

The Kitchen Sink Project: Unapologetically Creating Space

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The Kitchen Sink Project was first visualized and imagined when I was in my last semester of graduate school; and we, as soon-to-be graduating MFA candidates, were asked about our goals. At the time, one of my goals was to be a guest curator and be invited all over the world to curate exhibitions, galleries, community events, and maybe even a Biennale - or two. Lofty goals at the time, and in some cases seemed impossible.

I had very little curatorial experience under my belt, and I was worried that my visual arts focus on martial arts and communities would not be the springboard into curation that I wanted and needed to move forward.

One of my professors told me a story about how he gained his curatorial experience by curating a 10" x 10" x 6" box. He gave it a gallery title and worked with artists from all over the world to curate tiny travel shows in this box. He basically gave me permission to create my own opportunity and unapologetically build experiences to achieve my goals. Thus, The Kitchen Sink Project was not only envisioned but created in the fall of 2019.

Now The Kitchen Sink Project is a curatorial and exhibition project between myself and my husband, Nik Aberle, in Rapid City, South Dakota USA. We are taking inspiration from the phrase, "everything but the kitchen sink". The phrase originated around the early 1900s and the first print reference can be found in 1918 in the newspaper The Syracuse Herald. The expression became popular during World War II, where it was said that everything but the kitchen sink was thrown at the enemy. As artists, we believe that creating space to nurture, grow, and share the process and work of other artists is important. To this end, we curate an exhibition space within our very own kitchen. Unlike the original idiom, the project strives to leave nothing out - even saying yes to the kitchen sink.

This project has been an integral part of coping and working through the pandemic. So far we have a full year scheduled out with amazing artists from all over the world and a large diverse exploration of medium and content. We have worked with a painter from Pakistan, a video collage artist from Macedonia, a performance video artist from Detroit, and we have many more artists scheduled. The learning curve has been pretty steep in determining how to give space and agency to artists and maintain an identity and goal that is also true to The Kitchen Sink Project. My role is the connector and planner, while my husband's role is behind the scenes, doing tech set up, and being an idea generator. It works well for us, and it has brought us closer together and provided amazing energy to our relationship and our respective art practices.

Since both of us are artists our selection process is quite diverse - because we ourselves make very different art. Personally, my favorite part is being able to meet and engage with other artists and artistic practices. My personal artistic exploration has exploded since working and meeting

other artists from around the world. I now have more ideas than I know what to do with and The Kitchen Sink Project connects with more and more people every exhibition.