NEW VISIONARY

CONTEMPORARY ART + PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

What was the best part of working in the New York City galleries for nearly 15 years? Did you face any challenges during this time, and if so, what helped you to overcome them?

I worked in galleries for one year to three years at a time until I found a really good fit where I worked for nearly 7 years. In this gallery, the biggest highlight was writing checks to artists in the mid-high five figures for a single sale. It was amazing!!! Everytime I wrote a big check I secretly thought - "Ok parents! You had it wrong the whole time - you CAN make a living - and a good one - as an artist!" While these artists are great and well-respected by their peers they are not "famous" household names. It made me realize that you don't have to be a modern day Andy Warhol to make a decent living as an artist. So, on the other end of that was actually making those 5 and 6 figure sales, visiting artist's studios - sometimes abroad, and going to opening receptions at museums where the artists I was working with were included in exhibitions...also abroad at times! There were many glamorous events but one amazing moment that I can remember well was visiting the studio of an artist who we worked with in Spain along with a major NY based collector! We had the best time and she ended up commissioning him for a portrait of herself. It was epic.

The biggest challenge for me was keeping up with all the admin work while balancing all the creative work. While I am not an artist, I completely understand this common struggle. You're in your creative zone and you just don't have the bandwidth to get back to it if you answer emails for two hours. One way I overcame this is - I would answer any critical emails before getting to the gallery, then I would dive right into my creative work (writing, curating, design, etc) and after I had the majority of those creative tasks done, I would then shift over back to the admin work.

In addition to providing programs for artists, you're also a curator. When did you first start curating, and what do you enjoy most about it?

The first exhibition I ever curated on my own was Three Points Define a Surface at the Brooklyn Arts Council Gallery in March 2011. It even earned a Time Out Critics Pick!!! I was so excited. I got the opportunity to curate this exhibition because I submitted to an open call...and it made it to Time Out New York! How cool! Never underestimate the power of an open call. Since then, aside from curating exhibitions in the galleries where I have worked, I also curated a handful of other exhibitions and publications (like this one.)

One of the most exciting things for me about curating is being able to highlight the work of an artist. It's such an intimate experience to be lent work for an exhibition,

to be entrusted with it, and then to be entrusted with interpreting it within a space. That said, the best part is getting to look at the work, thinking about how you can present it, and bonus points if you get to do a studio visit to choose something. It's an intimate and amazing experience.

If you could offer any advice to emerging artists who are learning to navigate today's art world, what would it be?

Be true to yourself. Don't make art you think others will like if you don't like making it. Figure out how your particular perspective informs your work. The more honest and vulnerable you are about this, the more unique your story becomes and that is what separates you from any other artist. Then, define your audience based on the themes of your work and the perspective you have. Find a way to reach that audience. You don't have to go through a blue chip gallery to reach your audience. You can go to any institution, publication, or entity that has a similar audience. Get them to amplify you to that audience. For example, do you paint the cosmos because you studied astronomy? Your audience might be into astronomy. There are many podcasts and magazines about astronomy, get them to feature you because their audience will resonate with your work.