Emily Craighead

Hello and welcome to episode one of *The twined musings Podcast.*

Mallory Kimmel.

My name is Mallory Kimmel. I go by she/they pronouns.

Annika Cheng

Hi, my name is Annika Cheng. I see their pronouns.

Weichen L Hwang

Hey, my name is Weichen Leslie Hwang. You're welcome to kind of refer to me as Wei. I use they/them pronouns.

Linah Sedeek

Hi, my name is Linah Sedeek. I use she her pronouns.

Paolo Miguel Dela Vina

Hello, I'm Paolo Miguel Dela Vina or Miguel. I go by he/they pronouns.

Joell Ang

Hello. My name is Joell Ang. I use he/him pronouns.

Mallory

Welcome to those of you joining us following our recording. My name is Mallory Kimmel and I am the art collection technician here at the Community College of Baltimore County, otherwise known as CCBC. This evening, I have the good fortune to gather virtually with the four artists in the spring 2023 *twined musings* show at the CCBC's Essex Campus. Joining me today are the artists Anni, Linah, Miguel, and Wei. These four artists collaborated on this group exhibition to present an art exhibition focused on the subject of belonging through each of their individualized art practices. Together, with the help of their graphic designer Joell, they have crafted an exhibition catalog and exhibition ephemera with a central overlap of fabric and mark making. So without further ado, I would like to start by asking you the first question.

How did you all first meet?

Weichen

Yeah, I mean, I think my and for me at least, I have met most of these people through our time at MICA together, Maryland Institute College of Art. I think I distinctly also remember sort of like meeting all of these people, and I think all of us got a lot closer our senior year. Which was really, I think, exciting for us to sort of be seeing the crux of like to have worked on a practice or sort of began a practice through our time at MICA and to come out the end sort of together, we had many, I feel like, at least for me, like I had many sentimental feelings about wanting to continue sort of a communion or a companionship in both like professional and personal with a lot of these people.

Annika

Yeah, I agree. Funny enough, I think Joell was one of my earliest friends at MICA, and I think I had also met Linah, Miguel, and Wei in our freshman year, but we didn't grow close until senior year. And for me, it was really wonderful to see Joell’s art and practice evolve over the four years, but also to meet them all and we had of such a critical time where your work coalesces and congeals into maybe, not final is the wrong word for it, but maybe a cohesive body. Something that you've been working towards for a long time, and to see the path that each of us took in that year. I agree with Wei that this show was a really amazing opportunity to continue those trains of thoughts that I saw to begin to emerge.

Weichen

And I think it sort of interesting that you say that, because I know that for me personally, I've gotten sort of the opportunity to actually work really collaboratively with a lot of people who are in this chat right now. I know me and you did a quite like large scale project together. I felt like it was the first time I was really understanding how to collaborate with someone. And I think we as a group do a lot of borrowing and sharing and fabricating, creating for one another. And I, I think that's something that's I know that I find is really important to me and I sort of am always glad and privileged to sort of be in this audience to do so.

Linah

Yeah, and I think especially our final year since we were all working on our thesis project, we got to share our thought processes from the beginning to the end of specific pieces and I think, at least for me, everyone in this group was a huge part of my discussions and beginning to form exactly what I wanted to create at the end. I think we all helped each other in different ways, whether that was like help with the craft or with software questions or just like talking through and like, I'm not really sure what I'm doing. I think everyone was very integral to processes, especially in that final year.

Miguel

I just wanted to add, like on my end of things, I always had this thought among everybody here that, Oh, it would be really cool to be friends with these people eventually. And yeah, I did kind of meet people here and there and kind of saw everybody in passing, but it really wasn't until the senior year when we got to be in spaces together, a lot of very fun social spaces as well. I had participated in a dance group with Annika and Joell. I just think about all these various fun, fun, spontaneous moments that are not seen in like the artist lens, which I think is also really important in building that connection and that one between also.

Weichen

I think it can be difficult, but I think it's sort of so rewarding to be able to have such a kind of all-encompassing relationship. To be able to sort of very seriously, very, very considerately like have professional relationships with these people who I am also so sort of personally close to. And that I hold so closely, dear to my heart almost. And I think it's sort of special, I think, to be able to find people that you can traverse across all of these spaces with because I think there is a reality that these sorts of things are - they can be so hard. And so, it's sort of it's been really kind of an eye-opening experience continuing to work with these people in new spaces out of school, out of the bounds of school. I know that me and Linah have talked a lot about how it's sort of really nice to be working and to be making outside of like an academic and institutional space. And we always we keep telling ourselves, we keep joking like, Oh God, like, thank God, like I actually like making stuff. I like making work. I love actually making, it feels like a relief to find that and that side that with these people.

Joell

I think we also have had a very unique college experience beginning to look back at this like ten years from now and think about it, where we specifically bonded a lot during our last year. I think probably because all of us had the experience of having to go under our junior year completely online during the pandemic, it definitely impacted all our practices in different ways. And seeing all of us come back for the last year in a kind of beautiful struggle was definitely very sentimental. I'm going to look back at that year in particular for a very long time in my life, and I'm very grateful that these people I'm still working with. And even though our disciplines may vary, we still find meeting points to meet each other halfway.

Mallory

Thank you so much for all that. That part about being very beautifully sentimental was really, really touching. So thank you. My next question is what inspired the show twin musings and how did that bring you all together?

Weichen

I mean, it's sort of nice. That's sort of a nice question, I think, to follow this conversation of our relationship with one another. I know that I think a lot about this show as there's something really sort of soft and lovely about that twining - like weaving - twining. I had a professor very, well not very early on, but in one of my classes say something so simple to me, and she was just talking about how weaving and fiber work is watching line turn into plane. And I think there's a really sort of concrete way of understanding that that's sort of really magical for me. But I think sort of having this privilege of being able to dive into the poetics of like what that could mean. I know that I think a lot about how much of like how much I credit my understanding of myself and my work and all of the things that have interested me and like what I'm into, what I'm looking to do with my work, what all of these things that I'm always thinking about. I credit a lot of that understanding through communion and companionship. I think with what can be sort of nice thoughts to think about for me is if all of us are lines where we're all weaving together to sort of build understanding of. I was so surprised, and so very pleasantly pleased, by when Joell first showed us his initial sketches for the poster, because I was so like, excited about this, this concept of like all of these patterns that are very individualized, that are then put together in this, like, tapestry. I thought that was such a like, simple sentiment, but it was so like, it's so impactful and it's like there's something so impactful about like that simplicity. And I think there's a lot of large ideas at the in the background of *twined musings*. But the crux of it I think, is actually sort of like very simple in that way, very straightforward, and a way that I really appreciate is.

Linah

I think something that is really interesting is that all of us come from different majors, which I feel like is kind of significant for a group of five people. But when we all put our work together, I feel like we found that commonality with like weaving, whether it's physical, actual process of weaving, or the imagery of weaving or a concept that relates to weaving. Even though all of us practice in different ways, we found that that similarity, that commonality, that title of our work together.

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I also think that at the very core of all of our work is like the feeling of caring for other people and caring for your community and thinking about like what divides people and what brings people together and how the idea of twinning can bring people together. And I think that sense of care, both for others and for the people in this group, really brought the show together.

Annika

And I think the show is also about imagining spaces and thinking how you can build spaces for you and the people around you. And I think the show is coming at a very poignant time where all of us are emerging from college and finding our spaces in the world. What can that look like as an artist, as a young person, and as a professional and as in all your different identities that you find yourself. So, I feel like this show came at a critical point in everyones' lives and our practice.

Miguel

Yeah. To add on to that, I think we had all had been in discussion when we were coming up with the artists’ statement. So, to see the process of the artists’ statement to work, making the pieces to install and seeing the progress of how it's showing up in that space - it's really exciting to see what more can come from each of the artists that are here today. And like Annie said, like these different spaces that we're going to continue to evolve then and it all came from this statement that was written together. I also think about I think specifically about Joel's design, the graphic, all these different patterns, very different distinct voices, but they're all communicating this prompt that manifests in very unique ways that are very important and deserve to take up space.

Joell

I'm not sure if I should interject with some design processes, but things we're bringing up previously, but for me, as working as a designer for the these four of my friends that are that are also makers and artists in their own right, for me, it really wasn't a challenge per say. I, I kind of viewed the words *twined musings* to be quite literally a reflection of. And so, when I looked at their work as a designer, as a person that thinks in shapes, I quite straightforwardly looked for shapes. And for me what brought it together was the idea of creating, as we mentioned before, a tapestry. And there's something very simple and meaningful about just having these four patterns interlock and intertwine together to create several different pieces. And for me, coming from a discipline, I also realized while working with them that we are all not so different. At the end of the day, we were. The way that we create may look different, but the themes and our thoughts a lot of the times have intersections that we don't expect.

Weichen

I think it's important for me to say too, I find that a lot of this work is very thoughtful. It's very kind and careful in its own regard. I don't think it's reserved either, but I think that like we were while we were sort of like beginning to set up in the in the gallery space for the first time and sort of seeing all this physical work come together for the first time. We had like the march that this show seemed really quiet and like not in a bad way, but just sort of there's like a I think it asks for you to view it very in almost like a with, like care, almost like I feel like I feel like hush my voice or like a whisper when I'm around it. And I think that there's something about there's something there about what it means to sort of very quietly create space for yourself. How do you quietly assert all that non violently? How do you draw borders? How do you sort of understand the space that you take in the space spaces that you reside in? I know a phrase that I was drawn really early on in our discussion was dreaming through drawing. And for me I had sort of very recently rediscovered drawing a drawing practice. And I look, I think we started to really understand what drawing can be like can do for me, but being able to see how drawing and by that nature also process how a lot of these things where we were all working kind of similar earlier, thinking very similarly and in how it like drawing as a process in our practice. And I think that this, while it is not sort of a drawing show, I think that this is something that still stands throughout the work. And again, it's sort of a lot of understanding borders, which then creates spaces, and understanding these spaces. There's something so simple about that. Even drawing a line in the sand that demarcates a space into two. And I think that sort of practices expanded through all of this work.

Mallory

Thank you. I kind of wanted to add to some of those things you just mentioned being like. I do think that in the gallery to just give context to those people listening, the gallery is kind of in a place of being partially installed and we're not quite there. That kind of deep breath sigh of like, Oh, it looks so good and we're done. There's still kind of an internal angst of making sure everything gets done into the place that things want to be and be fully realized. But for the work that is already there, I would say it does kind of have this resonance of being emotionally contemplative, which I would kind of say is sort of similar to some of these. I heard what you say as well as that idea of drawing a line in the sand. It does kind of speak to as well as what Annika had said earlier about the idea of what is dividing us and what is coming together and this kind of idea that the weaving is a kind of fabric of community and how to foster that, which even to some of the things that people were saying is kind of post pandemic. Post-Lockdown you kind of came together after having been apart and kind of created your own fabric, which is now mirrored in what Joel has been making and designing, which is really beautiful and full circle.

Which leads me to my next question, which we have in fact touched upon loosely, but how did you specifically select the show title? Like how and why do these two words.

Annika

The title of the show actually went through a bunch of iterations. I think we had settled on belonging or something. There's like three words becoming something and belonging. I'm not sure it settled on that. And then something happened where we realized, like it doesn't feel quite right, like it feels almost there, but not exactly. Maybe it addressed the conceptual elements behind our work, but it didn't really highlight the process as much. And I think for a show like this where the process of each artist is so important, we wanted something that encapsulated both the conceptual and the physical in the work, I guess. And I know we had looked at all the images of our work to see the commonalities, and we had seen this recurring motif of linking together, weaving together, lines coming together to form a plane, to take Wei’s words from earlier. And I remember looking up synonyms for like weaving or knitting, crocheting or ways to tie in that metaphor succinctly. And I remember when we first landed on the word twine or to twine, everyone was like, ‘Oh, that resonates with me. We should think about this.’ And then in thinking about synonyms and words that encapsulate multiple meanings we wanted a word that was able to encapsulate maybe the words that felt more, I don't want to say finished because I think all the works are finished in their own right, but some of them could be seen as steps in a process or iteration to get to a final quote unquote final product. And that came to the idea of ideas or concepts or thoughts. And then that ended up to the word musings, which seems to encapsulate maybe something you're still thinking on, something you're working on, something that is constantly in progress and in flux. And we thought that these two words together really encapsulated the conceptual of things coming together, people coming together as well as things always changing, constantly being thought about and improved upon, and then together to find new things.

Weichen

Yeah, the sort of echo that like I think process or something that we began discussing it, but I felt like I grew to understand the importance of it in this show. I think process here is presented in a way where there's an ongoing action, right? We're always sort of there's like a malleability to it. There's nothing sort of concrete. All of it is a flux. And so that like that becomes like I think about when we were hanging one of tapestry was how we were stretching it, and it isn’t like those like little motions that not necessarily our focuses of the work, but I think our crux to a lot of the conversations that are getting at with these images, like these images and these these like objects or tying and weavings and tapestries.

Emily

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