

Dialogues: The David Zwirner Podcast

Rose Wylie & Russell Tovey

[MUSIC FADES IN]

LUCAS ZWIRNER: From David Zwirner, this is *Dialogues*, a podcast about creativity and ideas.

[SOUNDBITE; **ROSE WYLIE:** I think as soon as you start making mistakes on purpose then you're in trouble. So far I haven't done it. If there's a flick or correction, it's because I haven't liked what's underneath.]

LZ: I'm Lucas Zwirner, Editorial Director of David Zwirner Books. In every episode on the podcast we'll introduce you to a surprising pairing. We're taking the artists we work with at the gallery and putting them in conversation with some of the world's most extraordinary makers and thinkers.

[MUSIC FADES OUT]

LZ: Today's pairing: the painter Rose Wylie and the actor Russell Tovey. Rose's studio is just outside of London, and the floors there are lined with newspapers that have accumulated over the years. She takes inspiration from the images she finds there, from the films she sees, from literature, mythology, and her own childhood. Rose has been a witness to the twentieth century. She lived through the Blitz in England during World War II and she paints those memories. But she's just as comfortable engaging with the world as it is now, from Tarantino movies to selfie culture. She graduated art school in the fifties, then took time off to raise a family. Now Rose is in her eighties, and she's been the subject of much deserved critical attention, with a Serpentine show under her belt, an exhibition at David Zwirner in London, and a survey of her work on view all summer at the Contemporary Art Museum in Málaga, Spain.

One of Rose's biggest fans is Russell Tovey. The thirty-six-year-old actor is born and bred in London, and he's as serious about his art collecting as he is about his acting. In Russell's breakout role a decade ago, he performed in the stage and film versions of acclaimed play *The History Boys*. Other credits include the BBC series *Being Human* and *Sherlock* and the HBO series *Looking*.

Russell and Rose had met once before at an opening but they've never had an extended conversation until now. **LZ:** Rose, it's so great to have you here in the studio.

ROSE WYLIE: Hello.

LZ: Thank you for being here, and Russell.

RUSSELL TOVEY: It's a total pleasure to be here. Thank you for having me.

LZ: So I thought one place one could begin is just, where you, Russell, encountered Rose's work for the first time, if you have a memory of seeing her work?

RT: Yes. Well, I've seen your work for many, many years.

RW: Russ, stop.

RT: I saw it at Transition Gallery.

RW: Oh, I see.

RT: You had work there that you showed a lot, and I used to be there a lot seeing stuff. Then when Clarrie Wallis did your room at the Tate Britain, I saw that, thought it was phenomenal. I said to you, in the room, when I met you, that I saw you in the group show that Kate MacGarry did, the group show with Katherine Bernhardt. It was a huge work, and we met there, and you had your studio shoes on. I love your studio shoes.

RW: I was very fond of them. The thing was they were good, they made your legs a good shape. I didn't paint in them. **RT:** Oh right, okay.

RW: They were my best shoes.

LZ: What exactly are the studio shoes? What's the brand? **RW:** They had "hot" written on them. They were given to me. **RT:** They were like a big white pump with a star on it.

RW: They were big. I used them for about ten years.

RT: I loved them, I thought they were iconic, completely. And then yes, I followed you since, with Serpentine show, and recently your show at Zwirner at Grafton Street. I'm a big fan. I have a little work by you at home I live with.

RW: What have you got?

RT: It's called *Know Yourself in Latin*, and it's a little drawing. **RW:** Have you?

RT: Yes.

RW: Really?

RT: Can you tell me about him, what it's about?

RW: From time to time I look at the computer. I look at a lot of images on the computer. I'm never quite sure

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where I find them, because I flick, but I don't know how to get back to where I've been because I'm not an expert. So, I think I was looking up ships, sailing ships, on perhaps ancient tiles or something, and I came across a whole lot of Roman art imagery on tiles and on et cetera, and here was this marvelous man, with *Know Yourself in Latin*. No, I think, I must have chosen that.

RT: Because it says Greek, question mark, Roman, question mark.

RW: Yes, but I have big gaps, ignorant holes. I never know whether something's Greek or Roman. And I know I'm supposed to know, and I do know in a way, but—

RT: It's an apology, is it?

RW: As soon as you write it down you're trapped. So, if you put down options and question marks and alternatives— RT: It's more ambiguous. I love that about it.

RW: Oh, I didn't know you'd got that.

RT: Yes, so yes, this is a total pleasure to be sat here now. LZ: Russell, how did you get involved in contemporary art?

RT: I guess growing up I loved imagery, I was obsessed with Lichtenstein, and I loved advertising.

RW: Good boy, isn't he?

RT: Mel Ramos I loved, for some reason, growing up. All these women hanging off bananas, and out of martini glasses. And I'm gay now, so I'm just a feminist through and through, I always loved it. And I suppose I sort of was always visiting museums, but it never felt like I could ever be a collector. And then I started discovering editions, I started buying editions, and then for my twenty-first, my parents bought me a Tracey Emin edition. Then I did a movie about four years later called *The History Boys*, and with my check from *The History Boys* I bought a Tracey Emin monoprint. That was the first time I ever felt I could actually buy something original, and I could have that, and I owned that.

RW: Did you buy a little bird? What was the—

RT: No, it was called *No idea why they can jump so high*, and it's a self-portrait of her beckoning little penises over a wire, and they're little leaping penises in bottles, and that's what I've got. I've still got that. That's my first purchase. So that was my way in, and after that, I really, all of my money goes into buying

art, and it's my absolute second passion, aside from acting. It's something that I, wherever I go and work in the world, I find the nearest museum, I find the nearest venue or gallery where there's great shows.

LZ: It's a funny pairing, because it's someone who is explicitly in film, who's very, very interested in art, Russell, and someone, Rose, who's very much in art, as painting, but of course has this deep history in film. What is that background in film? You've talked about the different films that have inspired you, but how does it come into your work?

RW: The imagery is fantastic, I think, and I'm a sucker for close-ups, and cropping, and jumping around, it's totally flexible, as far as I can . . . It's a knockout, twenty-first-century art form. And I think it's close to painting in that way and photography, they're all linked together.

RT: Would you see a still of a movie scene online or in physical form and then copy that? Or would you see a movie then kind of like visually remember scenes and then go back and paint them?

RW: I've never copied a still. I could try it next. It's a thing to do, as a possibility. I love film posters too. I like the vulgarity. It's a kind of immediate vulgarity of high street quality that comes into film posters that you don't, well you used not find in art proper. But what I do is watch the film, then think that's it, that's just an image, it's great. But then when you come to do it, you can't quite remember how it went, it fades as you do it.

It's not necessarily a huge connection from the painting to the film, when you've finished it. There could be a bit, but then I don't go back and check.

LZ: There are three paintings up right now at Zwirner in London based on *Natural Born Killers*. Tell me about those, Rose, how did you pick those moments?

RW: I went back on a set of drawings and found four *Natural Born Killers* drawings. I did the drawings close to the time of the film, and then forgot about the drawings. And then I was looking for images and I found the drawings and I just picked them. But they came from a hugely good memory of the film.

LZ: Where does your mind go when you paint, Rose?

RW: Well, it's certainly not on the road outside, because I don't hear anything. I don't hear the traffic. I never play music because I wouldn't hear it.

RT: So it is like a trance-like state.

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RW: I suppose it is, it's cut off, it's cut out, isn't it? And you're not thinking about what's happening to the house or what's happening, when your tooth hurts, or anything.

RT: When you can lose yourself in that cloud, there's nothing better, is there?

RW: No, you do something and you think that's okay, but there comes a point when you suddenly think that's it, I think. And that's exhilaration but that's not trance-like, I don't know quite how that fits into, it's connected to being removed from normal activity and stuff. If I start sometimes, it goes on, it finishes, it's perfectly okay, but you look at a photograph of it at an earlier stage, and you think it was better then.

Or why didn't I leave it? Why didn't I leave it like that? Yes, but then that becomes organic, because you can then try to get back to that early stage. Then you've got two paintings which are related. And then you might go on, and then again, you wish you'd left it like that, and that's how you get sets and series.

LZ: So for you, a series actually comes out of, in a way, wanting to return to an earlier state?

RW: Yes. Particularly with photography and with the computer and the photograph, it's very quick, you can look at it and think, why did I change it?

LZ: One of the nice things about having an actor and a painter together is the question of the character, of how one selects, because of course, the same question one could ask, how does one pick moments to paint, sort of what speaks to you when you're engaging with a script, or when you're thinking about a character. I mean is there something that immediately hits you when you're looking for something?

RT: Dialogue is the number one thing. I can normally tell—**RW:** Is this before you pick the script at all, in the first place?

RT: Yeah, yeah. In the first two or three pages, if you get the whole script, I normally know what the character is, or if I want to play him, I can sort of tell. And you can tell that with writing, because good writing is just magic, it gets your bubbles in the blood fizzing, that's what it feels like. And then afterwards, if it's really cool people, that helps. You know, if you're given that and you know you're gonna be working with a lot of instinctive actors, and you're gonna have the opportunity to improvise, and that's incredibly exciting, because you know that that's—

RW: That's like a painting.

RT: Yeah. You're improvising on a canvas or paper, that's something that you're doing that wasn't there before you did it.

RW: Exactly. There was a script, it was there, to a degree, it's there before you start, I mean, interpretation isn't there, but the script is there. But a painting, nothing is there.

RT: I find writing is like improvisation on paper, and it's like you're in the monologue coming out, and you can let yourself go, and then you have to go back and edit. Which I know you edit your work, because you like to see mistakes, and the way you build up pieces with paper and collage is that you don't want to waste anything. It's like you don't want to waste any paper, but you like people to see how you've changed, and how you've altered areas.

RW: It's process—**RT:** I love it.

RW: The mistakes are, in fact, helpful. But I think as soon as you start making mistakes on purpose then you're in trouble because—I'm intrigued by affectation, mannerism. So far I haven't done it. If there's a flick or correction, it's because I haven't liked what's underneath.

RT: That's so unique to your work.

RW: Which is why I don't use cadmium paint, because it's hugely, hugely expensive, and I don't like . . . I love to be able to scrape it all off and throw it away without the slightest bother.

LZ: The question of the mistake is, have you had that where you are either onstage or making a film, where actually a mistake leads to the perfect take?

RT: Yeah, of course.

RW: Where wrong is right.

RT: I think that comes from being instinctive, and if you're instinctive, then you don't really make too many mistakes, you know in the ballpark where you're meant to pitch it, but sometimes you can go off-piste. And that's the director's job as well, to hone you and to put you in the path, if you're instinctive. If you're technical, it's probably easier, I would say, if you're a technical actor, to make a mistake. I think if you're instinctive, and you're always in it, and you can feel it. Like when you're painting, I guess you go into a zone, then you never make a mistake, because it's your zone, and you're giving your piece.

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RW: Not sure about that.

RT: Not sure?

RW: No, I think you can make a mistake, you can be crap at any point. I think mistakes, from my point of view, I make them all the time. RT: You're proud of them though.

RW: Well, I don't know. I cover them up, I think. No, it's a way of going on. It's a trigger, it's an impetus for movement. RT: It's like editing a script.

LZ: To perform the same thing every day, there's the combination of needing to keep it as interesting as possible, and also as consistent, potentially, as possible, and how do you do that?

RT: Well, it becomes something like, on one show you might move a cup two inches to the left and then pick it up and drink on that line, and then the next night, you might not touch the cup until you've said the line, and then you'll drink, and suddenly, that tiny little ripple of change can alter your performance, or alter your energy in that moment, and give you life. It becomes the minutiae in your performance, which is something that inspires the big thing.

LZ: Similar question for you, to go into the studio every day now, for—

RW: I think you've got to take a lot from your subject. The way you paint is more important, then that can be a problem because the way your painting starts to be the same, it starts to repeat, and you'll start doing the same thing, and I think you start getting bored. If the artist is bored, does that show in the painting, do you think? Because I find that an interesting question.

RT: I haven't picked up on that. I wouldn't be able to say you were bored when you painted that one, Rose.

LZ: Which are your bored paintings?

RT: Yawn, yawn.

LZ: This one's boring.

RT: Half asleep.

You need the paintings that aren't as good as the knockout to make you realize that that's a knockout, because if everything's a knockout— RW: Because otherwise you can't judge, you've got no sense of judgment.

RT: Exactly, yes.

RW: You're not for a perfect world then?

RT: No. No, I like to have all the shit there to see. And then I can see, then I can throw glitter on it, and let it shine. I like that, yeah.

LZ: But it is an interesting question. I think, from an actor's point of view, presumably, that energy, if you're bored and you go into performance, presumably that's going to be visible quite immediately, or if you're tired.

RT: Yeah, but then you get in trouble. LZ: Exactly.

RT: That's your job is to entertain, so yeah, they'd be like, Come on. LZ: Second take.

RT: The audience would know. But the worst thing ever is when you lose an audience if you're onstage. And you know, you can sense that.

RW: Must be very difficult.

RT: It is very difficult, yeah. When you feel you losing them, or can see people shuffling, or you hear a noise or a cough, it's disheartening. But when you are doing a scene in a monologue and you can hear a pin drop, there's nothing better in the world, you're commanding a room of like a thousand people with your voice and your presence, that's amazing.

One of the worst experiences I've had onstage, ever, was when I was doing a play on Broadway and I couldn't sleep, and I was given a sleeping tablet, and it was before a matinee, and I didn't sleep on the sleeping tablet.

And then I got onstage and I was completely on another plane. And then I remember I had this line, and I twisted the line, and then I had a complete meltdown in my head. But I remember thinking, just open your mouth, and I opened my mouth and the words just came out. All the other actors are looking at me very strange onstage, and I went off, and afterwards they were like, You just went somewhere then, where the hell did you go? I was like, I've no idea. But I opened my mouth, the words came out, but I'm just in this sleeping tablet. And that whole show it was like I was in a trance. But having to go out there, and as soon as you walk out, there was no furniture, no set, and I was barefoot. As soon as you walk out, all eyes are on you, and it was horrific, horrific. And I slept in between shows, and the evening show was one of the best I ever did. So it was like I was terrified—

LZ: The comeback show.

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RT: Yeah. But you do have muscle memory, you do have that ability, that kind of extra gas cylinder that's there just to power you through on those moments.

LZ: Has being openly gay, has that been something that's been complicated? Given you're so much on the frontline.

RT: Not now. It's been a blessing. It's been one of the best things that's ever happened. I've always been open in my career. I started as a kid, and I think I then went through it, and knew who I was, and it was never a shock. I think when I finally decided to really claim gay roles when they came in, it changed everything, it opened it up.

LZ: Because I read something beautiful you talked about this role you played, Ray, a superhero.

RT: Yeah, it was a gay superhero. It's quite scary that in 2017, when I made it, it was groundbreaking. You're like, this is amazing, we're in 2017, and an out gay actor playing a gay superhero on network TV is like a huge deal. And that's done now. So the next one'll come along, and it'll be calmer, and then it'll start normalizing, which is where it should be. But for me to be that reference point, to be pivotal to that, is the biggest honor ever.

LZ: I was hoping we could maybe go back in time a little bit, maybe a little bit about your early childhood, early childhood experiences, with or without art.

RW: I remember at the age of fifteen my mother thought, she thought she'd take me to the Prado. That was my first brush with art. The Prado, the trip, it was 1948, I think, so it was very bleak, Spain was very bleak because of the war. And on the way back we went to the Louvre. Now, they were both very boring from my point of view. Both of the trips. These are my first meetings with big art.

LZ: And what was boring about them? You didn't connect with—

RW: They were just big bible paintings. They don't grip you, I don't think. And that's how I saw them. So I had no way of getting into this, so the art, having gone to the Prado and seen these Goyas, didn't really affect me until later on.

LZ: You thought of yourself as an artist relatively early on?

RW: Probably. Well, I don't like performance, I don't like memory, I don't like math, I don't like . . . It suited me, it absolutely suited me. And I like doing, or I

like colors. I've always liked pictures. I think working by myself and without performing, and without other people, I've always found attractive. I think that's the dependence just on myself, I think that's a responsibility that we've got, and I like that.

LZ: I mean certainly your memories of certain aspects of childhood—right, Rose?—they sort of come up again and again in the paintings.

RW: I think the war probably had something to do with it, because it was a kind of exciting moment, from the point of view of bombs coming down, and air raids and stuff. From a child's point of view, that was quite special, quite unusual.

RT: So you found that exciting, rather than traumatic?

RW: Well, I wasn't really frightened, because it was going on all the time, that was what was. It might be more frightening for you, suddenly, if you had it, but if you're into it, and it's going on all the time, it wasn't so much frightening.

LZ: Did you know you were going to be an actor quite early? **RT:** Yeah, yeah, from like ten, eleven.

RT: My early influences are like *Home Alone*, *The Goonies*, *Dead Poets Society*, *Stand by Me*, these sort of seminal children's movies of the eighties, early nineties, that really affected me, and made me want to go into that. I desperately wanted to be American, I desperately wanted to be a runaway and experience that, and look for One-Eyed Willy and find gold. I went to a drama club, and got an agent, kid's agent, and then kept going. Through theater, my life, my career went in the path it's gone.

LZ: You think those films affected the type of art that you were then drawn to? The sort of type of visual art that you were drawn to? **RT:** Yeah, I definitely liked pop art, bright colors. I loved Patrick Caulfield, I loved Keith Haring, I loved Andy Warhol.

RW: I love Keith Haring. I think he's a really good bloke. **RT:** I think I love the naïve—

RW: But why do you like Warhol then, because he's different a bit, isn't he?

RT: Because the colors, I guess, and the images were very popular culture, and the way he reproduced those. I think him as a person, himself, I remember feeling fascinated by seeing that video of him eating a cheeseburger that lasts like ten minutes, and he's like,

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I'm Andy Warhol, and I just ate a cheeseburger in New York. And I remember just being like, Whaaat? This is so mundane, but it's so exciting. Wow!

RW: He looked good.

RT: Yeah. There's no one like that. And I think Basquiat— **RW:** You like Basquiat?

RT: Yeah. It is. More so when I was younger. I love his work, but I've seen a lot, it seems to be everywhere.

LZ: Now especially.

RW: When you see a Basquiat and a Warhol picture, you know when they did the collaboration— **RT:** The collaborations are the best.

RW: Yes, but did you tend to prefer one or the other or not? You just liked the collaboration?

RT: I loved the collaboration, I loved those, like a General Electric logo that Andy Warhol did, and then Basquiat works over the top of that. I think it's in the Versace collection or something. Phenomenal, just the energy in that, of them two combining, and the freshness, and how much

... You just never saw anything like that at the time. What they did, that they became such a reference point when they worked together, that's just incredibly historical.

LZ: Would you ever collaborate, Rose?

RW: I haven't tried it. I haven't ever thought of it much. It's a bit of a drab idea, I think. You do something good, and the other person takes it— **RT:** Some of the credit, right.

RW: And then you come back on them, then they hate you because ... I'd say it was full of difficulty from start to finish. Best avoid it.

LZ: Take us through the physicality, a little bit of the physicality of some of the paintings. They're big, you've talked about that people don't expect women to make paintings this big. Something that, I'm sure, you've pushed back against. But what is the actual physical process like?

RW: I like walking around the painting. I like to be able to walk along with the line. And I don't think it's more tiring, because you just have a bigger brush. It's more physical, but it's less up your ass than sort of fiddling. Fiddling around with little bits of paper.

RT: You do fiddle around with little bits of paper as well.

RW: I do either big paintings or quite small drawings. I like adding things too. I think it is organic, it's growth. Then at the same time, I think you can grow too much, so growth is an idea. Rome, you know, things get too big. So having said that I like paintings to go on and extend and extend, I actually also think that there comes a point where you don't extend anymore. I do like big paintings. I like mountains and lakes, I like that kind of stuff—the sea, I like.

RT: Yeah, dramatic.

RW: Yeah, I like drama. The theater, drama.

RT: You love drama, yeah. All your work is drama.

RW: I mean, people say to me, I haven't got a big house. I can't get your paintings into my house. Why don't you make smaller paintings? My house isn't big, but I can get double sets of double paintings in it very easily. You've just got to clear out the old furniture. Clear a bit out. Good light.

RT: Minimize. And then— **RW:** Good lighting.

RT: —one chair and a big painting by you, yes. **LZ:** Sell the rest of the art.

RT: Yeah, yeah, you don't need anything else. Even in a small room where I've seen your work, it isn't claustrophobic, even though it's big, and it's busy.

RW: It's not, is it?

RT: But it's not claustrophobic, you can't, you don't feel like it's sitting on your shoulder. **LZ:** There's space in the paintings too.

RW: I think because there's a lot of canvas. Also that allows you to bank canvases up and put them together so the painting isn't a little proscribed rectangle with an edge. You can add, so at any point you can put two, four, and six together. The ceiling would be nice too, to use the ceiling.

LZ: You'd kind of have to bend your head back.

RW: The Italians have done it. It's not new, but it's not often done. I don't think it's done all the time. **RT:** In the Vatican for hundreds of years.

RW: It's been hanging around, yeah.

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LZ: You would like the paneling to go up, it wouldn't be sort of free . . . It wouldn't just be on the ceiling, it would be almost leading up to the ceiling.

RW: Well, it would be stapled on, or whatever. I would do it in a normal way, in units, and then it would just spread around. **LZ:** In all directions.

RW: In all directions.

RT: I love it.

RW: Everywhere.

LZ: I think it's great. One thing that comes up, or I'm curious about, and I've read you talk about it a little bit, Rose, is how you experienced being a woman artist. I think I've heard you talk about your art school experience, and people basically said, Don't even bother, you're going to have a family, you're going to have children, you're not going to . . . There's no reason to pursue this in the first place.

RW: Which is precisely what I did.

LZ: Exactly. But then you pursued it.

RW: Well, the break came about because of marriage and children. People will say, Did you find that . . . Are you angry about that? And the answer is no, because the children are good, okay, great, knockout.

But maybe you come back to it again with a bit more excitement, perhaps, than if you'd kept going all that time. But then your age is out of step. So people expect you to be twenty-four when you start painting, when you get known. In fact, that's completely gone. You can't retrieve that. But you've got a lot of experience in between.

LZ: We're now in a moment when there's a real championing of female artists, how are you experiencing that?

RW: I'm outside gender, I think. I just don't care. I don't think it's about male or female. It doesn't matter what box you're in. If it's getting visualization because it's female, that's not a good thing. Or if it's getting visualization because it's male. The problem is there's been huge male domination, so you needed, it's essential, and has been, and is essential to push the women. It's got to be—

RT: —cutting edge, if it's a female that's made it. Do you know what I mean? And that's slightly—

RW: It's got to be about the work. Somebody did a clip which said that I don't do girly paintings, and they put a big picture of Lolita up, because of course it is very girly, or is it? It's not necessarily girly.

RT: If it's painted by a man, it would be quite pervy. It could be perceived as, you know. The show is called Lolita and there was this young girl washing the car at the neighbor's house, and it was a man painting that, it could be completely construed as . . . As it's a female, I guess it becomes—

RW: And it also, it's an affectionate nickname— **RT:** It becomes maternal.

RW: It was simply descriptive. Here we have Nabokov, and we know the story, because the story was everywhere at the time. The time when it was a buzzword. And it's been played out, you know, there's this girl sort of swirling about and it just came about, I think.

LZ: The way you've described it, the inspiration was the neighbor, and the memory of the neighbor, not so much the Nabokov novel.

RW: No, it wasn't, but when I think the name came up it was a very kind of chance set of comings together. She lived opposite, we called her Lolita, that wasn't her name.

RT: Did she know you called her Lolita? **RW:** No.

RT: No.

RW: But I went to that Picasso thing. You know there's the big show at the Tate Modern. **RT:** At the Tate.

RW: There was one picture of Marie-Thérèse Walter, you don't know whether you saw it, she's got a completely round face. I was very excited, because I thought it was like Lolita with the round face, the one I'd stuck on.

RT: Yes.

RW: But I'd never seen that Picasso before now. I thought it was a very exciting Picasso. And the ones which, perhaps, slightly less exciting, were the ones we see in books all the time.

Which led me to this . . . We've all had this idea that, area of thinking, that maybe the ones that the artist liked best aren't necessarily the ones that the audience likes best. And what does that mean to us?

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LZ: But what makes something a favorite for you, as the artist?

RT: I guess, the character, I guess, for me, is what it is. I have the opportunity to inhabit a certain character with certain other characters, then it becomes something very important, and you take it in, then that stays with you, definitely.

I did a TV show called *Looking* on HBO, which is about a group of friends in San Francisco, and I played a character called Kevin, and a lot of it, the script was there, but it was very loose, so we could improvise. And as the show was going on, the stories developed, they didn't know what it was, this was going along, and then this character became something really important, and became very special to me, and became like a water-cooler conversation character, and that was great. And I'd be able to remove myself from playing him and being in the moment, to go, yeah, I know, have a conversation about life, through this performance, through this guy. And it's the only thing I've ever done where I can subjectively watch myself and not watch myself. You know, I can watch the show, and enjoy the show, and know if I wasn't in it, I would like it anyway.

LZ: So totally present, and then also somehow removed and able to judge and assess. **RT:** Yeah, yeah.

LZ: What about walking into a show of your own work, Rose?

RW: Well, where I really like them is on my wall in my studio. That's my favorite relationship with them. It must be to do with the doing of it. Then it becomes someone else's. You want it out there. But I also like it when it isn't out there, when it's in my studio, and when nobody's said anything about it. In fact, there can be a time when nobody says a thing about it.

RT: It's pure.

RW: Because actually that's pure. It's quite. That's absolutely the right word. **RT:** And it's yours.

LZ: Rose and Russell, thank you so much for being here today. It's been really nice to have you both. **RW:** Bye.

RT: Bye, it's been a pleasure, thank you. [END CREDITS]

Dialogues is produced by David Zwirner. You can find out more about the artists in this series by going to davidzwirner.com/dialogues.

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I'm Lucas Zwirner. Thanks so much for listening. I hope you'll join us again next time.