

Zoe Braithwaite 01:45

To the gratification, Sophie found building a career as a designer, telling stories through light.
[music transition]

Zoe Braithwaite 02:00

All right. So Sophie, how are you doing?

Sophie Tang 02:03

Good. How are you?

Zoe Braithwaite 02:04

Good. Thank you. I'm excited to be talking with you today. So yeah, thank you again. So yeah, I was curious, just to get a little bit of background for our listeners; what were the steps you went through- like, kind of walk us through, like in the program at SFU during your undergrad to where you are now.

Sophie Tang 02:26

I actually started at SFU as a visual art major.

Zoe Braithwaite 02:30

Oh okay,

Sophie Tang 02:30

in first year, and then I took a theater class, because I don't know how it is now but back in the day, wer er @rrêthue

job. And then and then I took another one because it's supposed to be easy credit, so they say, back in the day since there's no essay to write.

Zo

Just went with it.

Zoe Braithwaite 08:48

And so have you brought that into like your projects since? Is that, like, your focus-communicating the feeling with them? With lighting?

Sophie Tang 08:56

Yeah. Sometimes, like there's something I called- there's for example, a warm sadness and a cool sadness. Depending on the context of the show, and what is happening. It usually, this is the most direct example I can give a director of what a feeling is. And usually, we're on the same page, and they're able to feel my feeling. So yeah.

Zoe Braithwaite 09:26

Yeah. So it's almost like a, like an empathy tool. Because most of us like that's, at our core, like, what we know how to navigate the world through is like the feelings we feel. So I think that's super cool to think of like a bridge instead of, like, trying to find like, what's the right vocabulary to talk about lighting to think of it on a basis of just human emotions? Yeah, um, and so, on another note, I was interested, like, you were saying that when you finished your undergrad, and you felt like you weren't ready to go into the real theater world and want to continue going back to school. And I mean, now like you've, you've have an extensive, like, CV of all the projects you've worked on. How, like what helped you like making like connections and like networking, like how do you I'm assuming that's how you get a CV as extensive as yours, right?

Sophie Tang 10:39

I don't really go and social with people. And I don't really go through openings to social and things like that. I think I just let my work speak for itself. And when I work with someone, either they wanted to work to get the collaborate again, or they would recommend me to someone or actually some of my old professors from both SFU and UBC, recommended some stuff for me in the beginning. And then it kind of just built on from there. And then because there's not a lot of female lighting designers out there, at least in BC, so for some project people who are specifically looking for a female or a full female team or something like that, and that kind of helped my career in the sense because just being one of not many, one of the not very many female and also bipoc, like, yeah, kind of fit into certain categories that people were looking for. [music transition]

Zoe Braithwaite 12:01

So switch gears for a minute. I know you've been working with Electric Theatre Company doing a show right now called An Undeveloped Sound. I'd love if you could tell me how that process has been going.

S Sophie Tang 12:12

We've done a couple of workshops for it. Last year, we did a production workshop here, also in the Wong. I don't know if you heard but the door, the guillotine between the assembly space and the Wong came in and it got stuck.

Z Zoe Braithwaite 12:27

Oh -

S Sophie Tang 12:27

Our show was supposed to start with the door in and then the door will go out and then reveal the stage.

Z Zoe Braithwaite 12:34

Okay

S Sophie Tang 12:34

But they came in after cue to cue before the tech run, and then it stuck. And then we had to pivot. It was supposed to be like 100 audience or something per show. We had to put people on the other side of the wall, which is inside assembly space sitting against the Wong. It became a very immersive experience for the audience. But it was a fun experience. Because it's that's not something you would go through every day. But the team really pulled together. And now that we're doing it again, this year, it feels both like something new, but also something very familiar, because we've actually never seen the show, at least last year as how it's supposed to be presented sitting in audience. So this time, we we had first preview last night and it was the first time I think maybe 100/200 audience saw it together. And it was a really good feeling. And I think we're yeah, definitely in the refinement stage.

Z Zoe Braithwaite 13:39

Yeah, yeah. So um, that must be super rewarding. Yeah, I can only imagine how insane that must have been to have to like totally re navigate where the audience is.

S Sophie Tang 13:57

It was a moment of panic because we had projection and lighting. And the door come in all of the front of house position was cut off and the projector was on the other side. So we had to rehang some lights and rehang the projectors and recalibrate in time to have a show so we can

get some fee

Yeah, it's beautiful. I think it comes back to like this idea of interdisciplinary, whether it's as an artist, switching between modes of creating theater, making visual art, etc, which SCA just puts a big emphasis on, but also like the styles within certain disciplines, like what we've mentioned, with your experience in theater production within SFU, versus UBC to have that vocabulary of both brings this ability to translate between and merge the two. It's so successful as a creator and a collaborator. And I think it totally shows up in your work and proven to be really successful. [music transition]



Zoe Braithwaite 20:02

Again, on another note, yeah, what's been your, like, favorite project you've worked on?

Sophie Tang 20:04

Oh, I don't know if there's really a favorite project. But I guess any project I'm working on and having a good time is my favorite project. So my favorite project at the moment is An Undeveloped Sound.

Zoe Braithwaite 20:18

Oh, that's so awesome. So you do you ever feel like when you're working on a project that you just hate it?

Sophie Tang 20:24

Um, I don't think so. I don't think there's any project I absolutely hated. But there are like challenging moments sometimes. But in the end, I wouldn't say there's a project that I hated. No.

Zoe Braithwaite 20:40

That's fantastic. I think that's something a lot of people strive for, especially in a creative industry to be able to say, like, I don't hate the projects I work on. I think that's really inspiring.

Sophie Tang 20:52

I think I'm good at finding like something for myself, like or some some kind of insight challenges for myself. Some sometimes I do some design that even audience might not even notice, but for me, it's a feeling and if you're the feeling then I believe some audience will feel it too. Even if it's not everybody, maybe it's a 5% intensity change. People don't even know. But it's a feeling and some people will feel it.

Zoe Braithwaite 21:22

Zoe Braithwaite 21:20

Yeah, yeah, um, one of my professors the other day, she was saying that she had a friend who was telling her that like, if you can't get out of it, you got to get into it. Like always trying to find a way to appreciate or enjoy like what you're doing and even, yeah, if it's something that no one else can tell or like, not a part of like the evident bigger picture if there's something for you to find to get into it, like it'll like radically change, like the way you work and make it so much more enjoyable. So I think that's like super cool to hear. Like you do it, like doing it in real life and actually working. So yeah, that's, that's really awesome. [Music transition]

Zoe Braithwaite 22:23

Sophie, thank you so much for taking the time to chat with me today. It's been such a pleasure. I definitely want to stay up to date with everything you do. So let us know where can we find you next.

Sophie Tang 22:35

So after An Undeveloped Sound, I'm working on Midsummer Night's Dream, the Opera. So that's my next project. And then in- and then have some other projects with Vancouver Asian Canadian Theatre. And then I have a show at the Arts Club called The Legend of Georgia McBride. Then I'll be heading off to Shaw Festival this summer working on The Apple Cart. And then I'll be returning to Bard this summer. I think that's far enough.

Zoe Braithwaite 23:15

Yeah, okay, well, yeah, thank you so much. For everyone listening, go check all that out. You make beautiful work. So I'm super excited to go see An Undeveloped Sound tomorrow. And yeah, looking forward to checking out more. So thank you so much.

Sophie Tang 23:33

Thank you.

Stacey Copeland 23:42

[Music transition] Interested in learning more about the FCAT community? Check out all our past episodes from seasons one and two in your podcast feed. And stay tuned for a new season to kick off the new school year this fall. A big thanks to Sophie Tang for joining us here on the show. You'll find links to resources mentioned and more info on Sophie and the SFU School of Community and Applied Arts.
syntactical a life SSSF of the

FCAT After School in your podcast app of choice, so you don't miss any of our upcoming episodes. You can follow us on social media at FCAT @ SFU. That's f c a t at SFU on Twitter and It [[t n d o m ' u E u p n t