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Turned On: An Exploration of Intimacy in the Age of Technology.

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Turned On: An Exploration of Intimacy in the Age of Technology

A Senior Project in Theater and Performance

Submitted to the Division of the Arts

of Bard College

By

Franchesca Breanna Chorengel

Annandale-On-Hudson, New York

May 2018

This project is dedicated to:

Mama and Papa: For always being there - no matter what, for teaching me that distance is only a number and for showing me the good side of technology. Thank you for your endless love; thank you for supporting me since the very beginning.

Nik and Emmett: For being my literal Day 1s. Thank you for encouraging me, for coming to every single one of my shows and for being the family that was close by when my other one was far away.

Nat and Cluno: For being the most fabulous ladies in my life, for teaching me how to really, really laugh and for making it so easy to smile everyday.

Leon and Aniya: I'm so glad we were able to go on this journey together; we did it together and we did it damn well. Keep on being the shining stars you both are. I know you both have bright futures ahead of you.

Rory, Tess and Adrian: Thank you for your unyielding effort throughout this entire process. We couldn't have done it without you!

Jonathan, Gideon, Miriam, Lynn and Caleb: Thank you for all of the knowledge you have imparted on me in the last four years. Thank you for the brutal honesty. Thank you for the encouragement. Thank you for the hope.

The Fisher Family - Zia, Bob, Jen, Michael, Jesse and Maria: Thank you for all of your support and hard work throughout this process. I am so grateful for the wisdom and guidance you have all given me over the last year. Thank you.

The 2018 Theater Makers: We did it. We made things. And they were fantastic! It's been a good run guys, see you soon!

Dundee: Thank you for teaching me that it's okay never to grow up. I wish you could've seen this project through to the end, you would've loved it; I hope your possum did you proud.

Behind the Scenes by Banjo Patterson

The actor struts his little hour,
Between the limelight and the band;
The public feel the actor's power,
Yet nothing do they understand

Of all the touches here and there
That make or mar the actor's part,
They never see, beneath the glare,
The artist striving after art.

To them it seems a labour slight
Where nought of study intervenes;
You see it in another light
When once you've been behind the scenes.

For though the actor at his best
Is, like a poet, born not made,
He still must study with a zest
And practise hard to learn his trade.

So, whether on the actor's form
The stately robes of Hamlet sit,
Or as Macbeth he rave and storm,
Or plays burlesque to please the pit,

'Tis each and all a work of art,
That constant care and practice means—
The actor who creates a part
Has done his work behind the scenes.

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Introduction.

"*You have to make art about something that makes you want to punch a wall.*" This was one of the first things that Gideon Lester said to Leon, Aniya and I after we proposed "*Oliver Twist*" to him as the basis for our Senior Project. We unanimously agreed that "*Oliver Twist*" made none of us want to punch a wall, so we went back to the drawing board. After meditating on some thoughts with Jonathan Rosenberg, explaining to him some of the pieces I had found interest in/ pieces I had previously created - he recommended that I read the play "*Love and Information*" written by Caryl Churchill. From the moment I picked it up, I knew that this was it, this was the text I would use for my Senior Project. Churchill structures her writing differently to most playwrights with "*the absence of a character list, speech prefixes, and stage directions, so that a director must apportion lines and construct characters without the guidance such a list, prefixes, and directions provide.*"[1] By having such a free form text to work with, so many of the elements were left to me to decide. I was the one with the power to decide how each character was sculpted, what the given circumstances were and how I wanted the message relayed to the audience. With fifty scenes in the play to choose from and twenty-five minutes on the LUMA stage, I knew scene selection would be a daunting task. Authenticity on the stage has always been something of interest to me. How can an actor be authentic onstage when portraying a character? When thinking about authenticity and how it bleeds into our everyday lives, I realized that it is actually quite difficult for most people to be authentic to themselves, nevertheless the people around them. Something that has stunted our ability to be authentic and to authentically

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[1] Gobert, R. Darren. The Theatre of Caryl Churchill. Bloomsbury, 2014. pp. 187

communicate with one another is actually technology, which was created to make

communication better. Go figure.

Communication is Key.

"We want to make out of theater a believable reality which gives the heart and the senses that kind of concrete bite which all true sensation requires." [2]

There is a six hour time difference between my parents and I. They live in Germany, and I, New York. We don't get to be with each other very often because of the distance but we see each other constantly. FaceTime has totally changed the way that we are able to communicate with one another. I get to sit at my dining room table and have a face to face (albeit through a screen) conversation with my Mother and I think that is fantastic. It is comforting to know that her counsel is only a push of a button away. Before FaceTime and cellphones existed, people wrote to one another. When my Father left his home in Germany and got on a ship bound for Bangkok, it took weeks to send or receive a letter. Communication was more delayed than it is presently. But even before mail and letters, storytellers and messengers would spread information from town to town. People thrive on information; even before technology, people would conglomerate to listen to the town crier and mothers would share their 'wives tales'. The only difference is that now it's constantly at our fingertips.

When thinking about how Leon, Aniya and I were going to structure our piece, we thought about the different methods of communication and how they have evolved through time. We decided that the cautionary tale of the "*Child Who Didn't Know Fear*" would open the piece, exploring communication through storytelling. Followed by "*Dream*" in which someone acquires

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[2] Artaud, Antonin. The Theater and Its Double. Translated by Mary Caroline Richards, Grove Press New York, 1958. pp. 85

information through research and overanalyzes it based off of the fear in their own head, before

consulting someone else. In "*Facts*" we explore our reliance on technology and the way that we

trust everything that is spewed out to us on the internet. *"The dialogue [in "Facts"] seems to*

conjure one character quizzing another with trivia questions, only to be answered every time. But

the question 'Do you love me?' elicits 'Don't do that.' At least until several lines later, as the play

ends: By what name do we usually refer to Oceanus Australensis Picardia? I do yes I do. Sea

anemone."[3] In "*Facts*" we also explore how it is easy to answer questions that have no emotional

connection to ourselves. But, when we are faced with answering a question such as "*Do you love*

me?"[4], the immediate reaction is "*Don't do that*."[5]. In the second half of the piece, we decided to

make the introduction of technology more obvious to the audience in relation to what it is doing

to our communication skills. "*Sleep*" is a glimpse into the lives of a couple who are in bed, trying

to fall asleep. One of them has no trouble falling asleep, the other cannot seem to get settled and

the scene ends with "*I think I'll just get up and go on Facebook.*"[6] Facebook is being used as an

escape, to be a replacement for human interaction. With the advent of social media, we have

forgotten what loneliness feels like. I don't mean that in earnest, but we are never alone anymore.

Our cellphones have become extensions of our bodies, the ability to communicate with someone

is always only seconds away, the only thing you have to worry about is if there a time zone

between you and there person you are trying to contact. We decided to end the piece with

"*Remote*", an exploration of a relationship where there is almost forced intimacy with the

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[3] Gobert, R. Darren. The Theatre of Caryl Churchill. Bloomsbury, 2014. pp. 197

[4] Churchill, Caryl. Love and Information. Theatre Communications Group, Inc., 2016. pp. 70-1

[5] ibid. pp. 70-1

[6] ibid. pp. 12

absence of technology as the couple visits an isolated seaside cabin. "*You'd have to go to town. Or I think someone said there's a spot about two miles up the road if you go down towards the cliff and stand on a rock, you'd have to know it.*"[7] This line in the show is probably one of the most important. This proves the remoteness they are physically in, with the cabin predating any form of technology. It exemplifies the effort needed in order to communicate; we are so used to the easy access cellphones provide, but what happens when there's no connection? I was watching a TV show called "*The Let Down*", in one of the episodes, the main character, Audrey struggles to find cellphone connection in the woods after being told by her Mother that all she had to do was "s*tand on the rock that is about three miles up the mountain, through the woods.*" She couldn't find the spot that was described to her, and the devastation she exhibited was astounding. She was furious at the ordeal, traipsing aimlessly through the woods, getting herself lost, not being able to communicate with her Husband or Child. Upon her return, she is fuming, thinking she was lost in the woods for an unimaginable length of time, when she was only gone for about an hour. It was so interesting to me to watch someone so consumed with technology that they completely ignored the beautiful flora and fauna surrounding them. We are becoming blind to our surroundings in a way, only paying attention to the screens in front of us.

As we workshopped the scenes in the rehearsal space, we realized that our idea of blatantly representing the evolution of communication should be considered throughout the process but should not be the focal point of the piece. One of the things that Aniya was curious about exploring was this idea of having an omniscient being that bleeds through the scenes. We were curious about exploring the idea of having one of the characters be a bridge between the

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[7] Churchill, Caryl. Love and Information. Theatre Communications Group, Inc., 2016. pp. 13

actors and the audience; having a character that is privy to both worlds. This was one of the key components to look for in people when it came time for auditions. We knew from the get-go that Leon and Aniya were going to be performing in the piece, and we wanted to cast another male and female to give us multiple dynamics to explore throughout the piece. Our fifth cast member was not cast based off of gender, but based off of presence and personality. After holding two rounds of group auditions and one round of callbacks, we had found the rest of our cast: Tess, Rory and Adrian. Out of the three, Adrian was the one to play this omniscient/ringleader type character. The idea was that he was to be a confidant of the audiences, being able to fluidly pop in and out of scenes. The idea was that "*The representation is never complete in itself, but is openly and continually compared with the life represented; where the actors can at any moment stand outside themselves and show themselves to be actors.*"[8] This concept was stretched further into our development process, insofar as we wanted our actors to be transparent with the audience. We weren't trying to pull anyone into an imagined space/situation with imagined characters. With the actors playing caricatured versions of themselves, we were trying to gently remind the audience of what is happening to our society, to allow them to find situations that they could find themselves in. In some ways, we wanted to remind the audience that they are still watching a piece of theater. "*It's more important nowadays for the set to tell the spectator he's in a theatre than to tell him he's in, say, Aulis. The theatre must acquire qua theatre the same fascinating reality as a sporting arena during a boxing match. The best thing is to show the machinery, the ropes and the flies… One must conjure up the reality of time… The materials of the set must be visible. A play can be performed in pasteboard only, or in pasteboard and wood,*

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[8] Benjamin, Walter. Understanding Brecht. N.L.B., 1973. pp. xiii

or in canvas, and so on; but there mustn't be any faking."[9] We were exploring real situations that people could find themselves in, we didn't want the actors to fake anything, we tried for authenticity and tried to amplify the feeling of being in a theater. We wanted it to look, sound and feel real.

I would by no means say that "*Turned On*" is an example of Epic Theatre, but it definitely held a few Brechtian qualities in the end. "*The essential point of the epic theatre is perhaps that it appeals less to the feelings than to the spectator's reason. Instead of sharing an experience the spectator must come to grips with things.*"[10] Theater is ephemeral. It lives in the moment. It teaches us to open our eyes and to listen. Contrary to the Artaud quote placed at the beginning of this chapter, I don't believe in creating "*believable [realities]*"[11] but, I do believe in creating theater "*which gives the heart and the senses that kind of concrete bite which all true sensation requires*"[12] and that reminds the audience of their role in society and how they personally are affecting the subject being explored in the theater.

[9] Brecht, Bertolt. Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic. Ed. & trans. by John Willett, Hill and Wang, 1964. pp. 233

[10] ibid. pp.23

[11] Artaud, Antonin. The Theater and Its Double. Translated by Mary Caroline Richards, Grove Press New York, 1958. pp. 85

[12] ibid. pp. 85

It's Not Syncing Up.

"The director of Love and Information must determine in each scene, how many people are speaking and which of them says what, just as this director must determine age, class, gender, and race - in short, the identity - of each speaker. Creating characters and building a narrative out of dramatic DNA, this director must provide, too, a theatrical context in which these characters can live. Many worlds are possible: Churchill has provided none but the barest of stage stage directions (nine in total)".[13]

After two months with Churchill and the project, working on assigning lines and characters, figuring out what their given circumstances are and an order for the scenes to be in, we were finally ready for the showings. They went extremely successfully for our group; our actors were all off book and the scenes and transitions went off without a hitch. However, we got some intriguing feedback during our post-showing meeting with Jonathan. The professors who attended the showings all met to discuss the pieces and upon getting the feedback, we understood that some of our concepts and ideas were successful, but others were highly misconstrued. The idea of having Adrian be this character emitting an omniscient presence was misinterpreted as him portraying the lonely queer man stereotype. They believe that this was being emphasized through multiple vessels throughout the duration of the piece, but this was not our intention at all. I understand where they were coming from. We had Adrian, alone on stage reciting the opening monologue of "*The Child Who Didn't Know Fear*" as well as being the host for our game show during "*Facts*". He was the only noticeable character without scenes explicitly with a

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[13] Gobert, R. Darren. The Theatre of Caryl Churchill. Bloomsbury, 2014. pp. 189

partner. In "*Facts*" this stereotype was emphasized through the lines: "*Do you love me?/ Don't do that.*"[14] Adrian also did not have a large presence throughout the second half of the piece. It wasn't only through the isolation that this trope was being highlighted, but also through delivery. Leon, Aniya and I realized we had some thinking to do. We had to figure out a way to get the focus off of our dilemma and aim the focus on the topic that we were trying to explore. We decided to cut a couple of scenes that we hadn't rehearsed much at that point. We couldn't find a large enough justification for keeping them in the piece and found much more suitable replacements. After seven long weeks of FaceTime calls with Aniya and being sans rehearsal, we finally had an established order for the scenes. They were as follows:

1. Child Who Didn't Know Fear
2. Dream
3. Decision
4. Sex
5. Facts
6. Virtual
7. Sleep
8. Fired
9. Remote

We had always thought of "*Sex*" as the thesis to our project. It blatantly explains to the audience what the topic being explored is. It was placed in the middle of the show as our turning point into using technology in a more explicit manner on stage. After our final meeting with Jonathan, we decided that "*Sex*" was going to placed at the beginning of the show instead of "*Child Who Didn't Know Fear*".

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[14] Churchill, Caryl. Love and Information. Theatre Communications Group, Inc., 2016. pp. 71

The Generator.

Why catharsis? Is it to escape a reality which we no longer wish to be in?

Aristotle was the one to bring us the notion that theater was a vessel through which we can achieve catharsis ("*the purification and purgation of the emotions (as pity and fear) primarily through art.*"[15]) He saw the theater as a place where people could go to achieve catharsis. He believed that people would thrive as better citizens of the state if they went to the theater to purge all of their violent emotions. This way, society would thrive if people had an outlet to let go of any negative emotions they would be holding within themselves.

"*It is in this spectacle of a temptation from which life has everything to lose and the mind everything to gain that the theater must recover its true signification.*"[16] Artaud believed that catharsis could be achieved through a bombardment of the senses, allowing the audience to feel real emotions and react organically to their theatrical experience. He believed theater that closes the borders between the audience and the performers should become a high form of reality as a way to achieve emotional release.

Brecht argues that "*the aristotelian play is essentially static; its task is to show the world as it is.*"[17] He believed that theater should prioritize function over empathetic reactions, whilst constantly reminding the audience that they are watching a piece of theater. His plays were often

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[15] "Catharsis." Merriam-Webster. Merriam-Webster, n.d. Web.

[16] Artaud, Antonin. The Theater and Its Double. Translated by Mary Caroline Richards, Grove Press New York, 1958. pp. 86

[17] Brecht, Bertolt. Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic. Ed. & trans. by John Willett, Hill and Wang, 1964. pp. 79.

didactic and aimed to teach his audience through the material displayed in front of them. Both

Artaud and Brecht however, went against what people had known theater to be. They veered

against the idea that theater should be restricted to showing snippets from people's every day

lives. They both removed preconceived notions of what theater usually entails, creating new

experiences, and aiding the audience to express feelings and emotions that society has been

forcing them to repress**.** "*We want to make out of theater a believable reality which gives the

heart and the senses that kind of concrete bite which all true sensation requires.*"[18] What I

wanted was for the actors to bombard the audience with information and to show them how we

are reacting to the emergence of technology in our lives. To show them that we are becoming

numb to our senses and to teach them to start looking beyond the screen.

At the time, theater had been primarily "*showing us intimate scenes from the lives of a

few puppets*"[19] and unknowing to Artaud, this trend would continue into modern day society; a

society bombarded by the media, by people sharing their private lives in the form of words,

pictures, videos…etc. This has, consequentially, created an era of people losing their authenticity.

We take photos of our private lives, and do with them what we please; whether it be for personal

or public use. We live in an age of technology, an age of immediacy. We have become an

impatient society; when we want something, we want it now. When we want information, we

watch the news or simply turn to Google or Siri to ask a question. Personal intimacy has been

normalized through social media. What used to be deemed authentic is now being upended due

to the advances in technology and having it infiltrate every facet of our lives. People strive to be

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[18] Artaud, Antonin. The Theater and Its Double. Translated by Mary Caroline Richards, Grove Press New York, 1958. pp. 85

[19] ibid. pp. 84

"authentic", to post a photo of yourself in your "natural environment" to Instagram, even though it took thirty minutes to pick the right picture to post. We are obsessed with this idea of authenticity, however, we constantly curate online personas of ourselves based off of what our "Facebook friends" or "Instagram followers" want to see. "*Electrical information devices for universal, tyrannical womb-to-tomb surveillance are causing a very serious dilemma between our claim to privacy and the community's need to know. The older, traditional ideas of private, isolated thoughts and actions - the patters of mechanistic technologies- are very seriously threatened by new methods of instantaneous electric information retrieval.*"[20] People are choosing which parts of their intimate lives they wish to share with the public. There is a pleasure in looking in on the private lives of people, but there is no more privacy.

But how does one measure authenticity? It's very difficult to tell someone to act "normal", to "be themselves" or, to "be authentic". Take a dinner party as an example: when you arrive at someone's house for dinner, you knock, walk through the door, greet everyone, and cordially wait to be invited further into the house. When rehearsing the entrance to a dinner party scene for the first time, I told my actors to "act normal", be themselves, and to greet each other as if this was a real dinner party and they're meeting each other for the first time." After getting the scene up on its feet, I realized how difficult it was for the actors to be authentic and to follow my instructions. They were all stiff and didn't know what to say. It was almost as if they had never attended a dinner party in their lives. It's different when you are told to do something or act a certain way versus just organically doing it. I wanted the actors to be as authentic as they could on stage, and we therefore ended up using quite a number of devising techniques to help us with

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[20] McLuhan, Marshall, and Quentin Fiore. The Medium Is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects. Gingko Press, Inc. © 1967 by Jerome Agel. Renewed 1996 by Jerome Agel. All rights reserved. pp.12

the generation of our movement. It wasn't quite devising as we had Churchill's text to work from, but it was a collaborative process nonetheless. "*Because of its form, the text of Love and Information can be described but not well summarized..*"[21] Without the note on the text stating that "*The sections should be played in the order given but the scenes can be played in any order within each section. There are random scenes…which can happen any time. The characters are different in every scene. The only possible exception to this are the random Depression scenes, which could be the same two people, or the same depressed person with different others.*"[22] one could make the argument that *"Love and Information"* is a formless text to work with which is why I was excited. I was able to do whatever I wanted with the text. I didn't follow any of Churchill's rules in the note on the text, and it was only after our performance was over that I truly realized her genius in the crafting of the original play. We did not keep any of the scenes in their original order, we did not make "*Facts*" the last scene, we did not add any of the random scenes at the end including the ones under the title: "*Depression*". Walter Benjamin stated that: "*In principle a work of art has always been reproducible.*"[23] The goal for us was not to reproduce Caryl Churchill's "*Love and Information*", but to create an adaptation using her text which ultimately focuses on how we communicate within our relationships, and how they are impacted by the evolution of technology.

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[21] Gobert, R. Darren. The Theatre of Caryl Churchill. Bloomsbury, 2014. pp. 187-88

[22] Churchill, Caryl. Love and Information. Theatre Communications Group, Inc., 2016. p. 2

[23] Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility." Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, edited by Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, Belknap Press, 2006.

Writing in Code.

"'*Love and Information', whose very title sets the subjective and emotional against the factual and dispassionate.*"[24] We gave ourselves the task of marrying two starkly different things: love and information. When I think of these two things, my immediate thought is: communication. The sharing of information can eventually lead to love; this is why the saying "communication is key to any relationship" exists. We struggled for a while to figure out what the containing space for our piece was going to be. By having nine, non-linear scenes and a 5'x5' box backstage to keep our set in, our decisions needed to be made carefully. After multiple discussions, attempting to assess commonalities and trying to figure out the best way to ground these scenes, we realized that being transparent with the audience, and not hiding the fact that we are in a theater was how to best remedy our dilemma. "*By gradually eliminating whatever proved superfluous, we found that theatre can exist without makeup, without autonomic costume and scenography, without a separate performance area (stage), without lighting and sound effects, etc. It cannot exist without the actor-spectator relationship of perceptual, direct, 'live' communion.*"[25] I wanted the audience to do what we were trying to do with the staging; I wanted them to learn how to open up, how to be transparent and how to be as authentically real with us as they can.

I believe that part of my inspiration for our set design came from assisting Jordan Fein in his production of "*Skin of our Teeth*". I watched how he opened up LUMA and exposed the

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[24] Gobert, R. Darren. The Theatre of Caryl Churchill. Bloomsbury, 2014. pp. 195

[25] Grotowski, Jerzy. Towards A Poor Theatre. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968. Print. pp. 19

entire stage to the audience. I did not want to try to trick the audience in thinking they were somewhere else, I wanted them to be present, I wanted them to feel just as much a part of the production as the actors. "*In the theater one is well aware of the place from which the play cannot immediately be detected as illusionary. There is no such place for the movie scene that is being shot. Its illusionary nature is that of the second degree, the result of cutting.*"[26]

We began our piece with Aniya holding an apple, teaching the audience what sex's purpose is; "*What sex evolved to do is get information from two sets of genes so you get offspring that's not identical to you.*"[27] and follows with "*It doesn't hurt to know it. Information and also love.*"[28] Aniya informed our audience of the concept, preparing them for the content about to be seen. This was our thesis, our little blurb on the back of a novel. When thinking about the audiences' integration in the piece, my hope was that they would find the scenarios relatable enough to be transported into any of the actors' shoes.

I thought about Goethe's Dictum:

> "*Wer den Dichter will verstehen*
> *Muss in Dichters Lande gehen.*
> *[If the poet you'd understand,*
> *You must go into the poet's land.*"[29]

This maxim amplified my idea of inviting the audience into the world with us, we wanted them to be as much a part of the show as the actors. They have to enter the world, to see themselves in

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[26] Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility." Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, edited by Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, Belknap Press, 2006.

[27] Churchill, Caryl. Love and Information. Theatre Communications Group, Inc., 2016. pp. 49

[28] ibid. pp. 49

[29] Benjamin, Walter. Understanding Brecht. N.L.B., 1973. pp. ix

the actor's shoes to understand. Brecht called scenes, 'episodes'; the events happening are not necessarily a result of the happenings from the previous scene. Churchill's text is non-linear, each of our scenes were self contained within their own stories, nothing connecting them but the subject matter. Brecht called his work 'Lehrstücke', which roughly translates to 'learning-plays', aiming to create didactic work that instructs his audience. I wanted to instruct our audience to listen, so that we were able to give them insight into what technology is doing to the way that we communicate with others; be it friend, partner, sibling or parent.

James Macdonald directed the original production of "Love and Information" at the Royal Court Theatre. His set designer, "*Miriam Buether built a white cube that sat center stage. Buether's cube entirely contained the action, and each side was marked with horizontal and vertical lines, as if the actors themselves were data to be plotted on a three-dimensional coordinate grid.*"[30] They had a cube, and we had a door. Before even researching this production, we had decided to include a rollable door to our set. It was one of the three main theatrical anchors of our show. We finally decided on our a door, four chairs and a crate that was our "prop box" containing the various smaller objects needed. None of the props or set pieces left the stage throughout the duration of the piece. I had the scene shop paint the door to look like an iPhone; a common piece of communicative technology which is always present. This was to undertone the focus on communication in our piece.The door never left the stage, just as phone never leaves our side. The door would be repositioned at the top of each scene, marking the beginning of our next episode. The scenes usually began with an entrance through the door, apart from "*Facts*" and "*Remote*". Churchill placed "*Facts*" at the end of her script, locking in the tone at the end of

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[30] Gobert, R. Darren. The Theatre of Caryl Churchill. Bloomsbury, 2014. pp. 194

the play. One of her few stipulations was for this scene to go last. I didn't agree, it didn't work with the message we were trying to send the audience home with. "*Remote*" ended our piece. It was the only scene in our piece where the door was set on stage, but not used. It is here that we see forced intimacy due to the lack of technology and how uncomfortable people are beginning to feel if they don't have cell connection or wifi. "*I think someone said there's a spot about two miles up the road if you go down towards the cliff and stand on a rock, you'd have to know it.*"[31] The last few lines of our piece were: *"Don't you sometimes want a weather forecast? I want you to be happy here. I am happy here. You'll find you can feel if it's raining"*[32] We wanted to show the audience that so many of the technological advances that are being created are useful, but not totally necessary. To find out if it's raining, you just have to leave your house and go outside, instead people choose to open up an app on their phone so it can do it for them. Our transitions were perhaps the last thing we worked on before the performances. We needed to find a way to surge energy into our piece. I turned to Artaud. His goal was to have the audiences senses assaulted by light, sounds and movement in order to achieve catharsis. "*Theatre of Cruelty proposes to resort to a mass spectacle; to seek in the agitation of tremendous masses, convulsed and hurled against each other, a little of that poetry of festivals and crowds when, all to rarely nowadays, the people pour out into the streets.*"[33] We picked loud, raucous music to juxtapose the scenes and as each of them ran under three minutes, the audience's senses were constantly being shifted around which hopefully kept their focus on the short episodes.

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[31] Churchill, Caryl. Love and Information. Theatre Communications Group, Inc., 2016. pp. 13

[32] Churchill, Caryl. Love and Information. Theatre Communications Group, Inc., 2016. pp. 13

[33] Artaud, Antonin. The Theatre and Its Double. New York: Grove, 1958. Print. pp.85

Updates.

"All media work us over completely. They are so pervasive in their personal,

political, economic, aesthetic, psychological, moral, ethical, and social consequences

that they leave no part of us untouched, unaffected, unaltered."[34]

Technology was created to enhance our communication skills, yet it is actually stunting

our ability to authentically communicate with others. My generation is the last generation to have

a childhood without the abundance of technology. *"Today's child is growing up absurd, because*

he lives in two worlds, and neither of them inclines him to grow up. Growing up - that is our new

work, and it is total. Mere instruction will not suffice."[35] I have begun to see how dependent the

younger generation is on technology. It is so easy in our modern age to access information that

we have stopped relying on ourselves, we have stopped feeling the need to retain knowledge and

trust in the digital information we receive without second guessing ourselves. *"Most people find*

it difficult to understand purely verbal concepts. They suspect the ear; they don't trust it. In

general we feel more secure when things are visible, when we can "see for ourselves." We

admonish children, for instance, to "believe only half what they see, and nothing of what they

hear." All kinds of "shorthand" systems of notation have been developed to help us see what we

hear."[36] Children nowadays are taught to trust in what they see, and not in what they hear. We

are living in a visual time, where the media and technology is taking us away from the verbal and

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[34] McLuhan, Marshall, and Quentin Fiore. The Medium Is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects. Gingko Press, Inc. © 1967 by Jerome Agel. Renewed 1996 by Jerome Agel. All rights reserved. pp. 26

[35] ibid. pp. 16

[36] ibid. pp. 117

focusing our attention on what we see. We explored many questions throughout our process: How do we communicate with the ones we love? Why is it so difficult to divulge personal, intimate information? How do we make the audience see, but also listen to what we have to say? At the beginning of our process, the tone of our piece was quite light and exhibited many childish qualities. It took us a while to figure out how to add depth to our pieces; we were viewing the various episodes through the eyes of young adults, trying to relate the situations to those of college students. Children are not cruel, there are simply no thoughts in their actions. They live in the world, disregarding any prospect of long term consequence. Because of the media, "*A new form of "politics" is emerging, and in ways we haven't yet noticed. The living room has become a voting booth. Participation via television in Freedom Marches, in war, revolution, pollution, and other events is changing everything.*"[37] We no longer have the need to obtain human interaction in order to retain information. This frustrates me; to imagine a world where humans live in an age of complete technology, a world where human to human connection is unnecessary because everything can be done with the touch of a button. We are unintentionally alienating ourselves from each other, stunting the future generations' ability to communicate.

If I continued working on this piece, I would like to expand the number of scenes used, and work to explore following Churchill's rules more closely, specifically the order the scenes are placed in. I would also like to explore the "*Random*" scenes in order to see what kind of a layer they add to the piece. Overall, I believe the piece was extremely successful in portraying our concepts to the audience; it married the subjects of love and information as well as the influences of Brecht and Artaud. We titled our piece "*Turned On*" as it was not Churchill's "*Love*

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[37] McLuhan, Marshall, and Quentin Fiore. The Medium Is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects. Gingko Press, Inc. © 1967 by Jerome Agel. Renewed 1996 by Jerome Agel. All rights reserved. pp. 22

and Information" by any means; it was our way of communicating our thoughts through our

adaptation of her words.

My biggest hope was to **teach** the audience how to **look** at theater and **really listen** to words the

actors have to say.

Production Stills.

Still from "Sex".

Stills from "Dream".

Still from "Decision".

Stills from "Child Who Didn't Know Fear".

Stills from "Facts".

Stills from "Sleep".

Stills from "Remote".

Program.

THE BARD COLLEGE THEATER &
PERFORMANCE PROGRAM PRESENTS

Senior Project Festival 2018

February 22-25, 2018
LUMA Theater

Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts at Bard College

There is a brief intermission after the second project.
Each performance is approximately 25 minutes in length.
Please turn off all electronic devices. No photography or video is permitted.

On behalf of my colleagues on the faculty of Bard's Theater & Performance Program, it's a pleasure to welcome you to the 2018 Senior Project Festival.

Performances included in the Senior Project Festival are collaborations between at least two Seniors. The following students presenting the performance component of their Senior Project in this year's festival:

Gideon Berger '18   Leon Gonzalez '18
Catherine Bloom '18   Amanda Houser '18
Franchesca Charengel '18   Lora Katz '18
Shane Crowley '18   Aniya Picou '18

The following students are presenting their Senior Projects outside the context of the Festival:

Kimiyo Bremer '18   Miles Messinger '18
Kate Brashear '18   Rishi Mutalik '18
Charlie Mai '18   Nina Tobin '18
Alexander Glass '18   Triston Tolentino '18
Victoria Haschke '18   Zoe Wohlfeld '18

These Senior Projects include a broad range of styles and genres, including adaptations, translations, and productions of existing dramatic texts, solo performances, original plays, installations, and live art. The students have worked with faculty advisors, but the Senior Project is overwhelmingly their own work, as they prepare to transition into the professional world beyond Bard. We're proud of them all, and are delighted to share their performances with you.

Best wishes,

Gideon Lester
Director, Theater & Performance Program

The Bard College Theater and Performance Department Senior Project Festival

1. Turned On

An adaptation of Caryl Churchill's *Love and Information*
by Franchesca Chorengel '18, Aniya Picou '18 and Leon Gonzalez '18
Director Franchesca Chorengel '18
Music *Neat Neat Neat* by The Damned, *Misirlou* by Dick Dale & His
Del-Tones, *Twisted Nerve* by Bernard Herrmann, *Video Killed the Radio Star*
by The Buggles, *You Give Love a Bad Name* by Bon Jovi, *Bump N 'Grind* by
R. Kelly, *Bad Reputation* by Joan Jett, *Low Rider* by War

CAST

Aniya Picou '18
Leon Gonzalez '18
Rory Magich '19
Tess Nohle Strohm '21
Adrian Costa '21

2. UNE SALADE

Adapted from *Woman Laughing Alone with Salad* by Sheila Callaghan
Director Imogen Thomas '19
Fight Choreographer Jane Collon-Bonet '20
Music *Work Bitch* by Britney Spears, *Cool Girl* by Tove Lo, *Last Friday Night*
by Katy Perry, *Ego* by Beyoncé, *Breakfast at Tiffany's* by Deep Blue
Something, *Man! I Feel Like a Woman* by Shania Twain

CAST

Meredith, Joanna, Joe	Cora Katz '18
Sandy, Joanna, Bruce	Catherine Bloom '18
Tori	Franny Keller '20
Guy	Seth Barrett '19

3. ...and others

by Dennis Bush
Director Shane Crowley '18
Co-Director Sophie Landa '19

CAST

Amanda	Brooke Tyborowski '20
Maya	Sophie Landa '19
Rachel	Sarah Carlisi '19
Katarina	Macey Downs '20
Brady	Aktve Hirsch '21
Randall	Jake Stiel '21
Kade	Roman Peña '21
Liam	Dan Burwell '21

Produced by Special arrangement with Brooklyn Publishers, LLC.
All changes to the play for this production have been made
with the special permission of the playwright.

4. HIS ROYAL HEINIE

A senior project by Amanda Houser '18 and Gideon Berger '18
Adapted from *Ubu Roi* by Alfred Jarry
Directed by Gideon Berger '18, Amanda Houser '18, and Charlie Mai '18
Makeup design by Marisa Bach '18
Music *Il Barbiere di Siviglia: No. 2 Cavatina: Largo al Factotum*
by Gioacchino Rossini, *The Four Seasons Concerto No. 2 in G Minor, RV 315*
Summer: III. Presto by Antonio Vivaldi, *Sabre Dance* by Aram Khachaturian,
Orchestral Suite No. 2 in B minor by Johann Sebastian Bach, *Theme from*
Das Boot by Klaus Doldinger

CAST

The Jester	Amanda Houser '18
The Lady Jester	Charlie Mai '18
The Visionary	Gideon Berger '18
The King	Bill Wang '20
The Queen	Sofia France '19
The General	Simon Paris '18
The Judge	Cluno Bruno '20
The Minister of Finance	Kate Gonzales '20
The Palace Cat	Natalya Sands '18
The Peasant	Sarah Carlisi '19
Winnifred	Ella Gibney '18

Senior Project Festival

Production Team

Lighting Designer Anshuman Bhatia
Production Stage Manager Emily Tabachuk

Assistant Stage Manager Julia Bryck '18
Sound Board Operator Connor Martin
Light Board Operator Angela Woodack '21
Wardrobe Supervisor Anna Hafner
Flyman Maeve Potter '20 and Sam Dickson '19
Wardrobe Run Crew Elise Alexander '19 and Simone Brown '18

Assistant Technical Director Ryan Naso
Lighting Interns Riti Bahl '21, Shane Crowley '18, Macey Downs '20,
Jewel Evans '18, Aidan Furze '19, Olivia Gibson '21, Callie Jacks '21,
Claire Maroney '21, Janine Rogers '19, Angela Woodack '21,
Marlaina Yost '20
Scenic Interns Edgar Guzman '20, Jasper Hartnett '18, Elias Posen '18,
Maeve Potter '20, Jeremy Wolf '18

Theater & Performance Program Faculty

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Annie Dorsen, *Visiting Artist in Theater and Performance*
Miriam Felton-Dansky, *Assistant Professor of Theater and Performance*
Jack Ferver, *Professor of Theater & Performance*
Neil Gaiman, *Professor in the Arts*
Caleb Hammons, *Senior Producer*
Lynn Hawley, *Artist in Residence*
Joshua Lubin-Levy, *Visiting Assistant Professor in Theater History and Contemporary Practice*
Gideon Lester, *Professor of Theater; Artistic Director for Theater & Dance*
Chiori Miyagawa, *Playwright in Residence*
Jonathan Rosenberg, *Artist in Residence*
Virginia Scott, *Visiting Artist in Theater and Performance*
Andrea Thome, *Visiting Playwright in Residence*
Jean Wagner, *Artist in Residence*

Theater & Performance Program Staff
Jennifer Lown, *Program Administrator*

The Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts

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Michael Hofmann VAP '15, *Executive Assistant*

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Jesse Heffler, *Assistant Producer*

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Nicholas Reilingh, *Database and Systems Manager*
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Carly Benedict, *Audience and Member Services Assistant*
Maria Whitcomb, *Venue House Manager*
Tara Lorenzen, *House Manager*
Jessica Bagg '16, *Assistant House Manager*
Joao De La Cruz '20, *Assistant House Manager*
Cara Kotz '18, *Assistant House Manager*
Nora Myers '18, *Assistant House Manager*
Anna Soros '18, *Assistant House Manager*
Hezaiah Tompkins '18, *Assistant House Manager*

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Marc Crittender, *Facilities Manager*
Ray Stegner, *Building Operations Manager*
Doug Pitcher, *Building Operations Coordinator*
Chris Lyons, *Building Operations Assistant*
Robyn Charter, *Fire Panel Monitor*
Bill Cavanaugh, *Environmental Specialist*
Drita Gjokaj, *Environmental Specialist*

About the Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts at Bard College

The Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts, an environment for world-class artistic presentation in the Hudson Valley, was designed by Frank Gehry and opened in 2003. Risk-taking performances and provocative programs take place in the 800-seat Sosnoff Theater, a proscenium-arch space, and in the 200-seat LUMA Theater, which features a flexible seating configuration. The Center is home to Bard College's Theater & Performance and Dance Programs, and host to two annual summer festivals: SummerScape, which offers opera, dance, theater, operetta, film, and cabaret; and the Bard Music Festival, which celebrated its 25th year in 2014.

The Center bears the name of the late Richard B. Fisher, former chair of Bard College's Board of Trustees. This magnificent building is a tribute to his vision and leadership.

The outstanding arts events that take place here would not be possible without the contributions made by Friends of the Fisher Center. We are grateful for their support and welcome all donations.

About the Bard College Theater & Performance Program

The Theater & Performance Program aims to develop innovative thinkers and artists, who use great theatrical ideas from the past and present to imagine and instigate the theater of the future. Theater and performance are intrinsically collaborative art forms, and collaboration and devised theater-making are at the heart of Bard's program. The program trains well-rounded theater-makers, who study the history, theory, and contemporary practice of theater and performance, hone their technical abilities as writers, performers and directors, and create their own productions and performances under the mentorship of master artists and teachers.

We encourage students to be cross-disciplinary thinkers and makers, who explore the intersection of theater and performance with dance, music, the visual arts, film, and literature, as well as the sciences and humanities. In addition to a faculty of leading professional theater and performance artists, students work side by side with a wide range of visiting artists from this country and abroad, who bring a global perspective of cutting-edge theater and performance to Bard's campus.

Poster.

BARD COLLEGE
SENIOR PROJECTS IN
THEATER & PERFORMANCE 2018

CORA KATZ &
CATHERINE BLOOM

Shane Crowley

• Franchesca
Chorengel
• Aniya Picou
• Leon Gonzalez

Gideon Berger &
Amanda Houser

RICHARD B. FISHER CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
LUMA THEATER

7:30pm Thursday 22 February
7:30pm Friday 23 February
7:30pm Saturday 24 February
2:00pm Sunday 25 February

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Script.

Turned On: An Adaptation of Caryl Churchill's *"Love and Information"*

By Franchesca Chorengel, Leon Gonzalez and Aniya Picou

Directed by Franchesca Chorengel '18

CAST:

Leon Gonzalez '18

Aniya Picou '18

Rory Maglich '19

Tess Noble-Strohm '21

Adrian Costa '21

Sex (Aniya)

Aniya: What sex evolved to do is get information from two sets of genes so you get offspring that's not identical to you. Otherwise you just keep getting the same thing over and over again like hydra or starfish. So sex essentially is information.

It doesn't hurt to know it. Information and also love.

If you're lucky.

Dream (Tess and Rory)

Tess: I had this dream last night, I was in a garden and there were blackberries, big bushes of brambles, I was picking them, and a butterfly flew across and I could see this orange and black butterfly really clearly on a yellow rose, but then the whole thing was a dance because I was at the ballet. And I looked all those things up, blackberry, butterfly, ballet, and every single one means infidelity. So now I know he's cheating.

Rory: So you don't feel you have to be faithful to him anymore?

Tess: No, why should I?

Rory: So that leaves the way clear for us?

Tess: You think?

Rory: Unless it's not about him.

Tess: Who then?

Rory: You. You and me.

Tess: That would mean we're definitely going to do it.

Rory: So either way.

Tess: Either way.

Decision (Adrian and Aniya)

Adrian: I've written down all the reasons to leave the country and all the reasons to stay.

Aniya: So how does that work out?

Adrian: There's things on both sides.

Aniya: How do you feel about it?

Adrian: No, I'm trying to make a rational decision based on the facts.

Aniya: Do you want me to decide for you?

Adrian: Based on what? The facts don't add up.

Aniya: I'd rather you stayed here. Does that help?

The Child Who Didn't Know Fear (Leon)

Leon: Once upon a time there was a child who didn't know what fear was and he wanted to find out. So his friends said, Cold shiver down your back, legs go funny, sometimes your hands no not your hands yes your hands tingle, it's more in your head, it's in your stomach, your belly you shit yourself, you can't breathe, your skin your skin creeps, it's a shiver a shudder do you really not know what it is? And the child said, I don't know what you mean. So they took him to a big dark empty house everyone said was haunted. They said, No one's ever been able to stay here till morning, you won't stay till midnight, you won't last a hour, and the child said, Why, what's going to happen? And they said, You'll know what we mean about being frightened. And the child said, Good, that's what I want to know. So in the morning his friends came back and there was the child sitting in the dusty room. And they said, You're still here? what happened? And the child said, There were things walking about, dead things, some of them didn't have heads and a monster with glowing - and his friends said, Didn't you run away? and the child said, There were weird noises like screams and like music but not music, and his friends said, What did you feel? and the child said, It came right up to me and put out its hand, and his friends said, Didn't your hair your stomach the back of your neck your legs weren't you frightened? And the child said, No, it's no good, I didn't feel anything, I still don't know what fear is. And on the way home he met a lion and the lion ate him.

Facts (Full Cast)

Leon: Who was president of Coca-Cola from nineteen twenty-five to seven?

Rory: HB Jones

Leon: What is the smallest village in Central Asia?

Tess: Qat.

Leon: What is the 5th letter of the alphabet?

Aniya: M

Leon: How many diamonds were mined in 1957?

Adrian: Sixty thousand four hundred and twenty-eight.

Leon: What are 2 primary colors?

Tess: Lilac and Turquoise.

Leon: In 1647 what day was the battle of Stonham?

Adrian: June the third. Tuesday.

Leon: Where would you find Buckingham Palace?

Rory: Moscow.

Leon: What sound does a capercaillie make?

Aniya: Aaaaah.

Leon: Who had the longest hair?

Adrian: Matilda Lucas.

Leon: Of?

Tess: Brighouse, Connecticut.

Leon: How do you say Thank You in Spanish?

Rory: Thank You

Leon: Do you love me?

Tess: Don't do that.

Leon: What is the formula that disproves Gödel's theorem?

Rory: X bracket a over t minus pi sigma close bracket to the power of ten minus n to the power of minus one squared.

Leon: What animal is the character Mickey Mouse based off of?

Aniya: A Cat.

Leon: By what name do we usually refer to Oceanus Australensis Picardia?

Tess: I do yes I do.

Adrian: Sea anemone.

Virtual (Leon and Aniya)

Leon: I don't care what you say

Aniya: no but listen

Leon: I've never felt like this

Aniya: that's not the point what you feel

Leon: it's the only

Aniya: because she doesn't exist

Leon: I'm not listening.

Aniya: She doesn't?

Leon: have you seen her?

Aniya: yes I've seen her but she doesn't

Leon: have you talked to her?

Aniya: I don't want to talk to

Leon: then what do you know about it?

Aniya: she's not a real

Leon: so?

Aniya: so you admit she's not

Leon: she exists she still exists

Aniya: fine all right she exists but so does your shoe or a can of

Leon: you're saying she's no different than a shoe?

Aniya: she's got not more feelings than

Leon: what do you know about

Aniya: she's a thing she's a thing.

Leon: Look I appreciate your concern but just

Aniya: look

Leon: she's beautiful she's intelligent she understands me

Aniya: she doesn't understand you

Leon: she listens to me she likes my poems she's the only

Aniya: doesn't understand any

Leon: she reads my mind she's sensitive to my every

Aniya: but she's virtual

Leon: so?

Aniya: so she's not

Leon: I can't believe just because someone's not flesh and blood you'd

Aniya: she's just information

Leon: and what are you if you're not

Aniya: yes I know we're

Leon: so we're information our genes our

Aniya: yes but she hasn't

Leon: what?

Aniya: hasn't got an inside to her mind she's not conscious she can't

Leon: how do you know she

Aniya: she's a computer she's a computer game she's not

Leon: and can you tell that from what she says?

Aniya: I don't need to

Leon: but can you tell

Aniya: because she can't

Leon: she might and how could she prove it because you wouldn't believe

Aniya: I certainly wouldn't

Leon: because she says she has

Aniya: what, thoughts

Leon: of course thoughts feelings because she's that complicated she says she loves

Aniya: she can't possibly

Leon: we know people won't understand but we don't care what you

Aniya: and what about sex

Leon: what about

Aniya: she hasn't got a body

Leon: she's got a fantastic

Aniya: but not a body you can

Leon: she's not in this country at the moment

Aniya: she can't ever

Leon: and the sex is great

Aniya: it's virtual

Leon: it's virtual and great

Aniya: but she never feels

Leon: I don't care what you say

Aniya: no but listen

Leon: I've never felt like this about anyone.

Sleep (Tess and Rory)

Tess: I can't sleep.

Rory: Hot milk.

Tess: I hate it now.

Rory: Book?

Tess: I haven't got one I like.

Rory: Just lie there and breathe.

Tess: My head's too full of stuff. Are you asleep?

Rory: No no, what, it's fine. You can't sleep?

Tess: I think I'll get up and go on Facebook.

Fired (Leon and Rory)

Leon: You shouldn't fire people by email.

Rory: You can't come bursting in here and shouting.

Leon: I'm just saying it needs to be face to face.

Rory: I'm sorry, I do appreciate, but I'm busy at the moment, if you could

Leon: I need to be looked in the eye and you say you're firing me

Rory: redundancy isn't

Leon: just say it to my face, you're fired, just say it, you're a coward you can't say it

Rory: why don't you speak to my p.a. and make an appointment

Leon: just say it, you're fired, just say it

Remote (Leon and Aniya)

Leon: You don't seem to have a tv.

Aniya: There used to be one but it stopped working. The reception's no good anyhow.

Leon: I brought my laptop

Aniya: You might have a reception problem there.

Leon: It's not that I need it. There's no phone signal is there?

Aniya: You'd have to go to town. Or I think someone said there's a spot about two miles up the road if you go down towards the cliff and stand on a rock, you'd have to know it.

Leon: We can listen to the radio. Does it work?

Aniya: I did warn you.

Leon: I know.

Aniya: It's quiet here.

Leon: I like it quiet.

Aniya: You can always cycle down and get a newspaper.

Leon: It's all right.

Aniya: I don't have time you see.

Leon: Don't you sometimes want a weather forecast?

Aniya: I want you to be happy here.

Leon: I am happy here.

Aniya: You'll find you can feel if it's raining.

Artist's Statement.

When people hear my name is Franchesca, they ask "Are you Italian?" I say "No." There is absolutely no Italian in my genes. My name isn't the Italian "Francesca"; instead, the French spelling, "Fran**ch**esca" which means Freedom. I am a strange mixture of German, Australian, American? I don't know where I belong, but I feel free. I travelled a lot as a child. I was exposed to different people and cultures from a very young age. I was fascinated by languages, how people communicated, I listened to the many different forms of music, smelled all sorts of various foods and ate up the scenes around me. I aspire to bring international artists, from diverse cultures together for an audience of all ages.

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