

Transcription Interview Sammy :

Presentation

SW : Hello I am Sammy, everybody knows me as Sammy but my name is Samsara, that's how I prefer to present myself professionally but online I also have some pseudonym of Susuubi which means sweet potato milk. It's actually taro milk it's one of my favourite desserts.

Name

Pseudonym

I've always had kind of like a small online presence even though right now taking a full break from it but I used to do a lot of streaming on Twitch. So I would do live, basically live sessions, where I'm drawing or I'm actually just studying or being productive and then I would reach a lot of audience through that.

Online presence

Twitch streaming

Audience

And that audience I wanted to reach was with my work which would be a lot of illustration because I've always been an illustrator. A lot of my illustrations that combined with my poetry kind of surrounding and about healing itself.

Audience

Illustrations

Healing

Basically everything that I resonate I turn into print. I also sell those in artist markets or online as I'm also owning a web shop. So my artistic practice is super like everywhere.

Print

Web shop/ practice

Motivations

IP : What would you say are your motivations when creating, either when you prepare dinner, when you host dinner or when you draw? What would you say stimulate your creativity desire, to produce?

SW : I think like it all boils down a lot of connection to people. I think I'm reaching out to people when I do art in the form of dinners, I'm seeking connection and I'm seeking love because I am kind of overflowing with love. And I just want to share that with people.

Connections

Dinners/ connexion

Love

And I think when it comes to like producing and especially producing artwork so to share or sell so a lot of it is kind of ,honestly, like a big reason of why I do this production even though it's a fun activity it's also a practice for myself to kind of acknowledge that what I create has worth and that's why I like selling things really helps you practice that.

Producing

Reason to practice

Practice

Worth

Like you know like I'm not just making things, I'm also producing something that's worth something, worth buying and a lot of my like friends are centred around just like self love and connection and that's always just rooted in like my kind of bravery in existing.

Production

Worth

Self-love/ connections

And that I want people to be able to relate to that. I know people do, there is always like a step of bravery to exist. And that's kind of a big part of my production

People to relate

Production

Artistic Activism

IP : Can I ask what notions of Artistic Activism do you have? Are you familiar with the concept? Is it something that you aim to use in your art?

SW : Yes Affirmation

IP : Yes?

SW : Artistic Activism to me, I don't know actually that much about it but I think I practice, I cannot identify as an activist while I do understand to a degree that I am

Little knowledge about it

Don't identify as an activist

one. I do practice activism but it is kind of different from what activism is normally perceived.

Identify as an activist
Normal definition of activism

Political Participation

IP : Do you consider yourself politically engaged? If yes, through which means do you think you manifest it on a daily basis?

SW : For me I'm definitely politically engaged; I think I definitely practice political engagement and activism in a very different sense than what is like conventional.

Politically engaged
Conventional definitions of political engagement and activism

I think a lot of like what we perceive as convention like conventional Artistic Activism is super directly about what they're saying, their message. And then there's some people who practice, for example, feminism by researching slowness.

Conventional artistic activism
Direct message
Different practice of artistic activism

Like there's a lot of very interesting ways to practice this and that activism. For me I practice obviously decolonisation. I wrote a thing in my artistic statement that I want to just read out loud;

Practice of artistic activism
Practice of decolonisation

Artistic Statement

"Having grown from colonised soil, existing and thinking outside of the western subject standards is a constant shedding of the lessons my ancestors were forced to obey. To decolonize myself is to rediscover value with the things our colonisers attempted to erase. The remnants of coloniality exist today."

Growing in colonisation
Western standards
Rediscover value
Remnants of colonialist

"If art could help me to discover my previously lost feeling of autonomy then what else can it do. This dynamic of finding what was last seen super in my life, finding pride in my queerness after having lost courage, finding home and food and people after being unrooted, finding value in the subjective after being conditioned by colonised education to find it inferior. I constantly seek ways to learn and unlearn my artistic practice."

Lost autonomy
To find
Queerness
Conditioned
Colonised education
Artistic Practice

I think that's almost my activism. So in my current upcoming project, I want to further understand how knowledge production can be decolonized with food and dinners, as both metaphors and methods. I want to change the way we see and appreciate knowledge; one story and one dish at time.

Activism
Decolonise knowledge production
Change

So my practice is dinners, my practice is telling stories through illustrations, through poetry, through performance. That is all rooted in the act of decolonizing because a lot of my work is researching indigenous knowledge.

Practice : dinners, illustrations
Practice : performance
Decolonizing
Indigenous knowledge

For me I understand through indigenous knowledge is that documenting and preserving memory is all done through practice. So what I'm doing is that I'm exploring how knowledge can be learned and taught in a non-western scientific centric way.

Indigenous knowledge
Memory/ practice
Non-western perspective

That to me it is a very important act of decolonizing, especially decolonizing the institution and the academic space. What other ways can I show you that research can be done and that is my activism in a way. I am living and breathing and practicing it so I'm not really doing activism in the sense that I'm going out in the streets protesting and showing banners.

Decolonizing
Decolonizing education
Practice/ activism
Definition of activism

I'm doing activism by fully practicing what I preach and showing for institutions that it can be done in a respectable, which I dislike, academic way. Everything I do is to shed the memory of colonisation and to show others that there's other ways of existing that is respectable and not primitive because to this point, our methods of knowledge have always been seen as primitive. It's the reason why like our education is so colonised, it is because it was seen as not good enough.

Doing activism
Respect
Memory of colonisation
Respect, not primitive
Colonised education

I think what I want to do is because I have such a big ambition in education. I really dedicate so much of my life's work to decolonising education. Like a lot of Indonesians still grew up with very colonised education especially around art. Even the idea of what I'm studying, interdisciplinary arts, wouldn't really be seen as a valid like academic pride. It wouldn't even exist as a major because nobody would see a value in it. At least I'm not talking about everybody, it's kind of a generalisation but it is how I feel about home.

Ambition in education
Decolonizing education
Colonised education/arts
Academic validation
Academic value
Generalisation about home

I want something like what I'm doing to exist at home. When people say they're surprised to know I am Indonesian, from other Indonesians themselves, they are happy to know that like someone is able to do research to this extent. My end goal is that I want other Indonesians to have the opportunity to study the way that I study.

Home
Indonesia
End goal
Opportunities for Indonesians

Because I have such an immense privilege to be able to be here and explore all of this existence, and being in such an academic setting. I have an intense amount of nationalism and patriotism and this is something that I question so much about myself. I feel like a big part of it is really drilled within our education to be incredibly nationalistic. It is part of our response to colonisation. It is a stronger response, we want to keep building our country up and taking care of our country. Because we've had the experience of losing it, it is just my trauma-response and how I experienced trauma and how in the end like I'm working so hard to reclaim my body

Privilege
Privilege of academic setting
Nationalism & Patriotism
Nationalism & Patriotism in education
Response to colonisation
Taking care of the country
Trauma-response to colonisation
Reclaim

Everything I do is to live and breathe that. I'm now already kind of past that phase, in a way where like I now no longer need to like work so hard to build up love towards my body. That process is still happening but now I can focus on other things.

Healing
Working hard
Moving on

Audience Expectations

IP : What do you expect from your audience when you share your artwork? Do you seek to move them emotionally, to encourage them to take action, to make them understand what your position is, or something else?

SW : Existing as a queer person, I've had like a lot South-East Asians who are in my audience and they tell me when I see you and I see that you're queer and you're public about it, which is insane in Indonesia, they feel confident that they can exist themselves.

Queer identity, south-east Asian identity
south-east Asian audience
Response of south-east asian audience

Even if they don't want to come out, and nobody should ever come out if they don't want to. Even if they don't come out, seeing someone else coming from the same background as you, coming from the same life you, exist publicly and visibly as queer and exist fully in their authenticity.

Coming out
Coming out
Queer identity
Authenticity

Authenticity allows people to feel comfortable in their own authenticity, even if they cannot fully exist yet because we have such such a like closed society around that kind of thing. By existing as a queer Indonesian, telling everybody Indonesia is queer,

Authenticity
Closed society
Queer & Indonesia

and by practicing my decoloniality alongside my queerness is also my existence, my activism in a way.

Decoloniality & queerness

Activism

I think in the end I want people to know. Please allow research for this to happen, please allow your youth to fully explore what this country is. This country is beautiful that's what everybody is saying but why are so many things blocked for us. Why there's so many things that people can't do and express and say.

Research

Research about Indonesia

Research about Indonesia

Boundaries in Indonesia

IP : From your own experience do you think that Artistic Activism has maybe more power than other forms of like either art or activism itself, to trigger an effect on people?

Artistic Activism

SW : Yeah I think it's so interesting because both art and activism have very broad understandings and definitions. I feel like art is a bridge, for me at least. In my practice, art is a bridge for me to get what's in my brain to my audience. So whatever research I'm doing, whatever we realise, that's such an important part of our study.

Art and activism

Definition of Art and activism

Art is a bridge

Importance of art

So when you do your research, the biggest part is the how you translate this findings into something that communicates with your audience. So in the end, artists about communicating and artistic activism, where else like where else can art fit besides activism or engagement. Even when you don't have an agenda or anything, art is always about a message, it's always about translation, it's always for an audience. You can choose to not have a message but that itself is a statement. Art is statement and I think it's super powerful when you combine that with political engagement because in political engagements you always have things to say.

Findings translation

Communication with audience

Communication and artistic activism

Activism and engagement

Message for audience

Statements

Political engagement and art

Queer & South-East
Asian identity

Colonisation

Sammy

Decolonisation

Practice

Artistic
Activism

Audience