

Event Transcript

May 19, 2020 – Nicolás Dumit Estevéz Raful Espejo, Anna Recasens, and Laia Solé: *On Art and Friendship*

Sara Reisman: Welcome everyone to on Art and Friendship. This is a collaborative project by Nicolás Dumit Estevéz Raful Espejo, Anna Recasens, and Laia Solé. My name is Sara Reisman. I'm the Executive and Artistic Director of the Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation.

Normally, we would host you at The 8th Floor in person, but today and until further notice we'll be meeting here for our public programs focused on social justice themes. Tonight's program is the first of *Performance-in-Place*, a newly launched virtual performance series, which complies with current social distancing safety guidelines.

These virtual commissions will highlight the artistic potentials inherent in our current reality, reflecting the adaptability of artists, whose practices are evolving in response to isolation and restricted mobility being experienced across the world. This series will feature new performances and revisit past works by artists, choreographers, writers and others, including LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs, Alice Sheppard, Aliza Shvarts, who's in the audience, Eileen Myles, Maria Hupfield, Baseera Kahn and others. Every three weeks on Tuesdays like tonight we'll host a performance which will then be archived on our websites and social media channels for further distribution.

In addition to performance and place the Rubin Foundation will host monthly talks. Next week, May 28th we'll host, "Places of Isolation and Healing; A conversation between Edgar Heap of Birds and Douglas Miles." Please visit The 8th Floor's website, www.the8thfloor.org for updated information on events.

In thinking about how we might begin performance and place, the team at The 8th Floor, George Bolster, William Furio and Anjuli Nanda, we all initially thought of a performance that Nicolás has performed back in 2017. It was a hands on, one-on-one healing ritual at The 8th Floor and it was part of a program to close the exhibition that was on at the time called *Enacting Stillness*.

When we approached Nicolás about that revisiting that performance he mentioned that he was developing a work with Anna Recasens and Laia Solé based on their remote collaboration between the Bronx, Pais de La Frontera and Barcelona. This began before the global pandemic and becomes more poignant as the duration of our collective isolation remains unknown. So Nicolás and the Bronx, Anna and Pais de La Frontera and

Laia in Barcelona have been communicating since February 2020 between the US and Europe through WhatsApp making visible some of the aspects of art practices that do not usually translate as art within the exhibition space, friendship and comradery.

All three artists share common denominators, they met in Catalonia, they've worked in communities and they're interested in art that thrives within the day to day. Similarly they've focused on shaping experiences and situations that defy art as a competitive field and instead have labored within a context of partnership and familiar relationships where the artistic and the personal mingle and nurture one another.

Before we start I should formally introduce Nicolás. Nicolás Dumit Estevez Rafúl Espejo treads an elusive path the manifests itself performatively through creative experiences that he unfolds within the quotidian. He's exhibited and performed at Madrid, Abierto Arco, the Ninth of Anabienal, Proforma '05 and '07, Prague Quadrennial, Ponta Viedra, Biennial, Queens Museum MoMa, Printed Matter, PS 122, Hemispheric Institute of Performance Art and Politics, Princeton University, Anthology Film Archives, El Museo del Barrio, Center for Book Arts, Longwood Art Gallery, Bronx Council on the Arts, the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, Franklin Furnace, and Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. Estevez Rafúl Espejo has received mentorship in art in everyday life from Linda Marry Montano who some of you may know as a historic figure in the performance art field.

Residencies attended include PS1 MoMa, and the MacDowell Colony. Estevez Rafúl Espejo holds an MFA from Tyler School of Art, Temple University in Philadelphia where he studied with Coco Fusco and a Masters from Union Theological Seminary in the city of New York.

Born in Santiago de los Treinta Caballeros in the Dominican Republic, in 2011 Estevez Rafúl Espejo was baptized as a Bronxite, a citizen of the Bronx, in the Bronx River. If you want to read more about his work you can look at www.elmuseo.org/office-hours.

I'm now going to do this more conversationally, I first came across your work Nicolás when you had a solo exhibition at Longwood Art Gallery curated by our friend Edwin Ramoran. Hi Edwin!

There I have the memory of you sewing a flag, I don't think it was quite the American Flag, it was kind of a performative interpretation of Betsy Ross. A year or two later you were a part of Jamaica Flux, a neighborhood wide exhibition in Jamaica Queens. I was part of a team of curators who helped site artworks throughout the neighborhood as well as in the gallery.

The criteria for the public artworks, many of them time based and performative, was that they highlight the relationships between art and commerce and art and everyday life.

You created a work called *Help Offered* which has been a pointed reference for me ever since. I'm going to quickly show the poster for *Help Offered* for everybody to see a little bit about this.

Can everyone see it? The thing about this piece, in the framework of Jamaica Flux, and I won't linger too long on this, Nicolás was one of 25 artists who were commissioned to make artwork that took place along Jamaica Avenue in shops, storefronts, shopping malls and some serve local businesses and what you can see here is he offered this free labor to small businesses, hair salons, dentists offices, bridal shops, diners, soups kitchens and other places. What was strange about the performance was that the local businesses couldn't receive the offering initially, it took time for them to receive the offering. The idea that he would come and work for a day for free for them was confusing.

I don't know if you would agree Nicolás but that's what I remember. I welcome you to comment on this. He later staged the piece in a Kitchen in Ontario and that was on a larger scale unfolding of the piece where he was sited in different businesses. Here you can see him in a salon. What I think is interesting in revisiting this piece now is that we're in a time when people are being paid not to work. A lot of people can't work and there are programs to be paid and then there are people who are unemployed and then there are many people who are a part of mutual aid societies that are forming in cities all over the country and around the world.

To me there's something poignant about this question of Help Offered and how we think about that now. So I wondered, just to start the conversation Nicolás if you had any thoughts about restaging this now? If you would do that what it would mean, how it would register differently? And if you want to add anything beyond what little I've said about the piece.

Nicolás Dumit E...: Just very briefly, I feel that that piece was key to my development as a creative person and I feel that I keep reenacting that piece. Maybe recanting is not the right word.

Sara Reisman: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Nicolás Dumit E...: I keep going back, revisiting that piece and I don't want to take too long but I was recently living in Michigan and the intention of my work there was to meet people in a small town called Albion to hear their voices, record their voices and to hear what that town was about. I ended up cooking a Caribbean meal for the Russian Orthodox church. The

community came and we cooked together and then we had fried bread things, rice and beans and shredded cabbage and [inaudible], so in a way that was a revisiting of that piece. I also ended up cooking, making sweet tamales in a Mexican restraint in Albion as well, so there you go.

Sara Reisman: It would be timely now, that's the point I think. That for me began our long term friendship that is really centered on your art, on your art practice and many of the nuances that come out of that. So maybe we could switch gears and focus on the project at hand *On Art and Friendship*. How did it begin? We've mentioned that it was through these kinds of exchanges with Anna and Laia but was there a premise or a call you were responding to? Was it for a show?

Nicolás Dumit E...: Yes, is there any way we can go back to the regular screen so I can see anyone?

Sara Reisman: Yeah.

Nicolás Dumit E...: Yes, that's a great question Sara. [inaudible] maybe a minute or so, I would like everyone who wants to, to just bring your hands up, thanks you everyone for being here, bring your hands up just very gently and let's start with your heart area. You can even close your eyes if you want to and just tap gently... and very slowly stop and put your hands on your lap. Observe feelings and sensations and whenever you're ready you can open your eyes very gently and return to the screen.

Thank you Sara, I wanted to do that because I feel that nowadays so many of us are living with so many trapped emotions and I wanted to do a little bit of drumming on the heart and I also feel that this is such a heart to heart conversation. What we think about art, what we think about scholarship. Many of us tend to stay here at this level, so when I envision having this conversation with you Sara, I imagine myself speaking from the heart and also listening from the heart. It is almost as if my mouth were here but also as if my ears were here too. Personally I want to come down from here down to here and see what happens.

You were asking me about when this piece came about. It was born in Michigan, I was living in Michigan in September, October, November and part of December as I said before, in a small city called Albion which is maybe an hour and a half from Detroit, an amazing place. Little did I know that Albion was the [inaudible] multicultural relationships, so when I went there, long story short, I imagined that I was going to an old European-American city and I was very surprised to find that that was not the case and that Albion has so many labels.

While I was in Albion, Hank Gelgio, who is a friend of Sara and also a friend of mine, who was also involved in Jamaica Flux, invited me to propose some work for an exhibition that he was curating. I might be mispronouncing the title of the show, I think it's called *Pumesh*, or Pumesh, Pumesh probably. The whole premise of the show was about art as collaboration so I type a paragraph and immediately thought of Laia and Anna and how the three of us could come together to really nurture this idea and I'm very happy that I did.

Sara Reisman: I'm happy you did too.

Nicolás Dumit E...: Thank you Anna and Laia.

Sara Reisman: Yeah. Should we introduce Laia and Anna more formally or do you want to do that Nicolás, before we get into some questions?

Nicolás Dumit E...: Yes, I think that's important. So I'm going to introduce Anna Recasen. Anna, if you can wave at us. Anna is in [inaudible] and I haven't been there, Anna and I met in Catalonia in a small town called Kalab which is maybe an hour away from Barcelona. We have so many stories about Kalab and also another town near Barcelona called Albio and the stories involve cooking and making things together as friends and also as creators. I'm so happy that you're here Anna.

I met Laia in another town Catalonia called Vic, a very fancy place and we were both at a congress that a friend of Anna and Laia organized, his name is Ramon Paramon and he is one of the leading figures, perhaps the leading figure of what would be in Europe socially engaged art, although I don't think it's called that, I don't think Ramon had a name for it. It's just something that would be and the name keeps changing. So I met Anna and Laia through Ramon in Catalonia and then Laia reconnected in New York City. Thank you Laia.

Laia Solé: Thank you Nicolás.

Sara Reisman: I guess I wanted to ask the three of you, can I pose a question to the three of you? Talking about our friendship, to me what feels integral to this is collaboration and I wanted to pose to you three and maybe it's for the rest of the group to think about, what are the criteria for collaboration? What's key to collaboration? I don't want to put it in terms of success, like what is successful collaboration but what are the aspects of collaboration that make it meaningful for you? I don't know who wants to answer first but... you can take it.

Nicolás Dumit E...: Laia or Anna, do you want to go? You don't have to.

Anna Recasens: Collaboration I think is many things and for me the success of the collaboration is that we find paths together, we're going to be sometimes in the same one but we can [inaudible] and then told again and then we can go to another path and then we share what we see and I think it's that movement, the freedom that you can do things together but also not together. If you ever want to find the path you need to converse and I think for me that's very important in collaboration. There's not submission, that's not a goal, you just keep going with the flow.

Laia Solé: What I like about collaboration is that while working with Nicolás and with Anna I'm drawn to areas where I'm not confident, where I'm really out of my comfort zone and that's something that I really appreciate because that's where I really learn and I really struggle and this is one of the aspects that Nicolás talked about while he refers to friendship. Friendship makes you grow gray hair for example, struggle I think is important, it's important in collaboration. They bring me farther, I grow as an artist, I grow as a human being and also at the same time because I'm drawn to areas that I'm not really confident with, there's also this sense of desire or curiosity involved and I think that for me this is a driving force in an artistic process, there must be some kind of difficulties, the kind of struggle that awakens curiosity and wakens the need to explore and to keep moving.

Nicolás Dumit E...: Yes. If I could say something, that's great. I feel like collaboration is special in the arts, it really tests our patience, they test so many things and they can actually end a friendship and I've seen that happen with some of my mentors with even some older people who through a collaboration they ended up not talking to one another. In some cases it has brought people together and I don't want to say the trick, what would be the word? Let me use the trick for now, the trick is to really stay present and to be able to withstand the changes in the weather pretty much like with any other relationship.

I feel that maybe this is a personal and biased opinion, much more than before, and again this is very personal, people tend to run away when something gets complicated in a relationship. Of course we don't want to stay in an abusive relationship but I've seen how when people stay and they talk to one another and they sort things out, there's a great opportunity for growth there and it's not always pretty, it's not always beautiful. Sometimes it's actually painful.

Sara Reisman: How do you think this changes when you're working from a distance? Or how does distance affect the collaborative mode? I'm thinking that in a time of pandemic we don't have the kind of mobility that we're used to, so maybe Laia, Anna and Nicolás, at some point you would be meeting in person. There might have been some eventual convening or congregation

where you would get together and be in the same space. Does the fact that you don't know when that'll happen or it may not happen, does that change the quality of this communication from afar? And maybe if you have any thoughts about how you make that work best I'd be interested. I think we're all doing it to some degree right.

Nicolás Dumit E...: Right.

Sara Reisman: Yeah.

Laia Solé: I don't know, my feeling is that if we were working together in the same space there's a reciprocity, we can work together and you have more information, you have a feedback whereas right now with any artistic process there's a [inaudible] of unanswered things and also working with Anna and Nicolás, this is something that I've learned, to embrace chance and uncertainty, but working with this distance I think that it distracts us a little bit more, this idea of uncertainty because there's time involved. We initiate something and maybe the answer and the feedback is going to come a few hours later or maybe a few days later and it's going to be shaped by the situation which we are on that day.

Sara Reisman: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Nicolás Dumit E...: The interesting thing is that this work was conceived before the pandemic so there was something in the air. I feel that we were sensing what's coming so it worked pretty well in that regard and I'm referring to the fact that we didn't need to be close to one another. In fact this work is at its best when we are away from each other and we communicate from a distance, but again it was interesting that this was conceived maybe as the pandemic was starting to evolve and become public.

Anna Recasens: There is something about the distance, we started before all of this and this social distancing thing, in some way and that could be year in some other [inaudible], we were looking into a way to meet but to meet at a distance. This has been cooking for some time like, "Let's see how we can, how we could, blah, blah, blah," and then finally we just thought on starting something, start the action, being [inaudible] and in some way restoring something, this idea of response, some day we talk about the letter, the letter that he talks from the heart, not from some lines from the studio, form the matter, it's not from other things.

Once we start to use the technology I think that that correspondence became something different, a different narrative, a narrative that has to do with the listening and has to do also with the oral themes to pass each other some knowledge through the voice and to listen in a kind of more ancestral way. That's something that I know we're still not thinking about

maybe and we are working with the things we are doing but for me forming that kind of [inaudible] because we are using the listening and that for me is very important and again a challenge because normally I don't use the audio so it's been very important listening and the distance gives us that possibility.

Sara Reisman: One of the things that comes up in the video, and I think we should show a clip soon because there's a video project that this is part of or is connected to this collaboration, one of the three of you mentions the idea of local sensitivities and I think it's interesting, you're in three different spaces, three different locals, how do the local sensitivities figure into collaboration, communication, art and friendship.

Nicolás Dumit E...: I think it was Laia that brought the term local intensities so maybe she should go over this.

Laia Solé: Local intensities. I think that it comes back to this idea that I was talking about at the beginning, my sense is that when I think about that moment, we started this work together and when you work with Nicolás you mark yourself into something, you don't know where it's going to lead. That's part of the work.

As I reflect upon it I think that at the beginning, to do a work about friendship, to me it was something shapeless, something that had to do more with the intensities of each one and the situation which they were living in and they were local and they would relate to each other through them, through the net.

And they were intensities because there was not a room where it was like, "Okay I'm going to record the message and you're going to be responding," or "I'm going to send a picture," there were no rules, we started in a very spontaneous way and that is also how it is evolving at the moment. So that's why it was kind of like fireworks, suddenly there's one idea that sparks from Nicolás, another from Anna and suddenly the direction of the work evolves and changes into something else.

Sara Reisman: It's also interesting to think about the local becoming intensified because of the separation and distance right? Did anyone else want to comment on that?

Anna Recasens: I just want to comment that we kind of are a part of similar conceptions of art. Not maybe sometimes that we do it, but yes in the conception of art leading life. So what we set this and we know this about each other, I think we do the most with the small details. I think we kind of stop talking about how we're a part of the arts but then we start to talk about the future,

about the [inaudible], about the [inaudible] or about flowers for example or our last walk because it's all a part of the same.

So I feel that we don't need to be constrained by a talk that needs to have a premise or something, not even to say something. You don't need to feel brilliant, I can pick up my phone and in the morning I just say, "Look at the window, the birds in the window," I don't need to justify that because I feel that there is that flow. But at the same time we know that something [inaudible] from there and I think this is more [inaudible], there's more things in everyday life that are a part of that intensity, that whatever ends, it takes a shape at some point from there.

Sara Reisman: That sounds more like an organic process.

Anna Recasens: Yeah, something like that.

Nicolás Dumit E...: Yes, it does seem very organic and it's interesting how we went from flowers to trees to books and to graffiti and mannequins, so it goes on and on and on. All of this [inaudible] that can surface from these conversations, from cave paintings, we talked about letters and I brought that up with WhatsApp as the equivalent of what was a letter in the past and this idea of a culture of images as opposed to a culture of writing and how the image is so prevalent now days that it's actually supplanting writing and how that goes back. It's almost like a snake biting its own tail, that goes back to the cave paintings.

Sara Reisman: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Right. Should we show the first clip of the video? And just maybe to explain to everybody, the video will be available after for full viewing and we're gonna show two clips, one now if that's okay.

Nicolás Dumit E...: Yeah, of course.

Sara Reisman: So it's a three minute clip and then we're going to show one later towards the end.

Nicolás Dumit E...: Yes, so bear with me, I'm going to share my screen, it's going to take me a minute or so.

Speaker 5: David, why are you so dark? Put some light so we can see your beautiful face?

Nicolás Dumit E...: I cannot see what you are seeing so let me know what you see, if you all see the video?

Anna Recasens: We do.

- Nicolás Dumit E...: You see the video, okay.
- We're talking about friendship and for me the friendships that I have valued, not all the time, are those that have given me gray hair, [inaudible] hair. The friendships that have been difficult, the friendships that have been on the verge of being terminated, of being ended but somehow reemerged.
- Anna Recasens: I have [inaudible] here, I have three and just thought you might want them. Normally in the first hours of the morning I have a complete symphony about that.
- Laia Solé: I'm holding a [inaudible] in my hand, I don't know if you can listen for the sound of the water, the sound of far away lands and my question is how would an art that is grown out of friendship and collaboration look like?
- Speaker 6: Thinking of New York, all I remember of my memories of Nicolás in New York is that you would go anywhere in a neighborhood, in another neighborhood, Midtown, Queens, Jamaican Queens, the Bronx, anywhere but he would always bring something to eat and he would always take it out from his back as a surprise.
- Speaker 7: [foreign language]
- Speaker 8: [foreign language]
- Nicolás Dumit E...: The meals happened, conversations took place and art showed up.
- Speaker 7: [foreign language]
- Speaker 8: [foreign language]
- Speaker 9: [inaudible] general situation of these global fighters.
- Speaker 10: Laia, Anna, Nicolás, thank you for your images. I agree with Anna that images are like fragments of time and space and because of that they allow us to travel in a moment right now where we cannot move easily from home because of confinement.
- Speaker 7: [foreign language]
- Sara Reisman: Thank you for that, I think that gives a sense of what the collaboration looks like. I guess the question now is, we had thought that we could open this up to questions, several people are invited to share about a meaningful friendship in their lives, so the first part would be the questions for the artists or for anybody in the group, we are here. How do we do this Liam?

Oh, you have to unmute. Do people just chime in or do they need to private...

Liam: I think it's a nice enough group that people can just chime in for sure.

Sara Reisman: Nice enough. It's a great group. I mean I guess if there are thoughts about collaboration at this time that people are doing together or separately from afar... Maureen, yeah? Maureen I see you're talking. I can't unmute her.

Maureen: I'll unmute myself.

Sara Reisman: Okay, great.

Maureen: I'm collaborating without any kind of endgame, with Tia Peters who is the executive director of the Seventh Generation Fund for Indigenous Peoples and she had invited me to a few meetings for thriving woman in regards to issues that indigenous women around the world have outside the UN, a couple times this spring and a couple times last year in the spring. She's been introducing me to some of her board members and on Facebook one word says and another word says and the words kind of collaborate, it is very fluid.

I think like Nicolás said, or Anna said, there's a fluidity that surfaces and it has nothing to do with control or even an ultimate intention but the collaboration, the words, the presence of individuals connecting creates something and it is invisible until you start putting labels on it. There's a few people on the Hopi reservation that invited me to consider a project so that's at a point where I'm looking for board members to formalize this. Then there's parts of my past and the different avenues of creativity that I explored in depth and recognition for different aspects of that are returning and I'm looking at that more as a way to do a profit to maybe sell things at some point and give the whole or 50 percent of the proceeds that actually supports the project.

It's all happening from the bottom up, there's not budget, I've been a volunteer for a number of years. I was talking to my nephew about this, I've watched him grow, he's watched me grow and all of the sudden, we're having this adult conversation on Sunday morning about projects and distance and how do we learn to trust people. There's that vibe, like when you're at the Eighth Floor there's a vibe, you're greeted, you see the artists work and you can feel it and you trust that curiosity, conversations lead through the art as the vehicle for connecting. I don't know what part of the might make sense to someone.

Sara Reisman: I have two questions that have come in. One is from Edwin Ramoran, he wanted to ask the panel if you've ever... how did it go? If you've ever

worked with an enemy that then became a collaboration? You can say yes, no and/or elaborate if you'd like. Was there anyone you ever worked with who you didn't see as an ally? Edwin says you can define enemy any way you'd like.

Nicolás Dumit E...: I could go.

Sara Reisman: Yeah.

Nicolás Dumit E...: Maybe he wasn't an enemy, maybe as I was talking about before, a problem, a challenge. I can think of several situations, one involving copyrights and struggling with copyrights for over a year with another artist who couldn't understand that this was a shared situation and almost dissolving that friendship and really being torn about what was evolving out of this really difficult conversation about who owns the piece and who's piece this is. Eventually everything got solved but really that situation brought a lot of distress I would imagine to both of us. That was maybe 10 years ago.

Another situation was when I was really mean to another artist, a person with whom I collaborated and this person actually is not here anymore, that person died and we remained very close friends because I feel that for that person friendship was above anything else, so I'm glad that this person looked at that situation from that perspective. As I grow older and as I see things from a different angle, I question myself, what is the most important thing at this moment? And in the midst of these things that we are creating is it about friendship, is it about art, is it about both?

I recall a supervisor of mine telling me privately that she had a very difficult time not being able to be friends with those with whom she worked. She said, "I know that I can have a professional relationship and that sometimes that is what we need to have but I have to be friends with those with whom I work and by friends it doesn't mean asking favors or doing things that aren't appropriate professionally but friends like being able to really get close to that person and being able to be with that person," and that really resonated with me.

Anna Recasens: I think that [inaudible].

Laia Solé: [inaudible].

Anna Recasens: Did you have something to say?

Laia Solé: No, no I was thinking that I started collaborating 13 years ago or something like that, with different artists and also with different people from different fields of knowledge but my perspective is that, from the

years I've learned to collaborate. Sometimes it's not evident that you're working with your enemy or whatever but the most difficult part is when you start working with a friend or an artist that you want to work with and then you struggle throughout the process.

But I think that through all of these years I've learned a lot and there's one anthropologist from [inaudible] which is where we met with Nicolás and with Anna who are working together in a project and he said, "Laia, when we work together, [foreign language], you have to be less in order to be more." So in a way, you put aside your ego and that's actual from my experience allows me to do things that are richer, that are crazier, that are far more interesting than if I was doing that alone. There's a component of learning how to collaborate with other people.

Sara Reisman: I like what you're saying about how sometimes you have to learn to be less for more to happen. Maybe it's about stepping back so that others can come forward, in terms of listening, active listening. Anna did you want to say anything?

Anna Recasens: Yeah, I'm kind of going down the same line of thinking. From my experience, sometimes you end up having a good collaboration even with people that may be outside of that environment, you don't share much things but sometimes there's something in common and that common base that you have in other people, you are working in that specific environment and that's important. You like even your personal thing and you can have a brilliant collaboration.

A couple of times in many years I needed just to sit down with someone and say, "Here we don't work probably, but here we are fine so we are going to decide what to do," and we decided [inaudible] work anymore. I think the collaboration is something that's mutual and you need to work especially on listening and knowing how to listen and listen to yourself and that step back sometimes is necessary. At the end of the day you feel okay, you can better not miss people, I don't miss work or opportunities but I can miss people very much.

Nicolás Dumit E...: If I can add something to that, I remember my friend who is also an artist, Mary King, talking about another artist and I don't recall his name, he said one of the things that he regretted was not being kinder in life. So when I think about that collaboration with that friend with whom I was so mean, because I feel like I was the one who was one who was invited to [inaudible], not that person, and I told that person, I said, "What's more important at the end of the day for me as a person, as a creator, to be kinder or to claim the right to be the one who was invited?"

Sara Reisman: I have some questions actually from our audience, I'm going to switch the order. Elana Herzog wrote, talking about issues of sustainability, she says, "Issues of sustainability seem relevant here, you-" and she's directing this to the panel, "you said that your project predates the pandemic, but it seems to respond to the multiple disperse and globalization of our lives and the arts. We took travel for granted even though it's so expensive and so environmentally damaging. Do you think we need to change-" there's something missing from this, but what I see is, "Do you think we need to change global practices for the sake of sustainability?" Did I get that right?

Elana Herzog: That sounds good.

Sara Reisman: Yeah, so it's a quote. It was changed, it was missing. So how do we think about our global practices in the context of sustainability? That's for you Nicolás, Anna, Laia. And if others want to comment.

Anna Recasens: Personally I'm reluctant to go or to go far away if it's not justified, if there's not other possibilities. Many of my work is really in myself, I need to be in a place, I try to be there for a while so I try to be in that place. So it that's a possibility to do that and I can reach place that probably, so I'm going to make myself meaningful and useful, then I move back. I try to do the things as much as possible, if I can, in a proximity, in a way I can reach them without out much cost.

If I could go walking to the places that would be better. I don't like planes and stuff like that but I think finding ways to work and to communicate and to share, I think it's a must.

Sara Reisman: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Nicolás Dumit E...: I think there's so much collaboration associated with the arts, especially the artists who make it to the top. If we look at the arts as a pyramid, not everybody makes it to the little triangle to the top, if we look at it that way. There's so much connection from that little triangle at the top and traveling from biennial to biennial, and if anything, what this is teaching us is that, and I don't mean to sound pessimistic, the world will not be the same, we will not be returning to the same world and if we do I think we are fools.

I think this is an opportunity to re-envision what we have been doing, it doesn't mean that we're going to stop traveling altogether and all of that but personally I see my home as a museum, I see my kitchen as an art space and I think that that's what drew me to Anna and to Laia, there's no separation between art and the day to day.

In fact, I have state before that without life, there's no art. There's only life and when we take the context of life we can create art.

Anna Recasens: Totally agree.

Sara Reisman: I have another question. Are you ready for that? That came from Olivia Georgia. Nicolás, Anna and Laia, can you tell us what the most surprising outcome that you experienced in this or other collaborations?

Nicolás Dumit E...: Sorry, can you repeat that Sara? I got distracted a by a chat.

Sara Reisman: Olivia Georgia asks, "Can you Nicolás, Anna and Laia tell us what is the most surprising outcome you've experienced in this or other collaborations?"

Nicolás Dumit E...: Did you want to go Laia and Anna? Or I can go?

Sara Reisman: Personally I'm not a person to have a vision of, "Oh this needs to end like that, or needs to [inaudible] or we need to do these things we want to do, blah, blah, blah," no. I think for me, the day to day, the things about how we are growing. They think fast and as Laia was telling me before, I'm going out of my comfort zone. In other moments I think collaboration take you to different paths and you have to try [inaudible] in a way. I think you're surprised sometimes with yourself, not an outcome that you say, "Oh gosh, I [inaudible] and then that," no, no, no. The outcomes sometimes are very close. You find a very, very fine thread but with that you can go and I think that's the path you...

Laia Solé: To me the surprise comes afterwards when I reflect upon what we have been doing in this project but also in other works. I'm surprised by how the process evolved, I'm also surprised by the results and it varies according to the kind of works. For example, I was involved in 2013 in one in Mexico with [inaudible] and if I think of what we did it's unbelievable. We were acting upon the public space and inventing things that in one month that if you had planned that in advance you would have never done, you would have never done that and of course not alone.

With this work also, as we were visiting the audios... for example, in my last message I'm talking about botanicals and people who know me know I'm not precisely interested in botanicals but that's only because of Nicolás and Anna and because of this willingness to be open and accepting that this will lead you to really strange situations.

Nicolás Dumit E...: I wanted to mention that some of the surprises for me have come from my friend and mentor of many years, Linda Mary Montano and of course from people like Laia and Anna because of the way they work. Linda never fails to surprise me in a good way, and I hope this is okay Linda to say. We were working on something and Linda said to me, "Let's be angels," and I thought that that was the greatest thing, that was the

proposal, for us to be angels. That is one of the things that keeps me coming back to collaboration and I feel that my work is so much more than even before. It has always been about partnerships and collaboration, either with organizations or with people or with cooks or with people cleaning, everybody. It's so much about this idea of interbeing, of being in connection with others. I can't see myself working in complete isolation, so I love this idea and this concept of surprise and the places where collaboration take me.

Finally I want to say that I don't want to divide aesthetics by US aesthetics and by European aesthetics but I have spent a lot of time working with Europe, especially in Catalonia where things are very slow, in a good way. There's no rush and it's all different from the US and from New York City where things are always happening fast. There you can do an artwork, engage in an experience that lasts seven years and it's still open and that's okay in that context. So in that sense I feel that for me personally, Laia and Anna this is like going back to Catalonia, going back to Kalab and Vic and all those places that I love so much. Thank you.

Sara Reisman: Should we show the second clip and then if people want to share before we close? What do you think Nicolás?

Nicolás Dumit E...: I don't know if you agree Laia and Anna, I think it would be great to hear from people about meaningful connections and if we can be brief, maybe to give five or six people the opportunity to talk about really meaningful connections in their life that relate to the creative field if possible. Then at the end I want to invite everyone to put up a [inaudible] together, don't worry if you don't dance, it's going to be great people.

Sara Reisman: I'm ready.

Nicolás Dumit E...: So maybe five people? Maybe a minute and a half per person, something like that.

Sara Reisman: I mean I'm looking at this group of people and I've collaborated with a lot of people here.

Nicolás Dumit E...: If you want to raise your hand there's a hand raising...

Sara Reisman: Yes, Lulu Lola's raising her hand. I'll unmute.

Lulu Lola: Can you? Yeah. Thinking of you Nicolás and how by fate I met you through your friend Maria Lowes, spontaneously how I met her through a chance and then I met you and it was like 2001, 2002 and we collaborated on [inaudible] commuter project on 14th Street and it was just by fate and chance which I love.

Nicolás Dumit E...: And you made cookies at El Museo de Barrio, we turned the kitchen into a gallery and we baked cookies.

Lulu Lola: That's right, we did that. We were sharing food and I love that very much, that we did that together in my neighborhood. Thank you.

Nicolás Dumit E...: Thank you. Silences are great.

Speaker 15: Does everyone know that just by hovering over yourself you can unmute yourself if anyone wants to spontaneously say something.

Sara Reisman: Yeah.

Reggie: Hi. Thanks. I thought I would just spontaneously say something thanks to George's suggestion. Hello Nicolás, so nice to see you and thank you Laia and Anna for this wonderful talk. I'm sitting here just taking it all in and thinking about the many years of collaboration in times past, Sara being also one of the wonderful people I had the fortune of doing that with and it's almost like there's so much to say. I think that's why there's probably silence, everyone's ruminating.

There's a couple of things that come to mind about the meaningfulness of it that you've mentioned and one is, just as someone had said now, this idea of chance and that interruption of time as we normally experience it. I think some of us might have had this kind of experience where you collaborate in a situation, in a public space, you have the opportunity to respond to a chance occurrence and I'm just sitting here wondering what that would look like in a digital space such as this one. Beyond the hack, what would intervention look like beyond the typical digital technological intervention?

Maybe what's so interesting is that it's all chance at this point. We're all just floating in an open chance situation in which it's very hard to plan, it's very hard to carve out time exactly, it's very hard to shape it. It's almost like where is chance in all of this? I'm just putting that out there.

The other quick notion about collaboration, I think about when you collaborate with different people, I think it brings out different parts of yourself in a way so that I've found that my own style or my own approach has changed depending on the people I'm collaborating with or the person I'm collaborating with, and I don't know if that's just me being mutable. I like this constant negotiation where I feel very porous and that person really affects my own way of collaboration in a way. So there's a bit of a merger that can happen or a mirroring effect that I enjoy very much.

Should I unmute now?

Nicolás Dumit E...: Thank you Reggie.

Reggie: You're welcome.

Nicolás Dumit E...: I think it's interesting, I'm trained as an academic, when I go to a panel I feel the conversation in a different part of my body, so I'm just wondering where people feel this conversation right now? Or the echo of this moment here that were spending together. You don't have to answer that question, maybe just pause for a few seconds to feel where in your body you feel the echo of what we're saying and this conversation here. Is it in your head, is it in your stomach, your feet, your hands?

It's okay to allow any emotions to surface or any sensations.

So we could give maybe one more person the opportunity, Sara and Laia and Anna, the opportunity to talk and then we'll orchestrate the ballet, we'll choreograph the ballet, it's just going to be with your hands.

Sara Reisman: Yeah. That's great.

Nicolás Dumit E...: So stay for the ballet.

Sara Reisman: Yes.

Nicolás Dumit E...: Maybe one more person who might want to share?

William Furio: I can share if that's okay.

Nicolás Dumit E...: Yeah.

William Furio: Is that okay? Okay. Today actually is the anniversary of the 11th year of me and my best friend moving to New York and we've been living together for the past 11 years as well. She means the world to me and I love her and she's an awesome artist collaborator, she's right to my right and she's amazing. It's a really incredible story about building each other up, we've done a really good job of that and we've done a really good job of being very honest and radically open and very tender with each other and also really try to push each other to do the best that we can. It's a very independent but codependent relationship but it's very nice and I love her very much.

Allie: I love you.

William Furio: Thank you.

Sara Reisman: Congratulations.

William Furio: Thanks. It was a hard thing, not many people know this at my job but I ran away from home and the first place I ran to was Allie's dorm room and I lived on her floor for three and a half months and then we came to New York together. So it's a lot of queer strength in our friendship.

Anna Recasens: Just one thing, I think William thinks that it had to do with collaboration but it had to do with his care, to care. I think he's been around all night at work in different days and I think he said to just care, just care.

Nicolás Dumit E...: I think that is great Anna, this idea of no fear. We had no idea how this was going to look and before we forget I want to remind everybody that the Eighth Floor will send you the link to the full video, to the podcast. It's 15 minutes and you can watch it on your own, but this idea of fear, we're so caught up, especially in the arts, about how things are going to look and I know that we have an aesthetic responsibility to people who trust [inaudible] for the work that we do visually but at the same time with this work that we're doing together we have no idea how things are going to continue to shape, so it's overcoming fear. Friendship is overcoming fear and so is collaboration. Anna, Laia, I don't know if you want to say anything? Whenever you're ready let me know, we'll do the-

Anna Recasens: Could do the dance? I'm totally unrespected and so [inaudible] teaching the commons that it's missing the bodies and I think maybe yes, that the dance is going to be helping with that.

Nicolás Dumit E...: So very gently bring your hands up and look at them, look at your hands, look at your fingers. You can turn your hands around and be surprised by them as if you were looking at them for the first time. You can bend the fingers. We're going to do this maybe two times. You can close your eyes or you can keep them open or you can lower your gaze down to the floor. You can bring your hands down for now but let's keep them up in a way that doesn't strain your body. If you can think of a friend who's really, really meaningful to you, just think about that friend, just one person. You don't have to say that person's name, just think about that person.

We're going to use our hands, let's do a run through to write that person's name. Not in a literal way, let's say that the name starts with a letter A, I'm not going to write the letter A, I'm going to use writing in a poetic way. How would you write that person's name? Thinking about the qualities of that person, the dynamic of your relationship with that person. You can practice, this is practice time and then we'll do it together as a ballet.

All right, ready? Bring your hands down to your lap, bring them up gently and at the count of one, two, look at your hands, three, you can start writing that person's name with motions. Maybe for a minute or so, maybe 30 seconds let's say.

When you're done just bring your hands down. Are there any sensations in your body? Any feelings or notions? Simply enjoy the echo of having breathed in that friend's name with your hands. If your eyes are closed you can open them, if they're open you can rejoin the room.

I want to thank Sara for your friendship all these years and for believing in what I do. William, thank you for the work you do and Anjuli and George and Laia and Anna and each one of you, I'm sorry I cannot say all of your names but I have come to the room and seen each one of your faces. I don't know if Anna or whoever wants to say anything?

Anna Recasens: Good night and thank you. Thank you for giving us this opportunity to be together. It's been a fantastic experience, truly.

Laia Solé: Thank you very much for creating this space to share with everybody. I see some familiar faces on some of the screens and it has been really nice to get to see them again after such a long time. Thank you.

Nicolás Dumit E...: There's no rush, I don't know if Sara has to make an announcement, whenever you want to go you can go but Laia, Sara, William, George and Anjuli, we'll stay here to see you go [inaudible] so there's no rush.