

NOTE: highlighted words are names of programs/things I could not confirm the spelling for.

Rebecca Irmen: Thank you so much for being here today. This is an interview with Jacklyn Brickman and Kathryn Logan, the artists behind Human Satellites Vegetable Space A Webscape Exploration, which is our first virtual exhibition of the Hopkins Hall Summer Series. We are very excited to be able to share their work during this time. If you'd like to see it for yourself, you can visit <https://hhg.osu.edu/exhibitions/human-satellites>, or you can click on the exhibitions tab on the Hopkins Hall Gallery website. So make sure to check that out. So for today I just have some questions for these two. That will give them the opportunity to give you some insight into their work and their processes so that further ado, I'm going to start with Jacklyn and ask you to introduce yourself and then sort of briefly describe the project.

Jacklyn Brickman: Sure. Well, I am a third year, so about to graduate in August, MFA student in the Department of Art within the area of art and technology and Kathryn and I have worked together several times. And we were both really excited about working together to create a proposal for the Hopkins Hall Summer Series, and obviously before we knew any of the, before there was a pandemic. And we were both really interested in, in space. Kathryn can talk about what she was working on but specifically space sounds and I had been working on a project that had to do with turning, onions, or propagating onions to become planets. And so, the rest of it just sort of evolved from that. I mean both are interested in working together and our collective interests in space.

Rebecca Irmen : Kathryn, you want to introduce yourself and add on to that description.

Kathryn Logan: Sure. Um, yeah so I'm Kathryn Logan. I am a recent graduate of the MFA program in the Department of Dance. I know it's crazy. Yeah, yes so I work a lot with dance and the camera, specifically dance and the moving camera and thinking about the camera as choreography. And so I had finished my MFA project that went up at Urban Arts Space in January and had started working on some new some new ideas around the body and space and cellular consciousness and was just sort of coming up with some ideas and working with NASA has a bunch of space sounds sounds, that they've taken in outer space or information that they've taken from outer space and translated into sound and I was simultaneously sort of working on that when Jacklyn and I started talking about coming up with a collaboration. I think we were both interested in, after having three years of research on essentially one singular major project I think we were interested in kind of using that information and and going someplace kind of new so that was sort of the seed.

RI: Awesome. Okay, so our first question is, how did you approach making collaborative art during a time of social distancing?

KL: A lot of video chatting, like we're doing now. And a lot of emails, although once we sort of got into the project we created our own email account that then we were able to easily send files and videos and that kind of thing. And you know created a YouTube page and a Vimeo page so that it would be easier to to send information because I think that's one of the hardest things about collaborating right now is getting information to each other, especially when you're working with something that, you know, like video or something in the digital world that is memory heavy. It's hard to transfer stuff back and forth.

JB: Yeah, having that shared Google Drive was super helpful and just having all of our documents, all of our writing and videos everything in one place, we can each access whenever, and not like lost in a stream of emails or other stuff was really nice. And then I think both of us. Well, for me, being able to just have a meeting, decide on what we needed to have done before our next meeting and planning that next meeting gave me, just a list of things that I could work on before we met again and I think that that really has helped me during this time of staying at home because I feel like time has become so abstract. And so having like clear set deadlines and easy access to information has been really good for working.

KL: And I'll also say that, I think, I think, because of the way that we both tend to work like we both are very much collaborative artists, but I also think that we both work really well on our own in terms of designing and imagining and and seeing things through. So in a way, there was something about working at a distance that kind of like Jacklyn was saying, with the deadlines and the meetings, kind of worked for us, because it was like, meet at this time go away for a week and get these seven things done and imagine totally in your own space, and then come back and reconvene.

JB: Yeah, because then we were able to sort of say well I really like the way this is working but I don't know about that and kind of bounce ideas back and forth.

KL: Yeah, I will also say that once we started working in **Mozilla h** b. And we started designing this world. It was really exciting for me too, because, we would both go in with our avatars into this virtual world. And in order to speak to each other in the virtual world you have to be quote

unquote close to each other virtually, and if you get quote unquote far away from each other virtually you can't communicate in this space. And so that created a really interesting dynamic where we would not be on zoom and we would not be talking to each other, otherwise we would only communicate inside of the space. And that made things really interesting once we started creating but maybe I'm jumping ahead a little bit.

RI: Um, yeah you kind of touched on some purpose next question we'll deal with, but I'll just ask it again so if you want to expand upon it. What have you learned and discovered through the process of adapting even Human Satellites Vegetable Space A Webscape Exploration to a virtual format?

JB: Yeah, we were kind of talking about this a little bit ago. You know at first we were disappointed because we were planning an installation, that's what our proposal was for this physical installation that incorporated sound and video and still, still pulling from the idea of plants in outer space and exploration but it's very much supposed to be this physical interactive experience. And, yeah, Kathryn, maybe you can jump in and talk about existing spaces but really I think that what we ended up with is actually a little bit more exciting and maybe even more effective than what we would have gotten in a physical space because we were actually able to design a virtual space and take people, participants, completely to a different place.

KL: Yeah, I think that one thing that we were interested in doing even inside of the installation was in taking people individually through space and having them have an exploratory kind of experience in relationship with their environment. So we were sort of going to build a kind of a

full outer space experience, but because of you know the pandemic and the way we had to end up working we actually got to build something that, in a way, is a little more accurate to our imagination. And so, you know, one thing that we were talking about is for me as a, as a dancer and especially as a dance filmmaker, I feel like I'm usually at the mercy of the kinds of spaces that I can find, you know that already exist, and I I joke and have joked to Jacklyn and have joked for years that I, I really have to be an architect in order to do what I, what I want to do because you know the space that a dance exists inside of is, you know, a huge part of the experience. And so, having the chance to really go in and build this experience from, or the space from the ground up in exactly the way that we wanted to, but still have the sensation of moving through space, it was a, that was huge for me, for me, as somebody who, who is usually looking for spaces and and you know frankly feeling like I can't find what I need and Jacqueline use the word trying to transition the space, instead of just being able to, to make the thing that you want to make so this was definitely huge for us in that way, I think.

JB: Yeah, yeah really a difference between transformation and creation. And I think if we were to build a physical installation we're still, everybody who comes there knows they're in Hopkins Hall. But when you enter our space through a screen like, you could enter any kind of world out there, you know, that's really exciting.

KL: Yeah, and generally if you're if you're working with video or even if you're working with, I don't know, with creating as Jacklyn saying the difference between transforming and creating, if you're really starting with a blank canvas, quote unquote, you don't have the opportunity to move through space which and through space and time which in dance is like one of the main

things or two, you know, two of the main components of what of what we're working with a notion of what is of interest to me. So to have the opportunity to both create this space and be able to move, and create in space and time was really fulfilling.

RI: Awesome. So, for the conversation portion of the piece, How did you choose your source materials?

JB: Yeah, so we during one of our, sort of in the middle of our collaboration, we were, we were in **Mozilla hub** already, and we were kind of playing with the functionality of it and one of the interesting parts is when you know you can have a conversation with microphones so you can hear each other, and but you can also type messages to each other, and like Kathryn said we were using that to communicate in the space as we were building it and navigating it. But then we sort of one day we had a really long work day and we met, and we broke off and worked individually and then we met again. And so before we broke off, Kathryn was working on designing the choreography aspect and, I was going to search for text, and I had just been reading Ursula K. Le Guin's, let me get the, it's a book called *Dancing at the Edge of the World: Thoughts on Words, Women, Places*. She's just this iconic feminist world builder science fiction writer and mother. And so I had written down several quotes in my notebook from her and simultaneously I was reading this book that's called *the role of plants and sustainable* oh no that's the article, the essay is *the Pole of plants in Sustainable Space Travel* and the book is *Planetary Echoes: Exploring the Implications of Human Settlement in Outer Space*. And so I think that it's really interesting to juxtapose, somebody who is working in science fiction, who's building worlds, and somebody who's working in the real world and building worlds and Tim

Smit, the author of that article actually has in Cornwall England, he has a project called the Eden Project, which is a biome and it has the largest rainforest in captivity anywhere in the world. And so the idea of somebody sort of, I mean Ursula K. Le Guin passed away in 2018 so she's very contemporary but Tim Smit is working right now. Yeah juxtaposing these, these quotes, and it didn't, it was very emergent the way it happened I wasn't planning to make a conversation right away I think it wasn't until Kathryn and I came back into the space, and we started by design in her choreography in the middle of the piece she built in a conversation and so the more we thought about it the more we were like, wait a minute, this could actually, we could build on this conversation between these two people who have so much incredible input to give. And what we're talking about.

KL: Yeah, I think, one of the, one of the seeds I think for bringing in some language was this idea that, because these two characters could only speak if they were in proximity to one another and we were interested in them kind of having their own separate journeys and then coming back together. We could kind of use it as punctuation and as a way of recognizing that there are two people in this space, and then it became clear that it was an opportunity for something more complex and and topical to, to kind of beef up the content, so to speak.

JB: Yeah, and then we should add that in that same condensed work period I also grabbed some books on herbs and plants, and so randomly, you know, we, when we build the space we kind of put in different plants we were thinking about that had a spherical shape and that just like spoke to us the whole thing was, was definitely a fun project that we were just working in a very fluid and emergent way. So we had a turnip, we had an orange, we had a radish, we had, I

mean french onion soup. So anyway, we started writing down the Latin names of these different, these different plants, and then we kind of randomly each chosen name, and it turned out that it wasn't even on purpose but that I chose the Latin name for radish and Kathryn's was for turnip in each of our characters explored those planets fully in the, in the choreography, and so it's also interesting to think about how you know the radish is Ursula K. Le Guin speaking and Tim Smit has become a turnip.

RI: Very cool. So what have you learned through working collaboratively on this project, and what areas of expertise were you each able to offer to allow this project to become fully realized?

KL: I think that we are both interdisciplinary artists, kind of, by nature we both work in a lot of different mediums anyway. And so I think that that contributed to, I don't know our ability to kind of try new things. This was my first time having any kind of engagement with 3D modeling at all. You know I've done a little bit of virtual reality stuff but no, no 3D modeling and so Jacklyn really kind of held my hand to that and, you know, watching tutorials, and that kind of thing. And then, you know, clearly, I've come from a choreographic background and so for me I was really interested in how we could not only build this space but then choreograph people moving through this space and present that as a, as a part of the work itself. Yeah, I don't know, Jacklyn you want to elaborate?

JB: Yeah, I think, I mean I think it started out as Kathryn said, both of us are very interdisciplinary and both of us are sort of fearless at jumping in and just trying things until we

get something we like. And so, **Mozilla hub** was totally new for both of us. Amy Youngs' my advisor told me about it and before that we were thinking we were talking about designing a website where like you would kind of roll over and get videos to pop up. In terms of other expertise, I mean, I have a little bit of 3D modeling background and working virtually, not a ton. But both of us worked in film. Kathryn has a lot of sound background as well and so I think we just kind of met in the middle and kept trying things and giving each other feedback. Yeah, it was really fun.

RI: So I know you both have collaborated in the past on projects, such as Walking Through the Doorways, Cautious Forgetting, Shell Forming. How did your collaborative relationship begin?

KL: So we work both separately working with Katherine Moore, who is a choreographer and dancer. And shem didn't you have a class together where you were working?

JB:Yeah. So first, Katherine and I were in an art, science class and we were done one collaboration, sort of start to finish, and then I made an installation two years ago in the Hopkins Hall Summer Series called The Breadth of a Walnut and Katherine Moore and Claire Melbourn and I invited both of them to create a movement for this installation, and I was, I was like, and I'd really like to video I don't know and they were like, Kathryn Logan. So, so Kathryn came and made a really beautiful movement video. You might have a different way to refer to it but that was the first time we worked together, and then the other sort of followed, but I think what's super exciting about. Well, I mean it's exciting all the ways we've worked, and, you know, most of the times we've worked together it's been one of us who has an idea or a project

that's already sort of happening and then we kind of bring the other person in. But this is our first time really just kind of starting, together with I mean from the idea and outward.

RI: So you both are graduated or graduate students at OSU. Do you think your experience teaching at OSU has affected your art making and how?

KL: So I mean I've, I've been affected in, I mean, just across the board by my teaching experience at OSU. It's been profound for me in a lot of ways. I will say that one of the most central ways for me that it has been informative is that I teach a lot of somatics so I teach yoga, something called **our tenia fundamentals** which is another somatic form. Somatics is really about kind of centering yourself in your body, and I think that for me, connecting for me teaching somatics, and really teaching any kind of body-based form like we do in dance has really kind of helped me understand a little bit more deeply what it is that I'm doing in this art form in the first place, which is not always clear, I think for for artists in general. But I think, I think for me watching the ways that people are transformed inside of like a semester long course people that you really get to know when you design a course over that, that period of time, getting to watch people's transformations really I think helps me understand a little bit better a) why I even situate the work that I make in the body at all and b) like what it can do for people like the fact that it matters.

JB: That's really, that's awesome. For me, absolutely, teaching affects the way that I make. And I think it does so in a lot of different ways I think teaching, you're always learning yourself with students whether you're like brushing up on a skill so that you can present it, or finding new

artists to present, you are constantly answering questions, or that students have or even just thinking in new ways, about things because students have brought up things that I've never thought of before. So I feel like it's definitely another collaborative project in a sense where I'm hopefully teaching them something, the students but they're also teaching me a lot too. And there's one more thing I wanted to say. But, yeah I think teaching absolutely influences the way we're. Oh, it, I mean I think it gives great practice for being able to speak about my own work and about other people's work, which is just a really important skill to have.

RI: Awesome. So I understand you both make a lot of collaborative art pieces, Jacklyn is a fine artist, and Kathryn is a dancer. Can you speak to the value of symbiotic relationships between artists and nature, as well as symbiotic relationships between other artists and institutions?

JB: Do you want to go first Kathryn?

KL: Sure. Yeah, so Jacklyn and I briefly, were talking about this earlier. I don't really like, my first reaction to this is that I don't distinguish myself from nature. And I don't distinguish artists from nature or things that humans do from nature. I'm more interested actually in connecting the two. If they are two, even that is a little bit of a farce I think. And for me, I think this relates a little bit to what I was saying before about, you know, focusing my work in the body in a way and then in sensation. You know, for me, I think one of the things that interests me about dance is the science of it you, you can't separate. You can't really separate the body from nature because it is nature and that's really centralized in dance. You know, we think we talk a lot about anatomy we talk a lot about, you know, equilibrium and weight, and the senses and

it's all really about connecting in with those things. So, I don't know, for me, I think it's about recognizing that connection, rather than like connecting to things that are opposite, if that makes sense it's more about awareness. Yeah, Jacklyn you want to?

JB: I think to expand on that I mean I agree that distinguishing nature and ourselves as separate entity entities is kind of confusing, but I think for me it comes down to being a part of a community and the way that communities, engage and interact with the other members within the community and I think that community can be the trees and the grass and the bush right outside my window, and it can be, you know, the birds and my dog, and my family members, and people at OSU. And so, yeah, for me it's very much about engaging with the entities around me and trying to understand them and learn from them. And, kind of processing things as an extension of myself and ourselves, because I think as humans we sort of try to relate everything. We try to relate what we're doing to something, or we try to relate the unknown to something we already know, and so that sense of community helps us to gain a familiar familiarity and a relationship with the unknown.

KL: Yeah, I don't know this. I guess we didn't quite talk about the artists and institutions, but I will say that, you know, it strikes me that at least inside of, you know, capitalist contemporary life in the United States, as an artist personally I'm quite dependent on institutions to fund projects, whether that's just to fund the project itself or to fund me. And I do think that operating inside of an institution is really complex, because there's a lot to critique, certainly, about being a part of an institution. And yet, the community that Jacklyn is talking about is also something that an institution can provide and so I think that I think that this is something that I

definitely in my work, and in my collaborations am always kind of navigating is like how, I don't know what my complex relationship is with what an institution can provide.

RI: Awesome. So we have one more question, which is can you speak to the importance of audience interaction engagement in works about the environment?

JB: Well, I'll jump in and say that I think that really good art helps us understand our humaneness. And so I think that. Yeah, it's just, it's about experience and it's about sort of the depth of our condition as humans.

KL:I don't know you said that really well so I feel like maybe I'll just leave it there.

RI: So that's all the questions I have for you today. Thanks again for taking the time to talk this has definitely been really insightful so thank you for that.

JB:Thanks so much for speaking with us Rebecca.

KL:Yeah, thank you.