

Finding Inspiration with Teresa Oaxaca

Hello and welcome to Down To Art. I'm your host Kristy Gordon. And today I'm joined by the amazing American born artist, Teresa Oaxaca, who's currently based in Washington DC So welcome Teresa. I'm so glad to have you here. Hi Kristy. Nice to talk to you again. Oh, good to talk to you. So Teresa's work can be seen in galleries and collections around the world, and she's the recipient of many awards from institutions including the Elizabeth Green Shields Foundation, the Posey Foundation. And I first became aware of her work when I saw her win second place in the Portrait Society of America's International Portrait Competition in 2011, which is where I first met her. And lately I've been so intrigued by her work to see the imagination that's developing in her work.

And I wanted to chat with her today about how she draws inspiration for her paintings and integrates it into the beautiful creations that she's making. So yeah, I guess maybe, maybe we should start a little bit with your education. And I know you've kind of combined multiple ways of, you know, training yourself. There's so many different ways to like train, there's online options nowadays and there's, you know, studying at an A t a and then there's self-study too. And I, I just wonder what your education looks like to bring you to where you are at. Well, I started doing art when I was quite young, so I would say that my first art was probably watching my father sculpt a small alligator out of some kind of like oven baked clay.

He took it out of the oven later and remember we were sitting on my bed at like, probably it was only like 8:00 PM but it seemed late and he was gonna apply the varnish, but we had some paints from the art store and I, maybe it was my suggestion or his, but we ended up like painting a lot of red blood around the mouth in the eyes to make it more real listening.

And then, and then we glazed it. And then I, I think like that was sort of one of the, my first art memories. Ha. And it basically led to me doing a lot of sculpture and drawing as like a way to amuse myself as a child at, at the time I was an only child, so I didn't have too many playmates like when I was at home.

And so I was amusing myself with just like drawing and creating toys. So like, it wasn't just the idea of sculpting, like it was like it had to be cooked or hardened in some way and maybe painted so that you could play with it. So like, it was a kind of a fun thing. And I think that helped because I've, I've talked to some friends who teach at Ateliers and they say that when they encounter adults who haven't really played with art as children, they sometimes are like a bit deadened by the monotony of just the theory and then they don't have that winsome playfulness that I think needs to be there to help you learn the theory. That's like such a good point. Yeah, I'm sure the same could be for music, you know, like it's no fun if you're just doing scales and, and you don't have fun songs to dance to, you know, in your free time. So yeah, that, that's like already such a good point. Like cuz then there is such an element of play and the like in your work now and having that experience as a child, it makes you just comfortable with art. Like, it's not like this big crazy intellectual process. It's like just sort of play.

And I can totally see that in the way you're creating art now. Yeah, yeah. And I think, yeah, if you have that desire to create some kind of finished product and, and it's not necessarily for like monetary terms, it's just you wanna finish it so it can be useful and, and you can derive more fun from it or share it or play with others,

you know, then you inevitably become like a little obsessed with techniques because there's, there's this whole thing now about like art for art psych and art for fun. And I feel like that's

given to children a lot. Maybe things are changing now, but you sometimes like, like I found myself like you sitting in a kid's class and they're like getting you to roll Play-doh or I don't know what it's like,

you're like, I want, I wanna draw, like I wanna learn to paint. So yeah, I think from like a young age I was like really wanting to learn some skills. So I think my next memory was like drawing watercolor, like how to do horse portraits, some, some kind of book, you know, from a store and Yep.

There was just a lot of that. And I remember being in a lot of adults classes because they were the only ones who did figure sculpture or figure drawing, you know, with models and you know, clay that you would like fire or, or some kind of like system where it was like, this is how the paint dries and then you varnish it and then you frame it and then you put it in a show and then people see it,

you know, there was a little bit more like that. So I was doing that for a long time and until I was about 12 and then I got really interested in all of a sudden the renaissance. So instead of animals I was like really into Michelangelo and Rembrandt and actually not really Rembrandt at the time I thought he was kind of brown And boring.

That's like, and I didn't get Caravaggio but like, like back in like, you know, 2003 or whatever, like most Caravaggios I saw were like a little like one inch by one inch yellowed photo in a giant book of art history. So it was really hard to understand when I actually saw Caravaggio in real life in Rome, I got it and he was like my favorite then,

you know, from like the age of 15 on. So I had just this like love of the figurative realism from the Baroque and the Renaissance and so I decided to go to a school in Florence, Italy and learn how to draw and paint like the old masters. Yeah, I actually love what you said, like about how like your experience just loving art as a child really just like naturally brought that desire to like learn how to paint like really well.

Like, and so the next move just naturally to follow that was like to go to an 18, like learn really solid painting and drawing techniques. Yeah. I kind of had a similar experience but I never really thought of it in that that way. Just how it really naturally came out of like my childhood love of, of art. And, and so you got to,

I believe you lived in Florence for some time, didn't you? When you were going to, which, which academy did you go to? Which aca? I went to the Angel Academy of Art and then I also went to the Florence Academy of Art. And then somewhere in the middle I also went to Rims. Yep. School, kind of like apprenticeship Italian.

Yeah, you went to, yeah, I was in 2008 Norway. It's like such a like perfect combination actually. And I actually have like the exact same practically and it's just a total fluke only I went to the Academy of Real Art in Toronto, but that was associated with the Angel Academy. I didn't finish the whole program but, but it was like the piece that I needed for the sort of academic painting techniques.

And then I remember when I met you at the International Project Competition, when you won the prize there, I think I talked to you about your time at Odd Nords cuz I was like considering going. Oh Yeah. And I sort of picked your brain about it and it really actually kind of finalized my decision to go, but, but it was actually a really nice sequence to do the a t a first and then odd nerdrum because I found for me,

like seeing odd Nerdrum work kind of helped me understand how you can build up a painting from your kind of imagination, but using, you know, models and just supplementing with whatever you need to do to make kind of a, you know, academically like a well, you know,

structured painting using the kind of principles that we know in academic painting, but to make it from your imagination.

It was like the first time I'd ever seen an artist work that way. And I, I don't know if it would be very easy to learn that kind of thing without just seeing someone else do it. So what, what was it like for you? Was that at all similar for you when you were studying with Arum? Or what was it like,

what did you get out of like the apprenticeship with? I got the freedom that he had, you know, he could work outside indoors, artificial light, role models, imagination. It was, it was like really helpful because the Telia had been very structured, both of them. Yeah. And, and one of them had a lot more working artists than the former.

And so you could see people working on their own projects. But the first to tell you I went to the Angel Academy, I actually didn't see a painting demonstration for three, three years. And so, Yeah. And, and while the teachers were very good before they were teaching and, and some of them are painting again after they, they stopped teaching,

I think that they had too much of a teaching workload to really be a practicing artist. And so you, you can get a lot of, you know, information and there's good lectures and there's like a lot of like kind of photographic step by steps, but mostly you're looking at the students around you work and that's not always the best way to work.

And it's not like their fault. I mean in around the two thousands, like, you know, it was before like social media was just like, oh, here's a progress shot. Here's closeup of a menini from a museum, here's a Rembrandt. Like, there's just like too much information now. It's, it's really good. But back then, you know,

I remember it was just like old yellow art books and, you know, PDFs that people would share on thumb drives. Like the information was a little harder to get. So it felt like people were stumbling around a little bit in the dark trying to figure out how to build these paintings that they saw in books, museums from the past. So it was like maybe almost like overly technique and, you know, focused and not enough on the, not so much the creative, but like just the freedom to try a lot of experiments, you know? Yeah. So Nerdrum was great cuz he'd been painting successfully for decades and his works were, I think arguably like technically better, but also creatively better. And, and you know, he was selling, he was, he was teaching. So that was, that was really helpful to see like, you know, a working artist and to be able to like kind of live in the same, I guess you could say like compound, you know, like yeah, he had the, the houses all in our, in kinda circle and everyone had like different studio or different dorm.

It was, it was kind of neat. Like you were really close to the action. And where were you? Were you in Norway or which location were you at Norway? Oh, it sounds This barn, I should say series of Porn. Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Totally. I was in the barn series. Yeah.

Yeah. No, I, I think what you said there about like the freedom, I think that's like really true because like the ats which I think are so useful and I'm so grateful that I got to kind of do some of that program. Cause I don't think I could have learned the technical, like, the techniques that I wanted to learn without that.

But some of the ideas are almost like you can't change the background, it'll change everything. Like you have to have the same lighting all the time, the same background, like everything, you know, and it's very restrictive, but it gets you to really observe super carefully. But then if you try to like add anything, you're like kind of stumped.

And, and the way that, and I'm not saying this is wrong, I think there's a lot of people that managed to pull it off, but I think like as far as building up a painting from the imagination, what they would almost suggest is to do like a million studies and color studies and like figure it all out, do detailed sketches and then do the final painting after he was like, figured it all out. Like that would be the ideal. But that's not how my process works at all. And I could basically like never do a painting that way. And I would try like for a long time. So I ended up having to like realize that my creative process is just like totally different. And from what I've gathered from you, from our like previous talks, you work a little bit differently too. Like you too sort of starting on the painting and you kind of just slowly kind of work it out as it kind of reveals itself to you. And surprisingly, I think you mentioned you don't make that many changes along the way. You just kind of slowly and carefully kind of work it out. Do you wanna talk a little bit about what your actual painting process looks like?

Sure. Yeah. I, I wanna say that I recently, you know, visited Mexico City and I saw a lot of Diego Rivera murals and, you know, these Were, they were way, Yeah. And they were fresco and they were just fresco, but they were like in weird places like stairwells with weird shapes and, and fitting between doors and like municipal buildings and schools.

And so like I can see how you would need to do some kind of preliminary drawings. True. Right, that's true. But if you're just making what, what used to be called easel pictures? Yeah, I don't, I don't think so. I don't think it's necessary. It, it depends really what you're trying to do. Like are you doing something that's some kind of,

I don't know, ink drawing or some kind of like fresco where you're literally setting the pigments into plaster and that's, that's it, you know? Or are you working on a canvas? And, and, and so yeah, as a, as a easel painter, I haven't really had the need to do that much like super study preliminary drawings. I mean,

I'm not discarding it, but yeah, it, it just hasn't been necessary and it, I don't know, you know, maybe if I had to do some kind of fresco like that someday, I might just do an easel picture first and then then yeah. Work on that. So the process would still be what you were alluding to, which is that I start with a pretty blank canvas and an idea in my head and then I try and place figures onto the canvas.

I have a couple main figures and then I'll leave spaces and in the background like the sky or the landscape or if there's water, you know, in the water. And I'll, I'll leave things like that and then I'll, I'll just have this, this open period where I'm working on the main figures that if something happens in the world, like, you know,

if, if Notre Dame burns down or if there's some kind of like idea in my head or I, I happen to see a beautiful bird on a, on a walk, like I'll put it in the painting, you know, so it'll mark the passage of time a little bit and, and the outside world will sort of get into my imaginary world.

Yeah. So I like having that, that openness. Yeah, I like really like that. I was listening to one of your podcasts on your podcast, the House of Oaxaca, which I highly recommend to everyone. It's really good. Theresa's an amazing storyteller. And in one of the talks that you were having with Suzanne, what was her name? Suzanne Lego Arthur.

Yeah. She, she, I asked her to interview me cuz she is such a wonderful interviewer and she is a wonderful artist too. So, and we're friends. I was like, this is like the best person to interview me in this painting at this delicate age. Like I couldn't imagine anyone else being better. So she was really amazing. She came over and we did the interview right in front of the painting and she really helped me get some thoughts out.

It was, it was really good. And what I really noticed was that like, there is like, as far as where you're drawing your inspiration from, which I want to ask you about, I did really notice that you're definitely like drawing inspiration from life too. Like from the real world, from what's happening in the world, from our history, you know, and you follow things like you read National Geographic, you like, you kind of have a good understanding of history better than me probably. So yeah. I, I like what you're saying about leaving like some openness for some world event or whatever, or daily life like event to kind of inspire you and find your way, find its way into your, into your work.

But yeah. Do you wanna talk a little bit about what your process looks like of drawing inspiration? Like, you know, I know you go to museums and there's art books, there's obviously Instagram now you spent time in Europe and do you wanna just speak a bit to some of those different, like sources of inspiration and how you used them? Sure.

I started off as a portrait painter in the Italians. And when I wasn't in school I used to do portrait commissions to, to pay for school during the semester break. So I used to start by, you know, getting a model who would come in and sit from life over a series of days or weeks. And so was always about capturing their likeness and then weaving some kind of story around them.

And that stuck with me even after, or while I was doing this kind of work. When I did my own work, it was similar, it was like find a model, then build this set around them. And then I started working more from photographs for various reasons. It, it wasn't like an exclusive thing, but I think I realized like having so many appointments,

I was like waiting on the stairs by my front door for a model to show up. Usually it was a commission. I, and, and sometimes they wouldn't come and I would be like, I was one of these super preparers, I'd be like waiting for like an hour and I was like, this is disrupting my day. Or I'd be like,

at a dinner party or lunch party and then, and then like the hostess would get mad at me cause I was like, I have to go, I have a portrait sitter coming over. You know, it was just this thing that was maybe symbolic of like the old world no longer being compatible with the pace of the new world. And similarly, like people don't wanna pose that long as much.

Yeah. So I started to do more photography and then I could paint like anytime I wanted. So I was still doing both, but like I, I found that I like to paint at night a lot and just, just any old time and, and for as long as I wanted. So I used to do like painting marathons that could be like sometimes 30 hours.

Whoa. Yeah. And I would try to probably when I was a little younger, like I don't do that as much anymore that sometimes I do. But I would try to like start and finish a whole painting like a 60 by 40 inch painting in like 30 hours. I was doing more of an style. So you only have to get like the face and hands really good and then you can kind of pellet knife the background.

So, but, but still, like it was, it was pretty extreme. And then I'd go like the museums and then I'd be like drinking in all the museums and getting ideas Yeah. From the art. And then I would go to like three different restaurants, which is like very decadent for me cuz I, I don't eat out much unless I'm traveling or you know,

or teaching. And I go out with students. Like I, I usually just kind of like cook pretty simple things at home. So, so very definitely going to like, you know, bars and like museum cafes and reading art books and like absorbing all the museums. And this was like a once a week thing. So I was getting a lot of ideas from the museums and the museum bookstore and the city.

And in a way it's really similar to just like, kind of like they call the infinite scroll where you're just scrolling infinitely on social media. Like if you're plugged into a lot of art history and you

know, like, like aesthetic accounts, you, you'd get a lot of images. And so it was kinda like that in the real world. It's just like seeing a lot in a short period of time and letting ideas come in. And then I've always been a book worm, so even, even before I was doing audio books, I was reading a lot and then at some point I started like audio booking constantly while I paint. So I just have a lot of that in my head while I'm working. So I almost feel like that's part of my process is like having some kind of constant mental stimulation with yay storytelling and information.

What kind of audiobooks are you listening to? I have a very big range. I, I went through a period where I tried to get like all the classics from the libraries and then there'll be like, you know, a War in Peace by Tolstoy or Sevki or then I would try like some of like the spiritual or like the religious texts, you know,

cause I was like, I need to read these, you know, and then I try just like pop you know, like Stephen King or something, like when you needed some kind of like mind junk food or something, you know, like something that puts you on your seat. Yeah, Yeah, yeah. Itk rolling or something like that. Like the,

the murder mystery ones, you know. And then, so like basically everything really like, and then the like little new books like, like a book that someone might be promoting on a podcast. And I'm like, I need to read that. Yeah. So that's kind of the working process is Actually, that's really interesting to me. I wanna, I'm gonna like actually do some of that.

I've been listening to new thinking aloud, which is like, sort of like metaphysical philosophy. It, so it's kind of out there a lot of the time. It sort of trickles into my work. I find that even though I'm doing an art podcast, I don't listen to that many art podcasts. I'm like, I'm interested in more of the ones that you were kind of mentioning to.

I mean, I would love to listen to Dusty Osby, that's such a good idea. But, but it's like, I can see how in that way those types of things like filter into your work. And I think that's really relevant.

I I know you do you read the National Geographic too? I know on another podcast you were talking about, I didn't even realize this,

that there was like five times in history that man was close to extinction and that some people are like thinking of this place that we're at now is like, did you say like that it's getting clo like it could be like the sixth close extinction or something like that. I didn't realize that that was like at The No, we are, we actually are in the sixth grade extinction.

Whoa. And it's a lot of animal species are going extinct at like a very rapid rate. Oh. And plant species. Oh. I mean I think extinction is a part of evolution in history, but there are periods where there are like a lot, you know, a lot of change. And so we're in, we're, we've been in one probably since we've been born.

It's, it's been a long time, you know. Oh, that's interesting. And where did you like learn about that? I wanna like get myself up to date on all of these things. I can't Remember. Yeah, totally.

But it, I mean I I I would read a like a lot of like Richard Dawkins or a lot of, like you say, national Geographic or just newsletters from them. Yeah. That, that's really cool because I feel like as far as like your work like draws on art history in so many ways and I love that kind of dialogue, but I think it's also really neat that you're like really aware of like, just like the current state of the world and so that like conceptually that kind of like filters into Yeah.

Yeah. I mean I, I I find it's hard to stay on top of the world and one of the challenges with being a painter is that it, it literally takes up so much time. Yeah. So the, I almost feel like I have to listen to a wide range of things when I paint. Otherwise that's like, I won't be up to date at all.

You know, I'll be like some medieval person who they used to say, like in the old days it's like the emperor could die and you wouldn't know for 10 years, but that's how long traveled along the Silk Road or something. Yeah, totally. I don't wanna be like that. So, so I am always feeling like I'm not really up to date enough,

but I, I try. Yeah, totally. And we have like a lot of like spare time as an artist cuz we are sitting in front of our easel forever. So if we can like, find the right podcast and stuff and just put them on, it's like, it's a good way to like kind of feel that, just keep our brain kind of intrigued as we're like sitting at the easel forever.

Yeah. I mean, I like going outside a lot, so I'll try to go out in the woods and do some like, read, I'll bring a book, you know, or Kindle and I'll like try to have lunch out there and have a moment where I'm not plugged into the world too much. That's, that's something I try to do. Oh yeah.

I have another like, like method for ideas and stuff. So. Sweet. Tell Yeah, I, a few years ago now it's, it's been a while, but like I decided to just like not drive a car as much as possible. So any kind of errand, like if it's supermarket, you know, post office, even if someone buys something from me within like 12 miles,

like I will run the package or I will run to get the groceries. Like, so I just run everywhere. So I run to the zoo where I'm in DC or near DC so we have like the national zoo and a lot of ooh, national museums. Really? Yeah. And so it's nice cuz you can run along like kind of like, sort of woodland trails like,

but still pretty within, you know, safely within civilization or whatnot. Like there's, I think, think we have coyotes, but like there's, there's no like wild animals, you know? So yeah. So you can run around, feel like you're in the woods and then you can emerge into some amazing museum and then like, like a hummingbird or something you can be like,

ah, I'm gonna drink a little bit of history, I'm gonna drink a little bit of modern art, you know, I'm gonna go over here. And, and, and I, I like to do that like, like do a really long run. So you're, it's like your brain is a little impaired cuz of I guess the getting up and then doing that.

Like the blood isn't really in the brain as much. It's probably like more in the legs and healing all the, I don't know what the muscles or the capillaries. So your normal thought process is different and you can sort of start to make abstract connections between, at least for me, like, like the things I see in nature, like, like a lot of the weird animals out there in the swamps and the wetlands and the,

the woods. And then I see like the museums and the history and then, you know, the art. And I just get like these weird thoughts. It's, it's kind of fun. And, And, and when I say like weirdly impaired kind of like, if, if you didn't know where you were going, it'd be very hard to read a map,

like that kind of thing. Like you're, you're a little confused, not not terribly, but just like someone who would be, who was running a marathon. Like just, just a normal kind of Yeah. Tiredness. Just which, which I think is kind of probably like natural. That's how we used to be. We used to exercise a lot as a species.

I think we were like, there's a book called Born to Run and it's about people running a long time and how we're sort of made for that and how, because we can sweat, we could technically run down animals cuz they eventually get tired, they can't run in sweat at the same time. So people would go run down animals for like a day or two.

I was like, oh, I think I can run to the museum like this. Not that far. So I guess like trying to not be so connected at the same time. Like some kind of balance, trying to find some kind of balance

in this world. Ooh, I like that. Like disengages like the normal types of brain patterns or something and like Yeah.

Allows for like more creative connections or something to be Yeah. It, it does become hard to operate a phone or like text it. It's kinda like, no, I don't, why would I wanna do that? Like, I'm here, I wanna see and hear and run and you know, like do amazing things in real life. Not be on my phone all the time.

So I have like, try to do that once a week or something. Like have one of those long days. Oh man, I love that. Yeah. I, I think I'm gonna set one like that up, just like going to that. I like how you're drawing like all in one day. Like from different sort of inspirational sources. Yeah, yeah. And nature too. I think that is really important. Like the actual natural world, the like energy of the trees and like, you know, birds and Yeah, I go through town too. If it gets dark, I'll, I'll go back through the town so It's not Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Totally. And you know, that'll be like cafes and sometimes I'll pop into like a, a fancy supermarket and buy really weird cheese, Like expensive truffles and like cheese and like a long baguette. And then I'll pretend I'm part of like the whole hipster movement culture, you know, I'll like walk down fancy train streets, like, like past the fire station and everything will just be like amazing.

I'm like, whoa, look at this. It's like, oh it's civilization. It's fascinating. Like, you know, it's just like ordinary things become really fascinating. It's like, and it makes sense cuz if you paint a lot at the easel, you know, it's like getting a day off from that and like just seeing a normal city street, it's kind of like a treat.

It's like, oh my god. Like it's like getting a field trip when you're a little kid, you know, like in school at a desk, like what is it, like 300 days a year or something crazy at least to feel like forever. And then you get a field trip and you're like, wow. It's like, Yeah. And you can kind of like see the culture for some reason it's making me think of like,

is there like a French word called like flair or something, which was usually like a male that would like walk around the streets and kind of just observe and like look at things or whatever kind of take. Yeah. But I like the fact that it's like a woman like embracing that. I feel like I too do that in New York. And I like the fact that as women we can do that.

We can be this flair type. I I think to be a flair though, you have to be dressed to the nines and Like Actually sit down and like order coffees and, and like, so I have done the fun thing. I, I used to do that a lot before Covid. I would like, you know, if I was traveling somewhere to teach or just traveling for fun,

I would be like a flair in some like fancy European city and Yeah, I can picture you like that. Yeah, no, no other objects than to just like walk around in nice clothes, going to cultural things and like reading books and, and sitting outside like in cafes. That was like pretty much it. Yeah. I've done the flair. It's,

it's definitely different than the, like the long running kind of thing I was talking about. It's very different. And because Are you actually running in these scenarios? Like, like running, like, or like, it's like a long walk Could be both. If, if I have like a camera I have to walk, but I, it's actually easier to run if you have to run,

whoa, 24 miles. Whoa. It's easier to, it's easier to run it walking, you get a lot more sore and you're out longer so you're burning more energy I think. So if you run it, if you're in shape, it's really easy. Wow. That's like, yeah, you Don't get four, you don't get injured, it's really easy and you're like kind of connecting with your prime evil self.

Like how you're really supposed to be like, functioning, you know, like, like you're not supposed to be getting tired after walking up a flight of stairs that's not normal, Supposed Around 10 miles.

Like, it's nothing like Yeah, that's, I mean, technically speaking I think that's how we were supposed to be, you know, at least Yeah.

Part of our lives if we were healthy and and lucky, but, you know, so I like that though. Yeah. That is different than the fla. No, this is, that's totally different. It's more, yeah, getting back to like our original state or, or I like the word primeval. Yeah. Your mind shifts. It does something to your brain.

Like you get yay. Really? You feel really clean and and healthy and you can sleep really well and it's like, whoa. There's like no pain. I think like most people, even if they don't notice it, they're in some kind of mild form of pain. Whether it's a minor headache or some kind of ache or just a brain fog. Yeah.

Like that's the one i I notice the most since I try to like work with my mind all the time. Yeah. And you do something like that and it kind of cleanses you and oh just, you just feel great. You feel like you're on a cloud or something. It's really cool. Whoa, that's such an interesting idea. I feel like I've like never exactly done this.

I like the idea. Yeah. So when you see inspiration, like during these runs, like maybe at the museum for whatever reason, certain pieces strike your like, you know, inspiration chords or like, or when you're reading an art book and suddenly something kind of pops out at you. Like what does it look like when you bring that into your paintings?

Like how do you actually integrate inspiration? Well I know I have, we can talk about like, I'm curious like how we're similar and how we're different. I know we're both like working with like art, art history and looking at lots of art, but I, I'm just curious what your process looks Like. I take photographs of, of the thing that inspires me.

So like, yeah, I was in Berlin for example, like on this museum insel like, like an island full of like classical history, like Babylonian, Greek, Roman, Like 19th century as well. Like it was really awesome and there was all these amazing things, but like, they don't all like strike me. So yeah, like I saw Nefertiti,

right? I wasn't like snapping that many photos of her. It was cool, but I was like, okay, it snaps for t tee's bust. But then I was in another museum and I was looking up, it's just the wall decorations and there was a man, I think he was kind of like a centar, but he was like a bull centar,

you know, it was like half man with, with with where the body torso ended. It's like the, the lower portion of a bull. So he had like four bulls legs and two man arms and it was like, oh that's kind of neat. Like I've never seen that. I don't know why it inspired me and I just like took a picture and it was just some kind of random fresco.

And so I'll do that a lot. It's, it's not always like a major thing. Yeah. And then the problem though is that it's like of all the things that you get inspired by, very few of 'em you probably act on or it might take years for something. Yeah. Like even that shark painting you were asking about the Garden of Eden one.

Yeah, yeah. Where Eve is like sitting on a shark and it's half water, half forest. That one I think was in my head two years. And I don't know if I would've started it if it weren't for March, 2020 when, you know, like kind of everything ground to a halt. So I had been traveling so much, like I just didn't really have time to sit and do something like that.

So I, I have been thinking about ways to be like more productive. I know that's now, that's like an, an unhealthy thing. It's like now we have to stop being more productive but more productive and like, like getting my ideas out and not just painting something because you know, like, because, so I was like, yeah, I wanna channel the ideas better,

like I think, and I think I'm starting to, so I'm, I'm, I'm happy with that. But that's, yeah, that's one way what I do usually if I'm a lot more like, like if I'm actually at home and not traveling, problem with when I'm traveling is I'm not home so I can't just go home and do it. Right. Yeah. So, but, but I did, I did recently when I, like my last trip was to London and like March, 2020, I was at the paid in the National Gallery. So I was doing a lot of drawing in a sketchbook, which I almost never do. But I started just drawing ideas. Like actual Yeah, paintings. Like each page was like a big thumbnail.

So I didn't, yeah, I didn't do copies. I just drew my own ideas like in cafes or whatever, like, and that, that was helping cuz I seemed to be making more of those paintings than the ones where I just merely like got a snapshot. And then the other thing that works, that's been like my most historical method since like I graduated art school is I just write myself a shopping list.

So I literally write like a list of things I need to buy, usually props, you know, so like I'll buy the stage props that people need to wear or pose with. And that seems to be the best one out of the three because it, you literally have put money down and then boxes are coming to your door and you have That's true.

Yeah. And then you have all these, these things and they're just like, paint us, paint us. You know, you can't ignore them. Oh, that's a good strategy. It's like making a big move that you can't go back on that commits you to having to do in the future. Yeah, Smart. Yeah. And actually I, I've done that with when I was in Italy like last time with the sketchbooks too, just like sketching out ideas. It's like, I don't normally like, well I might sometimes do like thumbnail sketches very like super loose of like general ideas before I started painting. But normally not too detailed. But when I was in Italy I was doing like more worked out kind of sketch and was just like playing around with ideas, kind of like what you were like as I went to the museums,

kind of like what you were talking About. You were very beautiful sketchbooks. I Remember Showing something. Thanks internet to me. Yeah, thanks. Mine are not that nice looking, so, Oh. But I'm sure they are. But actually that's more recent. The gush ones. Those are starting to get like, I'm trying to do little like, I don't know,

illuminating manuscript type of things or something. Yeah. My Italy ones weren't quite like that. They were just like graphite and and stuff, but I know what you mean. It it, it gives you like something tangible that kind of like works out an idea, right. While you're in the inspiration of them later. I might come back to it and start a painting and change it around a bit,

but I have another hack that, and I'm not, I'm not the only one who does this, but just like, like instead of just stretching one canvas, like stretch as many as you can. So 50 would be better. So it may, but if a lot of us don't have space for that. Right. But like, if, if you can just stretch like multiple canvases and different sizes,

the moment you have an idea you can actually act upon it right away. Right Then instead of like waiting. So that's true. That actually helps. And and I have a lot of friends who say that helps. It just, it just helps creativity. Yeah. It's Kind like Put more paint on the pallet, you're going to be like, have a better painting day.

So I kind of fantasize about like having like more studios, I'm like, that's would probably be the thing that would make me do more work actually. Might not be that way for everyone. But you know, and if you look at like the most productive artists in history or at least recent history, like Picasso and Rodan, those two come to mind,

they each had like eight or nine studios during their life. Oh. Maybe more. And some of them were being given like entire mansions or castles. So you know, like of course they're gonna be

more productive cuz they have more space. And then a lot of 'em would like just make enough work to completely fill up the studio and then they just move on to the second studio.

Huh. And they keep the former one like, like, like Rodan had like a few at the same time in Paris. He was during the days when the government would like give you a studio so you didn't have to like pay rent or, or buy it or something. Right. So, although I think he might have bought one, I, I don't know,

it's been a while since I read his biography, but I was just like impressed that, you know, he got really famous around the age of 40. Before that he was in this ground story studio and, and the only person who was helping him was his wife at the time, who he didn't marry until the end of his life and Rose. And she was like in charge of keeping his sculptures moist.

So if you've ever done terracotta, especially big ones, they're always in danger of cracking or drying out or or being too wet. So you have to constantly monitor the moisture level until you fire him. And he just didn't have the money to fire 'em all. So a lot of 'em, like, like 99% of his work was destroyed just by cold weather and Oh,

Lack of space. And so it wasn't until he became famous and then he had all these people working for him and all these studios that he could keep his work. So like that's a pretty big example. It's just physically having space and materials, I would say. And money. That's true. And because some people get like overwhelmed by the blank canvas,

they're like, oh my god, how will I, you know what I mean? They're like stumped or something, but I'm not like that at all. And I think, yeah, you're obviously not like that. It's inspiring. It's like full of possibility. It's just asking for something to be done on it when there's like a blank canvas hanging on my wall or something.

I think. I think that has to do with like your level. Yeah, I think so. Think about like a sewing pole. Like I remember being a little kid and I was terrified to jump in the water when there was no one there cuz I was like, a shark will get me. You know? And I only wanted to go in when a lot of people were there splashing around.

And then as you get older you're like, all these people are in my way. I just wanna like dive into an empty pool and, or like an empty ocean or something, you know? So that's how I feel with painting. It's like, if you're afraid of the empty canvas, you just need to mature a little bit with your practice and it'll be fine because Yeah,

the, the, the, the, I don't know what you wanna call it, the, the hardcore professionals are just like more empty canvases more. Yeah, totally. And it really does just back into me like if there's like a empty canvas, it's like my brain is like constantly rattling around like, what am I gonna paint on it? And I'm like looking for inspiration and it's,

yeah. It's just kind of like rattling in the back of my mind. Yeah, yeah. You start designing pictures Yeah. Within the space constraints. Yeah, totally. And also like maybe when there's a whole bunch of like canvases all ready to go, like all in one space, there might be like a tendency, which I kind of like to also be kind of designing things a little bit as bodies of work too,

which is kind of fun. Like where you kind of think of like a whole series a little bit. Yeah. Do you have that? Yeah. Yeah. Well so I, I used to think I didn't, but I think that series sort of just mark a stage you are in your life and so there's definitely a point where you're like, you can be just turning out paintings that in hindsight will look like a series and then there's a point where you can't make 'em anymore.

And then even if someone's like, could you make one of those, it's really like a struggle. Yeah. Return to an earlier stage of mind and Yep. It's not even techniques, sometimes it's technique, but

it's, it's, I think it's often a state of mind and you're not there anymore. And so yeah, the series are, I don't know if you can plan 'em.

I think that they come and go and then once the door closes it's like you can come back and reprise a theme. But at least for me, like it, I can go back and paint like a woman in a baroque dress with a wig. Like I can do that all day long, but I don't think I can just do her by herself with nothing around her.

Like she has to be like sitting in a boat in the ocean with like sharks or something now. Like, like that's literally an example of something I did. Like I, yep. I was like trying to make another like kind of beautiful woman portrait with, with a costume because like I had enjoyed doing 'em and I had sold all of 'em and I was like,

I should do more. Cause I enjoy 'em and I sell 'em and I don't have any, and I kind of like to look around my studio and I'm like, what's, what's in stock and what's outta stock? And the things are outta stock. I try to like replace. So I'm like, yeah. And then, and then I just start adding stuff from the new series and so it like yeah,

becomes part of the whole so that that can happen. But like I think it would be kind of tough to just completely recreate something from an earlier series. Yeah, that's so true. I like, I know artists who almost like maybe made like an intentional decision, like I am a painter of whatever, and then they're like, that's my signature. And then they just paint the same thing basically over and over again for the rest of their life.

And it might be like, good marketing and they're good paintings and they're like really good. But I tried to do that once in my life and I got so bored that I almost like never wanted to paint again. And so from then on I'll like never do that again. And, and if there's like consistency in my work, it's just because there's like serious interest that is pulling me in that direction.

And when that goes then I go in a different direction. I, I think so much of it has to do with where you live and how much information you have to information. I just say the information twice, like, you know, do you have like a really high speed broadband internet or is it spotty? Like, you know, is it,

this sounds like superficial, but I mean I used to have a really spotty internet, so getting online was like a chore and I only did it to do emails and it was like once every few days, right? Yeah. So I'm just like living on the same street reading kind of the same books, doing the same thing. So the work is kind of placid and then all of a sudden it's like,

oh, I'm like constantly paying attention to the internet and then I'm traveling constantly. And then it's like sometimes traveling would be like, especially if it was just the cities, you know, like it's different if you're going to landscapes, but like if it's just a city, it's like traveling. It's like, oh, that's when I get a break cuz I'm not being inundated by all the possibilities.

Like I have all these cool technologies now in my, in my home that can distract me or change my way of thought. Like every 10 minutes I can like learn something new and change my way of thought. So I feel like the pace of information and, and life is something to do with that. And it really depends on where you live and how you structure your,

your world. Yeah, that's true. It was just you Move New York again. Does that change? Like versus living in Canada? Oh, majorly. Yeah. I was just thinking about like my kind of like trajectory with like inspiration. Like when I first moved to New York, I think I started to get really inspired by all this stuff happening when the Chelsea galleries and stuff and my work got really experimental and,

and I was really interested in it. But then there came a time where I was just so, there was just like too much happening in my brain and I had no idea who I was as a painter anymore, you

know? And I had to almost like stop looking at so much stuff and just be like, what do I, what's really true for me?

You know? And almost like not look at things for, so for a little while there and then, and then eventually I would start, I, now I look at everything all the time again. But I feel like I took some time where I stopped looking at everything at one point as well. Yeah. So there's like a weird balance that happens.

Did you have anything like that? I don't think I'm able to do that. I think I'm like too, I get too curious and I do a lot of things you're not supposed to do. Like I drink tea in bed, like not, not eight hours before bed, not an hour. Like literally in bed, I'll just cup of tea and I'll like, that's a make no, i'll like mess up my circadian rhythm. So I'll have like different waking up in bedtimes. I, yeah, yeah. So then I'll of course, yeah, I'll be like listening to like all sorts of information and entertainment and podcasts kinda like DJing it almost. That's like now I need something exciting and now I need something kind of like,

you know, pop or now I need something serious or now I just need something dry and educational. Like, so I'm kind of constantly working with that. But I have a long time ago there was a, there was a painter that had a show in Arcadia. It was like way back, I was in high school and his name was Doc Hammer and he was doing these really beautiful paintings of women with like halos and he called 'em Saints and he also was one of the two co-writers of Venture Brothers,

which was this really funny like adult swim cartoon that I watched. And so I was like, oh, he's a painter and he is like a, a comedian. So that's why I started watching, I think I made the connection. My dad was watching Venture Brothers and I was like admiring his art and at that time there was like deviant art. So he would write about his process and things and I got like an appreciation for how hard it was to be a working artist from reading his entries.

And he said something about cartoon writing in one of his interviews cuz he was more famous for the cartoon than for the paintings. And he said that when he's getting ready to write a season, he's open to everything. Like absolutely everything. Like even this, like if you're at some cafe and there's someone talking loudly next to you, it's like instead of being annoyed, it's like you study the annoyance and you make that person into a character, you know, you use everything, right? Hmm. Yeah. And I was like, yeah, that's great. And then, but then when you're writing, you shut yourself away and then you don't look at especially other people's jokes. So for us it would be like you shut yourself away and do not look at other people's art because you, you know, as an artist you can't help but maybe like they say, artists are like the great thieves. Like you, you are one of Yeah. You other people's art, right? So like, hey, when I'm making this painting or this series, like I am just gonna purposely not look at anyone's art for a little bit because I want it to be a hundred percent my voice.

Like yeah. So I do respect that practice a little bit. So I'll try to try to like not be aware of what other artists are doing in my community, but you know, I'll look at other stuff that's like not my community maybe. Yeah, totally. And I'm just like really struck by how much you're feeding your brain with like, just information.

Like, I think that's so interesting and I'm gonna start doing more of that. Like, I like what you said about kind of DJing, like this playlist of information that you're like feeding your brain through, you know, podcasts and audio books and, and also like the light, like the, like artists writing about their process. That's, that's really useful too.

Like to read about how other artists, like, like I was reading Vasari's, the Life, the Lives of Artists, the life of artists, you know? And, and that was like really useful. Like it was really

interesting. So stuff like that can be really inspiring too to just, it's not necessarily about the technical aspects or like the kind of visual like creation of the painting, but like the kind of sort of challenges like on a conceptual level like, or even on a life level that that artists like were working through and how they, you know, came to them. I remember reading like Kiki Smith saying that like, all artists are looking at other art and the more like the more obscure your references, the more like originally your work look and that, that like really stuck with me. It's, Yeah, that's why I look at a lot of old art. That's why museum Yeah. My favorite because they were yeah. Often from lost civilizations even, you know? Oh, that's interesting. Yeah. Or, or like I look a lot of fairy tales Cuz they're from like, time Yeah. Memorial.

Yeah, it's, yeah, it's neat. Yeah. That it is neat. So, so I know you take like a lot of inspiration from like life itself and like, you know, contemporary events. Is there anything going on around you in the world today that's, you know, especially inspiring you right now? Hmm. I'm, I'm really interested in the way civilization seems to be breaking down in some places.

And at the same time, other places, it's like, everything's normal. I think that's really interesting and I'm sure it's always been that way, but you know, with like the 24 hour media and then like independent media, that's kind like amazing to watch and, and, and also like scary, you know? So, but I'm kind of fascinated by That.

Yeah. I found, I find myself doing a lot of kind of post-apocalyptic type of like, art these days. Sometimes like hopeful, sometimes like, I don't know, setting up colonies on new planets. I don't know. Dunno. Yeah. Yeah. I mean, I think I'm trying to cultivate more a sense of like joy and enthusiasm and like,

beauty in my work. Like, like I'm gonna amp that up and yeah, I think, I think there's a, there's this feeling like maybe some painters have, like, they have to solve the world's problems, but I'm not sure that painting can do that. And then there's, let's reflect the world's problems, but then I'm like, are we just adding fuel to the fire?

So now I'm like talking to some friends, especially a lot of ones who maybe like live through the Soviet Union or already saw civilization collapse. And what's interesting about them is they're a lot less scared of things that would scare me and they're just more like wanna carry on with their lives and keep things together. And they have an ability to find a lot of beauty and happiness and they're like,

you know, most of the world is good, most people are really decent. And so I'm like trying to not fall prey to the sense like, oh, things are really bad or people are bad, you know, like I, I think I wanna start making an effort to cultivate more of a sense of like, things are good, people are good,

there's beauty, you know, like, I think I'm gonna try focusing on that a little bit. Actually, it's interesting just thinking about my process lately. It's almost like a few years ago my art got like pretty dark, like a lot of battles and stuff like that. And more recently it does seem to have just like, naturally started to feel like that stuff is too much conflict.

And now I'm doing like a little bit brighter imagery too, without even being conscious about it. I'm just thinking about it now. And who knows why we do things as artists. I don't know if it's like we're coming to the end of the super hardest times or if we're like totally still in the throes of an inc. Really need some hopeful, more beauty.

Speaking of art history, there was a period when most art was trying to be uplifting and beautiful and then, yeah. You know, a lot of people say it's like the beginning of the 20th century, just a lot

of wars and destruction. And so art answered by being very dark and beauty was stripped away and it was kind of existentialist and nihilists, but also asking a lot of questions and rebellious. So like, there were a lot of good things, but I feel like as realism comes back into a fine art, like it was always during illustration, but you know, as it comes back into fine art, it's like, it's still not acceptable to be sentimental or beautiful. Like, all these things are called<unk> probably going like, this is like a Yeah, yeah, yeah. But I think he had a point and he was always saying, you know, like, well what comforts you? Right? Like people dark times want something that comforts them. So I'm trying to think like about that maybe, You know? Yeah. Yeah. That's, that's really cool. A sense of wonder like creating a sense of wonder.

Yeah. Beauty in, in art, you know, that you can imbue people with a sense of wonder. That is like my favorite feeling actually. Like the sense of wonder and the mystical, like the magic of the world. It's like my favorite feeling. Yeah. Like, it seems like a worthy thing to do. I think at a certain point you start to wonder like, what should my art be for? Like it's, you know, it's, it's not just about selling paintings or promoting yourself or being good at technique. Like, I think there's a certain point where you have to like kind of ask the big question. So yeah. What is art for, you know? So like that's maybe something on my mind. Yeah, totally. I remember when I was doing my MFA at the New York Academy of Art, John Jacobs Myer, one of my teachers there said something really useful. He was like, show me like through your art, like how you see the world. Like that's a kind of hint towards like finding our voice as an artist. And, and I think the way I see the world is like it's, it changes and that's probably why my work changes. But do you maybe find that you're looking at the world with like a sense of hope and wonder these days as well and that's like filtering into your work? Or is it more based on need? Just like the need to see some hope and wonder, although we might not see it yet. No, no, it's definitely like, it, it comes from like, just like all the books and the art and like the being in nature, it's coming from all that. Yeah. Yeah. But it's the difficulty of like creating that in art so it's not just a canvas and paint, but it's imbuing it with some kind of spirit or meaning. Yeah. As we said, you know, beyond the technical or beyond just the beautiful or the well executed or, you know, it's like giving it something else. And that's, that's kind of the, I I suppose that's the thing you get to do once you feel like you've figured out a few things. Like, you know, you figure out your technique and your, your, your voice, like the way your work looks, so to speak in a way it's made. And then the next thing is probably, you know, it's that Maslow's pyramid, right? It's the hierarchy of needs. So, so in art there's the hierarchy of needs. So it's like, can you, can you make it, can you sell it or, or can you afford it? Basically like, can you afford to make it? And then like, is it good? Do people like it? And then the probably the last one is like, do you like it or do I like it? You know? And then it's like, why? Or, or I don't know, I, I'm just, you know, thinking about those things. That's kind of, kind of fun. Oh, that is interesting cuz like the highest point of the on Natalie's peer that is like self-actualization or whatever. So like the idea of like, do we like it? Like are we really painting from our heart? Is it like just coming from that pure place of like, not trying to do it for any other reason or whatever. And, and I can really see your work, you know, being that way. I really love the way you're like combining, I mean, with the sharks,

there's like this element of like, thread, although I know you don't see the sharks that way, but they're still like, you know, a little bit threatening like next to Oh definitely. Yeah. Like next to the beauty of the flowers and the, you know, the, all the beauty like in the painting. And it just seems to really like capture like the wholeness of life and the, you know, the full reality that's still beautiful of, of what our life looks like. Yeah.

I, I think they represent a few things, but they, they represent maybe that kind of like the dread of nothingness or the unknown or just, I think, yeah, maybe not nothingness, but like, have you ever been to one of those museums? Here we have the Museum of Natural History and there's like a geological time section and they show geological time.

So it's like time that Maine can't even fathom. It's just like rocks and, and things like that. It's like so old, you know? And like before any creatures on earth and the, the great white sharks are pretty old, you know, they're PRS work. So like it's, maybe it's a little bit like that. It's that kind of like gazing into the abyss sort of Ooh.

Age, you know, all the time. Unknown. That's, it's wild to think about that. Like the ti like time so far back that like the history of the planet. Yeah. And that some of the creatures like living here now actually go back so far. Yeah. I mean I suppose we all do in some way, but Yeah, It's true.

But the, if you want a symbol for it, I suppose like maybe a puppy is not the best symbol for it, but Totally The dreaded great white shark is probably more appropriate for me. Yeah. Like everyone gets to make their symbolism. That's what's kind of fun about art. Like, do you have any symbols? Maybe we should talk about some symbols that you have in art.

Ooh. You've developed maybe unconsciously like That you Yeah, that's true actually. I think like fires and explosions are definitely one. Like I think a long time ago I was like toying I wanted to do some kind of phoenix, you know, but it just seemed so like, just too obvious, you know? But the fire with the explosion is kind of like the phoenix for me.

Like the burning up of the old, like it looks really threatening and you know, terrible or whatever. But really it's just like the end of the old. And then from that like new new will come Maybe, Maybe we should talk like some technical thing for the artist listeners. Like how do you go about painting fire? Because that's pretty hard, right?

It's, it's like so bright and true ephemeral. So what, what do you, how do you go about it? Yeah, that's true. So I kind of do sort of like some ipao like highlights kind of like, yeah sort of like an ipao sort of area in the middle. And then I start to kind of blob at it with my finger to make a glow and then I'll kind of glaze the reds and the oranges like on top of that.

Like progressing progressively less red than oranges as it moves towards the center. And then maybe I'll blob a like yellow sort of in the center more in pasta. So it kind of creates like a glowing effect. Not even that hard. Like there's actually a candle video on my Instagram account that kind of shows like very basically, so it's not that hard. It's kinda like,

and so I can kinda do it for my imagination and then I might look at fire reference if I'm painting a fire and start to paint like actual little flame shapes like inside of that. Yeah. Do you have, you have some fires in some of your paintings. Like I think you're working on a cake painting right now that has almost this element of fire in it,

but through the candles on the cake, how are you creating the, the fire? Let's see, I've done one fire and it mostly used, yeah. And pasta, a couple layers have done like the yellow, red, and orange kind of spectrum. But I saw people were putting blue in there and I was like, yeah, I think if you watch a fire long enough you see blue.

True. So I'm thinking, I'm just thinking from the next one, I was like, I think I'm gonna play with a few more colors in it, but I kind of just go about it the way I would like paint gold or something, you know, just something that like, or glass, you know, a lot of people get afraid of painting certain things and it's not really that hard,

you know, it's mostly like matching values and colors and edges. So you kind of figure it out as you go. So I, yeah, I, I was just curious, you know, cause it's like, you know, as an aesthetic, it's not a very common one maybe, you know, so Yeah, no, But like painting flesh or something.

Yeah, no, there it does take and say with water, I feel like water is like another one that requires certain techniques. Like I do a lot of glazing in water cuz water's transparent. Do you, what do you do for your water? You're using a lot of water. I have secrets for that. Yeah. I, yeah, have a huge palette and so I find that the more blues and greens you have,

the easier it is because you can literally just separate different passages with a different pigment almost. I mean, you still mix. So the turquoise cobalt, cobalt turquoise, that's Really hot. I love that color. I didn't use it for a long time and then I started and I was like, oh this is great. It just kind of expands my green range.

It's like the most beautiful color. Yeah, I, I like, like cerian blue, you know, Ultramar blue cobalt. Yep. I have like a bunch of different cobalts and yeah, just, just those kinds of things. Sometimes

I put like a pure lalus down just so I can be like, there's pure lalus there, you know? Totally.

I love that rock. I have Azure, right? Even though it's really difficult to work with, it's super grainy and, and doesn't like to be made into paint very well. But I use it for like skies and weird places for, I'm doing a horrendous Bosch kind of like, not quite a copy, but I'm taking the background from the Garden of Earthly Delights and I'm painting it into one of my paintings.

Oh, Sweet. I've done that kind of thing too. Like, yeah, it works so well. You just pop like a Bosch painting into the background and it's like, I don't know, it's, and then you start to riff off of that and put your own stuff in and it, it's like I've totally, no, I haven't used the same one.

We're doing different stuff of course, course. But that I've really like enjoyed doing That. You know, I have another thought. I just actually, this is pretty Oh sweet. Big one. Ooh. As far as coming up with ideas and working things out. Oh cool. It is just something I've done like my whole life. So I never really thought about it,

but I'm like quite a big role player. So either like a role playing game, like in the old days I used to play role playing games with my friends, whether they were written on like online forums or they were like the magic, the gathering things or whatever. Or just like playing like characters on a playground. You've Never done That. I did a lot of like,

yeah, just like, you know, it's like the kind of thing you do when you don't have any toys. You're just like role play from stories and movies and even if you haven't seen it, you like give a plot and then you let it go. So that was like all before. But i, I will just like, I mean nothing like crazy but like,

I have like a lot of outfits that kind of embody the characters in my paintings anyway. So I'll literally just wear the same outfit as as I'm wearing in a painting in like real life or if I go to a museum or if I go like different places, I'll just try to imagine the scene is different than what it really is or something for fun.

I don't know if that makes sense. That's cool. It Used to be a video game player too. I had to stop cuz I had a video game addiction when I was like 12. So Really Then, yeah, so over overactive imagination I have always had, so I just channel it into making art nowadays. It's like a productive use of time,

you know? But I, I haven't played that many video games, but I actually feel like there's like some that would probably really inspire me if I was to like play them. Oh definitely. Yeah, definitely. Yeah. Probably cuz of your art. But, but yeah, I feel like kind of a sense of role playing if if you, if you've ever done that or you know, to the lessers like that, that definitely, I use that a lot. Like I have a pretty strong aesthetic sense of like how I want things to be or, you know, in the work. So I do enjoy that. And it's nothing like obvious, you know, it's probably like the same way someone would wear a tattoo and you wouldn't know they had the tattoo and it's not hurting anyone, but, you know, it's, Yeah. Yeah. I might be walking through the woods and I'm like imagining a fairytale like in my head or I might be somewhere and like, I'll just like imagine the architecture a little different or ideas will just come into my head for paintings. Like it's, it's just kind like always kind of thinking or not like,

I don't know, creatively I suppose. Like what I can like totally see that. And like a lot of the figures in your paintings, like, I mean, I've seen you like in real life, like all dressed up and, and and like even the way that, you know, that you, you dress when you're all dressed up and stuff, there's, it's like really distinct and a little bit fairytale ish even. And, and like the figures in your paintings all look like that too. And, and there is this kind of like, yeah, I mean fairytale ish, it's like I'm having a hard time finding like the right word, but It changes the way you see life. Like it really does like,

like when I dress up in like, like a flat nerd, my dress or something with like pearls and yeah. Historical shoes and like, I don't know what some kind of like 18th century makeup. Like it definitely like people see you differently and you feel different like you feel Yep. Fancy or you feel, I always say it was kind of like, you know, when you, it's your birthday or something you feel really, like when you're a kid, you know, and there's like a cake and there's yeah, the prizes and there's like some kind of decorate, it's like that every day or something. You just feel this kinda sense of like excitement and Yeah. And it definitely does change, at least for me.

Like I think it's, maybe it's, maybe I just thought of it now, but maybe that's, maybe I use a lot of roleplaying without realizing it so that that helps. Yeah, I can see that. Cuz it actually gets you into the like state of like wonder and excitement, you know, in the world. Yeah, That's, that's really cool.

It's like going to a theater and like being in the audience versus just watching it on a screen. It's different, right? You're like more part of the performance. Yeah. Play or a musical or an orchestra and then if you're actually in the performance, like that's a whole nother thing. But, but I think that feeling of being right, like right in the audience, that's kind of the one that I was be thinking of. It's like a little removed but not, not just like watching it on a screen like you're participating. That's, yeah. That's interesting. I can totally see that like as I'm looking at your work like that you're actually experiencing it and at like, as you actually paint it, like you're in, you're putting yourself like into the kind of concepts of the painting. It's kind of like a writer who like comes to kind of know the character so well or whatever the, the characters start to like tell them what they would do next or something like that. Yeah. Oh, well this has been so inspiring to pick your brain and actually it's given me lots of ideas, which I just love, like, about how I'll kind of bring some of these ideas into my, into my work. I mean, just like, especially the idea of like getting good audio books that just feed my brain. I just

found it so inspiring to talk to you, you. So for people who wanna find out more about your work and your classes, where can they find out more about you? You can find my work@www.theresawaka.com where I post new paintings, works in progress, and I have a newsletter and I also have an online gallery where I sell both drawings and paintings, large and small. I also have another website and podcast connected to it called [house of oakaca.com](http://houseofoaxaca.com). And I'm on Instagram as Teresa Oaxaca and House of Oaxaca.

I love your work so much, I can't wait to see how, how your shark painting turns out down the road and oh, I'm just so happy to be in touch with you. So thank you so much for chatting with me today. It was really great. Thanks for having me, Christie, and I love your work too, so I'm really glad that we've been connecting like this.

Aw, thanks Teresa. Well I can't wait to talk again soon sometime and talk to you later. Bye Bye. I hope you've enjoyed this episode of Down To Art and if you're interested in any of my classes or seeing my paintings, you can check out my work at KristyGordon.com or look at the online classes I have at KristyGordoncourses.com where you can learn about my online art mentoring program as well as the different streamed online classes that I have.

If you've never taken any of my classes, I would suggest you start with the self-portrait class. So thank you for joining us today.