

Transcript

00:00:01 RMJ

--Recording again. All right, so it is, uh, February 3rd. And, uh, we have--

00:00:11 CGJ

2024.

00:00:12 RMJ

2024. Yes, thank you for the year. Um, and we have Sunmi with us—also. I forgot to say this at the top but like, feel free to turn off your camera if you want. You don't have to, but like I just want to make sure you know you are completely—if you want to be like on camera or off camera or whatever it's totally up to you.

00:00:23 SUNMI

OK.

00:00:19 RMJ

And also, I'm like, taking notes by hand. So if you see me like writing or whatever...

00:00:29 SUNMI

OK!

00:00:34 RMJ

That's what I'm doing.

00:00:36 SUNMI

Yeah, uh, sounds good.

00:00:36 RMJ

Um, Cool. OK, but we can go ahead and jump into it if that sounds good. And my first question for you is--

00:00:45 SUNMI

Yeah.

00:00:48 RMJ

How did you start making comics? Or if another way of thinking about that is like, what drew you to comics as a medium?

00:00:57 SUNMI

Um, I was always reading comics as a little kid. I would read newspaper strips. I went to the library a lot. Um, Yeah, I was just always reading comics and always drawing comics. I feel like that's like...Less interesting than if I came to comics later in life, I guess, or had some other interesting segue into, I don't know, a comics career.

00:01:27 RMJ

I feel like newspaper strips are a pretty common origin, right?

00:01:31 SUNMI

I think so too, and especially here in the states.

00:01:34 RMJ

Yeah, definitely. Um. So when you, you were like. When you were, what kind of comics did you draw when you were a little kid, were they like stories or?

00:01:43 SUNMI

I drew strips. I did--Yeah. Yeah. It's so funny. That's the thing is that I read a lot of manga starting young too, but I was not drawing in a manga—I mean, I was drawing in a manga style like I was drawing, like anime kind of characters, but, um, they format wise looked more like newspaper strips. I was drawing like a, a serialized comic on, on a copy paper, you know, with pencils.

00:02:14 SUNMI

Yeah. Yeah, it was. I, I feel funny. It's, I've mentioned it. I think in another interview long time ago. But it was just it's, it was like called *Adventures in Imaginary World* like it was the most basic like idea.

00:02:34 RMJ

Mhmm.

00:02:34 SUNMI

But you know, I was like literally like, I don't know like, seven years old or something, like pretty young. I remember. I was definitely not quite like adolescent and. Yeah, and it was

just like literally fan art. Like, it was just like me and a bunch of my OCs. And then characters that I liked from things that I liked watching (laughs) or reading.

00:02:53 RMJ

I love that. Yeah, super funny. Cool. And then so...Uh, you always were drawing comics, and I'm curious, did you always sort of plan then on doing comics as sort of... I don't know if "career" is the right word, but like career sort of, main squeeze, or was that something that came later?

00:03:18 SUNMI

Yeah. I think it's like when you're a kid--

00:03:20 CGJ

Main squeeze? (*Laughing*)

00:03:25 RMJ

You know, your main squeeze.

00:03:27 SUNMI

Your main squeeze. How you describe things that you do for a living or a hobby.

Yeah, I, uh. I think like as a kid I, you know, like all kids was like I'll be like a firefighter or like, I don't know, maybe I'll be like a fashion designer or scientist, like, you know, had, like, every kind of idea about what career you could do when I was um, actually old enough to think about it, if anything. Um.

00:04:03 SUNMI

I returned to music as an adult. Music was actually a bigger part of my life growing up than like visual art. Visual art, it's, it's like, I think actually though, I can think of other illustrators and cartoonists who kind of had this experience, maybe or similarly like, you know, being committed to some other activity like a sport or.

00:04:18 RMJ

Mm-hmm.

00:04:23 SUNMI

You know, all that. Like I was a band nerd, not just like in the sense that, like, I played music and played instruments, but I was really a big part of marching band and drum line and, uh, pit orchestra for musicals like I did music all the time.

But when you're a teen and then you realize, oh, but doing music professionally is horrifying, it's, you're on a stage alone that's the most, like the scariest thing ever. You're not just like hidden amongst the band. Um. And also just there's so much pressure in being a performing artist.

00:05:00 SUNMI

So visual arts, you get to hide a little. So as a, as a teen I, I was like, well, I suck at everything else. I love doing music, but this is definitely something that fulfills me emotionally and such because I've built my community around music as growing up.

00:05:18 RMJ

Mm-hmm.

00:05:20 SUNMI

That was the kind of community spaces I found myself in the like teens.

So I basically was like, well, the other thing that I'm good at is art. So I should commit to it and get better at it. And so, like, my mom found, like, some neighborhood mom and I took, like, private lessons. Like, just doing, like, still lives and stuff from her for like. Some period of time. And then I, I like skipped my way into AP Studio Art and then I just kind of like.

I think I just took AP art for the last two years of high school and I was like—

00:05:53 SUNMI

Oh, I went to a pre-college program, of course. So I also did that and all that made it so that I could commit to art and be like this is something viable as a career and my mom was like, OK.

00:06:06 RMJ

What pre-college program did you go to?

00:06:10 SUNMI

Funnily enough, it's been coming up again since I was visiting the Bay Area. Like, in passing people talking about it. I did CSSSA, which is like California State Summer School of the Arts.

00:06:18 RMJ

Oh.

00:06:21 SUNMI

It's like. It's its own organization, its own like uh. I don't know their designation, but they're an organization and they do the pre-college program out of Cal Arts. So I did spend that summer in Cal Arts, but it's not associated with the college actually.

00:06:40 RMJ

Oh, OK.

00:06:42 SUNMI

Yeah. So I did the CSSSA program, and I went in on my full scholarship, basically and.

Um. Yeah. At the summer to do art and meet gay people (*RMJ laughs*), well no I had gay friends in high school. But you know, the first taste of what an art school environment is like.

00:07:05 RMJ

Yeah, definitely. I feel like pre-college is such a fun, weird, like environment to be in.

00:07:10 SUNMI

Yeah, yeah.

I was also a TA and RA for MICA's pre-college, so I also had the experience of being the teacher adult like residential coordinator side too for the teens. Yeah.

00:07:25 RMJ

Oh yeah, that makes sense. Um, so I think digging a little bit more into your work then. How would you describe the politics of your work, and how do those politics relate to transness or being trans?

00:07:44 SUNMI

Um, OK, so I have notes written out with your questions because I was like I should have, be, like, I shouldn't completely wing it. Uh, I guess...the politics of my own work.

I have been thinking about this a lot because I think it relates to the, I think it's like we only have so much power that we can, over our own work, right, that it's like you can only do so much to write the story you had in mind to draw the way that you do. But the way that other people see it will never be in your control. I would say that being trans is definitely a political thing for me.

00:08:40 SUNMI

I don't, I cannot remove it, so queerness and transness are a political way of being. Um, and I embrace that. I'm not interested in queerness that does not work in solidarity with other facets of marginalized identities and communities. Because I also am, like, Korean and um, disabled and also lots of things so. Um. Yeah, I, what I wrote was that it's I think.

I've. Politics and having a political bent or goal in my work, I feel like it's not on the surface, but it's definitely something that I've been thinking about where ultimately, it is like my love for humanity and humans that like is present in everything that I do and that would obviously include trans people.

00:09:51 RMJ

Mm-hmm.

00:09:52 SUNMI

And queer people and people of color and everybody, so um. I do think that, there. Yeah, I do think that there is. Uh. Liberatory possibility in making art.

00:10:12 RMJ

Mm-hmm.

00:10:12 SUNMI

Um. That that is something that I find myself drawn to and is important to me.

I am finding more often that I myself am not drawn to stories anymore that don't attempt to engage with that, you know.

Yeah. Yeah.

00:10:42 RMJ

Yeah. Um. So I'm curious if you would talk a little bit more about, um. When you describe like, how you consider being trans a political identity. How would you? How do you like, uh, mean that.

00:10:59 SUNMI

I guess because there is no choice, unfortunately.

00:11:03 RMJ

Mm-hmm.

00:11:06 SUNMI

There are a lot of people out there who hate trans people.

00:11:09 RMJ

Sure.

00:11:09 SUNMI

So. Um. And, and, and that just doesn't necessarily like tie into the politicization of being trans I suppose. It's, it's, I guess, I don't know, I think. There is too much history of. There *is* so much history of um. Trans people being activists, caring about things like. Housing and poverty and all the things that intersect with being trans or marginalized in any way. It's like if you were to just like turn away at all those things then.

00:11:50 SUNMI

Yeah, you know, like. Then. I don't know. Yeah, it's like. You're, you're not here for all trans people.

00:12:01 RMJ

Right. Yeah, definitely.

00:12:04 SUNMI

Yeah.

00:12:05 RMJ

Um. Yeah. And kind of similarly then like. In your work, especially like, what do you see as that, like when we talk about that like, liberatory, liberatory possibility. Uhm, what, like what to you is that, like liberatory possibility of making art?

00:12:25 SUNMI

Oh, OK, this just my brain made the connection again, which is that I think it's that it's the. What I really want.

I think like I. Yeah, I've been in a very reflective uh, period of my life, I suppose, and reflective on my own art and practice and such. I think it is that it is. The liberatory angle is the, I think connection making, that it is always...Find yourself and other people and to make those connections that I have personally, and I know many people who are isolated, obviously, have felt isolated or been isolated for many, from many factors you know of whatever, like your current situation, identity and all that.

00:13:28 SUNMI

I think, yeah. Connection making is kind of the number one thing that I want out of my art, and out of what I'm trying to put out there is to like. Yeah, continually see yourself in other people and continually choose to connect rather than to self-isolate.

Which is very loaded right now with COVID, because we should be isolating, but in some ways, um, or other. Yeah, you know.

00:14:04 RMJ

Yeah, totally, I get you. So like, the way, the way you're thinking about it seems very interested in like. Almost like it's a dialogue with other people, right, like, like the people who are, like, reading your work or like other artists that you also connect with and things like that?

00:14:14 SUNMI

Yeah.

00:14:19 SUNMI

Mhm. Yeah, definitely.

00:14:23 RMJ

Yeah.

00:14:25 SUNMI

Yeah, I, I—Yeah, I don't. Everyone's like ohh cartoonists like are all so like. You know, you sit at your desk all day and it sucks, but it's like. But I'm like.

And I'm like, I do like drawing and having time to myself, but with like the current projects that I'm working on, especially the one that's with the small press that's going to be my own independent, my next independent work that I. I've used it actually. Yeah. My comics are basically like an excuse to make more friends and uh, to do more research because I want to learn new things and I want to make more friends. So. I think that comics should be like that. Like, yeah.

00:15:17 RMJ

Yeah.

00:15:18 CGJ

That's something I say to my students a lot is that art is a form of communication. Like we're communicating something, right.

00:15:26 SUNMI

And so you can't just do that by yourself all the time.

00:15:29 RMJ

Definitely. And I think that's interesting cause obvious like, you kind of were talking about this too. But that like mentality of like, the, the solitary artist, like whether it's comics or any other form of like visual art, right, like the image is very much like, usually a white guy. But like, you know, like the, the, the like sad alone guy who's just like--

00:15:47 SUNMI

Mm-hmm. You're the like lone genius at your easel.

00:15:54 RMJ

Right. And then like it's more about the outcome right, and then it's like whatever the final thing is, is the thing that like is shared with the world, that it's like an emblematic of, like one person.

00:16:02 SUNMI

Mm-hmm. Yeah. Your magnum opus.

00:16:07 RMJ

Right. And I think like what you're describing is more, I think real, you know, like actually what it's like, but also that, like, uh, antithetical to that, right is like, actually the process is the important part. And that's like where you're, like connecting to people and, um.

00:16:22 SUNMI

Yeah, yeah. It's more fun too.

00:16:26 RMJ

Definitely more fun, and it brings me to one of the things I want to talk to you about, which is *Datura*, um, which is an anthology that you and your partner edit and publish that's like a josei-inspired comics anthology, which I'm super not biased about, *ahem*. Both Cathy and I have contributed comics—

00:16:46 SUNMI

Of course not.

00:16:49 RMJ

For context, for the listener, both Cathy and I have comics to *Datura*—

00:16:53 CGJ

We are, we are incredibly biased. That was a lie.

00:16:56 RMJ

That was a joke. So *Datura* deliberately takes what y'all call like, a gender expansive approach to girls' love, GL, and boys' love, BL comics, um, like I'm thinking especially about like, we made a chart for the, the second one, right, that was like, girl yaoi, boy yuri, GL BL. And we kind of like use that to position our work. Um, so what was sort of like your initial conceptualization for *Datura*, like, what was sort of the like the spark, let's say that, like, made you want to start that project?

00:17:35 SUNMI

So, I think the spark-slash-precursor was that I have always liked um, comics magazines, and especially mango ones like *Shojo Beat* and like *Shounen Jump*. Basically, those are big two basically, but I think when I in 2018, I spent a week with Carta Monir, kind of an unofficial residency, unofficial residency at her house in Ann Arbor.

I remember talking to Carta about it. I was like, I think it would be great to do like an indie comics publication that leaned more towards girls love slash lesbian stories, I think, not that like, well, I don't know. I think people still to this day have this feeling that there's, uh, more of a lean towards Boy's Love and boys' media and I suppose in the mainstream, yeah, like gay movies, like stories about gay men and boys.

00:18:41 SUNMI

And I feel like in that sense, there's also quite a bit of research and academic—academia around yaoi and the history of boys, love and yaoi. Not that there isn't of yuri because there is a lot of academia around Yuri too. I've read it and I pay attention to it since I started being interested. Um But, um, yeah, you know, so I feel like. I told Carta about it, especially in the context being that obviously she's a trans woman, that I was like, I want to see more lesbian media that focuses on trans voices, trans people and, um.

Yeah, you know, it's just gender expansive. Like I think like, um, I really don't have much interest in girl's love or boy's love, that is catered to a mainstream taste, like I personally don't find like, you know, very skinny girls or fit men particularly attractive when it's just putting two Barbie dolls to each other, essentially kind of, like girl's love boy's love.

00:20:00 SUNMI

Like I, I think it's fun. I still, I do still enjoy reading some of it like the webtoons or manga and all that. But I would like to see indie comics and comics that obviously would have more stories and more people and bodies.

Yeah. You know, I think like, and also in terms of again the academia aspect of yaoi and boy's love that um. Obviously people point out that there's a huge audience of women and not cis men who enjoy yaoi. It's kind of culturally accepted-ish, in Japan and in the US or.

I guess not culturally accepted, but it's like it's a, it's, everyone knows that there is a huge readership that is not gay men.

00:20:52 SUNMI

And that, for that, in terms of that, that. Um. You know, whenever anyone wants to argue, like is yaoi even like gay or like, is it for gay men? And it's like, well, that's not the point. The point is that. It's uh, it's a gender expansive fantasy, you know, it's a gender expansive fantasy for whoever enjoys it, whether they are a gay man or not. And so I would, I felt with *Datura* and obviously with everyone we've collaborated with *Datura* who enjoys the kind of queer comics that we do that I want to push for gender-expansive lesbian comics. I think we need to push against conservative ideas of lesbianism and woman, womanhood. I think that... We should also, yeah, push against the politically queer aspect of being a lesbian or being in the space of girl's love.

That's why I think we pushed the gender expansive side of it a lot like, yeah. Yeah.

00:22:07 RMJ

Yeah. And when we're talking about like. Just for folks who maybe aren't as familiar, um, when we, when you're when we're talking about like *gender-expansive lesbianism*, like, how would you define that?

00:22:21 SUNMI

I think personally... And I just I get worried about talking about it because people get so touchy about--

00:22:31 RMJ

Mm-hmm.

00:22:33 SUNMI

--This sacredness of what womanhood is, you know, that's kind of obviously why TERFism is a problem.

00:22:36 RMJ

Right.

00:22:43 SUNMI

Um. It's really funny because it's like I have been trying to feel like more of a gay man. I've been, obviously.

00:22:50 RMJ

Mm-hmm.

00:22:53 SUMMI

I. Yeah, like I, I have been on testosterone for five years. I see my gender in a particular way that's fluid. Yeah, I think that it's what I would like to see is more of an embrace of fluidity for all people. That could even, that includes cis people, that cis people experience gender too. That it's oppressive for cis women and cis men too.

When I think of gender expansiveness, I think that everyone should be allowed to feel like a woman, is kind of how I'll put it without trying to get too into it. Yeah.

00:23:40 RMJ

Sure. Yeah, I like that. I think it's a fun. It's a good way to put it. Yeah. Yeah. And I know –full disclosure I have. I know you've been reading a lot about this kind of thing too. So this is like, I'm like, oh, yeah. I wanna talk to Sunmi about gender..

And sort of continuing with this, with *Datura*, how do you think—has, has how you think of like *Datura* and your goals for *Datura* changed since you started, because it's been a couple of years now. Yeah, you've had like 2 anthologies or two uh volumes.

00:24:11 SUNMI

Yeah. Yeah. So now we've we started in 2021. And then yeah, and, er. Yeah, we started the really production and the idea in 2021. So then we put out issue one 2022 and then issue two last year, 2023.

I don't. I think that *Datura* kind of philosophy is evolving. I think obviously every person who's going to make a comic for *Datura* will come up with something amazing and interesting and pushing on what *Datura* is and can be.

Yeah, I think. I don't know. Um, yeah.

00:25:01 SUNMI

I guess it it, it has changed but also. Maybe it's gotten stronger. The like, core of it, I don't know. Yeah.

I can't say for sure myself. I get so focused on the details that it's hard to like. Look at the big picture sometimes. Um, and it's only two issues, which is amazing, but hopefully at least four? We, we're going to try to aim for four but who knows.

00:25:30 RMJ

At least for one, for each quarter. Yeah. And then I, I think we've kind of talked about this a little bit already, but just to sort of kind of continue on this train, um, I think it's pretty clear that like *Datura's* philosophy is pretty connected to like your own approach to work right, and sort of like these ideas, like the politics of transness and also like solidarity with like other like, intersectional.

00:25:52 SUNMI

Mm-hmm.

00:25:59 RMJ

You know, solidarity with other marginalized groups.

00:26:00 SUNMI

Mm-hmm.

00:26:03 RMJ

So I think like. Maybe the more interesting question is like. Um. You know, you are...like when you are editing or like you know, assembling *Datura* like, it, does that feel like an extension of your like when you were drawing a comic right or do you sort of see those as like separate things?

00:26:27 SUNMI

Hmm. I mean. I guess they're separate things because it's a different headspace to take. But they are definitely connected in that like I obviously get a lot out of organizing *Datura* with Mar like it, it teaches me a lot. It pushes me like the comics that I read.

Every comic I read basically will show me something that I've never seen before and makes me feel like I could make better comics, like, um, get new ideas, you know, push my own philosophy and practice like. Yeah, they're connected, but also when I get into the like headspace of the like, all the, all the little tasks and things that make something happen...

Yeah, it's, it's a different headspace than drawing. If anything, ot's made it hard to get back into drawing.

00:27:36 RMJ

Definitely.

00:27:39 SUNMI

I've been having trouble coming back to drawing. For many reasons.

00:27:45 RMJ

Do you—yeah, that's fair. Um. Is it like just a—The shift in mental process or...?

00:27:55 SUNMI

I think so. Yeah. I think it, it has been because like I think, I've had periods of time where I'll draw a lot, like I'll draw every day.

But um, I don't know. Yeah. Sometimes when you fall out of it, I guess it's just like a habit that you have to recreate or, you know, I guess that's why they say it's like the difference between a hobby and a making it a job or making it a real practice is that yeah, you know, if it's a hobby, yeah. If there's no pressure, you should do it when you want to. You should only do it when it brings you joy. But if it's your job, you have to do it. *(laughs)*

00:28:31 RMJ

(laughs) Yeah. You don't have much of a choice.

00:28:34 SUNMI

Yeah.

00:28:36 RMJ

Um, I want to, because we're kind of like on this train of thought, I'm going to jump ahead a little bit in my questions.

00:28:41 SUNMI

Yeah.

00:28:42 RMJ

What is your—This is one of my favorite questions to ask people. What is your take on trans representation? That could be specific to comics, that can be sort of more broadly in the

media landscape, and then, how would you position your work in relationship to that concept?

00:29:03 SUNMI

Um, yeah, I listened to Emma's, uhm Emma's episode too, um, so I, it's so, for some reason, you know, it came up again, I remembered what she said, which is that, like, uh, yeah, I also am in the camp of I am not interested in representation as a concept. I know what the, what people will get out of it. I know that it has value, so I won't like diminish that, but I have never been interested in representation. I think because growing up obviously—

Well, it's, that's the silly thing, is that when I came up with the concept for *Firebird*, it was that me being like, well, no one has ever made a comic graphic novel about a teen who's a queer Korean person, blah blah blah, blah. All the things that would have been my representation growing up.

00:29:58 SUNMI

Um, but I really did not. Yeah, like, if anything, I think our generation having experienced a media landscape where there was no definitive trans or queer representation and that we had to seek homoeroticism and queerness and everything, that. I think it has. I feel like it's made my experience richer.

Um, so, I, so in that sense that yeah, it's like I don't need a representation like I don't need the perfect like Korean trans story like. I'm more interested in Korean people and trans people and disabled people and etcetera, like other facets of our experiences. I'm interested in people exploring, exploring their experiences. Like I really would rather one person's attempt to really dive into what that is what they've experienced and, and I'd rather I'd rather see something fresh in that way than just like the side character that's the like. This is my trans character in the TV show that, you know, that guy over there? He's trans. Cool.

00:31:24 RMJ

Sure. Like the different like.

00:31:25 SUNMI

Yeah.

00:31:27 RMJ

Like it, it almost sounds like it's a question of like, a kind of intentionality where there's a difference between like, someone exploring their own situation. You know ideas, feelings, life versus like.

00:31:40 SUNMI

MHM.

00:31:43 RMJ

Someone, whether they're part of that group or not, being like. I'm, I'm, I have like a this is the character that is this, this thing. Enjoy it, right? The, the sort of like, a, a literal representation versus.

00:31:54 SUNMI

Yeah.

00:31:56 RMJ

Like, representation in the sense of like, just have, own voices. Basically right, the whole own voices movement.

00:32:02 SUNMI

Yeah, yeah. And I know that there's criticisms of the own voices idea too, but personally, I connect more... I connect a lot to a stranger on the street who just decides to dump their entire life story on me, like, which happens quite a bit. You know, I feel like I know a lot of people don't like that when it happens to them, but I don't mind. I'm like, OK, tell me your life story. Like, let's go.

I don't know, that's how I feel about the comics and the stories that I take in media too, that like, I feel like what really drew me instantly to zines and indie comics, is that you are seeing people given the freedom to truly just say what they want or create the story that they want that really explores all the themes and nuances of their experiences, whether or not I suppose it even is their own experiences. Like, yeah, like, even if you were.

00:33:04 RMJ

Mm-hmm.

00:33:06 SUNMI

To, like yeah, it just but the like. Real ability to just like, get deep into it, I suppose. Or not, I mean, even if it's very shallow, cause like, I have been reading this like ridiculous manga lately that's like.

The, I, I feel bad, I don't remember the artist name, but she was like, basically put all her favorite tropes into this shojo manga where she was like I really like guys with eye patches. And also, I wanted to explore like a deaf character who has to, you know, speak in sign language. So I wanted to draw sign language in my comic. And also it's like a, gender bending twins. So it's like a pair of fraternal twins have to go to each other's school and cross dress, and then their love interests, who are the character who has the eye patch and the sign language are also fraternal twins. (Laughing) That's ridiculous.

00:34:04 RMJ

Wait, what's the name of this?

00:34:04 SUNMI

The point thing is that—I will. I will. It's like, I think, Oh my God, it's called *So Cute It Hurts*.

00:34:11 RMJ

Oh my God. Perfect.

00:34:11 SUNMI

It's just, it's on the Viz manga app.

00:34:13 CGJ

I literally googled “gender bending manga eye patch sign language” and *So Cute It Hurts* is the first.

00:34:20 RMJ

(Laughing) Perfect.

00:34:22 SUNMI

Because the, the artist in the very first page is like they just really wanted all of these things in one comic. And I'm like, that's so beautiful.

00:34:22 CGJ

It's from 2012 to 2015, which I, it's interesting to think about tropes from 12 years ago. Yeah.

00:34:39 SUNMI

It is interesting! Yeah.

Yeah. So actually, it's not even about getting deep into it, which I mean, it is because I do love when people are like, let me just dive into all of the trauma and like life that I've lived or whatever. But I also do like when people are just like very self indulgent like, we just wanted these in a story.

00:35:05 CGJ

That makes sense to me. Like you, you want people to be truthful to themselves.

00:35:09 SUNMI

Yeah. Oh, yeah. Yeah. Because that is the truth too. Yeah.

00:35:13 RMJ

Definitely.

00:35:17 RMJ

Perfect. OK. Um, so keeping on this same thought, because you, you talked about like and I agree with you, 'cause I think we kind of grew up in the similar time of like, there, there wasn't media that was specifically catering to, like younger queer and trans people, especially trans people, yeah.

00:35:35 SUNMI

Yeah, that's that's probably the way to phrase it. You're right, yeah.

00:35:39 RMJ

So. Uh. What then from like when you like when you were growing up or like now as an adult, like when you think of like, where you had to kind of look for that homoeroticism or whatever, um what are some of your favorites depictions?

00:35:55 CGJ

I picked up on that too.

00:35:56 SUNMI

(Overlapping) Speaking of—

00:35:56 CGJ

I was like, are you talking about fanfic? Like what are you--

00:36:01 SUNMI

Fanfic is great too.

00:36:01 RMJ

Listen.

00:36:06 SUNMI

So, uh, yes. Speaking of crossdressing or well, *Ranma ½* is obviously the most influential comic to me. I was probably a bit too young when I was reading *Ranma ½* because I remember I was also not quite adolescent when I was reading it at the library.

Um, but I was talking about this recently. I mean, Koreans are kind of like, cool with nudity because we have a bathhouse culture. Not all Koreans, of course, especially growing up in the US, but I did have the experience of going to public bath houses both in the US and Korea since I was a child, so *Ranma ½* was not anything jarring to me in the sense that there's all this nudity. So.

00:36:49 SUNMI

I mean, that's not even the point of *Ranma ½*. The point of *Ranma ½* is that he's, he falls into like, whenever he gets splashed with hot water—or cold water, he turns into a girl and then to turn back he gets splashed with hot water, which is why a lot of antics will happen in the public bathhouse. But yeah, *Ranma ½* and then subsequently a lot of comics by Rumiko Takahashi.

Uh. Yeah. I just. That is, I think, a lot of trans people who love *Ranma ½* because there is a lot of trans people who love *Ranma ½*, I mean what it is, what it provided for us as kids or teens or adults, even anyone who reads *Ranma ½* is the because, you know, I think criticisms like surface level criticisms for people who have not read *Ranma ½* or that like, oh, it's problematic. Like, um, whatever you know, gender bending, cross dressing, whatever. But I mean, Ranma, the main character when he becomes a girl.

00:37:55 SUNMI

At first it's he's a little bit like, Oh my God, whoa. But then he, like, eases into it really fast, and he's very comfortable. And then he becomes more comfortable with his girl love interest, Akane, when he's a girl. Like, she's actually more comfortable with him when she he's a girl. So he is basically a lesbian and a gay man because his other primary love triangle is with Rioga, who also is interested in Akane. But then Rioga and Ranma, just in being such rivals for love, there are so many chapters where, they, they're just, they're also very gay. They're bros, you know.

I find them to be kind of the ideal love throuple, or. Yeah, because yeah, it allows Ranma to essentially be both a gay man and a lesbian. And that's kind of how I feel so.

00:38:49 RMJ

Yeah, I was going to say this fits really well into what we were talking about as an example of that kind of like gender expansive, right? Where it's like a very.

00:38:56 SUNMI

It's gender expansive, and it's like whether Rumiko Takahashi realized that or not that's how she wrote it. It's like, I just saw a interview question recently, randomly on Twitter, where someone asked her like. What would you do? What would happen if you turned into a man and she was just like, well, I'd find a wife. I was like, *yeah*.

00:39:16 RMJ

Yeah, you can go do that right now, don't you?

00:39:20 SUNMI

You can find a wife anytime. You can also turn into a man anytime.

00:39:22 RMJ

Right. You can turn into a man and find a wife. There's unlimited possibilities in the world.

00:39:22 SUNMI

The technology.

00:39:32 RMJ

And, um. Uh, I want to kind of like. We've also talked about this a little bit, but like kind of bringing some of this idea back to like community, this is another thing that came up in my conversation with Emma that I want to like, ask you about which is like.

How would you actually define comics community and trans comic community?

00:39:58 SUNMI

Ah. I think. Uh, also, hearing the criticisms of approaching comics as a community versus as an industry, you know, the romanticization of that, we could all get along or that, you know, we're all in this together.

Um, because obviously that's not the case. But I do still have this feeling that it's like when it comes to comics, independently published comics and scenes, it's like ideally, yeah.

You're, you're making it for a community you want everyone who reads your comics and your zines, yeah, you want to engage with them. You want to support them too. You want to see the comics that they make and the zines that they come up with.

00:40:42 SUNMI

Um, so, personally. I do kind of view the people that I came up with, I suppose, and also the people who were well established in comics and self-publishing before me, who have been self-publishing for a long time.

00:41:04 RMJ

Mm-hmm.

00:41:05 SUNMI

I do see them as my community, and I do... Like the trans cartoonists that I've befriended over the years, yeah, like, um. I am interested in staying in touch with everyone and seeing how they grow and keeping each other alive.

00:41:28 RMJ

Right. So it sounds like you're, if you think of it as like.

00:41:29 SUNMI

Yeah.

00:41:33 RMJ

Again, sort of. That solidarity idea, right. It's like keeping up with people and also having that, like reciprocal, like, or not necessarily reciprocal, but like that, being able to materially help each other, right? And sort of like material aspects of it.

00:41:44 SUNMI

Yes, yes. I think yes, right, materially help each other. And I suppose even beyond materially helping each other because obviously we're all struggling, um, but uh.

I think emotionally helping each other or like emotionally staying connected to in the sense that like, yeah, it's like I have an interest in your stories, your ideas, and thus, of course I care about you as a person too.

Um. Yeah, like I, I care about your well-being and I care about like, your path.

00:42:25 RMJ

Yeah. And I know we mentioned like in your bio you mentioned like that you've been a part of, like a lot, you've been a part of these, like DIY communities, a long time. And I know that because, like, I think we've been tabling it like shows and stuff for the same amount of time.

00:42:44 SUNMI

Yeah, yeah.

00:42:45 RMJ

So do you think like your understanding of community was shaped by those experiences?

00:42:53 SUNMI

Definitely so tabling I think, um, tabling also has a lot of baggage, but if I was not tabling then I would not have gotten to yeah, interact with all these communities, all these local scenes in um, primarily when I was reflecting on it, yeah, East Coast, Midwest, West Coast.

00:43:16 RMJ

Mm-hmm.

00:43:17 SUNMI

Yeah, like I did a residency in 2018, too, like a official one in Chicago. And that week that I spent in Chicago was like truly the best. I love Chicago. I like think Chicago's probably, I think it's the best city in America personally.

00:43:37 RMJ

Mm-hmm.

00:43:38 SUNMI

I think Chicago is great and um, obviously that time that I got to spend in Chicago because I was able to do that residency. Yeah, I got to spend so much time with the Chicago scene and it was really, really excellent and.

Love those people, love those cartoonists and zinesters.

00:43:59 RMJ

So, if, it sounds like you feel very connected to like. Previous generations also, right. Like it's do you do you sort of like see yourself in that lineage of like previous DIY artists?

00:44:15 SUNMI

Hmm. I suppose so.

00:44:20 SUNMI

I mean. Yeah, it's interesting because I grew up in the Bay Area, but I have not actually been... When I was—So I feel like I should probably like clarify that my start in learning about DIY and comics and scenes was specifically with the small press Youth in Decline which was run by my friend Ryan.

Back then, I was mostly hanging out with Ryan when I would visit San Francisco. I was not tapped into the actual scene back then. It's something that's interesting to me because. Yeah, I, I just wasn't. But in recent years I have, visiting my mom and hanging out in that area.

00:45:15 SUNMI

There's a Silver Sprocket, the bookstore comic publisher and bookstore has, I think, been a huge force in just creating this amazing comics community out there, um, really giving a space for everyone to meet and also publish uh, which is really incredible.

Um. So yeah, I guess. I have been connected to previous generations of cartoonists through Ryan.

00:45:46 RMJ

Mm-hmm.

00:45:48 SUNMI

And through being able to table. It's, it's. Yeah. I don't know.

I think that's obviously, yeah, I, I do see that as quite a privilege that not everyone is afforded. Also, the fact that I'm bi-coastal, yeah. Yeah, I don't know, I have. I, I feel like.

But that's the thing is that personally, when I think about my own inspirations with like DIY artists and scenes like I found a lot of it online too. Like that is also how I found Ryan was not just through shows which technically I did. I, I did meet him at SPX pretty early on. But um.

00:46:25 RMJ

Mm-hmm.

00:46:34 SUNMI

But no, I, I've been very online since I was a kid, so I feel like online you can connect to people too. That's really important. And I don't think that that should also be the value of that is huge. I find that some of the artists that I'm most inspired by are international.

00:46:53 RMJ

Mm-hmm.

00:46:54 SUNMI

International artists. And then I feel that also these days I, I go further back in time too, like not just DIY, but it's like. I just like think ancient art is amazing, so I just go further and further back in time and I just, I seek a lot of connection and inspiration in Ancient art.

00:47:17 RMJ

Oh, that's so cool. Can you tell me more about that?

00:47:20 SUNMI

Oh yeah, because I think cartooning has been around for a very long time obviously. Primitive art, some people think is kind of a form of cartooning because you're simplifying the form.

00:47:31 RMJ

Right.

00:47:33 SUNMI

Yeah, I think, uh. Yeah, I see cartooning in every kind of world art.

00:47:42 RMJ

And I. Is that like also because I know, uh, you do talk about using like, Korean history, histories and mythologies and queer histories and mythologies, do you think is like that also—Like, are you looking at Korean ancient art especially, are you looking at sort of like all over?

00:47:57 SUNMI

All over, for sure I do. I do look at a lot of um, Ancient Korean art and whether it's like visual or otherwise.

But uh. Yeah, I don't know. Yeah, yeah. Korea has a Korea has quite a bit. But I do look more at like, I don't know. I've been seeing a lot of medieval art, like medieval European. I think Islamic art is amazing.

Um. What else? I mean Japan. Japan obviously has a huge long and. Like a lot of woodblock and all that. Uh, China. Obviously huge.

00:48:43 RMJ

Sure.

00:48:45 SUNMI

I think Ethiopian Christian art is really cool. They all have these eyes. They're like big black pupils.

00:48:52 RMJ

Right.

00:48:57 RMJ

I remember you made a tweet, I, I still remember your tweet of one of the, like, Ethiopian, it was a sculpture with the like the big eyes. And then like the image of Illumi.

00:49:06 SUNMI

That was, that was a viral tweet, yeah. Yeah. People were spreading that. Yeah.

00:49:12 RMJ

So funny.

00:49:14 SUNMI

Exactly.

Yeah, I think it's, it's, it's like we should draw a lot of inspire inspiration of course from our peers and uh contemporaries, but Ancient art is so cool.

00:49:26 RMJ

Yeah, absolutely.

00:49:36 RMJ

Yeah, and. Um.

00:49:41 RMJ

Hm. Let me think. So you've been tabling for a pretty long time. How do you feel about like comic and zine fests, generally or like, broadly.

00:49:53 SUNMI

Broadly... I'm definitely getting tired of it. I'm getting burnt out, but also it is a source of income.

00:50:03 RMJ

Mm-hmm.

00:50:03 SUNMI

Even if maybe in terms of like the cost of doing it, if it actually does lead to a profit.

00:50:10 RMJ

Sure.

00:50:13 SUNMI

Which is why it's like oh maybe I'm getting burnt out because it's like I've had enough experiences for a lifetime.

No, I mean I, I haven't. But uh. I, I think comics shows and zine fests. Ah. Yeah, they're.

00:50:35 SUNMI

Is it? Is it terrible to say they're necessary evil under capitalism I suppose?

00:50:38 RMJ

No, not at all.

00:50:41 SUNMI

Yeah, that it gives us a space to share our work right? Like it's.

00:50:44 RMJ

Mm-hmm.

00:50:46 SUNMI

They're all flawed. We all try not to, obviously like.

00:50:48 RMJ

Sure.

00:50:52 SUNMI

Be rude to organizers because I've also organized scene fest. I have also organized zine fests and art markets. It's a lot of work. All work in indie comics is a little thankless, but it is still very fulfilling, so. That's why everyone keeps doing it.

00:51:11 RMJ

Yeah.

00:51:17 CGJ

You should come to Queer and Trans Zine Fest in Providence.

00:51:20 SUNMI

Oh, I do really want to do that one, yeah.

00:51:22 CGJ

That's the problem is, it's the week before SPX,

00:51:26 SUNMI

(Overlapping) Which is rough timing.

00:51:27 RMJ

(Overlapping) Yeah that's such a hard thing.

00:51:22 CGJ

Which is such a big, big thing for you all, but it's like, feels so good.

00:51:32 SUNMI

I know I really do want to go. I love Providence. It's been a long time.

00:51:38 CGJ

And uh, people are paid to table.

00:51:43 SUNMI

Ohh. Nice. I. Yeah, that's great. Yeah.

00:51:43 CGJ

Rather than paying. Yeah. So then then you're more subsidized. Cause I think a lot of the problems is that a zine is 5 bucks, and a table is many hundreds of dollars, right? Yeah.

00:51:56 RMJ

Right.

00:51:56 SUNMI

Yeah. Mm-hmm.

00:51:57 RMJ

It is and I think. I think you're getting at something interesting Sunmi where we talk about like, you know, obviously a lot of my questions are very much like community focused, but it is a, it is also labor, right, like you said it's a source of income.

00:52:09 SUNMI

It's labor, yeah.

00:52:11 RMJ

And I think like. It, you know, like whether people find types of community in that or not it is still like a, a type of community that is structured under capitalism, right.

00:52:23 SUNMI

It is, yes.

00:52:24 RMJ

So, it is. It is interesting to sort of also think about like. That like, like in the uh, let's like, in, if, if, if there wasn't income to be had like would we go, you know.

00:52:44 SUNMI

Well, that's what I've been interested in too is that I would really love—I saw some risograph studios in Seattle. I feel bad, I don't remember which, but they, someone shared on my radar on Instagram that they did a zine picnic and I've been wanting to do that for at least a year or two but haven't gone around to it because.

00:53:01 RMJ

Oh!

00:53:03 SUNMI

That's really cute, just like everyone bring your scenes hang out in the park. Just read zines, trade zines. Just hang out. I would love to see much more DIY community stuff that is not centered around exchange of money, even though exchange of money is what allows us to print zines.

00:53:24 RMJ

Right.

00:53:24 SUNMI

So that is important, yeah.

00:53:26 RMJ

Definitely. Well, and, and that even goes like, thinking about like 90s zine culture.

00:53:32 SUNMI

Mm-hmm.

00:53:32 RMJ

Um, you know, zine fests have always been a thing, but like there also was. I feel like, like a very rich culture of just like sending people stuff or just trading stuff via PO Box, which I think is—

00:53:44 CGJ

I feel like a big part of early zines is everyone was stealing copies, and now that's really tricky. And now zine, like people, what people call zines are like, fully—

00:53:50 RMJ

Yes.

00:53:50 SUNMI

Yeah.

00:53:56 CGJ

Either they're like—

00:53:56 Sunmi

Very high production.

00:53:59 CGJ

Yeah. Like people were stealing copies so they could give them away for free.

00:54:00 SUNMI

(Overlapping) Or more higher production.

00:54:03 RMJ

Mm-hmm. And you can't, even if you were like paid copies even back then, were a lot cheaper. Like even at my library, it's like \$0.50 a page now or something ridiculous, right? Which is if you're trying to print like 100 zines, not doable.

00:54:14 SUNMI

Yeah, yeah. Uh-huh. Nope. For sure.

00:54:21 CGJ

It's interesting thinking about art interacting with that right, like what you want from your publication in an artistic way.

00:54:25 RMJ

Yeah.

00:54:32 CGJ

Versus that monetary issue.

00:54:32 SUNMI

Yeah, definitely.

00:54:38 CGJ

Because *Datura* is beautiful, like it's risographed and handmade. And that was the choice you made.

00:54:44 RMJ

And you guys are—Right. And you guys are very careful, I think in calling *Datura* a *magazine* and like clarifying like this is sort of like a, a higher production art object and not like a cheap zine.

00:54:59 SUNMI

Yep. Yeah, because I felt like anxiety about putting such a high price tag on *Datura*.

00:55:07 SUNMI

Um, I have never sold scenes for more than \$10 if they're the nice ones, but a lot of my scenes are \$5 and under still, you know, I just feel like, yeah, you know, so. Um.

00:55:15 RMJ

Yeah.

00:55:20 SUNMI

But people wanted that. They want it, they want to support *Datura*, they want to support the artists and they want to support the publication. So I, I'm really grateful for that.

Yeah, I, I, I, I do think that the like distinction between what makes a zine or art book or whatever is kind of wild these days. Uh. Both in like, the like indie comic spaces or in like fanzine culture.

The fan, fandom culture is wild, I think, and I'm also kind of familiar with it, because I've, I've done quite a bit of art for fanzines.

00:55:56 RMJ

Oh yeah. Yeah, it it's so interesting because I do feel like, the fanzine culture comes out of more of that lineage of like anime cons or like.

00:56:10 SUNMI

Yep, Yep.

00:56:10 RMJ

You know, like I have a lot of friends who have made, you know, most of their income by tabling at anime cons, which is a very different vibe from like, SPX or whatever. And the polish like the expectation of like, polish is way higher because you're competing with like, licensed merchandise.

00:56:29 SUNMI

I always think that that's so funny that I remember going to anime cons in the like early 2000s, mid-2010s and that like even back then they were still doing the like. Laminated the paper like, you drew your character you laminated and then whole punch it and that's a key chain. I, when I real, when I saw that like a shift into the like everyone getting their like mass-produced acrylic key chains I was like, whoa.

00:56:57 RMJ

Yeah, it's wild.

00:56:58 SUNMI

That's not DIY anymore.

00:57:00 RMJ

(Laughing) It's really not.

00:57:01 CGJ

I really experienced that, it was, it was very jarring to go back to Flame Con for the first time since like 2017 or something jarring how many acrylic keychains there were.

00:57:14 RMJ

Oh, yeah. Because Flame Con is really interesting because I feel like it's both. It's like 3. Well, it's anime con people and indie people and then also like Marvel DC mainstream.

00:57:23 SUNMI

The Marvel DC yeah, yeah. Comics umbrella.

00:57:26 RMJ

So it's like such a weird blend of stuff.

00:57:31 SUNMI

It's very funny and unique.

00:57:33 RMJ

Yeah, you don't, you don't often see all those, those different like audiences hitting each other like tidal waves.

00:57:38 SUNMI

Yeah, but queer people love everything.

00:57:42 CGJ

Yeah. And the expectations, like the convention expectations, that is what was so interesting to me.

00:57:45 SUNMI

Yeah. Oh, yeah, yeah.

00:57:50 RMJ

Do you mean like from like the convention itself or from like audience?

00:57:54 CGJ

The audi—well, uh, so I tabled last year and it was like people looking for their fandom versus like. Like, like, just like being an indie comics person is just like such a different. The audience expectations are very different of what you are selling.

00:58:10 SUNMI

Yeah, yeah, yeah. For sure.

00:58:15 RMJ

No, totally cause it is again, like when you're on an anime like or at least, when I'm an anime cotton. I'm like I want merch of my yaoi boys kissing like I'm not as interested in like individual like, oh, this person's art is just good, you know, versus when I'm at, like, a, an indie show.

00:58:29 CGJ

Yes, yes, but there were plenty of people who would, like, compliment me and be like, oh, I really like your artwork, but that's like, like, I'm here to get. Um. I don't know. Whatever, uh.

00:58:40 RMJ

Stucky.

00:58:43 CGJ

Yeah. I was trying to think of what, what's the name? Danmei. A lot of danmei.

00:58:46 RMJ

Oh yeah, the danmei, yeah.

00:58:47 SUNMI

Oh, that's gone bigger too. Yeah, yeah.

00:58:49 RMJ

That makes sense, yeah.

00:58:51 SUNMI

Yeah.

00:58:54 RMJ

All right, so sort of, this actually is a pretty nice transition to one of my last questions, if not my last question, which is uh, what do you think is the future of comics or scenes about transness?

00:59:08 SUNMI

This is the one that I when I looked at all your questions, I was like, oh, this one's rough. Because I don't even know about the future, future as a concept of, I mean uh.

00:59:22 SUNMI

Ah. I. I, hm. The future of comics and scenes about transness. I mean, I believe that the... I don't know it's, it's, it's hard not to feel like it's a bit bleak right now. Just the conservative pushback against queerness and trans people and rights in general, so.

00:59:49 RMJ

Mhmm.

00:59:52 SUNMI

To me it feels like those who are willing to stick to their, their wits will keep making the work that they want to, regardless of every, all like, outside factors and I'm there with them and I want to see that survive and.

01:00:09 RMJ

Mm-hmm.

01:00:15 SUNMI

Make really submersive and—subversive. Subversive. Uh, you know. Yeah, like I, I, I want to see that kind of work. And so I believe it will happen.

Um, so I guess that's what it is, is that it's like I only have so much in my control and power and. So. The future that I want to see, I will contribute to. And I will also support those who are making, yeah, good work about being trans and continuing to be trans.

01:00:57 RMJ

Wonderful. Thank you. I have.. um. I think that's a good place to wrap. So if that sounds good, but we do have one very important question that I almost forgot last time, um.

01:01:10 CGJ

Super important.

01:01:11 RMJ

Which is, um, what have you been reading lately?

01:01:16 SUNMI

I have been reading books. Um, again. It's taken me a while, but I'm back to it. I read *Paul Takes the Form of a Mortal Girl*, another uh genderfluid, contemporary fiction that's wonderful.

01:01:35 CGJ

It's set in the 90s.

01:01:36 SUNMI

Loved it. It's in the 90s. Oh, yeah. So it's kind of a period piece too.

01:01:44 CGJ

(Laughing) I read it too. What did you like about it?.

01:01:47 SUNMI

Yeah. I really enjoyed the freewheeling story, the like, following Paul as he/she moves through many communities and spaces and is morphing to fit those spaces. I think that that's fantastic, you know? Yeah, we don't see that's the thing is that I, why I feel.

The bleakness I feel in the like media literacy landscape is really informed by how conservatism is making people afraid.

01:02:23 RMJ

Mm-hmm.

01:02:23 SUNMI

Is making people afraid to embrace narratives that allow for the characters to be. Uh, you know? Yeah. Like fluid, like that it's like you aren't a fixed person. It's not like you were magically trans or like that once you're trans, everything's fixed. Or that like. Yeah, you know, yeah, I, I feel like everything is heavily policed and monitored, we are all we are all heavily policed and monitored. I mean some more than others obviously with the racial aspect but.

Even just the feeling of that, the surveillance culture and state has made it very scary for young people to feel like they can—everyone, everyone to feel like you're allowed to fuck up, you're allowed to change. You can be fluid in your life and actually that that's kind of

natural. That's the natural state that you're not the same person with your family, with your school or your workplace. Every environment you're in, you're you are shifting to fit it.

01:03:39 SUNMI

So I really love narratives like that, and I want more of them. So *Paul Takes the Form of a Mortal Girl* being very much so that that's the point of it. Um, yeah, I liked that.

And then I've been reading like French philosophy texts, like books, which is kind of ridiculous. So yeah. Yeah. And just like.

01:04:01 RMJ

Love that. Oh, we're gonna, we're, we can have a long talk about that.

01:04:04 SUNMI

I know. Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, I know. I was. I did think of you because I was like, when I see the names come up, I'm like, oh, this guy Foucault like, Remus is always talking about Foucault.

01:04:13 RMJ

OK. OK, which one, of the French, like, what are, what's your favorite French philosopher that you're reading?

01:04:23 SUNMI

Right, So what I read was a book that I picked up in San Francisco randomly at a used bookstore by a guy named Gaston Bachelard. It's, he's an earlier one. So he like, influenced, like John-Paul Sartre and other people.

I'm butchering these names even though I took French in high school.

01:04:37 CGJ

Sartre's right.

01:04:42 SUNMI

Uh, so uh. The book I picked up was called *Water and Dreams* and I just finished it, and I liked it. So I got what I wanted out of it, which was just musing on water and imagination.

Um. Yeah. So I would be open to reading more stuff by him. Mostly I have read Barthes before and I'm reading *A Lovers Discourse* right now too. So. *A Lovers Discourse* was also mentioned in *Paul Takes the Form of a Mortal Girl*, so yeah.

01:05:18 RMJ

Perfect. Listen, trans people love French philosophers. We can't help it.

01:05:22 SUNMI

They, they do be thinking about love.

01:05:25 RMJ

They think about this stuff. What can we say. That rules.

01:05:32 RMJ

Alright, Cathy, what are you reading so we can just get it all in one go.

01:05:35 CGJ

Oh! We didn't do this last time.

01:05:39 RMJ

Oh, did we not? I can't remember what we did.

01:05:39 CGJ

I'm, right now I'm reading another Iris Murdoch book. She's one of my favorite authors. I love her so much. She's a British author. I'm reading one that she wrote in the, it's from, it's set in the 70s, so it's about a guy who. Like all of her work is like this giant ensemble of just like, a huge ensemble of British people who are, like, very focused on society and like their concerns with following societal norms, but then all of them are like, really bad at it. It's delightful. And they're like, like, and she's really good at deathbed scenes, like, very early in the book, she'll kill someone off. And everyone the way people respond to death and they're like, no, no, no, no. We must call the priest. And she's like, she's not religious. And they're like, but that's correct, call the priest. It's just like I love that shit.

01:06:34 CGJ

And, but, and she's always had this, like, kind of overarching like war as a sense, like, like wars happening in the background. And then this one, one of the main characters, he uh, is an expat he, um, he skirted the draft for the Vietnam War, so there's like sort of this overall like brutality behind all this frivolity and.

01:07:00 SUNMI

Yeah. Yeah, that is, that's.

01:07:02 CGJ

I, I don't know how gender takes is part of that.

01:07:06 SUNMI

Oh.

01:07:06 CGJ

I mean it does, obviously, he's being drafted.

01:07:08 SUNMI

Yeah, it does, yeah.

01:07:11 CGJ

Yeah. So that's what I'm reading.

01:07:12 SUNMI

Everyone experiences gender.

01:07:16 CGJ

And I did not say, I think it's, a. It's definitely. It does definitely involves gender. Literally the title is. *An Accidental Man* (SUNMI and RMJ laugh) is the title.

01:07:25 RMJ

Mysterious.

01:07:27 CGJ

That doesn't have anything to do with gender, does it? (Laughing) And what are you reading, Remus?

01:07:36 RMJ

OK, um, I actually want to plug a movie I saw recently mostly because I think Sunmi, you'd really like it also, it's called *Blonde Death*. It's from 1984. I got to see it at the Alamo. A restoration by a, a little group whose name I'm forgetting at the moment. Apologies, but it it was made by James Robert Baker, who was like a gay pulp author under the name James Dillinger, the movie's under the name James Dillinger, and it was with this little like.

01:08:09 RMJ

Bay, Los Angeles based collective video arts collective that still exists but was like started in the 80s, called EZTV and their whole thing was basically like none of us want to make it in Hollywood. We just want to make weird shit. So we're just gonna, like, fund and make weird shit.

01:08:25 SUNMI

Yeah, yeah.

01:08:29 RMJ

And *Blonde Death* is like shot to video. So like, just like, you know, VHS, VHS camera. Like, very low budget. And the funniest, like the funniest movie I've ever seen. And also like.

01:08:34 SUNMI

Yay.

01:08:42 RMJ

He was like a huge influence on like Gregg Araki and like all these, like New Queer Cinema guys that came after and like Gregg Araki especially I feel like, my, my editor and I watched this together and then like we came out of it, we're both just like. Yeah, Gregg Araki definitely loved this guy, huh? Like 1-to-1 you can see.

01:08:59 SUNMI

Uh-huh. 1-to-1, yeah.

01:09:00 RMJ

It's so good. It is coming back into print relatively soon, I think, because they like, this like special restoration. So if you get a chance to see it. Highly recommend *Blonde Death*.

01:09:10 SUNMI

Ohh yeah, look out, yeah.

01:09:16 CGJ

Well, thank you very much. We are so happy that you came and saw us.

01:09:17 RMJ

Yeah. Thank you so much.

01:09:23 SUNMI

Yay, yeah.

01:09:27 CGJ

And, um, thank you, the listener for listening to *Drawing a Dialogue Presents*. My name is Cathy G Johnson.

01:09:31 RMJ

And I'm Remus Jackson.

01:09:31 CGJ

And.

01:09:35 RMJ

That's Sunmi!

01:09:35 SUNMI

Yay! Bye. Bye .

01:09:40 CGJ

Bye, solidarity forever.

01:09:43 RMJ

Alright, let me stop record.