

Speaker 1: So my first question is for the context of the interview and I was wondering if you could give an introduction to The Graphic medicine exhibition or exhibitions. You've helped organize.

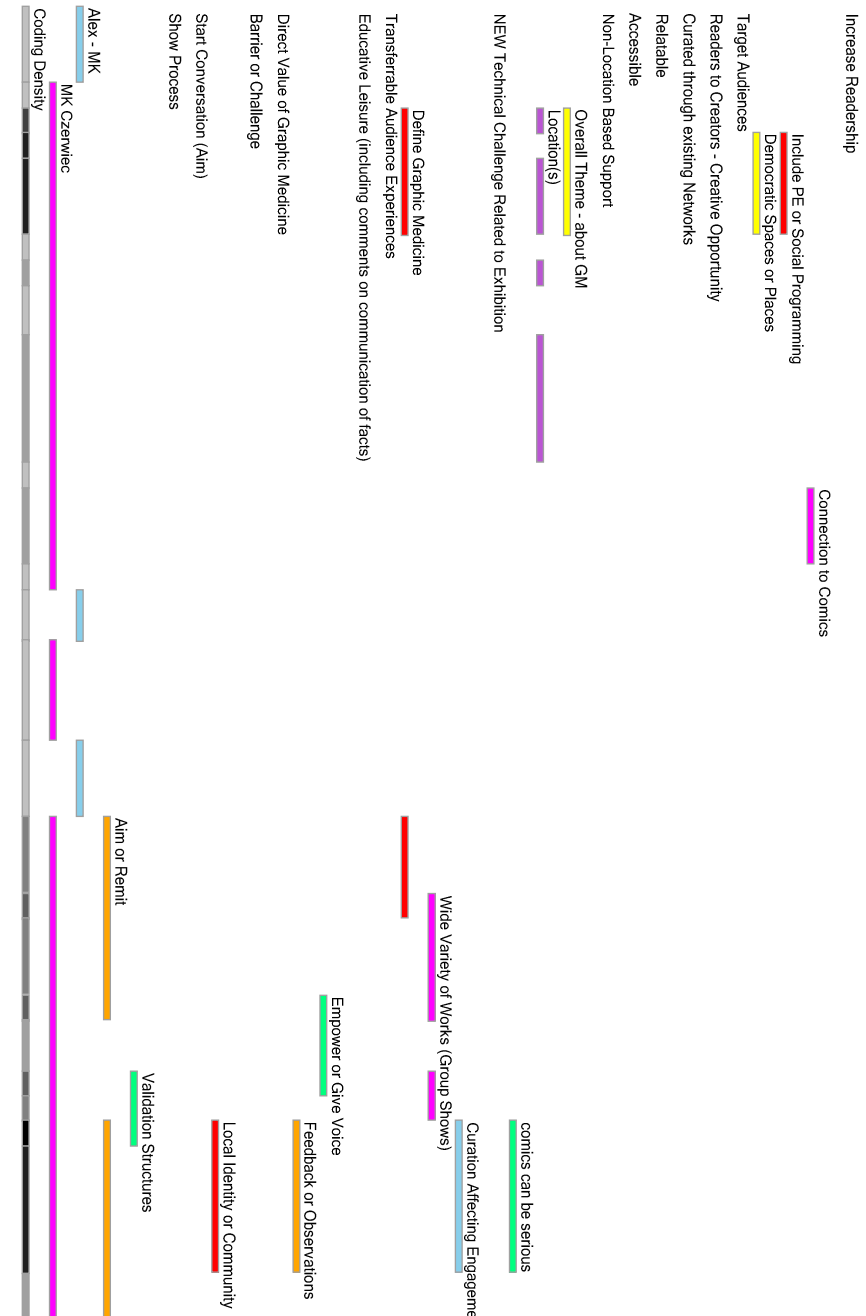
Speaker 2: Sure. Sure. I actually put some thought and wrote this down so I wouldn't forget any. So in 2011 it was part of the second Graphic Medicine conference I exhibited a poster size comics exhibit from the text that we had printed on foam core and exhibited in the lobby of the opening reception of the conference in the in a building at Northwestern Medical Center which at the time was this building that was shared by the medical center and the law school and it faces lake michigan and we had the exhibit on standing easles we had a big exhibit. So that was the first one the second one that comes to mind. If I not forgetting any skips all the way ahead to 2017 and 2018 reimagine End of Life. So for '17. It was in San Francisco and 18. It was in New York City. Oh, no. Wait, I'm sorry. My years are off. It's 18 and 19 because that was early This year in spring right? so that's 18 and 19. And that's a particular conference that I could tell you any details. You want to know about what to stay focused on the graphic medicine exhibits the San Francisco in 18 was in an art college. I think it ran for a month. And those were about actual size prints on paper some on foamcore but mostly on paper reproductions and then Be one in 19 the spring of this year in New York were high quality reproductions enlarged not poster size but enlarged of somewhat to their readable by standing in front of them exhibited at the 53rd Street Library and I have lots of photos of all of that and then moving forward from that. Oh I had one that just came to mind that is disappeared. But those are the main things that really have been active in and then DotMD that I did. And then I've contributed pieces to the one that Jared Garner at Ohio State University, which I'm going to see this weekend drawing blood exhibit are you familiar with that?

Speaker 1: No. No,

Speaker 2: yeah. And and so that's just opening now and we're going to do an event there on Friday at the Ohio State University and that used to think about that exhibit is all original part where anything I've been involved in thus far and I also has been reproductions.

Speaker 1: So I guess for all of these and maybe there's individual reasons, but why did you want to curate exhibitions?

Speaker 2: For the first one we were very much in an introductory stage and it was the first american conference and i was hosting it and part of it was so that people could see that, rather than, kinda as their first interaction with this conference and this idea that comics could be taken seriously in healthcare we wanted a kinda of make it large and in your face. and also feature the artists whose work was being represented in the conference and who were attending the conference to create to begin to create the sense of community that you know, you're not this person doing this alone, but you were part of a bigger picture and I think it was very successful in that regard. But mostly it was to kind of the there's a power to taking comics which are usually small in a book and really putting them large and creating a context around them that I think is very powerful and I wanted to just experiment with that I had this thought that I think that making them really big was a good idea but, and choosing very carefully which pages of the book to represent kind of a range of health issues to kind of show the broad expanse of the medium and the potential of the medium. So for example, David small created stitches, he was one of our Keynotes and he basically this I feel like this quote exemplifies the outcome i'd hoped for was that he said, you know when invited to this conference, you said really I have no idea of what you were driving at with this graphic medicine thing or it's Comics medicine and like what was your point in trying to bring people together to talk about it? So but as I walk through the exhibit at the end, I totally got it and that was exactly what I was hoping for. It's so so that was that one the other the other one that I was most involved with were these two as part of reimagine end of life, which is this Citywide Festival. That



was in San Francisco and then in New York, and it's hopefully going to expand around the country but to get from the Grassroots up people talking about end-of-life to, people talk about dying and death and what they would want their loved ones to know. Becuase having worked in an ICU and I think a lot people who organised this and worked in hospice and end of life care. one of the biggest struggles is that people don't talk about what they want or what they wouldn't want until it's too late and they can't speak for themselves and no one knows and so one of the one of the one of the goals of this Festival is to get those conversation started so colleagues and I from The Narrative medicine program at Columbia had this theory that comics and some of the amazing. Comics around end of life could be really good launching off point. And so we've been collaborating for a number of years and this exhibit emerged out of that and again to kind of get it big and then because it was in the 53rd Street Library, we hosted a number of events and collaboration with that the Hope was to just literally use the comics as a launching off point. And I can send you a blog post with some details about that and any more information about that.

Speaker 1: Oh cool. And what type of public engagement events did you have at the 53rd Street?

Speaker 2: So we had panel of New Yorker cartoonists to talk about single-panel New Yorker Comics and that kind of tradition of having that grim reaper as a character and addressing end of life issues in comics and a couple of cartoonists that did great stuff around that and talked to that. We also had a workshop that I ran where I got participants to make comics about kind of end of life ideas and thoughts and then we had a panel Discussion with two hospice Physicians who have been very active and in end-of-life issues and a hospice nurse who ran a hospice in San Francisco and a cartoonist about a project in prison where the inmates had life sentences, but there were still hospice so they knew they would die there and so inmates rose up and created a hospice where they train themselves to be hospice care workers for their fellow inmates where they were dying and a cartoonist named Wendy McNaughten had gone in and done kind of an oral history of that and then she made comics about that oral history in that hospice. And so we had an event where people can even listen to them. Talk about that project.

Speaker 1: Oh wow that's a really in what year was that project from or is that a current one?

Speaker 2: That was the 2019 - oh what year was that project with the hospice? I think it is kind of on-going but the work was - there's some information in the blog post and i'm trying to remember where that was published and in what year but obviously prior to this but...

Speaker 1: and then and then what so you've talked about kind of like why the aim for the first one at Northwestern and or Northwest and the second one the reimaging end of life, but what was the aim for the dot MD and then also the drawing blood

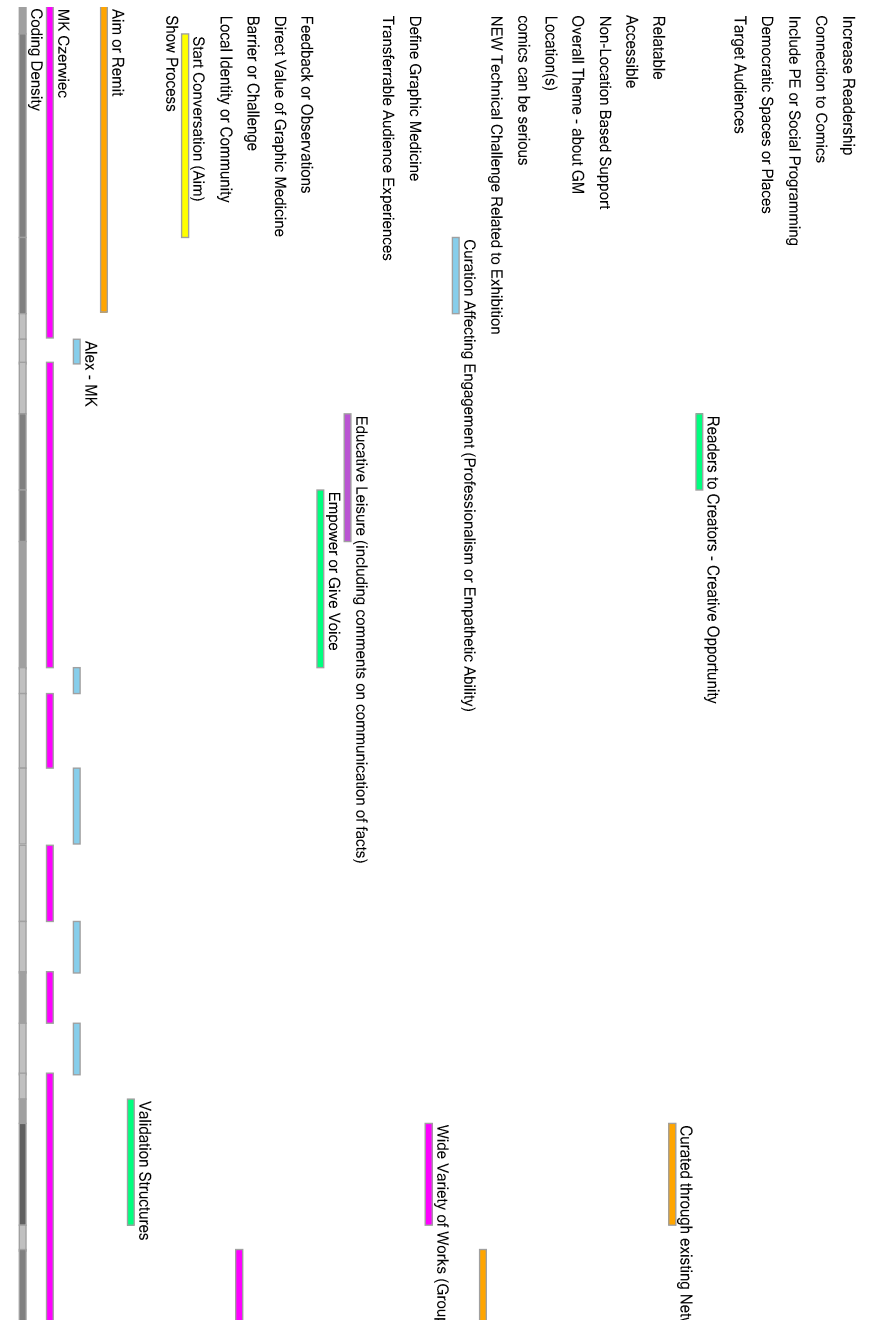
Speaker 2: Yeah, you know, I think the curators of those could speak to it I just wanted to [mention] those, so Jared Gardner at Ohio State was the curator for Drawing Blood and I think he would be really interesting to talk to about it and Ian curated the dotMD one.

Speaker 1: Okay, cool. And then for your your first two, did you have any help in organizing those exhibitions or were you kind of given a space and it was up to you to build them?

Speaker 2: Yep, pretty much. I mean I got help in hanging them and stuff but as far as like yeah, it was just to work within the constraints of the space and the budget

Speaker 1: and where those so those kind of feed into another question where there any challenges to organizing these exhibitions?

Speaker 2: I'm quite honestly the first one is so far away and its all [combined] with the challenges of organizing the entire conference but no not really. we were able to find funding for that one and - so no that one was fine. and that one was pretty self creating because I really tried to feed from the artists who were committed to presented at the conference and being at the conference and then the books that we felt that were out already that really exemplified what the field was and could be and so that one was pretty easy just pick those images and get them printed. I don't even remember how we got them printed, but I can still have them somewhere theres exhibit still exists and then the second one some challenges. I think were curating most efficiently for the space, which was it something I said, I'll send you photos with this gorgeous wall long wall and it's kind of a



modern design of library and its open to glass its really really neat space and then I think the biggest challenge there was that I not in New York and it was in new York. And so I had to guess and then do a site visit the week before adapt and show back up and hang it and I had help with hanging it, but that wasn't the bigger challenges not geographically . Not being able to walk the space and feel for it and then design around it. What kind of doing it in the distance.

Speaker 1: and then who is your intended audience for these exhibitions

Speaker 2: well the first one was the Attendees of the conference and then anyone who happened to wander through but primarily the attendees and again there was I think there was much more of a social aim also like as a bit of an icebreaker people would never met one another can say like, oh I saw that kind of get conversation started and then within the institution that I was working in to try and get a feel for those. Like I said the breadth of the field as it was growing the second one was the General Public And the people who wanted to engage with this reimagine Festival but also, just the general public people walking through to kind of get them thinking and talking and engaging.

Speaker 1: And then would you say those are the particular experiences you wanted to your audiences to have when they left or was there any other things like primarily it's about conversation. But if they also left with a b and c that would be good?

Speaker 2: Great, well if they also left with with maybe ya know we also for the reimagine New York one at the endbecuase it is also a library which is great we had a table with all the books so that they could get a couple of images but then if they i would love if they really got engaged when they checked out those books or sought them out elsewhere, but primarily then, of course the goal is that they would you know engage with the conference or their family to actually have those conversations and maybe in the end the goal is those conversations and if they document them great but just have them have, you know, like I saw this exhibit and you know, it got me thinking I really should ta--. Let's have this conversation with figure out a way to make it. It possible, you know or follow up with a resource that could make it easier or just facilitate that conversation.

Speaker 1: And then for the second one, how did you choose the works and artists involved in that

Speaker 2: it was so it started with graphic Memoirs that I've read and used in teaching and choosing the best images to represent those and that was a good chunk of maybe 5-8 books and then it was, becuase i curate. The graphic medicine website and end-of-life Care is kind of my focus area for my own work. I was I had a kind of a lot of items on my radar and then there were one or two things that were recommended to me, but mostly it was stuff that was kind of on my radar that existed in books or online.

Speaker 1: And how do you know offhand about how many works you ended up representing? Like how many artworks were up?

Speaker 2: in each one?

Speaker 1: Yes, if you remember

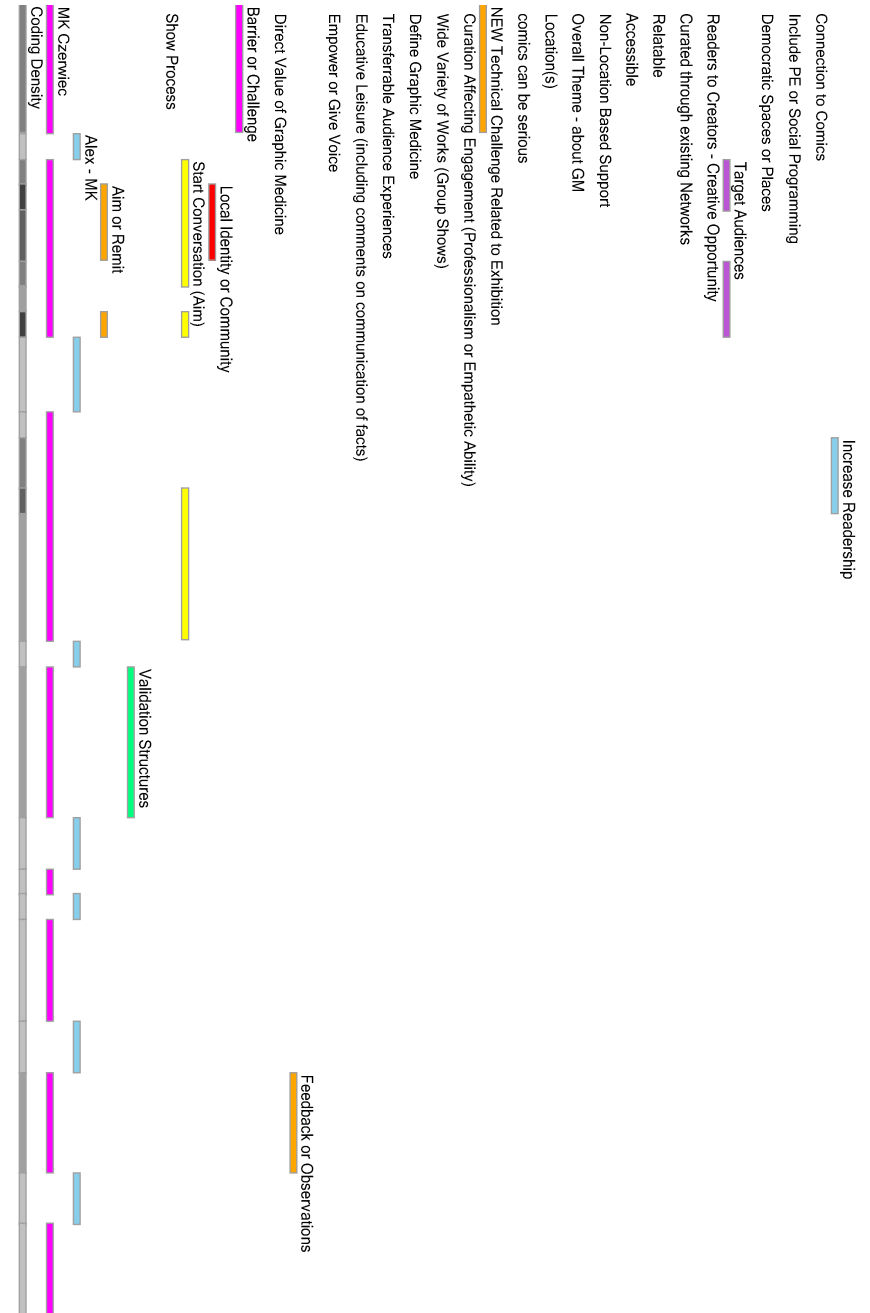
Speaker 2: Yeah, you know I should, in the second one. You know that is something I could follow up with those number and have more accurate. I might not be able to find the numbers for the first one - I would say the first one was about 25 and the second one was maybe 20 but I could give that actual answer.

Speaker 1: And you said that one the second one that you're hoping it travels? And is that as the festival grows or has anyone approached you about it?

Speaker 2: Yeah. The second one - yeah - I would recreate that. there was some talk of an exhibit or helping to curate one in London for someone who had attended the reimagine one and really loved it and so that is a possibility but right now it is kind of tied to the festival but again this is the area I work in and I will probably be doing it again for some other context.

Speaker 1: And do you happen to remember or are able to share any feedback you received from these informal or formal?

Speaker 2: Yes. So i told you about the first one and I think that really summed it up. The second one less so - you know I think part of the public that was engaging I wasn't like I said, it was a much more controlled environment for the first one second one being a public library people that came



through. I know I you know saw people reading it but I wasn't there for a very it was up for I think a whole week. I was there very small portion of that time and I didn't have as good of a system setup for getting feedback. I mean, I had gotten informal feedback from participants that said participants in that larger conference. the week-long thing that said that it was really great and they found it really interesting But as far as like outcomes and you know, I feel like I'm a better sense of like the first one achieve the goal what we were after second one. I'm not as clear on whether or not it achieved. the goals.

Speaker 1: And that you would say is tied to kind of like the public. Kind of the location and the the crowd that was coming in?

Speaker 2: Right because it was a public library and i didn't go all the time that it was open. You know that that I didn't have interaction with so I don't yet know. And yeah, as I reflect on it would have been really interesting to have some sort of interactive element of it where people could give feedback at the end. Like you know, what do you think or you know, or here's a board right some you know, whatever. It's a sort of some interactive thing where people could have an opportunity to give feedback. Yeah, and plan that in to the next iteration maybe a good idea

Speaker 1: And then was there a graphic medicine exhibition is part of the first graphic medicine conference.

Speaker 2: I don't believe so no. I am thinking about it...I don't believe so.

Speaker 1: because I've seen something of that nature at every one since

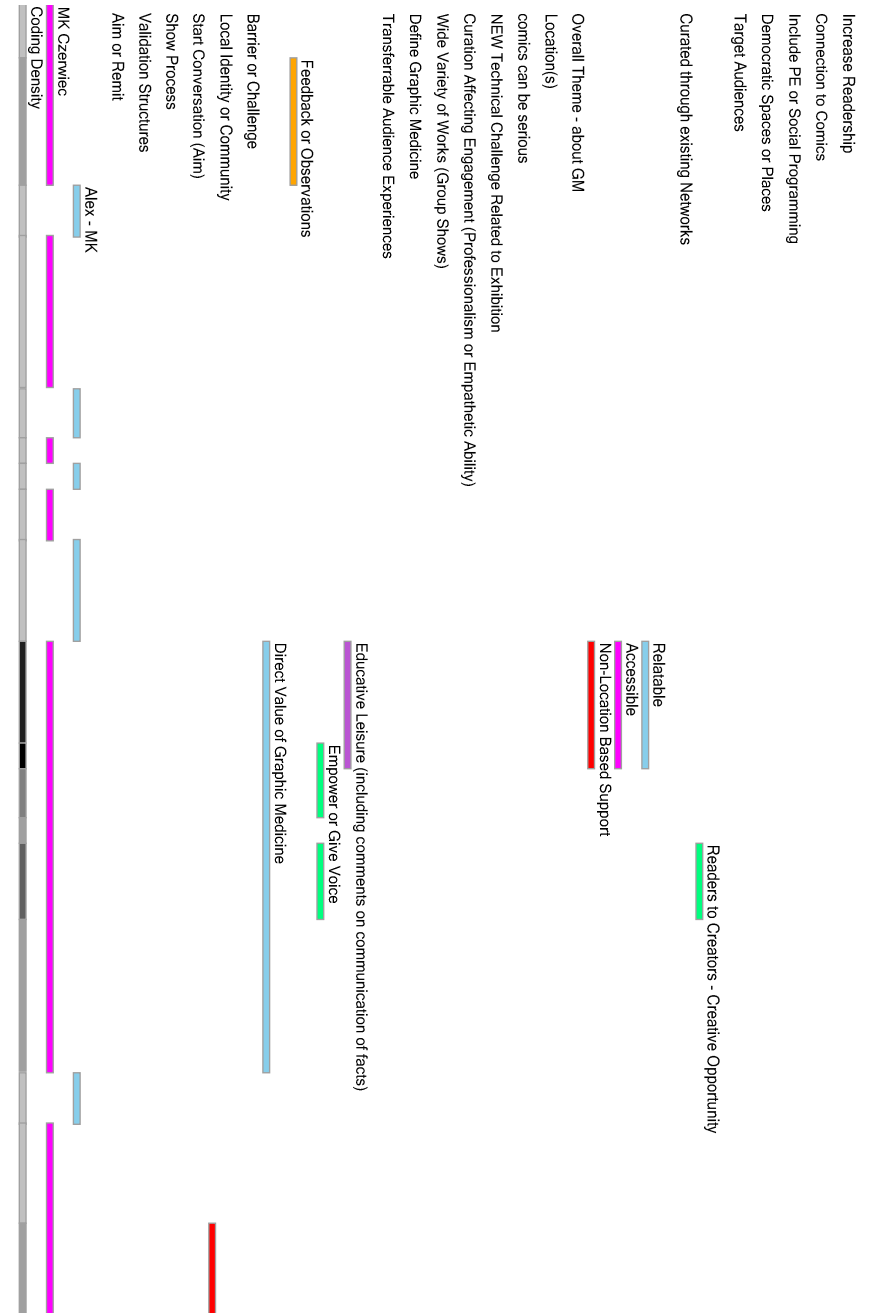
Speaker 2: yeah. I know that there is on in Seattle. they did it upstairs right? yeah I think that it Got picked up for a while. and...there is definitely one in Brighton, the first Brighton, yeah.

Speaker 1: And also I wondered because you're so involved with the community on all different levels like you you write you create you teach and then of course you're a part of the conferences I was wondering What is kind of your aim for graphic medicine and Society? What value do you think it has?

Speaker 2: I think that it is multifacted. I think one facet is using the Comics made by people who are experiencing illness caregiving disability kind of change of health status as a way so taking those texts that they are creating and and having people read them to have a deeper understanding of the experinece of illness So that creates understanding and then going to reduce the burden on the person experiencing it to kind of explain or fight against being misunderstood. Right? So if the reader for example is a provider then it amplifies the voice of the patient and family and caregivers in the encounters that they might have. So that's one part of it and then The other side of it is there's plenty more to this but the other side I think of as critical for my perspective as a nurse is then also creating Comics or the making of comics provides an opportunity to reflect on in a way different than just writing text both the experience of illness and caregiving and the experience of being a professional provider. So from all sides of the encounter and all it disciplines that deal with this Arena of health and Trauma and caregiving to kind of give a concrete tool to you know, this is hard stuff we dealing with here is a way we can help and it's prevention of the Arts and Humanities can provide that I think has concrete results. So it's this kind of like both those are reading the things that we made and then of course using Comics as an educational intervention about issues within health, and then also just the making of comics To try to develop our and process develop our thinking and process experiences.

Speaker 1: And what is your experience as one of the artists being exhibited at exhibitions? Maybe you don't curate. I wondered if you had any thoughts on that

Speaker 2: yeah. I had that experience at dotMD becuase I could stand back and watch people when their reading it. yeah its a really interesting experience its slightly awkward you know your sort of standing there and I don't know these people so they don't know that thats me. its kind of like exhibiting at an art show and I always tell my spouse like assume the artist is in earshot and they can hear what people are saying. and I did not overhear any comments, positive or negative, but so thats interesting cause as a creator you don't get to watch people read your work generally. A private encounter kind of makes it it makes this private Encounter of the relationship between



Creator and reader public in a way and that's kind of interesting and then the other piece of it is to really it really does I think give a feel for that sense that you are part of a community, you know, there's a sense of pride of like, you know, and I remember as we were hanging the pieces at that dotMD in Galway it was like, oh these are my friends, you know, these are these are colleagues. These are people in the Last 10 years that come to work together and I have a great deal of enthusiasm about you know, all that we've done in graphic medicine. It's the community that I'm most proud of and the ways in which we support one another and so this is this physical manifestation of that and yeah the range of subjects and styles and you know, just getting it all kind out there. It's really it's really wonderful.

Speaker 1: That's so cool. It's neat. And I just have a couple more questions and one because you you really kind of highlighted like that some are reproductions and some are the original works. And I wondered if you could expand on that perhaps if you see any difference in exhibiting a reproduction or exhibiting an original

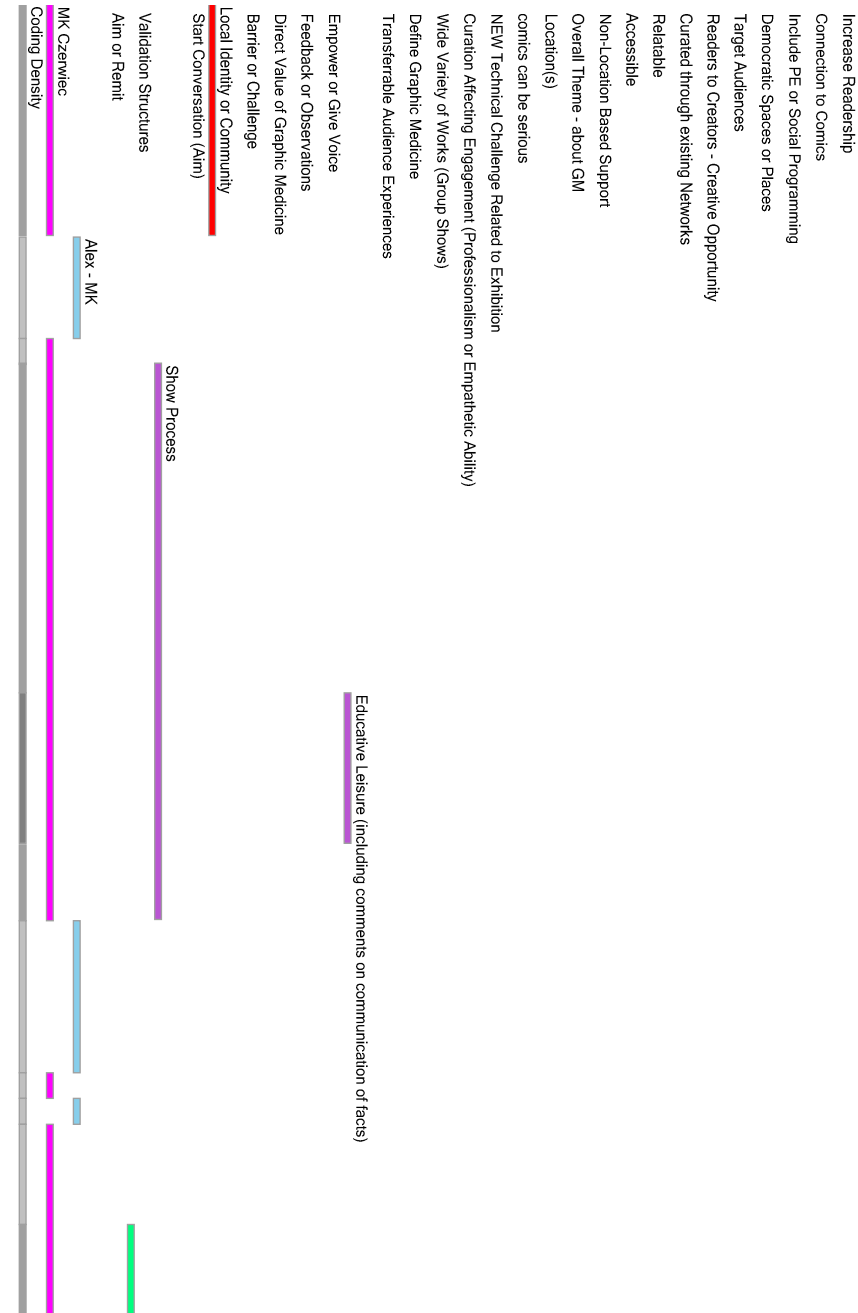
Speaker 2: Right. So exhibiting A reproduction of how it appears in a text or as will be published if its unpublished yet. That's its final state, but there's something in seeing it isn't final State and it doesn't give you as much data about the process right? It's the product yet, but a lot of times seeing the original art gives you a lot more information about the process. So like right now I'm sitting here and on the wall across from where I'm sitting on my computer. I actually have some original art from graphic medicine text I'm looking at it. There's one a piece of art from a page original page from Alison bechdel's fun home and you can see her notes in the margins and you can see like there was a face. She wasn't happy with so she reproduced it at the bottom of the page. And then when she went into Photoshop dropped that in there if for my own work the original will have notes in the margins Corrections, you know a lot of times like the older stuff you'll see white out on the originals. and my originals are uncolored and know when they appear in the book They're fully colored because I did all the color digitally so there's just like a lot especially as a Cartoonist to see that there's some people who create, you know, pristine originals Carol Tyler her original pages are as they appear or she was started over she - that's how she works but to see it, you know, Brian Fies pages are magnificent, but these little tells of like changes that are made editing. Those things are just so endlessly fascinating as a Cartoonist. I'm not sure if that's experience of anyone else. But for me it also just the nerd stuff. What kind of paper do you work? I will kind of pen do you use you know, that those Clues are in those original artifacts that Don't see on reproductions. And so to me and I don't know if that makes a difference to any one else but as a Cartoonist, like that's just all I care about like I'm way more into exhibits. I think the others are really powerful, but I'm so excited to see this exhibit that Jared curated it the drawing blood because it's of this as far as I understand almost exclusively original art. And so I'm just giddy with excitement to see that stuff for those reasons.

Speaker 1: Oh cool, that's really neat. And I think I'm going to take a minute because I had a question pop up based on that. Oh, and so one of my last questions was because you And I've heard you talk on this a little bit, but I wondered in the context of exhibition when you yourself as an artist have shared other people's stories or kind of like in telling your own telling other people's stories, but then also exhibiting stories that have other real people in them. Is there any concerns or thought process that goes into the kind of the stories you decide to put up on these walls?

Speaker 2: As far as attending to the ethics of representation?

Speaker 1: Yeah

Speaker 2: right. Yes, I trust the artist and in almost all cases know the artist well enough to know that they've addressed those issues and that you know with their care provider that their anonymizing patients or attended to that or if they're dealing with family members and whomever that they've Addressed that in their own way. I think every artist has to figure out how they're going to deal with that individually. But yeah. Yeah, I mean if someone is I think what you're saying is like so telling my story I'm also telling like other members of my family who become characters in it and stuff like that. right, so the artists I exhibit i trust that they have attended to those issues of



representation. and if there were something that I am concerned about having, you know my masters in bioethics and medical Humanities II would I'm predisposed to be thinking about that stuff. Yeah.

Speaker 1: Yeah, that's really cool. Yeah, I think that's a really interesting point. And I think it's one interesting thing that you've said a few times throughout this interview is kind of the sense of community and how these aren't necessarily random people you're reaching out to asking the people you have like a relationship with which I think is really neat.

Speaker 2: right so and I wouldn't be exhibiting work and also its work that is ready for prime time and i don't mean that in terms of the visual style. All I care about in terms of visual Styles at the text is readable. I mean more in that this has been thought through particularly in terms of representation. If I'm using a student's artwork, I will go back to them and it's usually not representational of any real person or whatever like they're special ethics you use in different situations, but these most is working stuff that's been published. It somewhere so it's already the been thought through all of that. You know, I'm not I I know that this is so and so shows up like in Mom's cancer. For example, he talks about how his mother responded to being represented 0 sisters and you know, that's all been worked through by the time it's something that I'd be willing. It's not just something somewhere made in a workshop and hasn't thought that stuff through. . It's so it's like it's meant for public consumption. It's not private work and I think those are two different things.

Speaker 1: that's a really interesting or good point but cool. But then my last question for you is just opening it back up to you and wondering if there's anything you would like to add that you felt my questions didn't get at.

Speaker 2: About exhibiting graphic medicine publicly? No, I think that the last one is like if I had to think about like a caution or thought the last issue we just discussed is the most important and thinking about the context and the environment you know, we are trying to think of you know, the content of the work is not going to be inappropriately exhibited so that it triggers someone right if there's a Content that's particularly difficult. You wouldn't put that into a super public area stuff like that. I just thought of another exhibit. Actually there's a woman her name is Kelso and she's did an exhibit at Duke. They had a graphic medicine exhibition have you heard about that?

Speaker 1: No, Kelso?

Speaker 2: and I can connect you with here. They are in london right now. they had done and maybe she'll refer you to someone else they don't because if I didn't get get to it, but I understand it was really - don't know if you're at the end of your interview, but I just remember it was another exhibit that

Speaker 1: So that would be sweet. That'd be really cool.

Speaker 2: I thought about it in the context of difficult imagery being put in - It was like a for example in thinking of a general medical hallway that people are scoring their doctor appointment passing through it. You've got to be really careful about what you would put particular someone's already under duress or put something is going to be triggering or really upsetting in this really public environment. so that is just what I was thinking of and I think that might be an issue with that exhibit, but I'm not sure.

Speaker 1: but I think I think that's everything I have for you right now. Unless there's anything else.

Speaker 2: I think that's it. I am sure I will think of things later but for now thats fine.

Speaker 1: That's all right. Well, then I'm going to press stop real quick.

