

# Ruby Allegra Interview Transcript

Transcribed using Otter.AI

[gentle upbeat music]

**Steph** 00:13

Hello and welcome to the SALA podcast. My name is Steph and today I'm delighted to be interviewing [Ruby Allegra](#) ahead of their upcoming solo exhibition '[From My Room](#)' at [Newmarch Gallery](#). It's super relevant that we are catching up in Ruby's home, in their room, quite contextually on-point there. But before we go ahead, I just want to take a moment to acknowledge that we are on the traditional lands and waters of the Kaurana People and pay respects to elders past, present and emerging. Ruby, thank you so much for finding time to chat in the lead up to your exhibition.

**Ruby** 00:50

Thanks for having me. And welcome to my messy chaotic room.

**Steph** 00:55

It's good, it looks inspired. And yeah, definitely things happening, which we're what like, a bit under a month out at the time of recording?

**Ruby** 01:04

Yeah - my mum texted me exactly like, on the day of a month out of my show being like "a month!" and I was like 'thanks Mum'. Love you, mum.

**Steph** 01:16

I love it. Well, before we get stuck into this interview, I just wanted to ask about how you define your practice. So do you think of your art making as separate from your other pursuits, like [tattooing](#), [zine-making](#), makeup artistry? Or do they feel interconnected and do you sort of consider them as one thing?

**Ruby** 01:38

I feel like it, they all kind of connect together to form my practice, or like, the medium that I'm using, I guess kind of depends on the work that I'm wanting to make and like, what the message is, or, you know, what I'm wanting someone to feel from receiving that work. And so that's kind of what informs where I choose to go in terms of direction of like, what medium I'm gonna use for it. So I think, yeah, having all of those different elements, I definitely think it's probably very closely linked with like, my ADHD as well, and autism in terms of getting hyperfixated on specific hobbies or skills or things and having a having a hyperfixation, really intensely, and being like, Oh, I've just discovered this new skill or this new medium. And it's really cool to use. And I'm going to really over hyperfocus on that for a very long time. And I'm just kind of accumulating different skills and formats of knowledge and communication. And I think that kind of sums me up as a person as well, because I don't really sit with any binary or box of

**Steph** 03:09

That's a nice parallel.

**Ruby** 03:10

Yeah, I mean, in all sort of areas of my work. I don't really like the idea of just sticking to one thing, and I guess, like putting all my eggs in one basket,

**Steph** 03:21

or being defined by one medium.

**Ruby** 03:22

Yeah, yeah, I think it I think there's too many rules that we're taught growing up about art and what it should be and what it shouldn't be, and who should be allowed to do it and access it.

**Steph** 03:34

And how to do it, yeah

**Ruby** 03:35

and I think that that's... umm... I don't agree with that.

**Steph** 03:40

Yeah - we could drop a bleep in there. [both laugh] Oh dear, Yeah no, I totally get where you're coming from. Well, I guess following on from that, did you always know you're gonna be creative?

**Ruby** 03:54

Yeah

**Steph** 03:54

Yeah

**Ruby** 03:54

Definitely. I was actually, um, the other day I was looking, my mom found a box of all my old artwork from when I was little,

**Steph** 04:04

oh, gosh, that can be an experience.

**Ruby** 04:05

Oh it was pretty funny. Like looking through some of the stuff that I was doing. And I was like, I haven't changed at all. I haven't changed at all in terms of style, or,

**Steph** 04:16

-I love it-

**Ruby** 04:17

you know, colour or whatever.

**Steph** 04:19

Was the pink and red thing back then?

**Ruby** 04:21

pink and red. Absolutely everything pink. Absolutely. For my whole life. My first wheelchair was pink, like hot pink.

**Steph** 04:28

Yep

**Ruby** 04:30

But and rainbows and like butterflies and flowers. And I think I'm like, as an adult, I'm kind of like revisiting my childhood.

**Steph** 04:40

Yeah, and those motifs.

**Ruby** 04:41

Yeah. I mean, like, particularly as like disabled artist like growing up. And my childhood was not. I had to grow up in a very different manner to everyone else my age and so there wasn't a huge amount of time for being a kid, it was just like very informed by medical trauma and being surrounded by adults at all times, and social isolation and all of that kind of stuff. So even though I was a kid with a really vivid imagination, and like, love for colour, and all of these different things, I didn't always have access to that either socially, or because I, you know, was dealing with being a disabled child in a non-accessible world. And so like, as an adult, now, it's kind of been fun, being able to revisit some of the things that I loved as a child and allow myself to, like, revisit my love for them. And just be like, Yeah, I don't, I don't give a shit. Like if, you know, if I want to make art that's just like, covered in rainbows and flowers and pink and, you know, revisiting things that might seem childish, or whatever.

**Steph** 06:06

It's underpinned by something actually, quite meaningful

**Ruby** 06:08

Yeah but yeah, but I can remember drawing and painting for as long as I can remember. I mean, like, as a little child, I've had, you know, physical therapy pretty much for my whole life, which I'm very lucky to have, you know, accessed. But, you know, a lot of that therapy was quite painful. And drawing and art was what I would do, you know, during some of those times to manage that pain, and to pass the time, like, even just at appointments, lots of waiting around, and lots of like, sitting around with a bunch of adults kind of having adult conversations about me and about my body and all of this kind of stuff. So, yeah, art was definitely a good escape from that.

**Steph** 07:00

So it's always been there. Yeah. And how would you describe your art to someone you just met? A

tricky one.

**Ruby** 07:10

It is a tricky one. Because I think it would also depend on the person that I'm meeting,

**Steph** 07:16

and how much time do you have?

**Ruby** 07:17

Yeah, exactly. But also, like, you know, who is that person? Is that person a child?

**Steph** 07:23

oh yeah

**Ruby** 07:24

You know, am I am I explaining my show to a child?

**Steph** 07:28

Oh, my God, how would you describe it to your younger self?

**Ruby** 07:31

Oh that's such a cool question. Well, I really wanted to honour on my younger self in this show. Like, I think that's a huge part of it. And I didn't know, when I was trying to make decisions about creative decision-making through the process of building the works. I was just thinking about, like, what would six-year-old me love? What would six-year-old me get really excited about, and allowing those decisions to kind of be informed by that. So if I was talking to young me about this show, I would probably say it would be a sparkly pink, Rainbow world that talks a lot about both how wonderful and joyful it is to exist in my body, but also how tricky and painful it can be as well, in the world that we live in. Yeah, I think...

**Steph** 08:38

That's gentle enough for a child to hear

**Ruby** 08:41

honestly, but like still, with. Yeah, lots of fun, and things that you can touch and feel and interact with code.

**Steph** 08:52

So there's another rule broken there, you can touch some of the artwork. I love that.

**Ruby** 08:56

yeah, there's a lot of different sort of interactive elements of the show, which will be fun.

**Steph** 09:01

Yeah. And what -I mean we've dived right into the show itself-

**Ruby** 09:06

Yeah.

**Steph** 09:07

How many different like mediums I have you got in the show, like it sounds like there's at least there's 3d stuff, 2d stuff...

**Ruby** 09:14

Yeah. So that there's quite a few I guess I've got furniture pieces that I'm painting and that will include a bed because I guess the concept of the show, The show is 'From My Room', so it's kind of set up like a bedroom

**Steph** 09:30

Oh that's so cool!

**Ruby** 09:30

and so you're coming into my room and my world and my space. And yeah, so there'll be some furniture pieces. There's digital works which will be printed. There will be painting works - oil, acrylic; there's lino-print, clay work,

**Steph** 09:49

oh gosh

**Ruby** 09:49

embroidery, crochet and like other textiles.

**Steph** 09:54

Wow.

**Ruby** 09:55

There's a lot. When I... there's a lot of different... zines,

**Steph** 09:59

Oh cool!

**Ruby** 09:59

You know, like lots of different... I wanted it to be reflective of like how I work naturally as an artist. And I think, and I guess it goes back into your question earlier, like, I have a lot of different methods of making work because I really need to be prepared and on any given day for what my body is going to be capable of doing. And so, you know, like, if I wake up, and I'm in huge amounts of pain and I can't leave my bed, what can I do so that I can keep making art. Because that's what that's how my brain finds joy and peace is through making work. So what can I do when I'm having a really big flare with my chronic pain or whatever. And so that might be, you know, drawing on my iPad in bed, which I have been doing lots of. It might be crocheting in bed while I'm watching TV, but then, you know, when I

have energy and spoons -I'll explain [Spoon Theory](#) in a little bit, so I'll like jump to that in a bit- But when I have energy, and I can make it into you know, the studio, what sort of things can I do there, I can work on my clay, I can do painting, I can do linoprint. And so it honestly, like the fact that there are so many different mediums, I think is more an access component for me than anything else. And and I think, yeah, I've been very lucky that I've been able to have access to a studio space for the last coming up to two years now down at [Post Office Projects](#) Gallery and Studios in Port Adelaide. And so I've been very lucky that I've been able to spread out my practice a little bit more and start to experiment with creating some bigger works. Because up until that point, a lot of my work I was creating in my bed or at my kitchen table, or you know, wherever I can fit

**Steph** 12:11

There's so many people nodding their heads right now haha.

**Ruby** 12:12

Yeah. And then like getting so overwhelmed, because there's no room to sit and eat dinner. As we are currently speaking, we're sitting on one half of my double bed and the other half is entirely covered in materials for making work. I've got yarn for crochet, and my blanket in progress. I've got my invitations printed. Yeah, you can have a sneak peek if you want. Yeah, you can have a look at it. Yep.

**Steph** 12:41

Yeah, I love it.

**Ruby** 12:42

Um, yeah, so. But I think that's the like, that's comes back to the theme. And like the title of the show, 'From My Room', which is really about, you know, this idea that for a lot of disabled people in general, not just artists, but any disabled person, particularly multiply marginalized disabled people, a lot of the time, our beds and our rest spaces are also our workspaces. They're also our community-building spaces, our protest spaces. And that's not always out of choice. Quite often, that's a factor of, you know, an inaccessible and ableist environment outside in the world. And so we retreated into these spaces to, to access what we're not able to physically. And so that's where, you know, social media and online connection come in. And yeah, so it's essentially it's really, it's really about how that concept of what it means to like, be able to show up or to build community, what does that look like, you know, if you can't do that, physically, you can't show up physically, because of the structure of our society.

**Steph** 14:04

And it is quite a concept if you aren't someone who's in that position, and your room just has one purpose

**Ruby** 14:10

Yes.

**Steph** 14:10

You know, that's a lot to wrap your head around.

**Ruby** 14:13

Exactly

**Steph 14:14**

Having so many modes within a single space.

**Ruby 14:16**

Yeah. Well, I mean, like, people talk a lot about keeping your rest space and your workspace separate, and, you know, [only using your rest space for sleeping and sex](#) and, you know, whatever,

**Steph 14:29**

limited things

**Ruby 14:30**

you know, and then doing other, you know, work elsewhere. Disabled people don't have that option. And, you know, I'm also a privileged disabled person because I'm, you know, white, I have access to community support and family support networks. And I have a house, space that I can live in, I have a bedroom, I have a bed, you know, so it encourages you to think more about people who don't have access to safe or stable housing and all of that kind of stuff. But yeah, I think I went on a huge tangent.

**Steph 15:12**

I love it.

15:13

[brief upbeat musical interlude]

**Steph 15:23**

And actually, we should go back and revisit [Spoon Theory](#). Not that it is your job to explain it. But just for anyone who doesn't quite grasp what that is, we're not talking about literal spoons.

**Ruby 15:33**

No, no spoon theory is a concept created by a chronically ill disabled person. And it is, I guess, a method of terminology and language use, which is designed by and for predominantly disabled chronically ill sick people. And spoons are a concept that kind of explains...

**Steph 16:03**

Is it kind of like a unit of capacity?

**Ruby 16:06**

Yeah, basically! So like, the basic idea is that if you are not a disabled person, if you're not chronically ill, you're healthy, you're neurotypical; the idea is that you each day, you wake up kind of with, I guess, an unlimited supply of energy to do whatever you want to do during the day. To do, you know, basic tasks around the house, whether that's like having a shower, or eating breakfast or whatever

**Steph 16:34**

and you wouldn't even think about it,

**Ruby 16:35**

Exactly. It's just an unlimited sort of supply of energy. And sure, there are different things that might make that fluctuate. But it's very different to where spoon theory comes in, which is the idea that, particularly for disabled people, chronically ill, sick, neurodivergent people, we often don't wake up with an unlimited supply of energy. So it's kind of; spoons are used as a, I guess, a measurement of like energy usage through a day. And so it's this idea that you might wake up with only a finite amount of energy or a finite amount of spoons in your day. And each day, you have to use those spoons to do all the tasks that you want to do in that day, but you've only got a certain amount of spoons, so you need to be very careful about rationing how you use those spoons, or those little chunks of energy to do the things that you want to do.

**Steph 17:36**

It's almost like a currency isn't it, you've got to decide where you spend them.

**Ruby 17:39**

It is! It absolutely is a currency. And, you know, different tasks might require a different amount of spoons. So you know, you might wake up and you've got like, 10 spoons - I'm using numerical values just to explain it. Like I don't wake up and I'm like, [sarcastically] 'I've got seven and a half spoons today'

**Steph 17:59**

[laughter] 'my spoon-dar'

**Ruby 18:00**

Yeah, exactly. But like, as a way of explaining the currency it is a really good analogy. And I've actually got a piece specifically about spoons as currency.

**Steph 18:13**

Oh I love that.

**Ruby 18:13**

I like going spoon shopping, grocery shopping. Yeah. And so this idea that, you know, if I wake up, and I have 10 spoons in a day, and I want to have a shower, and that takes 5 spoons; I want to eat lunch, and that takes another 5 spoons; already, we're at 10 spoons, but I might also want to do something else, like I don't know, see a friend or whatever, that might take another 5 spoons. So I'm either going to have to sacrifice doing one of those things on that list, or I'm going to push myself to do all of them, and I will potentially have a lot less spoons the next day, or it will send me into a flare up or I'll be you know, where I'll be in lots of pain, you know, and heavily fatigued. And that's where fatigue and you know, being tired after a long day are two very different things.

**Steph 19:05**

Yeah.

**Ruby 19:06**

So, you know, I'm sure a lot of artists can relate to fatigue and burnout and a lot of that kind of stuff. It's



like that, but like a lot more intense and it informs every area of your life. You know, I have to think very, very carefully about how I plan my days, so that I can do the things that I need to do but also things that I would like to do without sacrificing my physical and mental wellbeing in the process. It's not an easy thing to learn.

**Steph 19:45**

No, it sounds like you almost have to plan, not just what you're doing, but plan the energy use, days in ahead.

**Ruby 19:51**

Absolutely. Absolutely. Often I will write a list before I go to bed of things that I have to do or things that I want to do the next day and I will then review that list the next morning when I wake up and I can feel how my body's feeling. And often I'll have to cross lots of things off that list when I review it and realize, like, oh, I actually don't have the spoons or capacity to do any of these tasks today, and I can only afford to get out of bed and brush my teeth, something, you know,

**Steph 20:21**

which makes the fact that you're about to have your first solo show even more amazing!

**Ruby 20:25**

Yeah, I mean, it's been very difficult. And certainly, the pandemic has not helped. I actually had COVID, three or four weeks ago, and that really hit me hard. I'm thankful that I have managed to avoid getting it until this moment, but it really knocked me around. And I have gotten sick a couple of times after that. So it's yeah, the kind of like managing the spoons over the last sort of year or so has been not an easy thing. But it's kind of, I guess, having this show sort of, you know, I guess, in the back of my mind, you know, as something to look forward to has definitely been a motivating factor. And, like, knowing exactly when it is; I've got this date, this deadline to work towards. And I'm just like, it's just something I'm so excited about, you know, preparing that. A lot of the work that I've made for this show I've been making, in my bed, from my room, you know, I've got pieces that I made while while I was in bed with COVID, not being able to breathe,

**Steph 21:45**

but you could make art Yeah,

**Ruby 21:47**

I could make art but that was mostly because if I didn't, you know, because my brain was feeling active and needing to be stimulated. And that's a big part of like, my autism, as well is needing that, like stimulation and making art is sometimes the only way that I feel like I can manage that energy. And so, yeah, when I had COVID, when I wasn't sleeping I couldn't really even, like sit up enough in my bed to look at my TV or, you know, so drawing was something that I could kind of focus on while I was lying down.

**Steph 22:32**

That makes all the different mediums makes so much more sense.

**Ruby** 22:34

Yeah,

**Steph** 22:35

And I can't wait to see them all in the [space]. And actually speaking of the space, you said you've gone and seen the space itself. Is this the first time that you've worked with the sort of [classic white cube](#) kind of gallery?

**Ruby** 22:47

Yeah, I would say so. I I've had work in other shows before like in group shows, I was in a group show called '[Visibility](#)' curated by some wonderful people Pauline Vetuna and Hannah Morphy-Walsh. And that was all disabled and trans or disabled [POC](#) artists. And that was presented at [Wyndham Art Gallery](#) in Victoria. And that, I guess, was also sort of working with the gallery space, but because that was an interstate show, I didn't have anything to do with the actual installation process.

**Steph** 23:27

Ok

**Ruby** 23:28

So yeah, this is my first solo show. And I'm my first time kind of working in a like a gallery space.

**Steph** 23:38

And it sounds like you are enjoying that level of control.

**Ruby** 23:42

Oh absolutely

**Steph** 23:44

You know, when you say like, 'I'm setting up like a room', it's like YES!

**Ruby** 23:46

Yes, I'm so excited. The thing I loved about when I sort of went to see the space was being able to chat to Ed who works there, about you know, the different ways that the space can be used and sort of adapted to fit your needs in terms of like, moveable walls and stuff. I kind of went in, like guns blazing and I was like, 'Okay, so can we paint the walls pink? Can this be rainbow? Can we have this and this...'

**Steph** 24:16

Look. if you don't ask...

**Ruby** 24:18

Exactly. If you don't ask, you're not gonna know. And you know, he was like, oh, you know there's there's stickers on the windows with the artist's name and like little bit information about the show and I was like, 'Can it be a different colour?' and he was like 'Let's ask!' and so it's been really cool being able to have the vision that's in my head because I have a very visual like,

**Steph** 24:42

oh so you can see it

**Ruby** 24:43

brain and imagination. Yeah, very, very visual in terms of my thought process is I can really strongly visualize how I want it to, to be and to have the space that I can use in whichever way I want for this whole month is really cool

**Steph** 25:03

It's a lot of power, isn't it?

**Ruby** 25:05

It is, it is a lot of power. And I don't take that lightly at all, you know, because I've been given the amazing privilege of having this gallery space and this exhibition. And I don't take that lightly at all, because it is such a difficult space to, to be working as a disabled trans artist in a very mainstream art sort of scene. And representation and even just depictions of disability and mobility aids in art is almost nothing. But also like I have this platform, and community is very important to me. So, you know, there are other people who don't have access to platforms, who should have access to them. And so, you know, if I've been given this opportunity, I'm absolutely going to take it and use it to the best of my ability to uplift community and build community where I can. And that's a huge part of my sort of value system in planning all of my works is, you know, there's lots of, I guess, some political, well not political.. political and...

**Steph** 26:32

social I guess

**Ruby** 26:33

social conversations, and

**Steph** 26:37

they're sort of imbued into the work then I guess aren't they

**Ruby** 26:39

Yeah, and I, you know, I even had a chat to one of the staff members at the Prospect Library, which is joined on to the gallery, about working with them to set up a display of books specifically curated for the show.

**Steph** 26:56

oh cool!

**Ruby** 26:58

So that I can, you know, say, Okay, well, you've, you've received my artwork, you can process that however. I've given you a starting point of one perspective of being a disabled trans person in this world. And this is where you can go from here; these are the people that you should be reading and

watching and supporting. These are the people I've learned from. These are the people that you know, should be getting platforms as well, who have platforms, some of them,

**Steph** 27:36

that's a great bit of co-programming. You know, here's the continuation.

**Ruby** 27:41

Exactly. Because like, often, you know, people's response to coming up against something that they're not really familiar with, or, you know, don't really understand too much about is: 'well, okay, what can I do? How can I be a better ally?' and that can sometimes get a little bit grating on multiply marginalized people who are just working hard to survive this kind of bullshit transphobic, racist, ableist world.

**Steph** 28:17

Yeah.

**Ruby** 28:17

And so, if I can take some of that labour and, and sort of just like, condense it down into like, a reading list? Yeah, at least or something that people can be like, Well, no, I'm, I don't know if I'll be an ally. And it's like, okay, well, we've done the work for you. Yeah, here's a literal reading list. I am going to have a reading list at my exhibition. I'm not even exaggerating. Here's a reading list, take it and go. Go and support these artists. Read this writing, read this work, consume all of this knowledge, that I don't own, that has been given to me by other people. And, you know, you add to it as you go, but it's like one kind of like, it's a big, just kind of goes in so many directions.

**Steph** 29:08

Like a library of things

**Ruby** 29:09

Yeah, exactly. a library of things. I think it's really cool that we can tie it in with that.

**Steph** 29:14

Yeah. And nice to have that supporting the show. And because I think that's one of those things is that yes, there's a lot of really fun aesthetics, and like you said, borrowing from that childhood kind of feeling. But also it is underpinned by this great interconnectedness, this community; there's a lot going on. So to have that evident and tied back...

**Ruby** 29:35

Yeah.

**Steph** 29:36

And um, did you there's gonna be a catalog as well?

**Ruby** 29:38

Yeah, there will be currently designing a catalog for actually yeah, I'm just starting. I'm kind of thinking about having pages kind of go in a rainbow order. So having like a set up like a rainbow. But yeah,

there'll be a catalog with some pictures of some of the works, and I've got a couple of I'm amazing disabled writers that I'm going to be commissioning to write some words for the catalog.

**Steph 30:08**

Amazing

**Ruby 30:10**

And, yeah, we'll hopefully have like the reading list in in there as well.

**Steph 30:16**

well that'll be a great resource

**Ruby 30:19**

And QR codes and things like that. Because a big part of my practice is accessibility as an art form. And as just a way of thinking from the beginning. So yeah, fantastic catalog is coming along.

30:54

[brief upbeat musical interlude]

**Steph 31:04**

And on that note of accessibility, I noticed that you've got a lot of considerations noted in the [Eventbrite listing](#) for the exhibition from, you know, the exhibition will be viewable online throughout the month, which is fantastic. And a suite of physical, communication, and sensory things listed. Yeah, there's a lot there.

**Ruby 31:28**

Yeah, there is. As there should be. I think a big part of my practice is, considering access methods, and accessibility of art and art work, from the beginning stages of any work that I create, or any kind of planning process is thinking about: who's going to be wanting to access this work? And how can I facilitate that? And I guess that's where my university education comes in, because I studied speech pathology, and so I have a pretty good understanding of things like communication access, and all of that kind of stuff. And then obviously, my own, you know, physical access needs and sensory access needs. But I think it's really important that art is made with accessibility at the forefront of thinking because, I mean, if anyone has, you know, the privilege of aging, regardless of whether or not they are currently disabled, they will become disabled. And the fact that you know, like, ableism kind of intertwines into every kind of facet of, of human existence. And it goes hand-in-hand with so many other structures, which uphold things like white supremacy, and transphobia, and fat phobia, and queer phobia and all of that. And I yeah, I strongly believe in not viewing accessibility as something that is an add-on. I think it's something that is considered an afterthought -if it's considered at all. And often within art spaces. It's not. It's not. And, you know, that might make some people uncomfortable, but it's a fact. That's a fact is the arts, for a very long time, art spaces have been notoriously not accessible physically, financially, socially, class-wise, you know. And I think that it's something that everyone should be able to access, and make, and own, and do, and engage with. Whether that's being able to afford to collect art, or being able to afford to make art and not have to spend all of your money and resources -as a poor artist- on things like bringing your own access to spaces or things like that. And so when I'm

considering things like accessibility, it's not just about, you know, if I can get in the room, even though that's one consideration. If I can get in a room. Most people with mobility needs can also get into the room because I have quite a large and heavy powered wheelchair. But that's not the only thing that determines what access is or should look like. And it's not to say that things should or can be universally accessible because that's not possible.

**Steph 34:47**

No, it's not.

**Ruby 34:48**

because what works for one disabled person might be completely inaccessible to another disabled person. But it's something that needs to be considered. And the only reason that things to do with accessibility are so costly or supposedly so hard to find and do is because people don't think about them, they don't use them. And so those resources aren't becoming mainstream and therefore affordable. And people leave it 'til the last minute. So I think there's something,

**Steph 35:26**

There's something up there. Yeah.

**Ruby 35:27**

Yeah. And it's, it's, I really think it's, it's time; it's past time. It's absolutely past time, that exhibitions, and art spaces, and artwork, and anything to do with creative arts, whether that's visual arts, or performing arts, or, you know, whatever. It is way past time that those spaces and institutions be allowed to remain completely inaccessible, and exclusive of disabled and deaf and chronically ill people. Particularly those who are also people of colour, First Nations, trans, etc. And so a big part of what I wanted to provide with this show is yes, it's going to be pretty and cute and joyful and happy. But it's also going to - hopefully- encourage some people in the industry to question their methods and make some changes to their practice and the way that they engage with disabled artists; the way that gallery spaces work to incorporate accessibility in shows, whether that's with things like [Auslan](#)-interpreted writing, or [braille](#), or audio description, or image descriptions. You know, there are so many different things that can be done. You know, like, if I, one disabled person, am doing these things; institutions, galleries, organizations that have access to much more funding than I do, absolutely can do these things.

**Steph 37:14**

Yeah

**Ruby 37:14**

So, yeah, um, and that goes for accessing the artworks too, which is why I'll be incorporating tactile artworks that people can touch, sensory artworks, I'll be building a giant blanket fort

**Steph 37:30**

[impressed gasp]

**Ruby 37:30**

that people can go inside that's going to be accessible. I have a friend who will be doing some Auslan

descriptions of works, because Auslan, of course, is a separate language to English. And I'll have, you know, image descriptions and audio descriptions. And yes, it's a lot to think about. But I consider it as a part of my practice, not as an addition to my practice. And so that's just something that I weave into my thought processes. I don't have this list, you know, next to me when I'm doing all my stuff. Yeah. Because I'm like, Oh, well, I know that not every single piece is going to be accessible to every single person. But you've got to start from somewhere. And it's about trial and error. And, you know, how can you creatively make your work more accessible? Or how can you creatively incorporate accessibility and access methods without hiding them, because it's still important to incorporate those things as things of beauty and they can be beautiful. And I think if disabled people had complete autonomy over the way that access was designed and implemented in the world, it would look fundamentally different to what we think about now.

**Steph 38:57**

Isn't that's so interesting.

**Ruby 38:58**

Yeah, it is, it is. I think about it all the time. And in my work, I've done a few future kind of scenario works of designing, say, my dream lounge room that and how access might be incorporated into that. And I have representation of mobility aids and disabled body parts in the works. Because it's so, so rare that you see that representation of those things in Fine Arts in ways that aren't, you know, pitied or medicalised or clinicalised or seen as, you know, broken or inspiration or...

**Steph 39:45**

I feel the need to mention [the disabled nudes](#) at this point.

**Ruby 39:48**

Oh, yeah yeah yeah, disabled nudes!

**Steph 39:52**

The series though, are they lino cuts?

**Ruby 39:54**

No, they're not. They're digital pieces.

**Steph 39:56**

They're digital prints? I'm just being indulgent now.

**Ruby 39:58**

No, no, no! I did think about doing them as lino cuts, I just haven't got around to it. Because sometimes I'll do a piece and I'll be like, 'Oh, okay, this could actually work well as this form'. And so when I was doing those, I was like, Oh, these would work well as lino cuts. But they kind of came out of doing some sort of studies and -not studies but like, kind of observations- of [Matisse's](#) collage works, [the blue nudes](#), because I love Matisse's work and use of colour and shape and form and especially with his collage works. I actually have one of them tattooed on my leg.

**Steph 40:41**

So good.

**Ruby 40:41**

Yeah. And I didn't realize until after I had this tattoo on my leg, that he was also a disabled artist. And there are photos of him making work from his bed of painting on a huge canvas up on the wall, I think I've got a photo. And I had no idea until

**Steph 41:04**

until after!?

**Ruby 41:05**

until I googled it and I my brain just sort of imploded. This was after I had started making works for this show.

**Steph 41:13**

Yeah wow yeah.

**Ruby 41:14**

So I already had developed this concept of, of making work from my room. And of course, you know, there's also there's been so many artists throughout history who have been disabled, and you know, their disabled identity has been erased. But there are artists throughout history who have made work from their room; you know, there are artists now making work from their room. But, you know, another artist that comes to mind is [Frida Kahlo](#), who also was a disabled queer artist, and there are photos of her making work in her bed as well. But yeah, there's, [here's a photo of Matisse in his bed](#) with this very, very long, almost like a metre long paintbrush, and he's painting a big kind of minimalist face on his bedroom wall. And I saw this photo and I was like, wow, this is, you know, this is also another representation of, of, you know, he obviously had, you know, privilege and access to resources so that he could have this studio set up from his room. But it's this kind of documentation that we don't see through history of artists, working in unconventional ways and places and with disabilities. And I want to change that, you know, I want to be able to see representation of disabled existence and disabled joy and disabled art through history.

**Steph 42:49**

Well, I dare say, you are being the change, as cheesy as that is, and I'm very much looking forward to the show.

**Ruby 42:57**

Yeah me too!

**Steph 42:58**

I'm hoping that it will be open pretty shortly after we publish this episode. And yeah, and I hope that people take the time to enjoy the show and soak up the different the dynamics of what's in it, because there's so much packed in there.



**Ruby** 43:13

So much. Yeah. And I wanted to make sure that the show would be accessible, like online as well. So that, because I have a lot of friends and people who follow my work from interstate and overseas, and especially, you know, going back to disabled access and all that kind of stuff to the world. That's why I wanted it to be available online so that people can still

**Steph** 43:37

view it from their room!

**Ruby** 43:39

Exactly! They can view it from their room. And I think that's something that will resonate quite heavily with a lot of disabled and chronically ill people. Yeah, yeah.

**Steph** 43:48

Wonderful. All right. Well, I think we'll leave it there and let the work speak for itself.

**Ruby** 43:53

Absolutely, thank you so much.

**Steph** 43:55

Thanks Ruby.