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Fri, Jan 27, 2023 1:02PM • 1:28:08

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

lesbian, feel, friends, people, queer, lesbianism, relationship, friendships, thought, guess, affirming, parents, spaces, mom, growing, lesbian community, lesbian sex, mexican, bisexual, middle school

SPEAKERS

Olivia N

Olivia N 00:02

Today is January 24 2023. I'm Olivia Newsome interviewing Mara virtually over zoom. Do I have permission to record this interview? Yes. Do you know you can stop recording at any time? Yes. Can you say your name, age and pronouns?

00:19

I'm Mar, I'm 18 years old and I use they he or a pronouns?

Olivia N 00:27

How would you describe yourself?

00:29

I would describe myself as a Mexican, less boy. self taught artist living in Can I see my location?

Olivia N 00:40

If you want to?

00:41

Okay, living in San Francisco. Okay. Should I repeat that? I'm sorry?

Olivia N 00:45

No, you don't have to repeat anything. So can you tell me a little bit more about where you're from? Where you grew up? And what your childhood was like?

00:54

Yeah, so I was born in Mexico City. And I grew up there until I was five. And then when I was five, I moved to California. So my childhood is kind of split between that the majority of my childhood was, is American. But yeah, I mean, my childhood was better than a lot of people, but also had its rough aspects. My parents marriage was a little bit rocky, financially and emotionally. And so I remember like,

the very early years of my childhood being affected by that a lot being in the middle of that a lot. And then when we moved here, it was a lot of changes, learning English. And my childhood was just trying to like fit in. Yeah, it was just a lot about like, trying to fit in and being really sad that I didn't, and trying to make myself fit in. And over the course of my childhood, I slowly learned to feel okay, with like, not necessarily fitting into like the American, white, blond girl cannon and being comfortable and like the immigrant identity.

Olivia N 02:11

Can you talk a little bit more about you and your relationship to your parents? Did you guys get along? Yeah, um,

02:21

my mom and I have always gotten along. For the most part, we have very similar tempers very similar emotional ways of emotionally connecting. We're both like cancer moons. So we love and get angry very intensely. But she was a stay at home mom for until I was about like 12 or 13. So she was always around, and my dad was always working. So my relationship was really good with him as well, but more superficial, because it was more like, with my mom, I went through like the ups and downs with my dad, it was mainly only the good parts. But yeah, so my parents would fight a lot, they would lock the doors and have like, screaming matches, and my sister and I would just be watching TV and stuff like that. And so that definitely impacted the way that I saw my parents interact with each other. And then throughout my childhood, they separated, got back together, I got divorced. And so it was always my mom tried to offer a lot of stability by being a stay at home mom, but that stability was never 100% Because of the rockiness that my parents had between them.

Olivia N 03:35

So you mentioned that you have a sibling? Are you an older sibling.

03:41

So I have one older sibling, she's 20. And we get along really well. Like she is probably my best friend ever. We didn't always used to be that close. But there's a part of like, just everything that we've gone through that no one else really truly understands, like, the specific immigrant experience that we have, that doesn't really look like other immigrants, the relationship between our parents and how it affected us and like little things toward our childhood. Like we basically since we're close in age, we've shared like almost all the same experiences. So we've grown very closely. And that ends Yeah, so I got along really, really well with my sister.

Olivia N 04:22

Though, you mentioned how you have a unique immigration story. Can you talk about how immigration affected your coming of age?

04:35

Yeah, so I came to the United States because my dad got a job offer to you basically got promoted in his job to come to California and continue his job at EA and so we came in so I did once I started being more involved with like the immigrant community of just like connecting with people I realized quickly

that it was very different, like a lot like I didn't cross the border, like I went on a plane, like I was able to say goodbye to my family, I've been able to go back since to Mexico. And so in that case, it's a very privileged immigrant experience, but also a very strange one, because it's like right in the middle between. I mean, immigration in general is like very hard. And I, my mom is very passionate about like immigration, grief and the way that it affects you. And at first, it didn't seem like it did that much. And then as I grew up, I realized, like, there is a part where there was like, loss of culture, loss of language, all these like, different losses that affected me. And then on top of that, not necessarily, there's always basically my immigrant experience has always been balancing between not being Mexican enough or not being like other Mexican people, and then not being American enough not being like other American people, and like finding my spot in between all that.

Olivia N 06:09

So when you're talking about loss of culture, or loss of a sense of self, and then not feeling American enough, how did that manifest in like your day to day life growing up? I think

06:23

it first manifested with loss of language, I knew some English but not really a lot. And it was very hard at first to get used to that. I mean, I have like very distinct memories of like, hiding in the bathroom, when I was five, because it was time to say the Pledge of Allegiance. And I didn't know the words and like I didn't want to get made fun of. So I would just avoid it every time it was time to say it. And, you know, having like people are having like, my classmates laugh at like, certain pronunciation mistakes. Like if I said Grace instead of gross or something like that, that definitely affected a lot of things and just made me feel like, you know, I no longer speak Spanish outside of my house, but I also don't speak English well enough, but I speak better English than my parents. So it's like, I don't really know what it means. So it was just a lot of navigating like, contradictory feelings, I guess. And it also, in a way manifested itself economically, because since my parents, they came to California, like in 2010. So it was like, after the recession, all that stuff like we have been renting homes, since while all of my classmates, parents, like they probably you know, got married in the 90s bought a home, it's still like my, my classmates still live in the house that they were born in, that they grew up in. The Bay Area is pretty affluent. So it's like, two storey house or more. They own cars, they have a mortgage, like all that stuff. And so those differences between me and my classmates were I have a home and it's fairly, it's a good amount, like I'm very privileged in that, but it's not mine, it's still rented. I had another home with that, like, I can't paint my walls like stuff, like little things that like that, that. At first glance, you wouldn't feel like it makes me entirely different. But as when I was growing up, they felt like really, really big deals, and really set me apart and made me feel like I just did not fit

Olivia N 08:33

in. So when you're talking about struggling, or maybe class difference, can you expand more on class difference? So you saying that in comparison to like your peers, or maybe in comparison to Mexico or in comparison to what your parents were experiencing? Yeah, I think it's tricky,

08:55

because I mean, specifically in the Bay Area where I've I've grown up to be not necessarily well off in the Bay Area means that you're definitely well off anywhere else because of how expensive it is. And

so it's like, it's tricky to find the line where it's like, compared to the people that I've grown up with it have lived here, I don't really have a lot, but compared to what I had in Mexico, I have a lot more but compared to what I might have, if I had moved to Texas instead of California, it would be different. So it's like finding those nuances, I guess in class difference and also compared to other immigrants who didn't have a smooth transition from country to country. That also looks different.

Olivia N 09:46

Can you talk more about middle school? What was that like for you?

09:50

Oh, my God. Middle School was horrible. I really struggled in middle school. I had a set group of friends by then but it was just the beginning of a lot of friend drama for me, I yeah, I more feelings of like not fitting in kept resurfacing for me. And it was just it was just an awkward time. Like I was like being 11 to be like 13. Like I didn't like how I looked. I didn't feel like I was like attractive. Like, I didn't feel good in my body I did, I felt embarrassed that like my family, I felt embarrassed of myself. I wanted to be cool, but I didn't like the people who were cool. Like it was just a mess. But something I did, like I guess about middle school was that once middle school started, like the more advanced placement classes started happening. And so I was placed in advanced English and that was like a pretty big deal. To me, and definitely was the highlight of my, my middle school time for many years. But other than that it just really wasn't the best experience and my school was very negative like this the general energy. I did not like being there. I didn't like going there.

Olivia N 11:11

Yeah. So when you're talking about the school energy being negative, can you expand on that more? Like, did you go to a public school or private school?

11:23

Yeah, I went to a public school. And it's like, I guess ranked on like the standard. It's like a really good school. But I mean, the, like the teachers were really like, demanding and rude. And like, I guess Middle School is just that time where like, adults start to see you like, eyes just since you're about to be a teenager, they just assumed the worst from you. And so I felt that very clearly. As soon as we entered Middle School of just like adults no longer being like, oh, like you're you can never do anything wrong or but just like, automatically assuming that like, you don't care, you don't like this, that you're you're responsible that you're like having to prove that you're good that I think that that started happening in middle school for sure. Which just made me want to not try want to not be good. And which I did. I suffered a lot in middle school because I just completely stopped trying like academically I got a lot of missing assignments, a lot of bad grades and just like fell into this like state of like apathy towards everything, which I think was definitely influenced by the like I said, like the energy that my middle school had.

Olivia N 12:38

What was the transition, like from middle to high school,

12:42

middle to high school was, I think, a lot easier than elementary to middle school. I felt like I was excited to finally go to like high school because I had heard that it was like it was supposed to be like the best time of your life. And I think that that was a very important thing for me to do for like my little inner immigrant child because there were points in my childhood where my parents were considering moving back to Mexico. And my sister and I, his argument was always like, no, like, we're gonna miss High School, we're gonna miss prom. We're gonna miss formal, like, we're gonna miss all these like American high school experiences, like we can't. And so high school. I had very high standards for high school. But it was also very difficult. I mean, starting high school, like immediately, it felt that everyone in their mom was in a relationship. And I was not. And so that was like a real I remember freshman year was a really big struggle, because that was just I just felt like totally unlovable in that way, but also at the same time, like, I felt really overwhelmed while my classes but I also felt on top of them like it was it was very weird of like, entering that, like second phase of like, being a

Olivia N 13:59

teenager. What were your friends, like? Were you in any clubs or groups, I

14:07

entered freshman year with my eighth grade friend group, which consisted of, um, my girlfriends and their boyfriends. So they were basically all in relationships. And they had been in relationships for at least six months, starting high school and I was kind of like this the six wheel. And that was pretty awkward. And that was difficult. And I had a very close a very, very close friendship. that had happened in eighth grade that we fell apart in the fall of my freshman year because she started going out with this guy, and I felt so abandoned and I mean, like, looking back, it was just so obvious that I was in love with her, but like, at the time, it was just like, why don't you want to like hang out with me? What about like, why do you want to hang out with this guy? So Much like I like we're the most important thing in each other's lives like. And so like I remember, my fall of my freshman year was really difficult because I basically ended all of my friendships with the people that it started with, but they kept those friendships. So I basically like removed myself from the equation, but they continued to thrive. And so it was about like finding new friends and like connecting with the people in there, like outside of that friend group. And slowly I started to, I didn't really join any clubs, I tried to, but it just wasn't my thing. I just became more friends with the people in my classes, but it was it was difficult because it was like, you're really good friends in class, but like outside of class, you just kind of wave at each other. Yeah, so I just would kind of jump from friend group to friend group during lunch because I had close friends. But I didn't have like a solid friend group. But I remember that was a source of like, pain for a really long time throughout high school, because everyone seemed to have like, the group that they were going to spend the next four years of their life with and have all these amazing experiences with. And I had to like, insert myself if I wanted to have those experiences.

Olivia N 16:15

So while you were growing up thinking about middle and high school? And can you talk a little bit about how being neurodivergent affected you? Yeah,

16:31

so I didn't like I obviously didn't even think about the word neurodivergent until very recently, and my family didn't either, but

16:40

my dad,

16:43

my dad has ADHD, but he's just kind of, he's just very, I don't know if the word is practical about it. But he's just like, yeah, I get a little distracted. Sometimes, you know, I'm, like, forget some things sucks, like after work on it. And there's not really like an understanding or there wasn't until very recently and understanding of like what neuro divergence is. And so growing up like I would be when my mom said that I was always like, in my own little worlds. And I would completely forget basic things of like cleaning something or bringing something to school, I would forget my homework all the time. And then, during from fifth grade on, I started to have like, really strong executive dysfunction. Because we were starting to go into like math, and like science and all these things that I didn't like. And so because I didn't like them, I just like you could not force me to do them, I just would not do them. And that meant missing assignments. And then because I hated the feeling of like, shame that my teachers would make me feel if I forgot an assignment, I would hide it from them and my parents that I didn't do it, and I wouldn't make up excuses. And then in seventh grade, but I mean, I guess it kind of got a little bit better. But then in seventh grade, I was placed in a math class that was too advanced for me, because I think like my records got messed up or something. And that is probably like the dumbest I've ever felt in a classroom because everyone was just on top of it. And I was like, falling apart. And like, I remember, I would like cry during tests, because I just like did not understand. And I wish I had like 40 missing assignments that semester, like I and then my parents would get really upset with me. And they would force me to sit down and do all of those missing assignments. And because I wasn't interested, like, I just couldn't like I would stare at a wall, like I would do anything but and so it was a lot of like, like, my experience has been neurodivergent for a really long time. We're just about like suffering, like just kind of like not learning how to adapt or like navigate the world through my through the way that I see the world and just like struggling to fit the neurotypical standards and experiences and just like suffering from it, because I would have missing assignments, or I would have my parents yelling at me or I would have like, oh, it just felt so overwhelming. Yeah.

Olivia N 19:10

So can you talk a little bit about how ethnicity and race affected you growing up? You've mentioned it a little bit about your immigrant experience. But if you could expand on that a little bit more.

19:31

Yeah, so my ethnicity has in race have always been like, or work complicated for a really long time because on one hand, my mom comes from my parents were both Mexican but my mom came from like a really wealthy family with white ancestry, who looked down upon or who have looked down upon in the past, like people have darker skin tones, indigenous people in Mexico. Stuff like like that. And so then my, my dad is more of like, I guess, stereotypical Mexican, if you were to say where he's like a lot darker skinned, he didn't grow up as privileged, you know, my mom went to private school, my dad went to public school, like all these differences. And then there's me. And so my mom's side of the

family is the one I spend the most with. But they're the whitest, and then my dad's side of the family I spend the least time with so like growing up that was, I didn't really have like, a solid sense of Mexican identity. It was just kind of like, my family's my family. Like that's it. And then once I left Mexico, coming back, and also like meeting other fellow Mexican immigrants living in California, and when we would talk about our childhoods and our experiences, it would be entirely different. Because they would be like, Oh, I grew up watching travel a lot show like a TV show. And I was like, Oh, I wasn't allowed to watch that. Because my grandparents thought that it was vulgar, which is rooted in like classism, and all that stuff. And like, oh, you know, I love they would say like, Oh, I love spicy candy. And I was like, I, you know, I grew up eating very Americanized desserts, like I just bought in Mexico. And so like, that kind of weird thing has always like been, yeah, it just was really weird to find myself like, compared to my 100% American classmates or friends or peers, like I was very different. But I was even more different from like, the fellow Mexican immigrants, because I was a part of a family that rejects very outwardly. The, the, I guess, like MexicanUS, I, like I don't, it's still hard to like, wrap my head around it. But like, my mom's side of the family, like, does everything to westernize himself, themselves and like, rejects traditional Mexican customs and culture. Because they, they see it as inferior, but my mom has tried very hard to like, move away from that and reject that. But it feels it's always felt like when I tried to reconnect with that, like with Yeah, it was more of those like odd stuff. It's always like, Where's that coming from? Because I don't really have any close ties to it. So I've had to find them. And then on top of that, like, I grew up now, like, very recently, I'm like, because my parents used to only see themselves like, they used to see ethnicity and race the same. So when they would be like, so someone was like, What are you I would just be like, I'm Mexican, but now I'm like, I'm Mexican, but I'm also white. And, um, also my dad's not white. But he also has like Spanish descendancy. So it's like, I think that specifically in Mexico, it's very complicated, because everyone's like, Oh, being mestizo, like, that's basically what being Mexican is Misty. So it's like mix of indigenous in white. And it's like, it's not, it's really not like there, there are lines that are caused, like cross like, not every Mexican is mixed. There are very, very white Mexican people like my mom's side of the family. And there's completely indigenous and black Mexicans and all that stuff. And so for me, race has been, I guess, race just was never really something that I touched upon. It was always more like ethnicity. And then only recently that I actually realized that like, race played a really, really big part. In my specific experience.

Olivia N 23:37

Did you grow up religious at all?

23:40

I grew up spiritual, more than religious, but I did have religious influence. I mean, my mom, like, we prayed at night before bed, but it was always more. I mean, like, we talked about Jesus and like God and stuff like that, but I didn't have to go to Sunday school. And like, I really never went to Mass. My mom was just more about like, there's a higher power and like, do things that connect you to that and you know, just a general focus on like doing things that connect you to something deeper than yourself, but it wasn't ever. It's once I moved to California, it kind of stopped taking the form of like, a man up in the sky named god.

Olivia N 24:25

Yeah. So how did size affect your coming of age?

24:36

I have always been skinny, that has not really changed. I've always been skinny and tall. So I've never really had to think about size in that way. I've watched my friends develop eating disorders and body dysmorphia. And like, that's something that I just cannot relate to. And it makes me sad because I mean, I've seem like their pain and my sister has gone through similar stuff like that. But being tall has definitely affected me. And it affected the way they I saw myself in relation to being what I thought was me being straight, because I would always be taller than on the boys. And they would always go obviously, for the girls that were five, five. And like all that stuff I'm, I've always been like, I mean, I'm 511. Um, and so I remember like, my height, felt like a very I don't know what the word is, but it just felt like it's separated me from like, no matter how feminine I tried to be and how like appealing to men and boys, I tried to be like my height would always prevent that from fully happening. And so I remember that was always like very difficult to navigate and to think about for a long time before coming out.

Olivia N 25:56

So you mentioned it, like, really briefly when you were talking about how boys didn't like that you were 511 and that you were tall and maybe struggles with feeling connected to femininity. So how did gender and gender norms affect you growing up?

26:13

I was the girliest girl ever. I like I wore dresses. And I mean, well. I thought I did but then I looked back on some pictures and I look very, like me. Like three years old. I had a little bowl cut like I was always wearing like baggy clothing. Like I looked very boyish or just like gender ambiguous. But once I was like five and up, I loved pink I love like all these things. I my sister really liked sports really like soccer. She loves playing more like masculine quote unquote, things. Like she loved like archery. And I was more about like playing with my Barbies. And so I felt like I yeah, I just, it's always been like a weird, or it was always a weird thing for me, because I didn't like being masculine. But it felt like boys work because I thought a lot about boys when I was growing up like a lot. And I felt like boys were always attracted to the feminine girls, except for me, but then it ended up being that they also liked the masculine girls too. And so it just like it was just like everyone, but me is how it felt. And so I would just try to keep doing me and yeah, I would just have really femininely and I had my dresses and my little hair clips, and I really loved makeup and purses and stuff like that. Yeah, I think that my my parents when I was a baby, they, they dress me pretty endogenously mainly for the sake of comfort. Like they were just like, just wear a baggy shirt because you're two years old. And you just need to like move around. Like there's no need to have you be in like a little frilly dress. But then once I was able to like choose my clothes, it was more feminine. But I remember like, of struggle between my mom and I was that because she wasn't used to the California weather. I always had to like, always had to wear turtlenecks underneath everything underneath all my shirts. And I always had to wear leggings underneath all my skirts. And I just felt like I was like that was like the least feminine, pretty girl thing to do. And I just felt like, that made me look awful. And so I remember like, just thinking that if I if I looked if I had like proximity to masculinity in any way, like that would make me ugly. And like having my hair short, like would make me a boy and like, liking things would make me a boy. And that was just like a really bad thing in my head. Yeah. And I remember well, once I came out, and I started dating this girl in middle school, I remember that I because I was taller. I felt like I was the boy one if that makes sense. And so that was also like a very

jarring feeling. Because I was like I don't want to be the only like the masculine one. Like I also want to be like, someone's like nice girlfriends. And that goes into like the way that I saw bisexuality at the time and stuff like that. But yeah.

Olivia N 29:19

So when did you start questioning your sexuality? You mentioned having a girlfriend in middle school? Yeah, I

29:28

was always like, girls are so pretty. I wish I could be them. But I also was always like, it's really weird because like my attraction to women from like a young age was like being really scared of them. So I remember like when I would watch movies, and women will be like, wearing like really low cut tops. I'd be like, Oh my god, like that's so bad. Like no, don't show me that. But it was like some weird attraction underneath that as well. But I guess It wasn't until middle school like sixth grade because it was very, very clear like, sixth and seventh grade was for me, it was 2015 2016. And I saw my friends fall into like the Tumblr world. And it seemed like it was like, you, you get into Tumblr, and then you suddenly come out as gay. Like, that's how I saw my friends. Because suddenly, I was going to sleepovers. And like, my friends were coming out to me, and they were cutting their hair, and they were dyeing it, and they were antigen and fail. And they were like, oh my god, I ship. I shipped this guy in this guy, like all these things. And so, um, yeah, so I guess that's when I got exposed. I got exposed to it like 100% I mean, I knew about like, gay people existing. Like, we got some so bad, but yeah, I knew about like, the existence of like, gay people. Because my dad would go to pride a lot when I was younger, and he like, explained it to us and all that stuff. But it felt like it was just like, Okay, well, that's not me, though. Until sixth grade when I started being around people who were coming out, and then I thought about, like, my own sexuality. And I realized that I did like girls. And yeah, I was attracted to them. And I was beyond like, wanting to be them. It was also like wanting to be with them.

Olivia N 31:24

Did you ever get on Tumblr?

31:26

I did, but not as intensely as my friends did. I wasn't really I was never really into YouTube. I was never really into things like that. So I I was more of an Instagram girl. So I explored that. But I just never I mean, I had like a Hamilton phase and all that stuff, but nothing very intensely on Tumblr.

Olivia N 31:49

So what was your first relationship with a girl like in middle school? Can you talk about that? You mentioned how you felt that you were were you made to feel like a boy in that dynamic? And I guess you came out as bisexual at the time, if you could talk about that.

32:05

Yeah. So the very little that I did go into Tumblr was to search up a bunch of sexuality labels. And so I I originally came out as polysexual. And then I did some more thinking, and my sister was like, Do you even know what that means? And I was like, not really. So I just came out as like, regular bisexual, I

guess. And so yeah, but for me, it was always like, I like girls. But I am attracted to guys. Like, that's how I saw it. It's like, I'm gonna end up with a guy. I'm gonna marry a guy. Like, the the main attraction is always the boys and like, girls are just like a fun little side thing. And so in middle school, that's kind of what happened. I like this guy very, very intensely. And then he told me, he liked me back, but then like, he ghosted me, and just, like, stopped talking to me. And like, that was like, I was like, fucking heartbroken. And my friends, my really, really close friend at the time, who was like, openly pansexual went through the exact same thing. And so we were both like, really, really, really heartbroken and sad. And we were like, fuck guys, like, whatever. And then out of nowhere, I was just like, I really like you. And like, you get what I'm going through. Like, why don't we just date? Because like, this guy thing isn't working out. And she was like, yeah, so we dated very briefly. We dated for like, about a month and a half. But it was a very interesting dynamic. She didn't make me feel like the boy, I felt like that. And, you know, I obviously didn't even understand that. Like, there's no in queer relationships. There's not necessarily a boy and a girl. But that's how I felt because of my height and because of my own insecurities, but yeah, I mean, I remember causing, like a big it was a big deal that mean her sort of dating, because like the guys that that we had liked, like, they were very weird about it. They looked at us very weird. Like, she would go into class wearing my sweatshirt and people would be like, What the fuck? It was very strange, but it was also like my friends were like, all supportive. So it was I felt feelings that I never felt with a guy and I had never had a relationship with a guy so I didn't know if I did or didn't have those feelings, but like looking back now on the fact that I have had relationships with guys like I felt deep butterflies that were not how I was filled with guys because with guys it was like, a deep anxiety and like, fear. But like a very intense in a very intense thing that I thought was attraction but with girls, it was just like, this makes me so happy. Like she's wearing my sweatshirt. She's so cute. Like, I just want to like hug her and, and so I remember feeling that. And then the thing is that like me and my friends we both hadn't had have any relationship with guys so I remember very clearly, I was very insecure like she, I thought she was the prettiest person on earth and I was very insecure. And so I was like, I'm actually like, let's just not kiss like, let's hold hands, it's hold hands, but like, I'm not trying to like kiss at all. And she was like, okay, good, because like, I kind of want to save mine for a guy. Like, I want to see my first case for a guy. And at the time, I was like, me, too. I'm glad we're on the same page. But looking back, I'm like, that's, like the fact that we were like, if it's, if our first kiss like, Isn't with a guy, it's ruined. It's not good enough. Like, it's tainted, like that was. That was very strange. Um, but yeah, so I just remember like, holding hands, but it all it was like, it was a really a blast and very short. And it wasn't necessarily based on like, actual deep feelings for each other at first, but I was very attracted to her. We had like our one month anniversary, because we were very close friends. Before that. We had our one year anniversary, we went to the mall, and we had a little photo shoot, and she gave me as an anniversary gift, she gave me a framed picture of us. And she like wrote a little like, the date that we started dating, and we got each other, like, we got each other like rings with, like, the date that we started dating, like engraved on them. And, yeah, and like I she loved Deadpool. So I like drew her like this very complicated drawing of Deadpool with like, I love you and like hearts all around it. Yeah. And then we broke up, I broke up with her because I was like, I'm still not over this guy. And I thought I would just be like, whatever. But actually, like the breakup hit me a lot harder than I thought it did. Because she just started dating another girl, like really quickly. And like that was I experienced, like the first kind of pain, heartbreak towards girls that I experienced. Like, that was the first time that I felt something like that. And it made me realize that it wasn't just like a girls or just like a side thing, whatever it was, like, I'm equally as emotionally attracted to girls, as I am, or was at the time to guys.

Um, but yeah, so it was like it was a very short lived relationship. But it meant a lot more than I wanted it to. I guess like I didn't want it. I didn't think it would mean that much. But it did.

Olivia N 37:27

So can you talk a little bit about what do you think influenced you the most growing up? I think

37:42

I think that Oh, my God, that's let me think. I think that are influenced me a lot. I was always really into art. But no, actually scratch that. I think the thing that most influenced me was other people. I was always comparing myself to other people. And in terms of art, I was really, really into art until I got to fifth grade. And I saw that everyone could also draw and I stopped drawing. And like I was really, really into, or I saw that everyone was into Monster High. And I was I was like I have to get to Monster High. But I couldn't because the clothes were really expensive. And like my mom was like, Why do you want to get into that show? Like, it's whatever. And so And same with like justice clothes, like everyone was wearing justice clothes, so I wanted to wear justice clothes, but just as culture like \$36 for a shirt, and my mom just like couldn't afford that. So it was always based on like, what other people were doing, and what others had that I didn't have and wanted to have. And yeah, I think I've for a really, really long time. I just was always influenced by other people.

Olivia N 38:50

What were your earliest interactions with queer spaces? Um,

38:56

my friends when they started coming out, I remember my friend. We had like a really intense sleepover. And then she showed us well, he but he showed us a video of like, what being gay is and we just watched this like YouTube video and it was like a little simple explanation. And then at the end, he was like, I'm gay. Like, I'm gay. And I like our friend. And I was like, Cool. And at the time I was like, Cool. I always wanted to have a gay friends and that caused a whole issue between us and because I thought I was being supportive but like I obviously was not um Yeah, so like, being in a friend group with my friend was very like eye opening because I definitely witnessed like queer love and attraction and queer culture to like, they like they were cutting their hair and like doing all these things. Dressing really masculine ly like changing their name. Yeah. And so I think that that was like the first, maybe not space. But just like, I guess at one point, the friend group did turn out to be pretty clear. So it was a pretty

Olivia N 40:13

clear space. Do you remember what your first ever exposure to lesbianism was? Or one of your first experiences with lesbianism?

40:29

I think, well, when my parents got separated, my dad moved to an apartment in San Francisco. And he had a roommate. And she was gay. And I remember that my dad, like, he was like, oh, yeah, this is my roommate, like, she's a lesbian. And I would see, I would see like, her girlfriend now wife come over all the time. And like, they would be like, cuddling and like watching TV. And like she would she would

dress like pretty androgynous Lee, but also like, masculine Lee. And so I remember seeing her and being like, whoa, like, that's a thing, like people can, like people can do that. Like, you're like, in your 30s. And you're in love with a woman. Like, that's cool. But I also I think, another one of my experiences was, when I was dancing with my cousin in Mexico, I was dancing to the Shake It Up soundtrack. And then my cousin just looked at me and she was like, you dance like a lesbian. And I was like, what? And that for a while it was it was really weird, because that call is like very internalized homophobia. Like, I didn't even know truly what a lesbian was at the time, because I was like, eight. And I didn't think that anyone anything was like logically wrong with lesbians. But the idea of being associated or being called a lesbian was like, really insulting to me. And like, really, like a brought up a lot of feelings. And so I was like, Don't say that word around me. Like don't. Yeah. And then once I met my dad's roommates, and her girlfriend like I was, I had already grown up a little bit. And so I was a lot different regarding like, lesbians, but yeah.

Olivia N 42:18

So around what year? Did you know you were a lesbian? And how did you get there?

42:23

So I officially came out as a lesbian. In April 2021. I came out as bisexual in like, 2016 17. And then I had my first relationship with a girl. And then I entered high school. And then I was like, You know what? No, guys, like me, I guess I'm unlovable. And then I met this guy. And we got into a relationship. And that lasted all of my sophomore year, and halfway through, and almost into my junior year, and it was an abusive relationship. And it was a very toxic, controlling, very, like, overly sexual relationship that I was in, in like, at like 15. And I got out of it. And then I just was like, I was just like, I deeply hate men. And then, once I got out of like, I hate men phase because I processed some of my anger, shining the relationship, I was like, the thought of being in a relationship with a man like physically makes me ill. Like, I really don't want to do that ever again. And then I met this girl. And we started dating. And then I was like, this is like, this is it. Like, this is what I actually, this is the kind of relationship that I want to have. And then we were talking and she was like, I think I'm a lesbian. And I was like, You know what, I think I'm a lesbian, too. And so we both looked at the master doc together. And we went over it. And then I was like, oh my god, like, I'm a lesbian. And I kind of sat with it for like, a week. And then I came out on Instagram on lesbian visibility day.

Olivia N 44:04

So how old were you when you were dating this? This girl? And you guys both like came out as lesbians in the relationship? I

44:11

was. Yeah, I was. We were both about to turn 17 But I was still 16 We were like a month away from turning 17 Was your

Olivia N 44:20

ex. Was your was your ex abusive relationship older than you?

44:26

Yeah, I was 15 and he was um, it was in my sophomore year and he was in his junior year. So like 1517 1516 1715 1617 Okay.

Olivia N 44:40

So when you first started identifying as a lesbian, did it ever feel scary to you as an identity to claim? It did it first

44:50

because it was so wildly different from like anything I had ever thought of because I like I mentioned like, I'm like, my relationship to my At attraction to women was never up for debate like I knew that that was true. But to completely let go of like any attraction to men and like actually admit to myself that I actually don't want to be in relationships, romantic relationships with men was really hard for me because I deeply longed to be loved by men, the way that my friends who are attracted to men are, but I've never been, or I've always been, like, attractive or what I have been attracted to men, I haven't been attracted to them like they've always liked me and I haven't liked them. And so like finally letting go of like that. space that can be really validating with when a man is like, you're hot, you're whatever, like, actually being like, even if they say I'm hot, like I don't want to, I don't want to pursue anything with them was really scary at first, it was pretty difficult. And yeah, cuz I had hurdle. I knew a lot of bisexual people, but I didn't really know any lesbians like in my friendships. And it felt like it was a really, really big thing. Because, like, being a, like, being a gay boy, was feels different than being a lesbian, like being a lesbian. Felt. Not bad, but it felt like a really, really big deal. Like, whoa, like, you're actually saying that you don't like eyes like, wow, like you're into, like, I don't know, I just felt like the strangest thing that I've ever done. But it felt really right at the same time.

Olivia N 46:40

So do you believe in coming out? And have you come out multiple times before? And does the phrase coming into your identity resonate with you in a different way? Yeah, I

46:55

think that for a long time, I was coming out a lot. I mean, I came out as bisexual I came out is all this. I had a really weird period in June 2020. When I took back the bisexuality and I came out as straight and then I went back and I came out as bisexual. Fun fact, that was because I started watching Charlie Amelio, tic TOCs. And I thought she was hot. So I like went back to being bisexual. Yeah, so I don't really believe in coming out for me, like, I don't believe in coming out anymore, like public announcements. I like to tell my friends, I like to update my friends, like, Hey, I actually go by this label. Now I actually do this now. But I've felt a lot more comfortable with, like you said, coming in. And just like, I feel the same. But I add this new aspect to it, or I feel the same, but I add this new label or I tweak this new label. And I don't really give any more explanations. I just kind of say it. And that's felt more, a lot more comfortable. And I think a lot more liberating, because if I ever were to take it back, it doesn't feel like oh, I can't because now I like because I have to like explain to everyone why I'm taking it back. And it's like, I'm not telling anyone I'm just announcing so I can just announce it one day and like, that's fine. So yeah, so I don't really come out anymore. I just kind of add little aspects, I guess to my sexuality and gender, that just show up one day and like, they feel good to me. And that's kind of it.

Olivia N 48:34

So can you discuss maybe, if clothing, jewelry, makeup, tattoos or piercings or any other body mods have assisted with affirming your identities? Or lesbianism in any way?

48:52

Yeah, they definitely have I have a septum ring and I had a lip ring and actually closed like two days ago, because I took it out very sad. But those two have been really helpful for my for affirming, like my lesbianism and specifically my more masculine identities. Also cutting my hair has been really powerful dyeing my hair. I'm actually dyeing my hair back because I had like a when I was going through my breakup with that guy, I dyed my hair a ton of times and then dyeing it back. Like when I had brown hair again is when I came out and so staying in that way, like natural or closer to myself, like felt more affirming. Yeah, and I have a tattoo, I would love to get more and I think that those are definitely very affirming for my lesbianism and I let me think, yeah, my clothing style has definitely changed. It's grown a lot more comfortable with being more masculine and actually like I feel hotter when I do I don't really feel as comfortable anymore dressing femininely and if I do, it just feels like I'm not. I'm not necessarily a girl wearing a dress. I'm like a boy trying to be a girl wearing a dress like that's how I feel.

Olivia N 50:16

Yeah. What about art? I know you're an artist. Maybe I can ask you two separate questions, and you can answer them however you want. But the first one would be about, if any forms of art like photography, painting movies, TVs have helped you with your lesbianism and your understanding of self. And then the other part of the question, or maybe a separate question would be art making as a process? And how like the process of making art has influenced or impacted your identities.

50:50

Yeah, so for the first one, I definitely once I came out, I entered this phase where like, if they, if what I was consuming was not about lesbianism, I was not interested. Like, I wanted to only watch lesbian movies, lesbian shows read books about lesbianism, lesbian theory, lesbian fiction, like just anything lesbian. I was obsessed with it. And that was a really fun time, because I was just learning all these things. And like, I was just absorbing everything about something that I never really thought of before. And so yeah, I read a ton of books. I read a ton of like, queer love stories. And then I read a lot of like, lesbian theory, and my sister gave me a ton of like essays on lesbianism for my birthday. And she got me because she originally came out as a lesbian to after me, but then she just labeled herself as queer. But she got me a book about like, lesbian sisters together. Yeah, and I would watch like, lesbian TV shows. Lesbian movies, I got into the L word. Like, my I want to say, like, a couple months ago, six months ago, but that was a lot for me. I like watched it. I got through it. But I'm, I have mixed feelings on it. But just like in general. Yeah, I think that art and media had a big influence in the way that I started to. I don't know if except, but just like come into my lesbianism. And then with my own art making, I also really got into that I became like, really, I think, with art making my gender has been more of like, a route for me to explore that, like through art making. But my lesbianism has also been important. I think that zions have been a really huge part of that. And I think that paintings also have but when I paint about that, it's more about like general queerness and it's not necessarily about like, lesbianism individual to me, but it does still, like affirm that a lot. Yeah, I think that once I came out my art got really queer. And that means like, like, specifically queer, like, you know, drawing like all these things like and

then also like, abstractly queer, like deconstructing all these things for myself like deconstructing what are what good art was, like. Coming into a lot of different things, a lot of ways of being and making.

Olivia N 53:23

You mentioned lesbian theory. So what theory were you reading? Have you read and has your lesbianism while it has been impacted by theory because you were reading it? Is your sister a lesbian to

53:34

know my sister is is my sister thought she was a lesbian but she prefers to go by the label queer. She's dating a man right now. What? Yeah, but she gave me this, this book, and that she made herself I'm just like compiling a bunch of essays on lesbianism and lesbian theory and I read the use of the erotic by Audrey Lorde. And I read the Adrienne Rich's essay on compulsory heterosexuality, which was really big for me. And I also read this really great book called homophobia is a weapon of sexism. And a lot of my lesbian theory is attached to like, also the politics of sexual violence in a lot of ways because that was a good that was another layer I guess, in my coming out where it's like understanding my lesbianism also in relationship to my survivorship and how that affected me too. And so like for example, with the homophobia as a weapon of sexism, it talked a lot about like domestic violence and how domestic violence within lesbian relationships but also like how hetero patriarchy makes it so that, you know, women or lesbians or all that stuff, feel forced to have relationships with men and not all of those relationships are good ones because they're based on like power dynamics and all these things and like, how, so I just started through those essays and through that theory, I started, I guess learning more about how like, is for a while, I felt like I felt very much like, Oh, really like you got into an abusive relationship. And now you're randomly a lesbian, like, Are you sure. But when I read that it felt very affirming because it was like, No, it makes sense that I thought all my life that I was supposed to be attracted to men. And then I got into the first male relationship. And it was a terrible one. But I stayed because I thought that I had to do certain things as someone who thought they were attracted to men. And then I came out, and I left that I like, left that relationship. And then I actually was free to make my own decisions. And that involves realizing that I don't like men that way. And so it was, it was just really affirming, and like, the insecurities that I had, where I wasn't sure if like, it was a coping mechanism to come out, or if it was a lie, or if it was, like, me faking, or if I was gonna switch one day, if I did find a guy that I was attracted to. And reading that theory was just like, No, this, this is real, like, this makes sense. And like other people have gone through it, too.

Olivia N 56:09

So have your views on marriage changed before? And after you identified as a lesbian?

56:18

Yes. I just thought of marriage as like, just like, why wouldn't you do it, like, it's the normal thing to do. And then when I came out as a lesbian, now I see marriage, like, I know, a lot of lesbians that are married, like, I have my friends that are engaged, and like, that's really cool. And like, I love celebrating that. But me personally, like, I just don't know that that's necessarily for me. And I think that that has changed for many reasons. Like, I think that lesbians are completely capable of like, and I think that I would find a committed lesbian relationship that I would want to stay in maybe for all my life, but I don't

know if that's necessarily it would be defined, or it would have to be defined by like, a ceremony or like, under the state being, like, legally recognized as a couple. Like, I think that I, for me, I would just be like, if I found someone that I wanted to spend the rest of my life with, like I would, and I'm not, I don't know that I would, you know, have like a legal wedding, I would just be like, you're cool. I want to spend the rest of my life with you. I love you. And just like do that. And I think that, yeah, and so I think that, like, that's a lot of I think that has that's like a really big controversial issue sometimes in like, the queer community, because people fought so hard for, like, equal marriage. That it's like, when you reject that, it's like, you know, like, why are you accepting something that we work so hard to fight for, but it's like, some people don't want to be equal to straight people, like some people want very much their queerness to like, entirely separate them from anything that the state recognizes as, like, valid. I don't know if I'm all the way in that extreme, but I definitely do resonate with like, I don't know that I want to necessarily be recognized as like, okay, or as like, serious under state law, I would just much rather, like form deeply emotional and like long lasting commitments in relationships, just like by myself and like, with communicating to another person.

Olivia N 58:31

Um, do you identify as poly?

58:34

I'm interested in it, but I have not had enough experience to do it. I guess that's another thing though. I'm because of my relationship. Trauma difficulties. I'm not very open to relationships, like eight, it's very hard for me to get into one. And so even though I'm interested in potentially being poly or exploring that, like, I can't, I'm like, it's just be right now. There's no one else like, so.

Olivia N 59:03

So what ideas did you hear about lesbian sex? Like, once identified, or before you identified as a lesbian? Like, what were what were people saying about it?

59:17

Um, well, in fifth grade, one of my guy friends was just, like, just knew everything about sex, or we thought he did. And so we would, like all get together after school, and he'd be like, so I found out what 69 is, and like, he would like, show us and like, draw a little picture. Then one day, he was like, I found out what scissoring is, and he was just very, like, you know, and I was like, why would someone do that? Like, how does that work? I don't think that even would feel good. And then I heard a lot about Oh, my God, what's the what's the like, the movie Blue is the Warmest Color or something like that. And I heard a lot about that movie, and I was gonna watch it and I never did. But I heard that that was like I remember people were talking about that movie a lot. And apparently, there was like a lot of scissoring in that movie, but it was like, I mean, I know now that it was like a terrible depiction of what lesbian sex actually looks like. But at the time, I remember like, my friends around me being like, whoa, like, you know, this is like what lesbian sex is. And I just, it just looked really scary to me. And it just looks, I just, I didn't really think about it. And then I heard or I just had, like, a general idea that it was just like, solely, you really couldn't do a lot with lesbian sex, because there was no penis. So you just like, couldn't you just, you can just really only use your fingers, maybe. And that was it. And that was what I thought for a really long time. Until I like discovered porn. And I would search up like, specifically,

like lesbian porn, because even when I was bisexual, because like, straight porn really scared me even more like it just it was just scary. So I was sort of like lesbian sex, and they would be like humping, and they would be like, Jack, it's like dry humping, and having like their legs in between one another. And it'd be like, how does that work? Like, how does that feel good. Like, I don't get it. But they would also have like, strap ons. And I'd be like, Whoa, like, that's, like, I didn't know that was a thing at all. So I guess it just like, it was a very mysterious like it it still feels kind of mysterious to this day, where I'm just like, I don't even know how that works. But I'm in I'm intrigued. Like, it feels it looks like it feels good. But I just like have no no clue.

Olivia N 1:01:41

So how do you ethnicity race and, and being Latinate inform your interactions with lesbian community and this can be your lesbian community like you and your like friends, or like, maybe an understanding of when you go into other lesbian spaces, or you could like zoom out and then think about the lesbian community like capital L lesbian capital C community.

1:02:06

I am so like, deeply starved for fellow Mexican lesbians faces. Like I all of my lesbian friends right now my like friends are white, or Asian that I love. I love my friends. I love them so much. But I just feel like except for my closest friends who is a non binary non binary Chinese lesbian, like we get along amazing, but with my white lesbian friends. It's, we it's It's just strange. Like, it's just strange. And I think that I am, I'm noticing the amount of white queers that I am around, and how that impacts me. And specifically, in my relationship with the, my, my longest girlfriend, she was white and she was like very, very, very white. Like very white and very wealthy. Like she, yeah, she had like two houses. And she, you know, like read Sylvia Plath, and like, lit up little candles and was like obsessed with like, looking really pale and like all of her photos and for like, the aesthetic or somebody that like Yeah, and like, I remember that I would feel like internalized racism towards myself when I was in that relationship, which is a very strange feeling for me, because I always feel like I'm the white one in spaces, but then to have her that is whiter than like, to see that I'm nowhere close to the whiteness that she whiteness level that she is at. Like that would bring up some things for me because I'd be like, oh, like, I don't want to seem like I don't want her to think this. Like, I don't want her to think that because I listened to x music or listen to that, like, I remember feeling very insecure about myself and like, my background and like, kind of how I did when I was like younger, but in a romantic relationship. And feeling like embarrassed that. Like I will talk Spanish in Spanish with my like, family and stuff like that. Um, and yeah, and just like feeling very out of place. And so that's like a similar feeling that I have now with like some of my white queer friendships or just like Mutual's where it's like, it's so aggressively white. And like, a lot of my friends who like I look at their friend groups are in it's just like all white queer people. And I'm like, that looks like a very, like, I just don't know if I could be in that space. Like, I know how to fit into that space. Because I've learned how to over like yours like being in predominantly white spaces, but I am definitely starved. Like, I do not have any more. Besides like individual friendships like I don't have a lot of lesbians of color spaces around me and I also don't don't know if I would fit 100% into those either. And so like that's, I guess the really tricky part that that's that I've struggled with and like finding community.

Olivia N 1:05:12

So how does being neurodivergent impact or inform your interactions with lesbian community? And do you have ADHD?

1:05:24

undiagnosed, but like,

Olivia N 1:05:26

yes, that's okay. Okay,

1:05:27

cool.

Olivia N 1:05:28

Yeah, you don't have to have the app. I'm not the DSM five, I'm not another. He's like, show me your papers. Just,

1:05:35

ya know. Yeah, I have ADHD, okay.

Olivia N 1:05:38

I was like, there's a lot of talk about ADHD. Maybe it's just like, general vibes, and not you

1:05:47

know, I'm, I have ADHD, and like, my closest friend has the, the non binary lesbian has ADHD. And my close, white queer friendships also have ADHD. And a couple of them also have autism. And like, I don't really, I wouldn't really like, for me, my queer friendships are also my neurodivergent friendships, like, they go very hand in hand. And if they didn't start quiere, they ended up queer. And if they didn't start neurodivergent, they ended up neurodivergent. Like, they are very connected, I feel like and in many ways, also, like, I do feel that neurodivergent See, doesn't like, does help me form friendships with other neurodivergent people, because like, my friends, and I have very specific, like, hyper fixations, or like they have special interests that I'm into and stuff like that. And so I don't, yeah, I wouldn't really see the two as being separate, like in my life, now, they're very much connected.

Olivia N 1:06:48

Does it impact how you connect, or maybe meet friends or maintain friendships in any way? Um, I guess.

1:07:00

I'm going through I'm, like struggling right now to I'm trying to get evaluated for OCD. Because I'm not sure. But I've noticed since the pandemic, a lot of obsessive tendencies and like compulsive tendencies around like contamination and anxiety around that. And so that has definitely informed the way that I've found community in person, because I very often can't these days. And if I do, it requires a lot of like, mental preparedness for like, maybe they don't have a mask on or maybe they don't like test beforehand. And like, that causes a lot of intense feelings in me. And so I think that that above all has

really informed that but I'm, I don't know for sure if that would fit into neurodiversity, because it's something that I hadn't experienced until recently. But yeah, I that's been like the biggest thing outside of like, my already close friendships.

Olivia N 1:08:04

So can you talk about what it means to be a less boy in your own words, and how you feel like your general? How you feel about your daddy, how you feel like your gender identity informs your interactions with the lesbian community? That was a real struggle to get those words out?

1:08:25

Yeah, um, to me, being a less boy. I just love that word. I'm like, probably not the first person who came up with it, but I just love it. It's just like, I think I mentioned this like earlier where it's just like, when I think about my gender, my gender is being a lesbian, but it's not. It's not like women loving women, because I don't identify as a woman. It's just like, like I said, like, it's a boy trying to be a girl trying to be a boy. Like, that's quite genuinely how I would describe it. It's like, I feel not like a sis boy. But I feel boyish, and I'm presenting, sometimes as a girl, but also as a girl that's trying to be a boy. And it's like very multi layered of dislike. Messy transness going on somewhere in there. And to me, that's like, what less boy is where it's like, especially in relationships with other lesbians where it's like, now I very much do, like, lean into the, what you would call like, the boy role, I guess where it's like, I don't want like, I want to be someone's boyfriend in a lesbian relationship. Like, I don't want to be a little like sapphic girlfriend, like, I want to be a boyfriend. But I'm a lesbian. So it's like, it's like those two go together in my head.

Olivia N 1:09:50

It's always a struggle trying to explain it to my parents. I'm like, boyfriend. Yes, boy. Maybe, man. No, exactly. It's never, it's always like, Oh yeah, like, like, like, it's my boyfriend. They're like, who was like, oh, lesbian, Butch boyfriend. So I just lie and I just say partner. Because at that time, it was easier my parents, like, if I said the word trans mask, they would have been like, that was me too much. Okay, so that makes a lot do you feel like within your lesbian community, it's mostly, it's mostly sisters and mostly trans. Like, it's mostly trans lesbians. It's

1:10:34

most it's mostly trans lesbians. I have a close friend group of three white lesbians in me and they're like, all trans. Two of them are trans mask slash, like, trans ambiguous something. And one of them's like more non binary. And then my, my best friend, and I like we were always like, talking about how like, they like we're both non binary in a way, but I'm the boy that I like, and they're the girls like, like, for them. They're non binary, Enos is a lot more feminine. And for me, it's a lot more masculine.

Olivia N 1:11:06

So can you talk about being on the age spectrum, and how that impacts your interactions with lesbian community? Yeah, so

1:11:14

I, my, a spectrum, NISS, I guess, is very informed by my survivorship, because I fell into like a very hypersexual state really quickly being in a relationship with a man because in my like, in my head, I genuinely was like, I don't really want to do this thing, or this thing, or that thing. I'm not really into this thing, either sexually at all, but like, this is my boyfriend, and like, I'm the girlfriend, so I have to just do it. And so I fell into this very, like, yeah, just like very sexually active, not really, necessarily by choice, not really by enthusiasm, but just doing it because I thought it was what you're supposed to do. And it was very, like, I look back on it now. And I'm just like, you just were not supposed to be doing stuff like that back then, at your young age of 15. Like, maybe just, let's just not do that. And I think that if I had known that I was a lesbian sooner, like, I just would not have had those experiences at all. And so now that I'm, when I also left that relationship, and I started exploring what it meant, like what I thought about, like, being attracted to men, and also had to do with, like, what I thought about sex. And for me now, like, it has a lot of layers, like sex, like, deeply scares me. For, it's mainly a lot of the trauma and like, that's something that I've been like working through, but like, it's very intimidating, and I don't see myself doing that anytime soon. Like, I have not been sexually active for like three years, like, I just don't, I just don't like it's just not a thing for me. And like, also, once I also escaped, I guess, like, the idea that I had to be sexually active or just like sexual, and sexualized myself to be seen as, like lovable to men. Like, once that was just completely taken out of the picture. I'm like, I don't like I don't really feel like that all the time. Like, I just like, it's just not does not come to me that easily. I, you know, like, I'm attracted to women that can like, in when women are when I see women in sexual situations, like that's hot, like, I'm attracted to that, but like me personally, like, that's just not really my thing. And so it's been a lot about, like, exploring that. And now I think that I mean, I'm, I think I have ups and downs. I think that I feel sexual attraction, but I'm not acting on it right now. And I feel good about that. But I'm, I'm not closing that door completely, but I don't think that it would look like I guess the the typical, like sexual lesbian experience.

Olivia N 1:14:15

So how would you explain the typical sexual lesbian experience?

1:14:19

I guess I would just explain it from what I've seen, my friends do where it's just like, they just they're like hookup culture, I guess where they're just like hooking up and, you know, hook up this and hook up that and like, a lot of my friends are also poly so like, having sex with like this person, but also this partner and this partner and like, I'm having like having a strap and having a bunch of toys and like all that stuff. And like, just the general like, knowledge of what lesbian sex is and like lesbian hookup culture, like I just I don't know that I haven't experienced that. And so that also Yeah, I think that that separates me. And that's how I would describe it.

Olivia N 1:15:01

So what's it like making in meeting lesbians in your city now?

1:15:06

Um, it's really cool. It's really fun. I like my closest friendships right now are lesbians, which is really nice. And I haven't really met. I mean, no, that's why I hadn't met lesbians. But I was on Bumble for a little bit. And so I went out with a couple of people, a couple of lesbians and like, that was that was

pretty cool. Especially because we went into like, our lesbianism journey and like, I found some similarities with people. And that's an interesting and like, I think that right now my biggest thing is like, a lot of the people that I'm finding are white queers, and I'm like, you're cool, but like, I this cannot be the only thing. And also on top of that, like the whole pandemic stuff, I think that I'm holding back from like, going out and meeting people because I just don't I just doesn't feel the safest to me right now. So if my interactions with like, lesbianism and lesbian communities are more online at the

Olivia N 1:16:08

moment, what lesbian online spaces are you in?

1:16:13

I'm I wouldn't necessarily go into like spaces of like multiple people but like Mutual's and friendships and stuff like that, and some art spaces, like I joined, well, the queer ancestors project that I'm a part of that has been in person it's been very COVID safe, which is made me want to be a part of it. And like, there's been a lot of lesbians there. And that's been really nice to like, interact and like be in this specifically, art making space with other lesbians and like watching and like seeing the art that lesbians make has just been like really nice to be a part of.

Olivia N 1:16:50

So where are you finding these online? Let like where are you meeting? Like, what like, What do you mean by Mutual's? Like mutual is on what app

1:16:58

mutual is on Instagram? Mainly? Yeah, like, I, I'm on Instagram a lot. And so just like, even though like, they may be like living close to me, like just kind of supporting like, a lot of fellow lesbian artists, like, just if they make a scene zine, and I follow them, and we interact, and like, they make a zine about lesbianism, and I buy the zine, and now we're friends and like, they support my art, I support them. And like, we're both lesbians, and we're both trans and that informs like our friendship or our relationship. And just like, Yeah, I guess it's just like, the spaces that I'm in. It's just like, my Instagram, and there's just like a ton of lesbians that I interact with real.

Olivia N 1:17:39

So have you experienced or felt any isolation from the broader queer community in any way, and that can be like a lesbian or queer space that isn't inherently lesbian, or maybe assist space, or maybe you can talk, you've already talked about it a little bit, but maybe like white lesbian spaces.

1:18:00

Yeah, white lesbian spaces are something that I'm, like, starting to recognize that maybe that's just not the space for me. And I felt very safe. And like the, for example, the queer ancestors project is like only people of color and like the the lesbians of color that I've met there, like have just been like, really important to me. I think that most of all, though, I felt very isolated from the queer community in the times of the pandemic, because I feel like because my coming out, and just like, my general coming into my lesbianism has been during such a chaotic time, like, the way that I always explain it, it's like if, if COVID wasn't going on, and if I didn't have such deep like, personal ideas and like thinking about like,

what I want to act during, like, during this time, and like my emphasis on like, collective safety and a lot of stuff like I'd be going out, I'd be meeting people like I'd be, I'd be probably be hooking up I'd be dating all different kinds of people. But there's this barrier, that it seems the only I'm kind of taking seriously now. And everyone else is just like, bars, party hookups, like, which are definitely integral parts of queer culture, but I'm like, Please don't leave me behind. Like I'm like, I'm queer. But I'm also like, at home and like, I need you to mask when we hang out and like, we can kiss maybe but like, please like so I definitely have felt a little bit isolated in that sense, where it's like, it seems nowadays, like queer life and queer groups are very extroverted and social and if you're if you have issues with that, whether it's like for me like with pandemic safety are with other people that maybe like maybe like their neurodivergent see doesn't allow for them to exist in like those very, very social spaces like they, you definitely are kind of left behind

Olivia N 1:20:01

So speaking of that, what lesbian spaces would you wish existed?

1:20:08

I would definitely wish that I wish I could find more lesbians that like have had relationships with guys. And like, they discovered that they are they came out as lesbians like after being, quote unquote, loving relationships with men, because I feel like right now, a lot of the lesbians that I'm in community with are either just like, I never dated a man and it just came out, or like I knew from the age of four, that I was a lesbian. And I'm like, well, that's just not me. So I would love to find more people that had like a similar trajectory to getting to where they are now. And I would also love Yeah, I would love if like more lesbians and queer people in general took pandemic safety right now, like a little bit more seriously, in that there was an emphasis on like, the collective care that we all like, say that we're so focused on if that was actually like tangible right now. And I think that I would also love to find more Mexican and Latino and immigrant lesbian spaces, and also like all the trans mask spaces, because I love

Olivia N 1:21:21

I love them. So what does identifying in the lesbian mean to you

1:21:32

think identifying as a lesbian, to me is just like, separating myself from womanhood under like the definition that womanhood is given in the world that we live in. And I think that it would, it's just like I mean, for me lesbianism and queerness. Like I see them as synonyms. I know a lot of people don't, but like, I see, like queerness in general, as just like completely making your own path, and just deconstructing like anything else in your way. And so for me, lesbianism is like, finding new ways to connect with someone else, finding new ways to connect to friendships and romantic relationships, and sexual relationships and art making and all of these things like my my perspective on like, almost everything has completely changed, since I've been able to, like, say that I'm a lesbian. And so I just see it as like completely changing the way that you exist in the world. Because it's just so different from like, traditional womanhood traditional feminine neotraditional, like everything. So yeah, so to me, I guess like lesbianism is just so freeing, and so empowering. And like, it can really mean anything. And it's really nuanced, too, because I feel like a lot of times, like, when people think of lesbianism it's like we think of like sapphic white girls loving each other. And it's like, that's just like, we just talked about

what boyfriends are in like lesbianism. Like that's like, and I feel like if anyone else like heard that, that'd be like, like, their heads would explode. But it's like, like, that makes sense. That makes sense to us.

Olivia N 1:23:18

Yeah. So what does lesbian community mean to you? Like, what does your lesbian community to you and the lesbians you interact with? The idea of community as well, if you feel like you're lacking a specific community currently,

1:23:34

I think that the lesbian relationships and friendships that I've forged recently, and like the community spaces that I've been in, are just like, very centered on like, growth, and just like have have just been showing me. I think I've just learned a lot. And I've learned a lot about like, the way that I can live my life and like, the freedom that I can have, that I didn't really think about before I entered those spaces, where it's like you, you can say that you want to be someone's boyfriend, and you can, like want to be like, say that you're a boy, but dress up like a girl and say that you're a girl boy, like that. And like that's valid, and like not only valid, but like that's cool. And that makes sense. And that's hot. And so like just like all these things and like learning. Just I feel like the friendships that I've made now that are lesbians have just like completely changed my perspective. And just like affirmed also that I'm on the right path, because I feel like if I didn't have those friendships I would feel really really lonely and I did for a while before I made those friendships. Yeah, I feel I feel like I wouldn't be where I am without that community

Olivia N 1:24:50

what are you happiest as a lesbian? What does lesbian Joy mean to you?

1:24:55

Oh my god. Let's be enjoy. Looks like so many things. I think lesbian. Join me And to me like wearing boxers under my dresses, and hairy legs with my skirts, and also like tattoos of like bugs and like, like Jen like rediscovering boyish things, but in like a really affirming and nice way and how that is also like inner child. And like, let and also it's like, looking back at like baby pictures and being like, That's a fucking diet right there. Because I feel like for a long time, it was also being like, I'm a lesbian now, but I never was before and like now I'm like, I was always a lesbian. Like, I literally have a picture of me like posing in front of a butterfly and like looking at like, I was just like, like, that is a lesbian individual right there. And just like, Yeah, I think for me, wait, what was the question?

Olivia N 1:25:55

What does lesbian Joy mean to you, and

1:25:56

when I got lesbian, that lets you enjoy, just like looking over my baby pictures and like, called, like, I'm just like, that's a baby. Like, right there. And also, music for me like, lesbianism can be represented a lot of the music I listened to. And yeah, and I think lesbian joy would look like my trip to Florida this summer that I took with my friend group, where we were just like, topless in a river, just like being like our bodies or body. And we're just gonna dance around in the ocean and like, have a little group kiss under the full moon. And like, like, I was like, this is peak lesbianism. And I love it so much.

Olivia N 1:26:38

Is there anything else you want to talk about? Before we stop the recording? I

1:26:43

honestly feel really good. Like I don't, I don't think I have anything else to say I just like, I love being a lesbian. And I think in many ways, like, I mean, something I have thought about in relationship to like survivorship and stuff like that is like I do think a lot about like, in many ways, coming out and like naming myself as a lesbian did save my life or save me from a lot of really dangerous positions. And I think that that's something I think about often that I would love for theory and to go more in depth about about like the, the, the dangers of, like compulsory or heterosexuality like heteronormativity in relationship to like sexual power dynamics where you're like, that's, I guess what I have to do. And then until, like, if I feel like if I hadn't realized that I was gay, like, I probably would have still put myself in really dangerous, uncomfortable, unsafe positions. And so like knowing that everyday like whether or not I choose to like engage in sex now like every day, I'm like, actively choosing and living a life that's like safer and more empowering for me is like also in that way, like very, very affirming and like, just continues to prove that I was always a lesbian and like that, I love it.

Olivia N 1:28:03

Thank you very much.