

Lolita Cros Is In Love With The Process

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Lolita Cros – independent curator & art consultant – reflects on loving the process, crushing on clients, and navigating an unpaved path towards her passion.

“My biggest handicap, which has also become my strength, is that I was very young when I started doing all these [art] shows. When I would show up to a meeting, people would ask me about my age first thing. Or they’d have a smirk and ask, ‘Where’s your boss?’”



Lolita Cros is an independent curator & art consultant. Originally from Paris, Lolita arrived in New York twelve years ago to study at high school, then Bard College, putting together her first Manhattan art show while she was still a student. Being young and female may have presented challenges in the beginning, but these traits have given Lolita – now twenty-eight – a unique edge, a fresh perspective, and an opportunity to approach the curation process differently.

“I was [studying Art History] and learning about dead artists, or artists that had already made it. I thought, this is kind of crazy, because I’m in a school where young people are learning to be artists and maybe someone in this batch will become famous; someone that my grandchildren might learn about in

school one day. That's when I started doing studio visits, because I was curious what other students around me were doing."

"I started having conversations with all these artists and thought, I should translate these conversations into a visual experience for an audience. That's how I did my first show. In 2012, while I was still at Bard, I decided to do a show in New York. That's when I knew was going to stay a curator. If I could do a show in New York at twenty years old, then I could figure it out in the future."

"It was a little tough at first. I had to get a full-time job when I was straight out of college. I worked for a gallery for three years, but really didn't want to fall into the comfort of having a full-time job in New York City. So I worked on one show a year. That was my goal. Those shows were really hard, because I would put all my savings into it; all my energy into it."



"I was obviously my own PR, so I'd be trying to convince Vogue, or whatever publications my friends were reading, to write about a show for an artist they had never heard of. Sometimes they would text me back late. I would wake up at 5:30 in the morning and have a 7 or 8 am meeting with an editor – who would never end up writing [about the show] in the end. It was a lot of heartbreak, a lot of taking things personally. But you have to love the process. Every time I come out of a show that was hard or exhausting, there is always this massive, massive accomplishment of walking through the exhibition and saying, wow, we did this."

Lolita's love for the process extends from art exhibitions to exhibiting her own sensuality. The care and consideration that goes into both make the final result glow from the inside out.

"It's funny, because I think 'sexy' also comes with the preparation. When I'm rushed, I don't feel sexy, because I know in my head that it only took me five minutes to put on some clothes. I didn't enjoy the process. Whenever I dedicate a good amount of time to get ready – for your friend's wedding, for example – you really glow. You'll plan your whole day around it. You'll take a shower at the right time, you'll get your hair nice, then you'll dedicate an hour and a half to makeup, ironing your clothes, all those things. At the end, you feel sexy, because you've taken the time to feel sexy. It's really about the process."

While putting on a show is a process of love and labor, Lolita lets chemistry and connection take over when she's choosing new artists to work with.



"It's a crush. It starts like any kind of relationship. You start clicking with [the artist] like someone you just want to date. We start talking, I go on the regular studio visits, and then something just clicks. Either, years later I will see a space that is perfect for that artist or, on the spot, I'll say, let's get a show together. That idea you just had? Let's make that idea come true."

"I will always stay connected to both emerging and established artists. That process on both ends has always been exciting. Some established artists, who have been working for decades and have been in the same museum shows, become frustrated with the way people are seeing them. They find it refreshing to have a twenty-something look at their art with a completely new attitude and a completely new way of wanting to present it."

"At the same time, I really enjoy working with an emerging artist who has never signed a contract, who has never editioned their work, who has never had someone write their bio. I enjoy providing [those things] for them. Or telling them, this is how you price a piece of artwork, because right now yours is way too low. Or sometimes it's way too high."

While Lolita helps new artists make exciting professional jumps, she thanks her family's unique perspective on passion for emboldening her to take her own creative risks. Getting comfortable with failure and 'worst-case scenarios' allowed her to pursue unpaved professional paths.



"I'm insanely lucky, because my family is a bit of an unusual family. I have two deaf brothers, so we were raised with the idea of: you don't have the classic profile, so find what makes you happy, and do it. You can figure it out, but if you need help, we're here for you."

"I always thought, what's the worst-case scenario? For everything I ever did, I'd say, 'Worst case scenario, I'll be a waitress,' or 'Worst case scenario, I can be a dog walker.' There are so many jobs you can do to survive while you keep working towards your passion. I was lucky enough, from an early stage, to never have to go to the worst-case scenario. But even tomorrow, for example, if all my clients dropped me, I know there is always the option of finding a job to help me pay rent. I think my parents always trusted me to figure it out."

Lolita's process of figuring it out has been one of invention, not imitation. Her business model is unique and she's never met anyone that does exactly what she does. How, then, has she found her way? By picking the brains of all kinds of people – and by creating new opportunities when she sees them.

"I became a member of the Wing in 2016, right after I quit my job [at the gallery]. I had started working from home and was going insane. I needed to have a place to go. I started working there and they sent out an email to all their members announcing a big new space opening in Soho. I thought, 'You know what? I'm going to offer my services.' I responded directly to Lauren and Audrey, the two founders, saying, 'If you need any help with art, I'm here.' They answered super fast and said, 'Alright, let's do it.'"



Lolita was hired as a curator and consultant for the Wing, helping them fill the walls of nearly a dozen Wing spaces around the country. Each space features over 65 pieces and Lolita fills the frames with female artists local to each community.

“Obviously my eye is out at all times as a curator. So there is definitely a list of artists [always on my mind,] but when [the Wing] announces they are going to open in a certain city, I do research in that city. I googled residency programs, I googled notable galleries, I googled schools, and then go from there. I stalked every single artist. So hard. To the point where they said, how did you find me? Because I’m nowhere. I really cannot say. I don’t know. I just got into a deep hole of stalking.”

Lolita laughs about her social media sleuthing skills, but one scroll through her own Instagram account reveals a refreshing use of social media to connect with and uplift talent around her. She has curated the image of her own success with the camera pointed towards the artist.



"If you scroll [way] down, you'll probably see pictures of a dog on a desk, me in a bikini with an ironic caption, or things that really don't matter. One day, I thought, I'm kind of sick of people liking my pictures because the caption is funny or my hair looks good in it. For years, every time I did a studio visit, I would take a picture of the artist in their space. So I just started posting pictures of my work. Not of me, but of the artists. The first post got no likes. My friends were confused because the post wasn't funny or quirky, but I kept doing it. Eventually, people started liking it more."

It's natural to wonder what comes next for such a talented woman with a long professional runway in front of her, but Lolita knows better than to skip the process of navigating this path step by step.

"What's the dream? I don't know. People keep asking me that. I used to feel bad about not having a set goal; that at 'this time' I'm going to open a gallery. But it's kind of how I've always lived my life. I'm always open to new options. I don't have a plan for the next five years. I know where my feet are going, and when I see an opportunity, I'll say, 'This is it. I'm going to go for this one.'"