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KEY:

Cannot decipher = (unclear + time code)

Sounds like = [s.l + time code]

I: = Interviewer

R: = Respondent.

I: (Unclear 0:00:00.5) Royal College of Art, this is interview (unclear 0:00:06.7) final interview. We're sort of, with having just done the interview with Fiona, we've been very general in as such as we haven't got, necessarily specific questions. So, that has worked more as a conversation. We did remind ourselves of the sort of full, broad themes that we were sort of have asked questions about and sort of kept returning to those as we went through. So, one of those was around heritage understanding. There was the commissioning, the process as a whole. There was your creative practice and then there was a set of audiencing and that idea about how we think about how audiences engage with your work at the site. So, those are the sort of four things. And it'd be worth starting in the same place really, I think, which is with creative practice and, are they going to start with the (unclear 0:01:12.6) process?

I: No, I think we started with creative practice or lessons learnt.

I: Yes. That's right. So, there were two senses of thinking about creative practice was how you'd kind of responded specifically to the site and then maybe some broader thinking about where your practice is now and the influence of the project on the thinking creatively. That's just a very general start.

I: Let's start with something specific like has the commission at the birthplace, Thomas Booth's [Bewick's] birthplace, had an impact, isn't it, impact on your creative practice?

R: Yes. I mean, I think it's had a very specific interest in practice in two particular ways actually. The first one is it opened up a subject area for me in terms of the paintings that I make which I'd contemplated before but I hadn't kind of gone into it and that's looking at landscape. And landscape in relation to the

history of landscape images, how they impact on the way landscape's experienced and perceived now and going onto one of your other subjects, how they kind of reflect a sense of heritage, ownership in terms of a kind of general sense of ownership of lands here, land, rather than specific people who own it. And it's made me begin to think about how that can be pointed at other areas of the country. I think in a broader way, it's affected me in terms of a project I'm working on at the moment with the Museum of London in the sense that it was interesting seeing different artists coming into different sites and reacting to them in very different ways, and how that was kind of managed under the kind of banner of this project, research project.

So, the project I'm doing with the Museum of London, I'm managing the project but I'm not actually doing any work. I'm not doing any paintings for it. It's a completely different kind of thing. So, and it's interesting, it's been interesting for me to do that. We're writing an application to the Wellcome Trust at the moment for a project with, working with Facelab and Liverpool John Moores University and the Centre for Human Bioarchaeology at the Museum of London and we'll be making, the plan is to make three digital portraits of three people that are in the skeletons collection that will look like painted portraits from the year 1800.

I: Interesting.

R: So, but that's just, before, I probably would never have kind of thought of doing that or taking that role in something that I've kind of initiated and that's been interesting.

I: That's brilliant.

I: And what about, did anything happen with the Wordsworth Trust?

R: Nothing happened with the Wordsworth Trust and in a way, I don't think anything needs to. My plan is to do the work, just do the work really and I was effectively looking for a place to stay up there where I could work and Chris offered me his house to do it.

I: I see, okay.

R: So, my plan is to start off by making a series of paintings that will develop the ideas that started with the Cherryburn work and have continued in more recent paintings, developed those, and maybe at that, some future point, if there's funding needed, think about applying. But I just want to make the work really and I think, I don't the funding to do it, I can do it.

I: When are you going, when are you doing?

R: Well I'm going up in July. And the plan is to make, well last year, I took photographs that generated four paintings from Northumberland which in some senses connect very strongly to the Cherryburn stuff. This is, will be to do the same kind of thing, four paintings. But the scale will increase. There'll be this kind of size with the same amount of detail really. So, I'm still interested in talking to you, Judith, about finding a venue at some point. But the Wordsworth Trust, I don't

think they really saw what the connection to them might be or they didn't really kind of twig it. I got more of a sense of possibilities with Cathy Newbery and the different research projects that are going in the Lake District that I think later on, it might be worth hooking up and building something through them.

I: Can I just partly just for clarity, what is it about the Lake District that interests you?

R: Well it started when I gave a presentation about Cherryburn at this conference that was organised, I think it was in Manchester, and I was talking Cathy Newbery afterwards and I was just talking about the way that historical images of the landscape impact on people's perception of the place and she said, "It's really funny, one of the biggest criticisms we get is that the Lake District isn't like the paintings." And I think that's really weird. And then I began to look more into how it become this focus of artists' attention in the early 19th century and that a lot of people had mapped the walks, particularly in terms of Turner is that you've got all these sketchbooks of all the walks he did and I began to get interested in some ways connecting to the Bewick project with the relationship between drawings and paintings they've done on site.

I mean, there's more Turner than anyone else but nonetheless, and then what happens to them when they become the paintings which become these kind of romanticised sort of images that take on the kind of history and landscape from Europe and what the relationship between the two things are. I mean, Turner's drawings are kind of really, they've got this, they're curiously precise and detailed and kind of elegant and refined and the paintings become these kind of turbulence of the...

I: Yes. Although his sky sketchbooks are very different, right.

R: Yes, they are, yes. I mean, I suppose that was the starting point, I thought, good, I'd really like to kind of just investigate that in relation to going up there and now and making the paintings.

I: But there's a link there to Sean Scully as well, isn't there, with (unclear 0:09:45.1). Shall we ask that now?

I: Yes.

I: Partly because I went to see Sean Scully's work at the National Gallery yesterday because he's done some work in response to the Turner painting and some of the work in there are his responses to Van Gogh, Van Gogh chair. So, and so Judith and I were just talking earlier on and we were curious about what you thought of Sean Scully's work and perhaps thought about his responses. Have you seen it yet?

R: I haven't seen it.

I: Right okay. (Unclear 0:10:17.2).

R: My sense of Sean Scully is hugely influenced by the programme that was on telly [laughter].

I: **I've not seen it.**

I: **He's not seen it.**

I: **(Unclear 0:10:28.6) I need to watch it.**

I: **He was in a perfect stage of innocence.**

R: So, but I actually, I like his work actually. I don't know about the new stuff and my liking of his work hasn't been kind of affected by the fact that he thinks he should be more famous than the T, so whatever it is he said, I don't know. But I mean, but I think in the kind of broader sense of practicing painters now, I think that sense of almost perpetually connecting to the history of painting is something that happens all the time. I mean, you see it in the new Gagosian show that they've just put on, the Rembrandt self-portrait.

I: **I'd forgotten, yes.**

R: They've got the Rembrandt self-portrait, the famous last self-portrait.

I: **The (unclear 0:11:20.9)?**

I: **Yes. And they've got different artists from their stable to respond to it in different ways.**

R: Right. And that's really interesting because I did approach, I hadn't gone with you in my mind necessarily but as soon as I kind of saw it, I was thinking about our conversations about painting and heritage and the heritage of painting and all those kind of real complex relationships, and in a way that show at the National was really interesting because they've got the Turner painting, they've got the three paintings he's done in response to Van Gogh's chair and his responses to [s.l C Star 0:12:00.1], I think it's called. So, it's an interesting—

I: **What did you think of them?**

R: Well I like his painting. I had not seen the TV programme but I was slightly troubled by the interpretation of the film which was a bit ridiculously mythologizing the heroic artist's painting in the studio which I had a problem with.

I: **If you already get some of his (unclear 0:12:29.6).**

R: So, but I liked the exhibition and I liked the sense of artists engaging with other artists, just finding it interesting. But yes, but I like his work generally. I didn't think this show helped me think any more about his work than I did before and I don't know.

I: **This is obviously another conversation (unclear 0:13:03.9) he probably built a whole new conference among (unclear 0:13:09.9) but it occurs to me, it's**

not what, when you said about [s.I jets 0:13:17.4], and I think he's not Damien Hirst, that sort of thing about the status of providing the work. Which one is it? The status or the work? I mean, I really like Sean Scully, I think he's a really great painter. Those paintings, I love those paintings.

R: I mean, what you're talking about becomes difficult when you hear the people that are around him talking about it. Gallery representations and things.

I: **Yes, it's just dreadful.**

R: You wouldn't be saying that about any other artist, just because he makes you so much money then that becomes a bit galling really.

I: **Yes, that bit was sad. But then we don't know what (unclear 0:14:01.4) was like, personality.**

I: **His character—**

I: **(Unclear 0:14:08.5) or any of—**

R: No, well I suppose there are a couple of things that is the sense of artist engagement with other artists to bring it back to what we were talking, and I think that is fascinating, this relationship of you as a painter looking at other painters, then connecting to, I think, with the latest (unclear 0:14:39.3) which relates to what Fiona was talking about, the sense of landscape.

I: **Yes, she was, similar things.**

R: How we understand place and part of how we understand place is how we look at images of it. Of course, the Lake District has become a World Heritage site which has the real possibility to cause it problems in the way that it will fix it. Again, in a way that relates to what Fiona was saying about (unclear 0:15:08.5) landscape.

I: **(Unclear 0:15:09.8) really interesting. So, do you feel that, can I just sort of (unclear 0:15:16.4) to make it explicit to me is whether working at Cherryburn really did have, it really did put your practice into a different sort of mindset of subject matter rather than—**

R: Yes, it did, yes.

I: **Of subject matter. Could you, yes, landscapes weren't featuring heavily in your work.**

R: They weren't at all really, no.

I: **No.**

R: But I think there's always, at any point during your working life, there's what you're doing at the moment but there's always a whole lot of these other little things that are kind of just there, kind of niggling away and then I think it's just a point where suddenly, I mean, if I hadn't got the commission, I probably wouldn't be doing

them now. I could say that probably in all honesty. But I mean, just in addition to the Lake District stuff, I've been travelling down to Shoreham quite a lot, doing a lot of walks around there and a lot of photographs. I'm kind of waiting for this Samuel Palmer moment to sort of happen and it'll happen because again, it's just this kind of strange moment.

This was a place we used to, already went to quite a lot with the kids for walks. Suddenly realised this was the place where he made these paintings that were quite extraordinary in relation to everything else he did from the rest of his life. And I just think it's a kind of, it's a romantic idea in a way but I think it's still something that in a way, those things just sort of fuel something. They generate something. And I suppose, thinking in terms of the kind of, I suppose that sense of a sort of an emotional relationship to a sense of place is something that I kind of would like to kind of hang on to and cultivate in the face of all the things that you're talking about, Nick, the kind of problems everyone's facing in terms of the landscape. Some idea that actually this, probably a sense of a nostalgia. It has a value. It's not something that needs to be kind of continually treated with a sense of scepticism. Something there that actually is why people go to places and is to do with what they get out of it.

And I suppose, it's, in the Bewick, in the Cherryburn paintings, it was this idea of having glimpses of that in some of the images which are then, and then you have other images next to it which is, this is what it is now. That idea that there were images in that series that didn't reach back to some sense of the nostalgic past was quite important.

I: Is that your nostalgia for places you've been to because you talk a lot about having been to places before and then (unclear 0:18:58.6).

R: Yes. I think it's how things are reimagined actually. I don't think it's to do with, and I suppose this is something that I find interesting in the process of making the work is you go out, I go out, take lots of photographs. When I get all the photographs, at that point, I can't say which ones might become paintings. It takes quite a long time. They have to kind of go through this process of being reimagined and I think that's when the nostalgia comes in.

I: Right.

I: So, it's the reimagining?

R: Yes.

I: That's where—

R: It's when they become paintings and at that point, they leave any connection to the real world to some extent. They kind of—

I: Really interesting. Yes, that's really interesting.

R: And I think in a kind of material sense, it's the point where the making of it, the actual painting of it begins to have its own agency and energy within the work

that's not to do with it representing this or looking like that or being like something else. That's the point where it becomes the painting and that's where it becomes the meaning of the thing in a way.

I: I'm wondering if this a good point to ask the question about—

I: No, yes.

I: There is a reason to this question but it's like, why do you, well there's a very direction question which is why did you become an artist? One of the questions is why do you make paintings or why did you become an artist? And I'm just curious at to your response to that, seems a very personal question and I don't necessarily mean it to be but it relates to some conversations we've had but can you just say a little bit about why you, what is it about painting that's important to you and maybe that's connected to why did you become an artist.

R: I became an artist because well, specifically my mum encouraged it, and she encouraged it because when I was in the last year of primary school, I got knocked over by a motorbike and I was in hospital for about ten weeks. Before that, I'd always thought I'd be a kind of footballer or something like this and she thought, God, she thought, I must encourage him to do his art. So, that's how it came about.

I: Was she artistic herself?

R: Yes. She taught art in school. So, we had quite a big house in Kent and I had the top two rooms, I had a bedroom and a studio.

I: Really?

R: So, I had a terrible teenage life. I just painted all the time.

I: What was it about, I mean, you could've just said, "Okay." Done a bit and then gone, "Yes."

R: I was quite good at it so when you're good at a subject in school, you sort of, you tend to think, okay, that's what I'll do.

I: Do you mean representation? When you say good, what does that mean?

R: Well I could draw and paint, yes.

I: And make things look—

R: The weirdest thing was, this is just, I got an email yesterday from this bloke who I hadn't seen since I was at school. He said, "Hi Mark, just saying, I'm downsizing, I wanted to show you this picture of yours that I'd found in, stored away somewhere, which I'd bought off you for £5." And it's quite like what I'm doing now actually [laughter].

I: How old?

R: I was about 17. So, it's very photorealist. I mean, two photographic fragments, one a nude woman, and one of a bird, bird's head. So, it was just really odd again, this thing.

I: What is it about photorealist, what is it about making things—

R: From photographs?

I: Yes. How has your practice rooted itself in this? A bit of a big question.

R: I'm trying to think actually. I think it's probably more rooted in the idea of working from images rather than from photographs specifically. So, I did a lot of work working from paintings, early Renaissance paintings and things like that. But I think ultimately the heart of it, it's rooted in the idea of collage. John Stezaker taught me when I was on a BA course and I think that's sort of partly to do with it. And as it's gone through, it's been more about looking at, thinking about how different kinds of realism work and how a painting relates to photography in different ways. But I've never called myself a photorealist because I don't think I am really, not in the sense of the early kind of photorealist where it's a sense of reproducing an image, almost like a curtain coming down with a whole thing.

I: Yes, that's a wrong terminology thing, sorry, yes. It is wrong.

R: But yes, in some ways it's about using photography as a sort of drawing tool, I think, in terms of grabbing images and manipulating them and then putting them into the, yes.

I: I suppose to qualify the reason for asking that question relates to some of the conversations that the research team have been having around who artists make work for because of course, audiences is central to this project and there have been conversations about how much you or any of the artists involved in our project have thought about who is going to look at their work, both in this project, and how they conceptualise audiences more generally.

And so, we've had some debates about the fact that some artists we've spoken to will say, "Well I don't think about the audience or I don't..." It's not that they don't care, but the National Trust visitor encounters a piece of work is not necessarily who is in the mind of the artist. So, some of the conversations have led to, well even if artists don't think about their immediate audience, they've always got professional idea of their audience or their legacy when they're dead and who's looking at their painting as a (unclear 0:26:47.2) and so, and I've often questioned that and said artists don't necessarily make work, even for it to be public, sometimes it's problem-solving for themselves and so, that's just led to this question that is it possible for artists to make work without thinking about audience, and I think it's, yes, of course it is, but I don't know whether that's being challenged.

R: I think it's a really interesting question and I think it's difficult because I've seen so many artists as they get older, they get to a point where actually they're not showing their work, they're not getting any kind of external feedback or input into their practice and it does become very hard to sustain it, I think. I mean, I think, I can imagine with this sort of when you're younger with the kind of youthful energy, it'd carry you through that but becomes a bit grinding after a while. So, I think rather than specifically audience, it's more some connection to the world outside the studio. So, when I started showing commercially and began selling work, that then opens up a very different connection to a sense of audience than you would've had in any other way.

So, I think I've got different audiences. I've got the people who bought work and who have a kind of investment in seeing what I do and get a bit worried when it changes. And then there's the university side, there's the research culture which is completely different audience. You kind of articulate your practice in a completely different way for them. The commercial galleries I work with are not remotely interested in that bit of what I do at all. It doesn't interest them. They're not very interested in research questions or anything like that. So, I think probably what you learn is how to understand your work in relation to a whole variety of different audiences in a way.

And to some extent, Cherryburn was a bit fitted into that. After a few visits, I got a real sense of who visited the place. And I felt, I suppose, quite early on, I felt I didn't want to make anything that felt like it was trying to challenge why Cherryburn was there, what it was doing or what Bewick did or anything like that. There was a sense that I wanted the work to just look like it was meant to be there. And I've made work that isn't like that, that's much more, people find much more difficult. I mean, the irony is when I'm making it, I don't kind of get that bit of it because when I was making the images from the Wellcome Trust collection which are actually quite disturbing, it didn't occur to me that actually people wouldn't buy from me because they find them horrible. So, when you're actually making the work, often, you're a bit kind of disconnected from that.

I: That's really interesting.

R: You find something fascinating, it's very difficult to think other people won't.

I: Yes. Who are you making the work for then?

R: What, the Wellcome work?

I: No, who are you making the work for? Sort of distilling it right down to the basic question which I think—

R: I don't think, well, that's not true. I mean, I was going to say I don't think I'm that aware of who I'm making it for but I am aware at any point whether a series of paintings would be, I could show them in the gallery I work with in Germany and I know which ones he wouldn't like.

I: Are there any that are purely for you, that don't go out [s.I studio 0:31:37.2]?

R: I don't think so. I mean, there are drawings which are completely different from the paintings which I've never shown.

I: **(Unclear 0:31:45.5).**

I: **I think one of the things that is interesting (unclear 0:31:51.8) worth collecting on (unclear 0:31:55.1) process is that partly because those initial interviews with very specific questions have led to a whole load of much broader thinking, actually thinking about what we wanted these interviews to do. It becomes quite challenging because it's not, part of the social sciences (unclear 0:32:14.6) not great, but it's the specific questions to finish the research and actually, I'm finding it very hard to really, to think about what these questions are other than the obvious one about where your practice has got to having been involved in the project.**

I: **I mean, would you be looking for ways, things that you can distil from it that would lead onto another project, another work with heritage sites?**

R: Yes. I certainly think so and I think one very specific thing I am thinking about that is helping me reflect on what I'm interested in and this might be a question that is very, this whole way that people articulate, our museums and heritage sites do this, is that we want to work with an artist because, and it's just this sense of what is it that an artist does. It's not necessarily a sense of a professional set of skills but it's people employing artists and at this Grantham Institute last night where we had lots of scientists who were saying, "We work with artists because..." And there was an oceanographer, I use this example with Fiona. There was an oceanographer who says, "I spend this very isolating, I spent all my time looking at data to do with temperature, currents in the oceans, and I'm very cold and focused on that." And I actually wrote this down, he said, "I need an artist to be able to communicate almost the emotional value of knowing that because I can't do it as a scientist." And I was really fascinated by this sense of the role of the artist and I suppose it's then the arts, to just have—

I: **I think there are direct ways in which an artist can make accessible research which wouldn't be accessible to a general public otherwise. And I think that often works really well. But I think also, I think maybe what scientists find more difficult is the idea that artists could come in from a completely different direction and look and what they're doing in a way which they really don't get or understand or approve of. And I suppose the thing in terms of heritage sites publishing work is that it is a bit of a punt in a way that this is going to work because it may not work and it may be difficult but I think in a way, that's part of it really.**

R: You mean a punt in...

I: **Well you don't know if the artist is going to work with the people at the place or the work they're going to make is going to be something that the people at the place will feel does anything for them.**

I: **Yes.**

- R: And is that why, I'm thinking the National Trust, just but anybody, because museums, galleries, they will write text panels, they'll do evaluations, they'll be very clear about the reading age of this text and they will be very clear about the number of words and the hierarchy of text and the (unclear 0:35:57.0), we read one paragraph and you can involve the rest. That's such an, almost a science of interpretation that art does something fundamentally to us.
- I: **Yes. It sort of creeps in and does something very, very different and I think that's what they're looking for in a way.**
- I: **Yes.**
- I: **Do you feel that working in heritage places or historic places is important to you? I mean, I'm just thinking, you've done portraits, (unclear 0:36:36.2) exhibition of your family and all (unclear 0:36:43.0). Is that, this has been a very specific project about bringing those two sectors together. Is it important to you, an artist and painter, that there is a heritage element to it, to the starting of the work?**
- R: I think so, yes, I think there is. I think, I'm just trying to think why I've done so much work with collections and things in a way. [Pause] I should've thought about this before I came.
- I: **It's a big question. You do.**
- R: I mean, in a funny way, I think I've always been interested in the 19th century in lots of different ways. And I'm interested in how, and now with post-colonialism, it sorts of returns as a way of thinking, well the relationship between empire and kind of images of the natural world, for instance, is just one of the things that's been part of the work that I've looked at. And it sort of becomes interesting in relation to other things that people are thinking about in terms of looking back at our history. And I suppose the idea that it's a history that can't be ignored, you can't kind of just go on somewhere else and not actually acknowledge what that was about and what it did. And that it's still all around us in a way. And I suppose with the Cherryburn commission, it was a bit, suddenly realising well you go into landscape and it is like, it's like going into a museum and it's like trying to kind of understand something in relation to things from the past that are still there and still have resonance.
- I: **You've said something really interesting which is it's difficult to, it feels like, we're finding it difficult to sort of find the questions because it's like saying, "Okay, this is finished, how did you feel about it? Wasn't it great?" But actually it still sort of continues, these questions are still there. These questions are still there.**
- R: I think making the work doesn't make the questions go away. It doesn't answer questions. In some way it reflects on things and kind of opens that up, other ideas. The questions don't go away which is probably why you carry on making work really.

I: Exactly. Okay. Let's try, have you got any, thinking about the commissioning process now, now we've got distance from it and how that sort of went, have you got any other reflections on that, if you can, that whole process, was there anything that occurred to you that could've been done?

R: No, I mean, I think, I mean, I had this odd thing of putting in my expression of interest and then getting rejected. So, I don't know. I mean, it seemed to kind of make sense in terms of the people that were running the sites, were involved in the interview and they would pass the process selecting the artists and yes.

I: I tell you what was really quite an interesting spot in the sort of commissioning process was actually bringing the National Trust work to your studio.

R: Yes.

I: That really, I have the National Trust site staff saying that was really a change (unclear 0:41:58.4), I kind of understood, it's actually seeing where you worked and how you worked and recreating that wall of the studio, of the birthplace in your studio was actually quite important for them.

R: That's interesting. So, before that, they just...

I: They just couldn't get it. I don't think they, we're doing the same thing with Marcus now, we're doing a studio visit with (unclear 0:42:27.0) because for some reason, they're finding difficult to actually, a need to be there to sit and actually hear you be in your studio and hear you and see how you worked was very important to them.

R: And I've modelled that, actually, the impact of that is that (unclear 0:42:49.2) art gallery museum sort of students, I have taken them into our fine art studios and said, "Just talk to the artists about their work." And I've had to feed back what they've found that so eye-opening because of the sense of different languages, different (unclear 0:43:06.4), yes.

I: Do you think that would work at an earlier stage or not?

I: No, I think it was the right stage. I mean, I think what, which is interesting actually, which I just touched about is that you kind of recreated the space in which (unclear 0:43:27.4), you recreated the wall in your studio. So, you brought the heritage of Cherryburn into the studio in London which I think they found quite, why did you do that? Why isn't he just doing paintings? Why is he doing that? Why is he recreating that? And that thought process of why, and the integration of the labelling of the, I don't think they would've understood that unless they'd seen it divorced from Cherryburn from where it, if you had just brought that up and put it, I think they wouldn't have understood that it was completely integrated in your thinking.

R: I think the difficult thing, thinking from the starting point of commissions through to the end is that actually, because I remember when I met you at Cherryburn,

Judith, and we went into that room and I remember at that point thinking, but at that point, I didn't have the whole thing, I just had this kind of idea and I think, I suppose what might be more, what might be helpful or useful is some more of a continuous sense all the way through a process of how the idea's developing and what's coming into and how, not just in terms of it as an installation, but in terms of the paintings and subjects.

I mean, it's very internalised as an artist, you just do it and you kind of, it's not something you talk to people about all the time but I think with Cherryburn, I did have to do that more but I think probably it could maybe be structured in a bit more but what happened in the studio could happen in different ways at different points, just letting people kind of have some sense of where this thing's going. But I think that's got to allow for things like questions and problems and things that might be kind of working out and I don't know, I think, I mean, I was quite lucky that at the point when they came, I'd kind of pretty much got it sorted out so they were seeing it as it would be.

I: Yes, and it wasn't going to change much, yes.

I: Can I just say a couple of things out loud in case the [s.I health 0:46:09.2], because I think there's a couple of, just saying, there's a couple there I think are really fascinating, partly just to note the correlation between what Fiona has talked about in terms of the staff not understanding what she did as an artist and understanding the process, and effectively, you said the same thing.

The outcome and the problems of that generated will be different clearly but it's a similar thing that the staff didn't understand, they don't understand how artists work, in inverted commas, and then the other thing which I think is just really fascinating that you've just said which goes back to this conversation around audience is, and our research question about how do artists engage with heritage context within the creation of works. And you've said that it's a very internalised process, this idea of developing and I was wondering whether that helps us trying to think about this debate that we're having around artists thinking about audiences or not while making work and so that's really fascinating sense that there's something that's very internal about what an artist does and how they think that only then is about audience or just something there, I think, that resonates with that kind of (unclear 0:47:38.5).

Yes. And I think it's an interesting question, how much do people at a heritage site where, how much do they really need to know about the way an artist works? Is it helpful or not? I mean, I think in some ways it would in the sense that it would alleviate the anxiety that people might be feeling before the work's actually kind of there and revealed in all its glory. But I don't know. Have they got the time?

R: Yes, that's a good question. And actually, is it about them devolving an aspect of work to somebody else to do on their behalf so we don't need to know.

I: Yes.

I: Yes. I mean, it is interesting.

R: I mean, I suppose you could, for any different site and any different commission, you could begin to introduce that idea quite early on and determine how much people want to know or don't want to know or do they want to be involved, do they not want to be involved. But I think it's interesting from what you were saying, Judith, about the studio visit that that obviously did something good and that was the fact that suddenly, they were able to get a better understanding of not just what I was doing but the way I was working and what I was thinking about.

I: Yes. I mean, it's interesting because the person (unclear 0:49:13.7)[Name]. [Name]she's very, [they're] quite nervous about, they're the one that has to articulate in a different way to the audience that what your work is so [they were] quite keen and is being super keen, Marcus, because Marcus is developing new work at the moment, [they have] to see it in order to understand it in order to articulate [themselves] what, to the audience, [they're] like an intermediary, I suppose, so for [them], it was particularly, it was really, I mean, [they were] really keen to do that and just organise another trip down to (unclear 0:50:11.5).

So, it is interesting, that, in that it is this thing about, again, about volunteers being the outward facing and then they having to experience it. So, it's this sort of area, this enormous area where about do you need, how much do you need, how much do you need to know? And you're saying, which I think is right, do the public really want to know that much. Shouldn't the work, it's this whole thing about the work, should the work, does the work need that, and there's lots of areas within there.

R: I think certainly in terms of, I mean, just in terms of this project, did you have any sites that didn't want to work with artists? Did you have any resistance from anywhere?

I: Yes. And it would be hard to pin that down. It might be possible but the National Trust were very clear that we would only work with certain sites so I wouldn't go as far as to say the choice was made for us but it wasn't very far away from that in terms of which sites the National Trust were happy for us to work with, and that has involved it in other ways more recently, hasn't it?

I: Yes.

R: Which is quite fascinating.

I: It is fascinating because they make the decisions about which sites are ready for, yes, ready to work with an artist.

R: I suppose I was thinking about if you're basically thinking about what we've just been talking about devising a set of protocols that would possibly come into play during that kind of commissioning process. Would that alleviate some people's anxiety about working with artists if they could see, well this is what's going to happen, you will know this. Maybe, I mean, the project I'm working with the Museum of London, the three skeletons are from a site right next to Chelsea Old

Church on the banks of the Thames. So, we thought, great, it'd be great, before they're in the Museum of London if we could get the money and do the portrait, show them in Chelsea Old Church, okay, because there are people that are buried there approached the Chelsea Old Church, absolutely no way they want anything to do with contemporary art again. It's really sort of—

I: Was it because you said contemporary art?

R: No, I think it was—

I: It was like, these people will be brought to life in a different, yes.

R: I don't know what it, but it was funny. I thought it was just—

I: But I mean, you'll find this, if you're going to management, you'll find that the tension comes with the sites or the heritage or museum sector wanting to know what exactly they are going to get and with you, there's a very reassurance there because actually you didn't change your mind a lot so there wasn't that sort of, they were reassured. So, actually you're a very good artist to work with in this. With a lot of artists and one I'm thinking that we did talk to an artist who actually made it very clear that, (unclear 0:53:57.3), but that that artist was not going to say what she was going to make. So, her decision was I'm saying that I'm not going today (unclear 0:54:12.6) and for the heritage—

R: That's difficult.

I: One of us, that immediately puts them on a very sort of insecure position, in an insecure position, and they don't like that.

R: I mean, it's difficult that, because in a way, I would say, if I was working in a museum and someone said that, I'd think they're putting him in an impossible situation really. How could you really program in something that you, when you have absolutely no idea what it's going to be.

I: Well, I do it all the time. What I have to do is to reassure who I'm working with that you have to trust that this is going to happen.

R: I think what was interesting about that if I'm reading it correctly is it was almost, not belligerent, it was in principle kind of this is how I work, there is a research process to what I do therefore I can't presume what would be the end of it.

I: Yes, that's fair enough, I think.

R: But what is interesting is to discover the sense of kind of protocols because this project will have to make recommendations in a report. One thing that has just occurred to me from that kind of conversation is partly this issue of the wow factor, they want a fantastic image that they can use to sell to visitors, okay. And I wonder whether there needs to be that kind of model and I'm going to use V&A, they need the V&A, blockbuster shows to be the money spinners to afford to do the conservation work and I wonder whether actually that's really, whether we

should (unclear 0:56:03.7) recommend that the National Trust need, they need to do those things they can do, fantastic marketing stuff that can be their wow factor photograph in order to actually be able to do the more risk taking and maybe they're expecting too many things out of the same projects.

- I: Absolutely. I think that's really good, a good way of putting it. I think that's really, I think you could almost define the relationship between artists and working with historical sites that it could work across a really broad spectrum but actually needs to but it's not just, I mean, (unclear 0:56:50.7) are going to (unclear 0:56:51.4) with a proposal for a curated exhibition. Basically, they wouldn't even contemplate it unless they could have Damien Hirst or Marc Quinn in the title. That's what they need to get people in. So, but I think you could do all of those but I suppose it's—**
- I: It's very, very tricky. This is an area which I work effectively is that by far the biggest reason why they, is to get these big spectacle, the eye-catcher, the wow factor, that language is, the wow factor, the eye-catcher, is not, it's not to show artists' work.**
- R: So, is the job for these projects for us as artists, researchers, whatever we think of ourselves to help heritage sites, because that's our focus, understand the different possibilities that actually it is some of the work, some places might, there might be something that is risk-taking, that is about critical engagement, that some of it might be as you've quite strongly said, actually I want this to be, it's not that it's not critical, and it's celebratory but there's a sense of it belonging, a sense of it really powerfully belonging in a very important way but then when I hesitate to think about the Massari, the Stella McCartney thing because the marketeers have a very particular agenda and it's very, is it wrong, I'm just thinking aloud, for, in summary, I worry that we're just using contemporary art in the same problematic way as people talk about audience.
- I: Yes, I think there's a real question there, yes.**
- R: And maybe that's an issue that we're using this really broad term that every single person in the room will have a different response to and that's—
- I: I mean, it reminds me a bit about the way people talk about education in galleries. When it first started out, no galleries had it, no one did it. So, they didn't quite know what they were doing but now, I mean, every museum, every gallery's got a really sophisticated education programme, addresses kids, school kids, teenagers, students. And I think in a way, the work with artists and heritage sites needs to have, it needs to be, have that kind of, needs to develop sort of in that way so that people can, you get a situation where someone says, "Yes. But at this moment, what we want is someone who can come in and do this kind of thing." It's a more sophisticated understanding of what the potential relationship could be.**
- R: I mean, that potentially could be a really positive and powerful kind of output from this project partly because one of the things that I think the project is arguing and I know [s.I V 1:00:27.1] is very kind of keen on this, this sense of trying to articulate this is a very particular form of practice.

I: **Yes.**

I: **Yes.**

R: Yes, that's really interesting.

I: **But it seems to me that one of the things that happened is that most people think it's a valuable thing to do, that's a good start, I think.**

R: Yes, because interestingly of course, with education museums actually hasn't always been the case.

I: **Well I remember talking to Vivienne Ashley when she started up the (unclear 1:01:04.1), I can't remember the name of the guy that was director, [Name] or somebody or other. And apparently, she had these school kids in the gallery and he came in and said, "Vivienne, how long are these children going to be here [laughter]?"**

R: And I can remember arguments with staff at one of the sites I used to work at that asked me if, as the education officer, they were fed up of cleaning up after all of these children so would I ask them now on for the children to remove their shoes before they entered this country house. And I said, "Only if you make every single visitor do that because every single visitor brings dirt into this house." So, and of course, that immediately stopped them. But how dare they ask children to take their shoes off. It's just...

I: **Well that's a good positive thing. So, have we, do you think we've covered?**

I: **Possibly.**

I: **We've gone onto areas that—**

I: **We have really... But in a good way.**

I: **That's what we've done, audiencing, I think we've done the commissioning process. I think we have.**

I: **We have. So, is there a kind of final question of is there any questions?**

I: **Yes.**

I: **Anything that you need to say, want to say that we've not covered that's on your mind that absolutely doesn't have to be, obviously, given that this is the last interview.**

R: No. I mean, I think it's been a fantastic project to be part of. I think it's been really, it's been really good for me in lots of ways so I think, I don't have any specific questions about anything in particular.

I: **Fantastic.**

- I: (Unclear 1:03:04.0). No.
- I: Certainly wouldn't know.
- I: No, that's been really good. I mean, and it is interesting but we're finding it difficult to sort of close it in a way, you can't, there isn't a set of questions that actually closes the project.
- I: No, and I did, one of the things I was doing here was going back to what questions we put in the thing that we asked (unclear 1:03:42.9) very definitely dealt with kind of (unclear 1:03:48.0). Okay. Shall we stop?
- I: Yes.
- I: Thank you.
- I: Thanks.

[End of Recording]