

Hernease Davis:

Hello, and welcome back to the second season of the Project Space, a podcast featuring some of the remarkable artists who have participated in the Project Space Residency here at the Visual Studies Workshop in Rochester, New York. The Project Space Residency has served both regional, national and international artists for many years, providing a studio space and access to VSW facilities. I'm Hernease Davis. I'm a visual artist and the assistant curator here at VSW. For each episode, I will be in conversation with artists to discuss their background, their practice, and how the Project Space Residency has impacted their works.

Our brand new season starts off with a conversation with Aspen Mays and Dan Boardman, two artists and educators who have independent photo-based art practices and are also in collaboration with one another. Their latest work focuses on the Biosphere 2. I spoke with them about their time in residency together, the challenge of working on the topic of the Biosphere 2 project and how AI became an uncanny solution to some of those challenges. I've included reference links in the show notes including a link to the work of K Allado-McDowell, an artist Aspen Mays mentions near the end of our conversation. All right, let's get to it.

Dan Boardman:

My name is Dan Boardman. I am from, originally from Southern California, but for all intents and purposes, sort of grew up in the Finger Lakes. My practice is divergent in many ways, it goes a lot of different directions, probably most well known for these sort of in-camera pseudo collage pieces I make that use drawing and little masks that go inside the camera. Gives you a sort of flavor of what I'm doing there.

Aspen Mays:

Hi, I'm Aspen Mays. I grew up in Charleston, South Carolina, and I now live in the San Francisco Bay Area where I also teach photography at the California College of the Arts. And my practice involves a lot of cameraless image making, dark room experiments and things like that. But what I'm really compelled by is the use of photography in observational sciences, especially astronomy and things like that, how it's been used to extend our vision or complicate our vision, which I think we'll probably be touching on quite a bit today in our AI conversation. But yeah, those are some of the things that really motivate me as an artist, thinking about different ways of knowing something, the ways that photography can contribute to ways of knowing.

Hernease Davis:

It definitely will factor into this as we move in. So to talk about, how did you guys decide to do the residency together?

Dan Boardman:

Well, how did we decide to do this? So we, Aspen and I have sort of a long standing, a conversational collaborative process. We worked on a book together many years ago. We really liked working together and we, right at the end of that project vowed to work together again on another project and sort of dove in headfirst on a couple subject matters we're really interested in. And over, I don't know, several years now, we've sort of tinkered when we both have time to invest a little bit more into the project.

And then we knew about the residency here. I'm close by, I work over at Light Work, which is in Syracuse, and Aspen could schedule some time off to come out here. So the stars sort of aligned. It just

made a lot of sense. And then on top of that, VSW just felt right in the center of our wheelhouse in terms of our interests. We felt that it would be a place that would really understand what we're up to and be able to support us in a more holistic way than other residencies. Anything to add to that though, Aspen?

Aspen Mays:

Yeah, I mean, I would say this is really one of the only, I guess, true artistic collaborations that I participate in that has just felt really enjoyable and easy and fun. Frankly, Dan and I have a lot of fun together, which is a big part of why we like working together. And what originally brought us together was an interest in, the book that we made was about the Challenger Space Shuttle explosion in 1986, kind of intertwining an idea about a public or shared history, a shared historical moment interwoven with a very private photographic archive. And as Dan said, we enjoyed it so much, we really wanted to work on another book together. And what was interesting is that we started talking about the Biosphere as being this next subject matter, and then life just kind of intervened. We both took on different full-time jobs and things just got really busy.

And it's, the pandemic also brought us back in conversation around the idea of thinking more heavily about the isolation that the Biospherians, I know we're going to talk more about that as we keep going, but it really changed some of the original ideas that we were working with being both isolated and removed. We all were. And it really put a little bit more urgency back into trying to get it going. And that's kind of where the VSW residency just felt like kismet timing, that we could come back together and try to really push on this topic that we had wanted to do for a couple of years.

Hernease Davis:

So I'm actually interested in how you guys came to want to do work about the Biosphere. It is really interesting to hear how the pandemic and the reality that kind of forced us all into our silos or in isolation, how that was something that you guys were thinking about pre-pandemic.

Dan Boardman:

I think I originally sort of found the Biosphere... my work centers along the lines of looking at corporate culture and how that is sort of bled into these belief systems. I use "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People", where that sort of stood in for 10 Commandments, in a weird way. It's more valuable because it has rules, a corporate edge to it. And then doing research about those self-help books that sort of started me down this inquiry about the Biosphere, which has sort of elements of new ageness and intentional communities. And then it's sort of couched in this sort of scientific underpinning, which is there and not there at the same time. And Aspen and I just have a conversational way of talking about the things we're up to. And I shared some things I had learned about it. And it is truly a remarkable story once you start to unpack all that it is. And we were both just so intrigued and thought, let's just start here. Let's see where this goes.

Aspen Mays:

Yeah, totally. I mean, I think it hits a sweet spot that we're both, because of our age and our generation, we have our own really specific memories of the Biosphere, being in school and learning about it and thinking about this science experiment that had a lot of overlap with the Challenger in some ways, and then had a lot of very significant divergence from that story, and just kind of hit that nineties, eighties-nineties sweet spot. And also I think for us, which was important with the Challenger book as well, that it has some known, there's a controlled story, a PR story about it. And then there's all these maybe other

This transcript was exported on Jun 14, 2023 - view latest version [here](#).

personal archives or personal recollections about it. It wasn't filmed on the inside, it was at the dawn. I mean, the first season of the Real World was while they were in the Biosphere.

Hernease Davis:

So interesting.

Aspen Mays:

So it's right at the cusp. It's now sort of incomprehensible that the whole thing wouldn't have been livestreamed and every aspect of it recorded, it's really actually photographically, there's not a lot of images about their life on the inside that are accessible to the public.

Dan Boardman:

Yeah, we had this earnest desire to see what was happening there. So much so that we went to the Biosphere, two or three years ago now, pre-pandemic.

Aspen Mays:

No, I mean, gosh. Yeah, pre-pandemic.

Dan Boardman:

Pre-pandemic. And just to bear witness to what's there. And it's been repurposed several times over since its original purpose. So there's not as much there as you might think. It's kind of a big nursery kind of feel to it.

Aspen Mays:

Yeah, giant greenhouse.

Dan Boardman:

But then I would say that maybe the most enlightening thing was seeing the quarters where people lived, and they did have some artifacts, paintings, they had made, things like this. And that was really fascinating and interesting to think about somebody living in this bubble. Of course, it's sort of presented as a utopia, but we know that-

Hernease Davis:

Well, and I'll say, and it's interesting talking about how you are describing the interior, and I'm putting that together with what my preconceived ideas about the Biosphere was. And even after talking with you all when you were here for residency. So for the sake of our listeners who don't have a memory of the Biosphere or weren't born yet, or actually have very little information about what the Biosphere was, can you talk about what was Biosphere 2, where is it? Where was/is...

Aspen Mays:

Yes.

Hernease Davis:

... those things.

Dan Boardman:

Yes. Yeah, so I'll take a stab here, Aspen, but-

Aspen Mays:

Sure. Yeah.

Dan Boardman:

But please feel free to fill in the details. So the Biosphere is in Oracle, Arizona. It's close to Phoenix, Arizona. That's right. Yeah.

Aspen Mays:

Close to Tucson. Tucson.

Dan Boardman:

Tucson. Tucson. Yes. And the main sort of driving force behind it is this guy named John Allen. And he was somebody who had a sort of group that followed him that they had established different intentional communities through the seventies and eighties, one out in the desert and another one in Fort Worth, Texas, that they called the Theater of All Possibilities, which was actually on the roof of a building where they-

Aspen Mays:

Yes.

Dan Boardman:

And so their sort of mantra as a group is that they did these improvisational performances that were part play, part performance, where they worked out their own group dynamics. So it's rooted in this very experimental, almost verging on a cult kind of feeling to it. And then John Allen got really interested in this sort of star child, let's shoot ourselves to the moon. We can take the genesis of what we've done here and then propagate the universe with it.

He had these conferences, these biospheric conferences where he was bringing together disparate science backgrounds to talk about how you could make a sealed off community. And that got the attention of a guy, Ed Bass, who was an oil magnate, and they formed a relationship. And Ed Bass underpinned and underwrote the building of this large scale test, which was Biosphere 2, Biosphere 1 being the Earth, Biosphere 2 being this bubble that you could live inside. And then the idea was that it would be completely self-sustaining inside with no outside influence, and that then they could scale that or change that to different degrees. What am I missing in there? I feel like there's-

Aspen Mays:

Yeah. No, I mean, it's such a rich, it's such an interesting, occurred in such an interesting moment. I mean, they thought that they would also be able to grow all their own food. That's also what Dan said about self-sustaining. They would completely recycle all their own water. It was really a far-reaching idea about how we could live in better harmony with the natural, with Biosphere 1 with the earth, but also how it could be monetizing, corporatized to then also go into space or set up a colony on Mars or

something like that. So it had a lot of goals, but it did have this sort of, I think at heart, a really optimistic vision for how we could coexist in a more sustainable way.

Dan Boardman:

And it got ultimately got picked up by the press and then used as a punching bag. Who are these people? They're not really scientists. What is this experiment? And they snowballed from there. And I think they had a lot of self-doubt about that. Inside, when the rubber hit the road, they sort of broke into factions. They sort of abandoned their tendencies to work out their group dynamic. And they did not have enough food. And the building they built was not doing the thing it was supposed to do. It was literally leaking, or leaching oxygen out of the air. So they were sort of suffocating to death inside of there.

So it's, when you read through the history, it's like, oh, this is a drama. They had coffee plants, but turns out they had enough coffee plants to make one cup of coffee for each person every two weeks. So that's not really, yeah, the plants are there, but it's not really enough for the people there. And they ended eating out a lot of bananas while they're in there. They're making salad dressing out of bananas. So it's a really interesting confluence of utopian ideal and then the rubber hitting the road of like, oh, wait a minute. You can't actually plan and prepare for every outcome, or at least this group couldn't.

Aspen Mays:

Right.

Dan Boardman:

Yeah.

Aspen Mays:

I mean, they encountered a lot of really serious challenges, which one of the ironies of the whole thing. I think it got really unfairly in many ways, lampooned. And also I think there was a real fear and mistrust of the sense of that they did theater, that they were interested in art. There was also a lot of, but scientists can't like those things. I mean, there also brings up a lot of ideas that we have in culture about art and science. But one of the ironies of the whole thing is that the novel science that was produced by it was climate change science. Basically, they were living in a CO2 rich, unfortunately, environment that was really hard on them physically. And that's really what it's used as now is because they have a sealed environment where they can control things like that. They can really test the harshness of basically future conditions on this planet.

So there's a lot of layers there. And apparently group splitting into factions is a well known problem with a lot of the space colonization plans that NASA comes up with, that that is something that is very difficult to overcome. So of course, you can build this incredible thing and you can do all these other things, but at the end of the day, getting along with the other humans inside the thing is what almost sank the whole experiment.

Hernease Davis:

Yeah. That's kind of incredible. I don't think I'm alone in thinking, not thinking too deeply about Biosphere 2 ...

Dan Boardman:

No.

Hernease Davis:

... before hearing about your project, but every time you all speak about it, and I hear about your research. Because I remember growing up thinking that it actually was a NASA project.

Aspen Mays:

Right.

Hernease Davis:

I grew up in LA and I know LA has some woowoo tendencies, or they also have a way of skewing what is news or what is just the tenor or the vibe of a situation that - what I gathered as a child - was that these were scientists who were somehow affiliated with NASA, but just to kind of know that these were actually people who were well, had a pseudo religious beginning and were kind of doing this experimental thing that actually incorporated a lot more art into the process. And also thinking about this idea of nostalgia and memory, that this is all being filtered through a very younger self and being confronted with the realities after research or after a document has been made about the time within there. And to have some retrospect on the realities.

Dan Boardman:

And I think they did everything they could to make you make that association with NASA. I mean, when they were locked into the Biosphere, they're wearing jumpsuits that were very reminiscent of what you might see an astronaut in a press release wearing. And then they did everything they could also to disguise their artistic leanings and background. I mean it was, at least I perceived this, that there was a lot of fear about being debunked as not legitimate. And because they had so much money behind them with all this oil money that they felt like maybe there's this pressure to deliver on something, and the only way it was going to be taken seriously is if they sort of played the part. So maybe that's where the NASA thing comes from too.

Hernease Davis:

Yeah.

Dan Boardman:

I had that association too before I read about it.

Aspen Mays:

I mean, I think there were NASA consultants certainly at some stage. But what's I think interesting also too is that scientifically, what was really compelling and interesting about that whole experiment is they were trying to do planet level, huge system biospheric ecological monitoring, which is very hard to do because there's just so many factors. It's so hard to isolate. It's the oxygen and then the bananas would grow, but nothing else would grow. I mean, just this huge system is happening and all these things are interacting, which is of course what it's like on earth. And a lot of the science is really hard to do because you couldn't isolate everything from it. But now, fast-forward to our time right now, I think they really were forward-thinking in terms of, we find ourselves in this present moment realizing that all these interconnected forces are spiraling out of control, and they have all these different impacts.

And I think that moment in the nineties when I was a child where it's like Captain Planet, and if we just recycle, everything's going to be totally fine. We really, we have a grip on this whole situation. And we see ourselves now feeling like these huge systems are actually totally out of control, and they're affecting things in really powerful, dynamic ways. Part of their worldview, and I think it was utopian, but also part of their worldview was to think about systems like that. Buckminster Fuller was one of the early consultant. William Burroughs was one of the early consultants for the Biosphere. I mean, they were really thinking about and looking at systems thinkers, which is I think really useful and exciting and amazing. And also it opened them up to a lot of criticism.

Hernease Davis:

Well, so we have this very dramatic, complicated and layered project called the Biosphere and all this time, and then your collaboration. So let's talk about that.

Aspen Mays:

Yeah.

Hernease Davis:

Can you guys walk us through your time here in residency and how did you begin to tackle something like the Biosphere and how you are approaching that topic?

Dan Boardman:

This has been such a interesting project to work on. It feels like we've been gnawing on it for so long. And Aspen and I will get on these tears of solving it, or it's almost like we're writing a script or something. And we've tried it every way you could imagine too. And for better or for worse, this history is so interesting. It's so dynamic, reading about it, going to the place. There's an amazing documentary about it. And we've always, and we felt like this with our first book too. We keep coming back to this idea that, no, we're artists. We don't have to tell this story. We're not documentarians. And the documentary we would make would be bad. We are artists and we're responding in a different way or acknowledging some other aspect of it that we want to highlight because we feel like it's prescient or speaks to the rest of the human experience.

But the challenge we've had, and Aspen, you feel free to jump in here, but the challenge we've had is that we haven't had a visual thing to grind up against, to edit from, to use as shorthand to respond to. And we're both photographers, we come from visual media here, and I think we both really love images and the history of photography. And I think we under-recognized how important it was to, the generation of ideas to be able to flip through images, put them in sequence, pull things out, change your scale, whatever it might be. So what do we do?

Aspen Mays:

Yeah, I mean, this is exactly, no, this is all, these were all, I mean, think, yes, there is a great documentary. Matt Wolf just came out with "Spaceship Earth", which actually came out the very beginning of the pandemic. So there is material out there. There's certainly a lot of press material about the Biospherians, but the personal archive of the people who were on the inside is pretty tightly controlled. And in part it's because they received so much criticism. The folks that were really deeply involved are really reticent to share all of that material. And so we've seen the documentary, there's a great book by Rebecca Reider called Dreaming the Biosphere. There's a lot of things that have informed

our imagination about what was happening inside. And of course, the other irony is that they literally lived in a glass house. I mean, it's like there's no, there's a clear wall. You can actually watch them inside. And yet the interiority of that experience is also really opaque to the rest of us. But of course, it's like you read these accounts and you're imagining these group dynamics and living off bananas, just doing all the different things that were happening, not having enough oxygen. And so Dan and I thought, we'll go there and make pictures. We've just tried to get at this so many ways, and we kept running back in circles. We have these, it's sort of a known story and an unknown story. So are we trying to tell that story? Are we trying to tell our own imagination of that story? Are we trying to tell a kind of nondescript future past? We really have tried a lot of things and never felt like it got enough traction to get interesting.

And as I mentioned earlier, when we were in the pandemic, we started thinking about the Biosphere again as like, oh, actually this isolation and feeling like you're inside looking out. And the way that the window became this, in the early beginning where you're going up to see your friends through the window, all the different things that actually started to have this other resonance with the Biospherian handshake where folks would visit their friends inside the Biosphere and put their hand up on the glass. So it brought it all back in this weird, unpredictable, full circle moment.

Dan Boardman:

We had this personal experience of being trapped inside. And then we had these amazing anecdotes about somebody's birthday, and there's somebody, there's all sorts of amazing, really well-written anecdotes in these books that we're reading. And we didn't have a way to access that or access the image that it was conjuring up from the materials that we're reading and the things that we're researching. And then long story longer, we are here at VSW figuring it out, really enjoying the idea of, I mean, that was such a fun moment of really trying everything and yes, handing each other, let's try this. Let's try that.

And one night I was home sort of fooling around with my son who wanted to make a Pokemon card. And he had this description of a character who was like, he wanted it to be a cookie, but it was a ninja. And he's describing it to me. And I was like, oh, well, let's just try out this image generator thing. And typed in what he wanted to do. And then it made this cookie Pokemon character. And then we were texting and I was just like, well, let's just try this. And we just started typing in, I can't even remember where we began. It was like somebody-

Aspen Mays:

It was like a greenhouse that is dense and overgrown. There was the richness of the, I mean, that's what the text to image generators, it's of course a fascinating interface between description and visual output. And it just kind of unlocked it for us that, oh, actually we don't, as Dan said, we're artists. We don't actually have to chase down an archive. In this case, we're talking about our imagination now fused with our own lived experience of the pandemic. We're actually now chasing down something that is more imaginary and also exists from the vastness of all the images ever made in these data training sets that we could probably get pretty darn close to our imagination of it.

Dan Boardman:

And that was the thing that was kind of astonishing at first, is we were typing in these things from our own imagination or from snippets from the book, and it's bringing up the image that we were both thinking of.

Aspen Mays:

Yeah.

Dan Boardman:

And that was bizarre feeling to be like, no, that is exactly what I was thinking. And here it is now in front of me. But that's like, how could that exist? That's only in my imagination. And from there kind of just spiraled into, okay, well, we're now making this archive. We're making the big moments and the little moments, people having lunch, and what would people, we started asking each other, what would people take pictures of while they were there. They're not taking pictures of high drama necessarily, but they might be taking pictures of day-to-day life. So maybe calling on both the experience of vernacular photography before this and the sort of aesthetic of vernacular photography or what the reasons the camera might come out. And then using that to build up an archive that isn't a storyboard. Because we tried to do that too. We tried everything.

Aspen Mays:

It feels like it.

Dan Boardman:

Yeah. Trust me, we tried everything. We read Faust to each other at one point during this.

Hernease Davis:

This is so interesting. And it also is a little jarring to hear, you're generating these images through AI, like an AI image generator. And I think I just assume that you're not going to get exactly what you're thinking, or you're not necessarily going to get anything that you have imagined, but that isn't true.

Dan Boardman:

Well, we had that, you'd have that feeling in the dark room of something coming out of the ether. You're waiting and it shows you 10 or five versions of an image that you thought of. And not all the time. I mean, there's misses for sure, but when it really clicks, it's like, wow, that is stunning. And I should mention too, earlier in the residency, maybe the first or second day, we just wrote down unknowing that we were going to go into this AI direction. Just little tidbits of text-

Aspen Mays:

Yeah.

Dan Boardman:

... description.

Aspen Mays:

Yeah.

Dan Boardman:

I mean, probably a hundred of them. Just little phrases, little things just as ways to start to connect things together. And then those ended up being perfectly applied to this format.

Aspen Mays:

Right.

Hernease Davis:

Because can I ask, what were you thinking about doing with those phrases? Were are those going to be potentially some type of speculative photo or some staged or created or constructed image?

Aspen Mays:

Yeah, that's a good question. I think we were just really trying to find a way in to try to access this story. We were trying to pull out what we thought were maybe the most provocative phrases, or even just things that really set the scene. Imagine, I feel like one of the early ones was like "a desert sunrise, seen through the glass, day 157" or something like that. This feeling of, we've been in here for almost a year or half a year. We're watching yet another sunrise through the glass. Just things that we're going to set the stage for, we weren't sure. I mean, we talked about staging, re-staging some of these pictures.

I mean, we just were really trying to really turn over every stone. Is there some other way into this that we haven't considered? And the text generating the image. I mean, it really was a surprise at first. I think Dan sent me, he texted me a picture, one of the first ones you made. It was a sunset through in a greenhouse, and I don't even know exactly what it was. And it was shocking. It like somebody's wearing a space jumpsuit seen from behind.

Dan Boardman:

Yeah. It was as if I had found the image-

Aspen Mays:

Yeah.

Dan Boardman:

... we were looking for this whole time. Or maybe it talks about the limits or brackets around our imagination.

Hernease Davis:

Yeah.

Aspen Mays:

Yeah.

Dan Boardman:

And it's also the images were, they're mediated through our interest in photography too. So we're using the qualifiers or descriptive elements in photography like a Polaroid image or-

Aspen Mays:

35 millimeter

Dan Boardman:

35 millimeter. So that also helps keep...

Aspen Mays:

Kodak Gold.

Dan Boardman:

Yeah, totally.

Aspen Mays:

Yeah.

Dan Boardman:

That kept it on rails. It wasn't like anything. It was like, no, it feels like the thing that we would discover or could have discovered or maybe exists, and doesn't and yeah, it was a very unusual sensation.

Hernease Davis:

I'm hoping to hold on to what I want to say in response, because as you're saying that, I actually do want to hear more about how specific you had to become or how you learned to perhaps craft your inputs or your questions or however, whatever language you put in there. And then I'm going to go back, so hold onto that, and then I'm going back and thinking about pre-pandemic times, thinking about the Biosphere, but during the pandemic, that giving you perhaps an in to thinking about what life was like and also thinking about that experience, also crafting the description around what you want to see. But on top of that, what I think is really wonderful about hearing you all describe the images is actually thinking about the everydayness.

Aspen Mays:

Yeah.

Hernease Davis:

But also, that also brings me back to our time in lockdown. Those of us who experienced it that way. I was in New York City, and so everyone's super different. But thinking about how that gave you so many opportunities to embody what it must be like to perhaps be someone who has to shut in, or thinking about people who are differently abled, thinking about so many other ways of living that came out of that. And for you all, I'm seeing it also as this, another pathway into how do you tackle this very opaque and transparent, but kind of inaccessible society? And then also, how do you describe it and thinking of the language that you're using, also coming from being able to embody it because of this collective lived experience that we've had.

Aspen Mays:

Yeah, that's such a good point that you're making. I feel like maybe our original, or one of my original attractions to the Biosphere story is kind of the salaciousness of it. Just how baroque the drama felt and the architecture of the Biosphere. And I think after and during the pandemic, the mundaneness of it all actually became much more compelling to me that, exactly what you just described. And imagining, yeah I'm fighting with whoever on the inside, because we've been in here together, that feels like I can understand that.

And then of course, the vividness of the outside, everybody that got into watching birds in their backyard, it just started to set up this contrast that I think allowed me a much more personal connection to what it really must have been like in so many ways. And then I think the Biospherians were really worried about contamination from a very different, not from a disease standpoint, but they were... part of the validity of the experiment was that there was going to be no contamination from the outside. And I think that layer started to also become really interesting, of course, because we were all feeling that in a really different way in the pandemic. So bringing all that, I mean, did I leave anything, Dan? I don't know if you want to add anything here?

Dan Boardman:

No, that actually-

Aspen Mays:

That's the language part.

Dan Boardman:

But no, that totally solidifies. I think that what, I don't think I had the ever really quite lined up in my head that I think if we had stumbled upon this tool, or had it existed earlier on in the project, we would have made higher drama images, or we would've tried to be conjuring up higher drama things. And having that lived experience really did ground it. It's like, oh yeah, that sort of seven in the afternoon feeling of being stuck in the house. And it's like, is it light? Is it dark out? I don't know. This is hell. And I just imagine that must be, at least we're getting closer. It's rhyming with what the experience in the Biosphere must have been. I mean, they kind of had a higher calling and a purpose. There was a, they self-selected to be in there, but the duration is so long. I mean, they were in there for a year-

Aspen Mays:

Two years.

Dan Boardman:

Two years, right?

Aspen Mays:

Yeah.

Dan Boardman:

Yes.

Aspen Mays:

Yeah. It's hard to believe. Yeah, I know. But here we are.

Hernease Davis:

I know.

Aspen Mays:

Of course it wasn't quite the same, but that duration felt really different and more basically just more imaginable in a way. And so the language part was also really interesting because Dan and I also found ourselves connecting to the descriptions again. I mean, we visited the Biospheres, so we had our own kind of idea about it. But it was really interesting to go from language into visual, because of course, photography has, the connection to the caption is as old as the medium. I mean, it's always functioned with language, but after the fact, not as precursor to the image. And it was just really interesting to learn how image order, how describing a scene or a person or a setting, adjective description order, really could change the image as it was generated.

And of course, Dan and I, understanding history of photography or the fineness of the description about the type of camera or the output or, all of that really helped us, I think, craft the kind of nineties look that we know from our childhood. And that was a really interesting layer. I mean to me, I love also thinking about the specificity of that moment in time and then tagging it with the specificity of this moment in time where AI software is right now. And it's glitchy. There's artifacts, everything wasn't, a lot of things it can't quite do in a way. There's a lot of uncanny valley things that happen that we have tried to avoid.

Dan Boardman:

Totally. And yeah, that's where the editing comes in. Of course, the sequencing and editing and okay, what is mysterious enough to get away with? And what is just clearly glitchy fingers is the hallmark of this particular AI at this moment. Although even since we were making this work-

Aspen Mays:

Oh, yeah.

Dan Boardman:

In earnest in October?

Aspen Mays:

November.

Dan Boardman:

November.

Hernease Davis:

Yeah, November.

Dan Boardman:

It's changed so much since then. I feel like this, we were playing with a toy and using it as a tool artistically. And then the conversation and culture around AI stuff, maybe I'm just paying attention to it more because we dabbled-

Aspen Mays:

No, I think it actually kind of exactly erupted.

Hernease Davis:

Yeah. And I will say, so for our listeners, this will be published later than when we're recording. But for the sake of a timestamp, we're recording towards the end of March. And I actually had planned on speaking with both of you or scheduling you later in the year, but even while you were in residency, and I think right after you all left, just so many things happened that I was like, actually, I'm going to have to talk to them a lot sooner. And so I immediately got in touch with you. I was like, just letting you know, I didn't want to get in contact this soon. But because it has been speeding up so much, I had a student over the summer who was working with a Twitter bot to create AI images. And even that has evolved. And then seeing the images that you two were making during the residency, it kind of freaked me out because I was like, what is that? Wait a second.

So from the summer until November, this has happened. And so that also is a question that I would like for you guys to address now, which is, since I'm assuming that AI has not been a part of your practices before.

Dan Boardman:

No.

Hernease Davis:

And if it is now, then how is that working with this medium that is changing so exponentially? And then how is it factoring into how you make these photographs? And even thinking about these glitches or these imperfections that thwarts, this is AI generated or machine generated and not necessarily something that you guys photograph. How are you? What's that like?

Aspen Mays:

Well, I mean, something that I find in thinking about this conversation and preparing for it, I was kind of imagining to myself, the Biospherians or the Synergists or the Theater of All Possibilities folks might have been sort of delighted by this technology. There's something about it that is, fascinatingly can be utopian. It can be deeply dystopian. It taps into everybody's fear about where this could go. And I think that this feeling that this thing could be all knowing and pulls from the vastness of all human experience, I think might have been really appealing and interesting to them. I mean, part of the design of the Biosphere was to pull from ancient civilizations, all the kind of greatest hits of humanity, the way that this is our birthright to pull from everything that already exists. And that is also how this software works. It is training on basically any picture that it can train on and the internet.

So there's this feeling that it could, it's kind of utopian Tower of Babel in and of itself. And of course, we can also think of all the deep, dark ways that it replicates bias. I mean, I'm not saying it's a utopian thing, but it hovers around. It touches on all these things. And I think the Biosphere itself did that. And so I think to me, it's not necessarily something I'm thinking about in my personal work, although I don't know. Who knows, the machine overlords might make me do that in the future. But I think for this project, it just feels really right. And I think the errors or its inability to completely, accurately (whatever that means in air quotes), describe this is also the place that I feel about it. We weren't there. I remember it, but we weren't inside. So we can't, it's just sort of an unknowable space ultimately.

Dan Boardman:

And I get the feeling as we were generating images, that's like we're adding so many qualifiers to these images, and it's like, are we working with 10 images that it's just conjuring up these same things and

recombining them over and over? It feels like the image set we're working with was not that expansive. But that being said, we are also asking it to conjure up something super, super specific.

Hernease Davis:

And do you offhand, or do you have any right now can you give a description of your input? Something that's super specific?

Dan Boardman:

Oh my gosh.

Aspen Mays:

Oh man, I got really obsessed.

Dan Boardman:

We did.

Aspen Mays:

Oh, you had so many good ones. I got really obsessed with trying to make an image of tourists looking, standing in the desert, outside, in Oracle, Arizona, looking into the Biosphere, wearing cutoff jean shorts. It was that level... and like oversized tie-dyed shirts. I was really trying to hit this nineties moment and trying to imagine. And as soon as you said tourists, when you added that language, then all of a sudden, all the people in the picture, their shadow on the ground, you could tell-

Dan Boardman:

They were holding a camera, yeah. Or like you could-

Aspen Mays:

Like the-

Dan Boardman:

Yeah.

Aspen Mays:

It was so interesting. It's like you just add the word tourists and it added a camera into the scene automatically. You didn't have to say camera.

Dan Boardman:

You're like, got a sunset in the desert looking out of a giant greenhouse at people having a picnic with, we'd add more and more to it. We're almost trying to push it as far or as far as we possibly could in terms of description, keep adding another layer, another sort of qualifying thing just to see how far we could push this specificity.

Aspen Mays:

Right.

Dan Boardman:

And it with no issue added specificity over and over and over again. You could just infinitely go. It's limited just by your own imagination, really, which is a fascinating thing to be confronted with. Like, okay. And it's a great way to have a collaborator because we could sort of egg each other on and be like, oh, I tried this and it gave me this. And okay, add that. And what order did you do it in? And okay, let's try it like this. And it was a real good reason to be in the same room together, because that energy was like a writer's room or something.

Aspen Mays:

Yeah. I mean, there was a point too, where we realized the difference between saying that greenhouse and space frame or adding space frame to greenhouse, then all of a sudden would really change the scale of the kind of space that it was depicting. That was really interesting. I mean, of course, I guess that that maybe is an obvious thing to say, like a greenhouse is really different from, or space frame is a really particular qualifier. Dan was trying to create an electronics fire or something.

Dan Boardman:

There was trash in a bucket. And with window lit, it was, it's more astonishing than the description by tenfold. The images themselves, they live beyond the description in a way that is so, it's just everything that I love about photography really. And I got that same sensation looking at these images that were conjured up seemingly, obviously not from nothing, but from this huge bank of other images. But yeah, in terms of thinking about AI technology and it's exponential growth over the last even few months here, I mean, I think chatgpt4 came out, or is in beta right now.

Hernease Davis:

I think it came out on Monday.

Dan Boardman:

Yeah.

Hernease Davis:

It's Thursday.

Dan Boardman:

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And that one, that's apparently what the beta for the Bing search thing is based on that. And it's not supposed to be a little better. It's a lot better. Before the Chat was just barely passing the SATs, and now it's scoring in the 90th percentile. It's passing the long form LSAT, no problem. It's a lot smarter, a lot better. And there's a lot of doomsday predictions stuff about that, which is interesting. I think it says a lot about our culture that we immediately go to those super negative outcomes. And that negative outcomes, you have to walk through a lot of doors to get to them. But then again, you have these chatbots hiring a TaskRabbit to solve a CAPTCHA because they can't get through a thing that asks if they're a robot. So they're hiring a human.

Hernease Davis:

Oh, wow.

Dan Boardman:

And giving the human a reasonable explanation. I'm vision impaired. I can't pick which of these images have a bicycle in them, and then it'll solve that, and then let them in a door. I mean-

Aspen Mays:

Right.

Dan Boardman:

Yeah. It's all there. It's freaky.

Aspen Mays:

Yeah.

Hernease Davis:

Yeah.

Dan Boardman:

I don't know. I'm very torn about it. I have no answers about that. This is a fascinating tool, visual tool. I haven't really thought about it any, super deeply. I do think it comes with a lot of issues in terms of the way it's scraped images from the internet that seems to be trouble there, appropriation on such a mass scale with no consent. I haven't unpacked it fully for myself, to be perfectly frank. Yeah.

Aspen Mays:

Right. I mean, I would agree with that, I guess. And of course, I think there's a lot of kind of breathless, fear-based... A lot of the writing I think right now is, just feels so, it feels like really basic. Just, "but then it will replace us!" And like "Human creativity is... that's what makes us human. And now, we aren't human!" I don't know, some of that stuff where you're reading are just photo forum stuff where people are like, this can't be called photography. And you're like, all right, everybody take a deep breath.

Hernease Davis:

Yeah.

Aspen Mays:

I mean-

Dan Boardman:

That's fine. It doesn't have to be-

Aspen Mays:

Yeah, exactly. And it's always been a part of the medium, this technological turnover crisis point is every couple of years in photography. And that's part of what makes it really compelling, I think, to use and to play with. And I guess that sort of stuff I find a little bit predictable. It's like, of course this is what everybody's worried about, but it also has all this other potential that's quite fascinating. And I guess that kind of collaborative element to it was really interesting to me that it felt like we were doing this

thing in real time where it was like, oh, if I change this, you'll do this. It's this other kind of thing in the mix with Dan and I.

Dan Boardman:

And it felt like a culmination actually, of a lot of hard work, research and dead ends that finally, this thing is allowing us to break through and move forward. In actually, a sort of traditional way. We're going to make a photo book of this, and that's going to take on a somewhat predictable form, probably. I mean, we don't know exactly yet, but the means to get there has been so unusual, the path to get to this point in the project. It's interesting.

Hernease Davis:

Yeah. I mean, that actually is, it doesn't have to be a final question. I am interested in what's next. And I was thinking about perhaps the form this takes and whether or not you are planning on incorporating language or incorporating any type of AI communications as you go forward.

Dan Boardman:

I don't know. We haven't really talked, haven't really got there yet. I feel like that will reveal itself if it feels like the work needs that, I don't think we're opposed to including text to describe. But I mean, with the Challenger book, we felt like it was really important to be as clear as possible about what you were looking at. And so we put in a very concise, a very short but spelled out description of this is what it is, this is how we came to have it, kind of thing. And we felt like that was important for that work. But for this, it feels different for some reason. But yeah, I don't know. Aspen, do you have anything to contribute here?

Aspen Mays:

Yeah, no-

Dan Boardman:

We don't yet...

Aspen Mays:

I'm thinking about that. It's really, it's an interesting question. I mean, I think that what you just said, Dan, about how ultimately this might actually take a fairly traditional shape. I mean, I think that's interesting to me. When you think about some of these first things coming out with AI, you shared that artist, K Allado-McDowell. Some of these first really compelling things are novels.

Hernease Davis:

Yeah.

Aspen Mays:

It's not like you're actually tearing down the form or the container that's been a well established human artistic output. But the use of language, I think, yeah, that's something we're really considering, we haven't touched on in this conversation, but the language that we have been working with also, not to generate images, but to generate material for the book is actually nineties era infomercials. The language in those forms, and not to generate images. We're not putting those, that's not the input, but

it's a kind of companion to these pictures, at least at this stage. Imagining a kind of omniscient viewer or a voice on the other side saying, I can see your life. Call me now. Kind of beckoning through all of this.

Dan Boardman:

Totally. Like a one way voice, this thing that's through a one way mirror almost. If you were just to be cycling through TV channels and come across this message, I can see your life, if you're in a certain place in your life, that it's meaningless to you and that it's solicitation. And if you're in a desperate spot in your life, this is very meaningful to you, and you need someone to know, or you're seeking answers. So we're kind of playing with that a little bit too. Maybe the narrative wrinkle that is still developing.

Aspen Mays:

Yeah.

Hernease Davis:

Can you talk a little bit about the significance of infomercials? And if there's anything in particular about how an infomercial sounds or the language you hear in infomercial versus language for any other kind of advertisement.

Aspen Mays:

Yeah. It's such a good question. I think this is also so specific to that era, and I even have conversations with students about it where, as you didn't, so this really would be the era of the Biosphere, early nineties through the nineties. I mean, the internet is in its very beginning. So this idea of the internet that we experience right now was not there yet. And you would primarily be watching television late at night, and an infomercial would come on. And often the language was asking you to make a connection. Are you lonely? Do you need answers? The things that we've always wanted since time immemorial, to not feel isolated, to not feel alone. And to know that what the future is going to be, which of course is also what the Biosphere is about, is predicting the future, controlling the future.

I mean, it's in "Oracle, Arizona", of course. It's just all the things that it's about. So at that moment in time, I love thinking about the importance of the telephone, that it's like TV is the medium. It's the way that you connect. It's not this individualized device that you can completely kind of like... the algorithm will tailor it to all your needs. And you're only getting ads for things that you want to see. It's just this catch-all, late night, the commercial is the commercial. And that kind of beckoning voice that they... the language used to try to get you to bite.

Dan Boardman:

And just simply changing the context. If you're encountering just that language by itself without the black and white person mopping the floor or whatever it might be, or the television psychic, the language is very provocative and very insistent on itself. And so depending on your mental state, it's going to mean something completely different to you. Yeah. So that's in the oven right now too. Yeah.

Aspen Mays:

I think that's a really interesting point. We watched a lot of nineties infomercials from television psychics, and that was also felt like a really also nineties phenomenon. Although, of course, the idea of an oracle or a psychic is not new at all. But that idea that you could call somebody and you would pick up the phone and would be a human. I mean, I think that's the interesting, maybe counterpoint to this

AI generator where it feels like the all-knowing machine that you cannot, like who is it? What is it? It's not an entity. Is it an entity? Is it sentient? But the idea that the psychic is a person that you would call, you would just pick it up and say like, well, I'm Dan, and I'm really having, I want to know if I'm going to be able to pay my bills next week. Or am I going to fall in love?

That feeling that it's a real person, a real person on the other side, maybe that - I'm just saying this out loud and it's making so much sense to me - but maybe that's also the counterpoint in some ways, to the AI. It's like the voice, that omnipotent voice that was a real voice, was a person, at that period in time.

Hernease Davis:

I mean, because I was actually thinking of it and I was trying to get out of it... all I could think about, the language of an infomercial as an input into a person or into us, or the person who it hits with. If you're lonely, or if you're in a state where it's like, I would fall to the traps of Ms. Cleo. I'll call her right now. Let me know all the things. And so then there is that kind of relationship there. But as you're speaking Aspen, I believe there are dating apps that are just about AI, where people know that they're talking to an AI, and there are people out there who would rather tell all their secrets and actually form real relationships, for them, with a bot.

Aspen Mays:

That's good point.

Hernease Davis:

A learning machine, I'll say.

Aspen Mays:

Yeah.

Hernease Davis:

And so in a sense, thinking about this as a counter, there are some, of course, drawbacks and some utopian, dystopian things in between there. And also kind of what, I don't know, I'm suspending judgment right now because I don't know what it's like to want to interface that way with something that I know as a machine, I won't judge that knowing that it does create real feelings inside someone. Just the same way that someone who is really attracted to an infomercial.

Aspen Mays:

Yeah.

Hernease Davis:

That's asking you, are you lonely? A lonely person will reach out because of real feelings, in the hopes of getting those needs met, even by a stranger.

Dan Boardman:

Well, and even looking at these AI pictures that we were generating, they gave me the exact sensation of looking at any other photograph.

Aspen Mays:

Right. Yeah.

Dan Boardman:

A good one was, that is really good. And it felt like I made it, or it felt like we made it together and it's like-

Aspen Mays:

Right. Or we plucked it out of the unconsciousness.

Dan Boardman:

Yeah. And it had the same feeling, which is strange to say, because I feel like both Aspen, you and I both have very labor-intensive, crafty kind of processes in our normal practices. But here we are typing something in and the machine makes an image. It's satisfying. It's very, and that sort of awe of like, Yeah, I can imagine talking to a chatbot and having an emotional reaction if-

Aspen Mays:

Without a doubt.

Dan Boardman:

Without a doubt.

Aspen Mays:

Yeah.

Dan Boardman:

I mean, I think we're actually a lot simpler than we think. I think it's like humans and the human brain is complex and also very basic, very simple. And the things we want to respond to are not as much of a marvel as we sometimes put them out there to be.

Hernease Davis:

But I think it is a marvel, in that sense that, and I'm wondering, and just as an observation, because I wonder if the feeling also comes from a lot of this labor behind, to these years of trying to figure out how-

Dan Boardman:

That could be.

Hernease Davis:

... how to approach this. And then you land on something that seemingly, you know, don't see all the mechan-, all the machinations, all of the background. And we're describing the learning machine without knowing the nuances of building an AI bot or the nuances of what equations you need to put into some type of thing to scrape the interwebs. All you know is that you've put in this language, you've

done the best that you can at that. And that it's informed by all these years of collaboration and toil and thinking and ruminating. And then, you get this thing, and it's seemingly simple. It's really not.

Aspen Mays:

Right.

Hernease Davis:

It's an extremely complex image and an extremely complex process that is mysterious but real, and creates this emotional feedback. And also perhaps this weird, perhaps dissociative moment was like, well, what is this? I didn't make this, but you did make it. So what does that mean?

Aspen Mays:

Yeah.

Hernease Davis:

And it's here, and I don't know how it was made. But then you kind of do at the same time. Yeah. That's just-

Dan Boardman:

You're right. Yes. Humanity, we will continue on.

Aspen Mays:

Yeah. I mean, you're right though.

Dan Boardman:

I take back my statement.

Aspen Mays:

I mean, you're right though, it's possible because there are so many, there are actual images of a tourist in jean shorts in the nineties in the desert. Because those exist there, it's possible to use this. I mean, it actually keeps me, it just really brought me back to the idea of the Theater of All Possibilities. Even calling it, calling itself that it's like, you could call this AI generator "the theater of all possibilities." It's like, it's all out there. It's kind of all on a stage already. And that, it feels so generative. I mean, it will be, I mean, I think that's what its potential is if we use it to generate things that feel like they're about connection and kindness and all these other things, then it will learn that. And if we don't, it won't.

Dan Boardman:

This is going to be such a funny moment to time capsule, a point in time.

Aspen Mays:

Oh yeah. It's going to be like, wow, so amazing.

Dan Boardman:

It's looking at a PlayStation One, like, "That's real. Oh my gosh." And then you look at it now and it's like three polygons, you're like, what?

Aspen Mays:

Yeah.

Dan Boardman:

Like, that's terrible.

Aspen Mays:

Yeah. No, it really will. I think that was the thing just last week about it's really improved with human-

Dan Boardman:

Hands.

Aspen Mays:

... hands, that was one of the things, and we found that to be true in November. We really wanted to do the Biospherian handshake as a composition. It was really hard not to have it just be like, whoa, that doesn't actually-

Dan Boardman:

Looks so bizarre. Well, there's this thing of, in, I was reading about AI that, so someone was sort of equating it to the electric car. And the electric car has this issue of the last mile that they've got all the technology there, it's all going, but they have to solve this. How does it park? How do the final turns? How does it, like, it's all that sort of complicated last mile of a trip that they thought, oh, well, we'll solve that in the next year. But it's like, no, actually you're on an exponential curve and you're hitting the part that's extremely hard, and it's going to take a long time to figure this part out.

And AI is, I feel like, is on the same trajectory where it's like you got most of the way there, and now it's all in the details. And we're so good at picking up what's wrong about an image. We're so good at cluing into why something is off. And it could just be the look on someone's face or body language, and that's going to be much harder to nail considering our own, I mean, we're more inundated with images now than we've ever been. People are really good at looking and at images and knowing what they're about, decoding them. So I get the feeling we're going to be in this sort of limbo territory with AI for a long time.

Aspen Mays:

It's actually really bringing me back to thinking about the descriptions we read about the Biosphere, that in, underneath and in all these tunnels, underneath all these structures was all the electronics. It was really meant to be hidden, that it was such a sophisticated entity, the Biosphere itself. The Synergists who made it really believed in a kind of nature plus technology future where we would integrate with machines in such a way that we'd be able to live in a much better world, in a more sustainable world. And then a lot of the electronics of the Biosphere were meant to be hidden from view, but it was a vast array of machines keeping that thing alive and possible.

It could not have existed without that. It had a really sophisticated lung, oxygen intake system. It was a remarkable technological feat. And it was also meant to sort of be like, a little bit of the Wizard of Oz, pay no attention to the man behind the curtain. And I feel like we're in this space again too, where it's like you said, it's such a sophisticated marvel, but then at the end of the day, it just spits out a picture that you're like, yeah, my cousin could, that could have been from my cousin, whatever.

Dan Boardman:

Yeah. Amazing.

Aspen Mays:

Yeah.

Hernease Davis:

Well, I mean, is there anything, anything else that you would like to add to that, because I-

Aspen Mays:

Touched on the history of humanity. Pretty much.

Hernease Davis:

I know.

Dan Boardman:

I think, yeah, we kind of covered it here. I do want to say that it's such a pleasure to work with Aspen on things. So it's like when we get in the room, I feel like a little kid, like we're playing make believe and egging each other on, but then it gets into these deep philosophical, like, doglegs. So a very fruitful collaboration.

Aspen Mays:

Yeah. Well, I just appreciate you saying that so much, and I feel the same way. It's really been so generative. I feel like I have so much fun. We laugh so much. I feel like when we're laughing a lot, we know we're really onto something, but it's really been like, I don't know. It's just been such an interesting experience. I don't think I would've gotten here by myself. And that's what makes it so interesting.

Dan Boardman:

Yeah, same.

Aspen Mays:

And it was so amazing to me-

Dan Boardman:

I would have given up.

Aspen Mays:

This transcript was exported on Jun 14, 2023 - view latest version [here](#).

... you, Hernease when we were there, it was like, yeah, felt really awesome to also have made this connection.

Dan Boardman:

And yeah, also to say about VSW, which is just a remarkable place for artists. It's really unique. It's one of a kind. They take it very seriously. They're very kind, and they're very open. You can come here and they will help you do your thing. It's amazing.

Aspen Mays:

Yeah.

Dan Boardman:

I wish more places like this existed.

Aspen Mays:

I agree. And I think it's also not for nothing that the origin of VSW tracks at the late sixties moment of... late sixties, early seventies' moment of, how can we save a space for experimentation? How can we support artists? How can we set up a place where all of these things are accepted? And they are not only accepted, but they're ...

Dan Boardman:

Championed.

Aspen Mays:

Yeah, really encouraged and nurtured. So it's not for nothing that the Synergists also, that's sort of the same time period of their origin, I think.

Hernease Davis:

Yeah. That's a really interesting connection to make there, especially a project like yours. Even thinking about the process of how open you've had to be to even tackle like, what are we doing? We're interested in this thing, but how do we get at it?

Dan Boardman:

And maybe one day we'll finish this project.

Aspen Mays:

Oh my gosh. I know.

Hernease Davis:

Well, actually, I'm wondering how are you continuing to work together and do you think you need another residency to-

Dan Boardman:

Oh, yeah. Yeah, definitely. Yeah. We need a six-month residency here.

Season 2 Episode 1 - Aspen Mays And Dan Boardman (Completed
06/07/23)

Transcript by [Rev.com](#)

This transcript was exported on Jun 14, 2023 - view latest version [here](#).

Aspen Mays:

Yeah. Yeah, I think so. I actually, I feel like we are in some ways really close.

Dan Boardman:

Yeah. Yeah.

Aspen Mays:

It's just going to be, we really generate, I mean, maybe there's still some more images to generate, and it's interesting to think about doing it now, they're going to look different than the set that we generated just a couple of months ago, but that also might be really, really interesting. I think we're pretty close. It's just that last mile.

Dan Boardman:

That last mile and now, and Aspen and I both have very busy life with kiddos and jobs and things like that, so I get the feeling when the semester ends we'll, like there'll be some energy again.

Aspen Mays:

Let's do it. I think at this point, we're at the place where we could go back and forth. It's okay to be, is kind of hard.

Dan Boardman:

We're committing on this podcast. This book-

Aspen Mays:

Yes.

Dan Boardman:

... will release September 1st-

Aspen Mays:

Publishing date.

Dan Boardman:

Check back.

Aspen Mays:

Publishing date.

Dan Boardman:

Yeah.

Aspen Mays:

Yeah.

Hernease Davis:

And we'll, I'll be sure to get this out before then. Before September 1st. No, yeah, definitely. Definitely will come out. And actually, I was actually just thinking about that. I'm like, oh my gosh, what if it changes again? What if I have to release this a month before I had originally planned? It's just, yeah, things are changing. And just really interested in how this continues to evolve, because it's endlessly fascinating, I have to say.

Dan Boardman:

Yeah.

Aspen Mays:

Thank you.

Hernease Davis:

Thank you. Well, thank you both for coming on the podcast and sharing so much. And yeah, it's been a really wonderful conversation.

Dan Boardman:

Thank you so much.

Aspen Mays:

Thanks.

Dan Boardman:

Yeah.

Aspen Mays:

Bye.

Hernease Davis:

And there you have it. I encourage you to visit the websites of Aspen Mays and Dan Boardman to learn more about their practices. I've also included a reference to Aspen and Dan's VSW artist page, which has an image of their previous book collaboration about the Challenger Space Shuttle. Those links are in the show notes. And if you are joining us for the very first time, a special welcome to you. If you enjoyed this episode, please take a listen to the artists featured in season one and stay subscribed so you don't miss our upcoming episodes in season two. To learn more about the Visual Studies Workshop, please visit us at vsw.org where we have information about the Project Space Residency and our current artists in residence. Keep following us on Twitch and Instagram at the Visual Studies Workshop, and feel free to send me an email at herneasedavis@vsw.org. That's H-E-R-N-E-A-S-E D-A-V-I-S@vsw.org. This podcast is funded in part by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of New York State Legislature. Thank you so much for listening to this conversation with Aspen Mays and Dan Boardman. In the meantime, please take care.