

Philip Dallmann: Hello inclusion believers and welcome to the Access Champion's Podcast. I'm your host, Phil Dallmann, for this weeks journey into the galaxies of accessibility, diversity and inclusion. Uh, we've got another great episode for you this week. Uh, Jessica K. Ruhle, uh, Director of Education and Public Programs, uh, for the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University joins us, our second guest from Duke. Uh, (laughs), we, uh, we, uh, recorded this sort of mini interview, um, at our pop up studio, um, uh, down in Atlanta, um, and it was a great conversation, um, and, uh, there's a lot of great things happening, uh, down at Nasher and I guess down at Duke, much to my dismay.

Philip Dallmann: Uh, there are a few things that, uh, I was raised to dislike, and as the son of, uh, a University of Maryland grad, uh, Duke University and, and Coach K wa- was one of them, uh, but, uh, I'll say I have enjoyed watching, uh, Zion Williamson down there, and if, and if, if you're, uh, not necessarily into basketball but can appreciate feats of athleticism, uh, go ahead and, and google Zion Williamson, um, and just be ready to be in awe of someone that's 6'8", you know, 280, uh, being able to just short of fly. Um, the man can just [inaudible 00:01:25], um, but I digress. Uh, great conversation to share, and again, like I said, um, a lot of great things happening down there and Jessica is a big part of that, um, so I'm happy to share that conversation.

Philip Dallmann: Before we get to that, um, I do want to take, um, a moment, um, to chat about the, uh, the incident that happened, um, I guess it was over the weekend, um, with the, the, uh, Covington Catholic folks, students, um, down there, um, and, you know, there's a lot of, um, different things, different perspectives of what's going on, um, or what happened, uh, who incited who, blah-blah-blah-blah-blah-blah. A lot, a lot of finger pointing, um, as, as is often the case currently, um, uh, with, with, uh, both sides, you know, calling each other. Um, what I want to chat about or what I want to point, put out there, um, is that what I saw was a missed opportunity, um, caused by empowering, or empowerment in the wrong sense. What we had there was, uh, a tremendous amount of privilege, right, um, in, uh, a variety of capacities, um, uh, a list, uh, long enough for that, but the, the privileged wasn't being used to support the marginalized communities, um, and there are few marginalized, well, more marginalized than, um, the Native American, First American, uh, community.

Philip Dallmann: Um, and so while, you know, n- everyone doesn't necessarily need to agree politically, and, um, you know, have different, you know, everybody has different perspectives, um, what my hope is, uh, as a, a white man of, of privilege is that our next generation and the generations below us are empowered by us to use their privilege for good, and I think that happens, it happens at home, it happens at, at school, um, and it happens in media, um, and I, I urge those, uh, of us out there with, with privilege, um, that are born with, with privilege to, to not only acknowledge it, but be willing to talk about it, be willing to share what that means, um, and speak to our friends and colleagues about ways that, that small and large, um, we can use that privilege for good, um, and to uplift other communities that do not have that privilege.

Philip Dallmann: So, um, that's all I'm going to put out there, and I, again, I know it's something that I've spoken about before, um, but, uh, the images this weekend were, were striking, and again, like I said, it felt like a missed opportunity for young people, um, who are in history class and do learn that settlers came an- and took this land, and brought disease and smallpox and all the above, and, and learn about the Trail of Tears, and learn about some of the atrocities that happened in this country, um, to, to acknowledge that without saying that, you know, uh, it's their personal fault. I feel like that ... Yeah, again, I was about to wrap this up, but I'm not going to. Um, uh, you know, we, we look at that and we go, uh, there's so many folks that are like "Oh, well it's not my fault, I wasn't there," or "My family wasn't there. We weren't here yet," or what have you, or ... Um, it, it's not something to be defensive about. Um, it, it's something just to acknowledge. It happened, it's a fact. Uh, you know, bad things happened to these communities, and they didn't happen to the, the straight white male community.

Philip Dallmann: Does that mean all 30 something straight white men right now are responsible for that? No. But what I do think we have a responsibility to is to make the world a better place, to make this country a better place, to, to use the privilege, to use the fact that we didn't go through those things, that there aren't residual effects from those things, uh, effecting our community on, uh, on a daily, um, to, to lift other people up, to empower other communities, um, an- and to participate in, in movements like decolonization. You know, we had Annalisa Dias on, um, earlier, uh, last year, and, and we talked about that, and like acknowledging the art in these communities, and lifting it up, and experiencing it ourselves.

Philip Dallmann: I feel like we're all better people when we're exposed to cultures and communities that are not our own. Um, it can do nothing but expand our worldview, and, and, um, I get frustrated sometimes because I, I have a hard time understanding someone who doesn't want to expand their worldview, um, and, and, and see the world as the wonderful diverse place, um, and inclusive place that it could be, um, but, uh, you know, I, I have to check that frustration an- and understand that not everyone, um, feels that way, and, and, you know, that is what it is, um, and I can always be a voice towards, um, advocating for expanding worldviews, but, um, I can't necessarily go in and change somebody's mind, um, always, um, but I will always try. Uh, so, uh, again, that's a little bit of a circular way, um, a ra- um, and a bit of a ramble, so I do apologize. I just think we have, we have an opportunity right now, um, many of us who work in this field, to, to, to be a voice of change, an- and influence and activate those around us, uh, to also be voices of change. So, um, that's that (laughs).

Philip Dallmann: All right, and without further ado, Access Champion Jessica Ruhle.

Philip Dallmann: All right, and we're back in the pop up studio here at the Kennedy Center LEAD Conference in Atlanta. Uh, I'm here with Jessica Ruhle from the Nasher, Nasher Museum of Art in Durham, North Carolina on Duke's campus, right?

Jessica Ruhle: Exactly. Yeah, perfect.

Philip Dallmann: I'm not going to hold that against her.

Jessica Ruhle: (Laughs).

Philip Dallmann: Uh, I was raised by a Maryland grad.

Jessica Ruhle: Oh, yeah.

Philip Dallmann: Uh, just, uh-

Jessica Ruhle: We've all got our teams.

Philip Dallmann: Listen-

Jessica Ruhle: It's part of it.

Philip Dallmann: I was told from day one, "Coach K is the devil." (Laughing).

Jessica Ruhle: Well, that is the team he plays for.

Philip Dallmann: I mean, that's, yeah. Absolutely.

Jessica Ruhle: Or coaches I should say.

Philip Dallmann: Yeah. Um, so, uh, how many LEAD conferences is this for you?

Jessica Ruhle: This is my first.

Philip Dallmann: This is your first.

Jessica Ruhle: It is.

Philip Dallmann: Welcome, welcome.

Jessica Ruhle: Thank you.

Philip Dallmann: Uh, what brought you to the LEAD Conference?

Jessica Ruhle: Yeah. So, um, I had heard repeatedly from colleagues and friends how fabulous the conference was. Um, about a year ago at the Nasher we hosted a symposium for art museums that are doing programming for people with dementia, and-

Philip Dallmann: Oh, great.

Jessica Ruhle: Yeah, yeah. And throughout the conversations at that event LEAD came up over and over again.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jessica Ruhle: And then, um, several months ago in Raleigh, North Carolina our Art's Council put together a learning community-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jessica Ruhle: For, um, arts practitioners and educators who were working in the area all thinking about accessibility and trying to work towards greater accessibility.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jessica Ruhle: And so one of the requirements for being in that learning community was attending LEAD together this year. Um, so it was a great opportunity to check out something that I was hearing about-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jessica Ruhle: And do it with a group of like minded people from my community.

Philip Dallmann: That's fantastic.

Jessica Ruhle: Yeah, yeah.

Philip Dallmann: That's really great. So, uh, how many days have you been here?

Jessica Ruhle: So, this is just my second.

Philip Dallmann: Your second day, okay.

Jessica Ruhle: Yeah. Yeah.

Philip Dallmann: Um, what have you encountered? What did you, what, what got you, you know, what, uh, I, I always feel like, you know, everyday I'm like "Oh, that was, that thing was amazing," you know?

Jessica Ruhle: Absolutely.

Philip Dallmann: Yeah.

Jessica Ruhle: Well, for the first day, yesterday, it was just a perfect kickoff. I felt like the, uh, keynote in the morning got everything off to a great start.

Philip Dallmann: Isn't Micky Rowe great?

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Jessica Ruhle: He's phenomenal.

Philip Dallmann: Uh-

Jessica Ruhle: Absolutely phenomenal. My page is just solid quotes (laughing) of his whole talk. I wish everybody could have seen it.

Philip Dallmann: Yeah.

Jessica Ruhle: Um, and then I really loved the snapshots sessions-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jessica Ruhle: The 15 minute sort of quick and dirty. Um, I had an opportunity to hear some of the work that's happening here in Atlanta at the High Museum-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jessica Ruhle: And was super blown away with how they're accommodating families with children on the spectrum.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jessica Ruhle: Um, that's something that our museum is working towards and has some programs planned for this year.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jessica Ruhle: So it was great to see what's been really successful for them. And then, similarly we've been doing a lot of work around, um, visitors with low vision, and the work happening at Crystal Bridges that I got to hear about during the snapshots, with touchable paintings-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jessica Ruhle: And being able to bring more tactile materials into the experience. Um, I took a million pictures (laughing). I can't wait to get back and share everything. You know, you just finish so excited.

Philip Dallmann: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, that's, uh, a- again, one of my favorite things about LEAD is I feel like I leave here and I'm like "Yeah, I'm ready to take on the world."

Jessica Ruhle: All the things (laughing). All the things, top to bottom.

Philip Dallmann: Absolutely. Uh, what are you, what else are you excited to, uh, to learn about while you're here?

Jessica Ruhle: Well, my personal passion is, um, working with families with dementia.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jessica Ruhle: And so this afternoon there are some presentations by some folks who I know, and then some folks who will be new to me, and so I'm looking forward to being part of those conversations. And, you know, also just all the opportunities for conversation. The sessions themselves are fantastic-

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jessica Ruhle: But I think so much of what happens happens in between over coffee, and lunch, and getting a chance to really connect with people.

Philip Dallmann: I was just talking to Carol [Krieger 00:12:10] from the [inaudible 00:12:12]

Jessica Ruhle: Uh-huh (affirmative).

Philip Dallmann: And she said the same thing. She was like "I, uh, I love getting that spark-"

Jessica Ruhle: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Philip Dallmann: "In a conversation-"

Jessica Ruhle: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Philip Dallmann: "That I didn't realize I was going to have, and then it became a whole thing."

Jessica Ruhle: Absolutely.

Philip Dallmann: So ... Well, good. Well, thank you for sitting down with us.

Jessica Ruhle: Yeah, thanks for having me Philip.

Philip Dallmann: And, uh, I'm sure we'll be chatting soon.

Jessica Ruhle: I look forward to it.

Philip Dallmann: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Philip Dallmann: Thanks again to Jessica for taking the time to chat with us in Atlanta. Um, man, it was a blast. Uh, I know I've said it before, but I'm really looking for, uh, some opportunities, uh, to do the same. We do have one coming up that I think we'll, we'll announce next week, um, once every, all the logistics are done, um, on that, so I'm looking forward to sharing that with you guys. Um, quick, you know, thank yous to our producer Matt Kerstetter for making us sound great each and every week, our, uh, champion intern Ms. Kelsey Rose Brown, who's just killing

the game. Um, again, if you're not following us on social media, you should. Uh, and, um, again, a thank you to our, uh, transcript sponsor C 2 Captioning. Uh, we wouldn't be able to provide that great access via Rev.com without them. Um, and of course thank you to Eric Walton for that, uh, amazing theme song. It never gets old.

Philip Dallmann: We'll be back again next week, and remember inclusion believers, never stop running through that brick wall.