

# JOAN

## TRANSCRIPT

Steffani Jemison, *Toss*, 2021

Featuring Alexis Page, Jess Garland (harp), Sean T. Davis / theHalfStyle (sound mix)

HD video, color, sound

42:20 minutes

Edition of 3, +2AP

[0:03]

So, even though I know how to do a lot of things with equipment, walking down stairs is very daunting for me [laughing]. Here I am playing with a stick, I am seeing what I can do with it: different types of flips, flips under my arm, spins on my hands. A flip is any time an object rotates out of your hands. So, it's a small toss. A toss—not a small toss but a toss—is any time you're throwing an object in the air. It's usually an under throw. And now I am feeling the...the mallet. I am seeing what I can do with it, if I can do the same thing that I did with the stick, if I can, if I can do those same flips with it, if not more. The mallet's actually a bit easier to do flips with. I find that the more weight an object has, the more able you can control it. I would not have been able to do that move with the stick, and I think it's just really the shape of the mallet that makes that possible. Yeah, a spin is...is an object flipping laterally—this is lateral, right? Yeah—flipping laterally in one spot. And a spin can happen, you can spin it from one body part to the next body part, but it's just an object spinning laterally on your body part in one spot. Um, and here's the third object. That is almost the same shape as the other two objects that I was just playing with. However, this one is...the weight is very uneven, and I'm trying to see how I can...cope with how uneven the weight is. So I'm trying the same moves that I did with the stick and the mallet, except I'm adjusting, I'm adjusting my movement to prevent...to prevent me from dropping the tripod. And I think right here I'm realizing that it's actually not as difficult as it was at the start of it all.

And that's the beauty of working with different objects...not for their intended purposes. It only really takes, like, I'd say like 2 minutes of working with the object before you can realize that you can do like a whole bunch of things with it.

I notice that because this object is a lot longer than the others, I was able to do a lot more things. Like utilize my legs for a lot of the tricks.

So, when I am working with a new object I try to see if it reminds me of other objects that I've worked with in the past, and I also try to look at how it's different from other objects that I've worked with in the past. I then also look at grip, I look at safety—safety in terms of how long can I repeat...this skill without it hurting me.

[4:31 - instrumental music begins]

[5:15]

Everything is a rhythm. You're—it's kind of like after I toss, I kind of like... something clicks, like there's a beat once I catch it.

[6:07]

An object is a tool. It is a...a tool that's used.

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Sorry, I'm looking around my room of objects to see if I use all of them, and I do. So, I mean if I'm thinking of my body, I think my body's a tool, but I don't think it is an object. Like, tools have a purpose. It's much more of like a positive word than "object." Because tools are used to...tools are helpful. You know? Objects just seem...selfish. Like, you use them in a selfish way. But tools are helpful. So, I guess, objects are passive. They're just there and people use them for their own...for their own use, their own wants.

[7:45 – instrumental music stops]

[7:55]

Right here, I'm seeing how I can use the wall to my advantage. I definitely can't do any tricks with them, so I'm going to use it to stretch.

[8:27]

I don't know what this brain-like thing is [laughing], but it was a nice object to juggle. Definitely was found in the park, and...it was really sticky. After finding this broken branch in the park, I didn't know what I was going to be able to do with this... because it kind of reminded me of the tripod, because it had like three main branches sticking out of it, I knew that I could probably use it for rotation purposes, like I'm doing here.

[9:27 – instrumental music begins]

[9:47]

Objects just seem more...sedentary. They seem more sedentary, and they just seem like they don't have a definitive use, until you like actually give it a purpose. Because I'd like to say, all the ways that I use my body are useful ways—I mean I do dumb shit sometimes, but all the ways that I intend to use my body [laughing] are in useful ways.

[10:38]

I...still don't have an answer on what, what the intended purpose of my body is, though...I don't know if that's something that, you know, that we eventually learn, maybe once we get older, I don't know.

[11:07]

Well, I mean, I guess, actually probably making art. Making art.

But then okay, so if I use my body as a tool to make art for people to give them an experience, are they then like making my body out into an object, because I'm giving them something? You know, I'm doing something for them, and they're looking at me as an object.

What do you think the intended purpose of your body is? Like the intended use of your body?

[12:11 – instrumental music stops]

[12:31]

Here I am playing with the weight of this wig head, and I start out with small tosses and gradually increase to big tosses because I am trying to see how long it's going to take for the wig head to fall, and that's going to determine...what tricks I do.

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Here I'm warming up my...hands with some figure eights that I did with the wig head, as well as some other tricks like tipping it over my head. At this point I realize that I wanted to do more with the wig head, and it required a much cleaner space.

However, I probably should have, like, done some tricks with this broom. [Laughs].

[13:56]

And I'm really trying to stick to the areas that don't have much grass, 'cause I don't know what's in that grass, and I just want a very even...even-leveled floor in order to do these tricks.

[14:24]

Because I knew how long it would take for it to...to fall, I knew I could catch it without vision behind my back. The rolls were definitely the trickiest part when working with the ball. They seem like the easiest thing—these tosses were the easiest thing, I think. But the rolls were definitely the hardest.

Right here I'm trying to see what I can add to this trap that I just did. So, you can trap an object with your legs, you can trap it against the floor with your foot, you can trap it with your arms—not using your hands, just with your arms—you can trap it behind your neck, between your neck and your arms, it's just...catching an object between your body part and another body part, or your body part and the floor.

And right there, I was adjusting the placement of the wig head, because I knew that where I caught it I wasn't going to be able to retoss it, correctly.

[16:18 – wave sounds begin]

[16:27 – instrumental music begins]

[17:18]

I don't know what made me look at waves but, the article that I was looking at said that you can look at waves [laughs], you can take waves and apply them to like, you know, everyday things: sound, and even history. And, when you said that waves are cyclical, I thought that too but then, I researched a bunch of other stuff and people were just saying that waves are just energy moving over water. And the water, the movement of the wave going up and down, creates a circular motion with the water. But if...you think of energy as one thing. Let's look at, let's compare energy to a lesson. If it's continuous, that means it's like always evolving, you know? Like, if it's...moving forwards and that lesson is continuously moving forwards, that means that it's evolving, but evolving doesn't mean that someone's learning the lesson. I just think that... life gives us the same lesson in different ways.

[18:54]

I think that one thing about our movements being circular—if they're circular or cyclical, you can always build on them, like they can always grow, you know? And grow in different forms. Like, if I do a figure eight, I can... save my energy on the contraction. You know, the contraction can look super small and...finite. Like I can, you know, contract my upper body. But the energy that I put into that contraction is like extremely big, like making it look super small, but saving that energy, and then once I hit the top half of the eight I, you know, expand that energy, which is also giving me energy at the same time. I don't know, as I talk about it, making my body into something smaller actually takes more energy and expanding is a lot more relieving. But,

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cyclical motions can grow in different ways, and I feel like as they grow, like when you have that moment of growth, you can kind of like move into the next movement. Because your body, like you said, your mind, you're...letting your body lead you.

[21:07]

Muscles tendon bone tendons, muscles tendon bone ligaments, bone bone.

[21:29 – wave sounds and instrumental music stop]

[21:38]

One thing working with the wig head taught me, was to get out of my comfort zone. A lot of the tricks that I'm doing with the wig head are things that I already know how to do. But I did add a lot of other tricks to my vocabulary while working with the wig head.

[22:15]

So, the wig head and the tripod reminded me of so many different things. The shape of it reminded me of so many different things. What was...fun about using both of them, I was using both of them not for their intended purposes. Right here, I'm making my body into a tripod, and trying to see what other things I can use, it looks like a boxing...not a glove, like a punching bag. It also looks like a camera on a tripod.

And a mic on a stand.

All professions that I am not a professional at doing. I am not a singer, at all. Or a photographer. Or a boxer.

So, it's just still funny how this part was about me doing something that was out of my comfort zone, after using these objects to do something that I knew I could definitely do.

Fun fact, this was actually my wig head. So this part wasn't so foreign, me like sticking pins into it. As you can see, this wig head is battered up and just like it's definitely gone through its trials and tribulations.

[25:07]

It's weird because I'm not like... I won't show my emotion to people I don't know. Like you have to know me very well. And I think that once people get to know me they do know that, like I'm fairly emotional. But I'm pretty hard. Like I'm athlete hard. You know? Like I... [laughing]. But then also I kind of feel like I don't want my emotions to get the best of me. Like sometimes I feel so much and I'm just like ok, I don't want to, I don't want people to know how much I'm feeling.

[25:52 – instrumental music begins]

[26:12]

Oh, I did get the tattoo by the way, I did get it, tattooed.

[Distant] Really?

Yeah, on my thigh, I'll send you a picture of it. But yeah I did get it tattooed, her body is exposed but she withholds everything.

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[26:54 – wave sounds begin, instrumental music continues]

[28:18]

There are just things that come to you that are like instincts, you know? Like squeezing, you know? Squeezing whenever you hear a loud noise. Or gripping for...for survival.

I think that I would really love to move and... move without thinking. And that goes with anything, like I would really love to learn another language. You know... but then when I think about it, I just think that I'm super critical and then...I'm harsh on myself. And then I think of okay, well, what I have to say in that language and I...I can't ever think about being fluid in a language and also like fluid in my—fluent in my movement. You know? So, my question would be, when will I ever get fluent?

[29:57]

Flowing freely. Free! I think that's the best thing, that's the best word to describe it for me. Smooth and easy flow, OK.

[Softly to herself] Act or state of falling out.

Yeah, flowing freely. That's how I would describe it.

I was going to say that I guess fluency means...it just means clarity, you know? Seeing that there's a problem right then and there, addressing the problem, and creating a solution within the matter of a quarter of a second.

[34:07]

I have so many ideas in my mind that I know are possible. Because I know if I can think something, it's possible.

[38:40]

Alright, so today, we will learn how to do this cool toss without vision. [Softly] Vi-sion. Vi-sion.

[38:50 – instrumental music stops, wave sounds continue]

Alright, today, we are going to learn how do this cool toss without vision. Now, the first thing you need to learn is how to do a basic toss. Alright, so, you want to almost time the rhythm of the toss. Know exactly how long it's going to take you—take the wig head to go up and down. Next, you're going to turn to either your left or right, I'm choosing my left, and as the wig head is coming down, once I can't turn my head, I can't keep my head facing front any longer, I am going to grab the wig head and then I'm done.

Alright, one more time.

Alright, today, we are going to learn how to do this cool toss. [Softly] one more time. Alright.

Today we are going to learn how to do this cool toss without vision. Now, the first thing you need to learn how to do is a basic toss with the wig head. Now, when you do the basic toss, you want to learn how to time the rhythm of how long it takes for the wig head to come down. Now, next, you're going to turn to either your right or your left, I'm choosing to turn to my right, and then once you can't see the wig head any longer you're going to catch the wig head, that is your

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indication to catch the wig head. Once you can't see it any longer, you catch, and then you should be able to do the toss. So let's give it a try.

Alright? Your turn.

[40:50 – instrumental music begins, wave sounds continue]