

Episode 38: Karla Dickens in conversation with Penelope Benton

NAVA: The National Association for the Visual Arts is the peak body protecting and promoting the professional interests of the Australian visual arts. NAVA: In Conversation is a series exploring the issues and challenges of working in the sector. We speak with artists, curators and administrators to gain insight into the experiences of contemporary practice and seek to propose ideas for change, progress and resilience in both local and global contexts.

Penelope Benton: We are broadcasting on Gadigal land. I pay my respects to all elders, past, present and emerging, and acknowledge all First Nations peoples listening to this podcast. My name is Penelope Benton. I am here with Wiradjuri artist, Karla Dickens. Hello, Karla.

Karla Dickens: Hello, Penelope. I've, um, always been making art and my practice has gone across and is going across, um, and broadening into different mediums. And so I work ... At times, I work with a lot of found objects. Um, different times, I work with paint, um, as a trained painter at National Art School. Um, I've done a few short film pieces. And basically, it's kind of, um, um, whatever story I'm interested in telling and I'm focused on, kind of the, um, the materials, you know. It's not, you know ... I don't know go, "Ooh, I feel like doing this at the moment." It's kind of like, "That'd be the best medium to, you know, get the, um ... tell the story and actually get the feeling of the story." So, I kind of really kind of enjoy materials and-

Penelope Benton: And you work a lot with found objects, discarded materials. I guess they would influence a bit of the story you wanted to tell. Do you find that?

Karla Dickens: Um, well, hopefully they do.

Penelope Benton: Or what's appropriate in that moment when you find-

Karla Dickens: Yeah.

Penelope Benton: ... a thing.

Karla Dickens: Yeah.

Penelope Benton: It's an idea been around a while maybe and you find that that's the thing.

Karla Dickens: Yeah, sometimes, and it's like, you know, I've just been reminded being involved in the show at Artspace at the moment and there's artists that use the Australian flag and-

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: ... you know? And, um, y- ... Uh, January 26th has always disturbed me and it was, you know, like long time. So it's k- ... It was in my mind. I

wanted to have a voice about that and I found a Australian flag at the Lismore tip and sewed on that. And, um, I've done a number of works on flags now, but it was like that idea had been kind of sitting heavy with me-

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: ... and then I found the flag, so it was just perfect.

Penelope Benton: Yeah, exactly.

Karla Dickens: And then often, you know, um, I'll collect things and then, you know, they'll be ... I'll be able to use them later. I'm a bit of a hoarder.

Penelope Benton: Awesome.

Karla Dickens: Yes. (laughs).

Penelope Benton: So since you mentioned the show at Artspace, let's let's talk about your work in the show. So, the first exhibition for 2019 Artspace Sydney just opened this week and it is called Just An Australian. It's a great show. I did hear a rumor that it might travel around the country, which would be amazing, so other people get the opportunity to see it. Can you describe your work in this show?

Karla Dickens: Yeah. So, um, I've got three different bodies of work and-

Penelope Benton: You have a very big wall. It's really impressive.

Karla Dickens: It's very sexy-

Penelope Benton: It's good.

Karla Dickens: ... very sexy. Um, and it's, um, an installation of two previous bodies of work and a new body of work that I made when I heard about this show. So, there's three large black painted crosses on the wall, and the first cross has four new, uh, works onboard, where I, um, collected, uh, flags and, uh, memorabilia from the Queen's Tour in 1954, 'cause she came to Lismore. Um, so it's called Bottom Feeders.

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: So that was kind of, um ... I enjoyed that.

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: I really enjoyed doing that work. It was kinda fun and, um, a bit cheeky and-

Penelope Benton: It's totally fun and cheeky to look at, too. (laughs).

Karla Dickens: (laughs). Yeah. Um, and that work kind of ... There's a ... If the show does tour, um, I have a short film, um, that will go on that tour, not the work that's downstairs, which is called The Queen's Road. So, I made that, um, film for, um, Wynyard Station-

Penelope Benton: I was gonna ask you about that.

Karla Dickens: Yeah. So, that's the short film in, uh, Wynyard Station for Wynscreen.

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: So, when I was making that work, um, focusing on the Queen coming, I did collect certain things. You know, like if I'm focused on something and I see, you know ... So, I've got these incredible little flags from, um, the 1950 tour, so that's in that work. The middle cross is very heavy and-and hard, and there are three, uh, large horse collars, harnesses. And it's a series called Workhorses, and I did the first one years ago for an, um, exhibition at Blacktown for the Blacktown Native Institute. So, part of my story, my great-grandmother was a domestic, and, um, abused, and she ended up dying in Callan Park.

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: Um, and it's a story of a lot of other women-

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: ... indigenous women, in this country. So, the works, the workhorses look like large vaginas and they represent large vaginas, and they are filled with gnarly objects.

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: So it's quite heavy and it was hard work to make. So that's the middle cross. And then the last cross is a bit more uplifting there. Um, another series I did, there was 20 pieces of, called Warrior Women, and their aluminum knickers-

Penelope Benton: Yes. (laughs).

Karla Dickens: ... and (laughs) with different things attached to them.

Penelope Benton: They are. And I saw that you, um, as part of some work that you showed at Melbourne Art Fair last year-

Karla Dickens: Yeah.

Penelope Benton: ... it's quite a confronting work to read about, also. You know, the cross, a re- reoccurring motif in your work and acts as a graphic framework for viewing your paintings and sculptural objects. Symbol of Christianity. Arouses catastromic ... catastrophic moments from the Stolen

Generation and the masses of half-caste Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children wrenched from their families and taken to missions to be raised and assimilated into society. Commemorating this dark period in Australian history through what could be an act of crucifixion or spiritual renewal, Dickens has built a monument to this intergenerational trauma that lives on in Australian cultural memory.

Karla Dickens: Well, I know. And the reason I come to Sydney, I ... You know, it's hard to travel a lot. I'm a single mum and-

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: ... um, I have a very needy dog.

Penelope Benton: (laughs).

Karla Dickens: And, um, I, you know ... Next week, it's the 26th of January.

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: And, you know, I just was really looking forward to coming down here for this show to, you know, have a voice-

Penelope Benton: Yeah.

Karla Dickens: ... um, to be included with, you know, incredible artists that have strong voices.

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: And there's a narrative about what the 20 ... you know, just what Australia is outside of, um, what pisses me off. So it's just ... Yeah, it was really great to be down here. And- and I know that, you know, that work for me, it just helps me, um, you know, to walk on this country as an Aboriginal woman and not feel, um, as powerless as I could.

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: Makes me feel like I have al- always ...

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: ... you know?

Penelope Benton: Yep. Yep.

Karla Dickens: It's good.

Penelope Benton: It's great.

Karla Dickens: Yeah.

Penelope Benton: You received the inaugural \$80,000 Visual Arts Fellowship from the Copyright Agency late last year. A huge congratulations-

Karla Dickens: Thank you.

Penelope Benton: ... for that. Major. How did that feel?

Karla Dickens: Oh. Um, I wrote a few grants last year and I haven't done that for a number of years. And, um, you know, you do it in a kind of, um ... Oh, you feel like, "I ..." It's like, "I just wanna make art. Why am I doing this?" And- and then you start writing and- and it's like this is a really good process to kind of, you know, solidate, you know, what flies around in my head and kind of pull it into some orderly kind of idea, so it helps me, you know, articulate it, and you kind of put those- those applications. And, um, when I got the phone call, I was in a really shitty mood that day.

Penelope Benton: (laughs).

Karla Dickens: I don't know why. Um, not that it's uncommon. And, um, I had to ask the woman to repeat herself.

Penelope Benton: (laughs)

Karla Dickens: And, um ... yeah. It's just a huge, um, affirmation that ... You know, I work on my own and, you know, I've been getting, um, more and more recers- ... recognition and, you know, people, you know, saying, "Yeah, it's good work," and it's like okay." You know, like, you know, I'm not just kind of up here in the hills kind of, um, tinkering around. Um, and, yeah, it's just a incredible solid affirmation, um, that as artists, we all need every now and then. It's just like, you know-

Penelope Benton: Yeah, yeah.

Karla Dickens: ... it's more than a pat on the back. Like we get so many pats on the back-

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: ... but it's like sometimes you just need something solid-

Penelope Benton: You need payment. (laughs).

Karla Dickens: Yes. Yeah.

Penelope Benton: Yeah, yeah.

Karla Dickens: Absolutely.

Penelope Benton: Great. So, you ... And with this money, um, that will contribute to a project you're working on exploring Aboriginal peoples in the circus, yeah?

Karla Dickens: Yes. Yeah.

Penelope Benton: Tell me about that.

Karla Dickens: So, the project is a [dictarian 00:11:37], uh, circus. Um, so I've been looking at the boxing tents-

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: ... that went around the country. Um, and I know a few boxers from those times who are still alive. Um, my daughter's grandfather's one. Um, and you, you know, be talking and then you mention boxing, and their kind of stature just rises and they kind of like put a shoulder in, and, you know, it's just such a great sense of pride and-

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: ... um, honor. Like they just have a real power with it. And I know that, you know, I just ... I'd love to interview those ... some of those people while they're still round.

Penelope Benton: Yeah.

Karla Dickens: And, um, and then I started ... There's a, um, an Aboriginal, um ... He never identified it as Aboriginal. He used to wear a Spanish kind of outfit ... called The Wizard of the Wire. And he was one of the most well-paid, um, circus performers of his day, and went to the States. Um, Hitler loved him.

Penelope Benton: Wow.

Karla Dickens: Um, so he was ... Uh, it was an Irish Aboriginal family. Um, there were eight, the mother and father and his siblings. So all his sisters performed, so they were a circus family.

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: And, um, Cornelius, uh, Sullivan. So I'll be looking at him.

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: So the, uh, the exhibition will travel. So we'll start in Lismore.

Penelope Benton: Great.

Karla Dickens: Um-

Penelope Benton: When?

Karla Dickens: It's coming. It's coming. Uh, Lismore Regional. Um, that's why I wanted to kind of look at Cornelius and his family. Um, it'll go to Dubbo, um, so I'll be able to look at, um, different performers from that area, and then it'll be going to Melbourne. And it's a lot lighter. Like I've been doing some heavy work the past few years-

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: ... and it's like, you know, just wanted to run away and join the circus-

Penelope Benton: Yeah. (laughs). Amazing.

Karla Dickens: ... and I get to.

Penelope Benton: (laughs). Let's talk about, um, your work, I guess, in a bigger ... in a deeper context. There's a couple of things. There's a- there's a deeply moving balance of trauma, revelation and dark humor and irony in your work, and your own humor is light and open, drawing people into your thinking. Can you- can you talk about the balance of trauma and, I guess, irony and people talk about irony as being probably our strongest trait as Australians, whatever that is. Um-

Karla Dickens: Ooh.

Penelope Benton: ... yeah. (laughs).

Karla Dickens: Yeah. I, um, uh ... Years ago, I, um, live in a place out of Sydney in the Hunter Valley, and there was this incredible neighbor that I had who was a lecturer at Sydney Uni on spirituality. And- and I'd just left National Art School and I did this painting and went and ... It was like, "Ah, I've made this for you." And, um, she's just like, "Ugh. Yuck. I don't want it. I'm not gonna hang that on my wall."

Penelope Benton: Ah.

Karla Dickens: And I was like, "Ooh." She's like, "Look how dark it is-

Penelope Benton: Yeah.

Karla Dickens: ... Karla," you know. And the, you know ... It just, you know, the light bulb went on and it's like, "Yes, there's lots of dark things." And I'm very dark, personally, but, um, kind of realized to tell those stories-

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: ... you know, I have to, you know, sprinkle a little bit of fucking glitter on it first and kind of get-

Penelope Benton: Yeah.

Karla Dickens: ... people engaged, and then if they- if they are engaged-

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: ... you know, then they can look into it and find out what the work's about-

Penelope Benton: Yeah.

Karla Dickens: ... you know. Otherwise, it's kind of just like shock jock-

Penelope Benton: Yeah.

Karla Dickens: ... kind of stuff where ...

Penelope Benton: Yeah.

Karla Dickens: ... And, um, so, yeah. I just ... That ... You know, I always thank Pat for that, not taking (laughs) that painting. And- and, um, it's really good for me too, in I can be really blunt and- and abrasive, and it's with my art I get time enough to kind of consider. And it does open the door to more people-

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: ... and that's what I want, you know. I wanna be able to, you know, for my work or my voice or whatever, to be ... you know, for people to have a look.

Penelope Benton: Yeah.

Karla Dickens: So ...

Penelope Benton: Great.

Karla Dickens: Yeah.

Penelope Benton: You, uh, your exhibition last year, Lucky Bastards and Fast Food, you used the phrase "lucky country" as the base point from which you produced the work. Can you tell us about this term? We were just chatting before about, I guess, the translation of what- what was intended by that phrase "lucky country."

Karla Dickens: Yeah. Well, I guess, um, you know, I've heard that phrase, like, you know, a lot of us have, and I didn't actually know where that phrase originated. And, um, I found out ... I just put it into Google and it came up that Donald Horne, uh, wrote a book and it got called The Lucky Country. So, um, he was taking the piss out of Australia. He was taking the piss out of the country that, um, you know, uses all its natural-national- nat- natural resources, um, you know, fucks their indigenous

people over. So he was, you know, he was giving it a red hot go and-
and nobody actually heard-

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: ... what he was saying. What they heard was, "Lucky country," and they
got that, and they're still running with that.

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: And I just loved-

Penelope Benton: Typical.

Karla Dickens: ... the back story to that-

Penelope Benton: Yeah. Yeah.

Karla Dickens: ... you know, that he was taking the piss-

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: ... and he was being very honest, and nobody actually wanted to
acknowledge that history.

Penelope Benton: Yeah.

Karla Dickens: Yeah.

Penelope Benton: It's good to bring it to the fore.

Karla Dickens: Yes.

Penelope Benton: Um, so we just mentioned your work briefly at, um, Wynyard Station.
Your video work, The Queen's Road, is currently showing on
Wynscreen, um, throughout January, I understand, um, which is a
public art project at Wynyard Station. Do you wanna t- talk about that
work a little bit?

Karla Dickens: Sure.

Penelope Benton: Yeah?

Karla Dickens: Sure. Um, that work, um, came about because an elder had given me
incredible vintage dresses-

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: ... from the '50s. They were really sexy. And I got asked to do this project
and so ... It's interesting how when we were talking about materials, so I
had these dresses, wanted to use them and I thought, "Okay, how can I

swing a story, a short film, around these frocks?" And there's a big story, and there's more about the Queen visiting-

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: ... uh, Lismore and staying at the Gollan Hotel. And first she was supposed to stay with the mayor. Then the mayor's wife had a meltdown 'cause the Queen was coming-

Penelope Benton: Yeah.

Karla Dickens: ... and hung herself.

Penelope Benton: Oh.

Karla Dickens: Yes.

Penelope Benton: What?

Karla Dickens: So that's when the Queen went to ... So there's a bit of a story-

Penelope Benton: Whoa.

Karla Dickens: ... in Lismore.

Penelope Benton: I never knew that.

Karla Dickens: That's why she ended up at the Gollan, and then there was a flood. Anyway, that's ... And then I'd been out to Wellington and Dubbo, and that ... And I'm sure it was the same here, but in country towns, the Queen coming was such a huge ...

Penelope Benton: Yeah.

Karla Dickens: ... you know ...

Penelope Benton: Yeah.

Karla Dickens: ... amazing ... Like, you know, all those womens were out in there ... you know, there would have been-

Penelope Benton: Best frocks.

Karla Dickens: Yeah.

Penelope Benton: Yeah.

Karla Dickens: Their best frocks, cooking ... getting their best recipes out and, you know, cutting every hair on Tommy's head and-

Penelope Benton: (laughs).

Karla Dickens: ... all that kind of stuff. And anyway, so I found this incredible girl. It just kind of all kept happening. Um, a local girl, Cindy Paden. Never worked before. Fitted into these frocks like a glove.

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: And she was, um ... She's the starlet in it, who runs from the Queen the whole time.

Penelope Benton: Great.

Karla Dickens: Yes.

Penelope Benton: (laughs). Good. Um, speaking of women, uh, you're- you're currently showing in several places in Sydney at the moment. Um, The Ideal Home is at Penrith Regional Art Gallery until the 24th of March, um, and in that you have a series of six applique straitjackets that refer to the way in which some women feel bound by domesticity, family, financial dependence and violent relationships. Can you tell us about that work?

Karla Dickens: Yeah.

Penelope Benton: Yeah?

Karla Dickens: Uh, so, um, domestic violence is a big part of this country's ...

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: ... and, you know, recently it's had a bit of a voice, which is great. And, um, I have members in my family who have, um, experienced domestic violence. And I guess that work is about, it is not completely black and white-

Penelope Benton: Yeah.

Karla Dickens: ... and there are different, you know ... And I hear ... I've heard other women say, "Well, you know, you should just get out of that."

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: You know, "Why are you still there?" you know. And there's, you know ... One of the straitjackets has, uh, greyhound dog muzzles on it and ... that sit as breasts. So, you know, children will keep people in a relationship.

Penelope Benton: Yeah.

Karla Dickens: Um, what else is there? There's one, um, and she's got King Kong around the top collar, um, of the jacket, and it's like addiction. So, different-

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: ... you know, partners will keep women addicted. Um, women will be addicted so can't leave a situation. So it's about different facets of why women don't ...

Penelope Benton: It's women's stories.

Karla Dickens: Yeah. Financial. There's one with an old Commonwealth money bag on the front-

Penelope Benton: Yeah.

Karla Dickens: ... with a moth coming out of it-

Penelope Benton: (laughs).

Karla Dickens: ... you know?

Penelope Benton: Yeah.

Karla Dickens: So-

Penelope Benton: Yeah.

Karla Dickens: ... it's not so black and white.

Penelope Benton: No.

Karla Dickens: Yeah.

Penelope Benton: No, it isn't. It's a big story.

Karla Dickens: Yeah.

Penelope Benton: Who and whose work do you find that you constantly return to as artist piece and you're ... Who- whose work are you drawn to, inspires you?

Karla Dickens: I am drawn to, um, so many different artists' works at so many different times. Um, and- and also kind of nobody's, 'cause I'm not in an art world environment where I live.

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: Um, and I guess, um, you know, social media has changed that. Um, but I guess I'm drawn to clear voices.

Penelope Benton: Yeah.

Karla Dickens: Um, and recently I just found ... and I'm trying to think of his name but my ... I'm a bit slow ... a American artist in ... uh, Afro-American artist

that was around in the '60s, who loved found objects and, um ... I get excited when I find work that just really resonates, you know.

Penelope Benton: Yeah.

Karla Dickens: I don't know. It's so varied.

Penelope Benton: Yeah.

Karla Dickens: It's so varied. Um, you know, Tracey Moffatt. [inaudible 00:24:04]-

Penelope Benton: Yeah.

Karla Dickens: Recently, I saw a show of hers with the films. Like we were just downstairs-

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: ... watching [inaudible 00:24:10] film, which is a bomb.

Penelope Benton: It's so great.

Karla Dickens: Such a knockout.

Penelope Benton: Yeah.

Karla Dickens: And I was just like, yeah, it's like, you know, I'm so fortunate. We kind of live in a country town. I went down to Lismore and there was, you know, all her films there. And I was just in there-

Penelope Benton: Amazing.

Karla Dickens: ... going-

Penelope Benton: "Wow."

Karla Dickens: Yeah.

Penelope Benton: Yeah.

Karla Dickens: You know ...

Penelope Benton: Great.

Karla Dickens: Yeah, incredible.

Penelope Benton: Yeah. What's coming up for you?

Karla Dickens: What's coming up? I'm about to go out, uh, western New South Wales to make a short film with Bruce Pascoe.

Penelope Benton: Amazing.

Karla Dickens: I know.

Penelope Benton: Good on you.

Karla Dickens: I know. So I just kind of ... I'm not good with ... I'm better with hands on. I'm ... I don't like ideas floating around in my head.

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: So I'm very keen to get out there and-

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: ... get something happening.

Penelope Benton: Great.

Karla Dickens: And that will be ... It's a project called Artist, a Farmer & a Scientist, and it will be, um, a part of Kandos Cementa-

Penelope Benton: Great. Amazing.

Karla Dickens: ... later in the year.

Penelope Benton: Fantastic.

Karla Dickens: Yeah.

Penelope Benton: That's great. We're in the new year.

Karla Dickens: Yep.

Penelope Benton: ... um, and parliament will be having their first sitting week, actually, a later ... a week later than usual, but it is in ... from mid February. Um, and we're moving towards a federal election, so NAVA is calling for artists to join us in building a critical mass of advocacy for the arts, um, setting a confident national agenda that's led by artists. What do you think should be on the national agenda for this year and what's most pressing right now and how can we inform our government about artists' passions, concerns and bold expectations?

Karla Dickens: You know, I just left the country for a month and I kind of need to do that every so often. I went to Asia because I just ... um, you know, go through so many pha- ... I've been angry, shaking my head, um, wanting to step up and, you know, have a big voice. Wanting to stick my head in the sand and, um, you know, it's ... You look at, um, indigenous history in this country and sometimes you hear things that happen, nothing changes.

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: And for us, we just have to keep, um, questioning and being really honest-

Penelope Benton: Yeah.

Karla Dickens: ... about what's going on. Um, and, you know, in Ja- Jakarta, where I just was, there's a lot of public art. There is no ... There's ... They don't even know what funding is, and they have a voice and they support one another-

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: - and they're out there. And, you know, maybe it happens and I just don't see it, but that's what I'd love to see more. And, you know, I take my hat off to, you know, NAVA and people that stand with artists, and- and artists that stand up and have a voice. And I think we're all got the responsibility of an artist to go ... You know, we get offered gigs or whatever. It's like, okay, is this-

Penelope Benton: What are you gonna do?

Karla Dickens: ... a fair deal?

Penelope Benton: Yeah.

Karla Dickens: Should I say yes to this? And it's not just that I might miss out on a gig because I say no.

Penelope Benton: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Karla Dickens: It's like by making responsible choices then we support others behind us.

Penelope Benton: So true.

Karla Dickens: And I don't wanna get too honest about my experiences, um, but, yeah, I think we really need to keep supporting one another. And, you know, you get offered gigs, and people, you know, pull out and it's like, you know, as artists, it's like, "Well, what do you think about th- ... you know, are these people-

Penelope Benton: Yeah.

Karla Dickens: ... good to work with? Is there anything that I need to be aware of?"

Penelope Benton: [crosstalk 00:28:15]. Yeah. Yeah.

Karla Dickens: So it's a huge question, but I- I'll go home-

Penelope Benton: Yes.

Karla Dickens: ... I'll probably think about that for two weeks now.

Penelope Benton: (laughs). Aren't you thinking of it always?

Karla Dickens: Yeah. (laughs). Well, sometimes. Sometimes I just need to think about what's on the table for dinner.

Penelope Benton: Yeah.

Karla Dickens: Yeah. Yeah.

Penelope Benton: Which is also a big issue.

Karla Dickens: It is.

Penelope Benton: Um-

Karla Dickens: Which ties into that same question.

Penelope Benton: Oh, it does. Thank you so much for your time today.

Karla Dickens: Thank you, Penelope.

Penelope Benton: Such a pleasure.

Karla Dickens: Thank you.

Penelope Benton: Thank you.

Karla Dickens: Cool.

NAVA: Head to our website, visualarts.net.au for more information on NAVA's advocacy and campaigns for improving the working environment for Australian artists and arts organizations.