

Interview 103 - Anon. - 21 minutes (# hr. transcription)

(In all transcripts I have edited out ums, likes, ahhs and stutters from both the interviewer and interviewee unless it was deemed they added to the context of the response.)

Alex: When did you view the exhibition?

Anon: It was about two weeks ago. Yeah, I don't remember.

Alex: Do you happen to remember for about how long you were in the exhibit?

Anon: Ow, about 15 minutes.

Alex: Did you view the exhibition with anyone?

Anon: Yes.

Alex: Who did you view it with?

Anon: With my partner. But I did go around and look at it by myself. We didn't look at everything together, so. We turned up and then we wondered around individually.

Alex: Did you at any time have any conversations at the exhibit?

Anon: Not at the time, but we did afterwards.

Alex: Are you happy to share any of those?

Anon: I'm happy to share, I was a bit surprised by [their] reaction, but, and I don't want to offend (laugh), cause it is certainly not my reaction but [they] thought that the research was a bit pointless. So I am really sorry about that but that, I was like really surprised. But [they are] a scientist, so we had a conversation about why it was not pointless in my opinion. And I was like, I was completely taken aback, I was like you are normally quite, ah, open to these things, but [they were] quite negative, but I think that possibly more reflects the fact that [they're] very busy at the moment. So, it was quite surprising, [they] just kinda came out with "why would anybody want to look at that stuff, what relevance does it got to medicine", but it did make me think about what relevance it does have to medicine, so it was quite useful because I know much about graphic medicine, and then [they] said something like "well if I was ill I wouldn't go look at loads of cartoons, would i?," and I said "I don't think that's the point, as far as I know," but I don't know much about graphic medicine and how it is used, but I believe it is used more in a public health context for education and for wellbeing. Just for artistic reasons, but I am a bit vague on what it is actually before I must say, but clearly you know, clearly you need to engage with the medical services if you wanted help directly with your health but maybe graphic medicine

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does have a role in education etcetera. So that was quite, yeah, that was probably a string that you might not have expected straight, right away. And I was surprised at the reaction which is so dismissive. I felt the need to defend this work I must say, so yeah.

Alex: And was there any other, because that's very interesting, was there any other kind of like reasons you thought of why this might be important or why it might be worthwhile?

Anon: What from my perspective?

Alex: Yeah and in your conversation.

Anon: Ah, I don't find it of great relevance to me personally, I must say. I'm a bit like well what is it for? It's kind of art and so art is always good to have but how does it relate to medicine and wellbeing, I am not entirely sure either, although it does sort of, looking at any kind of art does make you think about things, but, it's kinda, it's slightly baffling to me. I must say. Even though I have been to previous seminars of yours, so I feel as if I know a little bit about it, but I am still not that convinced that it is of great relevance, not to me anyway.

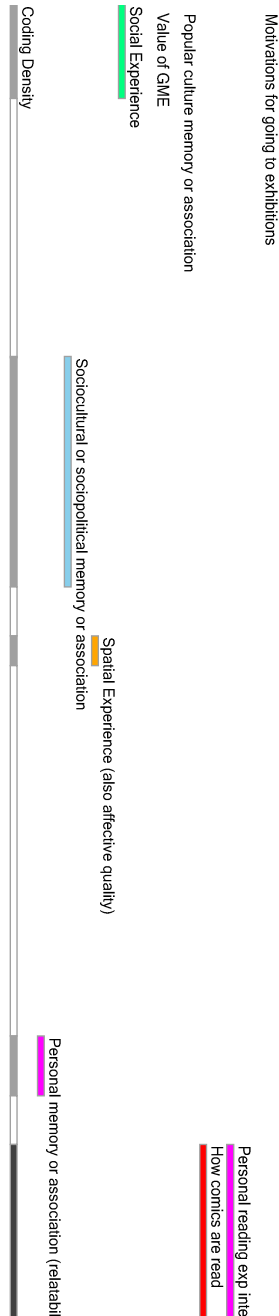
Alex: So, do you remember what order you viewed the exhibition in?

Anon: I think, I sort of dotted around a bit. How do I describe what order? I mean when you say do I remember what order, how do you want me to describe? I think I started on the left hand side, I think, and then went around, you know, and then sort of behind, so I think it was like that, but I think I did dot at one point. Ah, maybe I really didn't understand that one and I went back to look at a few things. So I was a bit free flowing. And I don't actually remember seeing your sketch (picked up catalogue) at the start. Cause is that supposed to give you an idea of the order you are supposed to go in? No...it's not it's just a plan. So, yeah that's fine, but I don't remember seeing that.

Alex: Can you describe your experience viewing the exhibition?

Anon: Right, well, this is helpful this booklet, because you see stuff like that one, that's just a gray blob to me, I just don't remember that, that means nothing to me (video), nothing, again you see, that means nothing to me (another VAST/O work). I just think what is it about and then I get a little bit irritated because "what is it?" (laugh). Um, I am being very honest aren't I, but you know me, I am quite honest.

I did, I think I started off with this one where there's this, Wild Child, I think I remember looking at that and I was trying to work out the story, but I didn't really understand, but I remember that one, because obviously there is some story to be told there and there is obviously some happiness going on, so I sort imagined scenarios, and then I thought I don't really understand what's going on, but maybe



it's the sort of thing where there is no one answer and you think, and you come up with your own explanation when you look at it, but it was sort of slightly depressing maybe. So I thought, oh, I feel a bit sad now.

So I went around, but I don't remember a lot to be honest, a part from feeling a little bit baffled. And then I read that one and looked at that one and thought, ah, I still not getting, its still not meaning a lot to me, to be honest, and I thought. Oh. I don't have a lot to say (Vast/o works).

But when I was, when what I was interested to see and noticed that beforehand was Raised on Ritalin. Because I guessed that that was about ADHD, which indeed it is, so I was interested to see that one and I understood that one. And I thought, well I am only understanding this because it is kinda a more explicit format that were use to, with cartoons that I am obviously well use to looking at from childhood, so I thought yeah, I thought that was really interesting, so the ones that are more artistic and vague to me I kinda felt baffled at and slightly irritated. And then one that was in a more conventional format with more text I suppose, I did enjoy looking at that because I really interesting. And I don't know if it was presumably it was about artist's own experience, I'm guessing, maybe, and I thought that was really interesting because my partner, does I think, have some of these behaviours where the world is seen a little differently from the way I see the world. A little more chaotic and um, which is why I was interested in looking at this one because I am pretty sure my partner has got ADHD, undiagnosed, if it is a thing indeed, *atoll*, cause I am still a little bit on the fence about whether it's a thing that needs treatment or could benefit from treatment or whether it is just a brain and everybody has got different brains, so I don't know, I am just interested because I think some of the behaviours in this are quite, um, interesting about stuff that happens in my life and looking back maybe sometimes might have been easier if there'd been, if I'd kinda realised that before, but then the person, I'm anonymising, [my partner], [they are] very resistant to this kind of thing being treated, [they] would rather not, [they] would rather just forge on in life and [they] would probably kind of say that this, there is nothing wrong with [them], so (laugh), so it is all a little bit controversial in that sense between us. Although I think [they] might, because I have mentioned it a few times in the last few years, and I think we might have reached some sort of, [they] said something a few week ago that might of, suggest that [they] might realise that [they] might have a slightly interesting brain, but [they] would never want to do anything about it or treat it or anything and. But I am interested in it because I think it causes a few problems. Yeah, so, that one I was interested in, I thought yeah, some of that really makes sense to me and, not exactly the same as my experience with my partner, but some of it I think, yeah I can see that you have a similarly complicated brain. So that was good. I enjoyed that one.

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And, that one, I remember seeing that one, but it didn't really leave an impression because I don't really remember what it is about, but I remember thinking it was quite creative (Batey?). And I sort of understood something about that.

And, then again, this journey to wellness, well it was okay, I don't know, I understood it, but I wasn't very moved by it or anything.

I don't remember seeing Anxiety (Cummings), maybe I blocked that out, cause, yeah spidery legs, yeah, looking at that right now makes me feel slightly anxious myself.

And actually I just remembered, I had a thought on another one, can't remember what it was now. I don't think a lot of it made a great impression. Oh this one, yeah, with the, it's not here, but some of it with, when the skull is there (Inner Voices), I remember thinking, "oh I don't like that I find it really scary and unpleasant), but I could appreciate the artistic value in that, cause its, I could appreciate that it's got effort put into it, I am not saying that others don't have effort, but to me it was more, it was an artistic statement, but it made me feel uncomfortable and didn't know what the artist was trying to say, but it definitely made me think "oh, I don't really like that". Yeah so that's quite a strong response I had.

And then the more cartoony, Panic Zine, yeah that was entertaining and interesting, again more conventional maybe, I quite enjoyed looking at that one.

I can't think of anything else to say at the moment. About my responses.

Alex: And you didn't do any drawing?

Anon: No, I don't think we could have done that. I think we were in a bit of a rush.

Alex: Why did you come view the exhibition?

Anon: Because I am interested in your research, because you have spoken about it and it new thing to me. And I thought I would like to see Alex's exhibition, see what's there, and because it was you, and I like to support students. So, two reasons really.

Alex: Was there anything else that you haven't shared yet that came to your mind when viewing the exhibition?

Anon: Hmm, not that I can remember right now, but if I remember anything I will let you know.

Alex: And a couple of these last questions I have for you might seem a little repetitious, so if you've answered that it's alright to say that. But, how did you experience the topic of anxiety in the exhibition?

Anon: I think I am a bit un-PC about anxiety. I think I am very "oh for god's sake, get over yourselves", you know, I know I am very lucky, it's not that I don't have an

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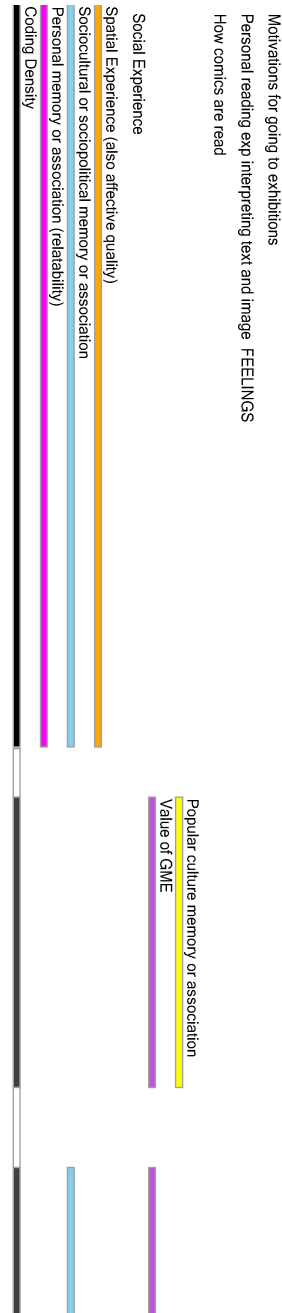
appreciation of anxiety, because my mum, my mum wasn't anxious as such, but she did suffer from mental illness, so it's not like I am dismissing mental illness, I feel as if I know a little bit about mental illness because of my own experience being brought up by my mum and also my father was a psychiatric nurse, so then there is that also, so brought up with that concept of mental illness being a thing, so it's not that I am dismissive in that way, its just, I just feel, life is difficult, forge on, you know, so I get a little bit irritated, but this is just my personal view because there is a bit of a conflict with the role I've got where we've all got to be very touchy-feeling-caring and I errr, with me thinking "oh for god's sake". You know life's tough just get on with it, just get over it and then you'll feel better, so I'm a little bit conflicted so, yeah. I gotta care you see at work, got to have my professional head on, but honestly, I don't feel as if our role as [job role] is to deal with mental health but our role is to identity if there is a problem we send the student, suggest, that there are services, that are the experts rather than us. But, there is a new bit of conflict in the organization because it is more and more insistent on everybody's responsibility and I kinda don't feel it's our responsibility to have us foisted on us as [job role]. So it's a little bit of weird position. There's a lot more about, I mean its good that there is a lot more openness about mental health, I fully agree with, I just don't want it foisted on me as part of my role because I am an administrator. Sometimes the boundaries are a little bit unclear now. So I suppose going around the exhibition I am thinking, rather grumpily, I would be prefer, I would be more interested if it was about like a bad heart or something practical, you know. Or some other medical complaint, bowel cancer, I would be really interested in that. (laugh) Because it is about anxiety, "jesus", not another one about mental health, so I am a bit grumpy.

Alex: So how did you think of the use of comics in exhibition?

Anon: Oh, I don't have a problem with that. I think its something, I think comics are used for all sorts of literature and ideas and concepts now so I feel as though I am quite open to that probably, so it's a good way of communicating. You see, but I am, having said that, that's a comic to me, that's a comic, I don't know how you define comics really, I don't know if that's a comic (flipping through catalogue) or if that's you know, art, I don't know whether you set a boundaries on where comic ends and art begins. And that's obviously that's conventional. To me that conventional format is a comic whereas some gray blobs that to me is not what I would call a comic so I am a bit unsure about that aspect.

Alex: And what is your impression of exhibitions as a way to communicate about mental health, anxiety, and medical stuff?

Anon: I mean that's interesting, I don't know, I am a bit confused about who they are aimed at and when. So, I don't know, I don't know enough about it you see. So I think yeah, interesting concept, but yeah how do you use it practically? Which I suppose is slightly [my partner's] point, it's an exhibition, yeah you go in if you're interested and you have thoughts about it, but how is it used to actually treat or help



people? I don't know enough about it, I don't know if you would use it in a clinic or if its, if you would just sort of set it up somewhere and expect people who are interested, and possibly anxious, to come there or what, I've got no idea. So I'm a little con...I'm not clear on that. I was wondering about that. And I was wondering about the absolute relevance, because you know I think any art is fun and interesting and everything, but I'm not sure, but I am not convinced of its relevance in the healthcare service, necessarily, but made that is a blinkered sort of attitude.

Alex: And then I've just got one last question, which you might feel that you have already answered it, but overall what was your impression of the exhibit?

Anon: Interesting. Positive. Slightly baffled at some of it. but I am often like that with art (laugh). I often leave an art gallery going "what?..." There's bits that you like, bits that you respond to normally and bits that you think "what the hell was that?" So I was a bit like that. I was a bit kinda, well some of it I understand, some of it leaves me really cold, some of it I'm like I really don't understand something going on that I've got no idea what, so I was a bit confused I suppose, but overall positive, yeah. Positive but confused, would sum it up in some aspects.

Alex: Wonderful (smilely tone), was there anything that you want to share with me based on the exhibition or the topics that I didn't touch on in the interview?

Anon: Not that I can think of. I did wonder, this isn't really relevant, but, ah, I was wondering, this is more about your project, not about my response or anything, I wondered if you were going to ask people from different walks of the community, because you get, obviously we are all likely to be the same type of person that is hanging around the university and working here or students here or whatever. I was wondering about that how you make sure that your sample is board enough or whether that matters, but that is more a question for you and your supervisors. Nothing to do with my response, but I was wondering about that. That's about all I can think of. I can't think of anything else that I was thinking about the exhibition.

[End]

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