

Duke & Battersby

Shit Doesn't Have to Be Perfect

presented in association with the CCA Wattis Institute and Untitled, Art
November 29, 2018 — Artists' Television Access
Emily Vey Duke and Cooper Battersby in person

Working collaboratively since 1994, Emily Vey Duke & Cooper Battersby create provocatively genuine video works which explore (and evoke) of states of emotional tenderness, empathy and grace. In their complexly confrontational use of such taboo tropes as cuteness, earnest direct address, emotive identification with animals and pop-cultural fixation, Duke & Battersby disarm viewers with sincere gestures of connection while reflecting on such topics as personal identity and empowerment, the social value of fragility and the withering of the concept of the divine in contemporary life. (Steve Polta)

Dear Lorde (2015) by Emily Vey Duke & Cooper Battersby; digital video, color, sound, 27 minutes, exhibition file from the makers

Bone collector Maxine Rose, a 14 year old teenage girl, is looking for validation from her heroes, amongst them the primatologist Jane Goodall, bishop Desmond Tutu and the New Zealand teen pop star Lorde. Offering them a gift of language, Maxine Rose stands for the desire to be visible and understood, not unlike the desire of an artist. We are particularly impressed by the multilayered storytelling structure, the freshness of the characterization, and the honest exploration of an artists' vulnerability. (excerpt from the jury's comment on awarding Dear Lorde the EMAF award. European Media Art Festival. www.emaf.de/english/festival/preisverleihung.html)

Here Is Everything (2013) by Emily Vey Duke & Cooper Battersby; digital video, color, sound, 15 minutes, exhibition file from the makers

Here Is Everything presents itself as a message from The Future, as narrated by a cat and a rabbit, spirit guides who explain that they've decided to speak to us via a contemporary art video because they understand this to be our highest form of communication. Their cheeky introduction, however, belies the complex set of ideas that fill the remainder of the film. Death, God and attaining and maintaining a state of Grace are among the thematic strokes winding their way through the piece, rapturously illustrated with animation, still and video imagery. It is a work that contains specific details about its themes, but sufficiently ambiguous and free of dogma, including religious dogma that, our futuristic visitors explain, is a vestigial leftover from an earlier phase of evolution. And while Death is an ever-present rumination, so are Redemption, Affirmation, and Possibility. (John Massier, Hallwalls. "Hopelessly Middle Aged." Fall 2012)

Dear Britney (2013) by Emily Vey Duke & Cooper Battersby; digital video, color, sound, 5 minutes, exhibition file from the makers

Britney Spears' fan Gary congratulates her on her comeback and victory over mental illness. Inspired by *Dear Madonna* (1996) Mike Hoolboom. (Duke & Battersby)

Perfect Nature World (2003) by Emily Vey Duke & Cooper Battersby in collaboration with Shary Boyle; digital video, color, sound, 4 minutes, exhibition file from the makers

Lifting the opening song from *Being Fucked Up* (Duke & Battersby, 2000), Emily's multi-tracked voicings ("I don't know, I don't know") are this time laid over a series of drawings by Toronto's multi-media work dervish Shary Boyle. A seamless pan offers glimpses of a bruised and lonely pre-teen heroine who gathers her lost hopes between nature world communings. Sometimes the sparkles stick to you even when you're sleeping in the puddles. (Duke & Battersby)

You Were an Amazement on the Day You Were Born, and You Are an Amazement Now (work in progress) by Emily Vey Duke & Cooper Battersby

www.dukeandbattersby.com

www.sfcinematheque.org