



## This Language That is Our Lives: An Interview with Kate Hunter

### [00:00:19] INTRO

**Duška Radosavljević:** Hello and welcome to the Gallery.

Like many artists of her generation, Australian performer and researcher Kate Hunter began her career in the 1980s in physical theatre. She trained extensively in the Tadashi Suzuki method of acting and with Anne Bogart's SIT Company in New York, and has created a number of acclaimed works of dance and physical theatre in collaboration with other Australian artists before moving onto sound-based performance and research in memory, performance and cognition.

Her 2017 piece *Earshot*, made with performer Josephine Lange, sound designer Jem Savage and dramaturg Glynis Angell is described by the artists as 'part live performance, part undercover surveillance operation'. In fact, *Earshot* is a truly inspired scenic rendition of a fully crowd-sourced piece of text, generated through eavesdropping. Divorced from its original context, the resulting script is deconstructed and reassembled into a type of musical score and then performed to the accompaniment of kitchen implements, DIY voice filters and ill-fitting transcript projections. I first encountered this piece by reading about it in an online review on [witnessperformance.com](http://witnessperformance.com) and immediately felt I had to meet its maker!

This conversation took place between Melbourne and London, by Zoom, on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

### [00:01:56] ATTUNING THE EAR

**Duška Radosavljević:** Thanks again, Kate, for making this time available and for sharing your work with us. I actually read about *Earshot* in Alison Croggon's review of your work in November last year and I thought: 'My god, this sounds like exactly the kind of work that fits in within this remit.'

**Kate Hunter:** Yes, it was a beautiful piece of writing. It felt like she really got it, you know, she really got the work. I mean, she's a writer and a dramaturg. She described *Earshot* as a theatrical poem, which I hadn't thought of in those terms, but as soon as I read that, I realised that's what it is and was. She was very affected by it and the work was critically acclaimed both in that season and the season that we did in 2017, so it's had two iterations if you like. But it felt like she had a really enjoyable experience and it kind of shifted the way she listened to things.

**DR:** That was quite interesting, the way in which the piece attunes the ear to the poetry in the everyday speech. What interests me about it was the way in which it departs from that model of verbatim theatre that we knew in the early 2000s. That everybody was making verbatim theatre, which was very often issue-based theatre and rightly so, but this seems to have gone into a different territory. And in the way in which you actually perform it, it very often evokes musical performance because you have scores on stands, you have the instruments that you have created for it. You actually also use other sorts of machinery to create sound in it.

**KH:** Yes, we use all sorts of machinery, analogue and digital, and it's interesting the way that came about. The music stands – I mean, I collaborate with musicians, so the other actor in the work, Josephine Lange, is a musician as well as a performer and composer, and the sound designer's a musician. I have played music quite a lot when I was younger – not so much recently – but I have an understanding of music and I was kind of curious about the ways that I might investigate language through music and the idea of playing language through music. The music stands and the design of the work came about through a very pragmatic decision, which was when we had our first development of the work, I just said: 'I do not want to learn lines. I don't have time. And I'm not interested in it. So let's just stick some music stands up and we'll have the scripts there and we'll work from the scripts. It doesn't matter, it's a showing, you know, people will understand that it's a development.' But then what happened was there was a kind of formality around setting up of a series of music stands and we dressed quite formally, we moved from one kind of station to the next and we started to explore or open up to this idea that maybe we might think of ourselves as musicians playing movements. That was a



really helpful way of bringing the work together, and the response from the audience was that form seemed to fit the content, and so we kept it. Each time we've worked the show, we've worked to that idea even more readily. So it's this idea of almost a recital of the Australian vernacular, if you like, because, you know, there's a lot of fantastic vernacular implicit in Australian language which is very particular to us. So that kind of came about accidentally, and a lot of my work is: some accidents happen and I'm a big believer in – what Anne Bogart talks about – celebrating accidents. So I'm always interested in stuff that isn't intended, that is accidental or that's on the edge or in the middle or left over.

#### **[00:05:36] FORMATIVE INFLUENCES**

**DR:** Shall we go back to when you mentioned you trained as a musician or you played music when you were younger – can we go back to those early days? I'm interested in the formal training you've had, but also I'm interested in any other formative influences that existed in your cultural environment that might have determined your choices or your aesthetic.

**KH:** The music wasn't a key contributor when I was younger as a young aspiring actor. I did a lot of gymnastics all through school and I was very interested in gymnastics and theatre. After I left school I really moved into sort of circus stuff and physical theatre. I worked with a theatre company called Born in a Taxi, which is a physical theatre company that explores ensemble physical improvisation, and they trained with Al Wunder, who's quite a seminal teacher here in Melbourne and has been here for many, many years. There was this curiosity around physical theatre and what was possible, and I was young and excitable and interested and curious and had some physical fitness and acumen.

**DR:** When was this? Just to kind of align it...

**KH:** Okay, probably from about – let's see, I'm 54 although I don't look it!

[Laughter.]

**DR:** No, you don't look it!

**KH:** It would have been around about '85 to around about '95, say, for around ten years or so. I don't know, it's all a bit fuzzy. But I also started doing contact improvisation so that opened me up to a world of movement theatre and dance theatre. And then I discovered the Suzuki method of actor training – a couple of SITI company members came to Melbourne a few times; Barney O'Hanlon came more than once to Melbourne and I started doing some work with him. Then I subsequently went to New York and attended the month-long SITI company residency up in Saratoga, which was probably pretty seminal. That was early 2000s I think. It was a seminal experience because I met Anne Bogart, because it's such an incredible, full-on immersive experience. I met some collaborators that I still work with today. Viewpoints I think really spoke to the work I was already doing with Born in a Taxi, so I had a familiarity with the vocabulary, but I loved that there was a vocabulary around the notions of space and time. And of course, I just love Suzuki training because it's a rigorous training that also opens up the voice. But then over time I got older and it's pretty rigorous on the body particularly, Suzuki training. When I started my PhD, which was around about 2008, my research was around memory and the place of memory and the creative process, and I was also interested in the relationship between neuroscience and memory – you know, how the science of memory might be a metaphor for a theatre-making processes. But in the process of that I found myself in the studio and filming myself and just feeling like it wasn't helpful at all watching myself on video. So I started to use an audio recorder to give myself instructions. That was the shift really to a whole new methodology which was about talking to myself, listening to myself and kind of engaging with myself as another actor in the room. That work that we were talking about earlier [off record], the 2011 work, *Maybe We're Never Together*, which was a work I made with my beautiful friend Emilie Collyer – that came from a series of messages that we recorded for each other. We audio recorded messages for each other and gave them to each other and that generated a whole series of: I'd record a message and then she'd record something back that were soliloquies to each other really but they became the content of the show, and that show was about our relationship with each other. We made each other do things and basically I was, sort of, mean to her. [Laughter.] It was an interesting meta unfolding of our relationship, but the key formal experiment with that show came from this process of audio recording, which in a way is sort of self-verbatim, isn't it?



**DR:** Yes.

**KH:** I mean, I didn't realise it was.

### **[00:10:26] METHODOLOGY**

**DR:** I'm interested in this moment, actually, if we can spend a bit more time on this moment where you decided to give yourself instructions in audio. What was it in the process that initiated that methodology? Or, that you discovered the unanticipated advantages of that way of working?

**KH:** Well, I was working solo. I was wanting to be productive and I found that it was difficult for me to generate material for myself just coming into a blank white studio. I'd lie on the ground a lot and listen to music and go: 'What am I doing?' And I was reading about improvisation because improvisation is also a key component of my work and I was working with solo physical improvisation. I read an article by Kent de Spain who was a choreographer who described a process he adopted where he asked his dancers to record themselves in the moment of dancing, and then at the end of dancing. He gathered that material and coded it and used it as a way of – it was a research project really. I was reading all this stuff about that and that was a moment where I thought: 'I might try that.' What happened then was I stopped looking at myself on video, so it became much more about what I was hearing – so I could work with my eyes closed but do the things that I was telling myself, for example. It became a very fruitful tool. After a while, the instructions stopped being instructions and they became scenes where I might have a conversation with myself. So I might pre-record some things and play that, and then I might speak live in the space in response to those. And then after a time, the words that I uttered in response, I recorded those words and they became a script that I then could break apart and then write into, and so it also became a way of generating texts as scripts. So I started to build this group of written scripts as well as audio scripts that could then be crafted, edited, built on, re-recorded, crafted again. So it became very complex and layered. It still is complex and layered – that's just how it seems to manifest now.

**DR:** And when you took that further in working with your colleague on *Maybe We're...*

**KH:** *Maybe We're Never Together*.

### **[00:12:58 to 00:13:55] Excerpt from *Maybe We Are Never Together* (2011)**

**DR:** Could you describe how that worked? Was that just using phones, or was it actually something you were doing?

**KH:** No, I had a Zoom recorder. That was probably another thing that was a seminal moment was when I purchased a Zoom recorder, and I've still got the same one I've always used, although, you know, you can get much more groovy ones now but I've just got a curmudgeonly one that I still like to use. Sometimes she would use her phone and then send that to me, and then we'd transcribe it and then she'd re-record it. Sometimes we'd just sit together in a room and talk to each other and record that, and then those audio mash-ups became material that either we performed live or we had as pre-recorded audio that we did physical stuff to. Interestingly, a colleague of mine was helping me at the time with the audio stuff, and he said a really great thing, because I was saying: 'Ah, these audios, you know, they're kind of clunky and they don't always fit together and there's all this, you know, sometimes we're in the park and you can hear birds and it's all bit [*imitates audio distortion SFX*].' I said: 'I want to make it all smooth.' And he said: 'Don't over-engineer it. Just let the sounds speak for themselves.' That was also useful because then what happened was I started to be interested in the accidental sounds that might happen. It's so interesting talking about it, just hearing myself talk about it and hearing about the progression of the methodology, because I'm realising how one thing builds to another. So that idea of allowing the accidental sounds to be in the mix opened me up to all sorts of possibilities around incidentals and now I'm really interested in the 'ums' and the 'ers' and the, you know, 'I'm sorrys' and the coughs, and that all becomes much more – adds to the richness. Particularly in *Earshot* I was really interested in that.

**DR:** If I understand correctly then, the initial impulse was that in a way you were using this audio score the way a dancer might use a musical score to respond to, only you were not only just performing as a dancer, or making work as a dancer, you had more of a vocabulary of a theatre-maker.



**KH:** I think it probably began as a function, as a tool to assist me with generating material when I was trying to make a work on my own. Initially it was separate, but it ended up becoming the work itself. It ended up becoming a methodology but it also became content because it became something that I started to incorporate in the work rather than just being something that was for generating other material. So from having an instruction to myself where I might press a button and then run into the middle of the room and the recording says: 'Stand still for ten seconds. Okay, now go'. I don't know: 'Now run up and down until I say stop', or whatever. So initially it would be physical instructions, over time it became more complicated because I'd start to talk to myself in those instructions: 'Oh, maybe you shouldn't do that. I tell you what, why don't you just stop for a second, let me just— Okay, I've thought about it. Let's do this thing.' It's like the instructions became another partner. It was a subtle shift.

### **[00:17:20] COMPOSITIONAL PRINCIPLES**

**DR:** How did this content become a performance? I mean, how did you manipulate this content that you ended up with in rehearsal?

**KH:** That's a very big question. That speaks to: how do we ever make decisions about anything really, about what to include and what to leave out? I'm very interested in what I include and what I leave out. I always keep lists of what I don't include, and sometimes later on the lists of things I don't include become a whole other work that I do include. I'm not quite sure what drives the decisions about choices for material except that – I mean, more recently those decisions are probably driven a little bit more specifically by themes that I'm exploring. In the earlier days when I was developing this methodology, I probably just thought: 'Oh, that's quite funny when that sits next to that', or: 'That's a surprising juxtaposition – let's keep that in', or: 'I've improvised an engaging response to this provocation, I might keep that in'. And certainly, once you start to incorporate other actors in the work then that's a whole other sort of aspect of possibility. So it's a culmination of a really grounded improvisation practice that sits also with a composition practice – and those two things in my work sort of sit together in interesting ways.

**DR:** I would want to know more about what the principles of the composition practice might be, but it's maybe just an intuitive thing that you don't want to necessarily look into?

**KH:** I don't know if I have a set of absolutely set in stone principles. I mean, I'm interested in things like the way I can use space and architecture and juxtaposition. These days I enjoy using the notions of music as composition. So repetition or coda, the idea of coda, coming back to something over time or contrapuntal, you know, that idea of music that rhythmically sits slightly at odds with something else or underneath so that you might have polyrhythms. I guess those are the sorts of things that interest me. I suppose I think compositionally, probably a bit thematically and more conceptually than anything else.

**DR:** What were your musical influences?

**KH:** I played a lot of piano when I was younger and a lot of that was classical piano. But I love Satie – I love Satie's descriptors. And I've married a jazz musician, so I've listened to so much jazz in my life. But I also love Philipp Glass and Steve Reich and Morton Feldman and Arvo Pärt and those sort of minimalist repetitive artists. I mean, I love Patti Smith too! But those sort of artists interest me, I think, just in terms of the way that they might work with repetition and building of musical images. I think the music thing is probably a bit of an accident, I stumbled upon it. It wasn't a driving decision. It was the way that we've worked with the idea of music and performance in *Earshot* – it was an accident that came out of that development, and then as we started... In *Earshot* we worked a lot with unison performance – Jo and I speak in unison a lot – and canon, so there's this kind of feeling that when we work together, that we're playing with each other, we're playing music with each other with our voices. We work together really well because we've done that for so long together, so there's a feeling it's a little bit like we're playing music together. But I wouldn't say it's a purposeful decision – it feels like it's arisen over time through this sort of series of experiences that I've had.





**[00:21:13] MAKING *EARSHOT* (2017)**

**DR:** Then just to put *Earshot* in this continuity of you starting working on your own with your own audio instructions, then having a piece where you work with audio instructions with someone else, and then as you said, you becoming more interested in the accidental and the unplanned as part of that process. So then *Earshot* is a piece which is all about the accidental in a way, isn't it?

**KH:** It's completely about the accidental in a way because *Earshot* is constructed entirely of overheard and eavesdropped conversations that I've eavesdropped on and recorded, usually via a process of being somewhere in a public space, in a public domain, and with a computer and a laptop and typing. I have just had so many experiences when I've been standing in a supermarket queue or sitting on a train and you hear someone on the phone and they're breaking up with their boyfriend and they're completely sharing that information with everybody in the train carriage, or they're talking about their most recent colostomy bag operation in great detail and I just feel like – I've always felt like there's such a lot of epic drama in these stories that we overhear, whether we want to overhear them or not. I'd been travelling a lot, I was spending a lot of time in places like New York, and New York has an incredible aural, sonic – well, it probably doesn't at the moment, but usually – it has an incredible sonic landscape. People talk and shout all the time really loudly everywhere, and so my ears were very enlivened to this wonderful array of voices and accents and stories. One of my first trips to New York I had my audio recorder with me and walked with it down the street and I think that just really illuminated the potential to me of this idea around making a work out of material that the general public was generating for me. That's the reason why I didn't really think about it as verbatim theatre, although it is. I didn't go into it thinking: 'Oh, I'm going to make a verbatim piece and I'm going to subvert verbatim methodology.' It wasn't about being interested even necessarily in people's agency. It's really about what I happened upon and this sort of beautiful poetic musical language that is our lives. How ethical it is, I don't know. I sometimes wonder if it's not at all ethical to just write down other people's stories and they don't know that I'm listening.

**[00:23:52 to 00:24:58] Excerpt from *Earshot* (2017)**

**DR:** Did you have anyone see the show and say 'That's me!'?

**KH:** No. I did have a pretty tricky situation though because in *Earshot* there is some material from someone who lives next door, but she's not part of the theatre bubble so she wasn't aware of it. The material gets so mediated, it gets so layered and re-voiced and re-performed and re-written in the process of making it, it's layered and crafted, so it doesn't really belong to the people that first uttered it, I don't think.

**DR:** How long was the period of collecting these incidental sounds?

**KH:** Oh, you know, years. I mean, I'm just always collecting stuff. Some of it was from New York, some of it was from when I was in Thailand and listened to four drunken Yorkshiremen at the bar – probably three years of gathering material. Not everything made it in there of course. And then, how long did it take to make, was that going to be your next question? Well, it's always really interesting because in Australia it takes a really long time to make anything because, you know, I had to get money, it took a while to get the money, so we sort of did it in stages. Probably from the time we had our first development in the beginning of 2016 – the show went up at the end of 2017 – so probably a couple of years. But it didn't take two years to develop. It took two years to manifest and then we remounted it again for 2019.

**DR:** In the process of making you worked with another performer. You just mentioned that the way in which you worked with the material was a process of crafting and a process of transforming that initial material into a performance score. Can you describe that process of how you approached this material in rehearsal with your collaborator?

**KH:** *Earshot* is a collaboration with Josephine Lange, the other actor, and also Glynis Angell, who's the dramaturg, and Jem Savage, who's the sound designer. I think of the performance as a sort of three-hander really between myself, Jo and Jem, because Jem's sitting at the bio box but he's live-driving some of the audio in response to the way in which we're delivering the work. It's a very, very collaborative process with all of the collaborators, and the work I'm doing now has those collaborators



in it as well as a couple of additional ones. So it's building a really beautiful relationship. We write on the floor in some ways. What tends to happen is I gather a whole load of, you know, ridiculous amounts of material in all sorts of different forms, like audio scripts and pre-recorded audios and written scripts and other stuff. I bring it all together and then I have to spend a bit of time explaining it and talking it through with the dramaturg and she'll ask me pertinent questions. And she knows my work so she's really good at trying to tease out the key driving artistic lines of enquiry, if you like. Then we get it to some kind of point and then muck around with it on the floor for a while. And then I might go and write some more into it or re-write something. Sometimes she'll say: 'This is working, but what happens if you write into it in this way?' But then when we're all together, both Jo, the other actor, and Jem will – you know, Jem has this whole host of possibilities that he can offer. He brings a whole other set of offers as a sound designer. There's some instruments in that show that are built out of long hoses that we talk through and they analogously spatialise the sound so that we talk through them from the stage and they reach all the way out to the audience and they're topped with big funnels and they come out near an audience member, so... There's all sorts of kooky instruments made out of tin cans and camping pumps that play harmonics and he'll reverb that, put some reverb on it. So it's an open, enquiry-based, collaborative process that is underpinned by my very particular aesthetic and curiosity about something.

**[00:29:20 to 00:30:21] Excerpt from *Earshot* (2017)**

**[00:30:21] THE LANGUAGE OF PERFORMANCE: PHYSICALITY, VOICE, MICROPHONES**

**DR:** And what about the writing, the actual letters in the background of your performance?

**KH:** Oh yeah. I'm not sure if you're aware but that's voice-activated text, so we're speaking into a microphone. We're mic-ed up and those texts are generated by something a little bit like Siri, when you talk into a voice message on your phone you dictate it, like Dragon Dictation. So the software 'hears' what we're saying and it has to make this syntactical sense, but of course it doesn't always hear correctly, so you get this really bizarre accidental poetry. I was really interested in *Earshot* to see if I could add a different layer to the audience experience of language, of hearing and listening and reading and watching. I was interested in what might happen if they were listening to us speaking and they were seeing what we were saying – but it might not be exactly what they're hearing. And that's because I'm curious about how we might intersect all of those things: reading, watching, listening, hearing, in performance. It's really like a language on lots of different levels, metaphorical as well as physical.

**DR:** I'm just thinking about what you said at the beginning of the conversation about how you began your journey as a theatre-maker in a very physical way. To what extent is that Suzuki training and the fact that you have internalised that way of thinking about performance-making still there?

**KH:** I think Suzuki training grounds you in a presence, in a state of readiness. That's incredibly important in any kind of performance. Even though we're not tearing around the stage in that piece, we do need to be very, very ready at all times, and we're also listening with all of our body. We're also using – it's all about breath. So there's all sorts of things that are going on that perhaps the audience aren't privy to. We've got headphones as well, so sometimes we're performing headphone verbatim, we're hearing an audio and we're speaking it at the same time. Sometimes we're reading it. And sometimes Jo and I are both hearing headphone verbatim and improvising who speaks first. All of that delivery requires an incredibly refined sense of or capacity to listen and to be focused, but also a very developed sense of the micro as well as the macro. I think Suzuki training – certainly my experience of it – not just Suzuki training but the other sort of improvisational, physical improvisation work that I've done, has really grounded me in that. So I think it's really there, and that's where its beauty lies. I mean, a lot of people gravitate towards that sort of training because they feel like they're all young and they're feisty and they're sweaty and they want to just do the thing – which is great, but I think there's a whole lot of other benefits that underpin it that are about attention and presence, that really stand you in good stead over a longer career. I haven't had a traditional actor training history, so there's something about engaging with work physically and task-based that I've always gravitated towards. Because it means I'm not so curious about demonstrating an idea, I just want to do the thing, see what happens!

**DR:** Shall we talk about the work you're doing at the moment? You've mentioned you're developing a



new piece, *In Perpetuity*, and this is with the same collaborators that you worked with on *Earshot*.

**KH:** It's with the same collaborators as well as a choreographer, and also a musician called Diana Weston, who is a harpsichordist. I've got a lot of interest in disease and bodies and biology and medical processes and operations, and I've been very curious for some time about the process of cryogenic freezing. That was the sort of leaping-off point really for this work, *In Perpetuity*, which is an examination of the notion of immortality, and the different ways in which we are curious about immortality and the extent to which we might go. In a way this new work is building on the methodologies and the techniques of the previous work. So we're still working with microphones and voicing written texts and using audio scripts, and working with re-voicing found texts. I think we've got a couple of examples of work that we've taken from *Good Morning, Britain* and *Ellen*, you know, like morning shows, and we are re-voicing them, because in this work we are also working with pitch-shifting software – a bit like Laurie Anderson who uses it, or others. It's just two of us, we are able to provide the voices of six different characters in one scene using pitch-shifting. So it's building on this idea of how you might work with the voice digitally but also analogously. You know, talking into a fan – I don't know if you've ever done that but it's really fun. Try it, it makes you sound like a Dalek! You have to have the fan on then talk into it. It's a fun thing to do when you haven't got anything else to do on an afternoon. So there's all this fun stuff you can do to change your voice with objects. I'm always interested in how we can do these things with objects as well as with the digital tools that we have. So that work is still in process. We've had a couple of really fruitful developments. It's got lots of physical stuff in there as well, so we're working choreographically as well.

**DR:** In Alison Croggon's review of your show, she actually characterises you and your co-performer as 'voice artists', I think.

**KH:** Yeah, it's just great that she said that!

**DR:** Do you identify with that? Are you happy with that?

**KH:** Well, I do now! It wasn't how I would have described myself. I mean, I always describe myself as a theatre-maker. So I thought that was a great description and certainly I'm very interested in what the voice can do and the way the voice can be expanded, extended, extruded, together and separately. What I love about working with a microphone is that it gives you so much more capacity to explore. I mean, I don't particularly like my voice, but that's okay, that's just one of my anxieties. But I certainly enjoy working with a microphone, the potential of what a microphone can do in performance. When I first started using a Zoom recorder... You can put headphones on when you're using a Zoom, you can just walk around and it also works as a microphone. A microphone when you're listening just explodes sound in your ears, but also when you're working vocally, there's all this stuff that you can do with sibilance and really low tones in performance that is very liberating and very interesting and very creative and very, you know, really out there. You can make some really out there stuff. I don't particularly like shows where people are mic-ed up just for the hell of it. It sort of annoys me! You know, when you go and see a theatre show and they've just got microphones all the time, and I just kind of go: 'Just project your voice!'

**DR:** I know what you mean, the Madonna mics.

**KH:** Yeah, the Madonna mics! I don't think it's necessary, but I don't take my own advice because I really love working with a microphone and I think it's a really creative tool.

#### **[00:38:42] EXPLODING VERBATIM THEATRE**

**DR:** To what extent is the way in which, for example, Anna Deavere Smith, who is often seen as a progenitor of verbatim theatre – I mean, her specific technique is very much rooted in this skill of mimicry that she has as a performer, that she hears other people's voices and reproduces them in a way that actually feels faithful – to what extent is that mimicry an aspect of your interest as a performer?

**KH:** Anna Deavere Smith, she learns the texts as well. So she's performing a monologue that she's learnt and she listens to. I don't like doing that because I just don't like learning lines. So sometimes I work with what's called in Australia 'headphone verbatim'. I think Nature Theatre of Oklahoma might have originated [it], but also there's a couple of people who work quite well known in Australia in that



realm, particularly Roslyn Oades. I just use it as a tool, again to allow me to not have to learn lines, but there is something about being able to work from having the voice in the ear and really work to reproduce the exact breathing pattern, the stops, the huffs, the exclamations, the inhalations. Again, it's a task-based exercise that takes you out of yourself in a way. But I don't always do that because sometimes the headphone – you know, what I'm listening to in my headphones is myself, that is a recording of something that I've recorded over and over and over again. It isn't necessarily someone else's voice, it's often my own, or Jo's, because sometimes Jo and I perform each other's work, each other's stories or each other's monologues, or I'll be performing her voice even though it's my story. So we share – no one owns any of the stories at all.

**DR:** Yes. Interesting.

**KH:** That happened with Emilie and myself, particularly when we did *Maybe We're Never Together*. Often we prepared all those stories but then we often swapped them so I'd be saying her words back to her. Again it explodes the traditional relationship that we have with verbatim, which is about agency and about participants and testimony. Kind of lets go of that, in a way, and it's more about the material itself, the words themselves being the fodder, if you like. It's a material practice in a way, in that those recordings and those stories are materials that are manipulated. It is an interesting way to think about it.

**DR:** Yes, great... Thanks so much Kate, that's been really interesting, really helpful!

**KH:** I hope it's of interest. I mean, it's great to just talk about it in that way and it's great for you to ask those questions about the trajectory of the practice, because it's so rarely that we consider that. We're all just lurching from one thing to the next, aren't we? It just sounds like really cool research and I'm very stoked to be some small part of it.

Transcription by Tom Colley

### Clips Summary

[00:12:58 to 00:13:55] *Maybe We Are Never Together* (2011)

[00:23:52 to 00:24:58] *Earshot* (2017)

[00:29:20 to 00:30:21] *Earshot* (2017)

Audio available at [www.auralia.space/gallery2-katehunter/](http://www.auralia.space/gallery2-katehunter/).

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