

## Confluence Podcast Transcript: Julia Galloway

**Anna Lemnitzer:** Sometimes I see her as a reincarnation of a Buddhist monk. And I, I know that sounds kind of hilarious. But she really has this quiet, wonderful, strong energy that I really appreciate. And at the same time, she's very caring and tough and, and that's a wonderful combination to have in a professor.

**Brooke Armstrong:** It can be really hard to get your work into a museum. And that part of the reason, like, she works so hard and that she pushes herself getting her work into a museum is so other artists and other emerging artists can get their work into the museum. Because ceramics isn't something that has been in museums for really all that long.

**Ashby Kinch:** You just heard the voices of Brooke Armstrong and Anna Lemnitzer, graduate students in UM's MFA in Visual Arts, talking about our guest on this week's episode, Julia Galloway. Julia is in her 20th year as a professor of art at the University of Montana, teaching and practicing her specialty—ceramics—while directing a dynamic program made up of visual artists in a range of media. She has done incredible work in support of the professional development of graduate students in visual arts, helping the next generation of visual artists explore their art, refine their practice, and open up paths to integrate into the larger world of art. And she, herself, is an excellent role model. She has developed a thriving artistic practice with a national reputation and devoted collectors.

Every episode, we ask our guests to read a poem or a short passage from literature about rivers. Julia has chosen a passage from Toni Morrison's magisterial novel, *Beloved*. You'll hear her read it, and then we launch our conversation, which flows through her artistic journey: how she chose her craft, how she develops her artistic ideas, and how she first experienced Montana. We also discuss her ceramic series, “The Endangered Species Project.” She is producing an urn to commemorate all of North America's endangered species: a powerful lens to think about loss, grief, and to stimulate thinking on what we hominids need to do to stave off further species' death. Art opens paths for thought, experience, and cultural change. We are delighted to share Julia's story with listeners who need that confirmation of why art matters.

Welcome to Confluence, where we aspire to the certainty of a riverbank in the evening.

**Julia Galloway:** “At the River Clarion” by Mary Oliver.

I don't know who God is exactly.  
But I'll tell you this.  
I was sitting in the river named Clarion, on a water splashed stone  
and all afternoon I listened to the voices of the river talking.  
Whenever the water struck a stone it had something to say,  
and the water itself, and even the mosses trailing under the water.  
And slowly, very slowly, it became clear to me what they were saying.  
Said the river I am part of holiness.  
And I too, said the stone. And I too, whispered the moss beneath the water.  
I'd been to the river before, a few times.  
Don't blame the river that nothing happened quickly.  
You don't hear such voices in an hour or a day.  
You don't hear them at all if selfhood has stuffed your ears.  
And it's difficult to hear anything anyway, through all the traffic, the ambition.

**Ashby Kinch:** Welcome to Confluence, Julia.

**Julia Galloway:** Hey, thanks so much for having me. It's great to be here.

**Ashby Kinch:** Yeah, and we've been trying to make this happen for a bit and you know, you've had a busy life. So have I. So I'm really happy this finally kind of took place. You're such a great spirit and the campus has just been so enriched by your art. And me, in particular, as a graduate dean who kind of oversees a big portfolio of things, I love the arts. And it's just great that we have, you know, representation of really powerful artists in the graduate programs there. So we'll talk about that, of course. But we're gonna start talking about that Mary Oliver poem that you chose. It's the second crack at that poem. Rachel Severson from psychology also chose it. What, what, why did it jump out for you?

**Julia Galloway:** There's two things about it, specifically. The timing of Mary Oliver: I enjoy reading how things are spaced out, how she puts words together, uh, feels very natural to me. So just the sort of formalistic part of her writing I enjoy. But specifically the poem, itself, is this part where it says: "I'd been to the river before a few times" and "Don't blame the river that nothing happens quickly." And I think, uh, the creative process for me is actually pretty slow and it takes time and you can't push it, right? The creative practice in making does not happen quickly. Sometimes there's a flash of inspiration, right? Or something like that. But mostly it's sort of a slow-moving, uh, sort of water runs deep, slow-moving sort of process. And I also loved this part at the end where it

says, “You don't hear them at all if selfhood has stuffed your ears. / It's difficult to hear anything through all the traffic and the ambition.”

And I just think that when there's a lot of noise, sort of outside noise or inside noise—meaning internal, sort of, wrestle—that it's hard to sort of hear the, uh, sort of the voice of what you're making or the clarity of your idea. So I think that there's something about that last sentence that really stuck with me.

**Ashby Kinch:** Yeah. And, and it's, and she's listening attentively to the voices that are coming from the outside too. And, and so that, that opening line is so casual. It's taking a huge topic very casually, and then reversing its course. And you know, we're listening to the stones and the all the small things that add up to whatever in Mary Oliver's universe would be the divine. Right? It's, it's accumulation of all of that. And all that stuff is outside the self. It's not inside the self. It's like listening to the world as you take it in. And I love that connection to your creative process.

I mean, uh, in my world, we're thinking a lot about slowness. In my teaching, I think about that a lot. Reading has become so fast. Everyone reads everything so fast. We eat fast, we move fast, and now we read fast too. We scan. And you can't scan a poem like this, you know, you have to feel it in its time. You have to feel it in its own rhythm, in its own pace. And, uh, so I love that connection to your work process too, that on the other side of it is a creative process that accumulates over time, rather than being something...Like you said, there might be a flash of inspiration, but then you gotta go do the thing, right? So that connects in a lot of ways with...and you know, we have so much we're gonna talk about. It connects in a lot of ways to this recent project of yours. I hate to jump right to that.

**Julia Galloway:** Sure, no problem.

**Ashby Kinch:** But we're gonna back up later and get a little bit more of a biography. It just connects so directly. So The Endangered Species Project, you've been working on it now for quite a few years. And I've seen some of that work, including just recently when I saw you at the Radius Gallery, you had a couple pieces there.

Tell us about how that work unfolded. What, what, what--I mean, obviously there, what are the ideas that underlie it? There's some obvious things that I think if people know your work would know, but maybe a listener who's never heard of this project, you know, what are the core ideas that are driving it?

**Julia Galloway:** Sure, sure. So I think that part of my role in the field of contemporary art, ceramics and pottery, is to push the boundaries that exist in the field. And that has looked a lot of different ways over time. And a lot of the things that I've sort of pushed for, which was sort of more interesting work, more depth, more educa--you know, things like that have really come to fruition in the field in a fabulous way. And recently I turned 50. And when I turned 50, I thought I wanted to sort of shift my focus a little bit away from me and more onto some larger ideas. And for quite some time now, I've been very worried about the environment. Who could not be, right?

**Ashby Kinch:** Right. If you're paying attention, you better be worried.

**Julia Galloway:** You better be worried. And so I thought quite long about how to bring attention to that using the tools that I know. So I thought about...this project really came from remembering when I saw the AIDS quilt. Do you know?

**Ashby Kinch:** Gosh, yes.

**Julia Galloway:** How it was so striking. The AIDS quilt made something that was mostly invisible to a lot of America at that time, right? AIDS was so located in just a couple areas that very early in that quite tragic time, people didn't realize sort of what was happening. And then when ACT UP got involved with it and made, uh, AIDS visible through something like the Names Project, the AIDS Quilt, it really, uh, showed loss. And the power of making something invisible visible was just undeniable.

**Ashby Kinch:** That is such a great connection. I, I mean, that makes sense to me that that was part of your inspiration because part of the connection there is the physical materiality of that form. That the quilt is this homely, rooted in the home. I mean, part of what that project did was show you the humanity behind these, these people and, and you know, people are suffering. And you say it makes it visible, but it also brings this material object that that is common and universal across the culture and repurposes it for this, for this, you know, display of humanity. That's, that's really beautiful, actually.

**Julia Galloway:** Right. So the quilt part of it, yeah, you nailed it completely. The quilt part of it is about keeping the human in it. Right? So I think when I...so when I first started, it took a while to kind of get up to speed with this. But now I'm working on making urns for the, uh, endangered species of the continental United States. And the urns are the scale of a hu--for a human. For

human ashes. So that was another way of sort of bringing the human in and getting the human, um, present in this exhibition.

**Ashby Kinch:** We're a little, uh, you know, it's not any news to say humans are a little narcissistic. So the human urn, you know, is, is a way of connecting to that. So, so the forms for...this is gonna be like this throughout this podcast, right? That we're gonna talk about a visual object a little bit. But, um, you know, the form of them, uh, they're very conventional, classic urn structures. Uh, I don't know. Did you have a particular, you know, Greek model or model for the urn itself when you built them?

**Julia Galloway:** I, I did. I looked at a lot of contemporary urns and I wanted them to be identifiable immediately. I didn't want the shape of the object to be leading you in other directions. Right? So it's sort of a cross between a classic American urn and then sort of it has a little bit of an Asian influence in its shape. That's really where it's from. And you know, I went to the Missoula crematorium, met with them and looked at all their urns and you know, did some research about what urns looked like. I didn't want you to get confused about covered jar or vase or whatever. I wanted it to be pretty clear.

**Ashby Kinch:** Clear that it was an urn. And that that's there also in the starkness of the material, though. Some urns might get, you know, lacquer and decoration. But you have this very clear ceramic urn. One of things I love about the project is like death, itself. There's this universal structure. But then the detail, which is quite subtle, you kind of have to go and approach the urn to see the detail is where each individual species is then brought to the surface. And that so perfectly captures this sort of nexus in, in death between this universal thing that we all experience, but then we all only actually have our own single life and our only single death. And so the, the, the project itself aesthetically captures that.

**Julia Galloway:** Right. Absolutely. I mean, I think all of that, uh, the, the urns are extremely...carved with extreme detail. And, uh, anatomically correct. And they--what I hope is show off the beauty of each species. Right. And I'm hoping that that skill and the sort of beauty of the species will sort of seduce the viewer to be drawn in. And then the viewer is already sort of committed as they're looking to it. And then somehow through that, right, by drawing the viewer in closer, closer, closer as they see the details. By then, I really have got them, uh, paying attention to this problem.

**Ashby Kinch:** Yeah. And part of--endangered species of North America also opens up just a massive scale and scope. So again, simple idea, core idea, but

now, you've gotta do research and you've gotta plunge into --where are, you know, where are...And so, so tell me about that process. How are you going about the process? How are you tackling? How do we capture all of these endangered species?

**Julia Galloway:** Well, sadly, a little bit clumsily at first. But you know, that's, uh, such a different warehouse. And I'm, I am not a scientist at all, in any way. I'm a potter, an artist. So I just looked up the US Fish and Wildlife website and typed in endangered and started to make a list of all these species. And then I learned that there's, you know, extinct, endangered, and recovered and threatened. You know, there's different categories. And that states have one list and the national is another list.

What was important to me was to be researching and presenting the species that were most important. So I didn't do Hawaii because I'm focused on North America and there's a lot of quite exotic species in Hawaii. And that kind of just leads me off in another direction.

So I'm interested in the grub and the mussel and that little teeny plant as opposed to, you know, the white rhino or the tiger from another country. Those are very, very important. But I feel like, um, ultimately regionalism is, is very effective with endangered species. So I wanted to make sure that I was including like that little grub that you played with in the river when you were a kid, or those mussels that you used to dig up or that frog, you know, those sort of species that are really close to home. And that's, so that's really...became the focus of researching and, really, I just looked at that website for days and days and days and days.

**Ashby Kinch:** Yea. And then in terms of process, you're moving regionally and you're thinking about capturing a particular region at a time?

**Julia Galloway:** Sort of. Honestly, I'm working alphabetically right now. And I'm, I'm just finishing the letter...

**Ashby Kinch:** Through the states?

**Julia Galloway:** Yeah. Yep. So, right. So I'm working on the national list and I'm moving alphabetically.

**Ashby Kinch:** And where are we in the alphabet?

**Julia Galloway:** The letter "E".

[laughter]

**Ashby Kinch:** I mean, I, I love these kinds of projects because you know, you gotta do it in a certain way, right? You have to choose a methodology. But the ambition and scope of it is really dramatic, right? You'll be doing this for a while?

**Julia Galloway:** Oh, I think four more years.

**Ashby Kinch:** Yeah. Oh four? You think four and you'll, you'll get enough of them done?

**Julia Galloway:** I'm hoping so. Yeah, I'm hoping so. I mean, I think that it's interesting 'cuz I'm doing extinct and I'm also doing recovered. I think it's so important to include the recovered species. And probably in display and then maybe those would be separated a little bit. So we could see that there is some hope—that it's not always a one way journey once a species hits that list.

**Ashby Kinch:** Yeah. Well, and so this is, you know, that, that exact topic is where it kind of intersects with my own work. You know, I, I work on grief and mourning rituals and, and medieval culture. And when I teach my death and literature class, we always take on questions of contemporary, what's called eco-melancholia. A lot of our younger folks, especially the, the, you know, 18- to 25-year-old group, they, they're wearing around a burden. They're carrying it around with them. They, they have this sense that things aren't right in the world in general, right? But it's specifically about the environment. And this term, eco-melancholia kind of captures that sense, that sensibility, that something's not right.

**Julia Galloway:** So echo like you're putting it out and it's coming back...?

**Ashby Kinch:** No, ecological. Eco-melancholia. So, so kind of a melancholy for the failure of our ecological systems and their collapse. And, um, you know, grieving and mourning in, in our human culture in America is also kind of a repressed phenomenon. Right? In other words, there's a double repression here, that we're not very good at that either. And so the two might be mapping onto one another in an interesting way. What I love about your project is that brings all of that to the surface: that the human and the animal processes are both right there. Just think about a, a normal American household. How many of 'em...even if they have ashes and they've kept those, those, uh, cremains that, that awful, uh, uh, neologism that was created, uh, by the cremation, crematorium industry. Even if they have them, they're very unlikely to display

them in the home. That's would be likely to be interpreted as kind of maudlin and overemotional or something. And so that kind of repression is so systematic in our culture about death, in general. But then, so, so what your work does is bring both sides of that together and bring it to, into an object, right? That, that, that, that's a place where we can think about both the human repression of our own grief and our own loss and um, but then also the, it's connection potentially to this world around us that we're losing species by species.

**Julia Galloway:** One of the other inspirations for the project was this, uh, fabulous ceramic artist named Akio Takamori, lived in Seattle and he, um, uh, got very sick and was dying. And, uh, he had one sort of last show. And the last six months of his life, he was making a body of work in the show was called “Apology and Remorse.” And all of the, uh, sculpture in the show or paintings in the show was based off of imagery of political figures, apologizing. So it had like the Chancellor of Germany on his knees in front of the Hague after World War II. And um, I was so moved by: if you had six months left to live, what would, what would your work be about? Do you know? That seemed amazing to me that in his last bits of making, it was about apology and remorse. And it made me think quite a bit about what I myself had remorse for or apology about. And I think that's really when I started to tune into the environment. ‘Cause my generation was the one that kind of dropped the ball, like, you know, the Endangered Species Act passed in 1972. You know, it was during my lifetime and we kind of dropped the ball right there. So I think really inspired by his fearlessness to go to such a vulnerable place, uh, made room for me, made some room for me to slide quietly into that idea.

**Ashby Kinch:** That's so interesting. Well, and, and ideas clearly inspire your work and push your work. You, you have, um, sort of listed Rachel Carson as one of your heroes and inspirations. Is that a longstanding thing going back to when you were young or is that more recent—sort of recovering her?

**Julia Galloway:** I think recovering her. When I first read the Silent Spring, I couldn't really get through it, you know, I was a young woman and restless. So some was the book itself, but a lot of it was this woman stepping up front, pushing the field forward and saying: “This is important. We have to look at it.”

And then also hearing that, you know, JFK read it and it was very influential him, and he told Nixon to read it. And that's one of the reasons why Nixon signed the Clean Water Act. And that seemed amazing to me that this one person could push something forward so much. Yeah. And, um, I, I liked standing on her shoulders. Yeah. Um, and I think her as much as a scientist and writer, as much as the content in the book.



**Ashby Kinch:** Yeah. In other words, her willingness to kind of put herself into a difficult, uncomfortable place publicly and pay the price for it. Right? I mean, there's gonna be backlash. Yeah. What an, I mean, it's, it's gotta be up there in the most important five or 10 books of the 20th century. Right. In terms of the impact it had, as it, as it rolled along.

And, and one of the other, um, you know, heroes you list is Toni Morrison. I mean, that would, *Beloved* would have to be on a short list of two or three of the most important novels of the 20th century. I mean, such a huge impact. Um, and, you know, we're, we're of the same generation. And we were talking, right, as we were getting going about that book coming out. And I, I read it when I was 19 years old, and I mean, it just blew my brain. What, what's the root of your, of Toni Morrison, the, the, you know, the heroism and, and the attraction to her as a figure for you?

**Julia Galloway:** You know, Toni Morrison, uh, said that she wrote the kind of books that she wanted to read because the kind of books she wanted to read didn't exist yet. And as a young artist in the world, especially, um, a woman coming up in the field that was still sort of male-dominated by an earlier generation, it made me think that gave me a lot of permission that I could make the work that I wanted to see rather than sort of, um, existing with this uh, you know, sort of already, you know, sort of work that already existed rather than making that better. That quote gave me tons of license to be able to, uh, really make what I wanted to make or at least try to go there. Yeah. So I think, and those, you know, sometimes those key sentences just get you right? They just say: "Okay, you got permission. Go."

So I think that, and I also just think to hear such a strong, uh, woman's voice, um, was so important to me and it gave me just tremendous room to, um, uh, sort of harvest my own ideas and my own place in the world because her place was so clear.

**Ashby Kinch:** She found this place to stand and then create. You know, and, and that's, that's just such a marvel. Um, you know, that's what the great artists do. They kind of remake a world around them.

**Julia Galloway:** Yeah. And also sort of how things were so personal and also public at the same time, just was such an interesting, um, place to exist. You know, I'm a potter and I make objects to go in your house, which is a personal, which is like very personal. But I study it in it's very large, big way. Do you know? So there was something about mixing all of those things together that was just so, so interesting to me. And also that the writing is so beautiful. It's so

beautiful. And I think sometimes in the, in the, uh, in the visual arts, sometimes we can get so heavily conceptual, we forget that we might wanna look at things, you know? And so for her to make such beautiful writing and saying such profound things just, uh, gave me license to have beauty be important in my work.

**Ashby Kinch:** Well we kicked around this passage, um, the famous passage in *Beloved*, where, where Seth comes to the Ohio River and, and, and she gives birth. And it's just, her and this, this woman, Amy Denver, who gave Seth, uh, you know, I guess the idea for the name of the child. But it's so intense, right? Yeah. I mean, it was one of the reasons we passed on it. It was like, uh, you know, it's a tough way to start a podcast. But, but it's such a beautiful passage. It has in it these, these lyrical moments threaded in of the, the, um, blue fern spores floating through the sunlight in the evening. And so that's one of those techniques that she has mastered and she's just so brilliant at that as intense as the moment is, it's a gut-wrenching scene. Especially, you know, when, you know the larger plot, you know that we're gonna have a, an infanticide and she's, she's rooted that in a real historical case. But then she's given it this very vibrant, you know, lyrical life, right in that passage. And I think you have another passage from her that you might want to read.

**Julia Galloway:** I do. Um, this is a quote from Toni Morrison.

“You know, they straightened out the Mississippi River in places, to make room for houses and livable acreage. Occasionally the river floods in these places. ‘Floods’ is the word they use, but in fact it is not flooding; it is remembering. Remembering where it used to be. All water has a perfect memory and is forever trying to get back to where it was. Writers are like that: remembering where we were, that valley we ran through, what the banks were like, the light was there and the route back to our original place. It is emotional memory—what the nerves and the skin remember as well as how it appears. And a rush of imagination is our ‘flooding’.”

So I, I think that's very beautiful to think about. Um, uh, the root of what was, things change in going back home again. And I think, um, when she says, “writers are like that, remembering what we were.” And I think that, um, for myself as a, as somebody who makes, um, sort of a traditional craft and pushing the boundaries of what that traditional craft is, I think that I'm constantly in the state of looking backwards and forwards at the same time: how to honor where I'm from and how to push the field forward.

So I think there was something in that passage about the Mississippi moving and then coming back just really, um, you know, I felt a kinship to that passage.

**Ashby Kinch:** That's fantastic. And so to, to do a trite but obvious thing, let's push you back a little bit, um, because it's a, it's a direct connection to this river, uh, passage.

One of your first exhibits, I, I love the titles of your exhibits one, one of your first exhibits was "Little Confluence." How perfect is that? Here you are on Confluence, our podcast, it's all coming back around. You're remembering. But tell us about that. Like where do those little title ideas from? Maybe start with that one.

We're gonna talk about a couple of 'em cause I love 'em.

**Julia Galloway:** Sure, sure. You know, I think the titles of the show have helped you understand the ideas and the work and I think that, um, anyway, I'm very interested in people being understand what I'm doing and to sort of understand the ideas and the work and that, that maybe that understanding takes time. It's sort of a beautiful thing about craft is that often since it's domestic, it goes in your house, you, uh, spend time with it. Right? Um, it's really not unlike books in a way. Right? That we have these sort of beautiful things around us that, um, come to have meaning. Uh, when we get them, we have some understanding of them as object and then as we spend time with them, they become part of our own story.

So I had a, it was around my very first solo shows after school. It was a big show for me and it was called "Little Confluence" cuz all of the, um, pottery in the show had to do with pouring. And so it was sauceboats or oil or pitchers or teapots or, and, uh, but uh, it wasn't big confluence. It was little confluence. There was a real intimacy to those objects. And, um, so it seemed like just a perfect way of getting that idea of things coming together.

**Ashby Kinch:** I love that too, just because again, the scale of a, of a river confluence is brought into the home. The small thing that echoes the bigger thing, you know, that things are pouring together.

Yeah. So some of the other ones, um, that I loved: "More Leaf Sigh Than Bray." Um, so I mean I love, um, in general I love art that evokes synesthesia. But that, you know, that one, you know, cuz you don't think of a visual object, especially a material object as, as sonic. But then that's the title of the show. So tell us a little bit about.

**Julia Galloway:** Sure. That's a quote from Toni Morrison from *Jazz*. And it said, uh, the full quote is “Their ecstasy was more leaf side than bray, and the body was the vehicle and not the point.”

**Ashby Kinch:** Mm-hmm. That's good.

**Julia Galloway:** And I think I know, right? Yeah. Aw, come on! Um, I think that, um, there's something about the body could be being the vehicle and not the point that to me, completely embraces pottery. So the cup is the vehicle, but the point is to have a moment where you're taking a nourishment or just a pause or sort of the beauty of that, um, giving yourself, uh, your daily meal. So to me there was such a perfect lineup. Yeah. In that, and also just the passion in the sentence is...

**Ashby Kinch:** So the show would've had that full sentence, but the title is the sound side of it, not the vehicle side of it. I love that. So the thing that's, that they're gonna go and experience is the body, right? The, that the body is a vehicle for a set of ideas.

**Julia Galloway:** Right. You got it.

**Ashby Kinch:** That's, that's beautiful. Well, “Morse’s Effloresces,” You want to talk about that one?

**Julia Galloway:** Sure. I mean, this, that was a little bit of an odd show, but it was a show that I had, um, up in Nova Scotia with a, um. And all of the work was made, um, uh, in a studio that was closing down. And that studio many, many very inspiring artists had come through that studio. And so I was, and so a lot of the work was geared with those artists in mind. So quoting something from their own work in my work, or paying homage to them in that show. So the show was visually kind of wild because there was a lot of sort of, quoting in it. But um, that's sort of where the title came from, was pulling these things together and kind of the great energy that came out of it.

**Ashby Kinch:** Fantastic. Well, and this is maybe the funnest one. Most whimsical one. You got a show called a “Very, Very, Very Fine House.” Uh, which, you know, people have a certain generation, maybe the younger ones won't immediately cap that capture that, but it's the “Our House” song by Crosby Stills Nash. What was going on there?

**Julia Galloway:** So it's very interesting actually, that show. The show was an on, was exclusively online and it was on a website that the images were laid out

in a very specific way. And you would sort of scroll down like you do and you would sort of scroll down to see the work. So I took the images of, uh, my house on my pottery. And so the first row of images all has the outside and has my yard and the outside of my house. And then as you start to scroll down, um, the images on the pottery, you move into the living room and there's images of the living room and all the objects in the living room and the books and the, and my dog. And then you, as you scroll down further, you move into the kitchen and then you move into...and so slowly as you're sort of scrolling through this website, you're moving into my house.

**Ashby Kinch:** Gotcha. And into more and more intimate space, like you're realizing that you're coming into the home just as you were talking about bringing the work into the home.

**Julia Galloway:** And the pots get smaller. So the first outside images of these huge show vases, and by the time you've sort of gotten into the kitchen, you're on a teapot, and then by the time you get to the bedroom, you're on a sugar bowl. And so I was using the setup or the structure of the website as a visual gallery.

**Ashby Kinch: Yeah:** So that drove it. Not the song, the song kind of wrote up on top of that.

**Julia Galloway:** I think that I wouldn't have gotten to my house without the song. So I think these things sort of come together like, um, you know, ideas develop slowly over time.

**Ashby Kinch:** Yeah. So what is that song again? Maybe you could sing the, the chorus for it.

**Julia Galloway** [singing]: Very, very, very fine house with two cats in the yard. Life used to be so hard. Something like that.

**Ashby Kinch:** Yeah. That's fantastic. Yeah. So, um, well, and, and I think, uh, From the standpoint of, you know, the show, this couldn't be like a, a cooler way of thinking about your history, right? We're, we're talking about you. Each show kind of has this set of ideas that drive it and personal experiences that drive it. So you're actually telling your story right that way. Right? And, and one of the culminating moments for standpoint of University of Montana is this Archie Bray fellowship that you got. Now, not too many, not enough people probably in Montana know about the Archie Bray.

So why don't you talk a little bit about why that was appealing for you to apply and what your experience was there and how that kind of brought you to Montana.

**Julia Galloway:** You bet. So the Archie Bray Foundation is a, um, uh, art center in Helena, Montana. And originally it was a, uh, originally it was a brickyard. And, uh, slowly over time, um, the, a small art center started there and it was a way that people could use more and more clay. Initially, when you would study ceramics in college, you would get a 25-pound block of clay and that would last your whole semester. And, um, as clay sort of moved into a larger art medium, people wanted to use more and more material.

And so eventually working in a brickyard made sense cuz they had these huge, huge amounts of clay. And so they started this residency program and it was very early in the residency game and uh, it was a very, very good residency. And now over time, now, it's just one of the most fabulous residencies, I would say probably in the world. I mean, there's a lot of places to go, but there's something about the history of that sort of starting in this industrial way and this great art kind of being birthed out of it. And it's really where abstract expressionism in ceramics started. So there's something about that abundance that makes that a very special place to work.

So I did a residency in there after graduate school and, uh, there was, there's, there's the, I hadn't been to Montana before and sort of arriving here where there was so much space, I just felt like anything was possible and it just allowed me to ferociously, um, develop my ideas with incredible vigor. And to just make lots of work and really establish myself in the field and give me confidence to be an artist in the world.

So I really, it really happened during those, I was there for two years, that two year period, and while I was there, I came to the University of Montana as part of something called Bray Day where um, uh, residents from the Bray come and demonstrate to our students.

And I remembered walking into the studio, the clay studio here is this big open space. And I remember walking in and thinking: "Oh man. Anything is possible in this room. You could do anything here." So after my residency, I, um, taught at the School for American Crafts in New York, uh, for about 10 years. And when a job opened up here, I just remembered that expansive feeling of walking into that old ice skating rink, you know, which is the pottery studio. And I thought, that's where I wanna work. I wanna work somewhere where it feels like anything's possible.

**Ashby Kinch:** That's incredible. So great to hear. And I, and I hope listeners will kind of take inspiration for this because this is one of these areas where um, you know, we just have a unique strength that maybe, um, it's uncanny in fact, right? That, that, that a, that a place like University of Montana and, and state of Montana in general, you know, the cliché is we punch way above our weight. I mean, for a small, uh, you know, rural agricultural state, it's incredible the art resources that are available here. And the Archie Bray is just a clear part of that in the University of Montana visual arts program, um, which you've been directing, uh, recently. And, and you know, part of what we have to talk about of course, is that, you know, uh, um, the podcast is the Graduate School podcast. Graduate education, what, you know, what does graduate education and the visual arts look like? And what are you looking for when you're recruiting students? And what are you kind of hoping for them in their time while they're here?

**Julia Galloway:** I think it helps when students come in to work on their graduate studies, it helps that they have some strong technique under their belt so that they're not spending their time here, um, sort of developing basic skills, right? Like we want them to have some skills about how to move the material and how to, you know, get them where they want to go. But I think I'm looking for students that wanna question why they make art and what they wanna do and what they wanna say. And I'm interested in students that wanna work with other people, you know, graduate school so much about community. So students who sort of are rooted in, um, uh, talking with their peers and developing a clear sense of self within a group. I think those things are very, very important.

You know, the MFA is the terminal degree for artists. There's no PhD in art in the United States. So I think my job is to help them sort of get to the place where they don't need to be in school anymore. And I wanna get them out in the world sort of quickly so they can bring their visions of how to be creative or how they see the world or sort of they're culture-makers. Right? They're a little bit culture-makers now. Um, I want them to sort of get out there and do that. So my job is to give them tools to do that. And I realize that's kind of vague, but I think that it is vague because that's so unique for each student.

**Ashby Kinch:** I was gonna say, the path each of them takes might be unique. Right? But you have to, but there are kind of common, um, you know, experiences and journeys and, you know, you've talked about, um, you yourself kind of struggling with putting your work out there in the gallery system and getting involved in it. Now you're, you're very successful in that, right? I mean, you, you have these shows and you work with Stephanie Frostad. I know that we're not gonna have a ton of time to get into that, but I, I, I love that you, your

shows with her are so interesting. Because you're two powerful female artists working in different visual media, but with some overlap, with some ideas that overlap. But you found that partnership, I'm assuming you know, and, and, and it takes work. And so part of what you're probably advising your students on is how important it is to put yourself out there and do that work.

**Julia Galloway:** Right. And define parts of their personality that's gonna be a good fit. Right? Because not everybody's gonna just want to go put their workout in this, in this really big sort of, um, visual way. They might be shy, might be a little bit introvert. So maybe then putting their workout online is gonna be a better fit. Or working with somebody who's sort of opposite of them will be a better fit. You know, I think that they, um, that uh, really embellishing or sort of lifting up who they are and making that stronger and stronger. And then awareness of the things that maybe are gonna hold them back instead of be sort of conscious so it doesn't trip them up later. I think that's really, really important.

**Ashby Kinch:** Yeah. And how do you know with your graduate students, this is of course, a tough one, but how do you know when they're first ready to come in? Right. So, so when they apply, they're, they're giving you an aesthetic statement and, you know, they're, they're sure personal vision for their art. Um, And, and how do you know they're kind of ready for that experience? And then how do you know or what, what, what are you hoping for on the other end in terms of their autonomy? Are you staying in touch with them? Are you building lifelong relationships with your former students and they're kind of constantly coming back for advice or inspiration or...?

**Julia Galloway:** Sure, sure. Well, I think that, um, I, you know, I love being graduate advisor cause I work with all of the graduate students sort of out of my area as well. And that's just so, it makes it so interesting, you know? I think that their letter of intent when they're applying is really key. And sort of, there's many, many, many good MFA programs. So why here? What is it about Montana? What is it about our school, the structure of our school? What is it about the Northwest? You know, how is that gonna feed their work? And uh, is it the professors, is it the facilities? Is it the landscape? Landscape seems to be very, you know, it's very, very important right now. So I think that all those things sort of feed into if we're a good fit for them. And then of course we see images of their artwork and that just tells us where they are today. That visually tells us where their feet are on the ground, how their hands are moving, how their brains are thinking. You can see all that in their work. You know, you can kind of read it like a fingerprint. So I think those things, I mean, I think staying



in touch with, uh, graduate students, um, I think students do a thing where if they haven't been in touch, they feel like they can't be in touch.

**Ashby Kinch:** It's hard to break that, uh, barrier.

**Julia Galloway:** Yeah. And I'm like, oh, opposite. You know, I wanna hear from you anytime. You know, I'd love hearing what you're doing. They also often feel, graduate students often feel like if they're not currently making work, then they're failing, and that's absolutely not true. We go in and out of being extremely. and then we have quieter times, or they're having families, or they're cha--you know? So I think that, um, you never really make work again in your life like you do when you're in graduate school, where you have like 24/7 to breathe it, eat it, drink it, you know? And uh, so I think when students leave school, they sort of expect that that's how it'll be. But of course, life steps in and everybody has to do their laundry. So I think that, um, uh, I love hearing from the graduate students and some keep in touch a lot in some sort of, uh, quietly disappear and then you'll get a little email or something from time to time.

**Ashby Kinch:** Yeah. That, that line's awesome. Cuz if you're not doing your laundry, you're probably not an artist. If someone else is doing your laundry, you're probably not an artist.

**Julia Galloway:** Probably.

**Ashby Kinch:** Well, so we end every episode with what we call our quick hitters. You ready for these? These are, um, you know, kind of either/ors first, first answer, top of your head.

**Julia Galloway:** Okay.

**Ashby Kinch:** Morning or night person?

**Julia Galloway:** Uh, night.

**Ashby Kinch:** Winter or summer?

**Julia Galloway:** Winter.

**Ashby Kinch:** Sunrise or sunset?

**Julia Galloway:** Either.

**Ashby Kinch:** Either?

**Julia Galloway:** Sure.

**Ashby Kinch:** Both?

**Julia Galloway:** Either.

**Ashby Kinch:** We're in the day when it's time of year, where if you're getting up for the sunrise, it's, it's early. You're getting up early. It's kind of still the night before. And if you're staying for the sunset, it's late. Yeah. You're not getting much sleep. Uh, Yellowstone or Glacier?

**Julia Galloway:** Glacier.

**Ashby Kinch:** What's your favorite Montana River?

**Julia Galloway:** Uh, well, Clark Fork here in Charles back in Boston. I grew up in Boston.

**Ashby Kinch:** Oh, the Charles. Oh yeah. I like that.

**Julia Galloway:** Hands down.

**Ashby Kinch:** That's great. Um, did you get out on the Charles when you were young?

**Julia Galloway:** Oh, yeah. What'd you do?

**Ashby Kinch:** Well, um, I biked down the Charles to go to school every day. A couple of miles. Yeah. And then, um, I, I didn't really, Charles is kind. I didn't, no, I didn't get really get out on it. It just was, um, always present. It's there. It's like always present an anchor for that part of Boston. And it, and it, um, yeah. It's part of our identity.

**Ashby Kinch:** Totally. Yeah. Yeah. What's your favorite Montana Mountain range?

**Julia Galloway:** Oh, Montana. Uh, missions.

**Ashby Kinch:** Well, if you have a non-Montana, that's good too.

**Julia Galloway:** Um, where I grew up, there's a mountain ridge called Jacob's Ladder.

**Ashby Kinch:** Jacob's Ladder?

**Julia Galloway:** Yeah.

**Ashby Kinch:** Where is that?

**Julia Galloway:** It's in Connecticut.

**Ashby Kinch:** Oh, cool.

**Julia Galloway:** Jacob's something. Anyways, we used to climb it when I was little and you could climb up to the profile of its nose.

**Ashby Kinch:** Do you have a shadow profession? Something you kind of dreamed about doing but never did?

**Julia Galloway:** No. Uh, I always, always wanted to be an artist. Yeah. I always, yeah, I always, but looking back, there's some other things I would've been good. Do you know?

**Ashby Kinch:** Like what?

**Julia Galloway:** Like something that's difficult with a big calling, you know, like, um, like I would've loved to be on those early boats for Greenpeace. know, those early boats that would go out and watch the whaling? Even though I would've hated it, I would've sort of, that's something, I like things that are difficult and that's like a difficult thing I would've gravitated towards. Yeah. But, I don't, I don't really like being on boats, so maybe not. Um, but I think there's something about that, um, sort of pushing the envelope that would've been interesting to me.

**Ashby Kinch:** Yeah. What would your best friend say about you when asked what you were like?

**Julia Galloway:** Uh, so she would say that, uh, I'm serious and funny, often at the same time. And she would say that I'm extremely driven and that no one should take it personally if I don't show up for dinner.

**Ashby Kinch:** That's good. What's the one piece of music you would listen to for all eternity?

**Julia Galloway:** Well, I think there's two different things, and one is like, um, those Bach cello things, concertos, whatever those are like, I love those. I love that solo sort of concerto. Um, so I think that, and then I just, there's, I just love Rocket Man.

**Ashby Kinch:** Oh, wow.

**Julia Galloway:** By Elton John. I just think that song is so spacious, right? It gives you so much room to move around in. I know those are very different. But they're both sort of about space.

**Ashby Kinch:** They are, yeah. Making space. Any chance you'd sing Rocket Man?

**Julia Galloway:** No, not much.

**Ashby Kinch:** Okay. What's the voice you hear in your head when you go to sleep at night?

**Julia Galloway:** Yeah, this is such a good, it's, uh, I mean, I think there's two, right? It depends on the day. I think that sometimes I have that, um, uh, work harder, stop working hard, so hard voice that like kind of contradiction about, uh, what you're doing. Are you on the right track? Are you going somewhere? So there's sort of that voice that's like maybe when you wake up in the middle of the night voice, like the 2:00 AM like, oh, geez, that voice.

And then I would also say that the other voice would be like, oh, so if you turned that over and you looked at the other side, then what would you do on the back? And if you turn it right, so there's sort that visual voice about figuring out what my work should look like.

**Ashby Kinch:** Like when you're, when your brain is going offline, it goes into the mode of problem solving. And it's still still solving that problem.

**Julia Galloway:** You bet. Yeah. You bet.

**Ashby Kinch:** Fantastic. Yeah. Well, thank you so much for joining us on Confluence, Julia. This has been awesome.

**Julia Galloway:** That was just such a pleasure. That was just a pleasure.  
Thanks so much for having me. That was just great.