

Transcripts: ICPP Interview #1 with Tosh Basco

Zoom

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Guest Artist

Tosh Basco/boychild

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Deborah Goffe: [00:13:23] Now that all the housekeeping is done, Tosh, I would love to begin ... If we can think of it as elaborating on the introduction a little bit by your talking about your work and, you know, what is your current work and some of the ... what some of the characteristics might be, if there's some key themes or priorities or ways that you're approaching that work or conceptual frameworks that are shaping it.

[00:13:51] Yeah. So, so when I was thinking about it and it's- the things that I'm currently working on, which I think I would say that a theme that I was working on maybe before the pandemic started because it's really been a different experience to work now. I don't know if you guys are experiencing this, but I would say that's still true, but I would say that, because my practice is so collaborative, there are many like trajectories and splinters, of pieces of what is my practice.

[00:14:32] In my personal work I'm actually it's, I don't know how to say this. I'm almost trading in performance. I'm basically working on drawings and photos. Some maybe more durational performances, but those are kind of like, I don't even know if what's going to happen with performance and sharing space at this point.

[00:15:05] But feels like it's a little bit on the back burner. The other part of my practice, that's a huge part of my life now is I actually live and work in Zurich and about a year ago, along with some of my collaborative group, I started working a theatre in Zurich, Switzerland. It's called the Schauspielhaus so, and when we go to that, well, there's a question about stages of my career, this is definitely a whole new realm for me and for all of my collaborators involved. So we are currently, in a repertoire, theater, framework which is

[00:15:56] like something I'm totally unfamiliar with, which is like, it looks, it looks different than I think a typical director, theater troupe, kind of schedule would look like.

[00:16:11] We have something that's a little different because we do come from like a performance art, visual art background which, you know it's, both in films and museums, and sometimes clubs, and so many different spaces. So we have kind of like one repertoire piece a year and then we have additionally, like this year, for example, we had a series of compositions and, which is more similar to like the previous years of our work together. to be like very first, like the next is coming up are like Orpheus and Moby Dick. But, I think when we start to talk more about the ways in which I work, that will get very, that will become more open and clear. I don't know if that makes any sense.

Points of Entry to that work: What brought you to this work?

Deborah Goffe [00:17:06] I think it's a, yeah, I think it's a great start and an important reminder that we're all, but that you just, your own trajectory is at a moment of evolution. And then there's this sort of global force that sort of shifting trajectories too. so that's a helpful, I think, place to begin. Can you talk a little bit about how you came to work as, in performance, in the first place to art making in the first place? yeah.

[00:17:37] **Tosh Basco**: [00:17:37] Yeah. Yeah. So where I am is both, it feels like a totally different world and also feels so similar in the sense that, so I started, performing, it's 2020, I think eight and a half years ago, I was a photographer. So I'm a photographer secretly. And, one of my friends who's a dancer invited me to be in one of his pieces and so, by chance I think that maybe people I trust, I take the invitation and as a way to acclimate myself to the stage, I really... I commit myself to the terror of being on stage and started performing at the clubs that I was going to, in San Francisco and just doing like, you know, the first, the first drag performance of the night, like my four friends that came was, it was horrible.

[00:18:36]but something happened, which was, I think, something that I have followed at least recently since, since first getting on a stage, which is like that terror and also the invitation, they're very important. They're very important to me. I think about myself as an artist and about performance. so yeah, I think something caught fire for me on stage and it was something, I didn't understand and I think the stakes were really, really low. There was like this openness to the space, that felt very foreign to me. Kind of like outside of, the ways I was seeing through a lens through a camera. and yeah, I think I was just taking every opportunity I

could to just perform in clubs. And I think within a year, I started like traveling outside of the Bay area to do that in different parts of night life.

[00:19:37] And I think, I mean very quickly- somebody, I think there was already kind of a bleeding of spaces happening because of the internet. Night life is still very like foggy, but the internet was also starting to like make its way, like Instagram for example. It's starting to make its way into our everyday lives in a way that's been familiar in the moment now.

[00:20:07] yeah, that's the beginning, I think like within a year and a half ago, I started with somebody invited me to do something like, actually I was speaking to Deb about this. Living between worlds and the multiple sides of any position. So in the beginning, I was like, people were inviting me to do performances in museums, but it was always a kind of like, it was always kinda like, Oh, do you want to be like, the performance that's at the opening, which just like an event? which is really cool because it gave me, it gave me permission to like, to know that I was allowed in different spaces.

[00:20:48] Like it isn't like arts spaces in general, like galleries and museums, they always felt like kind of off limits to me. And so in one hand it was, it was really cool to me at the time that I could move out of the club or be like in a museum doing the same, the same thing I was doing in the club and, and realizing the base in which it changed for work and the ways in which that it changed the audience or the way that the thing that was doing was being perceived, or even that it was work.

[00:21:23] Like it took me years to call what I do a practice, so to call myself from artists or to call myself- yeah like practice even still was like a thing that I think I picked up a couple of years ago in grad school. I was like ok, this is my practice. so the beginning was really just like. I learned from doing and I did it because I loved it and it was such, I just, yeah, I, I feel so grateful actually to have that experience of like learning through being with people and running myself to the ground and that kind of, that kind of work. And that is for sure, that is for sure one, like one stage of my career, if you could kind of consolidate, if you could consolidate the work or the pieces or the performances or the eras of the learning phases, that is definitely one of them, which is like nightlife, underground performances they're- you know some are between 2 and 20 minutes long.

[00:22:34] And, and also very, very importantly, the form, which is I lip sync, which I think all of those things, I think the invitation, the lips sync and that terror again, are like still things that are really crucial to the way that I think and approach work to this day.