



Artists' Moving
Image Network



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Holly Mária Parnell Interview Transcript

Voice: Holly Mária Parnell, FLAMIN Fellowship artist 2020-2021

00:07

I primarily work with moving image, sound and installation as well as live video performances. And the work is mainly built out of my own personal archive of material that I've been gathering over the years through filmed footage and field recordings and fragments of the everyday. And the point of departure for that is really led by personal encounters or relationships. So in that sense I've always taken a documentary approach in my work, and I do seek out a kind of intimacy or proximity to the people I'm filming. So it can reveal more subtle but powerful truths about embodied knowledge and lived experience, and I'm interested in extracting that through film.

01:02

For me, it's about zooming into those in between moments - the unfixed, the incomplete or the limbo - these quieter pockets. And using these fragments to build up new narratives through rhythm, arrangement and composition. So it's really within this type of nonlinear framework that my filmmaking language has developed. A kind of poetics where meaning emerges from when things are getting reshuffled or unravelling.

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So I think, in a way this type of interest in dream logic allows for a breakdown of meaning, or allows for the discovery of new forms of communication through something a bit more sensory or sublingual. It's about that dance for me, when different elements of movement are rubbing up against each other. That's why I use film in the first place. It's a language that I feel helps me fully explore what I'm interested in, which is ultimately theories of interdependence, gestures of care, communal forms of resistance and particularly the space between what is decaying and what is emerging, and looking at the joyful as being a profoundly political space.

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I actually applied to The FLAMIN Fellowship with a shorter, more portraiture based project that looking at the deeply woven relationship between my mother and brother and the complexities of interdependence and care related to his cerebral palsy. As my brother is non-verbal and non-mobile, my mother is his main advocate and voice. And at the same time, David has recently been learning to communicate using eye gaze technology, which tracks the movement of his retinas and he's also been reading poetry using this. So in our house at the moment, there's this beautifully rich and complex dynamic between language and communication playing out that I wanted to elevate.

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The FLAMIN Fellowship has been unbelievably beneficial, because it not only holds your hand through making the actual work, but also the infrastructure around the work and around having a practice. Especially if you come from an art school background, the emphasis is never on this area and it's such a vital support structure for making a work and sustaining a practice.

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Some highlights for me would be - it's all of it really, all the nuts and bolts, from insurance to funding to distribution, talking about pitching markets and clearance rates for archive material. Things I just did not know beforehand. Also things like sound workshops and hearing from sound designers about what they'll expect from the filmmaker beforehand, so there's a lot more conversation between all the different units. The career of an artist is such a precarious thing really, so having all these different invited artists speaking, and to hear about their journeys, how they're making it, how they're juggling it, how they got there, is really helpful. It's also a good reminder that there is no one way to be an artist, it's much more wiggly, nuanced and individual.

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If I had any advice for anyone thinking of applying to the Fellowship, it would be that what I've noticed from being on the programme is that it's not so much about what stage you're at in your career, and to not let that be something to hold you back or hinder you from applying. But I would say that everyone on the Fellowship does have their own language as a filmmaker that they've spent time on. You could tell that people have spent time with themselves. And this doesn't have to mean in a career sense or a CV sense, but just with exploring. So I'd say you'd get the most out of the programme if you felt that you were ready to take that language as a filmmaker and move forward with it and professionalise it more.