

Enthusiasm - Art and Drawing

Content Warnings

- Discussions of: Bad teachers, Work / Life balance
- Mentions of: Depression, Body Image

BETH

I like messy art. I like having art where I've got like loads of paints and I'm just like, like[makes splat noise] splat that all down everywhere. [laugh]

[Show Theme - Intro]

HELEN

Hello friends and fans and welcome to Enthusiasm, the show where we talk about a few of our favourite things. I am your host Helen Gould, one of the best Rusty Quillers. And today we're talking about art and drawing. And I, um, oh, what's a good art word? I am shadily excited [laugh]

TESSA

That sounds kinda negative!

ALL

[laugh]

HELEN

To be joined by April, Beth and Tessa. So as always, we shall introduce ourselves alphabetically, which means April. You are going first. Can I have your pronouns? So can you tell us what you do?

APRIL

Hi I am April She / Her. Uh, I am the executive producer at Rusty Quill, and yeah, I basically make sure that all of the shows run and things come out.

HELEN

Excellent. Because I do know that like the term executive producer is used in lots of different ways by lots of different companies.

APRIL

Yeah. So technically I am, my title is Executive of Production. It's just easier for me to say Executive Producer.

HELEN

[laugh]. Very fair. Next up, Beth, can you give us your pronouns and tell us what you do?

BETH

Hey I'm Beth. She / her and I am a vocal coach and singer and YouTuber and I like creating things.

HELEN

[laugh]. And you also do art, I assume?

BETH

Yes. Yes.

HELEN

[laugh] Fantastic. Can't wait to hear more about that. And Tessa, what are your pronouns and what do you do?

TESSA

Hello, I'm Tessa. I go by she / her or they / them or all of the above. And I do sound design for Rusty Quill as well as vocal editing. So I actually do vocal editing for Enthusiasm. The very show you're listening to.

HELEN

Yay.

TESSA

And I do sound design for Chapter and Multiverse.

HELEN

Ah, that the sound design for Chapter is so good.

TESSA

Thank you. Thank you.

HELEN

I enjoy it so much. Okay, let's start at the beginning. Can one of you tell me how you got started making art and how long you've been doing it?

APRIL

So I started out doing art and drawing, I don't know, prob like it forever, but probably, started being told that I could do art when I was like seven or eight.

HELEN

Oh.

APRIL

And I started copying animes. I remember I was really into Sailor Moon and I loved drawing the Sailor Scouts. Um, so I, I drew lots of Sailor Moon fan art back in the day and I really liked like copying and doing like cartoon art and stuff. And then I got my first digital art pad when I was in grad school. So I've only been doing digital art stuff for maybe seven years now.

HELEN

I see, that's still quite a long time.

APRIL

Yeah, it's, it's, it's been a while. It's my, my art skills depend on how much, uh, patience I have on a particular project. [laugh]

HELEN

Ah,

APRIL

[laugh]. It's funny because I have a piece that I did when I was in like seventh grade that like won an art contest and I still think it's one of like the best things that I've done. And I was like 13 at the time and it was because it, it was a sketch that took me like six days to do.

TESSA

Wow.

APRIL

And I don't have the patience that I had when I was 13 [laugh]. So I'll get partway finished with a project and I'm like, mm, no, I'm good.

HELEN

[laugh] What's the sketch of?

APRIL

It's like a model T car. Uh, it was one of the first times that I learned, I don't know what the technique's called, but it's where you like blow up a picture to like make it bigger. So you take an image and you kind of block it off with squares and then you draw in those squares so that you kind of can get the proportions and stuff right. And so it was done as like sort of a, a lesson drawing thing, but it was one of the things that I actually like put a whole lot of effort to. And I still think that like I look back and I'm just like, oh, I wish, wish I was that patient. [laughs] with my art projects. Now I've got canvases sitting over here behind me that I'm still trying to get motivated to do something with.

HELEN

Aww, bless you. Tessa, how did you get started?

TESSA

Yeah, I mean I think like most likely everyone in this call, I was doing art since basically my parents stuck paint on my fingers when I was very, very young. but in a more structured sense, my mom used to teach an art class for a homeschool program that also had like an in-school thing going on. And so I was probably like four or five, six years old and I would sit in on that and just do whatever they were doing. So I've been doing art really as long as I can remember. Although I definitely have had like waves of motivation to do art. So there was a whole time in like high school and middle school where I was just drawing over all of my favourite pages from Manga. So it's kind of funny cause it's the whole anime thing coming back where I would try to copy over my favourite art and that was like one way that I was drawing for a while. And then in high school I took an, an art and drawing class and that's when I really started to do more of my own original stuff and like figure out my own style more. And I've always been doodling in school and I have like tons of paper that's just covered with cutout, like drawings of doodles from classes and everything. So yeah, I've, I've always been doing it. Basically it's a big part of my life.

HELEN

All right. So that is two out of three. Who started with anime. Beth, are you gonna make it three out of three?

BETH

No, [laugh]. Oh, okay. I did not, I, I, um, similar thing, I don't really remember how I started doing art, but I have one art claim to fame from when I was eight and I drew a picture of a witch and I sent it to Alton Towers and they put it on the poster for Hallowe'en for Alton Towers and gave me a free ticket when I was eight. And I was like, yeah!

HELEN

That's so cool!

BETH

[laugh] So that was my, like my main artistic, you know, the peak of my career as an artist, [laugh] and uh, and uh, yeah, I really like drawing portraits and I also like drawing animals. I like drawing birds. I like nature things. I think that's what I always liked as a kid. Or tigers. That's cool.

HELEN

[laugh] Do you know what I think I quite liked drawing birds when I was younger as well. They've got a very pleasing, sort of rounded line to like, uh, their backs. It's very nice to draw. I did a lot of drawing when I was younger as well. My dad was very artistic, very good at watercolours and stuff like that. But I had a very demoralising art teacher and now I never draw [laugh].

TESSA

Oh no!

APRIL

That can be, that can be really hard if you have a bad teacher.

HELEN

Yeah.

APRIL

I think sometimes like bad art teachers are unfortunately like, do happen, but
like

HELEN

Yeah.

APRIL

That doesn't mean that like you are a bad artist.

HELEN

I know, I know. But just, um, it was hard to continue when I knew that my art teacher just did not see the value in anything I was doing [laugh]. Like she was a big fan of very traditional landscapes with nice pencils and you know.

APRIL

Like very traditional art.

HELEN

Yes. Yeah. The kind of art that, you know, you get on the, the side of a doctor's office, that kind of thing, you know, on the wall.

APRIL

Yeah. There's a reason why I didn't take art classes because I had an art teacher that I loved when I was in like seventh or eighth grade. But then I found that while it was nice to get to learn some certain like skills, I realised that a lot of times when you were making art in those settings, you were doing it based off of the teacher's eye. And I think that's one of the things that's really difficult to stay motivated in art when you're in those areas. Cause like I tried again when I was in college to take an art class and I had a very similar experience where I had an art teacher that was just like, no, you have to do this because this is my vision for good art. And then I had another class that was like a film-based class where we started really talking about, and I'm not gonna like divert this to like a film thing, but it really changed my perspective on art in general, which is like the perspective and intention of the person who's doing it is the one that matters.

HELEN

Mmm. <affirmative>

APRIL

And it's like you're an artist if you call yourself an artist and if you put some emotion and you know, feeling or thoughts into what it is that you do, even if that thought is just, I think this would look pretty if there was mushroom dogs, and you just made a collection of mushroom dogs, like

HELEN

Mushroom dogs...?

APRIL

I don't know. I was just thinking of something

HELEN

[laugh]. Oh, I thought, I didn't know if it was like the turtle ducks in Avatar or something.

APRIL

[laugh]. No, no. I was honestly, earlier I was thinking of Tessa did this really beautiful piece for Suzanne, I think once that was like this little mushroom lady.

TESSA

Yeah, this little mushroom person with like a cloak holding a lantern.

APRIL

It was so cute.

HELEN

Aww.

TESSA

It was a birthday card.

HELEN

Aww! That's so nice. And also thank you for the, for the motivational speech there April. I think, uh, 15 year old me could have used that.

APRIL

Here to aggressively motivate people to do more art.

HELEN

[laugh]. Yes, I am always, I've had of aggressive positivity. [laugh]

APRIL

Paint the thing.

HELEN

Yes, you can do it. Even if you think it's rubbish, do it then do it more, and then it'll be good.

APRIL

It's true. That's the only way that you get better.

HELEN

Yeah. I heard a, I heard a phrase recently, which was in order to get good at something, you have to be willing to suck at it for a while.

APRIL

Yes.

BETH

Yeah. That's so true.

TESSA

Yeah, that's very hard for me. Very hard

BETH

It's hard for everyone, I think.

TESSA

Yeah.

APRIL

I definitely had a canvas that I was working on a little while ago and I think that's part of why like, I haven't picked one of them back up because I definitely went through that thing where I was painting over it about six times and I was just like, I can't get what I want out of it. So I was like, okay, I just need to put this one away and get like a new canvas and start over.

HELEN

Oh! So I've already had two have you say that you started out like inspired by anime. I'd be interested to see if you would describe your style as being influenced by that. Because I've seen drawings from both Tessa and April. And I wouldn't say they were very anime-ish, but what do you think? Like what, tell me about your style journeys.

TESSA

I would say that my art is very, I try to stay more cartoony for sure. But it's not really like, it's not very manga-y, anime-y anymore because like I don't really read those books or watch those shows. I did that seventh and eighth grade, that's all I did. But now I just don't anymore. And I really was trying to figure

out like how I wanted my stuff to look and what felt the most natural and the most fun for me to do. And it just kind of naturally became these little cartoony caricatures. And if any of you are Patreon supporters and you've seen the pets of Rusty Towers, that's very much more in my like, style line of art. Just more simple drawings. And, yeah, I guess that's where I'm at with my style now. But I did definitely go through a whole journey. I mean, when I was young, I have all these drawings that I made where it's just like a round head and a big triangle body and like long legs with like round hands with like stick fingers. The stereotypical child drawing I guess is, is really what I used to do.

HELEN

That is incredibly cute though.

TESSA

Yeah. [laugh]. Yeah. It's really fun to see it now.

APRIL

I just wanna say I love your style Tessa.

TESSA

Thank you.

APRIL

I think that's one thing that I've been, honestly like really envious of. Cause I've kind of known you for a few years now of like painting and like different things and you have such a very like, distinct and like cute style and it's very reflective

of you. And I think that that's, that's just really great cause it's like I see that and I'm just like, oh it's Tessa, it's colourful and it's cute and yeah. [laugh].

TESSA

Thank you.

BETH

Do you think like your style is a representative of you April?

APRIL

Umm, I think mine's a little bit more difficult to pinpoint cause I, I think that I only really started trying to adapt a style or, or recognize a style in my art probably in the last like, I don't know, five years or so. It honestly wasn't until like my mid to late twenties that I started actually like trying to define my own style and draw my own things that wasn't just copying things or doing realism.

So like, cause I, I I was really big on using references for a long time, which is great and it's a great way to like learn and learn your own technique, but it is difficult sometimes to try to like make your own style from that or break away from doing that. So yeah now nowadays I do a lot of portraits. I would say that like earlier on a lot of my own work and like, style in terms of what, how I do portraits and things was based off of anime just because I really like that style. I really like the variations that you can get and like the brightness of colours. And so that's something that I think some of my pieces have where it's just like, really, I love adding glow onto things which just like make everything shiny.

HELEN

Hmm. [laughing]

APRIL

But then I've got other pieces when I do, like, I did a digital charcoal series and stuff that's a lot more like darker and abstract and it I would say that it reflects me in that it completely like flops on my mood. What about you?

BETH

I don't really know what my style is. I just [laugh], I just paint when I wanna paint or draw when I wanna draw. So it is, it's less, I don't know if I've even tried to develop a particular style, but I definitely have like a colour palette that I tend to go towards. I tend to go towards like, actually if, you know, you can't see, but the colour of my wall is like a, like a deepish blue or like purples and green, like kind of warm cold colours. Does that make sense? Like, uh, warm versions of cold colours, [laugh], um,

APRIL

Like gem gemstone colour.

BETH

Yeah, exactly. So I tend to go towards that and I like lots of texture as well. But I think like that seems to be something that's just, you know, like if I bought a piece of furniture, I'd like, like a, a nice natural wood piece of furniture. So it's just, rather than I feel like it's my style, it's just what I, I like.

TESSA

Well, it's your aesthetic.

BETH

Yeah. Exactly.

HELEN

Yes. That's exactly what I was gonna say. Your style reflects your aesthetic. So do you find that you use lots of quite vibrant colour schemes?

BETH

Not necessarily like I like messy art. I like having art where I've got like loads of paints and I'm just like, like [makes splat noise] splat that all down everywhere.

HELEN

[laugh]

BETH

Much to my partner's and it used to be my parents' dismay as I would get paint absolutely everywhere. But, uh, [laugh], I love that sort of thing.

HELEN

So do you do abstract stuff as well?

BETH

Mm-hmm. <affirmative>,

HELEN

Oh! That's really cool!

BETH

But I feel like that, I don't know, you know, I never know if that's good abstract is I [laugh] I've just thrown a lot of stuff on and then I'm like, oh, that looks pretty to me. Like, you know.

TESSA

And I think that that's all that matters when it comes to abstract art is like how it makes you feel as the creator.

HELEN

Yeah.

APRIL

Yeah. I've recently started experimenting with more abstract stuff, like particularly with, um, acrylic painting. And it's, it's been really nice cause yeah, I'm just like, I don't know that this is good. It doesn't follow like golden ratio or anything like that, but it's just, it's something that feels right with how I'm setting it up.

BETH

I also have like, um, I don't think it's like full synesthesia, but like, I have maybe an active imagination. So I very much like see music as pictures in my mind or see voices and things like that. So, and if I'm painting then especially for abstract stuff, sometimes I can like relate that to some music or something and I can see what colour palette I would use if I was listening to that music.

APRIL

That's really cool.

TESSA

That's really cool.

HELEN

Yeah. Do either of you end up, do you have associations of different things of different paintings and stuff like that?

APRIL

I think like, I mean, not to get too heavy with it, but like I definitely go through like depressive swings. And I have found that like, some of my art therapy pieces have been some of the ones that I'm most fond of because I feel like it's unfiltered I guess in that sense, because I'm just like, I need to make something just to like move and, and like make myself feel better. And sometimes, like even af- I would say after the fact or like longer after the fact of actually making the piece, those are normally the ones that kind of stick with me as like, oh, I actually really like those.

TESSA

Yeah.

APRIL

But I don't know if there's, I think, I think probably cause they tend to be rougher in texture versus sometimes when I'm just trying to make art because it's something that I want to do. Cause I have a picture in my mind and I wanna

like recreate that picture that's in my mind. Sometimes I don't like those pieces quite as much because I'll get too particular about like this line and like, particular digital art, it gets frustrating sometimes cause I'm just like, ah! I just filled in this area and now it's like, looks blocky, but it's sketchy on this other bit. And I just, I overanalyze it [laugh]. Um, so the ones where I'm just like making something just because I wanna make something, and I don't really have an idea of what I want it to be yet, I like those.

HELEN

So there's, there's less perfectionism involved.

APRIL

Yeah. [laugh]

HELEN

Nice, that's very freeing I find.

APRIL

Me a perfectionist? Can't imagine . Slander.

HELEN

[laugh] Who could have thought! That might be a useful thing to talk about actually, because I know it's something that a lot of artists struggle with in terms of perfectionism and wanting things to be exactly right. I mean, Beth Tessa, do you find that in your work as well?

BETH

Yeah. I find it really hard if maybe like family members will be like, will you paint this? Or I've like decided that I'll maybe paint my sister something for her birthday. And then I find that like, so hard that painting and then it often results in like, I'll do something and I've worked really hard on it and I'll be so knackered by it that I won't paint or draw for like ages because I'll feel completely like overwhelmed by the, the perfectionism that I've put upon myself. So I have to almost take a break and then come back to it and it can be for like a month or two and then like I'm kind of just start sketching again and then I'm on my way.

TESSA

Yeah I feel like I've actually managed to really mostly separate myself from perfectionism when it comes to art, which is really special for me because in like every other aspect of my life, that's very, very hard for me to do. But I think it's because I love showing people what I make when I'm making it. And so they'll be seeing it before it would necessarily be considered done. And I'm always getting feedback from like my friends and family and my partner and everything of like, oh my gosh, that's so cute. That's so cute. Or, oh wow, that's really cool. I love it. And then it feels like it can already be done because I'm already getting a positive reaction to it...

HELEN

Mm-hmm. <affirmative>

TESSA

even though, you know, it might not be done. And also while I'm making things a lot of the time I get really excited about a new idea. And so then it makes it easy to be like, okay, well you know, this one I think I feel good enough about it and I really wanna start the next thing. So I'm just gonna say, you know what, it's good enough for me, the process was what mattered. And I have something that I can show to people and they already like it and so it doesn't need more work for me. So yeah, it's kind of that kind of thing. And I don't know, it's very weird to explain that because I feel like in every other aspect of my life, like I said, I have a very much, like, I can't have anyone see me fail at anything or see anything in an incomplete state.

HELEN

Mm-hmm. <affirmative>.

TESSA

Yeah. Wow. I should look more into that.

HELEN

I think for now it's just really nice that you have that kind of attitude to it. Like that sounds restful.

TESSA

Yeah. Yeah. I would say I definitely love art to be something that I do quickly and not for long. I think I get really stuck in the process of things when it... Okay. So for example, if I start a new TV show or I start a puzzle, cause I do a lot of jigsaw puzzles. I've done like five jigsaw puzzles in the past month. And once I start it, I have it in my head all the time until I finish it.

HELEN

Ah.

TESSA

And so I need to kind of keep the scope of my art projects shorter because otherwise I just get so stuck in this idea of like, oh, this thing is sitting there and I need to finish it and I can't do work. I can't like cook, I can't clean, I just need to finish the thing. So that's why I think I really do shorter, quicker drawings because otherwise I think it's a little bit unhealthy for me. [laugh].

HELEN

Mm-hmm. It would take over.

TESSA

Yeah.

APRIL

I think that's one of the things that, that's a really good point too. Doing sometimes those short drawings and stuff can be a good way to sort of jumpstart that creative process again. Like one of the things I realised I haven't done lately is I keep working on the big projects and then I, I don't do art for longer periods of time because it's like big things and it uses up a bunch of that space. But like, getting a sketchbook and just doing like bean maps, uh, which like if you don't know, is where you just sort of like throw beans on a piece of paper and then trace the outline and then you're like, cool, I've made a fantasy map now.

TESSA

Oh that's really cool!

APRIL

Or like different things like that that are just sort of like quick exercises I think are really nice to just sort of keep doing things.

BETH

Do you find that like your art, because for me, because I have a creative job and I'm, and you're editing, you'll be the same, like if you're editing or you are doing something else creative, do you find it takes up the same portion of your brain? It's like, I have a limited amount of creativity that I can use and if I am doing loads at work, then I feel like I have less [laugh] for like coming back and doing some painting. But if I've had time off, then I can go and paint.

TESSA

Yeah, absolutely. I'll also say that in college I did creative writing as a program and it was really difficult for me to do art during that time because I was doing so much creative writing. And also now that I've, I've graduated and I'm doing a lot more editing, I really have not been doing that much art. I've got some unfinished things, despite saying that I don't like to leave unfinished things, [laugh], I've got some stuff hanging around my room, I've, and I just don't have the level of energy for it. And I think it's one of those things where once I get started again, it'll jumpstart me into doing creative stuff again. That's more of like on paper and digital and all that. But also because I'm doing like the pets of

Rusty Towers for Rusty Quill, it almost feels like if I'm gonna draw, I should be working drawing instead of...

HELEN

Oh no!

TESSA

...drawing for myself drawing. And that's not to say I don't enjoy, it just makes it, I would say I think when you have like a creative job, it's harder to do creativity just for yourself because you have a job that's creative and it feels like, if you're gonna be spending the time being creative, you should spend it creating for your work instead of for yourself.

HELEN

Yes.

APRIL

Yeah. I think I went through a similar thing cause like I've done art for Rusty Quill too. So like I've done, um, some of the merch designs and still do some of the merch designs. So there's been a few things where I've done art for work and it was something I really struggled with early on where for me it's a little bit different where if I'm in general burnout, it can be really hard to like do art just because I don't wanna do anything, if I'm in general burnout. But for the art side of things, I can separate them, so if I'm doing general things like for Rusty Quill in terms of like podcast, or if we're doing like video, if I'm like reviewing edits and listening to what we're making and scripting or things like that, that's a different part of my brain, that is sort of working on that. But if

I'm doing art things, I definitely do the same thing where I'm just like, no, but if I'm, I, I should be, I I I should be doing like business art things or like I've sold my art before, and I've gone to conventions and I've done commissions, but I don't do commissions anymore, for much the same reason because I'm more likely to hit burnout or to not do art for fun if I'm doing it for profit because I just, I hit a block and I, I don't wanna do it.

HELEN

I see.

TESSA

Yeah. Beth, what about for you? Like how do you deal with the creativity balance?

BETH

Because work for me, like I don't have a very separate work life from my life, so it can be really tricky anyway. And for example, right now, I, I have a lot of stuff on, I'm editing and I'm doing a lot of music writing, so it means that that side ends up just going in a little hiatus. But I, I've kind of given myself a project that I want to do art for my music stuff, so then at least that gives me a reason when time comes that I will make, uh, time for it. But yeah, I just find it so hard to find the time to do art for myself at this point. And I, and it only kind of happens in times where I, you know, really make sure that I have lots of time for myself, but unfortunately that can't happen all the time with work. So, yeah maybe I, it just means the art is on and off dependent on what I'm doing.

APRIL

It's a good point too to like try to find balance though. Like especially if you're a creative and you're doing a creative job when all aspects of your life are that creativity, that's still being able to find an outlet, whether that is a different form of creativity that you don't normally do as a job, or if that's you know, reading or something else, or like another hobby or like something that is outside of that creative space, I think can sometimes be really help create that healthy balance, um to just sort of earmark things as like, this is a thing that I do for me.

TESSA

Yeah, I think it's also so important to make sure that you tell yourself that the art that you're doing for yourself is as important as the art that you're doing for work. Because otherwise you can feel like, oh, it doesn't, like, it doesn't have the same value monetarily, and then you can be like, oh, well I shouldn't do it as much. I should focus on the stuff that gives me this other value. So I think it's very important to tell yourself, you know, the art that I do for myself is as important, like mental health, happiness, you know, all those other things wise to, as the stuff that is for work.

APRIL

I think that's a good point.

HELEN

I think that's a really good point as well. And on that extremely good point, I think we'll go to a break.

[BREAK]

HELEN

And welcome back. Okay. This has been, this is already like such a, you're all so wise! You're all very, very wise people in the ways of art, but I wanna talk about your actual, like, the specifics of your art. I would be really interested to hear if you find any particular themes coming up because I was really into portraiture and drawing people and, you know, you might be into, I don't know, landscapes or fantasy subjects or work that evokes a particular emotion. I don't know if any of you have any thoughts on that for your own work?

BETH

I, I don't really go for fantasy things as such, but I don't necessarily like copy a picture. So for example, I, I just showed you guys some birds, although those are like obviously like a real type of bird [laugh]. I wasn't necessarily like following something. I just wanted like a cool like background and then some birds on it. [laugh] so... but I, I, I think that it really just depends on my mood or actually that was just inspired by the fact that my mum got some curtains with birds on them and then wanted to have a bird picture. So that's why that was there. So it's nothing that, it's just for what I feel at the time. I actually did, uh, one of a giant duck, a Tudor duck, a bath duck for my sister who's obsessed with rubber ducks. Um, so it had like a Henry VIII hat and little outfit and it's duck face. So, you know, that is kind of fantasy I suppose. But it, it's for a specific reason.

TESSA

That sounds so cute.

APRIL

Yeah.

BETH

It was kind of terrifying actually. I don't know. She has it in her living room and I, it, it kind of disturbs me. So it has those big round eyes that look down at you while you eat.

TESSA

Oh!

HELEN

Eugh! [laugh] What about you, Tessa? Is it mostly, um, animal base, like the pets on the Patreon? Or...

TESSA

No, honestly, I do very little animals. I almost never draw animals. I mostly, I mostly do cartoon people and like space themed, either watercolour or digital art usually. so I've got like a ton of like, space watercolour up around my room and a ton of like little cartoon figures. Mostly it's just like head and shoulders and it's like the expression and the hairstyle and and whatnot. But, um, this actually made me remember that I have, I have a project that I've been working on since sometime in college. and it's, you know, one of those projects that's on indefinite hiatus, who knows when I'll pick it up again.

HELEN

Yeah.

TESSA

But it's where I basically reread an old story that I wrote in elementary, no, probably beginning of high school. And it's a really, really bad story. Looking back on it. It's, it's very embarrassing. It's got all sorts of bad themes and bad characters and very much of the time that I was writing it for myself. And so I reread that story with my older sister and then I was basically animating us reading it and all the things happening in it, like a movie theatre screen kind of situation. So that's like something that I also do, which is fun. [laugh]

APRIL

That's cute.

HELEN

That is cute! [laugh]

TESSA

It is very embarrassing though.

ALL

[laugh].

TESSA

It's [sighs]

HELEN

Oh, well, we all must make sacrifices. April, what about you? Do you find yourself returning to similar themes?

APRIL

Yeah, I would say that I definitely now that I've kind of started getting more like comfortable with different styles and things like that, I really enjoy like the human body and people. So like, I've just now started getting to where I'm like comfortable with hands. I tend to use references, but I like taking a reference and then making it something else. So like one of the things that I really like is just like human form that I've started getting into more. So Line of Action is a website that you can go to where you can get, like, you can go through like life drawing, drawing models for like different things. And you can kind of use those for drawing exercises. And I really enjoy doing like nude paintings, but I don't like drawing feet. So either [laugh] from like the waist up or from like bodies that are contorted in such a way where I don't have to draw feet. Um, which isn't like a thing, it's just that they're really freaking hard to draw.

HELEN

They are!

APRIL

And I've only just gotten comfortable with hands. I'll figure out the rest of it later. It's funny cause like I think about it sometimes and I'm just like, oh, I would really love to have like a profound reason why I like drawing like nude characters. But it's also like, I don't like drawing clothes because folds are hard.

[laugh]

HELEN

[laugh] Folds and feet, the two Fs.

APRIL

And it's like, yeah. So it's just like, I picked the things that I am comfortable being able to draw. But like, also genuinely like shading and doing more like sketch styles and things like that, which is why Helen knows cause I've done, um, what is it like sexy RQ, sexy RQG characters as like a fun art project that I've done.

HELEN

Yes, you did sexy Azu, I remember.

APRIL

Which is really just my excuse for, I want to draw characters, but I don't like drawing clothes.

HELEN

[laugh] So you did everything pin up style. I remember.

APRIL

Yeah, you know.

HELEN

[laugh] They were great. I have another question and it's about inspirations. I wanna know if any of you get inspired by other artists or anything in particular.

It'll be interesting to know if any of you are the kind of artists where if you go to like a pretty place, you're like, ah, I must, I, I must art [laugh].

APRIL

I think for me, like a lot of webtoons, I think are really inspiring for me.

HELEN

Oh yeah?

TESSA

Oh yeah.

APRIL

I definitely went through a period where I was like, I wanna make a comic. Like before I worked at Rusty Quill I remember during my interview I was like, I'm planning a comic. Comics are hard and like some of the stuff that people make is like truly phenomenal. And I think the access to being able to get that type of art is really, is really wonderful.

HELEN

Excellent, Beth, how about you?

BETH

I don't think things directly inspire me, but I do think that I see a lot of like beautiful things in the world. Which sounds really cheesy, but I'm definitely a person that like will see like a little flower growing out of a wall and no one will notice it. And I play this game sometimes with my partner if he's in a bad mood

and will go for a walk and he's like, I never see the things, so just tell me the nice things. And I go around and I'm like, look at that, that's really beautiful, to like help him get out of his bad mood. And then, so I feel like it doesn't directly influence, but then all that kind of builds up into something that could be a painting at some point.

HELEN

That's really lovely that you do that for your partner.

TESSA

Yeah.

HELEN

Aww!

BETH

It's a nice [laugh] way to get out of bad moods for sure.

HELEN

[laugh]

BETH

I also, it's very helpful for me because, you know, I don't want him in a bad mood. [laugh].

HELEN

[laugh]

TESSA

Yeah.

HELEN

And what do you think Tessa?

TESSA

Well, it's oftentimes the times that I have no access whatsoever to materials with which to do art that I feel subtly inspired. And I feel it's like one of those things where I'll be in the shower and I'm like, whoa, wait, I've got cool idea that I'd love to make or I'm on a walk. And it's not even inspired by anything I'm seeing. I think it's just because those are times where I'm removed from like social media or obligations to like get things done. And, and then my imagination just kind of is allowed to flow a little bit more naturally. And then all of a sudden I have all these ideas and I'm all excited to make things and then I get home or I get outta the shower and I and reality hits and I have to go and do like cleaning or cooking [laugh], or take care of my dog. And then by the time I have time again, I forget about what I wanted to make. And, and that's kind of the tragedy of the way that I currently structure my life.

HELEN

I do exactly the same thing.

APRIL

I think that's so relatable though.

HELEN

Yeah. Like when I find myself walking and just listening to music, I'll come up with so many like story ideas and stuff.

APRIL

Oh my gosh.

TESSA

Oh yeah.

APRIL

Yeah, I've started carrying a notebook around with me cause I realised like I'll just go for a walk and then I'm like, oh, but I wanna do this now. Like, I have notepads, um, on my phone as well where it's just like whenever I get hit with an idea of like, I'll draw this or I'll write this or something, like, I just need to keep like a running list of things to do.

HELEN

Yeah. Yeah. I'm exactly the same. [laughs]

APRIL

That's part of why I wanna get back into sketchbooks too. Just cause like then you just have something with you and you're just like, oh great. I can,

TESSA

Yeah. They're more portable.

APRIL

Yeah. I can at least do like a loose idea and then play with it later.

BETH

Do you guys think, the thing that I was thinking about asking is do you guys have like a strong visual memory? Because I find it so interesting. Like, my, my partner doesn't, like if you asked him like, what do you, does your mum look like? He could like describe but can't see the image in his head. Whereas for me it's like a very clear, like, visual, this is what this person looks like. I can see them do. Do you think that as artists you have that?

TESSA

I think I actually have a pretty bad, pretty poor visual image capacity. Uh, people will be like, oh, when I say like apple, like, do you see it in your head? And I like have to consciously think to get myself to see it rather than just it happening. And it's the same for like picturing things a lot of the time. It's like, it's like when you're looking at one of those optical illusions, where it's all like the black squares and a checker pattern and you see like grey dots forming at the corner of the white grid between them. But it's only in the spaces where you're not looking. And it's kind of that whole thing where like, I can't create like a solid image cause parts keep being blurry that I'm not focusing on. That's, that's a pretty good way to talk about my internal image capacity. It's not very good.

APRIL

I think that's interesting though because especially cause you do more, I think that relates to the style of art that you do rather than like...

TESSA

Yeah.

APRIL

...being an artist because like, uh, uh, you know, yours for instance, I would say is like a lot more like abstract or, non realism, I guess. Like Beth for instance, some of the things that you've shown are like really strong visual elements in terms of it. Like, for, for me, like I kind of fall in between, I guess. In that like I can picture things pretty clearly, but I do better if I'm like actively seeing it. But like, I get face blind with people. So like, I don't remember people's faces a lot, but I will remember certain particular features and things like that. So it's like, if certain features stand out, then it can be like, oh yeah, it's like this person, which is more of like characters I guess, of that person or individual or thing.

But if I'm thinking of places a lot of times it's really vivid.

TESSA

Yeah for me it applies to people as well where I meet people and I cannot remember anything about what their face looks like. And I can't remember their name.

HELEN

[laughs]

TESSA

And I have like a vague memory of like what happened, but it's so hard for me to get to know new people because they'll know my name instantly and I have to ask for theirs like three or four times before I'll start to get it.

HELEN

No, this happens to me all the time as well. I especially because I'm, I'm in the kind of circles where I am meeting quite a lot of people [laugh] and I've always, and, and the thing is like, it's never that I'm not interested or anything

TESSA

Yeah.

HELEN

I'm always just like, oh crap, [laugh].

TESSA

Yeah.

HELEN

I was going to say actually that I have a very good visual memory for people that I've already seen. But I find it really hard to visualise. Like if I'm reading a book and a character is described, I find it very hard to visualise an actual person with those features. Like, the closest I get is being like, oh, I guess they look a bit like this actor. And then they're just that actor [laugh] for the rest of the time.

TESSA

I always see them as cartoon characters actually. Whenever everyone books, everything is cartoony for me.

APRIL

That's really interesting. See, I feel like when I'm reading it's very vivid.

TESSA

Yeah.

BETH

Yeah same. It would be so interesting to be inside another human's head and just see...

TESSA

Yeah.

BETH

...like how we perceive everything and how we remember things. It's so different and it's so interesting that as artists, you know, you might expect visual memory to be a thing, but I, it isn't always necessarily just changes perhaps your type of art or you have a specific way of thinking about it. It's really interesting.

HELEN

Yeah. And it's that thing as well about some people have like an internal monologue and some people don't. Like, I never think, I never find myself being like, I'm going to go and do this now, then I'll do, I just, I just go and do it.

TESSA

Oh, I have an internal monologue.

APRIL

I do too.

BETH

I have a bit.

HELEN

What's, what's it like? I genuinely like, I don't know what the, I can't imagine it.

TESSA

I think the funniest thing that I do in my head is I'm kind of telling myself something that I already like, have thought through, like vaguely, and I'll be thinking it like word for word and then I'll just be like, I already know what I'm gonna say. Why am I going through this? Like, I already know what I'm gonna think. Why am I thinking it out word for word? Like, I've already got it, but then I'll still continue to think through it word for word. It's just very strange. It's like I have to finish the whole sentence or I get stuck on it.

APRIL

Your, your inner monologue as a completionist. [laugh]

HELEN

[laughs] So I'm going to make up one last question. It's not on my sheet, but it's just occurred to me. Do any of you have artists that you admire? They can be famous or not, or alive or not? I'd be interested to know if there's any one where you're like, wow. Or someone who, like you find their work very striking. Like, for me, I really like Magritte. I'm a big fan of quite a lot of abstract art. I especially like physical things like, uh I can't remember the name of the artist now, but he put a urinal in an art gallery, and it's there to like spark a conversation about like, well, what, what is art? What can be art? And I found that like, I think, I think that's really interesting and really funny. But, yeah. Who do you guys admire?

BETH

I like an artist called Jenny Saville. I wouldn't necessarily have her art in my house because it's quite, could be quite disturbing.

HELEN

Ooh.

BETH

Uh, it's often like naked bodies, like pressed against glass, painted.

HELEN

Ooh wow.

BETH

Or like people who have had like, like half plastic surgery and things like that. So it's to do with like body image and things like that.

HELEN

Mm-hmm. <affirmative>.

BETH

They're giant as well. Like I probably couldn't fit them in my house. But they're so beautifully like painted and they're textured. Yet they also have a really strong message, which I really love.

TESSA

That's very cool.

HELEN

That is cool. What about you April?

APRIL

For me there's two. There's like famous, I guess, would be for Rembrandt because I love how he painted eyes and the way people look. And I just think like the, the texture and like the colour palette, the direction people are looking in really pops. And I know it was like more reflective of the style at the time, but like seeing his paintings, I got to go to the, uh, Hermitage in St. Petersburg and they had a whole Rembrandt section and I got like completely swept away in it. and was just in there for ages [laugh]. The other one is, um, a Russian painter who I just looked up because I cannot remember his name is a- Aivaovsky who does ship paintings or did, uh, he's from the 18 hundreds, did ship paintings. And I've always had a love of the sea anyway. Like I worked on cruise ships for a while and things like that. Like, it's just like hits that place in

my heart. And like his paintings are so colourful and have such movement to them. Particularly how like he paints like the sun hitting the wave or the colours coming out for the water. And it's, it's absolutely gorgeous. So I'd recommend that people look it up. It is A I V A Z O V S K Y.

HELEN

Thank you. I also love the sea I will, I will definitely look him up. Tessa, how about you?

TESSA

I, I don't, I don't really actually use social media that much. Um, like I try to stay off of Twitter as much as possible and I don't have an Instagram and I don't, like, I don't because I've found that I have the type of personality where it just doesn't do me very good to be on social media.

HELEN

Yeah.

TESSA

And so I don't really know a lot of artists I guess. Like I know people in my life that I admire a lot, and it's mostly because they create things, I guess more than what they're creating. It's just the fact that they're making things that I admire cause I'm like, oh, I wanna be making things right now. It's so cool that they can just do that. I have though, recently I've watched quite a few of those like YouTube pages where they're like recreating either famous like movie things or just like fantasy land worlds where they're like building it out of like cereal boxes and crafting foam. And then they're painting the whole thing and

like, and it all comes together and it's like this perfect little world. And I think that that's super cool. And like stuff where people turn like little quote unquote imperfections in their houses. Like let's say that there's a hole in the wall that they turn that into like a little nook that's like a little reading room for like a mouse. And I think that those are super cool. I've been very into those as of late [laugh].

APRIL

That's really cute.

TESSA

Yeah. It kind of brings like a touch of magic into the everyday, I guess that those are the things that I really like. Um, there's also a whole thing, I don't know what it's called anymore, but it's where you like, create art out of like, just like leaves or flowers or sticks just out in the world for people to stumble upon.

APRIL

Oh yeah.

TESSA

And we did those when I was like in middle school and that's always been something that's kind of stuck in my head.

HELEN

Last question before I ask you if there's anything or anyone you'd like to plug. What is your like, number one tip that you would give to any other artists out there?

BETH

Just have fun and just, I don't know, experiment. Like, throw lots of stuff down on a canvas and don't worry about how it looks in the end. And you might find something that you think is beautiful.

HELEN

Oh, lovely.

TESSA

Woo!

HELEN

Tessa?

TESSA

I had a friend staying with me recently who was talking about how my family has always done art and she grew up not doing art in the same way and she's so jealous of the ability to do art. And I was like, I know it's cheesy, but everyone has the ability to do art. And it does just kind of take work. And so if you are, if you are sitting there and you're looking at all these things and you're like, I wish I could make stuff in that same sort of way. It does take effort. And it's just, even saying to yourself, okay, 10 minutes every day, I'm gonna look up a randomly generated prompt and I'm gonna get creative with whatever the prompt is and just do anything. And it can be small, it can be big, it can be something that'll inspire more. It can be, you know, something that you make and then burn because you never wanna look at it again,

HELEN

[laugh]

TESSA

But it's just the very simple, the the act itself of taking the time to practise creativity will then help you grow creativity as like a habitual trait, I guess.

HELEN

That's a really beautiful way of putting that, Tessa.

APRIL

That's really beautiful.

HELEN

And April, what about you? What do you think?

APRIL

Beth and Tessa had really good answers, so I'm gonna short change mine.
[laugh], uh, and just say, you don't have to draw backgrounds if you don't want to.

ALL

[laugh]

APRIL

And don't let anyone tell you otherwise. You could just do colour blocks or you could find like other sources, but you don't have to do backgrounds if you don't want to.

HELEN

Fabulous.

BETH

That's great advice. I never do backgrounds. I always just do a colour block, so perfect!

APRIL

[laugh] If you're a landscape artist, I have all the respect in the world for you. But [laugh], if, if, if you're not, then that's okay too.

HELEN

[laugh] And with that, I think we are at the end of our episode. So before we go, I would like to ask you each, if there's anything you'd like to plug April, we'd like to go with you first.

APRIL

Yeah. I'm gonna do the super professional Rusty Quill thing, if you want to see some of my work that I've done for merch on Rusty Quill, you can go to Rusty Quill at Tee Public or on Red Bubble. So you can see some of the designs there that both myself have done as well as several other commissioned artists that we've gotten to do some merch for us. Also if you want to join our Patreon, I'm gonna plug Tessa for her.

TESSA

Woo!

APRIL

We have, uh, the Pets of Rusty Towers, which is a comic about all of our pets, uh, from the people at Rusty Quill that Tessa makes a lovely comic about. It is currently on hiatus, but it is available to people at the citizens level tier for just \$2 a month.

HELEN

Yeah! Beth, how about you?

BETH

You can find me on YouTube. I have a YouTube channel called Beth Roars, and it's all about singing. So I do reactions and I also sing myself on there. And I also have another channel called Roar Exclamation Mark, where I go out and try lots of different hobbies and things. And sometimes you see me epically fail and sometimes hopefully I don't. Uh, so yeah, they're on YouTube.

HELEN

Hooray, [laugh]. And last but not least, Tessa.

TESSA

Um, yeah, I have a couple things. One is, uh, please, please listen to Chapter and Multiverse because that's one of my creative things is the sounds that go into it, and I also think it's really fun. And then I also wanted to plug, my older

sister has just been releasing a podcast called The Inside. And so it's The Inside by Anika Lee Vroom, and you can find it on Spotify. I don't know if you can find it anywhere else, [laugh]. And it's got some of her own art on the cover and it's very creative. It's all self written. So I figure it kind of fits in with this, uh, episode.

HELEN

It does! Ah, thank you all so much.

APRIL

This was nice.

HELEN

Yes! This was so, so nice.

TESSA

It was nice.

HELEN

A lovely chill, wholesome episode. Exactly what I needed at the end of this day.

I have been running around for a lot of today. This was lovely. Thank you so much for coming on the show. So listener, I hope you have enjoyed this episode as much as I have, and I will see you on the next episode. But for now, it's goodbye from me. Goodbye. And it's goodbye from all of them. Do you wanna say goodbye everyone?

BETH

Bye.

APRIL

Bye.

TESSA

Goodbye.

[Show Theme - Outro]

Hosted and Directed by Helen Gould

Produced by Lowri Ann Davies

Executive Producers: Alexander J. Newall & April Sumner

Editing by Lowri Ann Davies and Cathrine Rinella

Music by Samuel D.F. Jones

Art by Anika Khan