

An interview with Natessa Amin!



Natessa Amin is a Philadelphia based artist whose immersive installations draw on her exploration of her family history and her distinctive ethnic roots.

What is arts place in higher education?

Well I am a painting professor at Moravian college so that was one of my experiences teaching in a liberal arts education and I've found that it is very important. I am really interested in interdisciplinary education and combining different academic disciplines. Art, for me, has always been something to help challenge my own perspectives, to grow and evolve as a person so having art in higher Ed is extremely crucial for students that don't have experience viewing art or having any historical art background so they don't understand what it means or what goes into the art making process which is not just an emotional thing, it's a researched thing. It can be political, it can be religious, it can be based from history, and those aspects come from having a strong education outside of art. Art in higher education is really important to help students empathize.

What is the biggest misconception about contemporary art?

This is cliché but when people say "I could've done that." I think people don't understand art is a reflection of time, history and current events and without artists there would be no visual culture. People can sometimes, for those who are not as well versed in art, can feel or assume that certain works are arbitrary or meaning less but they're not. If you're going to a museum, or a contemporary gallery the work is often referenced to the current climate or a different cultural backgrounds or positions in society. So, try to be open to all of that.

What was your experience at the Berman?

This has been an incredible experience, I've learned a lot about my own work just through getting amazing feedback and interpretations from the students, through all the long conversations I've had with Deborah and Ginny which has been super rich and encouraging. They've asked me really deep questions that I haven't asked myself in a while. The students were so enthusiastic and professional, it reminded me of the reasons why I fell in love with studying art. This exciting feeling you get from learning of a new artist or seeing something new. It's been a really great experience, I hope more people come to the Berman because all of the shows I've seen here have been impressive and exciting.

What has been the most surprising thing about this experience?

Seeing it all come together, from the very beginning I've had some ideas of what it might look like but there is work in the show from the last five or six years of my life, which is not something that happens for everyone that often. It was great to see this work close to each other because it is all self-referential but it is also been a process and evolution, so it's really cool to see that they can live together. It was a lot of people to work with and it was really fun.