

Kellie Kawahara-Niimi (00:01.102)

in sing songy voice

I'm opening all of the script now and it's gonna take me a bit. Here we go, here we go, here we go, here we go, here we go.

upbeat intro music

Kellie Kawahara-Niimi (00:23.982)

Welcome to Snarkle Talks.

Hi, I'm Kellie, and alongside Seth. Say hi, Seth. Hi, Seth. We are Snarkle Rocks, two artists with ADHD and way too many hobbies. We've been friends since sixth grade and have grown up to be adults who can legally touch each other's butts in the eyes of the government. Our journey began as a sticker project that evolved into a full blown kendama business.

It's been a wild and super fun ride so far. Come along with us on this new shiny adventure that is way more work than I realized. And I'm so proud and excited about it. We're thrilled to introduce you to some amazing, awesome people who make the world better by existing and doing cool stuff.

Kellie Kawahara-Niimi (01:12.046)

Welcome to our first actual episode of Snarkle Talks, the podcast where we believe in the power of stories to ignite the flames of inspiration and the magic of laughter to bridge the vast expanses between our souls. Or, you know, connect over coffee and kendama. Today, I'm thrilled to be joined by a good friend and the brains behind one of our all time favorite kendama brands. Our collaborations have not only been incredibly fulfilling, but have also produced some of my favorite projects to date. We'll be exploring the art of communication and how to transform a fist bump into a partnership. Come hang out with us while we deep dive into the realms of networking and collaboration. We'll talk about the dynamics of having a business partner, share our favorite moments from past collabs, give tips on how to network and forge your own connections, and drop some behind the scenes looks at our newest project together.

Fasten your cloaks and light your candles, folks, because we're about to conjure up a storm of insights that you won't want to miss. It's an Occult reference, get it? Get it? Yeah.

transition music

Hi, you're here with my dear friend, who I am going to ask if you can introduce yourself, say your pronouns, and what do you think centaurs do with their arms when they're running?

Jack:

Oh, that's a great question. My name is Jack Oates, pronouns he him. And I started a company called Occult Kendamas where we make kendamas and other cool stuff. Centaurs are, I guess, half human. I'd imagine it's some detachment of what a human does with his arms when they

run. But wouldn't it be cool if it was a bit of a Naruto run kind of deal if they were like behind him? Right.

Yeah, I kind of, I see something like that. Yeah. Yeah. The things that our brains think about. Um, something I've thought about before at all. You're welcome. Um, okay. Let's start by you telling us a little bit about Occultt. Can you take us on your journey?

Jack:

Yeah. Yeah, definitely. So let's see. We just hit three years last August and about three years ago, I was.

Jack (03:34.304)

I was fresh out of college. I didn't really know what I wanted to do. I was kind of all over the place, but I knew I liked kendama and I was like saving up money to start some sort of business. I was like, why don't I give it a shot and I get to make my own kind of stuff and fulfill whatever gap in the community I think there is. And yeah, so it started right after I worked the summer job in 2020. It was COVID and the best thing for me to do was to start a business in my house because it didn't require going to work and getting a job.

Which was kind of hard at that time. So I bought a lathe, I put it in my shed and I just started teaching myself how to turn. No help from really any human being other than a couple of YouTube videos. The first couple of months we were just selling stickers that were like kendama themed because I figured it would be a good way to get our art style out there that I knew I wanted to put on the damas but I couldn't figure out how to make it. So yeah, that went really well. And then I had the pleasure of having a friend named Luis, who is a really, really gifted artist. And I figured it would be a really good opportunity to bring him on board and kind of help out with the one thing that I knew I could never figure out how to do, which was like, you know, draw the kind of art he does. So it was a very good pairing for the two of us. And that was three years ago. We've just been slowly building the business, collaborating and really using it as a conduit for our own creativity and aspirations within Kendama.

Kellie:

Why did you want to start a business in the beginning?

Jack:

I feel like this is a bit cliché, but it's definitely something I wanted since I was a little kid. There's this event in my area called the Invention Convention. And I was always trying to invent something, even at six years old. I knew that I wanted to have my own business. I just didn't know what it would be involved in. But as soon as I figured out that working with my hands was something that I really, really liked, that's when I decided that Kenawa could be one of those things. It felt right and was really a challenge for me, because it's always been something that...

I'm drawn to the challenge, I think. Yeah.

Kellie:

I didn't realize that you didn't start turning until you decided to start the business. I had just assumed it was a skill you already had. No, actually, first thing I ever turned was a kendama and I had no woodworking experience, not even just turning. Like I had never used a table saw or a drill press or a lathe or anything at all. It was kind of just trial and error. That is amazing.

Kellie Kawahara-Niimi (06:00.91)

There's some beauty in the universe that brings things together in the most unexpected way. I didn't start off as a kendama player at all. I knew about it. It was in my schools, but I fell into it and then I fell in love with it. The business kind of took itself from there. I found the thing that I was passionate about in a way that really suited my art and my life and my principles even. And I was like, this is it. And the universe in all its infinite wisdom was like, yeah, this is a good lane for you right now. And it kind of sounds like it was that way for you too, where you're like, I'm gonna give this a shot. And it kind of took off.

Jack:

Yeah, well, I mean, definitely not at first. I mean, it was a slow burn. The first drop we ever had, these kendamas took me months to make because I was so slow at the time and I wanted them to be as good as I can make it. And I made a bunch of kendamas, but they weren't good enough to sell. So that first batch of like 15, I think it was, took so much time and effort to not only turn, but we also did so much wood burning on those. Probably a hundred total hours more of wood burning. And I think we put them on the website for 75 bucks for a full setup. And it was just cause I really didn't value my work that much at the time, but whether it was the price or the fact that they were covered in wood burns and looked cool, they sold out in a day, which was a really good proof of concept for me. My biggest worry was that the shape was too weird and nobody was going to want to play it. But it turns out that's kind of been like our biggest asset over the last couple of years. Yeah.

Kellie:

I would love for you to talk more about that because it sounds like you've always pushed boundaries or pushed ideas or thought outside of the box even when you were little and creating inventions. What made you say, I'm going to take this risk and I think it's going to be cool. And then like, how did you get people to buy into that idea?

Jack:

A lot of explaining at first, you know, I loved getting asked questions about the shape and every single kendama that we sold in the beginning and now I've sold, I mean, hand turned, I've sold over a thousand kendamas. And then when you talk about all the other stuff we sold. I've written a handwritten thank you note with every single order since I started. And all those notes, what I also always put in there is any and all feedback, good or bad, shoot me a DM. And I've always been really religious about responding to people because these people put food on my table. This is my full-time job. And it's really been about communicating for me. What's been able to give me that drive is the positive feedback, but...

What gives me the drive to get better is the negative feedback. Even calling it negative, it feels like a stress to me because it's not people in my DM screaming at me. It's like, Hey, this might be better if you made the stalls bigger or the thing that everybody always wants is bigger cuffs. Right. And I like to find a gray area in the middle where I'm taking advice, but I'm not letting people drive my decisions. So, you know, having a reign on it but also having the confidence and that like proof of concept of people buying our stuff is in turn what gives me the confidence to push harder. It wasn't like I was setting out to make the craziest stuff I could in the beginning. I just wanted to make stuff I thought was cool. I'm not, it's gonna sound like I'm calling the community out in a way. I'm not, but I do think we see a lot of the same stuff in kendama and as a consumer, that got boring for me which is why I want to be that outlet for the people who want the crazy stuff, the stuff that people have never seen before, you know?

Kellie:

Yeah, yeah. That speaks to my heart. Snarkle is similar in that we don't do conventional things. And so being outside the box requires a bit of explaining and a lot of confidence. I definitely feel you. When it comes to, you mentioned Luis, and I absolutely love Luis.

Jack:

Who doesn't? Amazing guy.

Kellie:

I know! He's one of my favorite chaotic gremlins in the most lovable way possible. And your collaboration, your partnership is really amazing because he does a lot of the art. Yeah. So your creative vision comes out and he is the person who makes your vision come out on the kendamas themselves. Can you talk about how the process is between the two of you?

Jack: (10:49.976)

I would love to. It's quite random and probably different than like most people. But like I mentioned, we've been friends for a long time. I showed him Kendama, right? Because we as Kendama players want to push it on to all of our friends. You know, it's like it makes us feel so good. We want everybody else to feel that good. Right. And he was the only friend where Kendama actually just stuck and he like became as obsessed about it as I was. And he's been drawing since he was, you know, old enough to hold a pencil. So I was always looking for a way to collaborate with him. You know, I always wanted to do something creatively, you know, and Kendama just felt like it fit because of our mutual obsession. In a way, us knowing each other before is helpful because we already have experienced communicating just as friends. I think we're a bit lucky in that we are each other's like yin and yang as far as direction goes, because he has a lot of trouble pulling stuff out of thin air. And that's why we fit because all my brain does is come up with ideas. I have a notebook in my wallet because I'm always writing stuff down. But yeah, between the two of us, usually the way that it goes is I will come up with a bunch of subject matters and ways that they could fill the tama, because we usually start with the tama. And he will basically tell me if it's something he thinks is feasible.

because he's got to be the one who draws it. I think that's why we work really well because he's willing to accept those ideas and then just do his own thing. Almost like when you go to a tattoo artist and you're like, I really want this subject matter. They're not just going to draw it exactly how you say, right? They're going to draw it in their own style in their own way. And that's usually how you get the best pieces. So I think that's why it works so well is because we're able to compromise in all areas of design. Yeah.

Kellie:

I think that's a really cool way to compliment each other. Seth and I work in a really similar fashion where our strengths lie in different places. And when it comes to working with a partner, that intense closeness that you build in trying to learn each other's languages and creative processes and workflows is so interesting to navigate. I don't know if I get to talk to a lot of people about it.

Jack:

No, I couldn't agree more. I think it's really similar to most relationships because it requires that trust. Even though you may not see how the idea is going to turn out, you have to trust that your partner has a vision. And if you both have that trust, then you're going to be willing to push the ideas together and really mold them into something that's not too disjointed ideas, which I think is...Probably the hardest part about collabing in my opinion, for sure. Yeah.

Kellie:

Because there's two of you and you both have different styles and different visions for things, but you live under a cult. When you work with another company, how do you navigate both of your ideas with a whole separate entity's ideas?

Jack:

Yeah, I think it's a hundred percent more challenging than just the two of us. Um, I think in those situations, it really helps to have someone spearhead. You really can have that too many cooks in the kitchen type thing going on. If you don't have someone leading, typically with us, I will be the one who's doing most of the communicating, trying to figure out exactly what direction whoever we're working with wants to go. And then find a way that that can work with Luis because obviously I know how Luis works really well. So if I could learn how these guys work, then I can help create a idea that really works well together.

And I think, yeah, that's what I'm always trying to achieve when I'm working with another brand. That is so interesting to me because there is a really big difference between like, oh, I'm going to throw my thing on your thing and we'll put that together and we'll call it a collab versus an actual intersection or Venn diagram of ideas. Yes.

Kellie:

Is that a marker of success for you in a collaboration? And what are some other ways that you see collab succeeding.

Jack:

Yeah. So I think collabing is, it's all about combining. And what you start off thinking is how can I combine our art desire and influence into like one physical thing that people are really going to like? I think that last part is also really important. As much as I want to be creative and I want to make art, I always have this part in the back of my head that's telling me are people going to want this? because at the end of the day, this is my full -time job. So I want to collab, but I also want to make something that's like going to be received really well by the community. And I have to balance that. And when you work with another brand, sometimes their idea of that level is different. Sometimes they're much more focused on the consumerism side. Sometimes they're much more focused on let's just make art. And that's just something you have to learn how to deal with, you know? The bottom line is, is like, we've done tons of collabs in three years for sure. Some have gone better than others. And I'm not talking about how they sell or how much money they make, just how I feel about the end product. And the one thing that I see in common with all the ones that I feel really happy about and look back really fondly on is when I look at them, I see both of our brands equally. I see this new thing, this new amalgamation of two different creative styles. That's my favorite, you know. That's what I'm chasing every single time. So if I see a brand that I think I can achieve that with, that's really the only time that I go out of my way to see if I can work with them because I don't want to put in all this work for something that's going to be really one -sided. Yeah.

Kellie:

The collab, I'm going to just toot our horns right now.

Jack:

Please do.

Kellie:

The collab that Snarkle and Occult did with goats was really, really special. Not just The product that came out was super good, in my opinion, but the process of how that collaboration went between the four of us was just so much fun. I agree. And it was lovely that you took a shot on doing something so different with us. You really pushed the limits, I think, with our Snarkle collab.

Jack:

I agree. To your point, I really didn't know how much people were going to like it.

I knew I thought it was so cool and especially doing the whole nose ring thing and adding all these extra parts, the thank you cards that we've done and all the little extra things that really add that touch of personalization. I think that is what really makes me feel that it's special. Cause a lot of stuff you see out there when it comes to collabs sometimes comes off as, Oh, these guys are a big brand, you know. I want to do everything I can to work with these guys because it'll help us get a foothold. And you know, the bottom line is most of the time when you work with a brand that's much bigger than you, it's really hard to keep your identity, you know, even if you can manage to do that, you pretty much get one shot. And so if that's going to happen, you need to be ready to really put every ounce of work into it. And just what's nice

about our collab is I just feel like we're equals and we're doing everything we can to make it as cool as possible. And that consumerism side is so far in my mind, not even close to the front, you know? Yeah. I think between the four of us, the amount of, will this be fun to play? Yeah. Like how fucking cool can we make this? I know. I think we spend a lot of time trying to reel each other in and be like, okay, wait, how crazy can we really get with this?

Kellie:

Yeah, yeah. And I love having that. Like, what colors can we put on this that are just wild? Like, what can we put together that shouldn't work but works? And I think that our creative styles really lend each other a lot of inspiration.

Jack:

I honestly feel like I feel when we work together, I feel the desire to push myself so much harder just because I feel like the bar we've set for the collab is so high that everything we make now, I just want it to be amazing. Not even for people, but for me, like wanting to keep it, not wanting to sell it, wanting to have one for myself, which I almost never do. I have the smallest Occult collection of anybody out there. I have maybe five occult damas. And like I said, I've made like 2000. I do that too, where we forget to make stuff for ourselves.

Kellie:

We ended up selling everything and I'm like, oh, it would be nice if we had something from that set. I know. In the moment, you don't feel it. But then like a year goes by and you're like, oh, man, those are so cool. I wish I had one of those. Yeah, I feel that way about our goats. I don't have one of our goats. That's crazy. And we've done four colorways now, too. I know. I just we don't think about it. OK, so.

Kellie Kawahara-Niimi (20:13.614)

With the way that kendama companies are kind of popping up now, there's a lot of different businesses that are coming into the scene and people want to work together. There's a lot of different reasons for that. But how do you think that the new influx of businesses, plus the idea of collaborations are going to change how kendama moves forward?

Jack:

Well, I definitely think it starts from an artistic point of view, because I mean, you can collab on shapes and stuff and that is art, obviously, but Kendama has three cups, a spike, a hole. There isn't so many things from the standpoint of like your actual physical Ken shape that are gonna change too much. So I think when we talk about collaboration, it's really like combining the vibes of both companies into what usually ends up being the Tamar, right?

I think for a long time we've seen a lot of really interesting, super limited, kind of pricey, handmade collabs. We're probably going to see a lot more interesting artwork coming out of collaborations that aren't just being made by hand, that are being made in China. But I definitely think, you know, the more the merrier. More companies, more art, more influence, more eyes on Dama. I've never once felt like discouraged by more companies popping up, no matter how

similar or dissimilar they are. To me, I'm just gonna keep doing my thing. I think the one thing I'll say as far as collabing with smaller brands, when you do start to see some success and you grow a little bit, you know, in the beginning, anybody who wanted to collab, I was like, I'm down. But I do get to the point where I turn them down now, it's just because one, either I don't see the vision, or two, I just don't feel like it benefits us as much as it should.

You know, I want to sit here and be like, oh my God, the art is the best part and everything. But there is a small part of the club where you really do have to remember that there has to be some mutual benefit and there are a lot of work to make something you're proud of with people you don't really know that well. So if you're going to do it, you should be able to see the benefit at least a little bit beforehand, you know?

Kellie Kawahara-Niimi (22:30.542):

Yeah. I think that getting on a similar vibe, almost like dating, like feeling each other out. figuring if you have the same ethics, the same vision for your companies, are you headed in the same direction? And sometimes the answer is no, and that's not bad, and there's no judgment, it just is. And so we're having to do that too. We can only say yes to so many things in a year, and it sucks to feel like you have to prune and also, It is a sense of growth and balancing the two is sometimes I think a little difficult for me in my head too.

Jack:

100%. And you don't want to sacrifice on the work. Yeah. You know, I'm always really tempted to try and fit in as much as I can. Just go, go, go, go, go. But there has to be a limit. If you want to do the quality of work you've been doing that have been putting you ahead and have been giving you results that you feel proud of, you can't sacrifice on your time.

You really have to give yourself time to be able to create the coolest stuff that you think is possible. Yeah.

Kellie:

In terms of companies that want to start collabing with people, how would you want people to approach you? And how do you want to approach other companies?

Jack:

I actually love this question because I do have a bone to pick a little bit with how I get approached sometimes. Like sometimes it feels like people aren't even trying. If you want to collab with another brand, the best thing you can do is have an idea before you ask. Right. It's just like anything else. If you're pitching somebody something, you better have some cool stuff to show them. And this is my biggest gripe when a company comes to me, whether they're smaller or even bigger. If you come to me and you want to do a collab, cause you think what we do is cool but you don't have a semblance of thought in how you want it to go. If you want us to do the Kens, if you want to do the Tamas, how are we going to do the design? What are we going to do it on? Are we going to do it in the factory? Are we going to hand make it? If you don't have any idea, but you just like the vibe, it makes it a lot harder for me to say yes. I like the

analogy you use. It's like a date. I need a little bit of info. I need to get to know you. So that's like my biggest piece of advice is whether you know if they're going to say yes or not. If you're really going to shoot your shot, you better make sure the shots looking good.

Jack (24:46.926)

To go to the other part of the question, how I feel like I would approach bigger brands, how I did it with sweets is a good example in my opinion. He actually approached us wanting to do a collab because he's bought a couple of Kanamas before and he brought up the whole Halloween thing. So I was like, perfect. Good direction to go. Obviously we love this, but when it comes to design, I wasn't about to just go in like half cocked. When we got on our next zoom call, I didn't directly pitch him all these, but I had a...30 design ideas and I narrowed it down to three best of all 30 of those. And that's the ones that we did. Cause I knew you probably only get a sweets collab once at this scale and I wanted to be really proud of it. And I think the proof's in the pudding. I'm super proud of it. They came out sick and that's because we didn't just phone it in, you know, so like I said, proofs in the pudding and artwork helps a lot for sure. Or at least ideas.

Kellie:

I think that there is bit of a misconception sometimes with how idea people work. There is some truth to like, I spontaneously will burst something at someone surprisingly, but the amount of actual thinking and planning and prepping that I do before I talk to someone, that work is important to me because the impression that I want to give is this is a priority, you are important and exciting and I want to do right by our collaboration. I want to show you that I'm invested because I want you to be as invested as I am.

Jack:

I mean, that's the stuff that gets me excited. When like you're bouncing ideas off each other and everybody has an opinion on everything. I think the worst thing for any creative process is when you float an idea. everybody's like, oh yeah, that's dope. In your head, that might be what you think you want, but then the real product out of that kind of stuff is not gonna be as good as the people who are really developing something from start to finish, just like you prototype anything else.

Kellie:

Yeah, it's taking someone's excitement and rolling with momentum as opposed to stopping it with just saying it's good. I love that feeling, that rush that you get when someone else wants to go on that journey with you.

Jack (27:11.502)

It's a great feeling. It's like going on a vacation. You're like, oh, we're going to have some fun. Let's do it. You know, yeah.

Kellie:

Going forward, what are your hopes for the community, both as a player and as a business, not just in collaborations, but in general?

Jack:

Obviously, great question. Could spend an hour answering that question. I mean, I think as any business would say, I want to grow in the community and I want to get our shape out there as much as possible and push people outside of their comfort zone as far as shapes go. Also, another thing would be people being aware of us in general. This last year has been our biggest year by far. We've grown a lot more than we have before. And I don't want to spend a second sleeping and miss any of that. I want to give it every ounce of energy I have and really just figuring out how to put out more stuff. I think I'm really proud of everything we've done but I'm a perfectionist and I don't think we do enough. So I think like ironing out my relationship with the factory, figuring out how to get that right is a big thing. You have to learn how to not design. You have to learn how to design for the factory so that it's easy for them to use. And that's something we're still working on a lot too. So yeah, I mean, it's nothing really crazy special. I just want to make cool stuff and do it more, you know?

Kellie:

When you simplify it like that, it doesn't sound like a lot, but you're still that little kid who's in the invention fair. You're still pushing boundaries. You're still making people figure out new things because you're figuring out new things. And I love that that's still with you.

Jack:

I think the reason why I'm so obsessed with kendama and this is so hard to explain this to people who don't play, but you know, that feeling when you've wanted a trick for so long and you hit it, it's the same feeling that I get when I've been designing something for so long and it finally goes on the site and then I see it in person and people are playing it. It's the same type of addictive dopamine rush that I get from playing and it makes it easy to put in the work because when you see results like that, you know that you're doing not even just a good job, but you're doing your best. I think one of the things that I want to talk about all the time is that not everything we've done is amazing.

Jack (29:34.19)

And you have to be willing to live with that if you're going to do something that you feel proud of. And that's okay. I enjoy the opportunity to try and step out of my comfort zone and I can only work and get better. But I just don't think everyone should expect that everything they make is going to be a hit. Cause I think that's a really negative frame of mind.

Kellie:

Yeah, you're really right. I think that everything is a learning experience. Whether you consider it successful or not, they're all learning experiences that we grow from and take with us on our next journey, on our next adventure. And so the idea that we're not perfect and allowing that to

be true is really powerful. I want to end on that because I think it's the most beautiful thing ever. But will you please tell everybody where they can find you? Oh, oh, dang it. No, I lied. I lied.

Um, can I want to tease somehow this thing that we're doing.

Jakc:

Oh my God. Yeah. I was hoping, I was hoping we could do a little bit of that.

Kellie:

Yeah, I totally forgot about it, but I, the thing that we're making is something that I have been so excited to do for a really long time. The shape itself has been brewing in my mind. And I am so glad when we talked that you were like, yes. Can you talk a little bit about what was going through your brain when you're like trying to puzzle our new collab together?

Jack:

Well, first things first, we have a bar set, so it has to be crazier. I definitely wanted to switch it up, but in a way where we were doing what we really like to do, the two of us, which was get creative and really push the boundaries. And so when you pitched me this idea, I was like, this is the perfect way to do it. It's so creative. I think as far as how we can play with color.

Kellie:

It's going to be really, really exciting. So I'm really stoked on it. I know Luis is kind of this artistic genius. And so whenever we end up pitching you the first version of whatever it is we're working on, I know that between you and Luis, you're going to come back with something that's wicked, something that's just so occult that it marries our visions together in this awesome way. When you first see the draft, do you automatically think, oh, here's all the changes I can make? What's your process when you look at it?

Jack (32:02.56)

I like to be pretty critical, but I do start from a place of what I like. Cause if I'm not finding a lot of things I like, then a big change needs to happen. So the first thing is I look at it and I'm like, where can we go from here? That's not just this. So I'm usually just thinking like, kind of similar to what you said, what's great about both of our brands is we both have this really strong identity. And I think people feel it when they look at what we do. And so when I look at the first draft, am I feeling both these lanes? Am I seeing them intersect? Am I seeing that product reflect that? And the critical points are usually what could change to make those lanes intersect more and make the product even crazier. So yeah, that's usually the lens that I use when I'm looking at something like that.

Kellie:

How close have we gotten from your original like, okay, maybe this is what it's going to look like to the actual finished piece. Are we close?

Jack:

I don't, it's a tough question because the thing is, is I don't, I develop an emotional expectation and not a visual one. Oh, if that makes sense for me, I'm thinking about how it's going to make me feel and not really an exact image of what it's going to look like. Obviously with the goats, I was like, that's probably going to look like a goat, you know, but it exceeded my expectations visually because my expectations are much more based on emotions, but adding the pentagram and making the horns longer and a bunch of the changes that we made when we were revising that first one, all of those took it and just elevated it way past how cool I thought it was going to be. Cause I obviously want it to be scary.

But because it was the first thing we did together, I was like, how scary are they going to be willing to make it? Cause they like to make like cute little pigs and bunnies and stuff, you know?

Kellie:

Yeah. One of the things that people forget about us is they, we're morbid. We're a little bit darker than the cute things that are on the surface. Like the pig is dead. Yeah. The cross dies. Yeah. We sacrifice the pig to make the goat, you know, like, I so cool. The lore.

Kellie Kawahara-Niimi (34:20.59)

Yeah, like there's a story, you know, and that's, I think the fun thing about how our brand works, the face version of who we are is so different once you keep digging. And I think that occult kind of does that too. Luis's art style is so particular, right? It's a little bit graphic, it's a little bit street, and it's always a little bit spooky. But the more you dig, the more inventive everything is.

You're not just making pretty pictures. You have a vision. You're telling a story with each of your damas. And so I think that the intricacies of how your brain works really shows in the products that you make. I appreciate that. That's good because that is where it comes from. At least, you know, two brains, not just one. Yes, two brains. And the way that they smash together and how you influence each other is also...

part of that magic.

Jack:

It's my favorite part and I genuinely couldn't do it without him. And, you know, it's a new year. We're getting back together again and, you know, our brains are going to be smashing together again very soon.

Kellie:

I love it. Will you please tell people where they can find you and what? I think we're going to do the reveal of our Tamas the day after this airs.

Jack:

Perfect. Yeah. As far as where you can find us, we have Instagram. That's our main page. If you ever want to reach out to me, if you ever have any questions about who we are, what we do, what we make, what we sell, any of that stuff, shoot me a DM. I'm super responsive. I love

talking to everybody. Also, if you ever want to check out any of our products, occultkendamas.com. That's us. We've got a bunch of cool stuff out there. Yeah. If you ever have any questions about any of that or me or Luis or the business, just shoot me a DM on Instagram or check out our website. Woohoo! Woohoo!

transition music

Kellie:

Thanks again for joining us on this mystical journey through the world of kendama, collaborations and connections on Snarkle Talks. A huge thank you to our guest, Jack from Occult Kendamas for chatting with us today and sharing their journey and insights. See the bio on all the link things. Before we mysteriously vanish into thin air, here's a random tidbit about bats, Jack's favorite animal right now. Did you know?

Kellie Kawahara-Niimi (36:44.718)

that there is a species of bats that have evolved suction cups on their wings instead of thumbs. This unique adaptation allows them to cling to smooth surfaces and sleep upright as opposed to upside down. So, before you decide to grow suction cups, use those super handy dandy opposable thumbs to subscribe to the podcast, click the like button in all the places and text your friends to let them know that you just learned a way cool new animal fact on that one kendama podcast called Snarkle Talks. Until next time, I hope you make a ton of questionable decisions and we'll talk again soon. Bye.

Rae (37:34.862)

Snarkle Talks is brought to you by Kellie Kawahara Niimi, generally in charge of things and speaker of many words. Seth Niimi, producer and probably not imaginary co -host. And Ray Maxwell Ross, producer, sound editor, and goblin.

Jack:

Shout out to the audio editor.