



ART UNBOUND

Symbiosis:

*an interview with Marcel van Brakel
and Mark Meeuwenoord*

transcript

AMY DOTSON

This is Art Unbound, the official podcast for the Portland Art Museum and PAM CUT, the Center for an Untold Tomorrow. My name is Amy Dotson, and I'm PAM CUT's director and the Museum's Curator of Film and New Media. To read a full transcript of this episode, visit portlandartmuseum.org/podcast. This past March we rebranded the Northwest Film Center as PAM CUT in order to create a more clear pathway to expand what it means to tell cinematic stories beyond just film. In addition to film and video, we have been expanding into VR, AR, XR, gaming, podcasts -like this one- and the new cinematic technologies that have are just being created. Our ethos is to change for whom, by whom, and how cinematic stories are told, and my two guests are a perfect example of how this can be done. Marcel van Brakel and Mark Meeuwenoord are the architects of Symbiosis and PAM CUT is honored to present its US debut from November 12, 2022 through mid-February, 2023. Symbiosis takes immersive XR storytelling to a whole new level, with individualized haptic suits, soft robotics, VR audio and visual, as well as taste and smell based story elements. Mark and Marcel, would you mind introducing yourselves and telling our fabulous audience a little bit about your background?

MARK MEEUWENOORD

Well, hello, I'm Mark Meeuwenoord. Thank you for having us. Lovely to be here. I'm one of the members of Polymorf together with Marcel, and I, in this work, I'm responsible for doing a lot of the technical stuff like designing, engineering the pneumatic systems and sound design and music and co-directing with, with Marcel.

MARCEL VAN BRAKEL

Hello. And I'm Marcel van Brakel and I was founder of Polymorf. And together with Mark, artistic lead. And within the project, I designed the general concept and stories within the experience and overall design - whatever needs to be designed.

AMY DOTSON

Well there's a lot to be designed. I can vouch for that, having been with you for the last few days on the install which is very exciting. How did you two find each other?

MARK MEEUWENOORD

We found each other at the Design Academy- we both teach. And we were colleagues there and started working- Next to the standard curriculum, we started working on projects. Back in 2013, we started this - or actually Marcel and Frederik, a former member, started this research project on smell - sense of smell. And I joined in on that because I

thought it was super cool to do all these funny-not funny-interesting projects. Also funny, sometimes. And we started working besides working as colleagues and I joined Polymorf then, in design school The CMD Breda in Holland - the South of Holland.

AMY DOTSON

That's how - you're nodding - Marcel is nodding. He affirms that everything Mark said was true. Well, Symbiosis is happening downstairs at the PAM CUT gallery, which is so exciting. And I wonder if you could talk a little about the origins of the project. I was lucky enough to experience it IDFA DocLabs. I know you played this all over Europe, but now you're here in the US for the first time. How did this all get started for the two of you?

MARCEL VAN BRAKEL

Most of the time, like projects kind of organically move into a new project. So since we were interested in the sense of smell, working - multi sensory, designing for different modalities of the body, it was on our wish list to kind of make something with VR. We never did a very serious attempt to that. So this is the first- also the first work that we did do with VR. And we want to explore the taste sensation with VR and we also had concepts about how can you kind of turn the body into a non-human critter or being? And then I saw a documentary about Donna Haraway, Storytelling for Earthly Survival and within that documentary. there was a small clip about her latest book then, Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene. I never pronounce that right but that's how I pronounce it.

MARK MEEUWENOORD

I always say Chthulucene. Maybe I am wrong maybe also.

MARCEL VAN BRAKEL

It's a guess.

MARK MEEUWENOORD

It's an educated guess.

MARCEL VAN BRAKEL

Within that book is, Donna wrote a beautiful, really amazing story about Camilla - the story of Camilla, in which people tried to find different strategies for surviving the Anthropocene and building new biodiversity, healing the planet, but also staying with the trouble, also accepting that things have to change and are changing. And within that story, people kind of use genetics and nanorobotic to kind of merge their body with endangered species. So their offspring becomes new kinds of biodiversity. But with that, also, with that act, also you incorporate these endangered species into your family tree. And with that comes also the responsibility to take care of the environment that kind of supports the parents and the new children. And I thought this was such a poetic and beautiful way of presenting also very positive new future, that we kind of work with that as a starting point. And it kind of glued together all kinds of different ideas, we already had, an interest we already had into this new project, Symbiosis. And within that story, we started to write our own stories and new stories, to also explore the consequences of leaving this human centric position where we're in at this moment, where everything is about us and about what we want to achieve what humanity wants to

do. And I think it was very refreshing to kind of break that up and think tank what might happen if we move towards amore symbiotic relationship with nature, and other, and also more inclusive society with other kinds of nature, or new kinds of nature, or hybrid natures that might await us in the future.

AMY DOTSON

I love it. And I have to say, you know, experiencing it, hearing about it is one thing, and probably very inspirational for lots of folks that are listening. But experiencing it is a whole nother thing. And I'm wondering if maybe you can share a little bit about kind of step by step what-what, you know, how do you transform? It's one thing to say, Oh, you transform into this new being, but it's another thing entirely to come into the space, to put on the haptic suit, maybe walk us through that process, as well.

MARK MEEUWENOORD

Yeah, well, you come into the space and then you will sit down together with a couple of other people because they will be, they can enter six people and into the experience at the same time. So you will be seated down, you will have a short introduction about the story. And there's some explanation on the different characters you can play. And then you're actually asked together to kind of negotiate with each other to choose which character you're going to be. So that's the first step I think in having this thing that you anticipate and the other you have to think of yourself, what you maybe want to be, but also what the other maybe can do or whatever. So that's a step that's an interest interesting step. And then when that part is done, you're actually put in one of the suits that you have chosen together. And there are six different playable characters, and so that we have Colorado River Toad hybrid with human, a slime mold, which is a slime mold. And Camilla character, which is a hybrid between a monarch butterfly and an orchid. And then there's a multi-body which consists of three people being connected in 1 species or one new species, and that's also the most, yeah, the most, the suit that is the most connected - literally connected. So people will be put in those suits, which is also part of the experience, of course, because it takes some time and it's a very oddening experience, I would say. And then you will get the headset on and then the experience will take around 15 minutes, 15 to 16 minutes. And then everybody has his own storyline. And after the experience is done, people get out of the suits, which is also again, an experience because you know, you will be waking up or something. But during the experience you will be slowly, you have to slowly get used to or let go of your own physicality, your own body and give into the storyline, give into your character and the physicality of your character. And then after that, we'll talk through your experiences with the other people, whether it be you'll actually meet each other and the end of the experience of your timeline. And then I think there's some offboarding, maybe people can discuss what they experienced and what they felt and how different that is. And from that different perspectives maybe come close together. I think, at least that's what we hope. We hope for questions, basically. Questions but also excitement, of course, different people have different emotions, different reactions. And that's, that's the interesting thing as I think about this, that people

MARCEL VAN BRAKEL

I think it's also interesting that like, in a lot of XR, it's about giving the human body or the participant a lot of control or as much control as possible. And I think we do the opposite in our project. So, us, it's much about a more humbling position where you have to kind of surrender to what's happening to you, you cannot control the smells that you will smell, you cannot control the haptics that will change your body posture, and also give you different sensations of the

body. And there's also no buttons to push or whatever. So we try to design the experiences as intuitive as possible. So you can just walk around and touch things and discover, not necessarily with your hands, but maybe with other stuff that's available to you in this other body. So sometimes that's also scary for people that they have to give up control, and depend on a system. Because you also have a hybrid with the with the technological part, that Mark built, you part with this, this kind of almost cyborg kind of thing, extending your body in itself also. So there's the VR part, but it's also the physical part where you're hooked up to, actually to a machine that's taking over.

AMY DOTSON

I think it's such a good point, because a lot of people think VR, and they think clunky headset, and maybe they're playing some games, or some Beat Saber or things like that. This is, you know, we have a phrase around here art with a capital A, you said something really beautiful when we had our curatorial team here that putting on the suits is like being an astronaut. And that really stuck with me both in the sense of the audience, putting on this suit and going to a different place within themselves. But it also really struck me in that, you know, this is a field where when people ask me how to describe your work, I'm without words, I kind of fumble, I say, oh, it's XR, but it's performative. And yet these suits are just like incredible in their own right, right, I tend to kind of over explain, and yet, I think the beauty and the magic of what you're trying to do, is that you don't want to explain too much, there's so much mystery and uniqueness and humanity in it. This is not Beat Saber, to say the least. And so how do you all describe to each other or to folks that are curious about, I guess, specifically Symbiosis, and then we'll go into some of your previous work as well. But how do you describe to folks what it is you're trying to do?

MARK MEEUWENOORD

Well, it's a good question. I think, as makers or as artists or designers, you describe it by making the work itself. And that's your language, you know, so if you paint, you can say a lot about your paintings, but it's a paint itself is something else than words describing it. So I like it to speak for itself. But of course, we, I think if we talk about it, we frame it within the body of work we have. And that is really about using the body as a canvas for design, for exploration. So that's, that means it's multi-sensory, that we think that's interesting to, to use, smell to use, taste and touch in, especially now in this VR, because VR has this tendency to be solitary. And disembodied. And then we reintroduce a body, which is virtual. Marcel, it was really interesting. He said, I hate VR. And that's a very interesting thing. Because also we discovered with this VR, of course, it's- VR is really built for a human standing up straight, with his arm aside wide, and then doing using some controllers.

AMY DOTSON

They're literally called controllers.

MARK MEEUWENOORD

If you are lying on the floor, it's suddenly a completely different thing. Not that we didn't- we had to skip that- first things- we so introducing your own physical body and playing with that and go and designing from that. I think that's would mean some form of embodied design or embodied VR. I think that would be one of the description.

MARCEL VAN BRAKEL

It's really funny because in the beginning we also had a little technical problem, because like the software could not recognize the stuff that we're making.

MARK MEEUWENOORD

Yeah, but also the main interaction is also beyond or outside of VR. It's a whole installation. You step into a whole world that is both physical and virtual, I think that's really important also, for the audience to know, you know? You will enter the space and immediately you will be in the work because there's this whole new world being built as physical and virtual elements. And that's the suit. And I think that's, that's also interaction, starting within negotiation of who's going to be what. And how we talk about that? And I think that's also important that that has really the performative aspects to it. Which the VR also has - becoming the character, which the fear of becoming it, being it.

AMY DOTSON

And for those who haven't done VR before, because it's still, in the zoetrope phase, as I like to say, for those of you who are film nerds, it's such a new field. And it's such a new art form, that I think that we are just in very early days. And where I'm going with this is that, you know, as we watch media, and look at media arts, we're usually very passive, we usually pass by or sit on our couch or go to a darkened theater, and we are transported to another world. But especially with VR, you're not dealing with linear time, you're dealing with space, you can look all around you up and down. And, you know, it really is a novel form in that sense that it taps into empathy sensors, and it taps into other worlds that, you know, you could only imagine, but you feel for whatever the trick of the brain, that you're not just watching something, that you're in it. What I find fascinating as we transition into some of the other works that you've done is that comment you made about not loving VR when I experienced your piece for the first time, I talked about everything but the VR. And so I find that fascinating, because now that I know much more about your work and the very first piece I ever experienced was *Celebrity Deaths*. And you can talk a little bit about that experience and the immersive nature of that. But I find it fascinating that every detail that you've thought about is enhanced by the VR, but it's almost like you don't need the VR. So for folks that maybe haven't experienced VR before or are intimidated by it in any way, I would highly recommend you know, this is a piece that is multi sensorial, but also keeps your humanity front and center the entire time. I'd love to hear more about what it is that you have been doing that's led you up to this. And if you can share what you have coming up next.

MARCEL VAN BRAKEL

So it's good first to explain what *Famous Deaths* is about like, within *Famous Deaths*, you can experience the final five minutes of a famous person's life until you die. And the audience gets shoved into morgue freezing cells. So you're laying in the dark, and we only use smell and sound to trigger the story. And it's quite documentary. So within the project, you can be either Whitney Houston, or Vincent van Gogh, or Lady Diana, Qaddafi, or JFK. And then you kind of experience in smell and sound how it might have been to be them. So actually, it's kind of this analog version of VR, maybe because it's first person perspective, puts you right in the middle of the action or the situation. And at the same time, we don't use any visuals because they're already in your brain. So the smells kind of activate that. So you become your own narrator and you create your own story, and it's kind of also mixed with your own memories, your own maybe personal reactions to certain smells. We had that also as a feedback from some of the people that kind of did the experience. Yeah, and that was our first really big project moving into the field of working with smell actually, because a

lot of work. When I make a theater piece, it's always about a visual. It was before I entered this space and it was such a huge, exciting and inspirational fields to kind of work with other senses that we're not used to see as a design tool. And they have a really great impact. So the brain, of course, gathers data and smells like this subconscious influencer, that kind of talks to the brain, have it made decisions without you even knowing it. And for designer, that's such a powerful tool also to enhance emotional state or to change, to take over strategic manipulation of the audience or of yourself. So that's, that was really, for us really a game changer within our body of work.

MARK MEEUWENOORD

Yeah, and also, what I really like about it, that I hear Marcel talk about it now, because it's been a while since we worked on this, of course, that this relation with grounding theater, you know, being a director, and that you find tools or find means to find media, you can direct with direct story and direct focus, direct interest, direct topics, whatever. So that's, I think that's very interesting, and it really worked when we discovered how to work with smell. But also the technological part of it that was like, how do you do that? How can you deliver scents and how can you take it away, and it's a very interesting medium. It's in the air, it has these qualities to it, it has this difficult way working with it. So we try to also work on these technologies, too, we basically made a smell printer, and part of that smell printer was part of the technology we still use now in this work. So there's nothing interesting and to, to also discover, and let that- and always combine that with in Famous Deaths with the aesthetics, and playing with the aesthetics and playing with the imagery of the morgue freezer, which is very strong image, of course, and really reflects on death and how we perceive- and what we think of death and how we talk about death, and how we not talk about death, especially also. So we play with that with that imagery outside of the experience. But inside the experience, the image is gone. So you have to make your own image. So that's there was also- Yeah, were all things that really work.

MARCEL VAN BRAKEL

And I think it's also connected to Symbiosis where you also have to kind of step over your boundaries or enter a new, unknown territory, and give up control. I think that's always present in, all of our works, at least this the reason works, it's kind of challenging you, the audience to kind of really get engaged and to overcome preconceptions.

MARK MEEUWENOORD

And it can be very simple. In Famous Deaths, we ask you to lay down on this tray. But laying down is the first big step you have to do. Because when you lay down you're in a total different vulnerability and your body feels different. It's perceptive to different things, it's going to be a bit more perceptible, we think, or you have to- some people close off, but that's the first step and then being shoved into the freezer itself is- I always found that this most scariest part when I do it myself.

AMY DOTSON

I do, too.

MARK MEEUWENOORD

Goint into it - whaaaaaat. And then after that, it's more of a really in focus and letting go and then the story starts working.

MARCEL VAN BRAKEL

Also, the moment that you die, exactly. Because it's it comes always because I've designed the whole sound design. And I knew what was coming. But at the death moment, that always comes as a surprise, you cannot anticipate it. And that also was really confronting, I think, for me, when I did it first time, it's just in a snap, things are gone. And you cannot predict it. And I think that was very strong. I think also working with smells in Famous Deaths and the experience that we got with also people. They thought that we would manipulate different modalities than only smell it because they felt that their body was heating up in certain scenarios.

AMY DOTSON

Interesting.

MARCEL VAN BRAKEL

Or they started to have the sensation of floating or space of cooling down. And of course, we did not do anything with temperature. But it tells us a lot about how the body works and how it kind of reacts to certain smells. Maybe move into flight or fight mode to kind of prepare the body to do- for action when there's maybe no action, but there is the data of maybe danger. So that made us also realize that like the human body is this chemical robot that can be controlled in different ways that is also very interesting to look at it as this kind of chemical machine instead of this- Because in our daily life, we're always kind of occupied with what the conscious wants - the goals on a daily basis. And we often forget how this chemical machine is also interconnected to all kinds of different stuff that you're not aware of. And it's influencing you, and you're influencing it also back at the same time. And that really moved us back on track to more work, where we kind of explored that relationships.

AMY DOTSON

The only other thing that I've done that has really moved me in a very different way was John Waters, if you're familiar with the the kind of raconteur and filmmaker extraordinaire, he had a scratch and sniff program where he would have a card and a little six would come up on the screen and you'd scratch it really fast. And you put it up to nose, it'd be poop, you know, and it just kind of enhanced the whole thing. But I find it fascinating that I would imagine with the kind of work that you all do that has some theater, art with a capital A, there's you know, the XR experience, there's this smell storytelling. Who do you all look to today that influences you and the kind of work that you do? I mean, there's even a kind of gamified element to it in some aspects where people are choosing their own adventure. But what are some of the things that you're seeing out there in the art or the pop culture or the literary world that are inspiring you and you feel also folks should check out?

MARK MEEUWENOORD

Oh, friend. This is the hardest question ever.

AMY DOTSON

Hardest question ever. Do you have some favorites that you've been inspired by in the past?

MARCEL VAN BRAKEL

One of the artists that kind of we admire, I think I admire also is Lucy McRae who did kind of also touch on the same things that we're working on. She worked with swallowable perfume. That kind of is swallowed, and then it's emitted because it's chemically reacting with the body itself, and it's changing. And she did some excellent work on body architectural hacks with the body. So I like her work. But to be honest, I mostly find my inspiration in science. And so we're really focused also to be in this cross domain of art, science, design and art. Technology, of course. So I think that's- when I was younger, I could never kind of get that together. But now it comes more naturally. And we- it becomes more logic. But I think that's a huge inspiration for us. We, for instance, the entangled body project that we did, where we kind of created a ghost sculpture of your brain activity. You cannot see that, but we can project that with ultrasound in space. And if you will touch that, you can actually feel it. So we create a ghost of your ghost, which is touchable outside of the body. But we- the spark of that project was like actually just finding the technologies able to do that.

But also, this made me know that this ghost photography, you see that the ectoplasma coming out of someone's head or something that's also as an inspiration, I think for what can that be, you know, what, what are what are we talking about? And what is this tradition. So there is a tradition with these new technologies, they find glitches. And these glitches, they become like, like content or a theme for story are something that you can actually explore further. And I think with this ghost photography, it's the same thing that you can discuss that this is a glitch or some failure in the technology or some from finding the technology, let's call it that. And also.

This also gives you insight on how we perceive and think about ourselves. And it's that is an open dialogue also sparked by the technology or given expressed by these new technologies that also enable us to think differently maybe or to change or to challenge that.

MARK MEEUWENOORD

I have one artist that I find really inspiring. Not that it's directly seen, I think in the work we make but it's Stelarc. Exploring the body as a thing, as a thing that is part of these network, things with other machines and he's basically focusing on machines but also extending the body and redesigning it, asking real fundamental questions of what our humanity is but also what is our human body is. I find that very, very inspiring - his work been around for quite some time.

MARCEL VAN BRAKEL

There so many.

AMY DOTSON

I know it is a hard question, but I think it helps, especially for folks that maybe are coming to this podcast with a variety of different interests and backgrounds. And I think that's really what we're trying to do at PAM CUT, and certainly at the Portland Art Museum is welcoming folks from all sorts of different interests, and also make sure that they know that these stories are accessible, and that the things that we're doing are, in some ways grand experiments. You know, we're all trying to figure out what's next. And all trying to figure out exactly how you beautifully put that merging of art and storytelling, tech and design. Because that's kind of the stuff of life, right. It's not meant to be intimidating.

It's meant to be accessible. And when we all come together, and we experience something beautiful, like what you all have put together with symbiosis, we also have not only the opportunity to experience but also to discuss these really important things with others. I know you're both professors, as well. What do you talk to your students or even young people? As you know, the first time I did this piece, I did it with my 12 year old son, and it blew his mind. And this is now what he wants to do when he grows up, because he saw in what you're doing, what we've just been talking about this symbiotic thing that was in the piece, but also all of these disparate, different story elements, design elements, technology elements that I certainly think in young people, and probably the folks that you're working with, this is the norm, it's not the exception. And so I would be very curious, because I imagine some folks that are listening to this might be interested in doing work, like what you do or learning more about it. How do you talk to your students about what's coming next and how they can get more proactive and involved?

MARCEL VAN BRAKEL

I think what I always say is to like, be ambitious. Because what I sense with, with my students that they're they kind of try to play safe in a way, because they think about where can I find a job? And how can I control it and but I think it's always very important, when we do a presentation we start off with a slide of Peter Boonstra, that's another member of Polymorf, he made a very beautiful small film of his daughter dreaming, and you would see the rapid eye movement during the dream. And I think that's so huge and important to kind of dream, especially as a young artist, and to do the most ambitious thing you can think of, and then just try to spark that into reality, even though you have to compromise, it will still be unique and it will still be special, and it will still be important. And another thing is that we kind of moved more and more into speculative design. Because I think it's really way more interesting to kind of think about stuff that's now in the labs, it's almost there or not there, the stuff that's kind of emerging and to design for with that and for that because then you're first and it will give you a front supposition towards develop and also to kind of overthink what is waiting for us. A lot of these technologies stays in the universities or they only get kind of medical application or purpose but they're so interesting to be used in other fields in storytelling and all kinds of other design problems. So that's kind of yeah, get yourself informed on what's out there and dream as ambitious as you can and just make it and not wait for it, not think about it, just try to make it now. I think that's that's what I tried to teach them.

MARK MEEUWENOORD

Yeah, well, maybe to add to that. But a Marcel says it's also his own background coming from art school, which is that this autonomous thing he has to achieve I think but my backgrounds philosophy does complicated to spend three days with you guys. Think about it. What I think I think what what to add to it because I think I agree with Marcel but also be ambitious, but also be adaptive and be honest, you know, because there's there's these ideas out there that are really dominant. About this being successful about about a lot of stuff and I think you have to be able to and there's a lot of things changing really fast. So I think being adaptive and being open for that. So being open for change also change for you for you. yourself and accepting failure. I think that's very important for us to survive in this in this world, in general, but especially in design in art practices, because that's the you have access to so, so, so much of awesome stuff all the time, that it can be overwhelming, and you have to really take care of yourself in that I think as a person and as a, as a designer. Of course, also.

MARCEL VAN BRAKEL

Super.

AMY DOTSON

Well, our last question is a softball. But, you know, this is the first time you're bringing the exhibition to the United States. Obviously, you all have worked with the Sundance Institute and other places and been able to be here before but any insights that are unique to the US that you know, now that you've been here for a few days on the build, that you want to share on, you know, the differences between putting this together in Europe and you know, the excitement perhaps that you have for US audiences to experience this? Any last and final words?

MARK MEEUWENOORD

Oh, wow. That's a hard one

AMY DOTSON

I know. That was supposed to be a softball, you can just say, I love the donuts here. You can stuff all it back.

MARK MEEUWENOORD

I feel super welcome. And I love your team. So there's, obviously- there's differences. There's a lot of- so you Americans, can I say it like that? But yes, there's a lot of things you want to know in advance. And I think in Europe, that's less the case. You know, you can be more well, we'll see. So that's, I'm really curious about that. Now, there's a lot of- there's more things to set the boundaries of or whatever, I don't know how to say it. But you have to take care of that. And that has reasons it has its advantages, I also think, but it's different. So I'm really curious as to how that will, will play out. I think in the end, when I'm when I see American audiences experiencing our work in Holland, for example, then it's basically the same you kinda, it doesn't, there's not- we're humans, you know, and we are curious about this stuff. And we'll talk about it, they will, and some people maybe don't like it. And so that's I think, a good thing. We'll see. We'll see how that goes. It's super exciting. For sure. We also, because we're not around, you know, we're leaving next week. And that's also that's,

MARCEL VAN BRAKEL

That's also new.

MARK MEEUWENOORD

That's also nerve-racking in different ways. You can also be nerve-racking when you're there. But I'm no, but I think,

MARCEL VAN BRAKEL

I think also, in the beginning, when we launched Famous Deaths, we kind of became more popular in America than in Holland.

AMY DOTSON

Oh, interesting.

MARCEL VAN BRAKEL

It's really funny. And I think maybe also tells something about the Americans that they are more open or eager or to or, or investigative to the, to know the stuff or to search for new things. Because it was really, really, really a strange experience that we had, like all of these shows here in the US and then Holland yeah that nobody knows about. Actually, so what help. Thank you for that. Because that also helps us in back in Holland.

AMY DOTSON

Oh, good. We want you to be big in Holland too. It's great.

MARCEL VAN BRAKEL

Well, we caught up a bit but in the beginning was really interesting to see that they are really spoiled.

AMY DOTSON

But it's also when you come when- so we really like, another inspiration by the way, but really like, guys from Mars Mellow Laser Feast, of course, in their work.

MARK MEEUWENOORD

Absolutely

And also Makropol, actually, from Denmark. So when they come over, and it's, in some way it's special because they're foreigners, you know, and then you have the special attention you meet each other and and I think that's also in that also plays a role in some way that if you're not from around then, hmm, what's this has an extra..

MARCEL VAN BRAKEL

More cool

AMY DOTSON

Well, I certainly think being in Portland and this is a podcast of the Portland Art Museum and PAM CUT. Portland is an amazing place for you all to premiere this with our love of nature and our deep curiosity. When I first moved here, met somebody, met somebody again, I learned about their banjo playing, I learned about their art practice. And then I learned they were a brain surgeon. So it's one of those places where people contain multitudes. And I think it's a perfect place for the premiere of your work. And we're so pleased to have you here with us. And we're so pleased to have everybody that's listening as well. Thank you for listening to Art Unbound. For more information on Symbiosis, and Polymorf, and all PAM CUT's, upcoming film screenings, classes, artist services, and oh, so much more, please visit pamcut.org. I would like to thank our team at PAM CUT. And of course, Marcel and Mark and their entire team for being here, as well as our friends at IDFA DocLab who were kind enough to make this introduction many moons ago. And we're so glad that this has come to America. And we are so glad to see what audiences think. And of course, we thank you the listener and I will turn it over one last time to my friends, Mark and Marcel, if there anybody that you would like to thank, if you'd like to thank the Academy, your cat. Anything that you wanted to say as a thank you, I know, there's been a lot of folks who have worked very hard to get you here.

MARCEL VAN BRAKEL

So I always want to thank my family because I take so much time away from them. So I'm really grateful for their support and their help. And of course, PAM CUT for taking a risk with such a huge and also it's a big adventure to see how this will work out in three months. Because for instance, the longest show that we ever did. So that's we're really thankful for that. Yeah, and everybody who supports us and helps us because it's really important, all these little steps that they will help that help u further.

MARK MEEUWENOORD

Yeah, I think there's a lot of people to mention, I don't have time for that. But there's our team is, has a lot of amazing people in it. And also the funds that actually help us fund-

MARCEL VAN BRAKEL

Stimulation funds.

MARK MEEUWENOORD

And also the IDFA DocLab, but Sundance Institute helped us

MARCEL VAN BRAKEL

Amsterdam Art Fund.

MARK MEEUWENOORD

Yeah. So there's, there's all this funds- we have a list, I didn't bring it. And also, of course, my home base, my girlfriend, but also even my family supporting, all of you guys here. It's been amazing so far, we hope we pull it off together. And as I read that Marcel also said but it's really you guys taking this this step you know, and we know how hard this can be. We actually we won an award IDFA award for innovative technology. That was also a huge step for them to do to give us on this this award you know because we I think of course I mean it but I also see it from outside and it's it's taking huge steps be on these cutting edge stuff now it's exploring these boundaries. It's super important, but also can be super hard. And I'm grateful to be a part of that. Thank you for that.

AMY DOTSON

Thank you to the listener and to our sponsors, Nike HTC Vive as well as our friends at the Dutch consulate. We really appreciate all the support to get here today. And a special shout out to Jon Richardson, whose podcast this is and he brought this to life for PAM and PAM CUT a few years ago and it is now has a stamp of approval from the New York Times no less. So thank you, all of you and thank you for this amazing conversation today. I feel like every time we sit down I learn something new.