

Transcript

Dead Ladies Show Podcast Episode 76

Ester Krumbachová

(Dead Ladies Show Music - 'Little Lily Swing' by Tri-Tachyon)

SUSAN STONE: Welcome to the Dead Ladies Show Podcast, I'm Susan Stone. The Dead Ladies Show celebrates women, both overlooked and iconic, who achieved amazing things against all odds while they were alive. And we do it through women's history storytelling on stage, here in Berlin and beyond. And then we bring you a fine selection of those stories here on the podcast. DLS co-founder Katy Derbyshire is here with me, too. Hello, Katy.

KATY DERBYSHIRE: Hello, Susan. It's lovely to be here on this beautifully sunny autumn day.

SUSAN STONE: And it is delightful to have you here. Now, Katy, please tell the good people listening who we have on the show today.

KATY DERBYSHIRE: Yes, we have Rachel Pronger, who is a curator, writer and editor, who works with the wonderful Invisible Women Feminist Film Collective in Berlin and the UK. As you might imagine, she's chosen to tell us about a woman from the world of film, Czech multi-talent Ester Krumbachová. Ester was a costume designer, an art director, writer, director and an out-and-out iconoclast.

Her work was quirky, colorful and political, lashing out at the patriarchy and authoritarianism, which led to her official ban from working as a film artist at the peak of her career. Here's Rachel with her story, live from the stage in Berlin.

RACHEL PRONGER: If you had for some reason found yourself in Prague in the early 1990s, you might have gone looking for somewhere to drink. And you might have stumbled across a small neighborhood bar, a little local dive called Na Zelená liška — On Green Fox.

This is the kind of local where you can buy a beer, and maybe a plate of some kind of rustic, homemade Czech food, very cosy. Groups of men sitting around smoking in leather jackets, a stern woman serving the beers, this kind of place.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

And in this bar, you might have spotted this woman. She's a little older, she's in her late 60s at this time, with amazing cheekbones, this platinum blonde crop, and a definite twinkle in her eye. She's friendly, she's a regular, she

quite obviously enjoys a drink as well.

The locals know her, the men in the leather jackets treat her like a queen. She's glamorous and a bit mysterious, but also you detect she's maybe a little down on her luck as well. She comes here almost every night because her apartment is just around the corner, and sometimes when someone plays the piano she's been known to sing as well.

This woman is Ester Krumbachová, and she's one of the most original and influential artists in recent Czech history.

[SHOWS FILM CLIP WITH SINGING AND SPEAKING IN CZECH]

This is from a lo-fi DIY style documentary, and we've just taken you inside the bar that I described.

So we've met the regulars, the men in the leather jackets, and we've seen archive footage of that blonde woman, of Ester, singing in Czech. And everyone who the filmmaker interviews talks glowingly about Ester, very glowingly, [AUDIENCE LAUGHS] about her ability to drink, and also about her beauty, her charisma, and later on in that clip, the men in the leather jackets talk about the great outfit she used to wear and how colorful she was. So it's a really lovely introduction to this woman.

That clip is from a documentary called *Looking for Ester*, which was made in 2005 by Věra Chytilová, who was a close friend of Ester and worked with her several times. Chytilová is nowadays pretty legendary for being one of the key voices of the Czech New Wave.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

So in this photo, this is Věra and this is Ester. Chytilová made films such as *Daisies* and *Fruits of Paradise*, which are now very much celebrated as classics. But those films were also close collaborations with Krumbachová.

Krumbachová was a costume designer, an art director, a writer, a director, a dramaturg, a creative consultant, a guru. [AUDIENCE LAUGHS] She was really a renaissance woman, and she worked alongside many of the legendary directors of the era. She only directed one feature solo in her lifetime.

But despite this, I think there is an argument to be made that Krumbachová was herself one of the defining filmmakers of the Czech New Wave. Yet despite this, until recently, her work has often been buried and underestimated. She's all over Czech film history, but she's also kind of there and not there in that history.

She's sometimes described as the phantom of the Czech New Wave, the ghost who shaped the movement, and then apparently disappeared. Except, as we've established, she was actually just at the pub. [AUDIENCE LAUGHS] She didn't disappear.

So if you want to know more about this phantom, *Looking for Ester* is an amazing place to start.

In that film, Chytilová returns to important sites in Ester's life: so her apartment, her childhood home, her favourite bar, and she looks for the ghost of her old friend. The film is an attempt for the filmmaker to understand this complicated, multi-talented woman.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

As Chytilová puts it herself, “When someone asks me today who Ester was, I don't know. An artist, a screenwriter, a director, a writer. She did everything. We worked together long enough. We laughed at the same things. I thought I knew her.”

The picture that emerges in this film is dazzling: Krumbachová as artist, filmmaker, lover, muse, barfly, cat lady, witch.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

Ester was born on November 12, 1923 in Brno, Czechoslovakia. Here are a couple of photos of a very stern-looking baby, Ester, [AUDIENCE LAUGHS] and a very stern-looking toddler, Ester, as well, with this incredible bowl cut. I think she grows into her style a little bit. [AUDIENCE LAUGHS]

[SHOWS SLIDE]

Esther's father came from Slovakia, and his background is mysterious. Accounts of what he did vary. He was maybe a businessman, maybe an engineer. He spent a lot of time traveling the world. He also had Hungarian Roma ancestry, but it's rumored that he collaborated with the Nazis during the occupation of Czechoslovakia. It's possible that due to these connections, he was able to save Esther's mother, who was part-Jewish, from the concentration camps.

He was also something of a swindler and definitely a playboy. One day, he met another woman in Prague and left the family. Ester, her mother and her younger brother were alone. Esther's mother was a former teacher, but she was often sickly and seems to have struggled with depression. After her husband left, she stopped working completely. Ester grew up in this small

tenement building, cooking and cleaning and looking after her whole family. [AUDIENCE MEMBER SAYS “OOF”] Yeah. Oof. [AUDIENCE LAUGHS]

[SHOWS SLIDE]

These are some pictures of young Ester. I think in these, she's about 19 or 20. At this point, she's graduated from high school, and she went on to study painting and graphics at the School of Arts and Crafts in Brno. She was beautiful and charismatic. As you can imagine, having seen these pictures, she was not short of male attention. But even at this early stage, her art was coming first.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

She did, however, know the practical value of relationships. Her friends suggested that she married her first husband, who she married very young, because she just wanted to be able to move out of her mother's house.

In *Looking for Ester*, the first husband tells a story with this: “We simply put her in a car with a jug of beer and drove off.” It's like how they met. That was their first meeting. [AUDIENCE LAUGHS] So it was a bit of a whirlwind romance that did not last very long.

Coming of age during World War II was, of course, difficult. And while still in her teens, Ester joined the anti-Nazi resistance. She was interrogated by the Gestapo and subjected to forced labor. And it's possible that she also felt some guilt related to—implied by—her father's collaboration. So she had a complicated time, I think.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

Ester finished her studies in 1948, emerging into a devastated Czechoslovakia with few opportunities. Cold and hungry, she did all the manual jobs she could, from arranging shop windows to sheep herding.

She said she did “Everything to survive apart from grave digging, prostitution, or selling flowers in the street.” However, given her skepticism of the new communist government, the choice to work in more menial jobs might also have been an attempt to maintain relative freedom.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

During this period, Ester was restless, moving around the country, and determined to live a different kind of life. As she herself put it, “an adventurous life, where every day was a detective story.” At some point during this period, Ester becomes interested in theatre.

In 1954, she becomes a publicity officer of a regional theatre, and then she begins painting sets. That neglectful childhood had left her with some really, really good DIY skills. She was really good with a hacksaw. She made all her own clothes, and she also had this incredible, innate artistic ability, and then she'd studied painting. So this kind of move into costume design and set design in theatre seemed to come very naturally.

During this period, she also attracted attention from different quarters. She worked alongside the theatre director and actor Miroslav Macháček, with whom she started a romantic and professional relationship.

[SHOWS SLIDE] This is Miroslav looking very stately on stage, and this is Miroslav with a chimpanzee at some kind of later date. [AUDIENCE LAUGHS]

Ester also attracted the attention of Czech state security, the STB, and the STB would remain very interested in Ester for most of the rest of her career.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

In 1956, Ester moved to Prague and she began to work at several theatres. Much of her work was on plays directed by Miroslav, and she soon gained a strong reputation.

In her early theatre work, Ester would make almost all the props, costumes and backdrops herself, setting a pattern for complete DIY artistic authorship, which would define her career.

She also had an all-encompassing approach to her work that stretched beyond her job description, so she would often challenge male playwrights if she thought they were writing rubbish female parts. [AUDIENCE LAUGHS] Her designs were also conceptually driven, no detail was random. As she put it, "costume must have a philosophy."

And she could also be quite fiery, especially in the face of disagreements at work. Once she told an actor that if he didn't like his costume, she would hit him in the face.

There's also a really great anecdote about how she was working with an actor who used to do these really over-the-top arm gestures, and to stop him doing the gestures, she got rid of all the buttons on his clothes, so he had to walk around, like, hunched on stage. [AUDIENCE LAUGHS] So she was definitely directing as much as she could within her role of the costume designer.

By this point, Ester's really established herself as this kind of glowing talent in the Prague theatre scene, so it's no surprise that soon after, film came

knocking.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

In 1961, Ester took her first job as costume designer on Oldřich Lipský's *The Man from the First Century*.

This film is a really batty sci-fi set in 2447, in which an upholsterer working on a spaceship is accidentally sent into space, where he encounters an invisible alien. [AUDIENCE LAUGHS] So it's, I mean, it's an interesting film. I wouldn't say it's a major classic, but it marked the start of Ester's transition into cinema.

And from here, she steadily began to work across a number of films as a costume and set designer, but also increasingly in uncredited roles as a kind of creative consultant, doing things like removing people's buttons and shouting at the actors to make things happen.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

Soon after making *The Man from the First Century*, Ester had a fateful meeting with the director Jan Němec. The impact of this meeting on Ester's life and career would be immense. She knew as soon as she met Jan that this was a big deal.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

As Ester later wrote, "We immediately fell in love with each other to the point that I could neither eat, nor sleep, nor walk, nor do anything that would be beneficial to life." [AUDIENCE LAUGHS]

So just a classic whirlwind love affair. The pair immediately embarked on this passionate relationship that very quickly became a creative relationship.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

The first film they worked on together was Němec's debut *Diamonds of the Night* in 1964. This film follows two boys who escape on route to a concentration camp and flee into the woods where they fight for survival. Ester is credited as costume designer, but she was crucial to shaping the script as well.

And Němec described how she was also a key force in turning this story about the Holocaust into something that felt more universal, more like a Greek tragedy.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

Němec said, while working with her, “I realized her contribution might be entirely strong because she's a great dramaturg. I would say the guru of the project. *Diamonds of the Night* wouldn't be the same without her.”

One of the bold creative decisions Ester made was that she wouldn't include Jewish or Nazi insignia in her designs. She wanted the film to be, as I said, like a Greek tragedy, a blank page upon which viewers could project their own histories. She also served as the guru in the shoot and the edit, where she helped Němec find a pace which didn't follow the usual pace of thrillers and dramas at the time.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

So you can see some really striking images here. I mean, Němec is an amazing director, but this is his first feature and it feels to me that this is a really genuine creative collaboration with quite a lot of equality and a lot of two-way ideas. So I think that her role in this film is actually really important, as Němec acknowledged.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

After *Diamonds in the Night*, Ester became Němec's go-to dramaturg. The pair soon married, although Němec claimed that the free-spirited Ester only did this so she could stay in her apartment, which otherwise might be reclaimed by the state, as it was considered too big for a single woman. [AUDIENCE LAUGHS] The marriage only lasted until 1968, but in that short time together, Ester and Jan were hugely creative.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

So the next film that they worked on together was *The Party and the Guests*. In 1966, Ester was a prolific writer, and Němec remembers that when he met her, she had piles of unpublished scripts and short stories in her apartment. Literally she had like drawers and drawers, just full of manuscripts that she had written. One day she pulled out a story from that pile, and that manuscript is what became the basis of *The Party and the Guests*.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

The Party and the Guests is an absurdist satire. In the film, a group of picnicking friends are accosted in the woods by another party who forced them to join their birthday feast at the request of this kind of suave, authoritarian host.

Most of the group are kind of like, “okay, fine, free food, whatever, we can't leave, but it's fine.” But when one of the group quietly escapes, the host unleashes the dogs. Things escalate quite quickly.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

As well as designing the costumes for *The Party and the Guests*, Ester worked closely on set with Němec, heavily influencing shot design and composition.

At one stage during the shoot, Ester went on a holiday to Yugoslavia, but she was so upset to have been forced to leave the set, that she spent the entire holiday on the phone and ran up a massive phone bill, basically directing from Yugoslavia the whole time. [AUDIENCE LAUGHS]

Although it's now considered a classic, *The Party and Guests* was widely interpreted as a satirical portrait of the ruling communist government, and therefore attracted a lot of heat very quickly.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

The film was completed in 1966. It was briefly released in 1968, during the short lived period of liberalization that came after the Prague Spring, but then very quickly it was retracted again, and then formally banned forever in 1973, after the Soviet Union crackdown. *The Party and Guests* would be banned until the Velvet Revolution in 1989.

Working on this film would have long term consequences for both Ester and Jan, but that was still to come. Let's stay for now in the mid 60s, just as Ester's film career is taking off.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

So, Czech New Wave. In the 1960s, a group of filmmakers who became known as the Czech New Wave had emerged. This movement was mainly centred in Prague and around graduates from the prestigious FAMU Film School.

Has anyone seen much Czech New Wave stuff? Any big fans? Okay. One huge fan of Czech New Wave here. I really recommend Czech New Wave films, partly because a lot of them are really short. [AUDIENCE LAUGHS]

They're like 70 minutes, so you can do a really nice incredible double bill. They really know how to like come in, get out, make an impact, I would say.

Notable names associated with the wave include Němec, Věra Chytilová,

Miloš Forman and Oldřich Lipský. These filmmakers were rejecting old forms of representation and pushing the boundaries of depiction in ways they hadn't been in Czech cinema before.

Ester was a perfect ally to this movement. She's fiercely inventive, she has her own hacksaw, [AUDIENCE LAUGHS] she's completely unshockable and she just happens to have an apartment full of unpublished manuscripts that are actually really useful. So she very quickly becomes heavily involved in this scene. Here are a few films that she worked on.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

So, she became involved in *Witch Hammer*. It's an Otakar Vávra film about 16th century witch trials. Clue, it's also an allegory, they often are these films about witch trials.

This is a very grim and austere film, but I think that what Ester brings to the table maybe is this kind of discussion of repression and sexuality and gender alongside this persecution that I think is quite an important thematic part of the film. She designed and wrote on this film.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

There's also *Valerie and her Week of Wonders*, which is a really beautiful piece of work.

This one she co-wrote and she also designed the dazzling erotic jewel-like visuals. Yeah, this was a really treat to watch this film, so I'd really recommend it.

It's so lush and so beautiful.

But my favorite of the films that she worked on in this period are the films that she worked on with Chytilová.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

These include *Daisies*, 1966, *Fruits of Paradise*, 1970, and then later on, we leap forward, she also worked on *The Very Late Afternoon of A Fawn* in 1983.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

Yeah, *Daisies* is really fun. [AUDIENCE LAUGHS]

Again, I don't think it's even 70 minutes. It's really shorter than an episode of TV these days. But *Daisies* is my favorite of these films that they worked on together, and it's this totally iconic New Wave title now.

It's a surreal anarchist romp, which follows two spoiled young women, they're both called Marie, and they scam their way around Prague, tricking men into buying them dinner, and then causing general chaos.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

It's a really wild film that puts a bomb under the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. It makes fun of spoiled middle-class girls, and it has these two insatiable heroines. At one point, they have this massive food fight, they just like, stumble across a banquet, and they just throw it at each other, and it's really quite amazing.

The film also makes fun of the patriarchy, and the way that it underestimates these young women, as they bring down the country from the inside.

Ester was a co-writer and designer on this film, but she's also, again, credited to the kind of creative consultant, and Chytilová said that this collaboration helped her to draw out *Daisies*' central theme, which is destruction.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

“Once we were clear on that, we decided to show destruction in every sense of the word, not just things and relationships, but the entire film image.”

That's a quote from Chytilová. I really want to play you a bit of this clip.

[AUDIENCE LAUGHS]

[SHOWS FILM CLIP]

It's a lot of fun, this film. So the clip that I just showed is a sequence in which the two Maries kind of lying on a bed and rolling around, and then they like start cutting the sheets, and then they start cutting their clothes, and then they start cutting off their legs and arms and heads in this like lovely bloodless stop motion, and then they cut up the actual film that we're watching. So it really is destruction in motion at every level.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

I feel when you see *Daisies* in the context of Krumbachová's other work, it becomes really clear the role that she's playing in establishing this kind of avant-garde, proto-riot girl, playful aesthetic, which is something that runs through a lot of Krumbachová's work.

By the end of the 1960s, Ester had collaborated on many iconic films, and now she wanted to make her own.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

This is her on the set of *Murdering the Devil*, which is the only film that she directed as a sole director.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

In *Murdering the Devil*, which was made in 1969, an unnamed woman lives alone in a beautiful apartment, and one day she receives a call from an old flame, a Mr. Devil, and she invites him around for dinner, and she's kind of like, oh, we're having a date, this is going to be really romantic.

And then she finds that he's become kind of a bit middle-aged and old and slightly gross, but she's like, okay, I'll go with it. And then she cooks him dinner, and the two embark on a dysfunctional romance. And over the following days, Mr. Devil eats his way through her entire apartment.

So she makes him these incredible feasts, and kind of pampers him and listens to him talking about Freud, and at the same time, he gets more and more unhinged. So, he eats her plates, he chews the legs of her chairs. [AUDIENCE LAUGHS] And she kind of puts up with this until one day she doesn't anymore.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

Murdering the Devil is a film that I think you need to like, sink in and watch the whole thing, because it's very much a tonal ride. It goes all over the place. But I think it's very funny and messy, and kind of chaotic masterpiece of feminist subversion.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

As you'd expect, the film looks incredible. She based the apartment that the film is set in on her own apartment. She dressed the lead character to look like herself. She did her hair like herself. [AUDIENCE LAUGHS] This film is very autobiographical. And Ester really was the complete artistic mastermind of the project. So, she wrote it, she directed it, she made the costume, she designed the apartment. She even cooked all the food that they eat in the film. [AUDIENCE LAUGHS]

And I wish I'd included pictures, but the amount of food they eat in this film, and it's all these kind of incredible, elaborate, kitsch, late 60s piles of cream and like tiny little soups in little glass bowls and stuff. It's quite amazing. I would definitely come around for dinner at Ester's house.

The film is really kitsch, but I think it also has this kind of sharp political

resonance to it, in its depiction of this self-styled domestic goddess, who is apparently content, at least initially, with serving the bottomless appetite of this boorish man until she snaps. I think it offers this really witty satire on the feminine mystique.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

However, *Murdering the Devil* marked the end of Ester's golden period. The film was released in 1970 and was not well received, particularly by Ester's peers. Věra Chytilová, for instance, hates *Murdering the Devil*. There is a really weird sequence in *Looking for Ester*, which otherwise is an extremely complimentary film about a much-loved friend and collaborator.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

But there is this really weird sequence where Chytilová just goes around all the friends of Ester and asks them why the film is terrible. [AUDIENCE LAUGHS] She really, really hates the film. At one point, she interrogates Jan Němec, who helped Ester get the film made, and tells him that he prostituted himself just by being on set.

He just sits there and nods, and then he says this, "I don't know a stupider movie than *The Murder of Mr. Devil*, and I'm very ashamed that I'm noted as a co-writer and I played an extra in the film." So he really just sells her out.

This sequence in *Looking for Ester* really disturbs me, but also I find it baffling because I watched it and I love the film. I think it's great. [AUDIENCE LAUGHS]

[SHOWS SLIDE]

I wonder if maybe it was just too out of step with the time, because it is kind of playing with melodrama and romance genres, which wasn't necessarily something that the other filmmakers in the New Wave were doing.

It was a kind of more hard-edged avant-garde stuff that they were doing, and I think they just kind of thought it was silly, but I don't think it's silly at all. I think it's fab. So, don't listen to Věra, listen to me, and seek out the film. [AUDIENCE LAUGHS]

[SHOWS SLIDE]

This is a sassy picture I put in, which is how I like to imagine that Ester might have responded to this feedback, sitting, smoking a cigar and saying, yeah, two cigars at once actually here in this photo, and just saying, 'I don't care, whatever, I'm going to sit in my beautiful apartment.' [AUDIENCE LAUGHS]

So after *Murdering the Devil*, things really took a turn for Ester.

The aftermath of *The Party and the Guests* started to sink in.

Ester's name had become closely associated with subversive film making, and a brutal crackdown saw both Němec and Krumbachová banned from film making by the authorities.

By 1970, Ester had been blacklisted from both film and theater. Job offers dried up, and although she was secretly consulting on her friends' projects — they used to meet down the pub and just pretend they were in the pub and then talk about the films—she couldn't actually work in any credited way.

To support herself, Ester made homemade jewelry. She began obsessively making these kind of slightly witchy amulets.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

As I said, she was really interested in witchcraft and the occult, and she used to make these at home just with string and baking clay, and seems to have kind of eked out a living from selling this kind of outsider art jewelry.

She also remained fiercely productive, writing unproduced screenplays and continuing to make visual art. Prints and drawings—she's just incredibly creative, but she can't work in these fields properly anymore. And having that work taken away from her was a huge loss.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

Ester said herself, “When I was not allowed to work, I thought I was going to die. Really, on my word, no exaggeration.”

Ester became depressed and suicidal, and also increasingly dependent on alcohol. She was living alone and became increasingly lonely, although she did find comfort in cats, which seems to be a bit of a Dead Lady trope.

[AUDIENCE LAUGHS] I think cats might come up again at some point. But she also made quite a bit of art featuring the cats. She made like these cat paintings and stuff, and also this quite fun Polaroid.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

She also once left a lamp on in her apartment for the cats, and then started a fire and nearly burned her whole apartment down. Then the police came to investigate her, and she was so charming, she persuaded the policeman to quit his job as a police officer, because it was a worthless job, basically.

[AUDIENCE LAUGHS] So she was really still very, very charming even in her later years.

She was also, as we've seen, a regular at the local pub, and could sometimes be found singing along to the Czech folk songs there. By the early 1980s, a few cracks of light began to appear. As I mentioned earlier, she was able to work on Chytilová's *The Very Late Afternoon of a Fawn* as a co-writer in 1983.

After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989, she also worked on a few small film projects. In 1994, she published *The First Book of Ester*, a collection of dark fairy tales, unsent letters, and fragments from her huge archive.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

However, by this point, Ester was in increasingly poor health, exacerbated by alcoholism, and she died on January 13th, 1996, in Prague, at the age of 72. At the time of her death, she had not yet been fully rehabilitated back into the art scene, and there had not really been a reckoning with the importance of her work.

However, in the decades since, her reputation has thankfully steadily grown. So we have the release of *Looking for Ester*, which is a really—apart from the really weird sequence about *Murdering the Devil*—is a very good overview of her life and career, and still the best resource that is to introduce yourself to her work.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

In 2019, Karen Elson was in Czech Vogue wearing Krumbachová's amulets. So that's quite nice. In that same year, an online digital archive was established to catalog Ester's work, which you can visit. There was also a retrospective of her work in Glasgow. So there's a sense of a growing interest in her work over the past few years.

[SHOWS SLIDE]

Then this year, the restoration of *Murdering the Devil* premiered at Rotterdam Film Festival, which is where I got to see it and fall in love with it and be like, “What the hell is this? Who is this woman?” And spark this current obsession.

So I'm hoping that like me, more people will fall in love with Krumbachová's work by encountering that film. Either way, artist, guru, witch or muse, it seems that the remarkable Ester Krumbachová is finally on the cusp of being found. Thank you.

[AUDIENCE CHEERS AND APPLAUDS]

SUSAN STONE: Rachel Pronger on Ester Krumbachová, recorded live in Berlin. Thank you to Thomas Beckmann and everyone at Lettrétage for their kind assistance at this live show. And thank you of course also to Rachel, who is not only a wonderful presenter and friend of the Dead Ladies Show, but who has also transcribed many of our episodes. As always, you can find photos, links, transcripts and more info on our feature Dead Lady in our episode notes over at deadladyshow.com/podcast.

Personally, I have some catching up to do on Ester Krumbachová's films, but I have seen the absolutely delightful *Daisies*, which I would wholeheartedly recommend. It is funny, weird and gorgeous and perfect for all my feminist punk pals.

KATY DERBYSHIRE: Sounds like fun! If you're in Berlin like us, come and see us on November the 30th. We will be in our regular venue, ACUD, once again, thanks to the support of Lettrétage. We'll have the stories of three fascinating ladies, none of whom did what they were told. Magda Birkmann will be talking in German about Mary MacLane, a Canadian-American feminist writer known for her very frank memoirs. Susan, you'll be reprising your talk on the Scottish spiritualist Helen Duncan, right?

SUSAN STONE: I will indeed, she is an interesting character.

KATY DERBYSHIRE: Oh, very interesting. And then, of course, we have Florian who'll be talking about the French-Peruvian Flora Tristan, a writer and activist kind of pre-Marxist era. It's going to be a great show, in other words. So save the date and we'll have ticket info available soon on our newsletter, which you can subscribe to by following the link in the show notes and via social media at Dead Ladies Show.

SUSAN STONE: Can't wait! If you can't see us in person, but you would still like to support us and get more Dead Lady content, check out our Patreon over at patreon.com/deadladiesshowpodcasts, all one word, where you can find fun book-themed features, interviews, book reviews and more. Your financial support helps pay for our transcripts and gives us a boost in these lean times.

Here's just some of the women we featured over there in the past, Donna Summer, Muriel Spark, Elsa Schiaparelli, St. Brigid, Poly Styrene, Ursula Le Guin, Madame Tussaud and many more.

KATY DERBYSHIRE: Pretty eclectic mix! You can also support us by leaving us a rating and review in your favorite podcast app, and by sharing us with others. Just send out a link to a friend you think would like it. Thanks to all of

you for listening and supporting us however you can.

SUSAN STONE: Thank you indeed, and thank you Katy. The Dead Ladies Show was founded by Florian Duijsens and Katy Derbyshire. The podcast is created, produced and edited by me, Susan Stone.

KATY DERBYSHIRE: Our theme tune is Little Lily Swing by Tri-Tachyon. We'll be back again soon with another fabulous Dead Lady.

BOTH: Goodbye.

(Dead Ladies Show Music - 'Little Lily Swing' by Tri-Tachyon)