

Amy Kligman:

Hi, my name's Amy. Some of you here know me. I've been a part of the Kansas City art community for a long time, and I want to talk a little bit about how all of those experiences have really culminated for me in this Salon for Possible Futures, which, as I was told once tonight, is a lot of words. And it is. But I want to talk about what that means to me and hopefully what it might mean to some of you.

First, I want to talk about where this is coming from, from my personal art practice. This is work that I was doing about a decade ago. I was thinking about, well, this is where I started doing installation work, and I was thinking about similar things, actually, to what I'm thinking about in the work in the new media gallery here.

In that, I was thinking about the way we gather. I was thinking about, well, personally, what it feels like for me when I'm in a group's scenarios, things like parties where I'm supposed to be having fun and often I'm very anxious. I have a lot of tensions when it comes to social interaction. I really love people, but I also get overwhelmed. I'm one of those people that's right on the cusp between being an introvert and extrovert. So, I hit a moment where I tap out, and then I'm freaked out by all my feelings. And so I don't know. I've been doing a lot of artwork over the years that really is trying to communicate that.

This was also happening at a time that I happened to be working at Hallmark Cards, which you will notice by the materials I was using. This was very much what I had at hand. And I love doing this work, but I stopped doing it because it didn't feel very sustainable. I'm like, oh, okay. At first, I thought I could repurpose these materials, but really, it did end up generating a lot of trash, which I felt pretty bad about. But I learned a lot from this process. And I also started working with other artists to animate these spaces. So, that was the beginning of something for me.

These are paintings that I'm making now. I am a painter. I am still very interested in the notion of painting. But as I was making these paintings, I was thinking about creating spaces that were spaces of solace for me. These were at a time when I was feeling a lot of different kinds of anxiety, and so I'm creating these windows into spaces of serendipity and spaces of possibility. And it started to get me thinking about, but could I create that physical space? What would it be like to actually try to manifest this thing in reality in a place where people could interact with it? So, those were some thoughts that I was having from the paintings.

I want to talk a little bit about my experiences as somebody who is organizing artists. There are a number of people in this room right now, Misha, Corey, I saw Caitlin, I don't know, is Caleb here, I'm looking around, who were a part of Plug Projects when we started. And a Plug was an artist-run collective, or is still. It's just not called Plug Projects anymore. Now, it's Plug Gallery and it's run by other people. But when we started this, it was as much about community as it was about the art.

We did a lot of programming. We did a lot of bringing people together. And what I learned from that is that, I'm like, this is actually just as important to me as the art itself and the exhibits. It was really different for me what happened when artists came together in dialogue and in conversation, and I just knew that's something that I am going to always want in my life. I'm always going to want to be a part of that, and I'm always going to want to be helping to make that possible for other people and generate spaces where that is happening.

So then about 10 years ago, I left Plug, which was a volunteer thing. It was not a real job. Most artist-run spaces are not real jobs. But I left that to have a real job as a arts administrator. It started as artistic director at Charlotte Street and then became executive director. And the experience with Charlotte Street was wild. I can't believe that it happened even still. I'm like, okay. I am suddenly thinking about creating a huge campus. And we worked through, I cannot even tell you how many different programs and how many different artists and all the different things we did at Charlotte Street.

But some of the things that were critical turning points for me here was that I found that, once again, some of the spaces where I was getting the most out of my experience was where we were thinking about being in community, where we were thinking about a different way of experiencing art than just experiencing an exhibition, which, again, I love and I have really special moments with exhibition and with art objects, but I started to think about what it meant to be accessible, what it meant to be operating in ways that were appropriate for intergenerational audiences, what it meant to be thinking about being in proximity to art in a way that was activating it. And so this is just something that the past 10 years that I spent at Charlotte Street, nearly 10 years, nine and a half, really started to open up and make me think about.

Some other inspiring stuff, these are other artists. One thing that is a great benefit of being an arts administrator is that I had a lot of opportunity to travel and to see a lot of art over the past 10 years. And these are some of the artists and art experiences that I thought a lot about. Mark Dion is an artist who does really amazing, these curiosity cabinets. And you're not supposed to touch them. They're something that you look at from a distance, but I think they're beautiful.

Karen Kilimnik, there was an exhibition at MCA Chicago of her work, and it was wild to me. There was a mix of really contemporary work with things that felt very traditional.

And then at the bottom here, that's Juan William Chavez's work, who is actually in this exhibition, which I'm really excited about. He contributed some zines from his workshop in St. Louis. But his work is both an experience and it's a social practice project. It has an intent and a meaning. But it's aesthetically amazing, and so I'm really interested in that too.

Michelle Grabner is an artist who's also a curator. She's a mom and an educator and somebody who opened up a space in her backyard that became a really important art gallery in Chicago. And I've held her up as a model in my head.

And then this Afro-futurist room at the Met, I didn't get to go see this. I read a lot about it, but I just thought it was really incredible the way they were thinking about a different way of presenting the work. So anyway, these are some things that are also filtering into my thoughts about the room.

And then there's my living room and my family. A lot of you here have met my children because they're at every art opening and everything. I don't know, we drag these kids around to everything. But this is my living room, and these are some of the things that we do there. We have had living room karaoke parties. We play games. We sit and draw. Actually, it's funny, the table in that one is empty. It's never empty. It's always covered with shrapnel from various art projects.

And I think maybe I started thinking about this a lot during the pandemic because we were trapped in our house like everybody else was, but our room, our living room, our living space, it is a sanctuary space for us. We spend a lot of time there. It is how we connect. It's where we come together. And so I've thought a lot about what is this for the community? Where is our community living room space? Do we have something like that anymore?

This is also an inspiration for me. This is my family. This is five generations photo. So, this is me, I'm the baby, my grandmother, my great-grandmother, my great-great-grandmother. Three of the women in this photo were a big part of my life for the most of my life. My great-grandmother was around until my son was born. This is what happens in Indiana where everybody has kids at 15. I really got the benefit of knowing these folks very well.

And what I'll tell you about their life is that they were all really amazing people, but their lives and their practices, so the things that they did that were creative, were pretty much, I don't want to say dismissed, but they were not valued in the way that artist is valued. One of these people is a hairdresser. One of these people was a homemaker. One of them had five serial businesses that were like a flower

shop and a video store and an organic herb farm. And it was just a series of being this creative person in a small town and trying to find a way to make that make sense.

So, I'm thinking a lot about the way that certain art practices are appreciated, certain practices of being are appreciated and others are not. And I think about this a lot through a feminist lens and the idea of the home being a space that has been the realm of the woman for some time, and that's just something that happens on the side and everybody gets the benefit of it, but we don't actually acknowledge it as work. We don't acknowledge it as anything special. I wanted to think about that and acknowledge that as well.

I mentioned that I worked at Hallmark. So, one of the things that I learned at Hallmark or, well, actually at American Greetings before I worked at Hallmark, was how to do repeat design. I was designing wrapping paper, but I have cantilevered that into my art practice. So, I designed the elements in this room that are like the wallpaper, the upholstery fabric that is on the chairs that you'll see. What this has meant is that I can imbue it with meaning. I can use symbols of healing and rebirth. And the ideas that I have for this room, they're all melted into these designs. I won't get into the nitty-gritty about it because it would take a while, but just know that it's intentional.

Something else that I was thinking about with this space, it's immersive, it's interactive, it's intergenerational. I really want to encourage people to be curious, to touch things, to sit on the furniture, get comfortable, play, read, contribute. It's a collaborative space, and it's a space where we all have these separate journeys. And your journey with the space and my journey with the space, they're all going to be different, but there's going to be points of intersection and there's going to be points of discovery. And it's my hope, and actually the space has only been open-ish for two days, but I have had the pleasure of seeing so many people engage very earnestly in it, and it is so rewarding, so I just want to continue to encourage people to do that.

If you open up the drawers, you'll find things. There's little gameplay things and there's a blanket that you can mend. Honestly, I can't even go on to talk about all the drawers. There's a lot of them. But there's a way for you to discover all these different ways to interact with the space, and actually to invent ways of interacting with the space yourself. There are prompts, there are suggestions, but there's a lot of self-guided activity in the room.

Each of the cabinets were treated as a toolkit for the room. I would talk about the salon like the salon is my anti-bunker. So, if we're in the apocalypse at the end of the world and a bunker is a place where you go to hoard resources and be scared, then the anti-bunker is a place where you go to meet with other people and to gather and to come up with ideas for how you move forward. But the cabinets that are here, they're curiosity cabinets, and they're themed with these themes, sustainability, community histories, and magic. And each of those themes were what I feel are the anchors that we need for this future that we're trying to build.

And then I have this caveat. I'm not an expert in any of this, and being an expert is not actually the idea. I'm not trying to tell you anything. What I'm trying to do is give you tools and prompts for you to build your own. So, the idea is creating a space of curiosity, growth, and meaningful exchange.

And then I just also, I want people to know that these cabinets, they're massive. I think they're amazing. But they were built by Kevin Wilson, which is also known as Smiley Projects. I don't know if Kevin is here. But he spent a lot of energy making these and really interpreting some very terrible drawings that I did that were just so... I don't know, I have to give him props because he did a lot of work.

But the toolboxes and the ideas behind them, the reason why these things are important to me, specifically I want to talk about this idea of community. I feel like community is a word that gets overused so much. And I would love to come up with a better word, but I can't. But I feel like the thing

we need the most now and in the future is relationships. We need each other really bad. And we're in this space where I feel like people are in space with each other less and less. And so what the community cabinet is meant to do, they're simple things. It's games and it's conversation cards or the idea that you might talk to your friends, sit down. And that feels very basic, and it is, but it's also something that I feel like we're losing quite a bit.

The idea of histories. The histories are real and imagined histories. If you go to the history cabinet, you'll see a library of utopia and dystopia. I feel like those things are very much merging all the time. I have a lot of different ideas about utopias and the reasons why they fail, but the idea of the history cabinet is that this is a place to learn from. There are lessons learned. And you can learn a lesson from a fact, whatever that is anymore, and you can also learn a lesson from a fiction, from a story. So, that's all there.

And then the idea of magic. Some people might be weirded out by the magic cabinet, but what that is to me is it's about power. It's about a space where the power is in your hands and you are able to manifest these things, and I wanted there to be a space for that in the room.

And then sustainability is the thing that, frankly, I know the least about. And I put it there because I feel like, for me, it's the growth space. It's the thing I need to do better. This is a space of learning from each other. And in that cabinet, there's a lot of work that hopefully I'm learning from other people and we can learn together.

So, I mentioned that there's a lot of other people involved in this. A lot of them are in this room. You might hate me for this, but if you could stand up if your name is on this, or wave, please. Please. Okay, Aleah, Kevin. Yay! Okay, there's Patricia.

This is a list of people that contributed objects to the space, that are running programs in the space, that built things that are in the space. Everything from the pillows that you sit on the floor, Patricia made those. And so I want people to know this is about the magic of artists, and the way that artists made things and people made things can really impact and make a difference, and they have a different kind of character and a different kind of afterlife.

So, anyway, there are a lot of artists that were a part of this, and some of them are people that maybe they made something like a flower pot, and maybe that wouldn't typically be in a museum exhibition with a flower in it, but I think it would be in your life and it could be in your life. And I think I'm trying to demonstrate the ways that art can be accessible in a part of your life that maybe are a little less daunting.

These are some examples of some of the things that are in the cabinets that were done by other people. Sophia and Lara Karadogan, who are from Minneapolis, made these really amazing, they call them wax charms. They're all candles that they made for different made-up milestones. And then Kevin Demery has an entire shelf that's a diorama.

Minga Opazo, so these mushrooms, I like to explain what they are because when you see them, it'll be a little like, what? But this is a sustainability solution because what it is is there's fabric waste that is on the bottom, and then it's oyster mushrooms that are consuming the waste. So, it's like an ecosystem and it's a way to destroy this waste that we have. She's actually working with scientists at Stanford to figure out if this is something that can turn into something else.

Adams Puryear made this chess set, but he also made, there's an installation in the history's cabinet on the top shelf and also the lamps that are there. And then Sally Paul made this block game, which is really fun. I've already seen kids playing with that, and it's really delightful. Chiara No made these, they're these bells that are part of the magic cabinet.

I'm about to close, but I just want to say, I don't know what you're going to experience in that room, and I'm fine with that. I just want people to go and spend time there and to find each other and find the things that mean something to them and let that carry them into their own adventures. And I am interested in what this space could mean long-term, or if it has a second life after this installation, I'm thinking about models for new art spaces, and could something like this serve a different function than the other kinds of spaces we know and love and have all been a part of?

So, anyway, I'll be in that room. I'll be happy to talk. The other artists that are here, I'm volunteering them to talk. Sorry, guys. And I don't know, I hope you go and you spend time in this space and you come back to it. And please participate. There's lots of prompts. There's little strips of label tape that'll tell you, "Touch this. Play this." And I hope that you feel comfortable doing that.

And so I'm going to sit down now and invite Basil up. And I'm so excited, I just have to tell you, I've known Basil's work for a while and I love it, and I'm so thrilled to be here at the same time as you. So, hurrah and...

Basil Kincaid:

I'm going to stretch my legs. Okay, Amy, that was great. I'm excited to play in that room. I have one of my games in my bag. I may have to leave one in the space if that's okay.

So, I'm Basil Kincaid. I'm from St. Louis, Missouri. My progenitors are here. I always shout out my parents. I feel like I wouldn't be able to have the life or lifestyle or career that I have if it wasn't for their love and support and belief in me and my abilities or self-proclaimed abilities, whatnot. So, I'll just give a brief background, and then I'll go quickly through the slides. And I'm more interested in you all's questions than saying too much.

But I will say that drawing was my first love. I grew up drawing. I would draw in church. I would draw in class. I got in trouble for drawing in school. I was just drawing all the time. I think as a kid, it was where I got some of my validation because I was always the kid in class that could draw. It was just my thing. I just loved doing it. So, this is emotional for me because as a kid, I remember going to different museums. My mom loves museums, so she would always take us to museums, and I just as a kid even felt like one day my drawing is going to be in a museum, so I'm excited for today.

Y'all saw this. I'm going to skip that. Well, you didn't see the drawing, but that's me working on one of my quilts. But the text, I can skip it.

I don't know if you've seen the exhibition yet or not, so you can see it after. But pen and pencil, oil pastel. Those are all with crayons. Those are always my favorites. And so those are what you will see in the space. One of my high school art teachers, Angela Knight, she really encouraged me to work in ink because I was in high school too, maybe, concerned with what I thought were mistakes and correcting them. And she was like, "Put the pencil down for a little while. Draw with these pens." And it really helped me find my confidence. So, that first wall is dedicated to pen.

This is me working on a colored pencil drawing in my living room. You can see I'm sitting on the floor. A lot of this stuff is tied into my childhood, drawing on the floor. A lot of these drawings that are in the exhibition, I drew at my parents' house, either in the kitchen or on the floor. You can see all the toys and stuff. Play is another big part of drawing for me. It was just one of my ways of just being myself, and it was a space where nobody could tell me what to do. It was like my first freedom, I felt like.

And I always love drawing. I don't know, I just like drawing in my mind. I just see these creatures and color scapes. So, the drawing throughout my career, I kept it to myself up until now and more recently, mainly because I felt like it was too personal to commodify, maybe. I didn't want to have it being judged. I didn't really care what other people thought about it, so I just did it for my own self.

Around 2016, I got more interested in my family history. That was when I decided to shift my center from the art world to my family. And that's when I started thinking about quilting and all these different art forms that were carried on, like you were talking about, by the women in my family that were overlooked and underappreciated. My grandmother and her sisters and their moms going back all made these phenomenal quilts. A lot of them were abstract, and so that encouraged me to start making my own quilts, learning how to sew. A friend of mine taught me how to use the machine, and then I just taught myself how to sew. I would use my old clothes. People would donate materials from all around St. Louis.

Then in the pandemic time, my mom gave me a brilliant idea that changed the course of my whole career. I also made collages. That was in the beginning of my career, selling prints of my collages was my main, I don't want to say hustle, but it was my main... It was how I made my money and supported myself. And I always love collages too.

And me and my mom talk about art a lot. She's in the art. Now, my dad is getting more into art too. But she said, "Have you ever taken your quilts, the abstract quilts, but then cut them like you do your collage and layer them up like that?" And I said, "Stop right there. I got to get off the phone. I got to cut you off right there." It was like a lightning bolt went off in my head.

And that sparked a major shift, not only in the expression of my work, but in the way that I work. Because all through my childhood, she would give me ideas and I would reject all of them. If it was one of her ideas, I felt like, how can I do somebody else's idea and still express my own freedom? And so I would just immediately reject them. But this was like God giving me a lesson that other people have good ideas too. And sometimes the art is more about, going to your piece about community, it's more about our collective capacity for impact than me doing something all by myself and saying, "I did it all by myself."

So, from the last, basically I was really the end of 2019, the last six years or so was me going deeper and deeper down the rabbit hole on this idea that my mom gave me, but then expressing in my own way. This is one of those quilts. And this one is inspired by my parents' love story, even though it doesn't look representationally like them, but it's like this dance and exchange offering to each other.

This is another one. A lot of the quilts have to do with spiritual protection, these layers of compound energy. This one I think about is a group of people praying and just the manifestive capacity of group energy. There's often these forms, like the one in the sky shooting the Kamehameha, they're like these forms that are protective.

A lot of the sensations around monstrosity, like these monsters that you may see, it's an embroidery coming up, but it's tying into this idea. A lot of these ideas around monstrosity have to do with our nature of perception, like the way we cast our subconscious onto other people without knowing them or who they are. I like the idea of having some spirits on my side that can go to battle, that may need to not be pretty. It could get ugly, and they know how to deal with that environment. So, I like thinking about this myriad of protective energy. There's some people that are... Each person has a supportive role that's helping you become who you are over time.

Then recently, I started doing these abstract embroideries. These also started from my drawings. I'll do drawings. And normally on the computer, I just document my work. But I don't know. I started tinkering with digitally painting into my drawings, and then it got me thinking about this cycle of digital and physical and spiritual technologies that are a part of our everyday life. The way we live now, it's hard to think about ourselves totally separated from technology.

Flowers were always a guiding inspiration for me. As a kid, I would sit in the yard and I could draw weeds or flowers. This is a little bit about my process. I do all these drawings. And then this one is actually



probably three or four sketches in. That's why it looks so much like the actual quilt. But I'll do these rough sketches and then just, I don't project or copy anything, I put the fabric on the wall full scale and then draw it and do it like that. But this is just showing some of the process.

This is one of the embroideries that I made from the drawing. The embroidery has become more and more a part of my practice because I feel like it makes people take the drawings more seriously. I can sit and look at a small drawing forever and be captured by its nuance, but I feel like at large in the hierarchy of forms, drawings get... They feel diminished to me. You can look at it from a number of perspectives, either the way the market treats their value or the attention they get in various spaces.

That led me into thinking about, how can I amplify the effect of my drawings? And the thread made that possible, but it also brought up this idea that goes through a lot of my work around what we think about, how we think about the future, and our place in time. Everything that's new now, everything that we think of as old and traditional at one point was the cutting edge stuff out. It was the freshest thing out.

So, for me, I like thinking about how even this stuff that seems new now will one day feel old, ideas that I had in the past. That's why I almost put some of my college drawings in here because I feel like I did some drawings back then that were ahead of their time, and it's like things aren't always appreciated in that moment of creation. Sometimes they need to wait for cultural consciousness to catch up or any number of different scenarios.

So, I just like thinking in terms of why I relate digital media interfacing with this traditional media, it's because all of this stuff, you look at the Jacquard loom, it was the first implementation of binary code. It's like fabric and technology have always been interlinked, but I don't know. I'm interested in thinking about that connection. I don't have any answers for anybody.

And then this is, here we are. I've been excited for this moment. I'm trying to keep myself calm because it does feel really good to see, A, all y'all that came out to be engaged with the work, but then also just it's like a childhood dream come true. It feels really good.

I put this calisthenics picture in here because I think about drawing and calisthenics a lot in the same way where it's small bits. It's like investing. Small pieces compound over time. Any skill may seem daunting in the beginning because it's like I don't even know where to start. I think if you start, you'll end up surprising yourself. If you asked me 10 years ago if I would be doing fingertips [inaudible 00:33:23] in a museum show of my drawing, it's like I would've wanted to have the confidence to say yes, hell yes, but if I'm being honest, I may not have believed you. So, I think whatever it is for each individual person, you just put one little driplet of water in there as often as you can, and you'll be surprised at what blossoms out of your effort.

Thank y'all.

Don't be shy.

Amy Kligman:

Here we go. First question.

Speaker 3:

So, as an artist, I think a lot about the feeling of paper under my hand or the strain of steel metal that doesn't want to be bent or thread between my fingers. And I think both of you, you illustrate such an interesting tactility to your work. When you're making art, how important is tactility to you?

Basil Kincaid:

Do you want to go first or do you want me to go?

Amy Kligman:

You go.

Basil Kincaid:

I'm a very sensory person. And also, I think part of art is for it to be fun. I think it can take on other meaning and impact later, but in the moment, I really like to feel good while I'm doing it. And there's something about each material that I choose elicits this feeling of either comfort or excitement or something that gets me to the next work.

For me, tactility, that's part of what I love about fiber art, is a lot of the time when I'm making a quilt, I may mix fabrics of all different weights, stuff that normally quilters wouldn't do because it makes your quilt lay funny, but it's like the feeling of those materials in your hand is important to me.

Directly to your question, tactility is very important to my practice. That's part of the fun of it.

Amy Kligman:

Yeah, and I think particularly in this work, in the salon, the touching part is super important. It's about engagement. It's about connecting not just with the stuff in the room, but with the artists and the people that made it and with other people that might be in the room with you. But there's also something about, I don't know, I think we've been trained. And there's reasons for this. I'm not trying to downplay why this is, but when you're in an art space, there's distance and there's a preciousness to the objects and you have to be apart from it. And in this space and this work, being with it was paramount. I think in that way, tactility. And you open up a door and you put your hand in the buttons. There's something visceral about those things that brings a little bit of joy that I think is much needed.

Speaker 4:

Thank you so much for both of your talks. And I'm inspired to ask, if this is a question, because the salon of the future and your comments about the incremental nature of change and growth and development and somehow that links to healing and how the leap of faith that both of you capture this sense of growth and development and change, which is healing and brings us all together, if that's a question.

Basil Kincaid:

Well, I was thinking even while you were talking, Amy, about some of the overlaps. I love the title. I don't think there's too many words in the title. I love the title.

One thing that my dad and my brother talk about a lot is that before new future can manifest, you have to imagine it. You have to take time envisioning it and believing in that vision. This is a statement, I guess, but I love the way that you're tackling that. We're able to think about future possibilities. And I think that's why it's so cool that every artist is given a different seed that they bring to the world. I love your way of engaging with these ideas, and it's cool to be here together and able to talk about the overlap in our different approaches.

Amy Kligman:



Yeah, when you were talking about, I don't know, just the nature of an artist's work and thinking about, if you had asked me 10 years ago if I would be doing these things, I would not have felt like that was possible, I really relate to that. I'm like, my God. I was thinking about the way things were when I was making the work at the beginning of that slideshow, and I'm like, this was not a future I thought was possible at all. And so I think I get weird and misty and woo-woo about, hey, actually sometimes just saying out loud the things you want to happen, it's about connecting people to those ideas. And it's actually other people that help make them happen. But I don't know. I really related to those things you were saying. I don't know, I feel a lot of synchronicity there, for sure.

Speaker 5:

I have more of a comment than a question. I'll try to phrase it as best I can. But I think the biggest intersection of the work between you two that I see is the influence of the family unit. And I think it's interesting in the social era that we're in right now that we've trained as Americans to visually look at the differences in people and make assumptions. So, I guess my question would be, do you guys find any deeper connections or intersections within your work now that it's installed in the same gallery?

Basil Kincaid:

I find your work really encouraging. I feel like play, I would like to see play become a more active part of daily life, especially for adults. I feel like over time, we either forget to play or stop making time for it or think of it as unimportant. And I love how you're contextualizing play as fine art. I think about play, playing at the performative capacity of it. When you play a game, a board game, different parts of people's personality come out that they may normally keep tucked in. And I love that.

So, in terms of other connections, I think it's cool that you're bringing this thing that's deeply important to me that's kept separate from the art world into this space and putting it in people's face like that. I think it's also, in terms of overlaps between our work, just working through a number of mediums and letting ideas come out the way they come out I think is important. So, it's always encouraging to see another artist fluidly working through... I need you to teach me about that upholstery fabric-making.

Amy Kligman:

Oh, yeah.

Basil Kincaid:

We're about to have more overlaps.

Amy Kligman:

Yes, I love this.

Yeah, no, when you were talking about the family and quilting and all those things, I didn't even go into it. I was talking about my mom's side of the family. My dad's side of the family were quilters, and there's a quilt from my grandmother in the salon that people can mend because it's falling apart. And I don't know, I connected that so much. And I don't know, the fact that your family is here makes me want to cry. I'm like, this is amazing.

So, I don't know. I think that there's something deeply endearing about your honest approach to your work, and I hope I have that in my work. But it's the thing about your work that I connect to and that I... I don't know. I'm like, you have so many different bodies of work and iterations of work, and there's a lot that he didn't even show. And I'm like, every time, it feels like this revelation, but it's always very

authentic. And I don't know, I think that there's the obsessive passion that I'm just going to chase this down and see where it goes. And I don't know, I relate to that too.

Basil Kincaid:

I think too, to that point, I think as we grow as artists, I become more comfortable or more confident sharing other parts of my being with the public. I think it is a piece. I think Joanne was talking about the vulnerability component of it all when you're being an artist. All of this stuff, it means a lot to us. It seems like objects and activations and whatnot, but it's like deep parts of our heart and soul and the way that we understand ourselves in reality.

So, for me, each time I'm able to feel comfortable sharing another medium, it's like a new level in a video game where you get your new stats, you can apply and you get more charisma points and-

Amy Kligman:

Embroidery unlocked.

Basil Kincaid:

Yeah, exactly. Your skill tree widens.

Speaker 6:

Hi. You've both mentioned about getting started, you couldn't imagine 10 years ago you'd be where you are. For someone who perhaps wants to get started in art, what do you think is the most effective way to learn the technique that you've demonstrated? Like in the careful crafting of the quilts and stuff, do you suggest formal classes, college classes, community workshops? Or what do you find most effective?

Basil Kincaid:

Okay, can I go?

For me, I think it's just make a ton of mistakes. And I think the great thing about, I think about one of the best parts of being a visual artist is that we get to toil basically in secret. If you're a comedian, you have to be failing in public every night until you come up with a good five minutes. For us, we can make a million mistakes. So, for me, I think it's good if you have free time, allocate your free time to the thing that you believe you want to get good at. And the more you practice, before you know it, you'll be surprising yourself.

All of the breakthroughs come in the moment. I think there's value in formal education, for sure. I don't want that to be taken like that. And I think there's some techniques, I don't know what medium you're interested in, but there's some techniques that are easier to have access to when an institution has facilities and supplies and open hours where you can be tinkering. But for me, as a kid, that's why I love drawing because you can do it anywhere with anything. You could take a wet stick and draw on the ground.

You can pick mediums that erase all your excuses for why you don't have time to do it. I think the best way to get good at something is to just keep doing it, and don't let what you think of as a mistake wear on you emotionally. I look at every mistake... I can't even take credit for this phrase. Rhoda, my studio manager in Ghana, she has a great phrase that we use in the studio all the time. She says, "Every mistake is a new style." And I love that. So, if I'm in the studio and something doesn't go the way I plan, I say, "Every mistake is a new style. Keep going." Sometimes the test is what's going to make you stop.

I noticed that with art or strength, when you stop and start, stop and start, stop and start, that's when it's hard to get momentum, but if you just keep going and just keep putting one foot in front of the other, even if it's scary, just make a habit of doing something every day, you'll be surprised how even 30 minutes a day can compound into something crazy.

I personally like a two-hour stretch. If you subtract 12 or 24 minutes from that, whatever, however long that is, two hours with a short break, then another two hours with a short break. I used to have an old TV with the VCR attached to it, and you put in a movie, work until that movie starts running the blue screen, rewind it, take a break. And you can go as many two-hour sessions as you have the stamina for, even if you only do one a day or one every other day.

My other tip is whatever you want to get good at, do it for 15 or 20 minutes before bed. Look it up on Google. I have done that with so many different things, and it helps your skill acquisition in your brain happen faster. So, I would draw before bed, sew before bed, and now I'm done. Those are my tips.

Yeah, oh, [inaudible 00:47:38].

Amy Kligman:

I think I would echo just the make the thing, keep doing the thing. If art's the thing you want to do, make art, make a lot of art, and don't worry about what other people say about it.

I teach art now, which is something I've been doing for five minutes, but I think it's something that I talk to the students about is people get freaked out about critique, and it's like, don't freak out about critique. Just listen for the things that resonate. You can discard the things that don't. I actually don't care if I said them or if somebody else says them. But there are things that people will say that, it's like, oh, okay, that sends me in a different direction or that... And whether you get that in a formal classroom or you get that in a peer group, there are things in my life that I do now that I learned in formal education, and there's a lot of things in my life that I never was educated for at all.

I have a BFA in illustration. I've run an arts organization, and I never had, sorry if anybody's freaked out by this, but I never was formally prepared for that. I think you can learn things. The activity of learning things is not held-

Basil Kincaid:

It's a lot of fun.

Amy Kligman:

... only by schools. And I know that we're near a school where my husband teaches, so I just want to say school's great, but also, you can do a lot on your own and with other people.

Basil Kincaid:

And look at stuff. Figure out what you like. I like to take note of what captures my attention, and then just be curious. I think there's a lot of value in reading books. I taught myself a lot of stuff just by reading and doing YouTube. I think whatever your learning style is, lean into that. And for me, I follow what is fun because it's hard to keep doing something that's not fun.

Speaker 7:

We had a couple more questions in the back here, but I think we're getting a little low on time. Maybe one more question, and then if you have another question, the artists will be here for the reception, so go ahead and ask them in person. So, I'm going to... Sorry. Go ahead.

Speaker 8:

You both talk a lot about community and a safety net that helps you be creative. What do you do as artists or in general to show up for the people in your lives? And how do you stay motivated to do so?

Basil Kincaid:

I'll let you take this.

Amy Kligman:

Ooh, okay. Well, I'll just say that, like most people, I fail at this more than I succeed. I really try to show up for people as much as I can. I think that we're in a world where there's a lot of things pulling you a lot of different directions. But when you say, what do you do to show up for people? I think literally being there physically and face-to-face is a lot of it. Just listening to people is so much. And so I don't know, in my practice but also in my family and in my friends and in my world, I try as much as I can to be present and listen. Like I said, I don't always achieve that. It's an aspiration to do it. And I think in the instances when I have, it's been rewarded with a reciprocal relationship that actually goes somewhere and means something. So, I think it sounds trite and a little basic, but I'm like, just actually be there.

Basil Kincaid:

Yeah, I agree with all of that. I think too, letting people in your life know that it's okay to ask for help, because sometimes people don't want to ask for help, whether even when they need it. I know I went through that where I didn't want to ask anybody for help. So, I think now I try to say, how can I support? Because sometimes people may not outwardly say the support they need.

I think with the art world for sure, this is separate from family and community, but showing up in person, like you said, it's an in-face game. And I think that really amplifies with your family and friends. I know sometimes for my friends, I don't always have as... I haven't prioritized as much time around hanging out just for fun. But when people need me, I'm there to help. And for artists, a lot of my friends are artists, I go to their shows, go to their talks. Like you're saying, just be there.

I try to be generous with my time when I can. I know sometimes it's tough just by nature of how much time it takes to make these slow craft type works. I think you know when it's high-impact time to show up, and a lot of it has to do with intuition. I think it's a lot about trusting your feelings too. Sometimes the spirit may put a friend on your mind that you haven't talked to in a while. They may need to hear just from you.

Amy Kligman:

I think there's also a thing about just asking questions and being curious about the people in your life. And this is true of artists too. Working with artists, it's like they want you to ask them questions and to be interested. And I don't know, I've learned a lot of this from my partner, who is better at people than me, but if you're at a dinner party, he will ask you every question. And you'll get to the end of the conversation and you won't realize he's been driving it the whole time, but it comes from a space of real interest. And that's the thing. It's like you actually just have to care. And sometimes we are distracted,

and it's not that we don't care, but it's that we're distracted. And I think I'm always trying to remind myself to focus so that that care can show through.

Basil Kincaid:

I think the last thing, too, that I reminded myself of and making more time for is realizing, this is for me, so I don't know if it applies for anybody else, but there's more to life than art. And sometimes I have to remember to... I used to feel like if I'm not in the studio 12 hours a day, I'm not really as passionate as I say I am. And now, I'm getting to the point where it's put in six good hours and really, like you said, focus the whole time. Don't be in the studio goofing off. Focus, and then you have more time to make time for friends and family. And I'm realizing sometimes the answer for me is less time in the studio and more time in real life. And a lot of that real-life time naturally becomes time spent with friends and family.

That's been my journey, is realizing sometimes I have to get out of the art and into real life, so I think different people have different balances, but that's my personal journey around friends and family, I guess.