

01:00:09:08 - 01:00:28:19

Heather

Hello. Today's mini-episode is all about working with consultants and team members with lived experience on projects, about mental health and disability. But before we begin, we want to acknowledge the lands from which we recorded this podcast and from where you were listening are part of territories that have long served as a gathering place for diverse Indigenous peoples.

01:00:28:21 - 01:00:39:18

Heather

And we are thankful as guests on this land to be able to live, work and gather here together. We continue to learn about the history that came before us and encourage you to do the same.

01:00:39:20 - 01:01:00:10

Sarah

Our conversation is with Kat and Niko Troubetzkoy, sisters and the co-creators of the new CW and CTV show Sight Unseen. The series is about a homicide detective who rapidly loses her vision and has to quit the homicide force when she leaves. She's haunted by the cases she's left behind and is determined to solve them with the help of a visual guide via a visual assistance app.

01:01:00:15 - 01:01:12:06

Sarah

If you want to hear the full episode with Kat Nico about low vision and the representation of it on their show and beyond, we've included the link in the show notes. If you're a fan of brains, we love for you to also rate and review us.

01:01:12:08 - 01:01:28:22

Heather

A quick reminder to our listeners that this interview should not be taken as medical advice, and it is for informational purposes only because everyone's brain is different. Please consult your healthcare professional if you have any questions.

01:01:29:00 - 01:01:37:11

Heather

When you first developed the show, you worked with a low-vision or blind community consultant. What was that experience like and how did the consultation impact your project?

01:01:37:15 - 01:02:19:23

Kat

So the person who helped us the most, Yvonne Felix And they are an artist, a disability advocate at the interface between technology and disability. Site impaired use. The cane user, not a cane user. When it's not smart to be a cane user, that's a whole chapter. And they're just so knowledgeable about all disability. But working with Google, working with Apple, working with

all these disability platforms for visual impairment but many, many other disabilities as well, and they have been with us since word one and are very creatively open.

01:02:20:01 - 01:02:48:20

Kat

Don't believe in shutting down things for simple political correctness, but actually exploring the whole gamut of feelings. It was a surprising experience and we did not expect it to impact the project in every way. They did not tell us at first that they were crime buffs. Like true crime buffs. And like we were like, Yeah, sure. my goodness.

01:02:48:20 - 01:03:16:07

Kat

They knew more about crime than we did. I swear. And then the whole perspective IT technologies, that is their job, that interface. So we were put together with Yvonne Felix by a gentleman named Andrew Morris, who was at RMI and then became the interim head of the disability screen office. And he was like, I just think you should talk to Yvonne.

01:03:16:07 - 01:03:46:06

Kat

Felix I think they will be really good for your show. And it was just like our minds were on fire, sort of like talking to you guys where it was like and, and, and so Yvonne Felix is just the most valuable resource from the first word to the last sound mix. They've been with us and they are so open and not know judging, no closing ideas down, just like this open portal of creativity.

01:03:46:11 - 01:04:11:14

Niko

They've really helped us with just clues and the sound and how somebody who has quite lost is going to experience listening to the show and trying to amp that up so that we can give the best possible experience to our viewers and listeners who have sight loss. And they've dug in to the show on every level and we really can't thank them enough.

01:04:11:14 - 01:04:29:03

Kat

And and then Graham is a draw. You should look him up. He's funny as hell and he writes for BuzzFeed, GQ Travel life. I think he's probably The New York Times. I'm not sure, but Graham is. Adore is a newly sight impaired person who also had a play that was fantastic called Short Sighted.

01:04:29:05 - 01:04:41:05

Heather

And to the point of you saying about sound, how important that was to be thinking about the viewers of there are the people who are watching your show and I'm trying to use not sighted listening.

01:04:41:05 - 01:04:41:14

Kat

People who.

01:04:41:14 - 01:04:56:05

Heather

Are listening to your show. So what was the key difference that you find with tween, how you normally would approach sound versus the sound you would approach once you kind of we're talking to someone with lived experience of sight loss in that way.

01:04:56:09 - 01:05:21:04

Kat

A huge part of sight unseen is the sound we just kept trying to go further. And that's something that is, you know, there's one track, a picture, but there's 234 tracks of sound. It really is the bigger art form. I just want to address one huge challenge we had. We have two composers of the score who are so phenomenal that it got in the way.

01:05:21:04 - 01:05:46:01

Kat

We they're their score is so beautiful, so nuanced that we ended up using more score than we had planned. So I blame Tim Welsh and Jim McGrath for the score that we could not pry ourselves away from, but we separated sounds as much as possible. We did have moments of silence. We use silence. We use tests, paying more attention to sound.

01:05:46:06 - 01:06:05:21

Kat

But what we did not do is give her a super hearing. That's not true. What happens is yeah, with sight loss, you can learn to tune in and pay more attention to sound. So we did that and then we were really, really careful about Foley. And we did use Foley a little, a little more crisp, a little more clear.

01:06:05:21 - 01:06:31:02

Kat

We talked about some our sound. We really wanted to use that it sometimes we do, but I would have like I think it was there's just so much singing and dancing in the show as in there's so many bells and whistles to play with as far as as film makers that there was always something exciting to follow. And I would we would love to do an episode that's all dark.

01:06:31:04 - 01:06:49:00

Kat

I think that's all. Tess We are talking about fantasizing about the episode that hasn't doesn't exist unless we get season two. That's all Tess and Sunny's POV. Only that. And that starts with

Yeah, darkness and sound and really make people pay attention to sound.

01:06:49:01 - 01:07:16:09

Niko

You can endlessly make sound better, and that's definitely one of the things we want to improve if we're lucky enough to get a season two and also another thing that we were fascinated by that we weren't able to implement this season, but I would love to do in season two if we're able to have enough lead time to put it in place as something that Andrew Morris, who was that I developed, which is called integrated described video.

01:07:16:09 - 01:07:41:09

Niko

And it is so that you you're basically writing the scripts so that you are making things accessible to people with sight loss. So it's all baked in. So instead of like handing someone a coffee task would say coffee as she's like handing something over, like just a simple as that. And that's one of our goals for season two.

01:07:41:11 - 01:07:57:21

Kat

We tried to do as much as possible because Andrew had talked us through it, but he he wanted us to, you know, if we were going to do it right, He said it's going to take a lot of time, a lot of development and really next level thinking. So we were able to be conscious of all those things, but we weren't always able to put them in place.

01:07:57:21 - 01:08:10:06

Kat

But you know, we were always fighting for that. It's a writing challenge to make sound natural, but there are ways and it yeah, and the other thing is nobody's frickin looking at their TV. Exactly what exactly.

01:08:10:07 - 01:08:11:03

Sarah

You know.

01:08:11:03 - 01:08:26:12

Kat

Looking at their phones. So you kind of Yeah, yeah. It's win win. Yeah, it's one of that. The little get out of jail free cards we have that you might not even think of when you watch the show is Sunny is describing a lot of what's happening through.

01:08:26:14 - 01:08:28:07

Sarah

Because she has to yeah.

01:08:28:09 - 01:08:45:23

Heather

Just from what you've been saying it was really about the importance I think of working with people have lived experiences and I think not only your own, but the people in the room, the people on set, the actors, the consultants. So every time that someone does it, every time a production shows what's possible, it makes it easier for the next person.

01:08:45:23 - 01:08:52:15

Heather

So thank you for standing up and making sure that you had those perspectives. So I'll just say thank you for that.

01:08:52:17 - 01:08:53:11

Sarah

Thank you.

01:08:53:11 - 01:09:02:19

Niko

It felt normal and natural, and I can't imagine doing it any other way. So hopefully that'll be the norm going forward for everybody.

01:09:02:19 - 01:09:15:18

Sarah

Shout that on the rooftops. That's what everybody needs to hear. Yeah. Thank you for being a good example of how we can make something. Braaaains is hosted and produced by Heather and Sarah Taylor, and our theme song is by her little brother, Deppisch.

01:09:15:20 - 01:09:35:04

Heather

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