

## **SPEAKERS**

Kelly Lloyd, Nicole Morris

### **Introduction (Kelly Lloyd) 00:35**

You're listening to This Thing We Call Art, a podcast about something that's 'it's time based, it's months. It's months of work, it's months of reading, it's, it's a mixture of reading groups of, you know, cleaning the fridge and finding something dead at the back, it's, you know, is it's going to the fabric shop, it's you know, it's chatting to your Granny, it's all these things that come together over a longer space of time.'

I'm your host, Kelly Lloyd, a visual artist, essayist, and educator currently based in the U.K. I've been interviewing people in the arts about their livelihoods since 2017, and today you're going to hear a conversation I had on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February 2021 with Nicole Morris.

Nicole Morris is an artist working across gallery, education, and community settings both in a solo and collaborative context. Her work uses textiles and film to explore themes of domesticity and labour and how these are performed or re-presented in new contexts. Her work has recently been included in exhibitions and projects at The Foundling Museum, Southwark Park Galleries, Royal Museums Greenwich, The Drawing Room, [SPACE], South London Gallery, and Jerwood, all in London, as well as Baltic in Gateshead; Bluecoat in Liverpool; G39 in Cardiff; and The National Gallery in Prague.

I met Nicole in 2019 at her opening for *Interiors* at Compressor Projects in south London. I came with my friend Julia, who introduced us, and who has since created opportunities for me to run into Nicole again. I asked Nicole if I could interview her in 2019, and she agreed, but our schedules didn't allow us to actually make it happen until last year

Our conversation was two and a half hours long, and while I wish I could share it with you in its entirety, today, you'll listen to excerpts from it. I'm going to drop you 30 minutes into our conversation...

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### **Kelly Lloyd 02:13**

And you know, I think in some ways, my work as an educator is a lot more, like, politically, clear, then my work as like an artist.

**Nicole Morris 02:32**

That's really interesting, though, isn't it? Also like just having two strands to a practice. So being like solo artist/artist educator, like, already is kind of interesting. But then also, what an artist educator role can offer you, and that political clarity. I think the question is, why is that political clarity not in the solo Art World? And that surely has to do with, you know, where the Art World belongs, or where the solo exhibition belongs to in that kind of very, very clear capitalist, commercialized world. And you know that your presence in there is limited, because if you're not represented, you have a very limited time there. So, you tread carefully, and that I think, is a, is a huge problem, actually. I think quite a lot of artists have that.

**Kelly Lloyd 03:23**

Yeah. Because you respond in form to all of these things. So, like, yeah, like a solo exhibition is a completely different form than a moment where you get to speak to people in a way that could be instructive for you both. And yeah, like, how is it that this form kind of, can be expanded a bit?

**Nicole Morris 03:48**

I think that's something I think about quite a lot like, so if you have like these education moments where you have these one to ones, right? And you get in a space with people, and you talk, and you create something, and it's often like, quite politically motivated. And I often see those moments, almost like, what do you call it, like consciousness raising? Which is like, kind of, on the Left, like a massive thing, like, and I'm always like, why can we not have this as consciousness raising, because why can it not belong to like a Left project? But I think it can't, because those spaces do still, despite being able to be more political, need to remain neutral because you need to be able to have, you know, this freedom of speech within those spaces.

Because, you know, there's so many education spaces that are getting more and more shut down. Like schools, you obviously don't have much freedom of speech with them, you know, overall. And then you have like, current, you know, right-wing, people trying to stop freedom of speech within universities, for example, which is kind of interesting, in terms of, it will always affect the Left. And, you know, these these kinds of

things are not about protecting us from like fascism, they're about the threat of like socialism, which is mad.

I think there's something interesting about that lack of conversation that happens in those solo exhibition spaces. So, you don't put up an exhibition, and then have a load of people have those conversations that you have in, like, workshops. And why does that not happen? 'Cause it's interesting, when you write like an Arts Council application, like, how will we measure the success of this exhibition? And you have to use neoliberal language around like, 'Oh, well, you know, I'll create, like, an interactive website that will encourage people to, like, type their responses. I'll host a talk, I'll dadada.' But it's never the same as when you get a group of people, and you explore something together. And I think, I think there's something in that, that exploration from the beginning does not happen in those sort of exhibition spaces. You are not experiencing something together, and I think that lack of togetherness means that it enters into the private sphere, right?

**Kelly Lloyd 06:06**

Yeah, I mean, I think you put it so clearly that, that, like, we have to preserve this object. Like, we have to preserve the individual, like, in the solo exhibition spaces, so we can sell this object, and then we can sell this individual as, like, being so important. And so as soon as you start, you know, yeah, like, complicating the idea of like the individual and the individual object, then everything just kind of, like, falls apart.

**Nicole Morris 06:35**

It also has that impact of, 'Okay, we couldn't hit the target audience for the funder through the exhibition will mop it up through these outreach projects that will happen alongside it.'

**Kelly Lloyd 06:49**

[Laughter] Yeah, like, no one's gonna come to the show because people don't come to shows other than for, like, the openings, so how can we, yeah, get more bodies in the door? Um, so how can we create public programming that complicates those relationships, and, like, is more participatory at their core? And for me, you know, working in a number of different ways, including, like, as an educator, now as a student, like as a person who works in collectives, as a person who's interested in care, you know, like, these things. The thing that is always threatened is my solo art practice.

**Nicole Morris** 07:36

Yeah.

**Kelly Lloyd** 07:37

Like, I always feel like I need to protect it in order, to like, protect my future. Because, like, there's no way I'm going to be able to pay off my student loans unless I get a MacArthur Genius Award. [Laughter] And I'm not going to get a MacArthur Genius Award for my like, interesting participatory projects. I mean, I could, I might, you know. Like, actually, I might. But like, but it's quite interesting the people who are held up. It's really tricky... So, I wonder what that's about, my need to protect the thing that I feel like is mine. Yeah...

**Nicole Morris** 08:12

Well, that's, there's something in there about control that you're talking about, I think there's something interesting when you say like, you're never going to win the award for blah, blah, blah. And that for you is like the measure perhaps, of your success is your career. And I think probably here, you know, a Paul Hamlyn Award would, would probably make you feel like, yeah, you've nailed it. Or the Max Mara Art Prize for Women, or I don't know, there's loads of them, right. But that's what the deconstruction needs to be, is that these awards need to be refocused on what kind of practices we're awarding. But I don't know, yeah, I think there's something about what the award supports that would then go on to change your mindset about your own artistic identity, and what you need to protect.

'Cause, I have the same where it's like, I *have* to be in the studio, like, if I'm not in the studio, you know, doing *my* work, then I'm not validated. I'm not here, I'm not whatever. But more and more the work is taken over by the participatory work by these other strings on the bow of whatever it is this career is. But yeah, it's something about changing how we value these other strings that would enable us to release, perhaps, this care over this actually hugely problematic ideal of what art is. Like, on paper, politically, in conversation, I don't believe actually. Like, come on. Like, what are you asking for some time to, you know, spend some time making a masterpiece in a room that then could get bought by a rich philanthropist? You know, like, what? Like, that is not what I believe the work... you know, I have... And yet, we want to preserve that. So, I think there's something in there, isn't there?

**Kelly Lloyd 10:11**

Yeah. But it's so tricky, because, like, I want to... I feel like the answer is always just more. Just, like, *much* more money. [Laughter] Um, because I feel like there's this, um, there's this instrumentalisation of art for welfare that the state should be providing. So much of funding is for projects. Who knows what you would actually come up with, if you were given the time in a studio with enough money. If it's not project based, you may come around on the other side to making something that is [Sigh] like, more of a contribution to what we need culture to be, then this commodity object that, like, is a part of this kind of like, you know, hyper productivity.

**Nicole Morris 11:14**

That thing around just wanting time like, everyone wants time. If you've got shitloads of money, got put on a residency, right, what would you do with that? Like, I was saying to my partner the other day, like, my life is so far from that moment of like having time to just make. That I think if someone actually did just, like, drop me somewhere and say, 'We trust you. We value you.' I'm so far mentally removed from it right now that I don't know what I do.

Like, so went on a residency, a year, year and a half [ago] maybe, oh, probably two years now. Gosh, yeah. And I just remember being like, it was so hard to get on it. Like, it was so hard to organize the childcare. To organize time off three jobs that I was, I had. I had to organize something like ten train rides because I needed to come back for a job to go back out again. That actually, by the time I got there, I literally was like, I don't have a fucking creative bone in my body, do you know? Because you're stripped bare of, of any energy. Like creativity isn't just there.

Like, I think this pandemic has been really interesting to like... it's really stripped the like, kind of class, race, like all these divisions, right? That, like, limit you, your access to having this, this career, right? And you can see on Instagram, like all these people, they're just like, they've been so productive, and locked down it's just, you know, I just can't stop. I'm just like, I'm so inspired by my drawings, or whatever they're doing? And I was just like, mate, like, like, the most creative thing for me right now is making a cup of tea [Laughter] like, and how many times I'm gonna stir it. And I think there's something in that isn't there in terms of representation of that artist being, you know, free of any life burdens, any life, you know, troubles, which are often monetized issues, right? You know, they're in the place in the world they want to be, they have probably no family... like the family is absent. The

weather is beautiful. They have no mental health, you know, conditions. They are just living this time, apart from perhaps a slight concern whether the pigment is right, yeah? And they just can paint. And it's always paint as well. Which is, I think, is interesting, right? You're always going to paint. So then how does the how does the artist that doesn't paint exist? How does the artist that has all these other commitments [exist]?

Yeah, and also, like, that image of that artist is so far removed from so many people's family like, like heritage, that you could never, like, hold your head up in a family dinner and be like, 'I want to be that.' Because they'd be like, 'Are you joking?' But it is just this funny thing, where we can just throw it around. There's no value in that unless there's that, that value of that image of that white man in that ridiculous loft apartment. [Laughter]

**Kelly Lloyd 14:30**

One of the beautiful things about art is its accessibility, you know? But at the same time, it's a discipline. And like, whenever we in the arts have, need to have, want to have a disciplinary conversation, then people hate us, because it's inaccessible. But then also people are constantly trying to be like, 'Everyone's an artist!' Like, you know, 'Design Thinking!' Not that Art and Design are the same thing. But like, there is this kind of general proliferation of creativity, which yes, does belong to everyone, but is like, entirely different than what it means to concern yourself with, like, a discipline. And I don't understand why, like, other people get to have disciplines, [Laughter] and we don't get to have a discipline! Yeah, we don't get to have a specialty. It's beautiful that it's this thing that everyone can be an artist, but also like I'm unwilling to say that everyone can be an artist, when I don't have a job, like... [Laughter] As soon as I get a job as an artist, then sure, 'You can be an artist! You can be an artist!' Like, whatever.

**Nicole Morris 15:47**

Yeah, it's funny because when someone asks you what you do, like, all of this is an ongoing... because all of this is around, like, our identities and how we've been valued in society, or devalued, I guess. And, you know, so in the world of mums' school drop-offs, right, the conversation about what you do seems to come up. But I'm always like, tripping a bit on what I say. Because I, you know, it's like, well, okay, what am I? So, what's, what's my career? So often in those environments, I'll say, 'Oh, I run this youth program.' It's much easier to say that because it's really accessible. But then sometimes, every now and again,

I kind of think, oh, no, okay. And I say, 'I'm an artist.' And I swear, as I say, artist and asshole, they just, they just sound the same, right? [Laughter]

Like, and I feel like the face of the person listening just... do you know what I mean? Because it separates that person, and it elevates you. It says, 'I'm an artist.' It does also create that weird hierarchy, which, which harks back to that image, doesn't it hark back to that kind of inaccessible, I'm not represented, I'm not present in that image of what that artist is. And then if you know the person you're talking to, you'll get, they'll often ask a few more questions like, 'Oh, what do you do?' And then even if you go down that, like, if I'm like, 'Oh, I make, kind of, textiles and film.' I often lose someone at that point. If they keep going, and then I start talking about how I'm interested in the, like, language or the process of the two mediums and how they cross over, like, they've gone. They have totally gone. They are nodding, but they're not present, they're chopping, they're... do you know what I mean? They're making their dinner that night, they're working out. And it's so interesting, isn't it? Because for there to be such a production line of people being sent through this system of, like, learning this discourse, that then is like, holy untranslatable to like society. Why are we learning it?

Because in those workshops and those workshops, I normally would steer away from talking too much about my practice at the beginning, because I feel like I haven't got the people on board. I need to get them on board before I even start, because why should they learn more about me than I about them? I always feel that the beginning. And I also think it's about, like, having a situation where someone understands a bit more, or you have a mutual dialogue. I think it's a lot around dialogue, it's a lot around language isn't it, it's around, we need to speak the same language.

**Kelly Lloyd 18:41**

It's so interesting that you can track like where you lose people. But I did wonder about fabric and video. I don't really see fabric and video together.

**Nicole Morris 18:52**

Yeah, so I guess like more like film. So, think about analog film, and you think about textiles, so quite interested in the processes you can use within them both being quite transferable. So, for example, I'm currently working on, like, patchwork. So, patchwork in textiles being when you kind of sew things alongside and build up a space through, you know, joining, and those joins can be different scenes, blah, blah, blah. And within that, you

have the capacity to have lots of different visual images that then if you think about what that is in film, it's that splicing of film. So, if you get like a strip of film, you cut it up, you can patchwork it together in different ways. So, I'm interested in how those two have that same process.

So, in that project with Julia [Vogl], that *Dear World Project*, I guess that kind of shared process was, I was looking at green screen. So green screen in video being, you know, when you cover something green, it becomes transparent, and you can have something layered underneath. So, it has that potential to layer up, yeah? So, for those objects that I green screened, which is obviously a video process, the layer I put beneath was film. I drew on film, and that became the layer between... so it kind of still felt quite analog. And then in textiles, the batik being the wax that you put onto a fabric, and then the wax protects what is waxed, and anything that isn't waxed gets [dyed] so, you, again have this potential to build up.

So, I'm really interested in how these crossovers can happen between the two mediums. It's an exploration really, a curiosity and what, and then how they might come together in the end. So how they can come together to be kind of a 'viewing system.' I'm interested in how, yeah, how the textiles can become, like, almost like a device for you to see film. And how that can be activated by somebody whether that's, you know, a member of the gallery staff or whether that's a viewer coming in. Yeah, so I'm interested in those, kind of, I guess, like 'viewing systems', is what I kind of refer to them, as ways of seeing film in different ways. But then I don't want it to belittle the textiles in that way, they're not just devices to see film. It's really interesting the kind of labour behind them, and how they are time-based as much as the film is, right? So, I'm interested in textiles feeling like films, feeling like they have, yeah, a duration.

In terms of content, I think there's been like, quite like a shift. Like, I think, I've always been interested in, you know, bodies being together. And the, I don't know, in like, much earlier work, I was really interested in a more kind of like, like, the sensual tactility of a body and how, its breath, or its stubble, or its sweat might, yeah, be the focus.

### **Kelly Lloyd 22:41**

It's funny, the materiality of work that I miss now, in a way that wasn't really my vibe [Laughter] before the pandemic. But now, like, oh, my God would be so nice to have such [Laughter] like, such work.



**Nicole Morris 22:53**

I mean, I think that's something I've talked about a lot in the last, you know, year is the lack of visual stimulus. And that visual stimulus is obviously, like, really tactile. And maybe that's, sorry, that's wrong, it's not a lack of visual stimulus, we, we have loads of online content, there's too much online content, like I've never seen so much online content in my life. It's the lack of the tactile within that, that visual, so... And all those incidental moments that happen along the way. Because, you know, I'm a big fan of like, a day, a day of going to galleries or whatever. But it's often like, you go see four shows or something and, you know, sometimes it's like, 'Oh, really? Ugh, I've been looking forward to this. I'm a bit disappointed.' But then you might see something on the way that's like, ah, that was weird or amazing! Or you hear a conversation or...

**Kelly Lloyd 23:51**

...you get a coffee...

**Nicole Morris 23:53**

Yeah! Those incidental interruptions that that actually can become the creative process as opposed to what you think is, so.... And I think again, we can translate that back to the beginning of this conversation. Like, you might have this exhibition, you know, which is the 'showstopper'. You know? That's, you know, what the world thinks is what's bringing people. But then you have this little offside project where they've got like a kind of less visible artist in, and actually what's going on in there could end up being the thing you take away. Like at the Whitechapel just before this lockdown, there was like a little side room show of like Gallery Education through Whitechapel since whenever. I didn't have much time; I didn't spend long in it. But there is something so exciting about looking at photographs of those like workshop sessions, isn't it? I find them really interesting. In the same way that I find looking at images of, like, artists in their studios really interesting. Or a particular pleasure of mine is Phyllida Barlow when she had her children, she made quite a lot of work in home. And there's like a whole series of these beautiful sculptures that got put, like, on top of ironing boards on top of televisions, you know? They kind of like took over the domestic space, and I, I love those images. It's like interior decor, isn't it? It's like looking in, like, whatever those magazines are, you know? Yeah...

**Kelly Lloyd 25:34**

Voyeurism, yeah.

**Nicole Morris 25:35**

Yeah, yeah, it's yeah, it's voyeurism really, isn't it? But there's something in that I think, is missing in the exhibition space. And there's something I think I've always talked about, is like, when you, when you work on a show, you have so much, like you said it like, 'This is going to be my moment!' Because you think this is the moment where you're going to share everything your work, and, and in those moments of like, total, like, you know, it's like, it's like... what's it called, when you're like madly in love? Like, you know, it's not desire, not, I can't remember the word... Anyway, it's that moment, and you put it out there, but actually so much as missing. There's a reduction that happens in that process.

Like, I remember this exhibition that I had, and I had this studio visit beforehand, and I was showing this person all these ideas and dadada, and she was actually writing this text on the, on the show. And I remember the text being like, so exciting, because it really captured that moment in the studio that was full of these ideas. And what I actually put forward into the exhibition was rubbish. It was so reductive of that entire process. And I think, I think unfortunately, that endpoint, that kind of product belongs to that capitalist market, but is what you get known for. So, it's that caption of, 'Textiles and film, what's that look like?' It's, you know, and the more you can make that accessible in terms of like, 'Yeah, she makes yellow fabrics, and purple films.' People get them and that's when it becomes a successful product, that's when it evolves, that's when people start calling on you, because, you know, they recognize it, they know what you're doing.

The minute it gets too far down that other that way you try and try and create that whole, process, which is so... you know, multifaceted. It has lots of voices, it's got so many textures and mediums. It's gone. It doesn't, it's not, it lacks... it's not accessible. And it takes us back to that those conversations that I had with that, you know, that conversation with that mum, you know, that blank. How can you possibly translate that whole, you know, it's time based, it's months. It's months of work, it's months of reading, it's, it's a mixture of reading groups of, you know, cleaning the fridge and finding something dead at the back, it's, you know, is it's going to the fabric shop, it's you know, it's chatting to your Granny, it's all these things that come together over a longer space of time, and I think it *does not* belong to that product. And that's why I think this art career has to be seen as a really long, long haul. Or, like, you need to know that it's not going to be now. There's no... I think if you

start seeing it as like, this is my moment, you're gonna... you know, unless you have like, a real desire to, you know, belong to that world. Because you know, plenty of people who really desire that. They desire representation, they desire to be marketable. You know, and that is definitely a valid path. And I totally think if people want to do that, that's, that's cool, and that keeps that economic world going. But I think there's a whole other world that needs to be revalidated, and I think the validation has to come from within, not outside. Yeah... Duh duh! We got there.

### **Kelly Lloyd 29:19**

I think that's what, yeah... that's beautiful. Um, yeah, no, I mean, it's, um, my God, good job busting out just like a manifesto. [Laughter] I mean, I think that's the privilege of being an artist is that we get to understand... we get to be friends with each other, we get to wander into each other's studios. You know, and sure, yeah, we're like, you know, we see the books on people's tables, but then our conversations are more like, 'How are you feeling?' Like, 'What is that material you're using?' Or like, 'Oh my God, that's so funny, like, my cat looks like this piece of toast on your floor.' Or, you know, it's like you have all of the... it's more of the, you know, and you can be like, 'Oh my God, I found this dead thing behind my fridge!' You know? Things are able to breathe...

And you know, and then and I think you have already. And I think that as artists, we do understand that like museums are mausoleums and that, like, once we have a show it's dead. It's, like, dead stuff, you know? But then it's weird that the dead stuff is the thing that seems like the end goal when really, it's kind of like an exorcism, you know? It's, like, you have to cast things out of your studio, and out of your mind, so, you can like, move on to the next thing, you know?

I'm a fairly minimalist maker. I think, just in the way that, like, in my objects, there are only really ever like two or three things going on. And it's the same thing with like an installation or a show, like there's only really ever like two or three things going on. And I think that is because there's only so much you can fit in an object. There's only so much you can fit in the show because you are just reducing and reducing. And so, I love thinking about how I can build content, like, across shows, and across a lifetime of making. And then maybe in that be able to approximate, like, at least slightly larger percentage of, like, what are these moments that actually go into these moments that I then create for other people?

**Nicole Morris** 31:15

Yeah, and I think there's something in there about the archives as well, I think that was quite interesting. Like, I really do feel that my practice, but like each show, or each project, like you know, enters the archive. And I'm really interested in how they coexist and how you could look at the images, you know, and how those conversations, you know, crossover etc.

**Kelly Lloyd** 31:41

Yeah. And I mean, I guess like the one of the most accessible forms of an archive is like a retrospective. But then that goes into this... like the monograph, that goes into this, again, like this glorification of like the individual, as well. I always love the first couple of rooms...

**Nicole Morris** 31:58

The early works. They're always so interesting, and like so much more dynamic and, like, open, aren't they? And then you have that reduction actually as you go through the rooms. It's like, okay...okay, so we started off with... okay, so now we're just on one line. Okay, so you went from a heap of shapes, and color, and dadada to do something really paired back.

**Kelly Lloyd** 32:25

Yeah. And then you, like, see their commercial success. And you're like, okay, now you're just, like, hitting the marks.

**Nicole Morris** 32:30

It would be interesting to kind of compare though. Like, how, for example, the, the kind of rooms evolve between a woman and a man, or, you know, a Black woman and a white woman. Like how those evolutions happen, and how actual more visibility or something might impact on what they're able to make. In terms of what again, what they're being validated to do.

**Kelly Lloyd** 33:02

Yeah, and yeah, like, can you see how their lives are actually fundamentally different...

**Nicole Morris** 33:06

...Yeah...

**Kelly Lloyd** 33:06

...within this progression of the retrospective. Or is it like we were talking about before with a solo exhibition, where it is purely form? Where like, there's no room for, like, 'And then she did nothing from 1920 to 1940.' You know?

**Nicole Morris** 33:23

It's really interesting how the narrative as well is created around that, like, I remember when I took from my studio, I took six months off when I literally gave birth to Ula. Six months is nothing, like statutory you are allowed, like a year, like nine months to 12, right? That's a long, you know, a lot longer than, I think it was five or six months. And I always remember, I spoke to this guy who said, 'Yeah, so it would probably be good in what you write to just outline you've taken some time out.' I was like, in that five months, [Laughter] I did have a show. I gave birth and then breastfed, which is like a long job. And I just thought that was really interesting, like that, that concept of taking time out and what gets removed in the narrative.

I mean, I can only speak from understanding the U.K. system, really, childcare system, but you don't get free childcare until the child is three. That is three years, *three years*, which is an awful long time for you to have to pay for your childcare yourself, which is obviously only for people that can afford it. Or you take a huge cut in your career. Like, I remember when Ula was born, I had three jobs. And then having Ula obviously became a job. So, then I remember being like, what needs to go, and I kept stripping it back, kept stripping it back until, you know, [I] ended up, you know, having government support which isn't much at all. But also, it's taking a hit on your life in terms of, like, what you know, because, you know, you can't really, you know, justify having a studio or time if you can't afford dinner or something.

But, you know, in other places, childcare is paid for, from, you know, a year or even younger, you know? State paid maternity than straight into childcare provision that's paid. This system is archaic, it's sexist, it's unjust. And it creates this kind of, yeah, destruction of careers. It just re-amplifies the ladder of division, and also, they talk about the 'double shift', you know?

**Kelly Lloyd** 36:08

What's that?

**Nicole Morris** 36:09

Reproductive labor. So, if you think about caring responsibilities, so the idea that you would work all day, and then you go home, and you're going to have another shift of whatever that caring responsibility is. You know, there's no break. Whereas if a State recognizes reproductive labor which is saying that, that these things are not worthy of economic support. They're saying that having children, despite being, like, key to economic growth, they're saying that that is not worthy of being financially supported. They're saying, that having elderly cared for is not worthy. They're saying that cleaning is something we don't need to pay for.

If you think about all those reproductive labor costs, they don't pay for any of them, which means that your actual paid labor is cut. And then, it just kind of all falls in, into this devalued sense of identity, of purpose, of... And then you get this moment, I think, where then the State starts paying when that like three or something. And then you're just picking up the pieces of a very broken career, and a broken sense of self because you've fought so hard to just keep your foot in something, and then when you come back everything has, kind of, changed or... You know, like with that business school of, you know, degrees and stuff, you get people coming in that are churned out every year. You're already being kind of, you know, put further down, to then dare take... so I think there's something in that definitely around State recognition.

Yeah, I'm just got a book, it's called *Work Won't Love You Back* and it's by someone called Sarah Jaffe. It's all about that kind of idea about like emotional labor. And there's actually a whole section on an artist, which I'm kind of really interested in what, what she'll say about that. Yeah. And I think, I think that is like really critical, isn't it to a lot of people. So, I think perhaps this is what this book is, will talk about is that idea around your whole value or identity is based on paid labor that *won't* love you back. So, you know, your art career is like, you know, do you want to be, you know, seventy with the same career? Like, is that enough to keep you driving or have you neglected other parts of yourself?

Like, definitely I remember when, like, before I had Ula, like, having a weekend off was like such a really abstract and difficult concept, like, I found it really hard. I was like, I can't possibly take two days off, so I would always just have one. And even that day was hard, where it'd be all around, like, have I done enough, you know? I could have gone to

see a show, you know dadadada. It's like a really unhealthy relationship with yourself and, you know, time. But then when you have a child, like, all your time is off all of a sudden, but it's not at all. It's a totally different job.

But then, but then that's kind of interesting as well. So, then you become this onlooker. So, you see, like, I have plenty of friends that have a terrible relationship with self-care, and, you know, work all the time. And I see that, and I'm like, wow, I feel miles away from that now. But then at the same time, you become this onlooker into the Art World, in all its, like, systemic failings. [Laughter] But then also, you have this ongoing, you know, anxiety about never being in, always being out. But then perhaps it's better to be out looking in, you know?

But I do think it is definitely doable, having a child I think it is actually one of the, like, it's like the most incredible thing. And I think you can totally keep up a practice. It's more challenging, but it's worth every minute. It's about seeing it as this longer thing because you have this new relationship. It's falling in love, but in like, the most incredible way. And every day something grows, and it's worth it. And it's worth being on the outside because the outside is way bigger, do you know what I mean? It's like, it clears that tunnel vision, it clears it. Because it's like, you don't want a life that's just perpetually like you're failing yourself, always. Like, there's something just incredible about, like, Ula is learning to read, like just watching her be able to read a word is, like the most fulfilling moment. But it also takes you beyond, it doesn't feel like narcissistic. And I think it makes you want to work more with people. It makes you want to value, like, that kind of desire to, you know, improve society. Like anyway, it makes you put your politics more present as well, I think.

### **Kelly Lloyd 41:44**

I studied abroad in London during grad school for like three weeks and we met this one, I think he was an art historian. So, he works with political murals, both in Belfast, and also, I think he said he was someplace else, maybe South Africa, I don't know if I'm remembering correctly. And I remember at the end of this, like, really just lovely talk. You know, like, when you just go to talks with some people and yeah, you like, fall in love with them. And he's this lovely person, and then at the end, my professor who was interviewing him asked, like, you know, just do you have any general advice for people? And he said, 'Fall in love.' And I've always thought about that as like a kind of connection to, like, a wider humanity.

**Nicole Morris** 42:29

Yeah. Yeah, that's it. That's, yeah, that's what he meant? Yeah, that's so true. It's about like, just recentering as well, isn't it? Like, come on, like, this is not everything, isn't it? And if it is, then is that what you want? It's not going to love you back. Yeah. [Laughter]

**Kelly Lloyd** 42:50

Yeah. Thank you so much.

**Nicole Morris** 42:51

Thanks Kelly!

**Kelly Lloyd** 42:52

Nice talking to you!

**Nicole Morris** 42:53

Yeah, so nice.

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**Outro (Kelly Lloyd)** 43:01

If you are interested in hearing more excerpts from conversations I've had with people in the arts over the years, head over to the website [thisthingwecallart.com](http://thisthingwecallart.com)

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Thanks so much for listening, and tune in next week for my conversation with Leah Capaldi.