

Conversation Room

User-Qustodian's manual

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Conversation Room is a sound sculpture specifically designed to hold intimate and undisturbed long-stretched conversations. It acoustically isolates itself from external noises providing a protective, private environment.

The room is also a sound archive, a repertory of hundreds of fragile voices playing one after the other, in a long timeline that might last for decades.

CUSTODIANSHIP

CR is an architecture for breathing, it promotes both listening and speaking as a form of communion through air. The listener digests and the speaker secrets. This is how the air recycles itself for the survival of all breathing beings.

A custodian can have many forms, it is the user, an individual, a collective, a particular desire to meet, an opportunity to provoke creatively, to fall in love, or to be conquered. Regardless of all of these modes, receivership requires the same responsibility, which is to know how to embrace an alterity.

The speaker is also a mystery, since voices can come from all directions and from so many different beings. The speaker can be a call, a sign, a memory, a shout for help, an ancestor, a person passed away or a future friend with a desire to meet. It can be sensual, loud or faint, dissident or compliant, antagonist or empathic. All these voices from alterity need the chance to disrupt the inner structures of the listener, its most dearly-held beliefs. This is radical listening.

Conversation Room needs to be strong and robust, ethical, creative, and safe so others can transform themselves into new unexpected shapes, safely.

The person that practices this radical form of listening (or attending) needs patience, patience to internalize foreign forces and to hack its own biases and expectations in the process.

Again, speaker and listener can be many things, but always more than one, even if it is one person talking to himself, splitting the self in two conversational beings, there is always more than one.

These roles of receiver and speaker can be so heterogeneous that cannot be ruled on this or any other manual. Nevertheless, here are some few physical constants, physical conditions of CR that might influence how the host and the guest configure their encounter.

- The room might last for decades, it is not going anywhere anytime soon. It stays there night and day, enduring the seasons, waiting for a voice to come and visit. The

room itself is patient, therefore, long breaths, long waits, long timelines will always find a place in CR.

- The room is quiet, what is foreground and what is background are wildly separated. Some people call this silence, others a form of care and attention, and others an opportunity.
- The room is not connected to the internet which in turn provides a healthy atmosphere for disappearance and unaccountability.
- Nobody will hear you outside unless you want it.

Dear Custodian,

CR is made out of plants, and plants need care.

As we converse inside of plants we will never speak alone. Talking through, with and above ourselves with plants is the real spirit of sustainability, for nature to keep growing entangled with us.

In other words, the CR promotes Conversation as a path for Conservation.

Important: curators, users or custodians of the CR should always remember that the CR cannot be used under any circumstance as an on-demand recording studio or radio venue suitable for social events or media production/reproduction unrelated to the relational processes described here. Even though future projects can always be experimental (and therefore always changing), the use of the sculpture requires understanding and protecting the foundational spirit of CR. Being familiar with these basic protocols will contribute to forge a more coherent ethics together with a more coherent artistic trajectory for the life of CR.

VOICES PLAYING OUT LOUD

The affects of words can be better captured by sound, the rhythm of whispers, the tone of pain or the loudness of indignation can travel more efficiently in sound.

Recording and playing the conversations outside the sculpture in the form of audio works as a way to communicate the sensible and complex character of the conversations, to communicate *what* and most importantly *how* words are exchanged in the room.

This is the diffusion strategy of CR: to use the acoustic as a sensible substance to transfer what is beyond the literal interpretation of words as mere symbols.

CR plays sounds outside not only as a centrifugal force that pushes the interior to the exterior, but also as a centripetal force that seduces the local community to come and listen closer.

With the previous consent of the conversation participants, the sculpture has the ability to record conversations inside of the room and play them later on the surroundings of the sculpture. However, you can enter the CR to just talk in the room; recording is never mandatory.

Conversation Room stands for Oral Craftsmanship.

PROTOCOLS

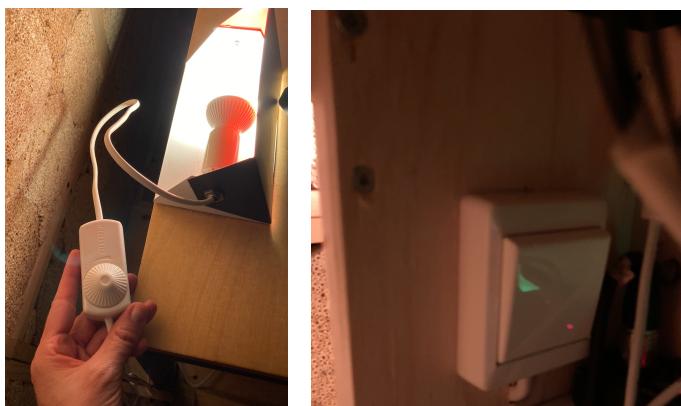
An agreement for how CR will be used with each guest is the most important meeting protocol. The users should always know beforehand what are the conditions of the meeting and the future uses of the audio recordings (if any).

A previous verbal agreement is recommended for this. This agreement is recorded ideally in the audio itself before the conversation starts (and re-stated at the very end) so this mutual understanding can always be confirmed later and the modus operandi of CR can also be communicated outside the sculpture.

OPERATION GUIDE FOR THE CONVERSATION ROOM

ENTERING:

1. Once you have removed the locks, please take them inside the sculpture with you, so nobody can close the door outside while you are inside the CR and the locks do not get lost.
2. Inside the conversation room, take off your shoes and place them on the wooden platform next to the speakers. No food or drinks that spill might be taken into the sculpture since any spill cannot be cleaned. Latch the hatch of the room from the inside so you will not be interrupted by outsiders.
3. The light switches can be found: behind the table for the small light (dimmer), and under the table for the ceiling lights. Do not use any other switches (manipulating them may interfere with the C.R. console and computer power sources).



4. For an attentive and dedicated experience, we suggest leaving all personal devices off.
5. Finally, there is a heater with a touchscreen control. Select “comfort” mode. The heater takes a while to warm up. Do not use the timer option.

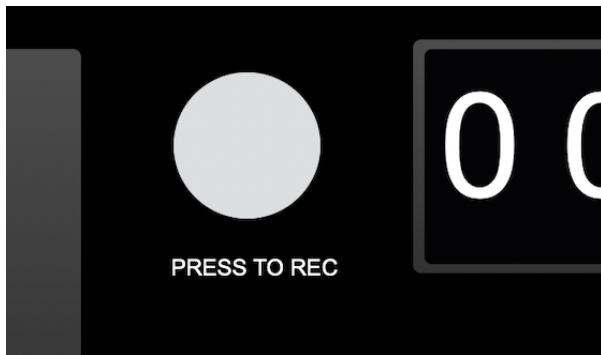
- To initiate heating, press the ON/OFF button. You will see the ECO mode icon . This means the device is in the ECO mode state.
- To change heating mode, press the MODE button to cycle through the modes:
ECO mode Comfort mode Anti-frost mode
- To adjust the set temperature of any of the modes, You can then use the UP and DOWN buttons to adjust the temperature. Temperature range is from 5°C –50°C.

Recording:

1. Turn down the internal & external volume of the sculpture by turning the knobs on the bottom left corner of the console all the way to the left. This is to make sure your meeting will not be interrupted by the sounds the sculpture plays.



2. If the screen on the console is in stand-by mode, (screen saver), touch it once to access the recording monitor.
3. Sit together comfortably facing each other for the microphones to register your voices properly.
4. On the monitor, press the (**Press to Rec button**). The button will turn red and the timer in the screen will start running, as well as the volume level bars. The recording has started.



5. Confirm with your interlocutor out loud if you both are clear on the terms you have agreed to talk and share words inside and outside the CR.
Silence is ok, enjoy it. Take your time. (Go back to the question of the sculpture, whenever that is useful.)
6. As you feel you have reached the end of your conversation, check in with your interlocutor once more. Do you both agree on leaving these words now uttered in the sculpture to be publicly shared? You may change your mind and that is fine.

Once you are done, press the record button again on the monitor. The recording will stop, the LED light should turn off, and your audio will be saved in a file containing the date and time of the recording.

7. Finally, in order for the file to be published in the surroundings of CR or to be shared with you or other users as a digital file, you need to write us here →. crcustodian@gmail.com *the files cannot be accessed directly, only remotely via internet.

Upon leaving:

1. Turn off the heater and lights.
2. Make sure to take the keys out with you.
3. Make sure that the recording has stopped (the rec button will be off).
4. Turn up the external volume knob to 2 o'clock.
5. Leave the internal volume knob down so we keep the inner room quiet.
6. On your way out, carefully close the hatch to avoid the door slamming down on you. Make sure that both hatches are tightly closed. Leaving them open will allow humidity to enter the C.R.
7. Close the entrance main door and make sure the door is padlocked.

ARCHIVAL AND BROADCASTING ETHICS

Before each recording all conversionalists must acknowledge the service and future use of the meeting recordings. As mentioned in the **Protocol** section, we suggest a verbal agreement which can be pronounced out loud at the beginning of each recording so the audio itself will contain the contract that each individual agreed upon.

Important: The archive cannot be accessed directly by connecting a drive or any other storage device to the computer, the only form to get access, delete, get a copy, or decide to broadcast through the CR speakers is to get in contact with us via crcustodian@gmail.com

About CR general access:

Locks on the C.R.: there is only one copy of the keys of the permanent locks of the CR door with the Aalto curators. Another copy is kept by janitors of Otakaari 1 A. For times of heavy use of the CR, there are 2 additional locks with codes that can be replaced on the CR door. This makes the logistics of access for students much easier (and safer, provided that the codes are only shared with a small group) and prevents the keys getting lost. The current lock codes are : 3322 and 5522.