

Kennedy Yanko, thank you so much for being here today. I'm so honored to be in community with you, to interview you. I've been following you in your practice for the last few years. I was introduced to you through Instagram. So again, thank you to social media because Larry Osei Mensa was posting about you frequently and I was very intrigued and oh my gosh. So I'm just like so excited. Even I was like a little nervous this morning. So to speak with you. - No, thank you so much. It's an honor to be here. And the work that you're doing is so important and so vital. And I think putting education at the forefront of how we're engaging in our practices and our research and ideas is really, is just so wonderful. So this work is very important today. So I thank you for having me, including me. - Ah, thank you so much. Yeah, so let's just dive right in. Okay, so I'm not sure if you knew this, but I am a former middle school science teacher. I was teaching physics and chemistry to sixth graders. Yes. - Oh, I didn't know that. - I did my graduate studies at the same time and my thesis was on arts integration. I was looking at if I use incorporated the arts in my pedagogy, how would that influence the understanding that the students had of like science concepts? And so, so I was integrating arts and I and many other teachers, science teachers and other multi subject teachers in schools, like they often have struggles because when they're trying to integrate arts in the classroom, because not everyone seems to understand these connections between the arts and all these different subjects like science, math, studies. I mean, social studies may be a little bit more obvious. But anyways, I always use the example I talk about sculptors and how they are scientists. And I talk about if you went in their studios and you looked at the materials that they're using and the processes that they're using is very similar to the materials that scientists use. So I am so excited to like start with this question with you because if you could be there to advocate for like myself or other teachers who like science teachers who were trying to build, you know, make that case. Can you talk about the relationship between science and like math or these different subjects in your work? Yeah, that's such a great question. I had no idea that you were teaching science to middle school kids. I love that. You know, I think for me, the integration of those things are in my work can come in in such an abstract manner. And I'm using the work almost as a playground to explore these ideas. So, you know, you said your father was a scientist. And I think there's two kinds of scientists. There's a kind of scientists that are gonna always come from the point of reference in which they need to move forward. And then there's the kind of scientists that are really the artists and the painters. And they're ideating in a way beyond the, you know, these the foundation of what they have at this point. And I think that the work really becomes this opportunity to explore these ideas where I don't, where I can enter with a hypothesis, or I can enter with an idea of what I want, but I allow myself to explore through the process of where the work takes me. And I think as an artist, it also allows me not to have an answer and not to have to define something, but to take an idea around how we know the way of the world and how it's made and kind of throw it at the wall and see what happens with it because I don't have to have an answer there. So I am very interested in not necessarily defining anything or answering anything, but creating a land where I can use my body as an instrument to explore things that provoke it and intrigue it and not have to and just kind of go with that. So I think that's the way I'm approaching, you know, a hypothesis is like using myself as an experiment in a wedding. Yes, yes. I always tell people, you know, artists, they use a scientific method in their own way. And then even in the making, you're having to heat matter. You're having to like do like apply

various like strategies, you know, with your knowledge of physics and chemistry, you know, whether it's explicit or not. But you're, those are enacted when you're making your sculptures, I'm sure. Yeah, I mean, definitely. I mean, I'm not deeply involved in chemistry or physics. You know, I have a very like surface understanding of those things. And even the way that I work, I mean, it's really, it's so experimental. And I'm often not following, you know, the purest rules and working with paint or working with materials, I'm so physical. And what I'm doing, it's very much about like trying something out, seeing if it works, if it doesn't, then maybe we get into some more of the technicalities of like, you know, how the material can be used better or in a more precise manner. But it's a lot of throwing things at the wall until it starts to create a little bit of direct direction for me. Hey, as experimentation, that sounds like a whole science lab right then, right then, in of that. Okay, so, all right. So looking back on your learning experiences, and I know that you talked about how your dad put you in class with 80 year old artists and you said that you you loved that and I was curious about why you love that being around much older people and then your schooling and and art school and just all your learning experiences. I'm curious about if there has been any particular teacher or educational experience that has really influenced you in your either like inclination towards being an artist or in your work. Well yeah you know I've always liked to be around older people Even when I was in high school, I was always with older people. And I guess for me, I just, I think that the dialogue there is, it's just has always been so fun. I really believe in the wisdom of experience. And, you know, I love to hear stories from, from every one of the different times of their life and what they were doing. And when I was, you know, I mean, I was five years old taking watercolor classes. I don't even know how that happened, to be honest. But yeah, I mean, for me, I think within the institution, something that was really big for me, you know, when I went to the San Franscard Institute, I went with, I was studying art history, I was studying painting, and then kind of just randomly took this new genres class. And when I found out about new genres and installation work, and these artists who were building environments and, and like, Ophrelia's on using working with scientists and working with architects to kind of create these optical illusions and to create objects that could be contributing to society as like beyond the museum and beyond the object. I really fell in love with that. I fell in love with invoking space. And I think that, you know, in my work, it kind of translates into these ideas of care and ideas of environment and how the space can change the way in which we understand the work that we're in front of. Something that really, I think, so I was studying with Alan D'Souza there. I was only there for a year, but it really opened a world of, oh, this is how I want to interact with viewers. And this is the landscape that I can move from in my work, even if I am just making sculptures. another really influential teacher to me and practice for me that was a little bit more of an alternative education. And I think that for me, even though I haven't gone through the institution and within my education, I've always been, you know, an avid researcher. And when I left school, I kind of thought, oh, well, I'm going to make the world my curriculum, you know, and I'm going to invite top scholars and curators and artists into my studio, and I'm going to go into their studio, and I'm gonna make a book list for myself, and I'm gonna make a research list for myself of artists I wanna look into. And I was always just like kind of picking apart the things that I was interested in, in different ways, through lectures, through podcasts, through reading, through writing, through film. But I think as far as honing in on my personal experience, I had to go inside of myself. And working with my seafood Justin

Ian, I was studying Shigong and energy work. I was studying yoga, I was studying nutrition, I was studying esoteric practices from China and from India. And those are and were the thing that I think allowed me to open myself up in a way where I wasn't, you know, when I talked about within the science, like having to, as a scientist, you know, you're trying to define something, you're trying to have an outcome or find a, find a, you know, the next thing. And for me, it's not so much about that. It's so much about, how do I get deeper into the experience of, of what I'm understanding and what I can do with my body. And so those practices working in Qigong, working with, with Sifu, they really became the tools for me in a very, very deep understanding of like other layers of what curriculum can be. Okay, you're using lots of words and saying lots of things like, "Just a woman after my own heart." I love that you talked about like creating your own curriculum, you know, and how we have that in common, you know, talking about you sought out teachers, the artists as teachers, and that's like, like the basis for my dissertation. So I love it. So I want to think about, like, you talked about space and I was wondering if you could talk about, like, the role that space plays, like, in terms of opportunities to have access to space. Because I've, you know, I know this, not always easy for artists to have the space that they need, whether it be in their own studios or to have residencies and things like that. And I was just wondering if you could speak to the importance of those type of opportunities or the importance, and all of that space is played in your practice. Yeah, I mean, well, you know, when I was painting, it wasn't as important because I could go in any corner anywhere and kind of find a way to make it happen with some brushes and literally anything. And I think, you know, as I've kind of grown into. Other layers of my practice, other mediums from performance and film and installation work and sculpture, space, support. collaboration, all of these things then come into play and then you become a different artist and a different kind of person. And I think, you know, one of the biggest things for me that allowed me that was, were residencies, were people opening their spaces to me. And you know, the beauty about a residency for an artist, I think, is that, you know, you're immediately taken out of, you know, it's just like when you're traveling or when you're going somewhere, you're taking out of what you know. So the original personality is kind of like looking for all these things to grab onto and what is it going to absorb? What is it going to take? Where is it going to go? And residencies were really the things that allowed me to take up space or to experiment in a new way because I would either have like maybe somebody around that wasn't there or I'd have extra room or I had access to tools that I didn't have before. So all of those things really allowed me to enter into the mindset where I could see myself and I could see my work in a new plane and in a new environment. It's really about, at least for me, is creating the environment where I can elicit a new possibility of thought, elicit a new understanding of, "Oh, I can make paintings that are architecture, Or, "Oh, I can make rooms that are paintings." Or, "Oh, my body can be a canvas." Or, "Oh, my body can be the brush or the instrument or the curriculum." I think that I'm really interested in how the environment elicits new understandings or just kind of can percolate another dimension of self. When you're speaking, I'm thinking about the role of play in the creative process. It seems like different spaces allow you to sort of, well, we already mentioned experiment, but really just sort of play when you're talking about, oh, I can do this, I can do that. And yeah, that's like really fascinating to think about. Do you think about the ideas of around play at all when you're in these spaces, does that resonate? - Yeah, very much so. I mean, like if

we're talking about education, I mean, if we're talking about like for me personally, just because of the way my mind is built and the things that I need physically to be able to focus or to be able to really engage, I have to come through play. I have to come through desire. I have to come through pleasure and deep interest. You know, I was a student who would have like, I failed math for three years. I say that and I'm talking an F, you know, it wasn't a C, it wasn't, it was a fail. And it was because I, you know, it was really something that was so hard for me about my mind around, I was so resistant to it, but I would have an A in history. I would have an A or a B in art. And it was like, I'm just really the kind of person when I commit to something, I'm totally fully there. And I think that play is such a big part in approaching education because it opens you up in a way where it's like, you can access something and not even realize you're accessing it. And I know that we were gonna talk about travel and talk about, you know, how we're exploring the world and what those things elicit from us. And it's those moments when I'm traveling in the world or when I'm with new communities or when I'm with new people, when I'm not necessarily thinking about a project, but it's like in my subconscious, it's like that's when things happen, where it's like I'm exploring, I'm adventuring and something underneath is conjuring and percolating and then it's magic. So I think play is a big part. I think care, restoration, I think making space for relaxation is a huge tool for me in kind of creating and ideating, you know, you know, I know you're in the library all the time. So it's like, how different would your experience be if you were on a couch? On a beach? You know, on a beach. I want to be at a beach. I want to be at a beach. Okay, on the beach, let's set it up. You're on the beach. You've got your books. You've got your little art. You've got your covering. You know, you've got your, you know, your collada, you know, like how different. different do you absorb information when you put your book down and you look into the horizon? Absolutely. Yeah, I remember being at the library one time and some friends were in Brazil. It was like spring break or something and I was like, I just had to leave the letter. I was like, that's it. Like you here you are in Brazil. Like I'm sitting here. I'm like, I'm leaving. So I like packed up and I was like, I went to a museum. I was like, this is this is what I can do right now. Yeah, and I think it's just, it is about it. And I think so much about learning is also aligning with yourself and your day, like knowing when your mind is turned on, knowing, you know, in the mornings, like the first, I always try to move my body first thing in the morning, because I know that that is going to elicit, you know, energy and thoughts and curiosity, and that's gonna like get my day started, right? You know? So it's, for me, I'm also interested in kind of like, what moments of the day do I need to be sitting in a quiet room and focusing on those things. And then when do I need to move my body and when do I need to do something adventurous and when do I need to step out? So I'm like, I'm always trying to figure out a way that to align with those things throughout my day. And then like that's how I can learn. You know, I think everyone has a different way of learning, but. - Without sharing too many of your secrets that I've heard you talked about. Can you talk about like? - Do I use the seat? Do I pull a secret along? (laughing) - I've heard of this. - Oh Lord. Oh, goodness. So yeah. Keeping the mystery alive in 2023. I'm curious. What are these secrets? Okay. So now I'm thinking about like, if I was observing you in your studio, for example, like if I was observing you in your practice, like what kinds of things that I noticed in the space? What are you doing? Do you dance? Like, are you doing like you said you move? Are you, you know, doing some handstands or something in there? Is there music playing? Like, what kind of

temperature? what time of the day, like, what does it look like if we could have observed you in the zone? Yeah, so my studio is set up. I mean, I like to have a living room in my studio with a couch and a big table with books on it and candles on it. I've got this really beautiful clay sculpture from Bonnie Vermeeras with some older pictures of myself and some little good buck charms. And I always, you know, I light my candle. I turn the heat on blast. And it is like being in the tropics when you walk into my studio. And I have a couple of different studios. I have four studios in the building that I work in now. So the main room that I work in, where the kind of the living room is, you know, I'll have lunch in there, I have my meetings in there. I usually have works that are on, you know, where I'm doing like the finishing processes of like deciding how I want to paint them or what things that need to change and works that are in progress are usually in that room with me. And then I have a room where a lot of the resin finishing is happening for the paint skins and more of like sanding and painting and where the metal work happens and takes place there also in the yards too. But for me, I like to clean. I'm cleaning is such a cathartic. I know. - I wasn't expecting that. - I walk in my studio and I walk around in circles and I start putting things away. And then I go back and I have these lists, I have these notes. So I'll be cleaning, and while I'm cleaning, I'm looking at all these things in my peripheral vision and I'm thinking. So I think a modality that I use a lot is movement, because movement is a place where I can start to get into my mind, where I can get into more of a transient state where things can kind of just be more fluid, and I'll do a million things at once. So I like to do that a lot. I like to talk on the phone in the studio a lot, you know, when I'm painting, I do love to dance. I love to turn the heat. That's a great way to like kind of for me to start getting in the zone is I'll put some music on and I'll just dance. And I've got all these, I've got these really cool mirrors in my studio where I'll use for working. And that's really fun for me. But yeah, just finding ways to get into my mind. That's very hard for me, you know, get out of my mind and into my body and be able to kind of align the two things to work together in some way. You know, that's always a challenge for me. You talked about these different rooms and some of them are like finishing rooms. And this is a question I love to ask artists. How do you know when a piece is done? How do you know when your outfit's done? You know, it's a feeling. It's a feeling. You know, you're ready to walk out that door, you know, you're feeling good. You're going to take it. You know, when you it's like it's very it's really simple, you know, it's like it's you just know that it's finished and it's not really asking for more. I think, you know, I'm always, as I'm building my sculptures, it's very much touch and go, you know, it's moment to moment, one step at a time. So I think there are just moments when they begin to sing and then when they've come into their full, into their full selves and they just make sense, you know. So I consider you an intellectual. I know just based on listening to your interviews that you read a lot and that you, I consider you a scholar. And so I'm curious about your research practices and the role that research plays in your work. What informs your research practices, your methods, and how does that show up? Well, I think the first thing is typically, you know, what I am interested in at the time in that moment. And I'll kind of just walk you through building a show more particularly because I can get a little chaotic. But, you know, I'll start with the material that I'm I'm working on, you know, and that begins in the yards. And that also is, you know, very often my life, the things that are happening in the world, my particular interest in the moment, you know, there could be a show, you know, I did the show. I've been doing research for a show that I did two years ago and I'm

still very deep into that research. And it's kind of what's guiding all the other things. And it's almost the point of reference in which I'm moving from in my research at this moment. And I think that for me, when I'm reading or when I'm writing or when I'm kind of really trying to pinpoint an idea, I'm interested in tying together how my particular perceptual experience and how I'm reflecting society today, which is just within like my motives and my interests and the things that I'm diving into, but then also how that transmits into the medium and into the kind of the phenomena of material. And I really believe in the idea of transmutation from thought to thing, I think that in the different shows that I'm working on, the show "Post-Capitalist Desire," which was specifically about how economic tides can elicit and guide our desires and interests and our sexual desires and our interests and how very much of what we know as ourselves is a conditioned understanding of the world. So there's so many layers as we try to get to the original personality of like what our desires are interested are actually chosen for us. And when you look at that work, you can literally see the confrontation of industry and of body and how they come together and how they integrate and how they deform and how they get challenged but then also where they interlock. And I really felt and I do feel that as I'm going from subjects to philosophers to artists, I think that as I'm engaged in that information, it's also kind of transmitting from my hands to the work. So that's really kind of, I guess, my process of working and of researching. I also just, I like to have a lot of dialogues with different artists, with philosophers, and scientists, and architects, and ask a lot of questions. And I think that I'm just always opening my studio and my mind to kind of like new ideas and new ways of thinking or refining my understanding how I'm thinking. And that's the point of reference that I feel that I can speak to most truthfully is my experience. And that's why I really kind of stick with that, you know, and start with that. Yeah, I really appreciate your interdisciplinary perspective or approach, like not only to the modalities that you're using or the mediums that you're using, but also just in terms of like the types of scholarship that you're seeking out from in body to, because I know that you used to be a trainer and I'm a Yoganie as well. I actually went to India and got my certification before I started my doctorate. Oh, amazing. Yeah, I need to return to my practice though, because my doctorate has definitely curtailed. It will always be there. It will always be there. Yes, yes. And the next question I wanted to ask you was about your collaborations, like speaking of your interdisciplinary in terms of modalities, you do performance work and you've trained in performance work in the New York City's Living Theater. And so I was wondering about your film projects, your performance projects. Can you talk about when you feel the need to collaborate and how you approach that? I love that. It really is from feel the need. It really comes from that because I'm working through life with the sculptures and I have I've always felt like any other medium is an additive to the dialogue that's happening within the sculptures for me, but also just kind of expanding that into the world in a different way. And it really, they all, my collaborations typically surface from, you know, just being with someone, spending time with someone, seeing how they're approaching their art and the world and just really having a desire to kind of make something with them because we're probably entering from different ways of living and different ways of thinking. It's very organic, I'd say. The most successful collaborations that I've had have come from, like, "Hey, I'm thinking about this and maybe you should try this and then come back to me and we can talk about it." It's back and forth for weeks or months. typically start before I actually have a place to do them or a project.

Like it's not like I'm applying for something and then I'm creating a collaboration from that. It's that I literally feel like I want to explore a medium in a different energetic form, you know. So working with performers and working with filmmakers and working with sound artists, it enters me into more of a directorial position, you know, in a more of a kind of a leadership role. And that has been such an interesting and challenging thing, you know, as an artist as a little bit more of an introverted person as someone who can be kind of really particular in how I want things done. But at the same time, it's like, you know, so much of my process is about going with the way of things and letting them unfold. And, and I think that that can be kind of challenging for some artists to and some of my collaborators because there's a part where it's like, okay, I'm creating a space for you. Now, now what do you want to do with it? How do you want to iterate it? And I think that what I'm learning now is how to even more thoroughly be able to provoke something from the artists that I'm working with so that, you know, we all walk away with a deeper understanding of what of our work and what we're doing and then what we create together is really just this kind of, I always think about art as relics from those experiences. I'm always thinking about it as like, you know, they're just these these living, breathing entities that now captured all of the energy and all of the ideas and all of the things into this one thing that can live forever. Well, I mean, what an amazing teacher you are, because I know you said leader, but I'm going to say teacher now because this is I live the way that you talked about that it was like, I thought about how you're really developing this co-emergent pedagogy in those instances where you're kind of oscillating between understanding the power dynamics with you being in control or being the leader of a project, but then also realizing constantly that you're in relation and that's the only way that things can work. And I mean, that speaks really strongly. Well, I think it's in relation, but it's also, we're all learning together. I'm not coming in there actually knowing exactly what to do. We're literally all figuring out in real time. And I think it's important that everyone's coming together in fellowship together. The thing about these collaborations, because they're typically with my friends or with people that I've been around, it's really deep work. It's really going into the pits of our souls and talking about it together and trying to figure it out together. I don't know if you can have the same kind of thing in a classroom or in a crit or in a, you know, cause you're developing something together. But in relationship to teaching, you know, I think teaching is such a part of my ancestral history. You know, I think my mother was subconsciously very much a teacher and my grandmother was a teacher. And I never really considered myself a teacher, but I think, you know, working through working in yoga, teaching Qigong, teaching all these things. I mean, education for a college dropout maybe one of the most important things to me. I think the research of artists, the archiving of research of artists, oral history directly from those who are doing the research is so important to me. But one thing that you said earlier today when you were talking about how teachers are engaging, or how curators are engaging, my interest is in the message being able to be received. I really don't wanna pack a lot of things around, I really want people to be able to get it. And when I was learning how to teach yoga, what I really appreciated about my teachers was they taught me how to teach. They didn't teach me how to give a Dharma. They didn't teach me, you know, I would learn how to get the practitioner directly into the asana in the most efficient form and get them there versus like implementing my egoic understanding of the philosophy. I'm creating a space for you to absorb it, for you to take it in and I'm gonna try to get it directly to you so that

you can have your own experience with it. - Absolutely, I mean, I agree that the best teachers are always learning, like 'cause everyone's always learning. If you're not learning, you're not teaching. And then also this idea that the teacher is also sort of more of a facilitator than like the holder of all the knowledge. I think that's really, really important. - Yeah, and that was, I think, when I was at the Living Theater, 'cause I would never call myself an actor in any form of the way. I mean, we were talking about our memory earlier. For me to get a monologue in, it's not gonna happen. I can barely memorize my name. (laughing) It's bad and it's getting worse every day. And I think that like, that was one of the biggest things that I took away getting to work so intimately with Judith Molina was her directorial form as a performer, as an artist, as a community leader. I mean, it was just a very interesting approach because it wasn't about the making of art. It was about the making of fellowship and community. And then what comes from that? I love it. Yeah. Amazing. She got to use an icon. Okay. So this may sound a little random, but I love that we're talking about, you know, we've been talking about sort of like education and teaching and things like that. So that just, you know, I'm in this space where I'm thinking about the kids, you know, and also I've always wanted to like touch like, you know, your work when I look at it, like part of me is like, very, it's like so tempting. And I know I've heard you talk about like how you imagine that people wonder about like the weight, like the literal weight of your work. And I do when I look at it, I do wonder like, Oh, is that hard? Is that like softer than I think? Like I have all these questions, you know? And so I was just wondering about your thoughts about, because touch, especially in art spaces, is like a fugitive act, you know, you're not supposed to be in there touching. Although I did take my daughter to a museum in Philadelphia two weeks ago called the Museum of Touch. I was like, I love this. Like they called it Museum of Touch. It was like the Children's Museum, which is a really fabulous building. If you're Evan Filly, I definitely recommend you've been there. Yeah, it's amazing. And yeah, so what are your thoughts about like touch and like also have you observed children interacting with your work? And because I almost feel like I could really imagine like some version of your work like you know, in a in a in a playground or a space like you know, I don't know. But anyway, it's like, what are you? Don't touch my words. But I you know, I think and I and I hear that so often, you know, about touching the work or wanting to get really close to it. I remember, you know, and I did a show called "Woo-Way" when I was 19 years old. It was like my first proper solo show. And I wrote a thing. I said, "Feel free to kiss the work." You know, because when I go to a museum, I will, the first, like I get my nose as close as possible. Like come up to the side, I'm going around. I'm really exploring it like a dog explores the ground. You know, I'm really trying to understand, for me at least, I'm trying to understand how this thing was made. I'm breaking it down. And I'm also just very deeply getting into the layers of the paint or the layers of the material that's being used. And that's the, I mean, that's the seductive quality of it. Right? It's like you are immediately posited with all these questions. And do you need to answer them? You know, it's like, what is it about this thing that can elicit so much from the sciences to psychology to how you're living your life, to how you're presenting in the world? like there's so much and that's all because it's really imbued with like with my questions. And you know, as far artistically, you know, I think that, you know, a dream project would be something where I could deal with all the senses. But when we go back to a lot of these practices within the healing arts or within kind of inner work, the senses aren't always the way to enter it. You know, the senses can be the thing that can help you be



more fully engaged in your mind. But I'm interested in kind of like that, that more, that, like that deeper, the deeper questioning, like that feeling that you get in your stomach, you know, that feeling that you get in the back of like, when the chills go up, your spine from looking at the metal, it's not so much about the sensation as much that is like a really inner whispering or inner response. And when children interact with the work, it's maybe one of my favorite experiences, the questions that they come up with, the way that they explore, I mean, they explore the work as architecture, which I think is so incredible because they're looking up at it and they're, you know, they're, you know, it's really, I feel like seeing art through a child's perspective is so magical. It's like all the questions that you have that come up with as an adult, they answer, you know, within their question. So yeah. - Yeah, I was in the MoMA a couple of weeks ago and my daughter was so excited when we walked in the room, Barbara Chase Rebels work. And she's like, 'cause she, you know, apparently she loves sculpture. I mean, she goes to school where they make art all the time, she'll tell you, "I'm an artist." And I just love it. I'm like, "Yes, you are." And some lady who got in her face and was like, "Shh." And I was like, no, I was like, no, no, no. Children are welcome in MoMA and in museum spaces. - She's just trying? - She, it happens, Kennedy happens often. Actually, there's a few of us, I've been posting about it and some people, we're gonna, classmates and I, we're gonna actually write about it because I, my daughter and I get policed into museums often. Yeah, it's happened in several museums. Like with her, we walked in Faith Ringgold's exhibition at the new museum and there was like, you know, second floor was like, you know, you just the elevator opens and you're just like, oh, and she had a sonic reaction to it. And she was humming and somebody was like, and I said, no, I just, I didn't know who said it. So I just said to the whole room, no, we don't check our, our bodies at the door. We bring our full bodies and have our sonic reactions as well in the museum. I mean, I feel like I had to say that to the whole, whole room, you know, at, yeah. But when did the silence in the museum begin? Well, as soon as she could walk, I said I was going to take her to the museum. So as soon as she was walking, we would go to museums and she would be pushing her stroller around. She would get out because she didn't want to be in the stroller. And she would push her stroller around and I would just, I just love to follow her. And I always want her to feel comfortable in museum spaces or around art. So that's why I do that. But it happens way more than it should, where someone, whether it be a guard, but it's often just like other random people that are visitors, you know? And I'm like, these ideas-- - Who made that up? - That's what, hello? - Like when did we get quiet in there though? - Exactly, I'm like, why is, like that's a very Euro-centered, I told the lady, I said, you have a very Euro-centered point of view about how we're supposed to engage with art. And I believe that we have embodied experiences. And that includes Sonic, you know, and she's asking questions. My daughter has, Georgia O'Keeffe went to hear at Teachers College at Columbia University and she's taken, my daughter has taken art lessons in the same studio where Georgia O'Keeffe worked. And I'm like, so she was very excited about her materials in this one space, you know, and that's where the lady was getting, telling her to shush. So I'm like, you know, that's why I was asking you about like, you know, children because I want to start talking more about children to artists and how artists, you know, you know, appreciate engagements with art, with the children, but also the children, observing the children, interact with their art, because I think we need, there's, from my experiences, being with my daughter in the museums, we need to reframe the way that we

believe that we're supposed to interact with or engage and be in these spaces where art is. Yes. And these spaces should really be facilitating space for us to moan and scream and do the things that we need to do in response to the work. I mean, I think it's just so strange. Once the work leaves the studio, it really has a life of its own. I would be really interested if I would love if you would take her to go see my installation at the Brooklyn Museum. Okay. Absolutely. And I want to record her. Hey, maybe you could come. I want to hear. Yeah, I mean, we could actually we could do that. We could do that would love to meet her. That would be so nice. Yes. So we can go over there sometime. She's yeah, she just she loves you know, and that's and so that's why I'm so glad I've been taking her since she could walk. So, um, yeah, and when you know when you were talking about the visceral reactions, you know, that go up the spine and stuff, that's why I was thinking like, yeah, sometimes we want to, you know, I've I've been in a museum and felt like I need to do a back band and I've done it. And I knew I'm going to do this back band, but I'm probably going to get in trouble. Did you? I have, yes. Yes, absolutely. I get on the floor. I do weird stuff. And I know when I do it, OK, I'm about to do a fugitive act because the majority believe that there's certain ways. But I don't ascribe to that. And I study museum studies here at Columbia. So I feel I'm prepared. I'm ready for any interaction that somebody might have. I'm ready to teach. And you think it'd be the other way around, too, because when you're taking in visual art, visual art is something that you really have to sit with. You have to be open to in a specific way that literally probably should have some kind of, preliminary physical exercise or some preliminary mental notes before you approach the work. It's very different than watching a film or listening to music, which is something that can fully take you over and you're immediately immersed into it. But with visual work, I think those elements of expanding and responding could be so helpful. You know, I mean, I think etiquette is such bullshit. I'm sorry. It's literally one of the worst things that we know. Yeah. I mean, and I have a friend who's doing her, her dissertation on embodiment in a museum, so I'm really excited. Cool. I love to read that. Yeah. I'm so excited about her, her research. Okay. So I want to respect your time. Um, I want to ask you a question that I feel is very important on this podcast, Beyond Beauty, because I, um, when I envision my primary audience for this, I do imagine it to be women artists, women, creatives, young and old around the world. And so I would like to, um, end off with a question about any specific lessons or experiences or advice that you have feel that have been particularly valuable to you that you would like to share with other women artists on their creative journeys? Oh, so much. There's so many things. I mean, because it's really, I mean, it's a real, it's a real hero's journey making art, you know, I think like to make something, the thing is, is that at least for me personally, the act of making is the easiest part, like pushing the work, challenging the work. If it's something that you're doing naturally and consistently over time and you're continuing to refine it and you're doing it and you're in the studio and you're doing your thing, that's the fun part. That's the thing that we can all do. I think it's like, if I want to have a career, if I want to do this work for the rest of my life and only do this work, that takes different things. So I think a big part of that is knowing when to get out of the studio, knowing when to to change gears, knowing when it needs to be more of a social thing, you know, when you're going to see, when you're engaging with your community and you're engaging with other artists in their work, I think understanding the business of art, if that is an aspect of what you're trying to do is really, really helpful and informative to creating a lifestyle where you can like, you know, do this

every day. So I think that all of those facets are good. So knowing like when to change hats, if you're already pursuing your work and challenging your work. I also think I really, really, really believe in mentorship. And I think something that people don't tell you about mentorship is that you pick your mentors. You know, it's usually you being really, really annoying to someone and just like continuing to show up and them being nice enough to like let you in and then eventually they'll warm up to you. So it's like any mentees that I've worked with, it's people that have just come to me. It's not something that I'm like actively seeking, but it's people who genuinely show interest in themselves and like where they wanna go. and I think not being nervous about that. I think people really want to share the knowledge that they've gained over time. And it's such a fulfilling thing to watch people come into their potential and to watch them discover themselves. So don't have any fear about asking questions to people. And I think finding different mentors for different things, finding a mentor who you specifically talk to about your materials is great. Having a mentor who you specifically talk to about your business, having a mentor that you specifically talked to about how you're guiding your personal relationship and your art. You know, having someone who you admire something specifically about them, and they can be your mentor just for that. I think those things are really, really helpful. Studio visits are absolutely vital. Having tier-raders come into your studio, going to other artists' studios. I think a lot of the conversations around the work, everything happens there. everything happens in the studio and that's the most intimate space and that's where all your energy is and all your thoughts are. So it's a really powerful environment. So I think, you know, if you're working from home, just creating like the area that is that shrine, that is that special place where you can just fully be your whole self. And, you know, as a woman, as a woman and historically spaces are not for us, You know, we all have always had to kind of create our own environments where we can fully be all the different assets of ourselves from our powerful self to our sexual self to our, you know, vulnerable self. And for me, it has been such a treat to have a special room for myself of my own making that I can be all that in. And I think in creating that environment for yourself, you then begin to create the material that can hold that. So, Woo Kennedy! Yes, this is all great advice. I mean, honestly, like, I even feel like you're just given advice that could be useful for all women, you know, like who are not even necessarily artists or, I mean, it's so, so important when you talk about creating a space that's just for yourself. I mean, we often neglect ourselves and we sort of put ourselves last, you know, and That's so, I mean, you kind of got me excited about thinking about doing that for myself when you were saying that. - I think that, but I also think it's like, when you said like neglecting ourselves, the first thing that came to my mind is like, where is the place where you get to be all of yourselves? You know, when you get to be like the ugly parts too, and then like, can you also invite that in, in those environments, you know? - Yes. Kennedy, this has been so much fun. like I literally could just go on and on, but alas, you know, I'm going to respect your time. I appreciate you being with me this morning and I just adore you. Thank you so much. Oh, you too. It has been so fun. Just kind of, you know, we've been talking on Instagram for years and you've given me some great reference materials. I think the work that you're doing is just so vital. We are at such an interesting time in our civilization and our human experience And I'm so excited to see the development of, you know, the perceptual experience of the black woman being held historically in a much longer and deeper and more intricate part of how we're developing. And I'm so, I'm so happy with what you're

doing. And I want to support you in any way. So thank you so much for having me and for celebrating all these amazing artists and for opening yourselves to this work, which is very scary and not easy. So kudos to you. But yeah, we can keep talking forever. And I can't wait to meet you in person one day. Yeah, let's do the Brooklyn Museum before it comes down. We'll all go over there. Yes. Okay, perfect. Perfect. All right. All right. Thank you. Okay. Thank you so much. It was so nice. This was great. Thank you, Kennedy. I feel like every all the artists you are all sort of taking a walk a leaf with me and I am so, so grateful. I don't take that lightly. You know, I'm really working to make this like amazing because that's what, you know, that's, that's, that's what I have to do working with all of you. So thank you. I really so, so grateful. Awesome. Likewise. Likewise. All right. Well, I'll talk to you soon.