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KEY:

Cannot decipher = (unclear + time code)

Sounds like = [s.l + time code]

I: = Interviewer

R: = Respondent

I: So, this is Nick Cass interviewing Mark Fairington by Skype. It's the 27th of April and this is the second interview in the series of artists' interviews. Mark is the commissioned artist for Cherryburn. So, can you just give us a quick description and overview of the projects at Cherryburn, if that's okay?

R: Well I proposed I would make a series of paintings that would go into the bedroom. That these would be miniature paintings and that they would be low consequence of making walks, doing a series of walks around Cherryburn and across Northumberland, kind of echoing the way Bewick used to gather information through walking. I kept two sketch books of the walks, which will go on show at Cherryburn, and again this reflects the way Bewick used to draw all the time, draw everything he saw. Part of the project is looking at different collections of his drawings in two different places, in the Great North Museum and the British Museum, and then making a series of landscape paintings that have come from those walks. I've made a mock-up of the wall of the bedroom in the studio and I've now worked out the installation plan for the whole show and there are five other paintings, which are figures of men from Bewicks' prints that are on plain ground. They're, kind of, isolated from the landscapes and from the backgrounds and they're men, kind of, hanging to trees or branches or ropes and things like that and those will be part of the display when it goes up, when it opens on the 2nd of June.

I: Okay. Actually that's an interesting, kind of, practical point because I did have something in my diary about it initially opening on the May bank holiday, but it is the beginning of June, is it?

R: Yes.

I: Yes.

R: Saturday. Yes.

I: **Yes.**

R: Six o'clock.

I: **On the 2nd of June.**

R: Yes.

I: **Okay.**

R: I mean it probably... I will be installing it on the 17th of May so it will actually be there for a couple of weeks but they're not going to open it to the public –

I: **Right.**

R: – till the opening.

I: **Right. So, that is quite interesting that there are paintings that have... Can you just, partly for, again this is correlating with my notes from last time, so, I've got a note that there are sixteen paintings –**

R: Yes, I think so. Sixteen. Yes.

I: **– but then they've –**

R: (Over-speaking 00:03:22). I haven't counted them actually.

[Laughter].

R: I think there are about twelve landscape paintings and five... So maybe there are seventeen altogether. I can check if you –

I: **No. I was just interested that you seemed to be indicating that there were two, sort of, slightly distinct bodies of work within those –**

R: Yes, I did.

I: **– paintings.**

R: The landscape paintings don't have any figures in them –

I: **Yes.**

R: – and I wanted the figures to come from Bewicks prints and I began to look at them and pick figures out. There was a line from a Tom Lubbock essay... I'm just trying to remember what it was. He says something like, '*Bewicks men are circumscribed by their small worlds*' and I really liked that, kind of, sense of the figure, kind of, isolated in this environment. The first one I did was The Hanging Man, which was an image that, right from the very start, has, kind of, gone through

the project and then had an echoing in The Hanging Swings that I would see dotted along the Tyne; rope swings that kids would make to swing into the river.

I: And there is... You have a painting of one those, haven't you? The Hanging Swing. I've just looked at it now.

R: The first painting I did from a Bewick print was The Hanging Man and then... They sort of came from that, really. I like the idea of the guys... There's a guy clinging onto his stilts and a man hanging onto his vaulting pole and then somewhere they're hanging onto branches of trees or the base of the tree. So they came together to make this little series of characters really, but they're the only people in the actual installations.

I: Yes. Yes. Are the things like the stilts and the vaulting pole, kind of, significant?

R: [Thinks 00:05:54 - 00:05:59]. I mean, I guess they kind of... I suppose... I don't know. I haven't really thought about it much, but there is something about this idea of masculinity where you're clinging onto something.

I: Right.

R: [Interference 00:06:15 - 00:06:19] that kind of defines (unclear 00:06:21) to yourself. And in some ways the stilts and the vaulting pole have a bit more, sort of, an obvious use or connection, but these ones of men hanging on to branches of trees, you know, which seem to be like trying to clutch the landscape to you in a way, you know. And the way I've painted them is, kind of picking up on something that I noticed with the Bewick prints, is that when you blow them up they become very expressionistic. You know, they're more like (unclear 00:06:56) prints or something like that so they have this sense of it kind of... I don't know, kind of, existential dread, you know [laughter] and I suppose I wanted... there's a sense in which the paintings touch on the idea of the romantic landscape to a sense, but I did want this sense of anxiety in there, somewhere. The relationship with the natural world isn't one of a kind of complete ease, you know. Wherever the anxiety comes from, (unclear 00:07:38) living off the land or trying to climb through a dry stone wall... I don't know, or avoiding pig shit, I don't know.

I: Yes. Yes.

R: It just, without being specific about it, I just wanted that sense in there, you know, and The Hanging Man image was really... I mean I did ask the people at Cherryburn if they felt that was okay to show that, you know, and it seemed fine. It wouldn't bother kids that much and we could have that in there.

I: Can you just say a little bit about whether the project has changed from the original proposal, because interestingly you started off by describing where it started. Has it changed at all?

R: I think it's become much more embedded in its relationship to the place and to Bewick. It's not an exhibition of paintings, it's kind of one piece of work that goes on a wall and what I've done, actually probably since I spoke to you last, is that

I've started looking at how the titles of the paintings are going to go on the grid of wood.

I: Oh, okay.

R: And that becomes like a road map with the titles like street names that take you around the paintings. So, there's this kind of interesting relationship with the whole thing being like a map in different ways.

I: That's really interesting. So, that sense of... Is it metaphor? Is it interpretation? That's definitely emerged... Actually, in the process of thinking about installation.

R: Yes, lots of things emerged that, you know, about how the placing of the work is dependent on the grid, the wall grid, and then how the titles then relate to the paintings comes from that as well. So, a lot of it comes from the space that it's in, what it looks like, but that then also affects the way it begins to mean different things. Each space, each niche has got one or two paintings in. One has got the titles of working and then all the titles of the paintings, kind of, run around them in this, sort of, series of pathways, really.

I: Okay. Has any of that, sort of, been...? What around that change and development has been unexpected, if anything? Has there been anything that's just taken you aback or been surprising?

R: I think what I've enjoyed about it is allowing the idea that this is where it's going to go and I want it to really work in that space, allowing that to influence the way I think about things like the framing, the placing of the work, the titles of the work. The titles are very direct. They're just where these places are.

I: Yes.

R: So, things like that have... I've enjoyed allowing that to happen and I think making the mock-up in the studio has made me really feel confident about what it's going to look like. I'm really pleased with the way it's worked out, actually. In terms of developing certain ways of painting and also the way in which images can cross different sorts of areas of meaning. Yes, I think it's... The work also has, sort of, tapped into my own family and my own history, so there is that part of it as well and I'm quite interested in the way images which... How the public... There's a sense in which the landscapes that people recognise, the landscapes that people might have experienced themselves, but they also have this other sense of meaning which is about how they connect my life and my family and in a way I think Bewick did that very strongly in his (unclear 00:13:03) engravings.

You get this strong sense of his life wrapped into them in a way even though they're scenes that everyone kind of experienced or kind of known and I suppose it's that relationship between the very, kind of, individual and personal meaning and the kind of communal, collective meaning and how those can work together. So, something that's very personal and specific can actually take on a meaning for a lot of different people. I mean you see it all the time in the way TV and radio works but I think it's interesting to think of it in terms of images.

I: Yes. Definitely. Could you just say that... I was quite interested in that sense of it's having personal meaning for you and your family, do you mind saying a little bit about what that is, what those connections are.

R: Well, my brother lives in Kelso, so one of the scenes is the river near where he lives but my mother died just after the project started so one of the walks we did was to take her ashes up to Weetwood Moor and scatter them on these prehistoric stone carvings. So, one of the paintings is of Weetwood Moor, of that journey and where we scattered them is where we scattered my dad's ashes five years' previously –

I: Oh, really.

R: – and one of the paintings is actually from a photograph I took after we had done that. The PWF in Happy Valley, after we had scattered my dad's ashes, I was walking down through and I went out to the middle of the river and took this photograph thinking that I'd really like to make this into a painting, but never really worked out how to do it. So, when I started this project, I looked at that photograph again, thought about the Bewicks idea of carving things onto rocks, words and things onto rocks that people would just see when they're walking, and I thought, 'Oh I'll just carve his initials onto the rock in the foreground.' So that's what that is.

I: That is a beautiful painting and funnily I was looking at it earlier and I hadn't spotted the initials and I can see them now.

R: Yes. So that's what that is and then the other one that's really connected strongly is the Border Park Services. That was a... I actually drove past that on the way to doing a walk and I remembered it because when the kids were three months old we drove up to Scotland to visit my brother in this little car, we had just got past Newcastle and the petrol gauge read red.

I: Oh no.

R: We're on this road, the A68, which is really (interference 00:16:18 - 00:16:20) and bleak (unclear 00:16:23) and in the distance we saw this petrol station, drove into it and that's what it looked like. It was completely derelict so when I went past it again I thought I really want to make a painting of that because it's such a kind of strange place. It's been derelict for ten years and we did manage to get petrol over the border but it's just that kind of memory of this idea of running out of petrol on that road, two kids asleep in the back, it was quite horrible.

I: [Laughter]. I've just got the Weetwood Moor painting and it's beautiful and it's interesting that now I know more about it, it does change your interpretation of it because in some ways, and I mean this in a really positive way, it's kind of quite nondescript in some ways.

R: Yes. Exactly. It is. It's just funny kind of hill just outside Wooler, but my dad used to go up walking there all the time, you know, a place he would go to quite regularly.

- I: Yes. It's interesting, because I live in Saddleworth and that field, that landscape, feels very familiar to me. And, you know, spending time in it, it becomes more and more important, the landscape, in terms of how I feel about where I live. So to me, that's a very beautiful painting because it's, kind of, both a specific landscape and a general one, which goes back to your point about personal and collective.**
- R: Yes. I mean, I think the one painting that's the, kind of... in the series which is a sort of a tourist one is the waterfall, and I wanted one that was a bit like that, you know, that's the kind of place that all the guide books direct you to. You know, you've got to go to [S.I High Tided Linn 00:18:26], it's this amazing waterfall, you know. So I sort of did that as a kind of... Because, I wanted to... I mean like I was saying last time we spoke, I wanted the series to be different reflections on the idea of landscape or a kind of conversation around the idea of landscape with different relationships to the history of landscape images and –
- I: That's interesting because I was trying to think about a question, given that all of these questions are on your creative practice, I was very curious about that idea of what it means to you to make a painting. Because you've said a couple of times now, "Oh I want to make a painting of that" –**
- R: Yes.
- I: – and there's just something in that response. It seems quite a defined response and I was just very curious about that idea, about that need or what that decision is based around somehow. If that makes sense as a question.**
- R: Yes. I mean I think... I suppose I often talk about painting as a kind of storytelling in which you kind of, when you start you don't know what the end story's going to look like as a whole thing. So, painting is a way of thinking about something and a way of thinking about your relationship to it and what that thing means to you. And it is the time that it gives you to do that, which... And it's an interesting relationship using photographs as source images because what I'd realised is the photographs, they give you a lot of things but they don't give you what the painting gives you at the end. You know, it's like something happens which is really significant and I suppose... Yes, I mean it is, you know, I guess I go round looking for possible paintings. See something. The photograph is like grabbing it and then there's sometime where I kind of think about whether it would work as a painting and then once that process has started it begins to change the image and what my relationship to it is. I think it's [thinks 00:21:21 - 00:21:26] –
- I: Yes. No, that's a –**
- R: There's also something about the way, in order to make the paintings, well the paintings that I make, you have to focus on every little detail of the surface. So every little bit becomes part of the story however irrelevant or insignificant it may seem, in terms of the whole image. You have to, kind of, consider every little bit but sure, you know, it's... I mean I'm interested in that idea of the animated surface, which invites you to focus your eye on every little bit of it. You know what

I mean. I think in a way that maybe connects to a visual anxiety. It's a kind of, in its extreme form you get artist like the American, Ivan Albright, who would paint one square inch a week, you know, his paintings are so... the surfaces are so bristling with detail it's almost impossible to see the image but yes I think that process of... I suppose I'm saying that painting's a way of thinking about something rather than about making something.

I: Yes. Yes.

R: Although you are making something at the same time.

I: Yes, yes. Yes. No. But that's really fascinating and I would be in danger of wanting to pursue just that thinking a bit more if, you know, but I guess that those questions really do cover a lot about the creative practice and around the way that the work's developed. You've already talked, because there is a question around how the site or narrative has affected your thinking but I think you've described that already in a sense quite a lot. So, I wonder whether it's just worth moving on to the commissioning process and this is just to begin to think about the frameworks of the way that the projects have been delivered. So I guess, the requirements of the commissioner, has that affected the development of your thinking or the work? I guess that's either to do with Cherryburn or to do with the brief that the mapping project set in the first place.

R: But the mapping project has meant that I've made the process more visible than I would do normally through the website and also being ready to talk to people about the making of the work and the process, which isn't something that necessarily happens normally. In terms of Cherryburn, I don't think they made any demands of me particularly. In a way, I think part of the... you know I don't think they really knew what they were going to get in that they haven't had a long experience of working with artists so it was very much an experimental thing. But having said that they've all been very positive about the project and coming down to the studio and seeing the work, talking to me about the place and just being very open about the whole thing. The kind of demands of Cherryburn are really demands I've put on it –

I: Okay.

R: – in terms of wanting it to look like it is made to be there and wanting it to be something that the general public or the people that go and visit Cherryburn will feel that it's something that they can engage with. You know, that it's not something that... they might find it surprising. They're not going to find it challenging in that is it artwork and what's the point of it being here. I didn't really want... I wanted it to be something where they go into the room they really feel it's nice to be there and... So, the visit to Cherryburn has been really useful in terms of getting a sense of the place and letting people see it, you know. But I think the other thing that I talked about last time we spoke was this (unclear 00:26:21 - 00:26:29) that people have.

I: Can you just say that again? Skype just glitched out there a sec.

R: They have a very benign view of Bewick, he's seen to be a good thing, a good man and a good thing and people like talking about him. They like knowing about him, they like the association of the area and I think that's quite an important thing. Certainly talking to Louise, last week, because we went on a walk together, the relationship between English Heritage sites and the local population is a really critical thing for them and it's something that they've had, kind of, difficulties within some places more than others. So, I think that sense that whatever happens at Cherryburn and whatever Cherryburn generates is going to meet with local approval. I mean I really only found that out after all the work had been made so it didn't impact on it but I think... And I suppose making myself up to doing talks to local people, talk to the volunteers, all that stuff I mean it's part [s.l and parcel of it 00:27:58]. But I think I've had a great map freedom to make the work that I wanted to make without... It would be interesting to, at the end of the project, work out why that happened because I don't think it always happens –

I: **No.**

R: – but I think it's a very kind of... It's a good way for those things to work.

I: **Do you think it's something to do with the right, and I don't know what I mean by right here, but the right place with the right artist?**

R: Yes. I think so. Yes. That probably is a very positive reflection on the process of choosing the artist and... I mean I don't know what it would be like if it was the wrong artist, I don't know what would happen. I'm trying to imagine what the wrong artist would be, you know, what they might do.

I: **Yes. Yes. I mean there are examples of things going wrong or being very challenging. I think my research into Charlotte Cory's exhibition at the Bronte Parsonage, for example, that was deeply unpopular both amongst some trustees and the general visitors. There's another one, another example, of an artist called Zandra Ahl who did a commission for, and I forget which Scandinavian country it is now, but it was a National Museum, and they commissioned her to do work, they literally pulled it about two days after she had installed it because it was too politically critical of the structure of the museum. So, there are examples of it, kind of, going wrong in that sense.**

R: I know some of the Richard Serra public pieces have had quite a hostile response to them. The thing is once they're in place, you can't get rid of them.

I: **Yes, yes. So, I do think, you know, certainly in terms of this research project that that's really important to try and get a sense of that.**

R: I think it's interesting isn't it because it seems part of the project, although it's the idea of mapping the public response to the works, but it is also very much part of beginning to build something that can be developed and added to, you know. There's a sense that they kind of work well and it seemed to work well, mapping, is really important.

- I: **Yes. Yes. I think so. I think so. Just moving on slightly, just thinking about the installation and again we've sort of talked on this and you've mentioned a little bit about labelling and trying to think through, is there anything that you're uncertain about in terms of the installation or that you're particularly enthusiastic about?**
- R: What I like is the way we basically come up with the idea that all the information signage will go in the museum. And then once people go into the cottage it'll just be the installation that will work without any other bits of explanation or signage. We've tried to be... We've looked at the way the signage is going to go in in the museum, tried to work out a way in which you can see what it is, you can read it easily and it doesn't get in the way of also looking at all the other stuff, which is about Bewick, you know. So, hopefully, that will work and there are additional links in terms of the colour and the background of the signs that link them to the wall in the bedroom. It's the same colour. So, yes, I think I chose a typeface that would, kind of, connect to the books, well the lettering in the bedroom is done in vinyl lettering that I've actually stuck to these little wooden panels so I can just go in and screw them directly to the wall.
- I: **Okay.**
- R: Put the lettering on the wall in the bedroom, which I think would have been a bit awkward. So, they're now ready just to go and then there's going to be, on the white wall of the corridor, there's going to be the title of the project Walking, Looking and Telling Tales. It's in bigger black lettering right across the front and you can see that from the door of the museum as you look out going down over towards the bedroom, you can see the title. It will kind of invite you in to it.
- I: **Okay. That's interesting. And just to sort of push that thinking a little bit more, given the heritage context, has that required slightly different thinking or is that the sort of thinking that you would do anyway, in terms of any other exhibition, space, project?**
- R: Yes. I mean when I did the [S.I Horniman 00:34:34] show, it was split into different sections and I wanted the text to go on the wall, not to be about the paintings, but to be a story that connected to the paintings. With this one, I wanted it to be fairly straightforward and direct. I didn't want it to go into any kind of too much depth. The paintings have come from this, this, this and this. So, it's sort of thinking that the audience going in there will not necessarily be an audience that's used to looking at art, particularly. Again, I've kind of brought out stories through the text about Bewicks drawings, there are little stories and anecdotes from his autobiography and the people talking about him. In the paintings one, there are stories, like the stories I told to you earlier on, in the text then... Because in a way I think, you know, the paintings can just be looked at in a very simply and very direct way. I don't think they necessarily need much more so we kept the text to a minimum but it gives people the information they need to know.
- I: **Yes. Okay. I suppose thinking about the... oh no you've come back. You just froze for a moment. I think with, again we've touched on this a little bit but it's good to perhaps draw attention to this sense of heritage specifically, and we talked a lot about that in the first interview and you sort of hinted at it in**

terms of your relationship to the landscape and the place, but have you thought about heritage as a concept or, you know, changed at all? How are you thinking about heritage and what that means now?

R: [Thinks 00:37:10 - 00:37:22] I wouldn't say my ideas about it have changed hugely. I think... I mean one of the things we talked about last time, the (unclear 00:37:42). was this idea I think that painting can kind of function as a place where different ideas about landscape and the history of landscape and heritage can, kind of, come together, can exist so that people can make the connection with those ideas that they want to from the paintings. And it's not something I really kind of dug into very deeply but I think it's interesting. I think it's because, when you look at a painting you automatically connect it to a history, a history of images and I think, you know... When I think about English heritage I think about the history of images of the English landscape and, well not just English landscape actually, I think about, you know, (unclear 00:38:45) images of London and things like that, they impact on the way you experience those things now, I think, inevitably. So, I suppose [thinks 00:38:56 - 00:39:04] that's something that, I think, my work deals with quite directly and the way they're framed. I think with some of the paintings makes it very difficult to say, 'This was made in 2018' and it could have been made a hundred years ago or two hundred years ago and I like that, without them being fake old paintings, you know.

I: **Yes.**

R: Which is a horrible idea.

I: **[Laughter]. I think the sense of time is a really interesting one because of course that for me, the sense of what heritage sites attempt to do and museums, there is this need to fix and preserve and preventing decay. You know, the language of conservation and even the idea of heritage of fixing things that exist slightly outside time, you know is quite interesting. I think, where, and again it's this language of contemporary art and something that is somehow slightly different from that and to me there's a temporal thing going on both in the language that describes different objects and in the sense of the, kind of, experiences that are hinted at somehow.**

R: I think what you find in heritage sites is, which it reminds me a bit of Hilary Mantel Reith Lectures, is this strange mixture of things that are actual facts and objects that existed and then sort of inventions and stories that are, kind of, built around them. I mean like the wall at Cherryburn, the wall I'm going to hang the paintings on at Cherryburn wouldn't have existed when I did them it was put there because the bedroom was inaccessible, you know. So, I think the idea of heritage necessarily being a collection of fictions, which sort of creates some sense of reality, I think, is quite interesting, you know.

I: **Yes. Yes.**

R: I mean Hilary Mantel is very interested in talking about the relationship between historical fiction and history and the importance of historical fiction and picking up the things that history couldn't do. And I thought that was... I suppose that idea of storytelling is important in terms of heritage, in terms of how people are allowed to

imagine it and I guess they're those kind of stories are always being retold and reimagined or reinvented, you know, that's not a fixed thing, that's a kind of moving thing that changes all the time.

I: Yes. Yes. I remember reading, I forget which journalist it was now, who was reviewing another version of Jane Eyre, I think it was the 2011 version of the new film, and he said, "Why do we need another? Why do we need another version of Jane Eyre?" and actually it was a really positive..., you know, he responded in a very positive way. He said, 'We need to keep retelling these stories because our reactions to them are very different because our world changes.' And I thought that was a really interesting sort of perspective and I know that Andrea Arnold's version of Wuthering Heights fundamentally shifted my understanding of what that novel is. So I think that constant retelling of stories, it very definitely does something different each time.

R: Yes.

I: I just want to pick up on one thing, and we're probably slightly out of sync with the questions, but we did talk a little bit last time and I would like to capture some of that again. The sense of the framing, there was a practical aspect of them needing to be framed, I think, but you know you did describe your thinking around the frames and what those did, could you say a little bit about that?

R: Yes. Well when I initially started working on the project I didn't think the works would need framing and I made them on panels that could go practically well on the wall without framing, I think the more I visited the more it became obvious that they needed to be framed, just to protect them. Because it's an un-inviolated space, even though they can be securely fitted to the wall, I thought that... I just had to... You know on a practical level they had to have some kind of protection. Then I went through all kinds of different possibilities, you know, putting glass over the whole (unclear 00:45:04), glass underneath, Perspex over the whole wall you know all kinds of things and in the end I think probably the simplest ways are probably the best and so I thought okay let's just get them framed really well. So I went to Derbyshire's... I've just got to take this phone call, Nick.

[Respondent takes phone call 00:45:26 - 00:45:31]

I: So framing...

R: Yes, so I went to Derbyshire's with the painting and I spoke to the owner about what I wanted, you know, and I wanted something so it didn't look like a framed painting it looked like an object with an image as part of it. I wanted... So the wood is the same colour as the nearer end of the edges and panel and they're quite deep, they're quite solid so when they're installed they'll be kind of flush with the batons that make the [s.l niches 00:46:06].

I: Oh, okay.

R: Yes. And when I got the first one back I was really pleased with it. It looks absolutely gorgeous.

I: Brilliant.

R: Really and it's I don't know it's sort of... Yes, I think they'll work really well.

I: Right. Yes. Because I think we talked a little bit about that in terms of the requirements of the commission, the requirements of the space affecting kind of your thinking, so that's really interesting. I suppose the last question, really is around, what we're thinking of in terms of audiencing. And again it might be just about drawing attention to a couple of things you've mentioned already but it's, I suppose, how has this process so far affected how you think about how people engage with your work? And actually maybe even how people engage with Cherryburn, but... Visitor engagement really.

R: I think right from the beginning I've thought about how can we make this visible to the public or the visitors so that all aspects of the making of the work and the thinking about it and the installation are there for people to, kind of, see and understand. And that's a question of knowing how much information to give out and how much information you don't want to give out, you know, don't want to overload people with stuff but you want to give people enough. I mean, I haven't had any direct contact with people who you could describe as the visitors, you know, in terms of the work that will happen once it goes up but we are doing one day, we're doing the walk one day. So, that will be one weekend, which is... On the Saturday evening it will be a talk by me and on the Sunday will be the walk the next day so the people will be able to get some sense of what the work is and its relationship to and the idea of walking and being in the landscape. I think the most important thing in terms of this [s.l literary 00:49:06] experience would be the volunteers and the people that work there.

I have noticed that everyone that goes in they go up to them and talk to them directly, right from the very beginning. You know, it's quite interesting, partly because it's such a small venue and everyone comes through the same door and there aren't, well when I've been there, there aren't crowds of people coming in so the volunteers are able to talk to people individually. So the talk that I do with the volunteers on the night of the 17th, I think, will be quite an important one but they get the information they can then use.

I: Yes. Yes. And is that your sort of briefing talk to them about the exhibition and about –?

R: Yes. Yes.

I: Yes.

R: Although there was quite a funny conversation they had in the studio –

I: Oh, right.

R: – about whether it should be an obligation for volunteers to come to the talk or not. You know, that was quite funny. The sort of different thoughts about that.

I: And was there any conclusion?

R: Well Louise was really quite firm that they should come. You know, you can't just volunteer for something and think, 'Oh that's it I've volunteered.' You've actually got to engage with the things that are going on.

I: Right. That's interesting.

R: We'll see.

I: That's really interesting. Because I do think that's key. And I suppose, do you think that...? I suppose, I know one of the first questions we asked, which I think everybody thought was a difficult one, about success and what does success look like in this project. But it seems to me, at Cherryburn, to be a kind of connection between the scale of the site, the scale of your paintings, the intimacy and the scale of Bewicks work; there's something that's sort of very concentrated and rich.

R: Yes, I hope so. Yes. I mean I would be really interested to see what the impact is. What people get from it, actually. It's always something that is part of the way you think about exhibitions really, but I don't think I've been involved in a project where it's been so much central to the whole process of making the work and the installation and that I think, you know, it will be really interesting to see what comes from that.

I: You mean the visitors being so central to the thinking?

R: Yes. Well, the idea of really understanding what the impact is or monitoring it. I mean when I do shows in my gallery in Germany, that's irrelevant, it's whether he sells the work or not, you know. That's all that matters.

I: Yes.

R: He doesn't care if no one visits the show.

I: No, and it's interesting because certainly I think coming from a museum studies perspective, and I'm reading Jo Morra's book on the Freud Museum at the moment, and that's, in terms of what she's trying to do, that is very appropriately, kind of, art historical/Freudian analysis of what that space is. Whereas for me I can't really think about what the Freud Museum does without thinking the visitor has to be in there somewhere, you know, but actually the whole rhetoric around all of these heritage projects, including the Freud Museums exhibition programme, is all about trying to affect the way the visitors understand that place. So to me, I think our historical analysis is useful but interestingly I'm also not only interested in the visitor response from a social scientist perspective. I mean my, I suppose, particular interest is in the complexity where I don't think you can leave out the visitor but also I don't think that the visitor is the only way to think about impact because of course it has an impact on you, the project. It has an

impact on the site and the staff and you know the discourse of heritage generally, you know...

R: It is an odd thing, Impact. I often think when people think about impact you can imagine Picasso and Braque doing their little cubist painting and then think someone coming out and saying, 'What's the impact of that going to be?' you know.

I: **Yes. [Laughter]. No, definitely. Definitely.**

R: But I think if artists can engage seriously with the idea of working with heritage properties and things like that I think it's really important that that's looked at, you know.

I: **Yes, yes. No. I don't disagree. I think, just in terms of the interview then and actually we have covered everything we needed to really, so I suppose is there anything else that comes to mind that you think is important to have on record at this stage?**

R: Sorry, there was a bit of a glitch there.

I: **Okay. I was just saying, really in that sense we've sort of finished the sense of the interview proper and I suppose I just wanted to know whether there was anything else that was on your mind that you thought ought to be on record at this stage or have we sort of covered things really. It's a "Are there any other comments" kind of question.**

R: Yes. [Thinks 00:55:52 - 00:56:00]. I don't know. I mean I'd be interested to see if there is any coverage of any of the things within the art press. Because I've often seen, you know, big shows are done with museums, well the Natural History Museum and the Holden Museum get a lot of press coverage but actually very little within the art press, you know. It's like, there's a sort of... There's this strange feeling that somehow that's not where the serious stuff is being done or something. I don't know but it would be interesting to see if you manage to get over that kind of gap.

I: **I totally... That's really really interesting point and I'm really glad you've raised it because I'm interested in that question as well. You know, Art Monthly, Frieze, there are very very few serious, kind of critical analysis of these types of projects in a way that you would get of a gallery show. And I do wonder whether it is simply just the machinery of the art press hasn't caught up or whether it's, as you say, something about perception, because some major exhibitions have happened in the last ten years in heritage sites and there are so few examples of any analysis I think.**

R: Yes. I mean I think with magazines like Frieze I would have thought they're, kind of, totally wrapped up with the commercial art world, every other page is an advert so they would have to reflect that that would then be reflected in their content I would have thought.

I: Yes. I'm more surprised that there isn't more in maybe Art Monthly or something like that.

R: Yes.

I: You know, but... No, that's an interesting point. I guess we did have something in... What was it? We had a first piece of coverage around the mapping project, I forget which kind of glossy sort of magazine it was now, but it raised some interesting questions, but also again, we thought it had some problematic views about what *it* thought we were trying to do. I forget now. I mean is there anywhere that you think there ought to be...? Where would you think? Do you agree about Art Monthly? Is there anywhere else that this ought to appear do you think?

R: I would probably need to have a think about that actually. I mean there's the whole way in which research is made visible and reviewed. I think there's lots of different avenues for that and then through... I think there is a conference, isn't there, attached to it.

I: Yes. Yes. Yes.

R: You know, I think... But I'd be interested to talk about... I mean I'd be interested in... You know after I had the conversation with you I thought it would be great to have Nick doing a conversation with the artists as a sort of public event.

I: Yes. Yes.

R: Because I think there's something about the way you... the questions that you ask and the way you kind of dig into them that people would find really interesting. You know and so I don't know, I mean I think maybe... We've got a meeting with [S.I Andrew 01:00:16] next week or on the 11th –

I: Yes.

R: – which would be interesting to talk a bit more about that.

I: Yes. Yes. I know Andrew's keen for something like that and I know that certainly... I guess some of my colleagues at the University of Leeds are very interested in this project because of the way it relates to our school's broader research if you like. So, I think there are definitely opportunities to think about that. Are you coming to the opening at –

R: Gibside.

I: – Gibside on the 11th?

R: Yes, I am. Yes.

I: Right.

R: I'm coming up for the meeting then I'll stay over and then go back the next day.

I: Yes. Yes. I think I'm coming back on, you know after the opening but I'm definitely going to come up for the day, so it would be useful to talk about that.

R: Yes. Yes.

I: Okay. Yes so that's definitely worth thinking about. So thanks very much and I really appreciate the round two.

R: That's all right.

I: You know and I think we've got some really good things to think about.

[End of Recording]