

SPEAKERS

Melissa Kojima, Dave Benz, Brandon Young, Lori S. Bird, Carny Val, Emma Ganger-Spivak



Brandon Young 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. 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. I'm Brandon Young, Production Hand Lead at the Portland Art Museum and an artist in the past three Monster Drawing Rallies. This year we celebrated MDR for the fifth time inviting a record 100 local artists of all ages to make as much art as they can an hour each pieces hold for a flat rate of \$35 as a fundraiser for free youth programs here at the Portland Art Museum. In addition to raising money, MDR is a beloved community event where all art lovers come together to listen to music, eat good food, and witness the vibrancy of Portland's art scene in action. MDR is one of my favorite events at the Art Museum and I love participating. As a member of the production team, my job is very physical and it's always a pleasure to sit down and do some art on the job. 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 MDR, 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 this Podcast this summer. Her effort spearheading this

series represents the culmination of her podcasting work. What you you're about to hear is the third episode in the series we're producing from those interviews. In an effort to intervene as little as possible, we decided to organize the interviews into random groupings so that the interviewees can speak entirely for themselves. First up, we have local pianist Lori S. Bird, who originally was passing through just to play a bit on the piano currently located in our courtyard thanks to Piano! Push! Play!, but ended up being drawn in by the spectacle that is MDR.



Lori S. Bird 02:29

I've been here all I pretty much knew this whole entire afternoon. And I didn't realize that this was going to happen because my original plan was to come and play there at the Portland art museums that piano push play. So I actually got a couple of hours of piano practice. And then I thought, Oh, man, the DJ starting to, to get loud. So I thought, Oh, my music is not going to be heard. And that's okay. So I decided to walk around in this area that this is absolutely amazing. The artists and all the the, the creativity of everything, and, and I basically sat and just watched people all afternoon, so



Emma Ganger-Spivak 03:24

That's really lovely. So So you were up here serenading us earlier on the piano?



Lori S. Bird 03:29

I think I heard you. Oh, yeah, I hope I hope I sounded good. It was a little windy. So it's kind of hard to get my music on the music thing, you know, so. But anyway,



Emma Ganger-Spivak 03:42

Yeah, you sounded great. See your musician though. That's, that's wonderful. Can you talk a little bit about the role that music and that visual art plays in your life? Oh,



Lori S. Bird 03:53

well, I love art anyway, anything that has to do with especially young children. I, you know, children's art is so, so real. And it is just amazing that a lot of talent here in Oregon, especially in Portland. So

E Emma Ganger-Spivak 04:15
did you get a chance to catch our youth rally at the very start of the event today? Well, no,

L Lori S. Bird 04:19
not not. Not not. Yeah. Next year. Yeah. But it's a fantastic event that, that I can actually sit and watch people. And there's, it's it's pretty well packed and full and everything. So

E Emma Ganger-Spivak 04:41
yeah, so I know, you mentioned that you didn't plan to stay so long today. Maybe you could just describe for our listeners what the atmosphere is like, here.

L Lori S. Bird 04:50
Oh, it's fabulous like you can't understand people because they were just like people everywhere. And just, and it was just fascinating. Just to see people just come alive and getting their art out there. And, and maybe that's one way to make them self known because of the art and everything. There's amazing artists here. And so.

E Emma Ganger-Spivak 05:23
So I'm curious if you have -- sorry. Yeah, have you had much experience with the Portland Art Museum? The Portland art scene in general? And if so, is there are there some kinds of events or types of art that you'd like to see more OOI

L Lori S. Bird 05:45
I'm pretty much Excuse me, I'm pretty much open to any type of art, and especially sculptures and, and then I love painting so many different things stuff. And, and another thing that I've been taking advantage of is that there's a program called arch for all so anybody that who carries the Oregon Trail card. It's a wonderful program, the best program that Portland can offer to, to Oregon is really, really, really awesome. I've been able to meet famous famous pianist from all over the world because and also go to the the Oregon Symphony I know at least good almost 30 people from the Oregon Symphony, because I can get in for cheaper and I can get in to right now Portland, Portland, have an event at a chamber Northwest. And it's been wonderful, usually hard to like, take people with me and, and buy tickets for them. You know, someone's just, I just

love anything that has to do with art. Anything. Yeah. Well,

E Emma Ganger-Spivak 07:17
thank you. It's wonderful. We're actually just about out of time. Oh,

M Melissa Kojima 07:21
thank you so much. Thank you.

B Brandon Young 07:23
Our next guest, an artist himself, came out this year to support a friend who was drawing for MDR. Sit tight to hear about his particular variation of photography, as well as a discussion of what else you'd like to see in the local art scene.

D Dave Benz 07:37
So I'm Dave Benz, also known as Benz and Chang, and I'm an artist here in Portland, and I came out to support my friend Melissa Kojima, who is an artist.

E Emma Ganger-Spivak 07:50
Awesome. Well, you mentioned that you're an artist, do you have a preferred medium or subject matter that you focus on? I do

D Dave Benz 07:57
what I call fakey vintage photos. So like, I want people to have the experience when they see my art that they've like, sort of stumbled across like, a Vintage Photo in a in a antique shop or something.

E Emma Ganger-Spivak 08:12
That's cool. Um, how would you? How would you describe the role that art plays in your life?

D Dave Benz 08:18

Oh, um, you know, it's really important to me, like, I have a community that's around art, here in Portland. I get up every morning, and I work on art. I think of art almost constantly. So it's, it's really important to me, and I feel like it's just a great thing for all of humanity. Do you

E Emma Ganger-Spivak 08:41
have a favorite artists, local or otherwise?

D Dave Benz 08:44
Um, yeah, I really love Francis Bacon. And also, darn is the names escaping me right now. But I'll stick with Francis Bacon.

E Emma Ganger-Spivak 09:02
So I know you said you're here supporting your friend. Is this your first time at the event? Or have you been before?

D Dave Benz 09:06
I think this is the second time I've been.

E Emma Ganger-Spivak 09:10
Do you have any favorite like any stories or anecdotes, either from today or from the other time you've been? I'm

D Dave Benz 09:18
not really I mean, I, I was pretty excited. The last time I came just sort of not really expecting a whole lot. But I ran into a lot of people that I know from our community here in Portland. That was cool.

E Emma Ganger-Spivak 09:30
Can you just describe for our listeners, the atmosphere of this event?

D Dave Benz 09:33
Oh, it's, it's celebratory. And that's pretty cool. There's a lot of people and I don't know, I feel like it's very sort of positive, upbeat, celebratory atmosphere.

E Emma Ganger-Spivak 09:46
We've already spoken a little bit about your relationship to sort of the arts community. But I'd love if you could be able to talk a little bit more about the Portland art scene, if there's anything that you'd like to see more of any certain types of it two types of art?

D Dave Benz 10:02
Oh, well, that's a good question. I'd like to see my art in other galleries. There's that. that's a that's a really good question. Because the, it's funny, because I might be featured in an article in the local newspaper. And I do feel like there isn't a whole lot of coverage of the arts, like the visual arts, and the papers in town, like the mercury and the Oregonian, and you know, you name it, like, sometimes they'll be something but it'll only be like a little more. So you'd like to see more media coverage of the arts? Yeah. In town.

E Emma Ganger-Spivak 10:49
As an artist, how do you know how to value your work? Is that something you decide is that something the art market or no galleries or other institution decides for, you

D Dave Benz 10:58
know, as another artist, and I think like, a lot of people echo what I have to say is, you know, sort of know where you are, what your level is, at your career, sort of what you're doing and sort of compare yourself. I mean, you're not really supposed to compare yourself to other artists. Exactly. But if you're trying to figure out your prices, as an artist, like look at other artists who are at your level in their career, and showing them the same kind of galleries, and that'll tell you what your price range should be.

E Emma Ganger-Spivak 11:31
How did you become an artist?

D Dave Benz 11:32

Oh, you just decide to. It's a very difficult path, at least I'm finding. But yeah, you just decided to, and everybody has to find their own path with it, to.



Brandon Young 11:44

Next, an artist you've already heard a little about from her friend and supporter, Dave Benz. This was her fourth year participating as an artist during MDR. And you'll hear in a moment how she was challenged by and then adapted to the drawing time limit.



Melissa Kojima 12:00

Hi, I'm Melissa Kojima and I am one of the participating artists and the monster dragon rally for the fifth year. So this is this is actually my fourth year I only found out about it after the first year otherwise, you know, I totally would be in all five of them. But



Emma Ganger-Spivak 12:21

how do you approach the timed to aspect of this event? Do you prefer to spend all your time on one be so try to crank out just as many as possible?



Melissa Kojima 12:30

I I'm kind of a meticulous person. So it was super hard. I actually didn't test at home to make sure I could even do a piece within that time and how I solved that was like doing smaller pieces. I found I could do an okay job for me. For my yeah perfectionist standards in half an hour. But I have to look at that actual timer and go Okay, wait, I gotta, I gotta hurry up. Okay. I only have you know, this much time left. So yeah, yeah. And that's what I that's what I do every year, I look at the time and know how much time I have left and try to gauge it that way. And so far, I've gotten two done in an hour, so...Yeah.



Emma Ganger-Spivak 13:14

Do you have a particular medium that you generally use or subject matter that you focus on?



Melissa Kojima 13:20

Yeah, um, I usually do color pencil and ballpoint pen this year. I'm just doing colored pencil on black paper. And my subject, my stuff is sort of Victorian Gothic, kind of like, so I like making classic monsters and people in top hats and kind of shady looking characters.

E Emma Ganger-Spivak 13:49
So you kind of draw inspiration from the monster? Definitely. Yes. Cool. Can you talk a little bit about how this event differs from the way that you normally market or sell your work?

M Melissa Kojima 13:58
I don't usually sell my work in an auction style. I was actually talking to another artist friend and saying how this kind of event really gets people excited about buying art. I mean, because they're seeing it done live and they're like participating with the artist. And I think there's something about just seeing that happen that that makes them feel like more connected with the art. So yeah, it's completely opposite of the way I do it.

E Emma Ganger-Spivak 14:30
I'm kind of On a similar note, I guess, as an artist, how do you know how to value your work? Is that something that you decide or something that you know, the art market or institutions decides for you?

M Melissa Kojima 14:41
Um, yeah, value, that's a pretty tricky one. value, it depends on a lot of different things. If you're asking about pricing, that definitely varies with like, you know, how much clout or prestige you have, like an emerging artists, even if they're just as good as a established writers are not going to be able to charge as much just because they're not known. Yeah, and that kind of sucks. So I think a lot of it actually has to do with like, you know, who says you're valuable or not? And it really sucks. But that's just kind of the way it is.

E Emma Ganger-Spivak 15:26
How would you say how you said, You've been here four times. So this is your fifth time? My fourth time, your fourth time? Okay. Um, do you have any favorite memories from past empty hours that you've gone to? Yeah.

M Melissa Kojima 15:37
My, the first time I drew, we have all these still have this, the PIP donuts. And I was right

there in front of Pip's donuts. And I was like, Oh, my gosh, what is that heavenly smell. And I realized that it was them. And it like it kind of took me through the whole my whole session. Like I just loved drawing Well, how having a wonderful scent.

- B** Brandon Young 16:03
Finally, an MDR artist who is a seasoned pro. This year, she prepared for the pressure of the drawing time limit by creating her own extra efficient medium, so she could make as many works as possible.
- C** Carny Val 16:17
Heidi-ho, I'm Carny Val. And I'm an artist here at the monster drawing rally.
- E** Emma Ganger-Spivak 16:27
Is this your first time as an artist here?
- C** Carny Val 16:28
it is. It's my first time.
- E** Emma Ganger-Spivak 16:30
Have you visited before in some other capacity?
- C** Carny Val 16:32
I wanted to come last year, but it was so hot. I decided not to come. So yeah, no, I have this my very first time being here. And my very first time being part of it.
- E** Emma Ganger-Spivak 16:42
Gotcha. Do you have some kind of strategy in mind for when you're
- C** Carny Val 16:46
I do actually. This week, I made spray paint all week long out of vegetable gel dye for food? Actually, Gel? Gel food coloring? And so that's going to be my first layers. I'm going

to spray paint the whole background and then we'll we'll move on from there.

E Emma Ganger-Spivak 17:06
Is that your normal medium of choice?

C Carny Val 17:09
I use water medium a lot of times. So it's pretty close to what I normally use. Yeah, I do use spray paints. And they're usually natural not not to panic. Cool. Yeah.

E Emma Ganger-Spivak 17:23
Um, do you think that the process of art making will be different for you in this context?

C Carny Val 17:27
You know, I've been thinking about it, because I am a pretty like slow drawer. So I actually made the spray paint so that I could probably speed up my process to do more than one in one hour.

E Emma Ganger-Spivak 17:41
Cool Kind of in a general way. Can you just talk a little bit about the role that art plays in your life?

C Carny Val 17:47
It is my entire life. Actually, I believe creativity is my religion. Because I show up and help others to be creative. Hi, ambulance.

E Emma Ganger-Spivak 18:01
Some ambient Background

C Carny Val 18:05
I show up and help others to be creative. I I so sorry. I preach creativity to anybody that will listen. And I also believe that my creativity is my connection to something bigger than

me. Yeah.

- E** Emma Ganger-Spivak 18:32
Can you talk a little bit about how you became an artist? Is there a particular started?
- C** Carny Val 18:37
I picked up crayons when I was five, and I haven't stopped since. So I've been an artist my whole life, which has been a long time.
- E** Emma Ganger-Spivak 18:47
As an artist, how do you know how to value your work? Is that something that you decide something that the art market decides?
- C** Carny Val 18:52
That is a very great question. I think the jury's out on that one. I tend to like give my art away or every once in a while sell something. But I am certainly not interested in the like gallery system or anything. I'm more DIY and so value is a strange thing. So up until now things are like less than \$100 for me.
- E** Emma Ganger-Spivak 19:25
Could you just talk a little bit - I know this is your first time here just about the atmosphere of the event that you witnessed today. Is there anything that stands out to you?
- C** Carny Val 19:32
Well, it's it's very jovial and happy everybody's excited to see art and be around art. You know, Portland is a very creative place. And this is like the perfect event to be right smack in the middle of it.
- E** Emma Ganger-Spivak 19:48
Yeah, so you just brought up the Portland art scene. I'm curious to know if there were any types of art events or types of art that you'd like to see more of here?



Carny Val 19:58

Well, I mean this this is a great event. And I love the fact that we The Museum has kind of opened it up to all different kinds of artists to show up. So you know, like something where more artists can be involved would be super great. Where there's not like a like an even playing field. And I think that's what this is.



Brandon Young 20:20

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. This episode is the third 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 art 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 you for listening.