[FRESH ARTS WORKSHOP] GOAL SETTING: STRATEGIES FOR CREATIVES WITH EEPI CHAAD
This is a video transcript from a Fresh Arts Workshop: "Goal Setting: Strategies for Creatives" with Eepi Chaad which was live streamed on January 21, 2021.

Reyes Ramirez:
Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome. I'm Reyes Ramirez, I am with Fresh Arts, I am the Programs Coordinator. And today we have a very, very special treat for you. If you're here, you know what this is about, this is the virtual workshop for the "Goal Setting Strategies for Creatives".

And so if you're here, there's an inkling that you're wanting to plan for the year ahead. And I think there is something to say about how creatives kind of think about these said things, how they see the future, how they plan things out. And that's why we make it a point to host this, because we do know that ideation, formulation of those goals and plans, just doesn't come easy for some of us. I know that's not the case for me, it takes me a minute to think about things and to test them out. And so we have an amazing treat for you today. With someone we love working with, I know it's someone I love working with, and so it is Eepi Chaad. I'm gonna go ahead and read her bio real quick, just to give some time for people to come in. But also just so you know how awesome she is.

So Eepi Chaad is a practicing multidisciplinary artist, advocate, environmentalist, who tells stories using textiles, fibers, metals, places, and people. Chaad's work studies humanity's relationship to both natural and built environments through time. Chaad was selected as one of the first ever resident artist for the City of Houston by the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs, while working with an eco-art costal margin preservation nonprofit in Galveston. After taking sabbatical for a residency with the city, Chaad took her current role as director of community engagement at Art League Houston. Additionally, Chaad currently serves as part of the team of facilitators for the Art League Houston program as board vice-president for Artists for Artists, and on the steering committees for the National Guild of Community Arts Education, Creative Aging Network, as well as the Houston Museum Educators Roundtable. Eepi believes art is for every community and creativity is in every human. So I'm gonna go ahead and bring her on. How are you doing Eepi?

Eepi Chaad:
Hi, Reyes, Happy New Year!

Reyes:
Happy New Year! It is quite a year. And so I'm excited for you today. I'm gonna go ahead and let you take it away. But first things first,

we're gonna have a Q&A at the end. So go ahead and ask your questions whenever they come to you. But we're gonna get to them at the end. So just so y'all know. And another thing we want you to do is please let us know where you're watching from. We'd love to know who's tuning in, so please Eepi take it away.

Eepi:
Hi, everyone. Thank you so much for joining us on this extremely momentous week. Kind of doing a little bit of happy dancing off and on these past couple of days. But this last year has been a lot. I mean, it doesn't really matter who you are and what your life looks like. This last year has just been really special. There's light on the horizon and I'm feeling really optimistic and I'm really thrilled to start the new year, paying some attention to planning for this bright and happy new future that we have ahead of us. So let's go ahead and jump right in. So in our time together today, we are gonna discuss why goal setting is important. Sounds like a simple task, but taking it seriously can take a little bit of practice. We're also gonna discuss some strategies for setting SMART goals. We'll be working through the Fresh Arts school setting toolkit that I work with Fresh Arts on to late last year. So feel free to follow along there if you have access to it or you can grab your favorite notebook and just follow along from there. We're gonna work through it kind of quickly during this workshop. You'll have plenty of time to go back and complete and spend some time with it after the session.

So I mentioned goal setting as a practice. It really is. It's something that you get used to over time. I wasn't always an avid goal-setter, even though anyone who knows me knows that I am a habitual planner and list-maker. It took me a while, I've only really been actively writing down my goals and formatting them and tracking them for three or four years now. And it's kind of amazing to see the difference it's made to be able to track my progress. So there's a little bit of magic in writing things down. I know that the writers among us know this. Sometimes the rest of us creatives, aren't the best at writing things down. I really think that actualizing your goals sometimes comes from telling somebody about them. Telling someone, telling everyone, yelling it from the top of a mountain or the roof of your apartment building or whatever. Speaking your visions out loud can really help you hold accountable to the goals that you're setting for yourself. So you can go one step further and write them down. That makes your visions into concrete plans that you've laid for yourself. And the great thing about that is then you get to go back and see what you've done. It's really amazing to write a goal, almost kind of forget that you did it, go back a year later and say, "Oh my God, I did that in like a couple of months. I thought it would take me so long."

So how do you realize a grand vision? How do you start a big project? Well, it's planning. But what is planning really? It's taking a

project and breaking it down into a manageable to-do list. You need to make it into little chunks. So let's break goal-setting down into some simple steps. Let's talk about knowing who you are, where you're going and how to get there. Before you come up with great goals and a serious plan of action, I think it's really important to do a little bit of self-assessment here and there. The world's a pretty quickly changing place, more than ever now. And we are busy and complicated beings that are constantly growing and changing as well. So it's good to do a regular check-in with yourself, see where you are.

So let's talk about that first step. Let's talk about knowing yourself. So who are you and what do you want? I mean, I'm not the same person I was a year ago and I want surprisingly different things than I did a year ago. So let's play a little game together. If you've got your toolkit, you can write this into the toolkit or your notebook or grab a piece of paper. What I'd like you to do is take a moment to think about you and who you are. And describe yourself in 10 simple terms. Now, when you're doing this be specific. Are you a creative? If you're a creative, what does that mean? Are you an artist? A visual artist? Are you a musician? You're a writer. Are you an actor? A dancer? A tightrope walker? All of the above. Are you a parent? What about the chefs out there, or just a foodie that aspires to be a chef one day? Or a runner? Do you love ice cream? Maybe don't write the ice cream one down, unless you're really, really serious about your ice cream. I'll go ahead and share my list with you. And like I said, this has changed over time. And especially after this last year, a few of the additions to my list are not unexpected, but I've realized those things about me over this last year, where we found different ways to engage with one another.

So my list right now has artist, advocate, environmentalist, you heard all that in my bio. Here's the one that really clicked for me this year. Connector. And I don't think that that's something that wasn't true before, but I see it in myself now. Collaborator, organizer, naturalist, wanderer, foodie and friend. I think it's nice to do this every now and again. Just give yourself a little bit of time to think about how you see yourself and what's important to you. It really does change over time. Now, if you've gotten through your 10 terms, great, if not, you can come back and finish up your list later. So now that we know who we are, let's talk a little bit about who makes us, or what makes us who we are? What are your values? What are the things about you that you hold dear and that make you proud to be who you? Are you dependable? Are you adventurous? Are you particularly trustworthy? So let's give ourselves a moment to think about what values drive us? What values other people can appreciate in us? And what values are the building blocks of who we are? I'll share mine with you. And I always have a hard time thinking about these values in words. So give yourself plenty of time. Think about this over the rest of the day. Think about it for the rest of the week. My list right now, honest, dependable, determined, loyal, productive, efficient,

independent. I have optimistic, dedicated and curious. Curious is a new addition this year. But overall, I would say the list of values that you hold dear, don't change as much as the identifiers, how you see yourself. Our lives fluctuate, but who we are at the core kind of stays the same and you just build on that over time.

So the next one is really fun. We know who we are, we know what we stand for. Let's talk about what vision of success looks like for you. I mean, it's different for every person. I mean, your vision of success could include having a family. It could include having a really successful studio practice. Your vision could include owning your own business, or it could be having an active lifestyle. It could be yearly vacations. And specific vacations, you could say you wanna do one vacation in the mountains, one on a beach every year. I'm not gonna limit you to 10 things to put on your list of successes, because you can just kind of keep going with that. Be as specific as you want, be as broad as you want. This is all about you and how you see your life in the perfect, happy version of itself. I've been thinking a lot about my success list, and I will share that once a year, I take some time at the beginning of the year and in this particular notebook write down all of my successes for the year. And sometimes there are things that I would put on the list prior to the year that I was aiming for. And sometimes just cool things happen, and I realized, "Oh, wow, that is something that I see as a marker of success." I have a new addition to my vision of success. It's new to 2021, I'm really excited about it. I'll go ahead and say, it's a little bit of a long-term goal. I have recently been somewhat obsessed with the idea of doing like a long through trek and if I could pick a place, I kind of wanna trek the Great Wall of China. I don't know why my brain has been in that place, but now that it's on there, I don't think it'll come off my list of success. I think it's just gonna have to happen. So take your time and keep adding to that list of successes as we go.

So we know who we are, what we want, now, let's talk about getting to that vision of success. Think of your life's journey and goal setting as a roadmap to that life's journey. So why is goal setting important? I mean, it seems like a simple thing to do. You set a goal, you think of an idea, wait for it to happen. I think that making goal setting a practice makes you look at the steps to the goal in a more realistic way. Goal setting really does help trigger new behaviors. If you say that you're going to finish x number of works by the end of the year, and you set that as a goal. Then you can start to put in practice a certain amount of time on a weekly basis to put towards your practice. If your goal is say buying a new home, well, then you can start the process of searching and planning if you need to downsize. But it gives you a way to move forward. It also helps you guide your focus. Is the goal that you're setting important to you? Do you need to put more of your resources and energy towards that goal? It also helps you keep moving. Sustaining momentum is really important to our productivity, to our general happiness. And in this moment, I'm really

speaking to us as creatives. We all know that that motion and that output is really important to the way that we function as people. It also really helps you with a sense of confidence when you reach your goals. It's the sense of having done well, an achievement, and that's worth its weight in gold, makes you feel great.

So what kind of, or how do you begin to set goals? So there's a system called SMART goals, and I'm sure some of you are familiar with this, or have tried this in the past. SMART goals are just a great way to set yourself up for success. It's the idea of taking a vision, an idea, a goal, and really assessing whether it's gonna work for you and it will help you build that action plan. So what does smart stand for? Smart stands for specific. So specific mean rather than saying, "Well, I want a successful practice." Maybe you rethink that and say, "I want a self-sustaining business model for my studio practice." Being very specific.

Measurable. So I'm gonna stick with the studio practice example here. So measurable. How will you know that your studio practice is successful? How do you gauge that? Maybe that means when you're covering all of your overhead and turning a profit in the studio practice, maybe it's something like working on a specific direction. Like you want a very specific residency and working on your studio practices, building up your portfolio of work to get to that residency. So we're thinking measurable is something that you can pin down and add to like a to-do list.

So the next one is attainable. That's I think a really important one to always keep in mind. I always think like, is it attainable? What does that mean? Well, I have an active imagination. I have visions of being some sort of space princess that has like an intergalactic unicorn. That's not really realizable though. So that would be nixed off my SMART goal list, unless I can figure out some fantastic art project that does actually get me an intergalactic unicorn. It's maybe possible.

Relevant is the next one. Relevant is thinking about how your goal is going to help you achieve your bigger picture of success. Does that goal fit into your hopes for your future? Is it something that will help build your practice, build your personal network, build your financial stability? Is it actually relevant to your life or is it just a random one-off? And relevance is really important when you're thinking about prioritizing the amount of effort that you're putting towards a goal. I mean, 'cause we're all really busy people and I don't think any of us have a lot of extra time to just kind of throw around and say, "I'm making sure that we're really focusing our efforts in places that will help us long-term is always important."

And then the last one. Making sure your goal is time-based. This one's pretty important too. And it kind of comes back to the measurable part

of the SMART goal system. So going back to that studio practice example. If I'm coming up with a time-based goal for a successful studio practice, I could look at that by saying, "Well, I want my studio practice to be fully sustainable by the end of 2021." And then at the end of 2021, you can decide whether you did it or not. If you're working towards that residency, maybe it's a matter of saying, "Well, I want that residency in the summer of 2022." And then you'll know if you hit that goal or not. Now, I wanna take a moment to talk about the time-based portion of SMART goal setting. It's important to give yourself leeway. Life changes, things come up. Let's say you aimed for that residency in 2022, and something happens and you have to push it back. Don't consider that anything, it's not that you haven't succeeded, it's okay to edit, it's okay to shift, it's okay to continuously change along with our lives.

So go back and look at that and say, "Well, 2022 is not happening, I can make it 2023, 2024." You can always shift your goals. You can also decide as you're working towards something, coming back to relevance, that that goal made a lot of sense for you when you wrote it, three or four years ago. But you're in a new place in your life. And that goal is no longer relevant. Well, you can shift that goal. It's not failure. Being able to edit and move forward efficiently in your own life is a success.

Setting SMART goals really just comes down to a simple system that helps you come up with plans that are realistic and attainable. And lets you kind of break things down into chunks and kind of think about how you want to move forward. Kind of now thinking about my intergalactic unicorn friend, and maybe I will come up with a project that will work that into a goal. So let's talk about creating some goals and thinking about it in a time-based way. We're gonna start big picture. Give yourself a minute, think about where you are, what you want, who you are. Think about the things that you were thinking about when we created our list of visions of success. And think about something that you would like to achieve in the next five years.

We're just give everyone a second to look inside themselves. Does everyone have an idea? Does anyone out there want to share their ideas and the comments for their five-year goals? I bet a lot of the people that are joining us for this workshop probably already have a five-year goal. So now we're gonna break down our five-year goal. This'll be a little exercise of breaking the goal down into smaller tastier chunks that we can work with. So first off, write down that five-year goal, in the toolkit, on a piece of paper, on Post-it Note, write it down, make it real. Be specific when you're writing down that five-year goal. Think about who, in addition to you, who's involved in that goal? What's the outcome? When do you want to have this happen? We're saying five years, but you may have an idea of a specific time that the school needs to happen for you. Where does it happen? So this could be something to do with your creative practice. It could be a

solo show. It could be choreographing a piece. It could be buying a home. It could be finding the perfect studio space for yourself. It could be pursuing another degree. It could be anything. But think big picture something that would be really big for you in life. So write it down. I'm going to write down my serious through trek, whether it be to the Great Wall of China or not. That's my five-year goal. And I'll say part of that this last year, I think everyone worked a lot.

So one thing I started 2021 with, was a promise to myself, to eek out time, to just relax and enjoy. And hiking is one of my happy places, so that five-year goal feeds back into my own sense of wellness. So it can be business-related, it can be practice related, it can be family-related, it can be something that just nourishes your soul. So once you've got that five-year goal written down, think about it for a minute. Think about all the things that go into getting to that five-year goal. What are the steps? What might you need to do? How can you break that big project into smaller projects? So now I want you to write down two goals that you can work on with a three-year span. For me, thinking about doing a extensive hike, I probably need to get my endurance up. I'm hoping that the plan is to schedule some semi extensive hikes in the next couple of three years to get myself ready. So that's one of my three-year goals. Another three-year goal for me, I have this grand idea of this long through hike, but probably need to figure out what supplies I need for that and start to accumulate that.

So my other three-year goal is to build out a proper pack so that I can go out into the wilderness and actually be prepared for what I'm getting myself into. So give yourself a minute and think about that three years or three year span and what you need to do? What are those smaller projects that you can work on? Now, everyone's got their three-year goal. And if you haven't jotted down your three-year goals, it's okay. Take your time with it. So I give you a three-year goals, either on paper or simmering back here. Let's break it down even further and let's get to 2021, let's focus on this year. What are two things, two goals that you can set for yourself for 2021. Now, keep in mind that you want these two goals to feed into that bigger picture of your five-year goals. How can these goals, and these goals can be individual projects, individual ideas, that still feed into your bigger picture of success.

So think about that shorter term. What can you do this year? And remember we're gonna be specific, we're looking at specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and the time-based is already built into this exercise. We're doing five, three and one year. So give yourself a second and think about that. Write down one goal if you can't think of two, you can come back and add in the other one. If you've got seven goals you wanna write down 'cause you're just skilling really on it today, great, go for it. I don't know what my one-year goals will be if I'm thinking bigger picture of doing a three-year hike. I mean, I'll say last year was probably one of the

more sedentary years I've had personally. So maybe my one-year goal needs to be getting on some sort of regimen where I'm taking a hike once a week, just to get my endurance built up, before I go on that semi epic three-year hike. Now, that we've kind of talked about the five, three and one year goal, let's take a second. We're gonna go back through and you don't have to do this in this moment. You can take your time and do this later, but it's really important to analyze your goals using these questions and you'll find these in the toolkit. So how does the goal, whether it be your five or your three or your one-year goal, how does that goal fit into your bigger picture of success?

Now, as we've been walking through this, I've mentioned making sure that your three-year goal helps your five-year goal, your one-year goal, helps your three-year goal, but let's talk like big picture, your life, who you are, where you wanna be? How does this fit into your picture of success? For me personally, I think the trek would be, it would fit into my picture of success, because work-life balance is really important to me and something that I struggle with pretty regularly. So being able to put that time aside for myself and really do something purely just for me would be huge, big, good habit to build. So think about all your goals again. What tools and assets do you already have to get you to this goal? I will be the first to admit that sometimes I come up with projects or ideas for pieces and rather than go through my studio and look for existing materials or stop to think about who in my network might have a specific tool that I could just borrow for the weekend so that I could get something done. I go straight to shopping for random tools and supplies on the internet. So that when something that I have to stop myself and think about a lot. What do I already have at my fingertips? What can I make work for me that is already easily accessible. But I mean, I told you before, I like making lists and planning, and I think that shopping for supplies is just part of that weird mania.

Now, going back to SMART goal bullet points, is it attainable? So let's think about what complications, what hurdles could come up as you work towards these goals that you've written down. It could be, I'm thinking, in my case, if I'm looking at doing a long through hike, I could hurt myself doing one of the shorter hikes. Like how would I get around that? I would have to figure out how to rehabilitate myself. Another possible hurdle if I'm talking about doing a really long through hike is taking time off of work or taking time out of life. So that's something when I'm thinking about that five-year goal, I'm already thinking about like how long would I go? Would I be gone for a month? How would I juggle my schedule? How do I start planning now for a month off five years from now, in some ways that sounds crazy, but I mean, time passes so quickly. So think about what hurdles you could run into and how you would troubleshoot, how you would solve that problem when it comes up. I'm thinking if your goal is working on a big installation project, the hurdle could be finding the right

space, so that you can work on your piece. That might go back to like, what do you have at your disposal? Do you know people in your network that have access to space that aren't using it? Do you know someone who has a huge warehouse space that has nothing in it? Can you reach out to them? Thinking of if your goal is the residency, what hurdle could you run into scheduling? What if the residency is not available at the time that you can take time off? Can you reach out to them and explain your schedule and see if they can work with you? Sometimes it's nice to, if you have a contingency plan, when things go kind of squirrely, it's not that stressful, because you already have a basic plan of attack to get around it.

And the last question, this is the like getting things, moving question, what are the action steps? What's the first step you need to take towards that goal? For my goal of a trek, I probably just need to start like getting on a regimen of walking x number of miles every day and trying to incrementally get that x number higher and higher. And I promise I will do check-ins on the internet. Let y'all know if I actually make it to the Great Wall of China, because I will be thrilled if I could make this happen. Very happy.

Now, like I said, you should take your time with this, I've kind of breezed through the toolkit today. It's your life. These are big decisions and big projects that you're thinking about. So take your time with this, think about it, sleep on it, come back to it. What I will say, I would really urge you to write it down, writing it down, just makes such a big difference. Make sure that you are sticking to assessing using the SMART goal system, specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-based. It's really helpful, gets you out of your head. We're all creatives with really big ideas. You gotta break down those ideas so you can actually get going with them. And I think that really, really helps me personally, to break apart a project and actually get moving, instead of just kind of marveling at the weight of a large project.

Now, I asked in this workshop for you to do one five-year, two three-year, or two one-year, I said, as many goals as you want, as long as they're realizable, as long as they're realistic, there's no such thing as too many. So visiting the goals that I've written down over the years has been such an amazing moment. I remember the first time I really dug into writing my goals down was actually through artistic with Fresh Arts. And they went through the program and there are exercises where you take some time and you write your goals down. And I did it and I kind of put them away just on a shelf with all the other notebooks that I have, 'cause if you haven't guessed, I maybe have way too many notebooks. And they came back to 'em maybe six months later, something came up and I just needed to review the material. And I was shocked that I had knocked off a couple of the goals already. Came back a year later and looked at those goals again. And I had knocked out not only some of my one-year goals, three-year

goals, I had knocked out several, like two of my five-year goals. Did not expect that at all and I really think it came from holding myself accountable. I'd put it down on paper. I knew that it existed out there, and going back and getting to scratch that off, with that nice line through it and like a check mark next to it, was such a feeling of success. I mentioned earlier that I also see my success inventory once a year. I would invite all of you to try that, especially this year. I think that last year 2020 was very special. And we all have a lot of weight that we're carrying from that. Take a minute and congratulate yourself for all the work that you did. 'Cause I know all of us did a ton of work and did amazing things and we're getting through it.

So give yourself a moment, write down the amazing things that happened in your work life, in your creative life, in your personal life, could be as simple as like you planted your garden and it actually took, great, that's a success, write it down, celebrate it. I would invite you to do that this year and do it in future years too. But this year more than ever, we need to take time to give ourselves a break and give ourselves a pat on the back. Well, that is it for the workshop portion of our workshop. We're gonna switch over to Q&A now.

Reyes:
Yo, thank you so much. That was great. I think the thing that I struggle most with, yeah, with goals is like, yeah, I just keep them in my head. And I think I'm just used to kind of like the urgency of things, where like, "I need to get this done. I need to get this done." And there is something to be said of just sitting down and actually like playing these things out and writing them down. And so thank you so much for saying all that. As far as questions, please, if you have a question, put it in the comments. I do definitely wanna address the issue with the toolkit. Some of you couldn't download it. In the middle of the workshop, we emailed everyone with the toolkit and then you can also download it here. It's in the comment section of YouTube. So I think you can click on that to go to the link, but in case you can't see it, it's right here. So also wanna give a quick shout out to Huntsville and Portland. People are tuning in from Huntsville and Portland. We appreciate y'all sharing this space with us. And so I guess while we wait for some questions to come in, I guess my question for you Eepi is, so engaging one to five-year plans I guess do they all have to kind of lead up to each other or are there just some things that you just need a year to complete? So for me, for example, like my five-year plan would probably include, like my one-year plan would probably be like, all right, I wanna work on this manuscript. So I'm a writer and we'll work on this manuscript. The three-year project is to edit, have the book fully edited. And the five-year plan would be to have it published. But then there are just some things where I'm like, I don't know, I wanna curate an art exhibition. And I'm gonna put it for one year, but it might not happen. And so for you, how do you prioritize those goals?

Eepi:
It's so personal. And I guess it depends on how you approach your practice. I definitely leave like room each year for a certain number of proposals that may just come up throughout the year, for like open calls for shows. And those are things that sometimes you know that it's gonna happen on an annual basis and you can plan ahead and say, "Well, like three years from now, I wanna do that show. Sometimes you have no idea, a new call is gonna come up. So I think that, I keep room in that one year, I try not to pack the one year too tight. And I definitely don't have like 25-year goals, I've like three or four. And I find that those five-year goals, especially when if it's like a self-imposed five years that you've put on it, sometimes you'll like, knock them out before you know it, because you've thrown it out there. I know I've had that happen with like residency projects. I think I had that down as a five-year and then within a year and a half it happened, it just worked itself out. It was the right time, the right place. I see a question about how much possibility do you build into your plan? Do you find yourself revising it along the way to your goal? Yes, yes. I definitely think that especially with bigger projects that are broken into chunks and I'll speak specifically to the creative end of this, because we are all creatives. I always have really great ideas about how I'm gonna fulfill a project and I will break it down and come up with all of these steps and outline things and halfway through it, we'll realize that column three makes no sense. I think it's really important to be able to scrap things and say that didn't work, let me reassess, and let me figure out what really does work for that individual project. And it's really important when you're editing, not to think it doesn't take away from like you getting closer to success. It's just things change, especially in the creative world, things change a lot. You can have things planned, especially if you're working with other people and something happens and you have to like change directions, change gears really quickly. But yeah, I think flexibility's good. I think that if you stay really rigid, then you're gonna get frustrated with the process. And the idea of setting goals is not to keep yourself in a box and just say like, I have to, blinders on move forward. It's more of a way to just continue to keep yourself accountable so that you are moving forward and you're being able to track that you're moving forward.

Reyes:
Yeah, I think in line with this question, again, I guess I'll speak to my experiences as a writer. I think a few years ago I had like this goal of like, I want my chapbook of poems to be picked up and published. That's my goal for this year. And then I would keep doing it, and I'd almost keep accomplishing it, but at the end of the year, it didn't happen. And it was very easy for me to be frustrated myself, but then I was like, "But wait a minute, I finished a whole, like

chapbook, I can now just build this into like a bigger book." And so even though quote unquote, it did not happen, or like, I guess I would say quote unquote, it failed, but that's the thing it's kind of like, I still had that building block there to jump from. So yeah, things that were out of my hand, I guess, oppressed not picking it up, is out of my hands. But what is in my hands is to kind of expand the project or to turn it into a three-year project.

Eepi:
Yeah, and you bring up a really good point of how we can shift our goals to be bigger, better goals sometimes. I definitely found during, at the beginning of quarantine, I had plans for a lot of things that fell through, but had a show that was meant to open in-person at the beginning of the summer and the city was on lockdown. So it wasn't a question of like, well, maybe we can make this happen. There was just no having it happen. So I was a little disappointed for like a hot second and I was like, "Well, put a lot of work into that, guess I'm just gonna..." And before I could even get to the point of like, I guess I'll just like put a pin in it, decided that we were gonna look at it a different way and ended up just shifting the entire project to a virtual setting. And I can tell you like the changes that happen from our plans for the in-person show to the virtual setting, like it exploded into something so much more magical than it would have been if we had just gone through with our original plan. I think having the ability to just like shift and move made for something really great. Like I'm so glad that happened, but I never would have planned for it.

Reyes:
Sometimes, it's the journey, not the destination, man. So we've got another question from Reyna Collura: "How do you figure out your maximum number of goals or know how much is realistic? Speaking as someone who tends to click projects ends up juggling 10 to 20 big goals at one time."

Eepi:
I don't think there's too many. I just think you need to like prioritize how many you can handle. Like you can have 10 goals, but actively be working on three, because you know that's like the capacity you have at the time. And then passively be working on the other ones. If an opportunity comes up, you can like shift it up in priority. I don't think there's such a thing as having too many, if given the right timeframe capacity that are attainable, I mean, having ideas is great. I really do think it's just prioritizing. Like what can you get done? And that goes back to what do you have at your disposal at the moment? What materials, what tools, what people do you have to help you realize those goals? If you've got two amazing, great projects, and one of them you're gonna have to like go buy a whole bunch of new staff, spend money out of pocket and hire people. And another one you have people in your life who'd wanna collaborate with you and you already have all the materials, well, prioritize that one.

Another way to look at that is like, who are you collaborating with?
And can they help provide resources? I mean, I think like as
creatives, we all have that the problem, but it's not a problem, it's
actually kind of like what we do. We come up with a million ideas and
if we stop having ideas, then no, I feel like the world would stop if
people like us didn't keep coming up with amazing thoughts.

Reyes:
Yeah, to add to that, I think sometimes there is this is quote by Zora
Neale Hurston, who said, "Some years bring questions and some years
bring answers." And it's kind of like, yeah, sometimes, you'll have
those 10 goals. And then as you're doing, you're prioritizing those
top three or five, you might actually find that those top three or
five facilitate the success of the other five. 'Cause I don't know,
sometimes I have this like insane idea of like, I'm gonna get into
shape and lose like 20 pounds. But maybe at the end of the year, I
didn't accomplish that. But if I still instituted like a regimen of
like, "Oh, I still did like stretches every other day." That's just
better than nothing. It was better than not doing anything. And so
like, no, I did not lose those 20 pounds, that was one of my 10 goals,
but in a way it still counts, it still contributed to that and I can
build off of that knowledge. So we have another question from Angel
Quesada: "To piggyback on Reyna, how much is learning to say no, do
you have a philosophy regarding what projects to drop? I think for the
most part, people are able to understand that things take time."

Eepi:
Yeah. I'm such a big believer in saying no to things, I could go off
on, that could be a whole workshop, just like saying no to things. I
think especially, and I'm gonna speak to this more particularly to
what we all dealt with over the last year. I think that it's really
important to know your own capacity, and not, I mean, there's good
pushing, and then there's pushing yourself too hard for no reason and
there is time. If I don't feel like I have enough support, and that
specific to the goal of the project, I'm more likely to say no to it.
If I have to go out of my way to build the support network around a
project, if it's not something. And it's much to what you were just
speaking to Reyes, I mean, there's a time and a place for things to
kind of like coalesce. If it's not happening, just put it to the side
and move on to something that can happen. You can always go back to
it. I'm not a big believer in like, I don't know, continuing and
continuing and spinning the wheel if it's just not going anywhere.

Reyes:
Yeah. I'll also say that usually, I guess there's a difference in
terms of like saying no, I think kind of like a deeper, or like
another way to look at as like, who are you saying no to? Are you
saying no to someone who's asking you for something? Or are you saying
no to yourself? And so I guess for me if someone says, "Hey, let's say
if five people ask me, 'Oh, hey, can you sit on this panel?'" And

they're all in the month of February, but I made a goal for myself to, I dunno, like work on this project, then it's sorta like, what's most important to me? Who am I saying no to? Am I saying no to this organization? Or am I gonna say no to myself? And so I guess that's another way that helps me of kind of saying like when to say no.

Eepi:
Yeah. I kind of ran into this over, right before the holidays at the end of last year. I had committed to myself and to a partner that I'd been working with that we would pick up a project. And the goal that we had set was to pick up and create new work before the end of the year. I was burnt out, like if you had seen me at the end of November, beginning of December, I was just tired. So that was to say no to myself and also saying no to the partner that I'm working with. And it felt really good to take that pressure off. And like I had the creative output, like we could have done it, but it felt really good to just say like, "No, I'd rather not, we'll come back to it. It's still gonna be there." It felt very indulgent. And I ended the year, I think on a better note for taking a little bit of time for myself.

Reyes:
Yeah, and sometimes I actually have the opposite problem where it's like, I don't get enough nos. Where it's like I'll just say this, in terms of like grants or like a queries, and putting things out there, you might plan a lot of seeds, but it doesn't mean they're all gonna grow. And so like this last year, I applied to a bunch of stuff and maybe only one or two things said yes to me. And so like, yeah, it wasn't maybe accomplished certain goals that I set, but the ones that I did, some of the goals I was able to work on, I worked on really well, because I appreciate them that much more, now I had more time to dedicate to those things. And so yeah, I would say that. It seems like we're out of questions. Is there, I guess, anything else that you wanna mention? I guess we can talk about the peer lab.

Eepi:
Yeah, yeah.

Reyes:
That's happening next week, with the time we have left. What is something that you're gonna wanna build upon with peer lab?

Eepi:
Well, what I'd love to do for everyone who joins us for peer lab, is invite everyone to go through those five, three, and one year goals and kind of work through those questions. How does it fit into that bigger picture? What do you already have access to as far as resources? What could you need to troubleshoot and what your next action steps are, go through those for all of those goals. And then we'll have just a open forum discussion, and we can talk through some of those goals. I'd love to talk through, especially the

troubleshooting portion and the resources portion. I think sometimes when you're thinking about what resources you have access to yourself, you can have your own personal blinders on and talking it through with other people helps me at least personally realize, "Oh, wait, I have access to all of these people and all of these things that I'm just not thinking about, because I'm so like my optically thinking about this project." So we'll be able to talk through all of that. And so kind of really excited to see and just hear what other people's goals are moving forward. Go ahead.

Reyes:
Sorry, yeah, I will say that it's gonna be more intimate. The peer lab, it's gonna be kind of like a Zoom room. So you're gonna be able to have conversation and feedback and all that good stuff. So yeah, I think hearing other people's goals, I think sometimes inspires me, especially in terms of how they accomplish those things. Yeah, so sometimes it is like, you just don't know who has access to what or who knows something that you don't know. And so sometimes is like, yeah, as you said, speaking into existence, one aspect is for you, but sometimes it can also be for other people. 'Cause if you hear someone else speak something to existence, that might give you a...

Eepi:
I love when people come to me to like work through ideas, it's such a great exercise, being able to have that conversation with another person. I'm like, yes, bring me all of your thoughts, we'll work through it, we'll turn it into bullet points, we will make this work. But yeah, I always feel like I walk away from those conversations with a lot. Also anyone who's coming to the peer lab next week, I would really invite you to take that second to do your success inventory from last year. And I'm not gonna ask everyone to share their entire success inventories, but I think it would just be a lovely moment for everyone to share something that they felt really good about from 2020 to kick us off.

Reyes:
Yeah. If you do, if you're on social media and you post anything about your goals, use the hashtag #FreshArtsFreshStart. 'Cause we love to know what people are working on. We love to know if people are working on certain things, we can formulate a workshop or a toolkit around that. And if like a bunch of people said they wanna do podcasts, we'll be more than happy to do like a podcast workshop and all that good stuff. Just as an example, it can be any number of things. And so on that note, thank you so much, Eepi, it's always a pleasure to hear you and your mind at work. Thank you so much for everything that you do. I'll see you around, I'll see you next week.

Eepi:
See you next week. And I hope to see a lot of you next week too.

Reyes:
All right, bye, everyone.