

SPEAKERS

Kelly Lloyd, Dominique White

Introduction (Kelly Lloyd) 0:35

You're listening to This Thing We Call Art, a podcast about how I can figure out a way not to become 'a cold, hard person.' 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 First of February 2021 with Dominique White.

Dominique White is a sculptor who recently relocated to Marseille after the first Covid wave in 2020. She's been working nomadically since forfeiting her London studio at the beginning of the pandemic, and has since pondered how working nomadically has changed her health and her practice. Her practice is positioned within the theories of Black Subjectivity, Afro-pessimism and Hydrarchy (from below) as a space that she defines as the Shipwreck(ed).

Recent and upcoming exhibitions include The Cinders of the Wreck at Triangle France, Marseille (2022), Hydra Decapita at VEDA Firenze, Florence (2021); Techno Worlds at Art Quarter Budapest, commissioned by Goethe-Institut (2021) and Blackness in Democracy's Graveyard at UKS, Oslo (2021).

She was awarded the ad occhi chiusi... prize by Fondazione Merz in 2021 and the Roger Pailhas Prize in 2019 in conjunction with her solo presentations with VEDA Firenze and has received awards from Artangel (UK) and the Henry Moore Foundation (UK) in 2020. White was in residency at Sagrada Mercancía (CL), Triangle France – Astérides (FR) and La Becque (CH) in 2020 and 2021.

I met Dominique through our mutual friend, Eva, and I was lucky to see her a couple of times before I got busy with my paid work, and she moved to Marseille. Our conversation was 2 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 in at the beginning...

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Kelly Lloyd 02:33

Why were you in Italy?

Dominique White 02:35

I was just producing a work for a collector, and then installed this work in the collector's house. That's also why I'm quite dead, because for like the last, I think, three days of it, I didn't really sleep. Yeah, it was fun. It's the first time I've actually properly done that, but also, it was also such a condensed time. Originally it was supposed to be like, I think it was supposed to be like two weeks that I was supposed to have, but we were a bit paranoid about traveling during Coronavirus.

Kelly Lloyd 03:08

Was this commission postponed or was it just kind of like condensed?

Dominique White 03:13

It was postponed and condensed. It was supposed to happen last April so like literally... or was it March? Pretty much like two days after I was supposed to have originally got back from Chile, I was literally supposed to straightaway go to Italy spend two weeks doing this commission and then come to France. But obviously, Italy was like in the thick of the first wave.

So, I brought like, the some of the materials. So, like the netting needles, like fully loaded with the twine that I need to weave. I brought part of the sail in my suitcase because we couldn't remember... Basically, I've produced like, in the gallery's basement for like months [Laughter] in 2019. So, I did have like relics of like, previous works like scattered everywhere. So, I couldn't remember what was there. And neither could he because he's, like, cleaned it out. So, I brought some of those bits but then I had, like a huge, like double pronged hook fabricated ready for me, basically to work on, which was really nice. Yeah. That kind of way of making which is, yeah, everything in my suitcase, and then half of it there, make it all there, and then come back, pretty much.

Kelly Lloyd 04:31

Do you have anyone to help you with it? Or do you just do everything?

Dominique White 04:35

At the moment, I do everything myself. But this year, I will be taking on an assistant at some point. I haven't quite worked out when because my schedule keeps changing. And it's really... ugh! But yeah, it's been a long time coming, but it's always been like a problem of funding. 'Cause couldn't not pay someone, and I also want to pay someone like a more than decent wage. In France, it's very, like normal for you to just take on a student for free for like, three months. And I'm just like, I can't... I can't do that.

Kelly Lloyd 05:13

Yeah, it's really normal in the U.S. also, especially for like professors just to like have a, like, free student. So, you, like, how... so, is this all through your gallery in Florence? And, like, when did you start working with that gallery? And like, do you like working with them? And, like, how did you meet them initially?

Dominique White 05:43

Okay, so officially... so like, the way that I came into contact with them was through one of their other Artists that they have on their books, called Emily Jones, who's also British artist, who basically was showing a gallerist a whole bunch of, like, different artists and their works. So, she was trying to, like, broaden the gallery's kind of like outreach and also like subject matter. So that happened in like, December 2018, was the first contact we had.

And then I went out there in January 2019... yeah that's right. To like, go through one of our private views of one of the other artists, and I did my first show in March of that year. Yeah. And then we did two art fairs that year, as always *Art-O-Rama* and *Paris Internationale* in France, but then also did a whole bunch of production with them. I really like working with them. They're only like a two-person team. But they're super cute. They're super, super sweet, and really supportive.

I mean, it's something that I'm learning more and more how to kind of like work with them, in the way that they want to work with their artists, but also, actually realizing that I don't have to do everything by myself. For example, they tend to help me with parts of production, if it's like, say with this like metal hook. It's like, I have a producer just outside of Florence that I love using but he's like, probably nearly seventy and doesn't speak any English. So, they kind of do that communication as long as I have, like, all the information needed. But yeah, no, I'm super happy to work with them because... especially like with

this year with, like, my schedule and the kind of ambitious works that I'm proposing to make with, like, various people that kind of support really helps. I don't really know how they do it to be honest. Because, yeah, I'm not the only busy artist that they have on their books, and if they are that, like kind of committed to like each of our projects. Yeah, fair play.

Kelly Lloyd 07:58

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Are they your only gallery who you work with consistently? Like, did you always know that you wanted to gallery?

Dominique White 08:08

This is the thing; I think there are different types of galleries that I also wasn't completely aware of. Like, admittedly, I was very suspicious of this gallery at first, just because as you... Rewind, I never wanted a gallery to be honest. I hated the idea of selling work, hence why my work is so difficult, and there will always be that layer of difficulty. Even if I start making in different, like, materials or whatever. Works will always be difficult, whether that's like scale, or like, you know, it's gonna fall apart kind of thing. But yeah, it was very suspicious at first because I was like, you guys are really nice, and I don't know whether that's like authentic nice. Turns out it is authentic nice. They are just like sweethearts.

But I've run into so many other galleries where I'm just like, that's the idea of a gallery that I had in my head before I started working with my current gallery. I think I would like to work with another gallery on top of this one. I think I just had to just survive this year first [Laughter] to see if that's possible. Because yeah, like my gallerist was saying is like, 'I really want you to take on another gallery as well.' But he was like, 'Dom, you have to realize that means you'll automatically have another show to do with them, like a year, like every two years. And then you probably have to do two more art fairs on top of what you're already doing on top of like your institutional shows and stuff.' And I was like, 'That's a very good point.' But yeah, I think for me, it's really important to work with someone who understands that the work is difficult, and that it's not always going to be sellable, and they do that really well, yeah. It's something that we're kind of querying together with, which is really nice.

Kelly Lloyd 10:07

I feel like that brings into like, question, this whole idea of like, what is sellable work anyways? And like, as long as you have... as long as you kind of are able to, like, clearly communicate what the work is.

Dominique White 10:21

But, but also, I think it's like, we need to expand what we consider as like, work as well. I mean, sure, like, I'd say, like, probably 80% of galleries do want you to make a certain type of work. Whether that fits into like sculpture, painting, drawings, or whatever, or video work, you know, like there's a very certain criteria. But like, even things like I dunno, drawings for like preparing for sculptures, or like, you know, sketchbooks, or I don't know, like, yeah, all these kind of things that are usually hidden from, like, the work or from the shows, I think, are also considered... But like, you obviously don't have to expand it to that, but I think it's, yeah, we need to broaden that understanding that it doesn't only have to be the finished object, it can be like, I don't know, the first version of that object that doesn't leave the studio or usually gets destroyed or something, you know? Or, like, yeah, maybe, maybe you do make yeah, these smaller maquettes for... I mean, this is something that we started talking about because he's like, 'Yeah, sure Dom you can keep making these 7/8/9-meter works, but like, you have to think about where the hell are they going to be stored? Or you're going to destroy them? And then like, what happens with that? And like, how sustainable is that? You know, you can't... like, you're essentially gonna burn out as you keep doing this, especially just by yourself.' And I was like, 'Yeah, these are all very good points, I just don't want to hear them.' [Laughter]

But yeah, I think I do think part of it is essentially, like the discourse that you frame the work with. Because if you say, yeah, it's supposed to destroy itself, I think it is about finding a collector or like a museum that can, like, take that. That can understand that. It's rare, but yeah, it's possible.

Kelly Lloyd 12:25

Wait, so where are you? Are you still doing the Triangle Residency? Or like, and do you have a studio? Where are you living now?

Dominique White 12:38

So, this behind me, this is my apartment. This apartment has my name on it.

Kelly Lloyd 12:45

Oh my God, that's so exciting! How long have you been there for?

Dominique White 12:50

Technically I didn't properly move in until like, the second week of November. So, I've been here for yeah, like two and a bit months. So, the residency was extended, so originally it was July to the end of October, and then they were really kind to just automatically extend it until the end of January, because they were like, 'Look, we know that you need the space and it'd be really exciting to keep you here.' But I don't have a permanent studio anymore. Technically I do, but it's in London, and I have no plans to come back to London, like, to live like my tax number and stuff are now in France.

Kelly Lloyd 13:27

Yeah. Do you, um, through the studios and with Triangle, have you been able to like, well, I guess also through the residency, have you've been able to meet people and like other artists and like be in a larger community of artists there?

Dominique White 13:41

Yeah. Which is why I like my stay in Marseille so far has been like really kind of seamless. Because yeah, I have like a community of friends here who are like curators, artists, or writers or kind of in the creative, or like cultural sphere (it's probably better to say), who I met, yeah, I guess like through the residency. Like, some kind of came for a studio visit in like my first couple of weeks there and then we ended up, you know, becoming friends. Or, like, yeah, their, like, friends of their friends. Or like, I went to like parties back in summer or like, you know, I'd kind of end up in the bar a bunch of people. So, like, yeah, this is really nice mix of, I think literally, everyone I've met isn't actually from Marseille they're from other parts of France or other parts of the world. Yeah, Marseille definitely has that energy of like a lost souls kind of coming together. [Laughter] Yeah, so that's why yeah, I feel happy to be here. And it's not a ... I mean, yeah sure, I miss London, but yeah, it's made my stay here a lot easier. But it's nice. It's very pretty.

Kelly Lloyd 14:55

Oh, that makes me happy. Like, why did you decide to move there?

Dominique White 15:00

I mean, some of that was from the ease of doing a residency for a couple of months. So, like I came to Marseille for the first time back when I did *Art-O-Rama* in 2019, and I thought ah, ok, this like a pretty cool city. Because I think by that point, I knew that I was doing the residency at *Triangle*. I think I found out like the month before or something. And I obviously knew with Brexit coming, and it's the kind of thing where I'd like been doing calculations and I knew that financially, like, London was not really getting any easier. Like, for example, like I needed a bigger studio, and it's like, to get a bigger studio was going to be like four or five hundred pounds plus the price of a room. So, like I was already going to be spending what 12/1300 and that was before the rent was going up on my studio. So, actually, it probably would have been more like six/seven. So, I was like okay, I need to find an alternative, and yeah, this made a lot of sense because also it's like, you can get a train to Milan straight from Marseille for like 35 euros.

And you know, living next to the sea. I dunno, France has always made sense. Like, it's the language that I can speak and it's something I've always wanted to do since I was younger. And it just kind of felt right, and then obviously, I let go of everything just before I went to Chile last year. Like, I let go of my room and everything, so it was kind of like simultaneously lucky but traumatizing, and it just kind of felt right to make that jump because the thought of, like, going back to London to rent a space was like... no, [Laughter] absolutely not. Yeah, I mean because the rent I pay for here I think is... what is that in pounds... I think it's probably like 520 pounds and something from my apartment here.

Kelly Lloyd 17:07

Yeah, that makes me happy for you and like, super jealous. I mean, London is really difficult. Like, I already before the pandemic didn't see people for months, just because I was working so much. And, um, but when we got pizza, I remember talking to you about how you were like, done with London, and specifically about how, like, you like weren't showing in London. So, like, I feel like the question that I'm trying to ask is just like, what's the point of London? [Laughter] It seems like it was obviously the right decision for you to move.

Dominique White 17:44

I mean, I'm in a very particular position, and like a very privileged position, both like actually for me, and from people looking from the outside. It's like, I managed to get to a

point in my career when I could actually make this possible. Like, I don't have to freak out about having four jobs, because my rent is fucking 500 pounds. And, I don't have a studio at the moment, which saves a lot of stress, and I don't have to pay for an Oyster card.

But like, for real, I don't know what the point in London is right now, really. Like, and this is also like, from having conversations with people that I'm supposed to be working with in Europe for example with Brexit, they're like, 'We don't actually know how to move your work.' Things like that are problems that I hadn't even thought about pre-Brexit.

For me, I was just tired of London, because, you know, it made me into a very hard, cold person. Because, yeah, I was working all the time. I think the art scene is pretty brutal in London. You know, working two or three jobs on top of having a practice. Like having to schedule to see your friends. Like that isn't something that I've had to do in Marseille yet. Like the most scheduling that I've had to do is now since, like, you know, we have a 6pm curfew like you have to plan stuff a bit more because of, like, yeah, trying to navigate that is a bit hard when you're working. But you know, other than that, you got to just, like, ring up your mate like 'Do you go for coffee or dinner?' Or 'Do you want to come over for dinner tonight?' kind of thing. It's not, 'Oh, in two weeks do you want to drink one glass of 10-pound wine [Laughter] in the pub that's, like, two hours from us but it's a pub that we like?' kind of thing. It's...

I don't miss that way of living, nor the pace. I don't really know how I did it on top of like doing all of these other things. I mean Marseille has a different, it also has a chaotic pace, but it's not that kind of rat race like New York, Paris, like major city pace. But like, yeah, when you throw Brexit into the mix, I'm just like, oh God, like, I really don't know what the point of it is anymore. 'Cause, I mean, this is what I've been explaining to Eva, there's so many other cities that can offer so much more security or like, a better way of living. But also, like after the pandemic, I'm really into the idea of decentralizing from these major cities. Like I really don't see the point in them anymore. Maybe it's you're more of like a younger emerging artist... I mean, I am a young emerging artist, but I mean, like, you know, fresh out of Uni. I understand the desire to be in those major cities, but I think as an older artist, yeah, fuck me. [Laughter] Yeah, I I really can't grasp why these cities should be deemed important anymore.

Kelly Lloyd 20:42

Yeah, I feel like it is a privilege of like, being further along in your career, that you are able to, like, detach from a place. And I mean, of course, it seems like COVID is just like,

thrown all of that... [Sigh] ... like, I feel like it's such a, it's such a large question, to think about what the Art World is now. And, like, how to kind of prepare to, like, make the most out of it, whatever it ends up being, or something? Or whatever it is now, and then changes into, or something. Whereas it seemed like before, the Art World was like enough of a stable thing to grasp that it was like, okay, I'll stay in the city where I like network, and I go to galleries, and I like, meet people, and then they give me these opportunities, or whatever. I mean, like, who knows many of that's actually true or not, but at least it's like, a consistent narrative that it seems like it's applicable to like, whatever situation you're in. Um, but yeah, like, I just don't... [Sigh] Like, I do think it's possible to decentralize, but it worries me.

One question that I definitely wanted to ask you was about, like, when you decided to... (and this is simplified in my mind, because I, you know, I don't know the logistics of it). But when did you decide to, like, quit all other jobs, and then just like, focus entirely on your work? And, like, when are you able to, I don't know, start to like, yeah, live a different kind of life inside of this career?

Dominique White 22:28

I only ended up doing that when I was certain that my like, art schedule and art income was like greater than, like, my day job. And I also then simplified all of my expenses. I mean, that's the reason why right now, I am not looking for a studio because it's like, I also needed to simplify my expenses, again, to ensure that I can actually survive on the income that I'm taking. And that's like our income has now been like, shaken by COVID, but it's still sustainable. But yeah, that was literally the decision, it was like a risky jump, essentially. It was back when I did, I think it was a residency I did in Italy in 2019 for like a month, but then straight after that I was at producing work for like another month in Italy...

There were all these things, and I was just like, there's no way that I can hold down, like, a gallery job in London with this. Like, I'd already proposed HR like, 'Hey, look, if I do this, can I like come back and work sporadically or whatever?' They said, 'No.' So, I was like, 'Okay.' So, I was like, so I really have to make this decision now. I think it was like, I'd asked that in like February or something, and I was like, due to leave in June. So okay, so I have to make this decision now. So yeah, I saved up a bunch of money and just kind of made that jump. But that's what I mean about it being like a thing of privilege because not

everyone can just do that, and I was very thankful to be that busy that year, and also, I had the backing of the gallery, which helps.

I mean, it's not like I got to be paid like a monthly wage by the gallery but there's always that like, kind of support there. Like, we had that conversation where I said to him, I was like, you know, like, 'I've calculated all of my income this year from shows and whatever. And like, from selling work, but like, there can be some sticky points, like say, if I don't get paid by this invoice for like six months, like what happens then kind of thing?' Or, you know, like, 'When I do eventually look for a studio, like, is there any support there initially, that you can then recuperate in different way?' Like, it's almost like having another parent kind of thing. But yeah, yeah, for me, it was about taking a big risk and just doing that jump. Because now it's like, even I still have like, small things like talks and artist talks, and kind of, like, small shows that I don't really have to give so much energy that pay as well as like the institutional shows and whatnot. So, yeah, I'm one of those people that really, really goes with their gut, and it felt really right at that moment to do that. It doesn't mean that I'm very secure now, like, next year, who knows? [Laughter] Who knows how that will pan out?

Kelly Lloyd 25:29

I'm going through a bit of an existential crisis at the moment, and so this is just entirely me projecting [Laughter] so feel free to not answer any of these questions. But like, are you ever like, fuck simplifying my expenses, like, I want a couch! You know? Or like, I want to live alone, you know? And, and I guess, in that way, right, like, what does that mean, to maybe have to move cities to be able to have those things? And to like, what kind of sacrifice is related to simplifying your expenses? And like, when is it worth it, and when is it, like, not worth it? And, and also, like, do you ever just get tired of, like, being okay for the next year, but like, not necessarily knowing that, like, it'll be okay next year too?

Dominique White 26:23

I think like that's a tricky one to answer because it's like, if you'd asked me that at the beginning of 2020, I think I would have a different answer for you. I think now that things have been shaken up and are so uncertain, I think me having an uncertainty about next year is partially because I've chosen to be an artist, but it is partially because like, everybody, the whole of Europe, and the U.S. is in recession right now. So, it's like that kind

of realization that we're not quite in the swinging '20s just yet, we have to [Laughter] wait a couple of years for that to emerge. So, I'm like, fuck.

Yeah, I mean, I do get tired of simplifying my expenses, but at the same time, it's like, I bought that couch from *MADE*. Like, I bought that couch with the idea that I'm not going to buy a shitty couch that cost two hundred euros because it's, it's cheap and quick. I was like, I'm gonna buy like a... it's not like, like it's a grand, but I think it was like what 550. So, I'm gonna buy a nice comfy fucking sofa out of this paycheck that I just got, because I want some comfort and I want some nice shit my life. I'm gonna buy this fucking ficus tree because I want a fucking tree my flat. [Laughter] I'm gonna rent this one bed apartment instead of renting this like twenty square meter studio, because I want some space that I can call my own, kind of thing. I'm going to rent it unfurnished because I want to furnish it with stuff that I've always wanted, kind of thing. And that was the sacrifice for leaving London. For leaving that network, for leaving my friends, for leaving that almost that... I don't know, this sounds like really like a like a paradox, but almost like leaving that financial security because I knew at any given moment, I could take on two bar jobs and a gallery job if I really wanted to. I mean, Marseille, I can't take on a bar job because they've been shut since October. So, like, you know, like, yeah. There are those things to balance out, but at the same time, it's like, the rent I was paying in the U.K. was way lower than what it should have been, and now that opportunity is gone. I'm now seeing my friends scramble for, like, an affordable room. Like, that's the mad thing. It's like, I know that this apartment in its entirety is cheaper than a double room in Zone Three London in a house share of four people.

I just, yeah, I didn't really want to be in my 30s still with that insecurity. Like, here...this is what I mean about like other cities or other countries having different types of security or different things to offer. I know I have this apartment for three years. And like for him to (like my landlord) to get me out it's like, very, very hard. I mean, I can leave pretty much whenever I want, but I know I have that security for three years if I'd like. Yeah. [Laughter] Yeah. Yeah, of course, I get tired of simplifying expenses, but I do also treat myself every now and again.

Like when this I've just sent off an invoice this morning, when that hits, I'm fucking buying myself a coffee table, I'm buying myself some nice fucking dress. Like, I came back from Florence with like, two bottles of grappa that costs like 25 euros each. I was like hell, like, I'm gonna treat myself, I don't give a shit. So, like, I have that kind of balance. But at the same time, I'm not also willing to be paying for like a fucking 700 pound studio on top of

my rent. You know, there's things that I balance out. I've also said like, I won't feel comfortable doing it until I start earning like more than 30K at a base minimum. I don't want it to be like, I've spent my whole paycheck every time.

Kelly Lloyd 30:18

One thing that I do wonder about is... because I remember talking to you about writing this proposal... I mean, I think your work is like what I've seen like is quite grand, you know? Even though I haven't seen it in person, unfortunately, which seems important to the work. But it seems very grand, and I just wonder like, you know, like at LACMA, like, um Chris Burden has like these two huge sculptures, but also like he's the same dude who like asked his friend to shoot him, you know? So, like when is the point in which you can begin to think bigger? And begin to think about resources that you, like, don't have yet? And like, how much that's tied to, or not tied to, like, your present feelings of scarcity? Or you know, of like having to kind of work within your means?

Dominique White 31:19

It's a good question. But I think because I look at it from a different perspective in regard to scale of the work is like integral to the practice, but also the budgeting of the work varies, a lot, because technically, the metal aspect tends to be the most expensive aspect of the work, so are the like silicone molds. I can easily drop like a grand on silicone, which is extremely painful. But I think in the beginning, it's like, it's not, 'bluffing' isn't the right word... I think part of it is actually just always about asking for more. Like say this is in the context of like doing a show with someone. It's always knowing exactly, *exactly*, how much the work cost to make. Yeah, I fund things from certain projects that can be used for other projects, so that's how I keep always like building larger and larger and larger. So, I would probably be making like 15 fucking huge silicone molds this year, which will then be like integral to my practice, for my studio, in that I can then experiment with these works or whatever. Yeah, I don't really know how to answer that other than like, the budgets have just been slowly increasing with time, kind of thing. But also, like finding producers who work within those budgets that do what you want or do what you need. Yeah, that's a tricky one. Because also, it doesn't always work out.

Yeah, it's like one of the biggest institutional shows that I'm about to do. Well first of all, they won't tell me what the budget for the work is, because it's part of a group show. And second of all, they basically said, what I proposed to do is like virtually impossible

because it takes too much labour, and it's like too complicated for their in-house production team to make. So, it's like trying to then navigate that. This is why I'm like very tired today [Laughter] because I'm trying to like juggle several things this week. So then trying to make this work, the way that it should be made, is actually now becoming so much more work than it needs to be. And trying to keep it within budget is another thing that... if you don't tell me the budget, how can I keep it in budget? You know what I'm saying? It's not always as straightforward as it may look. That's probably what it boils down to. So yeah, but I always like to dream big, and then have to scale back after, as opposed to try and do it the other way around. So...

Kelly Lloyd 34:07

You should sew that onto a pillow or something, that's great advice! [Laughter] I need to think that way. Okay, I want to ask you something that you do not need to answer. [Laughter]. But it's something that I'm wondering about. And so I'm just kind of interested in like, how, like, you know, in the first couple sentences of your artist statement, like how you're very clear about yeah, like Black Subjectivity, Afro-pessimism, like, you know, Black Diaspora, Afrofuturism... And I mean, it makes sense obviously, with your work, like you can see it clearly is like, you know, yeah, the set of materials and the set of, like, historical concerns and, you know. But like, do you ever feel... like how, what's your relationship to Blackness and your work? It just seems like this thing that I constantly have to think about how I'm going to play it. But maybe that's because it's not like, as kind of integrated into my work.

Dominique White 35:13

I think that it depends on that current situation, it depends... I'm quite impatient when it comes to speaking about these things. So, if I feel like someone is, like, taking up too much space, or too much of my energy, I just shut down I'm like 'Look, I don't give a shit.' Because also, I feel like it has to be really explicit in that statement, because I don't want white folks to get twisted and think about themselves in this future. Like, I get really annoyed when they start using the word 'we' because I'm like, 'No, no, no, no. Take yourself out. Sit down, be quiet, like there is no "we" in this future.' Yeah, I feel I have to be explicit in that sense, but then also, I do switch and talk about Futurity in general or Accelerationism kind of thing. Or, yeah, speak about politics in a more like generalized like, non-racial way, even though I think it's quite hard to speak about politics in a non-racial

way, but anyway... But yeah, I have varying levels to like, my patience as to like how much I will reveal, or how much I will like, give to people, for sure, so yeah. I don't really have like a set criteria of when I will speak about X or when I will speak about Z.

Yeah, it depends on how much energy I want to give, pretty much. I don't think there is a set way of speaking about work. It depends on how you want to frame it in that particular time. Yeah, whether you think it's important to also just reveal... Literally, sometimes I'm literally like, this work is about like, Abolition, and it is about like, destroying everything. And it is about a very certain vision of, like, Black Futurity. And then when people will ask, 'Ah, can you expand on this?' No, that's it. Sometimes that's enough.

I don't know how to talk about my work yet in French, so... some of the language actually doesn't even exist in French, it's really, really interesting. Because the main discourse around like, Abolition, not so much... but like, like Afro-pessimism, for example, or, like, Black Accelerationism is actually a very Anglo British American discourse. That hasn't really been translated so well yet into other languages. Or like, yeah, the discourse doesn't really exist. Or it does, but it's not in the mainstream kind of thing. France is very weird place to have racialized work, essentially. It's a very like, utopian country that is really fucked up.

Kelly Lloyd 37:56

Like, I remember listening is one I think, like, *This American Life* about this one African-American woman who's living in France who like, could speak without, like an accent but put on an American accent 'cause she knew she would be like treated better as like a Black person. This is like, the this is like, the fascinating part of like, living in a different place. It's obviously also like the really difficult part. Yeah, right, from me to you, I could be like, 'Oh, that's interesting! Like, that'll have an interesting effect on your work!' [Laughter] You know, even though like, obviously, like, you have to do all the hard work with all of that.

Dominique White 38:29

Yeah, I think it's very interesting, but I'm stubborn enough to like kind of not allow affect my work, because even actually, within the Black community in France, there is this weird utopian vision of like, Post-race kind of bullshit, or like Post-Blackness that is happening, which is very bizarre.

I don't know, I feel like it's a very like, loose subject to understand. And the only way that I've been able to like, read it is through the guise of like, Post-Blackness, which is something that I fully, I can't get behind because I think it implies that Blackness is like, a solid thing. That it has like one identity, as you would just saying. And that's how I perhaps I read it in France, for example. Like when I do speak to Black French folks, and were like, 'Yeah we purposefully don't make work about Blackness because of X, Y, and Z.' And I'm like... in my opinion, none of those are like valid reasons not to make work about Blackness. And like... yeah, I mean, that's a whole different discussion actually. Like, fuck. [Laughter] It's so messy sometimes. But yeah, that's the that's the way that I kind of try. Because I know it's a discourse that's starting to happen in London, which I don't know. Yeah, I really don't like it. I have a big problem of the idea of Post-Blackness.

Kelly Lloyd 39:58

Yeah, I remember when Obama got elected and people were 'Post-Black?' And it's just like, 'What?!' [Laughter]

Dominique White 40:04

Like, did you just forget, like, all of the threats he's had because he is Black? Like...

Kelly Lloyd 40:10

What are we even talking about? Yeah, it's insane. Yeah, I think something I think a lot about being here... like I'm in this reading group, it's about like Queer and Postcolonial and, like, you know, studying this stuff that I need to study. And it's somehow, like, devolved really recently into, like, let's read about Black people from, like, Black American writers. And it's just, like, this weird... so I feel like something I'm really conscious to being in the U.K. is just... like, yeah, like we're in the [U.K.], like why don't we read some like Black British writers or something? Like why are we like reaching over to the U.S., like? I don't understand how... I don't know, so it's something that I'm really thinking about being here. And I think one of the reasons why I'm here is so I can, like, think through these things.

Dominique White 41:14

I wonder if it's because like, particularly in the U.K., Blackness is so fragmented in terms of like, migration, as opposed to like how people view America as like, obviously, it's not all just like, one history, and like people have migrated at different points. But that is

like, the majority of the discussion is obviously around like the wake of Slavery whereas, like, in the U.K., it's like, Windrush, and then you have a lot of Nigerians, and a lot of Ghanaians, and then it's like other... within that within in that tiny percentage of the population already. I think, like, what Black folks are like, fucking, like, I dunno... 3% of the population. There are obviously obviously, like nationalities and stuff, but it's a different. Yeah, I think maybe there's maybe too many different histories. So, you can't really speak in a united way? Not that you would speak in the united way, but yeah, it's a bit... it's weird, I think.

Kelly Lloyd 42:13

Do you have any questions for me? But then also, is there something in this conversation that you thought we would talk about that we haven't talked about?

Dominique White 42:21

No. I feel like yeah, we've covered what I kind of expected, yeah. Is there anything that you feel like we haven't covered? Or...

Kelly Lloyd 42:32

I mean, I feel like I just want like a breakdown of like, what are you doing, but then also, that's also just like, a thing that I want as a friend. I don't know, I'm really excited for you! Thank you!

Dominique White 42:46

Bye! Have a nice day!

Kelly Lloyd 42:47

You too! Bye!

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Epilogue (Kelly Lloyd) 42:52

On the 15 of January 2022, Dominique wrote this to me, 'Since our discussion, I perhaps wanted to highlight that I never recovered from the fatigue nor the disillusionment that you could feel in my voice. I worked myself to the bone throughout 2021, culminating in

several burnouts, some more debilitating than others, and I feel that very few people allowed space for recovery. The thinnest silver lining from 2021, is that I have earned enough money to continue making Marseille my home; filling my apartment with plants and closing in on a more stable space to work in the city.

I travelled a lot throughout the year; producing in different cities, falling out of old habits and most importantly, spending a lot of time alone and by the time I managed to re-enter the U.K. in November, there was a sudden realisation that I hold the memories of this country dearer than the reality. I think I'd known this for the longest time - I was struggling to survive in London, choosing to juggle an art practice with three jobs and I knew that the sustainability of that reality was running out fast - I think I needed to be reminded that the U.K. will never give a shit about me. I've had this conversation with many unrelated folks, but honestly fuck it, it's time to claim another passport (Jamaica/ St Lucia?) before Priti Patel decides that I'm finally not British enough even though I'm cursed or perhaps branded with the surname of their legacy.

I've seen that shift in my practice too. These bodies or forms or whatever you'd like to call them, no longer hang in a static capture or escape - it's not this ambiguous limbo. I'm not quite sure what triggered it, but they're seeking revenge. I'm seeking revenge.'

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Outro (Kelly Lloyd) 44:58

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

This podcast was funded by the Arts Council England, Artquest, the Gane Trust, and TILA Studios. If you would like to help make the next season of this podcast a reality, please consider rating and reviewing this podcast on iTunes, becoming a Patreon member, or donating through the Paypal link on the project's website.

The logo was designed by Eva Duerden, the episode artwork was created by Fiona Reilly, and the theme song was made by Alessandro Moroni. This podcast was produced by me, your host, Kelly Lloyd.

Thanks so much for listening, and tune in next week for my conversation with Gregory Bae.