

VERY BEAUTIFUL CHEMICALS THAT PRODUCE VERY STYLISH RESULTS IN PEOPLE'S MENTAL FUNCTIONS

EDWARD DEAN & BRAYDEN VAN
MEURS
13.5 – 29.5.2023

An Interview between Vincent Le and Sasha Geyer on 10/05/2023:

Vincent: Let's see how this goes. Let's do it. Yeah. So, first impressions. Do you think this show, is it giving a slay or fierce kind of energy?

Sasha: I feel like it's a hard one because I think the impact is slay. But then there is this sort of nostalgia, which is fierce. When I think of fierce, I think of like... brassy, kind of more classic. Whereas slay as a concept feels very modern.

V: Yeah, because I remember you telling me fierce harks back to a *Glee* kind of era...

S: Or, a jazziness.

V: It's pre-cynical, before the crisis.

S: I feel as though the theatre kid within that made this show, is a fierce one.

V: Yeah, that kind of sounds right. That makes me excited for, the 2020s. You know how people talked about the 2020s being a new kind of roaring 20s jazz age. And it didn't really happen yet, It's been delayed for various reasons. But maybe this is a sign that this kind of repressed, pent up Jazz age is about to explode.

S: It's not like we can enter into slay. Slay has permeated everything. Fierce is the only way forward, which is like a hard one for me to even fathom as a slay person.

V: Yeah, likewise. What are we going to do? What's our place in the new regime?

S: But you know, you and I are sitting currently under an upholstered bowlers hat?

V: Yeah on some kind of pike or something.

S: It's slay that we're here, but if you look at our mise en scene right now, it is fierce to the core.

V: What do you think of, like, backyard galleries in general?

S: I mean, I'm definitely not a connoisseur. I often would go to a gallery more for social reasons or to support a friend. I think what I like about this show is that it totally fucks with the form, and the format of them (backyard galleries) because usually the format is a very minimalistic garage with a single work, and It's sometimes lost on me. I appreciate that they exist, but it's often lost on me. So as I was saying before, I kind of love it, that it is kind of playing with the more maximalist vibe.

V: Oh, totally. It's definitely ambitious, it wants to reach the institutions. It's almost like a blockbuster NGV show, but within the space and dynamics of a backyard gallery.

S: I was actually thinking today about how they had asbestos at a previous place and that was a very specific layout, how they managed to find a successor. Like how they found a space that honoured that. I wondered whether there's a setting on realestate.com.au that they managed to find a space that would be able to continue that.

V: Yeah I mean this space is better. It kind of fits their ambitions more. A lot of backyard galleries have sort of come to... there's a certain end-of-the-era kind of mood. Meows over, Guzzler's over. Shop Betrayal I guess is over, so Asbestos is one of the main holdouts.

V: You like fine dining?

S: Yes.

V: I mean this is sort of the opposite, but what would you think of an artist-run cafe? So to give an example, um, have you heard of Walrus?

S: Yeah I was familiarised with Walrus like, a week ago. I really like the name Walrus, so I'm intrigued to see what they do. It depends, if it's an artist-run cafe, they really have to nail the ambience. It's not really about the food. And so, I feel like the metric in which I would rate the success of an artist-run cafe would be nailing this sort of place to go, a hub, which I feel is missing at the moment. You know, there is definitely a market for like, a new institution. I feel like it is kind of necessary at the moment too, considering that all of the hubs are so cringy. There's no authenticity, they're all operating like Hope Street offshoots. There could be a hub that I'm not aware of, I feel like if we're talking bars, there isn't really a Meyers Place bar. I mean Hell's is still around but I feel like a cafe would be cool. I'd be down for it but yeah they just have to nail the atmosphere,

V: Hopefully the artists are good cooks as well.

S: I'm intrigued to see what's on Mile's and Shanny's menu. I'm into the bottomless filter coffee. I really am into the name Walrus.

V: Do you know where it comes from?

S: He told me that he and Britt were in Doncaster or something like that, and there was a Chinese restaurant called Walrus, and he really liked the name and he was like, let's just take it and let's use it. He made a good point that it's like it writes really well. There's something about the way it's laid out, it's the correct amount of syllables. Could you see Walrus as a place that you're going to go in your social sphere?

V: Well, I definitely want to go there. I guess it's distinct. I'm very much like a kind of night owl. I don't know if it's the same for you, but so it wouldn't necessarily be a replacement or a substitute for a cool bar at night.

S: Personally I try and be anonymous till 2 p.m. I would be interested to see how it plays out. Because I live in St Kilda, I'm spared, I get to have that daytime anonymity, you know. I've never been to Florian. I've been really wanting to go for ages, but I'm not in Carlton North at 11 a.m. In your head, what is the link between Walrus and this show?

V: I guess the link was more broad, I was thinking about backyard galleries. Obviously, asbestos is still here and thriving, but there's a kind of end-of-the-era vibe. Meows over, Guzzler's over. Shop Betrayal I guess is over. So Asbestos is one of the main holdouts. I was wondering what is going to be the next form, and then what came to mind is that Miles is doing like, an artist-run cafe.

S: Do you reckon the pursuit of backyard galleries are completely devoid of any entrepreneurial intention? Do you reckon there's something entrepreneurial about doing a backyard gallery?

V: Yeah, I think there is. I think it's the real entrepreneurial market in a way. It's like street vendors in China that sell knockoff electronics and iPhones. But weirdly, they're more entrepreneurial because they tweak the iPhones. Apparently each year a new iPhone comes out a lot of the new features are originally started by knockoffs in China. Street vendors are innovating and tweaking a knockoff iPhone. So weirdly like, they're the real entrepreneurs in a weird way.

S: What do you reckon the cultural capital that comes with having a backyard gallery... what do you reckon that looks like?

V: I think it's not necessarily anything in itself. It's what you do with it. The people in question are young enough that it remains to be seen, but they definitely have the right kind of entrepreneurial ethos. If you had a unique space in your backyard, would you consider doing it?

S: Uh, no. It's not my field, really.

V: Yeah. I'm much closer to you in these scenarios.

S: If I had a space, I would let someone do something with it and it would be interesting as the resident of a house to see what that looks like.

V: I mean in that sense, I might do something like that. I don't know if I would want to have that kind of curatorial control.

S: Yeah, that's absolutely not something I could contribute to. I was really impressed with what Zoe did for Shop Betrayal. I feel like there's like a possibility to do a mixed media thing, that would be cool.

V: Um, I guess that's what we're doing now.

S: We're breaking the fourth wall.

It's funny to be interviewed because I've been thinking a lot about how I'm actually quite an evasive person at talking, well, that's not entirely true in conversation. My inclination is to ask people a lot of questions and that is actually just straight up a way to avoid talking about myself. It's not entirely true, I'm also very opinionated, but it's a funny dynamic to be in. So in the spirit of that, I'm going to turn this back on you, what genre or character do you feel that this show expresses?

V: I think it captures, like both him and Brayden. I mean, I know Brayden less well. But like last year we'd all just say Ed is fierce if we're going to categorize him. But lately, I think like, he's like, he's sort of trans slay or something. As you say, there's a very kind of fierce element to this and a theatrical quality. There is some kind of jokey element, it's quite humorous, this show as well. But it's more refined and thought out than it appears. So there is that slay element with the methodicalness to this show as well. It's actually deeply thought out in its details, which I think captures like it kind of captures both sides of Ed and Brayden. There's a fierce public persona, but there's also definitely like, a slayness involved as well.

S: I feel like the show is a good sort of expression, and a curiosity and appreciation for everything as like a cultural artifact. I can't figure out whether that characteristic is slay or fierce.

V: I guess that's the weird thing. It's kind of both, it's simultaneously historical, but it's also the moment. Super contemporary and yet, historicizing everything as well.

S: I wonder what they're saying about Melbourne.

V: I think it's an entrepreneurial work in the sense it's not even saying that much about Melbourne, it's maybe saying about what it wants Melbourne to be, and taking steps to move the market in that direction.

S: Because I think as an optimistic show. In general art generally is quite cynical. Even the *whore and faggot* artwork, In the context of everything that's around is quite, um, optimistic, right? But there is an aspect of it that I'm curious about that, the choice to do that. I see the irony in it, but I want to know more about it. My centrist gay stance in life is that I never use that word, I think it's an ugly word. So I'm always intrigued to hear that I'm surrounded by people that feel differently, I'm not offended by it, but I want to understand it.

V: Yeah, it's right next to the Sky News thing, I guess it's just these big signifiers?

S: Cause it's not like, crassness for the sake of it, you know what I mean? I feel like there's a joke in there. I'm not offended by it, I'm amused and intrigued by it. I interpret it as a joke on this trashy genre of art and performance art that involves a really entry-level provocation. I don't know if they're wanting us to basically interpret the work, but I'm just going to do it. I say this room is very much a *Rone-esq* kind of celebration of nostalgic Australiana, which I actually quite appreciate. But I almost see it as like, a reference to when you're in a country truck petrol station toilet and you see like shit written on the walls. That's kind of how I interpret it, you know what I mean? So I feel like this room and that room kind of complement each other in that way, and then with the Sky News thing.

V: I mean, that one's really quite odd, it is just like a mish-mash. There's heaps of Australiana, I guess more broadly that is the thing that really comes across. Do you like Australian aesthetics, like Australiana?

S: I think what makes me fond of this is, I feel like at the moment, at least in like my orbit, a lot of people are leaving Australia. A lot of people are leaving Melbourne to pursue the world, which is something I appreciate as someone that's done that. But, you know, I've kind of internally taken the stance, for a while now, I've really been investing in Melbourne and wanting to be here, and be present here, and really want to see Melbourne thrive. So I guess, why I think the show is optimistic is because it speaks to a sort of celebration of Australia that I want to see. You know, in the context of the exodus, or what I see as a bit of an exodus. I do like the Australiana. There is like, a sort of, like, mystique of when you're in the CBD and there's a tone that is quite mysterious. And it's also very sexy as well.

V: I love Baz Lurhman. This kind of has a Baz Lurhman energy. Do you love Bazz?

S: I do like Baz Luhrmann. It's interesting that such campiness comes from a straight director. It's interesting that that is a straight mind. But I do, I actually quite liked *Australia* (the movie). I seem to be the only person that liked it.

V: Oh no, I love *Australia*. I cried when I saw Australia in the cinemas. It was really messed up. This has happened twice. It happened in *Australia* and it happened in *La la land*. The people I was with, they were cracking jokes, like, isn't this film so lame.

I had to hide my tears.

S: I don't really understand why it's considered a bomb. I feel like in our culture grandiosity is often punished, or slapped on the wrist. So perhaps *Australia* is a victim of that, you know?

V: The other thing I wanted to ask you was there's a thing in Melbourne among our circles, and it's definitely extremely prominent in Melbourne artists, is this kind of *germanophilia*; this transcendental urge to be like I must go to Germany and like Berlin. What do you think of that? Because you went there last year, what do you think of that pilgrimage from Melbourne to Berlin?

S: I'm the queen of the pilgrimage, living there was still the greatest thing I ever did. It was more of a life experience than a permanent living situation. Like I could only be there for the year. I think it's appealing because I'm not a careerist, I couldn't last a minute in New York. London is the same. Paris seems to be hit and miss from people I know that have lived there. Whereas Berlin is quite accessible and quite immersive in a recreational way, that's what I find appealing. It's definitely alluring on an artistic level. Saying that, you know, when I was last there it's, it's as expensive as a lot of other European cities, I feel like the idea of Berlin has caught up to it.

The dilemma I have in life is that part of me likes Melbourne because of the security, and the comfort. The people I know in Melbourne are world-class, I'm not starved for great people, but it operates on a different level, the tone is different. In Melbourne, you don't have the sense of possibility of living in a vast global transient city, and that's what's most captivating about Berlin.

But in terms of the pilgrimage, I mean, it's a cliché. People love to hate the cliché. Melbourne is a very self-deprecating kind of place, to love Berlin is met with a lot of, irony and a lot of sarcasm. In the summer months, it was really bizarre to get that concentrated wave of people, a lot of people from home visiting. But to observe people that were there but couldn't just appreciate the moment and couldn't enjoy it was just the most tragic thing ever. Because, like, why exist if you can't let yourself love something? You know what I mean? It's a cliché for a reason because it's great.

S: Okay so, to circle back on the Melbourne-ness, or like the celebration of Melbourne, I thought I'd say that the Adelaide diaspora is one of the most important parts. I often feel like Melbourne is built on the Adelaide diaspora, and I have a lot of appreciation for it. How does your outsider understanding of Melbourne, having to work through like moving here and meeting people? How would you characterise your attachment to this city and what it can give you?

V: It's interesting that you noticed that, that there's Adelaide in the veins of Melbourne. Do you remember like, Dolewave?

S: Yeah.

V: I feel like in that era when I was kind of into indie music and Dolewave and stuff. All of the bands that were part of that originated in Adelaide. The saddest possible thing that happens, this is like the worst case scenario, you get certain people that move to Melbourne and they move to Brunswick specifically and they come to the city with this kind of like, dark academia aesthetic that's amazing. It's preppy, It's like full vampire weekend, like prep lords. It's just so cool. And then they go the full Brunswick, mullet, goth athletic, I don't know. I don't even know like, you know, A1 aesthetic or whatever. Like, no, I'm not saying there's anything wrong with that. Adelaide is like an Ivy League uni town or something. That's like what Adelaide is. It's like a preppy Ivy League uni town. That's its aesthetic and culture. What did you actually ask? I can't remember.

S: I forget what I asked, but like, it's funny you say that because I feel like I've been talking a lot about it. Yeah. People that move to Melbourne and like, you know, jump right into I guess like the sort of like Brunswick share house. I guess if you're entering Melbourne from an outside perspective, that kind of pathway, it's the sort of set one. It's very far removed from my experience of the city.

V: Right, right.

S: But, um, in the context of people moving and making their own pilgrimage. It's interesting because Adelaide suffers a lot. I've heard someone from Canberra talk about this as well, how like to stay there and commit to it is really hard because so many core people leave.

V: Yeah, yeah.

S: And they leave to come to like Melbourne or Sydney. It's funny then, having that experience, like what I was talking about before. A lot of people leaving, having that experience of people moving overseas. That being the pathway. And it's hard because how can the culture of a city be preserved? What does that mean for the culture of the city and the sort of people that define it, you know?

V: Melbourne just perfectly fits between a kind of small-town provincialism, which I don't mean in a bad way, and then with big city kind of ambitions.

***Vincent and Sasha continued talking well into the night. Many bottles of various intoxicants were consumed...many tales were told. The nights we don't remember.....are the nights we.....*

*I love Australia, Crazy City. ***

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Tableau (carport):

Very Beautiful chemicals that produce very stylish results in people's mental functions, 2023.

Weatherboards, dining table, saw blade, fan motor, paper, chairs, drill bits, hats, spatchcock chickens, paper, shellac, doorknobs, dimensions variable.

Gallery (clockwise from left):

Freee thinking, 2023.

Weatherboard, newspaper clipping, grass, staples, bark, drawer, 94 x 17 x 34 cm.

Write poetry that only you can understand, 2023.

Weatherboard, book, key ignition, electrical components, paper, bottle cap, 162 x 27.5 x 5.5 cm.

It's an interesting turn of events to have 'honk' standing up, 2023.

Weatherboard, grass, pages from Wuthering heights, horns, staples, 13 x 168 x 38 cm.

He is dribbling spit tonight and the one he sent away, Was the only one who stayed, With a spoon and a decent book, And you can tell by the way she looks, She is sorry and resigned, As he wets himself for the final time, 2023.

Weatherboard, book, paint sprayer, wire, paint, 250 x 30 x 14 cm.

For \$1.00, 2023.

Weatherboard, newspaper, shellac, 17 x 127.5 x 1 cm.

The naughty paintbrush No. 04, 1948, 2023.

Weatherboard, shellac, paintbrush, 16 x 174 x 14 cm.

The acoustic rhizome, 2023.

Weatherboards, PVA, staples, cardboard, 174 x 24 x 2 cm.

Another world is possible, New Australian sculpture, 2023.

Weatherboard, books, callipers, page, PVA, 167 x 35 x 14.5 cm.

Insulin (Jaycar assemblage), 2023.

Weatherboard, electronic components, leaves, tape, shellac, wood, newspaper, 29 x 161 x 21 cm.

The naughty paintbrush No. 05, 1949, 2023.

Weatherboard, shellac, paintbrushes, conflict minerals, 172 x 30 x 31 cm.

Curiosity, 2023.

Weatherboard, drawers, leaf, 12 x 159 x 10 cm.

Jake, 2023.

Weatherboard, electronic components, wood, nails, staples, tape, 96 x 23 x 4.5 cm.

Courtyard:

Culturally liberal project of renewal, 2023.

Weatherboards, floorboards, wire, dolls, nails, grass, pool cue, plywood, flashlights, tape, dimensions variable.