



sometimes we need a bit of FEEDBACK?! :X

Lili Huston-Herterich

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To: sophie bates

Sophie

The chaos in familial conversation, these talking over one another that subject (the horror of a woman being run over five times) becomes numbed or like a smear over the duration of the conversation, it's more about thinking of it together rather than the subject itself, and also how much head space that takes (I'm thinking too about what must have been a long process of subtitled this moment, like pushing the capacity of how much headspace it takes by processing it further to amplify its disassociating quality. I've also subtitled some archival family videos so perhaps this is me coming at it from a point of my experience doing something (a process) retroactive and slow to a moment that was in essence fast and transient - in a car, in the morning, in an enclosed shared space, after perhaps a night alone in a bed masturbating, googling why I'm not wet, how to have better sex, and the head carrying that hurricane into the very different outwards hurricane of familial conversation.

Omg sheen girls and the mainstream pop dance music, and that Matt's stuttered giggle that seems like the way hot boys learned to train their giggles to be hot.

Yeah this family saying things out loud in the car! Like whatever comes, remember driving in Spain, won't do that again, it's only twelve minutes from their house, 15 minutes from the other... won't make much of a difference, don't suppose they have one in Tesco. It's like the loudness of thoughts said outloud to people you are familiar (family) to and this really sets the way you've edited the other parts in the work, associative but also along a path that is perhaps a more inner illustration of your own tangential patterns of thinking through being (and doing something useful, as the woman who is tackling the problem of drawing and painting, but I missed the context of that reading - don't think that matters, just missed it in the flow of the work).

Back at the NYE table and it's reminding me of this conversation Clem and I had this morning stemming from my expressing frustration in the expectation to like ~do~ recipes or cooking or whatever. She was describing her high school friends in Melbourne and how they "perform acts of courtesy" - for everyone's birthday there is a score, for holidays there is a score, for girls nights there is a score, for dinners with couples there is a score. It's again this performance we do with people we are familiar with to perform or familiarity, or maybe reinforce and affirm some reciprocal being in each others lives. These traditions, which are important. But also gendered, the girls talking about smoking at the summer table, talking about making it in her career when she can smoke Vogues, that stuttered giggle that I can't stop thinking about that Matt made which is so familiar, nostalgic even because I don't think men around me now make that laugh so often anymore (I'm certain they did). Anyway what I mean is you're shooting all these performances of courtesy, sharing bits of life with your parents (your brother talking about a traffic jam, maybe also following patterns that he gleaned from your parents, talking about traffic as a gesture of care and connection.. but maybe I'm projecting this also to my own family's habits).

And then all of a sudden I'm hearing Christmas music and holding hands at a dinner table with mash and gravy and it IS tradition, there is a real recognised tradition, but edged up against the NYE party and the family car and the summer cigarette table, but right now I'm really missing the smash cuts of masturbating and talking about wetness and your partners penis and google, like I just need some time alone in my bedroom to be me which ends up also being an over-performance of "me" in antithesis to the me that fits into different roles in these different contexts, different performances of courtesy with people you've known forever, since primary school, since birth.

The driving shots make me a bit sick and I'm trying not to feel trapped in all these worlds and have a bit more sensitivity to them, sorry to bring my own trauma to this.

The shot of your father feeding maybe your grandfather - ? is really beautiful, also a gesture of care and courtesy that is written into some code, but one we don't see often, caring for your elderly parents.

Relieved by the piano, someone does this so everyone in the room can be alone together for a while.

I haven't really acknowledged the jenga shots that often have these overlays, double exposures. They feel unresolved because they don't happen so often, but I guess it's a balance. These focused uninterrupted shots of showing the apartment, the car, the summertime table. There is a girl on her phone during jenga and her here-not-here presence, occupying two spaces at once (screen and benga), and we just heard the word Instagram which points out. The double exposure points out to this two, here-not-here seeing two things. Could use more of that layering?

Another tradition and courtesy, a mother reading a socially constructed definition of love (why can love not be irritable? Why can love never end?) because that is her courtesy, her gesture, her affirmation of her son's wedding, something real and important despite its construction.

I really love this part of your memory of the drive to your grandparents, a routine, the predictability of it. And maybe the predictability is facilitated and encouraged with these courtesy performances. Offering sensorial predictability and stability as a care and love gesture.

I love how it dissolves into a list. I love your lists and when you read them. I miss the list from the beginning, but maybe actually that's the best thing about it. Your grandma the artist, you the masturbating woman.

"You've never driven before mom?" You puncture the shared stream of consciousness, rare also to hear your voice behind the camera come out and into the mix, this is a super nice moment, also that your parents just keep going with the navigation, and the music playing too. Obsessed with everyone in the car letting your mom think about her work and how she needs to prepare for work. That is real love <3 very very touching way to end it.

Hey ok I've finished it and I'll read the text now (I read it before but forgot it bless my brain). Sophie I think it's really a good work, something I would be very willing to sit through again. But I didn't see it exhibited, I'm sitting here on my couch fully plugged in with headphones and all. There is something about the tempo of it that I wonder about. Maybe I'm pushing too hard this addiction to hear you reading your lists, or how the story of your grandmother's house slowly turns into list, but it changes the tempo of the video so much so when we return to the car or the table I have this list lingering - a flavour of associative memory - as I witness a now moment, a present moment. Which feels to me how I often witness moments. There are two moments where the tempo of the work picks up, in the beginning with the masturbating, putting the phone away, and this grandma list moment. There is also the moment where you are reading about the painter who wants to quit painting, but that doesn't have the same speed, it functions at the pace the driving, table, Christmas, etc shots function. If anything, I enjoyed so much these shifts in tempo that I could use a bit more in the work. I'm thinking also about the context of how its shown, how they are so seductive in the pace and poetry that they can hook people back in, like - you were just on a drive and the conversation is banal and recognisable but worthwhile staying through but if you've got a short attention span in this space you aren't normally in, the fast moments pull you back. Like - this will only take a moment, a list can't go on forever. And then all of a sudden your back in the car. Little breaths, you know?

Omg just read the text and that's your grandma your dad is feeding, and it's your grandmother that is the artist! I didn't catch it, fine I didn't but glad I have the text now to tell me. Wow </3 I'm feeling things. And the roll of film of photos of you insisting you in this familial space where "you" can get lost in the "we". Now I'm very moved and would like to cry.

I'm going to stop writing for now, I don't really want to write a conclusion. I'm sorry if this is too much labour to read. It took me so long to get to this as it takes me so long to get to most things, especially things I think are important. Forgive me.

Every work I see of yours I like better than the last Sophie. Or wrong, sorry – every work I see of yours reminds me how much I like your work, makes me like the work I've seen more. That's more accurate.

Love

Lili

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