

Aaron Foster-Breilyn, Luke Martin, and Sarah Pitan
Conversation about co-incidence festival
July 31, 2018

SARAH: Okay. I mainly talked about— Basically it was a bunch of ideas that I remember. We talked about money ideas, and then place ideas. Does that make sense? Like what places we were going to be occupying or whatever. Those are the main things I remember. Like those are the things I remember as being like the meat of the conversation.

LUKE: Yeah, me too.

AARON: Yeah. And I think, the other thing, if memory serves, is we also talked about the idea of place and kind of the idea of more of a nomadic approach to location. We had talked about how that would fit into the time structure, the scheduling aspect as well.

LUKE: This is very odd to do without Skype, cause I can't react to people's facial expressions!

AARON: Yeah, not a fan. No offense. I know your love of conference calls.

LUKE: Okay, but the benefit is that I can get a recording of it! For Jennie! Anyway, whatever. I guess kind of a goal for this would be to consider those ideas of spatially loosening it, while fitting that into how we were thinking about scheduling it, or composing it in terms of time, and then come up with some sort of, like... If people are going to get here on Friday, and we have 10 days, let's walk through it together, and how might it progress? Then the things that that will answer as we go through are, what the application should be like and what we'll be looking for in that. Especially, for example, a certain question. Last time it was the bridge question with Joachim that asked people to write a short response to these ideas: the bridge, the swarm, social sculpture. So I think that will come out of it.

SARAH: Okay. So we had talked about how we're going to deal with basically space and time in regards to nomadic living or whatever, and then like money, and then the applications. Is there anything else that we should try and talk about? I think that's pretty good.

AARON: Yeah. I think those are kind of the main things we need to discuss or whatever.

SARAH: So one thing I was thinking. Do we want to talk about what we're going to try and explore with the festival? I don't think we necessarily have to assign a theme to it, but if we have a good [thematic] idea being tossed around, that informs a lot of how we structure events. I'm also thinking of things like, should we sharpen the focus on some little impetus for the festival that we're developing throughout the ten days? And if we did that, the easiest way to pick something would just be to think about how the other festivals went, and give, through a self-critique or whatever, just decide, okay, well this will be the next thing with what's past.

LUKE: I think that would be good to try to identify some kind of motor within these things, or some sort of— Like maybe we can just start tossing around some ideas, just to get it moving.

SARAH: What was the first one? Did we have a thing for the first one? I can't even remember what went on.

LUKE: I don't know if we did.

AARON: Wait, like if we had a central idea? I mean, I think the central idea was, 'I don't know what I'm doing. Do you?' Okay. I guess that's more of a *modus operandi*. But no, the central idea was that we wanted to work on long form pieces that people normally wouldn't have the time or energy or forum to do it. If memory serves, that was a big, not necessarily an intellectual, theme. But that was the thing we were trying to create with it.

LUKE: Yeah. I think more of a logistical theme, or an anti-logistical theme.

AARON: Yeah. Then that is what informed the structure, how we interacted, blah blah blah. So whether we intended it or not, that I think was the theme.

LUKE: Yeah.

SARAH: So it's interesting, because if we try and compare what 'the themes' were for each round, each festival, it's not— They're different, but I guess, I don't know how I would summarize what you just said the theme for the first round was, but it has something to do with the form of making art communally or whatever, where the second round, it was more like a theme proper, like almost a thesis, a little bit. I'm wondering if this third time, what would be something different than those two things, or what would be— I don't have a better word for this, but like a synthesis of these two things, or to get the Goldilocks, like oh, that's just right. The other thing too I remember. We talked about this a lot, actually, was— What was too hot in the first part, and what was too cold here, and what happened the first festival, the second festival. I think that would be interesting. So if we come up with a theme that's trying to resolve past festivals, so it's accumulative, we're not just like, okay, bye to those other festivals, and now we're here. I have thought a lot about this when I wrote the documentation piece. I can easily revisit it, and just basically start there. I did say something about the positioning of the theme in relation to the rest of the activity of the festival, because that was the whole day I was there. So I have something, but not [right now].

LUKE: Yeah. Well one aspect of the theme that's common to both is that we were dealing fairly explicitly with time. I know we talked about this a bit, but how we dealt with how it was structured in terms of what we were doing each day. The first festival, even though people would do these indeterminate length pieces with an indeterminate number of people, it ended up being a very structured approach. And then the second one was like a total rejection of that, in that there was no schedule to speak of, and there was no final event to speak of. So

maybe thinking about the synthesis or some kind of in between thing. Can we think about that in terms of how would that look in terms of time? Like, okay, we have ten days: how do we want to set up instances where we're together, where we're apart? I don't know if this is getting too concrete or not, but I know that we had talked about in the past having these really intense discussion periods that were explicitly determined as, okay, we're going to get together and talk about something. We can figure out what we talk about later. I think it would be great to have you, Sarah, lead a lot of those things, or at least get us off on the right foot. So then, that could be something that happens every day. Every day from 12 o'clock to 2 o'clock, get together in Washington Street and talk about stuff. Basically what I'm trying to do is make an initial decision. Once we make one decision about how this will be composed or put together, a lot of other decisions will be contingent upon that decision. So I'm trying to figure out what our best first step is here, so we don't stumble later on.

SARAH: I think that that's a really good way to start doing things, like just say, how many hours of time together do we have, and then just carving out, okay, well X amount of hours is for this. X amount of hours is for this or whatever. I wonder if— You mentioned the possibility of that being too concrete. I wonder if there's a way to get the best of both worlds, so have a plan, but maybe not a time constraint. Two hours, well, you think it's plenty of time...

LUKE: That'll go by quick, yeah.

SARAH: If there's some type of little, some other system. So instead of saying, no matter what, we have X amount of time. But maybe if X happens, we have this amount of time, but if this happens, then we have a more flexible model, and we kind of pivot around different areas. What if had, like one of you mentioned conversation for two hours. I know you were just saying this as an example. That's the type of model that when I think of it visually, it takes a chunk of time and just segment it. And I think, obviously if you talk about nomads, we're always going to be talking about Deleuze and Guattari, so there is segmented space. I think, what do they call it, like striated space?

LUKE: Yup. We don't want that.

SARAH: Yeah. It should parallel with a nomadic model, will look something like, at least some type of circular model, more like field-esque. I wish I could see you guys. I'm like throwing my hands around.

AARON: That's how I talk all the time.

SARAH: But so we have, it's a little like, what is it, an electron cloud or something, so that we have a nucleus, like this is what we want to focus on for this day. We can reach out and move over here if this is going well, but if that's cold, we can move over here, like a field that determines that actions that we're doing, if this all makes sense.

LUKE: Yeah, I totally agree with that. Actually a lot like Michael [Pisaro's] piece that first year! Aaron, what do you think, making it a smooth space? That organization tends more toward the [structure of the] second year of the festival.

AARON: Yeah. So this kind of leads into something that I've been thinking about. I think we've talked about it at length before. One of the things that happened that was really great the second year was when we did things that took advantage of this kind of smooth space, like going to a museum, or having lunch at Luke's place, and those kind of things worked when we really broke out of Washington Street and did something a little more nomadic. I think those, at least to me, were the highlights. And so something that I was thinking about it, it might be interesting to kind of let people, like ask everyone to propose ideas of things they wanted to do, that we would break up in the time. So that could be anything from, something more typical, like they just want to talk or show a book, or talk about a book, or whatever. But then you could have somebody who's like, I want to go to the beach, go for a long walk. And that would be pretty cool. And so I was thinking that maybe something like that, or someone could say, you know what? I don't really have anything I want to propose yet, so good. I'll think of something later, or not.

SARAH: Yeah. I think I have two comments on that. The first one is, I wonder if we should say that. So if we're going to be like, hey, you have the opportunity to X. Cause if we leave in the opportunity for you to possibly not do something... So this happens in scores a lot. Like I think historically, the decision in score-making, at least within the Western tradition, to give somebody the opportunity to not do something, I get what it tries to do, but sometimes it doesn't go beyond just a really cute kind of politically correct, like I'm giving you space. Like here it is.

LUKE: Oh, absolutely.

SARAH: So I wonder how hard-nosed we should be about it, basically. There are people who are definitely willing to just not do anything. And the second comment was just, I think that that's a good idea, and I think the trick would be to get that participation, but to somehow recover some type of spontaneity with it, such that people aren't like, oh, I really have to prove myself or give this good thing that's— So they're really just thinking on their feet.

LUKE: I have an idea. I think it has to do— Now I better come up with something good, now that I've interrupted. So a lead-in. It has to do with something that we were talking about in our last conversation that was lost or we forgot about, which is the idea of a spy, the idea of creating something— Like we were talking about gossip, but creating something that like, oh, only Sarah and I know, but Aaron doesn't know, or something like that. And I think that could actually be perfect for what we're talking about. How does one introduce spontaneity? I take that to mean a more organic development into something where everybody proposes an activity and you have to do it at some time, and maybe some people end up being like, oh fuck, I don't really want to do it, and so on.

AARON: Oh no. I was going with the idea that these would all be optional.

LUKE: Yeah, but then to take what Sarah was implying. Maybe I'm wrong, Sarah, but you're meaning to be more on the nose with it and be like, you don't give them the option not to do it. Like if you're going to come here and you're going to get paid \$500 or whatever, you better do something.

SARAH: Yeah.

LUKE: So what I was thinking, and maybe this isn't the greatest idea now that I'm saying it... But anyway. What if everybody came up with some activity, like what Aaron was talking about, which I think is a really good idea by the way, but they didn't tell anybody. Or only told whoever they want to tell, or something like that. But they didn't have to tell anybody. And at some point during the 10 days, it's required that we do the thing. It's not announced. It's just, Wednesday during the week, I say, hey, people want to have lunch at my place? And then we go do it. And that's my activity. Nobody talks about the fact they have an activity. It isn't a big deal. Maybe it's not recognized as 'an activity.' All are maybe-activities. If people are like, no, I don't feel like having lunch at your place, then you can try to reinstate it later, but it might just not happen. That's pretty crazy. I don't know. Maybe we'll tweak that. Okay, I'm done.

SARAH: No no no. I think we should hold onto that. I think we should hold onto that and see what [happens]. I think my first question to that would be, how do we logistically insure that nobody knows, so that we don't put it in the application. It has to be purely word of mouth or whatever.

LUKE: You're right.

SARAH: Us three would have to know. I do think it's possible, and I do think it's a good idea, and I think that it solves the issue that I was worried about, which is being too hard-nosed about it. Like you have to do something. You're here to work! But it also gives people something closer to the total contingency of being able to not do something that Aaron was talking about. So I do think to hold onto it. It's just like, how would we do that? There is a way. I feel like there has to be a way. It's just an optimization problem or something. But I think we could do that.

LUKE: Yeah. Aaron, what do you think?

AARON: I think that's a good idea. Again, I'm inclined to think logistically.

LUKE: You are? Come on! That should be me.

AARON: Really?

LUKE: I don't know. I'm the one who always emails you to-do lists...

AARON: No, yeah, you do. But you're also like, oh, you know what? What if we had this crazy ridiculous idea. And I'm the one who's like, no no. We gotta do this. We need to be boring. And you're like, lalalalalala. That is what you sound like, by the way.

LUKE: I believe it.

AARON: So what I was thinking is something along the lines of, I'm hesitant to emphasize the secrecy, because I think these might be interesting, cool opportunities to get people outside of the co-incidence core group involved. And on the one hand, yes, the inclusivity would be amazing and great. But if they were announced, maybe us three and whoever's idea, we could talk about it beforehand and say, oh, should this be an internal thing, like dinner at Luke's place, or should this be an external thing like, hey, we're all going to go to Walden Pond. Let's meet there today. If that makes sense.

SARAH: So you're saying that if we toned down the secrecy bit of it, it makes planning easier such that people feel like they have a greater variety of—

AARON: What I'm getting at is that it gives more people a way in.

LUKE: Like more people from town?

AARON: Yeah. It gives people on the 'outside' ways in. And I think that that's important. I'm not sure where it lies on the importance spectrum, but I do think that is something that we should be at least aware of.

SARAH: So could you explain this again? I'm struggling to understand how one mode will be more inclusive necessarily than the other.

AARON: Oh. If we highlight the secrecy and kind of spur of the moment kind of thing, it makes it really difficult for people who decide, oh, I want to come and join in today. Oh, what are they doing? [Nobody knows].

LUKE: I think partially, and correct me if I'm wrong, Aaron, but I think partially what you're imagining is that before the festival begins, people have proposed to us a variety of activities, or one activity that they want to do. Maybe they're 2-hours ish long. And then we kind of schedule those throughout the week, and those then can be publicized on whatever, Facebook and stuff. So people know from 3:00 to 5:00, we're going to go to Walden Pond on Wednesday. Is that right, Aaron? I just want to make sure that like the full extent, the realization of it, I'm getting right.

AARON: Yeah, generally down that line of people come up with ideas. We have some things that are 'set events'. Yeah, some things that are set events, like maybe we decide from 9 to noon or 9 to 10:30 every day it's real talk with Sarah.

SARAH: Real talk?

AARON: And that's what we do, every day, 9 to 10:30. But then, maybe the rest of it is open to the suggestions that we've kind of— I hate the word curated, but that we've helped people to get things in a good place. But then we also can organize them on days that it makes sense to do that. So then we can have some things that are super structured and some things that are very loose.

LUKE: Just a quick thing to contrast that a little bit, cause I'm a bit nervous about it, is that I think it may— We'll deviate away from this, but I think it may tend further toward, like the first year, when we were basically like, the same thing, but on a grander scale. We said, propose activities, or in other words, pieces. But we were more specific about the pieces. And we would schedule those once we had all the pieces in. And it ended up being, I think, a bit of a failure in terms of temporal-composition on our part. Now I know what you're suggesting is not that, but I think it tends too strongly toward that, and it needs to be tempered, probably like my other idea, which tends too strongly toward the looseness of last year, needs to be tempered. So, with that, I will be quiet.

SARAH: Yes. So I really think if we could just somehow get the perfect ratio of both things, and I mentioned synthesis later, and I don't think that that's the right word.

LUKE: Hello? Aaron?

SARAH: Oh my god. Is this a horror movie?

LUKE: Maybe we try calling back.

[Call Lost. Reconnected.]

SARAH: So I think we would just have to realize both of those things simultaneously. I think, for example, what Aaron's talking about, it makes a lot of sense, and it's also just, it'll put us in a type of rhythm or groove or whatever. So every day, we're warming up, doing something, and we know we're going to do that every day. And it's kind of like a structural refrain or something that's super important to have, so that we can riff off at other points in the day. So I just think that it's not just saying the thing, but if we can have some way to have structures, like time for events, whatever, and then it would be up to us or somebody who's familiar with the area to, kind of like joker cards or whatever. Like oh, to kind of try and trigger, just like turn the knob a little bit more. You know what I'm saying? So yeah, I'm pretty sure, Aaron, I don't know if we've talked about Negarestani... I'm pretty sure we have.

AARON: Yes.

SARAH: Yes. When we're talking about these things, Negarestani comes to mind. He deals a lot with, he doesn't use the word 'size' or whatever, but thinking of some kind of complicity with anonymous materials that's really, that whole concept of something being pseudo legal or secrecy in stuff like this I think would be helpful here. And I'm talking about— I feel like if I can go back to the text and make this more concrete. Right now I'm just putting these ideas on the table as a potential model. But he also has— Because I think the question of, how do we get the benefits of the first festival and the second festival towards something that really works? Like synthesis isn't exactly the way. It's not a question of just combine your X and your Y and then bam. But Negarestani has an article that I can send you guys. It's in Collapse, volume 4, and he's talking about— It's pretty gruesome stuff. He's talking about [nigredo]. I don't know if you guys know what that is. It's like a really old torture technique where two bodies are basically realize on top of one another. I don't really want to get into the details cause it gets kind of gross, but I'd be very happy to share with you guys. Like basically, you know how they have all those medieval like horrible torture techniques. That's kind of what it is. They would attach a witch or whatever to a dead body, or like a body infected with whatever horrible disease, and attach them together, and they would feed them. They would feed the living person just to insure that they would fully contract whatever the disease the diseased body had, and then they would stop feeding them once they were fully like, okay, yes. Negarestani refers to it as this weird type of marriage between two bodies or whatever. But yeah, I think this model. He then talks about Aristotle, and there's this thing called, I don't know how to pronounce it, but [aphaeresis]. I can point it out. I can email this to you guys, but I think that's a model we're looking for. And this all sounds really abstract now, but Negarestani actually gives— He starts talking about what the topology of that situation might look like, which would be helpful for us, because then we could actually construct a map, and start getting our hands on how we would practice that concept in this setting. So yes, I can do the work to undig this, give it to you, and make it less abstract. But I think that might be, because we keep on running into the problem of, well, this is too hot but this is too cold, or whatever.

LUKE: Interesting. I think that would be good.

SARAH: Yeah. I guess what that would look like, with this question of how much time do we have for each event, it would look like having a refrain and then space to just improvise or whatever. Like if we want to do that— If we want to do that secretly, I don't think secrecy is the best word. It's just usually a good way to insure contingency, so that we don't all tend towards, oh, we're doing a performance on this day, lalala. Yeah, I think we could do both of those things, kind of. I know that it does become— I'm talking a lot, but I know that it does become kind of a question of ethics. If we were to do the entire thing the way you first proposed it, Luke, it would be a little bit weird for reasons that Aaron was tending towards, like we're just making this little game for ourselves.

One other thing. So, I'm going to stop talking, but one other thing I also thought of is, we do have documentation as a tool to make things more accessible after the events. So during the festival, it's really hard to just— I think you could do it in somebody's house and the people in the house wouldn't even care to look at what was going on or something. We do have

documentation that is very easy to disseminate, that we could just drop everywhere, like to people we know and people they would know, etc., etc. So that's also another tool to think about.

LUKE: Can you maybe be more specific about how the documentation would happen?

SARAH: Yeah. I think I remember talking about this in the last conversation. We were trying to see if in conversations, we can do this real time mapping of what was going on, to keep us accountable. But then we could easily repurpose this and fold it into something else after the fact. Or like I'm very, very happy to work on a documentation thing, obviously with others, whatever, as we do this. I would be able to put in extra time or whatever to do that. It would be a weird diary thing, almost. The question of accessibility was coming up, and it's always so hard, because even if you make something totally free, and you have, like everybody knows about it, you can't even guarantee, like you have to drag people to the show or whatever.

LUKE: Which is more or less what we experienced these last couple years. I mean, to be fair, lots of people came. But still, you always kind of expect a bit more. We made it totally open, totally free, totally whatever, blah blah blah, and people came, but—

SARAH: There's still an us and them. Even if something was open, I just try and think about it from an outsider's perspective. It's open and it's free to the public, and you're like, cool, that's so great, thanks. But you still walk in there, and like we're doing something, and we all know each other, and we're looking at the floor, doing whatever we're doing. So I don't know how we're going to— We're not going to solve this now, but the whole thing of inclusivity, it's like a larger problem. It's weird, because if we make ourselves open to the public, it's this weird—

LUKE: Yeah, you define them as the public in doing that. That immediately creates an outside.

SARAH: Although they are physically a majority, there's less of us and more of them, when they enter that space, they're immediately a minority, and then it becomes a question of, number-wise, it was 50 percent outsiders, 50 percent insiders or whatever. Does that representation of whatever minority group. In this case, it would be the public. Does that even really alter what you're doing? Visibility doesn't really solve the problem of under-representation or something. But that's getting down to a lot of stuff.

LUKE: No, I think that's super important.

AARON: I really agree. That's great.

LUKE: Yeah, totally, everything you said. So, basically, I think what that does is puts into question the efficacy of making something free or open to the public or whatever, and

implicates its inadequacy. What's the word I'm looking for? It's more than inadequate. It's kind of like a liberal thing. It's like oh, you're free, or something like that, when you're not, or you're going to work at Google and you get ping pong tables and comfy chairs, but still like everything is fucked and fuck you too. So, I think, that's a self-critique. That's a good one. And it opens up the possibility of, okay, well then do we take a different tact in shooting for that similar goal? And maybe that tact looks different than openness at first. Maybe it looks like extreme closed-offness.

SARAH: Yeah.

AARON: Yeah. And we've actually talked about that before.

LUKE: Me and you?

AARON: I know Sarah and I have. I think the three of us have talked about that too, where it's like, maybe if we do some kind of hyperstructure, it can crystallize something.

LUKE: But I'm not even talking about in terms of time structure. Maybe this is actually what you mean Aaron. I'm talking about, not exclusivity. You know what I'm getting at?

SARAH: Yes. Usually, this is a problem in philosophy too. Usually what's really not cool, what's really politically incorrect is arguing for any type of, everything has to be open to everybody all the time in this completely decentralized way, and that's just not, we're not supposed to, that's not in fashion, I guess. That's the best way I can put it. It's no coincidence that those, that's what Google does, or whatever. So, I think we would have to do it well. We couldn't just be like, okay, we got our structures, and then we just kind of fumble. Cause then we look a little stupid. But I think this is something close to what we have to get to, cause the means to getting towards whatever the little mini-revolutions of our festival will be, it's not going to look like free, or it's not going to be freedom as it's posited to us today. We also talked about this. I really don't know a lot about anarchy, but I think it's the difference between somebody who's like, 'anarchy's chaos, like lalala, these people are running around doing crazy shit,' versus like what anarchy probably actually is. I'm thinking it's a similar gap between those two things, like accessibility and decentralized lalala, all of this, and the means it takes to get there are usually dramatically, not opposite, but they run alongside contrary to it, or whatever.

AARON: Yeah. It's never immediately recognizable as the thing that it's intending to be.

SARAH: Yes. I kind of like where this is going. The other thing I also wanted to add is, we started talking about this because we were talking about the problem of accessibility from a non-artist, an outside of this art context, person coming in to our space or whatever. But it's the same thing. I remember trying to get at this that first, the first day of the last festival. And the same thing happened with the case of public art. So, the same thing happens when you have a bunch of artists trying to make themselves accessible by forcing themselves into a public space. I hope that makes sense. It was good that you were out in the community, really great,

lalala. I just remember thinking, like the artist doesn't come in, and its presence just sprinkles fairy dust all over the place and make it okay, [their day]. The same exact thing happened, only in that case, the artist forces themselves onto the space.

LUKE: I think this was felt by all of us, maybe in some cases more strongly than others— The tactic of listening (only) was a really effective stroke here. I think, actually, in retrospect, a perfect move.

SARAH: The thing is that I don't think that the problem is— Oh, well, when we do stuff, we put ourselves in the space. The problem is that— And that's not the problem. Like we need to put ourselves somewhere... It's double sided. So an example: an artist does a public work. They put themselves into a public space and that somehow fixes the problem of the artist's authority or whatever. So I'm recognizing that— And I'm saying that that's problematic. It doesn't really solve anything. But I'm not trying to say that we should then try and find some way to flip into a space without any hinting that we have any type of authority whatsoever. I'm saying that the problem is to think that us entering a space is a problem. So we have to kind of revise the ethics of it. Like we need authority. We need to be able to go here and do this. Nothing's going to be solved by doing nothing. But the solution is to then try and just remove all being in a space, which is impossible.

LUKE: Yeah, that makes sense. I think I get that now. Yeah, totally. I agree. This is an essential point I think. Let's see if we can summarize.

SARAH: So what we talked about, I have some notes. We just talked about structuring, and we mainly talked about, what do we do with time? And I would like for us to find some way to get the pros from both festivals, but that's still up for discussion. And then we talked about what model that we can use to help us do that.

LUKE: Right. That's where the bodies and the torture.

SARAH: Yeah. And then we talked a little bit about, I think we have to use a map. This is going to come up, probably so many more times. But I don't know how you guys— Did you guys use maps before? How did you guys determine how things went for each festival before?

AARON: Lots of talking.

LUKE: How did we determine when things happened?

SARAH: Yeah.

LUKE: Not too scientifically. For the first festival, I think we had five days or something, and eight projects, or eight pieces to rehearse, something like that. And so then we were like, okay, well half a day for each piece. It was actually four days for eight pieces, and that's why we did half a day for each piece. It was something to that effect. That was pretty much it. And that

was part of the bummer for me of the first festival— that that was it. To me, being hypersensitive to it, it felt like an enclosure, even though it wasn't intended as such and I don't think acted entirely as an enclosure. Then the second festival, we didn't really plan anything. I guess we had some stuff. We had that welcome concert, and that big event. And was that it, right Aaron? Oh, we had the sound bridges throughout the week. That was planned.

AARON: That was pretty much the main hooking point, right?

LUKE: Right. So that was the thread, which we're basically translating onto this coming year as real talk with Sarah, which I think will be even more of a structural refrain for this coming year. And I like that idea. I think that's one we should keep. We just have to figure out a way where it can be more flexible. And maybe that takes less thinking than we're even giving it. Maybe we just make it so.

SARAH: I'm doubtful of that point.

LUKE: Yeah, I am too [laughs]. Oh, another thing popped in my head. So we've had the welcome concert at the beginning of the year, each year. And I like that event. I think it's kind of nice. I don't know if— You were at both of them, Sarah, what your kind of thoughts are about it, and if we should do it again? Aaron and I had some ideas about stuff, but before we get into that, maybe we hear what you think.

SARAH: Yeah, I mean I was in a different position each time. So I like them, because it allows you to get a whiff of what might be going down. It allows you to, instead of just having to imagine. If you didn't have that, the very first thing would just be you just sitting in a room with these people.

AARON: Yeah. It definitely primed it in a good way.

SARAH: Yes, that's what I mean. But if I think about it on a larger structural level, if we had that at the beginning, it kind of feels very, like, and 'ha,' we have this. I think it would depend, like how would we balance that out throughout the rest of the days following the opening day or whatever? It's kind of giving a very strong introduction to the festival, which I think is necessary. But it's like, how do we maintain that energy throughout the festival? I think you guys solved that, from what I hear, was just having a thing that's triggered at the onset of the event, but also just happening again and again. I think what you guys already did is a good solution to the problem I was just bringing up. But I think it's kind of weird. Like it would be kind of weird to have something again that's closer to the first— Well actually no. This is what I'm trying to say: it would be weird to have opening night and then just regular 'residency days,' and then nothing else. I think a little less weird to do what the first festival did, which is like, opening day, lalala, closing day. It kind of just balances things out. I think it's even better to do the opening day, and then festival, slash, these little smaller like [larval] opening days.

AARON: Yeah, that was another thing I absolutely would like to do.

SARAH: Yeah. I wonder, what did you guys think? I wonder if you guys had any issues with this most recent festival, and how we could try and resolve that. We can keep on improving that structure, basically, is what I'm trying to say.

LUKE: Aaron, you go.

AARON: I'm honestly not—

LUKE: Well focusing maybe on the intro concert and then going into that. Or never mind. Do what you were going to do, sorry.

SARAH: Glaring silence.

LUKE: First I put him on the spot, and then, yeah [laughter].

AARON: Well no. You put me on the spot. I was going to start thinking one direction, and then I have to, like you shift the gear.

LUKE: Think in my direction, Aaron. Aren't you supposed to always just think what I want you to think?

AARON: I guess I'm honestly not particularly interested in trying to really think about this festival in terms of improving anything from either of the years. I kind of think about the thing that I think went really well, and the things that I think went really poorly. Or, none them went poorly, but the things I wasn't happy with. And then everything else that's in the middle, I kind of feel like we can count on again, and that's like the stuff that's interesting to discuss and to keep fractured and different and open each year, but improve the stuff that wasn't great and try to keep things up that was really good. So, on that note, I think that the guest artists show was a really good thing that happened year one, and then year two, we left it open so that anyone could, and we encouraged people to put on shows. But I was at least hoping that something like that would evolve organically as people got to know each other and wanted to hear each other's music and blah blah blah, and then it totally did not happen. Instead, it turned into something where people asked everyone to go around the room and share their work. But at the same time, that's what it felt like the group defaulted to. And so I'm not going to go say no or something. I think that doing the concert would be a good idea. Not only just because I think it was a great show and a great way to introduce the outward community to the guest artists, again trying to get people from the outside to come in. But it also, I think kind of gets rid of some of that egotistical, I need to express myself artistically blah blah blah bullshit. Which of course in these conversations, I do in no way want us to be fear-mongering or worried about people or counting on their lowest sentiments or whatever. But at the same time, I really liked the concert, and I know people will want a way to present their work, and I think this kills two birds with one stone. There really needs to be a better turn of phrase for that. Instead of

killing two birds with one stone, someone needs to come up with a better thing. Anyway, sorry, continue.

LUKE: Yeah, I agree. And we talked with Michael and Joachim a bit about this at the end of last year, that it's an opportunity for people to kind of get that out. You know, it's good. We enjoy the concert and it's a nice social thing, but also, like let's get it out of the way so we can— We're kind of clearing the air, or we're priming the air with the welcome concert, and then we clear any [bad] air with the guest artist showcase-y type thing. And so then, Friday night, everybody arrives. We have some kind of welcome concert. And I think that this should logically follow into what we're going to be doing for the rest of the week, the welcome concert, that is. So that should be something that really stems from, I think Sarah and all these conversations we're having. And then the following day, like we meet the next morning and talk, and whatever we're going to do. And then that evening, everybody has prepared a solo performance, before even getting to the festival. And they brought it, and this is what they're going to show, and it's like a straight up concert. And then we're done. This does not solve the thing of imbalance that you brought up, Sarah. And I'm not sure. Yeah, that is a hard thing to solve.

AARON: The concert at the end kind of thing?

LUKE: Yeah, cause we've gotten real mushy about it. Like the first year, we weren't mushy about it at all. We had that intense thing and it was cool. Then the second year, we were super mushy about it, and everybody kind of did something, and we had some food, and that was nice. But it was far from what we did the first year, which I thought was really special, that long performance.

SARAH: Yeah. I think, cause I really liked the idea of the first night welcome concert and the second night, like discuss, and just get your shit out of the way. Okay, great. And then I like that you kind of go from there. I really think that we could get away with not planning proper a final event, if we find some decent way to do this, like the balance between, we have our refrain event, and then we have our little, secret's not the best word, but it's the only word I have right now, like events throughout. Cause then we would already have like a double stream going on, at least a double stream going on. So if we had productive activity going on after that second day, I don't see why we would have to present a final thing, especially if— So we could have a final thing, but it could be elsewhere from the event. Documentation I think is just a great secret weapon, because we could handle that as well. Like what if we all just made a document or something of what we did? Cause we already did a concert. Were we going to do a concert again? Cause I guess what's good about the concert is that it invites, again, people to come and see what we just did. But I don't know if we need it twice in this instance, cause I do like how things are coming together.

AARON: That's a really interesting idea. I like the idea that the kind of thread that we're using throughout the week is the thing that we can make end in that kind of final event thing, as opposed to us getting to the end and being like: 'well what are we going to do?'

SARAH: If we're down for really seeing what we can do with documentation, it would be pretty cool. If we had an actual map that we used for planning, we could easily subsume this within our documentation, and then that becomes available to whoever wanted to help out with this throughout the festival. So it would be like an open source thing.

LUKE: I think that's great. Yeah, I think the documentation is going to be key, however we approach that. I'm still not super clear on it, and I don't have to be clear. Remember last time, we had talked about having that big movable wall and just having sticky notes on it? We could do something, string or whatever. And that can be a way of physically mapping conversations in the space that we have, and even overlaying them, which would be kind of cool. But maybe that obscures it too much. Never mind. Throw that idea out. But of mapping the conversations we have as our refrain. But then maybe there's some kind of online thing that you keep up, Sarah, or whatever, this diary idea. Because that reminds me of your blog that you keep up.

SARAH: Yes, my laboratory.

LUKE: Yeah, it's full of all kinds of goodies and scary things. And I think something like that would be cool and helpful. But then there's the thing of accountability in documentation with everybody. Like everybody has to be on their shit.

SARAH: Yeah, that's true. I think if we have a good team— Cause that's even the harder level, or a more latent level of conversation or whatever. It's like the vital matter of the conversation. What if some good marker of— What could we put in the application? Because everybody knows how to present their artwork or whatever. It must be so hard to read those applications, like this person, their art's like this, but we have no idea what this person's going to do in a room of other people. What is something we can put in the application? Like could you write something for us, or, I don't know. Cause writing isn't necessarily a good marker of it. I think one thing that is kind of necessary is some familiarity with some of these principles, like at least Deleuze and Guattari. Like I think if we're really honest, and we're just up front about the conceptual basis we're building upon, we just avoid a lot of issues. Because then it's like, okay, if people know exactly how deep we want to go, then people know where we stand. Cause there are a lot of artists who really just don't care about talking about these things, but they appear to fit perfectly in this situation. So we have to kind of let people know what the deal is very honestly, so we don't get in trouble later on.

LUKE: Yup, I totally agree, 100 percent behind that. Yeah, and I think that'll be in the description of the application. We'll have to be like, hey, people, here are the key concepts undergirding what we're going to talk about, or something. We kind of did that last time, but we did that in a very loose way in terms of like, oh, a bridge. The furthest, most intense we got, which is fairly intense, was saying social sculpture, which actually— So I think you're onto something here, Sarah. Social Sculpture, if I remember correctly in the applications, was the one thing that I noticed most people did not have an understanding of. Like people could Wikipedia it, but there were only a few people who wrote in their essay as if they knew what's

up, and I was like, oh, yeah you are there, you get it. This isn't just a hot take. And so, yes, I agree. So, we have to identify these areas, we already kind of have, but we just need a list of them.

SARAH: Like something that— I don't know how to make it— Because it's not like, you have to read— Well, I don't know. It's like the same thing you're just talking about. Like how much is too much?

LUKE: Give them a reading list beforehand.

SARAH: I'm kind of serious. Because you want to give people— So it's not about— You have to have access to these things in the first place. So I'm not really sure. Because if we gave a reading list, it would kind of be, would they get accepted and then get a reading list? Or would we tell them that— I think the reading list might be interesting, though. So we could have an application, and then people would get accepted or whatever, and we say, we're all going to be reading these texts together, and they're going to be coming up again and again throughout the festival. We don't know what people are actually going to do with the texts. But, for example, in the last festival, if people really knew what social sculpture meant, things would move so quickly throughout the festival. I don't want to come across as like, we are this ultra vanguard thing, and we know this and this. But I also am really tired of pretending that that's not necessary, because it kind of is. And we could do work, like each one person teach a concept, whatever. We could all do work to make these concepts accessible to one another. If we just give ourselves the time and space to do so.

AARON: Yeah. I think you really hit the nail in the, what is the saying, get the lightbulb light in the sharpest crayon. The readings can be successful if we make them so. And I think you're very right, and I think that really has to be on us. Because I do worry about being a vanguard, and I do worry that, hey, look, I am lucky enough to be exposed to these ideas and to be really interested in them, and also to be able to buy books and to have the time to read the books, and blah blah blah.

LUKE: Well, at least one thing, we can get them the books for free.

AARON: Absolutely. Yes, we can get the books for free, and we can do quick little write-ups. But I think it's going to be a delicate balance of making sure it's accessible, but at the same time, you're right. There is an expectation. And navigating that, I think, especially if we do the work of being like, not only here are the books I think you should read. Here they are for free. Here's an online version of it. You're right. You don't want to read *The Number and the Siren*? Here is a 30-minute lecture of Meillassoux online with subtitles where he explains the entire thing.

SARAH: We have the Tumblr for that. Like here are my notes on it. Here are the notes I'm working on. Let's compile some notes or whatever. So what if we had an application that was very honest about what we're after, honest and sincere about the things, the tools that we're using. Cause this thing happens in art where everybody's supposed to know every single

reading, but you're supposed to be very low key about it, and nobody dares mention— We have to avoid that, so we don't waste this time, basically. And then after the application, we say, okay. We let them know there's going to be something like this coming up, but we say, okay, we have these texts we would like to talk about, and here are our notes that we're going to be making about them. I've been trying to start doing this with scores I make. I haven't been successful, because I've been too lazy, but like, here are the notes I'm making for this. Just making the means of understanding these kind of texts available.

LUKE: Yeah, I think that's great. And a lot of the notes for books that I'm sure will be coming up are already out there online. We can do the work and make our own notes if we want, but there's already—

AARON: We can make them easily accessible.

LUKE: Yeah. There's so many great articles and weird blogs that just summarize this shit perfectly.

AARON: Some of which we may or may not have been involved in...

LUKE: Okay, this is good. So the application will have some sort of strong outline of different ideas or concept areas and their related, where they come from laid out. Like okay, nomadic, blah blah blah. Well, read that chapter in *Thousand Plateaus*. And then we say in the application that for the people who come, we'll have a reading list of sorts that will be help and preparation. We just let them know that's a thing. That's going to weed out a lot of people. But then I think we should ask some sort of question, something that will be another marker, or a significant marker of whatever. And we don't have to come up with that now. But something.

SARAH: Yeah, like writing, or just something. Even if it was just people, like seriously talking about something else that's not their art, because everybody's really ready to do that. Let's see something else that's a little bit different from the art.

LUKE: Yeah, that could be interesting.

SARAH: It's kind of funny, because we're all used to doing this. Like if you apply for a job or something— it's so confusing that this comes up in an artistic context. I don't know, it's just [beside the point]. Like if you're applying for an internship, you send, what are your writings on this contemporary artist? And that's expected.

LUKE: Yeah, maybe we can come up with some kind of like, not inane, but some question that's way from left field, but somehow would give us an in, like a behind the curtain look. Yeah, well maybe we can think about that. And we need to decide soon, but not today. I think we're in a pretty good place. Do you two feel good?

SARAH: Yes. I think I'm just going to start revisiting a lot of the ideas I had, which I actually think are just embedded within the documentations that I did. Yeah, like I have some notes I took now, and I'll send you guys that article. And I think I'll try and pass out more of the ideas even just for myself, and maybe just actually start writing models down and throwing things out there that are real and go from there. But yeah, I think this was good.

LUKE: Yeah. And we can all talk via email and see what comes up, we touch base again, even if it's like a quick phone call, and just be like, okay, cool. Here's what we're going to do for sure. Just like: buckle in, here we go.