

PEOPLE ASSUME I'M AN ONLY CHILD: POSTSCRIPT

I was afraid to revisit this work, it forces me to confront myself. It's already a remake of an older piece that I discuss and watch within the video you will see today. I could endlessly redo and remake it. Maybe I will. It's important to me that my works are not closed, that there is always the possibility to edit, disavow, re-contextualise, so I'm writing this because I want you to know that I recognise flaws in this piece.

I wish I could have communicated differently, left more space and time, exercised more patience. I inherited a particular way of interacting, which often includes testing, challenging, questioning, you can see this here. I don't know if my brother inherited this too. I remember agonising, seeking advice because I was too close to actually see the work, and my gut kept telling me to keep quiet. The push and pull between honesty and gentleness that I tried to explore in this work is still relevant to my practice, but in this piece I struggled to know if and when I got the balance right, I suspect I didn't, but I also suspect I'm still too close to the piece.

I see and acknowledge my pushiness. I know that you can't get the whole context, can't know that sometimes it takes my brother four hours to put on socks to leave the house, that "basic" tasks can be such a struggle even *with* a lot of patience. I know that also influences how I push and repeat myself, how I anticipate avoidance. Even so, I rushed Iain more than I should have done. I was too snappy, not allowing him to hold the camera "wrong" even, as if I have some discomfort with leaving things hanging, or letting uncomfortable things remain uncomfortable. Even though there are also moments when I am quiet and I follow, the ones where I fail stick out most to me. It's hard to know which starts first in a dynamic, this pushiness or the pushback.

I know from the daily sock battle that it's near impossible to coax Iain, to make him do anything that he doesn't want to, and so if he tells me he's happy to be in this video with me I should believe him, I should not undermine his choice to participate, but ultimately I am still the one driving the project, and holding the work after it's done, that fact never fully sat comfortably with me.

I feel sad when I watch this, not much has changed in our relationship. In the end, this work became about the difficulties of communication and being together under imperfect conditions. So art became a proxy for a relationship in which people connect, talk, and spend time together. The underlying sadness is real, but

it also detracts from something. I worry that my sadness might even be ableist because it stems, in part, from a desire for things to be different. Even if I know that difference doesn't have to conform to neurotypical norms; it can simply mean being more capable of being together, having more alone time, better understanding each other, or even not living countries apart.

There has been a significant cultural shift in discussions surrounding autism and neurodivergence since I made this work. I have been a part of this too, looking through this lens at myself and my own family. When I made this work, I was aware of certain tropes and approaches to people with autism that I wanted to avoid, but I didn't know what I wanted to embrace. If I had used my own neurodivergence to make this work, and to meet my brother there, what might have happened?

Many of the questions raised in this work remain unanswered and may stay that way, so I wanted to add this postscript partly because this work is ongoing for me. It serves as a document of a specific moment in mine and my brother's life and relationship, and that is also something which continues. Despite the shame I feel, I allowed this work to be here because I have the right to change and to admit when I did wrong, and also because it's not all bad. While I know that I did what I could at the time, and want to have compassion for that version of myself, I still wish this work was different. But at least that shows some growth trickling through, somewhere.

Iona Roisin, 2023