

Melissa Grey, David Morneau, Robert Kirkbride Interview



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Q: *Can you talk about the history of Flower Cat? I was reading you have know each other for decades.*

MG&DM: Flower Cat is the label and production house that we [Melissa & David] founded in 2020. We began working together as composer-producer-performers in 2016. We were featured in the music documentary series *Ao Vivo no Casarão*, have published poetry in *Circumference Journal*, and have performed on stages ranging from opera houses to docked boats and Bushwick clubs. In 2018 we released *PETITE ecstasy*, our debut album. Since creating Flower Cat, we have released a series of EPs. *Always Becoming* is our latest release and was created in collaboration with designer–musician Robert Kirkbride, whom Melissa met in Philadelphia, when he curated *Architectural Curiosities*.

Q: *Can you talk about some of the themes on the album? What inspired you to make Always Becoming? The name resonates with me and points to the way a lot of people feel these days in my opinion.*

RK: *Always Becoming* grew out of a desire to make sense from senselessness through pitches and pulses, beyond words. So much of our daily lives is spent trying to claim some degree of certainty from the uncertainties that surround us. Endlessly, we try to weave a coherent whole from experiences and phenomena that are often disconnected and disquieting, including things in the

world around us and in ourselves.

As a title, *Always Becoming* aptly captures the spirit of a collaboration that unfolded through music, drawings and text. It also crystallizes several ideas connecting the mundane and the celestial.

Musically, *Always Becoming* evolved from a single, longer work into a cycle of four short songs with interweaving themes and textures, whose end is also its beginning.

Open-endedly, this structure alludes to the interplay of the patterns of the stars and life on earth, which hinges (literally) on the tilt of the Earth's axis. This tilt is the source of the seasons and our notions of perpetual change and cyclical return.



Q: What is your creative process like?

MG&DM: Each project invites a new collaborator, which informs our creative process. For *Always Becoming*, we began with the songs Robert composed, recording the guitars in several rooms and with different microphone placements to capture room resonance.

Across successive months of early-morning, sunrise studio sessions, we wove these recordings into our sound design and production. We mixed the separate guitar recordings to create a hyper-instrument: an instrumental gesture from many recordings. Further sound design was influenced by the environment, such as songs of the dawn chorus and nocturnal insect communication, sleigh bells

affixed to a tree branch on a windy day and the delicate footfall of our rescue Pomeranian on the hollow wooden floors.

Q: *What was your recording process like? And has it changed over the years? Would you explain some of the tools and instruments you use?*

MG&DM: Embracing the acoustics of the spaces where the music was composed, we iteratively recorded each of the instruments—Robert’s guitars, Melissa’s theremin and guitar feedback and David’s trombone—in several rooms using a series of supercardioid and large-diaphragm condenser microphones.

We reinvent our recording and production process for each new EP. Our toolbox contains many standard software tools, like Ableton and MaxMSP, specialty instruments and unexpected solutions.



Q: *What else should we know about your music?* **MG&DM:** We aim to create immersive worlds of sound, with each release unique to the collaborator. Always Becoming cycles between dream pop and sunshine pop, treating these genre tropes as watercolors that highlight Robert Kirkbride’s compositions and performances. Previous releases have embodied chiptune, ambient, baroque, and many variants of edm. The focus of our production is a clean, bright and crystalline, yet soft, sound.
