

Laura Pearman

00:02-00:25: GL:

Hello and welcome to The Apple Cart. My guest today is an old friend. This is Laura Pearman from Laura Pearman Creative, and she is a personal branding consultant.

Laura and I have known each other for 9-10 years from local networking and conferences, and we've worked together on different things, so Laura, welcome to The Apple Cart.

00:25-00:36: LP:

How are you doing? Thank you so much for having me on this podcast. Gudrun. I can't believe it has been like that long, hasn't it that we've known each other well? Doesn't time fly?

I want to start by saying, I'm so happy that you've set up the podcast. You are always one of those people, that if I'm in a business situation or it's like an after-hours business situation, I know if I sit near you, I'm about to have an excellent conversation.

So you doing a podcast to me is just like, it's like peaches and cream. And I'm so glad that it's happening and I'm here for it. So congratulations!

01:04-01:19: GL:

Thank you. I mean, we could do an after-hours one as well, we just record ourselves in a bar. Yes, I love that idea. We'll lure people into the toilet so that we can. It's a bit quiet, but echoey, that would be good recording conditions.

01:19-01:44: LP

With the sound effects of a shaking cocktail shaker and like the ice and stuff, that would be brilliant on a podcast, it would.

GL: But we'd have to make sure we didn't pick one of those toilets where they've got the lady with the deodorant and stuff. Because I always feel really awkward and like, I don't want to be interrupted to pay somebody a pound for a piece of chewing gum. Do you remember when that was in the classy bars?

LP: Oh, yeah, I heard, like a fiver for a lollipop. Why you want to get anything that you put in your mouth in a toilet is beyond me. But it was a whole thing for a while, wasn't it?

GL: Well, it was, and then do you know I was in? Last time I was in Newcastle, I went into what I still call the vineyard, number one, Grey Street, the Wine Bar, which is my favourite bar in the town. And went tripping off happily at the toilet and discovered that not only was the toilet now unisex, but they had one of those. But it was a dude.

02:23-02:40: LP:

How strange

GL: sitting on a stool and I just, I. Actually. I was so surprised to see him. I looked up and went, Geez, that's not the ladies, and he went, Oh, it's unisex. And I was like, And then it was really awkward because he was right beside the toilet.

02:40-02:51

You were in the toilet, yeah?

GL: And then I came out, rushed my hands and I looked at him and sort of shuffled past, did a little nod. And yeah, wow, yeah. I couldn't believe they were still doing that. And then it was in a, you know, in a unisex toilet, in a bar like that. But there we go.

LP: there you go, yeah, times are looping in the background again.

03:04-03:11: GL:

Well, I tell you what? If the next time I go to a bar in Newcastle there's a dude in the corner with a set of congas? Then I will know it's 2000 again. Why anybody thought that was classy, I do not know.

LP: Yeah, I know. Terrible, crazy, not case times.

GL: 03:25-03:41

Ah, happier times without social media.

LP: Yeah, when you went out for a laugh, no one goes out anymore. Have you seen this with with? There's been a load of like in the last few months, I don't know if it's with the budget, but loads of nightclubs are shutting down.

03:41-04:15: GL:

Oh, really.

LP: And they're saying, like, it's the end of the nightclub era. You think back to, like, when we were in our youth and how important clubbing was like. It was a fixture in my weekly calendar for at least six or seven years, if not longer.

GL: Yeah, I used to. I used to go to the indie clubs and I had the DJ from Stone Rose, Stonne Lov at Foundation, Big Niall, and I somehow got to know him. And I used to ring up and ask for guesties on a Thursday mid-afternoon, and it was his landline.

He didn't even have a mobile, so I was ringing, Wow. I mean, his poor wife, she must have been sick of all these teenagers going Hiya, Big Niall in, she'd go, we'll just call him Neil in this house.

You know, and he'd go, Hiya, how many do you want? You know? I never got guesties for bulletproof, though that was a that was a disappointment. Although I did sneak in. I took my way in to see Manny when Manny was Djing. That was quite cool.

04:50-05:01: LP :

Impressive Gudrun. That's some rock and roll right there.

GL: Back in those days, I was an expert blagger.

LP: That doesn't surprise me about you, No, see, I was more into, like, the dance. Like, I was down the tall trees, like full on, like clubbing. And then I kind of got into indie way later in my like musical taste career.

But I was out, like on the podium with the shots and the fluorescent, whatever I could get my hands on, you could not get me on a podium. I'd just fall straight off it. Well, the thing with the podium was if you went and danced on the podium, you got free drinks.

So because I'm a dancer and I danced as a kid. You'd be like, Oh, get yourself up there, and I'd be like, Yeah right. Grooving around all night. And then I'd have a break to have some disgusting sparkle and wine. And think I was absolutely living the high life.

GL: Well, I mean, there was a short-lived indie night at planet Earth, you remember, down that back street from the gate? There was a club there and it was 10 pence a bottle for the first hour, that's disgusting, and they had three bars. So what we'd do is because we were all skint.

I mean, at that time I was either a student or I had, like, a job, but my boyfriend was in a band, so he had no money. And we'd all take it in turns to go around the bars, the three bars, and just buy as many bottles as we could for 10 pence.

And then we'd put them on a table. Work your way through them. One person used to guard the table while everybody else went and danced. You stay there, you keep the coat, you keep an eye on the drink, the alcohol. Yeah, oh, happy days, yeah.

06:43-07:06: LP: and now it's all gone. So you have to wonder, like in political times, they say, don't they? Like, you know, have you heard of the punk group Amel and the Sniffers? Yes, I have.

Yeah, I love it. But they say, like, in political unrest and times of like intense emotion. That's when we get the best art and creativity. And I was like, Wow, we've got a new, burgeoning punk scene happening.

And she's a part of it, she's one of the figureheads. So what's going to happen creatively? And then the counter of that is all the nightclubs are shutting down, like, is this the same? Is this a parallel with the disco era?

Because that was what happened in the 70s? Like you had all these disco clubs and then they went down and then you had, like, the punk era. What's going to happen? I'm here to sit on the sidelines and watch what's going to happen. What do you think? What's your prediction for music in relation to culture and the zeitgeist?

07:33-07:50

Well, it's, I mean, I don't. I don't listen to a lot of modern music now and old Fart, but I do. I obviously listen to six music, so I have. I have come across. Obviously, it's the law. That is my Sundays, Cerys and Guy Garvey and Iggy Pop.

There definitely does seem to be a different scene, although at least with Six music. You get reassured that there are still young people being creative in the way that they were when we were young, when we were young.

When are all that you know which is which is good? But yeah, it's it's hard, it's hard to know, isn't it? Because all the pubs are closing down as well.

And that's where, that's where young bands got their start, you know? Yeah, that's where they would galvanise. Yes, you know. Like downstairs, at the head of Steam, or occasionally even in a social club, which was always a weird place for a gig, but it did happen. And you know, what is the creative outlet?

If you can't, if you can't, go somewhere and have a jam with, you know, I mean, my brother's a professional musician, and when he started out underage, he went to the local buskers' nights. So he wasn't meeting many people of his age or the age he was pretending to be.

But he was meeting some of the best musicians in the north east of England, and he's now, he now has a career of that. And it's a very different vibe over where he is in Belgium. Because they obviously have an awful lot more pubs.

LP: They still place value in that that idea of gathering, it's not about going out and getting smashed. That was a very specific part of the 90s that we just happened to be the right age to really like. Fill our boots and it. But you're right, like, across the whole continent.

Like this idea of going out in the evening and staying out till late and enjoying a few drinks and appreciating the art of conversation. Is that doomed, or is it just this British nightclub scene like that that goes back hundreds of years, doesn't it? In Europe?

09:51-10:12: GL:

Yeah, so I was always saying that then there's two different things. There's what's happening in Britain with the nightclubs closing, and then there's what's happening elsewhere. Where, as you know, I'm now living in rural France. But tonight, Mark and I are going to pop along to one of the local bars where they've got live music and it's free.

LP: And that's a regular fixture, right?

10:12-10:14: GL

It is every Friday, that's a weekly thing. Yeah, yeah. We went one night and we were dead excited. It was an 80s night and it turned out to be French 80s, which we didn't know. Oh, brilliant, but it was this couple.

And they did, they did all these 80s songs that we didn't know, apart from a couple by Madness, which was great. I mean, she, she looked like a bovva boy, she had like the DMS and the braces and stuff.

But then the weird thing was that this was like in the height of summer. So they were outside. And what they did is that they then played the theme tune from Bottom. You remember the TV programme Bottom, right?

Turns out this is a Northern soul classic, or Mark, and I have never discovered. And no word of a lie. Every person in that bar apart from us, got up and line danced to that song.

11:03-11:06: LP:

What, that's amazing, everybody knew? And isn't that cool?

11:07-11:18: GL:

This is not the theme tune. Bottom, what are you doing? And, you know, and it was surreal, but you see, that is, that is the culture here, it's if there's something happening, you go to it.

Doesn't really matter whether it's your kind of thing or not. You're going to go and everybody else is going to go and you're going to have a good time because everyone else is there. It's that community factor, right?

It's a massive community thing here, which we never. When I was a kid, when my grandma lived in a village, we had it, but not in urban Newcastle or Gateshead. We went last year to the local town hall, where a group of teenagers from the village had formed a death metal band.

And they'd come back from uni and they were performing and it was death metal. So I can't tell you how good or bad it was because it's not my kind of thing, but it was the same age as my mum and dad. They went, Are you going to be all right with us?

She went, Oh, yes, I like Nightwish, and I went, All right, fine.

LP: but how beautiful the tapestry of life. What I was about to say earlier on, when we got into the pre of this conversation, was, Is it possible to have a musical movement now? Because everyone is so factioned off?

But what you're saying, there is actually the antithesis of that idea. And yeah, everyone can appreciate everything, it's just that we have a bigger buffet to choose from.

GL: Yeah, and obviously I don't know what it's like in the big cities here because we aren't in it. Most people we're encountering are just doing covers.

Yes, but we saw a band a few months ago that were doing ACDC and they had a 13-year-old drummer. And my dad went over and he's like, ACDC. Have you ever been to England? and

they're like, No. We just like ACDC, so you don't know Brian Johnson is from Newcastle? No, no, I just really like the music and you go, Oh, fair enough.

But where Edmund is in Ghent, which is obviously where they have the conservatory, the music school, that is fertile ground for new young musicians. Because they're coming out of the uni year on year on year.

And then if they stay local, there' pubs and bars in Ghent, which is not a very big city. And so there's a lot of opportunity for them to play. And what's really nice about it is that there's a lot of opportunity to meet other musicians. So you're not just you might have a local band, but you also have opportunities to play with other people.

So my brother gets invited to. He went to a retirement party where they wanted live music. So he just asks, goes around his mates and goes, alright, anybody free? I need a drummer and a female singer, and they put a little band together and they get paid really well.

For over a decade, he played every New Year's eve at this swanky party in a town about an hour away, they paid for the travel, he said. He performed on stage. I said, Did anybody get up and dance?

He went, Oh no, no, nobody even listened to us. We were just like literal background music. He and the band, whoever he took with him, got free food, but they got the same like three-course meal as the guests. And then he was done by 11.30 and he was home for New Year and then he spent his well.

LP: That's a damn sight better than the Hootenanny, isn't it?

14:41-14:48: GL:

Well, it is. Now we all know it's live. I mean, funnily enough, Jools Holland has played a few times in Ghent.

14:50-15:34: LP

I was just about to say to you, I wonder if we're going to see a repeat in, I don't know, 15 years once. The music scene is completely kaput because of the changes that are happening economically in Britain. If it'll be like the Beatles Hamburg effect, then we'll find that a lot of British young musicians actually go into the rest of Europe to cut their teeth.

To places like where you say your brother is to get that at collaboration, because we don't have it anymore. Because the way we did that in Britain will be gone, except for the fact that Brexit screwed that over. Well, yeah, that's going to only compound the issue, isn't it? Well, it makes it really, really difficult for young musicians to travel.

15:34-15:44: GL

My brother has had a few times in one of his bands, it's like a sort of ska dubstep band.

15:44: LP: Oh, that is up my alley.

15:45-16:05: GL:

Three or four bands he's in, that one's my favourite, well, other than his own band, which is named for him, obviously, that's my favourite, but the dub band. They've had grants to go into the south of England three or four times, but for the British bands to come the other way, it's not so easy.

Yeah, maybe what we're going to have actually is a new, burgeoning music scene here in Europe, because everyone's going to have to leave. They all speak English now and Britain's going to be left in the cold, which would be terrible. Because you think of all those Mersey beat bands and even the Manchester bands. I mean, that was 30-odd years that England was putting out these amazing artists.

16:42: LP: and dictating a movement of music around the globe.

16:43-16:44: GL: Yeah.

16:46-16:51: LP:

Time will tell, man, time will tell.

16:53: GL: Yeah, so yeah, I don't know, but I'm interested in what you're saying about. Yes, a time of political upheaval does create art. What about what do you think for the rest of the arts world then?

17:05-17:30

Well, you've got interesting things bubbling away, so obviously you've got the hot potato. That is the insanity of politics right now, and that's only becoming more divisive and filled with more hate and vitriol. But in addition to that, you've got this technical wave going on, so people are doing incredible things with the help of AI.

The way that we're creating art, so I've got my roots in photography, like what's happening in photography right now is fascinating. You've got it's like a divergence, so you've got one like you've got a movement going back to historical.

So there are people who are steeped in analogue and doing beautiful things with analogue. But making that better because of the ability to retouch and improve the process. And then you've got this other offshoot, where it's barely created photographs in a camera. It's all about the post-production and the technical side of it. It's really an interesting time.

And I don't know, in like a hundred years, if we're all still here, what this movement will be called in, like art history, will it be as clearly divided? Or am I just saying that? Because I'm in the here and now of it? And I'm finding it a struggle to compute? Because I'm in the here and now of it, because you're in the middle of it, yeah.

18:34-18:41: GL:

Yeah, I think as a creative, it's easy to go. Well, I don't like AI.

18:41: LP: You can't be that. Well, if you're a real creative, I would challenge that and say you can't be black and white in any opinion, like if you're a creative. The whole crux of that is to be able to meander through the grey hues of any conversation or issue. So if you're being that fixed in your mindset about something like AI, then I would challenge.

You're probably stifling your own ability to be creative, you know? If you can't create something with a new idea, what's going on? Why are you not working out your creative muscles?

19:19: GL: Yeah, no, I think that's fair. I think that's a fair challenge. You know, it's here. We might as well use it, you know, to inspire things. I mean, so long as it doesn't, I mean, the way it does hands is terrifying, so I'm not....

19:38-19:47: LP:

We're all right for the time being. Yeah, it was fascinating, and this is a popular conversation. I'm certainly not the first person to come up with this idea. But isn't it curious that, as humans, we've defaulted straight away to wondering if AI can create an oil painting masterpiece, or if it can write a wonderful piece of prose?

Why are we not being intelligent and creative with the AI? To get it? To do the stuff we don't want to do, like filling up the screen, washing your car when it's freezing cold on a November morning, or cleaning your house. I want Rosie, the robot from the Jetsons. I don't need AI to finesse some retouching, because that's the stuff I'd rather be doing than cleaning my house.

GL 20:28: And I think this is it. You know, I mean, shouldn't we be? Exactly, shouldn't they be doing the bits that we don't want to do? And I think our understanding of the human condition is.

20:38-20:57: LP:

We've gone straight into the philosophical problem of AI as a construct. It's like, you know, you would sit around and stroke your beard and pontificate. Yes, but will the AI be able to write Shakespeare? We've gone straight there. We haven't thought, well, hang on a minute, this is how the world's messed up.

And if we could teach the robots or the machines to do all this stuff, that makes more space for us to pontificate. We've totally leapt over the use of it in a lot of ways. And I wonder if we will go back and correct that in the next five years.

GL: Isn't that the fault of industrialism and capitalism? That what we want to do is just, yeah. Let the AI do the creative stuff so that everybody has more time to be a drone and do the shit stuff that nobody really wants to do. Well, it raises...

21:30-21:49: LP:

I was thinking about this stuck in traffic the other day. I was like, is it not just because we're actually all in a simulation? And it's the robots telling us that that's what we want the robots to do? Like, that's the bit I wrestle with this. Why have we not got the robots, machines,

technology to do these banal things? And why is everyone going straight to creative? Is it simulation? I mean, that's a whole other podcast.

GL: I mean, yeah. It's Friday, Laura. I don't really want to be getting into existentialism. It's really the matrix.

22:02-22:12: LP:

I mean, if it is the matrix, it's a lot more attractive than the matrix in the film. Well, yeah, and I am, so I want the juicy steak and not that weird beige mush. Like, for that alone, I'm taking whichever pill, it was the blue or the red, and I'm like, plug me in, I want the steak.

Yeah, I'm with you there. I mean, you know, I worry for the fate of humanity. But also I'd rather have a steak and a good glass of wine. Not going to be my problem, is it? And you might argue the machines have just spoken through us.

22:36-22:38: GL: They're my steak overlords, I really don't mind.

22:40-22:44: LP

It's fine, I'll do whatever you want, just let me eat steak, yeah.

22:47-22:49: GL: Take my work, just let me eat steak. So what about in terms of how these things impact business? Then if you're running a business, let's say you're not running a creative business, let's say you're running an ordinary business.

Do you think that just restricts people's creativity even more? Or do you think that their use of AI is helping them? Because, you know, when you see blogs and posts on LinkedIn that have been written by AI, they tend to be terrible.

23:25-23:59: LP:

So is that just stifling people's creativity before they even get started? Exactly, yeah, and it's that idea of not wanting to stretch those puny ideation muscles to give it a try yourself. I like to look in the meta of this.

And we're going to see either the death of social media. Because it will all be taken over. And it'll just be like another yellow pages of noise that no one is interested in. Humans are hungry and starved of human-to-human connection.

And that was what was initially so brilliant about social media. It was like, Wow, I haven't seen him in 15 years because he moved to Australia. And look, I can now see his kids and he's happily married and isn't that great.

And I don't have to send him a conversation, I can just give him a little wave and show him that I've seen it. And it's like a little beautiful moment of connection. If we're going to go down this road where that whole point of human connection is usurped by everyone just spewing out a bunch more technical crap, then we've lost the human connection.

So I think people will find another way to connect. So I don't know if we're going to be intelligent enough to go, you know what, this is a bit shit. Let's just get rid of this technical thing and go back to where we were.

I don't think we can collectively make any decisions right now. The world events are enough to show you that. So maybe it's just going to slowly come to a halt and then we'll all do something different. I don't know what that something different is yet, though.

Maybe we'll all just live in virtual reality and meet people there, and then you can literally meet them. Yeah, we'll be going to bars in virtual reality, we'll go full circle, but in a whole new plane of existence.

You know, I had a go on a virtual headset and it was the first time I've done it last week. And it was at college where I lecture, and the art lecturer had brought her own virtual headset in. Because she was selling the next level course to the students I teach.

And she had got this art paint thing where you could pick up with one hand a brush and then pick what colour and what texture, and then dance around and paint the world around you. But it was set on a transparent way, so you were still in the classroom, but you were adding paint and textures in the classroom.

And it gave me this idea. I was like, you know what? This would be so much easier if I could have my Christmas decorations and I could spend years creating the best Christmas decorations in this specific living room.

And they're just there the whole time. I don't have to put them up, I don't have to put them down. I can go online and buy textures and on an evening, toil away some lovely Christmas embroidery. That I wish I had time to do, and I'm never going to do.

And then when people come to my house in December, put on the headset, there's the decorations, that's going to change how we do Christmas decorations. It would be nice if I could just project them though. So you didn't all have to go around with, like, you know, I've had projectors for years that would just project it from your headset.

We'll all be wearing the new Ray-Ban glasses. So that'll have a virtual. It'll be like, Oh, when you come in the house, take your shoes off and put your glasses on.

27:00-27:31: GL

Yeah, who would ever thought your mum would say that? I've experienced virtual reality once. Last year, when we were back in England, we made a trip to York. And I got us tickets for the Van Gogh exhibition, which has actually been in one of the little churches in York for a couple of years.

I don't think it's still there, but it's an immersive Van Gogh experience. It was quite dear. Well, like 22 quid each, which is not bang for your buck, but for half an hour, you think, is it worth

it? Yeah, but it was incredible. So you sit in this room, well, it's effectively like it is the church, but it's deconsecrated.

And you can either sit in the middle on the pew, or you can sit around the edges. And they project Van Gogh's art all around. So you're in this room, this is before you even get to the VR. This is just the immersion experience, you're just surrounded by Van Gogh's artworks.

And they do this thing where they have somebody narrating Van Gogh's life, and he reads from some of his letters to his brother. And the paintings change, so sometimes it's like scenery, and sometimes it's actually his artwork.

And then towards the end, they put little empty frames all around the walls, and his paintings appear and disappear. And what I hadn't fully realised, you probably know this, is that when he painted a subject, whatever it was, he painted 10 or 15 different variations on a theme, iterations of the same person.

He painted a sailor and it moved from one version of art to another. And then they had the in the corner, they'd recreated his, you know, the blue room, the bedroom, yellow room. sorry, they recreated the bedroom anyway, so they had a barrier.

But of course, that did not stop the tourists climbing over, sitting on Van Gogh's chair for their photo opportunities. And then after, of course, you know, I'm standing there, very British going. You're not supposed to do that.

But they don't care. And then you go into the next room and there's a little display. And there's a bit about his life and you know what happened to him and then what happened to his. I didn't realise his brother had died the year after Theo had actually died the year after him, which was sad.

So then you put the VR headset on and sit in a wheelie chair, and you see this little street, cobbled street and you go lush and it's just like, it's like you're flying and you're just going through his artworks one after the other. But what's incredible....

You turn all the way around in your seat and you can see the street light disappearing behind you, and you can see the sky. And it was just unreal. I mean, I kept one foot on the ground. But like Mark, who was swivelling away.

And I was a bit like, I don't want to fall off here and drop from it. But it was unreal. And I think, if technology can give us that, then I'm all for it. That's an incredible experience to have.

30:49-31:16: LP:

Yeah, epic. What was interesting, I was having a chat with this lecturer after she'd done the showcase and we'd talked about Christmas decorations. And she was saying that. She'll often walk into the living room and her daughter has got the headset on. And she'll be like, lying on the floor in the middle of the room.

And she'll say, What are you doing? She was like, I'm in my den and she's built a den. She's got like seven dens in this virtual reality. And she's been in and had a look at her den. And she's made a whole fireplace.

She's got a little cabin in one and I was like, it changes the idea of imagination play as a child. So it's going to be fascinating to watch that generation because it's just they've just got it. It's part of their day. How are they going to manipulate it? Probably in a way that we can't conceive of yet, yeah.

31:41-32:02: GL:

Yeah, so that, I mean, that's great because I was one of those kids with an overactive imagination, but it was all in my head. But to actually be able to see it.

LP: we would, we would do it like in like, I grew up in a village in the countryside. And we would build dens in the woods or go in the farmer's field and build dens. Then it would be like a whole summer project.

And, you'd take snacks there every day and you had a whole storyline. But it's interesting. Will we be going out? Will those same kids be doing that in nature, and then their experience in nature, will that be optimised?

Because they're doing it in their virtual reality world when they get home. Or are they going to be like, No, I don't want to do the nature one, I'll just stay at home and do it. That's going to be interesting. And that would be sad, because, you know, it was nice when you were a kid and you could just like, roam around.

32:35-32:54: GL:

Out in the fresh air, yeah, getting cuts and scrapes like, yeah, important years, yeah. I mean, my mum and my grandma never knew where I was. I was, you know, at the Windy Fields or the Knobbies, you know where, there's some like half like a half-ruined building. I don't even know what it was.

it was like we didn't even need to build a den. It was there for us. We were out for hours.

33:03-33:08: LP:

Yeah, but the rule was when the lights come on the lampposts head on home.

33:11-33:25: GL:

Yeah, yeah, and I don't know if kids are missing out on the fresh air and being inventive. Yeah, just because it's nice to be outdoors and meeting people. As we were saying again about being face to face.

33:25-33:58: LP:

But it's not necessarily a bad thing, it's just it's just different to what we were used to. Yeah, it's just an additional way to experience that. So, like, if you have, like, an inner city child where there is no safe natural spaces to play in.

Or someone who's in like, a war-torn country. There's that idea of being able to access that space and time and the facility to engage in imagination play so that they can develop their creativity, yeah.

It's a funny one, but again, you've got this divergence. I'm all about the opposites and dualities of things. You know, you've got so many people now choosing to homeschool their kids, there's this whole rush now in America with forest school.

You do that all the way up to. Like the age of 12, where every day you go outside and your whole day is learning outside in all weathers. So I don't know what's going to happen. It's really a weird, interesting time to live in for so many reasons. But when you hang it all on this idea of creativity and being disruptive in creativity, it makes it even more curious to me.

34:43-35:09: GL:

Yeah, yeah. And I think that we should all be embracing creativity and being more open to disruption, because, as you said, the world is disrupting itself around us. So why not have a bit of control? And look at ways to make it more bearable and more beautiful.

Yes, get back to the magic of what it is to be alive. And we've got to have lives and manage households and kids, and jobs, and all running businesses.

But there are so many opportunities and options that we should all be able to find some small way of indulging our creative side. And I do think everybody has one. I think you just need a little bit of encouragement to play.

35:40-36:10: LP:

Explore all of the realms of creativity and then pick up a couple of flavours that you like. And there's that thing. I hate it when people say, like, I can't draw or I'm not creative, it's just not true.

If you can pick up a pencil or a brush or something that makes a mark, you are drawing and you are being creative. It's just that you think that there's a right way and a wrong way. Which, what we've just said at the beginning of this chat is that's totally not the point of being creative.

No, not at all. People who don't follow the rules are the ones who are usually the real creative virtuosos. And there's something very similar with how I feel about yoga. I remember years ago when I first got into yoga, one of the teachers that I went to said.

You will never master yoga, and the day that you accept that with a happy heart is the day you fully appreciate yoga. And I was getting like I was in my 20s, I was getting sucked in the whole like ego thing of yoga. I had been in the world of dance as a young girl.

And it was like, Oh well, she can get her knee on her, her head on her knee. Or look, he can do that, so I have to do the same. But the minute that that yoga teacher said that, I was like, Oh my god, that's so true.

And now when I go to a yoga practise, it's like, Well, how does my body feel today? You know, some days I will do this, some days I won't, and there's a whole million factors going on. But I'm really cool with accepting that.

Even if I practise yoga till the day I die, I will never, ever master it. Like the yogis who've dedicated their entire lives to living on a mountain and eating a weird arse diet, and, you know, in a little loincloth, doing poses, they will never master yoga.

Like, there's something so liberating about that. I think if we apply that to the idea of what it is to be a creative person, then, you know, we're all winning.

GL: Yeah, you're giving yourself permission to try. I mean, I don't know actually whether Jackson Pollock could draw properly or not. He didn't become famous for his lifelike sketches. He became famous for effectively flicking paint around.

37:52-37:57: LP: Yeah, splat, he is the artist of Splat, like, tere you go. Or, like Andy Warhol, with his photos and turning Campbell's condensed soup into a work of art.

38:07-38:20: GL:

Yeah, and the thing is is that art is art particularly, is subjective, and one person likes, another doesn't. So I'm not great on the Young British Artists, they don't do a lot for me. I like to see something that looks like something, but I also don't mind looking at something and trying to interpret it in my own way.

LP: Yeah, trying to appreciate it.

GL: Yeah, Damian Hirst's like Shark and Tracey Emin's bed. That doesn't float my boat at all, but if it's a bit abstract, I can cope with abstract. But then plenty of people do like Damian Hirst's shark and his crystal skull.

LP: yeah, each to their own. And you have to appreciate what. Like thread in the tapestry of art that they're contributing, the fact that it is, arguably it's an original thread. Even though you could say that Hirst and Emin are doing something similar, like they're using shock tactics.

And there's this idea of immersion, their threads are still unique and different, and together it creates what we understand as art. You've got to have the weirdos, the peripheral weirdos, otherwise what's the point?

39:26-39:45: GL:

Like, this is the thing of like old history in art, where everyone was doing everything the same way. And maybe that is where this like cultural idea of, oh, I can't do art, like, maybe that's where that comes from. But then you see. And I would challenge anybody who said I can't do art, I would say I can't do art.

But then I've also never committed any time to it because I'm not massively interested in drawing and painting in that way. But for those people who do think, Oh, I'd like to, but I can't.

If you go back and look at some of those 13th century paintings or 14th century paintings, the people don't look anything like people, yeah.

It's like a four-year-old's drawing the horse in the field, you know that? But that was the standard, and everybody drew and painted to a standard where nobody looked like a person. Nothing looked like the thing it was supposed to be. And yet they were being commissioned.

40:25-40:45: LP:

There's that reel that follows me around and it probably my phone will show me this today because it's listening to me. Where it's like cats throughout art history, and like the monstrosities of what people did to show a cat in a painting or a piece of art. Like, it's hysterical, it's exactly that you're right.

But then I would say, with you, Gudrun, you're an artist of words, like I said you love the art of conversation and you're obsessed with food like me. You're a foodie like that is creative art. It's not traditional art, but I think where that line is blurring now, every time you go to a great gallery or museum, like, one of the highlights for me and my husband is. Well, we're going to get some cake and tea.

Like that's the rule when we go to experience art, but there's that again. It's where the Venn diagram is now overlapping this idea of art and food, and experiencing the flavours in our mouths. And yet there's something there.

41:27-41:43: GL:

Yeah, and I love to, I love to cook for other people, like for my birthday. This year. We did because we can't get curry, so I did, we did a curry night, but we like, we've done a couple of them.

So we then decided, and obviously Mark just goes along with whatever I say and he gets really into it. So we took it to the nth degree, so I am. We've got these, these Christmas lights, all blue, and we hung them behind a sheet, and they've had these little lamps. And then we played Indian music and incense, and when our guests came in, we cleared the hallway.

We've got quite a big hall downstairs. When they came in, they all sat in the hall with their Bombay mix, which I've had shipped over. As if we were making a table to be ready for them in an Indian restaurant, and then what we did...

This is honestly how obsessed I am. I take these things so seriously. I've been on Amazon and bought posters that represented Indian restaurants. So I've got a 1940s Indian Railways poster, I've got a picture of an elephant and something else.

And then we put these all around the walls. And then we scoured the local shops and I'd found enough white flannels and I had white tablecloth, paper tablecloth. And we found these little fake roses, so we scattered the roses across the table.

We've got the Balti dishes and the little heater things. Mark cooked a stack of poppadoms bigger than his head. So we had the chalkboard with all the menu on. And then everybody came in to more Indian music and more incense. And then they had their meal.

And then obviously the best bit was afterwards when we brought out the hot flannels. And then we disappeared and came back with little shots of Bailey's and after it.

LP: Perfect. But what you've done there, it's amazing. You've created an immersive experience that celebrates a whole subsection of culture. Like the British love of curry, and the way that that's infused in both cultures is such a beautiful thing.

And you've created, recreated all of that that we hold so special and brought it to rural France. Like that, right there is like, hardcore exhibition, curation, so right there, that's epic creativity.

GL: Yeah, it is. And my mum's always like, do you not think you should just do a pop-up restaurant? And I go well, maybe because fortunately, the food was also good, it wasn't like I served them,

LP: Of course it was good. I expect nothing less.

GL: The food was also good, but when we brought our French neighbour in. And she's quite cosmopolitan, because she's not from rural Brittany, but she enjoys spicy food. But she's like, Is this what it's like in England? Like, Yeah, pretty much.

44:26-44:37: LP: Yeah, Curry Mile South Shields. Yeah, get yourself there.

GL: Yeah, this is exactly what it's like, and she's like, Oh, this is cool. So yeah, there are different ways to be creative. And yeah, you should just give yourself permission to do whatever you want to do.

I don't want to sit down and sketch the field. I mean, I could sit here and look down the field from my office window and sketch what I see. but I don't.

LP:
Not your idea of fun?

GL: Yeah, I'm happy to just look at it and go, Oh yeah, very nice, you know? But then I want to be creative in other ways.

45:00-45:23: LP:

And I think that's the thing is, find the outlet that works for you, because the world is crazy right now and you need an outlet. And whatever. Flick paint around, draw an unlikely horse, cook a meal, you know, get into your virtual den and hide from the world. And if there's room for the rest of us?

Put the kettle on, put the kettle on. Somebody's going to be pressing the nuclear button sooner rather than later. So well, this is the other side of it, like space travel or deep ocean travel.

Like, are those frontiers going to be explored further in a way that we can understand, like in a democratic way? Is it going to be done in secret? Like that's the next bit, isn't it? Like life, as we know it could fundamentally change very quickly. I don't know.

It is a crazy time, it's a crazy version of existence, so you're right, you've got to find happiness. And I think what makes us special as humans is that we are inherently creative and it's appreciating that.

You could be an exceptional creative person, like we were saying before, in a typical boring business. I'm using bunny quotes there for those listening, but you could be exceptionally creative, you could be the most creative leader ever.

And you're getting incredible results because of your the art of managing people. You might be insane at the creativity of planning time. It doesn't have to be with oil paint and a paintbrush, no.

If you can inspire people and you can get them to believe in your message, then, yeah. You know, you can be a really successful business leader. Or the president of the free world. Either option is apparently out there.

Or the best, like the best postman, the best post person that anyone has ever seen or experienced, you could be. I've been a post lady. My dad worked for Royal Mail, so I'm very familiar with that world.

You might think it's incredibly boring, but there are some wonderful characters who are up at 4am sorting the country's mail. And then you're out and you're engaging with the public. Like you could be doing so much creativity in a job like that, that has a profound effect on the people that you're with.

47:33-47:51: GL:

Yeah, I mean, I love our postman here, it's the same guy and he does all the hamlets in our area. And like, when? Because obviously, Mark and I are still staying with my parents until we sell out our house. And obviously my name is the same as my parents.

But Mark has a different name. So the postman was going to my dad. Like, who is this man? Like, he's getting my son-in-law and that's my daughter, and they're staying with us for a while.

And he's like, Right, okay, so now I know, and when he comes to the, he comes in his van. And the way it works here is you have a box outside and you have a key, and the postman has a key, so all the post-boxes across France, they all work with the same key.

And the postman will go and put your parcels in, and if there's anything too big, he'll come and knock on the door. But quite often, like, we'll go out, and sometimes because the dogs tell us we'll pop out and we'll sign things. And he knows exactly who lives everywhere, and he knows what it is.

My mum got a, they call it a carte grise. It's basically like the equivalent of a tax disc to go in a car. It's just a white envelope. And then something else comes and he goes, Oh, that's the that. And then the other bit that you're waiting for will come and we've got.

Unfortunately, we have got Starlink. You know, I'd spit on Elon Musk, but his Starlink is very good. And he knows all the people who've got the Starlink because he's delivered their Starlink packages to them.

And he's such a nice guy. The dogs have a habit of disappearing because we're surrounded by fields and woods, so we decided to get some little GPS trackers. So the parcel came and he went, Oh, right, and there's this, and I went, Oh, that's for the dogs.

And he went, Oh, what's for the dogs? and I said, Oh, it's GPS. I said, because they keep running away. And he went, Oh, that's not good. And you can see him registering that and going, I'll keep an eye out for the dogs.

For the dogs, yeah, because he knows who the dogs are, because they go mad when they see them, but he knows that they're friendly. They're just insane, so you know, he knows who our dogs are.

49:32-49:59: LP: How could you be the hub of the community? Like how wonderfully creative is that?

GL: You can, even you said you could during the lockdown. I think they probably still do it in some ways now. Is, you could leave a little sign on your letterbox to say that you want the postman to take a letter and post it on your behalf. And then he'll tell you how much it costs and you just give him the cash.

So if you're housebound and you can't get out, the postman will deliver your post, but he'll also take a post away on your behalf and send it off. And frank it. And then tell you what it costs.

50:16-50:26: LP:

The creative detail that goes into maintaining those relationships, yeah, like at scale, yeah, because he's not doing that just for you, is he. He's doing that for every single person he works with.

GL: Yeah, that's incredible, and there's a crazy number of people actually who live in this area. You wouldn't think so. Like, we're in a tiny hamlet, and it's only the more time we're here that we realise there's hundreds of people also all living in tiny hamlets.

And there's only, I think there's him and another postie that does this area, so he really does get to know everybody, isn't he? I don't know, like 800 people, maybe probably more.

50:55-51:03 LP:

Wow. What a life, what a way to spend your life, like, that's beautiful.

GL: Yeah, he just trucks around in his little yellow van.

LP: This is making me want to just do a sabbatical. I'll just come and stay in your backyard. You can feed me curry and I'll cruise around with him, and I'll take portraits of all the people he works with. Like, how lush would that be?

GL: That would be amazing because there are for you, I mean, I would also be happy to feed you Curry. But like, because there are so many, you know, like, it's I keep threatening Mark. I'm going to buy him some overalls because you're not really a real farmer until you've got the blue overalls,

Yes, they're quite pricey. So I said, you might have to make do with the Lidl ones for now, because the proper ones from the farm shop are dear.

LP: Yeah, but at least you get what you pay for.

GL: Well, this is true, this is true. He's already got two different kinds of wellies. But yeah, you could, you could really get some, some amazing portraits of the people living in these hamlets.

LP: I think I'd have to do it on a plate camera and get like, really like, detailed shots. Yeah, so we'd need some space if you've got a back shed for, like, a development area. Yeah, that I could be in in the evenings.

52:08-52:15: GL:

Yeah, yeah, we'll set you up in a little hut, we'll give you a heater.

LP: Yeah, great, no worries. Maybe I'll take up smoking black French cigarettes just for the year. Yeah, just for the look.

GL: You'll have to go to the tabac in the morning with a really strong espresso and a little glass of eau de vie. And then you're like, you're set up for the day and you can just just vibrate through the day.

52:33-52:35: LP: Just chain smoke me little black cigarettes. Yeah, I'm all about that. I'll let my husband know that when he gets in, yeah, I'm off, see ya, he'd probably be hanging about.

He'd be like, I'll just stay here with the cat, you know what? He would, God love him, he would. He'd be like, All right, I'll come and see you in a few weeks. I'll bring you something to stop the tremors. Yeah, good, OK.

53:04-53:19: GL:

Yeah, well, this is nice then, isn't it? We've established that there are all kinds of ways for all kinds of people to be creative.

LP: I think that's the crux. Yeah, I love that. That's what you're exploring in the podcast.

53:19-53:38: GL:

And I think I'd like to think that it will help people explore in their own minds as well.

LP: You know, yeah, you've got permission to go off and try it, give something a try, yeah, and fail at it regularly. Like, I still have not mastered a sourdough, and my God, have I tried?

I'm getting there very slowly and I am a pretty good cook and it's doing my head in. But I love the frustration of it and the nuance of it. I am enjoying that. Sometimes I do get very angry about it, but that's all part of the experience of human life. Yeah, what it is to be creative.

54:01-54:16: GL:

Yeah, I still can't really make gravy.

LP: really? Yeah, the trick is a good, like a good chunk of wine, that's what I do. I like to flambe it as well at the beginning and then cook it right down for ages.

54:17-54:22: GL:

Yeah, yeah, and fudge. I've never mastered fudge, yeah.

54:22-54:37: LP:

See, I'm not really bothered about fudge, I've never really given it the time. Whereas I love nothing more than a big crust of sourdough toast smothered in butter with a little bit of marmite on the top. Like, that is a great couple of hours. Well, that's it right there, yeah.

GL: And I'm going to have to make my own sourdough because they don't sell it here, and I also can't find a sourdough starter. So I'm going to have to labour with it myself.

LP: Well, next time you come to Newcastle, tell me and I'll hook you up with a bit of my sourdough, which comes from America.

GL: Wow, and it can be the international sourdough. Oh, that sounds good, yeah.

LP: So I'll keep mine fed and then I'll cut you off a piece and you can take that with you. Thank you. That would be good, yeah, because that's what I've been looking for. All I found, I did. I asked on Facebook, nobody had any.

And then I looked online and what it was English companies selling French style sourdough bread, and I was like, they don't sell that here. What are you making? It just sounds fancy to say it's Parisian. If it's not a baguette, the Parisians don't want it, honestly. Well, I feel like we have come to a natural conclusion there.

LP: Yes, we've put the world to rights, as we always do, Gudrun.

55:46-56:01

Always a pleasure to talk to you. And like I said before, I'm really excited about the podcast and where it's going. I can't wait to listen in to your other guests. I hate listening to myself speaking, so I will probably not be listening to this episode, but I will certainly be checking out the others.

56:01-56:08

This is the thing I don't like listening to myself either, which is why I'm not going to edit it. OK, that's a good idea.

56:16-56:39

I've just relaunched my YouTube channel and I've decided I wanted to go back to editing. Because I want to see if I can teach myself how to use Premiere Pro. It's really complicated and I was like, you know what, I fancy? The challenge, let's see if I can do it. I used to on all of my previous seasons, just send it out and have someone else do it.

56:42-56:50

It's an acquired skill to not die of the cringes about yourself when you are editing yourself.

56:53-56:54

I'm still acquiring that.

56:56-57:18

How you sound to everybody else is not how you sound to your own head, which still freaks me out, and the mannerisms. When you're moving around, you do things inherently intrinsically, and then you look at yourself and you're like, Is that what I look like? When I do that? What the hell am I thinking? But you can't stop doing that. It's fixed in your muscle memory by this point.

57:19-57:21

And then here come the cringes.

57:25-57:52

Well, thank you very much for being my guest. Do you want to point anybody to any links? or you can share a random link to anything you want? I think, yeah, if people could check out my YouTube channel, that would be fantastic. I've just renamed the channel because I'm now in this direction of doing personal branding consultancy. You can find me anywhere, including YouTube with Laura P. Creative.

57:52-57:59

So that's where I am everywhere. Brilliant and I will add that to the show. Notes Thank you very much for your time. I'll speak to you soon.

58:00-58:01

Thank you, bye.