

Post Mike Birbiglia and Jen Hope Stein Visit

By Victoria Alvarez

Mike Birbiglia and Jen Hope Stein’s Skype Q&A was not only informative and helpful for aspiring comics, actors, and writers, but also seriously funny. Their electricity was contagious—it was very clear they were on the same wavelength and it was enjoyable just to watch them interact. They shared their inside jokes with us, talked about their daughter being the funniest person they know, and interacted with the audience on a personal level. For two very well respected artists in their creative fields, they were very humble as well as helpful.

Birbiglia’s creative process in comedic writing stems from other people’s responses and reactions. His collaborative process allows him to understand his audience and be able to produce a genuinely funny, relatable product. However, Stein’s process is completely solitaire. She described her editing process and how it is important for writers to stay true to their core message. Her poetry book *Little Astronaut* is primarily about her pregnancy, her daughter, and Birbiglia and through her editing process, she was able to keep a pure focus on these aspects of her life as well as motherhood.

Birbiglia and Stein’s process may be different, however, their subject matter is the same, allowing them to collaborate in the best way. Birbiglia’s Broadway show “The New One” is also about his daughter and his reaction to parenthood. He incorporated Stein’s poems from *Little Astronaut* into his show because he thought they were too well written to say in his own words. Their upcoming project is a hybrid of Stein’s poems and Birbiglia’s essays, showing that writing can take many forms.

Their responses to the students were very helpful in terms of understanding the industry after graduation. The married couple collaborated on answers as well as built off of one another’s points, allowing for multiple perspectives of the entertainment industry and literary world. Some of the biggest takeaways that the interns encountered was Birbiglia saying, “leave Florida.” The fact that statement is just as funny as it is true perfectly sums up Birbiglia and Stein’s writing, as well as their visit.