

[INTRO]

[Bre Tobias, 00:13] Hello, everyone. Welcome to Art Supply Guide's podcast. We are on episode 2, where we are talking with artist Jamie Kinosian. Hi, Jamie. How are you?

[Jamie Kinosian, 00:23] Great! How are you?

[BT, 00:24] I'm doing fine. I guess let's get started here. Why don't you tell me a little bit about who you are and what you do?

[JK, 00:32] I'm Jamie Kinosian, and I'm a freelance illustrator in Houston, Texas. I also do comic books. I mostly work with watercolor illustrations, and here in Houston I do a lot of exhibits at comic book shows and big conventions like that, and I also participate in local gallery shows, and I also get involved with a lot of the local nerd community.

[BT, 1:00] Awesome! That sounds really interesting. So, how about a little background about you? Family, interests, or hobbies. Whatever you'd like to elaborate on.

[JK, 1:09] Oh, man. One of the biggest things, oddly enough, is video games. I'm a big gamer. And ever since I was a little kid, I used to collect video game strategy guides, and look at the art in there. Just to look at them like - yeah, ok, they're cool, strategy guides or whatever - but like I love seeing the concept art of the characters, and things that came about before the actual end product. You know, I make comics, but I also love reading comics. I'll read manga, and I'll read a bunch of comics. I'll read some cape comics, but I've mostly been reading independent comics these days. As far as cape comics, I'll read the good stuff like Ms. Marvel. Anything that's happening that just happens to be good. As far as [unintelligible] comics, I'll read Web comics, whatever's just awesome. As far as manga, I love Saint Young Men, and anything by [Cower-Mori], and Automan. And as far as family life, well, right now it's just me and my husband, and we have two pets. [Laughs] We have a bird whose name is Brucie, and a lizard. I have a leopard gecko named Vincent. [Laughs] I named him Legate Vincent - Star Trek. So, yeah. That's basically my interests and family life.

[BT, 3:00] Awesome. Well, what are your thoughts about, I guess, expanding your family. Is that something you see on the horizon, or do you see that as getting in the way of your art?

[JK, 3:07] Oh, man, you know it's actually really tricky, because I'm not sure. It's definitely something that I'm juggling with right now, and it's more of a... I'm waiting until I feel an, "Aha! I'd like to have a kid!" Because it's a little scary to think of being a freelancer and also having a child and having to juggle that. Because kids [laughs] kids are demanding, so I'm not going to underestimate that. But I know that kids are such a... having kids is a big thing for some people, and you know, maybe down the line, I don't want to regret missing out on that. Also, my partner would really like to have a kid. So, I don't exactly want to rob my partner of that, either. But, it's ... and then there's options. I don't really necessarily want to deal with pregnancy, so I would maybe also consider an adoption. That's about my status at the moment. Just a little unsure: I'd like to. Kind of unsure; still just kind of juggling that.

[BT, 04:16] Well, I think that's really good that you're being realistic with those options. It is an obvious lifelong commitment, and you know, as well as my partner, we are kind of at that pass where he's ready for a second one [Laughs], and I have the same fears. Being artists, it's really hard to dive into your craft and practice with that time, with a child, especially starting over again, and pregnancy is all that being a woman, it's always... the un-fun part



[JK, 04:51] Yeah, there's definitely some imbalance in the effort. [Laughter] In the actual process of creating a child.

[BT, 05:01] Oh, yes, definitely.

[Laughter]

[BT, 05:04] You get to hold that over their heads later, though.

[JK, 05:06] Yeah.

[Laughter]

[BT, 05:08] OK, so how did you get started in doing art as a freelance artist?

[JK, 05:13] As a freelance artist, I went through school, and I was always doing art, even when I was focused on my education and trying to get through that. I still really focused on my career, and getting on the internet and being active on there and trying to get an audience and staying active. And I did a lot of comic book conventions and stuff, too, at the same time. So really, if anything, I was kind of already doing that all online. Conventions were a big thing. Just keep doing conventions and dealing with people like that in that kind of a setting. So when I was finally cut free of college, it was just like, "take off and run." Here's this thing that I've been trying to do with my little bit of time that I have, and I can just finally have that time to work and focus on conventions and whatever I need to do. Yeah, so that was a good preparation.

[BT, 06:18] Alright, that's cool. So you were able to actually get an early start. I guess - in a way - a head start before you started creating art and doing that full time. I guess tell us a little bit about your style for those who haven't seen your work yet. Describe to us what you do and what materials that you use.

[JK, 06:43] Well I do watercolor, but a lot of the styles that I'm really inspired by are kind of all over the place. Like, I love comic book art, but I also like animation. I really like styles that kind of blend that together, where it's a comic book style, but it's also bright and fun and expressive, so I really take two aspects of that together, and I really love the coloring styles for animation sometimes, too. So as to what I like, I really like balancing those together. Now my process - I have the most probably convoluted way of doing things, but I actually use both digital and traditional work. Sometimes I'll do exclusively both ways. But for a standard watercolor illustration, first I'll sketch digitally on Manga Studio 5 with Frenden's brushes. It's just really nice to sketch digitally because it's just like there's - if something goes wrong, you can just... Ok, say a head's slightly too big. Oh, I really like the way I drew that head. I don't have to completely redraw it! I can just shrink it a little bit, or if the neck's too long I can just drag the head down a little bit. It's literally things like that that're such a time saver. And then so, also with the composition, if I feel like something's off with the composition I can tweak things a little bit and fit things how I have a better idea of how I want it to be. So I've been using Manga Studio; Manga Studio's been a savior. I used to draw on Photoshop, and that was not fun. But once I got Manga Studio 5, that's made digital drawing a lot of fun. And also when I got my Intuos; I have an Intuos 4, and that combination was really good. So after I draw my picture, I'll print it out and, if it's a bigger picture than an 8.5x11, I just tape the pages together, and then I use my lightbox. I have a LightPad, and I use that to ink directly onto watercolor paper, and the LightPad's usually good enough to get through, say, a 140lb piece of watercolor paper. So I like that, and I use brush pens for that, for my inking these days. And from there, I'll strap it onto a board and start watercoloring it. You know I use a... I have almost two sets of watercolor stuff. I have my more permanent setup which is for ... usually my bigger pieces I'm working at home. I have a big old palette that I use, and I usually use tubes when I'm at home. Tube watercolors. I use Windsor Newton. They're a little bit more vibrant. But if I'm at a convention or something, I have a pocket set.



I have a Van Gogh pocket set that I use, as well as the Pentel Aquashes, Aquash brushes, which are really cool. They're brushes with water, a little water thing attached to it, so I can just use both of them together, and I don't have to worry about having my brushes and a cup of water. I can just impulsively do them at a convention. But in a convention setting, when I'm just trying to do a piece right there on one piece of paper, I'll use a blue pen and directly ink on top of that, and then use my watercolors and... Yeah, I'm still figuring out a digital coloring style. Right now, watercolor's about the only coloring style that really I have a lot of fun with and works well with my style. Starting digital, it's been a little bit of a struggle. As far as comic work, I try to stick completely digital, because it's just so much easier to do comics digitally, because of paneling, and just getting into all the details, and not having to deal with transferring it if I wanted to go from digital to traditional. That's just a lot of steps and a lot of work, so I keep that all digital.

[BT, 11:35] That's really interesting. You know as an artist here, I'm listening to everything that you're saying and it, to me, is educational, because I'm always looking for new products and things like that to try out, so I watched one of your digital paints that you transferred into a watercolor, and I just loved it. Because it's to me, it's like taking a crash course in how Jamie creates her pieces, and I loved every bit of it. Going back over this Manga Studio 5, just a quick question for those who may not be familiar with it: is this something that you draw on a tablet, or do you use a mouse? How do you go about doing something like that? You can give just a brief overview of it so you don't have to go too deep into it.

[JK, 12:15] Alright, so, Manga Studio 5 is a super great program. It really changed digital drawing for me. I was just having a really hard time with it; Photoshop just really did not feel right for drawing, and it really felt like it was a program just made for artists. It feels ... just the flow of it, it feels like real media. And it's also really reasonably priced; it's \$40, which as far as art programs go, that's ridiculously cheap. And it's user friendly. The interface of it is very similar to Photoshop, so if you have any familiarity with Photoshop, you can just go right in and know what you're doing. But another thing that makes it super great is Frenden's brushes. He's an artist that makes custom brushes for Manga Studio. Manga Studio 5, specifically. Manga Studio 5 is what's so good. He makes brushes for that, and they just feel really good, like I use a - one of his brushes, the dry brush pen, that's what I use - and it feels so good. It feels like real inking when I use... I do a lot of digital drawing, and I'll digitally ink things, but then I'll go and I'll traditionally ink things, and it's almost like I'm using the same technique. I don't feel I'm losing out on my traditional inking, because I'm inking with that too much. So I'd definitely suggest both of those together. They're really great for artists, and I highly recommend them.

[BT, 13:49] Excellent, so you'd say that they're probably very user friendly. You can kind of find your way around the programs quite easily, or is it something that you need to transfer your knowledge from other digital programs like Photoshop and on into something like that.

[JK, 14:04] It is actually pretty user friendly, like if you have vague familiarity with Photoshop, it's basically like using the same thing. Most of the settings work exactly the same way. Yeah, it's very easy to use.

[BT, 14:17] Ok, excellent, that's good to know. So tell me a little bit about your early influences.

[JK, 14:25] Well, like I mentioned before, I was really into video games as a kid, and video game concept art. Specifically, some games like Final Fantasy VIII with Tetsuya Nomura's work on Final Fantasy VIII and Final Fantasy X, but then down the line, there were games like Viewtiful Joe and the Ace Attorney series. They just had really great personalities to the characters, the character art. And when I was a kid, I read a lot of manga. I read a lot of manga. You know, the typical stuff like Sailor Moon, and I watched a lot of anime, too. And then as I got older, I was like "I'm too cool for manga," and I got into western comics, too, and I moved on more as ... manga - manga



was just silly. At the time, they were just over-publishing manga, so a lot of crap came out over time. But then as they... getting into western comics is like “oh, here’s this new thing, and it’s totally better, right?” But as I read more, it’s just like, “OK, this kind of has the same thing going on, too.” There’s a lot of crap in this sea. There’s some great stuff, but there’s a lot of crap, too, and then it was just a balance. It was more, “I like both manga and western comics.” So I’d say that both of those ended up really greatly influencing my art together.

[BT, 15:49] Oh, yeah, I can definitely understand. You know, I remember being 14 and discovering Sailor Moon - the American release versions on TV - and thinking, “this is the coolest thing I’ve ever seen!” And so now I am reintroducing it to my daughter on Hulu. She’s watching the series - of course, the dubbed ones - and she loves it.

[Laughter]

[BT, 16:12] I mean it’s silly, but at the same time...

[JK, 16:14] Well, I mean it was a big deal for kids, because at the time cartoons were like, “oh, they have to be silly, and there’s no serious things that can happen.” And then for kids, it was just like “oh, woah! They can have actually semi-serious stories and be human characters! Woah!”

[BT, 16:30] Definitely, yes. [Laughs]

[BT, 16:32] What is your educational background, if you don’t mind me asking?

[JK, 16:35] You know, it’s what – I probably don’t have the best perspective of art school. I went to community college, which was great. I loved community college. But then I went to Sam Houston State University for a fine arts degree, which I had some terrible luck. And at the time, the art department was just going through some really bad things. It had a head of department that created a hostile environment for the professors, especially the ones who were really welcoming to artists of all backgrounds, and then the advisor was really unwilling to help students and was just really ... almost an ... just awful to students. So it was kind of a mess and ... it was very contemporary art focused. They were trying to go in that direction, so it came at a really bad time where they were just not very welcome to different ideas, and they weren’t very supportive of the ideas, the goals I had with my art. So I mean there’s ... I have a little bit of a bitter experience with art school, but I mean as long as ... you go to a school that’s more focused to what you are. You just gotta make sure; make sure you don’t go to a school that doesn’t cater to what you want.

[BT, 18:05] I have to say I really agree with, and... I guess I kind of have an understanding about what you’re saying. Similarly, I have the community college education, a lot of art classes. And I did actually go take a semester, a full load of art classes up at Sam, and I have to say that I was a bit bored.

[JK, 18:28] Uh-huh

[BT, 18:28] I had been working at an art school with children, and I had been teaching all these techniques, learning oils, and we’ve learned sculpture, and so I’m educating children and also doing beginner adult classes, and I’m stepping into these classes that I’m doing, like watercolor class. And figure drawing, I think, was the only thing that kind of pushed me, because...

[JK, 18:51] Yeah, definitely figure drawing is like, flat-out, like there’s no ... you can’t do figure drawing wrong. That will always be helpful.

[Laughter]



[BT, 19:01] Yeah, definitely, so you know I felt that because I, too, have ... my style is heavily influenced with cartoons, and you know it's not a lot of realism, I guess. It's all exaggerated, so for me it was educational. But I was bored, and I just was thinking to myself, "can I just test out of these classes?"

[Laughter]

[BT, 19:21] Just get my degree already. I was also a little older in my life. At that time, I had already met my husband. We had gotten engaged quite quickly, so I was ready to just not be in school anymore, so I did drop out, too, and just continued basically, I guess, teaching myself. I really don't see anything wrong with that as long you're constantly pushing yourself.

[JK, 19:44] Yeah, absolutely, with art... as far as going to art school, a lot of it really depends on what you want to do. If you want to be a freelance illustrator, school's not really necessarily going to help you that much because you're just ... it's mostly about just getting involved. You know you gotta keep pushing yourself no matter what schools you go to. You gotta have the motivation. So, if you have that motivation and you don't really need that degree, then just push yourself. And there's always people online. You can find help online. You can learn things on your own. YouTube's super great for learning stuff, art-wise. I have watched watercolor painting YouTube videos all the time. And if ... another great thing is surrounding yourself by artists. If you just get involved in the art community that you're in, just surround yourself by artists, get advice from people - and the internet is super great, too - you can make so many art friends. I've had internet friends since I was 13; we still stick together and just help each other and talk about art, all the time, all day.

[Laughs]

[BT, 20:58] I totally understand. I don't live down very close to Houston. I'm a little bit out further north of it, so I find myself really wanting to dive into the art community, and kind of skimming the surface a little bit showed me what I really think, that maybe I can see myself having a future in - and getting involved with - the galleries and things like that. Because I really feel I need that companionship...

[JK, 21:32] Absolutely!

[BT, 21:32] ... with more artists. I really do. And right now I kind of feel like I don't have a lot of artist friends around me so... I feel like maybe I'm a little disconnected, and I think that's something that I need to work on, myself. I think that's really good advice.

[BT, 21:48] Ok, so, what are you currently working on right now? What are some of the things you have in the works, or something that's successful that you're continuously working on?

[JK, 21:57] Well, right now actually I'm finishing up my commissions still from Comicpalooza, but...

[Laughter]

[BT, 22:05] A lot of artists are, actually.

[Laughter]

[JK, 22:06] Yeah, it's... Comicpalooza's a big one. But I'm also preparing... I'm signed up for the San Diego Comic-Con art auction, so I'm preparing for that, getting some stuff made, so I can show them off there and make some sales. There's also a bunch of conventions later this year that I'm signed up for, like San Japan in San Antonio. I'm



going to be tabling with EK Weaver. And Amazing Houston Comic-Con, which I think is like in September-ish area... I'm also doing little comic jobs here and there. I'm mostly doing short comics right now to get my comic skills up. Comics are hard.

[Laughs]

Comics are a lot of work, and I don't have a whole lot of actual experience in them, so I'm just trying to just get more done and get my skills tighter with shorter, easier projects. But, I'm building myself up to getting my own web comic started, *Gods in New York*. It's about my two girls: Alex, she's a wood nymph of Central Park in New York City, and Kara, who's a good friend of hers that has taken on to picking up her photography again.

[BT, 23:27] That's really cool, and I guess I'm personally not familiar with these characters, so I'd love to go look them up and find out about them, because they sound like something that would definitely be in my interests.

[Laughter]

[BT, 23:39] So, your future goals. I guess, if you see yourself short term or long term, where do you really see yourself going, professionally?

[JK, 23:49] You know, I love illustration, and I want to keep doing that. I love getting involved in the comic book community and comic books. I really just want to keep... I want to do illustration in comic books. You know one thing that's really been on my mind lately is just doing projects that I really love, even if I don't end up with huge, major things. I want to make sure I'm always happy, and I realize that success isn't really about being published by a big ... getting picked up by a big publisher.

[BT, 24:28] Exactly.

[JK, 24:28] It could just be that you're doing what you enjoy, and how you enjoy it, and it doesn't really matter, so that's been on my mind a lot lately. And, I just want to keep helping and inspire other artists; I just want to inspire other artists, like, "keep going!" And just like, "do the thing!" [Laughs] And, keeping a good balance. Well one of my goals lately is just - kind of a minor thing - is figuring out a good balance of stuff to take on. Especially events, because last year I really burnt myself out on doing too many conventions. There's a lot of people that can do that, but I realize that I can't, really. I just end up burnt out after a convention for a week, and it cuts into my art time. I'm just too exhausted to work, and I can't really think about it, and it just puts me behind for a little while as I'm trying to get back into my flow of things. So that's definitely something that I want to figure out: what's a good balance of how many conventions, what conventions, and things like that. And then there's also health. One thing about freelance is also figuring out good habits. It's very easy to just sit around and kind of close yourself off, and not being active. I just got really out of shape for a little while, and I felt myself getting lethargic a lot, and more recently I started getting back into working out, and it's been making a huge difference, and my goal is just keep on the flow of that and have that like a regular comfort that I need to keep up.

[BT, 26:19] Yes, that's really good advice. Considering when you are working as an artist, freelance, you're at home a lot, you're sitting down a lot, you're spending hours upon hours late into the evening, and you do find that you are, I guess, neglecting yourself... [Laughs]

[JK, 26:38] Yeah.

[BT, 26:38] ...in other areas, and I find myself doing that, too. Certain days, I will get out of bed and think, “I just need some coffee to get going,” and you know being at home, it’s so easy to get preoccupied with all the other things that pile up on you and things you need to do so, I really would have to say I commend you for cranking out such beautiful artwork and being quite successful at it, because that is something. You’re kind of your own boss, and a lot of times ... You see, artists are very fluid, go with the flow; they may not have that certain drive to produce success from their craft, so it’s really, really good advice. Because you are; you’re your own boss.

[JK, 27:27] There’s also another side, another danger to it, too. With freelance it’s also feeling guilty for having fun because of your work. Your life... your work life, and your home life are the same space, so it can be difficult to be like, “oh, I want to go play some video games, but I have this other thing to do.” Even on weekends, it can be hard to separate that, but it’s really important to. And not feel guilty for it. [Laughs]

[BT, 27:58] Yeah, I can I can definitely sympathize with that. So, how can the listeners get into contact with you as far as web sites and social media pages. What do you have out there that we could contact you and see some of your art, and maybe get some commission work.

[JK, 28:14] I’m just about everywhere on the internet. I’m very accessible. My main website is just my last name, kinosian.com, but everywhere else, I’m consistently my full name. So on Twitter, Tumblr, Facebook, Instagram, you can just search Jamie Kinosian, and I’ll come up. Like most of those places are just my full name, together. And also my email is jamie@kinosian.com, so pretty easy to remember.

[BT, 28:43] Ok, great. And then what we’ll do is we can always provide that information at the end of the podcast, or the links our listeners can click on, and that’ll guide them directly to your pages, and then that way they can really see this beautiful artwork that you create. I just loved it when I saw it. I had come across it from a friend and just thought, “oh, no, she does what I like.” So, it’s always cool, and kind of a privilege, to get to speak to other artists, especially whenever you see their work and you think, “this, here, could be a direct influence on my style later on down the line, definitely.”

[JK, 29:28] [Unintelligible]

[BT, 29:29] Oh, you’re welcome. Do you have any final thoughts, comments, or maybe words of inspiration that you’d like to give to our listeners out there?

[JK, 29:35] You know, one thing that I’ve learned that was very, very hard to learn was don’t get discouraged by a lack of following. It can be a real struggle to be posting your art out there, and nobody’s seeing it, nobody’s commenting. But it... it’s... once you delve too into that, you can really lose yourself. Like, don’t... and ... especially, don’t make things just to get that following. Just make friends, and be yourself, and people will really notice you being genuine, and they... they will really pick up on that and feel inspired by that, so just be yourself and have fun and draw things you love.

[BT, 30:19] Alright, those are really great words, and definitely something for all artists to live by. I feel that it’s key to really create what you love and not just mass produce things for what you think people want to see.

[JK, 30:34] Mmm-hmm.

[BT, 30:34] I think you tend to lose a little bit of something along the way. Well, thank you, Jamie. I really appreciate getting to speak with you and learning quite a bit of wonderful information, for myself and other artist listeners out there, hopefully that they can apply some of this to their own craft. And, I really thank you for taking



the time to speak with me today, and I hope you have a wonderful future with the rest of your year and all of the conventions coming your way, and good luck to you with your comic book ventures.

[JK, 31:09] Yeah, thank you! It was a blast!

[BT, 31:11] Alright, well I really appreciate it. Ok , guys. Thanks for listening to our Art Supply Guide's podcast, and again, we were speaking with Jamie Kinosian, and at the end of this podcast, if you just look at the links below, we'll provide some vital information that we spoke about in this podcast as well as how you can get into contact with her. Thanks guys.

[OUTRO]