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INTERVIEWS

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INTERVIEWS

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Editor: Aaron Brown
Text Editor: Kelsey Heintz

Special thanks to Brian Curran

studio@suuuperposition.com

www.suuuperposition.com

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Why

The original idea behind this book was to have it exist to complement S///F [p/n 001]. We wanted to build an environment around a product; we had designed a bookshelf, and now we wanted to publish a book to go alongside (or atop) it. We thought we'd create a bespoke pencil for note-taking in the book, maybe even release a limited run of posters with it.

But after about a month of sitting with that idea, we realized the gap between our vision and reality was larger than we had hoped. 003 (called 001B at the time) was more than a complement.

That was November 2020. Here we are, two and a half years later.

Along the way, 001B was placed on the metaphorical shelf, taken off, and put back again (and again and again). 001's fabrication process was cumbersome, and we decided its release had priority over the book. And after releasing 001, we wanted to refactor our process and take another shot at it with 002. By 2021 (and into 2022), we had too much on our plate to release 003. And somewhere on that route, we realized 003 deserved a proper suuuperposition release with a p/n of its own.

Despite the winding road, we never fully considered killing this book, and we credit a few factors with this perseverance to publish:

1. We're avid book collectors. While we don't read as many books as we should, we love books for their existence as capital-P "Products."
2. We set out to be medium-agnostic. Our first two products were in the world of metal fabrication, and we wanted our third to fulfill an early promise we made to ourselves.
3. Our Adobe "All Apps" subscription included InDesign, so we figured we might as well see what that was all about.

What We wanted to publish a book, but we needed a subject for that book. Early in the process of subject exploration, we printed SAMPLE books with images from our patented suuuperposition Image Library™, but those books felt too vapid – regurgitated internet moodboards, printed and bound, wasn't really what we were going for.

Eventually, we decided to use this project as an opportunity to capture a snapshot of our creative community. We wanted 003 to answer the question, "Who are your influences?" Furthermore, the purpose of our studio is to make objects we want lying around our homes. A compilation of answers to our most persistent questions from our biggest influences is exactly what we want lying around our homes.

Some of these influences were distant figures of inspiration who we'd never spoken to before. Others were old "friends of the program," who'd kept up with us since the beginning of our journey. (Fun fact: Ronnell [003.03] was the first person we ever followed on Instagram.)

Regardless of their relationships to our studio, we admire all these contributors for their creative pursuits, yes, but even more for their willingness to nurture the community by chatting with us newcomers.

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How This book is constructed as a set of eleven interviews conducted by a modified Proust Questionnaire.

All eleven contributors were asked the same questions.

Some contributors didn't answer every question.

Some interviews were done in a traditional conversational format and others were done through written questionnaires.

Interview dates should be noted.

This project is a window into the lives and working attitudes of our contributors from 2020 through 2022. We are extremely grateful for them giving us a peek behind the curtain.

Questions BIO	Questions PROCESS	Questions PATIENCE	Questions COLLABORATION
BIO 001 What's your name?	PROCESS 001 What's the life cycle of an idea for you?	PATIENCE 001 Describe any tension you might feel between patience and procrastination.	COLLABORATION 001 How would you describe your level of self-doubt within a collaborative space? Is there ever an initial embarrassment with presenting an idea?
BIO 002 Where are you from?	PROCESS 002 How important is self-education to your process?	PATIENCE 002 Do you ever completely drop an idea? Has a shelved idea ever resurfaced much later, ultimately to be fully realized?	COLLABORATION 002 Do you ever experience issues of ownership in a collaborative space? Self-consciousness of standing up for your own idea? Hesitance to fully consider an idea that wasn't yours?
BIO 003 How'd you get your start?	PROCESS 003 How much do you value being small or a 'critical mass'?	PATIENCE 003 Do you find impatience to be a form of motivation in your process?	
BIO 004 Anything currently in the works?	PROCESS 004 How many iterations is too many? How many is too few?	PATIENCE 004 Best activity to clear your head?	
	PROCESS 005 When do you know a project has reached its final form?		
	PROCESS 006 Describe the cultivation of your social media presence and how it may relate to your overall creative pursuit.	0006.00.003	003.00.0007
	PROCESS 007 Do you seem to find artistic maturation as you age? Have you witnessed a trade-off between youthfulness and wisdom in your design approach?		suuperposition
	PROCESS 008 Do you have difficulty finding a work-life balance as a creative? How do you develop the balance?		
Questions QUICK			
QUICK 001 Favorite tool?			
QUICK 002 Biggest vice?			
QUICK 003 Go-to article of clothing?			
QUICK 004 Three favorite musical artists?			
QUICK 005 Best and worst thing about where you live?			
QUICK 006 Go-to form of exercise?			
QUICK 007 Cook or delivery?			
QUICK 008 Thing you're most pretentious about?			
QUICK 009 Favorite thing to do outside your creative sphere?			



quinner baird

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quinner baird



BIO 002
Great Britain

**BIO 003 How'd you
get your start?**

After graduating university with a degree in industrial design, I moved to Madrid for a job in the engineering department of an art fabrication company. After a couple of years there, I started Caliper, which is based on a similar concept — production of work for artists and designers, but more focused on homeware and merchandise.

**BIO 004 Anything
currently in the works?**
Some bronzes, sculpture, furniture, as well as a shift toward more personal design work.

PROCESS 001 What's the life cycle of an idea for you?

Viability always comes first! Is it possible within the time frame and budget? Ideas usually come fairly developed from the clients, so we then take them to CAD, illustrate any changes through sketching or renderings, and then provide drawings and instructions for fabrication partners. Component parts come in and then we test, assemble, document and then ship [the final product] to the client.

PROCESS 002 How important is self-education to your process?

Fundamental. Even while working with the most familiar materials and finishes, you learn something new every time.

PROCESS 003 How much do you value

being small or a 'critical mass'?

Within the context of the studio as a business, I look to keep the number of projects manageable while retaining quality. We could grow faster if we were to take on everything that came through the door, but it would dilute the output.

quinner baird

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quinner baird

**PROCESS 004 How many iterations is too many?**

How many is too few?

Too many is to exhaust yourself and lose interest; too few is to not procure interest in the first place.

PROCESS 005 When do you know a project has reached its final form?

You just know.



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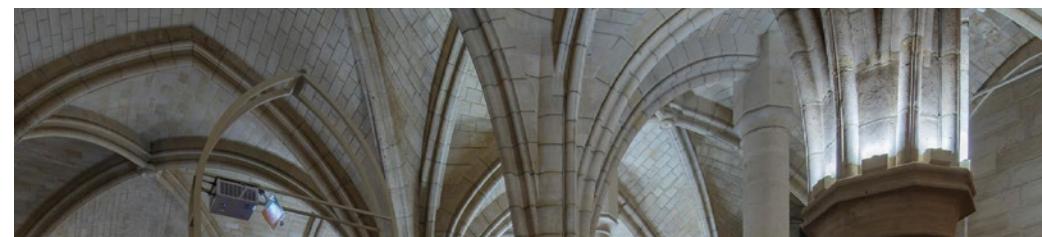
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PROCESS 006 *Describe the cultivation of your social media presence and how it may relate to your overall creative pursuit.*
We sell an incredibly niche service, so I suppose not as critical as other businesses selling a product to a general consumer. However, we try to maintain the website and Instagram [feed] mostly as a form of portfolio; they certainly help attract new projects.

PROCESS 007 *Do you seem to find artistic maturation as you age? Have you witnessed a trade-off between youthfulness and wisdom in your design approach?*
I find myself becoming more confident in my own taste and direction. I don't think youthfulness and wisdom have to be pitted against one another but rather combined and utilized as conjunctive tools.

PROCESS 008 *Do you have difficulty finding a work-life balance as a creative? How do you develop the balance?*
You find what makes you happiest and do that.



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PATIENCE 002 Do you ever completely drop an idea?
Has a shelved idea ever resurfaced much later, ultimately to be fully realized?
All the time.

PATIENCE 003 Do you find impatience to be a form of motivation in your process?

You find workarounds to that impatience where possible; otherwise, you just put up with it or distract yourself with something else. It's usually related to timelines, but generally, you can manifest an alternative motivator.

PATIENCE 004 Best activity to clear your head?

Walking the dog.

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quinner baird

COLLABORATION 001 How would you describe your level of self-doubt within a collaborative space? Is there ever an initial embarrassment with presenting an idea?

No.

COLLABORATION 002 Do you ever experience issues of ownership in a collaborative space? Self-consciousness of standing up for your own idea?

Hesitance to fully consider an idea that wasn't yours?

Yes, particularly as a fabricator you can become possessive of particular works, only for them to be released uncredited; however, that's just the nature of this industry. Thankfully, we work with some fantastic people who see the value in production and teamwork and are happy to share that ownership at the time of publishing.



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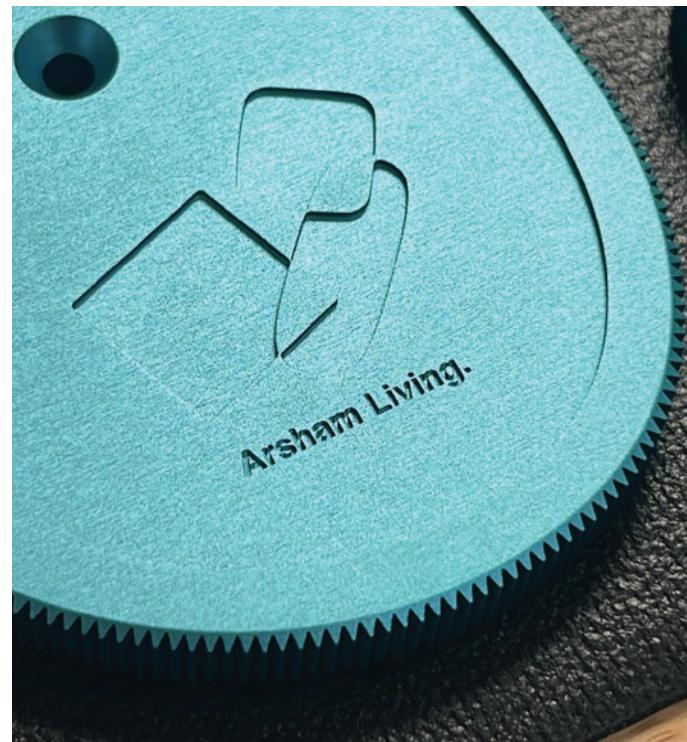
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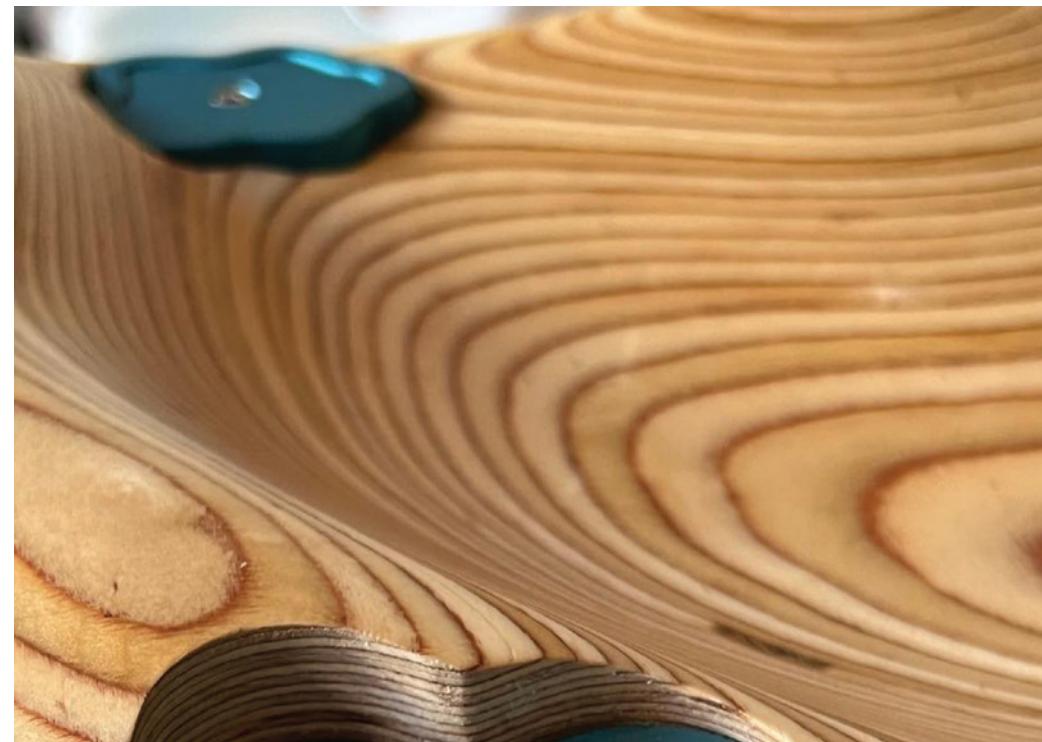
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QUICK 001 Favorite tool?

Metal lathe.

QUICK 002 Biggest vice?

6-inch pull-down machine vice.

QUICK 003 Go-to

article of clothing?

Margiela GAT.

QUICK 004 Three favorite

musical artists?

Damon Albarn, Joe

James, Alton Ellis.

QUICK 005 Best and worst

thing about where you live?

The best thing [about Madrid]

is the amount of sun. The worst

is the July/ August heat.

QUICK 006 Go-to

form of exercise?

Football.

QUICK 007 Cook or delivery?

Cook.

quinner baird

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QUICK 008 Thing you're

most pretentious about?

Restaurants.

QUICK 009 Favorite thing to do

outside your creative sphere?

Siesta.



BIO 001 Archie Lee Coates IV

archie lee coates iv

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003.02.0029

archie lee coates iv

BIO 002

Virginia Beach, VA

BIO 003 *How'd you get your start?*

A book from my uncle. Another from my parents. An early adventure to University of Miami. Meeting Jeff Franklin at Virginia Tech architecture school. Trust and belief from friends.

BIO 004 *Anything currently in the works?*

Men's Louis Vuitton FW21, Reese Cooper FW21, our first collection of furniture, and a lot more I wish we could share.



PROCESS 001 What's the life cycle of an idea for you?

A group conversation. Some research. Ideas into the void. Connecting precedent to the impossible until possibility feels close. Sketching. Writing. Drawing. Pinning. Deck.

PROCESS 002 How important is self-education to your process?

Massively. Your education is largely built by your own curiosity and work ethic. You're responsible for your own expanse.

PROCESS 003 How much do you value being small or a 'critical mass'?

We value being healthy, challenged, and free. Small or large isn't relevant if not driven by the former. Similarly, we don't aspire to any level of notoriety; we only aspire to satisfy the interests and curiosities of the studio and the ability to realize ideas at a continuously growing scale.

PROCESS 004 How many iterations is too many?

How many is too few?

Iterate until it's time to stop. Be honest with yourself about what hits and what doesn't.

PROCESS 005 When do you know a project has reached its final form?

When you look up and everyone is smiling.



PROCESS 006 Describe the cultivation of your social media presence and how it may relate to your overall creative pursuit.

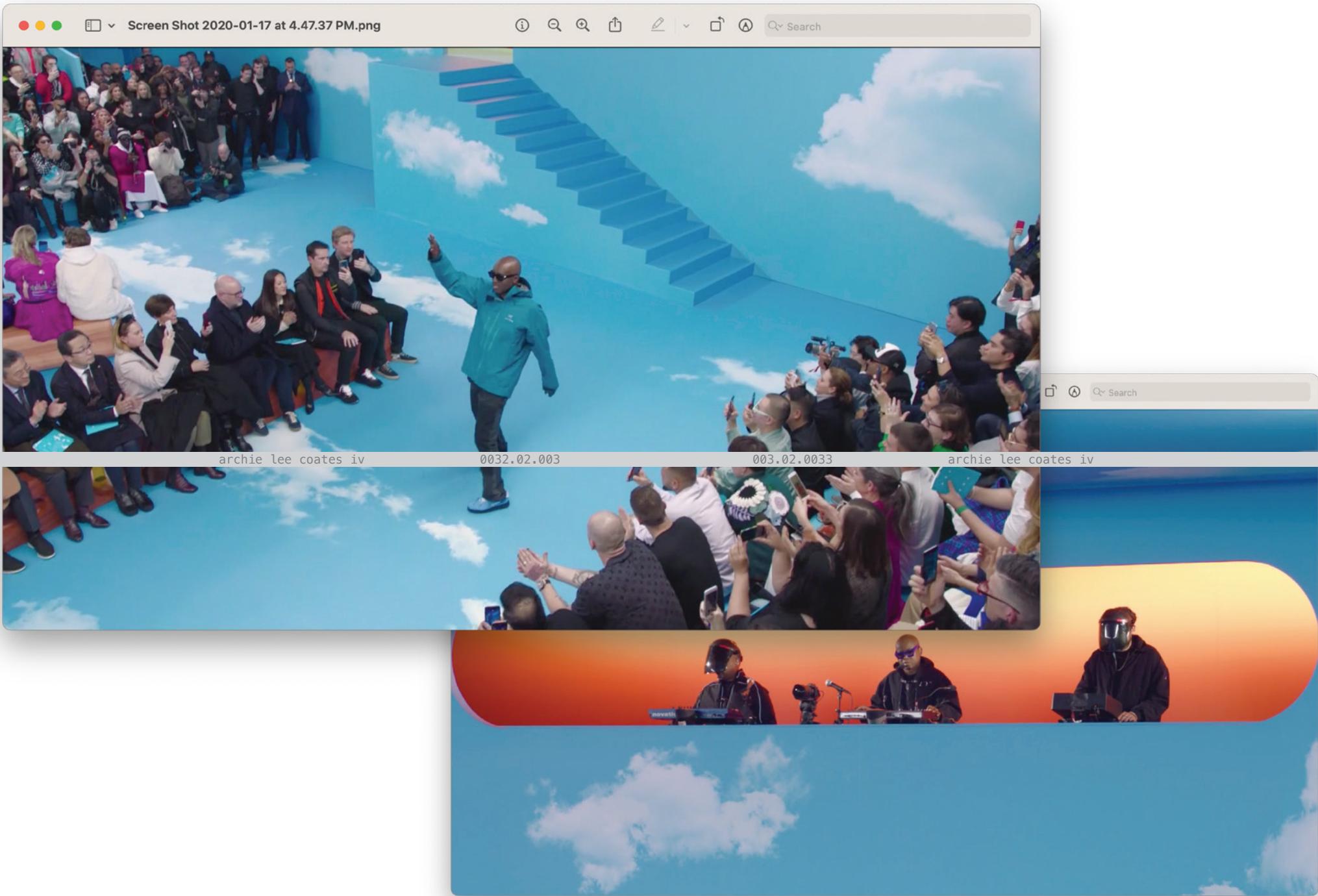
No cultivation; only posting and sharing truth and progress when appropriate. We value the studio's perception of itself more than others' perception of it.

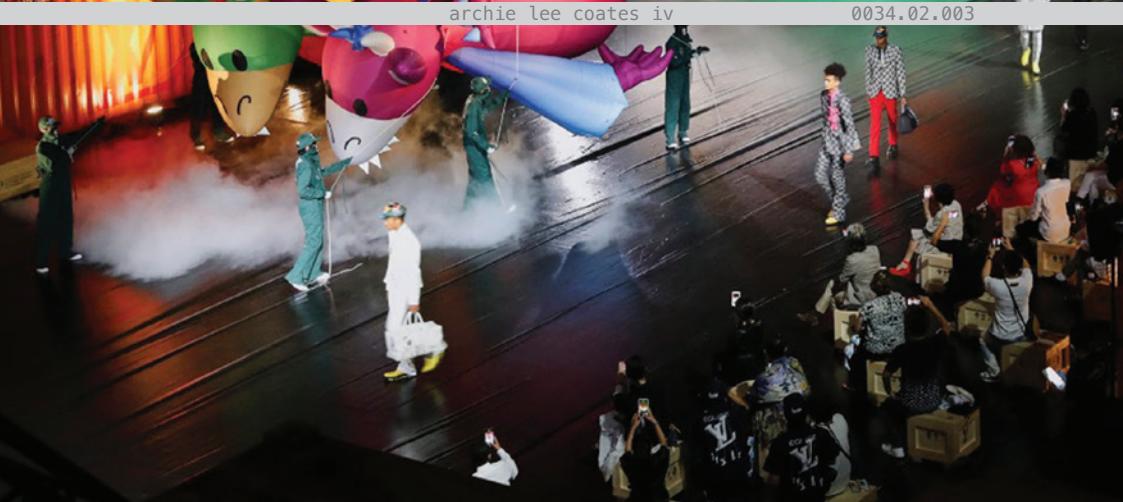
PROCESS 007 Do you seem to find artistic maturation as you age? Have you witnessed a trade-off between youthfulness and wisdom in your design approach?

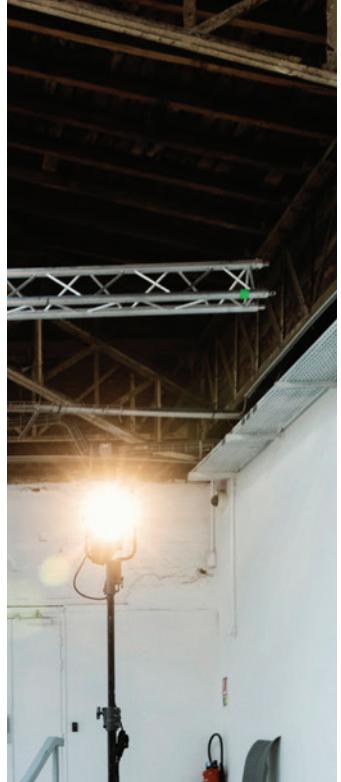
Yes and no. The studio is an exercise in seeing what a group of people can creatively get away with, what doors they can open, and what rooms they can break into. There's maturity in practice and business but not in design. Stay naive.

PROCESS 008 Do you have difficulty finding a work-life balance as a creative? How do you develop the balance?

The balance might be impossible. The ideas keep coming, the interest keeps expanding, and the possibilities keep growing. The only thing that isn't infinite is time and energy. We slow down when necessary, speed up when it feels right. We don't look back, we only look forward. That's about it.



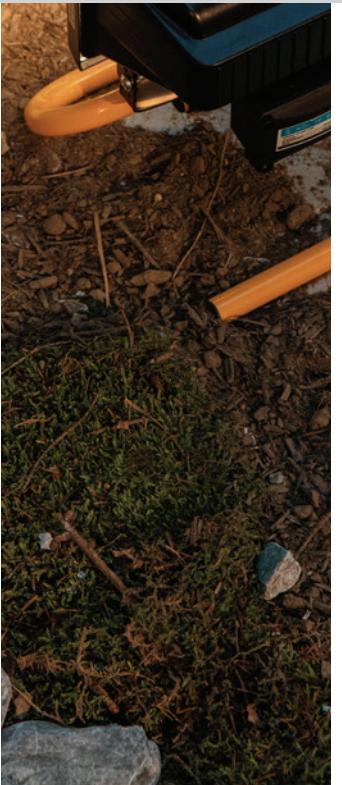
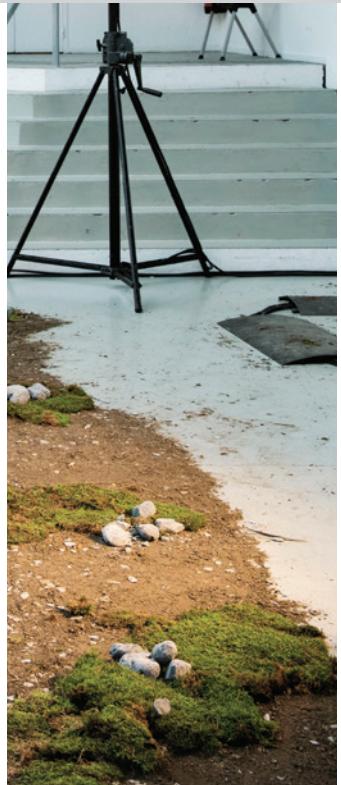




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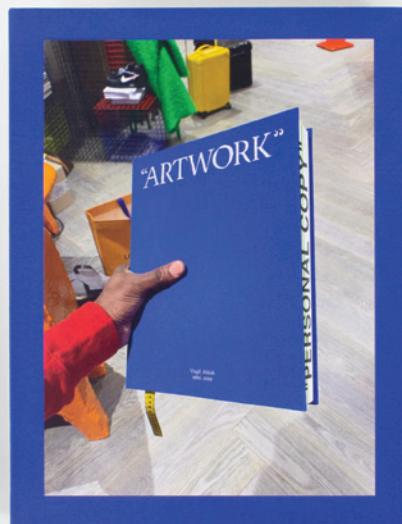
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archie lee coates iv

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PATIENCE 001 *Describe any tension you might feel between patience and procrastination.*
Procrastination only happens when there's a lack of focus, energy, or confidence. We try to keep those in constant check.

PATIENCE 002 *Do you ever completely drop an idea? Has a shelved idea ever resurfaced much later, ultimately to be fully realized?*
All of the time. All of the time.

PATIENCE 003 *Do you find impatience to be a form of motivation in your process?*
Not impatience as much as anxiety. Healthy anxiety is key. Too much is death.

PATIENCE 004 *Best activity to clear your head?*
Leaving the studio and then returning.





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archie lee coates iv



COLLABORATION 001 *How would you describe your level of self-doubt within a collaborative space? Is there ever an initial embarrassment with presenting an idea?*

Never embarrassment. We don't present what we don't believe in. The only self-doubt that creeps in is whether or not we were successful in delivering an idea that can be seen as we see it.

COLLABORATION 002 *Do you ever experience issues of ownership in a collaborative space? Self-consciousness of standing up for your own idea? Hesitance to fully consider an idea that wasn't yours?*

Ideas are free.







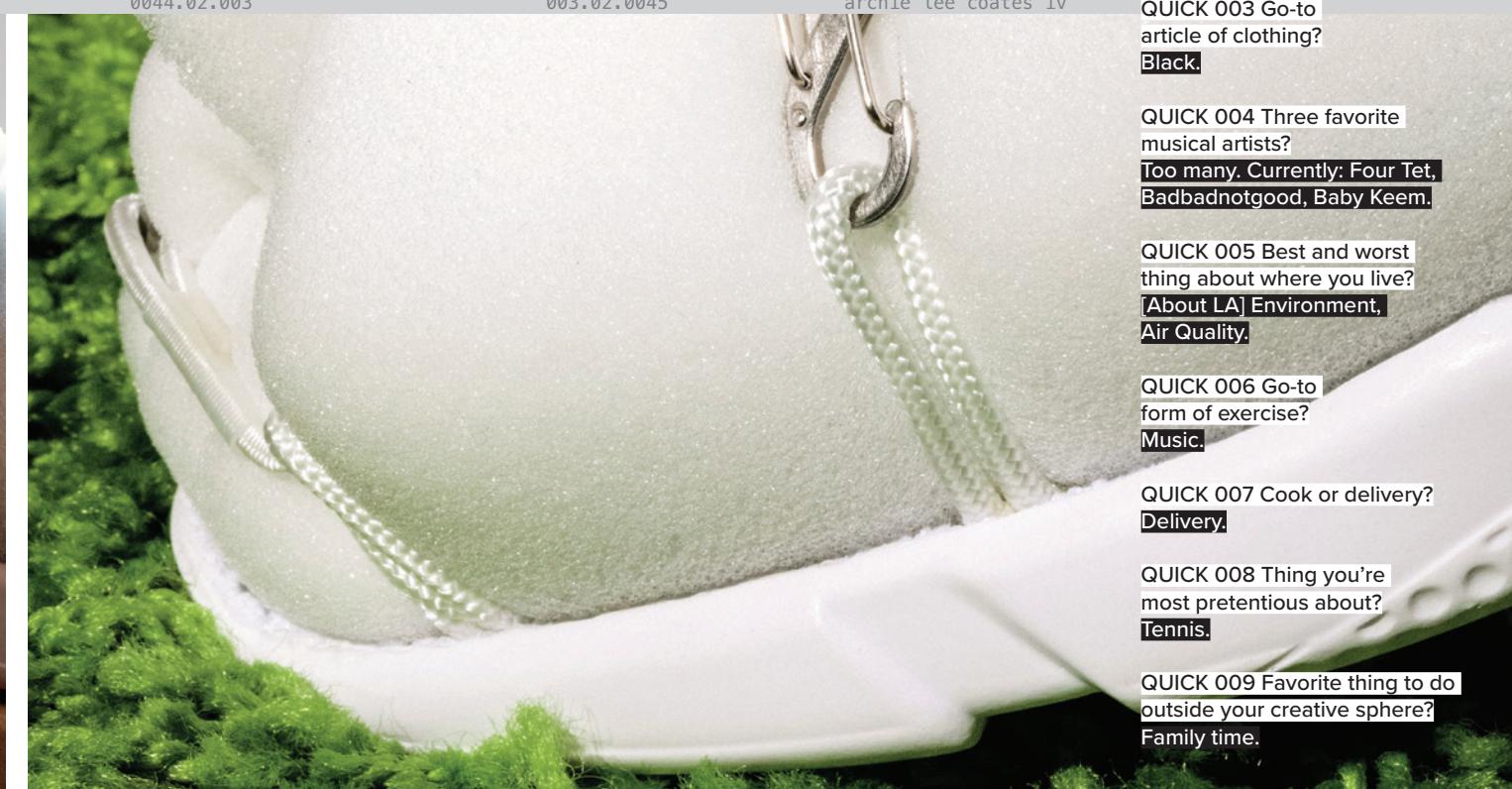
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archie lee coates iv



QUICK 001 Favorite tool?
Talking.

QUICK 002 Biggest vice?
Killing ego.

QUICK 003 Go-to
article of clothing?
Black.

QUICK 004 Three favorite
musical artists?
Too many. Currently: Four Tet,
Badbadnotgood, Baby Keem.

QUICK 005 Best and worst
thing about where you live?
[About LA] Environment,
Air Quality.

QUICK 006 Go-to
form of exercise?
Music.

QUICK 007 Cook or delivery?
Delivery.

QUICK 008 Thing you're
most pretentious about?
Tennis.

QUICK 009 Favorite thing to do
outside your creative sphere?
Family time.



BIO 001

Ronnell K. Culbertson

BIO 002

Queens, NY

BIO 003 How'd you get your start?

I've had my fair share of internships, working under directors and stylists and at agencies. Things really began to take shape while interning at Billionaire Boys Club, Icecream — I was trying to figure out my next move, and I decided to start with where I spent some of my hard-earned money as a teen. At the time, there were a lot of moving parts for the brand, which resulted in me supporting different areas of the business. A few days out of my week, I would go to the office of record label Star Trak Entertainment, supporting the brand director, and doing so led to an unforeseen opportunity of becoming the editorial assistant for Pharrell's book, "Places and Spaces I've Been." At that point, it all started to make sense and gave me the confidence to pursue anything I was interested in. I doubted myself not having any formal education or a traditional background. Up until that turning point, a lot of these opportunities seemed far-fetched.

BIO 004 Anything currently in the works?

I recently took up pottery, completing my first semester at BKLYN CLAY. Right now, the focus is developing the technique. I recently made a stacking bowl set. It's an intricate process — preparing the clay, drying, trimming, mixing colors, bisque firing, and glazing. I find it to be very therapeutic and rewarding having made something with my hands. It's also rewarding seeing the objects created put to use in functional, living spaces.

I'm also starting a company to explore my sensibilities and develop my skill-sets through creative case studies. I'm trying to create objects or curate objects that give my day-to-day some balance. And then create an experience through that.



ronnell k. culbertson

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ronnell k. culbertson

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ronnell k. culbertson

PROCESS 001 *What's the life cycle of an idea for you?*

Typically, it starts on my iPhone. I'm usually on the go, so it's convenient for me to quickly type my thoughts and then transfer to my Moleskine once I'm in a settled space and can write. From there, I start to work on pulling my references, some R&D for how I am going to bring my idea to life. I also find it easier to develop the idea in the Notes app because everything from a general overview lives in one place and I can make as many changes as needed, share the notes, and easily review all changes.

PROCESS 002 *How important is self-education to your process?*

I find self-education to be the most valuable element to my process. I am able to apply what I learn as I go. It's also about knowing your resources and how to tap into your community for help. I learn from others; therefore, I am very intentional about who I spend time with, what I spend time on, and where I spend my time, because it influences how I exist and the ideas I come up with. It's all a constant source of inspiration.

PROCESS 003 *How much do you value being small or a 'critical mass'?*

It's not so much about the value of being small as knowing that my ideas and the world are bigger than me. I don't aspire for notoriety; however, I do want to be acknowledged for my work. I prefer a behind-the-scenes presence, but sometimes, that's not what is required of me and will continuously change. When I think of a niche following, it feels limiting. I'm not opposed to it, as it does seem more organic and manageable, but that can also be scaled with those same intentions aligned. I would like for the things I create and have contributed to to reach the masses because that is when it all really comes to life, interpretation and opinions are developed, and I can gauge how people receive my work.

PROCESS 004 How many

iterations is too many?

How many is too few?

I don't know — it's always subject to change. It's a continued practice for how efficiently I can see a project through.

PROCESS 005 When do

you know a project has reached its final form?

Every project has its foundational elements. I use that as my guide because I can be very indecisive and all over the place otherwise. It depends on if it's something I'm working on from ideating to producing or if I am a contributor.

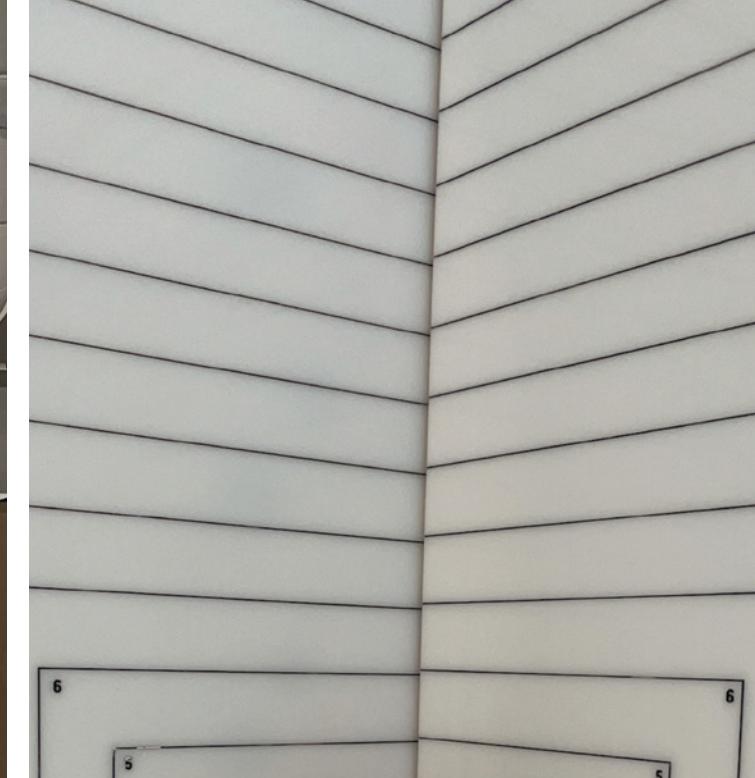
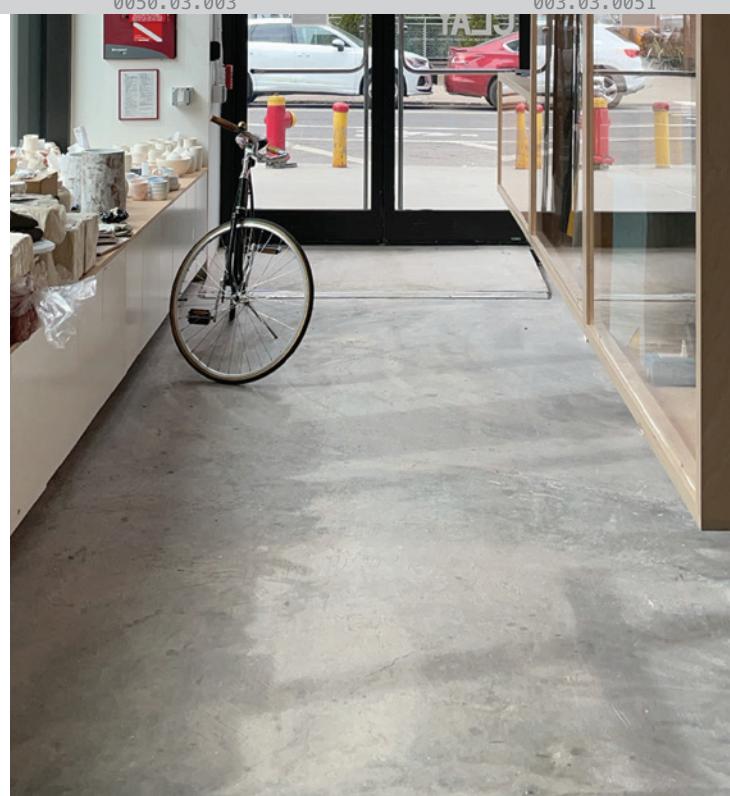
PROCESS 006 Describe the cultivation of your social media presence and how it may relate to your overall creative pursuit.

I'm not interested in talking about myself, but I am interested in how I represent myself from

an actionable perspective. I am my brand, my sensibilities, style, taste. Perspective is the brand. It's very important that I show up as myself, though I'm not interested in selling myself. This helps me avoid feeling uncertain when I meet someone on social media, because I'm not selling myself too much or trying to push too much of a narrative.

It's more organic. I cultivate my presence by being personable; I like to make conversation and let others know their presence is felt and voices are heard.

ronnell k. culbertson



ronnell k. culbertson



PROCESS 007 Do you seem to find artistic maturation as you age? Have you witnessed a trade-off between youthfulness and wisdom in your design approach?

Yes, I have. I am patient with myself and others. Having grace is a huge part of the process, not a trade-off. I've found a balance of youthfulness and wisdom in my approach. I still have the same eagerness to learn and discover new things as I did when I was a kid, while applying what I have learned along the way.

PROCESS 008 Do you have difficulty finding a work-life balance as a creative? How do you develop the balance?

It begins with being intentional about how I spend my time. I'm very conscious about what I am doing and who I am doing it with. Even in times of compromise, I stick with what is suitable for me, where my interest lies, and meeting my needs.

We're doing work all day — passively researching and developing new ideas. So, we're working way more than we would like to believe we are. But in theory, it's about giving that work life. Establishing intent. It's about being present with your process.

As a creative, the biggest luxury is your creative freedom — I keep that in mind, and I work from within. When you're doing what you love, how can it feel like work?! Sure, it can be taxing, but that's the beauty of it.

Integrity will sustain the balance.

ronnell k. culbertson

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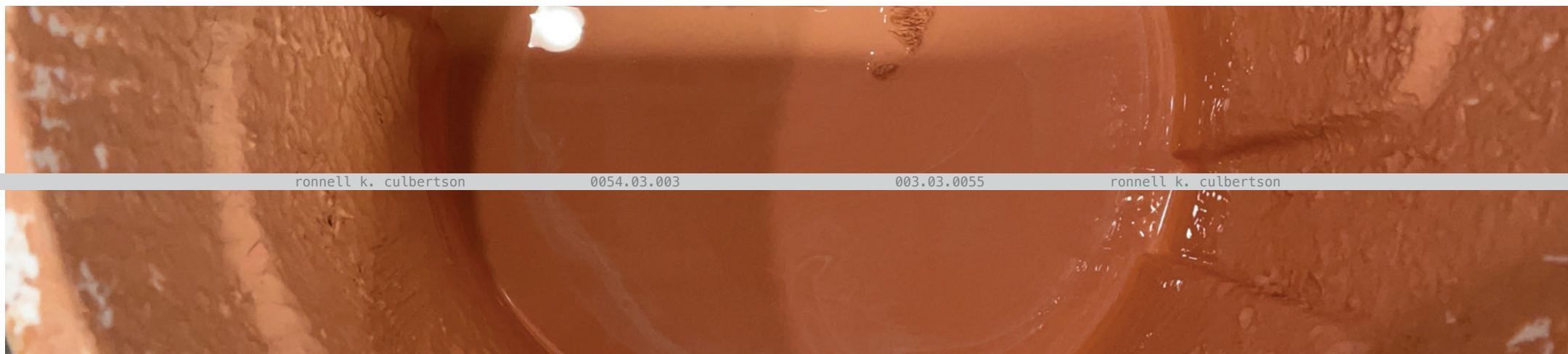


PATIENCE 003 Do you find impatience to be a form of motivation in your process?

I did when I was younger but not so much anymore. When I'm impatient, it usually works against my process. In my experience, I usually get ahead of myself being impatient. When I realize I am being impatient, it usually cultivates patience — I refer to it as slowing down to speed up.

PATIENCE 004 Best activity to clear your head?

A bike ride or hike.



ronnell k. culbertson

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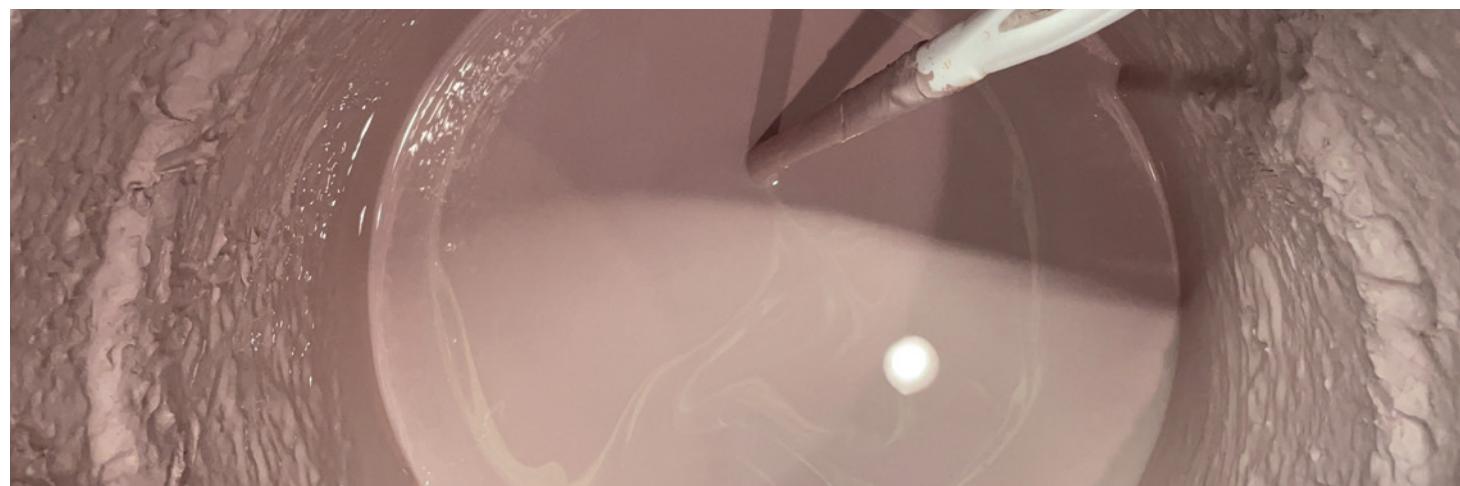
ronnell k. culbertson

PATIENCE 001 Describe any tension you might feel between patience and procrastination.

It's about knowing when procrastination is working in my favor or against me. I find myself procrastinating when I'm not embracing a challenge or a challenge requires me to step outside of my comfort zone. At that point, I realize my work is bigger than me, and that's how I realign myself.

PATIENCE 002 Do you ever completely drop an idea? Has a shelved idea ever resurfaced much later, ultimately to be fully realized?

I don't necessarily drop the idea, but I'll shelve it and later revisit a saved reference or associate the idea with something else I am working on and find the two fitting for each other.





ronnell k. culbertson

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ronnell k. culbertson



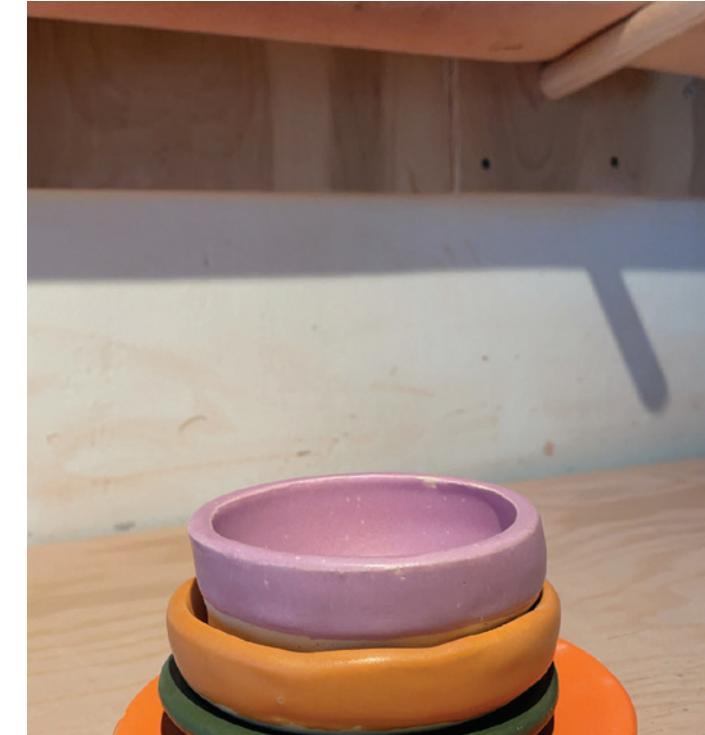
COLLABORATION 001 *How would you describe your level of self-doubt within a collaborative space? Is there ever an initial embarrassment with presenting an idea?*

When collaborating, there has to be a mutual safe space to share different perspectives and ideate. Sure, there is doubt, and I may initially be intimidated by what my collaborator has created or accomplished – but not in the sense that I dim my own light because of it. I'm more so inspired – sometimes even overstimulated – which can make it arduous to work from within.



ronnell k. culbertson

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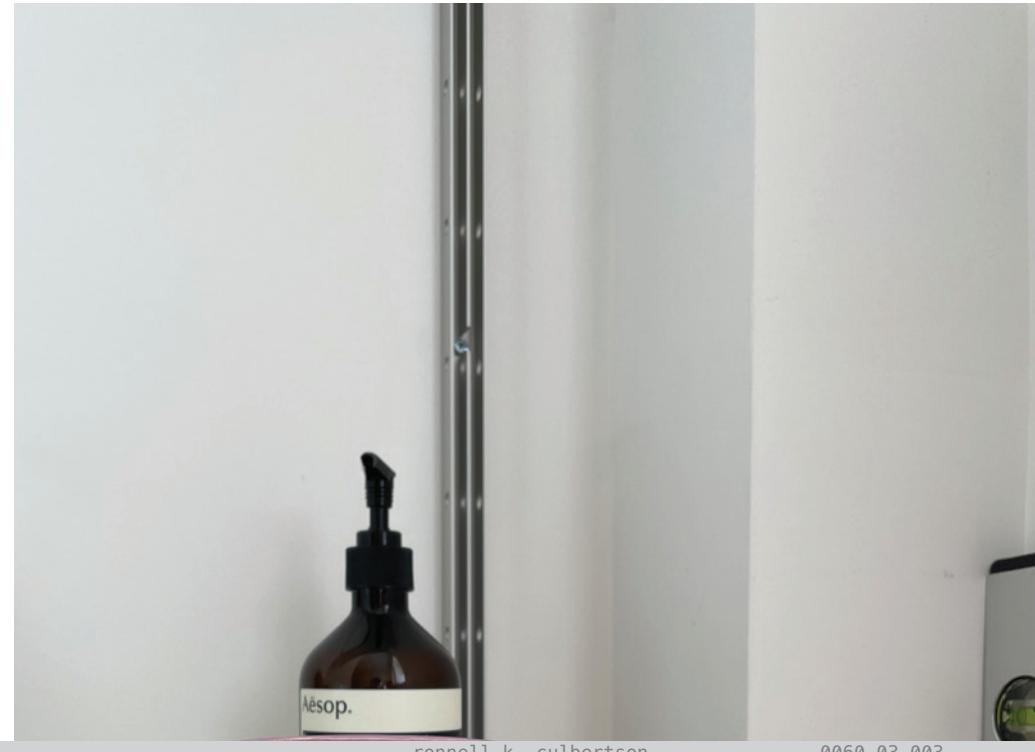
ronnell k. culbertson

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COLLABORATION 002 *Do you ever experience issues of ownership in a collaborative space? Self-consciousness of standing up for your own idea? Hesitation to fully consider an idea that wasn't yours?*

I have, but I've come to understand the importance of standing up for my own idea and the ideas of others. If I don't, who will? Collaborating is about meeting one another where we are as creatives. I am always open to collaborating and contributing to the ideas of others; there just has to be a clear understanding of my offering and how I can help bring another's idea to life.



ronnell k. culbertson

0060.03.003



003.03.0061

ronnell k. culbertson



QUICK 001 Favorite tool?
Micron 01 (black or brown).

QUICK 002 Biggest vice?
Books or magazines, and wine.

QUICK 003 Go-to
article of clothing?
visvim Lhamo shirt.

QUICK 004 Three favorite
musical artists?
Lately, I've been listening
to Larry June, Frank
Ocean, and Solange.

QUICK 005 Best and worst
thing about where you live?
Accessibility is the best thing
[about Brooklyn] — we have a
reliable transit system. It's easy
to get around, pretty much
at any time of day, but you'll
need to plan accordingly.

The worst thing is the hustle
and bustle. The phrase "in
a New York minute" is real
— time moves fast here, and
sometimes you can feel as
though you're on everyone
else's time and not your own.

QUICK 006 Go-to
form of exercise?
Biking. And I recently
took up rock climbing.

QUICK 007 Cook or delivery?
Cook at home. As I'm learning
my way around the kitchen,
I'm finding it very therapeutic
to prepare food; measure out
ingredients; and use specific
dishes, utensils, and plating.

QUICK 008 Thing you're
most pretentious about?
My humble abode.

QUICK 009 Favorite thing to do
outside your creative sphere?
Spend time with my family
and friends, and play chess.

ronnell k. culbertson

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003.03.0063

ronnell k. culbertson



BIO 001

Saeed Ferguson

saeed ferguson

0064.04.003

003.04.0065

BIO 002

Philadelphia, PA

BIO 003 How'd you get your start?

I got my start, really, in high school — maybe late freshman year, going into sophomore year. I was meeting a lot of new people and my high school was just outside of Center City, where everything fast-paced and cool is. Everything's there, so I got easier access to what was “happening” or “going on.”

There was a store that was in Chinatown that I got familiar with called Abakus and they were selling streetwear stuff. They had an internship that I got and then I got really immersed into that whole world. That rolled into a job that lasted for two years. Then, those guys opened another store called P's & Q's, where I worked for eight years. I went from just doing retail to doing photo stuff to running the shop, then from running the shop to collaboration ideas. I never truly designed while I was working at either store; that kind of came afterward, while I was trying to figure out photo stuff. My goal with ALL CAPS was originally supposed to be my way to do freelance photos.

I didn't really have a mentor in photography; I was just doing it because I loved it. I didn't want to do retail my whole life, so I was like, “I need to make money on photography.” So I started trying to take jobs and put myself out there. I didn't know how to price myself or anything. My next step was just using ideas to design photo shoots. And I'd been into streetwear for ten years at that point, so I kind of knew what was cool and I just started going for it. Then, I just randomly dropped a T-shirt and a tote bag, and those did well. And I just kept going from there — just teaching myself design and fucking around.

BIO 004 Anything currently in the works?

T-shirts and printable things would definitely be the core. We're also working on moving into cut-and-sew — actually creating garments from scratch. We have a couple pairs of pants and pieces of headwear coming out, and we're diving a little bit more back into ceramics, working with new ceramic artists on these free-form ceramic bowls. It's hard to describe, but to me, they look more like our pieces than classic ceramic pieces.

PROCESS 001 *What's the life cycle of an idea for you?*

Honestly, there's no real structure; it's always so different.

Sometimes it starts from having a conversation once with someone and leaving with a, sort of, hope; sometimes it comes from reading something or seeing something on the internet.

The process usually has some sort of idea where we want to use graphics in some way. Then, we decide what kind of garment we want to use and do research into, like, what pants we can source.

And then, we let the source inspire the process. Once you're there, working with the graphics, you're like, "Oh, man, these graphics will be a sick tote." Or like, "The way these graphics are lining up could be even better on this garment." As I'm using the graphics, it can inspire other ways of placing and using other objects to use these graphics with what makes sense.

PROCESS 002 *How important is self-education to your process?*

100%.

saeed ferguson

0066.04.003



saeed ferguson

003.04.0067



PROCESS 003 *How much do you value being small or a 'critical mass'?*

I don't think I have any aspirations of being huge. I want to continue to grow and be able to be profitable and be able to do this full time for quite some time. But I definitely don't think I want to be a huge brand. We're able to speak to people directly because we're small, and I think as we continue to grow, that becomes harder. Once I lose that, that's when I start thinking about it more in terms of a job rather than having fun. If it becomes big by accident, then I like it.

PROCESS 004 *How many iterations is too many? How many is too few?*

Iterating is especially important for the cut-and-sew stuff. We're probably gonna release these new pants maybe in a month or so, but we've been working on samples since last year. It's been different iterations of graphic placement, button color — there's different buttons we can use, and figuring that stuff out means a bunch of different decisions. It's a lot of bouncing around. That stuff is definitely more calculated for sure, whereas graphic stuff is all just illustrated. You can almost know what the end result is on your computer. But cut-and-sew? You just have to — at least for us — see it in person. Try it out, measure stuff. All that kind of stuff.

PROCESS 005 When do you know a project has reached its final form?

Usually it's a feeling, but it takes a while to get that. Sometimes, it's immediate, and then sometimes, it's a week, and sometimes, a month. Somehow, I just know; it just feels good. If I feel comfortable with showing people, that's how I know it's ready.

PROCESS 006 Describe the cultivation of your social media presence and how it may relate to your overall creative pursuit.

Dude, I think it's huge. We wouldn't be able to do what we're doing without it. I think it was fundamental for our product and our functioning as a company. That's how we built our entire business — off of social media, for sure. And I kind of learned that through working at the store. I ran their Instagram, and I found how to engage with people best and how to portray your natural self and all those things through the trial and error of working on their social media.

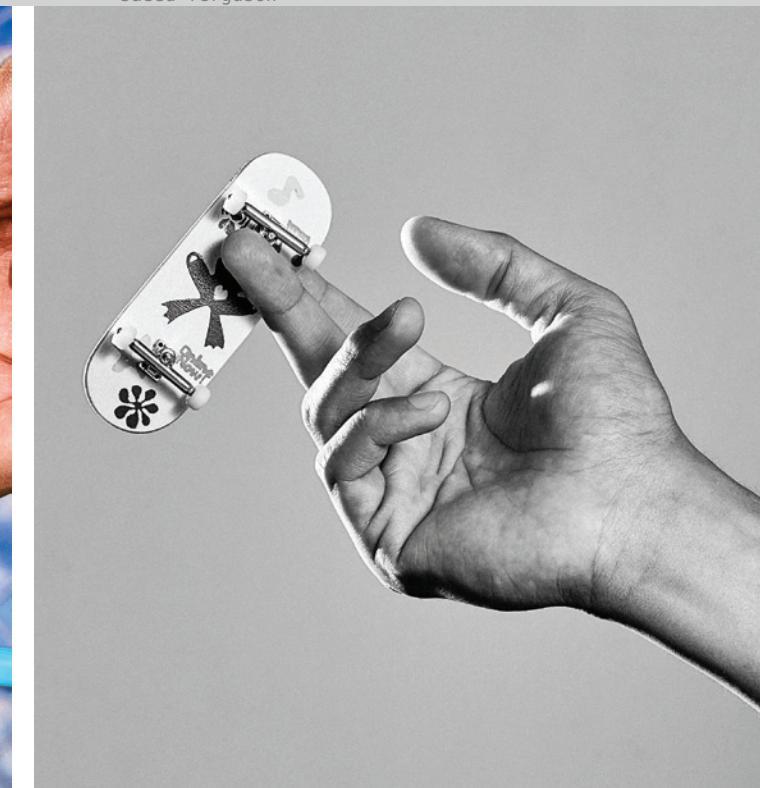


saeed ferguson



0068.04.003

003.04.0069



saeed ferguson

PROCESS 007 Do you seem to find artistic maturation as you age? Have you witnessed a trade-off between youthfulness and wisdom in your design approach?

Yeah, taste since last year has changed so much. It's ever-evolving. As you continue to learn and make stuff, you learn what's out there, your influences, and your taste. You actually meet people who are involved in this and they know stuff you don't know. So, you learn about this new brand from a homie and you're like, "Oh, shit, I didn't know this even existed."

It changes so much for me. My taste from when I was in high school was not even... I don't feel like the same person. It's so crazy. I think this so often: I literally have boxes at my house of, like, archived things that I used to own. It's cool. I used to wear these things all the time, and now, I would not even put them on. It's interesting.

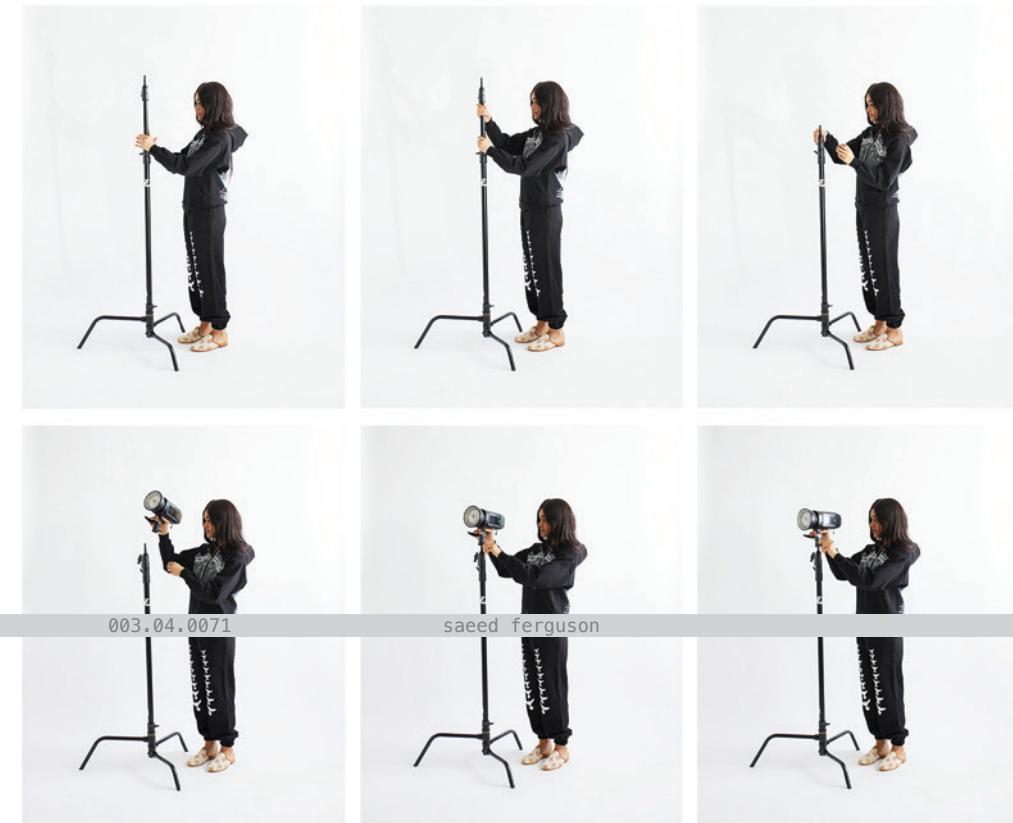
With our design, the original, original stuff can sometimes make me cringe. Even a collection of ideas we came up with last year and some graphics we used last year we would use differently now.

PROCESS 008 Do you have difficulty finding a work-life balance as a creative? How do you develop the balance?

There's times where friends are hanging out, and I'm just like, "I got to stay in another two hours and knock this out." It's work, but it's work that I want to be doing. It's super, super cool. And there are times where it feels like a job, actually. Getting my brain used to working in a new way and leading a company — I wasn't doing that before. The first four to five months were kind of intense and felt a lot like a job. I had to figure a lot of stuff out quickly, but after getting over that, it's like a playground. It doesn't feel real.

saeed ferguson

0070.04.003



PATIENCE 001 Describe any tension you might feel between patience and procrastination.

For the way we design, for the way I design, there needs to be time for me to digest what I'm doing. Because sometimes, I am just at my computer for 10 hours, looking at the same stuff for like the whole day. So, your brain is not really freshened up. I usually try to step away — have a week of doing it really intensely, then backing off, then reviewing it again with a fresh perspective of how it could be better. But there are definitely some times I'm just dragging my feet on a project I should have done months ago, and I don't like that.

PATIENCE 002 Do you ever completely drop an idea? Has a shelved idea ever resurfaced much later, ultimately to be fully realized?

We've had to drop a few collaboration projects because ideas weren't connecting the right way and things in the process just became a bit more complicated than we wanted them to be. I don't think there's anything we've tried to make that we couldn't because most of the stuff we were making was — up until the ceramic stuff — all printable. So most of it was pretty doable.





saeed ferguson



0072.04.003



saeed ferguson





PATIENCE 004 Best activity to clear your head?

There's always this mental space I have to get to to start working, and getting to that place is the hard part. Sometimes, all that's needed is caffeine; sometimes, I need the right song or something. There's always a different way to get to that spot. Once I'm in that space, I'll also have to be conscious to do work because if I'm not careful, I can just use that same mental energy to go shopping.

COLLABORATION 001 How would you describe your level of self-doubt within a collaborative space? Is there ever an initial embarrassment with presenting an idea?

With my partner Andrew, I'm really comfortable, so I don't really feel like that. I'm just like, "Yo, what you think?" He's like, "Yeah, this is sick," or, "This is trash," or whatever. I feel like we've got to the place where self-doubt doesn't exist. But that's not necessarily the case when I'm working with other people or on something new, like, let's say ceramics. If we're creating a T-shirt with someone, getting over that initial hump of the first round of ideas is always the hardest shit ever. That's like my nightmare. It's such a vulnerable spot you're in; you're trying to digest what this person is giving — all the information — then taking that and introducing your style and trying to visualize it all together. And it could be completely different from what these people are expecting. That basically happens with almost every collaboration we do — that anxious, I-don't-know-if-it's-gonna-work vibe.

saeed ferguson

0076.04.003



003.04.0077

saeed ferguson



COLLABORATION 002 Do you ever experience issues of ownership in a collaborative space? Self-consciousness of standing up for your own idea? Hesitation to fully consider an idea that wasn't yours?

We're trying to figure that out, but we usually do a pretty good job, at least internally. The pants we're creating actually weren't my idea at all, but I've been pushing them. They were Andrew's idea, but I'm just like, "I love that," and then he was like, "Oh, let's go. This is fire. Let's make it." And he's similar with me. That was kind of something we had to get used to and build up.

If you come up with something you're super psyched on, for it to be shot down kind of sucks. You just have to be open-minded and accepting. It is hard at first, but we've gotten to the point of full transparency. I can tell when he likes something, even from a facial expression or just from body language. There's been some cases where I know he hates something, and we still make the thing because I like it. Sometimes, I just have to trust my gut feeling and make the thing anyway. But usually we understand each other pretty well.



saeed ferguson

0078.04.003



saeed ferguson

003.04.0079

QUICK 001 Favorite tool?

Just the internet.

QUICK 002 Biggest vice?

I don't know; maybe
drinking or something.

QUICK 003 Go-to

article of clothing?

White T-shirt.

QUICK 004 Three favorite

musical artists?

Mike. Future. Coltrane.

QUICK 005 Best and worst
thing about where you live?

The best thing [about
Philadelphia] is that it's home
and it feels like home. Worst
thing is also that I haven't
experienced another place;
it's always in the back of my
mind to live somewhere else.

QUICK 006 Go-to

form of exercise?

Running.

saeed ferguson

0080.04.003

003.04.0081

saeed ferguson

QUICK 007 Cook or delivery?

Cook when I can.

QUICK 008 Thing you're

most pretentious about?

Gaming.

QUICK 009 Favorite thing to do

outside your creative sphere?

Just hang out with friends. Do
nothing. Just bullshitting.



BIO 001 Andrew Herzog



andrew herzog

0082.05.003



andrew herzog

BIO 002

Small city outside of Philadelphia, PA.

BIO 003 How'd you get your start?

Okay, so, when I go all the way back, I usually talk about it in the way of growing up within a household that was frugal, let's put it that way. Oftentimes, it was: you fix things or you made things yourself. So, my entire childhood I spent learning how to plumb when we had to plumb, learning how to wire, learning how to hang drywall — just anything and everything that needed to be done. By the time I was a teenager, I was trying to make my own skateboards and snowboards — all sorts of stuff like that. I would try to figure out, "How do you bend plywood? How do you make skateboards?" That framed a lot of the way that I've worked from undergrad through graduate school and beyond.

For me, undergrad was working out how to do things, you know? It was learning how to be a designer, how to use the programs, and how to formally make things. I could see my peers kind of be like, "Oh, I need to learn how to do this properly." But I was like, "Cool, just copy this code, put it here, and it works — we've got a website." And that mentality played a big part; that experience of having to do things or having to build things for yourself early on. And it continued to play a huge role as I went forward because I just recognized it as, "Oh, this no-fear approach in taking on works of new medium is a skill that I have."

003.05.0083

andrew herzog

BIO 004 Anything currently in the works?

We started a project dealing with the transparency of educational futures. The project — that has kind of been shelved for the time-being because of COVID — was called Public Works. It consisted of these eight-hour live streams from different studios in New York, like architecture firms or artist studios. We planned to do one every month, but we literally started in, like, December 2019 and did three of them. It's kind of this idea of: what does it actually look like to be working? Instagram shows you really curated moments, but what does it actually look like in an eight-hour day in the studios that we really admire? That's something that I would love to pick back up again in a world where we can get people together. We're really interested in live streaming as a technology but also continued interest in transparency and making things visible that are not often visible.

We recently designed the book I wrote, "A Report: Circle or Curve?" I wrote it and then we worked on it as a project in the studio. We are seen mostly as a digital kind of studio, and, while that is something that we're very good at, it's not the only skill-set that we possess. And we work on the idea that "you get the work you do," so if we want to do more books, we should design a book.

Right now, we're working on a new website for the studio, which has taken up a lot of our time, along with client projects. We're thinking about where we want to go next. That, oftentimes, is the question that fuels the self-initiated projects within the studio. Maybe we're doing a lot of consultancy work right now, but maybe we want to do some more film stuff in the future. So, we'll invest in a film project we could do within the studio next. And that's kind of the cycle, you know; that's kind of the rotation of how things work.

PROCESS 001 What's the life cycle of an idea for you?

Ideas usually start as thoughts that I let stew for a bit, and if I continue to think about them over the course of a few days, I go to the sketchbook to put them in sketches or writing. Usually, the sketchbook is as far as most things go. I tend to fill a sketchbook about every three months. From the sketchbook, things that go further usually get rendered in some form. If it's an installation, I'll take it to a 3D program to start to explore the physical space and scale in a setting. For paintings or sculptural works, I'll start to do more realized sketches or mock-ups that utilize the actual material on a smaller scale. Typically, while all that is going on, I am also writing about the project. I find writing — forcing myself to try to communicate an idea succinctly — is useful to do in parallel as things are being developed. If an idea makes it through that whole process, it becomes something.

PROCESS 002 How important is self-education to your process?

It comes down to your perspective, right? You could learn nothing in a classroom of the most educated people you've ever met. Then, you could learn so much from just going through YouTube on your own. So, I think it really comes down to personal will. Being outside the classroom could be more important if you want it to be more important. Understanding that things are not going to be great the first time is super important. This is the way that we approach it, in school. The process is: we're here for three months, you're gonna do shitty work, and then it's gonna get better. But somehow, when we're outside of school, we kind of expect that anything we do is gonna be brilliant, but it's really the exact same thing. It takes time, and it takes perseverance, and it takes will. Whether you're in the classroom or outside of it.

0084.05.003

003.05.0085

andrew herzog



PROCESS 003 How much do you value

being small or a 'critical mass'?

So far, I think we've definitely been intentional about staying small because small is extremely agile. And that gives us the ability to turn things down and invest in things heavily. I think it really becomes a question of what is the ideal size of the studio? What does being big make possible? If it makes possible the things that we really want to do, then, yeah, I can see a necessity for growing. But at the moment, I think everything that we want to do is fairly small and we don't need to be very big to do it.

PROCESS 004 How many iterations is too

many? How many is too few?

I feel like iterations are useful as long as they're pushing an idea along. Don't iterate to procrastinate. I try to iterate to better understand the process or get a sense of the final outcome, but ultimately, the final exercise will always be different.





andrew herzog



0086.05.003

003.05.0087

PROCESS 005 *When do you know a project has reached its final form?*

I'm the type of person, as you could probably see by my archive website, who likes to do a lot of things; I'm not the type of person that festers on things. I have a lot of friends who are really, really talented and make really, really beautiful things, but they might only make two things a year, and I'm just like, "What the fuck, man?" It would drive me insane. I don't know if that's a good thing, but that's me, personally.

If I've spent three weeks on something, I can't spend any more time when I have a million other ideas that I want to try and make. I don't know how long I'm gonna be alive for — I could be dead soon — I need to make as much as I possibly can, as quickly as I possibly can.

I think that also relates just to the ability to let go a little bit, you know? I obviously want to make great things, but to me, it's all about that overall body of work. All of these things build on each other. Keep building, keep building, keep evolving, keep piling it up. Keep learning more than anything because anything that you do will inform whatever comes next and whatever comes after that. It's less of getting caught up in making something perfect and more of what communicates what I'm trying to say in that moment.

PROCESS 006 *Describe the cultivation of your social media presence and how it may relate to your overall creative pursuit.*

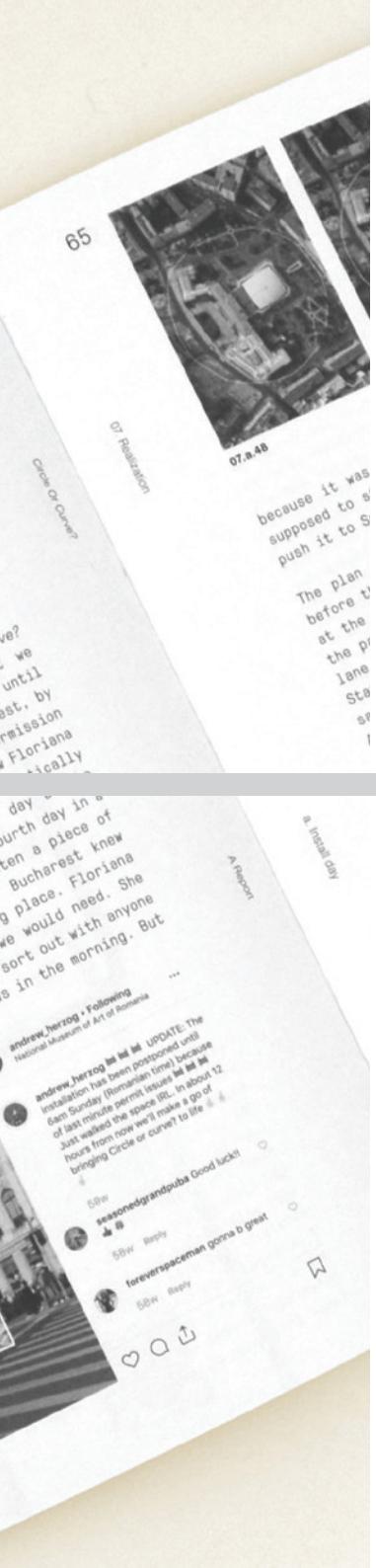
In some ways, there's an archival element to it. In other ways, there's this ability to have a built-in audience, where you can just put something up and it plays the role of this participatory element. It's not really see if it "works" because to a certain extent, I don't expect social media results to dictate whether or not something works. There are whole other factors at play, but it is interesting in that regard. The reason these things maybe are successful or the reason people are interested is partially because you saw it first. You saw it from eight months before it existed to when we did it. So, for me, it's about being able to create that relationship with people.

Public work exists in a literal public space. Up until maybe now, you've always had the interaction of people. But because of these platforms, you now also have the interaction of people who will never see it for real, but will feel related to it. They feel tied to it in a way because they watched it happen and I really enjoy that. I think it's really important in the work.

PROCESS 007 *Do you seem to find artistic maturation as you age? Have you witnessed a trade-off between youthfulness and wisdom in your design approach?*

I feel I've become more and more aware of my language; I know my language a lot more. I think that comes from years of developing my interests — authorship, some sort of accessibility, these things that I inherently would involve in my projects. And realizing also when I look around at my friends who make one or two things a year, I couldn't do that, I would never make that.

That takes time, because early on, I probably would have been like, "I could make that." But as I've gotten older, I know it doesn't make sense for me to do that; that's not in line with my voice, it's not in line with my vocabulary, you know? It's not me. It's not my language.



PROCESS 008 Do you have difficulty finding a work-life balance as a creative? How do you develop the balance?

I think there's a transition as you evolve through a career. In school, you're just so in it. You're around all these people that are in it, you're up late, you're doing all this stuff, you know.

After school, I moved to Minneapolis, and it was a really nice place to live, but I wasn't from there, and everybody has a really good work-life balance. But I was just 23; to a certain extent, I didn't want to have a good work-life balance. I wanted to be doing stuff. I just got out of school, I'm super amped up at the time.

In personal projects, you're the one that has to do the work. So, you're the one that has to skip the party or skip whatever it is. You're going to exchange that for the effort you put into this thing, and as long as you're okay with that, then I think it's worth pursuing. As long as it doesn't hurt anyone or affect people in a negative way, it's worth the while.





PATIENCE 001 Describe any tension you might feel between patience and procrastination.

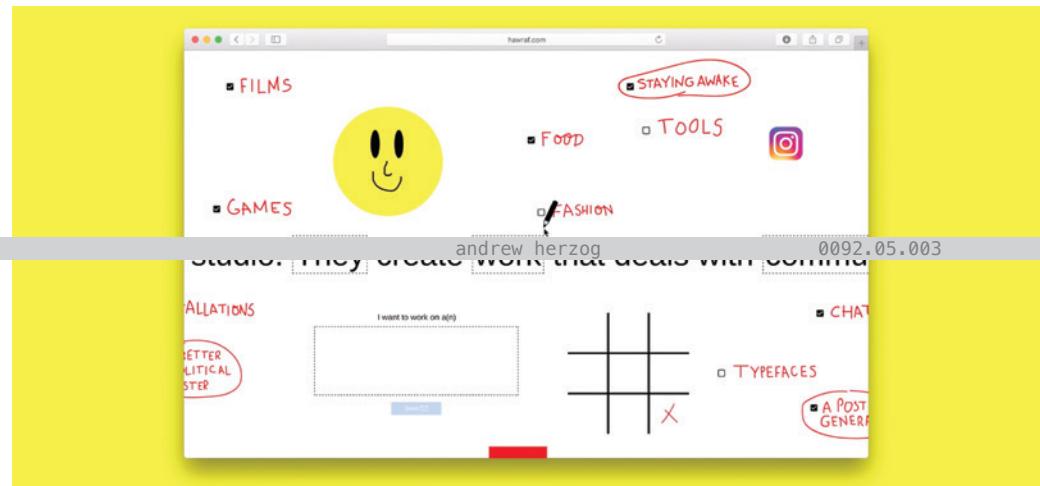
There are certain materials that require patience but none that require procrastination.

PATIENCE 002 Do you ever completely drop an idea? Has a shelved idea ever resurfaced much later, ultimately to be fully realized?

I'm revisiting things a lot more now as I've kind of matured. When a younger student or someone hits me up, I always recommend making a ton of shit because you're learning so much from those things that you won't really understand.

Things are just starting to come into focus, personally; they're lightly starting to coalesce in a way that's like, "Oh, that's the same thing I did there that I did a year later," and, "Oh, shit, those are the exact same projects. They just look totally different, but the idea I had behind them was totally the same."

As I start to do more stuff that exists in an "art" context, there becomes this sort of necessity to build on top of things.



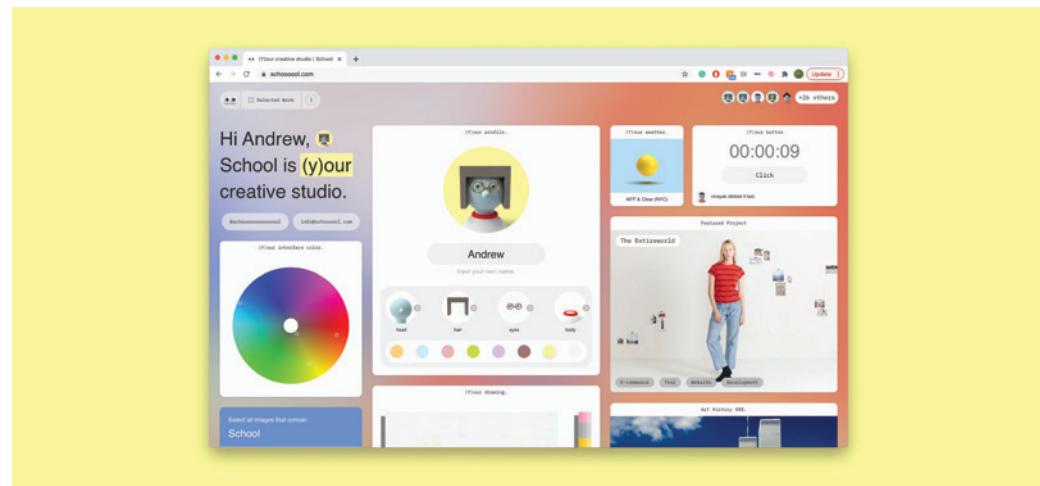
003.05.0093 andrew herzog

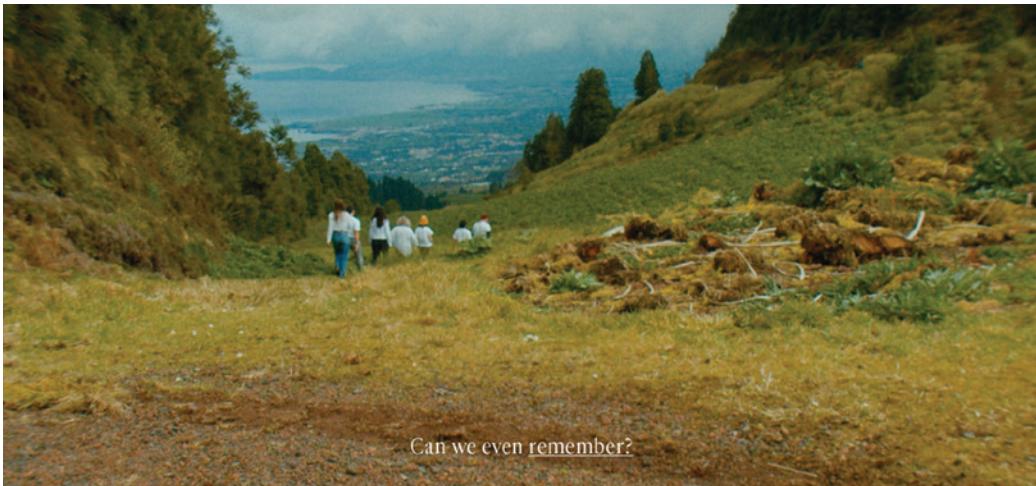
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CLIENT

CLIENT	SCOPE TYPE	DELIVERABLES	BUDGET	START	FINISH	LENGTH (DAYS)	LENGTH (WEEKS)	\$\$\$
Large technology company / search engine	Illustration	10 drawings	\$500.00	4/1/2017	3/27/2017	7.00	1.40	\$
Startup (dental)	Social Media	Monthly social retainer	\$4,000.00	4/1/2017	4/30/2017	29.00	5.80	\$
Startup (Angel)	Marketing Execution	30 second video	\$5,000.00	4/10/2017	5/29/2017	49.00	9.80	\$
Anthropologist	Development	Development for an interactive touch-screen	\$4,390.21	4/17/2017	7/31/2017	105.00	21.00	\$
Startup (dental)	Social Media	Monthly social retainer	\$4,000.00	5/1/2017	5/31/2017	30.00	6.00	\$
Small design agency	Design?	Wrote a poem	\$200.00	5/4/2017	5/5/2017	1.00	0.20	\$
Large design agency	Brand Identity	Generative Logo Development	\$7,500.00	5/5/2017	6/15/2017	41.00	8.20	\$
Startup	Concept Sprint	Theme Month Strategy	\$5,000.00	5/5/2017	6/15/2017	41.00	8.20	\$
Artist	Website (Personal)	Website design & development	\$6,000.00 + a painting	5/15/2017	11/21/2017	190.00	38.00	\$
Startup (dental)	Social Media	Monthly social retainer	\$4,000.00	6/1/2017	6/30/2017	29.00	5.80	\$
Startup (Series D)	Brand Voice & Messaging	Messaging & copywriting	\$8,000.00	6/26/2017	9/25/2017	91.00	18.20	\$
Startup (dental)	Social Media	Monthly social retainer (cancelled)	\$2,000.00	7/1/2017	7/15/2017	14.00	2.80	\$
Startup (Series B)	Marketing Concepting	Deck of campaign concepts	\$30,000.00	7/14/2017	9/25/2017	73.00	14.60	\$





PATIENCE 003 Do you find impatience to be a form of motivation in your process?

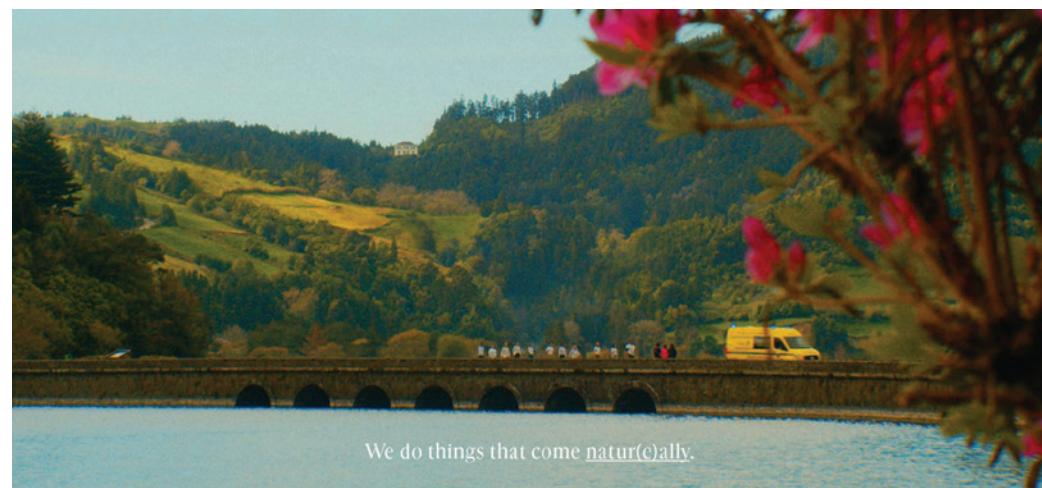
Yes. Impatience is important. It can be the fire under my feet sometimes. Sometimes, you have to bring things to fruition without waiting for the perfect situation. Sometimes, being impatient can help propel something into existence sooner than it would normally.

I can get caught up in how things should be done but get impatient waiting for all those things to fall into place, and it's useful to be impatient and do it yourself.

In the end, you get the work you do, and without doing it, you don't have much to show. Impatience can be a catalyst for pushing things forward.

PATIENCE 004 Best activity to clear your head?

Long-distance running or swimming.



COLLABORATION 001 How would you describe your level of self-doubt within a collaborative space? Is there ever an initial embarrassment with presenting an idea?

Early on, in the HAWRAF days, I definitely felt some of that. I think that's also just working in a partnership with other creatives, you know? It's that you don't want to push too hard because you don't want it to feel like you're just pushing your idea, but at the same time, you might feel it's the right idea. And I think there's some evolution that takes place where you become more resolute. You could go one of two ways: you could become even more, "This is my idea, it's right, I'm always right," or you can take a step back and empathize, try to understand why everyone isn't necessarily buying your idea. Usually that leads to making something better, asking, "Why is this not jiving with everyone as much as it is with me?" Part of that's just self-reflection. That's difficult to do in the creative process.



andrew herzog

0096.05.003



andrew herzog

003.05.0097

COLLABORATION 002 Do you ever experience issues of ownership in a collaborative space? Self-consciousness of standing up for your own idea? Hesitation to fully consider an idea that wasn't yours?

Nicky and I are the partners of School, but right now, we have another person working with us, and last year, we had two other people working with us. The studio, School, is really what I'm interested in because I know what I would do in approaching a design. And part of what I love so much about it is the other voices in it. Something always gets remixed, you know? It always gets changed from a grape flavor to grape ginger ale. You know, it's, "Whoa, that's cool. That's something I've never seen before. That's exciting."

I think now my focus is more in the design studio, more on making things that are new or really trying to harness the possibility of this person's really cool idea and how we find a way to meld these ideas rather than be like, "This is my idea, this is the right way."

That's not to say that sometimes, even still, there are points where someone might have something that we instantly know is the right idea and we scrap everything else. For the most part, what's interesting is being the air traffic controllers, trying to steer this complex mechanism. When it really makes ingenious things, everyone has to kind of give up a little bit of their influence to make that happen.

That was what was great about HAWRAF. I think HAWRAF was a real melding of different personalities and aesthetics and all sorts of stuff. That really felt like something different, and School is similar in that way — what we do is think really well, and what we make comes out of that. It has nothing to do with a medium or an aesthetic. It has everything to do with what makes sense and what's good. That stuff takes time, and I think we're getting better at it. But it's definitely a process.

QUICK 001 Favorite tool?

I guess the pencil.

QUICK 002 Biggest vice?

Oh, candy. Reese's.

Fucking love it.

QUICK 003 Go-to

article of clothing?

Mmm, like, pants.

QUICK 004 Three favorite

musical artists?

Let's go with Meek Mill, and
let's switch it up and go with
Foo Fighters. And I've been
listening to Billie Eilish lately.

QUICK 005 Best and worst

thing about where you live?

[NYC] feels like the center
of the universe, but it's
so fucking expensive.

QUICK 006 Go-to

form of exercise?

Running, definitely.

QUICK 007 Cook or delivery?

Definitely delivery. But we're
working on cooking a lot
more because delivery is
terrible for the environment
— too much plastic.

QUICK 008 Thing you're
most pretentious about?

I feel like I've lived my life
trying to be as unpretentious
as possible. That said, maybe
I'm most pretentious about
art because it's the thing
I feel most uncomfortable
about, so I feel a chip on my
shoulder type of thing with it.

QUICK 009 Favorite thing to do
outside your creative sphere?

I don't know if there's anything
outside of a creative sphere.





BIO 001

Jared Ray Johnson

BIO 002

St. Louis, MO

BIO 003 How'd you get your start?

I got my start in footwear design in a very roundabout way. I started college in 2008 and studied finance because the world was falling apart at the time and finance was at the root of it. My curiosity led me to a career on Wall Street, where I mostly made strategy decks and sales reports. As my curiosity began to wane, I began taking evening drawing classes in the city. I was working on a portfolio for architecture school but couldn't get myself to pull the trigger. I felt I needed to leave, so I decided to go down the MBA path because I could at least explain that to my friends and coworkers. The whole time I knew I wanted to find my niche in design, and I ended up finding myself at MIT because in addition to being the home of insane technology, it's one of the most creative environments I've ever seen. Early on at MIT, I met my co-founder at Season Three, Adam Klein, and the two of us began working on building a hiking boot.

BIO 004 Anything currently in the works?

Well, I'm still working on Season Three, and we've got a lot going on. We're designing two new footwear models for next year as well as working on a few collaborations.



jared ray johnson

0102.06.003

003.06.0103

jared ray johnson

PROCESS 001 What's the life cycle of an idea for you?

My design process sucks, but it's all I know. I start everything with references. I consume an unhealthy amount of media, so my brain is kind of trained to recognize things I've seen before. If an idea can keep my attention long enough, I pull together a moodboard, although most of my moodboards are incomplete and incoherent. In designing our first shoe, The Ansel, we got a ton of help from our partners in Italy on the technical sketches and we were able to move to an early prototype quickly. Once I have my hands on a shoe, it becomes easy to swap out colors and materials — it's kind of like the IRL version of NikelD.

PROCESS 002 How important is self-education to your process?

It's everything. Outside of a few figure and perspective drawing classes, I have no formal design training. But lifelong learning is a huge value for me and our company. So, almost every task, if it's going to be done well, requires some sort of education process.

PROCESS 003 How much do you value being small or a 'critical mass'?

Being small is cool because we can move fast, but at the same time, everything we do is resource-constrained in a way that paralyzes us at times. I'd like to grow big but not overnight. That scares the shit out of me, to be honest. The ideal progression would be to continue cultivating our niche following and growing it behind the scenes. There's something to be said about those brands that are "IYKYK."

PROCESS 004 How many iterations is too many? How many is too few?

We prototyped our boot to hell, but I don't regret it. I don't know what too many iterations looks like, but I can say that it won't be right on the first go and probably not on the second or third either. Shoes are hard, especially if you're trying anything novel with shape, silhouette, or material combinations.

PROCESS 005 When do you know a project has reached its final form?

A project is usually done at the point where it would be irresponsible to delay it any longer. I try to blend the lean startup rapid-iteration loop with my perfectionist tendencies to come out somewhere in the middle, but I have to be honest, most of my best work only comes when I've waited long enough to turn it into a good idea.

PROCESS 006 *Describe the cultivation of your social media presence and how it may relate to your overall creative pursuit.*

Cultivating our following on Instagram has made me hate Instagram so much, but it's certainly been important to our brand. We started our account at the end of a period where "Instagram brands" had become a thing, and we were keen on putting something different out into the world. It wouldn't be fair to say that we never had a strategy, but it would be fair to say that we never stuck to a strategy. We've mixed found images with original photography and low-fi graphic design. We've shown behind-the-scenes content and even hosted a live stream of our buddy Archie DJing for Earth Day, which Virgil Abloh promoted. Stuff like that is fun, and I wish we had more time for it. The routine posting and responding to comments is exhausting.

PROCESS 007 *Do you seem to find artistic maturation as you age? Have you witnessed a trade-off between youthfulness and wisdom in your design approach?*

Yeah, I mean I think the references I consider in my design process are more expansive as I age. I think the trade-off between youthfulness and wisdom is that when I was younger, I really only paid attention to things that immediately caught my eye or I had a reason to examine; as I've grown older, I feel like I've grown the ability to see things from different perspectives than my own. It's harder to put myself in that place where seeing something feels new, but I can find things that I know I would have overlooked in the past and reexamine them with an open mind.

jared ray johnson

0104.06.003



003.06.0105

jared ray johnson





jared ray johnson

0106.06.003

003.06.0107

jared ray johnson

PROCESS 008 Do you have difficulty finding a work-life balance

as a creative? How do you develop the balance?

Life should inform work. If you find something that you truly love, that's great, but it would be a mistake to invest all of your time there. Take writing, for example. All of the best writers lived lives that informed their work. Had they, instead of living life, just forced themselves to produce work all of the time, their writing probably would have suffered. All that is to say that balance is not the right goal. The goal should be to live a life that strengthens your work and, hopefully, your work will reward you with new life experiences.

PATIENCE 001 Describe any tension you might feel

between patience and procrastination.

I need to be patient with my work. That patience can sometimes manifest itself as procrastination, but I think the difference is that patience is confident. Patience doesn't make excuses or harbor any guilt. I'd like to be more patient with my ideas and work because, as I've said, I often need to meditate on something for a while before I'm ready to finish it, but sometimes I beat myself up about taking too long.

PATIENCE 002 Do you ever completely drop an idea? Has a shelved

idea ever resurfaced much later, ultimately to be fully realized?

Yeah, all the time. One part of my process that I forgot to mention is that I'm extremely social with my ideas. I need to gather feedback on even the earliest of ideas to know if they are worth continuing to think about. I'm very used to killing an idea after shopping it around to a few folks. And sometimes, it comes back because one of the people who I shared it with has continued to do their own workshopping on it.

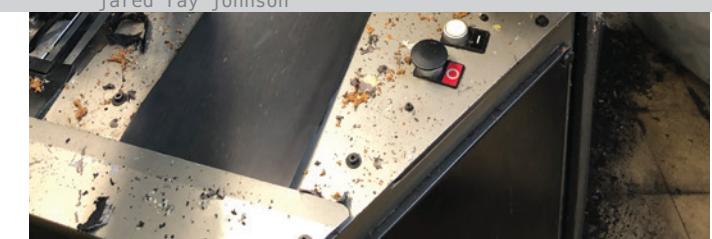


jared ray johnson

0108.06.003



jared ray johnson





jared ray johnson

0110.06.003



jared ray johnson

003.06.0111





jared ray johnson

0112.06.003



jared ray johnson

003.06.0113

PATIENCE 003 Do you find impatience to be a form of motivation in your process?

Yeah, I need to run the clock out until I can't afford to be patient anymore.

PATIENCE 004 Best activity to clear your head?

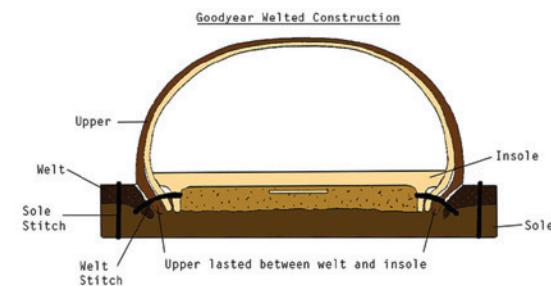
Playing video games. Meditation feels like the adult answer here, but I think my meditation practice is about much more than clearing my head. When I just need to get my brain to relax, I have to play video games.

COLLABORATION 001 How would you describe your level of self-doubt within a collaborative space? Is there ever an initial embarrassment with presenting an idea?

No. I'm so used to pitching new ideas to people that I'm rarely ever embarrassed if someone doesn't like it.

COLLABORATION 002 Do you ever experience issues of ownership in a collaborative space? Self-consciousness of standing up for your own idea? Hesitance to fully consider an idea that wasn't yours?

Due to the collaborative nature of my ideation process, I hardly ever feel like I "own" my ideas. But at the same time, I will sometimes keep explaining my ideas if I feel like I didn't articulate them correctly.





jared ray johnson



0114.06.003



jared ray johnson



003.06.0115



jared ray johnson

0116.06.003

003.06.0117

jared ray johnson

QUICK 001 Favorite tool?
Photoshop.

QUICK 002 Biggest vice?
Spending money on clothing.

QUICK 003 Go-to
article of clothing?
Army fatigue pants.

QUICK 004 Three favorite
musical artists?
21 Savage, Kanye West,
Playboi Carti.

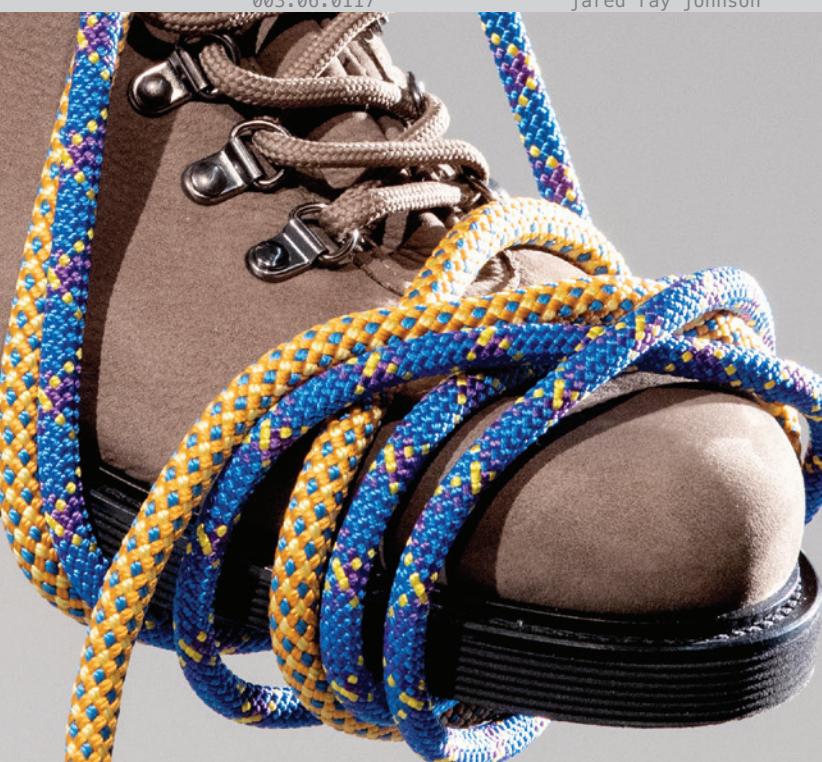
QUICK 005 Best and worst
thing about where you live?
The best part about living
[in Brooklyn] is that it has all
the conveniences of NYC but
an added neighborly feel.
The worst thing about living
here is the cost of rent.

QUICK 006 Go-to
form of exercise?
These days, it's running
and kettlebell swings.

QUICK 007 Cook or delivery?
Both. Pandemic cooking is
depressing, so you've got
to order to spice it up.

QUICK 008 Thing you're
most pretentious about?
My music opinions.

QUICK 009 Favorite thing to do
outside your creative sphere?
Making cocktails.



Che-Wei Wang

BIO 001.CW

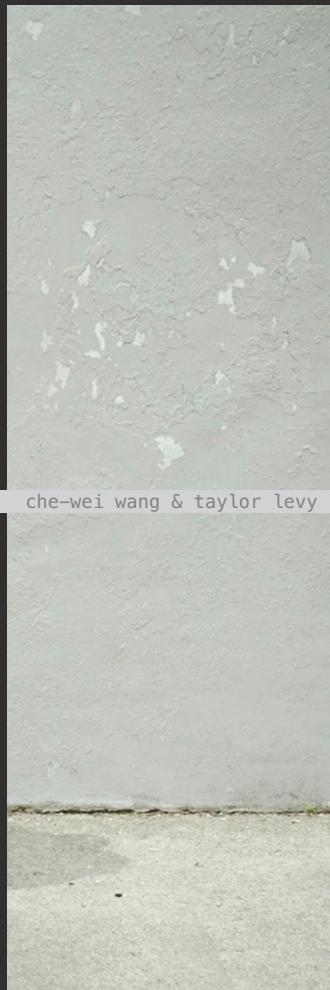
BIO 002.CW

Tokyo

BIO 003.CW *How'd you get your start?*

My first turning point was when my dad handed me a broken typewriter. I got hooked when I opened it up and figured out how to fix it. My teenage years were filled with sleepless nights of sketching things I wanted to make. Every day, on my way home from school, I would walk through Tokyu Hands, touching and browsing all the amazingly curated objects in their stores. I knew I wanted to make things, but I didn't know how to make things.

During my senior year of high school, I broke my knee snowboarding which exempted me from participating in sports, which was otherwise mandatory at my school. I ended up spending all my free time in the art room, messing around with every material I could get my hands on. That led me to architecture school, where I continued to mess around with more materials, while learning about and developing a design process.



che-wei wang & taylor levy



0118.07.003



003.07.0119

taylor levy & che-wei wang

interview date 2021.01.04

Taylor Levy

BIO 001.T

BIO 002.T

Montreal

BIO 003.T *How'd you get your start?*

Growing up, I liked lots of stuff but couldn't find a place I fit. I studied film and computer science as an undergrad. When I graduated, I moved home. To make money, my childhood friend and I started a company to help people use computers. I also started a company to make custom covers for iPods (which were new at the time). And another friend and I made a documentary about an up-and-coming jazz singer. During that time, I found out about the Interactive Telecommunications Program (ITP) at NYU through the Cool Hunting blog and applied. I went to grad school there and found my people — and my person (that's where Che-Wei and I met). For the first time, I saw how I could use technology as a way to do and make whatever I felt like. I went in thinking I would do more business-like stuff. But I ended up making art. Mainly electronic sculptures that reveal some aspect of how computers work.

interview date 2021.01.06

BIO 004.CW Anything currently in the works?

I just picked up a project that's been on the shelf for a couple years. It's a timed capsule. We're taking decommissioned scuba tanks, cutting them in half and upcycling them to be time capsules with an electronic timer, so you can set how long you want the capsule to be locked. Once the time is up, the capsule unlocks itself.

I also spend a big chunk of my time working on space stuff for the Space Exploration Initiative at MIT. My main project is a device for astronauts on the ISS that helps them gain a sense of orientation in our solar system by pointing to different locations around them. Home on Earth, the Moon, Mars, etcetera.

BIO 004.T

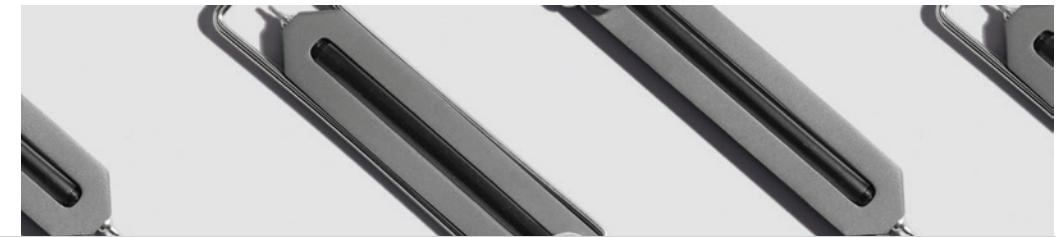
I'm working on an electronics project that weaves a narrative of how the transistor brings you to a functional computer. It functions both as physical lecture notes for courses I teach but also as an object that you can live with and experience.

PROCESS 001.CW What's the life cycle of an idea for you?

Sketch, sketch, sketch; then CAD, CAD, CAD, CAD, CAD, CAD; sketch; CAD, CAD; 3D print; CAD; 3D print; CAD; CNC machine; then if the project loses steam, it sits on a shelf until it gets picked up a few years later or dies on the shelf. If it gets picked up again, it goes back into design for manufacturing, then sourcing, then building assets for launch, then launch.

che-wei wang & taylor levy

0120.07.003



taylor levy & che-wei wang

PROCESS 001.T

I'm pretty slow with my ideas. They mostly live in my sketchbook as notes, words, I don't know. They often take a while to make it into the world. For no other reason really than me just taking my time and making sure the whole thing makes sense.

PROCESS 002.CW How important is self-education to your process?

We're constantly learning as we're making. I generally don't know enough to pull a project off, but I know enough to know that it's possible and that I could learn what I need to learn to make it happen. So, self-education is critical. I can't imagine doing a project where we're not learning something new.

PROCESS 002.T

Super important. If you want to do something, no one's going to do it for you, unless you have bagillions of dollars to pay someone, but if you don't (and I don't) you've got to figure out how to do it on your own. Fortunately, the internet has pretty much anything available to learn.





che-wei wang & taylor levy

0122.07.003

taylor levy & che-wei wang

003.07.0123

PROCESS 003.CW *How much do you value being small or a 'critical mass'?*

Being and staying small is one of our core principles. We don't want the risk and liability of becoming big (in size). We're not interested in chasing design awards, which seems like how most firms build notoriety, but it's nice to receive some kind of acknowledgment once in a while, especially from our customers who have been following our work over many years.

PROCESS 003.T

We like being small. It is part of our original mantra — just to be big enough to live comfortably and keep doing what we love to do.

PROCESS 004.CW *How many iterations is too many? How many is too few?*

I don't think there are ever too many iterations. I do find we often explore a branch for a while, only to return to one of the original seeds of a design.

PROCESS 004.T *How many iterations is too many?*

How many is too few?

There's no magic number. Just tweak until it's right.

PROCESS 005.CW *When do you know a project has reached its final form?*

I'm quick to declare a project ready. Taylor is much more cautious and skeptical about calling something done. I tend to hurry something to completion, knowing that once a project loses momentum, it'll likely end up on the shelf to die.

PROCESS 005.T

We get to a point when it just feels right. Then we figure out all the manufacturing, take photos and do other documentation, then hit launch.

PROCESS 006.CW *Describe the cultivation of your social media presence and how it may relate to your overall creative pursuit.*

We don't really do anything to build an audience. It's grown really slowly over many years, and I think that's okay. I'd rather have a tight group of hardcore fans than a giant group of randoms.

PROCESS 006.T

We're not very diligent with any of this. But it's obviously important. I think our main strategy is just slow and steady to incrementally build our following.

PROCESS 007.CW *Do you seem to find artistic maturation as you age? Have you witnessed a trade-off between youthfulness and wisdom in your design approach?*

I recently decided I'm no longer going to work on BS projects. BS projects would be something that I don't believe in or feel passionate about. I'm 41, and if I'm being optimistic, I have forty-ish productive years left, so that's maybe thirty to forty major projects that I get to pour my energy into.

Design-wise, I seem to be able to get into a design-flow state much more easily as I get older. It's been really fun and super productive. I'm really looking forward to getting older and getting into a super design-flow state. Feels like a super power.

PROCESS 007.T

I don't really know. I definitely think we are getting better at things, through practice. And getting older and having kids really means focusing in on stuff that is most important.

PROCESS 008.CW *Do you have difficulty finding a work-life balance as a creative? How do you develop the balance?*

Our first few years with our kids were pretty disruptive because we didn't separate work and life, but I think we're getting back into a good balance as the kids get older. Or maybe it's less of a balance and more of an integration between work and life.

che-wei wang & taylor levy

0124.07.003

003.07.0125

taylor levy & che-wei wang

PROCESS 008.T *Do you have difficulty finding a work-life balance as a creative? How do you develop the balance?*

We don't. But we knew when we got together and started a family that our kids would be part of what we do. So we involve them in all different ways. But we also spend time as a family not working. We're super lucky that we can work whenever we want, which often means once the kids are sleeping. And we can do stuff like pick up our kids from school (when there is school) and hang out when we want.

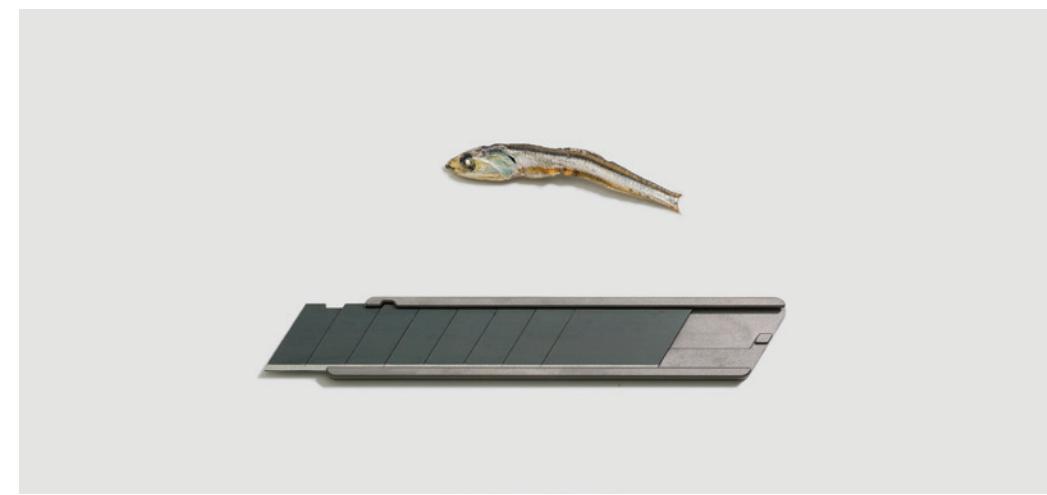
PATIENCE 001.CW *Describe any tension you might feel between patience and procrastination.*

We have the luxury of being patient with our design process. We don't have deadlines and other time constraints that make it extremely difficult to give a design process the time it needs to stew. Sometimes, projects sit on the shelf for years before we pick them up again because we have a lightbulb moment years after we stopped working on a project.

I'm not into procrastination (even though I do plenty of it). But I'm really into being bored. I love being bored. I find it to be the purest creative time.

PATIENCE 001.T

I don't really feel that tension. I'm very comfortable not working on something if it doesn't feel right or I'm not interested. And trusting myself to do it when it feels right.





PATIENCE 002.CW Do you ever completely drop an idea? Has a shelved idea ever resurfaced much later, ultimately to be fully realized?

Yes! I think nine out of ten ideas get dropped. One seems worth working on, so it gets prototyped. And nine out of ten prototypes end up on the shelf. On average, projects that get shelved stay on the shelf for two to three years.

PATIENCE 002.T

Yes. We shelve things constantly, and I'm super okay with this. Often a project loses steam because we can't solve something or figure out how to get it right. And then a few years later, someone walks into our studio and tells us about this new material or fabrication process or whatever, and it will randomly inject new life into that shelved project.

PATIENCE 003.CW Do you find impatience to be a form of motivation in your process?

Whenever I get excited about an idea, I put 100% of my energy into it to build a functional prototype. That's the easy part. The hard part is to somehow trick myself into staying excited about the project to see it through to manufacturing. So, I'm always looking to nurture that feeling, so I can stay motivated to go through some of the more grueling and time-consuming parts of the process.

PATIENCE 003.T

No, not really.

PATIENCE 004.CW Best activity to clear your head?

Walking in circles, exercising, and showering.

PATIENCE 004.T

Sleep.

che-wei wang & taylor levy

0128.07.003

COLLABORATION 001.CW How would you describe your level of self-doubt within a collaborative space? Is there ever an initial embarrassment with presenting an idea?

Depends on who I'm collaborating with. Taylor and I have been going at this for a while, so we both have already built up assumptions of how we'll respond to each other and there's some anxiety around sharing ideas (because humans are terrified of rejection). My solution is to try to work side-by-side as much as possible, so we can have more serendipitous moments and less formal conversations or pitches around project ideas. When I'm collaborating with anyone other than Taylor, there's always some self-doubt, but I try to counteract that by presenting a series of sloppy sketches to walk through how I reached the idea.

COLLABORATION 001.T

No. Even if Che-Wei doesn't like something, I'll still work on it if I care about it. And he'll do the same.

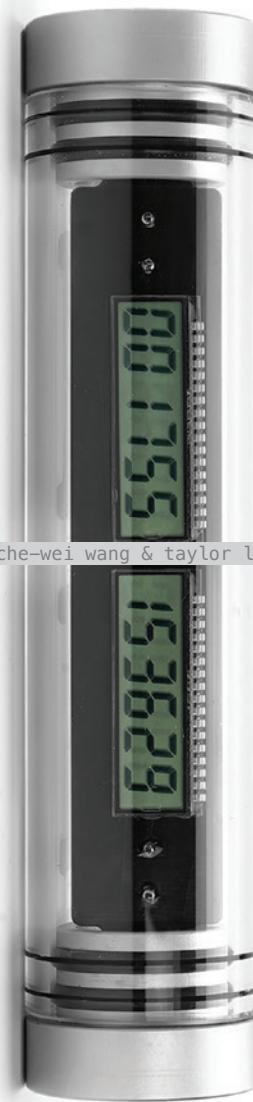
COLLABORATION 002.CW Do you ever experience issues of ownership in a collaborative space? Self-consciousness of standing up for your own idea? Hesitation to fully consider an idea that wasn't yours?

I like to think I'm open to ideas, but I have to admit I'm pretty quick to dismiss ideas that don't fit my vision. That's something I'm actively working on. I'm usually not the loudest person in the room, so I just stay quiet until I have a good idea to contribute. At the same time, I often feel like I'm contributing the most in terms of "good" ideas and "work." But I also know that it's impossible to quantify and objectively attach a clear value. Everyone's contribution is equally valuable. This is a pretty sensitive issue for me, and I'm trying to figure out how to change how I feel about owning ideas. It's most likely just something I need to do to rewire my brain and change my perspective.

COLLABORATION 002.T

No.





che-wei wang & taylor levy

0130.07.003



003.07.0131

taylor levy & che-wei wang



che-wei wang & taylor levy

0132.07.003

003.07.0133

taylor levy & che-wei wang

QUICK 001.CW Favorite tool?

Herring Blade.

QUICK 002.CW Biggest vice?

Junk food.

QUICK 003.CW Go-to article of clothing?

Montbell down pants.

QUICK 004.CW Three favorite musical artists?

Sylvan Esso, Four Tet, Frank Ocean.

QUICK 005.CW Best and worst thing about where you live?

Best thing [about Brooklyn] is running into friends on the street. Worst part is running into garbage on the street.

QUICK 006.CW Go-to form of exercise?

Jumping rope.

QUICK 007.CW Cook or delivery?

Cook.

QUICK 008.CW Thing you're most pretentious about?

Mechanical engineering.

QUICK 009.CW Favorite thing to do outside your creative sphere?

Long walks.



che-wei wang & taylor levy

0134.07.003

003.07.0135

taylor levy & che-wei wang



QUICK 001.T Favorite tool?

Pen.

QUICK 002.T Biggest vice?

These days, watching shitty TV when I should be sleeping to clear my head.

QUICK 003.T Go-to article of clothing?

Wool socks.

QUICK 004.T Three favorite musical artists?

Benjamin Clementine, Fiona Apple, Taylor Swift.

QUICK 005.T Best and worst thing about where you live?

[About Brooklyn] Friends. Rats.

QUICK 006.T Go-to form of exercise?

Running.

QUICK 007.T Cook or delivery?

Cook.

QUICK 008.T Thing you're most pretentious about?

Buying organic food.

QUICK 009.T Favorite thing to do outside your creative sphere?

Sports.



Livio Melo

BIO 001



livio melo

0136.08.003

003.08.0137



BIO 002

I was born in rural Dominican Republic but have spent the greater chunk of my life in the Bronx.

BIO 003 How'd you get your start?

Making outdoor gear just happened for me, but thinking back to my life experiences, it feels like it was bound to happen. My youth was filled with having profound outdoor experiences in which we made gear ourselves to make them possible. My grandmother taught us to salvage the protective grills on standing oscillating fans to make a sort of scoop net for catching crabs. We made a raft from driftwood once to cross that same bay where we caught crabs. We would go hunting for the perfect guava tree branches to make the squad slingshots and hunted finches with those.

I spent my youth in a culture that made everything themselves because of necessity, and I, like many of my fellow townspeople, was very handy. Then, I immigrated to a different culture. Nothing was made by individuals and nothing was natural about New York City. Outdoor recreation never happened for me while living in NYC, and most of my life since leaving my home country was void of "the outdoors." Then, in my late teens, I knew the right person and worked my ass off, landing myself in Patagonia, Argentina and Antarctica. In these places, I learned about global warming for the first time, as I saw the effects firsthand. I was making robots in high school then, and I used to think everything was designed by engineers until the year I had to apply for universities and learned there was such a thing as design. Finally, a lifetime spent drawing video game consoles and sneakers and tools and toys and jackets made sense. So, in three months, I composed a portfolio from scratch and applied to schools.

My first design ever at Parsons School of Design was a book cover that literally turned a book into a bag because I thought it would be funny to make a "book bag." The next six and a half years were spent justifying to professors why products should exist, as practice for eventually doing the same to board members, I assumed. I never cared to make just to make, and my justifications were always for the good of people. The last thing I designed there was an upholstered arm chair that was supposed to remind the user of a time they touched another human and felt something. This was in hopes that an emotional connection to an object would help it keep its life longer. That was also the last object I designed before I started making gear three years ago. I'm still trying to justify why an object should exist, but the angle is different now. I used to think products could change the world but never thought of culture and how they go hand-in-hand. So, now I make outdoor lifestyle gear hoping to help create the sort of experiences that foster respect and love for nature.

BIO 004 Anything currently in the works?

Really light-weight gear for hiking and backpacking and the streets. We want you to experience the outdoor lifestyle even if you are city-locked. It's great that the outdoors are in fashion right now; the more the merrier — fuck it.

PROCESS 001 What's the life cycle of an idea for you?

It's the typical design and development process, I guess. Tons of research and interviews, sketching, sketching physically, and as many iterations until it does what it's supposed to. The process is only kind of linear if everything goes right, and if everything goes right, you better believe there's something you are missing.

PROCESS 002 How important is self-education to your process?

It's really important. Research is self-education in a way, and research is the foundation to build ideas on, and that's key.

PROCESS 003 How much do you value

being small or a 'critical mass'?

I'm enjoying being small for now. The creative freedom is nice, and mistakes don't cost as much. I don't want to be nationally or internationally famous. We had a bit of attention recently, and that made me shrivel up. I didn't know I was that shy. Designers naturally tend to fall behind the scenes anyway, which works for me.

PROCESS 004 How many iterations is too

many? How many is too few?

Deadlines decide how many is too many, unfortunately. But even when the product is on the shelves, there are better versions in the works somewhere, you know? Too few is when you think you nailed it and it felt easy.

livio melo

0138.08.003

003.08.0139

livio melo

PROCESS 005 When do you know a project

has reached its final form?

It depends on the project, I'd say. If it's a personal project, it will never be done. Stuff for allmansright and others have deadlines and project briefs to meet. A well-composed project briefing helps a lot, too. Sometimes, deadlines force releases, and that feels awful — like when you know you are messing up in life.

PROCESS 006 Describe the cultivation of your social media presence and how it may relate to your overall creative pursuit.

Personally, I was never social-media savvy. I don't know if I am now, but the decision was to have fun with it. That was the truest thing to the brand I could do. It's important for me not to take myself too seriously while being dead-serious about the craft, and I want the same for allmansright. We learned a few things along the way, but we are taking the no-precedences approach here at the moment.



PROCESS 007 Do you seem to find artistic maturation as you age? Have you witnessed a trade-off between youthfulness and wisdom in your design approach?

Time has made me more mature artistically because it has made me more patient and intentional in what I do. It's given me a broader range of experiences to reference, but it's also made me more youthful in a sense. I'm more curious than ever. Maybe it's because I know there's way more out there. Youth tends to make people overconfident, and that's a trait I'm glad I traded out for humility because design isn't about genius, it's about experience.

PROCESS 008 Do you have difficulty finding a work-life balance as a creative? How do you develop the balance?

That's becoming harder to do every day. However, as long as I can remember, I've always wanted those lines blurred. We produce out of our apartment, so success? At the moment, work is giving me life, though. I've lived my life before not doing something I absolutely loved at least on the side, and it's not worth it.



livio melo

0140.08.003



livio melo

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PATIENCE 001 *Describe any tension you might feel between patience and procrastination.*

Patience is important in my process. It allows it to be methodical. When the process wasn't as defined, it was chaotic and the quality of the solution suffered every time. Lately, I've gotten away with calling procrastination "patience," and it's worked out a bit.

Sometimes, I just have to step away from an idea for a few days or weeks. That usually helps freshen the ideas up.

PATIENCE 002 *Do you ever completely drop an idea?*

Has a shelved idea ever resurfaced much later, ultimately to be fully realized?

All the time. Only a few ideas are good or, better said, good for the solution. Aspects of an idea have resurrected before, for sure, to affect a later project greatly but never the entire idea.

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livio melo

PATIENCE 003 *Do you find impatience to be a form of motivation in your process?*

I'm a restless person. My mind is often ahead of my mouth and body, and that's annoying to me. I have to try and practice patience, try to even be zen. But there are moments for that frantic energy. It's useful when you have to come up with dozens of sketches on a single idea.

PATIENCE 004 *Best activity to clear your head?*

I like to walk and process. Hiking is probably the best activity I've found for processing thoughts. You can just zone out of what you are doing in a quiet setting with fresh air and plenty of blood pumping.





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COLLABORATION 001 *How would you describe your level of self-doubt within a collaborative space? Is there ever an initial embarrassment with presenting an idea?*

I feel more self-doubt working alone than when collaborating. I've always worked toward being open and respectful and fostering a supportive, creative space. I'm quick to shut down behavior against that.

COLLABORATION 002 *Do you ever experience issues of ownership in a collaborative space? Self-consciousness of standing up for your own idea? Hesitation to fully consider an idea that wasn't yours?*

I try not to feel much ownership of an idea I had in a collaborative effort. Maybe that's why I don't feel doubt about my ideas in that setting. I'll fight for the right idea just short of disbanding the team regardless of whose it was. That said, no one better say "my idea" in the presentation.

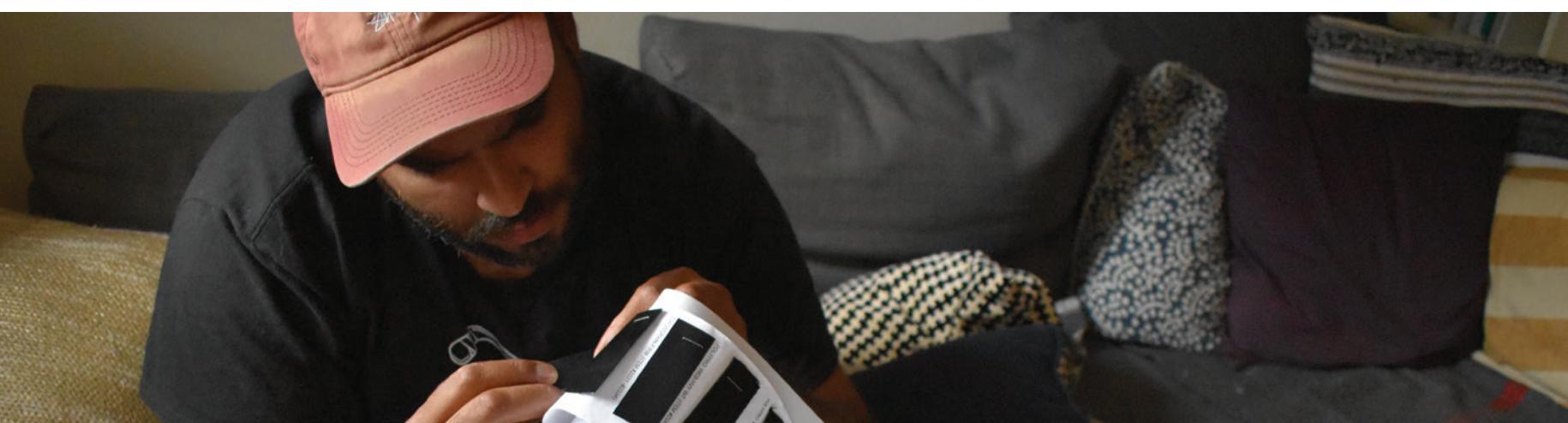


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livio melo





QUICK 001 Favorite tool?

Pen.

QUICK 002 Biggest vice?

Leisure.

QUICK 003 Go-to

article of clothing?

Fleece sweater.

QUICK 004 Three favorite

musical artists?

Kendrick Lamar, System

of a Down, Bad Bunny.

QUICK 005 Best and worst

thing about where you live?

Best thing is the people, and the worst thing is the people. I live in crazy-ass Morrisania in the Bronx. I went to crazy-ass Morris High School, too, in the same neighborhood, and it changed my life. Now, this little apartment in the same neighborhood is the headquarters to allmansright. Big ups, crazy-ass Morrisania.

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livio melo

QUICK 006 Go-to

form of exercise?

I love to swim.

QUICK 007 Cook or delivery?

Delivery these days — the only work we've been able to outsource.

QUICK 008 Thing you're

most pretentious about?

Football (soccer).

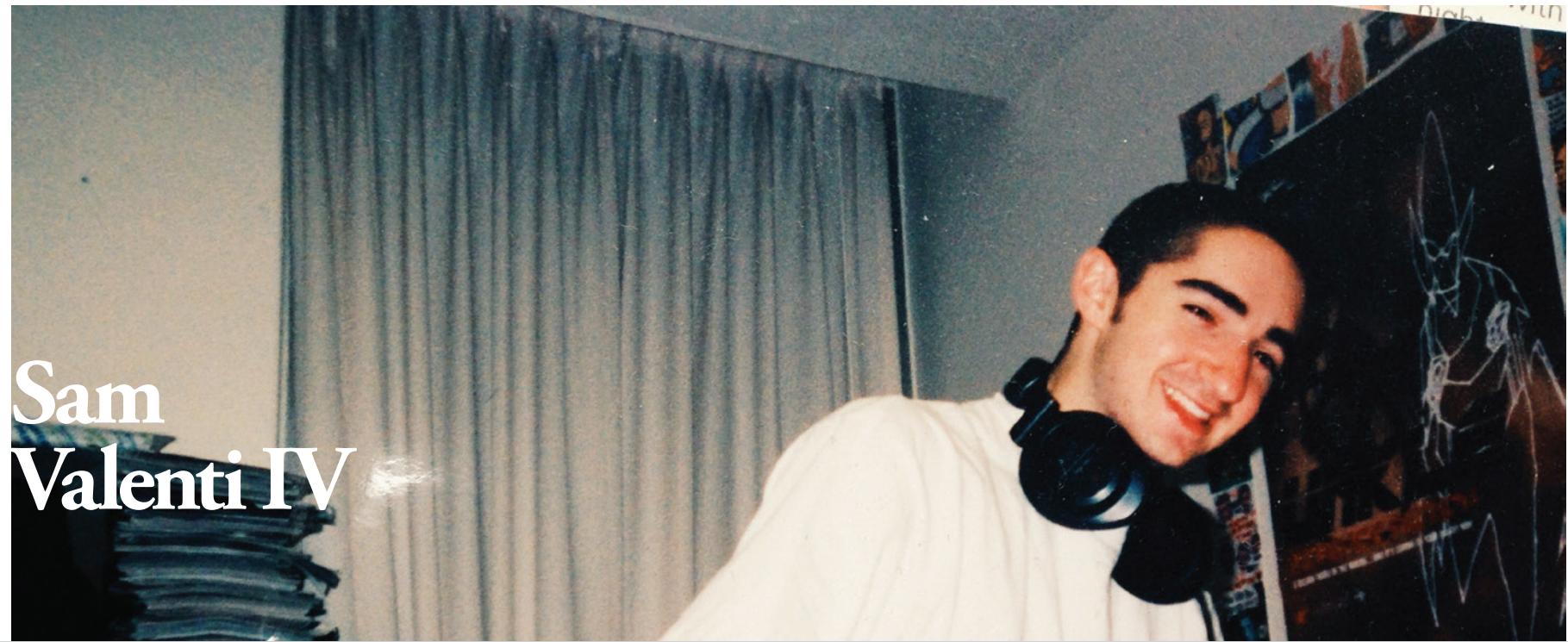
QUICK 009 Favorite thing to do

outside your creative sphere?

Watch football (soccer), and anything in the outdoors.

BIO 001

Sam Valenti IV



sam valenti iv

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sam valenti iv

BIO 002

Suburban Michigan

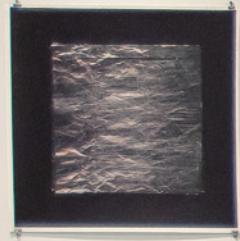
**BIO 003 How'd you
get your start?**

I started as a hip-hop fan; then a bedroom DJ, school dance DJ, and mobile DJ; then a rave/club attendee; then a club DJ; then I started a record label (in 1999, sold 500 copies); then a scene helper in Ann Arbor; then a wannabe in NYC; then a collaborator with visual artists and on products; then a direct patronage fan (drip.fm); then a record label grouper for All Flowers Group.

**BIO 004 Anything
currently in the works?**

All Flowers Group projects with Ghostly and Drink Sum Wtr, other collaborations with Ghostly, an Herb Sundays mix series, collecting and sharing.





sam valenti iv

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sam valenti iv



MICHAEL CINA



PROCESS 001 What's the life cycle of an idea for you?

First there's a phone note. It's discarded and rediscovered, then added to another phone note, building a stack of ideas. There's the 5 am feeling of, "Do I care about this?" Then the final outcome.

PROCESS 002 How important is self-education to your process?

I am a bad active student but process a lot and let my mind try and congeal it.

PROCESS 003 How much do you value being small or a 'critical mass'?

I value small, repeated actions with occasional "dolphin jumps" into view. The payoff is self-satisfaction.

PROCESS 005 When do you know a project has reached its final form?

Time and fear are useful; action is preferable.

PROCESS 006 Describe the cultivation of your social media presence and how it may relate to your overall creative pursuit.

When I think of it as work, it's work. But if I think of it as a place to be creative or useful, it can do more.

PROCESS 007 Do you seem to find artistic maturation as you age? Have you witnessed a trade-off between youthfulness and wisdom in your design approach?

Yes, I've had the castle (inside and out) knocked down a few times, which helps frame you, but it took me longer to get back up than expected.



sam valenti iv

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sam valenti iv





sam valenti iv

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sam valenti iv

PATIENCE 001 *Describe any tension you might feel between patience and procrastination.*
I want to see a project through, so I can get to the next thing, but I want to feel it and learn it, too.

PATIENCE 002 *Do you ever completely drop an idea? Has a shelved idea ever resurfaced much later, ultimately to be fully realized?*
A lot of ideas sit for years 'til they catch the light.

PATIENCE 003 *Do you find impatience to be a form of motivation in your process?*
You must seize it.

PATIENCE 004 *Best activity to clear your head?*
The things you do where time passes and you aren't thinking about yourself.





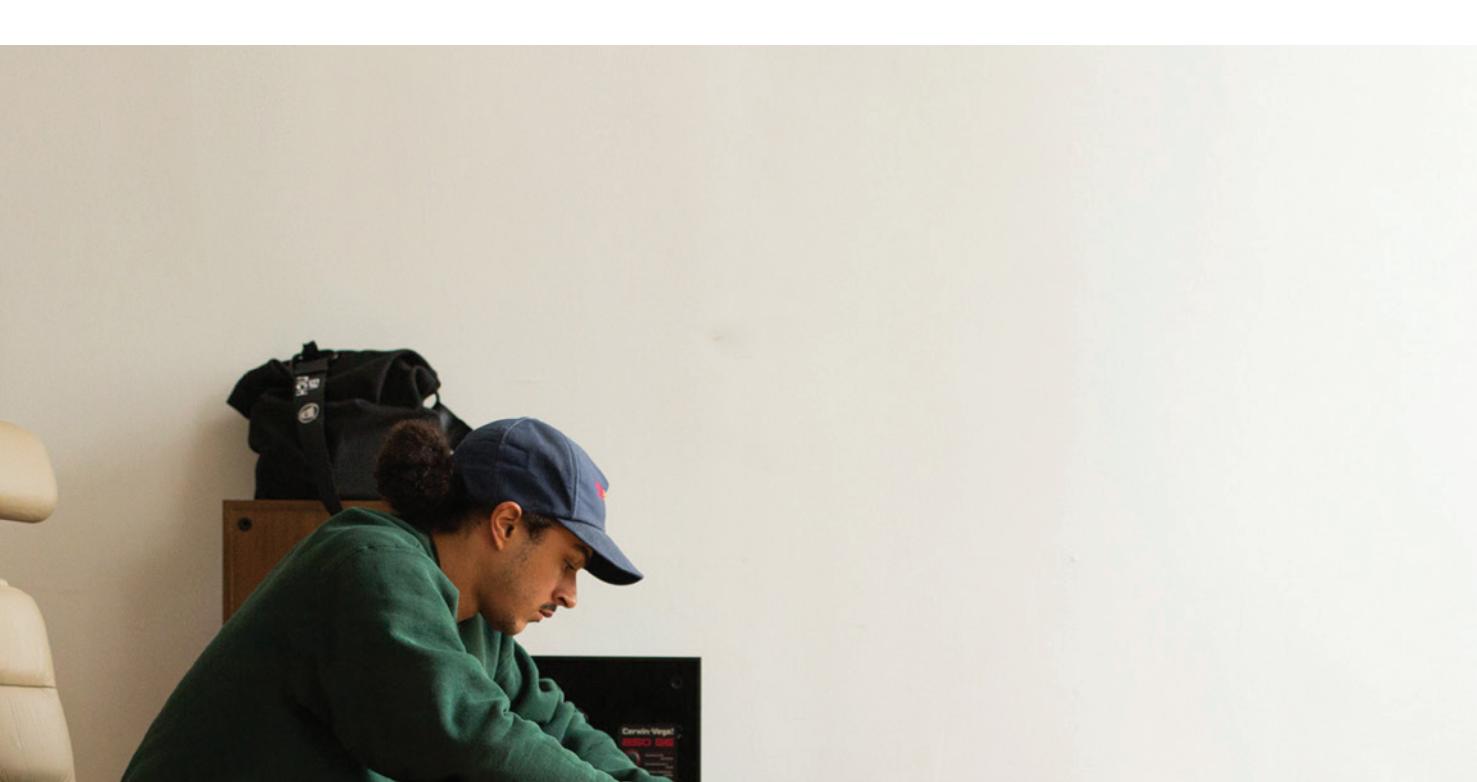
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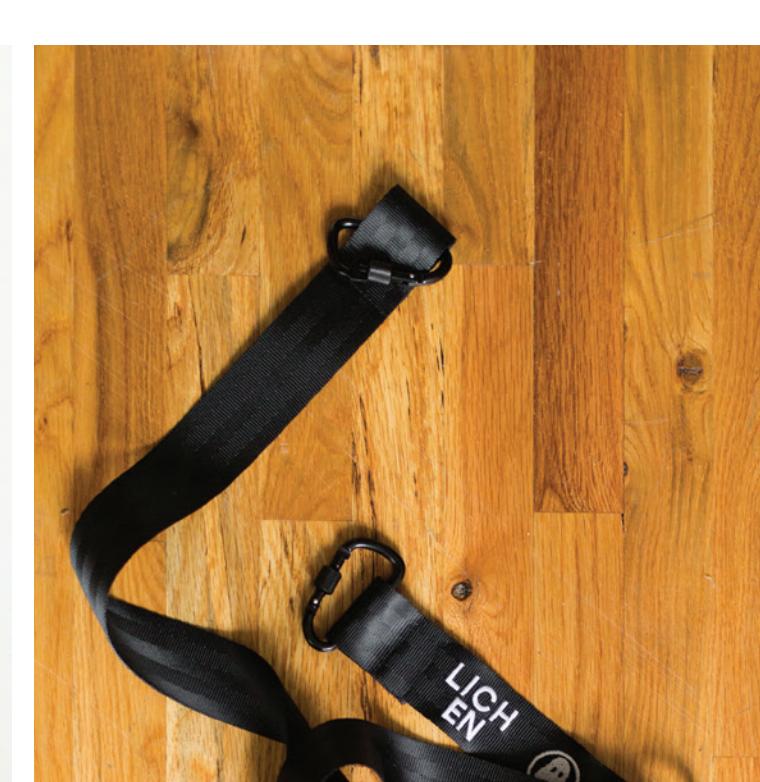




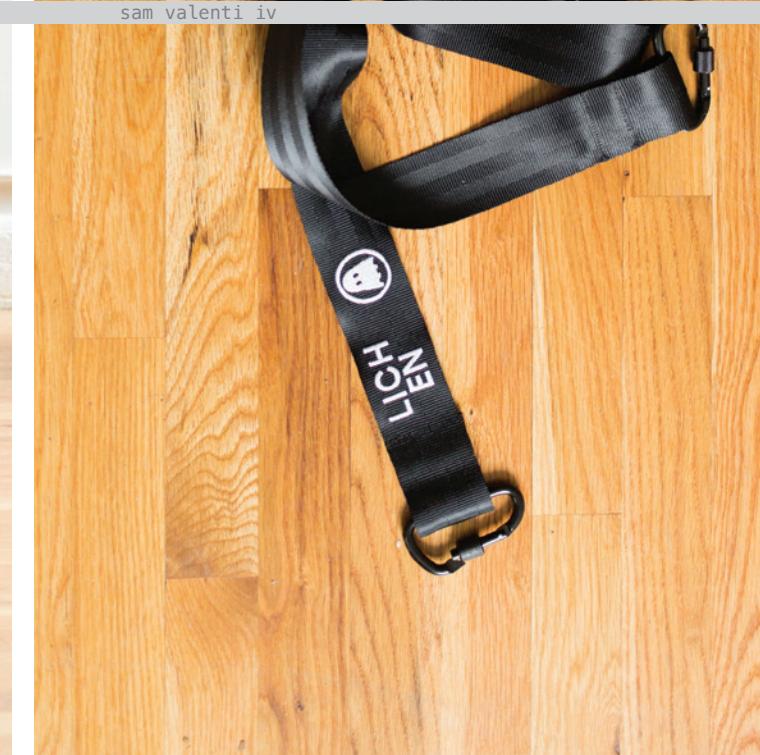
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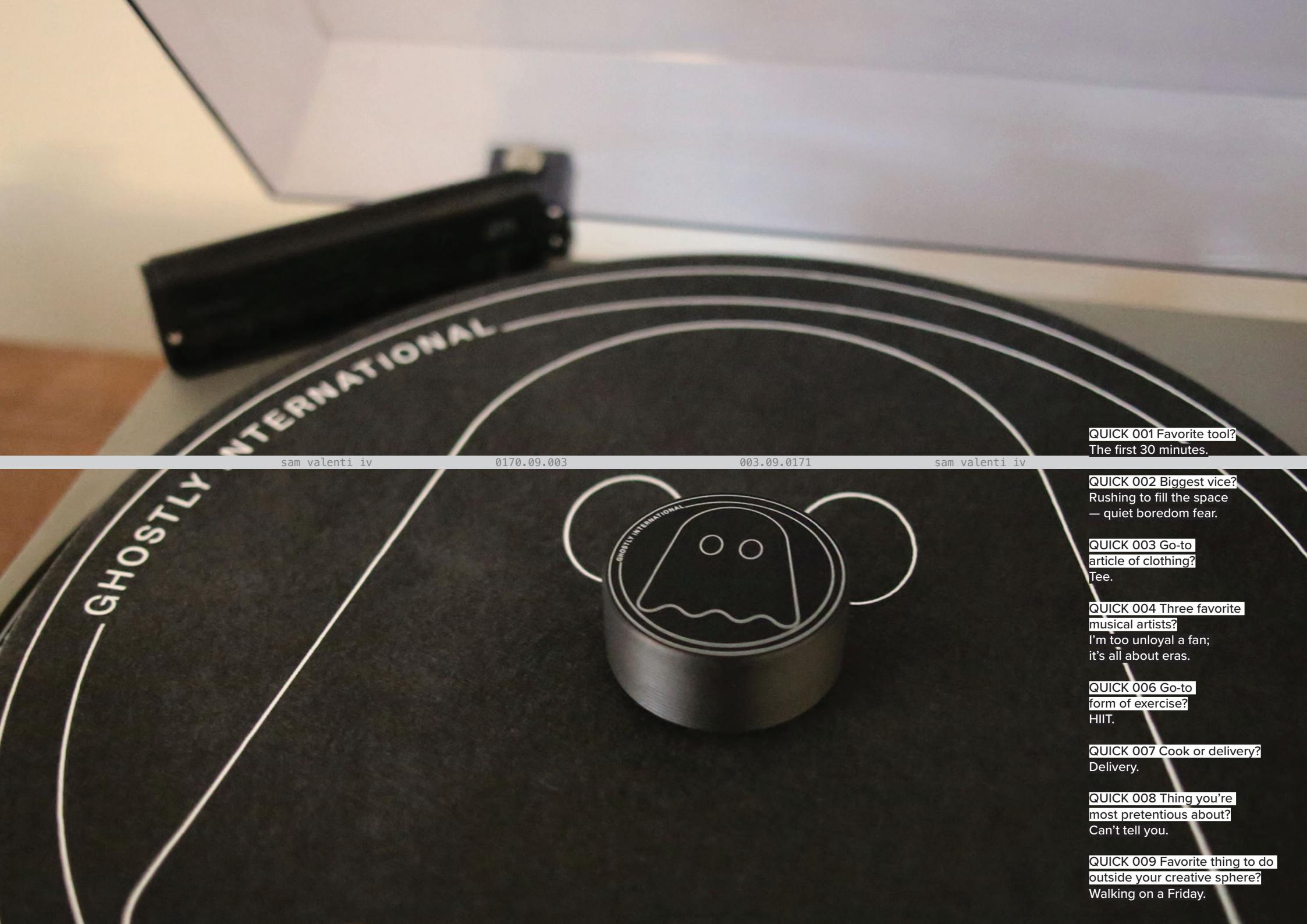


COLLABORATION 001 *How would you describe your level of self-doubt within a collaborative space? Is there ever an initial embarrassment with presenting an idea?*

Everything is embarrassing, so it's all good.

COLLABORATION 002 *Do you ever experience issues of ownership in a collaborative space? Self-consciousness of standing up for your own idea? Hesitance to fully consider an idea that wasn't yours?*

Yes, but it's increasingly fun to get behind other ideas if you can get excited about them.



GHOSTLY
INTERNATIONAL

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Antares Yee

BIO 001

interview date 2021.04.12

BIO 002

I'm from Santa Cruz, CA. It's a little beach town south of the Bay Area, mostly known for surfing, redwoods, nature, and its unique culture. A lot of that's been changing as tech has pushed its way into the area, unfortunately.

BIO 003 *How'd you get your start?*

My mom is a furniture designer, so I grew up around her drawings; in warehouses stuffed with cardboard boxes, playing hide-and-seek twenty feet in the air on stacked tables. I remember pushing the pallet jack around, wasting so much tape when nobody was looking, watching wood repair. The packaging and boxes were definitely the best part. On the flip side, growing up around furniture, I thought it was a super lame commodity, like glue or gasoline.

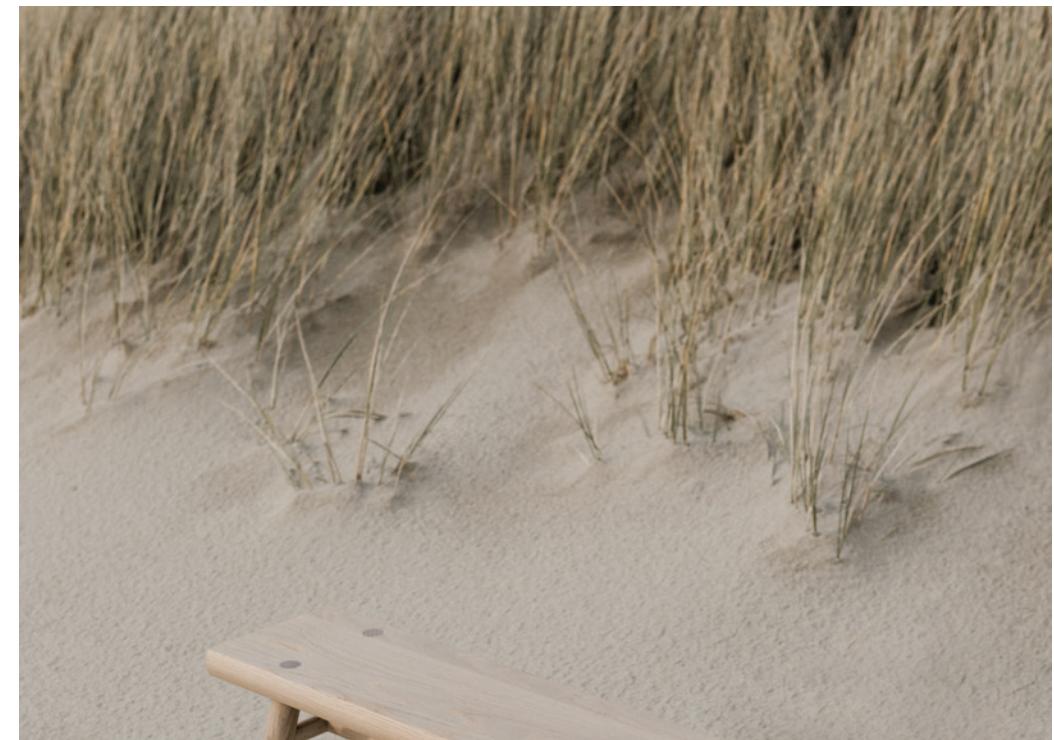
At some point years later, it dawned on me that my mom worked a fascinating, creative career and that furniture was a desirable object of design. I also realized that, like music and other forms of expression, furniture captures the intentions, vision, beliefs, and mood of the designer. That realization changed my relationship with my mom's work and put furniture in my mind as something worth respecting and as a domain where talented people poured their creative energy. Designing furniture moved to the forefront as a possibility for me.

In 2016, I started working on a few designs. In 2017, we produced them, and when those sold out, we designed more pieces and grew the line from there.

As to why we started Sun at Six: we use a form of traditional Chinese joinery, and work with craftsmen who specialize in this fading art form. Featuring their craft and showcasing the incredible workmanship is a huge part of why we do what we do.

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When we founded the studio, an important angle to us was to address the Made in China stereotypes rampant in the United States – the false beliefs that China only produces cheap, low-quality goods. In reality, China has a deep history of incredible craftsmanship with a reputation particularly for intricate detail work, as contrasted with Japan's minimalism. Traditional joinery, for example, has been passed down from generation to generation, with many of the joints we use having been around since Ming Dynasty times.

Now, in the midst of the Black Lives Matter movement and COVID dictating our daily lives, we're seeing increasing racist, anti-Chinese sentiment and attacks, as well as nationalist fear mongering. If COVID began in a white, English-speaking country, or if a white, English-speaking country began to surge economically, we wouldn't see that country as an enemy or threat, as some of the louder voices in this country attempt to imply. If COVID began in England, we'd be helping our friends across the pond, or if Australia's economy started popping off, no doubt we'd be happy and eager to partner with them. Instead, certain outlets are sowing seeds of fear, made possible because of xenophobia and a language barrier.

As makers featuring traditional Chinese crafts and of Chinese-American descent, we hope that our work can bring some humanity to Chinese stories and people, break down the idea of China as a monolith, and address some of the xenophobia and racism. We want to show that, just like in the US, young people in China are flocking to big cities for startup jobs or just trying to make ends meet. They're just trying to get dinner with their friends on a Saturday night in peace.

BIO 004 *Anything currently in the works?*

We've got a few dining tables we're working on, a few coffee tables, and a chair we're really excited about. It's an all-fabric chair and the comfort is extreme, so we've got high hopes for it.

PROCESS 001 What's the life cycle of an idea for you?

Typically, I work with Palaash, our other designer, and the joinery masters in Guangzhou – it's a collaborative process. At any given point, we have various inspirations, concepts floating around. When we tackle a new project, we usually set some goals – functional, aesthetic, emotional. If it's a chair, for example, we ask ourselves: how long do we design the chair for sitting – thirty minutes? two hours? What's the look or what are the settings we want it to fit? Are we trying to invoke relaxation or focus? From there, we usually begin with quick sketches to get as many ideas on paper as possible, including terrible and crazy ideas. We slowly cull and zoom in on the concepts that fit and get higher fidelity as we go. We spend a lot of time working on the production and manufacturing aspect as well – making sure the design is efficient from a production process, wood-yield perspective, which is something I think differentiates our process from some small makers.

PROCESS 002 How important is self-education to your process?

Very important. In running a studio, you face a challenge every day that you've never tackled before. In design, there are lots of great design processes, perspectives on what makes for good design out there, but everyone's brains, focus, values are different. What works for me won't necessarily work for you. I've learned from my past creative directors, studying other peoples' processes, values, perspectives, but at the end of the day, I incorporate what makes sense to me and what fits my values.



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PROCESS 003 How much do you value being small or a 'critical mass'?

I think something that's always held us back is that I avoid the spotlight, awards, "hot new something" lists, etcetera. Our following is pretty much gained by word of mouth. It's a big problem as the industry is increasingly hype driven – I don't reach out to publications, have as bare an Instagram as I can get away with, and don't make much of an effort to get to know people in the industry. It's not something I'm proud of; I'm keenly aware that my personal aptitude here is a problem. Unfortunately, it's just who I am. I'm here for the design itself, visual culture, but running a studio is about so much more – marketing, cult of personality, etcetera. I will say that the racism that Asian Americans have faced in the wake of the pandemic has catalyzed some change and convinced me to tell our story.

PROCESS 004 How many iterations is too many? How many is too few?

We know it when we see it. Generally, the more iterations, the better, though with diminishing returns. It depends a lot on what kind of piece you're designing as well – the formula for chair comfort is more complex than coffee table functionality, for example. We try to get most of it out of the way digitally, as physical prototypes are costly. That's where experience comes into play and makes a big difference.



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PROCESS 005 *When do you know a project has reached its final form?*

It depends on the piece. Dining tables are quicker to design because they require less testing. Once we finish production analysis, we're ready to go. For a chair on the other hand, we still need to have a range of body types, heights, ages, to test the chair in various settings. Granny might not have the quad strength to get out of that 14" seat if the arm rests are too far back.

PROCESS 006 *Describe the cultivation of your social media presence and how it may relate to your overall creative pursuit.*

I'm not sure about this actually. I'm not the savviest buzz generator. Our Instagram is pretty bad, in my opinion, but we're still doing well. I think word of mouth, the website, do most of the heavy lifting for us. That said, I do think we'd do much better with a better social media presence, and that's my fault.



PROCESS 007 *Do you seem to find artistic maturation as you age? Have you witnessed a trade-off between youthfulness and wisdom in your design approach?*

The biggest change is that I first ran the studio for myself, and now I feel the weight and responsibility more acutely for providing for those who work with us. The stakes are no longer about fulfilling a personal artistic inclination but rather providing for and economically supporting a group of people who have invested their livelihoods in you. I think this responsibility has helped me contextualize individual design decisions we make. Before, I might have sacrificed it all to push the boundaries in design in a way I felt compelling. Now, I'm more aware of the costs of that choice and weigh that carefully. Which is not to say we won't have some crazy zig-zag tables coming out.

PROCESS 008 *Do you have difficulty finding a work-life balance as a creative? How do you develop the balance?*

You can burn out even if you love what you're doing. Work-life balance is hard, and time-zone differences make things even harder. It helps to designate certain days and times as work-free. Specifically, this should include not thinking about work in addition to not doing work. That said, I work best by mulling things over on walks, coming up with ideas when on my off-time, etcetera, and I enjoy that.



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PATIENCE 001 *Describe any tension you might feel between patience and procrastination.*

For me, the amount of time spent designing isn't proportional to the number or quality of designs. I can spend five hours and come up with nothing, and then walking around the city, I might think of four designs in thirty seconds. So, for me, I've built this process into my life where design's always in the back of my head whatever I'm doing, and when the inspiration or concept comes to me, I capitalize on it at that moment wherever I am. I'm patient with the process as I know it's how I do my best work.

PATIENCE 002 *Do you ever completely drop an idea? Has a shelved idea ever resurfaced much later, ultimately to be fully realized?*

Ideas rarely go into the graveyard – usually they sit in a kind of limbo where most of our unproduced work goes. There are great ideas in there, they just don't necessarily fit an existing project. Many times we get custom requests or need to design specific concepts for clients, and some of our unproduced ideas are perfect.

PATIENCE 003 *Do you find impatience to be a form of motivation in your process?*

Impatience doesn't really resonate with my process, personally – for me, I do whatever I need to do to get good results, so I stick to the process that works for me.

PATIENCE 004 *Best activity to clear your head?*

I always leave "final" designs overnight, get a good night's sleep, and look at them again. A lot of the time, I trash or significantly modify the designs in the morning. I also like walks – moving my feet really helps.

COLLABORATION 001 *How would you describe your level of self-doubt within a collaborative space? Is there ever an initial embarrassment with presenting an idea?*

I used to do a lot of freelance design work in NYC, which meant lots of different types of people, cultures, values. I always felt anxiety and pressure to put my best foot forward in a new space. This got better as I grew and better understood the other side of the client or design studio relationship, the creative director or designer relationship.

At Sun at Six, the first round is intentionally about producing as many awful, crazy, unreasonable, ugly concepts as possible so that we expand our design possibilities and help alleviate anxieties of this nature. The first round isn't about finding good ideas; it's about getting tons of bad ideas out on paper. But inevitably, some of them end up being good.

COLLABORATION 002 *Do you ever experience issues of ownership in a collaborative space? Self-consciousness of standing up for your own idea? Hesitance to fully consider an idea that wasn't yours?*

My job as a creative director is to get the best work out of us as a studio, not from me as an individual. Good ideas come from anywhere – you don't have to be a designer to come up with a great concept, and a lot of great concepts don't come from me. It's my job to work with our team's egos, insecurities, anxieties, competitiveness, and channel that into producing great work. I need to put each of us in situations where we produce our best work, collaborate in ways that alleviate interpersonal friction, and get the best work out of us together as a studio.



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QUICK 001 Favorite tool?

Going to go digital with Google Slides here.

QUICK 002 Biggest vice?

Popeyes for sure – and other delicious, savory, fried things.

QUICK 003 Go-to article of clothing?

I'm big on color combinations, so I have the Uniqlo socks in, like, seven colors. Also going to shout out JNBY generally and VWORK VWORK VWORK for the sweet pants.

QUICK 004 Three favorite musical artists?

Currently listening to a lot of Chassol, then two classics I always go back to are Usher and Nujabes.

QUICK 005 Best and worst thing about where you live?

Best thing about [NYC] is definitely the people and culture. Worst thing is the car honks – if you just got rid of that one thing, I think the whole city's anxiety level would drop. One of the more unusual consequences of the pandemic was that for a few months, people stopped honking. That really changed the flavor of the city (in addition to the more serious pandemic consequences, of course).

QUICK 006 Go-to form of exercise?

I bike around the city and play a lot of pickup basketball. That's another great thing about NYC – you can always find a game.

QUICK 007 Cook or delivery?

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I try and avoid delivery; I love to cook. I'm cooking a lot of Szechuan lately, and now I'm excited because it's rooftop-barbecue season and everyone's getting vaccinated sooner than expected.

QUICK 008 Thing you're most pretentious about?

I don't like pretentiousness. It feels like an explicit way to put yourself above others, jockey for social capital, and I don't appreciate that. You can appreciate the nuances, mastery, skill, in great wine, art, whatever, without being pretentious about it.

QUICK 009 Favorite thing to do outside your creative sphere?

Definitely being out with friends – basketball, going to the park, Korean sauna, big dinners, throwing events; people are why I'm in NYC.

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Instagram Index

We struggled with how to properly reference our contributors' social media presences. We didn't want this field guide to have a shelf life tied to Instagram and have call-outs to everyone's handles feel how hashtag T-shirts from 2011 feel now.

That said, Instagram is how we met all our contributors, and we do use the platform, even if just for now. So, we landed on this index.

At the time of printing, our contributors were posting about their work to the respective Instagram profiles listed below.

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@calip.er | @quinnerbaird Quinner Baird
@playlabinc | @ottomilo Archie Lee Coates IV
@sharpmemorial Ronnell K. Culbertson
@allcapsstudio | @saeedferguson Saeed Ferguson
@schooooooooooooool | @andrew_herzog Andrew Herzog
@season_three | @jaredrayjohnson Jared Ray Johnson
@charliewhiskeytango Che-Wei Wang & Taylor Levy
@allmans.right Livio Melo
@ghostly | @sv4 Sam Valenti IV
@sunatsix Antares Yee

NOTES



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until next time...

0200.XX.003

I'm still working

Ok ok my b.

Yeah shut the fuck up

Download chess 3D on your
phone so we can play