

Oh my gosh. I honestly, I couldn't sleep last night, and it's partly because I ended up with swimmer's ear, but also because I was just so excited about this interview. Ever since I started the podcast, I've been thinking about interviewing you, and I just can't believe this moment is here. I just want to start with such gratitude.

00;00;45;11 - 00;01;09;11

Jacqueline

Thank you so much for making time in your busy schedule. I know you have so, so much going on and I'm just really humbled and honored and overjoyed by your presence today. So Bisa Butler. I mean, you don't even need an introduction. I'm just honored to have you here today on Beyond Beauty Podcast. Thank you so much.

00;01;09;13 - 00;01;20;09

Bisa

Thank you so much, Jacqueline. I've been looking forward to it. I know we've been talking about this for a while, so I'm glad that the schedules and the stars are finally alive.

00;01;20;11 - 00;01;26;09

Jacqueline

Yes, yes, yes. And I see. I think you must be in your studio. I'm looking at behind you. So (laughs).

00;01;26;11 - 00;01;26;29

Yes.

00;01;27;02 - 00;01;29;06

Jacqueline

Taking a break and getting ready now.

00;01;29;06 - 00;01;33;02

Of my goodness (laughs). There's so much work left.

00;01;33;02 - 00;01;34;14

Bisa

To be done.

00;01;34;16 - 00;02;01;29

Jacqueline

Well, that's I think that's sort of always the case. Right? yes. As an educator, I'm here and Teachers College, Columbia University, you know, this is where I record these sessions. This is where this podcast was sort of birthed through my dissertation work on studying the practices of

black women artists. I... you know, it's I've been so thrilled in particular because of your background as an educator.

00;02;01;29 - 00;02;10;13

Jacqueline

So we're going get there. But I want to say first that I've been able to share space with you. You didn't know this because.

00;02;10;15 - 00;02;12;07

You (laughs) were

00;02;12;10 - 00;02;42;00

Jacqueline

Always the guest of honor. But I was honored to share space with you twice in the last year, once at the Jeffrey Deitch Gallery. And then again at Soho House when you (oh nice) gave this talk on the art of storytelling. And so I've heard you speak and been in your presence. I've seen your work in person. And so I was...during those times where I was in the room with the I was like, gosh, like, I just wish I could, like, speak to her.

00;02;42;00 - 00;02;45;26

Jacqueline

So, like, this is like a dream. A dream.

00;02;45;28 - 00;03;02;06

Bisa

Thank you. That means a lot to me. That exhibit with Jeffrey was just like the culmination of so many hopes and dreams. Like probably starting from like high school or.

00;03;02;08 - 00;03;02;15

Jacqueline

Yeah.

00;03;02;15 - 00;03;15;13

Bisa

So anybody who got to see or even just walk by, it just added to it as to how important it is.

00;03;15;16 - 00;03;40;29

Jacqueline

Yeah. And how important you are to us because you're sort of walking in the path of freedom, dreaming and we're observing it and able to, you know, to be in the room and hear you speak. And even for the people who are not in the room with you, even just people who, you know, get a chance to go to museums to see your work or in galleries or even to read about your work,

whether it's you know, even if they're looking online, you give us an example.

00;03;40;29 - 00;04;09;18

Jacqueline

You give us a model that is really so inspirational, so my first question. I want to ask you about your values around education. Your parents are both educators. Your father was a college president and your mother, a French teacher..yeah (both speak in french ...dunked Ballet France) okay ... oh. (laughs)

00;04;09;21 - 00;04;22;21

Jacqueline

So how have these these experiences of your parents, who are two educators, how have they and you know, these values that you learn from them influenced your artistic practice, your journey?

00;04;22;24 - 00;05;04;13

Bisa

I can remember being around my parents as they either prepared lessons and prepared for something my whole life. My father started at the college where he eventually became president in 1968, so that was before I was born. So I don't really have a memory of like not being sort of in a collegiate atmosphere and running through those big halls and knowing some people simply by being so simple.

00;05;04;15 - 00;05;42;29

Bisa

And I knew from the start how much education had shaped and formed their lives. My father immigrated from Ghana and about I think it was around 1963 when the academic establishment. So I always knew that he wouldn't be in this place, nor would he have met my mother. My father went to Seton Hall and his philosophy professor was my grandfather...oh, my mother's father, and he was a black man from Nova Scotia.

00;05;43;02 - 00;06;07;19

Bisa

And he had an affinity for foreign national students because he was white. Even though Canadians always think of them as being immigrants, he spoke French and he was treated like an outsider. And he also knew that feeling of being in a foreign land and having no home to go to on Thanksgiving or Christmas or so and so.

00;06;07;22 - 00;07;05;15

Bisa

And uhm he invited my father to one of these. I don't even know if it was a Thanksgiving...was probably just Sunday dinner. And that's how my father and mother met uh. So my existence and being alive on this planet comes directly through education and scholarship and human

connection. And so I always knew how important it was not only for me to do well, but then also what kind of options there were in life As an educator growing up and walking through the halls of Essex County College, I met all kinds of people from computer to the bursar to the librarian, just the whole gamut of our teachers.

00;07;05;17 - 00;07;39;23

Bisa

And then my mother taught French (chuckles), which we talked about a little bit, and she taught high school French and not only was she a teacher and her father professor, **but she** had nine brothers and sisters. And I would say about half of them went into education as well. Hmm So I grew up with the idea that not only do you feel you directly are alive because somebody went to school, but that this is a promising and rewarding for you.

00;07;39;26 - 00;07;59;16

Jacqueline

I love the idea of you walking through the halls from such a young age when you were saying that it made me think of my daughter who (yeah) started my doctoral journey. She was one years old, so she literally grew up on the Columbia campus. And I saw in photos of like bringing her through the hallways first in a stroller to now she loves to run wow.

00;07;59;16 - 00;08;00;09

Bisa

I was coming.

00;08;00;11 - 00;08;05;08

Jacqueline

Up a whole block so big and kids love it. And we do things like I remember.

00;08;05;08 - 00;08;08;18

Bisa

That yelling through the halls, they really smile.

00;08;08;18 - 00;08;22;27

Jacqueline

It's so much fun. They just love, you know, sometimes I bring around the weekend just so you can run around the halls. And I just hope that she has these memories. So I really as a mom, I'm really grateful to to hear that that story. Yes.

00;08;22;29 - 00;08;24;06

Bisa

So yes.

00;08;24;08 - 00;08;39;28

Jacqueline

Then you grew up in South Orange, New Jersey, attended, was there and then you went to Howard University, uhuum an HBCU. Well, my sister, my my younger sister also went there. So she's a letter Delta powered by Z. (laughs)

00;08;40;01 - 00;08;42;06

And so.

00;08;42;08 - 00;08;55;29

Jacqueline

Yeah. So how did your experience at Howard, at an HBCU relate to or differ from your earlier learning environments uhuh, and how did it shaped your artistic journey?

00;08;56;02 - 00;09;32;24

Bisa

Howard was completely different than anything I had experienced growing up. My very first school environments were nontraditional. My mother was an American woman, but raised in Morocco, and she didn't come back to this country till the late sixties. Like right around the time when she met my family. But her formative years were spent in international school with French kids, Moroccan kids, Algerian kids, Ghanaian kids in those international schools.

00;09;32;25 - 00;10;04;23

Bisa

You know, you have kids from all over the world. So that...I would say the hippie lifestyle was already in her before she got back to the States and to put us in the structured traditional schools that she went to like Catholic school she didn't want. And my first school was the Rainbow School, which is it was a I guess you could call it Montessori, but it was a step further than that.

00;10;04;25 - 00;10;17;27

Bisa

It's a big Victorian house with no grades (hmmm) and the ages were like 5 to 12 and no set classroom.

00;10;17;29 - 00;10;21;14

Jacqueline

Schedule to get the different age groups mixed?

00;10;21;14 - 00;10;45;27

Bisa

Mixed together. And there'd be like an English room, an art room, a mass room is room, music room. The kids were allowed to decide where they wanted to be during the day, and I spent all

my days in the art school (laughs) and my sister for some reason, I mean, I for some reason I shouldn't throw shade. But she spent all her days in the master (laughs).

00;10;46;00 - 00;10;48;14

Why are you in there? (laughs) Is so

00;10;48;14 - 00;11;10;28

Bisa

Much better over here. And so my very first experiences in school were in like a studio environment, which is it would be in my memory, it would just be me and the teacher. Because at Rainbow School, you could play outside. It didn't matter if it was raining or snowing, it was raining. You could roll up your pants.

00;11;11;02 - 00;11;43;23

Bisa

It was warm and just be barefoot in the mud. It was very much like the laissez faire school (umhmm) environment. And then when we left Rainbow School, we went to an actual, essentially centered school in North New Jersey called the charter School. And the charter school was very regimented. Next to Rainbow, we had little uniforms that were green and yellow, that had a glow, that had acetone.hmm

00;11;43;23 - 00;12;14;01

Bisa

And we used to say the principals of the seven principals of Kwanzaa in the morning instead of the city leaders, would sing the black national anthem. So my first experience in like organized school environment was indoctrination. And in that African-American centered environment, we called all our teachers brother and sister. My mom taught there, too. She taught first grade.

00;12;14;02 - 00;12;46;09

Bisa

So my mother's name was Natalie. So she systematically and it yeah, it was totally different. But it wasn't it was different to me than Rainbow School because of the structure, but it wasn't different to me because of what happens in typical American schools, because I didn't have that experience in the first place. Right. And by the time let me see, I think my okay so my father went to school in Africa.

00;12;46;12 - 00;13;10;20

Bisa

And if you know how African boarding schools are, it's very strict. It's not anything like any of the environments that I was in. hmm An Afrocentric curriculum is nothing like when he was in Ghana. Ghana was still a British colony and they used to sing God Save the Queen in the morning oh. So he'd visit my parents divorce. And when he visited the church school.

00;13;10;22 - 00;13;15;07

I think that was probably our last day there. It ended very.

00;13;15;07 - 00;13;45;03

Bisa

Quickly because he was like, This is not at all what I want my kids to be learning. And my mother was willing to let my father step in and and I guess negotiate and decide like, what our education would be like. She had the early portion, and then by third grade, we had moved to South Orange, went to public school.hmm

00;13;45;05 - 00;13;52;22

Bisa

That was the first time I had been in a typical American school. I had to learn the planning reasons. I remember that.

00;13;52;24 - 00;13;54;15

Jacqueline

What grade was our third grade?

00;13;54;15 - 00;14;29;14

Bisa

Third grade? I was eight, I had not been in in a public school in the way of like, the bullying that happens in more public schools. And it's a bit bullying from your teachers or other kids. This is the eighties. So I don't think anti-bullying was a thing. It was if somebody was doing something that the other kids seems like weird or whatever, I think the teachers would just fall silent and be like, Yeah, go ahead and stop.

00;14;29;17 - 00;14;59;14

Bisa

And I stayed in South Orange Maplewood Public Schools all the way up until I went to Howard and in that environment, I think the black population is 5, 10, 15%. Okay. And South Orange is very close to New York and a lot of the parents were upwardly mobile. I ended up teaching at the school where I graduated from Columbia High School (umm) and I had the best friends there.

00;14;59;15 - 00;15;28;17

Bisa

The nieces of Jean-Michel Basquiat were some of my students. And when I was in school, like Lauryn Hill was a year under me. So we had these since I graduated from high school in 2009. I think for me. But you have upwardly mobile black families whose who the mother or the father live or work in New York and have creative careers.

00;15;28;25 - 00;16;02;18

Bisa

So that adjacency meant that a lot of the kids had opportunity to do voiceovers for cartoons because their parents were in that industry. Ummm There were a lot of kids who would leave school half day and go to Broadway because that was because their parents worked and it was access. Uhhmm You had the financial ability. You had even 10% in those days was considered good, mixed race environment.

00;16;02;18 - 00;16;33;07

Bisa

I had a lot of friends who were biracial and they chose their parents were selected. The parents weren't selected. The parents selected South Orange in Maplewood, the adjoining town, because they were known to be racially tolerant, large Jewish population, larger queer population, and interracial, which I learned at that time. Who knows? You know, it's like 85, 86.

00;16;33;10 - 00;17;08;25

Bisa

It could be 5 to 10%, but nobody's going to harass you or beat you up or set your house on fire or, you know, uhhh harm you. And by the time I got to Howard, that was mind blowing again, because I got to Howard in 1991 and there was a new black power movement fighting at that time. Public Enemy was really popular, that album, and takes a Nation of Millions to hold us back.

00;17;08;27 - 00;17;34;00

Bisa

We listened to me and my friends, and since a lot of Jungle brothers, A Tribe Called Quest, De La Soul, so the music influences a lot. We were starting to see the trends of other drugs and never liked on at a popularity. They were getting more mainstream uhhh because before that, if you were, let's say you were either Rasta or somebody who had an alternative lifestyle. uhhh

00;17;34;02 - 00;18;06;21

Bisa

But when we got to Howard, people were just wearing gloves because they thought that they were beautiful. Yeah. They started wearing African style clothing and that was my first exposure to, I would say the philosophy of Black power uhhh goes way back a chance to they were teaching us little kids like this. This is your history. I didn't know it was an anti history or an alternative history uhhh.

00;18;06;24 - 00;18;39;01

Bisa

That just was the building blocks. But at Howard we started reading things like Baby Boys and Stokely Carmichael and Maya Angelou or Angela Davis, or they would come up on campus and

that was something that I had never heard before. My father and mother grew up in places where the majority of the people were African, whether they were North African, Morocco or West African in Ghana.

00;18;39;04 - 00;19;16;21

Bisa

They didn't grow up feeling that they had to assert their blackness and their right to be proud of themselves, their hair, the complexion, their style of dress, the way they speak. But all those years in South Orange. And so I very much understood that I was as that as a person of African descent and not just because I was black, because a lot of my friends, they were black American through and through.

00;19;16;23 - 00;19;42;17

Bisa

And I think they felt comfortable in that space. But I was often told by black American kids and white that, you know, you're different because you're Ashanti. So that was a whole nother one, a barrier of entry, even though I was born and raised here because I look African and I am African, you know, my last my maiden name was Yaba.

00;19;42;20 - 00;20;24;05

Bisa

So right away with the roll call, Yaba was like, what did you have shoes growing up? That kind of thing was pretty typical (oh, goodness) . So Howard was great because I felt an awakening, like all of the things that I had been taunted with. You know, the typical primarily white public school made sense now. Now I knew why my black American classmate felt ashamed or felt that they didn't want to upset me because of that.

00;20;24;07 - 00;20;34;25

Bisa

The white supremacist ideal is that we were all getting in the Moses know, just watching TV. uhmm

00;20;34;27 - 00;21;07;22

Bisa

And I understood that there were alternatives to that alternative style, and it helped me to put my own childhood together, understand my father's experiences in colonialism in Ghana. And he was there when Ghana was liberated. And so I was finally asking questions like that. What was it like the night before? Like, what is it like when your whole country is suddenly a free, an independent nation?

00;21;07;24 - 00;21;39;07

Bisa

and to see Kwame Nkrumah, my speaking and how it was great because my classmates were

the children of other kids like me who grew up in the suburbs, who weren't around. A lot of black people like themselves. They were West Indian immigrants, African immigrants. There were kids from California, you know from Mississippi, and those of us in the Northeast.

00;21;39;09 - 00;21;45;15 (21:13)

Bisa

It was a true cultural melting pot.

00;21;45;17 - 00;22;19;20

Bisa

And some of my classmates were children, of people I had read about in books like I really good friend was one of the sons of Amiri Baraka (hmmm) and Ras Baraka, who is now the mayor of Newark, New Jersey, was the president of Black Air Force, which was a student revolutionary group on campus that I was a part of. So when people ask me, did you pledge? I know I was part of Black.

00;22;19;22 - 00;22;21;00

Although my daughter went to.

00;22;21;00 - 00;22;25;03

Bisa

Howard and so. (laughs)

00;22;25;05 - 00;22;27;10

I have to say both worlds.

00;22;27;11 - 00;22;52;03

Jacqueline

Because my sister went to Howard. I know so many people went to Howard and Howard. Howard alums do not play. I mean, no, it's something special happening at Howard. And I was always a big regret for me or lament that I didn't have the opportunity to study at an HBCU because many people in my family, my father, my sisters, they all have.

00;22;52;03 - 00;23;02;28

Jacqueline

And and that's, you know, something I always wanted to have that experience. And so maybe one day, maybe I have that experience, maybe one day teaching. (laughs)

00;23;03;00 - 00;23;26;08

Bisa

Yeah, I remember my grandmother who graduated from Xavier during the days she graduated

probably in 1936 or seven. But when she found that I wanted to go to Howard, she was outraged in a bad way, she was like, why do you want to go down there and she was like, I thought you would have wanted to go to one of the best schools. oooh

00;23;26;08 - 00;23;28;03

Bisa

00;23;28;05 - 00;23;54;00

Jacqueline

And Meanwhile all the people that I know went to Howard are all killing it in their respective careers. They're like all at the top of their game. I mean, that's a misconception that people have, you know, and but meanwhile, people are killing it who are coming out of HBCU you know so I love that you know you highlight or amplify that experience its so important Thank you.

00;23;54;00 - 00;24;20;16

Jacqueline

Yeah definitely. So I'm sitting here at teachers college where I'm at and many black artists have studied come through. I've even been able to take a painting, enter the painting class. I well, I took the class only because I know because I felt like I should, you know, I'm studying artists, you know, working with artists. I felt like I should, like, try to see what they're going through.

00;24;20;23 - 00;24;21;17

Yeah.

00;24;21;19 - 00;24;24;27

Jacqueline

Class was it. It was not easy. And I'm so.

00;24;24;27 - 00;24;28;06

Glad I'm still working, you know? Yeah.

00;24;28;08 - 00;24;57;07

Jacqueline

So but I'm so grateful for that experience. I think, you know, one of my friends told me, I think all art historians, all curators, people working with artists should, like take part in studio classes. And so I, you know, every studio class I've been able to take has just like, magnified my respect. So many black women artists (uhmm) have you know, participate in this tradition of being an educator like Adam, who spent many years, Faith Ringgold, many years.

00;24;57;07 - 00;25;14;12

Jacqueline

There's a long list and you are in that group. And so I definitely, you know, because as I was preparing for this, I was like, I don't want to ask her all the same questions that, you know, that she gives us. So I don't know if people are asking about this, but I really want to, you know, hear more.

00;25;14;14 - 00;25;43;24

Jacqueline

You talk about your experience as a teacher, and I was at a public school in high school. What did you learn about yourself? What what is something memorable that you've taken away from that experience that empowers you today. Many people who may listen to my podcast will be either educators or there are people who are thinking about education or thinking about schooling.

00;25;43;27 - 00;25;48;23

Jacqueline

So I'm just curious, what's your perspective on all these things?

00;25;48;25 - 00;26;28;12

Bisa

My experience as a teacher was at first shocking. I was a public school teacher. I taught for two years at middle school, and then I went to high school and I was not prepared for the amount of social emotional learning that the kids would need and the structure that I would need to understand classroom management and the psychology behind it, like how, you know, it's not just shouting or it's not just you're not trying to be punitive.

00;26;28;15 - 00;26;51;21

Bisa

How do you get 30 youths to agree (CHUCKLES) with what you want to do? How does that work? And so that that was a shock. It's not the same thing, like I said, is I knew how to make art and I thought, okay, I had all these ideas, all these lessons that I wanted to do right off the bat.

00;26;51;23 - 00;26;54;28

Bisa

And like any teacher would tell you that you should turn out very (laughs).

00;26;54;28 - 00;26;58;14

Badly because then the classroom.

00;26;58;15 - 00;27;00;22

Bisa

Could be total chaos.

00;27;00;24 - 00;27;01;14

And not.

00;27;01;14 - 00;27;36;01

Bisa

Only just the management of it, but how to teach something in bites so that everybody can get it. You can't just push on through right to the end without realizing where is the actual beginning of this project? (hmm). When I wanted to teach my students that as well, I realized that actually beginning is like keeping your materials organized, like your needle, your scissors, your fabric, that kind of thing.

00;27;36;03 - 00;27;56;29

Bisa

And then the very simple steps like how to thread the needle, how to make a knot at the end of the string? These are high school kids, but if you've never done that, you zip through thinking, okay, needles, tie a knot we're going to like know, right? So C and I realize I'm sorry.

00;27;57;01 - 00;27;58;28

Jacqueline

You know, so you have the scaffold. Yeah.

00;27;59;01 - 00;27;59;26

00;27;59;28 - 00;28;27;16

Bisa

Yes. The scaffolding. And then how much that helps everybody because you have different levels of learning in the world. Uhhh And children can be very gifted in one subject and not so much. And how much that would switch. I felt like mainly, though, teaching really taught me how to be a better human being at a care about people, large amounts of people.

00;28;27;16 - 00;29;09;27

Bisa

And then not only that, but how to win people over. Hmm Because if a child does not believe in you and what you're showing on, they don't care what you were saying at all and they do not have to do it. Uhhh I've seen what's happened, what happens in a classroom or in a school, and this doesn't happen as those are things you might see online teachers and students umm having tussles over sounds not like actual fights, but snatching of a phone to snatch a bag or the throwing of desks, eruptions of frustration and anger.uhhh

00;29;09;29 - 00;29;45;24

Bisa

A lot of those things. Part of the genesis is just lack of respect and understanding. And I had kids from very different backgrounds, some of them came from parents who were not as financially set up as they wanted to be. Uhhh Some of my students always lived with their parents. They might live with a relative or sometimes they were in the foster foster care system umm, and I had some students who were homeless as well.

00;29;45;26 - 00;30;03;08

Bisa

But at the end of the day, it always seemed like each their needs to know that you care about them. I want to pronounce your name correctly that's huge. If you mispronounced somebody's name, like if I jumped on here and I was like, Hey, Jocelyn. (laughs)

00;30;03;10 - 00;30;10;00

It's this, you know, this is did you not read the name? And if you couldn't pronounce.

00;30;10;00 - 00;30;46;01

Bisa

It, could you ask me Like that is an affront right there. And then if you refuse to say it correctly, because you can't or won't make that input, you're already saying like your name is not important to me. Umm That's a name that your mother gave you. And she is not important to me either. Uhhh The way she pronounce and spells your name is if it's, you know, we as African Americans and Americans, I have learned we like to be creative with names. ummm

00;30;46;03 - 00;31;07;22

Bisa

Bridge your child's name and I had a student who told me once, I think her name was I don't know, I think it was Nicole, but she was like, don't worry, my name is Daniel. And I said, Your name is not Daniel. Your mother names you a name that she thought was beautiful and every name was made up.

00;31;07;22 - 00;31;35;06

Bisa

At some point, somebody thousands of years ago was like, I think Mary is nice and everybody else had never heard that name before. So why is your mother's original creation less than somebody else's name that came from many years over? So I just wanted the kids to know that I cared about them ummm from the start and then share aspects of myself.

00;31;35;07 - 00;31;54;27

Bisa

I care about teaching and I care about art, and these are the things that I'd like to do, but I need to make sure that you're okay sitting here. If you are hungry, I don't think you can focus. None of us can focus on we're hungry, right? Right. In a meeting, you're just like, I'm hungry. Hungry.

00;31;55;00 - 00;31;56;02

I'm like.

00;31;56;05 - 00;32;02;18

Jacqueline

Right totally as it does. I mean, that's so real. Say, hungry.

00;32;02;21 - 00;33;01;29

Bisa

Angry. These are fundamental. So I felt like teaching. Also taught me to love. Because they is. This is my first experience meeting non-binary children or children who were trying to figure out how to express what they really are. And I had to understand that all of my class needed love, like the high school football star who everybody loves, still needed to know that she cared about him as the kid who was ostracized and nobody's speaking to like, you can't take anything for granted that just because one student is rich and good looking uhmm and that the other one is wearing the same clothes and sits alone, that they don't equally need love and attention.uhmm

00;33;02;01 - 00;33;25;04

Bisa

And so I feel like that changed me as a human being. And it made me think about when I used to walk in the classroom in the morning. I would say to myself, first of all, do no harm because kids can test you. High school kids. They're going to because they want to know how do you actually care about them?

00;33;25;06 - 00;33;51;03

Bisa

And if the situation is at home, that love is shown in a different way, maybe they want to know, how are you going to show that? If i make you really, really mad? Are you going to reject me? But even if they did make me mad, I had to find a way inside myself that I'm not going to harm the show.

00;33;51;05 - 00;34;15;18

Bisa

I'm going to let them know that what they did was not right or I didn't like it. And let's try to fix it because we have to meet again here tomorrow, same time, same place. (laughs) But those were all testing grounds. The ones who tested me the most, I remember this was I. Why did this? I do not know.

00;34;15;18 - 00;34;21;29

Bisa

But somehow he jumped up on the table and was making some kind of declaration. (laughs)

00;34;22;01 - 00;34;24;15

He was showing out a lot. okay

00;34;24;18 - 00;34;56;24

Bisa

This is like my little baby. And I just by saying, not in a cruel way, but I did like I lost my temper in that way. And then after that, that kid love me forever. He just wanted to be near me and he wanted to pass out all the papers and sharpen all the pencils and clean up everything because he felt he he had pushed me to my limit, my limit was not guilty or ostracization.

00;34;56;27 - 00;35;12;06

Bisa

Or it could be punitive in a way, but more like, I want you to do the right thing. I'm not trying to hurt you. And I think that he finally felt safe with me. So. Yeah.

00;35;12;08 - 00;35;41;22

Jacqueline

Yeah. I mean, you, you, you said so much, and I just want to I just want to respond to a couple of things that you said. You know, just the importance of saying names correctly. Some people might call that a microaggression, but one of my mentors here at Teachers College, Dr. Bettina Love, one of the things she said in a in a presentation was, how do you get to decide what am I a microaggression, you know, like this idea of like a mike.

00;35;41;22 - 00;35;45;21

Jacqueline

It may not be micro to the person who's experiencing it, you know.

00;35;45;23 - 00;35;46;14

Bisa

At all.

00;35;46;14 - 00;36;18;23

Jacqueline

So I was saying after I heard her say that, I was like, whoa, I'm that that word is canceled now because, you know, like, you cannot say that something was a microaggression because the person experience it may be totally macro so like you don't get a lot of like a gaslighting or like minimizing it by calling it Mike And then when you talked about, you know, this love ethic that you bring to the classroom, I mean, I definitely was thinking automatically about bell hooks, but I

was also thinking about people, scholars like Goldie Mohammed.

00;36;18;28 - 00;36;36;25

Jacqueline

You know, it's really a black feminist ethic, that approach to teaching and learning, which is one of the reasons why it's so important to have black women teachers, black teachers and myself. I didn't have in my K-12 experience, I didn't have not one single black teacher.

00;36;36;28 - 00;36;38;12

Bisa

When.

00;36;38;14 - 00;36;59;05

Jacqueline

So it was when I went to college. But actually what happened, you know, my parents, because of the extracurricular planning that they would, you know, outside of school, my dad's from Louisiana, my mother from his family's from Virginia and California. They would, you know, take us to the south every. So I got like a black education, a black experience outside of schools. yes

00;36;59;09 - 00;37;17;13

Jacqueline

And then in middle school, they signed me up to go to Mexico, study abroad, wow because my dad was a professor as well. And yeah, I don't know how he finagled it, but he got me in with some college students, my sister and I, and she was in here and I was middle school and I studied abroad in Mexico.

00;37;17;13 - 00;37;22;26

Jacqueline

I saw my first Diego Rivera mural. Wow That's I fell apart because I walked in the room and I was like.

00;37;22;26 - 00;37;25;04

Whoa, was this amazing?

00;37;25;04 - 00;37;46;24

Jacqueline

First of all, it's huge. So the scale of it was like, and then, you know. Rivera I mean, Aspire many black artists, you know, the good, the bad and the ugly. It's like truth telling is for me, that's when I learned early on that, oh you know, in my school environment, which was always predominantly white, you know, in the suburb of Rochester, New York, a small town.

00;37;47;00 - 00;37;58;24

Jacqueline

Penfield uhmm I learned early on from that experience, okay, it's the artist who's going to tell truth there. Oh I see So I want to know who I want to teach me. So I had to seek them out, you know?

00;37;58;29 - 00;37;59;08

Bisa

Yeah.

00;37;59;08 - 00;38;03;25

Jacqueline

So it is a lifelong journey. I'm still seeking them out to the point where I'm sitting with you right now.

00;38;03;27 - 00;38;05;22

You know.

00;38;05;25 - 00;38;27;18

Jacqueline

You know, So is this a and I mean, it's so when you were saying I was like and then you talked about basically, as I was to say, a self regulation, you know, social, emotional, you know, consciousness that a teacher has to have not only of their students, but of themselves like this and this, you know, this notion that a teacher has to be constantly self reflective as well, you know.

00;38;27;18 - 00;38;46;24

Jacqueline

Yes. And so, I mean, those are like some things I just had to like, you know, respond to. I mean, there's so much there's well, so you talked about I've heard you talk about and other interviews and read that you talked about self-esteem was one of the biggest issues that came up with your high school students, where you were teaching.

00;38;46;24 - 00;39;01;00

Jacqueline

And I was wondering if you yes. For the listeners, how if you can help them to understand how does artistic practice, how would that be helpful and building self-esteem?

00;39;01;02 - 00;39;38;09

Bisa

I think that talking to our students, talking to young people about, imaging, you know, I used to do a lesson on portraiture and I would say make a portrait of somebody who you are my. But I would talk to them about like looking inward and looking at someone you admire doesn't always

have to be a celebrity. What about your own mom, your grandmother, your grandfather, Your Honor, your uncle, somebody in your neighborhood?

00;39;38;11 - 00;40;21;23

Bisa

But look at the people around you are actually doing things for you. And I think that it starts to make them realize the value of all if they haven't already, of acknowledging portions of themselves. My grandmother taught me, and she's valuable, therefore I am valuable. Uhhh Also teaching portraiture, self-portrait. having kids look at themselves and sketch themselves on a piece of paper and understanding that we all have these things in life where you have uniqueness that is beautiful and you don't need to change it in your portrait.

00;40;21;23 - 00;40;54;29

Bisa

You're trying to get accurate, accurate picture of what you look like and not some idealized Photoshop image of yourself, because that's not it's not going to be what you see in the mirror. I think that having students pick out colors that actually look like their own skin and teaching them how to mix those colors and blend, gives them a certain appreciation for their own skin.

00;40;54;29 - 00;41;34;03

Bisa

So whether it be my medium, dark red is yellowish, you know, bluish or whatever the undertones and letting them understand the complexity of, their own skin and having them play around with how to get it right or how their skin is about one color at one time. uhhh I think it taught them more about I don't know to say that it taught them, but it exposed to them uhhh the idea that their own features complexions were beautiful and then also exposed to them.

00;41;34;03 - 00;42;02;01

Bisa

The idea that the intervening can be captured. Well, like if you're doing a portrait of someone at my they have interview. There's a reason why you admire this person over this celebrity person, the celebrity. You don't know what they're animals, hmm you know the outer and you know what they do. But a person in your life, you actually do know aspects of their inner self.

00;42;02;07 - 00;42;42;08

Bisa

How are we going to portray those? And that's how I would go about assessing a project for portrait worlds. How are we going to show the outer beauty and intervening in this one two dimensional, well, sort of three dimensional form of artwork? And I think it became reflective for the students too, because when they started thinking about themselves in the same way, I can sketch paint and put highlights down on this paper, but how am I going to show somebody something about what's inside of me? Hmm.

00;42;42;10 - 00;43;02;01

Bisa

And to do that I have to value something that's inside of me. So I think that that that helped a lot in the classroom. These children would change after that lesson and be more accepting of difference .

00;43;02;03 - 00;43;17;08

Jacqueline

Beautiful, beautiful. You know, I used to be a science teacher and I would incorporate arts in my science classroom. I'm one of the teachers who believes that, you know, in this idea of integrating arts in multi subject systems, you know.UHMM

00;43;17;09 - 00;43;17;26

Bisa

This.

00;43;17;29 - 00;43;22;21

Jacqueline

Could be a social studies class and you're engaged in arts, it could be a gym class you engaged.

00;43;22;23 - 00;43;23;05

Bisa

In.

00;43;23;07 - 00;43;49;26

Jacqueline

Can be just like, you know, it doesn't just have to be in the art classroom that we're engaging arts. And so, you know, so when you're saying that, it just makes me think of all the multiple ways, you know, that this really could be amplified. So I love to talk to artists about their studio practice. UHMM One of the things, you know, that excites me when I look at are as I sort of like, imagine what does their studio look like?

00;43;49;26 - 00;44;13;11

Jacqueline

What do they look like? Are they are they messing with me? Are they on the floor? Like, you know, I start imagining like, you know, sometimes you can see handwork. So you start to like, see, you know, I can imagine, like gestures or I or I, you know, I'm wondering about the conditions of the studio. So yeah. So can you talk about what conditions you require in your studio that foster creativity?

00;44;13;11 - 00;44;29;00

Jacqueline

What what what does what does the opposite for you? What are you look like in the studio? Are you messy? Are you neat? I heard that you like to listen to music, yes. so can you talk about that as well?

00;44;29;03 - 00;45;00;11

Bisa

Well, this right now I'm sitting in my studio, but this is my first studio ever, so it's a new experience for me to be able to help slaves. I always work in the home, as do most will choose. It's our home base Brass you know it was a craft that people use to make blankets and warmth for their families and sometimes quilts were done in a group.

00;45;00;13 - 00;45;31;14

Bisa

But even that might be like in a community center not that far from home, or in friends home, or even outside in the yard. hmm I used to just need a space on a table and good lighting and then something to hold my fabric. The table was good for me because I worked on the dining table and my daughters could do their homework at one end and then I could do my clothes at other things.

00;45;31;17 - 00;45;56;21

Bisa

And so I have my children nearby so that I can keep an eye on them. When they were really small, I used to sit on the sofa with the laptops and work on projects and small bit at a time and they would be like, This is like when they were like toddler age, sort of toddling around or rolling around on the road or climbing over me. laughs

00;45;56;23 - 00;46;38;23

Bisa

But I kept my work close to my body and I didn't really spread out because I had to use part of their home for other things, right? Like the studio space. Now I have like big tables that are probably like dining tables still and my machines are bigger, but this is my first experience, not having my studio be in my house, and it's just the studio being wherever you are, where you happen to be sitting, you have a bag with all your supplies in it and then you can work on your leg like the studio was with me.hmm

00;46;38;25 - 00;47;02;28

Bisa

And now it's an external place. It's a lot more organized. I do need a clean table before I start. I can't have stuff all over and then my fabrics, some of them are vintage. They're my mother's or my grandmother's or some of them I bought. But I have to make sure that there's no food or drink besides water uhmm because I don't want to get any oil.

00;47;02;28 - 00;47;33;07

Bisa

So I wash my hands a lot and I don't want any seed anywhere near...and you have to keep your sewing machine as your main tool there to keep it dust free and in good working condition, oiled and ready to go. You really do have to, like most art practices, take care of your materials. And for the first time I have a fabric room that's on the side here.

00;47;33;09 - 00;48;06;17

Bisa

. It's like a library It has been stacked up to the ceiling and I have like a rolling ladder that I can get things down where my fabric used to be in the basement or in boxes in my dining room. And then some of them were in the study. Laughs They were just like all over the house. So this is the first time that I've been able to have all my time with one place, and I can go to my grandmother's table easily, go to my mom's, and go to some new beading or rhinestone fabric that I just bought.

00;48;06;19 - 00;48;33;02

Jacqueline

Is there a time of day that you like to work? And I just want to point out (yeah) you started going full time in 2018, so it's not that long ago. Yeah. So when you say you know, when you say this, your first studio space sounds so shocking. But but then I the way you talk about the way you work, but do you so are you going there like in the morning or are you like to work at certain times of the day?

00;48;33;05 - 00;48;48;12

Bisa

I guess your early is today a new morning bird at night owl. A night owl? Yes, I will get here a long time in the morning, late, late morning. And I eat breakfast here.

00;48;48;18 - 00;48;49;27

Jacqueline

Okay.

00;48;49;29 - 00;49;19;27

Bisa

And I probably don't leave sometimes until around 11 p.m.. I think it seems like after when the sun goes down, I find my work to be more intense. Like I find my brain shifting into whatever mode when it's darker. HMM I know some people wake up really early and they're going, My brain is kind of sluggish in the morning.

00;49;19;29 - 00;49;28;25

Bisa

I work, but it's I don't think that I get into the zone that like I'm conscious work zone and so it's dark hmm.

00;49;28;27 - 00;49;37;23

Jacqueline

Is there anything that you have to do it, your body. I know you're working with big machines now, so is there, do you do like any kind of stretching or anything like that.

00;49;37;23 - 00;49;45;11

Bisa

Yes, I do like to do a lot of stretching and I'm trying to I say try.

00;49;45;11 - 00;49;47;19

To (laughs) make my.

00;49;47;19 - 00;50;06;07

Bisa

Core only it's thick to make my core stronger and my arms. So I've been focusing on push ups past couple of weeks. Okay Those are things that my arms need to be strong.

00;50;06;09 - 00;50;23;05

Jacqueline

Yeah, yeah. I was listening to you in another interview you were talking about with the smaller machines you had to push, but with these big machines, that have like the racks, so. And I was like, yes, that's a whole another use of your body. Can you talk about your your playlists? What are you, what are you listening to?

00;50;23;07 - 00;50;29;01

Bisa

my goodness. Yesterday I was listening to the beat (laughs).

00;50;29;05 - 00;50;32;06

You see.

00;50;32;09 - 00;51;04;13

Bisa

I just felt like because I had been listening to Jungle and I was like, no, jungle is not. I mean, I do like them, but what came before that were that sort of like disco ish? I don't know if it's disco, but anyway, soft rock eighties sound or seventies. So then I started listening to the beatings, and then I went to Fleetwood Mac Journey. (laughs)

00;51;04;16 - 00;51;06;08

And then I started listening.

00;51;06;10 - 00;51;32;22

Bisa

To Stevie Nicks because I didn't grow up on that kind of music at all. So these songs are kind of new to me hmm and to my formative years. I was a child like during the disco era, and neither of my parents were really Motown people because of where they grew up. Yeah, I didn't just cover Motown until I was in high school with my friends. hmm

00;51;32;24 - 00;52;06;02

Bisa

And then my discovery for Motown was just with my husband, John, who's deejaying, understanding the three of them. So Motown became immensely interesting for me to hear yesterday, me and my husband. We listen to Bob James and on the radio they were talking about how many songs had inspired the hip hop songs and use portions of his music.

00;52;06;03 - 00;52;18;08

Bisa

Right. And I also like The Sound of Philadelphia. And so I like I find myself liking older music more than newer music, maybe. Yeah.

00;52;18;10 - 00;52;46;19

Jacqueline

Yeah. Thank you for that. Yeah. Do you have to? I know it to. Do you have time for two more questions here? Okay. One is your it'll be quick, but your my last question is I was your advice but I did ask you I did want to ask you about research because I'm always telling people, artists are scholars.

00;52;46;19 - 00;53;27;19

Jacqueline

They are researchers. And listening to you talk, you know, I study studying you preparing for today. And just in general, you know, I hear you talk a lot about how you research photographs and then you find these photographs through and the ways that you're finding them. Sounds like many different ways that you're coming upon them. But you said you started out with Google and then you find these images, but then that leads you down another path where you start researching, like when you find image of Scott or Harriet Tubman or Frederick Douglass buried in my hometown, Rochester.

00;53;27;22 - 00;53;49;23

Jacqueline

And so then you're reading Frederick Douglass book and you're you know, so I just I just want to if you could speak to the role of research in your practice, what does research look like? Do you have research assistants? How do you know when you're done with the research or ready to go

into like what you know, at what point does the research sort of starting to convert into making?

00;53;49;25 - 00;53;55;24

Jacqueline

And is that still kind of an ongoing thing?

00;53;55;26 - 00;54;33;15

Bisa

To me, the research portion is part of the fun finding a photo or just somewhere in the photo online. Whether or not I saw it in a university archives or national archives, or even I seen photos on Instagram or on Pinterest. That is the beginning, but that's just like a big clues or a puzzle. And the research part is fun to me to try to figure out who this person was, or even if I can't do that, who the photographer was and what are the circumstances.

00;54;33;17 - 00;55;10;03

Bisa

History has always been so interesting to me. It's almost like like a game of mystery, right? There's a clue here is this person. Now we have to figure out as much as you can, this person. And I think it's rewarding, satisfying for me to figure out if this person lived or did not, like how much longer passed this photograph and what caused them to have this thing that's drawing me in.

00;55;10;03 - 00;55;33;28

Bisa

Sometimes it's like a very noble look or an intriguing look like, What can I glean from this person's life that would cause them to look like that? Seeing like a young photo of Frederick Douglass, you know, what caused him to have that suppression throughout his whole life? And then looking at very young photos of Frederick Douglass is pretty shocking.

00;55;34;00 - 00;56;10;02

Bisa

Seeing him in his thirties. We get to learn something new that his expression was even more fierce at that point becomes the excavation of it in history, especially because our history that is that's taught in public schools, where I was in public schools is so broken down uhmm or nonexistent, You know, we'll see. Like that same portrait of the older statesman, Frederick Douglass and a little bit about him being an abolitionist and somebody who escaped from slavery.

00;56;10;02 - 00;56;37;27

Bisa

But that would be like the end. Uhmm So getting into the story, what happening in his life, to cause him to have that kind of look on his face. And then I becomes like a social experience experiment in me looking at people that I know thinking to myself, Well, I don't know anybody

who walks around with that expression or who take photos like that.

00;56;37;29 - 00;57;09;09

Bisa

So what has changed or what is different?hmm The sociological aspect of it is really interesting to me. What is that person thinking? And then the research. So it's really fun when I get into their clothes trying to figure out, first of all, people who are not supposed to. I'm using clothes because we've been told that black people in this area do not dress a certain way and then have these things.

00;57;09;12 - 00;57;43;12

Bisa

But I'm the contrary hmm to photos of Harriet Tubman and seeing quite the contrary, she's wearing a beautiful dress. And it is that and rise for me to figure out what's the name of that shirt of a thousand pleats and how is something like that made it made by hand? Is it made by a machine? I think I had read that Frederick Douglass wife and the symbol made many of his clothing.

00;57;43;15 - 00;57;47;02

Bisa

So how many outfits did he have.

00;57;47;04 - 00;57;49;03

And.

00;57;49;06 - 00;58;13;25

Bisa

How much he was a dandy like a lot of these things in black and white photos we see machine. He clearly likes silk a lot. And uhmm then it just gives me an insight into the real person. Yeah, right. There's one thing of what you are projecting and speaking about, but who knew that Frederick Douglass was alive in that way?

00;58;13;27 - 00;58;58;08

Bisa

Right. You know, and I was, I would think, probably pretty bold wearing stripes and checkers together even now. And what are those colors? He probably I would think he was probably more akin to what we see online. My husband watch Sports Center and all the football players and commentators. What is beautiful custom suits hmm like Michael Strahan said. And they'll contrast the patterns and textures and their suits are fitted to death and they're very much like Frederick Douglass', who was also a big guy and who writes really nice suits.

00;58;58;10 - 00;59;15;03

Bisa

So the research aspect for me is some feeling. Yeah, because it gives me something that may not be written about at all. There might be a book somewhere written about Frederick Douglass clothes. There must be. (chuckles)

00;59;15;05 - 00;59;16;09

Let's see.

00;59;16;11 - 00;59;46;13

Bisa

But it gives me an insight that there should be, and it could have little fabric samples in it, you know, so that we could see like what colors were they actually wearing, What were the styles of the day? And then why? Yeah, I loved researching Harriet Tubman, how she was dressed when she was younger compared to how she was dressed when she was old fashioned fashion said chains and the styles and chains.

00;59;46;15 - 00;59;54;17

Bisa

And she was just so much more of a woman kind of searching this now, how she presented himself.

00;59;54;20 - 01;00;15;13

Jacqueline

Well, you know, speaking of style, first of all, I want to really let you know I appreciate in value your inquiry based approach to research. And I think this is something that, you know, I'm I, I was even going to ask you about inquiry based, but I was like, no, I know she's going to start asking questions.

01;00;15;15 - 01;00;16;11

And so.

01;00;16;13 - 01;00;41;23

Jacqueline

You know, you ask so many questions and every I when I've been reading and listening to you speak, it's like, you know, you're asking so many questions. And I just love how that sort of is like guides you. Your inquiry based approach to uhhh your practice is is is just amazing. And then also one of my professors here, Dr. Chris EMDIN, he always says change the world and dress just well doing it and he's always trying to do that.

01;00;41;23 - 01;01;03;25

Jacqueline

I love it. Yeah. I studied with Dr. Cornel West. He was always dressed, you know, and so I love this. And even I remember going to the MLK Memorial in Atlanta, and there was a whole part about his fashion and where I was in fashion. So and I have to say, every time I you like, I sort of shared the space with you a couple of times.

01;01;03;28 - 01;01;13;19

Jacqueline

You're always fresh to death. Like, you know, you come in looking like I'm like, oh my gosh, this is so beautiful. And your clothes. And I start wondering, you know, how many outfits does she.

01;01;13;19 - 01;01;16;29

Have making these offers? Many.

01;01;17;01 - 01;01;26;14

Jacqueline

So it's just beautiful. You know, I love I think you may be inspired by bye bye that that fashion that I am. Yeah, I actually am.

01;01;26;15 - 01;01;39;04

Bisa

I think about that. I'm like, well, I started, Douglas says. And then he wears croverts all different ones in each photo. They're not the same cravat style. I think I need to do that much.

01;01;39;07 - 01;01;42;01

At least to get it together.

01;01;42;02 - 01;02;05;28

Jacqueline

Yes, Yes. I mean, and that's why I, you know, I just look at you as your practice, but also your person as you know, so much of a model, we have so much to learn from your practice, your process, the work that you're making. You know, when you're doing this research on these various individuals we get to learn about, Now you're passing it on to us.

01;02;05;28 - 01;02;27;03

Jacqueline

We get to learn about these individuals. So you're kind of you know, you're you're you're still teaching students through your practice. And I love that. And I just wanted to name that. So thank you. Yeah. And I have to say, I'm also I appreciate, you know, as a doctoral student, I obviously would, you know, be on a tight budget and a solo mom.

01;02;27;03 - 01;02;56;17

Jacqueline

So I was thrilled that I was able you know, I still want my daughter to have our on the walls. And Lamar had a custom print of your Chadwick Boseman piece. Oh yes! And I was so excited about that. I got it framed and it's like I have this one mother on my wall. So I was just so grateful that, you know, that they and you made that accessible in that way for for me to be able to live with, you know, your work as a doctoral student. Thank you

01;02;56;17 - 01;03;11;27

Bisa

So they did an amazing job with that print. But any body who got one, they said had paper. It was so, you know, so nice. It I hadn't thought about they said it showed way more as I think.

01;03;11;27 - 01;03;15;07

I should say. Are you sure? Yes.

01;03;15;09 - 01;03;23;03

Jacqueline

I benefitted from that. And I'm grateful for this. So thank you. Is this about my daughters growing up looking at that piece? So I appreciate.

01;03;23;04 - 01;03;25;20

Bisa

And that's fantastic. Thank you.

01;03;25;23 - 01;03;38;04

Jacqueline

So my last question is what advice do you have for moms or teachers uhmm who are also artists and trying to negotiate? Are these roles.

01;03;38;07 - 01;04;12;17

Bisa

Moms, teachers, artists, people who are working at also, do they also need time to so, you know, you're not perfect, but all you can do is your very best, you know, and once that if you exceeded that and take a break, you know, because nobody's perfect, we try to at least try to organize the day. We need to do everything for other people.

01;04;12;19 - 01;04;40;13

Bisa

I feel like we as women, you know, we'll go to the doctor. Let's, you know, or forget about like pampering type things like getting a massage or something like that. That tends to be nice. Most of last on the list. When you're in a situation where things are survival hmm and we look at our children or those dependent on us as so very important, which they are.

01;04;40;15 - 01;05;10;28

Bisa

So they're always coming before us. But just to remember to have that little bit for you, I made sure that my kids get school and then they have successful playdates or not, you know, if the playdate didn't go so well, having kids and, you know, take them to the park, try to nurture their social and emotional well-being along with helping them with their homework and keeping them healthy.

01;05;10;28 - 01;05;54;15

Bisa

Well, and playing that, too. Uhmm But there's a lot that goes into rearing the child. And then there's a lot that goes into if you're in school, you're working, you want to do your best at work and you want to have good relations and relationships at work. And so like you're successful. But to try to take a little portion for yourself, because I wouldn't be here if I had not kept making artwork, even if the artwork I was making subsides of this piece of paper uhmm and I was just gluing fabric on one that made sense.

01;05;54;17 - 01;06;24;19

Bisa

I still did a little something. I always kept a journal slash diary somehow, always writing, getting my thoughts out, and we have to have like these sacred private spaces to do something. Because after a while, some of these other things will fall by the wayside or they will grow up and go away from me. And my children are my daughters are 24 and 28 now and they're doing very well.

01;06;24;19 - 01;06;51;04

Bisa

They've been a tremendous amount of support to me. I still support them on what they need and they've been a tremendous support for me as well. But me and my husband are in semesters and I'm so grateful that I have something for myself.uhmm That small little portion that might have been only 30 minutes of my day is now my whole day.uhmm

01;06;51;06 - 01;07;17;15

Bisa

But we have to nurture our inner self. Isolate too. My mom used to open the junk door and take it out and put it on the floor and let me mess with what were whatever was in there.hmm It was about starting from about six. So I was old enough not to know that I'd swallow things. And it would be like old thimbles in there, like, and playing cards.

01;07;17;18 - 01;07;50;16

Bisa

So glue, I would just make little assemblages or little structures, little mini sculptures. Uhmm

And that was the beginning. I would say. I'm just nurturing that creative side.hmm You're not making this for anyone. It's not going to be judged. It's, you know, submitting it for anything you're just making. And I kept that my whole life. One of my aunts was my Aunt Lydia, who was a photographer in Paris, told me, Make sure you have a space for yourself.

01;07;50;16 - 01;08;04;14

Bisa

So my husband always had, like, his deejay with me. So we usually have the basement or room. And that was, of course, we should have a space. And she'd be like, Make sure you have a space for yourself. So I didn't actually listen it.

01;08;04;18 - 01;08;06;14

All the way.

01;08;06;16 - 01;08;32;24

Bisa

Because I always felt like this this I couldn't take over and study without just studying. But I always had an interest means for myself to do, to do me.hmm And I think that intensely important helps you do sanity and it gives you direction and it's something for you when other things will not be there.

01;08;32;24 - 01;08;56;25

Jacqueline

Butler You honor me with your presence today. You honor us all with your insights. I am so inspired by and proud of you. I'm just, am so excited to continue to watch. I know you have a lot of things happening, things in the works right now, and I'm so excited to go to, you know, for all those things to come to continue to engage with your practice.

01;08;56;28 - 01;09;07;26

Jacqueline

So from the bottom of my heart, thank you so much for your today. This is really just been an enlightening conversation for me, a really joyous moment.

01;09;07;29 - 01;09;18;04

Bisa

Thank you so much, Jacqueline. I wish you and your little one nothing but the best. And I'm so excited to be here. I enjoy it is great you.

01;09;18;05 - 01;09;29;00

Jacqueline

Thank you. Thank you so much.

