

Project description

During the Can Serrat residency, I worked on my second poetry EP. The working title is 'all the swarming creatures that swarm'. This EP is a collaborative project with many local musicians, including my lotus threads collaborator Hannah Wu. It explores exchange in sound, language as reciprocity and voice as . This is explored through themes of deep listening, light, stars, non-human personhood, biophonies, translation/the untranslatable and interconnectedness. I am working with field recordings, spoken word, taped interviews, and a wide range of instrumentalists to create polyphonic, layered soundscapes.

Work statement

At Can Serrat, my work process took inspiration from the practice of 'deep listening', as developed by Pauline Oliveros. This practice explores the difference between the involuntary nature of hearing and the conscious nature of listening. As Pauline says, 'We open in order to listen to the world as a field of possibilities and we listen with narrowed attention for specific things of vital interest to us in the world'.

Not only did I listen to lots and lots of music at Can Serrat as part of my research, I went on sound walks in the area, took field recordings and taped interviews with the other residents, which inspired my poem 'Celistia' on translation, conversation and the ways in which people imprint upon us. I also wanted to engage in intuitive ways of writing, so did morning pages for 30 minutes to an hour in the mornings and chose to experiment with poetic forms such as abecedarians, poems composed entirely of questions, concrete poetry and poetry using the language of dream, perfume, and multi-lingual poetry. I thought deeply about and became obsessed with pigeons and whales, visited the pigeon room in Can Serrat and tried to inhabit their perspectives when writing poetry. I took footage on my iPhone and camcorder of El Bruc, Can Serrat and the people in it, to refer to in my future writing. I recorded readings in the grounds and surrounding environment to make short films with in the future.

I also took voice notes of residents sharing untranslatable words from their languages and will integrate that into my final track—this is a practice that I will continue to do. I also read a lot of bilingual Spanish and Catalan poetry, which was incredibly inspiring—I discovered the Mexican poetic movement of infrarealism, which in turn introduced me to the concept of 'poema integral', a literary text that is a total poem incorporating language and genre into the text as a way of representing the full integration of the poet into all areas of life. 'Celistia' is a blend of languages, prose poetry, found poetry, quotes from other writers that is currently being made into a track with my collaborator Hannah Wu.

☆.●* Celístia
Panda Wong
written at Can Serrat

A Catalan word for the brightness from the stars.

There is no equivalent in English, which makes me think of how Laura always says 'I love you' to her sister in English because it has less weight than French.

What are the stars trying to say?

We can think of their light as language.

Language can also be considered light, as what Mei-mei Bersenbrugge writes about thought: 'a form of organized light'.

Writer Claudia Pagés said about translation: '...Words and letters may move from one sound to another, but you'll still make them drown in a specific centre each time.'

I misread my friend Elese's Instagram post caption as '...many windows make the light work'.

Skyglow.

A beautiful word for the city's artificial halo of light that blocks out the stars' distant language.

Emma and Enxhi show us how to make cyanotypes, Prussian blue impressions of objects on paper, proof of the world as many little pressures given and received, the way light brings it all to the surface.

In a conversation with Ada, I think about how an accent is a remnant, a cyanotype of language.

Hannah tells me about how at Jeff Mills, Jacque closes her eyes to feel the music as much as possible, to commune with something so far from what she knows.

At the CCCB, Rgina sings a wordless song as we slowly rise towards the Agnes Varda exhibition.

I have started to collect words that are untranslatable in English.

According to Lena, heimat in German can best be described as a sense of home (one that doesn't have to be your native home).

Maria says that in Galego, there are more than 70 words to talk about the rain. Her favourite is orballo, a kind of rain that is very soft, it appears to be very light, but you end up completely wet.

Gizem tells me that in Turkish, yakamoz means the moon's reflection on the ocean at night.

At Platja de l'Arboçar, Noa starts a chain reaction of bodies (me, Gizem, Emma, Juliana, Maria, Lena, Laura, Vic) running into the ocean.

The moon's reflection in pieces.

Pieces surging together as one.

Light drowning in the centre of the ocean.

The night blinks back in distance.

Mum sends me a voice note explaining the Chinese phrase 欲言又止, '...the urge to talk but the words somehow stop at your lips'.

Sky to shore, thought to mouth, language is a structure that eats itself.

Laura is carving out bodies in lino that twist back on themselves.

You cannot take back any marks you make in linocuts.

Like bodies, they hold the possibility of scars.

Things tend to twist: roots, language, bodies.