

(0:03) INTRO MUSIC: beat like heartbeat, keyboard.

(0:06) Kari Robertson: Welcome to Triple Pocket Napkin Fold Podcast

(0:10) Mads Bycroft: I'm Mads

(0:11) Kari Robertson: I'm Kari

(0:13) Natalia Sorzano: I'm Nika. Together we are GHOST; a DIY, nomadic, facilitative platform based in Rotterdam and Marseille.

(0:20) Mads: This podcast is one of a three-part series commissioned by Artspace; Ideas platform. It's part of a larger project titled Triple Pocket Napkin Fold which includes 12 audio commissions from artists, poets, musicians, theater-makers and made in collaboration with dePlayer Rotterdam.

(0:37) KR: Today, you're going to hear 4 of the commissioned tracks plus excerpts from related texts and our improvised conversation about the work.

(0:47) NS: This project emerged from a research study group around the ideas of Eduoard Glissant, namely opacity and improvisation, which was held and conducted in collaboration with Tender Center Rotterdam; a queer, community space.

(01:01) KR: The participants included in this project Triple Pocket Napkin Fold are:

MB: Dani Reynolds

KR: Dean Bowen

(01:07) NS: Isabel Marcos, La Leche Travesti

KR: Cannach McBride

NS: Ogutu Muraya, Aloardi Collective

KR: The Postpeople

(01:13) MB: Angela Schilling

NS: Milena Bonilla

MB: Megan Cope and Isha Ramdas and Karen Iterralde Nuremburg. You can find a transcript of this podcast below, and we hope you enjoy.

Digital shhhhhh sound overlaid with harmonium ambience.

(01:37) KR: So, first up we're gonna go straight into playing a track by Karin Iterralde, it's called 'Nos persigue La Luna', I hope you enjoy it.

((01:39) *Nos Persigue La Luna* by Karin Iterralde Nuremburg plays)

[Audio Description:](#)

Single string plucking like water dripping, water dripping backwards and up. A metallic string instrument plays in the back, adding tension. Digital beeps add to the rhythm. A teasing and cheeky voice speaks rhythmically as the strings layer, more and less viscous liquids dropping in all directions, electronic now.

*Que todo está en calma
Estamos protegidos
No está pasando nada, pero tengo miedo
Tengo miedo
Aquí no hay peligro*

Melodic gong sounds playfully, jingling like a nursery. It contrasts the mysterious tone of the string instrument and the lyrics that address fear. The voice is an adult's voice, it speaks of "mami". It is excessive like a 1980s telenovela. The voice whines, it whinges, it elongates like an elastic band and then snaps back, slapping skin.

*Pero cuando, cuando tengo miedo
El peligro está, está por todos lados
Y parece que me va a alcanzar
El peligro en mi cabeza
Me acompaña a donde quiera
Es así como la luna que parece perseguirnos*

Is the voice sad? Reaching out? Or toying with us? Boisterous. It is also sensual and luring. The voice is felt in the chest. The rhythm and melody stop: then the voice continues:

*Y entonces digo mami
Trepate al carro
Pegate una aceleradita
Que nos persigue la luna
Prruu, cambio y fuera
Ya entró la niña, la niña ya entró
Prruu, cambio
Aquí todo está en calma*

There is a refrain, a series of voices join in for a chorus, smooth harmony like salted skin after beach.

*Y en esta calma
Nadie se puede relajar
En esta calma*

The voice breaks down into units of sounds. "Huhs" and "hmms". The voice cries, jumping up and landing now the voice is dripping in place of tears running down rhythmically. There is

despair from the main voice, while the chorus hmms in layers, as if it were watching it all happen from a distance.

(04:54) NS: We met up with Karin today at a Ramen place and we spoke about her track.

(05:00) Sounds of slurping and tinkling of cutlery mix with sound excerpts from *Nos persigue La Luna* by Karen Iterralde Nuremburg.

(05:06) MB: We could also do a little introduction, we're sitting in a cafe.

KR: Yes, we are, we're sitting in a ramen restaurant...

MB: I'm pouring some green tea for Karin as we speak

KR: ...with the one and only Karin Iterralde... Iterralde? Am I saying it right?

(05:45) Karen Iterralde: Yep, hello. Okay, so when I was doing it I started a bit late because I was gonna do something else, then I didn't, and then I went to Ecuador and I started when I was there. And, like I was saying sometimes I take this time to look retrospectively at what I have done and I realized that in the years of school I did quite some works that had to do with walking and encountering the city in different ways... and, like, somehow mapping but like mapping through different elements, so like where do I find rucola plants growing in the city? And that's a map. And then, like, map through the movement of strangers, this happened there that time. So I was like what is it about this walking? And why is it that when I got the chance to be in art school and have access to workshops that were amazing - it was an amazing opportunity, the only thing I wanted to do was to be walking on the sidewalk. And then I realised something that maybe was not all, but was an entrance to myself retrospectively; and it's that I always grew in a gated neighborhood, and then I always traveled by car. So, these free walks, wanderings, were not accessible to me when I was a teenager or a child and then my big impulse when I was here in Amsterdam was to be outside and to touch the street, to roll on it if I can and do all these things. So, then I was there again (Ecuador) and I could meet, again, with some conditions that have shaped me; I was again in the gated neighborhood, in my mothers house, I was again encountering and paying attention to other aspects of that structure; the gate itself, what is the park in a gated neighborhood? How is the park like? The ornaments, there's guards all the time and what is the relationship I have had to guards since they have been always so close to me? Cause this kind of collaborating with strangers, doing things out of my studio is something that comes naturally I thought maybe it was nice to try out to do something by myself and my perspective. So, I just dig in to a little bit feelings about transiting and why the gates? (09:00) And then I was just recording in my room and then yeah that's how I started to do the audio piece. I just took a piece of song from Meridian Brothers, which is a Colombian band that I really like, the musical samples are coming from there. I think it is also nice to just be able to use these sounds that I enjoy a lot and then I think I was just playing with these vocal moanings and trying to see what it could be to be expressive. That's something I was exploring; what could it be to be expressive?

(09:50) MB: That's a pretty perfect segway for our next question! Which was that in your track, you use many different registers of voice winking, crying, moaning perhaps sometimes on the verge of laughing, and we were hoping you could talk a bit about your use of those vocal

expressions, whether it was experimental or whether there was a way of was improvised how you then made rhythms out of these different kinds of vocal affectations?

(10:18) KI: Yeah, I don't know, I think I was trying to, yeah, like explore through vocals. And so not being like that narrative, or like this idea, but more like these sounds and the effect because of the way they're modulated, and then maybe trying to explore different ways of standing around the topic of, like, security. And that comes with fear, of course, like if you're like, full of security, it's because you're scared that something's happening. And I guess it's a fear that I see. And I also felt, and I was, but I also sometimes, question it, and also say, 'well, what about this fear?' Like, why can't I relax when nothing is happening? And so I was kind of trying to, with different sounds, place myself, or maybe the listener, in a different position around the fear. So that sometimes it's more like, annoying, then it's like, okay, this has been going on for so long that it's funny now, or like, there's maybe a moment of release. And also a moment where you also wrote in The Sound description, there's like a distance, because there's like some tones that are more harmonious or calm. So I think that was what I was trying to do with the vocals. I also read the other day, I was listening to Julio Mayorga. And then I realized that in some of his songs, there is quite some untrained vocals. And they seem very familiar to me. And then I realized, maybe there is some folk, Andean singing, that has this type of vocals, (12:14) I'm, I'm pretty sure, but I cannot say really, because this just happened some days ago. So I haven't really looked for it. And I think there's something of like, modeling the voice into these different spaces, that has to do with the fact that my voice is not trained by but then I can allow myself to like, kind of mess with it, instead of sing, like properly sing, which is not something that I would that I would... I would definitely like to also do, but I'm not there. So I can explore these other places.

(12:45) MB: It's super interesting, because I also feel that there is a really interesting relationship between control and an uncontrolled sound. Actually on the one hand, those moments of expression are really free or wandering or open. But there is also, in other moments, there is this kind of rhythm that emerges that feels like you're actually super in control of what you're doing. And I think that that tension is super nice.

(13:12) KI: I think maybe in the vocal, like, I was like, freestyling, or improvising. But then when I was in GarageBand, I was like, chopping here, and chopping there! And put this little thing here, and then maybe the control is afterwards, in the editing, but I think the singing was like this. Yeah, this exploration that maybe you mentioned.

((musical interlude; excerpts from *Nos persigue La Luna* by Karen Iterralde Nuremburg))

(13:45)KI: And then, yes, I think it's nice, this voice thing... that it requires the body. Like I also couldn't do the moanings without like, really using the body. Yeah. And there is something like really nice about that, that you have to do it. Yeah, you just have to go and just there's no, in-between, because otherwise I cannot do it. And I think you know, the performative aspect in my, in other moments of my practice, kind of comes and goes, I am sometimes more comfortable with it. And then if I don't do it for a while, I can close up like a little shell. And this was very easy

to do because it was in the room, and it was voice and therefore, it was very liberating. And then I remember the first time I let you listen to it. I was like whoa, no! But since then I'm actually super comfortable with it. And I know it's quite intimate because I mean at least I feel it's in the moment because I really feel this body.

(14:54) KR: It feels like it has so much liveness and so much body in it for a pre-recorded track that's playing digitally. It's interesting how much carries across.

((15:05) musical interlude; excerpts from *Nos persigue La Luna* by Karen Iterralde Nuremburg)

(15:14) MB: This morning, we were talking, we were preparing and having a discussion about your work and we listened to your piece. And we were talking about how there is, Well, I mean, actually, there's quite a couple of pieces in different languages in the work that we were thinking about the plasticity of specific languages and the idea that different languages have different musical qualities and cadences, rhythms and shapes. And I guess the question is, whether it's something that resonates with your experience of working between languages, because we really felt that there was something that was specific to singing in Spanish that was also about the rhythm and the musicality of the work...

(15:52) KR: And the drama!

(15:54) KI: the drama, yeah. Yeah, I think... I don't know, I do relate to the language differently. And this thing that you were saying in the sound description of talking about Mami, it is also specific relationship, I think. I cannot talk about Spanish in general, because there's such a big Spanish speaking population, and there's many different cultures in there. But, at least, I think a relationship with parenthood and my city where a lot of people live with their parents until very late; there's a specific type of relationship there. Talking about gated neighborhoods means to also talk about family, because that's how you close yourself up. And that's how you enter - you say the name of a family you're going to visit and your last name. And that's like so there's something about guest and resident that has to do with family and the closing up. So I think the Spanish was maybe important in that sense of what it brought. You also mentioned before a 'soap opera' kind of feeling that has to do with a tension that is family-related; I think the Spanish was bringing that, also with saying Mami and things like this yep.

(17:24) MB: Uh-huh hmm.

(17:26) KR: I think that's all of our questions, thanks so much!

MB: Thank you for meeting us today, we love your piece!

(17:30) KI: Thank you! I love GHOST.

((17:35) musical interlude; excerpts from *Nos persigue La Luna* by Karen Iterralde Nuremburg)

(17:44) KR: And this is *Dear Colleague* by the Postpeople.

((17:49) *Dear Colleague* by The Postpeople)

Audio description:

Two voices jump in immediately:

*Dear colleague, Dear colleague
we can't get there, We can't write*

Their voices are on the brink and full of laughter.

Dear colleague (sigh) we can read, but we can't write !!

They dictate together - interrupting one another - finishing each other's sentences what is meant to be written. They laugh, they are having fun, they are amused by the impossibility of writing, the irony that writing is their goal, that writing is what they want to teach, yet they can't do it themselves.

*we wanna - we wanna- we wanna teach -this is what we wanna get to with the teaching - ahhh
yes!*

Percussion joins their voices. They repeat each other's words like an echo, a second voice. Backing vocals sing along in a harmonic manner

*Dear colleague!
Dear Colleague!*

The voices can't stop laughing. The sing/laugh:

Look at us, we're reading!
We're reading !
We're reading !

It's sticky and ironic and playful. However, the repetition of the lyrics builds a tension that turns sarcastic and inconceivable: Laughter less felt now. Speech is more insistent and rhythmic.

*I'm learning - getting there - to write
I don't know how to write but I'm learning
we're getting better
we're getting better*

The even consistency of the rock track - snare and cymbal and kick drum- with the jesting melancholy of the backing vocal sung in unison, are overlaid and interrupt with the same pieces of phrases. Urgent, jubilant, sincere and silly.

we can make sentences

we can make sentences

sometimes!

Will they mean anything?

Sincerely...

(21:28) MB: That was Dan Tuomey and Tracy Hanna, who make up The Postpeople. About their work they wrote; 'sending an email to our colleague raises the following questions. Can we say anything? Do we mean anything? Are we able to write? Are we able to speak?'

(21:48) KR: Maybe to give a little bit of context on the Postpeople; Tracy and Dan are both visual artists who are based in Rotterdam in the Netherlands. And I believe they started working together as the Postpeople around 2017, something around there. They've gone through various iterations of how they work together in this sort-of, musical, sound collaboration: So for instance, they did a performance where Tracy would be typing lyrics, while Dan was performing. So there was this live transmission of lyrics that Dan would then have to immediately perform in song. And the musical accompaniment was just standard pre-recorded keyboard midi music that plays if you hit the right button. And they've also performed James Joyce; Tracy singing James Joyce while Dan plays guitar, for example. So kind of interesting, experimental, improvisational, sound making.

(23:00) MB: I remember one performance that they did with a giant book, as well, they created this giant book and then performed from that as a sort of score at WORM in Rotterdam.

(23:10) KR: I love in this track how it feels really irreverent. I think that's something that I really admire and, sort of, value in the way the Postpeople work. And that it almost seems like the lyrics are... they both mean a lot, and they also don't kind of mean anything it seems. They get just kind of repeated and exaggerated and expressed until they become really like, plastic and silly. Yeah, but also, I wonder, with reading the 'about' section I was thinking it also seems to be speaking about some quite serious subjects in a way. Like, maybe it's talking about power and talking about the ability to speak and speaking in a professional context, and yeah, I think there's a nice interplay between sort-of comedic, silly elements and quite serious themes.

(24:05) MB: I also find that they use a lot of humor in their collective and individual practices and it feels to me that this track starts very funny and then by the end, the humor is kind of evacuated, but at the same time, the longer you listen, the more funny it becomes. So this is...

(24:22) NS: Kind of sarcastic no? Because I think they also teach and part of their teaching is writing songs. And it feels to me at least that they were probably slightly stuck in the song making... I mean, specifically for this piece, that they, maybe, found themselves not finding a

way to make the song. And that's something they struggle with while teaching is... Okay, "we're teaching how to make songs and we can't even make our song?!" Or, that's at least, how I saw it.

(24:59) MB: You feel very much there in the struggle with them (laughs).

(25:01) NS: Exactly, exactly.

(25:03) KR: That's actually interesting because that kind of relates to Angela's work. I was thinking, this idea of taking a moment of hesitancy or of not knowing what to do and then that *becomes* the work. That's maybe an interesting overlap...

(25:21) MB: Postpeople have also made a music video for this track, which is incredible. And we are excited to share that with you when we launch our website. So maybe we can introduce Angela Schilling now who is an artist born in Peramangk country and currently working in Ngannawal and Ngambri country Angela works primarily with sound and as an archivist but also as a musician and DJ.

((23:52) *One of seven or more pieces* by Angela Schilling plays)

Audio description:

Ambient noise and birds singing. I hear the sound of one note on a keyboard that appears and fades out. Another note on the keyboard joins in, rich, and warm. Something rustles in the grass, or across the carpet. There is a subtle noise that feels like dust, but makes it feel warm. The keyboard is digital and the sound is cut in small uneven parts. Fading in reverse. Augmenting, swallowing, growing and then cutting itself off. It comes in and out with different intensities. Then a melody begins with a base sound, it becomes music. The sounds resonate through a large space. Slow chords, not quite melancholic, but waiting, stumbling, doubtful. A tentative voice speaks, as if on a telephone:

Um so, I'm not really sure.

A rhythm enters, slow, casual, cool, minimal, calm.

how about this

A higher pitch voice speaks in the background and it repeats in uneven rhythms. Percussion also joins in, it is rhythmic and slow, but doesn't keep a beat. Something is beginning and then it ends.

Um, so

how about this

Words are trimmed and echo slightly, fading

how about about, bout, out, t -

(29:34) NS: I find it very melancholic, that piece. I don't know if it's the sound of the birds in the back, but I have the feeling that it's related to the notes that are played that are quiet. They're like either E minor or A minor. I mean, I'm not a musician. I have no idea, if that is actually true, but they are quite melancholic notes.

(29:55) MB: Also in the tone of the voice, I think, but I don't know whether I would have said melancholic... I feel like it's quite calm or like that there is a sort of waiting or, or a hesitancy within the voice that feels that that maybe is the tone that you're talking about as well.

(30:16) KR: You used the word 'cautious' and also 'withholding' I think Mads and it feels more like that, it's staying in an in-between or something. And not only the voice but the soundscape behind has this kind of starting, stopping, it's on and then off again proceeding and receding.

(30:48) MB: There is a fragmentation that is throughout but also increases. At the beginning as you say there's sound and then pause, sound and then pause and then by the end even the text, words are being cut in half or there is more of a fragmentation that happens.

(31:05) KR: But also like a nice textural build at the same. By the end there's quite a sort of full ambient layering, despite this almost staccato beginning, so it's interesting, it sort of creeps up on you.

(31:20) MB: Mmhmm

(31:27) NS: Also what she's speaking of, an uncertain or unsure and then the repetition of that which goes along with that hesitancy.

(31:43) KR: It was interesting Mads, you were saying that for you there was a familiarity in the field recordings?

(31:50) In the bird songs? Yeah, it feels really... located in so called 'Australia' yeah, I, also it would be quite funny if I'm wrong about that (all laugh). But yeah, it felt really familiar when the field recordings come in, it felt like someone's back yard or parks that I'd been to and there's something very comforting there actually.

(32:23) NS: Yeah the lyrics I guess and the repetition of the sounds led me to think of a part from Glissant that I'm gonna quote "Repetition, moreover, is an acknowledged form of consciousness both here and elsewhere. Relentlessly resuming something you have already

said, consenting to an infinitesimal momentum and addition, perhaps unnoticed, that stubbornly persists in your knowledge.”

((32:59) Musical interlude excerpt from *One of seven or more pieces* by Angela Schilling)

(33:12) KR: Through these podcast episodes you have been hearing and will be hearing more short excerpts of text. These come from a reading group that we ran as GHOST between 2019 and the end of 2020 which centered around the ideas of Eduardo Glissant but brought in a lot of other authors and thinkers, to sort-of, think along with. We ran it in collaboration with Tender Centre, a queer community space in Rotterdam. You’re going to hear a quote now from Dionne Brand and I’ll let Mads introduce her work further but she was one of the authors we read during the group.

(34:00) MB: We’re actually recording from Natalia’s dining room in Rotterdam and it’s on a street with a tram and lots of foot traffic...

(34:09) KR: A lot of action in general! (all laugh).

(34:11) NS: It adds to the layers of opacity that we’re demanding now (all chuckle)

(34:16) MB: Um, we listened to Dionne Brand performing from the book ‘The Blue Clerk’ as part of our reading group. Dionne Brand is a Canadian poet, born in Trinidad and Tobago and we thought we would include an excerpt from that same book as a way of connecting elements in the work of Angela and Aloadi in terms of what is withheld or not-said or not-done or not-expressed and maybe pointing to the fullness of that withholding. “I have left this unsaid, I have withheld, what is withheld is the left hand page. 9 left hand pages have already written their own left hand pages as you will see, they are chronic. I have withheld more than I have written, evergreen and deciduous, incurable and uneasy and like freight.” And in an interview Dionne Brand was talking about the beginning of the book, the excerpt I just read and she said “It began with that idea at the beginning of the book that writing is a kind of negotiation between what is written and what is withheld and then how what is withheld multiplies much more than what you would actually write down.”

(Musical interlude - abstract notes on musical saw)

NS: We are now going to listen to Aloadi’s track ‘La Belleza del Miedo es Despertar’ which translates to “the beauty of fear is to wake up” Aloadi is a collective that is based between Lima and Rotterdam at the moment, actually, but it was founded in 1998 in Peru. It’s had different people coming in and out and they are dedicated to electronic music, experimental music, they also have had radio shows they have an independent label, they’ve organized workshops and events and exhibitions and all sorts of exchange between different people who are making sound. Currently the people who make up Aloadi are; Gabriel Castillo, Janneke van der Putten and Sajjra Xhrs Galarreta.

(37:00) KR: Oh, and a quick note on Aloardi's track; there's some silence at the beginning, just FYI.

((37:09) *La Belleza del Miedo es Despertar* by Aloardi plays)

Audio description:

Silence with very subtle slow fade in.

Hundreds of birds and insects singing in different melodies and pitches fade in. We are in the Amazon jungle. The singing becomes louder and a base sound from the environment becomes the blanket that holds it all together. I sense this lower base noise might be water, the Amazon river or one of its slopes? It's hard to separate one sound from the others, because there is so much singing that once one is thinking of one bird or insect, another one appears. However, something else begins to sing or speak or gesticulate louder than the rest. It is communicating to another one of its kind that is much further away. Or is it an echo? No, I think they are speaking to each other. Wwwoaaaaooowww. Prolonged and slow. In the background -although it can't be called the background because it is so prominent and loud-, life screams out. Other creatures sing as loud as wwwoaaooowww, but more la Eeeeewwuuuuu. Suddenly, something screams loudly, it is very close to the recording source. It is rough and low pitch, it has a coarse texture and an urgency to scream. Is it upset?

(40:35) KR: Nika, you were saying you know something about the mythology, or were the inspiration for this track comes from?

(40:45) NS: Yeah, well they sent it to me so that's why I know. It's a myth from the jungle of the Amazon from within the Peruvian territory and it's called La Yacumama. The myth is of a gigantic serpent that is related to the boa constrictor and they are protectors of the water, of the resources, the lakes; anything that is related to a body of water within the Amazonian region, they are the protectors. And, apparently what they do is they make very loud, deafening type of sound and it produces movements like an earthquake, seismic movements when somebody is putting at risk these areas, or the ecosystem. So it creates these sounds to scare people away, it's quite beautiful.

(41:55) KR: And is it an like exaggeration of the vibration of sound; the sound is so loud that it causes this huge terrestrial vibration?

NS: Yes, and I guess the — movement also, that makes people move away. And it's quite beautiful because there's so many of this type of myths within different regions of latin America.

For instance the virgin of Guadalupe is also related to snakes and to rivers, in Northern America in Mexico and in Colombia 'La Madre Monte' who also protects the landscape from being exploited so it's actually something that's quite frequent within oral histories and farmer populations and indigenous communities.

(42:52) MB: Really interesting that you mention that Nika, it reminds me of another idea by Edouard Glissant which has become really central to my research over the last couple of years which is Pensée du Tremblement or trembling thought, trembling thinking, which Glissant suggests is in opposition to systemic thinking or thoughts of the system. Actually, maybe we can play a small excerpt of Glissant talking about Pensée du Tremblement which we found on Glissant's website, which has a lot of really fantastic references and excerpts and descriptions of different terms.

((43:39) Excerpt of Edouard Glissant speaking in French, no direct translation/transcription available)

(45:07) MB: I also came across this idea in a book of poetry called Le Coque du la Montaigne. The book's actually not been translated into English so this translation has been done very slowly by me so it also will probably have quite a few errors but I'll just read this excerpt as well. "Imagine the flight of thousands of birds over a lake that flattens and melts into the earth. See the hesitation, the indecision of the swarming birds. Conceive the spiral that they unwind and on which the wind is flowing. But you will not really know their number as they are thrown over crest and revine, they rise and drop out of sight, they fall and they take root, then they leave again in a single wave. Their unpredictability is that which connects them. Their beauty strikes, flees, then the night looms and amazes you. Trembling thought arises from everywhere; from music and form, soft and slow, heavy and thudding music. Beauty with open cries. It keeps us from thoughts of the system and systems of thought."

(46:25) KR: I couldn't say if it's a correct translation, but it's a very beautiful translation anyway. (Mads laughs).

(46:31) (Outro music comes in) MB: It's getting dark outside, and our stomachs have started rumbling so we're going to...

(46:35) NS: Ours... Or just mine?! (all laugh)

(46:38) MB: It's true but it's a sign enough to wrap up this episode.

(46:44) KR: Thanks a lot for listening and thanks also to Artspace Ideas Platform and to all the artists in this episode, if you want to you can find a transcript of this podcast linked just underneath the episode. And, if you enjoyed this one there's two other episodes so keep an eye out for those.

(47:08) ALL: Thanks, thank you. Ciao, bye.

(47:10) Outro music, harmonium plays notes, sounds of birds and ocean plays out.