

Mural Festivals with Sydney Black

Hello, and welcome to Down To Art. I have your host, Kristy Gordon, and today I'm talking with Sydney Black, who is the co-founder of the Nelson International Mural Festival. So welcome Sydnee. It's so good to have You. Thank you so much for having me. Yeah, and Sydnee is a creator, performer, facilitator, and executive director of the Nelson District Arts Council.

And as I mentioned, she's the co-founder of the Nelson International Mural Festival. So I am so interested to hear more about the, the other side of the process on murals. Like I, I know I work with some artists in my art mentoring program who are really interested in getting into murals, making their own designs, pitching them, you know, but,

but I just love the idea of talking to someone who's on the other side, who's kind of organizing it and, you know, helping with the decision making of which murals get, you know, made and things like that. So, but first off, what, when did the Nelson International Mural Festival start in Nelson? So we started in 2018. In 2017,

I believe. The Vancouver International Mural Festival kicked off potentially 2016, and I was kind of checking out what they were doing and, and was really interested and, but it was so big and they had so much money, there was a lot of like, developer money going into their project at that point. And so they were dealing with like over a million dollar budget.

And I really was wondering about how we could scale that to a community of 10,000 and see what that would look like. And so my, my goal the first year was like, maybe we'll try to do like a, a fifth of what Vancouver Mural Festival does, you know, and we ended up doing, I think seven murals that first year with artists from all over the world.

And it was a really, really awesome, you know, tiny little seedling of a first year. But it was really, really exciting. And we've just kind of grown and grown and grown. And so I think the first year we had probably 80 applicants, and this year we just closed our applications on Friday and we had over 620 applicants. Wow.

So it's, it's really, really expanded quite a lot. Oh, that's amazing. I love walking around Nelson. I was, so, I lived in Nelson, I grew up in Nelson, but I moved back there for a few years. That's when I met you. So good to have met you after having lived in Brooklyn. And I was so, you know, attached to see all these amazing murals all over Nelson. It like reminded me of Brooklyn and it's just like, it just livens up Nelson livens up. I'm not sure if that's a word, but it, it's like so beautiful and they're so inspiring. Yeah. And well, so could you tell us a little bit about what the application process looks like when people are submitting their ideas?

Totally. So we really want artists to have to put as little effort into the application process as possible, because again, we wanna make sure that people are being paid appropriately at all times. So we don't ever ask for, for any designs in advance or anything like that. We really, really don't believe that that's like a very ethical process. So we, we really avoid that. We also avoid any sort of themes or parameters. We try to make sure that, you know, the artists have the opportunity to be as, as creatively indulgent as they would like to be, you know, without things, you know, being racist or overtly having religious symbols or things like that. There's some parameters that we have to abide by through the city of Nelson's mural policy.

But, but yeah, so we really like, creative control is a really, a really big thing for us. So when artist supply, they usually supply us with like an artist Instagram or website. It's really, really important for artists to have a specific artist Instagram where they only put up their art and it's not like they're awesome, beautiful selfies of them with their kids or other people's art.

I find that that that happens a lot. And so that's like a, a super hot tip for people that are applying to have something that's very dedicated to your own practice and, and showing things that are like relevant and indicative of your current practice as well. Because sometimes people will make an Instagram specifically for their applications and they'll load it up with a bunch of their previous work and maybe their practices changed since they, you know, they, they started initially. And so yeah, so just current up to date work is really important for us to be able to see. And then we just ask for if they have large scale experience, that's key in our process. We don't have the capacity, unfortunately, to train people on how to create murals. I know that Vancouver Mural Festival has an amazing program where you can be an emerging artist,

I believe and, and still be selected if you haven't done a mural before, but all of our applicants have had previous large scale experience. Doesn't necessarily have to be a wall, can be a huge canvas. But again, just around like ordering and, and those kinds of logistics, we don't have just the capacity to provide that. Yeah, that extra knowledge.

And then just previous design skills and compet composition we're looking at. So again, like quality of previous work, what that looks like, and artistic merit of their portfolio. So there's a five person arms length jury that comes together and they review the applications. So, so there's a curator on there, someone who represents kind of the Nelson Downtown business crew.

And we usually try to have it be like a millennial, a millennial business owner or like a Sure. A younger business owner. Millennials totally love those guys. I'm, I'm clinging to my millennial by like a couple years. Yeah, me too. Don't, don't take it from me. And then we have a representative from the city of Nelson always.

We have a cultural development officer in our community. We're really, really fortunate to be a, a small community whose city who's supporting that. And so, so she sits on it every year. And then we also have a large scale artist who's created a mural before, generally someone who's worked with us before and then a curator. So, so that's kind of what our, our crew of jurors look like. And then, yeah, and then people just send in their stuff and we, we go through it, it takes a couple months to kind of sort things out. And then we have a really long hiring process because we have like, really our funding is like very, like some comes from here and some comes from there.

And so, so we have to wait a lot of time for the funding to come in. So usually the funding comes in, begins coming in in like March. We can kind of start to hire people in plan. And then the last money that we get sometimes doesn't come in until July. So we hire our final muralists and, you know, late June,

early July and then wrap it up for the year. Interesting. So basically you're kind of looking at people's Instagrams and websites. Do they submit a proposal? Do they like, and they don't do a design, you're kind of just looking at their work, which is hopefully really nicely presented on their website or on their Instagram account. And that's, that's the,

that's basically, Yeah, it's just the, is there anything else? Totally. No, it's the body of, of their existing work. And then once they're hired, we pay them a design fee to create a design and then that design has to go through all of the process steps. So it depends, if it's a private building owner, then it has to be approved by the private building owner,

then it has to be approved by the jury, then it has to be approved by the city of Nelson. So there's all sorts of different steps that I run through after it's all, it's all good to go. And then, oh, That's, that's really interesting too. So, so at that stage, would there be like a written proposal and like a little nitty painting basically of what the large thing like would look like?

Yeah, so we send out the wall images and then generally people usually, and what's easiest for people to see in their minds is they're doing a lot of like digital, they just superimpose what they'd like to do on top of a, a picture of the existing wall and then everyone can kind of get their head around that. But we need, yeah,

just like, for like color approval and those kinds of things, we need that to all be fairly specific. And then the artist also provides a really brief write up on what the piece symbolizes, what, what it means to them, what it would mean potentially to the community, that kind of thing. Yeah, that, that's really cool. And I imagine like that written,

even though it's short, that written component is like really difficult for people to write, but, but, but really important for them to write. I think that might be like a really valuable thing to touch on. If you can think of, I don't know, I mean, I'm sure, I know you have a broad range of murals, but is there any tips you can give for that?

I mean, I know you mentioned obviously not to include obviously any problematic subject matter, but like Yeah. Other subject matter type of Really, yeah, what I, what I find is just because the artists are already selected off of what they're, what they're already doing in their process. So like, not, like not changing or, or if you are changing what you're doing, letting the festival know. You know, like if, if, if you've always been an artist who you know, does whatever photorealism portraits and you've decided that you're going to go into, I don't know, lettering and geometrics, then, then it's really important for us to kind of know where you're at in your like career trajectory and there's an opportunity to kind of explain that in the application where,

where you're at. But yeah, I just, I just think really just being true to, to yourself as an artist and if you're wanting to like push those boundaries because once you have, you've already, we've already won, you've already been, have been selected by the time you're doing your design and you're doing that writeup. And really for us, like the writeup is what we use forevermore.

It's what we use in all of our social media stuff. It's what we use in our, our, like we have like a, a map that we're, or an app, an app, a walking to her app that we're developing right now. And so, you know, all of that stuff is all all ingrained in there. And so some artists choose to just provide one,

one sentence, you know, some, some choose to do like full paragraphs. But I think being able to like yeah, speak to what it means to you as an artist is such a, it's an amazing gift for you to give to us as the, as the viewers as well, you know, so that we can understand, you know, those perspectives and pinpoints.

And like in Nelson, Nelson is a very, as, as we both know, Nelson's a very Caucasian, it's a very white community, so we're 89% white in this community as per the stats can numbers from 2016. And so it's really important for us to make sure that we are supporting the stories of other individuals and people outside of that vast majority in our community so that,

you know, we can also increase people's awareness. Like it just helps everyone culturally to understand and see these different forms of art that they wouldn't normally see. You know, because I find, yeah, in, in our process there is a lot of like, we like photorealism pictures of mountains or like very, like, it's a very specific type of art.

And so, yeah. And so that's where kind of the curatorial aspect comes in a little bit when we're, because we provide juried lists to building owners to select from, so they feel like they have a little bit of control over what's happening on their building. So they pick styles that they're interested in and then we show the building owners the top ranked artists in those genres that they like.

So, so that's kind of how our, like it's very, that's interesting. Yes, there's a lot of stuff going on. So say, so each artist can self determine when they're applying. They choose three different genres that they feel that their art can be, is in. And then the building owners also pick three genres. And so then we provide the top two artists,

I believe from each genre that the building owner picked. And then we pick two other artists that are outside of, of what they picked, but who were also ranked at the very top by the jury so that people can also see things that they didn't even realize that they wanted to see or that they, you know, it kind of gives that, that option,

you know, to, to kind of change things because you, you know, you don't even know what you like until you see it really. Yeah, totally. So then, wait, so when you're choosing the final artist, it's like the jury, but is it also kind of all like the person who owns the wall, who's also kind of choosing,

like is that part of the actual selection process of which artists get chosen if they choose that artist for the wall? Does that make sense? Yeah, totally. So it's, it's very complex. So we have two different types of buildings in our community that we paint on. So we either paint on public buildings, which are owned by the city or the province or we paint on private buildings.

So with our public buildings we pick the top rated artists, by the jury. So it's the top overall artist. And we usually have two public walls, two or three public walls that we can work on every year. And so the top overall artist usually gets selected to come and paint on that wall. And then the top local artist also gets selected to come and paint on a public wall so that we can make sure that we also have local representation.

And then the building owners is where we do that interesting shimmy where it's like, okay, yeah, totally. What are your top three styles? And then we match them and so then they, yeah, then they see, yeah, they see something broader than what they initially thought they wanted to see.

But then we're also able to, yeah, to slide in some other styles and,

and some, yeah. Yeah. And it happens a lot. Like people will select those other styles that they didn't even know that they were interested in seeing. So it's been, it's been really, really cool to see it grow and it's been just so beautiful to help to share those stories. And so again, back full circle. So that's why those write-ups are super important is because we want to understand and have people understand where you are coming from as an artist,

what your perspective is and what your root point is, you know? And so I think that that's just something wonderful that you can share. I like that it's kind of like an extension of the artist, like current practice and like writing an artist statement is always like hard for an artist. But I think so important cuz it gives us clarity about what we're actually exploring in our art.

And it's good to have some like, intentionality, you know, behind that. Plus your artists, you can say like anything, you could be like, I am rooting my practice deeply in the breathing of the essence of nature. And and we would be like, awesome, you're an artist. That's so cool. Yeah, You're the second person who said that to me recently.

The other one was Marina Granger, who's gonna be on the podcast really soon. And she's an art historian and an amazing art professional. But she was saying like, as an art historian, the thing for us to realize as artists is that like whatever we write in our artist statement is true. It's like, well that's comforting. Cause sometimes I have no idea if I'm writing the right thing in my artist statement.

And it's all you Exactly. We, it's we, we are just with you in that, you know? And so yeah, it's, that's a really wonderful, less pressuring way to think about it, I think. For sure. Totally. And it

just sounds like you've got a really nice, like streamlined approach though. I like that element of like bringing in the business owners and having them, you know, choose the artists, but also giving them like more options than they might have thought. Exposing them to more art forms something might've. Totally. Yeah. And I think with that, a lot of it was getting that initial buy-in as well, because we are like a small rural community, you know, we're Yeah. Very isolated, you know, like people Yep. Like change is really hard, you know, like, like I remember like when Subway moved down the street, it was a really big deal, you know, those kinds of things. Oh No, I remember that. Yeah, exactly. And so it was like a really great, it's a great way totally where we can bring, bring people into the practice as well. And you know, ideally someday we have enough, like our relationships are solid enough and there's enough trust in the community that we, you know, are given the opportunity to, to fully curate whatever we'd like to or, you know, or to fully have the jury select those pieces. But I think that it's a, it's a really good starting point where we're, you know, and that's what this has all been about. You know, we're going into to year five and, and it's just, you know, every year we start to like, it's, it's like we're, we're getting, we're becoming like adult adult, an adult festival. We're like a big girl festival. Sure. So it, it felt, you know, like we're getting more, we're working, we're gonna be working with soccer college on, on a course, you know, and we're starting to Oh really? Yeah. Well, and yeah, for their summer, I don't know if I'm allowed to talk about this, but yeah, for, as a part of their, as a part of their, their summer upgrading offerings, we're gonna be working on a, on an arts course with them and bringing their students into kind of the, the mural process and working with indigenous, indigenous artists that we, that we work with as well. So there's some, some really cool overlap and buy-in from the community. And we've also started this little mural kind of group where we have, there's seven little mural festivals throughout BC and Alberta. And so we've made kind of like a, every two months we hang out and we have a zoom call altogether and we kind of talk about, you know, the different issues that we've come up against and you know, like what you wish you had known when you were starting. And we've been doing a lot of like knowledge sharing and things like that. And that's been, I love that really awesome because, you know, we were kind of one, we were the first of the, of those guys to start or that crew to start. And so yeah, so we've been really, you know, supporting those humans as well and trying to help them get their stuff started. And so there's definitely a cool little niche of, of cool like art focused mural festivals that are happening because, you know, there's always like chemainus, which is wonderful and is full of historical murals and, you know, and that has its place for sure. And I think when a lot of people think of, you know, rural murals, they think of that, you know, community, you know, like pictures of white guys on horses and things like that. And so I think that, that this is like a really interesting way that these little tiny communities are like bringing in very high quality fine artists who are creating now. So Yeah, so really, And that's a good point. Yeah, it's a different flavor of mural. Like, yeah, no, I like these murals better. They're really vibrant, like really well, really amazing, really like artistically amazing to me. I don't know, just all the different types of styles and yeah. I was

wondering, do you, have you noticed anything about what works well design wise that might be a little bit like outside of the realm of, you know, your specific like, focus, but I, I can imagine like some simplicity and, and things like that. I think it's just as timing. Like if you are, it's, it's really interesting to see it just, it just depends on how you work. You know, like some spray artists are so detailed. Yeah. And they throw up pieces in like two days.

And I don't know if that's because like historically they've been like ping really fast on train CARSs and they have to get it done before the police come or whatever. But like, There's like, bacon was here the summer and he's a very well, well-known kind of like a godfather of Canadian graffiti artist. And so he came and painted for us and, and he was like so fast he threw up his piece that he had proposed in like a day and a half.

We had him booked for 10 days to be there and then he was like, I wanna do one on the other side of the building. So, so it's just, I think that it's totally just doing what you feel confident that you can get done in the amount of time that you have elapsed. Because I think a lot of times, like, especially if you don't have a huge amount of experience, but you have some experience, you know, like you could get thrown up on a massive wall and if your stuff is super detailed, you know, you can, you feel the, you feel the pressure of the body sometimes. It's funny because I'm, I'm like a performance artist is my artistic practice and that's so cool. I call it like getting on the rollercoaster when you have to go on stage so you like go through your rehearsal process and then you like are standing backstage and you have to get onto the rollercoaster because the rollercoaster is not like waiting.

And so you get on it and you are like, I don't wanna be on this thing anymore, get me off the rollercoaster. But you're like ticking up that first hill and you don't have the option and you have to go on stage and you did this to yourself and this is supposed to be fun and then you like just go, right. And so I,

I didn't realize though how similar the visual artist's practice was to that because I find like every, almost every time an artist is rolled into town, they're exactly like me right before I go on stage. They don't wanna talk to anyone, they don't wanna, like, they, they're very focused. It's like, it's like they have agreed to get on the rollercoaster and now they're, they're ticking up the hill and they're like, oh no I don't, like what did I say? Why did I say I was gonna do this? And, but then just to have your process be so public as well, right. The rehearsal process of it is all just so like, is so private and you as visual artists in the specific mural space, like you are exposing everything, every little piece of you, you know, as it goes. And people like don't understand the process as well, so they're like, oh, I don't realize that you aren't done until you're done. You know, like the painting like doesn't happen until the last day, you know? Yeah. For like the final wrap up.

Right. And so, so yeah, there's definitely been times over the years where I've walked by and been like, oh, oh dear. And but then it was Like totally that It never ends up like that ever. And then I'm always like, oh you're so silly. Could you imagine if someone came into your rehearsal process on day two and saw you dancing or like trying to learn your dances or sing your songs and you know,

they were witnessing that. Like how would they would also say, oh dear, like, what is so, Yeah. Especially in Nelson though, it's like a small community, like everyone you've ever known will probably walk by you on that day too. Like Oh Yeah, that is like an added challenge for sure. And love to talk about it too.

Right. We've, we've actually had to put up signage in the last little while, especially with Covid over the last couple years, just being like, please, you know, like let's keep our artists safe, let's stay away. Because people Yeah. Are super, super friendly but also like six feet. Yeah, totally. And I do have to do some painting today.

I can't Yeah. Talk all day long. Exactly. That's why the lips are helpful cuz you can be like, okay, I'm going up and then no one can Yeah. That, that's true. Yeah, I've been doing some murals around Brooklyn and we started using a scissor lift for the first time. I was very nervous about it, but it was actually okay.

Oh, and I'm nervous too. I, I've, our mural coordinator, Brian, he like, I I came around and he's like moving the lift and I'm like, it's beeping, what are you doing? It's beep. And he's like, I'm just gonna do this when you're not here anymore. You know, like he's just like, leave me alone. I'm like, safety. So I totally like that too. That Is a special step Every time it moves. Oh yeah, Totally. All the time. Yeah. But then there's the scary beep that happens too. But that was something that Oh, Likely I haven't heard that beep. I would freak out or something. Yes, exactly. When it's making the unstable beep and there's only three wheels, you're like, stop it. Stop it. Yeah. I would Freak. But that is definitely something that is helpful. Like if you're looking at doing larger scale stuff, having that training, so making, making sure that you have like your scissor lift ticket before you go to a festival. Like your How, like I got that through the company that I'm working with, but how would someone who's an individual do that? Or do you know, like cuz I, I guess they, they would do that themselves. Like it's not, Yeah, so we have like a Canadian training, like certification website that we use that does it. And so they have fest and elevated platforms, which are two super important courses for you to have, even if you're like, you want them, even if you're just gonna be scaffolding on a piece. Yeah. So, so that's super important and we have to have people have that if they get hired and we, we pay for it when we hire people. Oh, okay. Cool. And then another thing that we've just started doing is fit testing respirators.

So if you use spray paint at all in your practice, we now are required by WorkSafe BC to have your respirator, which has to be new fit tested to your face. And so it's, this last year was the first year, so it has to be a fully complete seal around your entire mouth and chin and you can't have any facial hair. And so last year we ended up having to tell like all of these gentlemen that they had to shave their beard and it was really,

I felt really bad. I didn't realize how like attached, like I'm, I don't have facial hair, so I didn't realize that it was like an attachment thing and I was asking people to do quite a lot, but Oh, but that's kind of a new thing this year is that, that you have to have a shaven, cleanly shaven face and a fitting respirator if you're a spray paint artist.

And we have to have a guy check it essentially, or else we don't have work safe certification, so Oh, Wow. That's good to know. So I, I have bought myself like one of these little, is it the respirator that you mean the one that's like a face mask with the two cartridges On yourself? Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. And so yeah,

I bought one of those for myself, but actually not everyone's using it when we're spray painting, but actually now that you mention it, I think I need to tighten it like it's Yeah, and change your caps to your filters, right? Like that's something that people don't think about at all. And so the, the guys like the, the, the rural guys say you're supposed to change your filters every day, you know, really if you're, if you're heavily spray painting, totally. But oh, that's not, yeah, that's so funny. Exactly. That's what we had a couple artists come in and, and he was like, so when did

you last change your filters on these? And the one artist was like, what? And he was like, I actually how to do it.

Yeah. I've never done this before and I've been using this mask for two years or whatever, you know? And so yeah, so I think that it's just really important to keep people safe and to, for your health, right? And so this is like long term stuff that is pretty serious that can happen, you know, and we wanna protect people's lungs and that's like, yeah, my big thing always is like personal and emotional safety and wellbeing and that's like a huge thing for us through the whole festival is just making sure that people feel, you know, physically safe but also like fully supported as well. So Yeah, it sounds like you're doing a really good job of that with each step, like the whole design of the application process and then the, you know, helping people get certification or whatever, paying for it, you know, for the scissor lift and then Yeah, guidance around mask use, that's all like super important. Yeah. Speaking of like, long term, how, how archival, like how do you deal with like, I don't know how archival the murals are, how long are they expected to last and things like that.

Totally. So we have a 10 year contract with all of the building owners and the city as well, so with the public building owners as well. So that's our kind of our, our threshold. So 10 years. Yeah. And then we have, our agreement says that we will either leave the mural as it was or they can recontract a new mural,

so provide more funding and then we, we do another mural or we will return the wall to its original state, which most of these walls were just like in really thrashy poor shape anyway, so we've actually totally, and so we've been putting away, we put away maintenance money every year, but we've kind of amassed enough money that if we have to, it would be like the saddest day in the history of the world, but we could like hire a contractor to like gray spray paint over everything after a decade. But I highly doubt that that will happen. And so yeah, I guess we're halfway to that, so I'm, I'll start thinking about that in like three years probably about how we're gonna deal with that situation.

Probably nobody will choose that, but yeah. And our, so you mentioned some of the artists are using spray paint. I know I'm, we're using a little spray painted then like Lex, just like house paint or not Lex Latex, I mean, yep. And I, I know of some newer artists that use oils. I can't imagine that's so smelly.

Like they're using smelly oils. I I paint in oils for my painting. Yeah, yeah. Oh no, we haven't Inox process and no One's done any stuff here, but definitely we, like, we have a sweet hookup from home hardware in town and they help us out with our, with our house paint. So we get like a really great discount from them.

And so yeah, we use just regular house paints or, or spray. I think we're gonna be working with a spray company called Loop who's a distributor out of Calgary this year, so that's really exciting. It's our first year again becoming a, a big person festival, you know, we finally have a spray sponsor, so that's awesome. And, and then,

oh, I'm trying to think, I can't recall what the name of the paint is, Nova Color. So there's a brand of latex called Nova Color and it's supposed to have like really hard high ratings for like sun so that the sun doesn't damage it and things like that. And so, so that's another brand that we've been using quite a lot. And then this last year we just have started to put anti-graffiti coating on some of the,

the murals, so Oh yeah, on there's such a thing. Yeah. So it's like a clear, it's like a thick, thick clear coat that you can put on. Usually you only have to put it like, you know, 10 feet up and

down because that's the size people can spray paint. Totally. But apparently there's this movement on the Instagram called f Your Mural, and it's like a, it's like people go and they find prolific artists like Bacon who came Oh, and they paint over top of their murals and then they post it to this Instagram Oh. To kind of seek like an online fame for oh, just growing this work. And so, so that was the concern that was brought to us this year. And so we were like, oh, we don't, we don't wanna be a part of that. So we, we've started using some anti feeding coating as well, but it also helps to keep the, the colors bright as well, so it'll be great to kind of, kind of keep those, those murals go on. It's really expensive, but it's really, yeah, but it's, it's, it's really been helpful. So, and So you put a thick coat on and say someone does spray paint on top somehow you use like TURPs or something and you just, Just pressure wash, not just pressure washes right off. So yeah, it's, it's amazing. You can't stick anything to the wall at all afterwards. Like we've, we've tried to go like put posters up for our openings and we're like, what won't stick? Oh no. So yeah, so that's, but yeah, it, it just, it people spray paint over it and then their spray paint looks like it's stayed and then you can just go and and spray it down after. Yeah. Oh wow, that's Good. It's super good. Yeah. That's interesting. Well, I don't know if I can think of anything else.

Can you think of Anything else? I think it's just so much about people being like really true to themselves and their practice and the process and like, and to apply to like multiple festivals as well. So you know, like there's a bunch of little festivals going on. So if you're looking at trying to kind of like ease your costs, because a lot of us don't have funding to pay for travel.

Like we pay usually around \$3,500 for artist fees. It goes up though and we cover accommodations and we also in non covid years have had restaurant sponsors. We've been able to feed people, which will happen again hopefully this year. So that is something that we are able to do, but oftentimes flights are a little bit tricky. So you, like, I always recommend that artists kind of look at,

for Cologna, they look at, you know, Squamish mural festival, they look at Chilliwak Mural Festival and Vancouver and kind of see if they can make a little, a little tour of it because we've been getting some artists like that. So yeah, just keeping, keeping your eye out and yeah, it's pretty, it's pretty magical to get to have people come and paint, especially when they're used to painting in such urban environments. To have them come to a place like Nelson, you know, that is this little tiny town just stuck in the middle of the forest, you know? And so it's definitely a, a different, a different scene kind of that we are able to provide than than other, other places in that respect.

Yeah, it must be like a great trip for people like to, to visit Nelson is like so nice and, and, but it's making the city look, it just looks so beautiful. It's like visually interesting, like everywhere you look. I'm so glad that you guys are organizing this and, and it's just so great to get to pick your brain about this.

I know a lot of artists that are gonna really enjoy hearing, hearing all your thoughts about it, so thank you so much Sydney. Oh, it's my pleasure Christina. If anyone ever wants to reach out to me, yes, they absolutely can. My email address is info n dac ca so if anyone has any questions or is looking for any guidance,

I'm always super, super happy to talk and share. You know, it could be a artist or a facilitator or someone who's interested in producing murals. If you are, you know, in the middle of Michigan and you wanna do a mural festival, shoot me an email and we can have a conversation about how we've kind of developed things. So, and the more we can do this,

the more we can make these spaces beautiful and have our communities connect, you know, outside of galleries. And I think just, it's just such a fabulous, wonderful offering. I feel so honored to get, to be able to facilitate it. Aw, I love that. And that's so great that people can reach out to you. I'm sure some people listening to this podcast probably will actually, because as you say, it's open at international, you know, anyone can submit and, and then what's the website where people can find the information as well? So we're at [www dot nelson mural fest ca](http://www.nelsonmural.org). Excellent, Well it's so good to talk to you Sydnee. Thank you so much and I hope to chat with you again sometime soon.

Thank you so much for having me. It's been an absolute pleasure and I, yeah, I really look forward to the next time we get to catch up. Me too. Talk to you soon, Sydnee. Take care. Bye.