

INTERVIEW



The Scheisse Wives have been acting together as a public menace for over a decade. I finally caught up with the elusive twins at Bubby's in TriBeCa. Over bowls of macaroni and cheese I asked them about their early influences, future plans, and their notorious opinions about blogging. by Florentine Perro

"I can tell what you're thinking" mutters the clairvoyant Pete (short for Petra). "You're thinking, 'What goes up must come down'" - as if announcing her partner rePete's entrance through the double doors. rePete's arrival raises Pete's energy; she stops muttering and as both twins gear up for the interview they begin by answering my questions before I ask them.

P: Our motto is *Go out on a limb and pick some fruit*. We got that off a weight machine we consulted in Times Square.

rP: We put the quarter in the machine and expected a piece of paper to come out with our fortunes and weight but we only got our weight and this digital sentence on a tiny screen. P: We were disappointed but decided to keep the oracle's pronouncement as our motto.

rP: We started our career after running away from home.

P: Naturally! (laughs)

rP: Pete wanted to play keyboards but she couldn't read music so I put coloured tape with numbers on the keys for her.

P: All our material is drawn from personal experience and anecdote.

rP: Or soap operas.

P: But definitely NOT reality tv.

rP: Definitely not.

P: And we don't work with fixed scripts.

rP: We're twins and we think each other's thoughts. We never rehearse because it would be boring to think each other's thoughts over and over again.

P: Our first performance venues were ice rinks.

rP: We've always been good skaters.

P: Yeah it seemed so natural and people liked it. It felt like we were in the Olympics. (laughs)

rP: And since your topic for this issue is symmetry, we'd like to point out how our career-long interest in the pep rally bears a certain symmetrical relationship to the carnivalesque.

P: Everything we do is naturally symmetrical...

rP: Because we're twins of course!

P: Though neither of us think about our work in those terms.

rP: Our work deliberately loiters in situations that can provide a fresh new look at transient relationships and the open road.

P: And we're never happier than when we're travelin' down our own chosen path of least resistance. (laughs)

rP: We were high school dropouts and didn't learn to put things together philosophically. Our work consists in activities - as a kind of nature...

P: Like trees!

"And what about your names?" I ask. "Did you name yourselves or...?"

P: Before we were born, our dad, like most dads, was hoping for a boy. If the baby was a girl our mom planned to name her Petra but when I popped out, Dad named me "Pete".

rP: And when, one minute later, to the surprise and amazement of all concerned, I popped out, right away Dad named me "rePete".

P: The situation of our naming has naturally left us with a profound concern for language and how it can be manipulated to correspond with parental or societal fantasies of who and what children should be.

rP: Overall our project is an attempt to take apart the constructs with which language...

P: (interrupting) In every venue or situation we are presented with we try to do something inappropriate - not to challenge our audience in any way but simply to be contrary.

rP: Over the top! Operatic!

P: We refuse to sit neatly in any one medium, ideology, aesthetic or...

rP: (interrupting) Because we feel that the language body of current theory is dissociated from the physical body of the writer and reader.

P: Or performer and audience.

rP: When you dig in the muck and see how language is used with the intention of leaving out other complexities and experiences the theory must necessarily come up smelling bad.

P: Smelling like Scheisse!

"We're twins and we think each other's thoughts. We never rehearse because it would be boring to think each other's thoughts over and over again."

rP: Our new work takes as its point of departure the twin framing stories that we will braid together with a third story.

P: The first narrative is about rePete's struggles in some slippery subterranean situations.

rP: The second narrative is about Pete trying to put her head back on after her piano teacher told her she had no talent.

P: The third story is the one we don't have yet - maybe it could be your story, Florentine!

"And Blogging?" I jump in, "What about blogging?"

rP: OK. What if Kafka or Gertrude Stein had been bloggers? Think about it.

P: What would they *not* have written?

rP: Tender Buttons?

P: Letters to Milena?

Nuff said!