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Art in Isolation with Sloan Sagar

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Alison Sam in her studio.

In the coming weeks, Contemporary Art Review .la will interview Lindsey Preston Zapata will be leading chats with members of the L.A. art community: artists, curators, and collectors.

The following was drafted by our team from an Instagram Live conversation on April 24, 2020 at 5:30 PST.

Lindsey Preston Zapata: One thing you wanted to talk about was how you have been working in your studio and finding a space to work.

Alison Sam: I am really fortunate—I was raised in Laurel Canyon, and [when] we moved back from New York, we found a house in Laurel Canyon with a little cottage in the back. It's a little bungalow, which is really great, because I can walk back and forth. I have a little studio there, and I have a little studio at home, and I have a little studio at my mom's house. So I'm very fortunate because we have this bungalow back in the yard.

LPZ: Have you been doing any gardening, or any landscaping?

Sam: My kids helped [with] together a little garden and grow the veggies. Yes, that's a little vegetable garden—we'll see. We actually don't have much space, but we have a little patch of land, and it's growing pretty strongly, enough... you know, if we get one harvest in October or whatever.

[Both laugh]

Sam: We converted part of our garage into a ceramics studio, so right now, I'm working on a lot of ceramic sculptures and installations. I'm also making tiles and I'm just a little outdoor work. It's too hot to work on it today, but that's in the press.

LPZ: Yeah, I know. It's getting to that summer heat. I can feel it. It's really—it's been very pleasant without air conditioning in our apartment, it's pretty difficult.

Sam: Yeah, it always comes hard and fast.

LPZ: You mentioned that you started back in studio during this time to make a piece for your mom. Can you talk about how you made the new sculptures. Give you[r] talk about how you've had to downsize or shift the scale of your practice.

Sam: Well, my studio is out in the valley in North Hollywood, and so they kind of—I'm a little like Harrison Ford—I don't like to leave my home. My studio is very close to my home, and I can walk there. And I'm very fortunate that I've got a couple of pieces in there. Part of the reason I wanted to do this piece for my mom is that I'm not able to see her right now, and I'm always because I work with chemicals and grinders. You can see the beard growing—I haven't been able to shave and get my haircut. So I'm not able to do it in Quarantine here, but my neighbors would probably tell me.

LPZ: It's so funny because my husband also makes wood sculptures, and he's—he's been in his studio, and he's—he's been, like, shaving his head. Hey, it's fine. "Do not" I keep on—I keep on—I keep on saying to him, "I don't know. It might be a little more "fine and fur" over here.

LPZ: Between all of the well-known cost of all the conversations—I'm sure you've been—you've been in conversations with your friends and family—I'm interested my time that I could, maybe, I'm sure this is great. Now, I'm interested in your perspective.

LPZ: Do you have any advice for others with land lines?

Sam: Yeah, I get these brand-new little tools. Whittling is totally new to me, so I'm loving that. It's nice to make these tiny figures. I can do it in the backyard. It's not noisy. It's more contemplative and chill, so that's really nice. I'm—I'm—I'm—