Jeff Goins: All right, Hank. Well, thanks again for chatting with me. I wonder if we could just start with your story. How did you become an artist?

Hank: I became an artist I guess you could say by happenstance. I am the son of an artist, and I think I learned about art more through osmosis than through actual real intentionality. My mother is also a curator and a photography historian. I'm not sure if I thought of myself as being an artist until I was actually in my late 20s. Up until then, I just saw myself as ‘trying to figure stuff out.’

Jeff Goins: What were you doing when you were trying to figure stuff out?

Hank: I mean, I just felt like ... I've always been a very curious person, and the camera allowed me to ask questions, essentially, about the world, about myself, about my place in it, about other people, how they navigate the world and their place in it. I was really just in that investigation, but not really thinking about it as art because I always thought that art meant that you knew how to paint and draw, etc., skills I'd never learned. I realize that now critical thinking was part of my art practice, and it took me a long time for me to notice that as an art practice and that photography was really just an avenue for me to illustrate and explore my critical thinking ideas.

Jeff Goins: I read that you call yourself a full-time artist, and I like that you said that's not really one job, it's like three jobs. I can relate to that. Talk to me about the transition in becoming a full-time artist. What was that like? How did that happen?

Hank: Transition? I mean, I've never had another job.

Jeff Goins: Okay.

Hank: It was kind of like I woke up one day and I was like, "Oh, this thing that I've just been doing out of curiosity is actually something that is a career." I almost wonder if I figured it out too late. If I'd known that I was going into a career, I probably might've approached it with a little bit more planning and foresight, but instead I just kind of found myself doing it. It sounds naïve, but I think I really had the conscious thought that if people wanted to buy, especially when I was doing a lot of work that was really part of a cathartic process of dealing with my cousin's murder, if anybody would want to buy that work, I wouldn't want to be associated with them is what I thought. I didn't think of it as art; I just thought about it as my mourning process. Then it was really only because people became interested in it as an art project that I started to think, "Oh, this isn't just me." It spoke to more than just my own personal issues and perspectives about my sense of loss.

Jeff Goins: How did people show interest in it? What were you seeing?

Hank: I have to frame this. I'm not sure how you'll be able to put this in your book. I went to an arts high school. I got a BSA and I got an MSA in digital and critical studies. I pretty much only went to art school, but I never learned how to paint or draw. In 12 years of art school, I kind of saw myself almost as an interloper. In high school, I was in the museum studies program. In undergrad, I was studying photography and Africana Studies. Then, in grad school, I really was just going because I didn't have to pay back my student loans and because I felt like it was just something that I could do.
In the midst of applying to grad school was when my cousin was murdered, and it gave me this sense of responsibility. It was no longer this frivolous pursuit against being 'responsible.' I felt like I needed to make something that meant something, but, really, if it wasn't going to bring my cousin back, it didn't really seem like it was that worthy. It seemed pretty futile. When I was graduating grad school, it was almost organic that people started saying, "I'd love to show that work," or someone commissioned me to make another piece that was loosely related to that, and they were a museum. Someone offered to buy it, and I didn't feel sleazy. I was like, "Oh, this is ..." People had almost a greater enthusiasm for some of the work than I did. That made me feel like maybe it's speaking to something that's, again, just bigger than your own issues.

That's when I started thinking of it as more like art, but I also thought that was just kind of an anomaly. It was almost another 10 years before I realized that this was something that was going to be consistent, not only because it wasn't always consistent, but what I always like to point out is that fine artists are some of the few people on the planet who would gladly pay to do their job. No one goes into art to make money. If you do, that's the wrong ... you're in the wrong industry. The guarantee that you'll be able to make a living, much less be successful, is zero to none. The most talented people are rarely the most successful artists.

I literally went into it for probably all the wrong reasons and then wound up realizing that I not only ... I hope I have staying power. Who knows? Having a career for over a decade and having a pretty decent level of attention, I should say, for the majority of that, I must be doing something right. It also might be that I just wasn't really focusing on it as a job or anything else other than just living. There's a speech that I appropriated for a piece where James Baldwin says, "An artist's struggle for their integrity should be considered as a metaphor for the struggle that's universal and daily for all human beings to get to be human beings." This idea of me trying to be an authentic artist is like me trying to be an authentic person, and that's why I can't really separate that from ... I can't make that a transition because it's my entire existence.

Jeff Goins: When you said you got into it for all the wrong reasons, what were those wrong reasons?

Hank: I kind of did it because I was mourning and I didn't want to get a job. I thought that if I stayed in school long enough, those four years in grad school getting two master's, that maybe ... I didn't think much beyond that, but I wound basically getting almost a PhD in art because I was in grad school for four years.

Jeff Goins: Yeah. After school, what happened? You said it happened organically or your-

Hank: Yeah. Students graduated grad school right before me -- some who I was close to, some that I wasn't close to -- had gone to New York and gone to California and other parts of California and gotten jobs. Just because they studied with me, they were like, "Oh, I know somebody who's doing something interesting," so they gave me one small opportunity here, which led to another one here in Miami, and all of a sudden ... Of course, it only takes five people in five different cities to give you a small opportunity which can lead to more. The person I spoke to before ... I don't remember her name-

Jeff Goins: Chantel?
Hank: Yeah, what's the real quick gist of the book?

Jeff Goins: Oh, it's about how to make a living as an artist, as a creative in the world today.

Hank: Yeah. Staying in school is one.

Jeff Goins: For a long time.

Hank: Yeah. A lot of times, people, when you're talking to them about grad school, just saying, "I'm not sure I can afford it," or whatever, I'm like, "Literally, the chance that you'll ever be able to afford your living as an artist is unrealistic, so why be realistic in starting that pursuit?" You're better off being unrealistic because that's closer to the way you're going to have to think and live to make the opportunity for you to make it.

My friend Wyatt took me to this Art Basel, a huge art fair, in 2004, another artist friend. I had heart about Art Basel. I think it was only the third or fourth year, but it just sounded weird. This is a place where a bunch of people come and sell a bunch of art? It sounded boring, but also uber capitalist. Making work about serious personal issues, that just didn't seem like something I would want to be associated with, but he had a friend whose mother got us some VIP passes.

We were walking to the fair, and there was some photographs by Sam Taylor-Wood, who is now Sam Taylor-Johnson, of her jumping around her studio and the White Cube. We didn't know who White Cube was. We didn't know who Jay Jopling was. We walked up and we saw some decent photographs of this woman jumping around in her studio, but it looked like she was floating. We walked up to the gallery we didn't know was then and still is one of the most successful galleries in a generation. We're like, "How much is that photograph?" It was a 40x60 color photograph. He said, "It's $50,000."

First of all, Wyatt tried to put on his best serious collector face asking about it, and then he's like, "Did you say $15,000?" He said, "No, I said $50,000. It's an edition of seven, and we've just produced a catalog of various images in the series." Then we're flipping through the catalog, and we're like ... After we got to the 20th page, we're like, 60 times 7, 50,000 times 7 times 20. The math was too hard for us to really calculate. I was like, "It is a pretty good picture, but if her pictures are worth $50,000 ... you could feed a whole town somewhere for a year for that amount of money ... then my pictures have to be worth at least 1% of that." It was like, "Okay, 1% is $500." I was like, "If I sell three or four a month, that's a living."

It was really just about this kind of audacity that made me start to think about this idea of a commercial opportunity to make art. I wondered, "Who am I serving if I'm not making any money and I can't get people to see what I'm doing because I can't focus on what I'm trying to do, while other people are jumping around in their studio and making down payments on houses?" I think, in a way, that described my whole struggle throughout my career of how do I ... My ultimate goal is to have an impact, but especially in a capitalist economy, commerce is critical to that. The art world is very much about commerce and transaction, and very few artists actually make work, especially initially, with idea of transaction in mind. What happens when you start being able to get
paid to do something that you would gladly pay to do? Does that affect the authenticity of what you make, or at least why you make it? Are you likely to become more formulaic or have less integrity as an artist, but aka as a person?

Jeff Goins: Yeah, what do you think about that?

Hank: I mean, I think there's a relatively cynical way of looking at it that says, “Money is power,” but then there's a more optimistic way of looking at it that says, “Love overrules.” The money, it can just be … the money can be … People who buy work, some of them are speculators, but a lot of them are benefactors. Some of them are patrons, but a lot of them are buying art not necessarily because they like the object, but because they like the artist and what the artist is trying to do. Even if the artist hasn't reached their fullest potential, people are like, "I want to buy this so you have another reason and a little bit more time to do what you're doing."

Getting into the weeds of are they doing it for this reason or that reason is unnecessary. It's more important to try and be the best that you can be with I think the mindset of … I go back to another quote from another poet named Audre Lorde. The last line of her poem A Litany for Survival says, "It's better to speak knowing you were never meant to survive," and this idea that we might as well speak because we can get into the whole anxiety of the questions of "If I do this, this might happen. If I don't do this, this might happen. But if I don't do anything, nothing will happen."

Jeff Goins: Yeah. You graduated from school. You went to this gallery, saw this photograph that-

Hank: Well, I went to an art fair.

Jeff Goins: Went to an art fair, sorry. They're selling for $50,000 a pop, and you thought, "I could do 1% of that. That wouldn't be too bad." What happened next? Did you start doing that? Did you start selling photographs for 500 bucks?

Hank: I didn't try. I just didn't avoid the opportunities that came along with thinking that. I think in previous times I might've just subconsciously steered away from those things. Just also looking at Lil Wayne, the rapper, who was then 16 years, a word that he'd coined 'bling bling' was not only all over popular culture but had just been put into the Oxford Dictionary. He'd sold a million-dollar album … I mean million album … He went platinum on something. It's like, "This is a 16-year-old who is already having incredible impact because he's using his voice."

I can either make my living as a photographer, for instance, making him more famous, or rather than it being his voice, it'll be my voice. Granted, I may never have the influence that he has. If he has a million followers, I might have 10,000. I might maybe only have a thousand, but that's, at least, something. In a way, you can call it … I wouldn't call it audacity or competitiveness because I'm like, "I'm worth 1% of what you're doing," but it was I think this indignance … Is that a word?

Jeff Goins: Yeah.
Hank: ... of if you can do that, I should at least be able to do this. If there was an opportunity to use my voice or an opportunity to sell my work, I didn't shy away from it. Because I'd had friends in it who were already out there ... I think what grad school does is it helps you build a network because all those people who graduated ... not everyone who graduates ahead of you becomes an artist, but even those who aren't becoming artists, they work at galleries. Somebody who worked at this gallery in Chelsea, they had a show, and he was like, "If you guys like that kind of work, you might like this guy's work." This New York gallery called [inaudible 00:19:34] ... I didn't know who they were or what they did, really, and they were like, "We want to try to sell your works. Can you send us something?" I was like, "Okay." Then someone else said it in Miami from another friend in grad school who grew up in Miami, and her friend's mom owned a gallery.

Then a curator, a former student of my mother's and was a curator at ... She was an assistant at a museum. She came out to do a show that she was actually performing in as a performer, and she asked me to take the photographs. Then she saw my work and she introduced me to the Studio Museum. It was really just like ... Even though my mother had connections to Studio Museum and tangentially knew my art gallery, it was really all of my great opportunities came from friends.

Another person who graduated from one of my programs curated me into a big survey show called Bay Area Now in the Bay Area. It was all of these people who I'd made friends with that just looked out for me. I can't say that I could've planned that, but the fact that I wasn't really focusing on ... It wasn't about the career for me. It was always about the work. When I realized that I could make a living doing it, it made it clearer for me what the opportunities that were being presented to me were.

Jeff Goins: So-

Hank: I just wasn't ... Yeah.

Jeff Goins: No, go ahead.

Hank: I just wasn't interested. Unfortunately, when I say had I thought more ... I wasn't really informed about the art market, and what it was and what it did. Nobody really knew. I couldn't tell the difference between having a lot of success and having ... Of course, I was making millions of dollars, which is a lot, but ... Could you hold on one moment? Sorry.

Jeff Goins: Yeah.

Hank: Sorry. Yeah, had I recognized basically what your book is about, what I was doing, I might've said, "Okay, this isn't just going to be this short-term opportunity. This is something that you can actually continue to build." I thought, "I just know these five people, and they like my work." I didn't realize that the five people that they would introduce me to might five people that I'm working with for ... All of them, I still have relationships with, but many of them I worked with for years to come, and at least in my gallery I'm still working with. What I say about grad, they teach artists how to become successful in school, but no one teaches you what to do if you are.
Jeff Goins: Interesting.

Hank: Yeah. Even if you get a grant for $35,000 or $50,000, most of our inclination is "Okay, I'm going to use that $30,000 or $50,000 to make the art that I said I was going to make," but none of that really goes to "Maybe I should put some of it towards paying my rent, and maybe I should put some of it towards a savings for the future." Rather than having $35,000, I only have $20,000 to do the project, but when the project's over, I'll still have some money to be able to go to the next project, and over time that'll build. We don't have any real strategies for that.

If I sell a piece of art, or maybe if I'm friends with other artists, that I should trade work with them, and as we continue to grow, maybe the value of our work goes up. We also get to build, hopefully, a reasonable art collection that in a worst-case scenario has some value that can help us out and sustain our lives in a different way. I think everyone is trying to win the lottery as an artist. Very few people are actually thinking about how the whole thing plays out over the long term. You can't make $100,000 a year as a fine artist and think of yourself as successful, whereas in most other parts of the world, making $100,000 is okay. Maybe not in New York, but that's pretty good money.

Jeff Goins: Yeah. Right.

Hank: If you're making that kind of money as an artist, you're just like, "Yeah, it's okay." I'm like, "We should be able to have ... what do you call it ... a white-collar or blue-collar class of artist that ... they buy each other's work. They support each other's work. They make a living, rather than just everyone is kind of like trying to make more than a living." You know what I mean?

Jeff Goins: Yeah.

Hank: I think I'm really interested in how artists can learn about financial planning and long-term life planning, and what it means to be strategic and career building, which is weird because, of course, a lot of what fine art is about is about breaking rules. We're inherently kind of allergic to the idea of doing things in what seems like a formulaic way, but in a capitalist economy and society, there are certain things that you probably can count on, ebbs and flows, exchange. Even though we might be small business owners, we don't think of ourselves as small business owners. Therefore, we have no way to really regulate when we're having a lot of success or when we're having a lot of failure.

Granted, we're not really typically drawn by money, but just having that kind of awareness of "Oh, maybe I should do that again," or "Maybe I should not do that," could for some artists really make a difference in allowing them to be alive. If you can't get health insurance, and you have an illness or you're working with materials that make you sick ... There's all of these things that I, as a 40-year-old person, wonder how they'd be different had I just had a little bit of an inkling, a knowledge of you'll still be doing this in 5 or 10 or 20 years.

Jeff Goins: If you could go back and do something differently, would you change anything?

Hank: Yes and no. I'm a firm believer in things happen for a reason.
Jeff Goins: The only justification of that is that they already did happen. I believe that if they were to happen another way, they probably wouldn’t. Maybe they did in another dimension, but this is all I can see. Looking at other artists and talking to other artists, I would say, yeah, think about putting money aside and have you talked about financial planning. Trade with other artists. Write down five things that you want to make sure that you do in your life and career, and five things that you want to make sure that you don’t want to do.

Don’t take anyone for granted, which I have never done. Don’t assume that you know who is going to be good for you and what’s going to be good for you. A lot of the times, a lot of the things that were the worst things that ever happened to me, including my cousin’s murder, forced me to appreciate my life, and life in general, on a much higher level and hopefully turn something that was wholly negative and could’ve easily become more negative into something that is, if not positive, transformative to the degree that people don’t necessarily even see that in my work anymore.

Jeff Goins: Was there a point at which you felt like-

Hank: Oh, I just thought of something.

Jeff Goins: Yeah?

Hank: Buy some property. Buy some property.

Jeff Goins: There you go.

Hank: Especially when the market crashes, buy it.

Jeff Goins: Yes. Yes.

Hank: Don’t stand around like, “Wow.” So many artists who are now middle-aged, they bought property in New York in the ’70s and ’80s. Even if nobody is still buying their work, they own their building or their apartment and they have tenants. Anyway, go on.

Jeff Goins: I was going to ask you, and I don’t know if this makes you uncomfortable or not, but was there a moment in your career where you felt like you arrived? I don’t know if that was when your work was selling, if it was just the sense that you had finally hit your stride or you realized this is going to be the thing you’re going to do for decades to come. Was there a moment at which you felt like you were a real artist and that this was really a thing?

Hank: I think I noticed about 10 years late. For me, even though I’d been in shows at New York museums, and I had a New York gallery and it had several shows, it really felt a lot like luck. It was only after 10 years and having employees that I was like, “Oh.” Even now … It’s really now when I go places and people are like, “Oh yeah, I saw you at this place three weeks ago,” and I didn’t even know that people even knew … When strangers start knowing who you are and telling you where you were and what you were doing, it’s like, “Oh, I guess … I don’t know if I’ve arrived, but something’s different.”
I think there's that, and then the fact that when I realized 10 years of being able to make a living doing this. That's not a guarantee that I'll be able to do it for the next 10, but definitely makes me realize that there's a reasonable level of ... There's a reasonable possibility that it might continue to be something I'm doing for years to come. It's a career. That's what I'm saying. I didn't go into it thinking I'm making a career decision. I went into it thinking I'm making a personal decision. The difference for me was realizing that.

Jeff Goins: You know, Hank, there are some people who say, especially in the arts, if you want to do this, you have to take it seriously and you have to quit your job and go all-in, and this has to be your thing. You have to fully dedicate yourself to your craft. Then there are others who say don't quit your day job. Have a backup plan, or moonlight, or have a side gig. Have some security. Which of those two camps do you tend to lean towards?

Hank: I'm in the camp of don't pretend you have any idea what's going to happen. I have friends who ... If you've been around long enough and you've seen enough scenarios, there is no formula. The people who sometimes are the most successful are the people who actually hack the formula. One of my successful friend artists, two of them, they've had jobs for ... One of them worked for Oprah, and nobody knew he worked for Oprah.

Jeff Goins: Wow.

Hank: Another one had a staff job at a university. He was not a faculty member at a university. He had a staff job. Then he used his position in the provost's office to get the university to do things that really, ultimately, advanced his art career to the degree that they then at some point, maybe they gave him a full-time facultyship and gave him the department. He has one of the best galleries in the world. He was in his 30s before he even sold any art or anybody even knew who he was. It was late 30s.

That's why I'm like it really has a lot more to do with your belief in yourself than it does to do with anything you do or don't do. I think it is safe to say if you have less options, like if you don't have a job, it's probably more likely true that you're going to actually be more resourceful and figure out how to solve certain problems. You know what I mean?

Jeff Goins: Yeah. You mentioned-

Hank: But-

Jeff Goins: Yeah, go ahead.

Hank: Yeah, I've seen it all ways. I've seen people in their 50s. I've seen people who were homeless. I've seen people who, like I said, are the best artists with the best education, the best personality, the best connections, and really good work, and people just don't care.

Jeff Goins: How do you make sense of that? It sounds unfair.

Hank: I mean, I think a lot of it is about ... Life is unfair. It is a lot about timing and luck and being ... If you think about professional athletes, one injury could ruin the career of the most promising person. With artists, one bad mood could do
that. Not even the bad mood of the artist, the bad mood of the person that they met. Sometimes people will be prejudiced because they’re like, ”This person has everything, so they don’t need this,” or it’ll be stupid stuff like there’s this other person that’s making work that looks like that work, and we don’t need two people whose work looks like this, even though this work might be better. There’s so much arbitrariness that affects these things, much less sexism, racism, classism.

Jeff Goins: Yeah. You talked about the social side of things, going to grad school with people, and then being connected with these five people, and then them connecting you with all kinds of other opportunities, and you finally availing yourself of those opportunities, letting them happen. How important is the social side of an art career?

Hank: You really probably only need one or two good friends, but you could have … It’s really about having someone who is going to advocate for you. In a lot of ways, that’s what the galleries do, but sometimes it’s a curator, sometimes it’s a collector, sometimes it’s a writer. Someone who is going to be in your corner is really important. Who those people are and how they advocate for you is equally important. I think the social aspect is critical, but it’s … I wouldn’t call it a science, but it definitely is like a … There is some kind of … not a reliable formula, but a formula nonetheless that needs to be paid attention to.

There are some artists … I’ve met artists who can’t talk about their work; they’re antisocial; no one understands what their work is; and they are hugely successful. It’s like, “Okay,” I guess. Then there’s times when I’ve felt that way about an artist and then years later I was like, “Oh, I just didn’t get it because I wanted the art to make sense.” A lot of times, the best art doesn’t make sense immediately, or doesn’t make sense in the way that we’ve gotten used to making sense of the world and making sense of things, but sometimes the world isn’t ready. I just feel really fortunate to be able to say that I’ve seen so many different things happen and so many different methods and opportunities for success that I just believe it’s really about … When I say love overrules, it really is about this idea of things work out the way they need to work out, and all you can do is try to be the best person you can be and presume that the best opportunities will come as a result of that.

Jeff Goins: And buy some property.

Hank: And buy some property, yeah.

Jeff Goins: Okay, last question. I appreciate you being gracious with your time, Hank. How do you define success? I mean, some of this stuff is arbitrary. Some of it’s luck. I know that you, in another interview, attributed your success to luck. I love that answer. It was funny.

Hank: Success is happiness. If you can look at your life and say that I’m really happy with who I am and the impact that I’ve had, I see that as success.

Jeff Goins: What about the grumpy artist who is just never happy and never feels like the world gets him or her? That’s a stereotype, right, this moody, aloof, creative person?

Hank: Yeah.
Jeff Goins: How do they find success?

Hank: I think it's all about shifting your perspective. A lot of my work is about framing and context, and about how, depending on where you stand, it will affect what you see. This whole idea of the grass is always greener or the half empty, half full question, it's real. I think each of us has that responsibility to try to make ... I wouldn't say make the most of what we have, but recognize that we could have what looks like nothing and it actually be a gold mine. I've seen artists from ... especially there's been a resurgence, or you could call it a market correction in the past four or five years, of female artists who were overlooked, or artists of color who were overlooked for decades, and finally people are paying attention and they're getting opportunities today that they didn't have when they were in their 20s, 30s, and 40s. You just don't know what's going to happen. I've had people say, "I had no idea this was happening," a 70-year-old man whose work is selling for mid-six figures.

Jeff Goins: Wow.

Hank: I'm thinking, "Thank God you kept that stuff."

Jeff Goins: That's funny.

Hank: I know other people who just destroyed it. They're like, "No one will ever want this, and I don't want it." They are that grumpy artist, and so they destroy the work. It was beautiful work, but they just felt like, because society hadn't given them the credit in the way that they thought, that it was worthless. That's why I have this optimistic perspective, where it is about don't presume you know what's going to happen. Just presume that the more open you are to change of your own perspective and change in the environment, the more opportunities you'll have to be prepared to take advantage of when they come.

Jeff Goins: I said that was the last question, but you made me think of one more. Do you think now ... Is it easier now to be an artist, or is it harder? I feel like we hear opinions on both sides. You talked about classism, sexism, racism, and how women and people of color may have more opportunities recently than they necessarily have had in the past. I'm curious what your thoughts are on that. Is it a better time to be an artist, or a harder time?

Hank: I don't think being an artist is ever easy because your job every day is to wake up and try to make your dreams come true. Can you imagine a harder task? In a society that finally is paying more attention to art, but also is still not yet willing to acknowledge the fundamental value of artists in culture, we're in a social time that maybe ... There was a time you could live in New York as an artist and have no money, and now you have artists who have a lot of money, but it's that much harder to live in this creative hub and be truly creative, which means that you're taking risks, you're experimenting, you're expanding.

To me, that's the trick. The bankers have gotten word, so it's no longer about the most avant-garde or the most transformative work. It's about the stuff that speculators think is going to be valuable. Some people benefit from it. I think society in general benefits from people seeing the value of creativity, but if what's being seen as creative is pretty limited, then what?

Jeff Goins: When you say the bankers have gotten word, what do you mean by that?
Hank: There is a whole Wall Street kind of a mentality that's like ... It's wonderful that people with a lot of money are investing their time and energy in art, but when it gets to the point when they're almost curating the art and defining what we as a society should value, it gets pretty dangerous because just by the nature of their business, they can't focus on stuff that may be transcendent but isn't going to be improving their bottom line.

Jeff Goins: Yeah, it's interesting. It sounds almost like the people who are paying for the art are now becoming the tastemakers.

Hank: What'd you say?

Jeff Goins: It sounds like the bankers, as you call them, the people that are paying for the art, are becoming the tastemakers, whereas ...

Hank: Yeah.

Jeff Goins: ... in previous generations, it sounds like, wasn't as much the case. Other artists, other people who were more qualified, weren't speculators, could say, "Hey, this is good." It sounds like that might not be a good thing.

Hank: I'm not even sure those other people were more qualified, but they likely were more invested for the long term.

Jeff Goins: Got it. Because it wasn't an investment.

Hank: Yeah. The good side of having the bankers in to look is, like I said, all of a sudden people care. People are paying attention. There's a visibility that artists have, and there is some form of appreciation for what art can and should do for society, which just didn't exist before. It just makes me a little bit worried that that's just going to become the entirety of the conversation, I guess.

Jeff Goins: Yeah. Wow, this is great, Hank. I could ask you questions all day. Really appreciate your time. Thanks for-

Hank: Was it okay? I'm sorry I'm-

Jeff Goins: No, it's great.

Hank: I was having one of those weekends, so ...

Jeff Goins: No, it's awesome.

Hank: I can't say don't quote me.

Jeff Goins: I know. I got you. No, this is great. I love it. I mean, your story is fascinating. I was trying not to ask you questions that I already have the answers to from Chantel talking to you and then this great little writeup in the Pacific Standard, which was a lot of fun to read. No, I really appreciate you and appreciate your honesty and the integrity of your work. It's inspiring.

Hank: Oh, thanks. Appreciate that.
Jeff Goins: Yeah. Any questions or anything else for me? Anything that you wanted to say that you didn't get a chance to say?

Hank: I think that's it for now.

Jeff Goins: Okay, cool. Great.

Hank: Hopefully, we'll get to meet in person.

Jeff Goins: Yeah, hope so too.

Hank: Where are you based?


Hank: Oh, cool. Yeah. I know people there. That's the new hot spot. That's the new New York, it might be called.

Jeff Goins: Well, yeah, I wouldn't call it that. People in Nashville might call it that, but I would never say that to somebody who actually knows New York. Yeah, thanks for recognizing that. It's interesting. What's fascinating about it is I moved here 10 years ago and here was nothing in terms of what exists here today in terms of art, technology, culture. Entrepreneurship has become really big here. Pretty fascinating. It'll be interesting to see where we're at in another 10 years.

Hank: Yeah, I'm excited to see that myself, aka buy property. Darn bankers.

Jeff Goins: You know what's fascinating about that is a lot of people are buying property in the area, including Justin Timberlake and all these people really from Hollywood, from California, because it's a fraction of the cost of buying another house in LA or something.

Hank: That goes back to my point about being able to be creative. You can't afford to be in New York and some places, LA, and actually make a living, have a decent quality of life, and spend your time focusing on art, which pays off 100 million times for the effort that you spend doing it.

Jeff Goins: Yeah, it is an interesting thing. I know you guys talked about this in the other interview, the challenges of being creative and then also essentially having a business to run.

Hank: Yeah.

Jeff Goins: You mentioned you didn't enter it with that understanding, but then you realized you have certain responsibilities and there's tension there. I'm not sure I've resolved how to manage them, but it's interesting because you do certain things so that you can make a living for yourself, and then those things you do to make money can become things that you have to feed.

Hank: Exactly.

Jeff Goins: It is a challenge.

Hank: You're right.
Jeff Goins: Any wisdom on that?

Hank: Thanks again. I hope that, as a result of your book, people really will start to realize that we not only preserve art, but preserve the artist and preserve the spaces for artists to ...

Jeff Goins: That's good.

Hank: … do the things that don't make sense in our society, so that our society doesn't become static and doesn't become fascist, really.

Jeff Goins: Right.

Hank: If we think that everything has to be 'useful' in order to be valuable, we're going to miss out on really making a lot of advances that we need. Therefore, that's why it's important for artists to be seen as an integral part of … It should be a job. Anyway, thanks again.

Jeff Goins: Yeah, thank you. Appreciate it.

Hank: We'll talk hopefully again.

Jeff Goins: Yeah, let's stay in touch.

Hank: All right.

Jeff Goins: Thanks, Hank.

Hank: Take care.


Hank: Bye.