



May Day 2023 Interview with James BL Hollands, a lighthouse operator living in Western Australia:

<1> We had no connection before a year ago. Then Tim Sternat and I started work on the Manifestation X compilation at the beginning of 2022. Someone said to ask David Notarius for connections to creatives. He sent me your information right away. How are the four of us connected?

We're definitely connected through a lady who lives in London called Amaia Allende who I went to college with, but I didn't know her then, then years later I ended up working with her. She is fierce and a brilliant artist. She was living next door to David when he was living in Beck Road in Hackney, East London, and she introduced us when I was curating this gallery called The Horse Hospital in London. David came and DJ'd for us quite a few times and was on the radio show The Horse Hospital and I had for a while on Resonance FM, we performed for David's radio show too. So, thank you Amaia!

<2> Tell us the story behind your piece. It has the longest song title I have ever seen. And it struck me as the most serious, the most contemplative piece in this collection.

Thank you! That's very kind of you to say it was serious. I'm very serious but I can come off as flippant so thank you. A lot of my work has had really short titles, like numbers or just single words, but I haven't made anything public - or been asked to - in many years so wanted a demarcation point. I also like those artworks with really long titles - Turner's Snow Storm - Steam-Boat off a harbour's mouth etc. - and since this piece was manipulated from silences recorded in harbours in the UK, it seemed good to reference that one, and obviously Damien Hirst's titles, I think that was the first time I'd ever seen a really long sentence as a title. Then I came across the Chinese feminist revolutionary Qiu Lin and one of her poems includes the line "I hear the fighting

continuing at sea" and she was hardcore and I'm hardcore and partly Chinese too and she's very dead so I figured she wouldn't mind if I nicked it.

<3> Was the piece created for MANIFESTATION-X (on cia-records.com), or are you so inspired that you have an entire collection of solo and collaborative pieces recorded and catalogued in your private audio pantry?

This piece was specially for C.I.A., but I've got 3 other very similar pieces which were made for the same reasons I made your one - commemorating a dear friend who I went sailing with who killed himself, trying to get over like this impossibly sad death, so there's like a very sombre album based on drowning.

I made loads of stuff but barely released any properly - a solo orchestral album, an album with my band Patricide, an album which was an art piece called The Penalty For Harboursing Partisans. I think they're all really interesting and at times beautiful - or at least none of them are rubbish but I lose confidence releasing stuff, I think, mebbe? I used to make a lot of stuff in London but after I moved to the end of the world and dropped out about 10 years ago, I stopped the production line. I have a new video installation coming out this year which is really cool and I'm in a coupla festivals here and kids seem to like what I do so am flogging along.

<4> I have been watching numerous people lose their minds and give up over the past few years. Are you mentally stable?

Yeah. I haven't been subsumed yet. W(estern) A(ustralia) had a really interesting pandemic. We closed our borders to everyone, even the rest of Australia, and consequently had almost no covid deaths and it was...like watching the rest of the world go mad from this really idyllic, chilled place. The population of WA is like nearly 3 million and 2 million of them live in Perth. I am 5 hours away from there. in comparison, WA is the size of Western Europe, which is 200 million. I'm more mentally stable than I ever have been in my life now, but I never totally lost it, although I've been told I was mad numerous times.

<5> In that same vein, how do you split your time between these 4 things: routine daily activities, creative sessions and inspirational moments, sustaining your own physical and mental health, dealing with calamities and spontaneous combustion events?

I have a partner and a dog and have settled finally after moving 7 times in as many years since moving to Australia so it's pretty calm. I work every day on my videos or sound but sometimes not for long. I've had a huge amount of calamities in my life which weren't self-inflicted and I don't even like emotions or drama so I spend a lot of time just being very quiet with my dog, to be honest. I'm very isolated, out of choice.

<6> *My wife and I have diverse influences and lots (too many) family connections. Yet having chosen to be childless, we have a group of close friends from our decade who also chose to have no children. More children or less?*

I don't know many people with children, I think it works like that hey, that people with kids congregate. I brought up my ex's daughter with him from when she was 3 to when she was 10, and I spent a lot of time bringing up my dog, who is huge and was wild, he came from the desert, and he's now the best dog in the town and everyone loves him, so I might be a shit human but I've been a pretty good parent. But generally, less kids and I'm not sure there's any benefit in getting old either. I like humans but obviously they're a virus from hell.

<7> *Where are you going from here?*

I'd like to live in Asia eventually. My work seems to be getting traction here after me pretty much giving up on it so that's really interesting. I have this big installation coming up in the Strange Festival in Perth in June called James BL Hollands' West Australian Trill Death Cult and I'm really into that.

I'd like to make some lenticular prints from that after, and I'd like to finish the mixing and mastering on my band's album. I've got a collected writing that I'd like to come out too.

<8> *Can you list the following items in order of importance or priority (Yes or No are valid answers)? (a) polar icecaps (b) taxing the wealthy (c) tree frogs in the tropical rain forests (d) drinking water (e) digital connectivity (f) auditory stimulation (g) the dream state?*

f) definitely. I can't do without sound or music, it's been my whole life.

e) I live in the boondocks man. I used to live in literally one of the most isolated towns on earth. The internet is fucking amazing.

b) I mean

a) I can see Antarctica from my hoose

c) Aw. tree frogs.

g) Though that doesn't seem right that the dream state is in this position but I don't wanna put the frogs last :(

<9> *Did you ever get Lyme Disease?*

You know what? No! But I had to have pills for leptospirosis though cos my downstairs neighbour had rats - this was way back in England - and then I moved and my next door neighbour there actually had it, he had organic madness caused by Lyme Disease and it took us aaaages to work it out because he was so erratic and soooo unpredictable in what he was doing and he finally said, oh yeah I got Lyme disease from a tick and so my brain is fucked.

Have you had it?