

Neonaturist body painting: a red RAG to patriarchy (Seminar)

Christine Binnie

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RAG International Women's Week special lecture with Christine Binnie.

Christine will talk about the evolution of her art practice including body painting, performance art, anthropology, experimental archaeology, menstrual blood, red ochre, protest and pottery.

In 1986 Christine discovered the Radical Anthropology Group. Although she didn't know it, she was already part of a female cosmetic coalition, The Neo Naturists, body painted performance artists. This is the illustrated story of her journey, via different disciplines, including the classes, and how they influenced her art and life.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Qqj-H42HoU>

Introduction

Camilla: Welcome everybody. This talk makes me almost more nervous and more sort of tingly and, wondering what's gonna happen than almost any other talk.

The first art was body art and the first body art was menstrual.

That is the theory in the models that radical anthropology has worked with for over 34 4 years and what's extraordinary is that what generated that menstrual art was a need for women to say no to any coercion, any exploitation, any, any male dominance.

So this is a, a time of history where we really need to learn what our ancestors did and how they did it with a lot of playful trickery involved, actually trickery and the origins of art is the title of a book that I should have written already, but haven't yet.

What's extraordinary about that no is that what it did was open the gateway to floods of Yes, extraordinary creativity.

The first step into shared imaginaries and symbolic culture and extraordinary creativity and generation of, of new worlds, of opening up worlds of ancestors, worlds of spirits, that when people painted their bodies, they were embodying them.

They were parting, getting in contact with them.

So this was, just the, the symbolic revolution, the human symbolic revolution and now today with the archeology particularly, we can actually trace where were those menstrual, when were those menstrual rituals happening across the African continent? About 160,000 years ago, we find the traces of Oka Oka, north, south and East Africa and in the forests and rainforests where we know homo sapiens were living long, deep time.

They may have been using other sorts of materials and minerals, plant pigments, but it would've been red, red, red.

So this has been enormously important for us at radical anthropology.

But the speaker that I'm introducing tonight has really been involved in revivifying, replaying, regenerating this kind of culture with practice of creating body art that's manful art, or menstrual art.

There's body art or varieties of flowering body art through many decades and doing that with a coalition of neo naturists, which sounds exactly like the sort of female cosmetic coalitions that we talk about in archeology.

To us this practice is almost like an experimental archeology, learning how to do use that body paint for protest, but also for joyous celebratory feelings of love, of beauty. For Bushman cosmology, red is the color of joy and ceremony always and it's the most desired color. The color they, they always want to find.

So I'm going to hand over very soon to our esteem speaker Christine Binney tonight to tell us about her journey through, but I would like to say that Christine's practice has kind of led the theory, radical anthropology has theory that we've never neglected total practice because, well, there's some evidence on screen here tonight that we took part in some of that practice, and we've kind of had this braided streams of meeting carting coming back together.

And, through three or four decades almost when Christine and her colleagues, some of them here tonight who were doing this way back, Christine's gonna tell us how long ago, it took a while before she bumped into radical anthropology in the form of Chris and maybe Chris would just like to say a little bit about It.

Chris: Very, very briefly, I feel as if I've known Christine forever, but in fact, I believe it was something like in 1992 or 1993 and the image, I have two images I want to, to sort of describe. I hope it's all right.

One is, Claremont Road. So for those of you who know about these things, it's just one of the great moments in the, in the anti roads movement sort of history.

But those you don't know, it was, it was, it was, it was, what was it, the MM on the road towards the M11 and it was Link Road, the link road, and it was, they were gonna plow through a kind of old Victorian brick houses, came up roping, one of these lovely, lovely roads, actually was full of lovely trees and, the most extraordinary edifice of tree houses and planks and bridges and all sorts of stuff to prevent these bulldozers from bulldozing down this, this, this road where people were still living. And, in the middle of Claremont Road with all these tree houses and clanks and bridges, and huge number of all of us and anti roads campaigners, was a kind of sacred spot that sort of the holy center of CLA road and it was, a red room and inside the red room was none other than 15 binny and it already, that red room was a room of menstrual blood with the holiest form of, of, of blood. That's one image. And I, I must have known Christine a little bit before that to sort of known that she was there and we all sort of meet up at.

The other image I have, we always had a plan in, in that late part of the last millennium planning, the, the revolution, the one of the ideas was to make sure we got back from the sun solar cannabis to proper lunar calendar and of course, I had a feeling that Stonehenge, this, we proved it later on, actually, Stonehenge was built, during the

neolithic, the massive sort of machine for engineering, this really precarious, difficult transition of moving from a hunter gatherer style moon clock with the beginnings of agriculture, trying to make sure that everyone move back, move over to a, a solar calendar without too much sense of treachery and perfectly so the, so the, the idea was that the, the sun was really the moon of the skies and all that sort of stuff.

Anyway, we managed it just before the millennium. We took over stone henge and the idea was to sort of use this huge clock and get back from solar calander to the lunar calander, and I just have this memory of, Christine, as we plow, I mean, this was the kind of vengeance on the police for the battle of the beanfield, the stone heads was a prohibited zone for many years and I had to proclaim my European religious right for the European Court of Human Rights as a druid. But we won our case, actually against the Wilshire Police.

But anyway, Midsummer's Day, just before the millennium, and I just had this image of Christine sort of plowing through the crowd like a sort of ship, a ship had these brilliant breasted females flowing through the wave. We plowed into Stonehenge. And we, and we took him at seven and I just remember, the arm, we, we were playing, we were playing hedgehog.

We suddenly a silence look around and this was, this was the great chief drew, like a drunken king. He was always drunk and he was, we knew him very well, but he, he, he, the complete silence in Stonehenge, it was amazing. How, how did he get like 40,000 people or so in the middle of stone Hch, absolute silent. We managed it through the, through sort of break in the sand, look around ye says, says, says the, the king of the jury, look around all the tribes. Never. this is, this is ours. Never let the, these stones ours, never let the buses take them from you and boom. And then the sound starts again.

But anyway, I, I feeling that without Christine, that moment would've, would've been a little bit less decisive, taking over a stone henge. Anyway two visions, there you are.

That's the sanitized version.

Seminar begins

Hello. I'm Christine, and I've done a lecture.

It's taken me ages and actually really it's loads of photographs.

it's, so I'm, I'm gonna talk to you about some of the ideas and things that have come, that have fed into the performances and things I've done as I go along.

But, yeah, I'm, I'm an artist.

I'm a potter, and there is a shop for later in case anyone wants find anything and I'm a neo naturist of, among other things.

And, after attending the rag evening classes for many years, I even went and got a degree at UEL in anthropology and I've also done educational and experimental

archeology in the kind of more traditional way, rather than what Camilla talked about, where we built houses, in school grounds at sticks and lots of children joined in and that type of thing.

but this is, this talk is mainly about my work as an artist and as part of the neo naturists and, yeah.

So where's my thing? Oh yeah.

this, this picture is to give you a bit of context of battalions, I'm gonna start talking about in the late seventies and that's what the Prime Minister looked like at that time.

And, that was the time.

Then I became a, I moved to London, became a life model.

And, I hated my body and one of the reasons, I don't know quite why hating my body made me think I'm gonna be a life model.

But when my friend who went to Ravens born said, oh, they need life models at the college, I thought, I'm, I'm gonna go and apply and I became a life model and it was something to do with not liking my body.

And, and during that time, I met I started meeting artists and I met people to, met people to do things with and oh, there's another picture of what that, and that's what ordinary people looked like at this time.

I typed ordinary people in the late seventies and various pictures came up.

anyway, ordinary people looked like that.

I went to, I went off to Berlin and I met, and I had been a punk, but when I went to Berlin, I met German punks, particularly one marvelous German punk or Christina and she didn't carry in her bedroom, her didn't have a black room.

She didn't sit there for ages putting her makeup on, make herself white.

She walked, walked around the house and her stilettos and went sunbathing by the lakes and she was often completely nude and she was sort of swo the, and strong.

She was just in charge and she was an in definitely an inspiration in my life.

anyway, there we go.

I do next. Oh yes.

Oh yes. I used to go.

So I'm telling you these things cause they're the sort of background of where I think becoming a neo natures came from.

I lived in Camden, I had a lot of gay friends, and we used to go to the Black Cap and see drag shows and um there were these men on stage dressed up as women having a lovely time and one day I thought, a minute they have to pretend to be a woman, to have a lovely time on stage.

Why can't I just be a woman having a lovely time on stage and I can be pretending to be one? And then, this, Alterna Miss World was a, was a a, a pageant put perform by somebody called Andrew Logan.

That's been going. But I, first time I went into it, I actually, people made up all sorts of names themselves, like misdemeanor and Miss, I don't know all stupid names.

I went in as Miss Vinny as myself and I dressed up as a, as a, a woman dressed up as a man, dressed up as a woman.

So I went as a transvestite and inspired by the transvestites, having a nice time and yeah, the other thing I want, I'll tell you a bit about why it inspired me a bit later.

Anyway, where are we go? Yeah, this is what quite, this is ordinary people in the seventies, that's what Google said.

this is more ordinary people than the seventies and I think my mom would've probably liked me to look bit of a mixture between the two of those two young beaches and then, but because I was hanging out with art students, the people I ended up hanging out with and living with looked like this and this is a cutting from a newspaper because they are the blitz kids, and they just only really thought about fashion and clothes and having their photograph taken and they all went to this club, this club called The Blitz.

but above them on the same page in the paper was this in Sunday, people and there's me and I'm wearing a sack.

Which one's you? That one? That's me and that's my sister Jen. And that's Ian.

We, he's our friend.

And, it was an Easter performance and so this was, those are the Sunday people.

Yeah, this was the sort of among all those ordinary people, this was somehow another how we ended up being.

yeah and Ian Webb was an art student at St. Martin's and by then I'd started modeling at St.

Martin's and he made a dress, to be as part of his fashion show and somebody spilt red wine on it as you do and the dress was kind of, it looked like a female body and so he said, I'm not gonna have time to make it because I paint the dress onto you.

So, oh, oh, this one's for Erica. There's me and boy George.

That's, that's more people.

and there's me, the first body paint I ever had with Ian Webb's dress painted onto me and I had to model that in the St. Martin's fashion show and so that meant I'd had some body painting done on me and it was nice, but a bit lonely.

and the option was, well, really, probably most people would've just washed it off, but the only place to wash it off was the freezing cold tiled toilets, Martin's in the sink and it just seemed a bit of a waste.

So I went out that evening wearing my body paint, and that's me in a nightclub hotel.

That's my first. So I suppose my first two proper times in public in the fashion show, but then in the nightclub, and that was Lee and unfortunately he's dead. He died of age.

Quite a few people in these as we go through.

and anyway, it wasn't long after that that I met Wilma and she's here and it's her birthday.

Wilma's called Wilma because she used to wear these clothes, made her look like Wilma Flintstones and she used to wear these kind of big leather jerkins and mini skirts and things.

And, they were made by her uncle and obviously I really liked her, not only because of her clothes, but it was all, it all helped and we became friends and I became Wilma's life model very soon after that and Wilma started painting me Disney, Roman studio.

and then we started exploring out with the body paint and there's me in the British Museum, oh, and there's, there's me in Soho, but it was all a bit lonely.

But one day, Wilma and I decided to go out together to a nightclub wearing these dresses that we made that were halterneck and we realized they looked better over one shoulder with one bosom showing than just like normal halterneck.

So we painted one bosom, each yellow, and went out and it was just quite surprising how sort of shocked people were really, because this is like 1979 or something and you'd have thought the sixth did have happened and he would be used to it, but it's kind of like, oh my God.

Anyway. And so it was partly 'cause they were shocked, but it was also partly cause it just seemed ridiculous that they were shocked.

But we thought, oh, we're onto something here and so we started, when I went to be Wilma's life model, we started painting each other all the time.

So instead of Wilma doing these lovely life drawings, we ended up justing that's on St.

Martin's roof. and that's us with some heads that Wil have made, where am I? and then while we were doing body painting, I then discovered that my sister had also simultaneously been doing body painting at art college in Portsmouth and that that's a picture of her and so then we all started doing it together, and We just formed this performance group, the neo nature.

It all evolved. I won't tell you every single thing, otherwise we'll never get anywhere.

But, this is me when I'm a, that isn't my sister, that's Nico.

when we did a performance by the Thames, we used to perform all over the place.

That's us by the River tents.

but we, we used to perform in nightclubs and at festivals, and a lot of our performances were seasonal, so they would be about right here.

This is a New Year's Eve performance.

I've got my tar and sash.

and it wasn't only us, it was men too, but joined, joined in with performances and I've got a list. We used to use a lot of props.

I've got a list here. and sometimes we'd find them just on the way, like we once found a big, long piece of orange silk.

We once found some fox heads and fox skins that have been just chucked away and they couldn't just be left in the ski and we incorporated 'em in our forms.

We used them a few times until they got the moss and we had to go.

But, I've got a list.

Shrimp cell tape, mashed potato, rubber wounds, freezer bags, 10 pound notes, biscuits, knives and forks, callas cooker, frying pan, scotch pancakes, peanuts, vitamins, sheets, harps brick or brack brick brack dolls, box fairs, odd shoe porridge and this is, at the Laren in Cam.

and we'd made, we'd write little plans for the performances, but we didn't rehearse them and it wasn't, it wasn't really a show.

It was more, just doing stuff.

So in a way it was more like a ritual.

But we did, he did sort of have entertainment in mind, but not very much.

We were just getting up on the stage and using the energy of the stage and having an audience to have a part creating the energy.

This is us at the fairy fair, and that's the time we forgot the body paint and so luckily we'd remembered the porridge and so we went to the cocktail tent and borrowed some food coloring and just lodged colored porridge on each other instead.

yeah and we didn't really care much about the audience.

It was a bit sort of like it or lump in it and well, we were punked at hearts still, really and a lot of most of our boyfriends and girlfriends got roped in those, grace and Perry, and we made him have an impressive bundle and I used, when I was a life model, I used to, sit in, in art college libraries and often gravitate towards the anthropology section and in fact probably usually only in my dressing gown.

So I was almost nude when I first, when I discovered anthropology.

But we, I'd get books out and things and we found out about, we had things like men having impressive bundles on their willies.

So we'd made grace and have one which quite liked it.

right and then, and this is another photo from the same performance, I think at the fridge in about 1982, but Right.

Little did we know it, but I'm gonna read this out.

Little did we know it at the time.

But when you add all this up and looked at it in terms of rag theory, we had formed a female cosmetic coalition.

Woo. First and I googled to make sure I got it right, 'cause it's a lecture.

I thought I'd better, I better Google to see what I, I Googled it and this is what it said, A female cosmetic coalition is a theoretical anthropological model developed by Chris Knight.

That's me, Camilla Power, and Ian Watt is on here.

it suggests the early use of cosmetics, particularly red ochre by women in pre-historic societies, enabled them to form social bonds and establish a sense of community, which is a crucial step in human evolution.

It played a key role in the development of symbolic culture, ritual practices and social cohesion among female groups leading the emergence of complex human behaviors like art making and religion, otherwise known as the human revolution.

does anyone want to fill in any words that we're missing from that? Yeah, it's amazing. It's not like the AI overview of people, but there's words missing.

There's words missing. There's mens sex. Yeah and what's the moon? The moon men.

But what about menstrual blood? Menstrual blood? So they've said it without menstrual blood, the moon sex strike.

Anyway, thank you.

Well, if you go right down, down Wiki, you, you go right in the Wiki and it has all that, but it's never done.

I, yeah, I probably wrote it in the wrong way. Yeah.

Anyway to elaborate on how it was a female cosmetic coalition, we were a mixed group, but really it was me, Jen, and Wilma that were in charge.

Definitely. No question about it. Yeah and people did.

Well we, we organized it and people came along and joined in and gave us their bodies, which was great, but, and may have had the odd idea, but really it was all our ideas and we organized it.

It was very hierarchical. Yeah, very hierarchical. Correct.

That's, that's how gallery was organized by.

but I think the act the act of painting each other was important, as important as the performances.

I think the act of painting each other is what has enabled us to all still be friends today.

Really. And, it was, that's the bonding and the, and the organizing of it and getting everything together and it's like the performances, the, is the peak of a lot of other stuff that's that's gone on.

Em it was very regular.

We, it was seasonal, it was ritualistic.

so and so we had a rhythm.

It didn't, it didn't really, I don't think we were tracking our periods or anything at the time and I can remember, I think thinking, oh, will anyone see the string? And thinking, well, actually, it probably doesn't matter if they do.

So that's from the, or whatever I had.

so so what we would do was very counter normality, but we developed various performances which took, which we did again and again and this one is called Sexist Crabs and actually we did it, part, it was partly to do with Elaine Morgan's, aquatic Ape theory book, the, the Descent of Woman, which we loved and so a lot of the ideas, well they sort of came out of it, but we just loved that book.

And, but also it's cause there were, the gaming in our lives weren't they weren't particularly pc and a lot of, they would call, they would call women tuna and it really used to get on my nerves and so we thought if they're gonna, if they're gonna call me tune or I'm gonna go and do a performance in heaven and, and sell tape crab my fanny, and then you can call me whatever you want.

So, so it was like getting men getting back at these gay men that were insulting women.

this performance we did at, all Over Play Heaven, Oxford University.
and we love turning into mermaids.

We turned into mermaids there.

That's kind of like our, if the aquatic a had gone even further and stayed in the water, they, and there's us giving birth, that's me giving birth to Sprats or something and there's this, or I should given the other, or there's Sprats ready to be born and me having my hair, like the, there's, there's my sister with Sprats in her fish nets.

We love Fishnets because of that, because of the whole aquatic thing.

but yeah, and we, we just liked a lot of the ideas out of it and in, in the Aquatic Ape, they, it was about how we wouldn't, that walking could possibly have been.

Well, it was probably helped by walking and water, being able to walk on two legs adequately enough and also Hairlessness and people are sort of are in there's, people are taught, some people hate the Aqua Apes theory.

Alice Roberts hates it. David Attenborough loves it.

And, Chris Stringer who, who we like here, he says that he thinks that walking water could, well walking because support of water's a good idea.

So I think that's, It's a prevailing theory now, Actually. Is it? Isn't it? That's good.

So does Alice Roberts changed her mind? yes. She has really, I'm so fashion. She Endorsed a book about what she calls the real cratic hate. Oh.

Which called Oh, lovely. She's Sort of judged divine, but she's, anyway, it's a long story I could explain.

Yeah. Brilliant. I'm glad to hear that. Anyway.

Where Oh, yes. Spin.

Oh yeah. More, more, more sexist crabs version.

That's Portland Bill Sculpture Park.

Can we speak towards the laptop if we can? Oh yeah.

People saying they can't hear.

Yeah, well, just to make it with, that's Portland Bill Sculpture Park, and there's more, more crabs and postcards from Brighton.

Oh. And this is, oh, I'm gonna, I might have to go, I have to look over there.

This is a, this is a cutting we did used to get in the papers sometimes.

we, we performed with Michael Clark, who's a dancer and the bit about, well, Neo Nature says he keeps rum company to wit a group of four.

They comprise one thin man naked, but for his black briefs and three fat women whose nakedness is hideously enhanced by the transparent tape in which they are partially encased and which adds unbeautiful bulges to the abundant ance with which nature and time them, the neo nature affair called they call themselves and they are horrid That A female cosmetic coalition.

What does, anyway, there's even more.

That was outside Center Point Fountain.

Well, in cent Point Fountain actually an outside center point.

It's the dog being painted. Yeah, the dog painted as well.

Got washed. Yeah. Dog have to join in.

this was in a, a fashion show where we fla made our braier and this is the Neo Natures Manifesto that was in the International Times in 1986 and it was all a bit of a joke really, but it was nice to have our manifesto published.

But around about that time, everything changed.

Jen moved to the countryside, that's Jen and had a baby.

Wilma went to Mexico.

Luckily she came back again. She's here and I was left in London thinking eat.

But luckily not long after I found the Radical anthropology class.

and I'm going to tell you about my first evening at the ology class.

Sorry, which, which year was this? I, it was either nine, I think it was probably 1987. Yeah.

I haven't been keeping track for, yeah. 1987.

And, On the first evening I went to the pub after the class and having heard various people talking about the theory, I asked Chris Knight, what is this theory everyone is talking about? Mm-hmm. He said something like 160,000 years ago in Africa, groups of women started getting together and painting their bodies with their menstrual blood and red ochre at the dark moon.

This was to signal they were not available for sex until the men hunted some meat and brought it back to them.

Then they would all be friends again at the full moon.

This was the human revolution.

Speech, music and art all started then.

I couldn't believe my ears, like I thought, actually thought he'd already heard about the neo nature, somehow knew I thought he was taking the p**s.

I did, I did. I thought, well, honestly, he's just joking.

And, but then I think he even managed to sway me that evening.

It's the truth. But if not, I went, I worked out quite soon.

That really was what he was talking about and so obviously I become a very enthusiastic member of the class.

Oh. And I carried, and so I carried on other friends, came in and joined me with performances, cath here and Jules here.

And, and so some of the ideas from the perform from the class started seeping into my performances and the first performance that I can, I've got a record of which must have been influenced by the class was called Communion with Christine and I haven't got one photograph from that performance, so I'm gonna have to use this instead and so, and while, while I'm talking about that performance, I'm actually going to help evoke some of the tastes and smells that performance by, by giving out some red wine and we've got, um if you feel like sharing, sharing the, the cups, please do.

If you don't, don't feel like you have to, but because because I'll, you want me to pass in there? Yes. But have a sip on the way.

Go this or whatever. Go for it.

Let's show you cup Yeah.

Share, like, have a, have a cloth tape with you and wine.

Anyway, so while that's going round, ready.

So as well, this, I'm called Christine.

Christine means Christlike and I realize that if I'm Christlike, it means I bleed.

Correct. And so this is the, this is Christ, or Christine's possible symbolic blood going round.

and the performance was about, reclaiming menstrual symbolism from Christianity.

what I did was I went to St.

James' Church where they used to give interesting talks and stuff, and if I'd spotted they had red cassettes and I managed to borrow a red cassette from upstairs in the Rie or wherever it was, and sneaked out.

the performance was in the diorama.

It was a, a marvelous art space and every year they had a, event called Sex and Sexuality.

So this was part of the Sex and Sexuality, week.

And, I, and I created an altar with red wine, and I made a homemade bread goddess and I stood in front of the altar with my cason, like a real vicar and read the communion service to the congregation and when it came to, this is my body take heat in Reem, to me, I broke the bread and fed it.

The congregation when it came to this is my blood, I pulled the red wine down, the I'll demonstrate I pour, I got the bottle.

Like I won't really do it.

I got close, I got the bottle like this, and I stood with the cell like that and I let the wine pour all down in my front and I caught it under my cunt and then that was the, that was the communion wine and I gave that out.

So basically I was reclaiming menstrual blood back from the church.

and I was particularly keen to do that.

cause in 1987 was the year that women were first ordained as deacons in the Church of England and I was thinking about when women become vicars and priests, how would the symbolism play out in terms of what happened in communion services? And going back to me being dressed as a, a woman dressed as a man, dressed as a woman, I was thinking, well, they're gonna be the same because vicar are men wearing dresses and that makes them shamanic because they've got a dress on.

So if women become vicars, that means they're gonna have to be women dressed as men dressed as women.

So actually they might just as well leave out the middleman and give out the menstrual blood.

So that's why that, so my performance, my performance is, um about reclaiming a symbolism for women and giving women pickers proper status.

Anyway. Yeah.

and when I read back and realized that, oh, this is what I read out while I was doing it and when I realized that was the first performance that I did that when I was inspired by the class, I say I was quite impressed.

Really. I did that.

But it was inspired by the women.

so so you, that was the first performance inspired by the class? Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Yeah. Finished.

And then at that same time through the class, I found out about all sort of interesting things like women's camps, star Hawk workshops, the House of the Goddess in Clapham, where they did rituals and so I started doing all sorts of different things and investigating different types of mythologies and women's stuff and rituals.

and I haven't, I didn't really have time to find pictures of any of those, which is a shame.

But this is the next performance that I've, I can see that was, it's not exactly inspired by the class, but there's aspects from it and it's exploring the Sleeping Beauty theme and it was in a youth club in Milton McKees.

and it's playing with different strands from, Wiccan Ritual, spider Woman's Story, Karen Teller, dancing and punk and basically we, well, we did all sorts of things including unpicking our jumpers as part of, spinning.

and we managed to create, managed to have a fire on stage, I mean on purpose.

cause by going to these ritual workshops and things, I'd learn how to make a fire and a source them.

and I don't think you'd get away with that today, but There's more pictures for performance.

but, and these backstage photos, and I'm putting those on because back that's, I feel like these are the sort of female cosmetic coalition photos really.

cause we are out there chatting, getting ready, deciding what we're gonna paint on each other and just bonding with each other and yeah, it's kind of like a big part of where the sort of magic happens.

And I'll say that later and we, mainly, an important thing about the aism is we mainly paint each other.

It's not about having somebody that does painting and then somebody getting painted and that's, that's an important thing, is painting each other and once you've got your paint on, I, You do feel different.

You do feel kind of protected and I mean, we all about this, you can just walk through a nightclub with body paint on, and it's like seas.

They fall. Yeah. They just go away and I think partly white. Yeah.

Particularly if they're wearing light.

Partly they don't want it on their clothes, but partly it's because it's just something happens, you suddenly feel more powerful when you've got body paints on.

and it does, yeah.

Actually it, the tightly uses sort landing in it and it does keep you a little bit warmer.

Not much, but when it rehearse goes on, it's quite cold, but then you just sort of warm up and it gives you something.

yeah, I'm with Cath.

This was Cupids and Amazons, we did visit the DIAM as well and this one was playing with the idea of, cupids Bow as a Valentine's performance and Amazon hunting and messing around with the hunting theory that I'd heard of and shooting.

I think we sh made, we chewed chocolates and spat them out and melted them in a cooker and bits of meat in them and shot them back into the audience or something and people could eat them dogs To get them off people's clothes.

Had a lot of Dogs. Obviously we weren't very good at shooting, but hopefully that was a big thing.

oh, this is French Revolution, celebrations in Paris.

That's what I've mentioned. It's revolution.

The, and Jen doing a little performance in, to help celebrate.

Great. Oh, and this should have come before that was the, that was the script for the, for the, PYS and Amazon one and that's some of the design I suppose were doing okay now. Greatest banner in all August and it an air in real life.

we formed as well as the neo natures.

Then we had another group.

It was a camp cabin and, we used to meet and do rituals and some of us worked at a place called Erickson Beman.

We were making jewelry and we used to take, take all these jewels home with us and red them up and get paid 10 pounds a necklace or something.

So we ended up with an awful lot of jewels at home and glue guns and stuff and one day we just decided that it was more important they went on a banner and actually Viki didn't mind.

So we made this banner and it says, dear wall mangers, if you want blood, have some of ours lump covered. What Was the occasion? It was four, this was in 1990 and it was to protest against the Gulf War.

yeah and I, we thought that, deep down all war, this is obviously with a bit of rag theory to help deep, we thought that deep down all war is based on womb envy, an envy of menstrual blood by men.

So this is what we wanted to say to them, because they don't need to kill each other.

They can, there's plenty of women with menstrual blood that they can have instead, ah, anyway, sorry, can you repeat the quote deep down? What did I say More is menstruation enb.

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

there's more pictures of it.

I have got some somewhere of the, of the, menstrual rags dangling on policeman's helmets, and I can't find them.

I hope I didn't throw away by mistake and we took it out again in 2001 and here it is in the paper, in the news of the world. Wow.

Quite near the front. This is great. Fantastic.

But they didn't stop you? No, they were, they were much more weird that time.

I think. I think we tried to take it out a third time, something, and we thought if we take it out again, they're gonna seize it.

So, and I didn't know that it was the word they worked out.

It said can't, even though we can't see it very clearly or whether they've worked, whether it was the, they thought the blood was a health and safety risk or what It was really, we didn't like.

Oh, oh, oh yes. Hang on. Oh yeah.

So then we come to this bring right to right. Yeah.

So here this, and then that's kind of how we got to that picture that you saw at the beginning and this really is a rag, a rag theory picture.

and it play, it's, it was, it was on mayday 1990 and it's about red and green because it's about it's the red of men love.

It's the red of labor day and it's the green of jacking.

The green and red and green are complimentary colors.

So we wove all the ideas together.

and we did a menstrual synchrony dance where we linked armpits to share our, our pheromones.

So we're more likely to have, synchronized periods.

we all were met red and black and white body paint, and we had animals and menstrual symbols painted on us and I'd just learned from Mary Lemley how to draw a labyrinth.

So there are quite a few labyrinths represented.

and the men were painted green and we'd, we did send them off hunting in this performance.

I think I might have a script somewhere. Yeah.

The men did go hunting at some point and then when they come back, they come back with some meat and we cook it, the women cook it, and then we do country dancing round.

The men who are holding sticks with ribbons on and then we, we tie them up somehow and then we paint them red too.

So that was, we were definitely, we using rag theory for that one.

More pictures of our body paint. We sang.

I am an anarchist like, Kathleen Ferrier or someone sort of like, hi Antichrist.

Don't know what I want, but I know how to get it.

I want to destroy the, by the way to be.

Yeah. So that's how we sang it very nicely.

what pictures? What pictures? There we are, and this is another performance in Belgium.

There's more red Oak in a, in a, futon shop.

But the whole plan went wrong and I can see the time, I'm not going to talk about that much and I'm just gonna go through the pictures.

this is, as people have babies, we, we thought, well, why can't they join in the performances? So they did come and join me with some of the performances and obviously they got to an age and they didn't want to, they didn't have to, but I think they enjoyed it when they were that old.

So this is a picture from the alternative world, 1991 and that's, and we used to use, patterns from ancient figurines as inspiration for body paint.

Sometimes. This is a picture out of, what was it? It's from Pop four on Serbia and it's from Maria BU's book and it's in a chapter about third godes symbols and I mainly look at the pictures in that book. Really? Mm-hmm. This is Alston Cambria.

There's Jill, where we went to do a ritual in a field and it was so freezing and we just got painted in the village hall and went to the disco and we decided it was just two college to do body painting in the field.

So we decided to paint the earth instead with red open.

Luckily we had loads of it and we spent quite a lot of time walking around all the paths, sprinkling red open all over the place and doing red open footprints and playing with the goddess breads and dollies and taken with us.

Oh, there's another picture of my sister giving birth, to some apples, I think it was Halloween and it, so we could do some apple bobbing.

Uh Oh. And I was also gone back to pottery then.

This is a plate I made sort of thinking about the communion idea and it says, bloody Mary, holy Mary, mother Mary, Bonnie Mary.

So lots of different sorts of areas you could get this central image. Image Is, rock and braiding from the bar region Aboriginal Australia.

Yeah. Yeah.

There's a combination of Australia means And Scottish party.

Yeah. It's a spirit figure you say it is.

Well, an image of, yeah. Menstruating, woman Access, power. All, all the, all the most powerful ancestral beings are sisters, females, and in, in Australian mythology and, and religion, Woman refer to the world.

Yeah, that's right. Pretty much recap it. Yeah.

Simplicity. It is an image of the, of the cycle. Of course.

It was so lovely that he put it in there And I gave her some sars.

this is, a wax body printed I did, which I then covered in red open, um art house.

Not the one that Chris painted to another one.

This is my sister and I in Lavia painted in Latvian national costume.

When we went to that beer in 19, it wasn't that long after you could go, we went with Andrew Logan, who does the iveness world.

Mm-hmm. Where am I? Oh yeah. 92 and we were painted by two fashion students who were Ian and they knew the national costume.

They knew all the symbols off by heart.

This is the story of the universe in a belt and they knew it off by heart and as they painted us, they told us what it meant that they were painting on us.

It was amazing. And here's my sister with two other lovely happy ladies and there's a painting mate, my sister did of it.

this is St. Patrick's Day performance, 1993 and it was about putting the snakes back into Ireland. Yes and we discovered this method where we could, if we put tight body paint ourselves, then put tights over our bodies and then put color porridge over the top of the tight, if we could then take the tights off and it's like shedding our skins and it's kind of like an anti strip because what we instinctively knew right from the start is you should never take your clothes off in front of anyone.

You should just only ever appear naked.

Because it is the clothes that actually make, Make the, the sort of make it sexual and we weren't sexual. We were a female collective.

I can't even say it anymore.

We were the thing and, really, and so this was like an anti strip.

So it's a way of well, shedding our skin symbolically.

So we had our snake skins and we gradually revoltingly took them off and revealed our red Lor outfits underneath.

cause apparently not that long ago, LEP were, did have red suits, only recently made become green and it's like maybe the red leprechauns are the snakes and the snake is symbolic of menstrual synchrony.

Of course. Everybody in the room who, everybody knows that everyone, ah, ah, ah, looking at the time.

M 11 link road, I'm gonna, this was the tower where that was the last bit to remain standing, just saying, my friend Anne Redmond invented the, let London breathe the slogan and made the banners, but she couldn't come.

and, but in one of the house, well outside from the houses, there was a car that gradually evolved and it just got dumped there.

Somebody put a yellow line, had someone put grass around it.

So I added rust in peace in red otus for the final bit.

This is the room that, Chris was talking about earlier with red ochre all over the floor and out the back there was a toilet and Jen and I had done a job where we had to do gold leafing in a nightclub, but we managed to come away with quite a lot of gold leaf.

And, so I had gold leaf, a squat, a squatted toilet seat, and I also gold leaf for natural leaves and on the door I wrote, I put sheets of gold leaf and I scratched in the gold leaf.

Open the door, open your bowels, open your cunt, open your urethra, open yourself to the stars.

The night, the day, the earth, the sky and remember anything is possible.

Of course, that all got demolished.

and that's me when I decided to do a bit of body painting on my own.

But I didn't feel lonely.

I mean, I have to say, it was so nice when Wilmas joined in right back, going back to the beginning, I forgot to say the big difference between getting painted on your own and getting painted with someone else is really, really different and doing it as a group is a very, very important thing.

But I did it on my own.

I think it's 'cause I was with the other protectors, I felt all right, but I was a red ochre sacred.

So, and I was completely legal cause I'd have four, IT have four pairs of plastic bosoms that become a, so, and there's me quite, there's a piece and there's another of shedding our skins performance of the alternatives world.

There's me at the rat anthropology, field trip and strangely, even though it's all about groups, there's no group photos from that.

There's an individual picture around of me, an individual of somebody in the room this night, his body paint on.

I deny everything.

Oh. So that's more experiential and here is the, when we, when we manage to block the M 41 motorway and dig holes in it, while it was blocked, me and Camilla were there looking like that and we were very modest recognized.

So we did, we put modesty scripts. Yeah. Yeah.

I I didn't put it on my tit though.

No, you didn't put it on. I, I refused.

I did it like Soho. I just copied Soho.

I put it in the same place as where you do it.

But that's probably about the most painful thing I've ever done and I just not, I mean inner performance, but just to say that even though performance art most, a lot of performance art seems to be about pain and seriousness and blood letting, in the sort of piercings kind of way.

In a way the neonatologists were just a reaction to that.

We were the opposite. We didn't really do anything.

We didn't wanna do, we didn't do blood letting or grueling things or, anything horrible.

We just did. Yeah and that, so that, just the thought of taking that off is probably one of the worst things.

Anyway, there's some more protestors than Camilla. Yeah.

I didn't recognize that. Very sexy woman and then we, that was flat. That's, I mean, it's flat. Yeah.

The books and a little group of us Good order actually just went to a Halloween party Day of the Death. Yeah.

Dead. I was turning with Zebra.

Yeah. Oh, were you? Yeah.

Then we became the Neo Natures ladies choir. And I go, oh and That's where the Pride flag came from.

Oh, the, You look like a pride flag.

The new like 100 versions.

we did several performances of the Neo Natures Ladies choir.

It was lovely. We, we've left the Red Ochre behind Suddenly and Gone for Bright, but very matching and it's, it the best, the best effect is always when you're matching.

Mm-hmm. Not identical, but yeah.

This is homage to, homage Mary Barnes and it was at Kingsley Hall and it's Rd Lang was connected to, Kingsley Hall, and it's where, he worked with Mary Barnes and where she came off of her anti psychosis medication and where he supported her in just doing whatever she wanted to do and allowed her to go mad completely and to write on the walls in her s**t.

To write on the walls in her, in her menstrual blood and eventually she recovered.

She didn't need her medication anymore with, and I've written it down is cause she worked through whatever it was and she expressed it, supported by the therapeutic community.

So it's possible. It's possible and it's just that I think the world is so limited.

We've just got to do art and express ourselves.

Anyway, this is me and Jen back on the blooming old, aquatic ape type of theme, sort of being mermaids on the beach at Belling Gap and I mean, after this performances did become quite infrequent.

I mean possibly one a year or not that often.

But I started doing the Neo Natures archive and getting it all together, which was a long grueling task.

But while I was doing it, I did some of my, some of my, the photographs, floated onto pots and I started making pots that were kind of storage storage vessels for, for neo natures documentation.

Yard it in 2010 at the Hayward Gallery.

We did the Neo Nature life drawing class.

We didn't really know what it was gonna be.

We just said we'll do life drawing class and this is a photograph that, so, and after the class as we like to do, we all went down onto the beach of the Big Tens and that was lovely. this is the only photograph I could find of Miss Marina psychopomp of the counterintuitive homeostasis.

There was another, another entry in the Eternity, miss World, and it was me and Jill and I'm gonna read this out using the, using ideas about the dynamics of the large

group to interact with and have conversations with the audience and it was using the psychoanalytical framework of group systems theory.

So we just, the the, the globe is kind of in the round and it's such a wonderful place to interact with the audience and it really was sort of like we were having a conversation with the audience and that's us being interviewed by Mr. Perry himself.

If anyone wants to buy that, that's 250 pounds.

You have to pay Getty images.

By the way, the, we had an exhibition in 2016, at Studio Voltaire that was all about the Neo naturalists.

We had our archive displayed in it and paintings by Jen and Wilma and we spent a week getting painted and printed on the walls.

So this is one day after we'd done some painting and printing.

This is some prints we did on the walls.

This is me and Wil we're up the scaffolding and we've been printing on higher up on the walls and our, our body paint's getting well worn in there and that's the room with the, with the images on the walls as well as our stuff.

this is from the 2018 Alternatives world.

That was psychedelic piece.

There's Jill looking very peaceful.

There's Wilma, you can't see me and that apparently is Paul taking one of Jill's take because I think we did the porridge thing again then that time It seemed to work quite So well.

Didn't it work? We took off. I can't kind Of naked.

Oh, alright. You've still got pain. Yeah, But seemed to, anyway, Anyway, think that was Paul helping Jill get her porridge off.

That's us on the banks of the Thas again.

in 2019 at the winter solstice doing a Santa Lucia performance and Lucier performances are very traditional for the winter sauce in Sweden.

Various places normally performed by maidens.

But we performed this because Santa Lucia is also the patron saint of eyesight.

So we've painted eyes all over us and we were all having problems like glasses and at the time, so this was just moving the energy on to the, to the people with glasses that needed a bit of help.

Another alternatives World, William Blake themed, we were called Ms. Golden Spread Bear.

That was 2022 and last but not least, in the presence of the bust of Sir Henry Tate himself, we did the last, that was the last performance we did and it was a lecture. And this is Wilma doing her bit of the lecture with Giant Painting behind mm-hmm.

Jen doing her bit of the lecture and this is us at the end saying, hooray and is this the women vol that was at part of Women in Revolt and that is the end of that bit and hopefully we've still got time to show you a quick film.

Perfect and the film. Yeah.

The film takes us back to about 1990 in the heyday of the, of the menstrual blood, revolution in my life and it's, I made it with Jill.

Well, and Jill is a filmmaker.

I'm just a performance artist that misses around with thing and so I believe the soundtrack is new.

We made that last year Bring down the lines of the film and Ruby never lose our way to the well of her and the power of her living the rise.

I wanna move on and cover another topic. We'll never.

And, Michelle McCartney from Colder Valley has The question, Mr.

Cher, as the firsthand author, I would like to know what you intend to do about the groin division between the north and the South.

Well, I don't, I think if I might say so, that, that tends to be exaggerated.

Well, I think it tends to be exaggerated because in the South too, It's an extra choice. It Must come up the Circumstances must, must Gentleman up at the top of the corner.

Yes. Isn't that really just saying that you're going to privatize most of the schools? No, it isn't. In essence The schools just hiding behind A no, it isn't.

It's saying to some parents who are very, very worried about some of the things their children are being taught and just want their children to have a very good sound education.

Some of these are trapped in some of those extreme left wing local authorities.

That is wrong. You're Saying Right.

Rise. It will rise again.

We will never, never lose our way to your way in the future.

So long as we are reelected, what, What were you gonna say to the president? No, I'm sorry Mr. Stacher.

There's no way I can agree with that. Nothing.

Perhaps most of the people here would say that is not true.

After, after spending seven weeks in our local hospital, the conditions, the nurses were golden themselves, but they were so understaffed, so pushed for beds, no wards to put beds in bed gonna get the care and attention because they just haven't got the vicinities.

Well, may I say to you that the day I walked into number 10, the amount spent on the National Health Service was under eight, 8 billion pounds.

It is part of my pride now that we've got a strong economy and the amount spent on it now, no, the cost of it, and I must consider the cost do without the scotch Again, we will never, never lose of her memory and the power of her living in flame.

It will rise. It will rise again.

I'm about to get them out in the oven, Jill and that means our kit kitchen scene will be complete.

I And the power of a living.

Audience questions

At the end of the film, there's this figurine with the tongue sticking out.

Is that you in the film?

Yeah.

So it seems like you're mimicking it with your tongue sticking out, right? Yeah. What is that? I Can't remember.

No, but it wasn't, was it? I mean, I Think Carly, yeah, there's a few that are like that, but I, I was thinking, oh, what is that particular one? Yeah. And what's Carly Indian? Yeah.

Cali. Yeah. C Okay.

Deaf in Hindu can Hindu of death, disruption, destruction.

What's the tongue being out actually represents like, it's wild.

It looks like doesn't, it looks like miles and cunt Of who? Much The same thing. Yeah. Is it there also a yoga force? A a yoga movement to help with your breathing Lion Breath? Well, that in a way, that's all to do with the expression of doing the thing you shouldn't it's not making you pretty, sticking your tongue out, spread As horrible as you could possibly be. Doing Things which don't make you pretty and good for you.

Yeah. Sometimes You succeeded. It'd be utterly, extremely horrible.

You succeeded. Horrible. Trust, Celebration group.

Erica: Somehow. Like it's the, the celebration somehow of the like, continuity of like the self in the world, like the poorness of the body, like there continuity like the imminence of the body and us like sort of as of aspiration to transcendence, everything goes off.

It's like, yeah, there's an openness.

So whether it's your mouth or your consci Yeah. Or something else.

Yeah. E you do want.

Yeah. what is the correspondence to like the kind of, is it a rock, something that gives your cut or Something? The crystal. Oh, the crystal.

Oh, was the co crystal. It's the Opposite. The cutting out.

Yeah. Yeah. What was it? What what was it was a, I thought it was a really, yeah, I gave, it's a 10.

Yeah. Look like a crystal. Looks like a, sorry.

Crystal. No, I put it a TenX.

One of the reasons that, Jill, Jill is here who made the film with me and Jill, one of the rea one of the reasons that, yeah.

Come on here. Come on camera here for the zoom.

One of the things, one of the things that I found out about Jill quite early on, and I laugh, is that she kept a little letter month, a dried one, and she had the more little box by her bed.

More than one. I can keep the lot the best ones and I dunno why you Did. And I thought that was great. And that's one of the reasons I knew that I could do things like this. Yeah.

I think I just kept it because I thought it was a fascinating thing.

Like there was an artist, I just thought he said these fantastic art material.

Yeah. I just instinctively he knew that For crying. Yeah.

And, and so yeah, we, we just had that rapport, didn't we, about the menstrual, the power of the menstrual blood.

Yeah. And I loved talking to you about it and all, and I was doing the sort of quite hardcore performance art where you did piercings.

Yeah. So you were kind of helping me transform and rethink things and together we, we kind of came through With that. Yeah. I was trying to educate you to say you don't have to be extreme with all those and endure that love, whatever it was and you can just have periods Yeah. When it's art and I was kind of primed anyway because I was collecting my Yeah.

Men you knew anyway. Really.

Yeah. It just, yeah. And that was all part of Yeah.

Exchanging ideas and that coalition feeling probably wasn't it? Yeah, it was definitely. Yeah and basically that film has hardly been shown.

It came out of like the box of things in sea break films that I'd had, since the 1980s because of the Women in Revolt, project and we still, we've made that film Bat Menstrual Blood.

It's a look at it. So we digitized it and then we put the, the soundtrack on it and it was almost like the second type being shown was like last year and we had to pretend it was made in 1988, otherwise it wouldn't have gotten in Women in Revolt.

But it didn't get in women in Volt in the end.

But it did get in a film show connected with vol.

But we had had to bring it forth back a couple of years And then, and then we had it at that wonderful occasion of the Dragon Luna New Year and it also was shown there the second time.

But I remember the whole thing about the tampax coming out was to be about, not penetrating, but the opposite, opposite of like emanating kind of Reversal Yeah.

Emanated with Acks. Yeah. Do Do you want Chris? No, we have two questions on just a very oh two on Zoom. Let's do Chris, That's very sort of minor point, but obviously coming from sort of theoretical antibody, there's, there is an argument, which is that you have ritual and you have speech.

I'm thinking of a guy called Roy Rappaport who talked about the obvious a aspects of ritual and he, he just made a point, which I've always thought about important is that, um we're always tempted to say, what if we're coming from outside tech? What does this mean? What does this mean? What does this mean? Doing a ritual? And he sort of says, well, actually, if you wanted to say what something means, you wouldn't do it in ritual, you'd do it in words and the point is that the rituals just produce some

kind of experience, which in different ways, bonds people and also excludes people of course and the ritual is kind of something which creates the potential for speech.

But just, and of course when you have words, you sort of say, what do they mean? And it's fairly obvious what they mean, but it's like he, he argued basically just this, it's that kind of a category error to wonder what it means.

Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Same as art or Some experience it, and it's either difficult or easy and all sorts of things about it.

But the ritual is designed to create a sort of emotional feeling of one to another and kind of what it means it's, it's like something you can only say in dance and if you could say, if you could say it in words, you, you do that instead.

But there are some things you can only do in dance or music Or video. What Chris saying? Zoom here.

Zoom. We can't hear On Zoom or Chris saying, I'm sure it's very enlightened.

Yeah. We can have manchego then.

Manchego has a question. Is it, are we going to zoom? Okay. Manchego, feel free.

Okey doke. Okey doke. thank you very much for that and then always makes me happy.

But it makes Camilla itch when any, I mean anybody brings up Elaine Morgan, but my question is, when you were on, when you were standing on the beach on the Thames, you're wearing black and white face makeup that is dead on Comanche war paint.

W was that on purpose? I don't think so. No, I don't.

Well, I mean, Mike death was around, wasn't he? He was doing a bit. He did your one. Yeah.

So maybe it was Yeah.

Pe we just, people just painted us and we, and so if they had, if they knew something about something like that, I might have been painted by somebody that was Jen painted me.

Yeah. She had, yeah.

So I don't think that there probably wasn't anything consciously connected with that, to be honest.

Well, may maybe it's the archetype Yeah.

Coming through. Thank you, Rachel. It doesn't mean something outside of itself.

It, it, it's, it's, it just is.

Should we have, Erica and then back to Zoom or Christine? I like sort a very specific question and a very broad thing.

So those specific thing, the baking of the bread.

So there's all this detail, there's a design, it's not just that this master what involves a specific form that's being created and baked and, everything is quite, well the, the boobs, the arms, it's, so there's, there's like, there's also kind of like a, there's no head.

You don't swarm the head. Mm.

This is just a very pedantic, so this is like an a why, where, why is there was that thought out? Or is that That's just what they're like those sort of like, it was meant to be sort of like the Venus of Willens Dorf and all those. You're Having a very specific ancient Or specific type everywhere because there's lots of them, that type of thing and that, that picture I showed, I think that maybe is that quite come from the there, the Venus of the Wills dorf and there's, there's a few, quite a few of these little figurines that have been found you could carry in your hand and they don't really have faces. They often don't, they Don't have either heads or feet And they have slit eyes.

It's between heaven and earth. It's, It could be between heaven and earth.

It could be also going into some kind of trance, losing head. It could be that kind of Experience. Oh, and it, and they sometimes have patterns all over their heads.

Yes. So it's like nets and stuff on their heads and so I was doing nety type of patterns in my knife all over to make nets.

Okay. That helps actually. Yeah. Thank you. Thank you.

Can I, can I tack on something else? Yeah.

This so for a, I've been speaking with, told Camilla about this co conference that invites me to do events in Berlin sometimes and this, and they do a lot of, I just, I haven't really synthesize this stuff, but they do a lot of, hanging people from hooks and a lot of this kind of love and stuff and a lot of this art and what you, the fact that you said you were doing this and that was your trajectory and just makes me put all this together in a whole new way that in a way for a while wondered how do these worlds combine? How can we, somehow bring something weird and feminist to Berlin? And I don't know, I'm still working on it, but one thing that definitely occurred to me as we were going is that I know, I don't know exactly how the menstrual blood fits in yet with the hooks and there, but, but it does and I also know that one thing I definitely want do is I wanna do this character that I'm developing is mariajuana laua marijuana of the cross.

It's like a crusading, marijuana grower.

Pot dealer's been displaced by legalization and this is kind of like effort at Rev creating a revolutionary class that these displaced marijuana workers, there's a whole other project.

Anyway, sidebar, but I wanna do it naked body painting.

Oh, Juan is like a gendered, like a very awkward subject already.

Like what I just said. It's an awkward subject position to try to speak from.

Okay. And, and, and it's not only like a sub alternate in all those criminalized ways.

It's also, a woman and it's, it's just awkward and there's this whole, I, anyway, I've just, you've just totally inspired me. I just wanted to Oh, good. Watching all those body.

I was like, yeah, I wanna do this lecture.

Very fancy lecture. You saw me last week.

I wanna do something like that. Like deadpan, but like on the front, like the suit painted on business in the front and party in the back.

Oh, that'd be Good. And do a performance like, anyway.

Thank you.

Have we got Zoom? We have another question on Zoom. Yeah.

Christine, would you like to unmute yourself? And Hi. Oh, hi. Can you hear me? Hello? Yes.

Me. Hi. that was Christine. Thank you.

That's possibly the most astonishing body of artwork I have ever seen in my entire life, and I lived the world.

I mean, it's really, really astounding and I have two questions.

Have, how much formal inter do you have with interaction? Have you had with the formal art world? Has anybody ever written about you in the art world? And do you, do you perceive yourself in any way in the kind of, official art world tra tradition? And do you, has your work been in any way inspired by or riffing with in conversation with other performance artists? Or is it mainly more, well, what is, what is your position? cause I've never come across you in the art world ever.

Are you respectful? well, I am a woman.

Woman and Sarah Wilma and Jen and, and Jill, that's one of the reasons.

But we, we were in the Women in Revolt exhibition that was in the Tate last year.

But that, I mean, Lindsay Young who curated it, spent years going round, finding women that no one had ever heard of and so, we were kind of lucky to be in it and so, I don't know if that means I'm in the proper art world or not really and in fact, I don't even know, I don't think I know really what you're saying and I know what you mean.

But, I'm probably on the cusp, I think sort of going between the worlds, but I don't really want to be in the art world properly either, because I think it's quite a sterile place sometimes It's nice life is good.

So I think being on the cusp is quite good for me.

But I mean, I think the neo nature is, gradually getting recognized.

We kind of people have started putting this as kind of on the edges of things and in things, but, and we did have our an exhibition at Studio of Voltaire that's quite a, a proper gallery in London, really.

But it's a bit niche. but yeah and what else did you say? Oh, I, I asked it.

Had you ever kind of been influenced by any performance, other performance artists? my fa when I Ambe is an amazing performance artist and she was my favorite artist for a long time.

and they're probably, and I and as I was saying, I I did the kind of performance artists and I can't even remember any of their names, but even like, there's an exhibition at the moment at the Tate about Lee Bowery and in a way he did lots of piercings and really extreme things and, giant dressing up.

And, but in a way I was kind of sort of being the opposite to him because, he wa, he was doing painful things and it was all very big and like a show and I feel like what we, what we do is different.

What the Neo naturists do is more, is more like, well, it's not just, it is more like a, an experience and a ritual and a joyful thing to be part of.

And, and it's also saying something, but maybe, and when, when I showed that picture of the Blitz Club, where very early on and then I was doing a performance underneath that was before body painting.

But in a way when I was doing that performance, and I think that it carried on with the body painting is I felt like I was kind of creating a balance because it just seemed to be such a one tracked kind of world.

It felt like it needed balancing out.

So in a way, the going new, which the kind of clubs where the only thing anyone thinks about is their clothes, could be seen, could be seen as just doing it to be outrageous or it could be seen as balancing the room because it's like all these people partly have got bodies or they can only be in a certain way and somebody just needs to see a, a different type of body.

So it might that's partly what I was doing.

But I I, I've been around artists, but no one's ever taken taken me very seriously and I think as, particularly as an individual and the neo naturist, they have up more these days.

Some people. Would you say that, could I just make one more comment? Mm-hmm. I, 'cause I teach in art schools and so many young women these days want to do performance art with their bodies, but they're incredibly sha ashamed of their bodies if they're not looking like supermodels and you should give classes in art schools to young women.

How could not be ashamed of yourself really.

You could have a whole career doing that. Thank You. Well the thing is nobody taught me to, I just thought I hate my body so much.

I've just got to be a life model. I didn't have a class in, Can I say something there? Yeah.

Because Me Too to, I sort of felt like I hate my body. Well, Wilma's talking now, I just swiveled you around.

But when you said that I felt like, did we hate our bodies cause we actually hated our bodies or because we were maintain our bodies were the predo of air blushed what would be Photoshop now supermodels and you saw them make it everywhere. Yeah and that's why we thought, oh God, my body doesn't do it like that. Yeah.

You know? That's Right. So it's Taken a long time to go for reason.

Yeah. We gonna what? Is there any other you okay.

I wondered how it go. You to have one.

Have one? Do you wanna have one? You have one? oh, then yeah, do you wanna go first? Okay.

Try and wrap up. So, Sorry, I Thought I've had question.

You had a question. I thought that was, if you allow me to, I, But I think it, is it fair to let me have one go even if I'm the chair? Or am I supposed to shut? Yeah, Camilla, just ask your question. Come on.

Okay. So yeah, got that.

So yeah, what some of the most important things you said talking about how being able to body paint and being alone with, and that process of body painting together with others is almost part, it's almost the process that matters more than the actual display or performance.

I strongly agree with because I've also had experience of body paint on my own in demos and scenarios and that is, yeah, that's, that's quite sharp.

But the, but I have a strong feeling of what it would be like to really be in coalitions, which taking in paleolithic design and so forth and really that that's kind of an almost a dream, a wet dream of mine.

and but the playful trickery that comes over that, that this low key and in the film is very low key.

You're just going to the oven, you're doing these domestic tasks.

It's menstruate, cookery, cookery, domestic and then it kind of goes into this explosive vortex state and I'm taken into the bushman cosmology of like first creation where you're going back into time before time where nothing is fixed and people have Elam heads and it is the girl's power in her menstrual heart, which is like the rocket launchpad vortex.

It's not a menstrual heart, it's a menstrual vortex that takes the entire community and this is what's so extraordinary about the neo nature, is they really are like transporting a community by being very rooted in that with ordinary and yet flipping into the other world in a way that's quite, quite magic and it's just quite magic.

When we did performances and they said, oh, how do you want the lighting? I would used to say, can we have it like a kitchen? That's amazing. We Bring, so it, and then we always bought our prop and staging carry bag To bring in the ordinary. Bring In the ordinary. Now Lex. And, And, and then I that's, Yeah, just to say that was some really incredible talk and it was so amazing to see all of it like together.

and I also think your art is going inspire like generations to come and to come.

Like it's really like powerful works.

but with the, the menstrual video, I was just, I can't remember if you guys were synchronizing at that point.

Yeah. So when did that happen? Did you just by chance or did you try and plan it? Well, I mean, I can't remember the details, but I think we were just very much, we knew we wanted to do this film together and we were Did we or did we just think, oh, we both got our period let to make a film? I think it's quite a mixture.

I Know, But we knew that sync us being synchronized somehow was the right thing.

Yeah, it was. But we worked so that's why I'm featured in it even though it's really pristine mainly, but it was just me and you and we were in Synchrony.

It all just seemed to happen.

But if we made it in 1990 when we really did, we had just done the menstrual Synchrony dance.

Perhaps.

We might have been, yeah.

It could have been filtering through.

I think it was probably summer now clothes we've got on.

Yeah. So Funny. I have a very Quick question Just because I think you didn't mention it.

Where, where did this name come from? How did you come to this name? New, new ISTs Actually, it took us quite a long time to come up with that name and first of all, we were the segments.

Yeah. 'cause we found a piece of orange silk on the way to a performance.

It was a Karma Miranda night and so we turned ourselves into an orange and called ourselves the segments.

But then, I dunno, I think it just came, you woke me up one night. Yeah.

In UK you just said the name and I think it was something to do with people like co and people talking about near this and near that.

Yeah. You, you are like, oh, I've got a good name. Yeah.

So I think it was 'cause CMS slightly sort of pretentious art studenty people talking about.

Yeah. I did wonder immediately if there was a reference to naturalist, like in French and a naturalist is a nudist nature.

Nature nudist. Okay, so natures means nudist. Yes, it does and so Neo is like what does that mean? Like, could mean anything new nudist. Yeah.

What isn't, what isn't wasn't in my lecture was, we were, there was a documentary made about Us once by the British nature of sort of connected to the British Natures Association and they, they filmed us on a trip.

You were there weren't you? Yeah. Was strapped on Aven.

Yeah, the strapped on Aven.

They hired a canal boat for some reason and we all got painted on the canal boat and then we all, they put us up in a hotel, but then things went downhill from there and what, I don't know, there was a bit, we got body paint all over the sheets and Yeah, Probably and there was some kind of ang I denied at the time.

Yeah. And anyway, but basically we, one of the reasons we are neo natures is cause nature is always, are always trying to be natural and behave normally.

Like it's really ordinary to walk around with their clothes on and so we were neo nature is because we do art and show off And there's Dottie online, but honestly you had your hand up.

I okay. You and then we'll come to Dotie. Maybe that's Just a very quick point about, the Ti Gate thing.

Without that period, we wouldn't have had a descended layering and so language would not have been, There were loads of things that No, No, we don't think that Alistair, we No, you're wrong.

Gonna difficult. It's gonna be fixed. No, let's not.

These are artists. They're not kind.

No, I understand. Sorry, I just, sorry.

The other question I had, which was very much another man's question, which is, the, the, the self image, threat or a source that you get from public images of female bodies.

Is that something which that I, you'll get that from very young, I'm guessing, but does it intensify when you, when you reach puberty or is it just a continuation of the same or does that, does menstruation actually intensify that, those feelings of negativity or, or not? Negativity is the men that do that.

Yes. That's what I'm asking. That's why I'm saying it's the men's question.

I want to know whether that affects that.

If you have a bad, bad body image before then, does it, does it change at that point or does it not have much different, make much difference? I think it's probably different for everyone.

It really, your body, because your body changes a lot as well.

It's quite shocking in a way.

So men, you being ized by men and women and magazine, it's probably much harder for young girls now than it was for young girls.

A few young women now girls now confronted social media.

dotie, can we come to Doty's last maybe because Yes. Doy feel welcome to unmute yourself.

hi. oh, I dunno if you, well, yeah, so just, thank you very much, both of you or all of you that are there, that have come along for this and it was really informative.

and just, yeah, just love what you do did and do and have done.

but I, all of us here in Oxford, we're feeling a bit sad and despondent 'cause so much of what you were saying we couldn't really hear, very well and but the way I always treat things is if things don't quite pan out the way you want is to try and make a positive out of it.

So would you ever consider coming to Oxford? I put on the put on the, on the, chat thing.

How about a mayday na Naked riot? Amazing riot. That's good for Oxford.

Did you, that's what's what we Need. Did you tune into the, some of the photographs were taken in Oxford? I didn't actually. No, I didn't hear that either. Oh.

But but it'd be great to get, to get like you were saying, you had a documentary made about you and it'd be great to see that and it'd be great to make a new one or like just get some get some more archival recording of your thoughts and ideas about this.

cause it just, it's such an amazing thing.

I'm not gonna completely fascinating. R has loved it.

The bits that you could hear. and yeah, it would be just really great to, to see you here and we, we, we invite you as Oxford, we're inviting you to come and, and naked or otherwise, somewhere May, I thought you were gonna pay me for a minute. Oh God. I'll pay you in, I'll give you, I'll give you three tins of paint, Three tins. Yeah. But yeah, it'd be just, it's very inspiring and I do think it'd be great to like get that spirit back again because I feel like that that whole, just giving society the not the, not the, not the v sign, but I just think showing that we can live a different way and like be a different way.

I think that's just amazing and I'm not gonna completely bait out, but I'm with somebody who's done a lot of the performances or similar ideas independently here in Oxford and I think she'd love to meet you.

Right. Well done. So, thanks Dottie.

That's all fantastic idea for the future, near future.

Invite everyone there. They've gotta come. Yeah.

Wants to go write in Oxford. May. May.

May morning. May morning on the bridge.

Painted, painted In paint.

Fantastic, fantastic idea.

I'm really sorry about Zoom not being able to hear.

Is that, is that really so bad? We tried or we could to make sure.

Yeah, it was that universal. I'm Gonna, I'm gonna buy you a uni, a multi-directional microphone.

Camilla Send to you. You recommend it to us Dotsie without buying it for us.

If you tell us what to get.

Okay. Will do. Yeah.

Thank you. Us here in California Heard, heard is fine.

Yeah, yeah. We, we heard Okay.

As well California, but yeah.

Yeah. People are messaging through saying they could hear everything.

Yeah. I think it was just one.

but anyway, we will follow up your microphone recommendations.

Do I think, I think we've really got to, so this was the most fantastic lecture for International Women's Week this week and it was a very special, occasion as far as I'm concerned for rag, I mean it, Christine Binney isn't famous in the art world.

What, what does the art world think It is? I mean, really actually Jill, all the Mary, Wilma, Wilma, everybody here.

you, you're here at, you just, yeah. Come up here. Yeah.

Why don't you come up, say hi you.

Your birthday. Birthday. Exactly, exactly. Your birthday.

No, just to say it's the moment that I met Christine in the corridor in St.

Martin's completely changed my life and we have had some the f*****g an amazing adventures together, so thank you.

You still are, we are still friends all that time.

All that. We can still work together.

It might be blooming annoying sometimes, but we can Well I Left for 30 years and came back again.

Yeah. So that's a tribute to, You know, longevity.

So do it. It's theory for us.

cause I went away for Australia for like 30 Years. Yeah. And so the bonding of the bonding of the, the body painting, it's working A cosmetic combination.

Novation, Come on then. one last question then very quick because We are, You were in Mexico, You're in Australia. How did you find the relationships in those countries to body art and Where Mexico, I was actually sitting on a bus in the desert one day and I thought, I can't do this anymore.

It doesn't relate. And it made me realize you have to do it in a particular environment.

So we were walking around London naked and that was fine, but I was alone and I was not about to walk around Wacka city and body paint by myself.

So I had a long lot things happened.

I did. So you do realize that Neo Naturism has a place in time as we wrote non manifesting.

I think that place in time has come back for me joined again. You think It does.

So, I think we are gonna say goodbye to everybody on Zoom.

Goodbye to everybody.

We have got a little shop here, in case anyone on Zoom feels a bit left out because they can't get job if they live in London or close by, I will be doing a stall on Saturday with Lex at the Vagina Museum.

Oh. And sailed in London in Bethal Green and I think you, if you could do, maybe we can put a link or something.

We got so called Vagina Museum Sugar and you can't really Google Vagina Museum because of the word.

It's something else. And I can't remember what it is called Vagina Museum, but it is called that.

Or maybe it's just Instagram. So maybe it's vagina.

Find out about the sale.

If anybody can get on TikTok, you get a nice little lecture from professor Chris Knight on TikTok about why vagina's a horribly patriarchal word, but cunt is not.

Thank you very much.

The Ted K Archive

Christine Binnie
Neonaturist body painting: a red RAG to patriarchy (Seminar)
4 March 2025

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