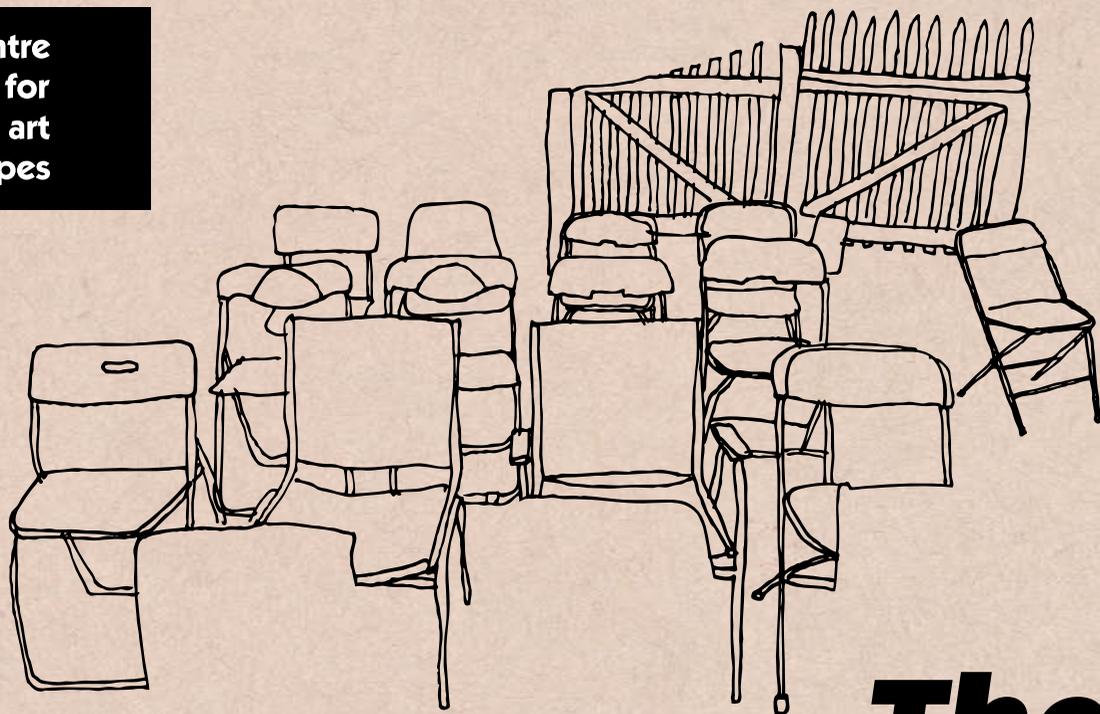


centre
for
art
tapes



The Fuller Terrace Lecture Series

Ella Tetrault & Bethany Riordan-Butterworth

Copyright © Centre for Art Tapes 2013

Editor: Mireille Bourgeois
Design and cover illustration: ALL CAPS Design
Publisher: Centre for Art Tapes

All Rights Reserved

Published by the Centre for Art Tapes in partnership with ALL CAPS Design

National Library of Canada Cataloguing in Publication

The Fuller Terrace Lecture Series: Growing Pains and the Internet
Text by writer/artists Bethany Riorden-Butterworth and Ella Tetrault. Text commissioned following a year-long residency, video lecture and artist talk hosted by the Centre for Art Tapes January-October 2012.

ISBN: 978-1-927340-03-5

Centre for Art Tapes
www.centreforarttapes.ca
1657 Barrington St., Suite 220, Halifax, NS, B3J 2A1
Phone: 902.422-6822
Fax: 902.422-6823
Email: cfat.operations@ns.sympatico.ca

The Centre for Art Tapes gratefully acknowledges the support of the Canada Council for the Arts, and the Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

GROWING PAINS AND THE INTERNET

The Fuller Terrace Lecture Series began in 2009 with a desire to share stories and experiences with members of our community. Lectures are held throughout the summer in the backyard of 2664 Fuller Terrace in Halifax, Nova Scotia. To date, we have hosted over one hundred speakers and produced twenty five lectures with topics including; the difficult subject of faith, love as a battlefield, personal geographies, health care/self care, the end, michael jackson, the light lecture, the green lecture, how to be an adult and many more. We host four speakers per evening each with 15 minutes to elaborate on the topic as they see fit, which can be intensely personal, fantastical or practical. Often speakers will put themselves on the line, opening up to the audience with tender and daring stories of their life. As a result of this, the lectures have grown in scope and popularity not only do the speakers come from far and wide, the audience has increased year after year beyond the capacity of the backyard. With this in mind, we began to talk of changes in the format

for the 2012 season. In early 2012, we were awarded a Centre for Art Tapes' Curatorial Residency and were tasked to find a way to maintain the exchange between speaking and listening in a digital format. To begin, a website was developed to archive audio and video lectures. We then curated an online lecture on the topic of Growing Pains and the Internet. Robbie MacGregor (Invisible Publishing; Halifax NS); Sam Love (Mess Hall; Chicago IL); and Eryn Foster and Ryan Suter (Sackville NB) each interpreted the topic and presented video lectures by proxy. For this essay, we would like to use this opportunity to speak about our first experience as curators and the research we have conducted around the act of listening and speaking as well as where we foresee these changes heading in the future. In 2012, having curated four seasons of the Fuller Terrace Lecture Series, we perceive a great need and desire to share and hear stories. In his 1936 essay, *The Storyteller*, Walter Benjamin warns of the death of storytelling due to its replacement with the information age. He forms a compelling and romantic argument for the importance of storytelling in our lives, stating that information only exists at a given moment and quickly loses relevance, while a story lives on and gains strength as it ages.



Eryn Foster and Ryan Suter, "The Outer Space of the Internet: A Conversation on Our Digital Universe"; Fuller Terrace Lecture Series; Sackville NB; 2012; Video Lecture.

Our intention has been to blur the lines between a more formal lecture format and the act of storytelling. The Lecture Series has always been a type of call and response, offering a diversity and playfulness different from traditional lectures. One fundamental realization for our collective has been that a good speaker is an honest speaker, someone who is willing to share their stories and experiences, failures and accomplishments as they are. Cavarero describes in *Relating narratives: storytelling and selfhood*, that no two lives are the same, which is why personal stories are so



Robbie MacGregor, “Deeper Magic from before the dawn of time”; Fuller Terrace Lecture Series; Halifax NS; 2012; Video Lecture

interesting to hear (Cavarero 2). We believe that the lectures exist because people want to share lived experiences and are looking to make sense of the world and their place in it. As strong as our conviction that there is a great need and desire for storytelling, we also hold a belief that we have an incredible audience. There is a feeling in the crowd when everyone is gathered to listen, a sense of optimism and openness. A key component to a great audience is what Fiumara refers to as “The



Samuel Love. “Form/Content/Then/Now/Tomorrow”; Fuller Terrace Lecture Series; Chicago IL; 2012; Video Lecture.

openness of listening.” She contends that the act of listening is also a creative process which belongs to the nature of language itself and this nature occupies no space of its own and requires no sort of physical territory (Fiumara, 51). In 2010, Brendan Dunlop gave a lecture entitled “My Mom” where he detailed his relationship with his mother who had passed away from cancer a few years before. This vulnerability pushes the boundaries of the speaker/audience relationship: the speaker challenges and



Fuller Terrace Lecture Series backyard view. Photograph by Heather B Watts, 2010.

bare all, while the audience arrives open to anything and offers overwhelming support. As the years progressed, we began to wonder how the relationship between the audience, speakers and ourselves would change without the physical location of our backyard on Fuller Terrace.

In our collaboration, we see The Fuller Terrace Lecture Series as an extension of our artistic practice situated in the field of Collaborative Art. The basis of the lecture series is to present

a number of topics for loose interpretation in an informal atmosphere. Like many of the key texts addressing collaborative art such as Suzanne Lacy's *Mapping the Terrain* and Grant Kester's *Conversation Pieces*, we also share a desire to focus our project on seeking out new and varied ways to communicate as a form of art and sought out experimental methods of producing knowledge (Kester, 90, Lind, 60). We find we increasingly share commonalities with the performance lecture, a take on the academic lecture format designed to integrate teaching as a form of art (Milder, 13). In Veronica Simmonds' lecture entitled "Fight for your right to relax" she made a sociohistorical argument for relaxing in our daily lives. Similarly, artist Adam O'Reilly performed a pseudo serious lecture on the history of green villains for *The Green Lecture* in 2010. In the winter of 2011, we hosted the *Light Lecture* at the Khyber Centre for the Arts, where Eleanor King assumed the role of a motivational speaker for her lecture "Live Life the Light Way! Clear Light Life System."

Often, the responses we imagine when we send out our call for submissions are endearingly different than the proposals we receive. It is not surprising then, that when we sent out our first

curatorial call for video lectures entitled Growing pains and the internet, we had envisioned a completely different set of replies. In “The Outer Space of the Internet: A Conversation on Our Digital Universe,” Eryn Foster and Ryan Suter compared the vastness of the the internet to outer space. We were thrilled with the unexpected perspective on viewing the internet as an expansive world latent with possibility. In fact, the CFAT residency was all about unfurling. For our curatorial residency, we focussed on the development of a website to function as both a digital platform for future lectures and an archive for the previous lectures. We wanted a website that allowed us to keep people informed on upcoming lectures as well as allow easy access to previous lectures. We decided that given our desire to form an archive, the best way to document the live lectures would be through video. Through this process, the idea of expanding our format to include prerecorded lectures that would exist solely on the website became possible. By curating our first set of video lectures, we not only changed the nature of our audience from an exclusively live audience, but also changed the way we see the lecture series developing in the future. It is bittersweet to be projecting the lecture series into cyberspace. We have formed a unique community of speakers and listeners and are anxious

about upsetting the balance between these elements. Moving out of the backyard of Fuller means that we need to reenvision the way that people can and will find us. This feels strange, but also allows us to shift our attention to working on the web. Although we have less control over the physical environment, we are able to connect, reconnect and reframe the lectures in new cities, provinces and countries.

The role of curators is new for us, one we hope to expand and gain confidence with. Through research and expanding our audience, we are keen to continue to create a name for the Fuller Terrace Lecture Series online. We introduced a lot of components during the 2012 season such as the digital archive and platform which allows us to reexamine our role in the Halifax community and expand the lecture series beyond our physical boundaries. Ideas include further training and writing, developing our website, building connections with other organizations and hosting “Satellite” lectures. Amidst the unknown our certainty is the importance of the exchange of stories.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Benjamin, Walter. The Storyteller http://slought.org/files/downloads/events/SF_1331-Benjamin.pdf

Cavarero, Adriana. *Relating narratives: storytelling and selfhood*. London: Routledge, 2000. Print.

Fiumara, Gemma. *The other side of language: a philosophy of listening*. London: Routledge, 1990.

Kester, Grant H.. *Conversation pieces: community and communication in modern art*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004

Lind, Maria. "Complications." *Public 39* (2009): 5372. York University Library. Web. 15 Oct. 2012. <<http://pi.library.yorku.ca>>.

Lind, Maria. *The Collaborative Turn*. <http://doublesession.net/indexhibitv070e/files/lindthecollaborativeturn.pdf>

Milder, Patricia. *Teaching as art*. http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1162/PAJJ_a_00019

ELLA TETRAULT AND BETHANY RIORDAN-BUTTERWORTH

are two artists heavily involved in the Halifax community. They both seek to engage and question the public through their art practice, and seek out personal interactions as a way of exploring a community. Ella is currently completing an MFA in Public Art and New Artistic Strategies at the Bauhaus University in Weimar, Germany. She has a background in participatory theatre and youth work. Bethany is a graduate of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. She has experience coordinating numerous events throughout the city, working with organizations such as Turnstile Pottery Cooperative, the George Dixon Center, the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia and the Center For Art Tapes.

THE CENTRE FOR ART TAPES' LOCAL CURATORIAL RESIDENCY

is a year-long residency and mentorship program for emerging curators interested in developing an exciting and engaging media art presentation. All electronic and new media genres are considered and CFAT encourages research and exhibition proposals that critically engage with contemporary discourse of media arts.

centre
for
art
tapes



Canada Council
for the Arts Conseil des Arts
du Canada


NOVA SCOTIA
Communities, Culture and Heritage

ALL CAPS DESIGN