Pengu & Sleepr Podcast – Transcription

Pengu: Hey Sleepr, nice to meet you. My name is DegenService. I'm going to be grilling you for questions. No, I'm just kidding. We're just going to have a chill conversation about art, about what you do. So, how's it going? Nice to meet you.

Sleepr: It's a real pleasure. Everything's been going pretty well. I'm pretty packed by back to back with work and a whole bunch of activities at the moment but I'm really excited to be here and just share my thoughts.

Pengu: I was actually just a few hours ago reading your medium article. It was great.

Sleepr: Cool. That's actually such a long story. But the first time I cracked that open or that topic that line of thought and actually really meaningful thought process but on that topic for so many years, maybe ten years or so, since I touched it. But this space has actually given me not only a voice and even Kadense mentioning it's really interested to hear from you. It's the same thing. I feel like there's a stage or a platform where my voice can be heard and some of the thoughts that I've had about some topics may be able to be revealed in the light. So that's one of my favorite topics, the medium article. And it's something that I really formally worked on and thought I had figured something out. And it's interesting. It's actually something that can be considered within this one of one art NFT space. It's an alternate angle to perhaps how the role that we see of art. So just a tangent immediately into 100 circles. I'm a university lecturer. So I teach at a university in Australia and I'm helping be a program director and run the courses for 3D animation and UX and Webb. But it's a design university and so I teach a lot of students in design. And the bread and butter amount of work is in design and the university tends to struggle with the meaningful impact of what Creatives can do. They tend to be commercially acquired for to sell Coca Cola commercials or they get picked up to sell Nike adverts or build Nike websites. So what we're teaching for three years is an extremely technically challenging and advanced skill set and I really believe that creators are so talented. It's an extremely complex skill set, but the role of where they can go with it is only been well defined and well ironed out in one road or one space. And I'm interested in expanding that as well into where else can these skill sets be applied. I think that's another interesting angle to the article.

Pengu: Definitely. And the main thing that was really, really interesting and really, really interested in was just like you said, that the ability that Creatives have to, it's so cliche to say, but to think outside the box to look at things from different perspectives and try to basically carve new paths. Because being a creative, there are certain other Creatives that you can follow behind, but the real journey of being an artist, your own artist, is something that you have to trudge through. Like, it's very independently no one else can tell you how to do it. So my question would be, what inspired you specifically to be a creative?

Sleepr: It's interesting. I can come back to what inspired me, but just the role of a creative by definition is the exact point of imagination. That's what it is. Your job is to go out and make things that aren't here. It is invention. It is imagination. It is novelty. I tend to use the word novelty a lot, but it is the process of creating something original that didn't exist before. And that task is required in many fields. It's required by all of us. How do I build a house? I need to imagine and design and create it out of thin air. And there are mechanics to the imagination that I think aren't well understood yet. There's mechanics to the mind's eye. There are a refined cognitive behavioral skill set that you can used to be advanced in creativity, so it's just interesting when we talk about how creators can think outside the box, it's like that's their job, that's exactly what we should be trying and striving to really investigate. I think my personal journey to be a creative was quite sharp and sudden. I grew up a really normal kid just playing sport. I grew up in Australia, I live in Australia, grew up playing sport, and grew up with a very middle class family. That were very nice. I went to church once a week. Everything was very standard and never really thought of creativity at all. And through just a general curiosity and there's a strange subculture in Australia of bush plants and bush medicine and Australian aboriginal and indigenous culture. And that tends to encourage shamanic paths. But anyways, I was this young kid, not very creative, doing school. And then I started becoming a little bit curious. And then exactly at 15, it's a longer story but I ended up taking DMT. And it's frustrating in my own story that I tend to have to point to what is an uncool departure point or inspirational point that ended up this drug that I took that changed everything. But I had it once and I had an experience. It was just incredible. It was just suddenly launched into a 3D hallucination and a whole world opened up literally in front of me for ten minutes or eight minutes. And I couldn't believe what happened. My brain just could not. And in fact, my brain told me that it didn't happen. It was a very curious fact.

Pengu: When there's something that doesn't click, when there's something that it can't put into a box and categorize hates that.

Sleepr: You got it. Exactly. It's like that old adage of where the indigenous couldn't see the boats on the horizon. Because their brain just had no category for it. And that's really what happens with trauma. When people have trauma or go through a really hectic experience, their brain will compartmentalize it in order to help process it. Anyways, I had this experience and I saw this stuff. And for the first time, my creative and mind's eye really just opened up. And it was the launching point for leading me down a curious path of what the imagination is and what the mind's eye is and that whole space. So shortly after that, I started very crudely trying to draw these things that I'd see and getting frustrated in the process of not being able to document them. So I tried very hard to put them down on paper, but ironically, I'd chosen one of the most complex things to draw and would endlessly get frustrated in not being able to document them. So then I wanted to learn how to make imagery, and that pushed me down the creative industries and 3D animation skillset roots.

Pengu: So would you say that led you down that path of really trying to? Because I know in your ***"Medium"*** article, you mentioned how you really tried to scientifically figure out, basically you were trying to shape that box. So that everyone else's brains accept and can categorize these things. Like, how do we do it? How do we actually come back and articulately explain what we saw, even though no one's ever seen it. Was that what led you down that path?

Sleepr: Exactly. Really beautifully said that. That thing, that frustration that happened at 15 and a little bit after, I could never shake it off. It was always with me. I feel to be my karmic path, until I may be let go of it or resolve it. But it's something that I'm walking around with. And then ten years after that experience, that problem never went away of being able to document those things that were seen, and that's a byproduct of another question, a more fundamental question which was, what is it? What am I seeing here? And no one could answer it. And I went, ***"Why can't you just tell me what it is?"*** I realized, no one actually knows what it is. And then it was like, ***"How can we find out what it is?"*** It's like, we can't even find out. So there's a problem here, and what we need to do is probably document it so that some other guys who are smarter than me can go figure it out.

Pengu: That's actually something that I find particularly stunning about your work, because after reading the ***"Medium"*** article. And then taking another look at your work, all of a sudden I was like, ***"Oh shit, this is his own way".*** And I'm making an assumption. This is his own way of choosing these different objects and shapes and if I were to try to explain it, you went somewhere and you experienced a mirage of things, like a battery of things all at once. And then now you're back here and you're trying

to take little pieces of whatever you can of that and mold it into something that you could visually express.

Sleepr: This is a wonderful conversation. This is exactly what I mean. You really articulated it because it's a consistent effort. And the strange thing is, there are some pieces I've done that are one to one direct experiences that I've had, but it's so hard to even document, this happened on the Saturday night, the 17th, and I saw this electric eel come through the room that was rainbow striped. There's some of those that are specific experiences. But what's happened is I've had so many experiences now. It's become this barrage or battery of crazy stuff, but it's shaped my aesthetics. And this keeps opening up doors down the rabbit hole. But I've just shaped my aesthetics and my taste in a way that everything I touch, not like it's a Midas touch that I'm turning everything into gold, but everything I do now has this trail or taste and shaping of that space's. But everything I do now has this trail or taste and shaping of that space's geometry or aesthetics as well. So every time I make work that. Tries to capture an essence of that space, some pieces come through and I feel I'm creating quite a collage or a document collection of bits and pieces from there that will later be able to be identified as qualities.

Pengu: It's funny, it reminds me when I was younger, I would have dreams. And I'd have these very lucid dreams and I could do whatever I wanted in my dreams. But as I grew older, those started to fade and fade. And it just reminds me of this attempt where I would try and get my memory of my dreams back. I tried for so long to do that thing that everyone suggests. Grab a little journal. When you wake up, immediately start writing in the journal. It's so crazy because you come out of that so fast. And literally, you could write pages and pages and pages. You could write a whole book, but you're still only grasping at little tiny inklings or little tiny straws of what you actually did experience.

Sleepr: Wow, that's it. It's like going to another country. Like an analogy I've said a few times is like going to Thailand for a week and then someone's like, what does it look like? And you're like, ***"Wow, I don't even know."*** There's streets and there's these little shops and what you tend to do is group something and then generalize it into a generalized archetype or pattern. So the way that the shop fronts in Thailand tend to looks like this, whereas you won't really talk about a specific shop front unless it was quite unique or quite representative of the rest of them.

Pengu: Or unless you had some special talent and you were like exactly 5ft high this diameter, unless you literally put it into a 3D drawing that you would never know.

Sleepr: And those savantas are the only potential key to something like that, where it's true, they can take a snapshot with their mind's eye and document it on a one to one ratio perfectly.

Pengu: It sounds like we need to find that. I remember there was a story about some guy who took a helicopter ride around New York City. It sounds like we need to get that guy some DMT.

Sleepr: I know. Well, there's an ethical issue with but we kind of do. We're all digging with spoons in a mineshaft, and we're getting there but we need to send some machinery down. I think with the resurgence of psychedelic research, there will be more attempts. Another attempt was, how about we just drip feed it to someone who over hours and hours and hours and there's some other things we can do. Savanta a very interesting case because they do prove that at some level, with some change in some brain chemistry, you can retain seeing a single mind's eye image, seeing a single image in your mind's eye for as long as you want. When we tend to close our eyes, we just see black, but we differentiate seeing black within the seeing memories is much fainter and more ghostlier experience. And so everyone can dream up. If I asked you to dream of a bird that looked like a house flying in the air, we could all visualize that. But where you see it is very faint. I think the scale of art or a gradation of artists skill sets is the ability to retain that created image in your mind's eye and then to sit there and meticulously document it.

Pengu: It's funny, that's one reason I never got into drawing was because I had such a vivid imagination growing up as a kid, and there was so many things slamming my brain. I have ADHD, so that experience of processing so much information at the same time. I always had something on my mind. But the speed at which I could try to start drawing something that was in my mind or an idea that I had, the next idea would come and I was never fast enough to actually sit and learn to be able to explain all the things that are going on in my head. So it's interesting, there's so many parallels between these things.

Sleepr: And I think that's a really earnest statement about the speed in which it happens. I think of it like mind's eye, or the space of where imagination happens. It's a bit like a highway. There's a lot of traffic going through there, and maybe you can swap a billboard out to retain it and keep hopping in different cars and driving around the block and looking up. But it's a moving space. It's not really like an art gallery where there's all that you can walk around, and there's these static artworks on the walls. It's a very dynamic process that happens in the brain.

Pengu: You just reminded me. Honestly, sometimes it feels almost like you're connecting to some invisible stream that's like streaming these things down into your head. Like, I'm an actor. I've done shows, straight plays and musicals and all these things. And whenever I've done any of these shows or go to play these different characters, it's just crazy thing about what they call flow state. I step on stage and I'm a different person, and I'm thinking in the cognitive framework of that different person and reacting as that different person would. So once I'm there, I do my scene. But then once I step back into the backstage, it's almost like, ***"Whoa, was that me? Did I just do that?"*** That didn't feel like it was me. That felt like it was something else. And now I'm having trouble remembering exactly what I did on stage because in that moment I put myself somewhere else.

Sleepr: I did a lot of acting as well growing up, when I was on stage a bunch as well. And it took me a long time to realize that there's quite a shamanic process that happens with acting. And that can happen in a whole variety times of life. I'm sure most people feel that when they go to work. They're just about to walk through the doors at work, and suddenly they switch, and then they're the work, I know I can turn on my work costume very quickly, and suddenly I'm a very efficient and business like person. And then after at 05:00, I'm putting on some jazz or psychedelic music, and suddenly it's a different Sleepr again. I know it's a very acute and extreme point on stage. It's a really amplified version of that that you can suddenly change in entirety your story of who you are. And the thing with psychedelics is that at one level, it's parties on the front. That's the secret. That's the trick. It tricks everyone. Everyone wants to go party, and then they take the psychedelics, and then they start seeing this weird stuff, and then the next door is like, actually, everything's just love underneath. And it's like, what? Like, thought we were having a party. And then it's like, you're not even who you are. It's this huge psychological unraveling of all of your baggage and trauma and stuff. And you realize, I tell these stories about who I am all the time. I'm this type of person. Who I really am is this. But all of those things can be let go of and we just use them to function, but they're choices to either keep patterns of behavior, and you can let go of any pattern of behavior that you have at any time. It could be right now. There's something that in your heart, you are frustrated with how you behave, and you can just change that immediately or how you react to any situation. You can just switch it on and off. I remember Charlie Sheen, he was talking about addiction, and he was probably really high at the time. But he was like, I just decided I'm just going to turn it off. And I was like, that's the trick. I think there's something to that. But anyways, there's certainly choice and control over. I'm very interested in the story that we tell ourselves of who we are. It's rich territory

for everyone to continue exploring and you think, I've gotten to the bottom, and this is really who I am, but it just keeps going on and on.

Pengu: It's an endless journey. I think that's the one thing where people start talking about their goals and things. When you get there, there's going to be another one. You talked about switching things on and your interest in that story that we tell ourselves. I think it's really interesting because it reminds me of this thing. I once went out and I bought a little red Honda Fit. And afterwards, after I had that red Honda fit, I started seeing other red Honda Fits out on the road, and I had never seen them before. But then I had the realization, there were just as many red Honda Fits around me, but it was the fact that I never recorded and categorized the details of a red Honda Fit. It wasn't until then that I started noticing them everywhere. So you can't notice something that you haven't really digested and categorized to notice. So it plays into that whole, what story do you tell yourself? So if you wake up in the morning and you think to yourself, ***"What's going to go wrong today?"*** Then you're prepping your story so that you notice what things can I point out that are wrong during the day? You're telling your subconscious, ***"Hey, make sure that whenever there's something that could be positively taken as negative, going to go ahead and take it as negative, because we decided that's the story today".*** And it's funny because everyone does this subconsciously. It's really hard. Like, the brain always tries to save energy. It always just go to whatever executable behavior it's already done. So it's definitely a difficult thing. So I would say, ***"What are the daily things that you do to get yourself into these moments where you can sit down and start to visually create representations of things that you've experienced in the past?"***

Sleepr: I really agree with all that. The temptation is just to say, it's maybe reminisce or think about those experiences that I've had. But, honestly, creating work is a real birthing process, and it's just extremely taxing. It's really heavy when I'm making work. And for anyone else looking in, it probably doesn't look anything like that. But it's just so many layers of cognitive thought at once. It's just so many considerations. Hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of creative decision making and constantly trying to get outside of myself and inside myself, and then look at it objectively and there's all these considerations. So I can't touch work unless everything in my life is maybe stable and functioning and working. All the jobs at work have been done. There's no ill will in my life, in any of my relationships. There's a real sense of love and purpose and safety and trust, and I have to be really delicate or something, but it's like everything has to be until I can unzip that part of my mind and begin to really freely make decisions. Because what I've tried many, many times when shit's going wrong to make work and charge on and get on with the job, but the work looks really tight and tense, and there's certain

decisions that I've made that I regret later. So I'm trying to play chess with myself. And, for me, the most important thing in creative work is a really far off and distant intention. And I can tell when someone's trying to impress me in their work. I can tell when someone's trying to pull a puppet string of my emotions. I can sense these thought processes that the artist had in trying to manipulate how I think about something. I sense that in the work if they're frustrated or they're fearful of their own skill set. I can sense if they're trying to strive to draw better, but they're struggling to draw better, then it's just attention filled peace. It's not really like I've missed something more beautiful that would have happened or that I would have experienced a trigger prompt for my own experience that I wouldn't have even blinked twice at their skillset. It's not about that. So, for me, the artwork is these just spots of pain. It's just shapes and colors. All artwork is. This really elaborate labyrinth of mind that three dimensionally sits on top of the artwork that I feel like I get entangled into. So, for me, this is exactly how I treat my psychedelic experiences, is I have to get my mind straight first. I have to get my mind connected and in real time and present to then let go those really last bits. It's easy to let go a lot of the stuff, but then there's some really nuanced careful tough pieces that it's harder to let go of at the end, and I really want to make sure I do that. So I think elaborate way of answering, but I just get my mind first and then let the work flow through.

Pengu: I agree with you. I would say, I've definitely had a similar experience where I have this hierarchy of needs that need to be met before I cannot have anything else to think about other than just whatever thought journey I'm trying to go on and it can definitely be a difficult thing to do. Now that you've been in this Solana NFT space, what advice would you say that you have for new and emerging artists in the space?

Sleepr: There is a lot of artists out here who suddenly there's an opportunity that didn't exist before. I think most of my advice will be pretty cliche, but it's really important that they treat this as their own personal journey first and foremost. It's the only thing they can control, that the expectation of anything is really low. I think most of it's about reducing expectations and reminding that the process is one for them, foremost. So they're the ones who will define what the work looks like, they're the ones who are able to ensure the quality is correct at their standard. They want do all the things you can in your basket and then it's about showing up being consistent. I'm a big believer that popularity and populism in this space, it's just a jostling competition. That's what marketing is in some respects, it's just a bullying competition. Not with a negativity attached to it, but it's just who is heard in a loud room? Well, it's going to be the loudest person or it's going to be the person who came up with a clever way of twisting

the focal point. So despite what new artists might think the taste is or what people want, take cultural taste and production and consumption of culture is defined by the loudest person. It's like history is defined by the winner. I think the same thing. I think the Backstreet boys or something, why is the back straight boys in my head? Universal Records just jostled and bullied it in. I never chose Backstreet boys to be part of my cultural consumption, but they just jostled and pushed it in. What happens is then they stand someone in front and we consume that, and then we change our taste and it homogenizes towards what we keep placing in front. So then the next one, I'm going to adjust that slightly to being a little bit like Backstreet boys. And then there's a chance that sequentially bubbles up and rises to the front after. For new artists, don't be scared to just go down a random new path that's got no backing. I really believe in individuality and carving your own path. It's a long way of saying, but just don't try to worry about what people will like because it's not true what people like. People don't know what they like until it emerges out of something else. Because one of the battles for me in this space has been, ***"People like this. It must be PFPS or it must be animals."*** And a lot of people tell me, you should do characters because people love characters, and you don't do characters. It's like, maybe I need to do characters. Maybe I just don't and then we'll figure it out. And I think bully your own way through.

Pengu: I definitely would agree with you there. And when you say, don't be afraid to break down your own path, I would say, please go break down your own path. Look at what happened to my poor music category. Now we just have algorithms and four chords. It's so funny. There's literally a musical piece. I think it's called 4 minutes, 32 seconds. It's the most hilarious musical piece of classical music on earth. It's for piano, but it can also be for orchestra. It could be for any arrangement of instruments. And it's literally 4 minutes and 32 seconds of silence. The person just sits at the instrument and turns the pages, and everyone sits there in silence. Go and try something like that with your art, keep it interesting. Like you said, everyone starts bullying each other to try to get the attention and then everything just starts mixing. And then at the end, everything just looks like that mixture.

Sleepr: That's exactly it. Luckily we've had these conversations throughout culture many times. We had these hard combos in art history. We've had Duchamp putting a fucking urinal in a gallery and saying this is art. And we've had people quite radically try to hustle with this problem. If we are moving into an art chapter, which I really genuinely think we are, we've got giants to have really foreseen and engaged with many of the problems that you might feel have happened or are happening to you as a young artist in an emerging artist in this space. And we can really lean on those to help. Now, it won't change the

algorithm. It won't change how your voice is heard, but it can at least give you some insight as to where these questions and answers might end up.

Pengu: And also when you trot down your own path and then someone else connects to it, that's way better than looking at the mixture, making your own version of the mixture, and then having a lot of people say, ***"Oh, I like that".***

Sleepr: You'll get over the other path. You'll just get sick of it, and you'll feel disconnected to it. You'll feel that's not really me. I think Steve Jobs even said, ***"Why would you ask what people want like you?"*** They wouldn't tell me make an iPhone, so don't ask anyone what they want and do it about what you want to do. And that's actually what they want. That's actually what a collector or a viewer wants is, I want the most amount of you coming through, because art is the ability to very quickly jump in someone's shoes who's lived for 30 years and to see through their eyes. Suddenly, I can become Deegen for a day. I can become Pengu for a day, and I can suddenly gain so much so quickly. And that's the shortest route to the maximum experience. It's not anything else. Don't show me what you think you want to show me, show me what you want to do, and I'm interested in that. That's a really cool thing to do. That's a really strange and weird thing to do is to hop through and see the world through someone else's eyes.

Pengu: I love that. I completely agree with you. I feel that's also an acquired taste. Because I would say on average, people sometimes don't. And there are those rare enjoyers of cognitive dissonance, you enjoy when something rattles you and makes and forces you to think about something in a different way. But I feel on average, sometimes there's a select group of people that don't like when things rattle them. They don't like when you burst them out of their bubble and force them to reevaluate their world.

Sleepr: That's a great point. I think that's the archetype of between safety or known and unknown spaces is straddling that. And at times, I'll make decisions in my work that are creating an affordance for the viewer or the collector. Here, let me be a bit. I'll create an environment and a context for you to enjoy this scene. There has to be an accommodating factor. Like, if I was to just maybe be me as just absolute chaos in the page, it's really disconnecting for everyone. But I might be like, that's the truest representation of myself. That won't gain anything. We are in a commercial context, and we are creating work as well for others to view. This isn't purely an individual act, but this straddling the relationship

between that. So it's a really good point you made that some people aren't interested in cognitive dissonance and being disrupted. It's definitely a consideration.

Pengu: You just made me think of something, actually, that's why there's so much focus on story. I think that's why the most common questions that I get, the most common question that I ask on these inside the igloos is, ***"Who were you pre Web 3?"*** I'm almost losing my thought here. It's like this thing where - it just flew right by.

Sleepr: That's fine.

Pengu: I got this. It's like that sacrifice that you almost have to make, you could be 100% yourself and take it pedal to the metal like balls to the wall. This is 100% me. But it's also that story you don't just walk into a stranger's house and ask them for a cup of coffee. Like, you meet them, you see them at the park, you get to know them a little bit, and then all of a sudden on that journey, as you're almost revealing your truest self to the world, it's like taking people on that narrative or taking people on that journey so that when it comes time to really, really reveal who you truly are, and who you're trying to express in your work, then they followed along with that story. You've kind of guided them. You didn't just slap them in the face. You invited them to the party, you sat them down, had drinks with them, got to know them. And then it became an experience that's also tied the work that an artist puts out.

Sleepr: I think that's really true. I think that foreplay between and teasing of content that comes out and the packaging of your stories is crucial. That's the craft itself is how do you the ability to tell your story through the works in those bite sized pieces that help tell a much larger overarching story as well.

Pengu: Definitely. So our belief here in, Pengu, relationships are the alpha, and we like to win and help win amongst ourselves. So we actually really like asking our guests this, what's the kindest thing that someone has done for you in the Web 3 space?

Sleepr: This is a lovely question. I really resonate with that. And being a good person is really crucial, there's been a bunch of times where people have. It's probably the actions that aren't clear to someone else that here's the time for going to do a nice thing. Now, it's often been times where someone's reached out unexpectedly, and it normally happens at the exact time that the doubt creeps in. So a lot of times that's happened, to be honest, anytime someone has supported the work, I really, really deeply feel the gratitude and feel a real sense of responsibility to repay that through the continuation of the work. I really shout out, Shaikh in here. I just feel endlessly indebted to Shaikh for believing in the work

really early and really just being a genuine enjoyer of the work. And we spoke about Murakami and La art galleries, and he just thought the work was sweet and then just was quite proud in saying that. And it just really wasn't about anything else, it was about the work. So it was out of the blue as well. So that was huge. I owe so much to George or early Shadopter, for believing in the work really early. And George is on a really interesting character, but he's a nice guy and he does nice things silently. Some of the things are quite private, but he often just does things because they're the right thing to do. So I think that value driven, it's exactly what you're saying. But a couple of those individuals are value driven. I know P Nug's here in the room as well. I've mentioned this before, P Nug and I connected early, and he was the nicest guy I'd met in the space. It was just like, ***"Wow, I can't believe you're giving up your time and just genuinely connecting with me and welcoming me into the room."*** Early on when I didn't know anyone. Soft money as well. I made a work that was called ***"The King of both worlds"***. And it was actually about soft money, tweeting about his dad really personal, and tweet about. There wasn't enough money he could make that would bring his dad back or change the relationship that he had with his dad. It was someone declaring, and all of his tweets are like that, where he's got a more worldly, value driven approach to his content. I know we're in a space and we're all here to make money, but at the end of the day, none of that really actually stacks up in comparison to the relationships that you have with the ones around you and just declare for someone like his position to declare, that was really significant for me to hear as well. So then I made this artwork. So if you become the king of this space and you've got so much money, what do you do then? Well, then the next challenge is to become the king of love and the king of spirituality. How do you navigate now being the kindest or the nicest person in the room? And that's the king of both worlds is the person who is not just the most successful, but also the most impactful. There's heaps of points that I remember very deeply and fondly of people interacting and sharing and supporting. And I've been really surprised by it as well, to be honest. But also maybe not surprised, because at the end of the day, it's a weird. You think it's Twitter, you think it's business, you think it's crypto stuff, and then it's actually just people behind the scenes, and people have a tendency and a nature towards kindness and love because we're all running. All of our lives are the same story. It's the same story that we're all outsiders and then we're insiders and navigating feeling like you're part of a community or you're part of something is the most important thing evolutionarily. That would be death if you were to be excluded from the tribe. So that's our deepest fear is to feel like we're not part of something. And I'm sure we've all felt that same process of being not accepted and not an outsider and not known. I can't believe people even know the word Sleepr. I feel so privileged to be

honest. That's why I feel so privileged to even be here today. It's just to be accepted or seen as part of the fabric. That's a real honor to me to be seen as a chair in the room. I'm actually part of something.

Pengu: Definitely. We've had an amazing conversation today, and it actually looks like we're up at the hour mark. Would you be open to maybe taking a few minutes to maybe answer some questions from people?

Sleepr: Of course. No stress at all.

Pengu: Awesome. So if any of you have questions for a Sleepr, just go ahead and unmute yourself and ask away.

Questioner 01: Hey, Sleepr. It's Cadence. Really love this conversation. It gives a lot more connection to your work. One of the questions I had was, you're transferring these visuals that you've seen. Does the story and the content that you create around it follow as more like a descriptive piece or you put the art and then draw the stories to it, because what I got from this interview was, you see this other world and you're trying to transfer the experience into a visual. And then within your narration of the piece, you give how all those insights come together. So I'm just wondering how you build that all into its full delivery for consumption.

Sleepr: It's a great question, Cadence. Some pieces will be slightly different. But, generally, because people don't quite see that there was two or three days sitting with a messy version of that piece while it was being made or modeling and texturing and then rendering and then drawing. So all these times, I'm telling myself I'm sitting there in silence or maybe music. But then I'm telling myself stories about the work, or I'm got a captured snapshot in. My mind's eye that I have these values or thoughts that come through. So I know you are the star. The essence of all that might be, ***"What is the essence?"*** The essence is either descriptive or it's the visual. I knew it was on stage. I knew it was the messiest, most rawest expression of you. But there's another value that I know which is you are the star is something that came through in the hallucinations. It was a line that was told to me by these beings on this other side. You are the star. You're the one. You're the guy. You're the thing that's so important. And it's taken me forever to understand what that means, so it's like a swirling star. And then I will try to poetically craft the description a little bit to fit. Fitting is such a process. Does the description come first or does the description come after? It's really like at once they come together and the descriptions are really important for me because these are semi abstract works. They do have realistic components, but then they've got some clear abstraction inside and chaotic composition stuff. I have to help. Just as Djen was

talking about, I have to help guide the viewer to interpret and understand and see the work, to see the details inside the work as well. Now, it's not like me saying, can you see the blue chair in the background or can you see the spotlight? I might hint at some of the visual cues, but it may just be a context to help reflect the symbols inside the work. So this may sound like I'm just waffling and making things up. But I'm not. There's one of the works like that Papa Mumu picked up. I was talking about being lost in chaos. And the work itself is quite chaotic and difficult to find the edges. So I'm matching the symbols in the work, maybe not just through the visual cues, but providing a context in which to view the work. Hopefully that helps.

Questioner 01: It definitely helps for consuming and understanding everything that's going on. And then listening to this interview draws you even closer to it. I think I'm going to go back through some of your works and read through the stories, get a better understanding of what's going on. So thank you.

Questioner 02: Hi, Sleepr.

Sleepr: Hey, Mike.

Questioner 02: It's good to see a fellow Aussie here.

Sleepr: You're an Aussie? Where are you from? Well, maybe I shouldn't ask that.

Questioner 02: No, that's fine. I'm in Sydney. I see that you're in Brisbane and I'm fascinated and I love that. I've actually only come across your work this week. Every day I'm trying to find and learn about art. And the fact that you're so big in this space and I haven't heard about you is just my ignorance. But it's very interesting that talking about psychedelics for inspiring your work. I've been reading the book ***"How to change your mind,"*** the new science of psychedelics. It was actually recommended by Solace, who is in this specie. But I had a question about the way that you experience the psychedelic catalyst. Is it something that you need to do regularly to produce art? And then that's the first question.

Sleepr: Well, yes, it is a really important part.

Questioner 02: The follow on question would be like, if you see those visions and hear those voices in that hallucination, do you have to put the work out away or do you let it simmer around for a couple of days and then it comes out? Is it like a dream that you can recall parts of or is it like more vivid?

Sleepr: I often scribble things quickly to help capture some details that I know do slip away. But some things are so memorable that it's impossible to shake off. So some features and some qualities are really

just stick and it could be months later until I document them. I've got quite a bank of experiences that I can draw on, but some things I need to document quite quickly. So it's a little bit of a balance between the two.

Questioner 02: Thank you. Final question I has was, the people that really appreciate, enjoy your work. Do you think that they appreciate it and enjoy it and see what you're seeing because they themselves have sort of those experiences? It may not be necessarily psychedelics or hallucinations themselves. They appreciate that source of inspiration exists, if that makes sense.

Sleepr: I know exactly what you mean. No, they don't. I can guarantee you that there's probably 50 collectors out there who Sleepr works. I can guarantee you that probably 99%, maybe 95% haven't experienced or probably don't even really consider the psychedelic component to it. I think they might be aware that it's some part of the story of Sleepr, but not really the consideration. I think what people see in my work is something that's a bit strange or that's a bit unique. There's an aesthetic or technique or something that's a bit unique and it's interesting. There's an exoticness to it. What is that thing? It's unique. And what I'm doing is trying to say, I know exactly where that unique thing is coming from is and it's here. But the problem is so few people have taken psychedelics in general, and so few people have then taken DMT in general. And I've considered many times. Do I even bother talking about it? Because it doesn't really matter too much too many people. Because it's just talking about something you haven't experienced and the conversation ends immediately. They can be interested in it and you can talk about it. They can't make a connection to it, which is totally understandable. But to just sit in truth and uncomfortable truth and be transparent. This is what it is. And this is where it's come from. I think this is what's influencing the aesthetics. But it's really important to me as well that the art stands on its own. Because, otherwise, I just go research and do PhD and article stuff and document art and submit it into research articles. And it's an academic pursuit. But it's really important to me that the work sits in an art context as well. Hopefully that helps, Mike.

Questioner 02: That helps a lot. Thank you so much for answering.

Pengu: Sleepr, just to riff off of Mike, have you trained your mind's eye to be able to dip onto those images? Because I know when you dream, they say keep a dream journal next to the bed so that you can start training it as a muscle to capture some of these images. Is that something that you found that you've been able to hone over time? Because some of these images that you produce, there's a lot of

detail there and I just wondering what that process has been over this arc of time from when you first started to where you are now.

Sleepr: As we mentioned in the convo, the first time was 15 and then the early works, I've got a maestro collection and they were all done in 2010. I think maybe it's 2010 to 2012 or something, but they were done over ten years ago. And you can tell the rawness and there's a messiness that a difficulty in maybe capturing pristineness of the quality and the complexity that then the later couple of collections in particular exotic and then the discern collection but you can see the same essence. And that's what's really interesting is that you can see what I was trying, the exact same task I was trying to do over ten years ago. I was trying to make art, print it. I was in galleries, but I was doing digital prints in galleries around Australia, but no one bought them really, but it was the same thing. It was exactly the same thing I'm saying today, over ten years ago making art, trying to document it and getting stuck in the ability to capture it. And that was my inability of my mind's eye and also the inability of the craftsmanship. So those two things in parallel had to increase. But over time I've been able to see and experience, I only have heroic doses of psychedelics.

Pengu: What does heroic doses mean?

Sleepr: McKenna termed it. A medium dose of mushrooms might be 3 grams and a high dose might be like 5 or 6 grams. But I take 7 or 10 grams and sit in a black room, no lights on for 8 hours, and just sit there and I see what happens. And I tell you a lot of things happen. A lot of very interesting things happen. A lot of very interesting images happen for 8 hours. I see a lot of really strange, geometric, complex, otherworldly things. I see beings, I interact with them, whether they're real or not. I'm a sane, safe adult. I sit there and I really try to see them. By seeing them, I mean cognitively grasp them. And what the difficulty is in the cognitive grasping, there's these other problems. This field is just littered with problems that people aren't really talking about much, but they move and shape based on what you see. So someone who can jump to conclusions quickly. It's a real dangerous territory. This is why people go crazy on them, because they believe what they saw really quickly. They'll say, I saw all these angels and I saw these demons. These demons came out of nowhere. Now I'm petrified of demons and I don't ever want to do it again. It's a really common story. And the thing is, it may not have been a demon that may have been a trick of the mind. Where the slipperiness of that highway that Deegen was talking about of the imagination and of mind's eye, mental imagery space. It just slipped into that side stream or that side street and suddenly manifested and created and perceived at the same time. And suddenly the engine kept running ahead. So I'm really skeptical of everything I see. I'm watching it and

I'll see everything under the sun, but I don't really know or think if it's anything that. I'm perceiving at that time. I'm actually trying to look under the hood. It's like watching a movie and being like, ***"Babe, the pig is talking."*** How did they train Mister Ed to talk in that TV show? There's a talking horse out there. You could just tell everyone there's a talking horse. But if you keep looking at actually the lips don't match the dialogue and, or actually it's a 3D composition onto the pig's mouth, or there's peanut butter on the side of the horse I can see, there's a trick. There's something constructive about what I'm seeing. So I'm really, really trying to see what happens. And what happens a lot of the time is these faces will come out and they'll be so grotesque and they'll be so distorted and pulled like these masks in a theater, and they'll unfold and these tongues of stripes will come out, and then I'll keep watching and I'll be fearful for a moment, but I'll go, it's so interesting. I think you're beautiful. And they'll suddenly turn and soften and they'll settle. They'll change as my cognitive process changes as well. So one of my really deep, clever tricks with my work is I say, ***"I'm doing psychedelic art."*** And people go, ***"But it didn't look like these hyper colored tunnels that everyone does in visionary art."*** And I go, ***"I know, but what I'm doing is I'm doing all these chaotic shapes"***. So the same experience happens to you that happens to me when I'm having a deep experience. So I want the work to literally change in front of your mind in the artworks that I'm doing in the NFTS. I want them too. When you sit there and look for a while, suddenly they morph and change a little bit. You get triggers and you see these faces, and then you blink and they go away again because there was no face there. That's the whole. That's the actual. That's the really common quality I experience a lot is the process of early detection, early trigger points, there's an early trigger of it face and then suddenly, almost in the next moment, it's gone. And what happens when people see my art is they go, ***"Maybe it looks like a face, but it's not really there. But this other guy, he drew a really good face."*** I know I could continue down that path and draw a really good face, but it's more interesting to trigger you and then let it go again. I see all this other abstraction work as well, and I see them as on that same path, but it's just sitting in pure abstraction. And then on the other extreme, we've got pure realism or something like that. Or really clear drawings or really clear imagery, and then we've got really unclear imagery. I think there's something interesting in the middle between those two that happens in psychedelics. So that's one answer to my ability to capture and record the content the mind's eye over time.

Pengu: Sleepr, you're triggering me all over the place for inspirations.

Sleepr: That's wonderful. That's great.

Pengu: It's almost like you were talking about over time. At first, it's maybe like your 2010 work is more chaotic. I don't want to say this because it has bad connotations, but like vomit. And then it's crazy how it gets more and more defined. And I almost had this image in my head of when you imagine that new experience as a gallon of water. And when you take DMT, you hold up your Dixie cup, your tiny, little shot Dixie cup, and go ahead, give me the gallon of water. And then it pours the gallon of water into the Dixie cup, and the Dixie cup just overflows and you only get little images. You can only take back a little bit of that water when you're done. But then as you experience that more and more, it's almost like your Dixie pump starts morphing into a shot glass. And then it just slowly starts getting bigger to the point where now you go and you have a heftier glass and you get to bring a lot more of that water back.

Sleepr: That's a really beautiful visual analogy. And you really understood the challenge and the story of my work. That's a really great description of what's happening it, that's exactly how it's felt. It was so frustrating to have. I don't even know what a Dixie shot glass is, but one of those really small cups, and not being able to hold much of all overflowing and feeling really overwhelmed with that and then feeling so proud now to be able to document more and capture more of it and come back with more of it to share with everyone else. That is the story of Sleepr. It's a great perception that you've had.

Questioner: It layers on a new dimension to your work after hearing this. Like an artist shares a work in progress and you get drawn into how they created it and it connects you deeper to the work. I feel this workshop and just understanding the journey you take. Sleepr just adds another dimension to your work and understanding the journey you take to bring back your experience. I really appreciate you sharing that and definitely want to go back to your earlier works and see that evolution of how you've been able to hone not only the ability to hold the images, but t craft them in more precision. So, thank you.

Sleepr: Thanks. I appreciate it.

Pengu: We could keep going forever and ever, but we should probably say our thank you here. Thank you so much for coming in. This was a great convo. I'll probably stare at a wall for another half hour to finish off my thoughts, but thank you so much for coming. It was a really great conversation.

Sleepr: Thanks, DJ. And thanks, cadence, for having me. And look at my DMs are always open to anyone's welcome to reach out and have a convo if you're interested on any topic. It's always fascinated about all of it, but thanks so much to Pengu and for all the love shared. Appreciate it.

Questioner: Cheers!

Pengu: Take care Sleepr. Bye.