



*THEY BELIEVE THAT ART HAS TO BE WHEELED AROUND LIKE AN OLD WOMAN
AND INTERPRETED FOR THE WHOLE TIME.*

TELL US ABOUT

Shareen and Baxter of Arret Sound have been given too little money by a cultural body to make two-minute talking head shorts on exhibitions in the city. They are not looking forward to encounters with non-media trained individuals who pontificate for hours on a single nuance.

Interview 1: Their first interviewee has done her homework and visited their website to view samples of other films. Her conclusions are three-fold: All the previous interviewees look wooden. What a factory line. I am not going to say what they want me to say.

“What did you have for breakfast?”

“Bread and butter.” Oh Christ, they have sucked me in.

“Okay, sound levels are good. Could you tell us who you are, please, and what you do?”

“Hello, my name is Katanya Goldberg. I am curator at Yannik Space.”

“You don’t need to say hello. Just repeat the question as part of your answer and don’t look directly at the camera.”

Katanya breathes in and imagines golden, powerful roots growing out of her feet deep down into the gallery floor. This is her self-soothe go-to visualisation when under pressure. She breathes out. “I am...” Katanya looks to the left of the frame at the white wall. Shit, her eyebrows have been rigid during this repeat. Get to the end of the sentence. Eyebrow raise. Smile.

Interview 2: “Dirk Bach. Director of Bach Projects.”

Dirk speaks slowly. It is more from tiredness than understanding the need to speak clearly to camera. The circles are visible under his eyes. They were caused by an installation that went on late into the night. Dirk is over 40 and has become used to 9 to 5s. His misfortune has been to recently work with artists who start at 3pm. He has the press call following this. He needs... the intern to buy Daisy some flowers for tonight’s preview. Flowers. Remember. Nice and unexpected touch from a male curator. And he has to proofread the labels. A mentor told him some years back, that when he reached the position of Director he would never have to work with labels again.

“Can you tell us about this exhibition?”

“This exhibition is something of a retrospective for Daisy Solomon. It includes work she made a very long time ago, to work she has made literally today.” Wow, earthshattering observation, Dirty. Sweet Jesus, he knows he sounds like a dork. The crew wants to push through. He has to crank this up.

“Do you want me to do something dynamic? Walk into frame and then start speaking?”

“No, no. Just stand there. We just need a head shot. Tell us about what the work is really about. The audience would like to know.”

Interview 3: “Here at Betsy Starr we present the group show ‘Orpheus Head’.”

Constance La May is on it. She has carefully selected clothes for the screen that will animate her image when she is not thinking about it. She had wanted to call the show ‘Our hands look beautiful in the shadows’ but was over-ruled by Betsy who thought that there were too many artworks and exhibition titles about hands in this world. She chose another body part instead.

“‘Orpheus Head’ brings together works which continue to power themselves after they are cut off from the source. The practitioners are all interested in automatic art, in a sense exploring the Cold War fears of machines replacing men.”

“Constance, thanks for that. Can you take it from the top and this time can you find another word for practitioners? Not everyone knows what that means.”

“Oh, ok.”

Interview 4: PBR has no time for this stopping and starting business.

“My name is Petra Brown-Rankin, Cultural Officer here at ‘Post-Local Festival’. We are showing Candy Lee’s film installation ‘Untitled’, an iteration of her renowned works exploring the basic principles of the material versus the immaterial world. Lee is considered to be one of her country’s most acclaimed post-structuralist filmmakers. She invited craftspeople from her birthplace, a rural village in North China, to make their batik. She paid for a mystic to invest a message into the material. These works are hung over the camera lens. She then shoots fragmented, evasive yet ultimately poetic scenes of her village of origin, through this ‘veil’. We have suspended some of the original batiks from the doorway, to touch the tops of gallery-goers’ heads as they pass through this liminal space.”

Baxter cuts to the Health and Safety sign above the material above the door: ‘CAUTION, MIND YOUR HEAD’. Petra had fought long and hard over that one, but it had been deemed a risk so was out of her hands.

Interview 5: Shareen is getting pissed off. They are getting nowhere with this fifth guy and they still have to interview no. 6. She throws a boomerang. *“Some would say this work has really been thrown together, no?”*

“Ah, I am pleased you see this. His work is so immediate, it’s like he has made it in his bedroom. Yet the more you look at it, the more it stays with you. I think Joao is really inspired by looking around him. Yes, by the world around him.”

Interview 6: The last interviewee, an artist, had requested to be filmed at his home in the lounge that was his studio.

“Your work looks incredibly complex. Tell us about it.”

“I am not prepared to say anything about my artwork. They, the curators and audiences, believe that art has to be wheeled around like an old woman and interpreted for the whole time.”