Swimming Lessons (Vidisha Fadescha and Prayas Abhinav)

A broadcast by Surfatial, the collective of Satya Gummuluri, Malavika Rajnarayan and me, 13 July 2015. Watch on YouTube

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I made this transcript by machine from the recording and corrected it against the recording's description and my own records. I have not checked the words by ear. I checked a sample of the speaker names by ear, and corrected those I heard differently. [?] marks a word still in doubt and [unclear] a passage that could not be made out. A speaker is named only where the broadcast's screen or the recording's own words say who is speaking. Fillers such as "uh" and "um" are left out. Times are from the start of the recording.

In this broadcast the screen did not show who was speaking. A name marked BY VOICE was matched by machine against the voices in the broadcasts where the screen did show names. Tried on those broadcasts, where the screen gives the answer, it was right in nine speaking turns out of ten.

Prayas Abhinav · prayasabhinav.net/videos

00:02 PRAYAS Hi Vidisha. So h are you enjoying your time at Surfatial?

00:06 PRAYAS BY VOICE You are

00:06 PRAYAS BY VOICE I'd like to introduce you to everyone to Vidisha Fadescha, who is how do you pronounce your last name?

00:14 VIDISHA F Fadescha.

00:16 PRAYAS Fadescha. Fadescha, is that correct?

00:19 VIDISHA Yes.

00:20 PRAYAS BY VOICE Okay, what does it mean? Where did it come from? Is your is your is everyone in your family called Fadescha? Fadescha?

00:30 VIDISHA Is this in

00:33 I was I was I was tired of what people think of my last name.

00:38 PRAYAS BY VOICE Yeah, you invented your last name, did you?

00:41 VIDISHA My last name. Yeah.

00:43 PRAYAS So is it?

00:45 VIDISHA I fell upon my last name.

00:47 PRAYAS BY VOICE But is it very common where you come from? Do people make up their own last names? Is it like a thing?

00:52 VIDISHA Yes. Yes.

00:53 PRAYAS So it has a history. Would you like to share the story? where did it

00:59 PRAYAS BY VOICE Who does it? like I've never heard of people who just make up the last name. So like you can tell us a story.

01:12 VIDISHA I think we get tired. I also actually had a friend once who was called Barbie.

01:19 PRAYAS Who was called?

01:20 VIDISHA She called herself Barbie.

01:22 PRAYAS Oh, great.

01:24 VIDISHA BY VOICE I think because she liked it, but I think they're just bored of like the real name.

01:36 For me I was not bored. For me I just wanted that other name.

01:43 PRAYAS What's the story behind your Adhanin? [?]

01:48 VIDISHA BY VOICE It's very I mean I kind of fell upon it. it is from a newspaper in Dubai who had published my name. So all the other proper nouns in that article were correct, but my name was Fadescha. So I became Fadescha. I said, I'll become what you want me to become. They didn't want me to become you, but I became

02:16 PRAYAS So today you are offering swimming lessons.

02:20 VIDISHA Yeah.

02:21 PRAYAS BY VOICE So how will you okay, so how are you teaching me swimming? So I'm Prayas Abhinav you're hearing my voice and I work for Surfatial and Vidisha is spending this month at Surfatial. So she's offering me swimming lessons and let's do this, okay.

02:44 VIDISHA BY VOICE So I actually was informed during my residency here that Prayas is really struggling with his swimming lessons. Because he just started with his swimming. And the other day he asked me that he needed a new instructor. So I said, sure, I'll tell him. but I mean the only thing that Prayas said that he was allowed to ask me as many questions that he wants, because his current swimming instructor is very tired of answering Prayas' questions. So Prayas just recently started to learn how to kick. How's that been going, Prayas?

03:23 PRAYAS BY VOICE I figure out how to kick today and keep myself afloat.

03:31 PRAYAS BY VOICE So I was so I've learned how to float last week and this month I mean this week I've learned how to kick keep my head above the water and stay afloat, all three at the same time.

03:47 VIDISHA Keep your head above the water.

03:50 PRAYAS Yeah. And kick and stay afloat.

03:55 VIDISHA Okay.

03:57 Oh

04:02 Yeah, I mean those are like the first lessons. Did they also teach you how to breathe?

04:06 PRAYAS Underwater?

04:08 VIDISHA No normally I mean

04:11 PRAYAS BY VOICE Hm in water above the head. No, they didn't teach us how to breathe. It's I'm a really slow learner, so I'm hoping that your class will really open up new horizons for me and you know.

04:27 VIDISHA I think it's a good thing.

04:28 PRAYAS Yeah.

04:29 VIDISHA BY VOICE There are actually many different kinds of swimming strokes.

04:36 VIDISHA BY VOICE I don't remember the dolphin one, but there are there is front stroke, the freestyle, sorry. It's also called the crawl. So it's like one of the first things that you'd actually learn. So yeah, I mean so you just I did show it.

05:04 So you I don't know where the water is.

05:10 PRAYAS The water is here. It's the fifteen. Thank you. So it's the fifteen

05:16 VIDISHA So it's just yeah. So you can just go like that.

05:21 PRAYAS Yeah.

05:21 VIDISHA Just go like that.

05:25 PRAYAS Oh.

05:25 VIDISHA Yeah, we can try it. then there is then there is a backstroke.

05:32 PRAYAS Hm.

05:33 VIDISHA Oh

05:35 VIDISHA BY VOICE So these are like common strokes that people do. There's also like a butterfly stroke. I'm not sure if you'll be able to do it.

05:44 PRAYAS What do you learn first?

05:47 VIDISHA Freestyle.

05:48 PRAYAS You learn the freestyle. Oh y so you didn't learn the crawl first?

05:53 VIDISHA No, it's the same the same stroke. But yeah, it's the crawl. The crawl is the freestyle. Freestyling and crawling is the same thing.

06:04 PRAYAS BY VOICE I'm still very far from that. I can just stay afloat and you know, I'm not very far. I haven't really learnt much of swimming.

06:16 VIDISHA So what do you look at when you're floating?

06:20 PRAYAS What do I look like?

06:22 VIDISHA Looking at

06:23 PRAYAS Look at I keep my eyes closed.

06:28 VIDISHA Why? You're scared what do you get inside your head?

06:32 PRAYAS BY VOICE Yeah. I d I feel very I'm almost in yeah, I'm in a panic mode. I'm just like hold your breath. Ah you know, so I'm not relaxed.

06:48 VIDISHA BY VOICE No, so Prayas try breathing, okay? Try breathing. Do you have sunglasses? Do you have those swimming glasses?

06:58 PRAYAS No.

07:01 Shaped? [?]

07:04 VIDISHA Yeah. So that you're not scared that it goes inside your eyes.

07:07 PRAYAS Right.

07:08 VIDISHA Then when you'll go inside the water, it's going to

07:15 It's going to

07:18 Help you see. So if you wear those swimming glasses it's gonna help you see inside the water.

07:24 PRAYAS Right.

07:25 VIDISHA Do not feel so scared.

07:27 PRAYAS Okay. So I'll get them tomorrow.

07:31 VIDISHA And you go shouldn't get [?]

07:34 PRAYAS No.

07:35 VIDISHA Why? Because you're a boy.

07:38 PRAYAS No, I've just I just haven't been asked to get one.

07:41 VIDISHA Because you're a boy.

07:43 PRAYAS Yeah.

07:46 VIDISHA So m you go in like the family time, when do you go? It's just

07:50 PRAYAS In the men's time.

07:52 VIDISHA Yeah.

07:53 PRAYAS In the time for men.

07:55 VIDISHA The men's time. So nobody wears swimming cap then.

07:59 PRAYAS BY VOICE A lot of people do. But it's like hardcore. I think it's hardcore. It's just like I know I don't know what a cap is for, so as long if I don't know it, then I don't feel like buying it.

08:14 VIDISHA So it's basically to help you protect you from chlorine which is in the pool. also so that you don't make your hair don't make the pool dirty.

08:26 PRAYAS Okay.

08:28 So yeah, I should yeah, it's

08:30 VIDISHA BY VOICE But usually what I've seen at like swimming pools in India is that men don't have to wear it and women have to
08:39 I actually learned how to swim in a palace.
08:42 PRAYAS In a palace.
08:44 VIDISHA Is it
08:45 PRAYAS Which palace?
08:48 VIDISHA In Jodhpur. It's in Rajasthan. So it's
08:54 PRAYAS You knew the prince.
08:56 VIDISHA Sorry?
08:57 PRAYAS Did you know the prince?
09:00 VIDISHA Okay.
09:02 PRAYAS Mm.
09:03 VIDISHA The king.
09:04 PRAYAS Oh you knew the king.
09:07 Wow.
09:10 So how did you get to know the king?
09:17 VIDISHA I was born to know the king. No, I don't know.
09:20 PRAYAS Huh.
09:21 VIDISHA I was I was I mean I was very
09:27 PRAYAS So you're just
09:31 PRAYAS BY VOICE Flapping around in the king's swimming pool and learned how to swim.
09:35 VIDISHA Yeah. Some special kids were could go and learn how to swim there. There was also
09:42 PRAYAS Didn't have a teacher.
09:44 VIDISHA No, I had a teacher.
09:46 PRAYAS Okay.
09:48 VIDISHA Me and all the other friends who knew the king could go there.
09:52 PRAYAS BY VOICE How many of you are there? we are like sixty of us. It's a pigsty. The whole swimming pool is full of people. Everyone's someone's hitting you all the time.
10:05 How many of you were there?
10:07 VIDISHA BY VOICE I don't remember. I mean of the last thing that last swimming pool which I had like remember going to a community swimming pool was at Y M C A in Los Angeles and because it was in Koreatown so it was a lot of
10:25 Korean people. Yeah. Used to also have a fancy sauna right next to it.
10:34 But I didn't I mean there is basically like lane rules. I think I have a drawing.
10:41 How creating it's [?]
10:43 PRAYAS Off?
10:45 VIDISHA Lane rules.
10:48 PRAYAS What's that?
10:50 VIDISHA There are rules in a lane, so sometimes what happens is that if it's a big lane
10:56 PRAYAS Which lane, swimming lane.
10:58 VIDISHA Okay. I'll draw it. I'm gonna draw it. So this is the swimming pool.
11:06 These is the this overlays. [?]
11:10 Of course they are not drawn properly.
11:14 And then so this direction No. This is wrong. Don't listen. This is wrong.
11:29 So this is for these people. This

11:35 VIDISHA BY VOICE And this is for people going in this direction. So these are the lane rules. You know how sometimes there are like these divider, like dividing balls which divide the swimming pool. So in between there those are like the lane rules.

11:51 PRAYAS Okay.

11:52 VIDISHA BY VOICE So when you are I mean I know people, I mean people don't even follow lanes here. Sure. Yeah. I don't know if people even know that there are lane rules. no, so th there's so there's the crawl, which is like the first thing you learn. But I think they're also gonna teach you something to just like bat like they just like make you do like this so that you're just dragging the water. So you basically just dragging your body.

12:20 PRAYAS BY VOICE How to do that, but they're just teaching us that like a hand movement, just like a hand movement exercise. You know, so they tell us not to not let our body move at all.

12:36 VIDISHA So how do you so do you not move forward? What do you do?

12:40 PRAYAS BY VOICE Yeah, we're just practicing how to move our hands.

12:47 VIDISHA So what do you do? You just stuck your legs on

12:50 PRAYAS BY VOICE No, we just yeah, we just keep our shoulders below water and push the water down with our hands.

12:56 VIDISHA Ah, like that.

12:58 PRAYAS BY VOICE Yeah. So just practicing the hand movements and

13:03 VIDISHA Babies can actually you know when they are little, like

13:06 PRAYAS Can see them. [?]

13:07 VIDISHA Month after six months. Yeah, they can swim and they can actually hold their breath for really long time underwater.

13:14 PRAYAS Wow.

13:17 VIDISHA BY VOICE So it's really good for them. Like I mean that's why a lot of babies do swimming as an exercise. I don't know as

13:26 PRAYAS But do when they grow up, do they remember?

13:30 VIDISHA No, I think it depends on how early you start and you learn.

13:35 PRAYAS BY VOICE But then there's some people who never need to learn swimming.

13:40 VIDISHA Maybe.

13:42 PRAYAS That's cheating.

13:45 VIDISHA BY VOICE No, I don't think so. I mean I think people need to learn how to swim. Because I mean emotionally we just start to fight like because we try to control our body, right?

13:55 PRAYAS Right. So when babies become children, they forget how to swim.

14:00 VIDISHA Sorry?

14:01 PRAYAS BY VOICE When babies become children, they forget how to swim.

14:05 VIDISHA Yeah. No. Yeah. No, I'm talking about like the holding water, the breath.

14:12 VIDISHA BY VOICE Because the womb is like water. So you can hold your breath for that long. So up to six months you can hold your breath for really long. So if you tried learning then you could do better.

14:26 PRAYAS Yeah.

14:27 VIDISHA BY VOICE No, so there's the crawl, there is so after this like dragging thing, I think this is the first thing they're gonna tell you was also like teaching your teaching you how to push your legs and then basically going forward. Do you also use those floaty things?

14:44 PRAYAS BY VOICE No. No, I wish they I had them that I could stay floating without holding my breath. But they didn't give me

14:52 VIDISHA They didn't give you what

14:53 PRAYAS The flo the floats for the hand

14:58 VIDISHA Oh, those manbones [?] are bad.

15:00 PRAYAS Achha.

15:01 VIDISHA Then you'll never go inside the water.

15:05 PRAYAS BY VOICE Okay. So the tire one, the ring one is good.

15:13 VIDISHA I mean because you can just use it as a board.

15:16 PRAYAS Mm-

15:17 VIDISHA Like a paddle board. So then you can just do your leg exercise and you can go forward. That's also something that they teach you in your swimming lessons.

15:25 PRAYAS BY VOICE Oh great. So I wrote something about swimming today.

15:32 VIDISHA Yeah.

15:33 PRAYAS Do you want me to read it out?

15:36 VIDISHA Well.

15:38 PRAYAS BY VOICE It's five hundred words.

15:41 VIDISHA Okay.

15:44 PRAYAS BY VOICE If you get lost i because if it's too it's too unedited. I just wrote it today. If it doesn't make sense, ask me to shut up.

15:55 VIDISHA Mm-

15:58 PRAYAS BY VOICE So the text is called Masking.

16:03 PRAYAS BY VOICE Curses are masks. Masks hide something and reveal something else.

16:10 PRAYAS BY VOICE This temporary management of appearances helps in balancing at least two urgent needs.

16:20 SPEAKER 3 Doesn't make sense.

16:22 VIDISHA Do it again. I can I can do it.

16:25 PRAYAS Curses are masks.

16:28 PRAYAS BY VOICE Masks hide something and reveal something else. This temporary management of appearances helps in balancing at least two urgent needs.

16:40 PRAYAS BY VOICE One is the need to nullify the opposition. Once the opposition is nullified, some progress can be made and the situation which seems like a crisis can even be remedied. Two is the need to proceed as planned. In spite of the discussions, a larger project has been underway. This project demands the timely dedication of resources and the equally timely delivery of material. When any particular pillar of the project becomes unstable, a dispute arises.

17:16 PRAYAS BY VOICE Masks help in executing complex discussions under the front of abstraction.

17:23 PRAYAS BY VOICE It might seem to someone not familiar to the pragmatics of discussion in the room that the topic under discussion is coffee. But in reality, a complex battle formation involving a massive cost and thousands of lives is the current engagement. Abstraction helps to desensitize discussions. It helps to divert the overbearing sentiment towards rational argumentation and away from sentimental brooding. That leaves us in a difficult position. We would not know what to do with our emotion anymore. Emotion is a problem because we have not been trained to deal with it.

18:05 PRAYAS BY VOICE We have been trained to understand emotion as a deterrent to rational thought. On the contrary, it is a lens that aids the complex perception of ideas that otherwise would never be perceived at all.

18:19 PRAYAS BY VOICE The absence of emotion from our cognitive apparatus has led us to a difficult point in our evolution. We produce anger, irritation, fear, confusion and other artifacts of a troubled mind. Because we are basically starved of emotion. Nothing touches us because we are stuck on a dry piece of land and we do not know how to swim. We need swimming lessons.

18:46 PRAYAS BY VOICE After our swimming lessons we'll be able to float, but float while precariously holding on to the edge of the pool. Courage to let go and allow our body to swim will take time, and in this time we can enjoy the feeling of not being able to navigate the terrain. After we learn how to swim, we will not be able to forget how to swim again. Water will become like land, water will know its place, and it will not overwhelm our nostrils. Then we will need to learn to swim and still drown sometimes as well.

19:24 That day we will learn how to wear a mask.

19:37 VIDISHA It's over?

19:38 PRAYAS Yeah.

19:51 VIDISHA Yes.

19:52 PRAYAS Yeah.

19:54 VIDISHA Can I can I tell you a joke right now?

19:57 VIDISHA BY VOICE Yeah.

19:57 VIDISHA BY VOICE There's also actually something called the side stroke.

20:02 PRAYAS Huh.

20:03 VIDISHA It's not a very not everybody knows how to do.

20:08 PRAYAS Huh.

20:10 VIDISHA Well

20:15 I mean I've shown it I've shown it to you previously.

20:18 PRAYAS How do you do it?

20:20 VIDISHA The side stroke.

20:22 PRAYAS Yeah.

20:22 VIDISHA You just do it with one hand and one leg.

20:25 PRAYAS How?

20:30 VIDISHA You get on your side.

20:33 PRAYAS Yeah.

20:34 VIDISHA And again like the way you learn how to drag and crawl your body, you push you push one hand and then you take the

20:51 VIDISHA BY VOICE So the right let's say you want to do the side stroke from your right side. I mean it doesn't usually happen on the right side, it's better, it's always on the left side. the last time I tried to do it from the left side, they told me not to do it anymore. but so you move the can you is it left right now? Is it left, right?

21:14 PRAYAS Yeah.

21:16 VIDISHA BY VOICE So left hand and left leg and you just keep going. And this right side is just relaxed. It's nothing, it does not exist.

21:24 PRAYAS So one hand only.

21:27 VIDISHA Yeah, your left hand and your left s left leg

21:30 PRAYAS Wow. I've never seen that.

21:34 VIDISHA We try to do it earlier.

21:37 PRAYAS Yeah. I look it up on YouTube.

21:42 VIDISHA Okay.

21:45 PRAYAS BY VOICE So how does swimming lessons, how does swimming lessons how are they connected to what you are doing in this month in the residency?

22:00 How does it make sense to you?

22:05 VIDISHA BY VOICE I think a lot of times what happens with residencies is and I think it's always been a really important part of residencies is just the idea of so of course one like decides that

this is what I'm going to do. But a lot of my practice kind of has to do with the idea of with primarily speaking of the process. And so I think it's important for us to like even what we do on Facebook to constantly like kind of and I'm also like not just Facebook, I mean I'm also speaking in the residencies also happening virtually at other places other than Facebook. And a lot of them might also just be private conversations, but at least some parts of those private conversations have to come back out on Facebook because it's a way because I'm interested in the idea of

22:54 I mean for me residency have to important occupation.

23:01 PRAYAS BY VOICE Is it like occupying a place?

23:05 VIDISHA BY VOICE Residency, yes, but not in sense of yes, in a sense residency is an occupation. but I mean that what I'm talking about is the process of what one is doing at a residency that you know how does one I mean I think process for me is as also really important in any kind of practice. be it curatorial, be it gardening, be it swimming. I mean it's important to know before you actually get there because I think again it has to do with this idea of like if you get there then you don't have to do anything anymore, you know? so I'd rather not get there. Or at least like value of not being able to get there. Or even if I get there, I still value how I was getting there. So I actually even when it comes to swimming, I don't know how to do a lot of like so you know, whenever you go to the edge at the pool. There are these turns and every stroke has a different turn. So I actually don't know all those turns. So and that's the idea of the edge. So I know what to do in the middle. I don't know what to do on that edge. And yeah, so I mean so yeah, so I think releases [?] kind of and I'm always I think interested in this kind of

24:32 The s that's why I said that the lesson only is about the stroke and I don't know the turns. So I don't know the turns. I just know the stroke. And the stroke is only gonna help you get up till the edge. And then the edge then you're just like doing what people I mean, or somebody else will have to teach you that. and yes, residency has an occupation. it works like that.

25:05 VIDISHA BY VOICE I think also like the way people are engaging with me through Facebook or through emails or through other things, other kind of social media. I mean I have done this previously at a short run, like just a one week long thing, but I haven't done like a four week long thing and I think it's even more intense. And I've actually grown more dark circles now in the last one week. because the screen is very close to me.

25:37 PRAYAS The C

25:39 VIDISHA The screen.

25:40 PRAYAS The screen.

25:41 VIDISHA Yeah.

25:43 PRAYAS But you switched off your video.

25:48 VIDISHA No.

25:49 PRAYAS BY VOICE Okay. So before you changed your name, were you doing stuff still publicly or was that a time when nobody knew you?

26:00 VIDISHA So I was doing stuff publicly.

26:03 PRAYAS BY VOICE So if and what happens to when you change your name, what happens to that whole history of doing things with a different name?

26:11 VIDISHA BY VOICE I think that's comp that's the struggle, I think. Because now a lot of times when you are doing the Google search in some sense it has erased a lot of my history. because now you are like but then of course at some point you find out that this person also worked like that. So even like right now, I think a lot of times one is exchanging those names. I think I mean the Fadescha came in because of trying to censor a lot of things. I mean censor the sense that

26:46 I mean I think so I was actually about to post this one image because that my hist history is not

27:12 Bye.

27:15 Yeah.

27:19 But yeah, so
27:23 I'm still
27:26 I think we're going to have a second.
27:29 PRAYAS You
27:29 VIDISHA So I mean r even right now I kind of do miss stuff.
27:44 PRAYAS BY VOICE But why do you why would you want to do that? Why are you interested in erasing history? People actually take a lot of pain in claiming history.
27:52 VIDISHA BY VOICE A lot of it because no because the lot yeah of course that's the thing. I mean everybody I kind of see are basically just like capitalizing on it in some sense. But I'm not I'm not interested. I'm not in because it's a history that didn't actually do anything. No, it's a history of some kind of kind of social violence in the sense that the last name was. So I'm not I'm not interested in having that history. I'm not interested also actually that because in terms of whatever I want to do, I don't want to apologize to anything, and I don't actually want somebody to find someone else who needs to apologize for it. So yeah, so nobody should be apologizing. I don't I'm not going to apologize anyway. And so yeah, so then you're telling you I am dead.
28:54 PRAYAS BY VOICE No, but you're talking about erasing a hist a c a segment of history that let's say you're not that you don't want in your as a part of your narrative anymore.
29:13 Right? Are you are you are you saying that?
29:18 VIDISHA BY VOICE Actually not all of it. I mean but I think it's totally okay for I mean, of course people are able to find my previous work as well. it's totally fine.
29:33 PRAYAS BY VOICE But so are you saying that you like being porous? You like to be whoever you choose at a given time and you don't care about being the same person all the time?
29:46 VIDISHA Yeah, absolutely.
29:48 PRAYAS Are you saying that?
29:49 VIDISHA BY VOICE That's yeah. But that's the truth even about like the way I looked at myself before my name, before I changed the name.
29:59 PRAYAS BY VOICE So what is that condition what should we call that condition? And w do you want to talk about that a little bit?
30:06 VIDISHA I mean again like
30:09 PRAYAS BY VOICE This condition of being of being okay and being comfortable with a kind of porosity.
30:17 VIDISHA Because I think the thing is that I at I understand that
30:25 VIDISHA BY VOICE I think no one can know enough. I think I can't even if I claim and I know enough I still don't. Like how much do you even know? So you're not claiming any sort of like that oh I have this knowledge. No, I mean I have some knowledge, but I'm not saying it might be the truth. Personally, like that's the rule. Nothing is true. That's the rule. There is no truth. And we all live in a myth. So if we all live in a myth, we can't like keep holding on to something. Because living in a myth is such a great space. It's it means that you can just play with it. So you play with it. I mean, what's the harm? I mean I'm not scared.
31:14 Yeah.
31:17 Mm.
31:18 PRAYAS BY VOICE You know so but you're talking about playing with your own with your own mythology, right? You're playing with the
31:28 VIDISHA Any I think. I mean
31:32 VIDISHA BY VOICE I mean, how do you hold something responsible? Because we have also, I mean, we as education in terms of learning, we've come to a point when something when an act happens and a physical body of some somebody is present within that act, we have come to a point in terms of knowledge where we don't believe we don't even like blame the physical

body for present. We have found ways to basically save that physical body, saying that you are not the criminal. What is the criminal is the precarity around you which has produced you. So now if you've come to that point where you can't believe blame the physical body, which means that physical body then can do whatever. So in terms of knowing knowledge, if we've come to that place, then we just have to be okay with other things too. I mean we become all of those things.

32:31 [unclear]

32:33 PRAYAS [unclear]

32:39 VIDISHA Hello?

32:40 PRAYAS I can hear me. [?]

32:42 VIDISHA Yeah.

32:42 PRAYAS Yeah. No, so are you saying that porosity is kind of inevitable?

32:47 VIDISHA I can't hear you, Prayas.

32:50 PRAYAS Yeah.

32:58 PRAYAS BY VOICE No, are you saying that porosity is kind of inevitable? That there is no other choice but for all of us to be porous because there are so many things happening and

33:14 VIDISHA I think I think

33:16 PRAYAS Have to accept them.

33:17 VIDISHA BY VOICE Yeah, I think people shouldn't take themselves seriously. the moment you stop to stop doing like you moment you start to take yourself seriously is when you lose that porosity. And you actually as a body can't exist without that porosity. You know, because I know so many people who like at the age of twenty five they would say this is what I'm going to be and that's what my life is, and I made these couple of decisions and blah. How do you make that decision, 25? What are you gonna do? Are you gonna do that thing for fifty years? That's really stupid. I mean you actually just made your own choices, I think for like seven, eight years until you decide that this is what I am and this is what I want to do, because what you are

34:01 PRAYAS BY VOICE I think yeah, I feel very uncomfortable with how people spend their twenties also.

34:09 VIDISHA As in

34:10 PRAYAS BY VOICE As in I don't yeah, I don't feel comfortable with people who you know, they try to

34:23 Decide

34:29 About I mean through what they've done.

34:32 VIDISHA Thank you.

34:33 PRAYAS Okay.

34:40 PRAYAS BY VOICE Okay. no, I mean they decide too soon about what they want to do, like you're saying, all their lives and they study something and they because of that they feel locked into a certain identity and they live with that and they feel trapped in that.

35:01 VIDISHA BY VOICE Yeah, but it's like the modernism hangover. Wh which is I mean only if people it's like that. It's like why you know, because if one again now if one is talking about knowledge like knowledge or whatever. And I'm sorry I like have such a like it's like inside my head. that

35:24 VIDISHA BY VOICE If one actually did understand postcoloniality. Now I'm gonna use this word because it kind of is attached to a lot of because that in-between space, that space of flux, that's that identity which does not belong to multiple spaces, that identity is that. That's what postcoloniality means. It does not belong. So I'm just what I'm what I'm trying to s what I'm saying is that I'm just bringing this in because people don't understand post-coloniality so well. Like what that identity is. It is a identity which is in flux. It can't it can't be the binary. And I mean a lot of these things are like things that I also say about gender, things about I things I say about

other things, and everybody in some in and I and it's actually and that kind of you know the idea of the strokes and knowing the strokes because you are not getting to the edge. And now of course it's not even about the idea of the periphery or anything. It's just about knowing those strokes or learning those strokes and getting through those getting to the edge but com coming back to because you are what you know is only the stroke. Because it's also this I mean the idea of this in between space is also a space for really like it's the space for protest, it's the space for where new things can come up. So unless you are in that space, unless you unless you don't answer those questions for yourself, unless you don't like kind of sit onto something and just do that something. Unless you're sitting onto porosity which is like my case where everybody's just like what the hell are you doing? I'm like yeah, so I'm doing all of these things. You know and So I think that's the idea of the strokes also, like we should know the stroke. We should know this that space. So yeah.

37:16 PRAYAS BY VOICE No, but not everyone is

37:20 Fragmented enough, right?

37:25 So you might not

37:27 VIDISHA Because you are thick you want him to be silent. [?]

37:34 PRAYAS BY VOICE Decide what? s yeah, I think if you switch your video off, we'll have better bandwidth.

37:41 VIDISHA Okay.

37:45 PRAYAS No decide what.

37:48 VIDISHA I don't know all of these things. I want to be vegetarian. I don't know. I'm not gonna

37:54 PRAYAS BY VOICE Don't decide then it is it will just be

38:00 PRAYAS BY VOICE You know, I mean, what is your personality? But a set of decisions. If you don't decide anything, you won't have a personality.

38:08 VIDISHA [unclear]

38:09 PRAYAS True.

38:10 VIDISHA BY VOICE I mean, sure, don't have eggs for a month. Don't eat certain things for a month. I mean, how what are you doing? I mean, you can do it for three years. Don't do it for three years. Great. I'm totally okay with that kind of time limits, you know. And I mean, what do you mean? What does what does a personality mean? Like I'm saying that so many times, what the idea of the subject, sometimes the subject is not even a body, the subject is the body's history. And the b so if you even do something, you it's not even credited to you. It's credited to your history. So, what are you becoming the personality of? What you're becoming personality of your history then?

38:55 And a lot of times you yourself don't even have a hand in that personality of history.

39:01 So if you want to buy that history stay with that history.

39:06 PRAYAS BY VOICE But is it really our decision to make what you would like our history? I mean do you really construct your history or you know, consciously, or is history something that becomes your narrative? You know, it's a emergent narrative, it's not the scripted narrative.

39:29 VIDISHA BY VOICE You can't control your history. It's like you can't you ca what we don't have control on anything. I mean even if you when

39:38 PRAYAS BY VOICE You change your name. So then when you change your name to erase a certain history, does it get erased?

39:45 VIDISHA I don't use it.

39:48 VIDISHA BY VOICE You can find it. I mean you can find it. I'm just saying that at places it's because the thing is it's making a history of its own, you know. and so I mean this is probably the first time when I've actually not answered directly where that name comes from. Though a lot of times I have answered where that name comes from. but that's also a kind of history. So maybe one doesn't want to talk about that history. And Fadescha actually has started to stand

has over time in my practice, whenever I speak about it, has meant different things. Sometimes it was meant it meant this girl who was twelve year old. This sometimes it meant this some other person who was down on the streets doing something. So Fadescha also meant different things. So Fadescha has not stayed constant. It's just the name maybe which is stayed constant, but it's building its own history. It does not It of course again the I think the history also which comes with the last name is also the moral history of the origin and which Fadescha also has it. But that's why in this particular video I've actually not said where the what the origin is.

41:04 PRAYAS BY VOICE Right. So if but if you if the origin story and the you know where it comes from, all the stories, if the all the stories keep changing, then how do you I mean you were talking a while back about the mythology and about you know playing with it. So if the mythology that is script keeps changing, then which one gets registered?

41:33 VIDISHA I think that depends on the present. Like, so you know, if you go on a walk, if you go on a walk and you go on a walk for half an hour and you come back, you tell the person what you saw in your walk. You remember certain things. Now, if I ask you after one month, you remember certain things. And then you'll remember might remember something else, and maybe you also have a different language for why you saw a certain thing. Because what you know has changed. So the same walk has all those things. So it's totally okay if the history of origin and this entire methodology or the process, when it's articulated. I think that's why language and actually myth, what is myth? Myth is actually just text, you know. And of course it becomes it performs, it's a text which performs. So it that's it, so myth then or the story then or the history then is very located in the present. You know, it doesn't it's not located anywhere else.

42:46 PRAYAS BY VOICE Right. So you're saying it works even if it's loose?

42:53 PRAYAS BY VOICE It doesn't need to be tight or controlled or e even the it doesn't even re need to remain the same.

43:02 VIDISHA BY VOICE Yeah, because it's on the pr it's because it's depending on the present and my imagination of you know? And my imagination of how you see me. So I think those all those things that what that fragment or the incomplete narrative or the complete narrative is about.

43:31 Hello?

43:32 PRAYAS Right. No, yeah, I was just swinging that through my head.

43:40 PRAYAS BY VOICE It makes a lot of sense what you are saying about your imagination of my imagination of you.

43:50 VIDISHA Yeah.

43:52 PRAYAS BY VOICE And I think that's the that's the bridge that strangers are able to make. you know, so someone I've never met before.

44:04 VIDISHA Mm.

44:05 PRAYAS BY VOICE If when we meet, we can just try build this bridge on the basis of a shared imagination of each other, right? In the sense that you can just like how I how you imagine that I imagine that you are.

44:23 VIDISHA Yeah.

44:24 PRAYAS BY VOICE And you can just like that, even if that doesn't even if that's not true.

44:31 VIDISHA BY VOICE Yeah. I mean it always happens. I think that's one of the big issues of what we actually become. And that's why I'm saying like even the way the way because and that's why I'm also saying that we are not controlling anything. So we firstly need to know that. We are not controlling anything. Our personality is not made by us.

44:50 And so of course there are different reasons what we become what we become, but this idea of this imagination is it's also my very important because what happens is that sometimes I'll also try to sometimes it depends. If I'm trying to impress you and I think that you think highly of me, then I or a certain and highly means something to you, but I imagine what highly means to you. So I am going to become this imagined person that you think me to be. Do you under-

stand why I'm saying? Right. Like I will become the imaginary Vidisha, which it is for you. But for you it's imagining. So I will try to perform. But here the thing is that it's many it's like many meta like meta levels of imagination because it's not me. What you imagine of me is not me, right?

45:47 PRAYAS Yeah.

45:48 VIDISHA BY VOICE What I imagine you imagine me to be is not me and then I perform it. So and that performing is also just in my head. It's not even true for you, like when you look at it. but also I mean I think it also depends on how much each other one of I mean, how much are we paying attention to each other? Like do we really care? I don't know. I mean how much do we care? Do we care about ourselves or do we care about each other?

46:19 PRAYAS BY VOICE And this not caring is actually what porosity is about.

46:30 PRAYAS BY VOICE Yeah. Yeah.

46:30 PRAYAS BY VOICE So when you don't want to I mean it's not that you don't want to control, you then you don't really don't really think that it can be controlled.

46:42 VIDISHA BY VOICE Yeah, but I think it also has to do I think for me, I like I said that I'm not scared. So what I'm not scared of is I am not scared of you thinking to me to be something else. Because I know what I am. Okay? Or that I know that I am there for myself, whatever happens. So nothing can shake that, nothing can change that, and so I don't have to be scared because it does not matter to me what you imagine of me.

47:17 PRAYAS Yeah, but that's being that's being very strong.

47:26 PRAYAS BY VOICE I mean in the in the whole i Inviting Weakness s sessions we were talking about this. You know, I mean it feels good to think that it that it doesn't matter.

47:40 You know, but of course it matters a little bit.

47:45 And some and but how much is how

47:49 VIDISHA Depends on the time.

47:51 PRAYAS BY VOICE No, but how much that little bit is a matter of degrees. Sometimes you're going to be less vulnerable, sometimes you're going to be more.

48:01 VIDISHA BY VOICE Yeah, but the thing is that time changes things. The thing is So time changes things and so even if at some point you must have I mean I think that's what something happened in Inviting Weakness was this like this idea of like scared of failing. But why are we scared of failing? Because maybe we're not failing, you know what I mean? And yeah and it's how long is it gonna take you to heal from something like that? It's not gonna take you long. You just have to know that it's not gonna take you long. So people heal, people fail, people heal.

48:40 PRAYAS BY VOICE But what are you afraid of? You are afraid of not being able to heal.

48:49 VIDISHA In the Inviting Weakness session.

48:51 PRAYAS BY VOICE No, I mean what is anyone ever afraid of? People are only ever afraid of being hurt so fundamentally that they will not be able to heal.

49:07 VIDISHA BY VOICE Yeah, but

49:07 VIDISHA BY VOICE One has to act upon it. You know, like one of the rules, like another thing, I think another thing, I'm not sure if you have time for this. but one of the So now, I mean, going back to Inviting Weakness, it's a very the idea, it's like a level of at the level of emotion. But I said that the emotion is just bodily. Emotion is not or like now this is my place. I have like some kind of invisible emotional disability or something. Where emotional for me, emotion for me is bodily. Emotion does not mean that I am feeling happy. So I might feel happy, but I might not react in the way happy reacts. You know, and I might so different points where I imagine that I'm in love, but I'm not in love. It's just my body. Who thinks that I'm in love? So my body is doing something, but I'm just putting a few things together and thinking that I'm in love, which is not true. I mean, it's these are just separate things. So this healing so depression is one of these other things that people think that oh this is over, I'm done, blah. one of the first

things that depression tells you is that you have to help yourself, you have to go walk out of your house, like walk out of your room, you have to do it yourself. It is not like

50:33 PRAYAS BY VOICE About the biggest thing about depression is that depression cannot be cured by positive thinking.

50:45 VIDISHA BY VOICE Yeah. I'm not asking you to think positively. I know it's not gonna happen. I know that. And I also know you'll come back to your room. I'm only asking you to go see the sunshine. Like one can make that effort. Just go see the sun. This is it. I'm not asking you to do anything else. So it's just this simple, the idea of healing. It's to know that what you can't do. So I know I can't have happy thoughts. Okay. I but this not me, I'm talking about the if the depressed person. I know I can't I can't be happy. I know it's gonna take me this long to be happy. I think one of the very important things is for people to actually spend time with themselves and understand their body. So one of the other things I think, which is the idea of the residency, is very sp like and this idea of occupation of something else. I think one month period is an extremely important period. for somebody to understand a certain place. because a lot of times when you like something, it might just actually have to do with your body in that point in time that you like it. You might actually not like it, you know, in the longer time. So for me, that as a traveler also, I like to basically spend like one month in one place to actually know what I think about this space. Because your body goes through a lot of things in those months. Both like all kinds of genders, bodies go through those things in one month. So there are points when you're sad, you're happy, blah. So you have to experience all of that to make a judgment, you know. It's not it does not like you know when people say that places have to do with like friends and family or like landscape and everything. No, it has to do with your body. It's you have to give a location that time.

52:43 And you have to I mean understand body separate from emotion. So

52:50 VIDISHA BY VOICE But body helping the emo but body making you react. So that's why this one month residency period or this idea that you have to go and see the sun.

53:04 PRAYAS But how are you how are you able to talk about the body in this time that we live in let's say you know let's say we were able to think about the post digital body you know 20 years back we were able to think about that right so the cyborg like you know all of this so how are you able to think about the body in the pre-cyborg way still

53:41 VIDISHA Okay, so I wanna say two things. One of the things is that something which has been really hitting me really hard in the last one month. Not that I mean one month, two months, but I've been reading these articles about like, oh, the next generation is this is what's gonna happen to the next generation. What are you gonna tell your children? What are they gonna eat? I mean those questions have always been present, you know. But our parents did not raise us saying that, oh, you are living in a bad world. Because the moment that happens, something dies, like something it's like, oh, there is a certain nostalgia of a life you never lived. So you should never raise people saying that, oh, I lived a better world. No. You just say that this is the best we have. This is what we have right now. This is the best. I mean it's always been this. It's not always, I don't say that. That's not what I'm saying. But just but you just like don't have this kind of like how do you tell your kids, oh the I used to live like where a house with mango trees and like no, you don't have that. We can't afford that. You can't you can't have those trees. They don't exist in the same manner. So live and answer things in the present. And also why am I thinking about the body in the no, I think actually body for us we even the in the digital space, we you know, I mean I think it's the even like now actually my if one is looking at the digital spaces now, they have started to get humanized a lot because I actually have like a couple of focus timeliners on my Mac. where one of them is says where one is like a focus thing so I just like put the work I need to complete on that focus thing and it's just gonna keep popping up. So it just pops up every ten seconds and if I'm not doing that it'll just keep irritating me. It's like it's like poking me that no this is what you need to do. And then I have this other thing which starts to buzz every 45 minutes. Which means that oh take your eyes off the screen. So I do take my eyes off the screen for forty five minutes. Or for sorry one minute or whatever. So

it'll basically it'll just like make a really loud piercing sound if you do not move from your screen. And so I mean our digital ages have started to become have started to address the body because now over these thirty years, th thirty five years of having the computers, sitting I mean having a lif and fifteen years of everybody having that kind of a lifestyle where we are spending so much time in your computer, it has to get humanized. It has to these are it's important for it if even if the digital need age needs to exist. You know, why and I mean I mean the digital has changed so much. The digital has changed our social so much, like what are we loving, what are we eating, what are we like what are we making and what are we looking at? How are we looking at ourselves? What's how so I mean it's affected us. It doesn't exist on its own. So the digital affects us.

56:55 PRAYAS BY VOICE Right. But does it affect us or does or does it reimagine us entirely?

57:04 VIDISHA BY VOICE It's both. I mean, we have always been reimagined. We've been controlled about what we are through media for a really long time. Actually TVs were never supposed to be a part of entertainment. TVs actually existed in supermarkets. And TVs were and what will happen if you had a TV in your market store, you would come inside the store and somehow purchase. And you would purchase what was on the TV. So TV was primarily only for commodity. It was only part of the material culture. So TV is not entertainment. Film has never been entertainment. And film has always been part of this material culture. So we have always been controlled of what we are, what we become, how we love, what we eat. what we think is right, what we think is wrong, what we fear and what we don't fear. So of course and digital is just another one of those medias which is also doing that, you know. So it's nothing new.

58:10 PRAYAS BY VOICE So by saying that it's nothing new, you think it's more of the same? In a sense, it's a parallel or maybe the same of what the world that we live and breathe in is like.

58:36 PRAYAS BY VOICE Is it a parallel to I mean I'm just trying not to use the words offline. I'm not trying I'm trying not to use the word in real world.

58:46 VIDISHA No, I don't think it's parallel actually. I think it's the same thing.

58:51 PRAYAS It's the same.

58:53 VIDISHA BY VOICE Yeah. So you know, if because if you see there was this really cute illustration. So this is the last one minute. there was a really cute illustration which I saw where it says, Oh, what if so group of people basically used to stand facing each other. Then what photography did is that everybody was facing the camera. You know the that's the group of people. When there's a group of people they're facing the camera. Now if you actually see the group of people, they are all like holding their hands up and taking their selfie or whatever. So everybody's body has become so we become that, you know. But we have always become that. We have always become our technology. So it's nothing new.

59:37 So it's not parallel.

59:39 PRAYAS BY VOICE So that's okay. I mean we can accept that it's nothing new very easily. So you know it's not a painful acceptance. But then even if it's the same old.

59:52 VIDISHA It's ten o'clock.

59:54 PRAYAS Okay, so we'll continue this conversation in the next

59:58 VIDISHA Does the recording go off?

01:00:02 PRAYAS BY VOICE No, it won't go off, but we can just behave and try to stick to the time. But just I'll just complete the sentence of what I was saying. So even if it's the same thing, even if it's exactly like you know, li living in the world where we sweat and get sick and die.

01:00:28 PRAYAS BY VOICE I think even then it's worth thinking about a little bit because even if it lets us think about our existence otherwise in a new way, right? of how we live online, if that allows if thinking about that allows us to think about how we live otherwise in a new way, it's worth it. It's good enough.

01:00:58 VIDISHA BY VOICE But that will only happen if you hold on to a nostalgia.

01:01:04 PRAYAS BY VOICE No nostalgia. There is just you experience you document your experience when you are online essentially, and you document your experience when you are doing something else and you're disconnected, whatever. And you just hold these two documentations together.

01:01:31 I mean I don't know.

01:01:32 VIDISHA BY VOICE Yeah, I know. I mean that's why I was when I was talking about a project which I did earlier, which was again about this digital thing, it's in two thousand ten, was called I'm There, I mean I'm here. And

01:01:48 I think at some point or maybe it's just because I am one of those people like

01:01:56 VIDISHA BY VOICE Who kind of grew in who grew up with the computers. So or whatever. Or maybe like at least in my adult life I had the computer and the social media which was defining me. Like I must have been on Facebook for eight years now. Or five, seven years. so I don't

01:02:19 VIDISHA BY VOICE So I think I talk like that. I talk like how I talk on the social media.

01:02:25 PRAYAS BY VOICE Right. So you are in that sense native. You think you're native at least. So I mean that's very different from how I am related. But I think yeah, that's like a that might be just like a whole entirely different conversation. So we can pick it up next week.

01:02:46 VIDISHA Okay.

01:02:47 PRAYAS BY VOICE And yeah, bye for now. And have a good time at Surfatial in the next three weeks or two weeks, I don't know.

01:02:58 VIDISHA Okay, thank you.

01:02:59 PRAYAS Yeah. Bye, good night.

01:03:00 VIDISHA Bye.