

The Peale, Baltimore

Out of the Blocks Storytelling Series

Recorded by Aaron Henkin; Photographs and Music by Wendel Patrick

Produced for the *Out of the Blocks* website, created by the Peale, <https://ootb.thepeale.org/>

Out of the Blocks is supported by PRX and produced with grant funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Cohen Opportunity Fund, The Hoffberger Foundation, Patricia and Mark Joseph, The Shelter Foundation, The Kenneth S Battye Charitable Trust, The Sana and Andy Brooks Family Fund, The Muse Web Foundation, and the William G. Baker, Jr. Memorial Fund, creator of the Baker Artist Portfolios



Amy Cavanaugh Royce:

My name is Amy Cavanaugh Royce, and I'm the executive director of Maryland Art Place, 218 West Saratoga Street. MAP is and has been the home for living artists for 35 years. We cater to contemporary artists. And the building that we're in on Saratoga Street we purchased in 1986. In 2014, I moved us back to the building. I fell in love with the building. It's five stories. It's amazing. In terms of creativity, there's just so much happening in the building now. We have a lot of tenants.

So my day to day here is basically making sure the tenants are happy, making sure our exhibition schedule still happens, raising money to keep the building alive. I've completely invested my life into this space for sure. And it's a total mess.

Interviewer:

You went through like a transition to landlord, right? I mean, what's it like to be a landlord?

Amy Cavanaugh Royce:

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It's awful. I have been working nonstop for four years. I should have a cot here, but I sleep on a black sofa from time to time. We have 10 HVAC systems in this building, three of which don't work, and they all need to be replaced. I need a new roof. Some days it's like having a toxic boyfriend. It's like, this relationship's not working out. I have to go, but I can't because everyone's relying on me to be here.

Interviewer:

Is it true that one of your tenants is your mother?

Amy Cavanaugh Royce:

Yeah, my mom is here. She's a jeweler. It's nice having her in the building. I can go cry to her from time to time. I wanted to be a cellist, I guess, because I spent the better part of my life doing nothing but playing music. How I landed here is just a sort of bizarre state of affairs. My degree is and cello performance. This is where I always forget every time. I forget after that. I fear that somebody from like the BSO will hear this and go, "Oh my God, girl, you need to go practice your intonation. It's terrible."

Playing is so difficult for me today. It's like you're just part of this thing that it's like so big. And the fact that that's not a part of my day to day I think makes me sad, but there's other more meaningful things happening in a lot of ways that affect people beyond me. My life has become about buildings and art and communities and that's not a bad thing either.