

Episode 2: Karen Klassen. Piecing it together.

Welcome to the Audio On Visual podcast

My name is Jay Bigam and I'm your host. Audio on Visual is a podcast that hopes to bring you into the artist's studio whether that be a large commercial studio space or an extra bedroom in a condo to help you get to know the struggles triumphs and day to day lives of people creating visual arts

Initially the artists featured will be from my circle of friends and acquaintances which are mostly Edmonton Alberta based but I do have quite a few folks I know through social media spread out all over the world I hope to feature some of them through the magic of the Skype interview.

The artists who were here for the most part will be people you probably never heard of but you may be familiar with some of their work is in a podcast that would be featuring famous artists rather it's focused on those artists that live and work right beside you.

Today's guest is Edmonton based mosaic artist Karen Klassen. I sat down in Karen's garage studio for our chat surrounded by buckets of rocks minerals driftwood and metal Let's get right to it.

J: Since we're talking about it, let's talk about your big piece and you know in your living room.

K: OK

J: How did you come up with that how did

K: Being mosaic it's hard to build big because it's heavy and the work that I, like the materials that I use are heavy, metal, all my rock, shale, so it gets heavy right? It's thick. I like to stack it so I needed to figure out how to go big without. you know, you can't just have one great big huge piece right so it's just too much. So I thought how can I get it big without having this big clump right. So I decided to do thirty individual pieces to make up one big piece.

That's basically where it started and I had all this material and that was more of a...I really like to experiment so I feel like a big part of what I do is studio time trying different things so this was just let's try this. So I started in my basement before I got my studio I had a little room down there I could work in and I would lay it out on the floor and my husband cut the dimensions I wanted and so I would basically have it laid out on my basement floor and I just take piece by piece in and then I kind of draw to the next where I'd have to kind of match it up and that's basically what I started. It was incredible I called it Mother Earth. I'm really proud of it that was my first big one and it kind of a blow your socks off piece for me because people come in and they just go "oh my gosh" and it's never been out in public or anywhere because it's kind of you can't really move it and if it's going to be in a gallery that's thirty holes in their walls right so. So I'm not sure they're gonna want that.

And then my husband put it up for me because for the first time. On a Christmas Eve he was, we finally got time and he put it up for me in one piece at a time and it was like a big reveal for me because I'm sitting on the couch and he'd come up and I'm like oh my gosh here is another piece of that just added to the whole thing and then finally the last piece about what I thought I thought this is so grand and this is so cool this needs to be in a show you know where that's how you're going to show that's the big piece that's what I love is the kind of like the excitement and the reveal. Right?

It's just now you see what I've made so it's a mosaic within a mosaic. So I was sitting there and I was I was kind of teary. It was just a really great moment for me because I've never done anything that big and at that time that was, I don't know how many, eight years ago, nine years ago that I really wasn't

Episode 2: Karen Klassen. Piecing it together.

showing much. It was really the beginning of, of where I kind of started I started. 2006 and then I didn't get into it till couple years... my kids were pretty young and so it was always finding that balance between working and creating and taking care of the kids and everything else right. Trying to find that balance..

J: So I understand that the the production of that piece didn't go without its...

K: Oh no no oh my gosh yeah I had it laid out on our basement floor and being that my kids were really young so that's where they'd play down. We had the futon open in my big art piece. It's like five feet I think it's six feet wide by five feet high some like that. So I had all these boards out and then the parts that weren't down were just laying there and then there was parts that were done were finished there's chunks of metal through it. So Nash my youngest, my son, he comes running through and he hurt his foot but he didn't say anything right.

So in bed that night I'm reading a book and we're talking and saying goodnight and he says and he looks up and he's just got this cute, serious face and these big green eyes looking at me and he's like "Mom I have to tell you something" and it was so serious and I'm like what's going on? What's wrong and he goes, he goes, "Can you finish your art and hang it up because we're getting hurt." Because he hit his toes and it was bleeding you know but he never told me right so I'm like "OK I'll finish it" you know.

So I basically, it was summer, I picked it up and kind of just left it for a while and didn't really complete it until fall you know.

J: And you have a studio

K: And now I have a studio. Wow. It started from my dining room table. To a room in the basement to this which is incredible but I still want.. we all dream of the bigger... but this is incredible and I love my studio.

J: It's great. So let's talk about your your path. How did you get here?

K: Wow. You know I think it feels like this is what i was supposed to do always. I've always felt like this. Growing up. Grew up in Namao, out in the country and we had an acreage. Lots of trees to climb and we were outside all the time. I never really watched a lot of T.V.

School I guess starting in art class. I loved art it was just so my gosh I love art and I just would draw. And so a lot of my life was. Drawing. So that's what I would do it might be in my bedroom I'd be picking a way. My mom would bring me old costume jewelry and she her necklaces would be tangled Karen can you fix this and I just love that right. And so I would you know, sort all that and then I would draw. I was just always drawing stuff right.

I think the biggest part was grade seven or eight. It's kind of odd because I would draw in our class and the teacher would never believe I did it so I always felt like, why would you say that to me right. It was really weird how that happened. Not until Grade ten did I us, I took art10 and I loved it.

Oh my gosh it was incredible so I knew right then that's like this is what I want to do. My mom owned a flower shop. So when I was..high school basically.. we all grew up in the flower shop so I had always helped I was like the gopher we call it so I would make boxes I would clean flowers things like that.

Episode 2: Karen Klassen. Piecing it together.

So my mom was very creative. And her dad was very creative and it ended up my mom owned the flower shop and I was the one that was the creative one so I really took to it and loved it. That was a creative outlet for me.

So I could just continue drawing through school kept doing that and I just knew I wanted to be an artist at that. Just knew it. But also. Just being that connection to nature, I think developed like at such a young age we would camp, We'd go up to David Thompson up in the mountains and we'd spend a month right. And we would fish and I'd go pick Roxanne and I think to the development came with..my mom's flower shop because she brought all that nature in her to the flower shop so we.. we used driftwood. We used rock. You know what I mean? We used all of that and so it was just really.. I feel like it's just part of who I am.

So when I started...I ended up buying my mom's flower shop from her at twenty. She, my parents got divorced so it was like...that was the end of me ever going to college to art school..anything. It was like get a job. Survival really right? So my mom and I moved in together. I ended up buying the flower shop. She moved away and I just...that was my creative outlet..was the Flower Shop.

So we worked.. my husband and I worked at it for thirteen years and it was excellent. Big learning curve. Sold it. And decided to start a family because it was either you know when are you going to do... you can't do it all right...so it was like I have to do something. My decision was what am I going to do. All I going to go for this flower shop and make it go for it. And then I just kept thinking I don't want to be that kind of mom that leaves the kids in a daycare you know what I mean it just wasn't for me I want and then I thought OK so I'm going to have a baby screaming and I'm taking a wedding and how am I going to do this so we sold it.

And yeah I started. I had, I had Brooklyn and I was. I was just lost without my art without some kind of a creative outlet so I started taking courses. I took silversmithing. I dreamed of always wanting to be an oil painter or that's all I could ever think of as I want to do oil. I saw when we went on a field trip at Grant MacEwan. When we went into the art class that's... one of the students had painted a Pepsi can on canvas and I had to look and look and I was almost like I want to touch it because it looks like it I could have grabbed it right off the canvas and I couldn't believe someone could do that right it was like blow me away and like...this is what I want to do right.

So so anyway I ended up taking a few courses. Took stained glass and I just couldn't really... and I never did take a painting class and then I thought well...I just started building because the kids... Brooklyn was really young and I'm like I got to just do something so I was fiddling with all kinds of stuff and then I ended up with with mosaic.

I thought well I love mosaic let's just do something. So I'm pregnant with Nash. I'm out back. I'm smashing tile not a clue what I'm doing. Made this mirror and I thought you know what? I think I like this. I like the tactile but it needs more and that's kind of how it started. I just went...how am I going to do this. I took a course to find out what tools they were using. The gist of grout, glue, mortar...get that information. Came home. Made a piece and that was it. I ended up putting in my copper or my metal my...everything that I loved in it.. right so... my driftwood.

J: So right from the start I mean when people hear mosaic they're thinking just tile generally just ceramic tile. But you almost immediately started adding all of your natural pieces

K: Oh my gosh yeah that's what it was like. It was just doesn't feel right and I. I'm not I'm very

Episode 2: Karen Klassen. Piecing it together.

intuitive and spontaneous when I work so that's really what I work and I remember being back then thinking No it needs... it needs... rock's. It needs minerals. Everything is rocks for me. I love rocks so yeah that's just what I started doing. I was adding all my stuff in there like... I love it and then it kind of developed. Well I love rust so I put rusty nails in and I love you know what I mean it just became this. Putting in everything that I love and and it works like it's.. it's unique and you know I love it.

N: You're listening to Audio on Visual. The podcast about visual arts and artists. Today's guest is Edmonton based mosaic artist Karen Klassen. For more information on Karen or to hear all or episodes visit AudioonVisual.ca, follow us on Twitter at [AudioOnVisual](https://twitter.com/AudioOnVisual) and visit facebook.com/audioonvisual. Now back to Karen

J: So talk about where... where you source your materials from because I know that a lot of these things aren't things you pick up on the side of the road.

K: That's right..No I source world wide. I think naturally I'm a hunter forager or you know so camping mountains...I'm a mountain girl. Is all my river pebbles, my shale from the Rockies. And driftwood right...is all from the mountains and then and when it comes to the minerals which is in my.. my gorgeous cabinet filled with quartz and amethyst and everything...pyrite.

I source.. I was by buying bulk from the states. But the shipping is really hard on you. you know and it's heavy stuff so I ended up going...so I also travel so...I would go to conferences..mosaic conferences. it's called SAMA which is this Society of American Mosaic Artists and they have conventions every year and...you go. It's in a beautiful hotel and there's different courses you can take. So that's kind of how I also learnt is by taking some courses and things like that so then I would also source around what I can look at right...so if I was in Tennessee or..I was in Kentucky one year was...where was the other one oh Seattle.

So I would just source and bring stuff home as well as the conventions they have stuff you can buy so I would source from there and then it ended up now the last few years I've been going right to the source which is Quartzite Arizona and Tucson. I went again this year and I would go and buy and bring back as much as I can, the material I need. Which is great because I are incorporate it as a family trip with what I need and...

J: and you don't have to pay airline fees for bringing back a six hundred pounds suitcase..

K: That's right exactly how my gosh and they let me and I tell you it's hell for my kids because I'm searched...they're searched. It's like the last what was the... she's opening up my suitcase and I'm telling her about everything because I brought home rocks from Sedona...a ton of driftwood and the the cactus wood and so my suitcases failed and I always get pulled over plus the kids have stuff and there isn't...everybody gets it right so I'm showing the inspection agent she's opening my suitcase with her gloves and I'm supposed to stand back, you know hands behind your back and I'm like "open that bag... look inside it's gorgeous" and so I'm telling her all about it and they're like... oh my gosh I get so excited.

Yeah so yeah yeah and then I have stuff like... my some of my tile... the small pieces from Italy. The Fiores Italy so yeah it's expensive. It's an expensive art but you know..

J: it's obviously worth it. It's beautiful

K: it's beautiful isn't it. it's just I think with the the natural elements the man made... I don't know I

Episode 2: Karen Klassen. Piecing it together.

mean it's a good balance of every thing in there you know. And I think the natural parts resonate with everyone

J: Unquestionable and you also make natural forms and shapes within you know, the piece itself so you can see... well you see whatever you want in there. Is that is that a tree within a tree... is that a river all kinds of things.

K: it's beautiful to hear responses because I think everybody sees something different and sees things I'd never see so I love that's what I love about art shows as you can talk to people and they see things that I never even imagined were in there

J: So let's talk about your or now Goddess

K: Yes oh wow she was...she's pretty powerful. I had made her last year. It took.. I had the form for about a year. I found it out at a recycle place and I just... it had no arms. It's just a body. No head. No arms and you put it together it comes in three pieces and I thought...

J: I should say this is a full size figure six feet tall it's...

K: Yup with the top of her driftwood horn head is seven feet tall yeah. She is. It's one of the most incredible things I've done. It was quite a process. She was very... it was a very intimidating to start with because I knew this had to be good I don't know why I just thought this is my one chance you know there's... it's pretty big so I didn't want to waste material so I was afraid I just I knew what I wanted because as soon as I bought the base, I brought it home. I came in the studio and I had all these driftwood pieces right and I'm like I have that.. I bought... I found in Jasper... the head and I found that chunk of driftwood and I was just like coveting at it was like "OK kids don't break this..and you know I get it home.. it survived the trip home in the back of the truck.

It sat in my corner here in the studio and I just loved it and I'm like that's going to be for something special so it felt like every part that went into her was meant for her. It sounds kind of weird but.. and then I went out and so I got it set up and much I said Ken come in. I put the head on.. I go "LOOK" and then I'd put that down... I'd put on a driftwood arm and I go LOOK. Isn't this going to be incredible and so yeah that was like... I just I wasn't ready to make her at that time I knew what I wanted to do... kind of had a vision and that was it I left it for a year and I just went yeah I'm not ready because I knew it would take a long time and that's a big commitment so I was like I got other stuff to do first.

So yeah she came together and put her head on first and I went holy crap this is going to be something else because just her head alone is kind of.. it's different. It's something you've never seen before. So she she's been I think... building in me to come out of me my whole life through every experience right. She's she's power she's Goddess. It's you know in the biggest inspiration came from when I was at one of the conventions. In think this was Kentucky and the director of Who Does She Think She Is was there. They showed the documentary and it's about women in art and I tell you that changed my life just knowing being a mom... having all this this.. I just want to explode with creativity and being kind of like stuck in the you gotta take care of kids you got to do this you got to do that and so the art was a very little slice of my life...it felt like. But I never stopped rate and so you know it's all of that and then all of the adversity in my life all of everything.

But I don't know how to explain it but it just felt like this force had to come out and so being a woman in the arts having to spread myself so thin...being frustrated all of that came in to play with this as well right it was just being a business owner, a young woman being taken advantage of. And being...you know what I mean just being young and then the men part all of that plays in so it's everything in

Episode 2: Karen Klassen. Piecing it together.

there so she represents just a hope and a go for it and don't mess with me I Am Woman I Am power and that's what's in it and I put again everything.. I didn't want to be....like reined in.

My husband says "well don't make her arms that wide and how are we going to move her" and what I said I don't care that's your problem. I create you move her right so yeah that's what we did and she's got stuff in her from all over the world. A lot of friends bring back stuff from their travels for me so I've got...really proud of Nottingham Castle. Friend of mine went and he brought back a chunk had fallen off the castle so he just picked that up and brought it home for me and I said you could get a sentence for that probably go to jail for that but there's that in there, there's the Atlas Mountains there's Italy there's there's just worldwide you're going...amethyst... everything's in there. It's incredible and the roots...that come all through was from Kentucky... that picture behind you all the trees in there... when we were walking in Kentucky the trees were just roots and you know nature is always still my my go to inspiration. I can just go outside and look at my trees and my all my rocks and it's like OK let's go for a it's it's powerful.

J: For sure and it's also quite easy to figure out that you've arrived at the right house I noticed when I pulled up. Your entire front yard is full of rocks

K: Yes it is yeah it's great

J: So let's talk about some of your... I mean that's obviously one of your more major projects what other things have you done.

K: I've actually got my first public art. yeah. I've just finished just finished fabrication so there was an art call for the Dermot Art project. Yeah I applied... my girlfriend... She pushed me to try it on my own and I was too intimidated and so we decided you know what let's do this together so we did. We put in a call to the..Edmonton Arts did a call and we submitted and we got it so yeah it's my first public art and I'm so proud of it. It's incredible. it's about just under one hundred square feet and it's a wall in Dermot Park so it's a new playground in the Bonny Doon area and one side is like a bench. And the other side is a wall... lower wall and so we're so it's incredible So yeah we won't install until this summer

J: Until it stops snowing...

K: Exactly so that was pretty huge for me

J: That's... that's very exciting

K: Yeah yeah feel to be involved with all that is is actually. Pretty cool experience to see how everything works for public art you know

J: Yeah there's lot that goes on...

K: I had no idea. It was a year until we just started... we just finished Yeah it was a year or

J: so is that going to be mostly a ceramic tile piece

K: yeah it is all tile. It's all Frostproof like we had to do the research for that for our climate it's kind of hard to just put anything in there right so yeah there's porcelain in there and ceramic. Yeah it's pretty cool

Episode 2: Karen Klassen. Piecing it together.

J: because I could see some of your other work not being terribly child friendly.

K: yeah you know for sure yeah there's inside art and outside outside art.

J: Well that's great. Let's talk about.. have you got work in a gallery?

K: Yes I do I have work in the Avens gallery in Canmore.

J: well what perfect place

K: I know hey yeah I know it's perfect and it's weird because. When we my husband and I and the kids went through Canmore one year and I had just mentioned to my husband. You know if I was going to have a gallery represent me this is where I'd want to be and then there you go the next year it happened you know

J: So how long have you been there

K: I have been there for two years this will be my third year with them

J: has that been a good experience for you?

K: it's been really really good. I wasn't sure if I wanted to be in a gallery like I think kinds of a weird thing for artists like I always thought galleries were kind of. Intimidating and I don't know I don't know how to explain it without being negative. You know most of my gallery experience well I had a really good experience with a gallery when I had my flower shop right next door used to be Bear Claw Gallery. So she was with her mom to, Agnes was...she worked with her mom and I was in the store next door in the flower shop working with my mom and so they would have art shows and these artists would come in and I would do the flowers to match whatever right so Jackie would say Karen we got a show and I did the flowers and so that was great but when I started mosaics and went into different galleries I just thought. They're not going to want my work it's all paintings.

And I just didn't felt like I belonged and I did didn't feel like I had the credentials like I always thought you had to be have these big credentials right so I didn't have any of that I just did what I did right and so when I was....I went to an international show Art Vancouver and the first day the the owners and the manager from the Avens Gallery in Canmore signed me the first day. I was like what? I had to come to Vancouver my stuff in Canmore but that's just the way the universe works and I completely believe that's how it works

J: it's so interesting because you're right I mean galleries are very much sort of painting centric and but the smart gallery owner is going to look at your work and go I've never seen anything like that and I think that it's you know...

K: that's what's so intriguing and that's what I love about my art is that there's nothing like it. Rghtand it's me

J: When you see one of your pieces it's a Karen.

K: totally yeah yeah.

Episode 2: Karen Klassen. Piecing it together.

J: So. Have you got any...obviously you have your public art thing coming up... is good.. what other things

K: I think I've got my next thing is I'm building right now for the Art Walk so that's always I usually start a few months before because my stuff takes quite a bit of time to me. So I'm starting for that I've also got. I help another artist Gerry Whitehead he's from B.C. and he has sculptural... there's a sculptural garden going up just by the the new bridge so they'll be a sculpture park going in there and so I helped him with his public art..Turtle I helped him with the small one. So I helped mosaic Sorry I should say that mosaic be the bigger one so that's coming up here or in May. So I help him with that for a week or two and then the Art Walk and then I'm not really booking a whole lot right now I want to build for I really want to get into something different but I always like to not always stick it stay in the same same I want something different so I'm really really trying to get to Toronto to art next year so I'll apply for that the jury you know in and and get out there and see what happens so I want to build for that which is a lot of planning as well because we'll have to drive right because you can't ship this very So that's the problem is is shipping is expensive for I think any artist but for this how do you how do you ship all this

J: it's a nightmare every time I see you tearing down...

K: Oh my gosh it is it's and I have to have the back of my truck. I have a big table I put in for the big cause of the wood that kind that comes out and so you can't stack anything. So that's kind of an issue for me so we're trying to figure out my husband's really good because he does the research and he's got the prices and what when and how we got to do things. So yeah we're going to apply for that and then we'll end up driving I said well how are we going then we're going to need a bigger something like a motorhome "we'll figure that out when you get the you know the call that says yes you're in" I said OK.

And then of course I always dream big and my big dream is New York I've had..I know a couple people from Edmonton that go to the art show there and I just think my goddess and my art would be so unique there and I just I just love that idea and that's my really big goal. Other than that I think in reality I've been asked to exhibit in Florence Italy and unfortunately I don't have the money to do something like that how do you how do you do that you know there's no guarantee it'll sell so I'm going to ship a lot of stuff and so we're thinking of either making a holiday of it going but I still the shipping that's

J: just getting it there...

K: yeah it's just not going to happen so I think making your dreams with Toronto I'll start there and then maybe next year or the year after all to try to get my stuff there

J: I can see the art really resonating in those really big cities where nature is so..hidden in a lot of cases

K: for sure

N: You're listening to Audio on Visual. The podcast about visual arts and artists. Today's guest is Edmonton based mosaic artist Karen Klassen. For more information on Karen or to hear all or episodes visit AudioonVisual.ca, follow us on Twitter at [AudioOnVisual](https://twitter.com/AudioOnVisual) and visit facebook.com/audioonvisual. Now back to Karen

Episode 2: Karen Klassen. Piecing it together.

K: My art you can touch

J: That's that's right like...

K: you get in there ALWAYS I encourage it and a lot of that a lot of people don't believe me and they think it's a trick right She's going to make make it fall so we have to pay for it I said if anything falls that's my fault not yours and I would never make you pay for it please touch like it's nature like touch it very So people are so just blown away and then you have the connection right like that's given get into the art right yeah so I love that yeah

J: well and for me when I first saw your art one of the things that I thought was. You could spend an hour. Just staring at a small corner finding the different pieces because you hide so many little bits and pieces in there that it's just it's just really fascinating

K: it's a lot of detail Yeah it's cool hey yeah I love it so. It really gets it really gets in ya you know like yeah there's so many neat things that you can discover. And people see different things you know and they start stories like the one big one. I have a lot of the pebbles that are run right down the middle and I had a couple that say OK and they started the story between this is the river and they have to go through the mountains and they're having a war and I was like oh wow look really cool to hear the response and and that's I think every artist is so taken aback when you have a response to your work and I think that's to me what makes it worth it is like you get me then like you get it and I've had people cry.

When I have I've had this one woman was just beautiful she found a piece she liked. It was all white this piece actually ended up on the billboard Oh yeah so anyway she she it was that the Whyte Ave Art Walk she saw it and she just went over like who and she started crying she goes this is me this is my piece I have to have this and I was just like wow and then she says but I can't afford it and she just we talked for a while and then away she went and then when I was another art event she came back she goes and she cried again I can't believe it still is just part of me and Anyway it ended up that she bought it so I'm crying she's crying I'm hugging her and I'm just so

J: what could be better.

K: I can't there's nothing better you know

J: I mean it's one thing for people to appreciate your work and that happens a lot at art walks. People will walk by and say wow that's amazing but for someone to actually buy something they probably can't afford...

K: No she had to pay monthly payments and and I was like wow that's just so cool I'm honored you know and I get a lot of like with my goddess at Art Walk She was quite hard to get this back and forth to the art walk I had to to keep her at the Arts barns and running you know but. When she was first out I mean people were screaming...crying they were like to witness this and I have to kind of mentally prepare myself because she's intimidating and she's a little scary too depending on what how you are as a person right because I had people go whoa and I had to be prepared because I'm so used to people like loving Oh my God And this is incredible to something that could be a little intimidating and a little scary and they're like oh geez But I mean for the most part so I had to have tha am I OK with them not liking for her or OK with them being intimidated

Yeah yeah yeah right I love it and so I the first day I had so many people crying. They saw her and

Episode 2: Karen Klassen. Piecing it together.

they just broke down and just started sobbing and then I would cry and then. Yeah it was it was incredible the emotions I had for the first time I've never experienced this but I had a lot of people that would walk up and they of course they look at me did you make this and then they look from my toes to my head and back like Who are you what's wrong with you that's what I felt like they were like what but they would scream FUCK. That's what they would do I'm not kidding they're like FUCK And I was just like I honestly had never heard that before. So who I was like OK yeah so I had to actually put a barrier around her the first day I didn't realize that so many people would be crowded so I was worried about her getting knocked or broke in and so I did a chalk outline and then I went came home the that night and I bought a little fancy to put around her to stop people because they were getting pretty close and yeah it was it was an incredible experience having her and just the power of her

So I want to just basically take her around the city and just photograph her all over the city go to different areas and want to have her at the the museum, the art gallery I want her everywhere and I'll see if I can get her somewhere out there right

J: so what we will do as well because people obviously this is an audio podcast that will put a photo up on the web site so people can have a look because it's truly a remarkable piece of work

K: that's pretty cool

J: so you can talk about the your. The other small things you do...your jewelry and

K: Yes Actually my jewelry came from that big piece I was telling about so the 30 piece I was sitting there looking at one little corner and I thought because I love I'm a jewelry girl too great so I love jewelry and I thought I should do a small piece like that corner I should and then it all began so I searched out some jewelry bases ended up just playing and before you know up there you go I'm I'm full on I got the earrings the bracelets the necklace. Yeah I love it it's incredible I'm just starting I just bought my drill press I'm going to start doing more stones so I can do more of that. Oh endless possibilities

J: and affordable art possibilities too

K: right Yeah that's really I have a lot of people will buy my little necklaces because they actually look like my big heart rate so it's very detailed lots of little things in them I even put the driftwood in my tiny little pebbles and I've got all my minerals in there so it's basically a small art piece so I had a lot of people that one year this woman bought this one piece and she's like we're going to hang this in our cabin that's our first Karen Klassen so there she goes but it's not for me to wear it stay on the wall right so they kind of graduate up to my pocket art you know and then up to the bigger pieces

Yeah so it just gives you that small it's wearable art right so yeah it's incredible it's been a huge success for me and I love it and I love it. It's kind of addicting you know yeah it's great well

J: Is there anything else you want to touch on?

K: I don't know I just I think I love our community I love our city. And I think we need more art. And I love the variety of art and all the artists you know you do the shows with artists and everybody's I don't know I think we're just a small like minded community no matter what we do. I have friends that do all different types of art I support think we need to support each other and that's why I just said yes to this especially because you're helping us Jay like thank you for helping us and bringing us together and making it OK for all of us we're not competing we're helping them right now it's never competition

Episode 2: Karen Klassen. Piecing it together.

we have to help each other you know and

J: the hope for this podcast is to to get people that aren't artists interested in the background

K: Absolutely Who says it's hard if this is hard and I don't I mean it's just I don't want sympathy or you know what I mean I just want you to know this is like we go through stuff it's it's funny because people have just this one story when I sold my flower shop the women that bought it. They thought that it was just going to be this pretty little flower shop. you don't realize it's twenty four seven you know I was a business owner when I was twenty and I worked seven days a week I would eat sleep I dreamt about the work I was stressed it's I did I would always say take the order make the order deliver the order right and it's the same thing with art like it's with everything you're doing everything I'm doing the books I do everything and and I have to be my own promoter so I have to do my website you know all that yuck stuff has to go with all the good stuff and I think we all go through that nobody wants to do all that but that's what it takes.

J: Well it's a business and a lot of people forget that you know and I think that's going to be a theme in this series certainly our first episode talked about that quite a bit you know small businesses. Artists are small businesses

K: that's exactly what we are

J: and if you don't approach your art as a small business you're not going to succeed because you just can't

K: because then it's a hobby

J: Yeah that's a hobby

K: you know it has to be a business

J: You've got to put the hours in and you've got to do a lot yucky stuff

K: for sure you know I'm not.... the pay off the reward is getting to do this I'm full time now I've been full time for years and that's the reward that you know it's not ever probably going to bring me a lot of money but it keeps me going right it keeps me going every day building. The shows that we have here and yeah just keep going keep learning keep emerging keep. Right it's all something I'm lucky I feel lucky cause I couldn't do anything else I've always done the arts something creative

J: you're doing what you should do I think it's very obvious

K: Thank you ...it's a good journey

J: well thanks for being on the show

K: Thank you

J: Good luck with the future Toronto New York and then who knows where

K: yeah. Who knows Thank you so much Jay.

Episode 2: Karen Klassen. Piecing it together.

N: Thanks to Karen Klassen for sitting down for our second episode. Audio On Visual is recorded produced and hosted by me Jay Bigam. The Audio On Visual theme music is called Good Day by Kim Lincoln. For more information on Karen or to hear all or episodes visit AudioonVisual.ca, follow us on Twitter at [AudioOnVisual](https://twitter.com/AudioOnVisual) and visit facebook.com/audioonvisual.

--end--