

PROGRAMMANUS



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RADIO POPREEL

Twin Headed Wolf, Australian and Canadian art

PAMELA:

On *Radio Popreel* today: The band Twin Headed Wolf from Ireland, the artist Elizabeth Zvonar from Canada and from Australia, Jenny Alcala and Brenton Smith. This is *Radio Popreel*.

Brenton Smith makes art out of technology.

BRENTON:

Growing up, I had different ideas of what I wanted to do. They always involved creating something in some way, so... When I was ten, I wanted to build robots. Not robots that were useful, I just thought robots were cool and I wanted to make them. That moved on to wanting to become a cartoonist, because I quite liked to draw during my teenage years. That changed in my early twenties to actually going to study commercial photography, but I kind of got fed up with the commercial side of that. I realized that what commercial photography was wasn't the reason why I wanted to make images. So the logical step from that I guess was to go into making art.

So one of the main things that I think about in my work is ideas of the cyborg. You know, that's a very good example of a mixture of a machine and a human, but not necessarily in the literal way of like the terminator sort of cyborg sort of thing.

JENNY:

Let me tint the wire first, actually.

PAMELA:

Jenny Alcala, also known as Kit, is a sound and performance artist.

JENNY:

Well, I think there is this return...for hunger in the intimacies between humans and technologies. I feel like we're at a time where we are between being immersed with seamlessness, but also wanting to desire physical interactions with technology.

So I...I started to build these tape loops. And what I enjoy about tape loops is that they're just this imperfect connection, basically because they are just made of rubber bands and bits of tape being put together. And this is meeting with a digital looping program,

technology
teknologi

to involve
att blanda in

cartoonist
animatör
commercial
reklam

to tint
Att färga, tona
wire
ledningstråd
performance artist
performance konstär
intimacy
intimitet
to immerse
att fördjupa sig i
seamless
utan sömmar
interaction
interaktion, samspel
loop
slinga
imperfect
ofullkomlig

which together they meet and...

BRENTON:

Technology they say is supposed to extend our abilities, and it does, but I find that at the same time, with every sort of bodily human problem it solves, it brings with it its own new set of problems. It's an interesting thing about the transhumanist cyborg idea, that one day we can use technology to completely overcome all our limitations. It seems like that to me isn't quite reachable, because every new thing will come with its own accidents, its own problems.

ELIZABETH:

I was a creative kid, my parents told me that...

PAMELA:

The Canadian artist Elizabeth Zvonar talks about her exhibition The Challenge of Abstraction.

ELIZABETH:

Ritual, mechanics of devotion, a curiosity about the supernatural and the unknown, the extraordinary. Sex, sexuality, power, desire - these are themes that threads throughout my work in general, and also show up in The Challenge of Abstraction.

Being an artist offers an unparalleled intellectual freedom. I do like to leave in humor with heavier issues. I think it creates an entry point for a viewer to look at the work...and for myself, it keeps things interesting to have a...multiple layers of things happening. At best, it will open one's mind up to larger social issues.

I use body fragments often in the work that I make. Part of the reason I do that is because it's convenient. Oftentimes, I'm casting my own body. When you dislocate something from its larger whole, so if you take a finger from the hand, it takes on a new life and I find it quite interesting and strange to look at.

I was interested in bringing in incense to create a different sensory experience, a layered sensory experience. It's made from cedar and lavender, and it makes a campfire scent in this...the gallery setting, and opens up, hopefully, another way of looking into the work.

I work across a variety of mediums, including sculpture and collage. The materials I use are determined by what the piece requires, whether it is...it needs to be done in bronze, or in porcelain, or wood or glass.

I trust that my feminist intentions and politics come through in the work that I make.

to extend
att förlänga
ability
förmåga
bodily
kroppslig
limitation
begränsning
reachable
inom räckhåll

devotion
hängivenhet
extraordinary
ovanlig
in general
generellt
unparalleled
enastående
entry point
ingångspunkt
multiple
flera
social issues
samhällsfrågor
fragment
fragment, del
convenient
bekvämt
to cast
att gjuta
to dislocate
att vricka, vrida ur led
incense
rökelse
layered
i lager
sensory
sensorisk
cedar
ceder
lavender
lavendel
scent
doft
medium
medium, uttrycksmedel
to determine
att bestämma
to require
att kräva
intention
avsikt



TWIN HEADED WOLF:

Where have you been on a long summer's day? Son, tell it unto me.

PAMELA:

In the St Stephen's Green park in Dublin, Ireland, Julie and Branwen Kavanagh sing a song for *Radio Popreel*. This is Twin Headed Wolf.

JULIE:

How are you?

BRANWEN:

Good, how are you?

JULIE:

Do you want some tea?

BRANWEN:

Yeah, sure. Did you just boil the kettle?

JULIE:

We're twin sisters from County Clare and our band is called Twin Headed Wolf. And I suppose we would call it experimental spooky folk music.

We never intended to be a band together. As twins and as teenagers, we were very focused on "I want to have my own identity and I want to be my own person and I want to be in my own band and do my own music", but then...we kind of sang together at bonfires and parties, and we'd sung together when we were kids, so... It kind of just, when you find a name - Twin Headed Wolf... Branwen showed it to me and then I was like "Oh, if we ever have a band, we should call ourselves that", and...and then we kind of looked at each other and said "Why don't we have a band?"

Even the name is very apt for what we do, so I think it really suits...yeah. So it's nice to have something come to you rather than like searching for a name or an identity as a musician or an artist.

BRANWEN:

I like making things out of junk, and like kind of finding things that already sound interesting and working with them, so...yeah.

This is a spoonophone, and it's made from half a keg and some spoons. And I made it in second year of college in... I was making instruments in sculpture.

Julie studied ancient culture, and ritual and civilization, so we base a lot of our performances on ritual and... I studied sculpture, so I make lots of props and instruments as well.

kettle

kanna, här; vattenkokare

experimental

experimentell

spooky

läskig, skrämmande

to intend

att avse

bonfire

brasa

junk

skrot, skräp

keg

fat, kagge

prop

rekvisita



PAMELA:

What's the hardest part with making an instrument?

BRANWEN:

It's all fun. I guess, I guess the patience to see it through to the end and kind of get the result that you want, yeah. I mean, you can go very deeply into like...like...into making it the finest instrument you possibly can, but I like making things out of junk and like kind of finding things that already sound interesting and working with them.

JULIE:

So this is our bag of tricks, and we use a lot of these things in our shows. I will show you.

This is the human trumpet.

So we use this for that effect.

BRANWEN:

I think it's like possible to make music out of anything and to feel like it's accessible to everyone, just based on like ordinary objects like this, and you can kind of like...make...

JULIE:

Sometimes we have big theatre shows and we have like sacrifices and possessions and...kind of three-legged men and stilting and human prophets and all kinds of things, so a lot of the things in here are used as props for auditions. Branwen collects lots of mad things, so...

Someone, just this again, described us as... When they come to see our shows, they said it's like two little girls who are very happy playing very dark games. So we sing...I guess we sing like murderous songs in a way, in a very sweet way.

TWIN HEADED WOLF:

I'm weary mother, let me be

I'm weary mother, let me be

And who put the blood on your right shoulder?

Son, tell it unto me

It's the blood of a hare that I killed yesterday

The killing was not for me

The killing was not for me

PAMELA:

You also talked about the importance of letting your dark side co-exist with the playful side.

trick

spratt, påhitt

accessible

tillgänglig

sacrifice

offer

possession

besatthet

stilt

stylta

weary

Trött

to co-exist

Att samexistera



BRANWEN:

Yeah, I think...I think that's the only way to do it, really. I think you have to be humorous about the dark as well, and... Yeah, I think it's important to...to see the light through the dark, you know, like experience the dark so that the light is stronger in some way, so that's...like to amplify the light in a way, yeah.

JULIE:

Yeah, because oftentimes, if you just ignore the darkness, which a lot of people do, it just kind of festers, you know. But we like to go in there and experiment and play with all those kind of ideas and things, yeah.

BRANWEN:

It's a really nice kind of material to work with. I mean, there's a lot there and...a lot of...maybe uncharted territory, places people don't want to go, which is kind of nice as well. And then you go there and it's...and it's fun and, you know, and funny. So it's nice in that way.

JULIE:

I think sometimes our shows make people very uncomfortable in some sense, like the...the sacrifices and like "But we're so friendly". Like we kind of...well, we try to make them accessible to people, so we just like have a playful sacrifice... But like we do, we do talk about a lot of dark things and... We use like bones and different strange objects that people might find strange. But it's good to like bring them out and allow them their time in the light, yeah.

PAMELA:

How do you have a playful sacrifice? That sounds like a contradiction in terms.

BRANWEN:

This...well, okay so... One of the first sacrifices we performed...we had these three girls who were dressed in white, and they were the sprites. And they're like wild and wonderful and very merry people anyway. And we had like planned a sacrifice to show up, but he never came, so they kind of like whipped a stranger out of the audience and just...they're just like the kind of people that make everything feel like wonderful and hilarious anyway. So for the person that was being sacrificed, they... Like we did libations, but the way they did it was just so funny.

Like they had all this wine and they're like pouring it all over this poor, un-expecting stagehand. They like kind of playfully lit candles all over the...the body, and we had this sort of...this...like a waiting kind of prayer for the moment and...

And then like, it's just kind of... I suppose using props that are kind of oversized, like swords and saws and things to like kill him and... It's just funny, like...it's like... But the whole idea is just to kind of...like allow this kind of like ritual space where people can feel like wild and free and able to just kind of express like really openly, I guess. That's the whole point.

to experience

att uppleva

to amplify

att förstärka

to fester

gro, ruttna, att vara sig,

bli inflammerad

uncharted

utforskad

uncomfortable

Illå till mods

contradiction

motsägelse

sprite

älva, vattennymf

merry

munter

to whip

att piska

hilarious

festlig, dråplig

libation

dryckeslag, dryckesoffer

stagehand

scenarbetare

oversized

överdimensionerad

to allow

att tillåta

to be able to

att kunna



PAMELA:

I can understand now, when you said that you sometimes scare your audience.

JULIE:

I guess, yeah, you might not...you might not know what you're in for when you come along. But, yeah, we never...we never claim to be any different, like our shows might scare people, but we don't want... we kind of enjoy that sometimes, I guess.

It was never...we were never... Well, I guess like when you're a teenager, you get frustrated sometimes by...by not being called by your own name. People would say "the twins" and often people would forget who they'd be talking to and stuff. So then I had short hair and Branwen had long hair, because we just wanted... But being a teenager is all about your own identity, you know, as distinguished from another person, so...

BRANWEN:

Yeah, take the exploration of the ego in some sense.

JULIE:

Yeah, yeah... Yeah, we had very interesting experiences going to college, because we went to different colleges. And we had always made friends together, and when we went to college, we realized that we had both adopted different roles in the friend-making process, and we had like holes in like how we would do it. So like when you went to college, it was like "I don't...I don't know what I'm doing wrong", like "Branwen usually does this", and we had to like relearn really, really basic human skills.

BRANWEN:

Like I didn't know how to say "hello", like I was really bad at like saying "hi" to people. I just didn't know and I had to like really teach myself. Julie would always do that and then Julie was really good at saying "hello" and then didn't know how to continue the conversation. So it was really like we both needed...we were like a unit in that sense, you know, so...

JULIE:

Yeah, we...

BRANWEN:

Like we do have like a sense of shared identity in that sense, that we're kind of...we discovered it through being separate, so yeah.

JULIE:

And it's mad having to relearn your basic social skills when you're like eighteen.

to claim
att hävda

to distinguish
att urskilja

to explore
att utforska

to adopt
här: att anta

to relearn
att lära om
skill
färdighet

unit
enhet
in a sense
på ett sätt



BRANWEN:

Yeah.

JULIE:

Yeah.

BRANWEN:

I mean, anything you might talk about, like the other person just gets exactly what you're saying. You don't even have to express very much, they just know like, so it's nice in that sense. It's like having an expansion of your own mind, I guess, or like an extended aloneness, maybe.

to express
att uttrycka
expansion
utvidgning
to extend
att förlänga

JULIE:

I think...I think sometimes the beautiful part of us working together though is...just...we kind of bring things like... We have similar ideas, but we bring them to different places and so... Often, we'll be like "Yeah, I really like that idea, I'm glad you came up with it that way", or like we have kind of a... Yeah, like we really enjoy all the same things, but we don't think the same things about them, so we can draw different ideas down from different things, which is nice.

similar
liknande

BRANWEN:

It's important to acknowledge the dark side in order to kind of... I guess to me it feels genuine to acknowledge it and not always be living in the light or whatever.

to acknowledge
att erkänna

JULIE:

But your stories when you were a kid!

BRANWEN:

Yeah, all my stories when I was a child had everyone died in a fire at the end of every story.

TWIN HEADED WOLF:

The killing was not for me
The killing was not for me

BRANWEN:

I think like when we sing, it's almost like... It's extreme intuition, so we know exactly where the other is going to go. Like if we just improvise, it like...it's really easy to know, like I think...

JULIE:

We're not afraid to be playful or be eccentric or be dark, so that's kind of...

eccentric
originell, underlig

BRANWEN:

I think also we haven't forgotten how to be children, because we've always been children together, so in terms of the connection, I think it's very... Like we remember how to be children together.



JULIE:
It's nice, yeah.

BRANWEN:
Because I think play is where most creativity happens, and I think people forget how to play, so yeah... I think that's the most important element in being creative, is being able to play.

JULIE:
And they call it playing music as well, so...

BRANWEN:
It is playing music, so...

JULIE:
We take that very literally.

BRANWEN:
Yeah. Let's play some music.

PAMELA:
The team behind the program: Niclas Jensen, Daniel Stein, Sanna Scherp, Jonathan Katzeff and myself, Pamela Taivassalo Wikholm.

You have been listening to *Radio Popreel*.