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## Artist Jaret Vadera On Creativity & Inspiration

Interview with *PLASTIC*, June 27, 2016

A few months back I interviewed multidisciplinary artist and friend [Jaret Vadera](#) for a project. Through his interdisciplinary practice, Vadera explores how different technologies shape and control the ways that we see the world around and within us. His paintings, prints, photographs, videos, and installations have been exhibited and screened at the Queens Museum in New York; the Museum of Modern Art in New York; Bhau Daji Lad Museum in Mumbai; Paved Art + New Media in Saskatoon; and the Maraya Art Centre in Sharjah. Below is our interview conducted via email.

**PLASTIC: Describe the first thing you remember creating as a child.**

JV: When I was a kid, my brother and I always used to be making things. I remember making elaborate snow forts till the sun went down, constructing toothpick helicopters, and programming lo-fi games on our commodore 64. But what I remember the most was the first time that I learned that if I drew a circle and then shaded it in on one side, that I could make it look like a sphere. I must have drawn a hundred of them that night. I felt like I had learned some kind of new magic that turned flat things into real things. I felt like I had a secret power.



**What is your favorite tool to use as an artist? Why?**

The computer is like my Swiss army knife. It has been an integral part of my artistic practice. A few years ago, I was feeling claustrophobic with just making work in my studio. I wanted to be out in the world, to be more present, to experience more, and to travel. Now, I divide my time between the US, Canada, and India and my laptop travels with me wherever I go. It's a portable studio that allows me to make my work on the road.

Over the years, I have been exploring a few ongoing themes, but each work can look very different from the last. The way that I make each work varies from piece to piece. I like to experiment with different mediums, tools, and technologies. Each tool inherently tells a different story. It has its own voice, its own references, its own strengths and weaknesses. So I choose my tools based on what I want to say and how I want to say it.

Lately though, I have been missing getting my hands dirty. I miss the physicality of the process. There is a special kind of surrender that happens when I make things with my hands. I am present, but at the same time, hours easily slip away, I forget to eat, and then at some point I wake up, zoom out, and there is something in the room with me, looking back at me, that has a life of its own.

**What's your favorite piece of work you've created?**

It is hard to pick just one. Each piece was a question I needed to ask. It is hard not to be connected to everything I make. But I have been thinking a lot lately about a project that I worked on a few years ago during the [Transparent Studio artist residency](#) at Bose Pacia.

For a month, I re-imagined the white box gallery space as an alchemist's studio/artist's lab. Every day, I would take long meandering walks on my way to the studio. As I walked, I would figure out what I wanted to make that day or at least where I wanted to start. My goal was to respond to the immediate world around me and to make a new piece everyday.

During the month, I also brought other people into the mix. Sometimes they were artists, sometimes they weren't. The same rules of the game applied, just with another person. We met in the morning and spent the day collaborating on a new piece. It was an exciting process for me. Every project was a new adventure.

I learned that everyone had a unique, idiosyncratic, and delicate creative process. When the energy flowed it flowed, but whenever worry or too much analysis set in, the flow would stop. The bulb would dim. I learned that if I didn't fixate on the end result and just kept the energy moving, in the end, something interesting always happened.

Collaborative projects with: Uzma Rizvi, Adrienne Koteen, Diana McClure, James McGirk, Richard Oliver Wilson, and Jaishri Abichandani can be seen [here](#)

**Whom do you admire? Why?**

I don't know if I admire any one person. I'm not sure if I believe in heroes. Nobody is admirable all the time. But, I do believe in heroic acts. Acts of courage, imagination, and resistance performed by people just like you and me who made a choice to take a stand.

I often feel like my tongue is too big for my mouth or that my words are too slow or pale to express what I am thinking. So, I am jealous of the James Baldwins of the world. In the warrior poets, who passionately and eloquently wield language, speak truth to power, and transform injustice into beautiful anger.

**What advice would you offer creatives who are just starting out?**

Turn off your phone. Seriously. If you are the type of person that checks your phone constantly, stop. I try not to check any screens for an hour or two before I wake up and before I go to bed. Creativity comes when I allow myself permission to be bored or to be useless. So factor in wasting your time. It won't be wasted. It helps to schedule it in. Don't worry about the usefulness of your ideas at the beginning. There will be plenty of time for that later. Creativity comes when you stop asking yourself why and you start asking yourself why not.

Be open. Go to therapy. Meditate. Break something. Break your routine. Go out dancing. Go for long walks. And remember to always breathe. I feel like creativity is in the air and you just have to tune into the right frequency and it will flow through you.

**Creative Prompts:**

Go for a long walk by yourself. It has to be at least two hours. It is better if it isn't planned. Just start walking.

Go out dancing.

Go to the bus/train station. When you are there pick a place on the departure board. Go on a day trip or away for the weekend. Figure it out as you go.

Do an upside down drawing.

Turn off your phone and don't look at your computer for at least one day.

Flirt with someone.

Break something.