

## SPEAKERS

Chris Hicks, Ross Jackson, Julie Forbes, Plastorm, Stephanie Parrish, Emma Ganger-Spivak

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### Stephanie Parrish 00:05

This is the Portland Art Museum Podcast, a channel between the Museum and you. Our goal is to amplify community voices through conversations and personal stories. And we're here to facilitate respectful dialogue, debate and the free exchange of ideas. To participate, submit your idea at [pam.to/podcastidea](https://pam.to/podcastidea). We invite you to connect with art through your own experience, voice, and personal journey. Relevant links and transcripts for each episode are available at [portlandartmuseum.org/podcast](https://portlandartmuseum.org/podcast). I'm Stephanie Parrish, Associate Director of Programs and one of the founders of the Portland Art Museum Monster Drawing Rally. This year we celebrated Monster Drawing Rally for the fifth time, inviting a record 100 local artists of all ages to make as much art as they can in an hour. Each piece is then sold for a flat rate of \$35 as a fundraiser for free youth programs here at the Museum. In addition to raising money, MDR is a beloved community event where art lovers come together to listen to music, eat great food and witness the vibrancy of Portland's art scene in action. Monster Drawing Rally was founded or begun in the summer of 2015 as an experiment. We were modeling it off of similar events in other cities, notably San Francisco, where there'd been a long running Monster Drawing Rally since the 70s, and we thought it would be great to host a rally here in Portland with so many amazing illustrators and artists and bring people together to really meet artists, to collect art at a low cost, to support youth programs here at the Museum, and to generally have a really fun time on a summer evening under the stars. For the first time ever, this year The Portland Art Museum Podcast had an outdoor podcasting studio in the Museum courtyard during the event. The podcast studio was a place where anyone could sit down and talk

about who they are, their relationship to Monster Drawing Rally, and what art means to them. The person conducting the interviews is Emma Ganger-Spivak, a student intern here at the Museum who along with ongoing projects in the Learning and Community Partnerships department has been assisting with the production of the Podcast this summer. Her efforts spearheading this series represent the culmination of her podcasting work. What you're about to hear is the first episode in the series we are producing from those interviews. In an effort to intervene as little as possible, we decided to organize the interviews in random groupings so that the interviewees can speak entirely for themselves. To begin, here is a first time Monster Drawing Rally artist.



Ross Jackson 02:46

My name is Ross Jackson, and I am an artist in the first round of the Portland Monster Drawing Rally.



Emma Ganger-Spivak 02:56

So you're an artist, do you have any particular media or subject matter that you consistently use?



Ross Jackson 03:02

Yeah, I am a cartoonist. So I tend to go with like micron pens, I like a lot. And any sort of pigment based pen or like a nib, pen, stuff like that. I've also got these really great scissors recently, and so I've been doing a lot of paper cutouts in my work as well.



Emma Ganger-Spivak 03:22

Cool, um, so what were you drawing today during the Monster Drawing Rally, were there any like motifs or themes?



Ross Jackson 03:28

Yeah! I drew a lot of foliage, I like drawing foliage, and kind of strange structures and fields and sculptures and little hidden faces here and there.



Emma Ganger-Spivak 03:46

Can you just describe the experience of making art and the context of this event so like in front of an audience?

- R** Ross Jackson 03:51  
Yeah, there's so much crazy energy going on and I'm a performer so it's really kind of energizing to be around so many people looking at you draw. I was able to draw three things in an hour, which is a record for me. It was very exciting. And, yeah, it's just a really supportive environment. And so it was, it was energizing.
- E** Emma Ganger-Spivak 04:18  
That's really cool. So have you been to the event before this year?
- R** Ross Jackson 04:20  
I have as a spectator before. Yeah.
- E** Emma Ganger-Spivak 04:22  
Um, can you talk a little bit about how your experience was different as an artist versus as a spectator?
- R** Ross Jackson 04:28  
Yeah, well, I think, as a spectator, I was able to kind of flit around and look at different artists, I mainly just watched Carson Ellis draw. But this year, I was just total tunnel vision as I was going in, and it was really nice to kind of just like, feed off the crowd energy and lose myself in the work.
- E** Emma Ganger-Spivak 04:51  
So how did you decide that you wanted to participate as an artist this year?
- R** Ross Jackson 04:55  
It just looked like so much fun the past few years that I've been. And for a good cause. I'm really passionate about children's art education. That's what I do as my day job. And so yeah, it's just really nice.
- E** Emma Ganger-Spivak 05:11  
So as an artist, how do you know how to value your work? Is that something that you

decide? Is that something that the art market decides? Galleries or other institutions? Publications?

R

Ross Jackson 05:21

Um, well, my primary medium is comics. And it's so tricky, because like, when you're making your own book, it's different. It can be the same size as like, a floppy that you get at a comic book shop. But because it's like an art book, it costs more and it's a tricky thing to price. Yeah, I don't know how to answer that question, that's really circumstantial. It depends on how much time I put into it, how much sweat.

E

Emma Ganger-Spivak 05:50

That's the million dollar question.

R

Ross Jackson 05:52

We're all trying to figure it out.

E

Emma Ganger-Spivak 05:54

What would you say I guess, in the context of this event, where you're making art for a fundraiser and for flat price... does that sort of change your perception?

R

Ross Jackson 06:05

Yeah, I think it kind of frees you up a little bit. Um, it, it made me... It got me not being as precious as I can be, which kind of freed up my thought process a little bit. It was really nice.

E

Emma Ganger-Spivak 06:22

Um, well, I'd love to hear a little bit more just about what role art plays in your life in a general way. And maybe just how you became an artist?

R

Ross Jackson 06:29

Sure. Um, I, I've always been someone who really appreciates looking at the small detail, details of things like looking very closely at the brushstroke at the Museum, which, to my family's annoyance, I'm very slow going through places like that. And so I think just having

an appreciation for like, very close details drew me to recording them.

**E** Emma Ganger-Spivak 06:56  
That's awesome. Well, you finished just at four minutes.

**R** Ross Jackson 06:58  
Oh, perfect.

**E** Emma Ganger-Spivak 06:59  
That's great. Thank you so much.

**R** Ross Jackson 07:00  
Thank you, Emma.

**S** Stephanie Parrish 07:02  
Next, and MDR pro, who takes our understanding of drawing to new places.

**J** Julie Forbes 07:07  
Hi, my name is Julie Forbes, and I'm an artist here tonight to participate in the Monster Draw.

**E** Emma Ganger-Spivak 07:14  
Is this is your first time participating as an artist in the Monster Drawing Rally?

**J** Julie Forbes 07:19  
This is my third time.

**E** Emma Ganger-Spivak 07:21  
Oh, wow. So you're an old pro?



Julie Forbes 07:23

Well its always anew again for me.



Emma Ganger-Spivak 07:26

Is it different every time would you say?



Julie Forbes 07:28

Well, I never know what I'm gonna be doing. So it's always kind of yeah, fresh that way.



Emma Ganger-Spivak 07:38

Um, do you have a particular strategy when you're making your art? Like, do you try and just work on one piece, or get as many done as you can in the hour time limit?



Julie Forbes 07:49

It really depends on how it starts to flow, I always come out with this goal of trying to make three pieces and have something in progress. And you know, if it goes perfectly they all get done. If not one or two gets done.



Emma Ganger-Spivak 08:05

Do you find that the experience of art making differs for you in this context, so like in front of an audience, as opposed to, you know, wherever you normally make your art?



Julie Forbes 08:14

It's exciting, because a lot of times, kids come up and they get curious about what I'm doing. I work with unusual collage objects and assemblages. And they you know, so they, the electronics and everything, it gets their attention. So it's fun to like, see that.



Emma Ganger-Spivak 08:33

Where do you uh where do you source your materials?



Julie Forbes 08:36

I've just become known to all of my friends and their friends and they give me things it's... pretty much I've got a lot of material to work with at this point.

**E** Emma Ganger-Spivak 08:49

So people just know to direct their interesting objects to you. As an artist, how do you... how do you know how to value your work? Is that something that you decide? Is that something that the art market decides for you?

**J** Julie Forbes 09:03

It's a really tricky decision for me because I try to create my art organically. So so one might... Like one of the first pieces I made was a boombox. I found it, it was free. But then I spent hours taking it apart and reassembling it onto a canvas and painting it. So it's kind of like the materials and the hours have to be weighed together.

**E** Emma Ganger-Spivak 09:35

Have you done anything else like this event? Any sort of like public art experience, art bazaar, auction...?

**J** Julie Forbes 09:43

I've been juried into events at I think in Tigard and Hillsboro where I haven't been... Well, what I've done is I brought art to make while I've been sitting there selling my art in a booth. Hillsboro has like a featured artist there Tuesday night when they close down the street.

**E** Emma Ganger-Spivak 10:06

Do you have any favorite artists?

**J** Julie Forbes 10:08

Anselm Kiefer and Julian Schnabel.

**E** Emma Ganger-Spivak 10:12

Do you want to talk a little bit more about what compels you about their work?



Julie Forbes 10:19

They're masterful in making really large pieces of work and making it all work. And it's assemblage on canvas and it's a tricky medium, I know. And I'm just... And Keifer's work is talking about his childhood and about World War II and it's just really evocative of war-torn Germany.



Emma Ganger-Spivak 10:45

Um, can you just talk about, talk a little bit about the role that art plays in your life? And maybe how, how you decided or I guess just how you became an artist,



Julie Forbes 10:57

I basically had been a visual person my entire life and, you know, played around with art when I was a kid and took art classes. And then I went to design school and got a degree in graphic design and went to New York City and became a textile artist and a fashion designer and a graphic designer. And just so it's, it's always just been something that I've been doing. And now I've had a little space to really focus on my electronic art. And, you know, that's where my head's at now.



Emma Ganger-Spivak 11:31

That's great. Well, we're all out of time. But thank you so much.



Julie Forbes 11:34

Sure. Thank you.



Stephanie Parrish 11:35

Now for another Monster Drawing Rally artist who draws his inspiration from the world around him, both natural and architectural.



Chris Hicks 11:44

Alright, hello, I am Chris Hicks. I was one of the artists in the first round for this year's Monster Drawing Rally. And I do mostly watercolors, I'll also sketch out scenery, do landscapes, interiors, and use watercolor pencils for that.

**E** Emma Ganger-Spivak 12:08  
Cool. So was the work that you made today during the Monster Drawing Rally similar to what you normally make? Or did you switch up your subject matter or your technique at all?

**C** Chris Hicks 12:18  
Switched up the subject matter a little bit. Normally, I'll do like cafes, interiors. I'll do really intricate tables, chairs, other objects that you'll find inside a building. And usually I like to, as a hobby, I like to also do landscapes. And so since we're outside, I just sort of picked a spot that looked really good, and then started drawing that. So I ended up doing a bit of trees, some buildings that were up on the skyline. And I kind of had to rush it too. I didn't spend as much time as I would have liked on the detail. So I only have like, seven minutes in order to actually do the watercolor part.

**E** Emma Ganger-Spivak 13:01  
But you were... you were recording something that was in front of you while you were sitting down at the table.

**C** Chris Hicks 13:06  
Yeah, I was constantly looking up and down at my paper and back in the building to make sure that I had everything arranged, right, the angles were right. So I noticed a lot of people kept on looking behind them upward because I was looking in that direction like every 30 seconds, just back and forth.

**E** Emma Ganger-Spivak 13:28  
Is this your first time here?

**C** Chris Hicks 13:29  
It's actually my second.

**E** Emma Ganger-Spivak 13:31  
Cool, as an artist both times?



Chris Hicks 13:32

As an artist both times.



Emma Ganger-Spivak 13:34

So do you feel like you've developed sort of a strategy for this event? You know, like, you mentioned being a little worried about the time constraint this time, but...



Chris Hicks 13:42

First year, I feel like I actually did better. Because I I immediately just went like whoosh, I wanted to make sure that I fit in the hour. And then this time, I felt too comfortable to the point that I just ended up being like, okay, I'll take my time on this. And then by the time everything, the detail was done, I'm like, "Oh, I am out of time for watercolors." So I didn't have as much time as I would like. Next year though,



Emma Ganger-Spivak 14:10

Can you describe just the experience of making art in this context? So with an audience, with the time limit...?



Chris Hicks 14:18

The time limit, I actually kind of like because it sort of forces you to hustle and not worry about every single little thing. So there were times I just had to sort of skip it and accept what I had and go on. And as an artist, that's definitely hard to do, because you keep on wanting to do that one last line. But then as far as the audience goes, it was great to interact with them. I had a lot of people look at my art, then look behind them and just really. They're like, "Oh, that's really cool. You're actually drawing the scenery over there." And "Yep I am and now please excuse me, I need to continue."



Emma Ganger-Spivak 14:58

So obviously, at this event, we sell everyone's work at the same price for \$35. I think one of the biggest questions as an artist is how to value your work and I'd love to know a little bit more about what that means to you. So is the value of your work something that you decide? Is it something that the art market decides?



Chris Hicks 15:17

That's a hard one right there. Um, I feel like it's a little bit of both, like if it's worth enough to the point that like, it makes up for the materials, for the time, what you have to spend in order to work on it. Along with like, maybe being able to sort of judge Okay, how much or is someone going to pay for this? To the point that it's really comfortable because it's really easy to undersell or oversell yourself, so you got to find the sweet spot in there somewhere.



Emma Ganger-Spivak 15:51

Well we're just about out of time. But thank you so much.



Chris Hicks 15:54

All right, thank you very much.



Stephanie Parrish 15:57

The final interview of this episode is a little different. In a moment you're going to hear from Plastorm, painter, video editor, writer, and general eccentric, not necessarily in that order. You may notice that the audio quality for this interview is a bit different and there are a few moments of miscommunication between the interviewer and the artist. This is because Plastorm's artistic practice involves constructing and wearing elaborate robot suits. During Monster Drawing Rally the suit included a helmet with a voice modulator which made hearing one another a bit difficult. Disclaimer aside, buckle up for this one-of-a-kind interview.



Emma Ganger-Spivak 16:36

Can you just tell me your name and your relationship to Monster Drawing Rally?



Plastorm 16:39

Ok, so name is Plastorm and I guess the relationship to the Monster Draw is I guess this is my third or fourth year of doing the draw.



Emma Ganger-Spivak 16:52

How did you decide to participate in Monster Drawing Rally?

- P** Plastorm 16:55  
I just got an invitation out of the blue and it just seemed like something that would be just really cool. And you know, as someone who spends a great deal of time in isolation working it seemed like a great time to get feedback from an audience.
- E** Emma Ganger-Spivak 17:15  
What kind of work do you do? Do you have a preferred medium? Subject matter?
- P** Plastorm 17:19  
I would say mostly large scale canvas work. I primarily use graffiti tools. But I'm by no means a graffiti artist. I'm more of an abstract, I guess painter. But it's discovering graffiti tools that really changed everything for me. I work very quickly, more things exit my head as they often do,
- E** Emma Ganger-Spivak 17:45  
What do you look for in a location?
- P** Plastorm 17:47  
Restate.
- E** Emma Ganger-Spivak 17:51  
So you said you're a graffiti artist? Is there something particular you look forward in location?
- C** Chris Hicks 17:55  
I would say no, definitely I'm not a graffiti artist. But I use graffiti tools. Yes. I mean, I primarily do abstract, you know, canvas painting, stuff like that. But discovering graffiti tools is what changed the game for me. Allowed me to work very quickly.
- E** Emma Ganger-Spivak 18:16  
Um, how did you become an artist?



Chris Hicks 18:22

It's an interesting question, I think.... I guess it's like saying "how did you become a male" or you know, a bird. I guess it's something that I always knew was there. And I guess it was always there manifesting itself in different ways. At this point in my life, I've changed. I've chased a lot of space windmills. And it wasn't until about eight years ago, where I thought I was really onto something. And that's when the art career took off.



Emma Ganger-Spivak 18:54

So maybe it's not so much a matter of becoming, it's just being



Plastorm 18:57

Restate question?



Emma Ganger-Spivak 19:01

Can you talk a little bit more about the role that art plays in your life?



Plastorm 19:05

I mean, I think a true artist...I think an artist, everything they do is art. Everything they do is part of their art, whether it's a good thing or a bad thing. I'm a over-expressive nut who wears every emotion on his sleeve. Thankfully, that makes a good painter, I think. A little madness goes a long way.



Emma Ganger-Spivak 19:29

On the topic of wearing, can I ask a little bit about your ensemble today?



Plastorm 19:33

Yes. So what you have here is my Spark Suit, I guess Mark IV. It's gone through a lot of iterations. And so I'm really happy about this version because I've incorporated a cooling pack, so the pack circulates cold air into my respirators through the tubes into the helmet because there's ice with the fan that then circulates it through the helmet, and then there's a fan that expels it on my helmet.



Emma Ganger-Spivak 20:08

That's awesome. So do you consider that... Can you remind me what your suit is called? You just said it I think.



Plastorm 20:14

My Spark Suit.



Emma Ganger-Spivak 20:15

Do you consider that part of your work as an artist?



Plastorm 20:17

Absolutely. Especially the fact that I can't ever stop. You do this upgrade and then you stare at it and you want to do this and you want to do that... It is a labor of love that I've spent the last month perfecting before tonight.



Emma Ganger-Spivak 20:32

That's awesome. Well we're just about out of time. This is wonderful. Thank you.



Stephanie Parrish 20:37

Thank you for listening to the Portland Art Museum Podcast. For more information about the free youth programs that Monster Drawing Rally raises money to support, visit [portlandartmuseum.org/learn](http://portlandartmuseum.org/learn). This episode is the first in an ongoing series produced from the interviews we gathered in the Monster Drawing Rally podcast studio. Make sure to subscribe to the Portland Art Museum Podcast so you'll be sure to catch the next episode in which you'll hear more of the many voices of Portland's arts community. This episode was produced by Jon Richardson and Emma Ganger-Spivak. Thank you to Blick Art Materials for sponsoring this event and Mark Orton for providing the interstitial music. Finally, thank you, the listener.