

Artist Salon Webinar with Nancy Lee 李南屏 and Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੰਬਰ

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SPEAKERS:

Nancy Lee 李南屏 and Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੰਬਰ (artists)

Kathy Tycholis (host)

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Kathy Tycholis

Good afternoon, everybody. Welcome to the May 2021 session of the Artist Salon series. My name is Kathy Tycholis, I'm the Richmond Art Gallery's Education and Public Programs Coordinator, and I'll be your host for today's session with our guest artists, Nancy Lee and Kiran Bhumber. I want to thank you all for joining us today from wherever you're Zooming in on in this beautiful day and supporting the Richmond Art Gallery's public programs. For those of you who are new to the program, the Salon is a monthly series of talks by arts professionals held on the last Saturday of every month from February to November. The goal of the program is to offer a mix of professional development tips, community building, and inspiration for artists to keep on making your work. The Salon also does exist as a Facebook group, providing resources for artists in the Lower Mainland, including posts for open calls, local arts events, professional development opportunities, as well as a space for you all to connect with each other. So you're all welcome to join that, and all the info on that is on the gallery's website, which I've included the link in the chat right now for you to look at:

<https://www.richmondartgallery.org/learn-and-create/adults/professional-development-for-artists/artist-salon-series>

So before we begin, I did want to start with an introduction that was made especially for us here at the Richmond Art Gallery by local elder Cecilia Point. So I'm just going to play this for you now, it's a very short clip, and then we'll start the Salon.

Cecilia Point

I said my name's Cecilia Point. I'm from Musqueam First Nation, and I want to welcome everyone here today. And I said we're all of one heart and one mind, so whenever I give a welcome, I ask my ancestors to tell me what I'm supposed to say, what message I'm supposed to deliver. And also the purpose of the welcome is to give people a sense of place, of where they are. So I want you to think way back to when there was no buildings here, thinking about my ancestor mænéʔ, my great-grandpa who lived to be 104. So he literally saw the Lower Mainland drop on him like a building. It was all trees, and rivers, and water. And he talked about how we used to, of course, go berry-picking, and fishing, and stripping cedar, and we used to collect wool from goats that

Cecilia Point

were indigenous to these territories here and make our blankets. And I remember myself as a child in Richmond catching oolichans in my bare hands in the river. So many changes have happened. And I'm thinking about my granny xʷlayxʷlet, whose mother brought her in a canoe from Squamish over to our long house in Musqueam where she married my grandpa. So the other message I'm getting is not one of my ancestors but a well-known Indigenous person, Louis Riel, and he said, "My people will sleep for a hundred years, and when they awake, it's the artists who will bring their spirit back." So I'm thinking about the arts and culture Gallery, and all of the wonderful cultural activities that come here, from all the people that live here now. And we share all of our cultures, and we stand in solidarity with each other, and we learn about each other. So I'm very happy that this space exists, and that these activities exist. So I want to welcome you with a song from my great grandpa, or from my great uncle Dominic Point, and it's our Canoe Song. So picture us going out on our canoes on the river and greeting you, the visitors, coming in on your canoes. ♫ ♫ ♫ ♫ ♫

Kathy Tycholis

Thank you, Cecilia Point for that lovely welcome. It's really nice to have that done just for us here at the gallery. So for now, I would like to introduce our guest artists, Nancy Lee and Kiran Bhumber. Nancy and Kiran are the co-creators of the current exhibition at the Richmond Art Gallery, *UNION*, that is running until June 5, 2021. And it is co-presented with Cinevolution Media Arts Society and part of their Digital Carnival Z. So this is a completely new work by the artists, and it incorporates XR, performance, sculpture, multi-channel sound and video installation. The artists did work with a large creative team, and often work with a team of other artists when producing their works. I will pop in their individual bios into the chat for you to look at. They both call themselves interdisciplinary media artists, which is a huge scope and is really specific and unique to each artist, so I will post that in there for you.

And that is also part of the reason why I thought they'd be such great presenters for today. I get asked a lot by Salon participants, you know, how do you find your focus? How do you just focus on that one thing? And I personally don't think artists need to, I think we should all be interdisciplinary artists and finding things that interest you, finding things that are maybe just part of other elements of your life, and trying out new things, and bringing them all together to create a more sort of, well, interdisciplinary art practice. And I think that Nancy and Kiran are great examples of this: they work with a lot of people, anything they don't know, they figure it out, and they ask people that can help them out. Which again, is something I think as all artists we should be doing, and just really expanding your own community. So for today, I've reached out to them to just kind of expand on that idea, and to see part of their journey, and to how they got to where they are today and just how they work. How do you work with a team? Especially if you're an artist that's used to working by yourself, how do you work in a collaborative environment? And then just offer up some tips for those of you out there who might want to explore trying new things, trying new things or different ideas within your own art practice as well.

I will now open it up to our guest artists. I will disappear into the background and come back after they present, to answer any of your questions. So again, a reminder, just keep popping in any questions in the chat throughout, as opposed to waiting to the end. So welcome, Nancy and Kiran. The stage is yours.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

Thank you for the introductions.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੁਮਰ

Yeah, thank you.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

So well, I'm Nancy Lee.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੁਮਰ

And I'm Kiran Bhumber.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

And we will do some screen sharing here, I'll pull up our PowerPoint. So Kiran and I in this photo, as our title page, this is a photo of us when we were performing in Mumbai in India.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੁਮਰ

Yeah, we were able, we were fortunate enough to take our pieces to Asia on multiple occasions. In particular, we reached out to a collective in Mumbai called *Homegrown* and they focus on contemporary South Asian voices and ideas, and so we were able to perform our piece '*Hollow Vertices*' and also have an installation there.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

So we, at least for me, I did not come from like a traditional kind of artist pathway. I never went to art school. And I got into art making by throwing underground parties. So that's kind of where my thing kind of, where I kind of come to art making is from kind of a community practice.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੁਮਰ

Yeah, and I definitely came from more of like, I would say, the more nerdy side of art making. You know, I was like, I grew up as like a band nerd. So I, yeah, I played the clarinet in Middle School in High School. And I was really into sciences, and then I was like, "Okay, do I go into sciences or music?" And did a year of science and then hated it, realized I want to go back to music. And then when I left school, I didn't know what I wanted to do. And I knew I wanted to make stuff, I knew I wanted to make art. But I didn't know how to do it. So I would just go to shows by myself, and kind of experiment on my own, and just go to shows and start talking to people. And I eventually went to this show, which you see here, or this party if you will, which is one of Nancy's parties, and this was in 2013.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

Yeah, late 2013.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੁਮਰ

Late 2013. And I remember going to this party, and I was so inspired by the DIY elements of the party, the musical performances, and then also the staging of it, which Nancy had built the swing sets. And people were having so much fun on the swing sets. It's like, it's incredible how something that is so familiar to us can activate the sense of play. And while I was on the swing set, swinging, being a participant, there was projections around us. And during my time at UBC, I experimented with interactive performance and technology, and I remember thinking, "Oh, it'd be cool if the swings could change the projections, or we can change sounds with the swinging motions". And then Nancy and I met again, at New Forms Festival as a volunteer. So this was like another, "Okay, I want to meet people, I want to see what's going on. I want to be a part of the community". And that's when we started talking about collaborating. And we eventually went full circle and had this installation at the 2016 New Forms Festival. So this was the version two of *Pendula*. And you'll see in this installation, so it's the two of us and Laine Butler, who we work with a lot, who is an incredible visual artist. And we have these long USB cables, and at the ends of them, we have an Arduino sensor. And that sensor lets us track the swinging motions of the swings, and then we're able to change projections.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

So we were initially, we showed this piece at the Vancouver International Jazz Festival. And, you know, at first Kiran and I, we were just DIY-ing this, like, we did not really have a plan to showcase it, we just wanted to experiment, you know. We were kind of just working at my studio, just setting it up kind of like, you know, we didn't really have a plan to figure out how we wanted to do this. And I think that was the first time I've ever shown any kind of media artwork. It was through the Vancouver Jazz Festival. And we learned so much from that process of just working with them, learning about how festivals are produced from the inside, learning about how things are budgeted, and things are structured. Also, and that was like the first time I've even thought about grants. I've never, you know, coming from a DIY kind of underground art scene, it was like, I never knew anything about grants. And I hadn't really made media artworks either at that point, you know, so I think Kiran was kind of like, she hit me up and she was like, "Yeah, let's do this, I know how to do the programming for it". And I had thought about making it interactive, but I had no clue how to do it. So we just kind of embarked on this learning process together, lots of hours just troubleshooting, figuring out, reading up, soldering our own sensors, and just kind of starting to build our own hardware, and just starting from scratch. Luckily, we had amazing mentors. We worked with Dr. Bob Pritchard, who gave us a lot of mentorship on like, how to work with these sensors, and how to build the max patches, and things like that. So it you know, mentor, having relationships with mentors is like really important throughout our artistic journey.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੁਮਰ

Yeah. And he also opened our eyes to the possibility of grants as well. And, you know, we were super fortunate to land a gig with Jazz Fest. But it was very humble beginnings. And I mean, you know, we made posts about it on social media, and then Rainbow Robert, who was curating, hit us up to be a part of it. But this just gives you an overview of what it was like. So this was like, in 2014. You know, we bought everything ourselves. We would just like, get together, you know, there's a bunch of messy cables on the ground. And we would just install and experiment and then just have our friends test it out. And that's kind of where we, where we came from. And a part of the installation, I mean, part of leveraging partnerships, was leveraging UBC because I had come through

UBC. So that was asking for support for institutional space. So this is UBC ICICS room, and part of the Pendula installation was a performance as well, where we had a quadrophonic sound performance with Clara Schandler, who's in the photo, is a cellist, who goes by Sidewalk Cellist. So we were able to test the sound in the space, because space is so hard to find, as an artist, and especially when you're working on large scale work, that involve multiple people and multiple technologies, it's really important to build those community partnerships to leverage access to space.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

Yeah, like this is, I think, this is my first time going to like a fancy studio. If you saw the last photo, like, that's the studio, that's my studio that I usually work at, you know, as, like a DIY artist, you know. So this is like, "Oh my God, I didn't realize this was a thing". And I was just so grateful to have that kind of support from members of, you know, that are part of institutions that do have access to these spaces. So I think, this kind of shaped our way of, our artistic journey, because, like, we remember what it's like to not have those kind of access to spaces. So you know, building in that kind of, remembering that we, not everyone has the same access to space that, keeping in mind that younger artists and emerging artists are making works, and just kind of like, keeping those doors open was like a big part of our artistic journey.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੰਬਰ

Yeah. And we learned from people who did that, you know. People from these institutions who opened the door for us, so it's like passing down that lineage too.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

So I'm just gonna pull up a different video here. This one's just like a 360° video, so I gotta pull up a different app for this. So, you know, fast forward 2017. That's when we started dabbling in VR works. So this is kind of like our first VR project. And, you know, I had initially started working with this project with Emmalena Fredriksson in 2016. We were building some VR, kind of DIY VR rigs. (Oh, this doesn't quite work. Oh, this kind of, that kind of works.) It's kind of janky right now, this is actually not the way it's supposed to...actually, let me just try pulling it from a different...

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੰਬਰ

It's an interesting format for this one.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

No, it's top/bottom, but it didn't actually. Anyways, hilariously, this is a VR dance film that we were working on, and luckily we had the support of the National Film Board. But initially we didn't really have any idea how we were going to get funding you know, we applied for BC Arts Council, we got denied, and then we just continue with the project. I started like cold calling other VR companies in Vancouver that did 360° video, and lucky enough, I was able to get in touch with a colleague of mine now, Olivier, who was super eager to start working on 360° videos with us. So we were able to create, like a pitch, kind of demo reel. And then we used that demo reel to bring it to the National Film Board in order for them to, you know, see what the project is about, and the vision for the project, and for them to kind of like provide the funding for us to create the exhibition. So yeah,

there's lots of DIY elements in, this is like a contemporary VR dance film. I had never worked with VR before. I think I just tried a VR headset for the first time like a month before deciding to make this project happen. So like, the whole process was just learning how to do it. And in 2016, we didn't really have the softwares to make VR work. So it's like, even working with the National Film Board, having their support, a big part of our process there, you know, working with their creative technologist was also just to figure out, like, how do we even like, "Do we use a Mac? Do we use a PC? What softwares to use?" At that point, none of the softwares were that seamless, as it is today. So yeah, that was kind of like the beginning of our learning journey for this VR dance film.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੰਬਰ

So this film, you can actually watch on YouTube, if you research, if you search '*Tidal Traces, NFB*', you'll actually be able to see the 360° video in there, if you'd like to watch it.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

So just to kind of give you an idea, like the DIY-ness of kind of our initial phases of research was like, literally, you know, getting a 3D printed rig for, I didn't even have six GoPros. I had, it was meant to be for six GoPros, but we had like five GoPros, because I think at that moment, that's how much we could afford. And like literally just kind of bring this into the ocean and start experimenting with it and start shooting with it. You know we were fortunate enough to get our demo video, 360° video, and pitch that to the NFB for them to help us realize the project in a way that we were able to, you know, access the really fancy 16 GoPro Odyssey setup. Which is a stereoscopic camera rig that kind of gives you like, it's eight directions, so you have two GoPros that go in each direction. So it's like one for each eye. So the work that you make is 3D because it has depth, and it has its own cloud stitching, like Google Cloud stitching, so I didn't have to, we didn't do any of that ourselves anymore. So we were able to kind of rely on better resources that the NFB was able to provide us, in order for us to actually realize the project in its full form. And you know, Kiran, also during this process, our first showing, pre-showing was at MUTEK in Tokyo. And you know, Kiran had to, was in Michigan at that time, and she was sound designing and composing for the piece. And you had to like, build the VR audio set up.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੰਬਰ

Yeah, yeah. So on my end, like working in different cities, I had to figure out the VR audio workflow, which like, didn't exist where I was. Which became a, it was a little stressful. Just like, you know, working in two different time zones, getting these video files and then figuring out like: Okay, how do I play this video? How do I decode this video in a way that I can use it in a digital audio workstation? And then what do I need to export out so that the Oculus can read it? And do the right calculations based on where the user has their head in the space? And also like, this is the first time I've done anything spatialized in a binaural format, so figuring out like: How do you choreograph the sound? Have you enhanced where you want the users to look, based on sound? And I was fortunate enough to be at an institution that also supported me in this project, this project being outside of the institution. So I was able to meet Nancy at MUTEK Tokyo for the first showing of the work.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

Yeah. And you see in this photo, this is a very rare sighting that you would see dancers also carrying the gear. So we shot this at Boundary Bay. We have Zahra, Rianne, and Lexi here in their outfits made by NOT DEAD YET, Adam Lin-Bungag, which is one of our collaborators for *UNION*. And yeah, you can see like this, it's a very DIY kind of process here, where we have been sent here from the NFB, and me carrying the case. It's like trying to figure out how to bring all of this gear into the middle of the ocean, set it up, shoot it, and then bring it back before the tide kind of eats us alive. So like big part of, you know, the research, I think this is kind of working with Emmalena Fredriksson is kind of the beginning of our process of like, learning about the body and choreography. Kind of diving more into understanding like, how immersive media and how the body works, and how, you know, thinking, considering the ethics that kind of come into play when we create immersive works that often, you know, is a very intimate experience for people with VR and stuff like that. And like how we can have additional kind of considerations for the body, for the performers, for us as creators, and for the audience, when we kind of make works like that. Because, you know, in 2016, 2017, a lot of VR works back then was like, very jarring, and was kind of like, some of them was overstimulating, there was elements of cyber sickness that hadn't been totally researched as much. So you know, just taking all those things into consideration, like, how can we create work where we can be kind to the body of the audience members. Even though like, I felt like the dancers here, definitely had to endure a lot of very, very difficult dancing environments, but they were amazing troopers for this project. And yeah, it was the first contemporary VR dance film, a 360° dance film, that was made.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੰਬਰ

Yeah, so our second exploration of virtual reality came through this VR, the surround sound VR performance environment, which is called *Telepresence*, which you're viewing right now. And *Telepresence* came about from, I think it was like, right after *Tidal Traces*, I had met the musical director, music curator at Western Front, or the one at the time, DB Boyko, and we were talking about, you know, future works. And I always had this idea of, coming from working with *Tidal Traces*, and working with dance and choreography, I was thinking in my head, like, "How can you create a piece where virtual reality, instead of being so foreground in our experience, you know, when you're in a virtual reality headset, it's like you're in your own individualistic experience, you're by yourself, and you're just witnessing, and you're a part of it. But how do we create an environment that is collective? And how do we enhance this environment to a musical performance?" And so that became the impetus of *Telepresence*. And *Telepresence* took a couple years to fundraise with DB, and it resulted in partnerships with Emily Carr, and yeah, a big partnership with Emily Carr and Basically Good Media Lab, who were able to give us space. And so we collaborated with JP Carter, who's performing on trumpet. And during our research process, we were experimenting with different virtual, or like objects, game objects in Unity. And we would study like, "Okay, if we have this game object in space, and we're viewing in VR, how does it feel in our bodies?" So this is where the body comes in, as well. When you come into a VR space or into a performance space, you come with all of your past and your memories. And based on that, and based on this collective group, you're creating this new experience for everyone, based on your past relationships with the technology and yourself.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

Yeah, and this project, it took us a couple of times. We weren't successful the first time when we applied for the grants. And then we had to try again, kind of like reconceptualize the project a little bit more, you know, fine tune it a little bit more in order for us to, you know, have a successful grant application. And you know, a lot of the collaborators in this project, like, see the video there was Laine Butler, you know, who was someone that was part of the kind of the DIY music world that I come from, and we start collaborating with *Pendula* and stuff. And then also Ian Lavery, was someone that you had known from UBC.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੰਬਰ

Yeah, yeah. So Ian, and I work together on artistic projects at UBC, with The Laptop Orchestra. And so Ian helped us develop this network app. So everyone who's wearing the headset is able to experience the VR, the virtual experience at the same time.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

Yeah, this is just an image of the studio space that we were able to access at Emily Carr. And you know, it's really important for any kind of grant application, especially project grant applications, for you to have firm and well-established partnerships moving into, like when you apply for it, because, for example, for this project, *Telepresence*, we were presented by the Western Front, but we had a partnership with Emily Carr that offered us the space and offered us some presentation opportunity and student engagement opportunity with its cohort as well, too. So we were able to not only leverage the space, we're also able to leverage the community access that they had in order for us to present our work. Which kind of, you know, which it helps your grants, it helps your applications, it helps your projects to reach more audiences to have some things, to have an exhibition or presentation date that is already secure, and already pre-negotiated.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੰਬਰ

Yeah, so this is just another photo of us, in our stances, our power stances, starting the piece or experimenting with the piece. So the piece actually had, so that's eight channel surround speakers, and then we also had four tube amplifiers.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

And, you know, this piece was, we were able to bring it to South Korea, Gwangju to show at the International Symposium on Electronic Art in 2019. Yeah, and I think, you know, Kiran and I throughout our process, all of our projects, we've written and we've published on. Because a big part of our practice is not just making art, is also developing new workflows and new pipelines for emerging technology and the use of all the different emerging tools. So, I never even thought about this, but with the first project *Pendula*, Kiran actually encouraged us to submit this to a Musical Interface Symposium paper. So we started writing these papers about and documenting our process, our creative process and research process through writing. And we've done that with *Tidal Traces*, as well, because all of these workflows are novel and new. And same with *Telepresence*. And I think that has given us a lot of opportunities to not only be able to present work with an arts institution, we're also able to present and travel with our work within some academic institutions that are also partnering with other arts institutions in other places in the world.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੁਮਰ

Yeah, and I would say too, there's a lot of technical and pipeline stuff when working with technology, but a big part too, is there's so much space for pioneering in this media arts world with like, aesthetics, aesthetic thinking. And I think that's what's so important about publishing these papers, is so that it gives people a voice to, you know, what developing new ways of thinking about media art and immersion and presentation. And people use those. I mean, people have referenced our papers too, which is pretty incredible.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

Yeah, and also just to take up space. They're a very male dominated field, you know, academia, and then also the electronic arts, too. So yeah, even just being bodies in those places, and being like, "This is our work, and this is our research." And we're technically savvy, and that, you know, we're not just performers, because, you know, oftentimes, we're moving in these spaces, they think you're the performer. But it's like, "No, we develop the entire pipeline".

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੁਮਰ

Yeah. And, you know, sometimes those spaces are uncomfortable.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

It is super uncomfortable. It sucks, but you know, you got to do it.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੁਮਰ

And sometimes you disagree with what's being presented. But yeah, as Nancy said, it's important to take up space in those institutions. But you know, we also realize that writing papers is also a skill. And we're both fortunate enough to have university education, where writing is so ingrained in our educational system.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

So this is just another video. So while all this stuff is happening, I continue to throw underground parties. I know, this is a strange sight to look at how many people are at these parties. And this is a party that we threw in like, 2017 for Chapel Sound, which is a grassroots media arts collective that is based in Vancouver. And most of my connections and relationships with artists and stuff like that, is through this underground community. Now that I have more opportunities to show in gallery spaces, or in other academic institutions, I have new networks. But honestly, this whole scene, this underground music scene, I mean, that's where me and Kiran met, but the scene kind of allowed us to connect with people and connect with other artists that all have the same passion for community building and grassroots building, but are all super multi-talented. Like this party was thrown, organized in collaboration with Eli Muro, who is currently on our *UNION* project as a web designer, and Laine Butler as well, too. So, I think it's really important to not forget about the grassroots contributions and keeping connected with the community, because it's like, institutions and stuff like that, they can come and go, but it's, at the end of the day, I know this is the community that will have my back, and that will support me throughout any kind of transitions or in my journey. In this photo here, so in 2017, we, also with Soledad Muñoz and Ash Luk, we actually started this feminist *CURRENT*, Feminist Electronic Symposium in 2017. And this is kind of the beginning of this project, where we felt like, Vancouver's electronic music scene was too 'bro' heavy. So, too

many 'dude bro's' on lineups, so we essentially were like, "Screw it, we're gonna create a symposium and festival for women and non-binary artists, for and by women and non-binary artists, and also host panels talking about these issues, and also host workshops". And in this picture, you have Kiran here, facilitating a synth building workshop.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੰਬਰ

Yeah. And, yeah, I think it's important to, you know, when we talk about grassroots organizations, it's important to realize that we have these grand institutions, we're able to travel to these academic places and galleries. But as artists, we also have agency to create our own opportunities, and we do that through these grassroots organizations and building community. And I think *CURRENT* is a great example of that, you know, having these educational workshops, having performances, having talks and panels where people can come, but they can also volunteer. And, you know, we met through volunteering for a Vancouver nonprofit, and then we started collaborating. Yeah, so you know, part of my practice too, is community building and mentoring and creating opportunities. So yeah, I had a amazing time leading this workshop for *CURRENT*, when we could meet in person, physically build stuff together. So everyone here built an Atari Punk Console synth.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

This is just a photo of a performance. So this is actually artist XO, who is our graphic designer and our visual media artist that worked on *UNION* as well, too. So as you see, we wanted to illustrate through this presentation that the people that are on our current project, *UNION*, we've had long relationships with over the years. So this is, our collaboration process is through a deep process of like, relationship building over the years and trust building over the years. So, you know, these relationships don't just come out of nowhere. I think it's important to note that in order to have strong collaborators and strong collaborative relationships, it's important to nurture your community and to like, you reap what you sow, ultimately. So this is Veron performing for *CURRENT*, in 2017. And, it's really amazing to work with different artists. I met Veron at a Chapel Sound thing, like in 2014. So it's like, throughout the years to be able to witness someone's artistic journey, and then also be able to be in awe of their talent, and then be able to work with them in an intimate manner is just like, the most rewarding experience as an artist.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੰਬਰ

Yeah. And also just to develop a friendship.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

Yeah.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੰਬਰ

That's, you know it's one thing to collaborate, but then to deepen the relationship as like, with, being friends, I think has been so amazing. And that again, build on this community notion.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

Yeah, like, we're more, it's more about like, we're pals. We're friends.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੰਬਰ

Yeah.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

Like, professional collaborator, that's the title, the formal title. But we're all just friends.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੰਬਰ

We're just homies. Yeah, and we just want to hang out and make art. Yeah, it's really what it's about. Yeah.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

So fast forward to 2019. So *CURRENT*, has done a couple iterations. We decided that, you know, we've done the festival thing, where we brought tons of out of town artists, like in 2018, we've had tons of international artists that came through. We did a five day kind of like symposium with panels, workshops, and all this stuff. And for 2019, we're like, let's look inwards, right? Let's change up our format, because we can continue to apply for more funding and develop bigger and bigger and bigger festivals. But bigger is not always better. You know, it's not always about endless growth, you know? Sometimes you just have to turn inwards and look inwards. So for *CURRENT* symposium in 2019, we on-boarded Jen Sungshine, and then also Alex Chen to join our *CURRENT* team to host a 2019 mentorship program. So this mentorship program, we had 11 participants, that are various artists and cultural producers that do really cool things in the city. And essentially, we did a three-day program, where we paid them and we gave them all the resources in the three days, through our community networks that we had built over the years from the previous editions of *CURRENT*. Give them budgeting, kind of like what we did in terms of how we budgeted our festivals, grant writing kind of workshops, connecting them with our grant funders, also, doing space tours, connecting them with our different venue and space community partners so they can start conceptualizing ideas on how they can produce their own shows, or kind of structure their own collectives and their own festivals, and looking at publicity and marketing and all that stuff, all the logistical elements that it takes to actually put on a festival. So, it wasn't a big showcase, like the way we had before in 2018. But, you know, it was a really important thing to do because I think, especially as people of colour, especially as women and queer folks, mentorship is so important. Because it's like, you know, I'm getting older and I'm getting tired. Like, I can't stay up and do these shows all the time and you know, I gotta sleep and stuff. So, it's okay, well, if I'm gonna retire from doing so many late night shows, what am I going to do with all of this information that we've gathered over the years, that we've learned? Like our learning experiences, we need to pass that on somehow. So that's why we decided to create this mentorship program in order for us to, give us an opportunity to reflect on how we were able to create *CURRENT* the previous years, and pass on all the information that we had learned, you know, all the mistakes that we had made and learned throughout the process.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੰਬਰ

Yeah, and then fast forward to 2019. So in the previous picture you saw, there's an artist, Alannah Ho, who took the *CURRENT* mentorship, and Alannah, who actually took one of my workshops in 2015. And we ended up collaborating on this project called *INTER/MEDIATE* with Jonny Ostrem. And *INTER/MEDIATE* came about from us wanting to create what we call an educational media art festival. And what that means is that, when we talk

about emerging technologies and media art, when we talk about accessibility, like who has access to all this new technology, who has access to VR headsets, or even a computer with a great GPU card that can handle projections and things like that? So we really wanted to open up the space and create a new ecology, where we invited participants, focusing on marginalized groups, to come and learn from scratch: What is media art? And how do you create interactive projections? And how do you even build a computer, and keep the computer too, so that you're able to collaborate with other folks afterwards? So this happened in 2019, the fall of 2019, and it was a two day event. And we had, we also had artist talks as well. And one of our artist talks was by Chimerik, which is a Vancouver media art collective. And Sammy Chien, who's part of Chimerik, ended up also collaborating with us on *UNION*.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

Yeah, so this is just another example how the things like our collaborator and things, kind of happened for a reason, right? It's not like, we don't just pick our collaborators, it comes organically, like these relationships reveal themselves in these kinds of community interactions that we have over the years, right? It's like, okay, the time is right now that it's the time where we can create an artwork together or make something together, because, you know, it does take years of trust building, in order for us to have, you know, it's a very intimate thing to collaborate, and there's ups and downs, for sure. Things work some days, and then things don't work some days. And, you know, I think it's important to be able to have relationships that are strong enough to handle the stressors, to handle the stress test of creating a complicated project together.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੰਬਰ

Yeah. And I think a big part of that is developing the communication style or communication skill, and also being organized. Which is something we've had to work on, and started to get kind of good at, at this last project. But yeah.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

Yeah, so, oh, go ahead.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੰਬਰ

I was just gonna say, I think, yeah, communication. Being able to be honest, and having clear communication and documentation, you know, having meeting notes, talking about action items, I think is very key when it comes to collaboration. It's like, even though you're homies and your friends and you've done it before, there still needs to be a sense of ownership.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

And accountability. Accountability is like, I think with Kiran and I, it's like, over the years and working with a lot of collaborators, we just want direct, honest communication. It's like, if you have a problem, say it, you know, and that really helps. And I think that goes, just is the way we collaborate. You know, not everyone collaborates the way we do, but at the end of the day it's not really about, like the project is one thing. You know, you make the project, people see the project, the project tours, da da da. That's like, it's no longer your baby. You know, you have the baby, and the baby is walking and it does its own thing. But it's the relationships of the

collaborators that we hang on to, that we get to continue to nurture, because it gives us new opportunities for us to make more work in the future together. Because those are the friendships that really, I think, is really, really dear to us. I think more so. I don't know, at least for me, I think those relationship is more valuable and more dear to me than like, whatever artwork I make.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੰਬਰ

Absolutely, you know, its like you do the artwork, and then you start working on something else. It's fleeting, right?

Nancy Lee 李南屏

Yeah, exactly. So this is just an image, a screenshot, so Kiran and I, so fast forward, 2020, COVID happens, you know, everything is canceled. And everyone's stuck at home, and on screens and stuff. So I had the great privilege of being invited by the IM4 Media Lab at Emily Carr to teach some immersive technology workshops. And when I was invited to teach this workshop, I was like, "How am I gonna make a workshop about VR, when you don't have access to any gear?" And this kind of goes back to when Kiran was talking about, with *INTER/MEDIATE*, and even with *CURRENT* symposium, it's just like, accessibility to technology is a privilege, you know. And not everyone has the same access to privilege as you, as COVID has shown, the extreme wealth disparity and lack of equity that permeates within our artistic community. So I started developing this workshop, and it's like, essentially it's a web VR workshop using A-frame, which is like a web kind of, it's using HTML and simple HTML coding to build a VR environment. So you don't even need a headset, you just need to have any kind of computer like, Mac, PC, whatever computer, and using any kind of web browser for you to start accessing the different HTML codes that we can type in together. So this platform is, it's called Glitch. And it's kind of like Google Docs before coding and building apps online collaboratively. And using these tools, I was able to start teaching these VR workshops to members of different communities all over the place, because now I'm no longer constrained to a physical space, because of being able to find tools that are more accessible through the internet. And Kiran and I, we were part of a music video with Web VR Workshop a few months ago, as well, bringing in the different elements of using sound and then combining it with visuals in this VR environment, using strictly only free softwares and free platforms.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੰਬਰ

Yeah, just building a web app.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

Yeah. If you guys are interested in more of these workshops, follow IM4 Media Lab on Facebook or Instagram, they have tons of workshops all the time. Yeah. And they're all very, very much accessible for people from all different sorts of media arts levels and literacy. Yeah, so again, mentorship, super important in our practice. It also just keeps us, honestly, like watching the participants in these workshops build these worlds, these VR worlds so quickly, is so rewarding, because you're just like, "Oh my gosh," you see the learning right away. And I, before this workshop, because I was DJing before, and all my gigs were cancelled and just working on *UNION*, I started moving into teaching. And prior to this, I hadn't really taught. And I remember, panicking and calling Kiran and being like, "Oh god, these people hit me up for a workshop. I don't know how to teach, I don't know

what to do!" But you know, having supportive peers and mentors coaching, just making sure and giving me ideas on what to look out for in creating a workshop, to create a nice, fun workshop where people on Zoom, because there's also challenges with keeping people engaged on Zoom. I never thought I would be an educator or instructor, and this is kind of a whole new path for me because back then I was more of a producer for festivals, or a curator. I never really moved into the educational realm. But with the support of my peers, I was able to gain the confidence to start developing curriculum to be taught through the internet.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੰਬਰ

Yeah, and I came from more of a mentorship and educational background in my training at UBC. So when I graduated, I knew that was something that I wanted to develop more and also give back and strengthen the community. So for a while now I've been developing music technology and sound workshops that are dedicated to women, femmes and marginalized communities, to give access to that information and that technology.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

Fast forward to 2021, the Richmond Art Gallery. This is the photo of, like an art documentation photo by Byron Dauncey of our exhibition here. So, you know, often people are like, how do you get connected to gallery spaces? How do you get, how do you even get to put on a show? Or how do you even get people...

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੰਬਰ

How do you get a gig?

Nancy Lee 李南屏

How do you how do you put yourself out there? Yeah. And I think, you know, at least for me, I think the reason why I get the opportunities I get, is not really because of the artwork I make, it actually has everything to do with the community work that I'm engaged with. So like my community following, and the community work that I do, and the panels I speak on, you know, and the advocacy work that I do for arts funding, I think that actually helps my artistic career way more than actually just me making the work itself.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੰਬਰ

Yeah, I'd agree too. I think its, I think it comes down to community building and those relationships that you have, and because people want to work with people who they admire, and they respect. And I think that that's more, it's more about those deepened personal relationships than it is about the artwork.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

Oh, absolutely. I feel like the art is just, the artwork is just like an excuse for us to get together and to, for us to imagine a future that we actually want to be in. And I think with a lot of, with the projects that we get to do, it's in the way we get hit up, it's by curators, like with Yun-Jou from Cinevolution contacting us, you know. Those are pre-established relationships of folks that are aware of the community work that we do. So, you know, people want to work with people that have a message and have a stance on what they want their work to say and what they want the future to be, you know. I think it's important. Like, I know, I'm pretty outspoken on what I want,

what I hope the world will become. And I think having a strong stance and belief and having integrity in how you operate and how you carry yourself is extremely important. Yeah, come check out the exhibit.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੁਮਰ

Yeah, so I mean, the UNION exhibit, you'll see that there are, our collaborators, I mean, the majority of them are our friends and have been our collaborators from the very beginning, you know, since like, 2014, 2015. Laine Butler is doing visuals on the project, Veron is doing graphics, Sammy Chien, who is part of *INTER/MEDIATE* did the interactive projections. Who else do we have?

Nancy Lee 李南屏

Josue Sanchez is a longtime DOP that I work with, with all of my music video direction, I work with him. And then, with NOT DEAD YET, it was Adam Lin-Bungag, he's the costume designer for *Tidal Traces*, the VR dance film back in the day. And then we kind of maintain this relationship over the years and, you know, obviously, we hit him up when we wanted to design this futuristic wedding dress for UNION and he was totally down to collaborate with us. You know, and it wasn't, you know, all these components of UNION wasn't an easy process. It wasn't an easy journey, definitely. Some, at some points, definitely high tension and high emotional experiences, but that's the thing. It's like you want to work with people that you can laugh and cry together, right? So, I'm not saying...

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੁਮਰ

It's a journey.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

Yeah, it's a journey. You know, it's an emotional journey to birth a new project together.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੁਮਰ

Yeah, there's actually this poster. We're in the Richmond Art Gallery, and there's this one in the program room that says, "Art is not, art is a journey, not a destination".

Nancy Lee 李南屏

It's true. Yeah.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੁਮਰ

You know, I read that poster, and I think that really sums it up. So this is the interactive floor projection, and we have the 16-channel surround sound. And yeah, part of this was working with audio designer Aleks Zecevic too, who has hooked us up with other community partners too, which have gotten us gigs. So, you know, it's like, it's you reap what you sow. Yeah, exactly what you said. It's creating opportunities for other people, will create you opportunities, in return. Like, that's just how the universe works.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

Mentorship is two ways. You know, it's not like, "Oh, I know more information. I'm more knowledge, I'm a knowledge bearer here, and someone, my mentee is someone who's only learning from it." No, it works two ways. Yeah. Like, when you mentor someone who is emerging, more emerging than you are, it's a two way street. You give them certain information, I learn about new music and new aesthetics from the younger generation all the time. I learn so much from folks that are younger, or more emerging than I am. And, you know, it's just as fulfilling and it's two ways. So I do encourage folks that are entering the art world, to start contributing to your community, and to start building those relationships through volunteer opportunities, or even just joining workshops to kind of like, start building your mentorship relationships. You know, like, even with this project, we started this in like, 20, started fundraising for this in 2018. And we had one grant rejection with this project, too. It took us like,

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੰਬਰ

I think it was a couple, a couple of grant rejections before we actually secured funding for this project. You know, just because it doesn't work out one round, doesn't mean that your project sucks, or it's not gonna happen. It's just not the right time. Yeah, so, you know, maybe that means like, reconceptualizing, or stepping away, and developing it more, but there's always that possibility, the possibility is always there.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

Yeah. And, you know, I feel like people don't, people think like, "Oh, we get grants all the time". It's like, we get more rejections than we actually get the grants. Yeah. But we, people will see that, people see the project that you do, and they're like, "Oh, great, this project", but it's like, you don't realize how many rejection letters actually kind of came with the project, you know?

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੰਬਰ

Yeah.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

And I think it's important to note that it's great to have validation from arts institutions, and from art councils and stuff like that, but the value and your worth is not about the art institution's validation. Because art institutions also carry other kinds of things that they need to fulfill, that they need to do. So your value as an artist has a lot, it's more about you being secure in who you are. And your value is much, much easier for you to see your value through those grassroots community connections, because getting validation through arts funding or through arts institutions, you know, oftentimes arts institutions and arts funders, they carry other, this is some structural stuff, you know?

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੰਬਰ

They have their own biases.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

They have their own biases, you know, they're working on their decolonization and reconciliation efforts, you know, which is like, very much needed in the Canadian arts, the arts institutional systems. So like, especially as people of colour, sometimes we feel like, "Oh, I need to make work that is like, that would be fundable by these arts institutions". You know, thinking like, thinking too much about what these institutions want you to say, but I think it's not fruitful to think that way, because it's really discouraging, because then you put in all this effort, and you wait, you kind of assess your own worth, through the lens of these institutions. And I think in the long run, that is just totally not sustainable. And, you know, kind of coming back to the roots of being DIY artists, it's really important for us to have those community relationships, for those people to remind us our worth, you know? Like, the people that come through the gallery that see the space and see the exhibition, and having those one-on-one personal interactions, like those, like another Asian queer person that's in this space and telling me how much they love the work. That is more valuable than any, any award any institutional validation that I can ever get, you know. So at the end of the day, it's about personal relationships that will support your artistic journey.

Kathy Tycholis

Thanks, Nancy and Kiran. That was a great presentation, and we have a few comments and questions. One was, you know, going off your last comment, is just how collaboration is all about building those genuine relationships, from Sammy Jo. So a question from Zara is, "What has your process been for developing the concepts collaboratively, do the concepts or the medium arise for you first?"

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੰਬਰ

Concepts or mediums arise for you first? Both. Both. Yeah. For developing concepts collaboratively, I mean, definitely project specific. But I think it comes back to building that relationship and that trust, even before thinking about things conceptually, because there's something to be said about creating the right environment for, in creating the right environment and safe space for you to imagine these concepts.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

Yeah, it's true. It's like, you got to create...

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੰਬਰ

The ambience, the vibe. The vibe has to be right first, like, you gotta click.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

Yeah, the vibe has to be right first, and then the magic will just like, it'll just happen organically,

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੰਬਰ

You got to get food first.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

You know, we got to eat.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੁਮਰ

We got to eat, we got to dance.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

Yeah, we got to enjoy the music, feel the vibe.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੁਮਰ

Go for a walk.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

I think, and that's why those parties. I mean, we miss that so much, you know? Especially as queer people its like, oh man, I feel so alienated from my community because we don't have this weekly gathering anymore, where you just get to be in the presence of each other, right? And that's why those like, you know, partying, in my opinion is so important, because that's where you get to go out and get to see, meet different people and know that people are like, whether they're on your wavelength or not. And it just kind of creates this like, random factor too. It's like, you get to bring different people, different backgrounds, different talents, different disciplines into a space, and then you kind of like, shake it through, like DJing and music, I guess, and then different kinds of interactions kind of happen, you know? And I love seeing it, like over the years, like throwing events, seeing all the different people that you know, that didn't know each other, and you see they're at your event is like, "Oh, well, okay, they're collaborating, oh, they're dating, Oh, they're starting a new band together." You know, it's great to see that cross pollination happen.

Kathy Tycholis

So just sort of on that, like, what would your advice be for someone who say, just moved here, or maybe wants to start working in sort of a new community? Like, maybe, you know, I've been a solo painter for all these years, but I want to break into a totally different medium and meet people in that community. So what sort of advice would you have for someone who's new to a different community?

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੁਮਰ

Yeah, I mean, I can speak for myself. I mean, this is pre-COVID, and speak for pre-COVID. But you know, in my experience, going to, like, you know, going to school and not going to too many events, but then, after that I just did a lot of research online. I was just like, researching different organizations and you get into a rabbit-hole of clicking, and then you end up finding other grassroots groups. And I would cold email people as well, and I think that was like, super powerful. We feel like, you might feel like, the person might not email back, and it's not really about that. It's about just like, reaching out and seeing what the possibilities are. And from my experience, if I get a cold email from someone, from a younger artist, or someone that's just moved here and wants to get to know the community, this is where the giving back, and creating that community comes back. Where it's like, you're, by being a part of it, you're giving back and opening up the space for other folks. So I would say like, researching online, cold emailing, and events will come back. You know, a big part of my artistic journey was going to these events by myself. You know, having that confidence of like, you know, I was in like, my early 20s just like, "Okay, I don't know what this is, but I'm just gonna go to it, and maybe talk to the artist, or maybe talk

to other folks there". Or like volunteering for a festival and meeting people, and doing the work that's not very glamorous, you know. Like Nancy and I were painting tables with small, like the smallest paint brushes, but it's, you're still a part of it, you know? Even if you're like, yeah, the door person, or you know, it's like every single action you have speaks, right? And it will evolve, the more that you permeate into it.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

Yeah, 95% of it is just showing up, be reliable. You know, if you're going to volunteer for something, just show up, show up, when you say you're going to show up. And if you do that enough, you will become part of the community. Like, it's very simple, like, people think like, 'oh, how do I...'

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੰਬਰ

'Oh, I got to network, I got to...'

Nancy Lee 李南屏

Just show up. Show up to all the events, show up, stay behind, help with clearing the event. Ask, talk to the people that are working there, ask how you can help, you know, just offer support. And the more you do that, people will start to notice and people will start to build trust with you. And then you can, you know, like, with some of the events that we were doing, like way back in like 2014, with Chapel Sound and stuff like that, that was kind of, that was it. It was just like, literally DIY small, house party, kind of like DJ events. And people, more and more people started showing up, it was like, six people just jamming on the floor and in a house, and then like, it turned into a 500 person event. It's just like, people start to show up. And if you're consistent, and you're reliable, and you say you're going to do something, you'll start kind of becoming included in the family and in the collective, right? Because it's all just about, it's all a game of trust, you know, at the end of the day.

Kathy Tycholis

Right. And yeah, I can't wait for events to come back, so that we can start participating in those things. I mean, I know, just as someone who works with a lot of volunteers, I mean, you're so right, showing up is half the battle. So yeah. And then same, I guess, similarly, not just looking for community, but looking for mentors. I mean, I know, Kiran, you were mentioning a lot of it came from your studies at UBC and your connections with UBC. But what if you're someone who hasn't gone to school here? How would you connect with a mentor?

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੰਬਰ

Yeah, I think that definitely relates to the last question too, of like, going out to things and you know, if you're admiring folks too, and reaching out to them as well. Just reach out, just reach out, reach out, if you admire someone and you want to get to know them, and you want to learn from them. Just reach out.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

Reach out, see what happens. Offer something, you know, like, offer your time, offer some other support, you know? I think like, people are social animals, we want to connect with people. And if you reach out to someone that you want to mentorship with, or you want to just learn more about, you know, like, invite them for dinner, or take them out for a coffee or just show up to their shows more and start helping them with cleanup. Because

there's a, you know, there's a bunch of very not glamorous jobs in being an artist, you know? And you know, if you are willing to participate in supporting other artists that you want to be mentored by and, you know, volunteering your time by doing those, they're not very glamorous tasks, like these, we're so thankful for that, you know.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੁਮਰ

Yeah, it's like, maybe you're really good at organizing. Like, you know, we're not good at organizing.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

But maybe you got like, you're really good, you don't know anything about media art, but you're super good at file management.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੁਮਰ

Yeah, file management.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

Or like, organizing the calendar or like, cleaning up emails. You know, like, it could be anything you know, and I think, yeah...

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੁਮਰ

I think it's also remembering to, as someone who's aspiring is that, you know, you might not think that you have, you don't have anything to offer, but you do. And I think that's the biggest thing as well. It's like, "Oh, I don't want to reach out to this person, because, you know, I'm self conscious of how much I've done in my past and my skill sets". But you have, you have all the skill sets. Yeah. You know, you're capable. And again, like showing up, volunteering, being on time. And showing, yeah, showing that you're reliable is a big thing.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

I mean, that's honestly, that's all it takes, to be honest, in Vancouver, all it takes just being reliable and show up when you're going to show up all the time. Yeah. Then you will have a career eventually.

Kathy Tycholis

No, I hear you. Yep. I was really interested too in hearing about your working with symposiums and using that and conferences, kind of as another way to get your work out there. That's not really something I had thought about. So I guess any sort of tips for people on that? How would you, like especially if you're not a writer, like you two are great at writing, but if you just kind of wanted to start, you know, dipping your toe in that field. Any suggestions?

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੁਮਰ

Yeah, I think one of the biggest things is like start researching. Yeah, again, you know, if you've reached out to artists in the community that are part of those mediums or part of those conversations, reaching out to them. But using, like online to Google papers and such. And also, if you have friends who have gone to these academic

institutions like UBC, using their logins, to find papers. Because that's another thing is like, you need to have access to all these papers as well, which is very unfortunate. But hitting up folks that could give you access to them. Yeah.

Nancy Lee 李南屏

I mean, as media artists, I do find that there are like some electronic arts symposiums that are totally free and available online. The International Symposium on Electronic Art, something that we both submit to, if you just Google that, you'll be able to see all of their archives and all the papers over the years, and that's just free and available online. So I think just using online tools to start researching, and just start reading more of these publications, it will help. It will just help you build your knowledge and help you kind of inform what works kind of exists already. I think it's important before you conceptualize a project, to know like, what is out there, or who's been doing it. And if it's someone that also has similar interests, just email them, you know, DM them, reach out to them, and then start chatting. And I think that's kind of the best way to kind of go about, like, conceptualizing new projects, and also like, getting some support, you know sometimes you never know what these interactions and these, this kind of dialogue through just cold calls can kind of bring you.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੰਬਰ

Yeah, and I think we can both speak to that. Because, you know, we both have papers online. And we've both been hit up by like other, whether they be like academics or like artists, too, that are like, "Oh, I read your paper online, and I'd love to talk to you more about this project", or, "I've been thinking about something similarly, can we talk about it?" So, you know, just speaking from experience like that, that has happened to us, and that has, you know, we've responded to those emails as well as inquiries.

Kathy Tycholis

Great, great. Great tips. So I know that you're still kind of in the thick of things with UNION, but looking ahead, I mean, do you have any plans for, I'm thinking more along the mentorship lines, because you both seem very interested in offering that either through workshops, or conferences or whatever. And knowing the world is slowly opening up right now, do you have any plans upcoming in the future or events that you would like to potentially host, coming up?

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੰਬਰ

You have, a mentorship?

Nancy Lee 李南屏

Yeah, yeah, I do have mentorships. Well, I work with Festival of Recorded Movement, kind of movement on screen and dance film. I'm an artistic mentor for that festival. I also work with various artists in Vancouver, kind of doing mentorship programs. You know, mentorship is one thing too, like, at the end of the day, we just need, we all need like a collective catharsis, and like a big party. So we can kind of like, you know, shed this, like COVID, like, you know, this COVID kind of year, so we could just kind of like, start anew I think. I'm just excited to start throwing events again, you know. It's been too long, you know. I have a studio space in Chinatown, and I used to throw events like different film screenings, music shows, like ambient music shows, dance parties, and just

various different kinds of things at my space. And I think that's kind of like what I'm excited to do, is to just start gathering different types of like-minded people in a space and start getting that, I don't know that, it's like, it's like alchemy, you know? It's like, it's just like, you put enough people, interesting people in the space and like something magical will happen.

Kiran Bhumber ਕਿਰਨਦੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਭੰਬਰ

Yeah, and I mean, for me, I definitely have felt the exhaustion of online events and screen time, you know, especially being a media artist and being on screen. But I am looking forward to redeveloping what *INTER/MEDIATE* would look like for the next edition and thinking about how to create this environment or *INTER/MEDIATE*, thinking about learning media technologies outside. So that's something that we've been delving into.

Kathy Tycholis

Right, sounds great. Well, I will, when we have the recording available, I will include some of these links to the events that you're talking about. Also, that IM4 website sounds like another great resource, so I will definitely include those in the links in the video recording. So we are nearing our end time, I will say again big thank you, Nancy and Kiran, that was really informative. I think our artists in the audience learned a lot. I know I did, just of all the different opportunities that are out there, and that are hopefully coming back soon as well. So thank you, and thank you to the Cinevolution team, I know you're out there in the audience watching today. And thanks, Melanie, for all the tech help. And for everyone out there sharing your sunny weekend with us today. We really appreciate you tuning in today.

I hope you'll come back next month. Next month, I have two guest artists who also collaborate, Puya Khalili and Charlotte Wall. They have been working for many years together on large sculptural public art installations. So they'll be sort of sharing tips on what it's like not to just collaborate with another artist, but in public art, collaborating with city staff and construction workers and, you know the type of people you need to help you build an artwork together. So the link will be up next week, you can sign up for that one and we'll see you then in June. And then I think in July, we will actually be seeing you in person. At least, fingers crossed, that's the hope. So thank you, everyone. So till next time, stay safe. Enjoy the sunshine out there, and we'll see you again soon. Bye.

Nancy and Kiran

Bye. Thank you