

TALKING

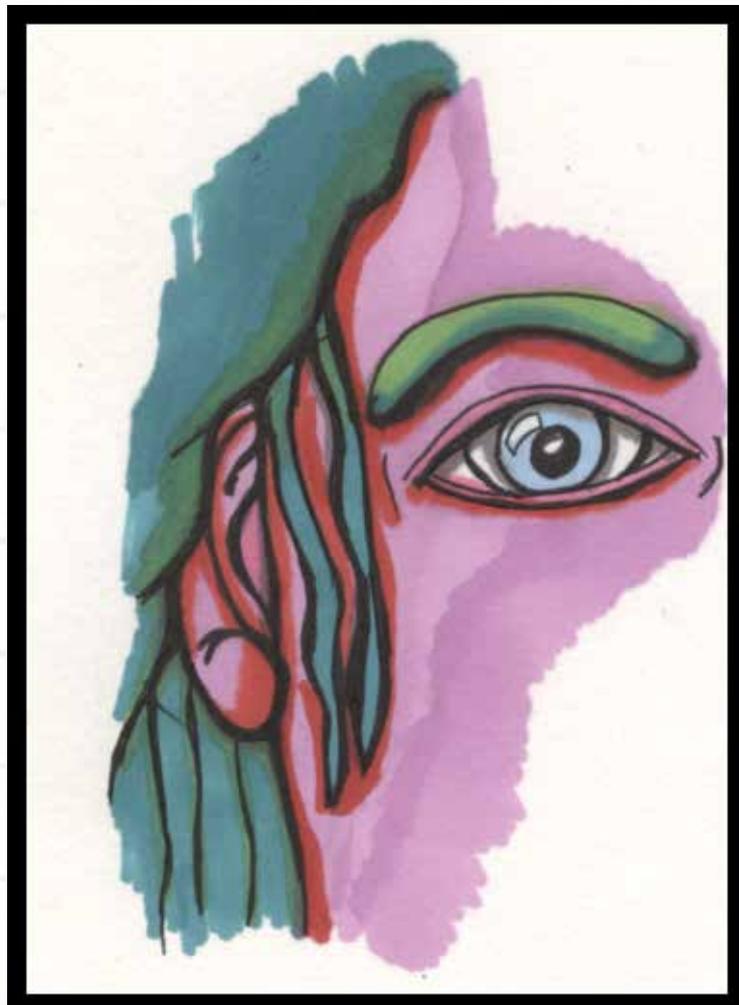
A performance in a zine

Created by Steven Fraser

Introduction

Talking is a Private Play. It is a story about feeling, talking and connecting.

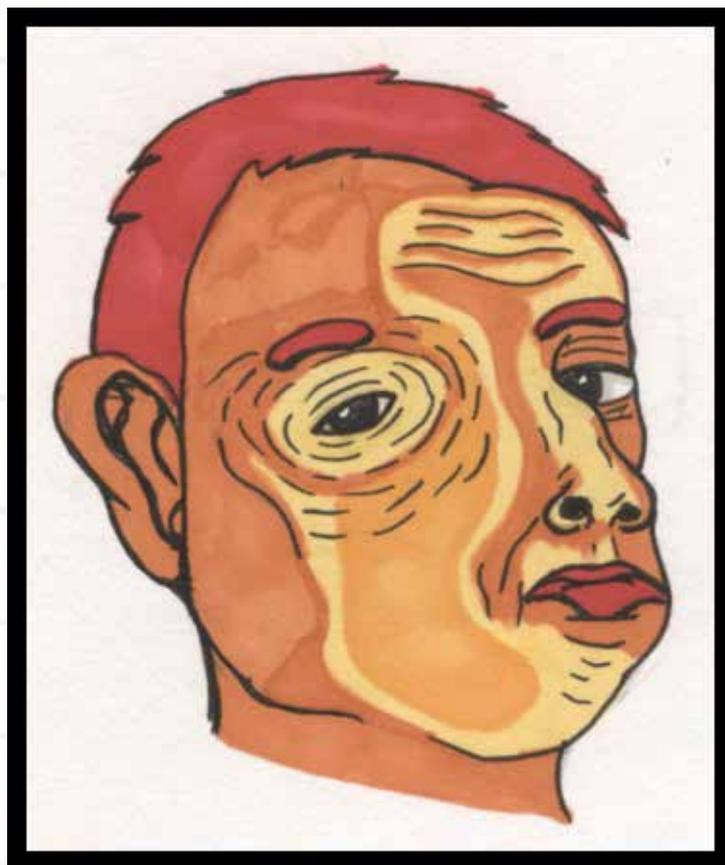
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What are Private Plays

Private Plays are intimate performance encounters where the audience read illustrated performance scripts that are presented in a zine. Zines are self-published booklets that cover a wide variety of topics and tend to be made by marginalised people.

Private Plays usually occur in strange and atypical settings. **Talking** occurs in your home.



Private Plays are written to be read and enjoyed by autistic people.

Uncomfortable stimuli associated with crowded theatres and unfamiliar spaces are removed and the reader is in control of the pace of the story. You don't need to be autistic to read and enjoy.

More info at - <https://doittheatre.com/>



How Talking Works

Talking is a performance that happens in your home, specifically a room with a window and where you have access to a phone.

Read the text and follow the instructions.

There are illustrations to help you imagine the story.

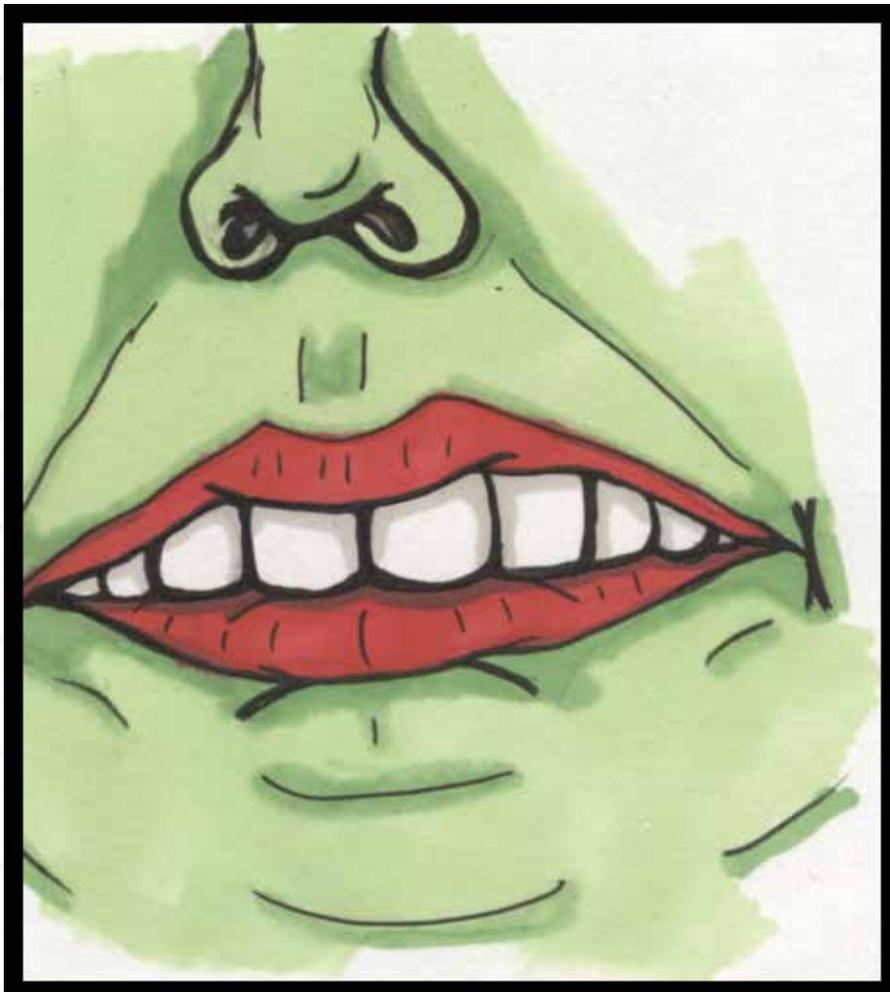
The instructions are in **blue**.

Also feel free to ignore the instructions and read the text at your own pace.

The story assumes you have a room with a window, or a private and quiet place that you can feel comfortable in. If you do not have access to a room like this, then please try to imagine this place.

Talking is a digital Private Play. The zine is a pdf document that is best read on a smartphone or mobile device.

Feel free to save the document to your phone and read it on the device as you move from room to room.



Mainspring Arts Series

For Mainspring I have created a series of 3 digital zines. Each covers a topic in relation to autism and identity.

The focus is on different senses and intimacy. The three stories are from the perspective of an unnamed protagonist and look to convey personal and distinctive emotions in a thoughtful and considered manner.

The feelings and emotions may not reflect your own, but the intention is to present storytelling in a new, abstract and atypical method.

Scene 1 - The Set up

Find a location near a telephone.

This could be your mobile phone, so you can hopefully go wherever you feel comfortable.

This story mainly takes place with you talking into a phone (not actually talking out loud, unless you want to. It can be pretend talking if you like. This could be mouthing the words or just saying them in your head - you are not expected to call anyone).

You may be reading this text on your mobile, which would make it difficult to pretend to make a call at the same time.

That is fine.

We will get to that later.

I want to talk about talking.

This is about what I want to say to someone who I haven't seen in a long time. I have ran the words over and over in my head on so many occasions.

I have played out the entire scenario -
The time of day I will call.

What I will be wearing.

Where I will be standing when I am speaking.

I want to stand.

I don't want to sit down and be too comfortable. I want to be alert.

I want to be focussed.

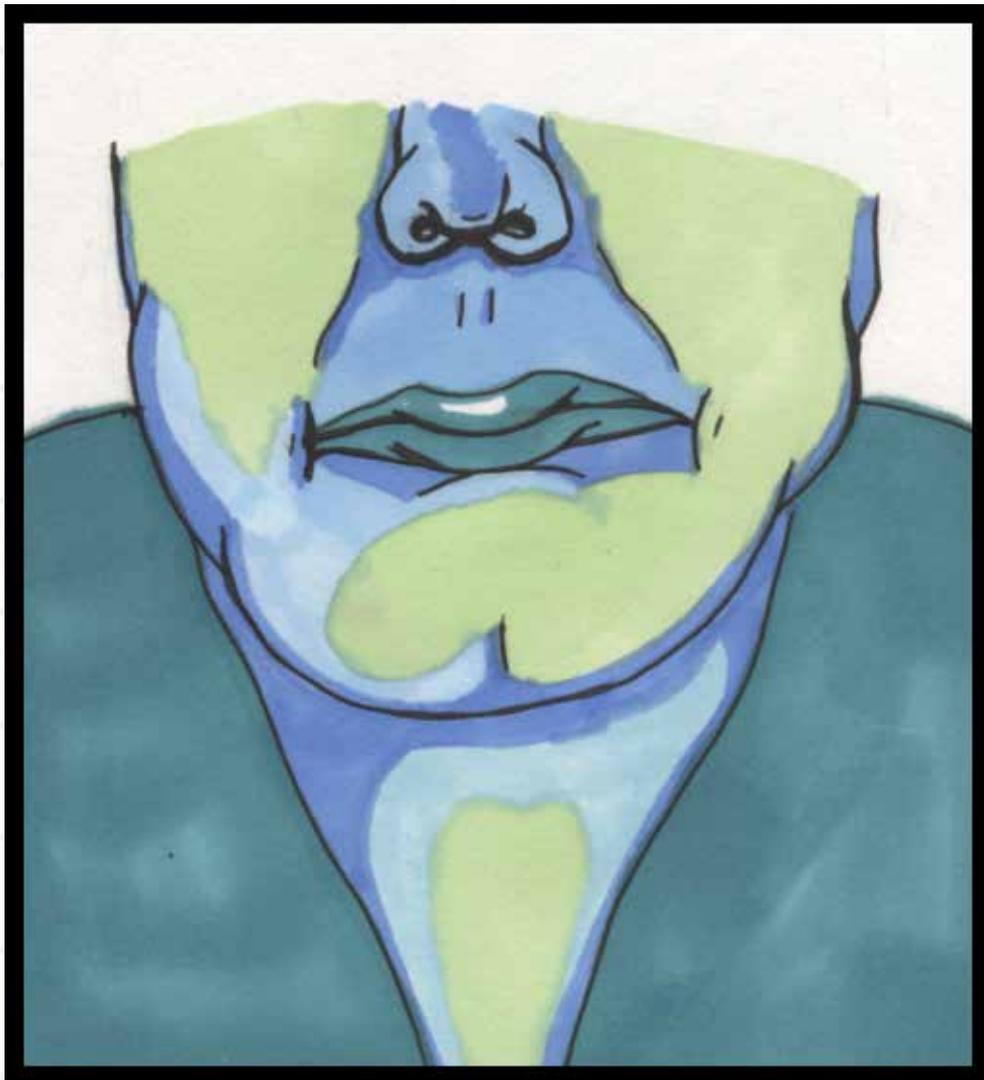
I don't want the person to talk back.

I just want to open up my heart and let everything out.

And I want them to stay silent and I want them to listen.

All the words I want to say and all the feelings that I feel - I just want to get them out.

No response.



Is that an arrogant thing to do?

Just to call someone and talk.

Ask them not to speak and not to react to what I am saying.

I will be asking them to wait and be patient.

Silence.

I speak.

Then I hang up.

I won't wait for a reaction.

I'll just say what I want to say and that'll be it.

Yes, that is arrogant.

But that is what I need right now.

I wish I was good at one thing.

I wish there was one single thing that I was best in the world at.

I could just put all of my time and effort into that one thing and I could be happy.

Then I could use up any extra time on concentrating on making connections with people.

I could be a people person - with lots of friends and the ability to communicate with others.

I'd be able to pick up the phone, dial a number and say what I want to say, without hesitation, doubt, anxiety or frustration.

If I could do that I would call you.

I'd put on my blue shirt and red socks.

I'd stand by my window.

I'd call your number.

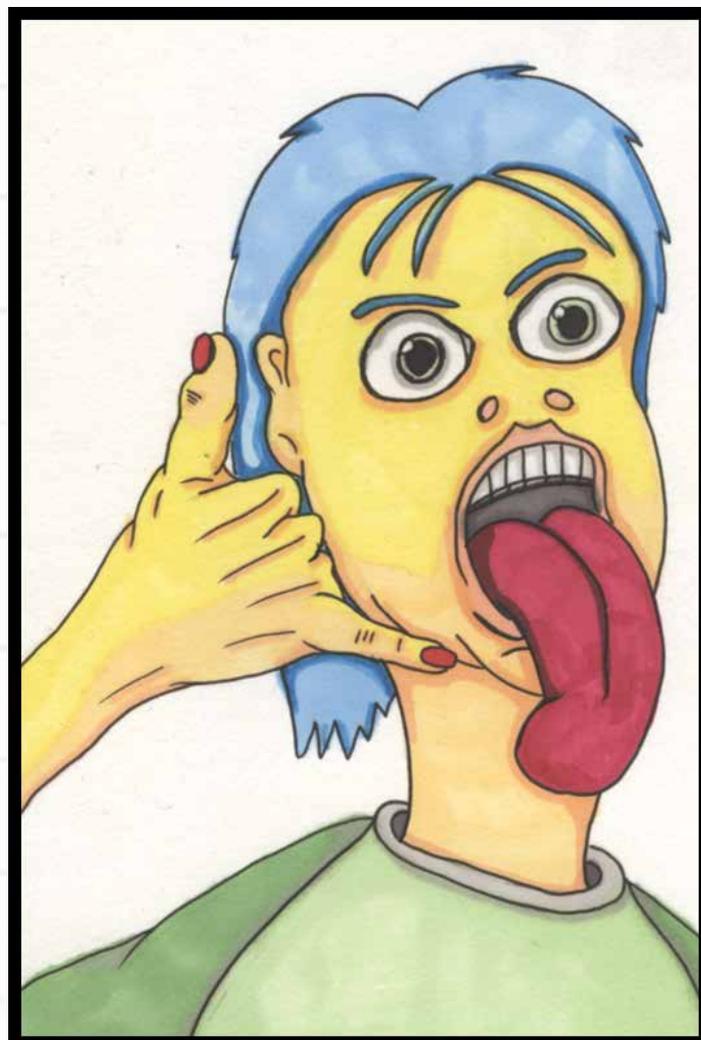
And I'd say what I feel.

You have several options here.

You can pick up a phone and pretend to make a call.

If you are reading this on your mobile, then you might want to put your fingers up to the side of your face to pretend that you are speaking into a phone.

See diagram below.



Or you could just read on and imagine that you are saying it out loud - as long as you make believe that you are speaking into a phone.

Feel free to walk around when you are reading/saying this, but only if you can.

Maybe look out of a window for an extra feeling of drama.

If it's raining outside that would make it even more dramatic and that is the feeling we are going for here.

When you are ready, read on with heart and passion.

What follows is a conversation with someone that I am too anxious to call and speak to.

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I miss you. I am sorry that I have been absent for so much of your life. I know that I have missed so many important events.

Lots of different things have happened to me and I wish I could have shared them with you.

I regret that.

There are so many things I would have liked to have done with you.

We grew up together, but we grew apart.

I don't know you.

You don't know me.

I have hidden behind my own mental illness and used it, not as a weapon, but a shield. I have used it to shield myself from the responsibility of looking out for the people I care about.

I am a hypocrite and a coward.
I care very deeply about you.
But I didn't show it.

I am sorry.

I am sorry for not holding you the times you cried.

I am sorry for not being there when you needed to talk to someone.

I could have helped, but I was absent.

When were younger I wanted you to protect and help me.

But I had an undiagnosed illness and no one knew what to do.

It was impossible to determine how to make me responsive and happy.

I held this against you when you couldn't help me.

It wasn't your fault or your responsibility.

I am sorry.

We've walked past each other in the street several times.

I always keep my head down whenever I walk, in order to avoid eye contact.

But, I know I am walking past you. You have got older, taller, bolder.

But you move in the same easy way that you always did. I know it's you.

I just want to walk after you and hold you.

Gently.

I feel like I've failed.

Thinking isn't good enough.

It's all in the inside.

I am here for you.

I am here for you.

I am here for you.

Thank you for listening.

I miss you so much.

Hang up the phone.



Credits

Steven Fraser is a writer, artist and animator who makes zines, comics, installations and short films. His work covers many topics and has a focus on autism and identity.

You can see more of his work here -

<https://stevenfraserart.com>

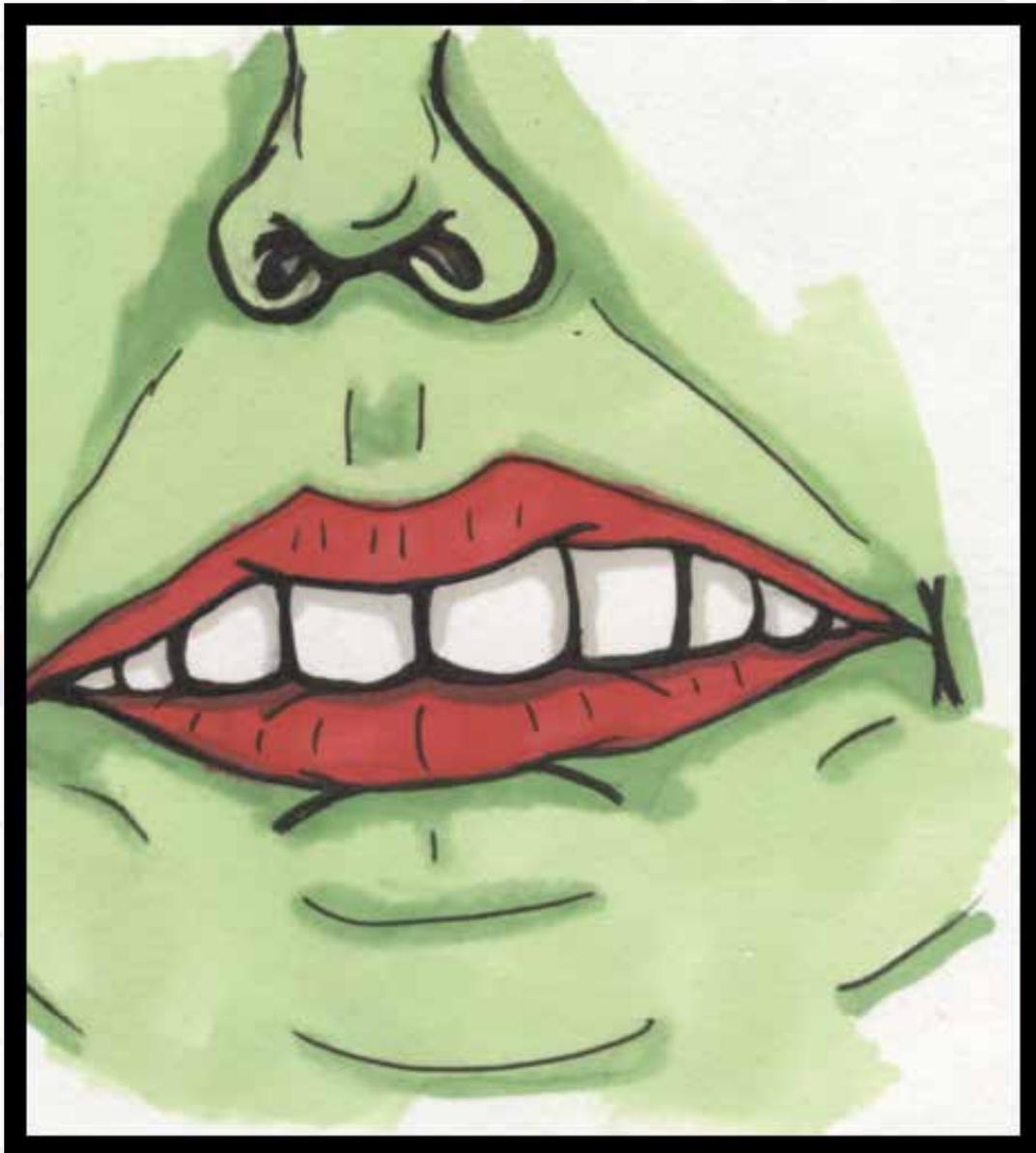
<https://doittheatre.com>

You can buy some of his zines and comics here -

<https://www.etsy.com/uk/shop/DoltTheatre>

Social Media -

[@stevenfraserart](https://www.instagram.com/stevenfraserart)



A PRIVATE PLAYS PERFORMANCE
IN A DIGITAL ZINE.

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