

## Episode 35 – Obelia Exum

THE MICHAEL EURE SHOW PODCAST

INTRODUCTION: Hello, this is Michael Eure and I'd like to invite you to the Michael Eure Show featuring student hosts and very special guests talking about a variety of interesting topics. You can find us on the Eagle Stream YouTube channel.

MICHAEL EURE: Okay. Well, we're live.

So, Obelia, we're have some technical difficulties, even though we tried to avoid them. So, we're gonna start from the beginning.

If you don't mind, tell us a little bit about yourself. I know that you are a, we're gonna get to what you do at the museum, but before we do that. Growing up in Goldsboro North Carolina.

OBELIA EXUM: I grew up in Goldsboro, North Carolina. Graduated from Goldsboro High School. I consider myself to be a sort of a small-town rural girl that grew up in a local county and I'll share with you some of the things that I did was I'll never forget my years of working at the pickle plant. I never forget [indecipherable] going into tobacco fields.

I eventually got a job working for the state, you know, sort of at it [indecipherable.]

But the only reason I tell you those things is because that helped me to become who it is that I am today. So, I'm saying, and then I cleaned houses. So, my mom did it and she kind of passed it on to me and I helped to do that with women that she knew.

So, there's a lot of things that I did growing up in Goldsboro. I kind of look at it as my learning experience.

And so, there, and I'll go into the next phase when you want me to.

EURE: Right. So, now what I want you to talk about is your experiences at Wayne Community College and how it prepared you for North Carolina A&T and NC State, perhaps?

EXUM: Yeah. Wayne Community. Yeah, I consider Wayne community to be my base. I love Wayne community and right now love Wake Tech because I am a product of that.

And I believe and I love telling that experience that Wayne Community really was, became my gives me the backbone, because it really is sort of like with the root of where I started. Where my house is being built and I can put it like that.

So, again, Wayne Community and they began to connect me and help me begin to believe in myself as I should.

How did they do that? Well, they gave me tutoring classes and counseling classes and classes to help me gain strength and momentum to be prepared to become a professional in life.

So, I was in their college transfer classes. I took that and I enjoyed it while I was there. Went there a couple of years and as I say, they're kind of my backbone from the very beginning.

EURE: Right. And that that kind of connects to our ILC, Individualized Learning Center, where they do the tutoring. And I know they do a great job.

Now when you went to A&T and you majored in art, how did you decide you wanted to major in art? Is that something you discovered while you were at Wayne?

EXUM: Yeah, I have an older sister and older sisters, and some of you viewing may know one of my sisters had passed. But I'm from a big family and I should have said that in the beginning. There was seven of us, and I'm one of the younger three.

So, how did I start? I took, my sister would see me drawing and would see me copying text. Um, I would say that and my mom would see me as well. So, I would do

these little collages where I copy text and I was also doing just drawings of people, of cartoons, of anything that I could. And believe it or not, I was a very quiet young lady and so, I really did not even speak hardly. I just if, had I been in your presence. I would have been there with the drawing pad. I would have been there with some, finding some words to write. And I'm pretty much sure I would have been there with a pencil.

And so, my mom and my sister decided, my mom decided... since she sort of did some peddling stockings and odd things on the street. She said, I don't want you to be an artist because they're not gonna make any money. I see them on the street all the time.

And my oldest sister, who's about 20 years older, had left and gone off to college. And she was like, mom, she can, there's another area she can go into, and my mom went well, she's not going to be an artist because they're not making any money. They're just all hanging on the street trying to sell a painting.

So, I became a, my mom actually was instrumental in talking me into going into art education and my sister pushed for, so, to speak, graphic design. She didn't know that's what that was.

And my mom said, at least if you go into art education, if you wanna be an artist, you can kinda do a show, but you can also teach and make money. That's sort of my story with my family.

EURE: That makes sense. And you were involved in other things that A&T, I'm gonna get to NC State. But you were in the gospel choir and got to meet some celebrities, I understand.

Go ahead.

EXUM: Yeah.

I'm, yeah... Shirley Chisholm is one of the ones I remember meeting. But as soon as I get this, I came from that little rural town and I'm going up to the big city of Greensboro. I didn't know until about a year ago. My brother tells me that my mom

was like, this is my last baby leaving home. I don't want her to go, so, I must have stayed with my mom until I had parents, like grandparents. So, they were well in their 60s.

So, anyway, I went up to the big city of Greensboro after I left Wayne Community College. And by the way, I wanna say Wayne Community helped me with my math. I became a like Ooh, wow, I could teach it now.

So, I completely, I tested out of it completely A&T State University. That helped my confidence as well and they had some great tutoring at Wayne Community. I just have to say that.

So, I went on to transfer to North Carolina A&T State University, and I joined the gospel choir while I was there. That was one of my other activities and with a lot of gospel groups.

I'm gonna go back just a little bit. I was in a gospel group at home. We always had our food clubs with my mom, so, I did a lot of mission work before I even got up there. In a lot of the mission clubs she was in.

Once I got, and then I'm from a singing family and a family that does instruments. So, I left there and I went to A&T and I got and I joined the gospel choir. And joining the gospel I got to travel and a lot of times we got to see politicians on campus and Shirley Chisholm was one of the ones that I got to see. [indecipherable]

EURE: Thank you. Because it's Women's History Month. So, that's very, very good.

And we will say A&T's founding was March the 9th and it was also the International Day of Women. And now you are the international woman we got.

So, now we want you to go into your experiences at NC State and through all of this, where you and any ways a minority woman, student, female student, or was it just standard?

EXUM: No, I just have to tell you, you know, I believe Wayne Community played its role, you know, in just giving me the grit that I needed to and just the strength that I needed, and the character I needed to move on to A&T because I took counseling there as well.

And once I got to AT&T, they really helped me to bond with African Americans and, you know, truly have that experience. It's nothing like being an Aggie, you know that. And I know that. Homecoming all the experience of being in the parade, all of it, games, everything.

So, I was in that gospel with the gospel group and leaving there, I went to NC State University, believe it or not, with at least nine, I wanna think 10 African American students. And once we got there, I believe that most of the students, I went to school of design, and you know leaving NC&AT and going to NC State and I'm going to get my master's there, was definitely kind of a culture shock.

I was like, okay, and going into that School of Design program, which everybody has to fit into the School of Design program mode, they just have to.

So, experiencing that and go on with students, 10 students with me. All 10 or 9, maybe I made the 10<sup>th</sup>, of them quit and said this isn't for me. I can't stay here and believe it or not, about five of them went. You're gonna be able to stay here. You're gonna be the one to make it for us.

They put the burden on me, but the integration of getting there and then just trying to live in that community or even talk to the students, I will never forget my school design experience.

Because what I found was as after I, the fear left me, and there was like I am afraid, and I believe we all were afraid. After I worked through some of that, because I never went to counseling there that school.

But I began, some of the students began to reach out to me as they, as I was in courses with them, studio courses, and began to reach out to me.

And they began to show me how to do things. One of my best friends was a dude from the military and he sat down with me. And you know, this is after you get past the point of I'm shocked everybody in here is white and there's not one other black graphic designer in this room with me. Oh yes.

Oh yes, and I had my experience there helped to shape me in every area that I am because being at NC State, that's when my parents died as well, passed on as well. Um, there was that fear. But I began to, when the students reached out to me, I reached out back. That was just a moment of, I believe you. They, I began to understand them.

I believe they began to connect with me and I really became a friends well with them. But it took a while to get used to that because we're used to, I wanna say the black experience. And then you're feeling as though many of the professors don't have your background. Don't understand your background and are not gonna be sensitive to your needs, so, I did have a not so, good experience there when my parents passed. And I did have someone to say to me, well, why are things happening with you and totally insensitive.

And I began to, I'm glad I didn't let that help, cause me to believe that all, you know, white Americans were like that. And so, I laugh now because I have friends who would say, oh my God, I can't believe you, of course, she said that. She's this way.

And so, I start laughing because I began to understand that they were experiencing difficulties as I was. But I didn't, I'm not gonna go into the depth of what that made me feel, when my parents both, one died in August and next when died in September. I had to drop out and get myself together and I came back and I remember some of the negative talk that was happening when I left.

And then I also had folks to reach out to. So, it was, you know, it was a great time and it was a sad time. Every time I go to NC State, it's like my parents would want me to finish at NC State and get my degree in graphic design.

EURE: Okay. And that was a good, good story and a segue because we don't now see some of the work you do and graphic design there at the museum. And I do

appreciate your talking about A&T because it is the largest HBCU in North Carolina and Wake Tech is the largest Community College. So, we wanna connect that way as well. In fact, A&T is the largest HBCU in the nation.

But this is a picture of you and the African American Cultural Celebration design that you did. Tell us a little bit about that.

EXUM: Yeah, that was in my mind. I'm sure Emily Grant may be on his. Like oh, my last year with Emily Grant. I love that spirits there because we just began to come together. It's like oh there's his African American [indecipherable] graphic designer down there. And I just became a part of the African American Cultural Celebration team and that was that was really so, wonderful.

20/20 vision of 400 year Legacy I'm trying to reveal, but okay what was the...

EURE: That was the Earl Ijames kind of revelation of celebrating 400 years since 1619. It was a great design you did though.

EXUM: Yeah, I felt like they my idea there was if I could just sort of get the sash cause I wanted it to really be really graphic. And this is the banner that goes outside.

So, my idea there was to get the patterns and get the graphic and get, actually this is the first time I've really used the Kente cloth actually in the words.

And so, yeah, I wanted it to look embroidered, that sort of thing.

And so, this is really, I believe my first time ever using that Kente cloth pattern in there and using, of course, we, the 2020 and that discussion with African American Cultural Celebration everything is discussed.

So, I'm, every word up here with that vision, and we're talking about that 400 legacy. Is thematic and it's just thoroughly in the with the AACC.

EURE: And for the audience you don't know Obelia is like official graphic designer for the African American Cultural Celebration planning group and for that whole celebration, which is big. And Wake Tech participates.

And if we were in my office, you would see that I have this poster hanging up in there as well as some others.

So, we're gonna go on and look at some more of your great works, okay?

EXUM: Yeah, Freedom Coming, A Promise Disrupted, that used to be traveling, in I believe in 2020. I wanna believe when the Museum of History in 2020, that was the same year, I believe this exhibit opened.

EURE: Okay.

EXUM: If I'm not mistaken.

EURE: And when you're standing there, does that mean that you have something to do with the graphic layout of this?

EXUM: Yes, I got, I had the opportunity and I'll be using that a lot.

Okay. I love saying opportunity to be the graphic designer, creative designer for this particular exhibit, and but a discussion I was involved and that's one of the things I love about the Museum of History is you get that involvement with the teams and you get the passion and the title topic discussion. Like, what is it going to be?

And once you look at it, you know, A Promise Disrupted, you know, we're basically talking about, you know, of course, disenfranchisement.

But we're also going back to, forgive me I'm trying to think about the word, reconstruction.

And so, museum, you know, as we dissected this, and I'm telling you a little bit on the



inside of the team. How do you say to people, okay, we're not gonna put reconstruction on there.

But, you know, what would be a word that would draw them in and us with a subheading? So, everything is discussed. And so, yeah, this goes back to the reconstruction period and the letter's freedom, part of my job, the letter's freedom is like a 3D, we actually go out to a group, get the letters cut, bring them back in and install it that way.

Right behind it is a mural. Promise disrupted was just printed on one surface and the line at the top, line at bottom, freedom, all of that was stuck on to apply, if I can say that, to that surface and we talked about the colors that we use purple and blue.

EURE: Okay, and we're gonna get to, umm, anybody has any questions please ask, but I know we have some comments so, we can kind of read through them before we go to the next slide.

Laura Bethea from our office of our Career and Employment resources. Creative eye-catching design Ms. Exum. Thank you, Laura.

Wake Tech ILC. If you're talking about tutoring, that's our people. Love that Kente cloth design, and the play on 2020.

So, Chris O'Riordan-Adjah from our Department of Engineering; That was a nice design. Amazing, but most West Africans, every time we see Kente, we get very excited. Thank you. He's from Ghana.

And the ILC tutoring again. What a cool design. The people in the background, the trees, such creativity and history captured here too.

So, do you have any responses for all those comments? Before we go to the next slide.

EXUM: Oh I'm so, glad that they like the design and this is one where I wished I could have shown the three phases of what this exhibit actually went through.

On every exhibit, not only do I get to do the intro panel, but I also am the graphic designer for each, I would say large poster graphic with text on it. And so, well we divided this into the three phases, and I know that first section, included Harriet Beecher Stowe at the very beginning and this exhibit by itself starts and it breaks up what reconstruction really is.

I believe it's not traveling anymore.

EURE: I was gonna ask you a question about the museum. You can finish, but is it open now and what are the hours?

EXUM: Yeah, it went to, it traveled after we opened during 2020, it traveled to our satellite museums.

EURE: Okay.

EXUM: And so, when we say is it open, it sort of like went from one museum to the next venue. A lot of times when we create the exhibits, they're always looking at how can we package this and how can this go to another satellite? Or how can this go to another uh, a venue, the library, or whether that's a state school or whatever that venue is.

EURE: Because that when we recently did African American Cultural Celebration it was virtual. So, is this a virtual exhibit, or is the museum operating fully virtually? Or is it a combination right now?

I think the museum is operating virtually. I'm amazed at what the museum has done during Covid.

EURE: Okay.

EXUM: I'm going to use the word celebrate. I celebrate with [indecipherable] all of the work that they are doing virtual, and as everybody else, they had to began to use that during COVID.

And you know, that makes us bigger, and that makes us grow even more.

EURE: Okay. Because when we get back to a sense of normalcy, I like the idea of doing things simultaneously, virtual and on site. And that's something that maybe had not been explored. Not just at the museum, but at colleges and many other institutions.

But I love you. So, we can move to the next one because you know you got a lot of stuff to cover. So, we'll talk about Earnie Barnes a little bit.

EXUM: Yep, that picture of me with that hat on is me in my workspace, you all.

I'm glad it looks a little neat, but yeah, that's where I live and work and play every day. And I'm thinking about it because if you were to have seen me today, I'm working on Answering the Call exhibition. So, that's yet another brand and look, that's coming up. Th gunna open April 6<sup>th</sup>, ou gotta come and see it.

EURE: Okay.

EXUM: So, but I love this look because one; my graphic designers gave me tha hat because I'm a person that wear a lot of hats and I do mean physical. I am a person that wears a lot of hats. So, I love that picture because that's it's like that's definitely in my workspace.

The Earnie Barnes exhibit, oh my God, that must have been the, one of the most exciting exhibits I had worked on. I got excited for many reasons on that entry panel, which is where I am standing, that we decided to use the drum major. We decided to use him as our icon for the exhibit and so, on every, and I always like talking to the designers, every bit of ephemeral that we use, he was on there.

And I got Joy, I got, I mean just it is an opportunity to be able to actually execute this. And so, I enjoyed it.

And I wanna talk a little bit about it at the top and at the bottom, Earnie Barnes loved wood. And so, I knew whatever that entry title graphic was going to be, it was going

to include that wood, because one of the things he like was getting the wood. He used wood frames in his paintings and many of you may have been able to make that, may have been able to make that exhibit.

I wanted, don't let me start guessing on when it opened.

So I put wood in this painting and also like I said, the drum major I saw in some of his notes where he would come home and he would sketch this drum major in many, I mean just many depictions. And so, this was one of the favorite of images that he loved painting.

So, the other thing I have to say about exhibitions is, it's powerful to just see an image twice as large as you are when you're in an exhibit. You wanna make a big a big blast. Like when the person goes there.

So, I love it that people use it as a backdrop and if you look down at the bottom, I put that sub heading on plexiglass. I'm getting detailed but these are component parts. I do small sketches and then get, have them to scale, draw those images, have it to scale, enlarge it once I get it to the printer and then we have a firm to come in and just put that together.

EURE: And I didn't wanna acknowledge that Ernie Barnes is actually from Durham and went to Hillside and North Carolina Central. So, the drum majors was something he knew about. Played professional football and they called him Big Rembrandt.

And so, the museum did host his exhibit. And I guess it was a birthday celebration of some sort, but it was excellent. And we even had the kids from South Africa come and they loved it. From Cape Town.

So, I think we got some more for you.

EXUM: Okay.

EURE: Alright, the suffragettes, let's talk about them little bit. Go ahead.

EXUM: Yeah, and I'm talking about this purely from a, these exhibitions that I've worked on and, you know, images that we have put together, if I did not say it, we meet with teams on any and all of these exhibits and so, and each team is different.

So, I love sharing this one because this is one of these pictures that I must, I felt like I did, I felt like I did 50 sketches, but I really didn't.

So, one of the things we were enjoying when we talked about, you have to start a thing, and is that, that comes from... I should remember her name, but that's what, we got the name from a suffragette. Not a, yeah, a suffrage person. We got that name from there.

And what...

EURE: Go ahead.

And we were gonna talk not about Susan B. Anthony, but Ida B. Wells a little bit. But let's skip that because I know that's a lot for you, as a graphic designer.

EXUM: But let me let me just...

EURE: We do have a question for you as soon as you finish with this.

EXUM: Okay.

And I just wanna say this is one of the most interesting, I wanna say, entry title panels that I've done because there were four intricate parts with this. So, this running banner Votes For Women, which is actually taken from specifically from the banner, Votes For Women.

That's one banner, one 3D piece that applied and then the actual banner in the back to show suffragettes and then the women from Greensboro. That's another piece applied.

And then actually to show the protests at the bottom because sort of what the team,

what we were all talking about is the different phases of women and the times that they had protested throughout history.

And so, that we wanted it to look historical, but also go from one date bringing it up to what does 2020 look like. And that's what this exhibit sort of entails.

This is Gertrude Weil, she's actually from Goldsboro, NC, and you know, she's one of the famous suffragettes, which is right here on the banner.

And you all, I just wanna say I had fun working with the team. We're putting fringes on it because the whole idea was to create a banner. This was the look and the feel of that time and that period and that's one of the reasons we have that up there.

That is what it was all about to make it look like fabric and then to have your collage at the bottom. And your votes for women, which is a banner that they kept on everything 1800s.

EURE: And that exhibit is up now, right?

EXUM: It is up now and I wrote a note down just to because I wrote that note knowing I'd have to remember a lot of things. It said opening through August 8th. So, it's open through August 8. You can go and see it.

There's a lot of discussion there about pro suffragettes. Those who are far suffragettes. A lot of discussion, those who were against. There's great audio that they have in there that is just amazing to me. It makes the exhibit come to life, and then it's a full array of North Carolina.

And what was North Carolina's whole stance on what the national group was doing. And so, it's sort of like this is the North Carolina version connected to, okay, what was the national group doing?

And from what I'm understanding, North Carolina did not actually, was not out there actually being, going out in, and being, holding protest signs up nationally. But North Carolina was more in their little office space, just writing letters and that sort of thing.

Regardless of what the national group of women were doing and some of them were connected.

EURE: Alright.

Let's ask a question for you. This is from Chris again. Miss Obelia, thanks for sharing. Can you please discuss some of the software you use and what students pursuing graphic design should focus on?

Sorry I'm joining late, so, if you already discussed. But she didn't answer that before.

What should graphic design students focus on? That's the basic.

EXUM: Yes. That's funny you would ask that question. That is the question.

I basically work with Adobe Illustrator and so, it's so funny because the Votes For Women, I actually laid out in that program, I worked on Photoshop with the collages that you see in the back.

So, in Photoshop with the banner and the suffragettes, women, I worked in Photoshop with that program, as well. And I and I mainly use, believe it or not, InDesign.

And I use InDesign a lot because we have a lot of text panels. We don't just have one in our exhibitions, it's multiple, multiple. And so, because I we have heavy text with image, InDesign for us at the Museum of History is the program.

When I say multiples, you know we may have an exhibit, it could be 40 panels, it could be 80 panels. And then it could also be consistent in formats and sizes.

So, most of the time, because we are text heavy, I'd love to grab my images from Photoshop or touch them up in Photoshop, bring them into InDesign.

This was done with a combination of programs, Adobe, Illustrator and Photoshop and InDesign because I kind of work on my skill. Illustrator takes a lot of memory, so,

I kind of worked on a small scale in InDesign to begin this project and then I went into Illustrator and Photoshop for other portions of this.

But because I teach, I have taught as well. I typically tell my students to stay familiar with InDesign, not to do all of their, what I call text and content. When you're writing body copy a lot of times, realistically, and you're working with an institution, that body copy's never gonna be 3 or 4 lines.

It's great to stay realistic with laying that out in InDesign. You might have 10 panels and then taking your images out of Photoshop, bringing them into InDesign to lay out and out of illustrator, into InDesign to lay out.

You could obviously lay this out in many of the programs, but that is how I'm working in the programs. And the cut out, I just went into Photoshop, cut that out, laid it on my design in InDesign. And I love InDesign because I can just make small proportion and it doesn't take up as much memory as Adobe illustrator does.

EURE: Okay. And we have at least another question, and another comment. And I'm gonna get you to put your information up in a little bit.

Wake Tech ILC Tutoring; The vision and planning that goes into these designs is amazingly intricate. Thank you for sharing these details.

Laura Bethea again; What advice and or resources, do you offer aspiring graphic designer seeking experience and employment opportunities in the field? And I think she's talking about the Museum of History. Do you have internships or any kind of programs for graphic design people?

Go ahead.

EXUM: Yeah and let me answer the first and then you let me know if I have completely answered them.

Just in terms of internships, the Museum of History offers that somewhere around March or so. They'll go in and fill out a form and [indecipherable.]



I goes to the Department of Cultural Resources, so, it's just not us at the museum, it goes to the bigger hub and we ask them, and would like for people to look online for that information as well.

But seems like I see the internships coming over, somewhere around February so, they may have a call and say, hey, you all need an intern? If so, let's fill out this form and we have a coordinator there at the Museum of History and Education.

So, do go to our site [northcarolinamuseumofhistory.org](http://northcarolinamuseumofhistory.org) and look at that more.

EURE: Okay. Can we interrupt just to have Sarah, can you put her contact information? If they can't remember, at least they can contact you directly.

Okay?, I know that's not your job, Obelia. I'm just asking. If our students are interested, can they contact you and get them...

EXUM: Oh, feel free to contact me. Yeah, feel free. I have a shadowed students and here's an interesting thing here.

Because production it just so heavy, sometimes I barely have enough time to let up. It's like oh my God, not enough time to breathe.

And I'll share with Michael that I'm working on Answering The Call, which is gonna open April 6.

And right now is a heavy production period for me as well. But the like I said, doing those entry panels and graphics panels throughout the exhibit, I am excited, at the age where I am, excited about being a graphic designer and being, and having that creative director hat on.

Typefaces, trust me, the types of typefaces you use are, means everything. Sometimes you have to have that historical look. I can go into this because I forgot I have, I've got a, I have been a professor as well.

EURE: And I wanted to ask you a little bit about, because I know you taught at St. Augustine's University and at North Carolina Central University.

EXUM: Yes, I was in visual communication studio over at NC State. I must have taught there before I had my son. He's 24 now, so, just imagine before those years, I was at NC State teaching seminar and visual communication. Seminar and studio.

So, I was actually teaching classes and I want the students to know that my students would ask me in studio, did I actually work in graphic design or was I teacher teaching theory and I would say I'm glad you asked.

And that would help me to give them assignments to come to the North Carolina Museum of History so, that they could see I was actually working there.

So, yes, I work for North Carolina Central University for about 10 years, and part time. And also I've been on and off with St Aug, here and there.

EURE: Central has a great art collection.

EXUM: They do. They, it's really a great artist school. Because you know Ernie Barnes went there as well, and he was constantly when I was there, he would come on campus.

It would be a weekend or so, that he would come on campus, and they would show his work there at that museum as well.

But yeah, well, they have a great art collection. I haven't been there in a while, but my connections there are still like, you know, pretty much live because I know the chair there, the chair of the department there. So, he and I still dialogue, you know?

He and I still talk about students and over the years, you all, I just want you to know, maybe not in the last two years or so, but over the years we've hired and worked with students from the community college we've hired and worked with students from North Carolina Central.

I'm not sure if I got one from Saint Aug, but local colleges and sometimes students have come in to shadow even from high school. So, I have, there been many students that have worked with me there at the North Carolina Museum of History.

EURE: Well, you know, I'm gonna have to ask you to prepare yourself to get invited to Wake Tech when we get back on site and then hopefully maybe we can take some students to the Museum of History and you can give them a tour of the things you do.

EXUM: Yeah, this, trust me, it's quite complicated. It's quite complex.

I love to tell the new people who are coming into the museum that I still love and appreciate what I do.

I was thinking, when I became a graphic designer way back, was it 30 years ago? But I was thinking when I became a graphic designer, you know, I don't know if I will always be one, but I'm glad to say on this program I have enjoyed being One.

I've enjoyed being a creative person there, working with museum staff. And I failed to mention I actually have two other graphic designers that work alongside with me and we have kind of a studio environment.

We've got a little bit of a different environment than just your regular office rooms, and so, we share with each other, from one graphic designer to the other, resources, any essential information. We've got two plotters there at the Museum of Natural History. So, we output, is where, these are technical things, but things that I know that the students would enjoy hearing.

EURE: And for students that don't major in graphic design, there's lots and lots of opportunities and institutions like museums.

But we do have another question and comment for you.

EXUM: Okay.

EURE: Alright. Tiana Stewart Ross, how you doing?

Sign me up, she says. Okay, at Wake Tech ILC; Is the print behind you one of your original creations? And we talked about that earlier. It just illustrates your taste, right?

EXUM: It illustrates my taste. I have to admit, I have a little bit of bamboo in my house, a little bit of Asian art going on.

So, in this particular room that I'm in, I have that in here. My connection, I was thinking to myself, and all of my images are downstairs in my family room and in my office studio and I was thinking of myself. Oh, my God, I would love for them to have seen just some of the visual branding I did when I was at NC State, because I have those images downstairs.

I've also have images where I worked before I came to the Museum of History for contracted out to the City of Raleigh, where I did festivals there as well. And I did art shows there as well, so, I should have known when I started out doing festivals with the city of Raleigh, I would end up doing it for the state of North Carolina.

This room is the only room that I actually have of more, I wanna call it, sort of an Asian background. The rest of my rooms, I'd love to do another interview and sit in the room that has all of my paintings and that has much of my work, artwork, design, posters, ephemeral exhibit items. I have all of that in my other rooms.

EURE: Well, we're gonna get you back, as you know. And see, I've got some African art in the background.

EXUM: Oh, you do. You do.

EURE: Yeah, but I really love the work you do. And I want you to think about coming back. And as I say, virtually and...

EXUM: If you don't mind if I could give a shout out as well.

EURE: Sure.

EXUM: So, I'm also with the Justice Theater project. And as you know, I was on black nativity. It's one of the other creative things that I've done as well. I think creativity is has my name on it.

So, as in Black Nativity and I'm looking here because I wrote it down and I wanted to give a shout out about Black Nativity, not Black Nativity, then Black Nativity in 2019, actually. And I applied for a role in...

EURE: and I also wanna do a little shout out, if you don't mind. To the Museum of History. It is a wonderful, wonderful board that we serve on. Allison [indecipherable] and Nancy and Michelle and Earl. Just a great group of people work with. And of course, Obelia Exum.

EXUM: Yes, somebody, I was going to get to, ncmuseum.org. That's where they have to go to get that information.

Justice Theater project, the reason that is a part of my life as well, the theater part. They've got, and I wanted to mention that, the River Speaks of Thirst and it's going on now. I'm just like, and you've got for the poet laureate Jackie Shelton Green. Who better could you have?

Do go to [thejusticetheater.org](http://thejusticetheater.org), [justicetheaterproject.org](http://justicetheaterproject.org) and look at that. They're having a party on Friday for people who wanna go on and see this moving experience that that we have there.

And I wanna...

EURE: There's the party at?

EXUM: Oh, we're online now with that, and..

EURE: Okay.

EXUM: It's online and tickets are... it's March 14 and tickets are on sale. So, go there and check it out. I'm gonna be there as well checking me out on that time, as part of that.

So, that's one of the groups that I'm also with Justice Theater project.

Enjoy Black Nativity as well. That was part me acting and me singing. Went for a singing role and I actually got a singing role and a speaking role. So, I sang in that.

So, there are a lot of things that I do that I'm sharing with you previously.

EURE: And that's why you have to come back. But we have another question before you leave.

Laura Bethea; What's your next venture in graphic arts? That that's a good question.

EXUM: Now that is like the greatest question.

So, you know, I asked my viewers, how do I take all of what I've learned and all of where I've been in, and especially with the Museum of history, you know, also teaching products that I have.

How do I share that with younger people and tell them what my experience has been since I was a student and just a young kid going into the field. I became a graphic designer. At must have been about 25. Look at me now.

So, the question is, how do I market this product? How do I show from this point on, okay, here's where I'm going next.

EURE: Have you thought about doing any summer camps or workshops, or anything like that.

EXUM: That is something I would certainly entertain if I can, you know, I can certainly connect with that?

I know there are a lot of young students out there that wanna know, that really want information on how do you put this together? How did you do this at the museum? That sort of thing.

So, I have thought about a lot of things and also including writing a book. I've already written a book, but now with the information that I have as I've been at Museum of History, there's a lot and not only Museum of History, just to say that, you know, even at universities, that's a lot of information to hold.

And so, I'm putting in my mind creative ideas and asking that same question of how do I share this information to you, the public? And you've given me the opportunity to begin that.

EURE: And we're gonna leave in a minute, and we're gonna get your information again. But, do you feel most graphic designers could do illustrations for books, since you brought that up?

EXUM: Did you see the book that I had? I would love to...

EURE: Oh, Circle It?

EXUM: No. This is Blossoming Hope. Blossoming, this book.

EURE: Nuh Uh, no I didn't. Oh, do we have a picture of that? Sarah, do we?

EXUM: Yeah, Blossoming Hope.

EURE: If we do, we can put it up real quick? But I love your imagery. It's wonderful.

EXUM: Yeah, I wanted to show the...

EURE: There is goes.

EXUM: Yeah, Blossoming Hope.

I wanted to show them that because aside from all the projects I worked with at the museum, I do wanna say I do other projects on the side and I grab this one just because I just felt like this came out so wonderful.

But Dr. Tonya Armstrong was just at our African American Cultural Celebration on mental health and she, I worked with her on designing this book.

And so, I said that to you, because it looks like, oh did an illustrator work on this?

EURE: Okay.

EXUM: So, a graphic designer is smart enough to know how to get bits and parts and pieces, do a little bit of the sketch and actually put a collage together that looks like a tight sketch.

I don't always think an illustrator's necessarily a graphic designer and a graphic designer's necessarily an illustrator.

EURE: But you are.

EXUM: So, I did put that together and we, I loved working on this book right here, but they're really more books that I've worked on. There are more projects I've worked on than what you've seen at the museum.

And also, the Women's Suffrage project there. There are articles that I've written in there as well, so, that's part of my experience in Circa. As well with interviewing people.

There are a lot of things that I really do do, that I can share all of it.

Can an illustrator be a graphic designer? I think from the school that I came from, we can focus on, sometimes the illustrators are really good, from what I've noticed. And I tell my students that if I see that they have a fanatic, a sort of a, they can kind of draw or there are people who draw. Let's put it like that. I usually and it, really good illustrators sometimes I tell them to go, to head for more illustration and you can just



learn some basic graphic design traits because you need to use your strength.

And so, if you're not an illustrator and you have a student or a friend, that's when you and that student can get together and work together on your book, your posts or your project, or your team of people.

And we're in a society now where even as a student, your team of people can get together and say, hey, we worked on this book cover or we worked with this person to create this book, flyer, poster, whatever that person's bio is. I believe that a good graphic designer can do a little bit of all of it.

But we work a lot with text, body text, typefaces. You've got to find the right one for your style and for your look. And so, a great illustrator if you choose to go into that field, then certainly I would say put your portfolio out there. Show your illustrations and have some minimal graphic design with that.

I always say your gift will make room for you, and Michael knows that I say that that gift of illustrating will make room for you and the graphic designer. If you are a graphic designer that can actually show, draw and have some illustrative skills, certainly by all means use those skills with your graphic design. Whatever you do, make impact. Make it a very strong visual.

Make it have character and show that you really really, your work is quality and professional product.

EURE: And thank you very much.

One last time, Sarah, if you could, Sarah's in the background doing everything. We appreciate it.

If you could put Obelia's contact information and Obelia if you don't mind reading it because we do have an audience that can't see it. There's one audience that is looking at it live stream and then we have some podcast that they're only gonna hear it. So, you don't mind reading it if they wanna get in touch with you?

Okay.

EXUM: Okay, that's Obelia Exum. [Obelia.exum@ncdcr.gov](mailto:Obelia.exum@ncdcr.gov).

EURE: Thank you.

EXUM: Yes, please look at our site at the Museum of History. Civil Rights Online is coming up. There are a lot of exhibits that are coming up that you've got to just come and share with us.

EURE: Do people need to make an appointment to come to the museum at this point? Do we need to make appointments to come into the museum, or is open at all right now?

EXUM: Yeah, the museum is open. Actually, every day except Monday, so, we've got Saturday and Sunday our regular hours.

We are experiencing, you know, we are in Covid and so, we we're set up as someone.

EURE: Uh, I hope she didn't go, go.

But we have a couple of comments so, we can put those up.

Chris O'Riordan-Adjah; thank you all. Great show.

Thank you, Chris.

Wake Tech ILC; I have so enjoyed listening to you. I hope you return so, that we can see your designs from your other rooms and hear more about your work and projects.

Thank you.

Maybe we'll get together with Student Activities and maybe the graphic design department and have come and do a show?

And I guess we're through. And sometimes I think that technology will tell us that it's a wrap.

So, once again, thanks everyone for coming and we'll see you on the 4th Thursday from 12:00 to 12:30 or so.

Have a great weekend.