

Episode 0

Introducing Academic Feelings

Rosa Marie Frang:

Some say all art is political.

I'm an artist,
and for about a year ago,
I was invited to do a podcast as an artwork for a
new center at the University of Copenhagen.
The center is called PASS, Center for Practice-Based Art Studies.

Coming from the outside, entering the university, I
didn't take the task lightly.
I wanted to make a podcast that would actually matter.
I wanted to do my research properly.

So feeling like an undercover alien spy in a foreign country,
trying to blend in, but with all my antennas out, I've been
attending hour-long meetings, workshops, seminars, PhD
defenses, conferences, and joining study trips, lunches,
and parties.

Who were all these people?
How do they work, and think, walk, and talk?
What's the subtext to their culture?
How could I do a podcast that would be of any relevance?
The conclusion?

I was fucked.

Why?

I've met all these intelligent, sweet, strong-willed, and hard-working people r
esearching the most fantastic stuff.
In short...all about sharpening our experience of the arts.
And art is – ultimately – all about sensing, sensibility,
...and sensitivity.

But in contrast to this, my subtext antennas noticed something else.
Something that just made me sad,
...and honestly, almost made me lose all my enthusiasm for doing this podcast.

An environment

where everyone involuntarily seems caught up in a power game of positioning oneself as the sharpest or most relevant person in the room.

...An unhealthy and never-ending nervous story of constant applications, networking, and competition.

Or?

Was I wrong?

Was it all in my head?

Did I just have a super naive and too high expectation to what grown-up life is like?

Was it me who was too sensitive?

Or was it, once again, my social background growing up in a lower class backfiring on me because I don't master the social codes of the higher middle classes?

Looking into it, I understood that at least it wasn't all made up in my head.

Recent surveys show that 65% of all temporary employees are struggling with stress. Almost half of all PhDs say they feel burned out.

To top it up, there's cut-downs in university state funding, growing institutional bureaucracy, a growing pace in the demands of reforms, and likewise, a growing dependency on private funding.

...Altogether, leaving less headspace, time, and freedom to do real research.

And,

to top, top, top

it off,

of course,

we have the digital platform companies building global power empires based on fucking our brains' basic functionalities up, like our ability to concentrate, think deep, and remember, making us more narcissistic and less imaginative.

We have public media shitstorms where high-profile politicians contribute to shaming individual academics or artists.

71% of researchers working with so-called controversial topics are afraid of or have been threatened, and many express a lack of support from management.

Yes,
it is no wonder I sensed notes of stress and internalized self-censorship floating
in the air.

So,
I've been wondering
if research in the field of art and culture is ultimately about sensibility and sensitivity.
Are we in a perfect storm?

Welcome to Academic Feelings.
My name is Rosa Marie Frang.

First of all, disclaimer, this
is an experiment, meaning
I'm not sure how this podcast will unfold,

but I want to challenge the hierarchies for what is considered knowledge and
challenge the formats for how knowledge is shared

to see if I can give voice to the research and the feelings of the artists and art curators
working in the field of practice-based art studies.

Can I create another kind of space where it's okay to be both knowledgeable,
intelligent, and just a curious human being who's not pitch-perfect, but, like everyone
else, full of flaws, irrational anxieties, contradictions, and very understandable
insecurities?

Ironically enough,
I'm well aware that most of us are so stressed out that
very few will even have the time to listen.

For my own case, I
haven't slept a full night the last two weeks because I am so nervous
about sending this podcast out into the world.

But I insist.
This is a slow and raw podcast,
you know, just like there's slow food and raw food, and
in opposition to the ultra-processed and fast media.

So
the episodes might be long,

and they will be published as unedited and raw as possible,
and I will not be doing straight and narrow interviews following
a pre-planned manuscript.

In contrary, I'll be having unruly, unpredictable
conversations with the most fantastic,
knowledgeable people.

The premise?

Guests are asked to come with the topics they really want to talk about,
and while I'll do the same, none of us will know of each other's topics
before the recorder's turned on.

And
you'll also be hearing some of the raw
behind-the-scene recordings, the kind of
stuff that's usually not published.

And
along the way, I'll try to put into words what I
feel about doing this podcast artwork.

Welcome to Academic Feelings, coming soon to
a podcast platform near you.

And now I'll keep quiet and let you listen to the music I've made,
giving you a couple of minutes to contemplate on what you just
heard.