

## Oops | Out of Practice Seminar

Institute of English Studies

School of Advanced Study

University of London

28 May 2024



### An Experiment in Six Voices

For this multi-voice reading of ‘Girlspeak’<sup>1</sup> I invite Oops participants to perform sections of a chapter with me and (the voice of) my garden chaffinch. ‘Girlspeak’ is a chapter in which I stage an interspecies (bird-human) conversation between a charm of winged female creatures perched on a tall pine branch above a raging forest fire. The conversation is composed of fragments blending speculative fiction, quotes and birdsong; mimicking adolescent girls’ prattle, and foregrounding this girlspeak as a radical strategy to harness alternative approaches to the patriarchal system’s impasse that is failing to act in the face of the current ecological crisis.

**Katja Hilevaara** is a collaborative artist, researcher and teacher who works in performance, installation and art-writing. Ideas around maintenance, care and enchantment are often foregrounded in her artwork, and she pays close attention to the everyday in the making and thinking of her various projects. Recent works have drawn on (auto)biography and re-imagined histories, exploring ways to tell stories that question existing narratives, and which might deliberately mis-remember or otherwise creatively interpret events to shift their perspective and meaning. Creative constraints such as tasks and instructions often shape her projects. Katja creates work with other artists and thinkers, cherishing the chance to be inspired by dialogue and conversation. She is involved in a long-term collaboration with artist Emily Orley with whom she creates performances and writes, including the co-edited *The Creative Critic: Writing As/About Practice* with Routledge in 2018. Katja is currently a Senior Lecturer in Theatre and Performance at Goldsmiths University of London. [www.katjahilevaara.com](http://www.katjahilevaara.com)

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<sup>1</sup> Hilevaara, K (forthcoming Dec 2025). ‘Girlspeak’ in *Performing Punctuation*. Eds. Anna Brown and Julicanna Preston. Intellect.