “doing nothing”. (My models sat for hours without looking at their phones.) It feels un-american to simply sit and observe or look. This work decidedly does not employ the use of photographic imagery for references-- all the 2D drawings are translated directly from 3D . There are no photos taken of the models or of the environments they occupy. The paintings are made from life and the audio is taken from life. The residual recording is completely bent through the lens of the artist. The

recordings paired with the pictures create a window into a world that is, as my brother put it, somewhere in between realities.

I am examining the mythology of what it means to be a painter. One thing that Mary Gabriel's *Ninth Street Women* does really well is it frames mid-century American art within the context of the world stage in a poignant way. European intellectuals we transplanted to New York City at the onset of the holocaust (Gabriel, 556). Modern American myths about painting (as heroic, pure, sacrificial, etc.) come directly from an era when artists were taking it upon themselves to preserve what seemed to be all that was left of humanity. War imbues art with meaning. The trauma inherited from the first and second world war was unspeakable. In the wake of the depression the country's people were broke and FDR's New Deal afforded a handful of artists the opportunity to develop their skills and live their lives. One was Lee Krasner, the woman who wrangled the raging drunken man child Jackson Pollock and made him into the first ever American Art Star (Gabriel, 333). The US government promoted the image of the paint slinging American cowboy artist (Pollock as depicted in the August 8th issue of *Life Magazine* 1949) as propaganda for American Freedom in the face of facism. At the time, *Life* had one the largest readerships of any publication in the US or abroad. For the first time in canonized history, the United States (and specifically NYC) was a place where Art happened.

I inherit that mythology; even as we retell and dismantle it. An act as small as drawing a portrait is subversive. There is power in the stillness of the picture. Modern American painting programs are in direct lineage with a very warped and traumatized story of what it means to be a painter and wherein the power of painting lies. The academy depends on the doctrine, yet the nature of art corrodes what seeks to contain it. By documenting my community, I am carving out our place in history.



(fig. 4) Powerofart, By Jacki Granger 2019

## Transcriptions

What follows are a series of excerpts from the recordings which I have transcribed in order to both 1. Better understand the material I am working with and 2. To explore transcription as a form of archive (the power of the written word/ the pen is mightier than the sword ). What I found was that not unlike painting or drawing, even when I made the most absolute effort to transcribe information without bias, the choices that I made revealed my own predilections. This brings up the question of the untrustworthy narrator...one of my all time favorite literary tools, introduced by Miguel de Cervantes in Don Quixote 1605/1615.



(fig. 5) My Father, Dr. David Taibleson By emily charlotte taibleson 2019

My Father  
Dr. David Taibleson  
In his home  
October 21, 2018

*Classical music, the sound of news paper rustling on occasion, a pencil softly scratching a page. A puppy snoring.*

D: Rudolph Virchow, a doctor, in the 1840's said...that if you want to achieve *anything* you have to be radical...

E: I like that...you know me...

D: Even now standard medical treatments seemed radical at the time, even handwashing..."you must start by inciting the population" he said...he was sent to an area where there was a typhus epidemic and was asked, how do we get rid of the typhus epidemic and he said, "You have to treat these people like they're human beings."

E: Where was it?

D: In Germany.

E: What does Typhus look like?

D: Uh, they get terrible diarrhea, tummy aches...

E: Is it like cholera?

D:...not quite as bad as cholera but you...you certainly do die from it.

E: It's an intestinal...

D: It's a diarrhoeal disease. Salmonella typhus.

E: Oh, it's the same thing?

D: Yeah. Salmonella Typhus.

E: Oh, I didn't realize that.

D: Clean water helps. Sewage. Having a sewer.... Having toilets.

*Begins to whistle (quite well) along to the Bach playing in the background. News paper rustling...*

D: Hm. Front page appears to be missing.

*Pencil scratching sounds.*

D: Which is my better side? You're sort of doing the um...the this side right?

E: Your right side.

D: Isn't my left profile better? Which is more flattering to my, uh, fans?

E: I don't know...I'll do one from the other side and then we can compare-- how about that?

D: Mmmk.

*Bach continues. A pencil lightly scratches a page for what feels like a long time. The puppy snores.*

D: So you're going to play this recording...or parts of this edited recording... you're not going to play it for anything. You're just practicing.

E: I'm not going to edit it.

D: OooOooh.

E: laughs.

D: So this is where I could like, say things that other people would have to listen to while they walk by the paintings?

E: Only if they chose to listen.

D: So I thought I'd take the opportunity to tell you, things like..." To tell you the truth, Emily, I was really born about 208 years ago...

E: Yeah.

D: In Battleburrough, Vermont which is now the um...location of the state mental facility...  
*(laughs)* Being one of 14 children...

E: Are you...I'd like to draw your hands. And. But, only-- if it's in a comfortable place-- like, you were doing this before...but you don't have to. I liked it.

D: Like that?

E: Whatever--or, while you're reading, if you have something you want to read or we can just talk.

D: Like that?

E: Yes, that's fine.

D: They're all intertwined.

E: That's great.

D: Are you sure that's not too confusing?

E: It's better if it's confusing.

D: Hmm... because my pinkies are hidden down here below the...

E: They'll think I forgot them. Oh. Well. Is there an eraser on here? I don't ever use the eraser. There you go. Cool.

*Sound of brushing eraser dust off the page*

E: *(sing songy)* Modern technologerr.

D: ...*(in an "old man's" voice)* I was the 8th of 14 children... five of the younger ones died... because it was so... bone cold, in the winter.

E: Was it the depression?

D: Well we were talking about..prior to...prior to 1710. We didn't have central heating back then. And my real name:

E: *(gasp)* Don't say it!

D: Bartholomew Ichabod Fairchild Fleischman Youngmen Junior.  
Biffy? Biffy. Biffy Junior. My father was Biffy Senior.  
A Typical New England name.  
Call me Biffy.

E: It's true.

D: My older brother was Ishmael.  
He used to always say...Call ME Ishmael.  
I'll call you Biffy.

E: And then,  
when you were leaving,  
you'd be like,  
"Hey!  
Call me!  
Ishmael!"  
...cause you know, it's all inflection.

*Long period of classical music and the sound of puppy snoring. In the middle of which E says,  
more to herself than anyone,*

I find his little snores to be so soothing.

D: I think somewhere in my baby book my mother made a sketch of me...

E: I bet! I bet she sketched you a lot.

D: She was quite the sketcher.  
I don't know what happened to *anything* she painted.  
I remember the basement was full of paints and paintings and things.

E: Really?

D: Mmhmm, I remember the smell of, uh, what's that stuff? Some type of oil?

E: Linseed?

D: Linseed oil. I really liked the smell.

E: Mmhmm me too.

D: What do you use linseed oil for? Is that for mixing paint? Oils?

E: Yeah. It's basically like adding a fat, adding the literal oil.  
We call it a medium.  
It changes the viscosity and the temperment of the paint.

D: The fascinating thing about seeing all these paintings at the Louvre, there would be little comments on the side, and some pictures here and there about how the painters had to make their own paints, as well as do the paintings.

E: Right.

D: And they showed them like, grinding various stones and rocks and minerals and things...and how long they lasted for, and how they'd have to use them, and grind them, and...it's a big deal!

E: It's a huge deal.

D: They had to be sort of little...

E: It's alchemy.

D: They had to be amateur chemists.

E: I think we all have to be...artists do. That's why I like ceramics a lot too...

D: *(Big yawn)*

Can I can change the page on the paper?

E: Mmmmm... If you could wait one minute-- that would be really great.

D: Mm k.

E: Sorry.

*Puppy snores. Music plays.*

D: Well this says democrats will probably win the popular vote in the house elections for the first time in the last six years. Trump, afterall, remains unpopular. But gerrymandering and the concentration of democratic voters in major cities means that a popular vote win doesn't really mean that there will be a whitehouse majority.

E: Ok, you can change the page now.



(fig. 6) Eric at Home By emily charlotte taibleson 2019

Old Roommates  
Eric Padget and Yasmin Eldbradie  
In their apartment in the CD  
October 23, 2018

18:51

*Eric is the subject of the drawing. We have been working already for a few hours. Yasmin enters.*

Y: That grow light is really crazy. It's like, bright pink.

EP: The what what?

Y: The grow light.

ET: The grow light?

Y: Yeah.

EP: Bright pink?

Y: Yeah.

EP: Oh, that's what you got for yourself, is the grow light.

Y: Mmhmm.

EP: Not for your whacky cousins. That's the-- what was it called?

Y: The hatchimons...the hannible hatchable

ET:...scary...

Y: *Laughs*. Are you having fun?

ET: Yeah. I am having fun.

This is what I do for fun...

Y: Drawring. Drawring. There's a weird dude that-- I don't know if he's only out when it's sunny or not--

EP: I don't know if he's weird or not.

Y: He might not be weird. I mean, he's weird in that...

EP: I was being...I was being...Sarcastic. No. This is a very weird dude.

Y: He hangs out in the lot across from the window and he wears...

ET: Over there?

Y: Yah. In the fix-it--like--there. That's not the fix-it parking lot, but like, where the fix-it sign is. But anyway, he is, he doesn't have a top on and he wears army pants and he does like jumping-- not jumping jacks but jumping rope and athletic exercises...

ET: Mmmhmm, yeah?

EP: He works out.

Y: I mean, he's acting like he's in a jihadi training camp. Or-- you know--

ET: He was probably in the military.

Y: He might be. But why is he there?

EP: He's also probably like, 42...  
I think he's just trying to...  
it's his spot...

Y: He doesn't seem to have very much hair...  
He's trying to what?

EP: It's his spot.

Y: Well sure ok.

EP: And he doesn't always wear military pants,  
sometimes he wears slacks.

Y: Once he wore shorts when it was hot.

EP: That makes sense.

Y: Sure. But he's always shirtless.

EP: Well you said for a long time, like, he was there all the time  
and I was like, what?  
I've never seen this guy before ever.

Y: I saw him several days in a row.

EP: Yeah. Well.  
Now I keep seeing him.

Y: Well sure, I mean, I think he's always there, it's just a matter of like, being there at the right  
time.

EP: But he's just, right there. And he does these like...throw punches? Like these...hooks?

ET: Like kung fu?

Y: I think it's good. It adds some like, neighborhood flair.

ET: Mmhmm...

EP: Well it's cool to see SOME life AT ALL besides these fucking...stupid birds and stuff

ET: Zombies.

*Laughter*

EP: I mean, these humans!

Y: Yeeah, I try to look outside the window and see something that's not like, a dolphin, or something, you know? Something normal. Like--

EP: Some strange...

ET: Like a man doing jumping jacks?

Y: Some white human. Yeah.

ET: That's hilarious....alright. You're free Eric. I'm drawing Toast now.

EP: *laughs*

Y: What are you drawing now?

ET: Toast.

Y: Tooast.

ET: He just made his way into the composition.

Y: Cute.

EP: Do you want the rest of that-- that other soup?

Y: Noooo.

EP: Too much soup? Are you gonna ever want it?

Y: I mean, if you want it, go for it. I don't, like...usually...coconut stuff is...it's probably too rich for me.

Too rich for my blood.

I didn't even finish my soup.

It-- my soup is *very* spicy....

We have to figure out where we're going to put that grow light my booboo.

EP: Why don't you put it on top of the rack?

Y: That's a good idea.

EP: Cause that way, you can get a lot of plants.

Y: (*Like a robot*) I'll put nature to the rack and force her reveal her secrets.

The rack is a good idea. That's uh, *Des Carte*.

EP: Yeah, move Descartes

Y: Oh we should name the rack Descartes.

ET: That's so cute.

EP: That's definitely Descartes.

*Sound of voice moving towards the sound where the pencil is coming from.*

Y: Oh, it's so beautiful...

Oh my god! That's Eric!

But he doesn't look like Eric,  
he looks like my father.

Weird.

ET: *laughs* They all look like my father!

That's the point of this project.

*All Laughing*

Y: I am your father.

EP: *chanting* Dads, dads, dads, dads, so many dads!

ET: Yeeah.

EP: I'm not a dad.

Y: Do you know what this plant is called? It has a disease, but it's called phil granum pastazanum

ET: That's um, really important to know. Can you say that again?

Y: Pasta. Z anum.

ET: Pasta-- like "paasta?" (ironic (canadian) pronunciation of pasta)

Y: Yeah. Like paasta! Like macaroni salad. Pasta z anum.

EP: (*singing*) Macaroni salad with spam cubes, spam cubes, spam cubes, spam cubes, spam cubes...bacon tubes...

Y: That sounds like something you would get from Safeway. Macaroni salad with spam cubes and a mayonnaise dressing. With extra fresh cracked black pepper.

*All giggling*

Y: And one green pea. Oh, delicious. I want to have five ounces of that please. Would you like a spoon with that? Sir?

Y: That's all Eric has from Safeway now. Maybe because I kept talking about your chickens. Now you just get like, weird creamy confections.

EP: Noo, I get a variety of things...you just don't--

Y: Nooo. Sometimes you get like, a creamy kale salad. Sometimes you get like a creamy macaroni salad. Sometimes you get like a creamy tuna salad...

ET: That's just what they have there...

Y: No, they also have samosas.

ET: Yum.

Y: Yeah. They're good.

Eric's craving creamy things.

Creamy

Things

EP: How do you think I keep my mallowy complexion?

Y: With Safeway! Are you looking less mallowy than normal? Come on down to your local Safeway!

EP: If you really want to know, the reason why I go there all the time is that Kieran's little brother works at the deli.

Y: Yeah, but are you like, in love with him?

EP: What was that?

Y: Are you in love with Kieran's little brother?

EP: No.

Y: Ok.

EP: But it's fun to have a person in the neighborhood I know...

Y: Sure. Totally. I know that Kieran's little brother works there. He's not always there though. Sometimes they let him leave.

ET: At least you don't have to work the deli counter.

Y: That's true.

EP: I have done that before.

Y: Well sometimes I have to do the sample booth...Actually, not really anymore now that I do mornings, thank the good lord. It's quite terrible. That's the worst thing in the world, is giving people free food and then having them tell you that it like sucks and they don't like it...You're like, "Do you not understand this? I'm giving you this free thing."

EP: It's not a free thing. It's an advertisement.

Y: Ok, fine.

EP: Packaging and advertisement is a gift!

Y: A gift you can eat...

EP: Yeah, it's true (*yawning*) I miss the candy bars in the mail.

Y: Candy bars in the mail?

EP: No. Not really. I wish.

Y: You wish. But you never check the mail. Maybe then you would check it. They would probably be like, shitty ones though.

ET: That's cause all the mail is for you Yasmin.

EP: Gawd, this musical thing that I'm doing...is putting my system in shock. Cause it's like, all the candy I eat over the course of the year, like the hardcore candy--

Y: yeah.

EP: Just like, Twix bars, Skittles...I mean. We ate some skittles there for a minute.

Y: Yeah.

EP: We had a skittle kick.

Y: We had a skittle evening.

ET: Here?

Y: Yeah.

EP: Yeah we got one giant bag of them and got really high and ate them.

ET: Fuck that dude. Skittles are gnarly to me.

EP: Yeah. They're gnarly to everybody.

Y: They're pretty delicious if you're really stoned.

ET: They're like crack though.

Y: Then, you can eat the rainbow.

ET: They're pure sugar. Yeah you are eating the rainbow.

EP: Well the trick is to segregate them and then eat them in handfuls...

Y: Segregate them? You have to eat them all together so you eat the rainbow.

EP: Eat the rainbow.

Y: Eat the rainbow.

EP: Eat the rainbow later.

Y: Later.

I can't remember what I came out to do...oh I was going to look at that orchid that I saved...orchid, orchid...

EP: They can all live on DesCartes.... (*laughing*)

Y: They can all live on DesCartes

ET: So good.

Y: Oh I didn't even understand that that was a pun until right now...

ET: I love it. What was the quote?

Y: We must put nature to the rack and force her to reveal her secrets.

Descartes was like, a real piece of work. He used to vivisect animals cause he thought it was just like, the sound of machinery if they cried...cause they don't have souls.

ET: Right. Evil.

Y: Yeah, it's pretty evil. Thanks Descartes. Fucked everything up.

ET: He wasn't the only one.

Y: He started it. (*singing*) Mind body dualism...It all started with Descartes. YES. I was a philosophy major. I will fight you.

ET: I have fun essay for you...to read about that...it's in the Lapham's quarterly on consciousness...

Y: Cool.

EP: He probably grew up with a shitty family and shitty friends.

Y: Who? Descartes?

EP: Mmhmm.

Y: I mean, probably. Everything was shitty back then. It was like...

EP: Was it?

Y: Well yeah. In Europe?

EP: Or do you think people still had the same pleasures they have now...

Y: No, they didn't have like, Netflix.

EP: Boiling water and showers...I know. I know.

Y: Running water...

EP: I know. Everyone just pooped into their hands and threw it out the window or something, if they could afford windows...

ET: They didn't have windows.

EP: When was Descartes?

Y: Hey Alexa, when was Descartes born?

ET: Like...1650 or something...

Y: Thanks Alexa!

*Laughing*

Y: I think people have those things so they can yell at something...

ET: He was friends with...he had a correspondence with the queen of Spain. They would write letters to each other. She supported his theory...easier to control the masses with religion...

Y: Ooh. Did they send nudies to each other?

ET: No...they-- he sent dick pics.

Y: Imagine how annoying that would be!

ET: He's like: Mind body dualism! Look at my member!

Y: It would have to be-- like, "fetch me the artist, the royal artist" Then someone like you would come along and he'd be like, "Draw my penis. I wish to send it to Isabella."

Then he's be like: "Not big enough."

ET: And then you'd have to deliver it on horseback, in a scroll.

Y: And then you have to burn it as soon as she sees it.  
So it's like snapchat.

ET: It is,  
it's like snapchat.



(fig. 7) My Brother, Daniel By emily charlotte tablesen 2019

My Brother  
Daniel Taibleson  
In his apartment on Lake Washington  
October 30, 2018

*A hockey game plays on the TV in the background. You hear the spark of a lighter and the sound of a deep inhale. My (one year) younger brother Daniel is on the couch with a sprained ankle, elevated.*

D: So the guy that's talking right now is named Kevin Weeks and he's like, a horrible announcer. He's like, the one black goalie, that, you know, now he's a commentator on NHL...Network, which is like, it's own TV channel...

E: Uh huh.

D: And it's just like, all has-been hockey players that do all the talking, and they're just garbage. They're all Canadian. They're all garbage. Like, I'm going to sit around and listen to three Canadians talk about hockey...! Stumble through the performance...!

*Dissolve into laughter...because that's exactly what he'll do.*

D: Oh! So that's another really funny thing from this weekend, I realized that everyone Justin was hanging out with was Canadian.

E: Really? That makes...so much sense.

D: Yeah, like, Masah is Canadian, his therapist is Canadian...and I was like, wait a second!

E: And we're like, kind of Canadian...

D I was talking about this with everyone, like, no wait-- this makes perfect sense, like, they're Not American.

They're Canadian. They're Canadians.

Canadians are dope.

We've known this.

We grew up with Canadians.

We know that they're different. Just cause they're like...

E: A different culture.  
Civilized.

D: Very civilized-- educated Canadians are very aware of themselves...are very aware of what's going on...very...in tune with their emotions...I think...I think they're probably a more communicative group.

E: Wait (*cracking up*) Wait. What are you talking about?

*(Both laughing)*

E: I just flash to like, the bus, the school bus to Monashee...

*(Imagine a school bus with snow chains filled with twenty drunk ski bums and all of their gear about 4 hours up a logging road into an isolated ski area in the backcountry of central British Columbia, Canada.)*

*Hysterically*

D: *(in an vaguely irish accent)* Your dead mum!  
He's like, "You're more dead to me than your dead mum!"  
Like...oh my god.  
Like, Your dead mother doesn't love ya.  
Like, wow...

E: It's like...four in the afternoon...

*Both laughing*

D: Yeah, but I was like, aww, Justin. You just needed some Canadians in your life. That's all that you really needed. Ya know?

E: Is he still struggling? How is he doing?

D: Oh, he's doing good. I think he's doing-- I mean. Seems like he's doing really, really well. Um. He's like...not working.. but...oh!  
He's writing a book.

E: Right...

D: Uh, to help people...  
be...like  
him.

*crack into laughter.*

D: So instead of... he's like, this whole like, being controlling over each every individual person thing isn't working, ya know, so I'm just trying to manipulate an entire generation through mass mediums...

E: That is hilarious.

D: Yeah. It should be...but I mean, I'm sure it will be full of really great stuff. You know, stuff that does make sense, like, you know...these foods are healthy, these aren't. I mean, there's science behind the things that he's talking about.

E: He's writing the book about food?

D: I think it's like about food, and it's about...it's like lifestyle.

E: It's his journey...

D: Yeah. I think he's going to document his journey as a way to make it...my gut reaction is to say, "feel like work", but I think he seems pretty passionate about the ideas, helping people. So,...

E: Yeah, I'm happy for him.

D: Yeah, it's just...there were times when you felt passionate about helping people...

E: I used to care.

D: Then you realized...humanity...

E: I used to think I--

D: Could change--

E: I used to think things mattered.

*Both laugh*

D: *(in the voice of a gruff old man)* Boy, was I wrong

E: There was a time, when I was full of hope.

D: It's like, hold that thought: *sound of a sparking lighter and deep inhale.*

*Hockey game plays in the back ground.*

E: Your glorious ears. I could do a whole series, just...

D: I do have large supple ears, yeah.

*Long pause as hockey plays*

D: I mean, I'm still kind of offended when people say that though.

E: Awwwww. I--

D: I mean, I'm not.

E: I didn't say that to be mean.

D: No-- I don't-- it's, you know, it's not like they're saying I have the biggest ears they've ever seen...I just...

I have....

big ears and small teeth.

*Both dissolve into laughter*

D: I'm kidding, I don't give a shit. Oooh wow, goal. Oh my gawd.

29:31

D: My foot feels like a piece of flesh hanging off my leg. Useless. Lump.



(fig. 8) Yasmin (Odalisque) By emily charlotte taibleson 2019

Yasmin

(We used live together)

In her apartment in the CD

October 24, 2018

E: Drawing Yasmin, session 1.

Y: Hi Emily's recording!

E: You can tell it anything you want.

Y: Nice. My deepest darkest secrets.

E: MmmHmm.

Y: It is almost scorpion season. So, secrets. Secrets are comin out.

E: Oh, yeah I saw that today. Today is the first day.

Y: Taurus moon.

E: Dun dun dunn

Y: Dun dun dunn

Y: Oh yeah, you can talk to me about astrology.

E: Taurus moon is nice.

Y: Yeah, except it's gonna be a little...fucked up.

E: Oh-- maybe keep your arms in one...or-- just like, can you put your hand back--forget it. I'm just sketching...warming up.

Y: I don't remember what I was doing with my hands.

E: Yeah. You were braiding your hair I think...

Y: Oh, gotchya.

E: This is a pretty good position for your finger though.

*Laughter*

ET: Keep that.

*Both laughing*

Y: And...I apologize for all of the prints that's happening...

*(she's referring to her mix-matched clothing)*

ET: Oh, my goodness. My pleasure. I love it.

Y: Alright, perfect.

ET: I expect no less.

*Laughter*

ET: Well, I am realizing that a big part of this is going to become documenting people's objects, like their Things.

Y: their stuff.

ET: Yeah, I mean we're such a Stuff

Y: culture

E: people.

Y: Yeah, I was um. It's interesting. I watched a couple youTube documentaries, or articles and there's so many like, assignments...like an assignment to audit your trash-- take out all your trash for, I don't know, however long and like, see how much there is and what could have been recycled. And that's like...a lot. And then I read another assignment and that was to help you become like, zero waste, and also just to make sure that your are recycling what you're supposed to recycle and all that.

E: What do you mean an assignment?

Y: It was a youTube video that was like, 13 tricks to reduce your waste...

E: Ok...

Y: Something like that

E: Ok...

Y: And then the last thing they said was to do a trash audit.

E: Ok. Ok.

Y: And it just seemed, kind of like, a lot. I mean, I'm sure it's a great exercise. I'm just thinking about all these exercises that we...are recommended to us like all the time. We're just obsessed with working.

E: And like... improving.

Y: And improving. Right. And then there was another one. The first one, seemed fine. The other one, seemed fine. But then, together, it was like, whoa this is kind of ridiculous. It seems like you're going to spend your whole time doing that shit.

E: Yeah. My friend was telling me about her sister did that, she has two kids. And for like a year, they didn't buy anything that had waste.... Toast? What are you doing? NO! NO! NO POOP!

No. Stop it. ...I thought his head was the other direction. I thought his head was in the litterbox.

Y: Oooh. No.

E: *(to the dog)* You're not so bad booboo.

Y: he's not so bad. He's just finding the treats that are outside...

E: *(to the dog)* I just yelled at you.

*(to herself, under he breath)* Ok. This is crazy. I have to start again. The idea is to do something lose emily. *(sound of sketching)* Loosey goosey. Mmk.

*(to Yasmin)* Have you ever done a trash audit, or equivalent?

Y: Mmmm. MmmMmm. No. I never have. I really changed, in some ways. I mean I used to basically, like a, not a stay at home mom, cause I didn't have kids, but I wasn't working. And I was married. I was like, you know, doing "the big weekly shop", and cooking dinner from scratch, every day. And going to the co-op. Cause I could afford it. And I was like, why can't everyone do this? Why can't everyone bring their own containers, and use the bulk bins, and make their own dinner? I had no idea that, no everyone can't. Even like, me in the future, can't.

*Laughs*

Y: Yeah. That is was I used to do. And now I'm like, awwwww.

E: Do you think you were more wasteful then?

Y: No, I think I was less wasteful. Overall--I don't know.

E: You were spending more money.

Y: I was definitely spending more money. I was making a very big effort to use less resources. I was probably producing less trash. I didn't buy bananas because they were a long distance...

E: I don't really like to buy bananas.

Y: They're just convenient. They're really convenient. They're like the one fruit that I'll consistently eat.

E: I've gone through phases where I've eaten a lot of bananas, but, lately I just haven't.

Y: Yeah, you definitely don't have to eat bananas. There's options.

E: But yeah that's an example of a food that has a wrapper.

*(to herself)* See? At the same time, it's good to stick with it...

*(to Yasmin)* I'm just feeling really humbled by this project right now, I'm excited for it. I'm really grateful that you guys are my...my guinea pigs.

But I have been feeling that way too. I have been saying lately that 20 year old emily would be really disappointed in 30 year old emily.

Y: Yeeeeeah. Yeah. And I don't know how much of that is inevitable...Unless you...stick to a value system which...is possible to do, I suppose...I mean, when I was like, 14, 15 and a young teenager in the suburbs...it was all, you know...smash the TV! Smash the corporations

E: I know, I was like...vegan....stickers all over my binder...we'd like, shoplift from Whole Foods...

Y:...that's pretty good.

E: I would never do that anymore....

*Cackles wildly*

E: I think the thing is, I do kind of have the same value system...

Y: I mean, it's not like corporations are cool now, it's just that--

E: We're lazy.

Y: Well, yeah. We're lazy. Yeah. Definitely. That's a part of it. That's not the whole thing. But definitely, a giant chunk of it. It's also like, wow, all of these other people are going out and buying their jeans from like, you know, this giant corporation.

E: Yeah. You do what you can.

Y: Why, why not I? I mean, there's a reason those people are doing it, because it's convenient. It's cheap.

E: I mean, that was the joke, was that Christian and I were walking to the coffee shop and he was like, do you want to bring a cup with you? And I was like...Mmmmmmm. And he was like, "You're going to use a paper cup?" And I was like, "Errrrrrr...." And that's when I said, "twenty year old Emily would not approve." I like, carried my jar everywhere. I was on it. I only rode a bike for years and years. Didn't have a car. And I loved it. But I was also like, in fucking poverty. And then you realize, all the organic shit, like you said, it's just, a lot of it's just privilege. Having access to that.

Y: Yeah. Right. No. Totally.

E: And that's been the biggest lesson for me...but carrying a jar is doable.

Y: Yeah carrying a jar is doable. Yeah you used to take your mug with you to Cortona Cafe every day.

E: I used to, yeah. And then somewhere, in the last like, two years, I fell of the horse. I fell of the wagon. And I've been not feeling good about it. Honestly. I hate creating that much trash.

Y: Well, it's also hard when it seems like no one is doing ANYTHING.

E: I know! I agree.

Y: It's like, everyone's like: climate change, climate change, and obviously, climate change is real. It is happening. It's, you know, it's fucking everything up. And the fact that nobody is take mass action just makes you feel like...

E: Like I'm gonna eat this five part meal out of five different plastic containers. What the fuck.

Y: Right. Yeah. It's really weird and ridiculous. I guess it seems unrealistic to people.

E: To change their behavior?

Y: And you know, like corporations and associations of people basically, cause like, for example, let's say you buy the ramen that Trader Joe's sells right now...it comes in a paper cup...which has some kind of lid....it has at least three separate plastic components in it...and that's probably not as bad as, like you could probably go to Uwajimaya and buy one in styrofoam, you know? And that's just like...ASIA.

E: Yup. I mean, the truth is-- and you're vegan-- probably always will be, but  
Y: But it's almost like a habit...at this point. And I became vegan early enough that it's just...I don't know.  
E: But maybe we really shouldn't be eating things out of the ocean. It just seems like things are getting real.  
Y: Yeah.  
E: Real real.  
Y: Things are getting really real. That's pretty sad.  
E: It does make me think, what would mean, to have kids?  
Y: Yeah. I am lucky that I don't want kids.  
E: Yeah you are lucky that you don't want kids.  
Y: I do, I feel lucky. My thinking about children is...you either want them, or you don't want them.  
E: ...right...  
Y: And-- I think it's biology honestly. Like your hormones kick in. And I don't think it's just men or just women or whatever, but once you want it, you want it. It's not a logical decision.  
E: Did you ever want it?  
Y: Yeah.  
E: And then, you got over the hump?  
Y: Yeah.  
E: What was the peak of your hump?  
Y: It was my housewife experience. When I was married...  
E: But what years? Age--  
Y: How old was I? Oh, I was like 24. That was like the peak. 24, 25.  
E: And then, what happened?  
Y: Mustafa didn't want kids.  
E: Never did?  
Y: At all. He never did. I think he had actually, a brief moment, with his, new partner. But he knew, like he said going in, "I don't want kids." And I was fine with that. And then when I was like, oh I want a kid he was like, I still don't want kids and so I was like, Ok.  
E: Did you guys use contraception? Even though you were married?  
Y: Mmmhmm. So yeah I didn't have kids. But if I did have that kid, it would be ten years old today-- which is crazy. Like part of me feels like it's like compounding interest...like, if only I'd had a child ten years ago, I would have a ten year old today....without all that labor, but...I mean, I don't regret it....  
E: Ok, I'm going to draw your face. So...  
Y: Can I drink water before?  
E: Yah. So...quitchyer yappin.

*Laughter*

ET: Ok. Can you please, assume the position?

Y: For the jury...

ET: Yah, the other elbow is up.

Y: It's like I'm in yoga class...

ET: It's the odalisque.

Y: *cackling laughter*

You just said that to make me laugh.

ET: No, it's because we're making art history right now....

*Laughter*

I'm serious.

Y: Art history should be...(*indecipherable mumbling*)

EP: *singing*

better art history than art herstory

Y: Art herstory

*Laughing*

ET: That's a thing though...!

Y: I didn't go to Sarah Lawrence so...I can't call it Art Herstory. Sorry.

ET: You don't have a degree in that?

EP: A degree in Art Herstory?

ET: Then you're not even allowed to say it.

*Laughter*

EP: You can, but you have to write a check.

Y: Toast had like, 15 seconds of chasing his own tale.

ET: Yeah. That's his...

Y: It's not a metaphor!

ET: I know, it's incredible. They actually do it.

Y: Yeah, it's wild.

ET: This hat is so gangster.

Y: Gangstah.

ET: It just really adds a whole different....flavor to the painting.

Y: It's funny, I've been wearing the green one for a few days but, this one is actually warmer.

ET: I need to order some swag.

Y: Yeeah Emily.

ET: I know.

Y: She has some cute-- did you see the farting t-shirts?

ET: MmmMmm.

Y: They're really cute. It's like this person laying in, uh, what's that-- non-wheel...plow. Plow pose.

E: Plow pows

Y: Plow pow.

E: Pow Pow.

Y: Anyway a person in plow or whatever and they have a fart coming out and it says like, Poseurs or something.

E: Don't forget your plow pal!

Y: It's quite funny.

ET: Plow plow?

Y: Eric, you're a joy to have in class.

ET: Ok, I need to draw your face again.

EP:...I have been told...

ET: Can you look at me?

Y: A joy at home. I am. (*In a whining, ironic wailing voice*) How do you even know if I'm looking at you, if you're not even looking back ...

*Laughter*

ET: Your job is to look at me and I get to look at whatever part of you that I want.

Y: Whoa. Did you examine the gender bias...implicit..

ET: Yeah that's why I'm doing this project...

Y: Okay it all makes sense now.

ET: It's the male gaze brah.

*Laughter*

Y: That's what she said.

E: If you want to be around the male gays, you can go to Diesel down the street. That's where all the male gays hang out.

Y: (*eye rolling*) Oh snaps.

E: What did you say? Maps?

Y: I said snaps. You can snap if you wish.



(fig. 9) Alex Knitting 1 By emily charlotte taibleson 2019

Alex Knitting  
(We used live together)  
In his home in Greenwood  
October 2, 2018

*Latin jazz plays in the background. It's a bit echo-y -- the space. The puppy plays on a hardwood floor.*

E: Hold on, let me press...record...

*Hearty Laughter*

E: Here, will you put that right...there. Thanks. Ok.

Ummmm.

I don't know. Fine I guess.

A: Mmmhmm.

E: I'm probably in the wrong department for the conversations that I want to be having...

A: Mmmhmm.

E: So I'm just trying to reconcile that and still make it as positive as I can. But. Yeah, and, it's getting me to paint which is interesting.

*Long silence while cuban piano solo plays in the background*

A: Do you feel like they're helping your...growth?

E: ...I mean, not in a "nurturing" way...maybe in, like, a...I don't know, maybe...growing hurts. Right? It kind of sucks actually. But here we are.

*Solo continues*

E: Like, I've been fantasizing a lot about having a job with zero ambition...like working in a bookstore in like, Walla Walla or something.

A: See, that's kind of what I'm thinking...I'm like, why am I doing all this? Why don't I just work in a bookstore in Walla Walla?

E: And have a quiet life. And read books.

A: And go for walks.

E: That's all I really want to do.

A: I know.

E: And like, yoga. And like, grow plants in my yard and like, look at them.

A: Mmmhmm. Go for a swim.

E: Yeah.

A: Like, are we just making it hard on ourselves for some weird pseudo-ambitious reason?

E: Well yeah, and then the conflict I come up against in my painting practice is that apparently I'm too concerned about the way the work is going to be received...and it's hard for me to get immersed in it...and that's partly because I don't think it matters, and I don't think anything matters. And it's partly because I'm worried about how it's going to be received because of the academic probation.

A: Oh, yeah.

E: And, because it's been so poorly received...

A: That's such a shame. I feel like, I mean it's impossible in your position, but if you could just make paintings that you just knew no one would see ever...

E: Yeah but I don't know if painting is the right thing...

A: Or you could just make pieces of work that would just be so private.

I recently started a sketch book, I was like, no one is going to ever see this.

And it's super nice. I can just fuck up super hard and it's super nice.

E: That's good.

Except now you told me about it, so you're going to show it to me someday.

A: No.

*Laughs. Latin music continues, singing in the background. For a long time it's quiet, like people are working.*

E: *(to the puppy)* You're a good boy Toast.

A: yah.

E: I know. It's a rainy day honey. Get! Out of there.

Hii. Do you need something? Love you. Hmmm.

Can this leg that's in front of you...kindof, yeah. So I can just see what's goin on back there?

Thank you. Perfect.

...I'm just going to peek at the cake... (*her voice gets further away in the echo-y room*)

A: Oh, yeah.

E: Whoa, it puffed up a lot.

A: Does it look done-ish?

E: It looks so good.

A: Do you want to poke it with a, um, fork or something and see how the inside is?

E: My god, it's so beautiful. It's not done though. Oh, my god. I'm so excited. It's probably like, eight more minutes.

A: Ok. Yeah, I wanted to bake it early so it would cool enough to not melt the frosting.

E: That's so smart, yeah. Oh, or the whip?

A: The whip.

E: The whhhhhip.

*Time lapses*

A: I guess that's just...the road to..growth is paved with self doubt.

E: Well. And there are just, certain realities... *laughs*

A: Shutup...

E: No, I mean, of my own...like-- it's not about: do you have talent or not have talent. It's like, are you passionate enough about this to like, follow it through? Like, you were kind of talking about the doctor path too, like, ok...you could be a doctor. Like if I worked as hard as I..."should"...that's the only way you become a Painter...is if you fucking paint, every fucking day, for your whole life, and that's like what you want to do. And the reality is that I have to figure out what my end game is, because I am in a painting program...They can't really give me advice about anything else...is basically what I've figured out. I want to talk about all these other things...I don't know-- it was interesting, we had a visiting artist yesterday who was like, oh, you're a conceptual artist! And I was like, well yeah, isn't everybody?

*Loud dog bark in echo-y room*

E: (*to the dog*) That's not ok.

*Music plays for a while*

Make me really mad when you do that Toast.

A: I don't know it's hard when you have so many things you enjoy doing.

E: Yeah! You relate to that. And that's what's so funny about it. A lot of these people that we study, that made great accomplishments, and even at a master's program school level, you're supposed to narrow your research down to like, one thing.

A: Right.

E: And then, that's your work. I understand that...I don't really present that way.

A: Well it's not that you-- multifaceted interests....

E: Yeah, and, I know, from being out of school, for a certain amount of time, that I can survive in the world, and be a valuable person, and also have many interests.

A: Yeah.

E: But surviving in academia, or in any institutionalized, or... hyper-specialized

A: Right, it requires you to be kind of tunnel vision-ed in a way.

E: Mmmhmm. So. I'm trying to enjoy it and treat this year like a residency.

A: That's a good way to think about it...

E: Yeah, and, try to glean what I can...and that's what the portrait project is kind of about...it's like, what could be a harder dumber thing to try to paint than portraits.

And I'm also going to keep doing landscapes. I just um...

A: I like your landscapes...

E: Thank you.

But, this will get me through the winter. And it means I can hang out with people I love...and there's also this aspect of like, incorporating people into my practice, and talking about how valuable relationships are to me...because there is the narrative of the painter as this isolated...genius alone in the studio, tortured...

A: Yeah.

E: And I need, for my own practice, to destroy that narrative. Even if I do eventually end up there. I'm not saying that the myth is quite as valid in the world today, but at least in the way I was educated, it's this hyper-romanticized...I fell for it, at least.

A: yeah, yeah yeah.

E: I just, wanted to be Jack Kerouac. Real bad.

A: Hmmm.

A: This is the real knitting you should be painting....it's called ripping out knitting.

E: That's like what knitting actually is...

A: Uh huh. I call it....I fucked up again.

E: It's called, this is life. Raveling and unraveling.



(fig. 10) My Mom on the T-Dock By emily charlotte taibleson 2019

T-Dock November 7, 2018 00:21:02

Part I: In which my mother describes a drawing I made of my brother, while I draw her, sitting on a dock on Lake Washington. (A cold clear fall day).

J- my mother, Joyce Mauk Taibleson MD (figure 6)

E- emily charlotte taibleson

E I just want to capture, some of this, the fact that we're on a dock...

J yeah! It's perfect.

E it's kinda fun

J It's deep. ...

E the water is deep. Our relationship is deep.

J So deep. But, yeah, Art therapy

E it's-- been fun

J and you can do laura, when you see her, sometime

E I really want to do Michelle

J Yeah

E cause I know she would...

J you know they say narcissists are drawn to other narcissists-- did you know that?

E Of course Mother, (laughs) you tell me that all the time.

J Everything I say to you and your brother, you say "you tell me that a hundred times!"

E Not everything. Not the first time you say it..

J That's what he said.

That's what he said...

00:23:42 (figure 5)

J: But I thought in your sketch of him...was a lot a dark stuff.. in it.

E: In the pencil?

J: The sibling rivalry.

E: In the pencil drawing?

J: Absolutely.

E: Cause he looks like a... quadriplegic--like, he looks like he has Parkinson's disease in the drawing? (laughs)

J He looks.. It -- I mean, talk about his shadow, the shadow self, it looks like you got the shadow self on the canvas...

E I, well I'm glad you saw something, that's great. I have no idea.

J And you got the gemini quality...sort of the...where he has the conflicting...

E The side eyed?

J The conflicting stuff goin on...The two sides to him.

E: Great.



(fig. 11) Swaine 1 By emily charlotte taibleson 2019

Michael Swaine

Dec 3rd On the third floor of the art building NW corner 00:06:54

Part III: As part of a two credit independent study that I enrolled in with professor Michael Swaine from the 3D4M dept fall quarter 2018, he very generously sat for an hour long portrait for me in an auxiliary space on the third floor of the art building, where he and David Burr had deposited an antique upright piano the previous year. Swaine kept picking up his lap top computer and dropping it onto the piano keys.

M So as we were driving there, imagine snow and ice and kind of treacherous driving conditions, you know I um, borrowed my mom's station wagon...and, I don't think, I don't think it was a date. It was me, you know, wanting a date...but I don't think she thought of it as a date. You know, it was one of those types of dates, where only one half of the party thinks it's a date.  
E Right.

M Umm, so we're driving to go ice skating, and I'm realizing, that I am, trying to... so, she's in the right, you know, I'm driving, she's in the seat next to me. The passenger seat. I'm realizing, I'm trying to tilt my head and look at her while driving...because I don't want her to see my profile.

E Oooh. Wow.

M Of my nose. And of course it's like, unbelievably dangerous, to drive, in Syracuse, winter, I'm like, I don't know, seventeen...

E You risked your life. You risked both of your lives.

M Like just learning how to drive...and there's like ice and snow. Um. Yeah. So. I don't why that stuck with me so long. The realization of, trying to, trying to...

E ...show your best side...

M Tilt your head a certain way so someone doesn't see...the other side...

E well, that is a really relevant concept to portraiture. ... It's something that I didn't anticipate, so much, like, having to contend with people's vanity...and the funniest part is, of course, you know, I've been joking that the most vain person that I have drawn had been my Dad.

Both laugh.

E And he's very much like, is this my good side? Is this my good side? Don't draw this side. And you know, he's kind of joking based on that archetype from, I don't know, like the 40s. "Get my good side".

M I saw his portrait. And his felt like it stood out in its posed-ness. (figure 5)

E Oh yeah, it was really funny. He was the first one...

00:12:51

E I'm just grateful for the way how this project is evolving..and I feel like, it's giving me something that I needed. And, part of it, is this idea...I have been drawing a lot of people lying on the couch, talking, you know? So it's kind of like, Artist/Painter as...therapist? (laughs)

M Yah. I was thinking of that while I was sitting here.

E ...a little bit of that, and different people have different ideas about...I think I told you, my dad for example was, "Let me tell you..." like, "Should I tell you my history?" -- now that you're recording me?

M Right...I was also thinking that the pause...in conversation-- like a, small pause in conversation, when your not, kindof, stuck-- in a certain -- you know, like in therapy -- you're kind of stuck on that couch for an hour.

E uh huh

M when you're being drawn, you're stuck in the chair.

E Mm hmmm.

M And if we were...at a cafe...or, I don't know, in passing-- and I wasn't stuck, for an hour, and there was a pause in our conversation, I might just be like, wha! Gotta go. See you later.

E Right.

M Like, "I've got other stuff to do" but now, with the pause, it reminds me of therapy...where I'm like... "Oh, oh gosh, I've got to say something...what else? What else should I talk about?"

E But also, the silence is OK.

M True.

E 'Cause you're not paying \$150 an hour for it...(laughs)

M That does-- we humans-- definitely-- have our, um (pause) issues with silence.

E Right. But if we did this a few times...

M You think there would be longer pauses?

E Mmhmm. Absolutely. The ones with my dad now are totally silent. (laughs) it starts off as kind of performative and then people forget... I like this dangling button.

1:04:57

E...the thing about drapery is that I really could just spend all day drawing your jacket...

M It's interesting too...um...Granite and I have gone on a bunch of walks...as studio visits...

E Aww. Isn't he just an angel?

M Yes, he is an angel. And it's, but it's nice to think, how does the walk create...a different way to connect with someone?

E Mm hmm

M And I think it's nice to do this version.

E It's like...practically opposite.

M Well, it's opposite the walk but it's, to me there is -- and I know you haven't tried this with your other-- painting faculty --

E Nope. You're my guinea pig.

M But I'm just wondering, like, kind of knowing...it's both-- I have to be still. I know you have kind of the upper hand.

E It changes the power dynamic.

M Yeah, the power dynamic. You could yell at me and be like, "Stop. Stop blinking Michael."

E And I do sometimes, I'm like, "Will you..."

M (laughing) "Please stop laughing michael-- i'm working on your belly right now..."

E Or often I will ask people to stop talking. Like, "I'm drawing your mouth. Shhh!"

M (laughing)

E and that's part of it too, to speak to the history of this practice, it's like usually, a clothed man and a nude woman.

M Ahhh. Right. Right, right, right.

E Historically. And that's actually really important to me, to reverse that.

M Yeah. And there's the portrait painting version in history, but I'm also thinking about the, being a grad student...and that history.

E Oh, like you have people telling you what to do all the time?

M Yeah, yeah. Oh just how um, I mean, even in...it's both my choice and your, your system, but somehow, that I am looking at this leaf, and um...

E has it fallen yet?

M no, the light has shifted though.

E when it falls, you can get out of the chair  
(laughter)

M ...it seems sturdy, but it has shifted. Um, yeah but just thinking about the relationship between grad student and teacher in studio visits...you know, and how often I am like, either walking around their studio...

E ...you enter their space.

M ...looking at what they have there, or, or its during kind of a formal critique where they've brought their work out...and i feel like I'm...asking questions...and however kind I am, in that version, it's still me asking questions...

E a little interrogatory...

M Right. Right and me like, am I into that? And *this* feels like, it's a little bit more like I'm...the..subject...

E You are 100% the subject.

(pause)

E so thank you.

M And I know that I am being recorded too, and I like, hate my voice. And I say umm to many times...

E Samesies. I know. It's horrible. Just horrible.



(fig. 12) Hilary for President By emily charlotte taibleson 2019

Mercer St. Hilary November 12th 2018 00:08:06

Part II: Drawing Hilary at her mother's apartment on Queen Anne on the evening after midterm elections. Hilary and I have been good friends (like sisters) since we were 11 years old. She is a second year resident in internal medicine at the University of Washington.

H: Hilary Zetlen, MD

E: emily charlotte taibleson

Janis: Hilary's mom (not pictured)

H: So we do these conferences, at lunch time, where we talk about a topic...and like, a different person leads it every day...

E: That's so structured! And..

H Yeah.. They're like...really serious about our learning.

E Wholesome!

E It's cute.

H Yeah, it's...

E I wish someone was that serious about my learning!

H It's HELLA cute. (laughs) No, it's good. It's really good.

E I do say cute in an inappropriate way...

H No, no, I think it is cute. Um, and I think it is, you know, valuable. And the topic, last week, because of the election week, was physicians in politics... you know?

E Oh! I'm going to a lecture, uh, Wednesday night that's called...Why Artists Should be Lawyers.

H OoooOoooh. That sounds really interesting.

E Similar but different.

H Is it by a lawyer or an artist?

E Both! It's actually, my lawyer's best friend from law school is coming from New York... Alfie Steiner...

(laughing)

E He's real, I swear! That's a real...jewish name.

H That's amazing

E I'm sure he's not the only Alfie Steiner..

H I mean, God, should we all be lawyers? I think there should be a like, Why Physicians Should Be Economists.

E OooOOo. Well. Or why physicians should learn business...

H Well. Fuck. Yeah. That's a product of the society in which we live, right? That doesn't have to be that way, that's just the system that we've chosen in the US that's-- completely -- doesn't -- work. But...

E What was the conversation you guys had?

H It was really interesting because like, I clearly have really strong opinions about the fact that like, Yes, while I understand that a lot of people didn't get into medicine to be politicians, it's like, the medical system that we have forces us, whether you like it or not, you have to have a political stance and an opinion to be a doctor. I think.

E Not everyone would agree with that though.

H I know. I know. And I think. My reason why I think this is true is that policy directly dictates the way that I do my job on a daily basis and on an individual patient to patient basis. The way people vote, the way people are taxed, and who is in office, directly effects, literally, like what medication I can give somebody.

E That's incredible.

H so like, you can't just say you're a-political when your ability to do your job to the best of your ability is, you know, influenced by politics.

Janis: That's so true.

H And...

E Well I think that teachers are in a similar...

H yeah. Yeah.

E To some degree.

H Yeah, I think so. So I think you have a duty to at least be like, politically aware, engaged, vote. Cause part of this conference was about how, physicians have comparatively lower voter turnout

E Really?

H Probably related to the fact that they're...

E That they can't get out of the office?

H yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I mean, how crazy is it that we don't get paid time off, off of work, to vote?

Janis: Do you think election day should be a national holiday?

H ...yea. (Laughs) I know it sounds simplistic, but like, a lot of places do that. By not, you're basically guaranteeing that anyone who can't afford to take off work isn't gonna vote. So like, that's not fair.

E In this state we have the um..

H Mail in, yeah...but that's not true like in, like in Georgia people were waiting in line for like six hours, you know?

E Which is insane...

H Yeah. So who's going to be disincentivized from doing that? People who lose money for every hour they're in line, right?

E ...and mothers.

Janis: In Peru it was like a paid holiday...

H Well in Peru it's like, well, this probably relates to a history of political unrest, cause there would be like, riots and shit, but, yeah, they don't sell alcohol.

E That day?

H Mhm. It's..two days? Or four days? It's a long chunk of time.

Janis: that's a great idea.

H Yeah, what happens is, every store has an alcohol sale, so everyone has these big parties. But! Then, everyone can go vote and they don't miss out on wages. Oh and then you get a penalty! You get a tax penalty if you don't vote.

## Installation Photos



(fig.13) facing the west wall of the gallery; installation by Sean Lockwood in the foreground. Photo by Mark Woods. June 2019

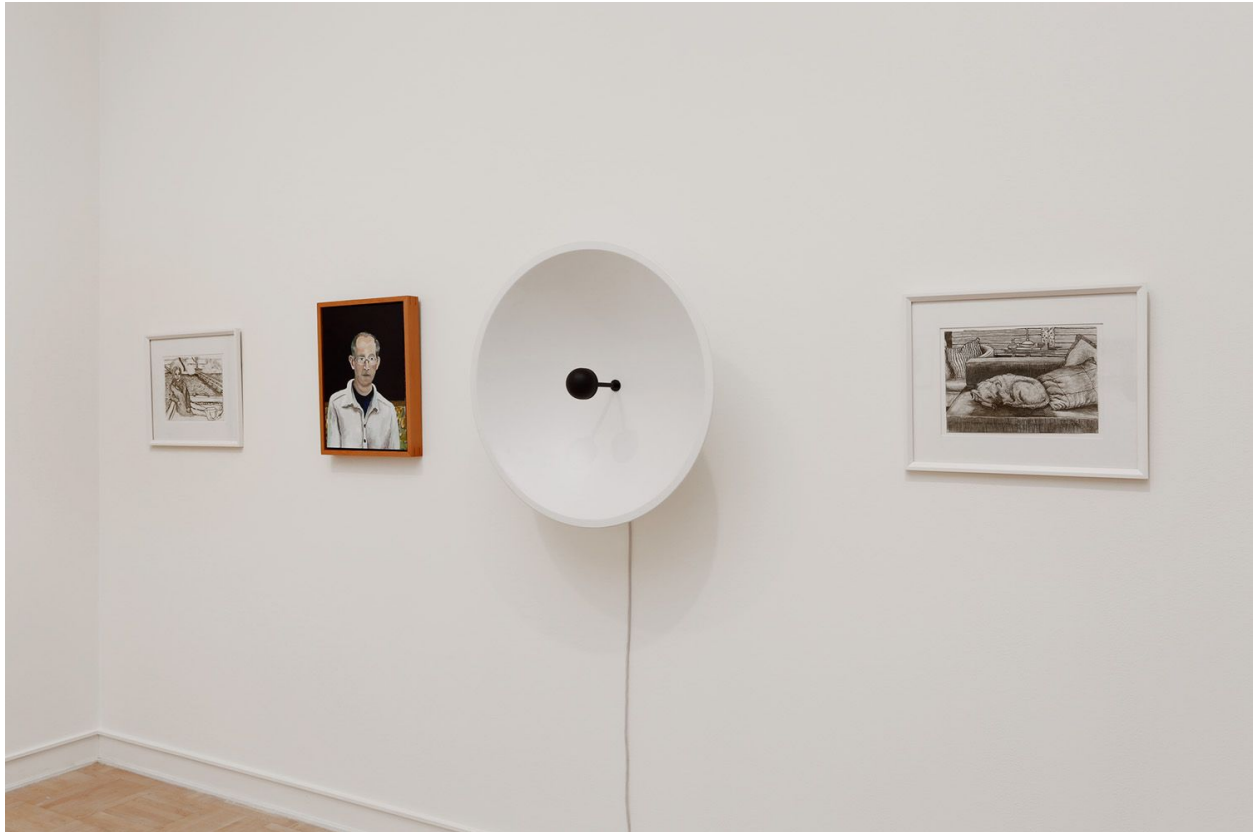
### Track List for Final Installation:

(Pictured in fig. 13 from right to left)

1. Portrait of my Dad 14:02
2. Portrait of the Artist's Mother on the T Dock 4:54
3. My Brother, Daniel 3:34
4. Christian 5:50
5. Alex Knitting 5:42
6. Yasmin & Eric 7:14
7. Sweet Katherine 5:47
8. Hilary for President 4:18
9. Magical Sam 5:04
10. Swaine 3:37
11. My Puppy Toast 0:19



(fig.14) South & west wall in the Henry Art Gallery. Photo by Mark Woods. June 2019



(fig.15) Northern wall of the Henry Art Gallery. Photo by Mark Woods. June 2019



(fig. 16) Western wall of the Henry Art Gallery (detail). Photo by Mark Woods. June 2019



(fig. 17) Facing NW in the Henry Art Gallery. Photo by Mark Woods. June 2019



(fig. 18) Facing SW in the Henry Art Gallery. Photo by Mark Woods. June 2019

## Conclusion/ What's Next:

The installation at the Henry Art Gallery represents one iteration of presenting this work. The installation at the Henry should not be considered the resolution of this research, but rather, the beginning. Further transcripts may be recorded. Certainly more portraits will be drawn. The pictures will be gifted to their subjects and live in their homes amongst family and guests in the city that we all live in. The portraits were framed durably, behind glass and in hand built wood joined frames for that reason.

Future recordings will be made with specialized microphones and more sensitive field recorders and will be placed strategically to create multi-channel stereoscopic soundscapes. Some recordings will be made in the landscape while drawing the landscape. Future recordings will be presented in their original long form durational format. Future portraits will tend to be of couples or of multiple figures with existing relationships and in landscapes. Future pictures may be made in any number of media and be of any scale. In any case, I am no master. My work has just begun.

“The road may be longer than my life.”

- PaulKlee

## **THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO POSED FOR ME:**

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Corinne Sebren  
Maia Veague  
Hilary Zetlen  
Janis Zetlen  
Joe Heffernan  
Dan Smith  
Sam Osborne  
Michael Swaine  
Eric Padget  
Yasmin Eldabradie  
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