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KEY:

Cannot decipher = (unclear + time code)

Sounds like = [s.l + time code]

I1: = Interviewer

I2: = Interviewer

R: = Respondent

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- I1: Somebody has just tweeted me, that might be Maura telling me about the laptop person but I'll let you know.**
- I2: I'm still carrying it around.**
- I1: It like a comfort blanket.**
- I2: I sort of do it automatically.**
- I1: Here you are, oh, 45 have booked in for Friday and [Name], [Name], Andrew I have forwarded you his contact address, so if you want it afterwards, I think he's based in Prudhoe. Right, I'll say thanks and then I'll turn this off. Ok, good.**
- I2: Shall I do the little, front bit.**
- I1: Yes, if you want to do the formal bit that's good.**
- I2: So just so, I mean this is literally just the, a sort of introductory, sort of statement really, so thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of our research project and you know the purpose of this conversation is generally to collect information about your experience of creating a new artwork for a heritage site. You may decide you do not want to answer any questions and that's fine but it's part of long term research process so we hope to follow up on some of these questions in later interviews and given that you're a named artist within the project the information you provide will be used within a range of outputs from the research including but not limited to conference papers, journal practical's and other published material.**
- I1: Yes, and we, if we use, want to use something we'll check with you.**
- I2: Yes, and the other thing is that what you will get is one of these, which I can't actually let you keep at the minute, which is just an information sheet, it's effectively meeting the ethical requirements, so that you understand the, the, how the data will be used, I can't let you keep that at the moment**

because it's not actually been signed off by the University's legal team but it's just a sense of where the data will be held, all of those sorts of things, so it's not.

I1: When it's signed off do we, we.

I2: I think we can then just distribute them to the people we've interviewed but that's currently the, the sort of, final draft if you like. I think one of the issues, the reason we can't let you have one of these at the minute is because it's tied to your being contracted to the University, so what the legal people have to do is make sure that what was actually said in here just matched exactly what was in your contract.

R: Ok, yes.

12 But generally, but basically for the purpose of the interviews this information sheet really is about how we're going to use the data and that it's going to be stored securely effectively, which is and we're not experimenting on your physical being we're just actually talking to you.

R: Yes, it's the line of, if you are harmed by taking part in this study, it's like, what's happening.

I2: So you will get, so that's it.

I1: Ok, good, good, Ok, shall I start off then, shall we leave that one that we said.

I2: Yes.

I1: Right, Matt, so can you just, can you, I mean this is very informal, you know, sort of, so anything that you say and we may want to expand on something that you said, can you just reflect upon the experience so far about the selection process, you know if you can remember the artists brief, whether it gave you enough information, how that process worked for you and what made you, you know, respond.

R: Yes, in relation to the artist brief I mean I suppose I felt there was just enough information in the artists brief concerning the actual site, although it was, I suppose in some ways relatively scant but then thinking about the Holy Trinity in comparison to some of the other locations there isn't probably so much stuff available in terms of being able to pass on information about the history, the context and so on. I guess the other sites are more formal heritage sites, the Holy Trinity is not and it's in a state of flux, so that is, that was probably more difficult to pass on but that was part of the thing that interested me about it in terms of choosing one of the heritage sites, I mean I'd been slightly steered towards Holy Trinity when I was sent the information, saying this one is probably, we think is most suitable for you but it probably was the most interesting for me as well because of the fact that it wasn't such a kind of formal heritage site and it's going through quite a lot of change. So in terms of the rest of the information in the brief I thought it was clear, I understood it, it was, I remember the word count, I'm trying to remember now, was super low.

I2: Yes.

R: It was really difficult to even try and get across what you might do, I think it was in the initial, I'm trying to remember back now, the initial expression of interest, it was like well what can I say.

I2: In five hundred words.

I1: We limited it, yes.

R: No, no it was less than.

I1: It was two hundred, it was two hundred.

R: Yes, it was less than that, you had to describe your, if I remember rightly you had to describe your, something about your, talk about your practice, as well as say why you were interested in the site and there was quite a lot listed, I remember rightly in terms of like, oh, we'd like you to talk about this and we'd like you to talk about this and it's like, well if I talk about my practice a hundred words and then I have a hundred words left to talk about the project, I can't do that, so I remember that being like ok, I can say pretty much a one liner about what interests me about the site, in two lines and I thought actually that could have been, that could have been a bit better, I thought that you know, even bumping up to like a few hundred, a couple of hundred words about why you might be interested in the site might have been a bit more helpful because it's one of those things where you, if your given a really limited word count you have to be so selective about what you say and you feel like you have to be so selective about what you say and careful about what you say but I did kind of, I remember sort of sending it off sort of thinking, well I'm not too sure how the panel are really going to judge from that what might be interesting or not.

I1: Would you of liked more research information in the brief, if there, when you have briefs do you like it when there's quite a lot of background.

R: I mean it can be helpful yes, I think partly because I seem to remember there was a bit of, maybe a little bit of kind of repetition in the, in the information in the, that was sent in the brief for Holy Trinity but also you very quickly went online and you found it was the same information online as was in the brief, so and you didn't kind of gain anything more and actually, I mean that was my worst thing about actually realising that, that information about that site is pretty limited.

I1: Ok, what about the, what about the site visits.

R: Yes, I thought, thought the tour around Holy Trinity by Church Conservation Trust was great, I mean they, you know they know a lot about the building and gave a good overview of the building and the parts of the building and what currently is happening to that building, obviously there was a little bit of conflict during the site visit because what the University were talking about in terms of timescales and what the Church Conservation Trust were talking about in terms of timescales conflicted, so there was a bit, seems like there was a bit of sorting out to be done there and then which was a little bit confusing but, but you can kind of see that obviously from the Church Conservation Trust point of view they have a construction schedule which, and conservation schedule which they are going to need to meet and get on with and so this, the timescale for this might not kind of tally. So yes, I mean, I think from the tour I definitely had, felt like I had enough information to work with. The timescale was fairly short between the tour because

it was a place where you couldn't access (inaudible 0.10.09.7) for anyone outside of the region or for myself obviously it was slightly easier for me because I'm within the region but I guess again for some of the other sites they're much more open access sites, you can go to them, you know as just a visitor whereas Holy Trinity is much more, it's a closed site pretty much. So, so when we did the site visit there was, I'm trying to remember now exactly how much time there was but it felt, it was quite a rapid process between that site visit and kind of making decisions about ideas for the proposal and then sort of, you know, writing that up into a, what seemed like a clear enough proposal but also trying to leave enough openness within the proposal that you're not, I don't, I think because generally when I'm writing a proposal I try not, try to be clear as to what the idea is but then leave openness as well because I think if it's all so set in stone then you kind of think well what, in a way what's the point of the process of working with an organisation, so because I think that's when some of the most interesting stuff happens is that when you have that openness and it's like ok, there is a sort of path that we're going to follow to get the commission but we don't know quite where that's going to go and it could kind of go off at slight tangents but obviously wanting the organisation to feel secure enough that they sort of know what they're going to get at the end.

I1: So it's important that it isn't, it isn't so very tightly defined.

R: Yes, yes I mean for me and I don't know if that necessarily works all the time with, with some organisations they probably like to know exactly what they're going to get but yes, so, I mean in terms of writing the proposal, I mean when I, when, when we had the tour I, I had a Dictaphone, so I didn't take notes, quite often I would write down notes but I've sort of started relying more on a Dictaphone, so as we were walking around I could just listen as opposed to having to sort of, take notes and then maybe missing bits of conversation and actually I found that really helpful to then go away and then listen back to those conversations because actually there was a lot of information as we were going around the different parts of the building, there was a lot of information they were giving and so that was really useful because then I could just, kind of glean, I suppose what felt like the most important parts out of that conversation when I listened back to it. I think probably going into the tour I, I had an idea of what the proposal would probably be and that was from, from online research.

I1: Ok.

R: So, I kind of started to get, I think because the timescale was relatively short I felt like I needed to have at least a sort of, a vague idea of where the proposal might go and then hopefully sort of, through the tour things would come up that would bolster that idea and it would, I'd be able to kind of elaborate on that, that I deal with and that's pretty much what, what happened during the tour. So, and then going away from the tour definitely sort of, I felt that the idea felt appropriate and there was stuff which I didn't know such as the, the bell tower currently being closed, which as soon as I heard that it was like, oh, yes, I definitely, that was like a point where I was like yes, I definitely want to go down the route of exploring the, the Annabelle composition that was performed in the tower because obviously with the bells being silent a way of kind of reinvigorating that felt really appropriate. So there was definitely, there were definitely moments within the talk by Church

Conservation Trust that strengthened my feeling towards what the proposal should be.

I1: It seems like it was important, that site visit for you.

R: Yes, yes.

I1: And the interview how, have you got anything to say about the interview, how that, any reflections on, if you can remember, you know sort of any.

R: Yes, I think I'm not too sure beforehand that we were given a sort of time, sort of the timings for the interview and that, if we weren't and I could be wrong in that, we might have been given them, if we weren't and I'm thinking that we weren't given timings like, your proposal should be "X" amount of time and then we will talk for "X" amount of time then that would have been useful because I remember suddenly feeling a bit rushed.

I2: I think that was the case wasn't it, timing weren't given were they.

I1: They weren't and then right at the, and then.

I2: So you are correct in that.

R: Ok, I remember just thinking, oh, I've got quite a lot that I was going to say and suddenly condensed.

I1: It was to say, well you've got about forty minutes and it was just like, oh, hello.

R: Condense it down to I think, I think it was something, I've got to try and remember off the top of my head now, I think at the beginning of the interview he said, oh, if you can talk about the project for.

I1: Forty minutes it was, forty five minutes or forty minutes, forty or was it, no, it wasn't even that.

R: No, it wasn't.

I1: Twenty.

R: No it was less than that, I think it was even less than that and I remember thinking, oh, yes, my, images that I've put together and things, oh, yes, I'm going to have to streamline it, sort of there and then and I remember as I was talking I wasn't doing a great job of streamlining it sort of, on the hoof and getting to the end and suddenly going, so I'm going to rush though the end.

I1: Yes, I think that was an oversight that was, you know it was just one of those details.

R: I felt like I, I felt like I.

I1: It was just like one of those details that everybody sort of went, oh.

R: I did feel like I got to the end and then I had to suddenly skip over probably the last half of what I was, I was, certainly the last third of what I was going to talk about. I remember walking away from the interview thinking, oh, I forget to say about that and I forgot to say about that. So yes, yes that would have been, that would have been good.

I1: Ok, oh, yes, it's me again, I've got this whole lot. So what about the working relationships that you're beginning to develop or have you developed, you know with, in your case I think with Holy Trinity it really hasn't started yet has it.

R: No, I mean I can't really comment on that. I had a phone call from Amanda.

I1: Oh, did you.

R: Whilst I was in Plymouth.

I1: Great.

R: Yes, just kind of saying, hello, also which was like, oh, ok they have Dave Stewart from the Eurythmics on their board and she was like, oh, just like of like we're talking about the project with Dave Stewart from the Eurythmics and maybe, maybe we could find some way of working with Dave Stewart, I was like, oh, ok yes, so but I think he's quite, I think he's quite from what I've heard sort of an awkward character.

I1: Dave Stewart.

R: Yes, but Amanda was like, oh, I'm just putting that out there, just putting that out there.

I1: Ok so let's, ok, so because this is quite interesting in a way is that they've come to you but what does that say about the understanding of the commissioner about your practice, do you think?

R: I mean from, I would say from their point of view it's like obviously because he's a name and it's like you know, there's that sort of I guess the interest that comes around Dave Stewart doing something but you know immediately for me there was the thought of like, ok, well suddenly that's, it will just have Dave Stewarts sort of stamp on it, you know and.

I1: How do you see your practice with Dave Stewart.

R: Well I don't, you know it would go somewhere, I think it would go somewhere else completely, completely different to what I had kind of proposed, I mean again I could be wrong on that you know maybe it could be great but I think it would because I think a large part of the proposal is about with working with other people in kind of quite a fluid way, whatever they are musicians, people from the local area and you know that's not something that I could imagine he would be, he would sort of come in and probably sort of, yes, I can't think of any other but it would just be his, put his sort of stamp and kind of penn'th in and.

I1: Can I just push, can I just push a little bit without, without giving my own view, I just want to push that a little bit is that the Churches Conservation Trust have sat on, gone through the selection process, they've read your expression of interest, they've read your proposal and they've interviewed you and they've rung you up making a connection with something, with another person, I'm just wondering why you think they might have made that connection.

R: I mean the obvious, well the obvious link is music and I think that's immediately what they just went at, so, oh, we're working with, you know on the board we have Dave Stewart.

I1: **Do you think, I'm trying not to give my own, well I, what do you think that, how, how does that concern you, that they've made that connection, does that concern you?**

R: No because I kind of took it in a way of like, we're just phoning up, just to let you know but I think there was an element of like, oh, you can take it or leave it, you know, it's not like, oh, we have this idea and we feel really strongly that you should.

I2: **Yes, it's, yes it's interesting.**

I1: **It's quite interesting that area because I think they've, what they've understood that, about your practice there's a, an understanding how it, that your artistic practice is this, so therefore you are with Dave, do you know what I mean and yet, I don't see your practice like that.**

R: Yes.

I1: **So that's quite interesting for me that's quite interesting because I don't, I actually don't see your practice like that, so it's quite interesting.**

I2: **Yes, definitely, definitely.**

I1: **Note to self. Ok, so really that hasn't, we haven't really, we haven't really started that, that relationship.**

R: No, not at all, I mean and that's, that's come down to well two things, one me really not being here because I've been busy on working on other projects which, which have just pretty much wrapped up, not quite wrapped up but and also that obviously conversation with you, Judith, is that, no we're not contracted yet, there's a lot that hasn't been set and been put in place and therefore it hasn't really been formalised as a commission, so really until that happens then you know, I think that's the point where things sort of really, were it will start.

I1: **Yes, I agree, I agree, and we should have more information about all contracts, so I think actually Andrew has sent something through imminent, so therefore that you know we need to.**

R: I guess just on that as well, I guess I'm within that what I don't know is that how well informed Church Conservation Trust are by the commissioning team of whether they're thinking, oh, Matt hasn't started this yet or whether they're being kept informed just like we haven't actually formalised this yet, so actually from my point of view as an artist, so I'm you know, it's fine for me to go, ok I understand you know there's not contracts in place and things, so in a way the kind of start point hasn't happened yet, which is how, how I've been seeing it but do the Church Conservation Trust know that, do they know, ok, contracts aren't in place, things haven't been formalised and therefore, which has partly come through the team saying ok, you know contract haven't been done so it's fine to kind of hold off until that point but do they know that in case they're not going, ok, well he hasn't really started anything yet.

I1: The answer to that is no, mostly because everybody has been away, there's been a lot of people being away.

R: But I think it would be good then that the Church Conservation Trust sort of understand what I understand as well is that well, ok, it's not really started yet because we haven't, we haven't got to the point of properly contracting artists and so on.

I1: Ok, yes. How do you, how would you see that these relationships developing over the progress of the commission, how do you, how would you see that happening?

R: I mean I obviously imagine that I'm going to be working closely with the Church Conservation Trust team, I know Amanda is going to be leaving, so obviously there will be, they'll be a change there and Amanda has, it will be interesting to see how that works because Amanda has built up, as far as I understand it quite good relationships or that was passed onto us from, from her, from what she said is that she's built up relationships with people within the local community and groups and when she leaves I don't quite know how much of that has been passed on to anyone else with the Church Conservation Trust team or whether that kind of goes with her. So it will be important for me at least to have garnered from her, probably quite a lot of her connections and you know, to have had a good sit down with her and talk about, ok well what are her experiences of connecting with, with people from the local area, you know sort of particularly around the church. So, so that's, I don't know how that's going to work at the moment because I don't quite know who's really going to be taking the lead, they might know that or they might not.

I1: Well I might find out tomorrow I think.

R: Ok.

I1: I, I think they have got a name to a person but I haven't met them.

I2: Because you're meeting Amanda tomorrow aren't you.

R: Yes.

I1: I'm meeting Amanda tomorrow so I might find out a little bit more. I think it's going to be different from the national trust properties, this commission because the national trust properties have got static, you know staff at their site, I think it's going to be a little challenging.

R: I've had that impression, I mean that you know, again this will go back to one of the first things I said that, that the flux of the space is really interesting but I also did realise and probably even more so actually during the term, it's like ok, this is, this is a pretty challenging place because all the ideas that was laid out in the brief, not all the ideas quite a number of the ideas that were laid out in the brief did not correspond to the site, one of them being the timescales, the other being that as a building it's not, it's accessible but not overly accessible to the public, so if something happens inside the building you know, down to the things, if it's in the main part of the building everyone has to go in with hard hats because it's a hard hat area because they've got bits of the ceiling falling off, it's like, it's like ok, right there's quite a few things to grapple with here. So you know and there was a strong emphasis in the brief of something potentially being event based at Holy

Trinity and again that was like, I remember thinking after the site visit and during the site visit it's like, oh, the brief and the place are really kind of contradicting themselves because actually the idea of doing an event in the space was really quite, the idea of doing one was really quite difficult.

I1: Yes, because of the restrictions, because of the Health and Safety, yes, I know, I know.

R: And I was trying to grapple with that in the, asking the questions during the site visit was ok, if we do, do something because I had originally thought about doing something event based, linked, linked to the idea that the proposal was based on but if it was more event based but that also doesn't tally with the idea of, that was put in the brief of how long this exhibition was going to last for, it seemed like I don't, I don't quite understand sort of want an event but there has to be something in the space from this time to this time, which is a long block of time, so what do people see because if you have events and you just stagger them through, through that time that's fine but the venue and what, and the capacity of the venue in that it's unstaffed, it's only accessible at, you know at certain times and if you go into the main part of the building you're probably restricted in numbers partly because of safety, all those things just didn't tally up at all. So it was, I remember that feeling quite confusing, it was like ok, we could do, actually it doesn't, it doesn't work to do anything event based even though that was the, I remember there was a strong emphasis in the proposal, sorry in the brief about a desire to have something that could potentially be event based, it just didn't work on all, on nearly all levels you were just thinking, ok, I don't, I don't know how this could work because it won't fulfil, in many ways it won't fulfil the exhibition criteria of the duration of it, what are people coming to see, how are they going to see it in that space, yes, all those things. So there was a point we're walking away from the, the site visit just thinking and I don't think it was ever really clearly answered and I think I asked the question clearly enough or maybe I didn't in, in the tour of trying to grapple with ok, I remember being told it's like, oh, don't, don't become fixated on this idea of something being in the space for whatever time, it's like three months, I can't remember now three months, three months.

I1: Yes, it changed didn't it, yes.

R: And yet there still seemed to be that desire, something, something needs to be happening over that duration, so I felt quite unclear about ok, I still don't understand if it's something event based how this could operate.

I1: How it could even work.

R: Yes and so I think there was the point where I just walked away and thought, I started writing up the proposal for something event based and then really rapidly just thought, it just doesn't work on all levels and actually that was actually, I would say that's probably positive for the idea that I was putting forward not to have gone down that route and I think there was something else that came up, what else came up in that conversation, oh, yes, the, the, the team said, oh, yes but we need also do, is it three site visits because we can't get the team altogether, if there's a performance, something that's performance based or event based it will kind of have to happen three times because.

I1: I don't remember that.

R: Because we couldn't get the team altogether, all in one go and I was just thinking, oh, this is getting more confusing and then I remember, I do remember someone in the, Nicky maybe saying, well I think that's something for us to discuss and you are kind of thinking, well actually it seems like actually quite a lot hasn't been clarified beforehand in terms of how actually what is being asked of the commission, I will have a recording of it, it's on my Dictaphone.

I2: **I mean it would be interesting to work out whether it's ethically allowed all of us to have access to your recording on that but I think, just to flag up at this point, there some, there's something really interesting there about the research process observing the way the question happens and actually your role as both facilitator of the commissions and as a researcher because some of these problems illustrate real kind of, conceptual issues around who the audiences are, are the, the idea of is the audience do they want in the church or are they willing to accept that the audience are all people you work with who may not, you know, and there's some really interesting conceptual things there about their perception of what this project delivers but also some of the real challenges around working with an organisation who have limited resources, are difficult to pin down and that is something that's worth thinking about and trying to tease out.**

R: Yes, and there was also in that, I mean your kind of now as we're talking sort of reminds me of various things in that the access issue in Holy Trinity because they're not a staffed venue and that came up a few times and it, from a number of people saying well how, how does this operate in the space because there needs to be, you need someone to open up the space to allow people in but you kind of need to invigilate it as well because you can't just have people walking in and wondering around and even if it's not a thing, even though it's not a thing about necessarily about the safety of the work which could be quite a robust work, I mean obviously at that stage we didn't, there was no idea of like, ok, well what the work is going to be and even if it's not a thing about the safety and security of the work it's obviously about the safety and security of the building, which is a heritage site, which is obviously quite a delicate currently heritage site and none of that was worked out because you could tell from the organisations point of view from the Church Conservation Trust point of view they were like, ok, I think they were almost like, oh, well we thought that would be sorted out by you i.e. the kind of probably the commissioning team and the artist but obviously coming in as artist you're thinking, I don't know how this is going to work because I sort of thought, you know it would be something that would have been partly worked out prior to a commission being set up because obviously that would be one of the biggest issues, ok, if we open up something in this space, how does it actually work in the space in terms of just a practical opening up and security issue.

I1: **Again it, they're new to commissioning, brand new to commissioning as an organisation and so their understanding of the level of, of what they need to provide isn't there, coupled with the fact that there's a changing, you know a changing organisational structure there as well, which is going to be, as I say different from the other commissions, this is going to be different because they would say, well I don't know what, I don't know what you're making so how can I made those, how can I make those decisions about how it's going to go because I don't know what I'm getting and they want certainty, they want certainty, you know they want, it's going to be an event,**

it's going to start at seven thirty and it will end at nine thirty, so therefore we need this.

I2: Which again avoiding putting a conclusion onto what I think about that, that reflects back on the brief doesn't it, in terms of actually what was in there or what, you know.

I1: It reflects upon the very initially discussion with who, with who was going to be a partner.

I2: Yes, it does, it does.

R: I mean just on a, I mean this is a bit, I just, whatever is coming into my head I'm just saying, so you know it's good but also given the nature of the site and the complexity of the site, I know all the sites as a heritage site, as heritage sites are complex by their very nature but it was interesting with Holy Trinity, tell me if I'm wrong in this as well that Holy Trinity was given ever so slightly less budget than the, I think the others had a slightly, the capacity was maybe to slightly more on the other budgets for the other commissions.

I1: I don't think so, that was a.

R: I think they were.

I1: Were they.

R: Yes, I think, I would check on my computer but I can't, I think they were ever so slightly more, not, not massively but they were slightly, in the briefs they were slightly more but given the fluid nature of the churches, of Holy Trinity it's kind of interesting that, that was so, if it is so.

I1: I think in the brief, if I'm, I, I might, I think in the brief it was, it was left, the budget will be between this and this, if I'm remembering rightly, I think it was, the budget will be between this and this and then when the proposal, the details for the proposal were sent out the budget was a little bit more fixed, I'm pretty sure that was the case.

I2: Yes, it would be interesting to check because there was a conversation around, does the nature of each site require any difference in budget, you know for literally practical reasons.

I1: That was a discussion that was going on.

I2: That was a discussion but you know where that actually then got to and what was in the brief, so let's.

R: I think, I mean it would be interesting to, just to go back and double check the, the briefs but in my mind I, I remember, because I, I went through each of the briefs although I was kind of more initially steered towards Holy Trinity I did have a look at the other briefs and I have it in my head that there was a, there was a slight difference between them, I think Holy Trinity was the lower end and I think some of the others had a slightly more attached to them and there could be all sorts of reasons for that, like you say practical reasons but, but interestingly kind of given the, in some ways the complexity of Holy Trinity because it's new to commissioning, it's got all sorts of things going on in the site currently but maybe there was a practical decision as to like, ok, it's not a, in some ways such a rigid

site as some of the other places like Gibside and working in the National Trust and sort of having to kind of do everything a certain way because they have more experience of working on projects and I suppose it's sort of, it's slightly double edged in that because in a way an organisation who hasn't had any experience there might be lots more complexities that get thrown up because of that, yes.

I2: **Interesting.**

I1: **Ok.**

I2: **Shall we move on.**

I1: **Yes.**

I2: **Ok, my turn, kind of, a couple of questions that are around your kind of creative practice and we'll sort of start of thinking about your practice generally and then kind of move a little bit more towards this specific project and I guess a couple of things that we've, we've noticed in, in previous interviews if you kind of find yourself thinking, well I'm sure I've said something along those lines, sometimes it's useful to kind of just reiterate comments you've already made because often within the research process it's just useful to have that as evidence as that is your response. So the first one is just, you know how would you describe your kind of artistic practice generally?**

R: Yes, so I mean for quite a long period of time my practice has been focused on exploring event and phenomena linked to groups of people who have been involved in some kind of activity which has changed a place or impacted upon a place and focus of that for many years has been, has been music, so quite often working with music communities or sub-cultural sort of music communities often they're, when I say communities, very informal communities to explore a subject that is very close to, to that community and to work with that community of people to develop a work, whatever that might be whether it's a film, whether it's an event, installation, archive and I sort of put archives within installations, yes whatever form, form their work takes and allowing research and process to drive where a project goes, so usually sort of through working in a particular context and working with a particular group of people and the conversations with that group of people that directs where a project is going to go and the final form that it's going to take. So yes, quite often heritage, so because this is linked to heritage, heritage, I say heritage, history/heritage is a large part of, of what is out there, the heart of those projects and when I talk about history and heritage that can be something that's happened ten years ago, fifteen years ago and that's equally, I feel that that's equally as valid as something which happened over a hundred years ago, two hundred years ago, three hundred years ago, you know the idea of exploring kind of recent history is, is as valid as kind of going, going back and exploring and trying not to look at, I think the difficulty with trying to explore something within recent history and sometimes something which it's kind of more distant is that, is the element of nostalgia and trying not to create something which just dwells on, or verges on nostalgia, which I think can be quite easy to fall into some times and certainly in projects, past projects that I've made there is an element of nostalgia and I wouldn't even try to kind of, say that there isn't but I've always tried to sort of move, also within a project try to move away from that. So, sorry I was just about to say something then, it's slightly, it's just gone from my head, there's always, I

think within the projects, past projects that I've made trying to in, working within a particular place and with a particular group of people about a particular thing that's happened in that place is also trying to move, kind of beyond the subject as well to try and bring something new to whatever it is, the thoughts about that thing that's happened, the discussions around that thing that's happened as well as trying to, in many ways trying to kind of celebrate it as well.

I2: I mean what's interesting I think that issue about nostalgia is really interesting and it might be that we touch back on that because we have, we do have a couple of questions to, which particularly are around this issue of heritage, so it's great that you've raised that but I'd kind of like to come back, come back to that kind of question. So, so thinking about that kind of, creative process, you have talked a little bit about this already in the interview process but can you just describe your, your thought process, is there a way that you can just talk a little bit about your thought process in how you, what happens, whether it's the site visit, whether it's the, the online research kind of, what happens between that and developing the idea, so can you, you know how do you approach the commission?

R: Going from, going from the, sorry, just to make sure I answer that question correctly, going from the initial research and writing a brief like how to?

I2: This is more, I guess I suppose there's two sides to the research, there's one which is the practical, how do commissions happen and how do, how does this research process help us report on making those, that practical process better but then there is the other side of it which is around, kind how, what is the kind of creative practice that happens, this is much more about your creative practice, you know, so how do you approach thinking about the commission, how does the idea develop, how does it emerge, that's?

I1: Yes, why, why do you, because you do go for, for these commissions in heritage, what, what, why is it that, what's the thing that makes you interested in it?

R: I think, I think for me the idea of, I mean I enjoy the, I enjoy the research process and I and it's always a dangerous territory, I think the research stage because it's so easy to get sucked into the research that then pulling away from it and actually making something can be quite difficult, you know that point in which you go, actually this just, I can't, the research just can't go on, you have to make decisions and things have to happen and I'd say in this case it's, there's a little bit less of that because I had to put a brief, sorry, I had to put a proposal in with an idea and it wasn't an open way of working in, whereas some of the, some of the projects I've worked on in the past I suppose have had a little bit more of a kind of residency way of working, whereas like, ok, we'd like you to come to this place and do something related to this place and those open ended kind of residencies, commissions that's when the kind of like, you know research there's a point were you go right, no I've got to, I've got to stop the research and actually make decisions as to where it's going. This is slightly different because there is a relatively fixed, as you know from what I said earlier, so relatively fixed because actually I've tried to leave it open enough were I there's certain stuff or a lot of stuff that could happen within the idea and I don't quite know where that's going to go. So and in some ways that's quite nice coming into a commission or a project going, well actually I've done the bit, the decision, partly the decision making has

had to happen because I had to put in a proposal in order to be selected. I think also in terms of, so as well as kind of enjoying the research process, I think the thing I've, with many of the projects I've worked on in the past and with this project as well, this commission is that, I suppose there's always, I always enjoy the process of trying to find something which both responds to a heritage site, says something about the heritage site and it's history but that also feels like it moves on from that heritage site in a way, I suppose with an element that slightly and subtly grates again that heritage site and I think that's really important, certainly for me that it's not, you know doesn't just, you know, not to go for something that feels overly comfortable I suppose in, in the heritage site, is to have something that, that is, I suppose slightly awkward and that jars with that, the heritage site. I think because again I could be completely wrong on this but from, you know from a visitors' point of view I kind of think that's going to be something that sticks with them more if you kind of immediately, you are sort of throwing a kind of questioning into like, ok, I don't quite understand why this is like this is this place, yes.

I1: Yes, yes.

I2: Ok, so is this different from, this particular commission is it different from a way of working that you've had before, is it, does it feel similar, do you have to adapt from one to another but how far does this one, how far is this different from other commissions?

R: I mean at this stage it's quite difficult to say I think, I think the, it's, I would say the bulk of things that I've worked on in the past have had, come out of the, which I've just explain the more kind of open process of like, ok, we'd like to come and work in this place, whatever that is whether it's a building, whether it's a kind of, broader geographical area and respond to it, this is a, this has been a bit more defined because the process has required that, you know in terms of having to kind of, formulate an idea in order to be selected. So it's probably, yes, I've kind of gone down that route less I think with projects that I've worked on, I mean, I mean Hexham I had to do that as well, so the Hexham Gaol commission I had to do that and it was an idea quite fixed and in some ways I suppose the idea very much followed the original proposal but there was still so much in question with that, I have no idea what these songs are going to sound like and that what it feels a little bit like with this one as well, it's like ok, fairly, fifty per cent know where the idea is going to be, go and end up and, and what, you know what the final thing will be but the other fifty per cent I don't know, that's probably quite a good way, quite a good division to have.

I2 Definitely, ok. What does success look like for you in terms of this project.

R: In terms of this project, yes, well yes, a good question at this stage, I think that and partly to kind of reiterate something that I've just said is that whatever it is at the end, however it kind of turns out, the final outcome that it's, it does have that element of slightly rubbing up against the, the place in a way that's interesting and that hopefully that it's something that, for a kind of large part of the audience, visitors to that place engages quite, whilst hopefully it engages them fairly rapidly that yes, that it's there's still, there's an element within it that yes, it does, just sort of brush up or rub against the venue and what they are and what the Church Conservation Trust is doing and I'm saying that in a positive way, I don't mean that

in a negative way of just trying to do something for the sake of you know but there should, should be, yes, should be something that's slightly, sort of jars.

I1: Great, that leads on to audience.

I2: It does.

R: Ok.

I1: Which is great, very nice thank you. So who do you see as the audience for your work, for this one, for this one.

R: For this one, yes, I mean I've got to say I, I don't quite know because of the complexity, because of the complexities over how it's going to work in that place, I don't know, because I don't know how it's going to work in terms of the place being open, when it's going to be open, how often it's going to be open because unlike Gibside and Cherryburn who have their regular opening hours and everything, Holy Trinity doesn't have that and so I just don't know, I don't know how that's going to work.

I1: Did you get from the site visit an idea of what they thought the audience was, was, what they felt the audience was?

R: I mean certainly I, I think from them they hope that it's going to be, it's going to engage the people from the immediate local and but also kind of have, you know the sort of ripples of the, the commission have, have a kind of wider reach as well but I did feel like probably their priority is engaging, engaging people from the immediate local and Sunderland.

I1: When you are going to make this work, so I'm just going to ask you another question who do you imagine or do you imagine someone watching it and who is that?

R: I don't have like a, I don't have like a specific audience kind of type in mind, if that's what you're asking.

I1: Yes, what am I asking with that, I find that I've got, do you think, I'm going off piste a bit but do you, do you, do you consider the audience in your work, is the audience important in the making of your or developing your work and the making of your work?

R: I'm going to come up with probably the worst answer which is yes and no.

I1: Ok.

R: I get, in past projects, again this is probably slightly different particularly projects that have come about through building up relationships with a particular community, the very loose communities I was talking about before, I get very conscious of what that community might, how they might interpret what the final outcome is, you know and what their relationship might be to that final thing and that doesn't come down to a simple thing of whether they like it or not because in some ways I think that's sort of irrelevant, I think the sort of thing that for me that worries me most, I say kind of worries, you know I get really concerned about in the project is whether it feels like it matters to them or not and so quite often I'd say my audience that I have initially in mind is that group of people because I've built up a relationship with them and they've built up a relationship with the project

and that will happen to a certain extent with this as well because whoever becomes involved in the project in terms of, because there's a large element of performing within in, so working with, with various musicians, groups of people who are going to be involved in, in creating the work and possibly in terms of, because I was talking about through conversations that some of the, the conversations will likely be used in terms of text or the words which are used to some whatever, within the piece will come out of conversations with local people about the stuff that matters to them, things which are going on now as well as things which link historically to that building, so whether it comes from vestry papers whatever, obviously that's kind of easy stuff because that's in the past, there's no one to kind of, there's no one to worry about in terms of using those historical artefacts but certainly people who are living in the area, sort of performing in the piece I would probably still get to that point where I'll, I will have that concern about, I wonder what they're going make of this thing at the end. So I guess the initial audience is the people who are involved in it and then outside of that you have, I'm sort of talking about this in sort of terms of I guess the, how I've experienced past projects and then outside of that you have a sort of, I suppose a swathe ring of people who are then associated to the people who have become involved in a project and then outside of that you have a public audience who are just coming in because they've heard about it and don't really have a direct relationship to it and, and I probably think about that audience a lot less than I think about the audience which are closer to the project.

I2: That's really interesting.

I1: It's such an interesting area this, Matt, because particularly with you and your practice which comes over that you do have, you feel a sense of responsibility for the community that you work with in the making of the work and yet me as somebody who works with organisations, they are often talking about audience and that's the first, you know, why I asked you to imagine it is that as a curator I have to imagine an audience, I have to, I work the other way around in a funny sort of way and yet, it's a really key one for you, a key question for you because you're, you're as you say your audience it grows from the nucleus of, of the, of the work and the idea of the work and that rippling affect that you see.

R: Oh, definitely that's, I mean that's the easiest way to put it.

I1: Absolutely, I can see that.

R: If you were to do it visually it is kind of like, you know you have the next, just like sort of concentric rings and it's just like, I guess that's how I think about audience and the key bit is the sort of the bullseye in the middle and that as it goes out I probably think about audience, the audience left and probably out the furthest ring is the, the general public who just come to the place because, I guess who Holy Trinity is a bit of a funny one because it doesn't have really a kind of audience associated to the place at the moment because it's not an active church, it's not heritage site in a kind of open heritage site, so it's like well, who is the audience linked to Holy Trinity of which I then.

I1: I don't think it knows, you know if you ask Gibside what their audience is they want to increase their audience which means they want to increase the footfall.

I2: Which interestingly, sorry to cut in there, is in a way the complete inverse of what you've just described, the most important people are people who are entirely outside of the concentric rings or the biggest ring are the people who don't just walk in and they're, they're in the middle because they're the most important, so there's something really interesting about that conceptualisation.

I1: Very interesting.

I2: How they kind of intercept.

I1: Yes, which actually makes Churches Conservation Trust the one at Holy Trinity quite a good one for you, I think really because it, I think it, what they, I think what they are saying is that it is about you know, a community, a nucleus, it's not about, a interesting, a very interesting question. I think we've answered the next one.

I2: Yes, I think we have.

I1: And how, I don't, let's see what you say about this one, how do you imagine that, lets say Amanda and the volunteers, how do you imagine that they will engage with your work? You can answer that any way you feel.

R: I mean hopefully there will be a sort of, good level of engagement during the making and the process of making, well that's what I, at this stage that's what I would kind of hope happens in that they, certainly in the initial stage that they kind of engage with kind of informing me about the place in sort of, sort of all facets of the place, not just the building but you know, what, how it engages and how they engage with the local area and people who are living in the area and then hope, I mean hopefully if will kind of get to a point were in a way they've, through that engagement with them, that they, I get to a point were I feel like I can just kind of go off and, and the sort of, project is running by itself and those sort of, building up relationships with, with people, I guess in order to sort of, get to where I want to with the project, that they've sort of set me going and I can just go, yes, go off and the project will be kind of, running by itself or under my own steam and then, and then in a way the sort of kind of, reengagement with them once it's got to a point where I guess things have started to become more real i.e. there is more, there's stuff, in this case, with this project, there's stuff to hear, you know that they can hear how the composition might sound or how it's been transposed, you know and what, what that means and what it becomes.

I1: We were at the very beginning, it will be interesting to see how that, you answer that at the end.

I2: Back to the beginning.

I1: The big one but which, Matt has.

I2: Yes, ok. So clearly a key interest for us is in this heritage contemporary art, so we're interest in your, your thinking about heritage, so the question if you like, what does the word heritage mean to you, now that's not necessarily a question that's related to you as an artist, with a capital A, it's more about you as a person, you know what does heritage mean to you?

R: I mean when I hear the words heritage and again to reiterate something that I said earlier, is that you know, that can be something that's happened a matter of years ago, through to however far back you want to go and I think that idea of you know, sort of sounds like a bit of a kind of, you know oxymoron is the right word but sort of contemporary heritage, I wouldn't sort of put those two together you know, I'm massively intrigued and interested in that area of like, ok, we you know, the stuff that shifts on, you know, stuff that happened kind of ten years ago that's had a massive impact on whatever, someone's life, an area, the things that have happened and exploring that is equally as interesting and valid as kind of going back however many years you want to go back, however many hundreds of year to go back and I suppose the sort of idea of heritage it's that, it's that sort of, it's something that kind of I suppose defines people lives at whatever point that, that is, whenever it happens, you know again sort of in a contemporary sense and sort of going back, back way further and I think that sort of idea of like the stuff that sort of, defines people and the way they are and the way they live in a way that's sort of how, how I understand heritage.

I2: So, looking (inaudible 0.1.11.18.0) in a slightly different order, so in terms of that understanding of, of heritage sites because we've talked a little bit about heritage sites, what's your previous engagement with heritage sites and your kind of personal history and kind of the question really relating to this idea of, yes, so what's your personal background in terms of being taken to or just visiting historic places, heritage places in your leisure activity or just generally.

R: And this is kind of outside of artist, being an artist, I mean yes, I kind of remember as a, a kid being taken around a lot of castles and from my memory sort of less kind of museums, no, no kind of museums as well, you know and it's probably you know, the typical thing as a kid where you feel like you're being dragged around those places and you're not really, massively engaging with them, it feels like something more that parents, parents are kind of wanting to do rather than you as a kid and now that I have kids probably doing exactly the same thing with them but you know just trying to think like, just a couple of months ago going on to, going to Vindolanda and sort of taking the kids around there but actually what was really great, I think you know it was kind of interesting as someone who now has kids and sort of that idea of how, how we as parents sort of, I guess engage or try to sort of get kids or kids to engage with heritage, going around Vindolanda and you know trying to make it as exciting as possible when actually, probably from a kids perspective they can't see very much, there's a lot of stone sticking out the ground, just like you know, trying to explain this stuff but what was brilliant about that was then coming away and our eldest now, you know suddenly he's just fixated on Romans and it's like, it's his birthday this weekend and we're having to have a Roman birthday party, Roman themed birthday party and it's like, you know actually there's moments were you kind of go, oh, I'm really not too sure how much they're getting from this but then you kind of realise actually they've soaked up quite a lot of stuff and actually it does have an influence on them, an impact on them. So I guess sort of talking from a very sort of, current sort of, personal point of view I was probably finding myself going along to the heritage site, sort of heritage sites in inverted commas, the kind of what might be sort of deemed more kind of, heritage sites because, because of partly because of being a parent and kind of finding that actually you know that stuff you suddenly find yourself doing and then slipping sort of slightly into me as an artist at the same time because of

stuff I've just recently worked on, working on something in Plymouth and talking about this idea of sort of contemporary heritage, working on a project which was linked to, partly linked to the loss of live music venues in Plymouth, which is not a Plymouth specific thing it's happening all over the place but because I was working in Plymouth and that was something that came up a lot in conversations the project kind of started to revolve around five music venues, one that was very, very recently lost due to the closure of an old bus station and the redevelopment of that site into a leisure complex, a multiplex sort of restaurants and cinema and so on, through to a kind of venue in the seventies that now has a social housing scheme built on it and sort of revisiting those sites with bands and doing stuff on those sites, you know that was a sort of, I suppose a sort of claiming of a, in terms of the project, a claiming of a sort of and trying to underscore a bit of recent heritage and to kind of remind I suppose in some ways remind people of these things which have happened and the current things which are happening and not trying to sort of, put it in a sort of light of like, oh, it's really bad this stuff has happened and these venues have been pushed out but actually it's just, it's partly about, you know how, how a scene and these kind of places just evolve and they kind of move on, I haven't put that particularly clearly but so, yes.

I2: I think we've covered.

I1: Yes, you've said some really interesting things actually, for me the things about nostalgia and, and that which are really, really interesting about heritage and how, you know and your practice you know, it does, as you say it does position itself quite firmly within the historic context or even if it's a contemporary heritage, you know that I was quite interested in that as we go, go along because that's kind of where I am, I'm obviously not an artist but it's where our position, it's quite a, why do you do that, you know why do you do that, sort of you have to think about it, therapy session. That's great, that's great, that's really good, really, really good.

I2: Thank you.

I1: Thank you for that, you've thrown up some really interesting.

[End of Recording].