

Penumbra Online Podcast Interview: Hosted By Bo Locke and Hannah Neeley, Featuring Reaa Puri

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BL: Hello, and welcome to our next episode of pop the Penumbra Online podcast. My name is Bo Locke and I am the non-fiction editor

HN: And my name is Hannah Neeley, and I am the reviews editor

BL: And joining us today, we have Reaa Puri. She is the filmmaker, director, and co-founder of Break Type Productions, a film production company owned and operated by women of color rooted in intersectionality solidarity. Hi Reaa, thanks for joining us.

RP: Thank you for having me. So good to be here.

BL: So why don't you give us a quick little spiel about what, what kind of films you make?

RP: Sure. Yes. So I do a range of things and I kind of grew up working in kind of a range of positions in film. So, but primarily I direct, produce, shoot and edit sometimes, and right now I'm working on a feature-length documentary. My work primarily is really focused on issues of, of sexual and state violence, as well as addressing collective healing and collective power and what that looks like. So those are themes that, like, often are super consistent in my work. And right now I'm doing a doc, but you know, I work, I've worked in narrative, we were talking about music videos. I've worked in music, videos and shorts and hybrid. So it really just depends. Like this year I started animating. So I think it just depends on the mood. Like, yeah.

BL: Sounds like you're very multifaceted. What, what are some of the struggles that come with, like, making documentaries about such a sensitive topic?

RP: Yeah. So this is my first feature, feature-length documentary. And with it, it's like the kind of funds I'm trying to raise for it are, you know, way, I think, more than anything I've done in the past. And I think with that, there's a lot of gatekeepers that you have to navigate in the, in the film industry in particular, which has been quite a unique challenge. So I think for me, it's, it's, I think one of the challenges, you know, kind of continuing to stay inspired, especially when you're working on a feature-length documentary. Like, it ends up being, like, a two or three or four year process or five-year process. So, you know, really being able to stay with the core of, like, why, why you're doing the work and then continuing to build and deepen the relationships with the people you're working with, has been quite, I mean, that's, I'm like in the cracks of that right now. So, that's, that's, that's been one of the things for sure, amongst many others.

BL: Yeah. I'm sure COVID has messed with the filmmaking process as well. Did you have to put your project on hold or did you just kind of shift gears to other aspects of it?

RP: Yeah, I mean, that's really, it, it was kind of about. I think for me, getting a little, you know, resourceful around how to continue building momentum for the project and working towards something with the limitations that, that I had. This story, this story in particular is very sensitive for political reasons as well. And it's happening in an abroad...in Kashmir, which is, it's an occupied territory. And, so, you know, that was, that was one of the things that was off the table, which was shooting during COVID, you know, going there in person. But I realized that actually there was a lot of various things that I could do in the meantime, whether it was, like, finding safe ways to shoot within the US with certain people who are characters, who are now in the US or whether it meant, like, focusing on grants and, you know, building those kind of funder relationships. So much of what I've done this year has been, like, non-creative work around, you know, kind of really advancing the visibility of the project to, like, industry specific people. But then also, like, with the creative process, knowing that now I have, like, over, you know, over 50 hours of footage, knowing that there's, like, a lot, but I can do that as well. So. Yeah. And that's something that I've been focusing on now is like,

really shifting gears to look at all my footage and start making selects of scenes and things like that.

HN: Okay. So you've done a lot of narrative shorts and shorter series in the past. What urged you to kind of create the "K for Kashmir" short into a full length documentary?

RP: Yeah, I mean, I think ultimately it was, I think it comes from a really personal place, like my great-grandmother's from there. And has a hotel there in the region. And so it was just, I think, you know, the short, it was actually one of my first films that I ever made was that short. And I really had no idea what I was doing when I made it. Like, I went as a first-year college student. Shot some footage went, went back to Berkeley and I'd, like, sat on the footage for a year. And it was just one of those things that, like, stayed with me and years later, Kashmir and what's happening on the ground continues to, like, stay with me. And so it's just one of those things that I find that I really care about and have cared about for a prolonged period of time. So just, it just felt right to kind of continue digging a little deeper to see what else is there both creatively and as a story and as something that can also hopefully, like, shed light on the issue, but to, you know, arrive at it from a creative place.

HN: Very cool. Does it, do you find that most of the projects you work on come from, like, a personal, like, urging to look into that or like inspiration from like friends and close family members?

RP: Yeah, definitely. I mean, I think for me, it's like, what are the things I'm obsessed with and cannot stop thinking about? And ultimately that bleeds into my creative endeavors. And like, I find that so much of what I'm interested in are, like, fundamentally, like, human questions and, and, you know, inequities and things that we all face. But then to translate that to kind of a, just a more universal story bowl, so rooted in something specific. So like, I think last year I was just really interested. Like, I had a few dating profiles and I was really interested in, you know, technology and like, what would it mean to kind of, um, create a short narrative film where it's, it's rooted in a character who is navigating these digital -- digitized spaces. And what does it mean for her to confront her own isolation or

belonging in the context of these digitized spaces? Because she was like, the character was like a Lyft driver and then she was like, doing all these, like, app based jobs. And I was just really fundamentally curious in that question, for instance. So it, yeah, it usually just comes from these, like, really simple ideas that I continue to think about and obsessed about, and they turned into projects.

HN: That's cool. You're working from life experience. It probably means that you're more invested in the product too. 'Cause it's like close to your heart.

RP: You have to be, yeah, you absolutely have to be. I mean, at the end of the day, it's, you know, like so much of, even with this project that I've worked on now, it's been about two years of working on this feature and I have absolutely no funding for it. And at that point it's like, you really, really have to like, love, love the story and really care about it. To continue to, like, wake up every day and be like, I'm going to keep working on this and believe in this. Even when the world doesn't see it yet, or the world doesn't believe in this vision yet. So you, you, I think in that degree, you really have to be like a cheerleader for yourself. And I think that's true across artistic and creative mediums, you know, whether it means, like, getting up to write that 10 pages when you, you know, when it's still in your head, you know.

BL: I know for some films what they'll do is they'll film, like, a scene and then use that almost as, like, a trailer to help get funding and investors. Can you even really do that with a documentary? Cause I'd be like, I feel like you're used footage, so like to tell a specific point of view. So I feel like, have you, have you had to do that, like make, like, a trailer that you can show potential investors?

RP: Yeah, we've cut. I mean, so personally I've just been really protective of where I'm getting funding from. So I've primarily looked at grant funding because I think private, private money I've been really concerned about ethically, whether that's appropriate. And I don't think it is, but, but with, with grant funding yes, I've, I've cut scenes and cut work samples that are like 10 minutes samples for funders to kind of get a sense of the project. and, yeah, so we do end up doing that quite a bit and you know, every, every with every application you end up tweaking something and changing something. So it's, it's really interesting because, I dunno if you've

ever had to write a grant application, but they're so involved and it can be kind of a daunting process when you're still starting your film.

And you're like, I don't know what it's going to be. Like, I want time to explore, but you know, it pushes you to kind of get really specific and really literal about, like, what you're going for, with story with artistic voice, with like the subject and all of those things, like even cutting the work samples have been really valuable actually.

BL: Okay. I'm sorry, go ahead.

HN: Go ahead. A grant application. It's like you said, it's very complicated. I took a course on it in my undergrad, which is why I'm familiar with it. How did you get introduced to something like that? Especially as a creative, maybe you won't be having, necessarily, classes and things on, like, the like nitty gritty process.

RP: Absolutely. I think so. Last year I got into the San Francisco film, film house residency, and all of a sudden I was immersed, basically, in, in a setting where I was around filmmakers who had won, like, Academy awards and have, you know, screened their films at Sundance and had all this industry experience. So it really was through being in these professional settings, where I really kind of was looking out for like, what are ways that people are funding their projects and. That's how I learned about grants. And so it's literally been like, all trial and error and absolutely is something that I did not learn about in school. I studied film, but had no idea about how the financial process works. And I'm like, now it's like, if I could control or have any say in, like, an education program, that's like focused on creatives, it would be like funding because we ended up spending so much of our time, you know, looking at like, how do we make, how do we have careers that are financially sustainable? And it's just such, it's such an ongoing, you know, I think a thing that we have to... a reality that we have to confront and address.

BL: Okay. So when you transitioned from school to the professional aspects of it, obviously when you're in school, you have like all your professors and your peers for support. And then I feel like once you're professional, you're kind of on your own a bit. How was that transition? Like personally, not necessarily the nitty gritty

details of it, but, like, how did you, not necessarily cope, but how did you handle all of a sudden being on your own? Like you have to make it or break it.

RP: Right. Yeah. And I think it can be really isolating for a lot of people who come out of that process, cohort and go out into the world and how you're expected to find work. For me, throughout school, I was actually working in film as well. Like, I spent years shooting weddings, and picking up different kinds of, like, jobs where I would primarily shoot or, like, do a technical skill, which I think was a great introduction into, like, by the time I was fully out of school to kind of know, roughly, you know, have certain things to reach out to, and, start working in the industry. I was always very clear that I wanted to ultimately make films. And so I was. I was looking at like, what's the path that can get me there. And I was more interested than, like, picking up a job that let me, like, shoot for a day and, you know, get paid for some of those more technical skills while I continued to build. And so, you know, worked, I worked for a range of, video, like video production, new news companies and, kind of agent agencies that are more, like, digital focused. So oftentimes I would end up, like, producing, shooting, directing for them. Doing various, like, technical skills, but like, one person handling it essentially. So, but it can be really isolating. And I think, I think ultimately, like, for me, the shift in my career was really when I found, you know, my partners at Break Tide and decided to collectivize, I think that, like, was a real game changer.

BL: Okay. Kind of give yourself like a, not necessarily a support group, but just peers that you can...work with. I think that's really important for creative types, because for so many different, yeah, for so many different creative types, it's like, you kind of feel like you're on your own or you're writing your own poems, writing your own books, you're directing your own films. And it's like, you have to, you really have to form a kind of a collective, as you were saying, to have people to bounce ideas off of. So, you know, to help fight that isolation. And I think that's really important. So, I'm glad you, I'm glad you have that company, Break Tide, to really help with that. Because I feel like that's where so many people get lost and end up dropping their dreams, because they feel like they're on their own.

RP: Right. Absolutely. I mean, I think, yeah, like it's the one thing that as creatives and as artists, I think we, we do well when we're in collaborative settings and we

feed off of that energy from each other, you know? So like, and there's a lot of power to collectivizing, you know, you, you get to be in spaces where you feel like your process is nurtured. So even out of school, actually, I had a few collectives of artists and, like, even with a former professor, we would meet, like, once a month and we would, like, work on our creative projects. So even before Break Tide, like, I was always really interested in like, what are... sorry for the noise...what are ways that, you know, we can get into like these. Just DIY spaces where we can create and support each other and feedback each other's works. Like that has always been my favorite part of, of this whole process. And even now like the SFL and residency, I'm at, it's one of the most amazing things to like every month, every second Monday we meet and we review each other's work and we feed back in and it's just a generative process. I think for everyone involved really.

BL: Okay. Yeah, that sounds so super supportive. Cause I don't know, just cause I write prose. So I'm more familiar with the, you know, sit by yourself in a quiet room, don't interact with anybody. And I feel like I know that there aren't as many support groups for that. Cause for filmmaking, I mean, you can't just hunker down in a room and do something on your own to start with. You have to go out and film something first or, you know, have your idea. I guess you could pen, like, a script or something like that, but I feel like you still have to interact with people in order to get to that point.

RP: So it's a highly collaborative field. And I would say, even for writing, like, I think you learn a lot about your craft when you present it to a group of people that you trust.

BL: Yeah.

RP: And you get to hear what they think. So some of that stuff I think ultimately does happen, you know, maybe in a closed room, but, but some of the, I think to me, like, some of the most valuable moments come from the, opening it up to the, yeah, because ultimately the art it's like, there's a level of consumption to it and...

BL: Yeah, I feel like it should happen more with writing it. Like, I feel like writers need that more. And we kind of try to all do, be independent, do it on our own. So...

RP: Absolutely.

HN: And you do a lot of the, a bit of the writing for some of your films, is that correct?

RP: Yes.

HN: Do you enjoy doing that or do you prefer to be on the more production side of it?

RP: It's, it's quite a special thing to write, I think, I think too, to me, I've always been the most afraid of it because it literally requires you to be so, you know, precise. And so I think it's almost one of the, one of the art forms that is so spiritual in the sense that you're really, you know, it's a pen and you, and then you just, your imagination gets to really flow.

I think that way it's really magical. I've always been a visual thinker, but so, which is why I think the writing has always been like, oh, is this once you get into it? I think it can be really valuable. And it's something that teaches me a lot about myself and... I remember as a student, um, one of the most profound things that my, one of my professors had said to me, screenwriting professor had said was about, you know, good writing and how, how, if you're able to tell a story and take out all the words and the story still makes sense, in the film context, that you've done a good job. And that was always, like, a fascinating thing to me because ultimately it's something that is turning into something that's visual, you know? And it's, yeah, you're using your words, but it's like, ultimately you want it to be something that's..felt and acted rather than just spoken. So I remember watching *Moonlight* and that was one of the first times that I was like, Oh, I get what this, I get what she meant by that.

HN: It's so difficult and unique with film writing. Rather than prose or poetry like that. It's like you said, it's much more precise. You don't get all that, like narration per se or like that, like, 'and then they walked to the door,' like that all has to be conveyed visually. So like, I can imagine there's maybe even more pressure to write a script, because, like, you only get a couple of lines to evoke a lot more emotion than you would in like say a book or a short story.

RP: Absolutely. You know, and yeah. I mean, I completely agree with that, but I, and I also feel just with the PO like poetry, something that I do, and I've done actually like all my life, I think since as early, as like eight or nine years old and something I still do.

And I feel like when it really comes down to it with creativity and art, like it's...so much more fluid than we think. Like there's so much more connected than I think we give these different art forms credit for. And sometimes I find that like, taking a break from my film and, like, writing a poem or, like, animating something gives me a lot more, like, energy and fuel to come back with some kind of inspiration to edit, you know, or do something that's very technical. So, yeah.

HN: That's cool. Making sure that you're not losing that, like, artistic energy, you're just redirecting it. So you don't get burned out in any one thing since there's a lot of different aspects that go into one project, like the funding and all that.

RP: Right. Absolutely.

BL: Okay. Um, one question I like to ask people is, if you had no budget constraints and, probably excluding your current project, what would your dream project be? Like, no budget constraints at all.

RP: Yeah.

HN: Or Covid constraints.

BL: Yeah. Like, free world, unlimited money. What would you do?

RP: Oh, my God. It's so fun. Well, there's so many, honestly, there's, like, way too many ideas. Okay. But, but one of them, one of them... I'll give you actually two, if I can.

BL: Yeah.

RP: Um, one is a script I started writing last October, um, based on kind of true, true-ish events. And I started writing it last year about this. Basically it's like, it starts off as like, it's a, it's a romance, but in like an apocalyptic setting where these two people meet and have a beautiful romantic time. They both are not from the city, but it's kind of like one of those connections that happens serendipitously and they have a beautiful time. And then like the apocalypse hits, and this is something I started writing like last, last fall, which is like, there's like a global pandemic and all, and there's basically massive death and massive suffering. And it was a story about like, what does it mean to find love and life in times of like, massive suffering. And it's something that I was just really interested in, so it's kind of funny that now, here we are, but it's something I definitely... it's, it's what I'm going to work on probably next, when I'm, when I'm, I'm very like stubborn that way. And I'm like, I want to finish this documentary, but it's, I do write every now and then a little bit. And then another, another thing that I've always wanted to do is like a citywide public project. That's like a film project. That's, that's, it's very abstract, but it's like, something that would be collaborative amongst, like, people who lived in the city—to like make a film and be able to, like, you know, in a day or in a week, essentially turn a city into, like, a film set. And I'm just curious what that process could look like and what gifts could come out of that.

HN: That'd be so cool.

BL: That would be awesome. I'm just trying to think, like, how big of a city could you even use?

RP: *(laughs)* I know. I'm in London right now and I'm like, I mean, 'cause imagine, I mean, it's like, I don't know if you've ever been on a film set, but to me, it's when it's done with care and it's done with kind of, you know, you set up the right atmosphere. It's one of the most, I think, transformative experiences. And so I

just imagine, like, what it could look like to take a city and, like, make it your playground for a day and, like, what could come out of that. And so that's the part of me that's thinking outside of just the film, but more processed, like, I love thinking about process and, yeah. So I just find that really intriguing.

BL: That would be, that'd be super interesting. And it's like, I feel like the towns that would let you do that would be so tiny. It'd be like the size of a regular movie set, but like in a big city, that would be awesome to imagine. I would imagine, like, all of San Francisco, like the whole thing, that would be crazy.

RP: And like, what if, like, the people who work at the convenience store are in on it, you know, and what if, like, everybody who works in the city in different roles are in on it? And like are like, that could just be really fun. I feel like, yeah.

BL: That would be awesome.

HN: It'd be very authentic too, because you have the people who are living there every day, getting to be like, the people portraying their lives. That would be cool.

RP: Totally. Totally. And I think it could be like, you know, it could be just like a field for connection of humans across, like, you know, people that you might not speak to everyday. You get to, like, make a film with them. Like, what, what could that, what could that result into, you know?

BL: Yeah. So that actually makes me think of another question. You, you know, so many people are unfamiliar with the filmmaking process. When you tell people you're a filmmaker and they're not familiar, what are some of their, like, reactions or misconceptions?

RP: They're like, are you a video videographer? Like, what do you do? Like, what does this mean? Do you actually do this with your life? People often don't think it's also what I do full time, which I think there's maybe some level of privilege to be able to like, actually earn from this art form. Right? Because sometimes as artists we're used to having multiple jobs.

BL: Yeah.

RP: So I think . . . and then a lot of people, a lot of people I speak to are like, wow, I, you know, have always wanted to do that or do something like that or do something creative. And every time I get that type of reaction, I'm always like, I think it's so, it's so much in our fabric, core fabric as human beings to be artists. Like, we are literally all born creative. So it just is... I get a range of reactions, but I think most, mostly I think it, I would like to think it makes people feel like, 'Oh, like, this person is able to do this. That means, like, maybe, maybe I can,' you know. It's, it's funny. I just met—I go to this Lebanese Health store just next door downstairs, and ,like, now met the entire family and they're like, 'Oh my God, you're a filmmaker. My daughter's studying film. And I just had a great conversation with her yesterday,' and like, even those kinds of connections now to kind of be around people that more and more are going into creativity. This is a tangent, but it's just, it just gives me so much to bring you so much joy.

BL: I love tangents like that. 'Cause that's, that's what I think is the good part about a podcast is it's not really that structured. Like, if we go off on a tangent, I kind of get vibes like that too, because you know, without really too much of myself, I kind of think it's a, really a shame that human beings have to work 40 hours a week just to kind of live. And so I like to ask people like, imagine if you just didn't have to work, if your housing was taken care of, if food and healthcare were taken care of, and you can just do what you want, what would you do? And I mean, a lot of people would sit around for the first month or so, but then they'd start like doing something interesting, something that they actually cared about. 'Cause like, right now I work as a data analyst and I'm not, I'm not passionate about that. Like, that's a job to pay bills. And so it's like, if I did have, like, an unlimited—well, like, if my basic needs were taken care of, I'd probably have written so much more than I have now. And I feel like, I like to imagine a society where people aren't penned in with having to work nine to five jobs without having to help support corporations make money and can instead either work for themselves or, you know, do something that they want to do outside of the, you know, whole capitalist constraints.

RP: Totally, totally, totally, totally. I mean, it's something that, you know, when we started Break Tide, it was quite scary for me to like, actually leave my job and

film and not everyone chooses to work. Uh, you know, to earn your money through film, but then also like, be doing it as the thing that's your life's work. And there's a part of me that does feel like art and capitalism, they're inherently, like, they just don't really go together. But what does it mean? You know, we, we do live in this reality, and what does it mean for us to try, to try our best to do it on our own terms? And so when we started Break Tide, that was a thing for us. We were like, what? Like, let's try to imagine what would be an ideal situation for the way that we work and the way that we produce our art. And so, what we've been, been privileged enough to do is to spend half our year taking, like, client projects that are still film oriented that are mission aligned, that are people that we enjoy working with, organizations we like working with. And then we take the resources from those projects. Then we pour them into our, like the stories we really care about, the long-term stories that aren't funded and, you know, not everyone can do that, but for us, it just was such an importance to try to, yeah. To, to be able to work on our own terms and to be able to have careers that are sustainable because for artists, we often don't have that luxury.

BL: Yeah. Yeah. I feel like so many artists are just trapped in a cubicle trying to make it work. So I'm really excited to meet somebody who has moved on that. A lot of the creatives I have met so far, like personally, they've been like professors at schools, which I think is really kind of a, it's an easy way to still maintain your art while without having to like, you know, break your back or sit in a cubicle.

RP: Absolutely. And yeah, and I think that the beauty with that is like, you know, there is. I mean, we live in this kind of sensibility. Like, there's no one way to make it happen. You know, if you want to be an artist, but you'd rather not like, be doing it 24/7, like I think that could be a perfectly great path for a certain person. Like for me, at times it can be really exhausting to go from creative work that is financially tied to then creative work that is purely like, upon my own, like motivation and desire. So, so, I think there's no, like there's no one right way to make that happen at all. Yeah.

BL: Have you ever, like, explained a project to somebody and they're like, well, how are you going to make money off of that? *(RP laughs)* And what if that did happen? What did you say to them? Like, I don't want to.

RP: Right. I've never had that conversation, but I will say that like, if I wanted to be rich, I don't think (*laughs*) if my motivation was money, I would not become a filmmaker. If your motivation is money, don't, well, don't get into art. If you're trying to make money, it's not very profitable. It can be at times, but I think it just can't be the thing that drives you at the end of the day. This doesn't . . . It's not going to cut it, like when it's just you and it's the thing that's really gonna motivate you. It has, it has to come from somewhere deeper than that.

BL: Yeah. I think the people who make it, like the super famous directors and stuff like that, like it's, I feel like it's almost like winning the lottery because I'm sure there are people who are just as talented as them just, they never had the chance, never had the funding. And so, yeah, I definitely, I think it'd be really interesting. Like you're, you're living off of your art. That kind of sounds wrong, but you're making a living producing your art. But like, you're not going to be like, well, you never know you might be a millionaire someday. But so many people get these aspirations where they want to be like a filmmaker. They want to write. There used to be a phrase I heard all the time, 'the next great American novel.' And it's like, they just want to be millionaires off of their creative work. And I was like, I feel like it's almost, as, you know, even odds as winning the lottery. It's just, it can't happen for everybody and there's not really a way to make it happen on your own. You kind of just have to be in the right place at the right time and strike gold.

RP: Right. Right. And I mean, I think, I think to that, there are clearly a lot of institutional barriers. I mean, that's something that for us, as women of color, that's something we think about. And something else that I think a lot about is like, I think it's like, the beauty of the process sometimes. Like, you know, if we lived in a world where, where we valued process as much as, like, end product, I think that just could change so much first. Just the way that we think and, you know, live our every day, you know? I think we are obsessed with like, the end, the end product and like, okay, what is this going to turn into? But like, even when the work I'm doing now and the work that I'm creating, it's like, you know, it's not always, like, fun, but it's, it's . . . I realized that it's like, this is where the gold is in some ways. It's like in, in the making of it. And then whatever happens at the end, like, that's something that'll be beyond my control. Like, there's something really pure I find

about graffiti, for instance, you know. It's one of those art forms that like, the second you're done and left the paint...it might not even be dry..the second you're done and you leave it on the wall, like, it's no longer yours. You know? And so what does it mean for you to just, like, create for the joy of creating and then whatever happens after—that, that's what, you know, what happens.

HN: So what has been, like, the most rewarding part of the whole process and being able to like, make your life around your art and your passion for the art?

RP: Yeah. I mean, I think, I think for me, the relationships. It's always deeply rewarding to watch your, your film, obviously on like a big screen when it's done. That's always like, 'okay, it's out in the world, the babies,' you know. You might not, you might still like, be like, 'it's not ready, but it's done.' But the thing that you end up when you really remember back on the film...like, I, mostly, what I think about is, like, my days on set or my days, like, you know, actually working with the people and you know, what is it like, with *Break Tide* too? We think about this a lot. Like, what does it mean to build relationships that are rooted in care and an atmosphere that is generative— like, 'cause my work I'm really interested in this idea of healing. Like what does it mean when I'm working on subjects like the one I am in now where a lot of the people, the on screen participants, have had extreme forms of lived trauma and lived experiences that are really intense? What does it mean for us in the process together? To instead of like, furthering the cycle of harm to replace it with like, a cycle of care and a cycle of healing and a cycle of solidarity and yeah, just connection? So those, those moments for me, I mean, even with this film now like, I can't tell you the relationships that I've made, the friendships I've made. They're going to last my whole life. Like, and that to me is just such a gift. It's such a gift.

HN: It's like such a gift for your field that you're able to travel and meet so many people that you wouldn't have been able to otherwise had you been at home working a nine to five.

RP: Absolutely. Absolutely. And I think ultimately for me personally, in the last time I worked kind of a nine to five—I was, I was bored. Like, I wanted more from my life and not from a sense of like, a career perspective or like, oh, I want these

like awards and things, but from a place of, like, I want to be in spaces that feel meaningful and that I feel like I have agency over alongside other people.

BL: Yeah. It sounds, it sounds like the ultimate goal for a lot of people.

RP: Yeah, totally. I mean, I don't, I don't think we're designed to, like, work 40 hour weeks. I don't think it's natural to us. I think what's natural to us is to be free and to find, you know, like, to be creative and to find space and time to rest. And you know what, but I think the fact that we're able to talk about those ideas and imagine a world where that's possible. I think that's really important for us to keep doing.

BL: Yeah. Yeah. I hope, I hope someday we live in a world like that where people—I, you look at like, these futuristic movies and it's like, there's robots doing all the jobs. Every car is automated. What do people do all day? And I'm like, they just live. Like they don't have to be doing anything. They can be, but they can just, you know, live. And I think that's really, really something I look forward to in the future. I mean, obviously I don't think I'll experience it. I don't even think my kids will experience it, but a couple generations from now, I feel like humans, humankind will finally be, if we don't blow ourselves up, we'll be at a place to, uh, actually kind of live out a world like that.

RP: I hope so. I really, really do. Yeah.

BL: Okay. Well, I think this is a good place to go ahead and end the podcasts. You have anything else that you want to say? Last little note?

RP: No. I mean, I just, thank you for taking the time. I think, you know, for anyone listening that is interested in art and, and is feeling stuck in any way, like, I think I just always kind of want to emphasize the value in collaboration and collectivizing with people who share your values and who want to build a kind of world that you want to build, like, work together and play together. You know, like, make art together, see what happens. Yeah. That's all.

HN: Thank you so much.

BL: Thank you.

RP: Thank you both. Likewise.