

Paul Litherland
Notes on *Listener*
2001

Karen Trask and Paul Litherland were invited to participate in an artists sculpture symposium in Edappally, Kerala, India, along with artists from Korea, Japan and India. Although the main focus of the symposium is to produce sculptures which will remain in Changhampura Park, a number of painters were invited to produce works on canvas. The artists were given an area to work in in the public park, and were more or less available to talk to the public while they produced their works.

Changamphuza Park is an outdoor city park in the town of Edapally, a town near Cochin, an historic city 15 kms away, known for its mix of peoples of widely varying origins and religions. Muslims, Hindus and Christians live together in this region, a region which has experienced occupations and colonial efforts by the Dutch, Portuguese, and English for the last few hundred years.

The event was originally conceived by Reiko Nireki, a Japanese artist, as a symposium for artists from around the world to get together and create works. Originally a low profile project, the symposium plans grew with the addition of corporate and civic sponsors, and soon became a month long event that included about 30-35 artists, and traditional performances for every evening of the symposium. Of the 30 or so artists, there were 10 – 12 sculptors, and 15 or so painters. The artists making paintings worked in a tent erected in the park. The sculptors were assigned locations that were defined by bamboo fences.

The artists were given a place to stay and there was a small canteen established in a typing school classroom to feed everyone from the symposium.

The work *Listener* emerged from Paul's experience of having an ear infection just before leaving for India, making him partially deaf. The obsession with hearing, or not hearing, emerges in the work. The trees are asked to be our proxy selves, their ability to listen stifled.

A local metal smith was identified, and unfortunately I do not have his name here. He built a small foundry from the dirt at our feet and I made ears out of bees wax, covering them in the same dirt/clay... We used the lost wax process to create each pair of ears.