

Now Playing: Dr. Lisa Gives a Sh*t – DLG303 Did Ben Davis's childhood give him an extra dose of objectivity when writing about art?

I start this session by blurting out to my guest, [ArtNet's National Art Critic, Ben Davis](#), that I have an art critic crush on him because I do! And I barely know him. Ben is one of the most insightful, honest, direct and hilarious art writers I have ever read. He really stands out to me in his art writing in that he is able to place art in a cultural, economic and social context in a very articulate, comprehensible way, while somehow uniquely incorporating a great sense of humor which makes his work a pleasure to read. Let's give [ArtNet](#) a BIG SHOUTOUT too for having Ben in his role there!

I dig into whether Ben sees himself the way I see him, as a bit of a rebel in the art world, and turns out Ben had an unusual childhood which I think, gives him a certain objectivity on culture. Ben grew up on a sailboat! This somehow full-on blows my mind and I have a lot of gee wiz type questions to get to the root of Ben's perspective on the world from his unusual traveling environment growing up.

Ben has just published a new book which we touch on, but mostly I implore him to describe how other art people process his writing. And then I find out about how he grew up which is awesome and not like anyone I've met. I think his upbringing has allowed him to be more objective than most but still with less cynicism than myself and many other folks—you know who you are!

BEN'S WEBSITE: <http://www.benadavis.com/>

BEN'S NEW BOOK: *Art in the After-Culture: Capitalist Crisis and Cultural Strategy* <https://www.haymarketbooks.org/books/1662-art-in-the-after-culture>

BEN'S HIGHLY ACCLAIMED PREVIOUS BOOK: *9.5 Theses on Art and Class* <https://www.haymarketbooks.org/books/503-9-5-theses-on-art-and-class>

ARTICLES THAT BEN WROTE THAT WE REFER TO IN THIS EPISODE:

<http://www.benadavis.com/archives/2021/3/31/i-looked-through-all-5000-images-in-beeples-69-million-magnum-opus-what-i-found-isnt-so-pretty>

<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/madonna-beeple-2112374>

<https://news.artnet.com/opinion/inside-nft-rush-axie-infinity-dreamverse-alessio-2042849>

<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/kaws-what-party-brooklyn-museum-1948026>

<https://news.artnet.com/opinion/dutch-museum-nail-salon-emily-in-paris-art-2063605>

<https://news.artnet.com/opinion/artreview-power-100-culturetrack-superblue-merch-2045335>

LISA LEVY SCOPE ART FAIR 2006: "My Kid Could Have Done That.": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tPzvshzOgp8>

https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/dlg303-did-ben-daviss-childhood-give-him-an-extra/id1025575080?i=1000567283226&fbclid=IwAR18VY5Hvhg1SM5GFviEHxD-DUPa7DEmqaXlj7jXgb79qoLpAR8_Be5OaY