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SIBLING REVELRY: THE SIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF
BRANDON AND OLIVIA LOCHER

August 17, 2017



You'll notice the preternatural ease with which they discuss one another's professional work and personal selves; the respect they have for their interests, efforts and shared history; and the continued expectation they put on each other to create something new, exciting and distinctive. Brandon (@brandonlocher) and Olivia Locher (@olivialocher) — siblings, roommates and originators. At 30, Brandon is an audio-visual artist, while Olivia, six years his junior, is a photographer. Typically, age difference is enough to warrant a devolving of paths, yet they have no qualms staying in the same apartment, giving the other feedback, working on the same projects and finishing each other's sentences.

"I think Olivia and I have always been close, especially now that we have gotten older and we've studied a long time together," says Brandon. "Even when I was in high school, Olivia was friends with a lot of my friends."

"We have the relationship where we could be in a place this small together and not kill each other," adds Olivia.

Today, the two are in her studio in Manhattan, where the air conditioning is broken and a large fan swirls on the floor circulating hot air. Behind them is a newly purchased original Eames desk, which Olivia snagged the other day from a seller on Craigslist. There's also a

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multicolored rug, a white Ikea bookshelf, which has been glued back together several times and displays a variety of art and photography books and vinyl records, and a group of enormous rolled-up backdrops, each in their own poppy colors — bright yellows, blues, pinks and oranges. When they need space, they either go off into their own separate corners, or Brandon will return to the Lochers' hometown of Johnstown, Pennsylvania, where he currently houses most of his instruments and electronic equipment.

The studio is located on Madison Avenue, which Olivia admits is a strange place for two working artists in New York City. But she had her heart set on a spot with big windows and high ceilings and found it in this spacious apartment just south of midtown. Here, she shoots and brainstorms much of her bombastic, satirical work. Most recently, it was the series "I Fought the Law," which looked to show off America's most unusual laws.

"I was photographing this guy, and he randomly brought up that it's illegal to have an ice cream cone in your back pocket [in Alabama]," says Olivia. "Then I just started researching other weird laws, and I realized there's one for almost every state."

Brandon didn't officially collaborate on the project, but he did assist on shoots and was a voice of reason when it came to choosing which portraits made the final series; after Olivia posted them on the wall in the studio, they were able to talk through what worked and what didn't.

"I didn't realize some of them weren't working until I pinned them all up," says Olivia.

When you're creating something, you tend to erect blinders. That's why outside opinion is important — particularly when it's coming from someone who knows exactly who you are and how you operate.

Explains Brandon, "We're close enough that if I'm working on something that she doesn't like, she'll just tell me."

The eldest Locher is currently working on a project known as "Mazes to the Motherlode," a series of black-and-white drawings and illustrations, a few of which hang over Olivia's new desk. However, Brandon has mostly made his stamp in the music world. This past February, he released the debut album from Stage Hands, a collaboration with drummer/producer Gerald Mattis that combines a variety of genres and tones, from jazz to ambient electronica. Brandon compares the recording and mastering process similar to the one he and his sister used for evaluating "I Fought the Law."

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“It’s the same with me with music-making, to try to put together this entire collection of songs and have all of those songs and all of those sounds and everything that is happening within that 40 minutes working with each other,” he says.

Even if they don’t end up speaking about their work, each sibling has an unconscious effect on the other’s project: motivation. That’s how Olivia got into photography. At the time, Brandon had been entrenched in his hometown’s DIY music scene. Sensing a need to create on her own, she decided to pick up a camera and branch out. More than a decade later, they’re still challenging each other to reach and break through their limits.

“I think Olivia is always pushing me artistically,” says Brandon. “She’s making so much great stuff happen all the time every day. And if two or three days go by and I haven’t finished anything, I start thinking: ‘Hey, come on. Get with it, Brandon. What are you doing?’”

“We’ve always been very close creatively,” adds Olivia.

The two have since gone from siblings working off each other as kids to living with each other and creating their own unique works of art to collaborating on full-fledged projects. Down the road, they will release their first album called, appropriately, Family Teeth. The music is still being recorded but the album cover is set: a portrait of the duo by Olivia, where they appear painted in all black — far from the bright colors and tones the two have used in their work.

“I think it’s important as an artist to never repeat what it is the last thing you did,” says Brandon. “Yes, you could put out something that a lot of people could like, and then you could be very successful. But I feel like the challenge of the art is just to not repeat yourself and just keep giving people what they expect of you and what they think they want of you but to evolve and to develop and to take your work to another level. And then hopefully your audience will follow you.”