

# PRECREASE & COLLAPSE

## S01E02, Viviane Berty – Transcript

**Stéphane** If you've been folding origami for some times, you certainly have some stacks of chiyogami and other patterned papers in your drawers. They look nice, sure, but you never find a suitable model to use them... Well, don't give up ! Listen to Viviane Berty, my guest today, and get inspired by how she challenged herself into designing marvelous models for this luxurious papers.

Welcome to Precrease & Collapse.

[Theme]

**Stéphane** Today, I'm receiving Viviane Berty, a prolific French artist. Her models show a subtle alchemy between shapes and colors. If you are not familiar with her work, don't hesitate to check her Flickr gallery while we talk.

Viviane and I met a few years ago, at the Lyon Convention. Every time we both attend there, I'm delighted to admire her exhibition, her new models. And to hear her talk about them. So, why don't you join our conversation?

Hello Viviane, and welcome to Precrease & Collapse. It's really a pleasure to have you here!

**Viviane** Hello Stéphane!

**Stéphane** Tell me... When, and in which context, did you discover origami?

**Viviane** I discovered origami in 1990 in Toulouse, my city, in France. I was, at the time, a student at the University of Philosophy and, by chance, I heard about an origami course. It sounded great to my ears, because I was a bit tired. It was the exam period and something was wrong. I found the studies too serious, so I needed something fresh to change my mind, and origami sounded great to my ears. So I went there, and I was really, really surprised because the course was organized by an astrophysicist, Jean-Pierre Brunet, a medicine doctor, François Domergue, my yoga teacher, from whom I had the information. So the course was not as childish and fresh as I would have imagined, but during the course, I discovered something really wonderful that I liked a lot. Something really new for me. It was origami.

**Stéphane** What appealed to you in that first experience?

**Viviane** What I really liked in this first experience was that... First of all, I had "préjugés", a bias, about origami. I think that many people have the same bias, so I can really understand them. And this bias was destroyed. First of all. After, of course, I liked the works of the hands, really it was the first time I had such a pleasure to do something with my hands because it was something so simple, paper. Paper is so simple, you have paper everywhere. I had manipulated before many sheets of paper, so it was so pleasant to do something else than writing on paper or reading on paper. I loved it. Of course, I saw beautiful shapes in the folded paper. I was surprised, for me it was a new beauty. And after that, when I

left the first course, I had to meet a friend to work hard during the end of the night for preparing the exams and I came with my first origami models, and I showed her. I was really moved "Oh look! How beautiful things I have made!" And what I saw on her eyes was... pity! Because what I had in my hands was rough paper, bad folded, not, of course, something beautiful. And I laughed! Because the beauty was in my mind. It was sort of, I would say, a premonition.

**Stéphane** Then, a few years passed before you started creating your own models. What put you on the path of creation?

**Viviane** Yes, twenty years passed and I didn't need to design an origami model. But I think that I was getting a deep knowledge of origami techniques, without thinking about it, because I was folding from time to time, and also I was helping my friend Jean-Pierre Brunet to make origami better known by people, organizing public workshops, and I was busy with music, other things, but I think that origami was in a part of my mind I didn't realize. So, what changed twenty years after?

On 2011, I became president of the French society, MFPP. That is to say that everyday, I had to answer to origami messages, I had to manage something for the association, I had to go to origami conventions to communicate and help French origami activities, I had to check some books, to prepare exhibitions. And I met new people and new techniques. I have to say that wetfolding techniques by Giang Dinh and Quyet Huong helped a lot to change my vision of paper. And what happened is that on 2012, one

evening, I had to prepare a scenery with rabbits, with a clover. I wanted to put a clover with the rabbits to give to the rabbits something they would eat. And I tried to find a model in my books – at home I have a lot – and I didn't find a model for that. So I tried to fold something for the rabbits. In the first origami course in 1990, at the end of the course, we were invited to fold something by ourselves, and I tried to fold something new, but it was like school exercise. I wouldn't have called this designing. At this time, what I did in 2011 was really different, because I knew the origami techniques, so I could be aware of what I am doing. And designing this very simple model, I had a feeling that I will never forget. And this is the first day I liked, I wanted to create something.

**Stéphane** Do you remember what model made you realize you were onto something?

**Viviane** Well, it is difficult to answer this question, I think. Perhaps I should define creation, I will do my best. Creation is, to me, expressing with a complete freedom what I want to say. So, since the very first model, this simple clover, I felt that I could be totally free to say what I want to say with origami. So, the first model, the first experience, was the first step for me.

**Stéphane** I was wondering... What is your process when you start working on a new model?

**Viviane** Of course it depends on the model. Sometimes the idea comes from the paper itself. It's color, its pattern, its texture. Sometimes, from an idea, a feeling, a conversation, a situation. But, in the process itself, the first step is doing nothing. Just let the images come in my mind, folding in imagination, choosing the techniques in my mind. When I have an idea of the base, of the folding sequence, I try step number two with rough paper. And when I'm satisfied with the movements, with the shapes – I'm trying to find something beautiful, something I really like, and of course I'm surprised by what is happening – when I find something I really like, I fold with the right paper. And after that, step number three, I show it to my friends and ask for their advice. And the last step, the very last step, is to draw the diagrams. When the diagrams are drawn, I am sure of every step. It's finished. And sometimes, I'm forgetting to fold the model itself, because it's on the paper, I have not to remember!

**Stéphane** When I see your work, I am charmed by the smoothness of your folds. It seems to me you work by deleting unnecessary folds from a theoretical "finished" model, to reveal its essence. Am I right?

**Viviane** Yes, you are right. For example, for the piano model I designed this year, I began with box-pleating technique and I tried to simplify this model, because I don't like when there are too many layers on a model. It doesn't look nice to my eyes, I don't like it. So I tried to find a shorter way of folding the piano and to get the purest shape I could get. It took me

a long time, really a long time, I could say weeks, to get the simple shape. But for other models, for example for the elephant from a pentagon, it was the opposite. I got a very simple shape I liked, but I felt it wouldn't be enough for my friends, so I added some shaping to get better results. And I'm happy with it.

**Stéphane** In front of an exhibition of your models, I'm struck by fluid shapes and vivid colors. They really stand out. How did you find your style?

**Viviane** Thank you, Stéphane, you're very kind. About the exhibitions, I decided since the very beginning to put backgrounds behind my models, to control the colors and contrasts, because I noticed I have seen many photos on the Internet difficult to read for me, because of some confusion between colors. So, I tried to control.

**Stéphane** You use patterned paper, which is, from my point of view, not so common in modern origami. Why this choice?

**Viviane** Yes, you are right. Not so many designers are folding models with patterned paper. In fact, it's difficult to fold a good model with patterned paper. I had my inspiration from Roman Diaz. I saw on his Flickr a little geometric hen, folded with paper with a red side and the other side with funny flowered pattern paper. Really, this image was so joyful, funny and perfectly clear, readable. It was striking for me. I think it's a masterpiece. And recently, he folded a bull, also with a patterned paper, in a very Spanish style, really a

masterpiece. I love it. So, why do I enjoy folding models with patterned paper? In fact, in normal life, I have to fight everyday with a huge number of visual information. For me, it is chaotic, it is chaos, difficult, really, to find a meaningful information, useful information, among this huge amount of visual information. So, I like to challenge myself, playing with this difficult part of my life. It is to make something clear, something readable and something pleasant with a very funny and crazy pattern.

**Stéphane** You've been quite busy these past years. You've been invited to conventions on at least three continents. You appeared in multiple exhibitions. How those interactions improve your origami experience?

**Viviane** I have been lucky to attend many origami conventions during the last few years, and it was really a joy, and I learned a lot from these conventions. Because, usually, many different styles are gathered in the same place, and I have to say, when I'm going to an origami convention, I like to fold something I don't fold at home, by myself. That is to say I like to fold some techniques I don't like, usually. For example, a long tessellation, or a complex model, or crumpling. But crumpling very seldom, because I don't like this technique, I have to say. But I'm really happy to see all the different styles, because I can learn something, even in a model I don't like, you know. And this is important. It is the same to speak friendly with people you don't agree with. Because you learn more speaking with people you don't agree with. And if it is a friendly dialogue, I love that. So, I usually really learn

a lot from the origami conventions. And also I have been so grateful the last few years, I have been also a special guest, a guest of honor, despite the fact I'm not a professional artist. So it is really a warm welcome, and these facts pushed me to create new and new models, because I didn't want to come every time with the same models to teach, you know. It is like when you have friends for dinner at home, you don't prepare every time the same menu.

**Stéphane** You're also very present on Flickr. How does this social media interact with your practice?

**Viviane** I have to say that I owe a lot to the Flickr community. After the conventions, we go back home and we are back to the normal life. But every day we can connect and take a look at the images on Flickr. Most of the times, the photos are beautiful and people are kind, and I really can read in the comments the emotion that people can express and through the pictures, I can guess a lot of things about the artists. It happens many times that I saw on Flickr some images, and after meeting the person was not a surprise. So, it is really a food for my imagination, a food for improving my imagination. I really owe a lot to Flickr and also it is something that allows me to take my time to be aware of what I am thinking, what I am feeling. This is a time more slow, slower than in conventions. So we meet people and have to say hello and talk about many things and sometimes it's too quick for me. So I had really a lot of inspiration from the images, sometimes the challenges we have on the Flickr

and I think that I wouldn't have been so involved in creating new models, and a lot of new models, without Flickr.

**Stéphane** Last month, Gachepapier said that one of the perks of the current origami community is that women have more visibility. Do you agree with him?

**Viviane** Yes. Recently, things became easier for women. It is the same that throughout society, I think. Of course, all the problems are not fixed, we have to improve everything.

**Stéphane** Are there difficulties for female creators to be recognized ? And if so, what could be done about that?

**Viviane** Well, I'm not sure if I'm the right person to talk about this issue, because I don't want to be a professional artist and I don't want to make money with origami. Anyway, I'm aware of the difficulties of most of the women who have this project. So, what I can say is that the most important is to reach a self-confidence. If you are not self-confident, everything is a fight. You have to fight to get what you want. You have to fight only because you are a woman. But if you can believe that it's possible, and if you can just stop fighting, I think that other possibilities are coming. But, really, it is difficult, I know this, because it needs that all the society can change.

**Stéphane** You've been in origami for nearly thirty years. What is your best memory of your origami life?

**Viviane** To tell the truth, I have a lot of good memories with origami. So it's not easy for me to choose one. But I will choose one. It's participating in the exhibition *Mujeres de Papel*, in EMOZ, Saragosa, Spain. The exhibition was organized by Alessandra Lamio and Daniela Carboni and their team. And really, it was a challenge for Felipe Moreno and Jorge Pardo and Feliz – they, all together, are a men team – to welcome a women team to put things in their museum. All these people are so clever and talented! I'm grateful to them, to have been able to go there and try to help to put all the models together and try to match in interesting and beautiful way so different styles. Really, it was a success. I learned a lot about art, about team work, about communication, and a lot of things I cannot tell here. So, it's certainly, about exhibitions, my memory number one. After that, I really loved participating in *Paper Heroes* exhibition, in Jaffa Museum, organized by Ilan Garibi. I created for this a model of suffragette. It's a way for me to change my ideas in creation. I have to say *Mujeres de Papel* and *Paper Heroes* are the two projects that made me really fold something that is not a bird, or boxes, or flowers, or other animals. Really, my ideas and feelings in a really personal way. I would have many many things to say, but I have to stop there.

**Stéphane** And how do you think origami will evolve in the future?

**Viviane** The origami future is a complete mystery, I think. My opinion is that if there are origami schools and if money comes into

the origami field, a lot of money, things will change. If not, we can continue to enjoy origami like we are doing now.

**Stéphane** And for now, what are your immediate plans, origami speaking?

**Viviane** My new plans are need a long time. So, immediately, I have nothing new. I will attend origami conventions and upload some pictures and draw diagrams. And so on...

**Stéphane** Well thank you Viviane, that was very nice to have you here. It's always a pleasure to talk with you.

**Viviane** Thank you Stéphane, and bye-bye. I have to say it was not easy for me to speak in English for such a long time, so thank you anyway, it was a good experience. And bye-bye everybody!

**Stéphane** You did really well, I can assure you!  
This month, I want to take advantage of Viviane's presence and ask her to pick a book from the Great Origami Library.

[TV dialogue] [*Futurama*, S03E07 – *The day the Earth stood stupid*]  
Fry: I did it! And it's all thanks to the books at my local library.

**Stéphane** So, Viviane, which origami book would you recommend us today?

**Viviane** I cannot choose a book. I love a lot of origami books, so I will choose, please, let me choose two books, of two styles I like.

The first is a book by Makoto Yamaguchi, *The beauty of origami*. It is gathering many models of many designers. The title is true, the models are beautiful. It's high-level origami, figurative origami, with good diagrams and satisfying results. And most of the models are known, because they have been published before. But it is great to publish a book gathering, I would say, the best models. Of course, it's unfair. There are many, many other beautiful models. But it's really a good publication.

**Stéphane** I have it at home, and I totally agree with you. It's a fine recollection of the best that origami has to offer. And what is your second choice?

**Viviane** What I like, the book I like is those like *The origami garden* by Mark Bolitho, for example. It's a recent book, also. So, we have flowers and pots and everything to make your origami garden. All the models are related to the same project. It is the sort of book with intermediate models, not that difficult, that you can fold in one or two days, for a weekend for example. You can have a relaxing time folding your origami garden. And it is nice, I love this. So, they are, of course, many many other books, but I have to stop now...

**Stéphane** I didn't know this one but it seems very promising. I'll check it out. Thank you Viviane for your recommendations. I'll give all the details about these books in the notes.

And now, let's see how origami conquers the world

[TV dialogue] [*X-Files*, S01E22 – *Born again*]

Mulder: Look at that. Looks like a hawk or a falcon.

Scully: It's beautiful.

Judy Bishop: It's called origami.

Mulder: Japanese paper folding. Where did she learn how to do that?

Judy Bishop: I have no idea.

**Stéphane**

Today, I invite you to watch a short film. It's called *Origami*. It was animated and directed by David Pavon, and released in 2014. It has been showed in more than a hundred festivals and rewarded multiple times.

The story begins with an old man, a toy-seller. He must enjoy origami, as his shop is decorated with lots of models. We see traditional cranes and a shelf with more complex ones. Sadly, he passes away folding his last paper boat. As the old folder draws his last breath, this small piece of paper starts a journey of its own...

It's a beautiful movie, with a bittersweet tone. Just give in and climb aboard this brave little boat. You will remember your trip, I guarantee you.

You can watch *Origami* on Vimeo, for free. You'll get the link in the notes and on [precreaseandcollapse.com](http://precreaseandcollapse.com).

I hope you'll like it as well as I did!

After watching this great short film, why don't you listen to some podcasts?

[TV dialogue] [*Superstore*, S03E19 – *Lottery*]

Jonah: This is the problem. Women aren't socialized to advocate for higher wages despite the fact that...

Amy: Mm-hmm, I'm going to need you to turn off podcast mode. Thanks.

Jonah: Fair enough.

## **Stéphane**

I want this section to be a gateway for those of you discovering podcasts through *Precrease & Collapse*. I aim at guiding your first steps through the podcast world, and help you to discover some great shows. This month, we'll get acquainted with two female-lead podcasts.

The first one is the audiodrama *Girl in Space*, created by Sarah Rhea Werner.

X, a biologist, is isolated on a drifting space-station, the *Cavatica*. She was born and raised there, and wasn't always alone. One day, she finds a strange buttony device and does what we all would do. She presses the button. And the trouble begins.

The season one finale was released a few weeks back, so you'll get a whole season of incredible sci-fi adventures ready for binge-listening. You are so lucky! And should you enjoy cheese and dinosaurs, you're in for an even greater treat!

[Extract] [*Girl in Space*, S01E13 – *Force of Nature*]

Sarah Rhea Werner: Sometimes you just need a moment to pause, collect your thoughts, and ask: "What would the velociraptors do?" It's *Girl in space*

The second one is a French, non-fiction podcast called *La Menstruelle*. Each full moon, Audrey, Fanny, Julie, Karen, Lisa and Pomme engage in open discussions about their periods. From there, they quickly extend to much larger debates. They address topics like contraception, pregnancy, endometriosis or menopause with a strong feminist point of view.

Their goal is to free the speech around these subjects, in a sense that the more we talk about them, the easier it gets. And, by sharing experiences, it helps women to face and retaliate to people minimizing their problems.

[Extract]

[*La Menstruelle* – opening]

Non mais elle a ses règles ou quoi?

[French for "She's on her period, this one!"]

As it is an important subject, I asked them about similar English-speaking podcasts. They recommend you *Period* by Kate Clancy, and *Stuff mom never told you* by Anney Reese and Samantha McVey.

I strongly encourage you to listen to them!

I would like to end with a quick disclaimer... From October 25th to 27th, the OORAA will hold its thirteenth Lyon Ultimate Origami Convention, in France. They have invited five international guests : Dasa Severova from Switzerland, Oriol Esteve from Spain, Artur Biernacki from Poland and JW Park and Jang Yong Ik from South Korea. If you're in France or in Europe, don't hesitate to come. You'll have a wonderful time meeting other folders and attending great workshops.

And as I'm a member of the organization, I will be there, eager to chat with you.

That's all for today! I hope you enjoyed this episode. If you want to share your thoughts about it, find me on Twitter and Instagram, @PrecreasePod, and on [www.precreaseandcollapse.com](http://www.precreaseandcollapse.com).

Listen to this show on Ausha, Apple Podcasts and everywhere you find your podcasts.

You can support me by sharing it on your usual networks and social media. If you're part of an origami group or organization, I would be thrilled if you would recommend me to them!

Recorded and edited by me, Stéphane Gérard.

Music courtesy of Wintergatan. Go and listen to them on BandCamp.

Next month, I will receive someone who's been improving origami for quite a long time now...

But until then...

**Special guest**    On va faire de l'origami!  
                          [French for "let's do origami!"]

[Theme]

**Stéphane**        Tell me , Viviane... what suits you the best? The precreasing or the collapsing?

**Viviane**

I usually don't precrease and don't collapse because my favorite models are too short. But if I have to choose, sometimes I prefer collapsing. Because when collapsing, something appears, something new, and there is an emotion. When you precrease, no emotion at all. So I prefer collapsing.