

# 63 WINDOWS: GENERATING RELATIONALITY THROUGH POETIC AND METAPHORICAL ENGAGEMENT

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## **ABSTRACT**

In this paper, an artist-researcher and scholars from the fields of cultural studies, theology, and educational and social sciences reflect on their artistic experiences to think about what kinds of affects, meanings, and responses emerge when engaging with the sound artwork 63 windows. The experiences are discussed particularly in relation to the metaphor of the window and weaved together with the perspectives of collective biography and memory work, the ethics of care, and the narrative and interpretation theories. On this basis, the paper suggests that relational ethics of care emerges in the continuous and puzzling process of attentive engagement with art: first (1) with imagination, then (2) experiencing belonging and distance, and finally (3) arriving at the understanding of mutual connectedness of life.

## **KEYWORDS**

collective biography,  
ethics of care, imagination,  
memory, metaphor, poetry,  
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## INTRODUCTION

Look out of the window  
and enter through  
Disappear into the window  
into the imaginary above

The glass panel of a window suggests a separation between the inside and outside, but what if one opens the window: where does the inside stop and outside start? Like a window kept open, caring for someone means being open and sensitive to the reality of another being (Slote, 2007). Drawing on the concepts of engrossment (Nodding, 2003) and attentiveness (Tronto, 2013), Slote (2007) claims that caring for someone does not mean imposing one's own ideas about good on the other; instead, it is about paying genuine attention to the ways the other person perceives the world, like imagining looking through the same window. Caring for someone in this manner is not easy since the prioritization of values such as independence, self-determination, and autonomy has led people living in liberal, postindustrial societies to a systemic ignorance and devaluation of interdependence and positive interaction with, especially distant or different, others (Robinson, 1999). This is also observable in our culture of intensive self-care but at the same time insistent carelessness towards others (Amin, 2012; Thompson, 2015).

The listening copy of the  
sound artwork '63 windows'  
by Raisa Foster:  
[LINK](#)

In this paper, we—an artist-researcher, scholars of cultural studies and theology, and a research collective of educational and social sciences scholars—discuss how the multi-sensible and metaphorical nature of art can generate relational care by opening a space for diverse interpretations and imagination. We develop our discussion from a poetic sound work 63 windows, which one of the authors of this text created from the memories collected in collective biography workshops in the Re-Connect / Re-Collect: Crossing the Divides through Memories of Cold War Childhoods project (2019–2021).

The artist of the sound work, Raisa Foster, worked as an artist-researcher for the project, which was originally developed and led by the Mnemo ZIN collective. The members of the collective, Zsuzsa Millei, Iveta Silova, and Nelli Piattoeva, organized and also participated in the collective biography workshops. Theologist Terhi Törmä and cultural theorist Laura Hokkanen were invited to take part in the dialogue developed in this paper because of their expertise in hermeneutic analysis and theories of metaphor and care ethics. Raisa, Terhi, and Laura did not attend the collective biography workshops.

The artwork was born out of the artist's initial recognition that the word "window" appeared in many childhood memories. The 63 windows artwork combines memory stories from multiple narrators, also from those of the Mnemo ZIN collective, and the final sound artwork was created by using free online software that transforms text into speech.

This paper does not aim to perform a literary analysis of the artwork but instead to engage with sensations, ideas, and concepts that the work had initiated in us. The montage-like artwork moves between narrative and lyrical poetry and uses window as a word, image, and metaphor. We discuss the multiple sensibilities that the poetic and auditive work has evoked in us in both the creation and reception of this artwork. We follow Paul Ricoeur's (1975, 1983, 1985, 1990) studies on metaphor and narrative, and memory work (Keightley & Pickering, 2012), which show the importance of imagination in understanding memory, life, one-self, and others. This kind of imagination is not an alienating flight from reality but a creative encounter with memory and artwork with respect to one's own practical life. Especially in his narrative theory, following Wolfgang Iser (1978), Ricoeur stresses the role of the receiver's imagination in engaging with artwork. On this basis, we suggest that relational ethics of care emerges in the continuous and puzzling process of allowing an active and attentive engagement with the artwork.

## **COLLECTIVE BIOGRAPHY, POETRY, AND SOUND ART**

Mnemo ZIN:

We used collective biography workshops to create memory stories that involved "attentive, embodied listening" (Davies & Gannon, 2006, p. 10; also Foster et al., 2022; Silova et al., 2018). The collectivity of the memory emerges during the sharing and responding to the memories. As the person tells a memory, others ask about details of the event and the embodied sensations felt by the child in the story. The memory story thus takes shape within the workshop between the storyteller and others who try to imagine themselves in the story. The idea is that "each story becomes imaginable with/in the minds/bodies of everyone" (Davies & Gannon, 2006, p. 9). As we share memories and listen to others' memories, the encounters intensities and affective flows of memories make them collective as we feel ourselves within the stories (Davies & Gannon, 2012). In a visceral and relational sense, emotions and affect also emerge as others' read

the memories and remember their own childhood. The poem, created from 63 windows through which children looked at their world, invites the person listening to the artwork to look through the windows and see the world as those children did. Through this invitation to look through the same window, a relationality between the narrators of childhood memories and the listener emerges.

Raisa:

Applying poetic inquiry (Faulkner, 2009; Galvin & Prendergast, 2016; Leavy, 2010, 2015; Prendergast, Leggo & Sameshima, 2009; Prendergast, 2015; Thomas, Cole & Stewart, 2012) and assembling a research poem—or in this case, a poetic sound artwork—is an artistic process in which intuitive and analytical crafting are intertwined. For this reason, it is impossible to provide a clear formula for composing poems. The artistic process combines multiple ways of knowing: in poetry, for example, sensory knowledge manifests itself as a taste of rhythms, and the poet's emotional response may guide the choices of creating metaphors. In the fusion of sensory, affective, and cognitive ways of knowing, words, phrases, and sentences eventually settle into their places. For some artists, to know when the work is finished may be a result of an analytical evaluation, but for some others, it is an intuitive feeling that the work has closed itself and the artist does not have access to it as a maker anymore. When the work is finished, the artist becomes a receiver of the work and the work may even keep surprising the artist too as if it was done by someone else.

I did not attend the workshops, so I did not take part in telling and writing the memories, but instead, I read the memory stories in the project archive (Re-Connect / Re-Collect, 2021). While I was reading the stories for the first time, I noticed that the word window appeared in many of them. The children seemed to watch the world through windows; this raised my curiosity since I do not remember windows and window views from my own childhood. I searched through the texts and found that the word window appeared 63 times in the collected memories. I copied all the paragraphs and sentences in which the windows were mentioned, organized them into a document, and started playing with them.

I selected, shifted, added, and erased words, phrases, and sentences from the chosen material as long as the verses started to speak to me (Prendergast, 2015; Leavy, 2015). The childhood stories were

diverse in their contexts, places, and times of the memories, and I had mixed feelings about cutting just parts of these personal narratives. At the same time, I was curious to see how the different windows would look next to each other and how I could create a poetic collage of these various window views. However, I wanted to be truthful to the narrator's original voice, and thus I kept all the words as they were. I did not include any words of my own nor added repetition. I crafted the multiple narrative vignettes into a lyrical expression. While I sought to maintain the voices of the storytellers, I attempted to crystallize (see also Richardson, 2000; Ellingson, 2009) the essence of the different memory stories and construct the outcome in both an achievable and aesthetic form (Prendergast, 2015).

When I read the written draft of the 63 windows collage poem, I heard the multiple voices in front of the different windows, so I started to think about creating a sound art piece. For both practical and aesthetic reasons, the final piece was created by using free online software that generates speech from text, and different voices were selected to simulate the multiple narrators; three feminine and one masculine voice.

The research poem arising from the research participants' words but interpreted and crafted by the artist-researcher can be more accurately called "interpretative poetry" (Leavy, 2015; see also Foster, 2016; 2017a). Following Monica Prendergast's (2015) description of collage poetry, momentary descriptions, metaphors, elements of surprise, and aesthetic power can be found in the final piece of sound art.

## INSTALLATION OF THE ARTWORK

Mnemo ZIN:

We have engaged with the 63 windows in two setups. The first time, we experienced the work as part of an online event, and we were encouraged to close our eyes while listening. While closing our eyes, the visual metaphor of the window that would have initiated seeing through the window and sensations of sight became blocked. Instead, looking through the mentally created windows promoted our imagination to become open to the multiple worlds children might have looked out to through their windows. Connecting with those worlds through our own memories and imagination of looking through windows we felt standing there with those children next to us.

In Raisa's solo exhibition *More than human* at Gallery Saskia in June 2021 in Tampere, Finland, the 63 windows were set up in front of a window inviting the listener to look through. The window of this more than 100 years old building has had many many viewers gazing through. In the window frame, an old red-brick church and a flowering bush in pink petals merged with the vistas of the narrators' memories of windows. The concurrent solar eclipse expanded the view to cosmic realms, merging even further openings to the memory stories. As we looked back at ourselves in our imagination from space to Earth, the scale of the experience and our relations to narrators and gazers through this window also changed.

Laura:

The first time I experienced this piece was at home when I served as a test audience for the artwork. I closed my eyes, and the work immediately pulled me to another dimension. I became one with the artwork. It felt like someone had built a frame around me as for a piece of art. I interpreted the work as literary art—not history writing nor folklore. In cultural studies, the concept of the horizon of expectations (Iser, 1978) refers to the idea that we perceive different texts in a specific context. In other words, we grasp different texts with distinct expectations and prior information. For example, the words of a shopping list or a poem could be the same, but it is the framing that guides our interpretation.

The second time I experienced the piece was in the art gallery, where I looked out the window while listening to the sound artwork. The gallery context facilitated my perception of this particular text as art: It was framed as art, and thus I interpreted it as art. A new kind of symbolism opened up in the gallery: I became part of this artwork as I looked out through the actual window frames of the gallery.

Raisa:

It matters where and how the artwork is installed. The recipient takes in—consciously or unconsciously—the elements present in that place and the moment when the work is received. The artist may make careful decisions about how to install the work; but at the same time, they cannot have control over the other life that surrounds the particular art object.

Even if the artwork is presented in a white cube, the gallery windows and doors allow sights, sounds,

and even smells to enter the room. There are also the other artworks and other audience members that somehow affect the experience of perceiving the single piece. For example, in the gallery, it could only be suggested that the experiencer sits down on a chair and perhaps looks through the window while listening to the sound work. There were no written instructions, so some people were sitting and some were standing. Someone closed their eyes, another looked through the window, and the third turned to face the room. Also, because the listener could decide to play and stop playing the sound work themselves, not everyone listened to the whole work. In the online event, some instructions were given for listening, and the work was played from start to end, but still, it cannot be known for sure if the audience actually followed these instructions.

In addition to the external conditions of perceiving the piece, there are a whole set of internal states of the various listeners, which artists have even less control over. However, the lack of control should not be taken as an obstacle but instead an opportunity for authentic dialogue with diverse relations to emerge.

Terhi:

When I was listening to the piece at home, I noticed that my eyes had to be closed; otherwise, the objects around me would have reminded me of everything waiting to be done. At first, I experienced only sound and peace. The voice did not demand nor manipulate. It only stated and framed, and that way, it built a getaway amid stress. There must be some creative attunement for this kind of space to emerge. The art experience itself is like a window that creates relations between the stories of others and my own but also between my everyday productivity and my authentic self. I opened an imaginary window, and suddenly I was in reality, which was still mine, but in a different way. On the one hand, it is conscious; on the other hand, it just happens unconsciously: my everyday life, which requires my daily duties, gets bracketed for a moment, and I am in another world with an as if sign in front of it.

## CREATING DISTANCE AND CONNECTIONS

Mnemo ZIN:

In the collective biography workshops, we used the third person in writing the memory stories to distance the memory from the person sharing it. This

creative writing technique distances the experience described in the memory from the person who shared the memory and makes the listener more open to identifying with the experience. The listener can capture the diverse perspectives and create a picture independent from the persons sharing their stories. In the artwork, other words surrounding the word window are picked out from their storied context, removing the storyteller's time, space, and identity. Distancing the window of a particular space and time can also make the listener identify easier as she is trusted with her imagination to create that world the window is opened to.

Using the computer-generated voice for the artwork also contributed to distancing by removing the (particular) human as the narrator and moving toward a kind of shared humanity. At the same time, the machine voice created a new connection between humans and technology. The computer-generated voice completes the emptying of the words from any set direction towards interpretation, perhaps leaving the listener ample space to call up connections. Thus, the listener can only rely on words without other types of hints present in the intonation of a human storyteller and this way, perhaps create spaces for critical reflections on our common humanity.

Raisa:

With the computer-generated voice, no emotions are guiding the interpretation. Perhaps the generated voice also frames the stories as art; giving more freedom to play with the memory stories. Yet, paradoxically it may somehow feel ethically more acceptable to let the software tell the fragments of the personal stories. If the narrators were real people, a whole host of ethical questions could arise while sharing others' memories in this way: Have the presentations done justice to those of the original narrators?

There is not so much control over the narration of the software because the computer-generated actors cannot be directed as human actors could be, which means, that the artist's intentionality has been, at least some parts, given away. However, it must be noted that the human still has chosen sections of the memory stories that are told and those left out: the multiple narrative presentations have been turned into a single lyrical expression. The sentences have been cut and diverse storylines combined. Rhythm has been created by adding punctuation marks, and with sound editing, by including pauses and overlaying the voices.

These treatments have radically changed the stories, sentences, meanings, and atmospheres of these memories.

Mnemo ZIN:

There was a sense of compulsion to listen and follow the words spoken by the software voice. “Go over to the window” uttered by several voices is like a command or a haunting spell that one cannot ignore or disobey. Words listened as separated from the original narratives and the human trace—with various accents, intonations, and emotions—the listener’s imagination roams free, and the words invoke and connect with their stories of windows. Perhaps the artistic choices prevalent in the 63 windows accentuate the idea that memories are never true to the original experience, and the role of representing memories is not to recreate and/or re-encounter the original experience. In the artwork, memory snippets do a different type of work than affirming some historical event. Words invoke connections of various kinds, such as the place and time of listening or to the listener’s memories, experiences, and imagination.

Raisa:

The montage-like piece does not allow passive reception. The dialogue between the artwork and the listener is very active. Because there is no clear storyline, one must listen very carefully in order to interpret the work. Of course, the dry narrating of the software and the unclear plot may cause puzzlement for some. However, it is precisely the quality of oddness in contemporary art that is productive. When one confronts strangeness, it means that something new emerges. From a pedagogical point of view, contemporary art can teach a valuable lesson about the limits of knowing and being in control (Foster, 2017b). When the experiencers of the artwork enter into the unknown, they start to build new connections.

Terhi:

The narration composed through the computer-generated voice reinforces the experience of bracketing my everyday life and entering into the world of the artwork. In other words, the artwork creates a space of distancing and making connections at the same time. The work makes me listen to a proposition of a world, letting my imagination compose different kinds of answers to this proposition. The poetic sound art opens up visual landscapes and evokes emotion and again my own

memories. The diverse windows presented in this artwork become multiple windows to my existence.

## **INVITING MULTIPLE SENSIBILITIES AND IMAGINATION**

Raisa:

Perhaps the task of a contemporary artist is not to illustrate what is but evoke different sensibilities to imagine as if. So, in its best, artwork invites multiple sensibilities: First, the listener is engaged with sensory perceptions, the voices of the different speakers, the music, the overlapping of the sounds, and silence. Then the sounds, words, and sentences may evoke emotional responses or connections to the listener’s memories. Perhaps, the artwork creates an atmosphere that cannot be reduced to the listener’s subjective psychological state or the objective qualities of the artwork; instead, the meaning of the sound piece comes alive in between the artwork and the listener, in an “asubjective experience” (Vadén & Torvinen 2014). The direct asubjective encountering, sensations, emotions, and personal memories fuse with the listener’s rational ways of making sense of the told stories. If life is ambiguous and in constant flux, why should an artwork be a coherent linear plot representing some totality of Truth?

Terhi:

When encountering the 63 windows, I realize in a very concrete way what Paul Ricoeur (1986) means by stating that the place for self-understanding is first and foremost the imagination. For Ricoeur, the power of imagination lies specifically in linguistic expression (Ricoeur, 1975, 1976, 1983). Semantic innovation works on the level of discourse: Someone says something about something; it lies in the text’s capacity to refer to the world, to open up something new, a possible way of existence (Ricoeur, 1976, 1986). This kind of imagination—working as a semantic innovation—is a dynamic process. It is realized as composing a metaphor or making a plot. This dynamic imagination has the power to produce a unity out of disparate elements (Ricoeur, 1983), which also happens in the 63 windows—not in making a storyline as such but as a unity of sudden episodes, a composition of separate souvenirs. This creative ability to compose an artwork of disparate elements of life attests to the surplus of meaning in life. The creative way of making sense in the arts helps us understand ourselves, others, and the life that often challenges our understanding of what makes sense.

Laura:

Interestingly, the 63 windows also evoked my own personal childhood memories, even concrete memories of windows. The artwork connects with familiar objects and images and produces recollections and imagination of the listener (Houessou, 2010). For example, when a person perceives a work of art depicting a childhood landscape, they imagine houses, yards, and plants familiar from their life history. Soon one, in their thoughts and inner images, walks a familiar forest road and sits on the shores of a lake familiar from childhood. Over time, memories blend into each other and combine features and details of other people's memories dealing with the same issues. Memories are thus never individual but always relational.

Mnemo ZIN:

The artwork creates a dreamlike space in which the listener must fill the gaps, with this reenacting memory work while creating their own story from the snippets of others' memories. In other words, the artwork refigures how memory is assembled from fragments. As we remember, we can never tell the story as it happened. Instead, we fill the gaps with imagination; hence memory and imagination are closely related and work together (Keightley & Pickering, 2012). The fragmentary nature of memory is reenacted in this art piece as only snippets of memories are retold and crafted together to compose something new. The fragmentary nature creates multiple openings for the listener to connect, to weave memories and imagination together.

## EXPRESSING AND THINKING WITH METAPHORS

Laura:

While listening to the 63 windows, I found myself thinking that the window is a metaphor for something. If I had read the original memory stories, I would probably not think in this way. However, the poetic language pushed me to figure out the mystery of these windows. Why are certain words put together? Moreover, why is there something missing in these sentences? According to the more traditional theories of metaphors, the listener must reject the false literal interpretation and somehow find the nonliteral meaning of the particular metaphor (Glucksberg & Keysar, 1990): what is the window, and its meaning? I agree with more recent metaphor theorists (Iser, 1978; Niyogi, 2012; Arora, 2017) that the meaning of a metaphor cannot be

understood just by changing a word with another, but rather meaning emerges from something that exceeds the semiotic explanation of a single word. Thus, metaphorical language makes the explicit comparison and explanation unnecessary (Niyogi, 2012).

Daydream  
stares out of the windows  
looks the others at the window  
She steers out of the window  
wants to touch  
but they cannot leave

As they lived on  
the glass windowed their vision  
Results posted  
on the windows  
pretty windows

The window has become a well-known metaphor and part of our everyday language: for example, the eyes are said to be the windows to the soul. The window metaphor may also reveal that the window—which we typically perceive as transparent and open to a view—may conceal that which is on its other side (Orell, 2003). The window has been seen as a metaphor for a step into the unknown. The above verse leaves the impression that the world on the other side of the window is unattainable. The poem ends with an absurd idea of a window that has no meaning and is thus pointless:

On the left  
there was a small window  
There was a window  
no importance  
small and covered  
No longer moon  
lightening the room through the window  
throwing them out the window

Terhi:

Metaphors and stories have the power to open new worlds in front of us. Worlds in which we could dwell, worlds where we could understand our most authentic possibilities as humans, always in a relationship to others. It is all about metamorphoses. Linguistic innovation opens up something new, something that is encountered in imagination. Imagination has the power to put my everyday life in brackets in order to set me free for new ways of seeing, hearing, understanding, and experiencing. However, it is crucial to understand that here imagination is not happening out of nothingness; it

needs a listener, a reader, somebody to receive the artwork, hear the metaphor, or read the story.

Laura:

Wolfgang Iser's (1978) Reception Theory gives an interesting point of view to understand the process of interpretation. The text itself means nothing until someone reads it. Reading or listening to a text is a creative process that goes beyond what the author has written. In other words, the text is an explanation or a creation of an individual reader, and that way, there cannot be a single meaning which is the same for all readers. The author of the literary work produces a text full of gaps, and then these gaps accelerate the reader to form meanings that would not otherwise come into existence (Iser, 1978; Ni-yogi, 2012; Arora, 2017). Technically speaking, the window might be a text gap that the listener must fill with an explanation.

Terhi:

"Human memory is a window." "My childhood is a silent window." "My spirituality is a window inside of me." In all these metaphors, the window *is* and *is not* a window. That is how metaphors function. In his study on metaphor, Ricoeur (1975) develops a tension theory of metaphor. Ricoeur explains that metaphors should not be understood by substituting one word with another (semiotics) but rather by innovation happening on the level of a sentence (semantics).

Semantic innovation is tensional and thus productive. Firstly, a metaphorical sentence expresses a tension in its enunciation—between the first and second subject (Ricoeur, 1975). In metaphorical expressions, we find words—and world—that would not otherwise belong together. In this way, metaphor redescribes reality. There is a similar heuristic aspect in metaphors as in scientific models; metaphors generate understanding that could not be grasped through language's descriptive use. They open up one's world in a more profound way and show possibilities of seeing one's life differently.

Secondly, Ricoeur (1975) describes how the metaphorical expression plays with a tension between the literal and non-literal interpretation of the sentence. When I say that my memory is a window, the listener knows that I am not talking about this window here, above the table, but that I am talking about how I feel my memory, my history. The listener may find it accurate in their perspective and

might even say that human memory is a window that we share.

Thirdly, a metaphorical sentence expresses tension in the copula; in the way that the metaphor refers to reality (Ricoeur, 1975): something is and is not at the same time. Here the tension is in the verb *is*. Thus, for example, in the metaphorical expression "Human memory is a window," the literal and the critical *is not*, is included in the metaphorical and ontologically vehement *is* (Ricoeur, 1975).

Laura:

These tensions make the receiver active. The acts of reading and listening become exciting and even pleasurable when the metaphors direct one to use their imagination and engage with their own interpretations. However, if the text is too clear or too ambiguous, the reader or the listener will get bored or burdened and thus is likely to stop reading or listening (Iser, 1978).

## MUTUAL CARE

Raisa:

If the artwork does not communicate with the audience, it could be said that it has failed to form generative and caring relations. However, the artwork does not have to please the audience but the work has to evoke something. Sometimes this something is confusion, irritation, or anger. In its best, the work stimulates something that has not been considered before; the relation between the artwork and the recipient is thus generative. So, following Slotte's (2007) notion of care, the artwork's generative power arising from its dialogical nature has also potential to initiate relational care; but only, if the artist/artwork is not trying to impose or teach something, but rather to open a space for multiple relations and meanings to emerge.

Terhi:

I agree that the generative dialogue between the work and its audience is where relational ethics begins. When I listen to this poetic sound work, the voice in the third-person invites me to go through imaginative variations of life. The distance further created by the computer-generated voice allows the dialogue between the listener and the work. Ricoeur (1985) describes the dialogue between the narrative and the reader as a fusion without the confusion of the horizons. He claims that narrative (both in its historical and fictive mode) always aims

at rendering the truthful vision, the one that the narrator feels obliged to tell. So, the meeting of the work and its audience is always ethical as well.

Raisa:

I want to add that it is not only the final product delivered to the audience that aims for mutual care, but instead, the whole process of artistic research is relational and reciprocal (also Thompson, 2015). For example, this work was born out of the artist's curiosity towards the memories of childhood window views that were significantly different from her own childhood experiences. It is critical to stay open and allow and respect the alterity of others but also to see the sameness there where one might see only the difference at first. This kind of attitude of mutual recognition helps to extend the circle of care to include more distant others, meaning other people and other than human animals and plants too (see also Foster, 2012, 2019).

Mnemo ZIN:

Perhaps the mutual caring relations are not unidirectional – from individual to relational – but just like memory work itself, a multidirectional (maybe even circular) movement of ideas, perceptions, sensations, and relations. In both the memory production process and the artistic research, and in engaging with sound art, there is a constant movement between collective and individual relationalities. As a poetic presentation, the 63 windows keeps “edges open,” creating spaces for old and new connections and relations (see Haraway, 2016).

Terhi:

Artworks have the power to express this kind of tension in being, which arises from the paradox of identity and alterity, sameness and difference, old and new. The poetic, metaphorical language of arts expresses and preserves the experience that one has on a profound level, an experience of belonging. However, at the same time, the fact that it is an artwork that proposes this world further produces distance (distanciation) which is essential for critical thinking (Ricoeur, 1986).

Laura:

Contemporary art can create a sense of freedom when there are endless possibilities for interpretations of the artwork and the life itself, too (also Foster, 2017b). For some, this creates a sense of anxiety when the work cannot be encoded

immediately and in clarity with rational knowledge (also Foster & Turkki, 2021). Engaging with artwork is not only a cognitive but also a multisensible process in which perceptions obtained through different senses—and experienced together with emotions and memories—provoke the viewer to reflect and seek an explanation, a unity, in the poetic expression. Learning the language of contemporary art means staying open to the immediate perceptions, which are always the starting point of rational thinking too and thus essential for profound, reflected, critical, and caring understanding of the world and the other.

Raisa:

The understanding of the other is so desperately missing today. As James Thomson (2015) explains that “[c]arefree as a social good has meant that careless (in all senses) has become a defining value” (p. 435) in today's postindustrial, liberal societies. Thus, the ethics based on an autonomous and free individual's self-realization ignores the other and dismisses the benefits of mutual reliance on all (both human and more-than-human) life (see also Amin, 2012; Thomson, 2015).

Thomson (2015) has formulated an aesthetics of care, a set of values and practices realized in a relational process that focuses specifically on engagements between people in art projects. Thomson is speaking from the perspective of community art and applied theatre, but his ideas can also be adapted to other art practices. The idea of attentiveness in care (Thomson, 2015; Tronto, 2013) must be at the center of creating and presenting art. This kind of sensory-ethical attunement does not only mean listening and responding to the other but reflecting and rethinking one's own prejudices about the difference (Thomson, 2015; also Robinson, 1999).

We cannot keep repeating only the histories of the winners and narratives of the masters, because, as Donna Haraway (2016, p. 35) says, “It matters what thoughts think thoughts. It matters what knowledges know knowledges. It matters what relations relate relations. It matters what worlds world worlds. It matters what stories tell stories.” So, the critical reflection in a spirit of relational caring can only happen if one accepts the idea of witnessing and welcoming the other as another. The idea of a caring art intervention is not to drain (the different) life out of the other but to sustain (the diversity of) all life.

## SOME CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

In this text, we, a group of scholars with diverse personal and professional histories, have engaged in a dialogue on how the sound artwork 63 windows might create relations, in which care for the other (human or more-than-human) might emerge. We have shared our reflections on creating and perceiving this particular art piece and interpreted our experiences by drawing on collective biography and memory work, the ethics of care, and the narrative and interpretation theories. At the end of this conversation, we observe that relational ethics of care emerged through this artwork by first (1) initiating imagination, then (2) experiencing belonging and distance, and finally (3) arriving at the recognition of mutual interconnectedness of life.

There has to be a listener who builds with imagination a bridge between the artwork and their practical life, as Iser's and Ricoeur's thoughts would suggest. First, someone is called to listen —“close your eyes and picture / what she was going to tell” — and enter through imagination into the artwork. Imagination brackets everyday life and opens towards the variations of life portrayed in the poem reflecting how an artwork opens new perspectives. In other words, the listening and imagining of an experiencer make it possible for the artwork to find its way back to the soil of action and passion – to its meaning. The listener's ethical attitudes and actions in this way become necessary parts of the meaning of the artwork.

Memory and poetry cross each other in referring to reality, as Ricoeur (1985) states focusing on history and fiction in his narrative theory. Memories need the imagination to recompose a vision of what once happened. Poetic expression is needed to hear about and feel the things as we would have experienced them ourselves. Poetry gives us eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts to feel the memory stories that need to be narrated to give voice to those who would otherwise remain silent. Memory moves between remembering and forgetting; poetry between what is said and not said. Both of them exist in a tension of the being of what is/was and is/was not. The poetic language of arts expresses a constant shift in experiencing belonging and distance, sameness and difference; that way, it brings us back to the vitality of our existence and its connectedness to others (Ricoeur, 1985; also Törmä, 2015).

The world created by the artwork is the world in which the experiencer of the artwork dwells. The meaning of the artwork arises from this very life one lives and shares with others. Possibilities generated by the imaginative variations of the poetic are not in some other reality but the reality of ours. The artwork makes it possible to experience things from someone else's perspective; the sound work invites the listener to think about the windows and look through their imagined windows. The task of the poetic expression is thus to awaken to authentic co-living and arrive at a collectively remembered humanity, to the mutual reliance and the relational ethics of care for each other.

What did you see in the window  
when you entered through?

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