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I mean some of these are specific but I think these are just cool things for people to know, like I thought it was funny . You had to go back up here and just forget something. Cuz he places. I know it can definitely be hard right because you're not in person, you can't just have a space. Yeah. Alright, so now we're going more into the actual pieces so I know you kind of mentioned earlier, but again, what, why did you choose to portray these mythological figures and these goddesses as just contemporary women, and like everyday women. And I shouldn't say everyday.

0:45

That's her. What's her, um, I mean they're all these particularly Venus. Venus was the one who started off there all these, like, old classical paintings of Venus as this like, you know, beautiful like thin curvy white woman with like perfectly pale skin and you know she's got like shining blonde hair red hair or whatever and like the paintings I've seen her and she's just portrait of, you know representation of this very specific Western ideal of beauty. And I think that we as a contemporary society are slowly learning to recognize that that is not the one sole idea, ideal of beauty. Yeah . And, and I wanted to, to bring her into a modern perspective, and, and let her be beautiful as as a black woman with all her, you know, enormous curly hair, full of, you know, the entire universe, and say with Andromeda I wanted to take her story and and look at it from modern perspective from a feminist perspective. Think of how I want that story to be told.

2:16

So I'm going to go over individual parts of the painting that initially said me and maybe I was wondering if there is a reason behind but if it isn't, then feel free to say that because I know something you might not thought about exactly but I was wondering why did you picture her with her eyes closed, and why without any clothing for Venus specifically. Um, I did to be

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whether or not to put like a dress on her or something like that, it's like so you could see on her shoulders, and it felt like it would have taken away from the message of the piece and,

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like, like I didn't want to,

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like the straps of some sparkly dress on her because I didn't want to say that that was beauty and I didn't want to, you know, like, put, put any, I didn't want to want to, to limit my message in any way and, and, and I wanted it to just be her. And so that was why I decided to leave. Leave off any clothing that you could see on her shoulders in any jewelry I was originally thinking of using jewelry, the same way I did with Andromeda to like add another thing and I left that off too. And, and her eyes are closed, just because I don't know that was how I that was how I drew her in my initial sketch, that's how I always pictured her, because I think to have her eyes open and that, you know, very straight on angle that I drew her on would be very like direct and very like, accusing all of us and that just wasn't the, the vibe I was going for with her I wanted her to be, to be very soft.

4:09

I mean just looking at the painting I think that one thing that stands out for me is the level of detail you were able to get on the ends of her hair like that little, I don't know what to say specifically what swirl or something like that. So I was wondering how were you able to get that level of details there any techniques or something or

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it's just a lot of time. And when I did was, um, I painted, I painted everything I paint the hair last because it's um, it's just pure black and it's kind of hard to paint over that later. And so I had painted everything else when I did the hair and I filled in the like main section of it first. And then, and then like I like I had like a big sort of cloudy circle. And then I went in with some, some fresh that with a brush, little thin brush and some paint that was a little bit like watered down suppose thinner and I could control it better, and I just went in and painted a little curls around every edge of her hair I had a I had a reference photo that I was looking at I believe, so that I can try to get the texture right, and, and they just went around every little edge and it did look weird for a little bit because,

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by definition, I'm

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kind of painting them with no dimension or shape to their hair, like, like the rest of them is shaded and you can see like the highlights where the light hits it but when if their hair is just flat solid black so it did look kind of strange, but as soon as I put the stars and then it just sort of this, this, you know, the void of stars, looks really cool.

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So, I liked it a lot before you're talking about the major piece of symbolism is that one star symbolizing how she shines the brightest, is that Lisa

6:09
Yeah Venus is the Venus is the second brightest thing in the night sky after the moon so.

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So I was wondering, is there any other pieces, small pieces of symbolism, like, or is that just the main one.

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I don't think there's really more than enough there's more than drama but yes that was, I think I've told you about everything that I put in there, there were fewer small details that one was more.

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Yeah, I just wanted to let you know if there was anything else you know. Okay, so, yeah, that was really good so now we can move on to Andromeda and I guess my first question I thought that was a dragon right it was so sea monster and you told me that story which I think is important. And I'm definitely going to include that part. Also what I was wondering is, I'm like, cuz I think the most of the pieces blew cracked and started those type of colors, why did you choose to compliment, like the starry hair with a red instead of, you know the traditional blues or like you did before.

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Because it seemed to go with her she was, I mean I, I painted her with purple lipstick and I was thinking of. I think I think I was originally like, what if I gave her like I was giving her green eyes, and I was like, what if I gave her red hair though I was like wait, no, I can't give her red hair because I can't take your hair black so I could fill it full of stars within, within I was talking to Peyton and we were like she seems like the kind of person who would have like, like dyed streaks in her hair and so I was trying to see if I could almost like, make that galaxy pattern sort of look like she had. She had red streaks in her black hair. And so I almost I almost said purple. Like her like her lipstick but without that that wouldn't quite stand out a bunch of sent out as much so it was, it was meant to complement the background a little bit and and sort of pop the same way that Venus has made us blue in her hair. In contrast to like the yellow background and sort of the warmth of everything else in that painting.

8:18
Yeah. And also I should say that like I think the three things that stand out the most is that piece of jewelry, the sea dragon right and then her lipstick and then I think her eyes also stand out to me along with the hair. So, how did they kind of go with blending all these elements and making sure one wasn't too dominant, where it seemed like the others were not as important. I don't know, I did just I didn't I don't think I put a lot of thought, specifically into like how do I balance this, I did. I did try to sort of put her in, in a casual pose and also a pose that would show off enough of her arm that I can paint the sea monster and it was meant to be this sort of eye catching, saying, and it took me absolutely forever because tattoo style drawings with a paintbrush are hard. Let me go into that a bit more, I mean it's amazing how you get that to look like an actual tattoo. So how did you do that.

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So,

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um, I use paint that was, I mixed and mixed this color that was sort of like, dark blue.

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I'm

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like, like, sort of old fashioned tattooing. I don't really want to do it in color I want it to look really obviously like a tattoo. And so I did, I did the dark blue, and I send it down with something called glazing medium which is just an alternative to using water to thin your paint down it's just sort of clear and makes it makes it thinner. And I have a little liner brush which is a brush that just has like a very fine tip for drawing lines, and I say I drew the shape on in pencil first and then I went over it very very very slowly with the lighter and like I did it a couple times to just try to get the line really smooth so it didn't look like it had been painted. And then I shaded it in a little bit. Also with the like paint and then I think when I was finished, I took I mixed her skin color, again, and defatted out and painted a really thin coat of that over again to make it look sort of like faded like it had faded into her skin a little bit like it wasn't like a brand new tattoo it was old and it was like part of her.

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Yeah. If he were to give me an estimate how long do you think that took him can be a rough estimate.

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It was a couple lessons with pay and so it was probably like two or three hours, I believe, to do the dragon. I think to this user but

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yeah that's fine is assessment. Okay, so also, as I was saying.

11:11

Now let's go ahead.

11:11

Okay. I was also wondering so I think there's different parts of Andromeda which differentiates from Venus like just the angle which is positioned Now obviously you have to change that so you could show the tattoo but also just her countenance and the other choices in addition so were you looking to differentiate them or was it something that just like, This is my, this is how I think of them, and then you just started to go off that I know you had a lot of those like different positions in your sketchbook in different poses so

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yeah I think part of it was just changing the pose and the angle to, to show them off better to show off their hair better right with Venus, the great head on with her hair like framing her head and Andromeda I needed to turn her a little bit because I wanted to get as much black of the black hair with the stars in the photo as possible so I tried to turn her head so that her hair, you could see her hair going down her back

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and

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she was actually she's actually a little bit more. Three quarters in my original sketch and then she like slowly shifted into like full profile almost as I ended up refining it. But yeah, they were, they were. I sort of meant for for the hair, the similarity of the hair with the stars to tie them together, and has that been a common thread between them. And I wasn't trying too much to make the rest of them match, I had both of them I had a very clear image in my mind going in I was like this is what I want her to look like. And, and that showed up in my original sketch and you can see my original sketch until you know that it went pretty straight through to the painting.

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So I'm also wondering is, the story here theme something you're gonna continue with Artemis. Yes,

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I'm going to I'm going to, hopefully, paint the moon in her hair because, yes, moon goddess Yes, so it's gonna be it's gonna be fun because the angle I've drawn her I have not actually given myself that much room to work with, but, but I'm gonna make it work. I'm trying to see if I can do it in her hair, almost like a little, like, like, like a crescent right here like almost like it's like a, the way people put barrettes in their hair, or like draw it back, I'm gonna see if I can position it like that.

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So is this, as it is going to be the last one in the series or just not sure about that yet sure yet.

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Um, it depends on how I feel when I finish her if I, you know, want to keep going. I have, I have a handful more ideas, um, I think I went with the strongest ones first, so like those, those three are the ones that like really, they really work and make sense to me and if they could, if I wanted to others I might have to I have to think about how I can make them fit into the theme, the same way, but, um, because frankly there aren't that many constellations and planets and things that are actually named after women there is the majority of men. And also I mean most of the constellations like animals and stuff but like you know there's like Orion and Hercules and Perseus are all in the, in the sky. And then there's like Andromeda and Cassiopeia, who is her mother, who feeds her to the sea serpent is also a constellation, who I thought I thought of trying to, I tried to do her so she, I might I might see if I can explore her story from sort of a different angle than Andromeda is. If I can, if I can make that work, but, but there aren't there aren't a lot for me to choose from, sadly.

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So, in terms of the break is that just more, you're kind of busy with these other stuff you're doing, or is it that is there something in the piece that made you be like I need a break, or how did that work.

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Oh it's Artemus like, I'm not working on it right now. Um, I think, so I, I started her in the like winter, I think of last year, and was, was trying for a while to get her done before the end of the year because I thought that it would be better to have three pieces in me than to just to have those three as sort of a cohesive series. Um, and so I was, I was sort of rushing for a while seeing if I could make that happen but the last part of this, the second half of last year, last square was very busy for me, and very stressful, there was a certain point when I kind of just realized that it wasn't gonna happen and I wasn't going to be able to finish her in time to send Mr videogo picture before the end of the school year before I knew it out. And so I just decided that since I didn't have that deadline anymore. For myself, I would, I would focus my energy on other things, and I needed to add to the city or come back to her a little bit and where I spent a couple more art lessons, working on her but I've just, I've just been, I've just been doing other projects and like I needed a break after I spent so long kind of pushing myself to get it done for a deadline that I had to post on myself. I wanted, I wanted a break.

16:59

So, in general, also this was a question I was wondering so in going through all these pieces, what are some of the major setbacks you recollect where you might have had to re do something or re envision something was there any setbacks that you can clearly remember

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this was easy. Well, we this was not easy. This is easier, Andromeda was hard, and drawing an eye kept. I had to paint over sections of Andromeda, multiple times because I would get, like, like I had, I kept getting the proportions of her face wrong. And I kept getting like the angle of her face wrong like I like I said, she started out at like the three quarter angle and she shifted more into profile. And so, for a while, like, it just didn't work like parts of her face like I looked like they were fully in profile and parts of her face look like they were turned a little more towards you and it just like I kept having to like go over the front edge of her face with a blue brush and paint over the background, like a background color and like, you know, fix it because her forehead was sticking too far out or like notice was like a really weird shape or whatever, so I can't tell you to do that with her. And like okay I had a couple of spots in her hair too that I had to go fix, so she just she just took longer to get right i mean profile profile is I think a little harder for

me than the straight on angle that I did for for Venus so I had more, I had more difficulty with that I'm trying to think if there's anything else. I mean, certainly there's lots of times when I've just put a brushstroke in the wrong place or it came out, absolutely the wrong color, and I just had to, you know, wipe it off before it before it dried, I had a lot of trouble with Andromeda has skin tone because the background is blue. And the thing about color in like when you're doing a painting is that it's very relative. And so, like, I mostly noticed this the skin tones the same skin tone on one color background and a different color background and will not look the same. So, because the background was so cool I had to make her skin tone really cool as well and I couldn't put as much of the like warm brown into it that I would usually use. So, so it just, I kept mixing it like with more, more of the cool white color that I had to paint that I had and a little more blue than I normally would use to just try to try to get it to a color and look really like tan and like weird on that background Yeah,

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cuz I can't imagine Venus's getting called out in that background, I don't think that would like have the glowing effect.

19:56

Oh yeah no cuz hurts her skin color is half like the yellow shell or yeah it would, it would look completely different.

20:04

Okay yeah so this gets me to the last part which is sort of the larger meaning and kind of takeaways. So yeah, so I guess. This series is obviously revolving around, I feel like in my from my perception that theme for me is like women empowerment, and just showing them in a different light which they're not seen as. So could you expand a bit more about that, not only in your art, but just in your life in general and, though, is this those feminists sort of things just a part that makes you say the last bit again. So I guess like, what does this art say about you in terms of the themes of woman empowerment and feminism, how does that play a part in usr Yes. Or what does that show about you I guess I should say,

21:01

sure. I MAN I consider myself a feminist I have since I learned what the word meant.

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And

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I

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think,

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paintings, sort of show that that's something that's important to me and that specifically that the intersectional feminism is really important to me. Do you know what that means, or would you like me to define. So intersectional feminism is the idea that, that we are all at the intersection of many many identities, and that those identities can interact with each other and in ways where you can't, you can't separate them. Like,

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like, like, a lot of times, For example, women of color have been excluded from both women's movements, women's rights movements, and like the African American civil rights movement or other movements for the rights of people of color, just because they cannot separate out like being a woman and being a person of color. As like to like you know two separate things like there were there were black women in the suffragette movement who were told that they should, you know, stop worrying about civil rights to just you know, focus on the women's rights for now, or whatever, but like you know those, those are, you know, those are not to two separate things and so that means that those identities, interact and can't be separated and the types of oppression that people face can't really be separated out and there is no there is no one size fits all. So, so the reason that the reason that Venus is German is very is very soft and very beautiful and loving is because I wrote all these things about about intersectional feminism, and what that mean

s for stories and Compton. You know the like feminist narrative is to take the, take the softer being a woman and you know make her like strong you know give her. The girl with the sword, you're like save herself or whatever. But, but that only really works for white women because white women are the only ones who have been told that they are dainty and soft and precious and fragile and black women are told that they are that they are strong, they don't get to be taken care of, and don't get to be soft and beautiful and loving and and loved. And so the reason that those that I'm not trying to apply the like, you know, strong, strong woman narrative to both of them in a drama is because I'm trying to recognize that that is not empowering for everyone and that there is no like one size fits all. feminist narrative that will work for everyone.

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Yeah, I'll definitely mention that word. I think that's important because of like overlapping Yeah. Okay. Um, so also like Andromeda and this story told me. How does it sort of personify that as well because she said she was trying to Iraq, I believe. I'm sorry I don't know too much about mythos, yes.

24:57

Yeah, she was chained up to a rock at the at the sea and oak sorry if I pronounced it. Confusingly, but yeah. Yeah, she was, she was, she was sort of, she was sort of shackled to a to a, to a rock and, you know, treated as this. This victim to be given over to the sea monster. And so I painted her as a white woman, and I painted her as a strong woman who does not need to be seen as as dainty and fragile and someone to be rescued, because you know she is in the story she's only there to be rescued by Perseus who's one of the like great Greek mythology heroes who comes in with a sword and whatever kills the monster.

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I mean I was talking about like how you differentiate other pieces and I think that's one way he did right. But yeah penis Andromeda. So yeah, obviously I'll do more research so I get this story, right, but it was good to hear that. Yeah. So also, what is that takeaway that you hope people have after viewing your art because they don't know it as well as you and they might know the background in the story, but if there's one takeaway you wish that everyone had what would it be,

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there should be, everyone should be able to see themselves in these stories, and in art and that we can that we can, You know, choose the stories and rewrite the rules and make new ones that, that have that have room for everyone and not just one kind of beauty or one kind of strikes. Also, this is more of a personal question for you, but when you saw that your art was gaining recognition and Mr Verdugo was putting it out but not even that, but I'm sure you probably had some of your family members or their peers, maybe see it beforehand, I'm not sure they did. But how did it make you feel and when other people started looking at your work. Do you remember sin Andromeda specifically. I mean, yeah, those two but also in general. I mean, I was just I was really, I was really proud of those pieces specifically just because I feel like a lot of my art before that was just not that deep. I've done lots of things that are like, you know, trying to explore a new medium or trying to explore any technique or just trying to make something that's, that's pretty you know that looks good figuring out how to paint stars in a way that looks. That looks good. And, I mean, of course, the things that I painted were still like you know coming from like this is something that I am passionate about or whatever I want to do but like this for the first few pieces that I tried to like give movil like deep meaning and symbolism too, and, and I was just I was, I was really happy. It was it was really fun to try to explain them to talk about them to my family and show them to friends and relatives, and I sent a photo of Venus and a couple other my pieces to Mr Hidalgo as like here is an example of my, my work because I was I was offering to I offered to make something original for NDA, because I was just like you know let me know if you have any talent that you'd like to use for me so I was like, I'll make you a piece, here's some of the stuff I've done. And he was like, that piece looks really cool, I would love to. I would love to find a place for it and I told him more about it, and the story behind it and he was like, well, our theme is reimagining, and that's he reimagined and that seems like a perfect thing to put on the cover and I was just like so blown away, and, and really proud that he that he chose to do that to include that the first time that I've had my heart somewhere like that and so.

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So how have your family members and your relatives reacted to

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you, they all like it they I think appreciate the most, most of the people I don't get the chance to like go really in depth into explaining the like behind it, but like, they appreciate the,

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the, the

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skill of the painting and the way that it looks and the stars and the hair and the faces and everything, and they have all been impressed with that side of it.

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So, for you personally Could you name a not name but what what are you the lessons that you have from your art, and just going through the process and the thinking, all these different components of mythology astronomy all that it seems like a lot right but what are the lessons that you've really taken away and as a person and as a human, I guess. I know these are really deep questions. So feel free to take your time. Again, do you mean like from art in general or from these pieces specifically, I think that's more for art in general, I think you've talked about the main things from the pieces.

30:52

What I buy like what lessons have I learned from art, and they don't have to be big. Yeah, I mean I'm learning slowly to be, to be less of a perfectionist about my art, and learning that, even though I like really care about them. And like the pieces that I'm making and I like them passionate about art. And I want it to be good, that doesn't mean, doesn't mean it has to be like, perfect all the time, and I don't have to, you know, make every piece of it perfect and, you know, hide every brushstroke and have it look, you know, it's beautiful and pristine and it's okay for me to still be scopin g learning I mean there are things about me notes that I would potentially go back and change if I had the chance and maybe I will eventually because the nice thing about paintings is you can kind of just do that. Even though, like you know a photo of it's been on the cover of a magazine now, But like, you know, they're there, they're things for even those like no more and pieces that I would, that I would go back and change. So,

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and so to wrap up. In the future, where do you hope that this series will also your work in general goes and there's just something you're gonna keep working on and keep doing because we'd love it or is there anything specific.

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I mean, I would love to finish the series. I intend to finish Artemus. And I hope, but I can get her to a place where I'm as proud as proud of that painting as I am with the other two, and it's possible that I'll go on from there.

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I don't know there I've already, You know,

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this this this series has, has leaked into other projects that I've considered other ideas that I might, they might use or go out of it into different projects, different series, different things that I do. I am going to keep making our I'm going to keep, you know, to your classes I'm planning on applying to art schools in the fall so I'm so I'm going to, to keep, keep learning and see where see where it takes me we'll see, I think, I think this will not be the first time but I, you know, Well, it was not the first time that I that I incorporated feminism into my paintings or astronomy or mythology and it won't, You know, certainly won't be the last.

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