



INSIDE THE GALLERY PODCAST

Transcript of interview:

DR REBECCA COATES – Artistic Director and CEO

SHEPPARTON ART MUSEUM

OCTOBER 2021

Tim Stackpool:

And to tell us more about the new gallery, the Artistic Director and CEO of the Shepparton Art Museum. Dr. Rebecca Coates, thanks for joining us via Zoom on Inside the Gallery.

Rebecca Coates:

Absolute pleasure.

Tim Stackpool:

Now, the collection that you have, it has quite a history. Just put us in the picture of how all of this came about, how the new building was established, and the history of the gallery, I understand, goes by back to 1936 with some sort of 50-pound grant. What's the story behind that?

Rebecca Coates:

Oh, I think it's a great story. And it's a really interesting story for not just regional Victoria, regional Australia, but the sort of aspirations, I think, of what you see in Australia in that early 20th century. As you say, there was a town clerk who had a vision for a really exciting and dynamic part of regional Victoria. And he, obviously, had some partners in crime and managed to secure or get the promise of a 50-pound grant to work towards a space of art and culture. So they thought, how do we do this? And they approached the leading portrait painter at the time, and so John Longstaff was co-opted and he then recommended the acquisition of not one, but two works to start the collection in 1936.

Tim Stackpool:

Right.

Rebecca Coates:

They were landscape works and he talked about ... It was largely painting at that stage and the sort of three areas were painting, landscape, and still lives. It took quite a while for a work by a woman artist to be acquired and it took quite a while for a work by an indigenous artist to be acquired, which is no different from the history of many other collections.

Rebecca Coates:

But I think to your point, the fact that a space in regional Victoria that had a large immigrant population who had come to create a new life, to settle down and make roots, and it was post Depression. So really, the sort of growth of what do we need to live a good life, I think, was what I'm hearing. And the fact that they got a leading contemporary artist to actually say it needs to be contemporary art and it needs to be of and for our times has really helped us, I think, in how we've thought about our collection and our role in engaging community.

Tim Stackpool:

Yeah. Unbelievable. Shepparton back then, it was so different to how it is now and to have that type of vision is quite incredible. Because arts, as we talk about on the podcast so much, has a tremendous input and influence on the areas where the galleries are set up. I mean it can change the whole perspective of a location simply by having, not necessarily a contemporary art gallery, but some sort of artistic outlook on the world wherever you are.

Rebecca Coates:

Yeah. I mean I think that's really a good point. And one of the things that I was hugely surprised by when I started as director six years ago was one of the first things someone said to me was, "Art is elitist." And I was so shocked because I had obviously been working, I had a long connection with regional Victoria and regional areas. I'd worked overseas. I'd worked in major institutions. And for me, it was a reflection of our values and our culture as much as ... and art, if you want, was our language, the way that we created a space to talk about sometimes challenging ideas.

Rebecca Coates:

But I was really interested that this was the first thing that someone had said to me and I thought, right, how can we shift this? 'Cause I certainly don't think this is the case. What do we need to do? What are the inhibitors and how do we make this a space that reflects the community within which we live and work?

Rebecca Coates:

So that goes to talking about arts and culture because when you say sport is a reflection of culture, the ABC is a reflection of culture, our broadcasting is a reflection of what we value. People go, "Yeah, yeah. That's absolutely right." So there's obviously something there. And I think that then, as you say, it's a reflection of we are and where we sit in the world and what we dream about.

Tim Stackpool:

Yes. Yes.

Rebecca Coates:

They go, "Yeah, yeah." So I think that was one thing. And the other was about when you come into a place ... Oh, first of all, does the place go out to you? So do you see the sort of permeation of arts and culture in your community? And the answer's yes. So then if you entice them back, whether it's through education or whether it's through workshops and activities or volunteering or just coming and, beautiful time to look at work and talk about something, talk about ideas. It's do you see yourself reflected in that space in some way? And how is it? So is it the range of artists that we acquire for the collection? Is it the sorts of topics and ideas that artists are exploring that we're picking up in the shows that we curate? And I think that that's a really interesting point about how do we make this a place for everyone?

Rebecca Coates:

So there's some of the questions that I've been sort of, I think, really focusing on over this last period and that have informed what SAM will hopefully do and how we will grow into this new opportunity of a new building and a new space.

Tim Stackpool:

Yes, yes. And let's talk about that space. Just thinking about that elitist perspective, and if you think about art galleries established perhaps in the early part of the last century, we're talking about great stone buildings, almost castles if you like. But the building that you're moving into, and part of it's opened now apparently, I understand, but the building that you're moving into, it's a striking modern piece. I mean how did you come about choosing the architectural direction to take with this?

Rebecca Coates:

I think that's a great question. And it's, again, another thing that we've talked quite a lot about over the time. We, in a way, are fortunate. Shepparton doesn't have a history of gold and it doesn't have a history of wool and, regrettably, a lot of its earlier architecture is no more. We have some great examples of modernist architecture with the SPC Factory and building, so that sort of sense of futurism and what Australia stood for in that growth in the sort of modernist period, I think, is reflected in Shepparton and there's an awful lot of not so good architecture.

Rebecca Coates:

But I think the pluses of not being hooked to those Australian, largely colonial histories is that we can look back to our multicultural community, our First Nations people and say, "If this is a reflection of culture and place, we need to be ambitious. We need to be visionary and we need to be contemporary." Because these are the things that we see in the community, innovation, entrepreneurship, taking a risk and creating a new space and new home. So they were some of the things that we talked about in the architectural competition brief and really invited architects to respond to that and do it in a way that actually was exciting, that they'd go, "I might've done," in DCM's case, "We might have designed the Museum Victoria, but this is something we haven't done before. This is really interesting."

Rebecca Coates:

So we got 88 applicants. They were every single architect, you could say, you could easily have built a museum with. They were fabulous. So we were really blessed. We worked with the Institute of Architects to have the competition endorsed because we were very, very keen that this was something that they wanted to have on their CV. They wanted to say, "I've been part of this experience and it was a good experience," and do it in a way that was sort of best practice that was open to real innovation and design and rooted in the location and the place and people. And then we shortlisted five architectural groups. They're invited to develop stronger concept designs. And from that, an expert jury selected the proposed winning architect. It then had to be endorsed by council because this is the council project.

Tim Stackpool:

Yes, yes. Yes.

Rebecca Coates:

So council owns the building and Shepparton Art Museum has now moved from council and we're an independent, not-for-profit arts organisation. So that also happened as part of our move. So we lease it from council as a peppercorn rent. But I think back to your question about the building, the architects really embraced those principles, if you want, the values of innovation, vision. We weren't tied to the temple of learning or the temple of enlightenment sort of architectural form, and that gave a real freedom to the architects to respond to the landscape and nestle a very strong, as you say, striking and visionary building that's very simple, if you want, into its indigenous landscape and place.

Tim Stackpool:

Yeah. It has a great strength, I think, looking at it amongst the landscape there. It's a bit hard to describe, of course, audio-wise in the podcast.

Rebecca Coates:

Yeah. Well, it's a huge cube. It's a big cube. And it's four stories, it's actually five stories high, and it's very simple and very restrained and very refined from the outside. And I think initially, a lot of the responses were, "Oh, it's a little imposing," but when you get into the building, and so we have opened up the ground floor 'cause there was so much interest in the building and because this has been a challenging year for us all with COVID. And we were originally hoping to open earlier in the year. COVID hasn't allowed that. So we have opened up the ground floor and the SAM Shop is open and people can come in within COVID restrictions that have opened and closed, opened and closed all year. And they can look up and get a sense of the building.

Rebecca Coates:

And the response that we have had from the public coming in is that it is an enveloping and welcoming and quite human-scaled interior. It's got a wow factor. It's got a wonder. It's got that sense of sort of cathedral-like space. And yet it's a very human scale that's quite intimate. So I think that there's that play of outside and inside. And again, thinking back to Shepparton and the place, it's searingly hot in summer. It's freezingly cold in winter so big extremes of climate and temperature, and it's tough. It needs to be a strong building that is proud of its position. If we are hoping that through arts and culture, we can become a place of meeting, a place of pride, a reflection of culture and a reflection of people, then it's got to be a building that is a bit of a destination and a beacon I think.

Tim Stackpool:

Yes, yes.

Rebecca Coates:

And so that in a flat landscape, and it is very flat in Shepparton, it is the fruit bowl and the food bowl of Victoria, we are the tallest building in Shepparton.

Tim Stackpool:

Mm, mm. And I think you're right in terms of what you said earlier with art having to reach out to the community as well, even at a very basic level. Driving past and seeing the building, if anyone was not familiar with what it was, you would go, "What's that?"

Rebecca Coates:

Yeah.

Tim Stackpool:

It would be like a huge ... It's like a punctuation mark on the trip to say-

Rebecca Coates:

Yeah, I think-

Tim Stackpool:

"We've got to take a look at what this is."

Rebecca Coates:

And I remember when I first started at SAM, there's a wonderful building on the other side of the sort of wetlands lake. And I thought, oh, goodness, it's sort of quite modern architecture and I wonder what it is. Is it a school? And it turns out to be Aquamoves, which is this recreation space and the swimming pool, the old 50-metre outdoor swimming pool, which is one of my most favourite swimming places in the whole of Australia, I think. But I thought that's interesting 'cause it draws you over and you want to know what it is.

Rebecca Coates:

So I think that sense of placemaking is going to be very important in the building. The fact that people who perhaps don't want to come to see an exhibition, first of all, will come and they might come and have a coffee. They might come four times to, "I'll meet you at SAM, have a coffee or let's walk around the lake." And then maybe the fifth time, they'll drop in and go, "I wonder what is happening in that gallery." And that for us is a big win. I think the biggest win will be, "I'll meet you at SAM."

Tim Stackpool:

That's the great opportunity in creating a destination, as you say. It's difficult for some galleries because of where they are positioned. If I think in terms of Sydney, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, it's in a beautiful location in The Domain, but you do have to leave the central business district to go and meet someone there for a coffee, which is quite different, can I say, to the Museum of Contemporary Art, which is positioned right at Circular Quay in Sydney. People who know Sydney will know what I'm meaning, and their cafe is heaving outside of COVID times.

Rebecca Coates:

Yeah.

Tim Stackpool:

You're, however, you are somewhat outside of the central business district of Shepparton, if I can put it that way so-

Rebecca Coates:

Yeah, we are.

Tim Stackpool:

Are you going to have to work a little bit harder in that sense in order to become that point of destination?

Rebecca Coates:

I mean I think we've all been thinking good and hard about this for quite some time. And I think that the MCA, as you say, has got the rockstar position in Sydney and a visibility of architecture and place that I think is really great. We have a similar visibility of architecture and place, and I think regional Australia is still very much a car experience.

Tim Stackpool:

Okay, yeah.

Rebecca Coates:

Now I'm not saying it should be, but I think again, over the last six years, the number of sort of articles that I've seen in the local newspapers about should the mall be opened up? Should we be able to park for free? How does parking help increase visitation to local shops? These are all the things that have a visibility in a regional centre that is actually much less relevant in Melbourne or Sydney or other capital cities because of the public transport sector. And because a 20-minute drive is, that'll get you quite a long way out of the town. So you're a lot more used to jumping in the car and a half hour trip is neither here nor there to go and pick up the mail.

Rebecca Coates:

So I think that that sense of distance and the expectations of what you will do to get somewhere is a little different. So that I think that's one thing, but I think we're mindful of a number of things within that, that I think we're trying to sort of push. One is given that it is still a car, I call it car city, we've got electric car plugs so that you can drive your little, not necessarily Tesla, but drive your electric car and there's a charging point so-

Tim Stackpool:

Right.

Rebecca Coates:

This idea of sustainability and being mindful of the environment is something that we have kept very much at the forefront of our mind in building a new museum. And it's six-star rated. We do, if we think about Bendigo and the sort of what they've done with public transport, working with V/Line and the destination sort of experience of show, lunch and a nice trip on the train, I think that that is a real opportunity over the next few years, this sort of, as the borders regrettably have closed down, regional tourism has increased 'cause we all need to do something. We need a point of difference at the weekend. We need to have a semblance of normality in an un-normal world.

Rebecca Coates:

So I think that that's going to be another thing, too. We are on this, the Melbourne to Shepparton road. So we are the first thing that people see as they come in sort of off the Hume freeway and I think from that part of town, and I think that's quite important, again, as this sort of placemaking and destination sort of aspect. So it is a bit different.

Rebecca Coates:

The real opportunity that I see at a local level and linking us to the centre of town, which is only I've ... It's a 10-minute quick walk. It's not that long. Is again way finding or that sort of experience of linking to the train station, walking through town and making it as a point, a sort of journey. So I would see sort of public art and sort of narrative opportunities as absolutely fantastic. I think it's a real opportunity. You recognise what could be a challenge and say, "Is there something within this that we could make this quite a unique experience?"

Tim Stackpool:

And in terms of the influence as well, can you see this kind of changing the perspective of Shepparton? I mean how far do you think your tentacles can reach in terms of having art accepted further into the community?

Rebecca Coates:

I have observed, as I say, look, I've been, my family's lived regionally for three generations, but the city-country thing, I think, it's been very interesting to sort work between and I have observed a real change in the way that Shepparton has been viewed over this last six years, and I think that's in part about building up a pride. It was very much seen as this sort of difficult place with high youth unemployment and a lot of social issues, and that story of innovation and entrepreneurship, and the story of vision and the story of success, if you want, I think in a regional centre was not the narrative that was told. I have observed and many others have also said that that perception, self-perception and perception of place is changing. And I think these sort of ambitious projects with vision and leadership and very clear reason for being will help people to understand that things can evolve. So I think we will play and we already are playing a very key role in this change.

Tim Stackpool:

Mmm. I want to come to some of the exhibitions that you have planned, but before we do that, since we're so philosophical about this at the moment and certainly over the last 18, 20 months, there's been a big change in perspective about what's important in life and particularly in working life and how we undertake our day. Now coming to, hopefully, the end of this challenge that the world has seen, I've seen as we come to the end of this year, there's a bit of a departure from what's important in the cities. And I'm talking about in terms of the personnel that I'm seeing working in major art institutions in capital cities. Key personnel are deciding for whatever reason that there are opportunities elsewhere outside of the city.

Tim Stackpool:

So it's kind of like they've reached a pinnacle of their profession, but now they're going back perhaps to their roots. I don't want to name names, but in particular, we've got some major curatorial players in arts who are going back to smaller towns, going back to work with smaller foundations. And I just wonder if the timing is now really right for institutions such as yours in what we might call regional areas to really mature in the market and to become, as you say, destinations not only for the public, but for what I might call high power professionals in the art industry, if I can call it that as well.

Rebecca Coates:

Yeah. I mean I think that's a good point. I, again, about six years ago, I'd say probably, and maybe you're more aware of it when you're making the move, I think there are a number of my friends and colleagues who made quite specific decisions about opportunity. And so we'd all worked internationally, we'd worked in leading institutions, in state and national institutions and I think there was this ... So we talked about this recognition that there were opportunities to do things differently. In some ways, there were greater freedoms.

Tim Stackpool:

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Rebecca Coates:

Certainly you could make your own luck and it was tougher in a way because you needed to build your own tribe sometimes, but I think you're right. I think that you're seeing this now around Australia particularly, and this is something that's always happened in Europe. It's always happened in the States. It's happened in many other parts of the world.

Rebecca Coates:

So I think it's really interesting and I think you're right. The two sort of, apart from the unbelievable fatigue I think we're seeing across the arts and cultural space, and we will keep going, but it's like the exhaustion I think is huge. The two things that we've talked a lot about in terms, with my team, in terms of sort of culture and what we've missed or what we value is a sort of sense of community. We've really missed seeing our artists and our colleagues and those conversations that we perhaps took for granted. I think that's something, that sense of community or connectedness is something that we will take with us. And the world has also shrunk in some respects. And I don't think, while we say we're going back to normal, I don't think that we'll ever be as it was before.

Rebecca Coates:

I think if you look back to the Spanish flu, I was wondering why there's no art really. There are only a few paintings and there are a couple of literary texts, but there's actually nothing from the Spanish flu. This is in January last year. And I did quite a lot of research around it thinking, why is this so? I think after the 18 months and it will be two years that we've been through this, I think we'll all want to forget. So I think that sense of connectedness and the things that get us up in the morning, the things that we love and the things that bring us joy, we're missing a lot of the joy at the moment. And I think, again, this is where we can play a key role as a great workplace, as a leader and builder of culture, as a sense of excitement and fun, a place of learning and to engage, and to remind ourselves that these are the things that link us with others.

Tim Stackpool:

Yeah. And art is so far reaching. It's a broad term.

Rebecca Coates:

Yeah.

Tim Stackpool:

And as you say, when it comes to with the community, it can range from the graffiti on the street to this fanzine, zine culture that we're kind of seeing as well up to fine art, classic arts, sculpture, even galleries hosts performing arts performances as well, that connection.

Rebecca Coates:

Totally. I want to see slam poetry. I want to see the knitters and spinners breaking the Guinness Book of Records with the most number of spinning wheels throughout the building. And it's not that it's high and low art. It's a reflection of culture. And we work with outstanding artists who are at the peak of their game. And I think sometimes, the others who are not involved in this arts and culture space can see it as deceptively simple. They don't understand that that, to do something like that and to be able to create the space to have these conversations is usually artists who are at the peak of their game. We make it, I think we sometimes make it look too easy.

Tim Stackpool:

Well, that's the thing because what the arts community want to do is provoke, but entertain as well. I mean there's no point in creating work which is not going to engage people.

Rebecca Coates:

No, that's right. I've always said as a curator, it doesn't matter how good your show is if people don't come.

Tim Stackpool:

Yes, yes. Yeah. And they see the value in coming as well. We need to move on and talk about exhibitions, what you've actually got planned coming up.

Rebecca Coates:

Yes, yeah.

Tim Stackpool:

Now building is due to open on the 20th of November. What can we see following that?

Rebecca Coates:

So we are going to open on the 20th of November, come hell or high water. We will work within the COVID restrictions. So when we open, we'll do a range of, we'll continue to do a range of sort of online and also in-person experiences. From the 20th, the whole building will be open so the whole five floors. There will be exhibitions. We've got four new main exhibition spaces. So a large permanent collection space where we've got a exhibition that draws on more recent acquisitions and the exhibition is titled Flow so stories of people and place. We're launching with a major new exhibition, which has been co-curated by two of my colleagues, Belinda Briggs, who's a proud Yorta Yorta woman here and has been on the team for five years with me, and Shelley McSpedden. And that's a show of Lin Onus' work. He's a Yorta Yorta man who has never shown on country before.

Tim Stackpool:

Wow.

Rebecca Coates:

So this is a really exciting thing. It's enabled us to work with the community. It is very much co-led. And I think there's a sense of an artist and a family coming home as well, which is quite moving. And I feel enormously honoured to have worked with his family and to start talking about how can we do this? What is our role?

Rebecca Coates:

We've got a kids' space for the first time. So we're working with Amrita Hepi. Again, we've responded because of COVID and this sense of participatory and engaging, doing that safely and sensibly in a COVID context was something we were very mindful of. So it's a beautiful sort of human movement. It's a invitation and response. I'm really hoping that everyone just gets going and has a go and really enjoys this. And Amrita has done some beautiful sort of choreography and sort of thinking about how we move and engage and connect with people through art.

Rebecca Coates:

We've got a dedicated community gallery space, which is called the Williamson Gallery. And we're launching that program with an exhibition called Fresh and it's top art and design, students from the Golden Valley region who, of course, all had their final year exhibitions cancelled because of COVID. So we've worked with the school kids to say, "Listen, you've done something amazing over the last two years of homeschooling. We want to support you. We want to support your families. We want to show that you're part of a community through arts and culture, and your teachers who have supported you for all this time." So there's a huge excitement about that show as well.

Rebecca Coates:

And the bit that people I think are not as aware of is that the whole building is a living, breathing space to show and work in. So we've got new commissions throughout the building, not just in the galleries. And we've embedded display cabinets throughout the building that will showcase the ceramics collection which, of course, SAM is recognized for.

Tim Stackpool:

Wow.

Rebecca Coates:

And then probably the last thing I think is worth just touching on is that we're very aware that with this strong building, which is, you can see through at a ground level, so it's got that lovely flow feeling that's good design has so that it's not blocked off to the outside public space. We've created what I call our Gertrude Street window equivalent in regional Victoria. And we've got a commission space on the exterior of the building. So it's like a window display area that we're inviting artists to create commissions for.

Rebecca Coates:

So when the building is closed at night, you can still be part of the building. You can still see art, and we've invited Maree Clarke, who's Wemba Wemba, Yorta Yorta woman to create a new commission. And she's worked with elders to create this new work specifically for this context and this opportunity. And on the outside of the building, too, in that sort of public/private play, we've got a wonderful new artwork, public artwork by Tony Albert that stands really strongly like this sort of beautiful sentinel of shared walking together, if you want, at the entrance of the museum.

Rebecca Coates:

So there's going to be a lot to see and a lot to do. And I'm hoping that people, because we are free to the public and for the first year or so, we will remain free so that people get this on their radar. And we don't want money or financial imperatives to be an impediment to owning and being part of this building. We hope that people will drop in and sort of do your shopping and a five-minute drop in, just have a look at one artwork. It doesn't ... You don't have to put your lipstick on and dress up to come to the gallery. Come in in your high vis vest. It is for and of the people.

Tim Stackpool:

Talking about this level of detail that you're going into here and like you said earlier, it looks as if you're doing it very easily. Going back, however, to the original gallery, which was pretty much attached, if not

part of the council chambers, so at one end, you had the council offices where people were paying their council rates and complaining about their car parking tickets and infringements and-

Rebecca Coates:

Yeah, their parking fines, yeah.

Tim Stackpool:

Yeah. And then you had the gallery sort of a-

Rebecca Coates:

Wedge in the middle.

Tim Stackpool:

And now you've got this own dedicated space, which is beautiful and fantastic, to use the superlative. Given your international experience, however, how much further does Australia need to go in order to actually recognise the arts for what they should be recognised for?

Rebecca Coates:

Ah, look, I think it's a really topical and interesting question, and I think there's been a lot of discussion this year about advocacy and what we can do. I think we need, I think you've got to be in the room to change the discussion. That's number one.

Tim Stackpool:

Yeah.

Rebecca Coates:

I think we've also got to learn how to find the language that non-believers speak without dumbing down what we do, making it relevant. And we need them to then be our advocates as well as us. So I think there are a few things. I think we've got ... So the answer to your question is we got a long way to go. And I think that's ... I could say it's disappointing. And I could say when I worked in the UK and Europe, it was across the newspapers. It was across the tabloids. There was a level of engagement and discussion that was just a given.

Rebecca Coates:

But I think it's not irrelevant, but that's not going to change things. So I think we've been very good at saying, "Ah, but it could be or it should be." This is where we are and I think we need everyone to talk about the value and why it matters. So we are super smart and we have great people in our midst. What we're doing in terms of building and being a part of a strong and identifiable culture is no different from sport in some respects. In fact, there are more people that go to arts and cultural events than they do the sport.

Tim Stackpool:

Correct. Yes.

Rebecca Coates:

We know that and yet, that's not a message that comes through. So I think we say, "Well, what is it about sport that people love? And why do you have this grassroots?" And it's about identification. It's probably the only thing in Australia where you can actually try and achieve the best that you can without being shot down as a tall poppy. So it's about excellence and that's all accepted in Australia. And yet, my argument would be for those people who aren't part of that, should they miss out on that sense of community, that sense of being part of something, the sense of feeling good and getting up and giving it a go?

Rebecca Coates:

So I think that there are very clear arguments that we can make for those people who don't necessarily drink the Kool-Aid. But when you explain it like that, they go, "Yeah. Well of course, that's right. Well, that's logical." So I think we've got a bit of a way to go because I am convinced now more than ever that we need arts and culture in our lives. That is the bit that we've been missing. And that sort of light bulb moment when we were locked out of our institutions that we work in and we weren't seeing and working with our artists, I thought I realized how often I clearly snuck into the collection to get away from the meetings.

Tim Stackpool:

Yeah, yeah.

Rebecca Coates:

And I realised that I probably have conversations, I'm going to sound quite mad, but conversations with the artworks 'cause I thought I was talking to my friends. You know?

Tim Stackpool:

Yeah, yeah.

Rebecca Coates:

So I think that's the bit that we perhaps a little have taken for granted 'cause it's always been in our lives. And if we can reaffirm that need for a connectedness through arts and culture and what we would love to share with people, I think that would be an enormous achievement.

Tim Stackpool:

Rebecca, we've come to learn so much about you in this conversation as well. And there's a bit of a tradition which has started up in this podcast is for me to ask some rapid fire questions to wrap up the conversation.

Rebecca Coates:

Yeah, yeah.

Tim Stackpool:

Are you cool to go ahead with those?

Rebecca Coates:

Of course.

Tim Stackpool:

Okay. So this is actually borrowed from James Lipton from the Actors Studio. So your time starts now. What's your favourite film?

Rebecca Coates:

I was going to say anything Italian, but I think I have to say The Arc.

Tim Stackpool:

And your favourite actor and performer?

Rebecca Coates:

Tilda Swinton.

Tim Stackpool:

Mmm, very good. Your favourite song?

Rebecca Coates:

Oh. Probably either Maria Tibaldi or Soul Funk.

Tim Stackpool:

Oh, very good. Your general preference, here we go, the Beatles or the Rolling Stones?

Rebecca Coates:

Ah, depends on the drive.

Tim Stackpool:

Well, automobile or motorbike?

Rebecca Coates:

Automobile and preferably, two-door and Italian.

Tim Stackpool:

Okay. Does pineapple ever belong on pizza?

Rebecca Coates:

Certainly not.

Tim Stackpool:

One place you'd like to visit, but you haven't?

Rebecca Coates:

Darwin.

Tim Stackpool:

What's your favorite word?

Rebecca Coates:

At the moment, it's hilarious and I'm not sure, it's ironic.

Tim Stackpool:

Your least favorite word?

Rebecca Coates:

Nice.

Tim Stackpool:

What sound or noise do you love?

Rebecca Coates:

Birds.

Tim Stackpool:

What sound or noise do you hate?

Rebecca Coates:

Formula One.

Tim Stackpool:

What profession ... I love Formula One. What profession other than your own would you like to attempt?

Rebecca Coates:

I think that's really hard. You've got me stumped on that one.

Tim Stackpool:

That's a pass. That one's all right. What's the biggest surprise you ever got?

Rebecca Coates:

Probably having children.

Tim Stackpool:

If you could change one thing, what would that be?

Rebecca Coates:

Equality and inclusion.

Tim Stackpool:

If heaven exists, what would you like to hear God say when you arrive at the pearly gates?

Rebecca Coates:

That God's a woman.

Tim Stackpool:

I was a woman all along.

Rebecca Coates:

I know. I know. How good would that be?

Tim Stackpool:

Rebecca, thank you very much for your time. And we really appreciate all that input and philosophy you've given us on Inside the Gallery today.

Rebecca Coates:

Oh, it's an absolute pleasure to speak.