

Interview 54 – Mara - 20 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?

Mara: Well I just came from it and I also it for the first time, that was Thursday I think, last Thursday. But I just came from it because I wanted to remember it all.

Alex: For how long do you think you viewed the exhibition both times?

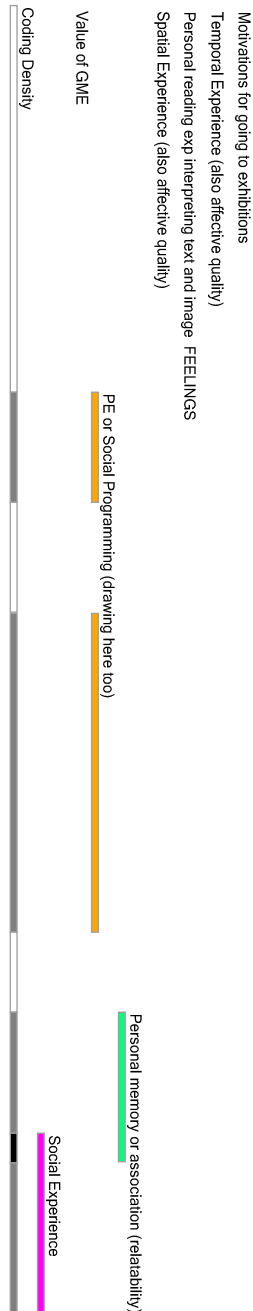
Mara: I would say the first time I was like for focused on the scavenger hunt, so I wasn't like, um, observing it. But this time I really wanted to understand every piece of art and we stayed there for 15 minutes.

Alex: so the Scavenger hunt, when you did that, I think its interesting that you said that that wasn't the same as if you were to go view it. So, if you could explain how that experience was?

Mara: Ah, well, its because when you are doing the scavenger hunt you are not, you are understanding, you are looking for something, right? But you are not given the option to understand the pieces by yourself. Whereas if you gave me like pieces of the art and I was to look at those pictures inside, so I was more driven through the scavenger hunt to understand some things. For example the first one, I remember, because there was a question in the sign language type of thing, so I was like okay this is related to someone who cannot talk, but then today I saw it back again and was like okay maybe this is not related to sign language maybe this is related to, I don't know, some kind of hostile situation with the mother or like, it was a different experience.

Alex: And how would you describe that experience with the scavenger hunt, the game, as far as what was your impression of that in an exhibition?

Mara: Well I have an emotional connection with scavenger hunts in museums because when I was a kid in Columbia all the museums have scavenger hunts and when I was going with my parents I always did that. And I did one by myself once at the university for children, so I was more focusing on doing it right, doing it quickly. I told Ranti I won. But, yeah it was more like to look for the pieces that were given and maybe I was reading more the descriptions of the picture, because I remember Ranti told me "Oh why did you tell me the description of the picture I was trying to understand it by myself," whereas I was trying to look for clues in the description of



the pictures, so I also didn't give myself the opportunity to try and understanding it. Whereas I "okay, where is the facts," you know?

Alex: So that was a next set of questions that I had, did you view the exhibition with anyone?

Mara: Yeah, the first one with Ranti and the second one today with Alex (Sasha).

Alex: Do you remember any conversations you had with Ranti besides the one where you gave away the information?

Mara: Well, we loved the piece about the brain (Batey) when you have like idea, I give up, it's not working, I gave up, because it is really relatable to the research like journey. So we had a long conversation with her being like "ah, this is amazing, I want this" I also showed it to Alex (Sasha) today so that resulted in conversation around it today. With Ranti, specifically, we also were discussing the piece where there were xrays. Because it was kinda hard for us to understand like the meaning of that piece. And today was the same; I think I had the same conversation with both of them. We didn't quite understand because in one column there's, it's probably just us with engineering and square minded, but in one drawing we had letters and the other there were xrays and we didn't quite understand that.

Alex: And was there any additional conversations you had with Alex (Sasha) today?

Mara: Well he was the one that pointed out the kinda of relationship with the mother situation (Wild Child) because I was describing the first comic to him and I was like "okay so I believe her mother has her but she cannot talk and I mean for me the piece that make the whole thing have sense is when she I going to like language therapy, or what I guessed was language therapy, and then she goes back. And I was thinking okay maybe she is frustrated because she cannot talk, but then Alex (Sasha) was like yeah but maybe this was a trauma. He was the one that pointed out maybe this is another meaning for the piece.

Alex: And was there any carry on from you or a response once that was brought up as a possibility?

Mara: Well I think I kept thinking about it, but I was like okay maybe. I was like "yeah...maybe...", because the end was, but I think in my mind I was still thinking, I was trying to give the story a meaning, so I understood hostage situation and she is rescued by the policeman, she goes through all this language therapy and then she goes back to this lady, so I was like okay I don't get this. I was still processing when he said this was probably a bad relationship with the mom. I was like yeah but still why would she come back to her. That was still in my mind for, probably that's why there wasn't any follow up, I was still processing that.

Motivations for going to exhibitions
Temporal Experience (also affective quality)
Personal reading exp interpreting text and image FEELINGS
Spatial Experience (also affective quality)
Personal memory or association (reliability)
PE or Social Programming (drawing here too)
Value of GME
Social Experience
Coding Density

Alex: I am really interested in the comment you made about being from the engineer background and being square minded and I wondered if you could speak more to that perhaps with works that did communicate?

Mara: Yeah, I think, well I said it twice, the back wall (gm wall) somehow, well it was more comic wise anyways, it was less abstract for me to understand, so that wall is easy to understand, you read, you feel, and you connect more with it, because, for example, the kind of flower (the rose) one that's in there that's trying to express, what I wrote...claustrophobia and things, it's hard for one to like feel how some with claustrophobia feels, but if you put like characters expressing, like, with comics it was way clearer for me. so yeah it think that the comic one, which I was kinda sad that it was just one wall with the good comics that I like which are on the wall which is not part of the main one, you have to go back. I was like that's sad that it's here and part of the main view, but yeah those where the ones that were clearer for me.

Alex: And do you think that, um, because you said something really interesting about that it is really hard to show people how you experience claustrophobia, do you think that there was anything in particular that you thought was attempting to do that or did that even in a small way?

Mara: Sorry I didn't understand the question.

Alex: So you talked about the flower piece (Mara: yes) trying to experience claustrophobia (Mara: ah, yes, yes), was there anything in the exhibition that tried to do that?

Mara: Claustrophobia exactly, no, but I understood the anxiety pieces. Like those were, well they couldn't be clearer, there is someone there expressing their feelings, through an exaggeration of their reality and you can see like through their eyes, right, so it was super clear to see, and claustrophobia...maybe there were, the panel where there is someone and there is a lot of written parts (Body Becomes a Place?) that was way clearer than the flower. But, maybe because the sentences were trying to be like too poetic or something, so it was more like self-conscious and all of these things, so that's why I didn't feel like I experienced like, "if I were someone with claustrophobia", as I did "if I were someone with anxiety. I can totally see this".

Alex: Do you remember the order you went in when you viewed, the first time you said you went with the scavenger hunt, the second with Alex (Sasha) do you remember what order you viewed the exhibition in?

Mara: The same one. Started with here at the right with the girl who cannot speak (wild child) and then go through the whole thing and then the last one.

Alex: Why were you interested in viewing the exhibit?

Motivations for going to exhibitions
Temporal Experience (also affective quality)
Personal reading exp interpreting text and image FEELINGS
Spatial Experience (also affective quality)
Personal memory or association (reliability)
PE or Social Programming (drawing here too)
Value of GME
Social Experience
Coding Density

Mara: Well because it is your work. Can I say that? (Me: Yeah) Because it is your work. I don't know we were talking about it. We talk about our research and you would be interested to see my research as well. And, today I was like, I realised doing the scavenger hunt I wasn't taking the exhibition in. I was just marking, like checking boxes, so I was like okay I don't feel I was present in the exhibition. Just fun and that's why it's a kid's activity I suppose, but I was, I didn't feel I'd taken in the exhibition. I thought, that's why I told Alex (Sasha) I need to go back because I don't feel like I really understood anything.

Alex: Other than what we talked about was there anything that came to mind when viewing the exhibit? And this could be absolutely anything.

Mara: I think that you can get that from my doodle. I found that background noise really disturbing. Especially when you are in the anxiety, because I reacted so much with the anxiety part of the exhibition and then you have this background noise that is not relaxing at all. So, that was like the only thing that I didn't particularly enjoy.

Alex: And so it was your doodle that had the (Mara: *yeahyeahyeah*)...with the...

Mara: Yeah I didn't like the noise, when I was reading all these comics, and I again I could like feel if I were someone with anxiety, so easy to like take into yourself, but if you are trying to put yourself into those people's shoes and you have this noise which is really stressful, it was like "Aghhh, can we shut off the tv, please?" That's like the only thing I remember like "aghhh".

Alex: Did you have any other drawings that you included?

Mara: No, just, just that one, because when you asked me what are my thoughts about the exhibition (community comic on open night) I went straight to the background noise.

Alex: And so I think that leads into this next question, you might have answered it already, but how did you experience the topic of spatial anxieties?

Mara: Yeah I already answered that (laugh). Yeah no...actually there was an interesting discussion with Alex (Sasha), but I know, this is probably Alex's (Sasha) interview and I'm just giving his, his thoughts on this, but he was saying when we were looking at the comic in Asda and then this guy (Panic Zine), so Alex's (Sasha) intake was like from the other people's perspective, so oh yeah there are people there like too close to themselves and they don't even notice who is around them and I said no I think the idea is that this little guy doesn't want to be noticed, it's not about the people, but it is about him so, yeah that was another interesting, I think Alex (Sasha) understood everything the other way than what I did.

Alex: and then what did you think of the comics medium as a way to tell these stories?



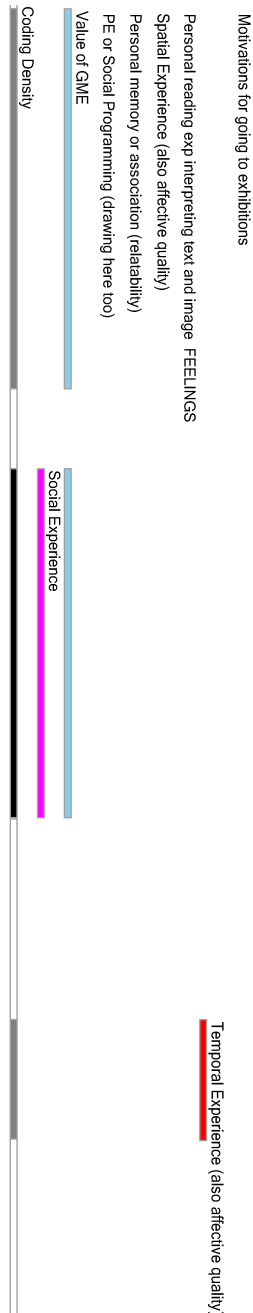
Mara: Yeah again I feel, for people that are not related to art, and don't have a lot of experience like taking in what the artist is trying to express with the, the strength of the lines or the colours, the composition, comics were the best, I mean I understood everything way clearer, it was way easier to relate to these people than, maybe the only one that connected, besides the comic, but it was really close to the comic, so I think there was some purpose there, it's the one that is like women on a cage (Tied Up). I don't remember the piece of the art, but she is like with a [therpin...inaudible 15m15s] here and she is also like on a [tv?...inaudible 15m20s] trap. And I think it I because it is kind of comic but not comic. But it was way easier to understand I know the first one with the deaf girl was also a comic but I didn't relate too much to it, but I didn't relate to it much, I don't know why, I still struggling understanding it, but yeah the locked in girl, that one.

Alex: And what, perhaps, is your opinion of exhibitions of this topics in a social space?

Mara: Mm let me think, yeah because I assume, I mean mental health awareness is important, like for everyone, maybe...because I do get that sometimes it can be, you have to be careful whe...to not trip someone's anxiety when seeing these things and all of that, but I think maybe, I don't know because, but maybe if someone would have these disorders and are they are looking at a piece that are allowing other people to understand how they feel then maybe they would also find it beneficial. Because sometimes it might be hard for people to express how they feel and then there is this piece doing it so clearly and everyone is able to step on their shoes. So I think it is great, I know like, I am not an expert in how to take care of these kind of ethical things, but I do think it is great that one is able to understand fully the sentiment and all that is happening in people with these mental disorders.

Alex: And then I just have one more question for you, then I am going to open it up to you as well, but what was your overall impression of the exhibit?

Mara: I think like talking about exhibit right now I can see that, maybe, you were trying to contrast normal art and comics, but at the moment when I was at the exhibit I don't understood like how, why do we have these comics here, why there are the other corner, and why all of this is, like, are more abstract pieces that you have to stand in front of and try to understand what they try to express. When I go to an art exhibit that is too abstract, sometimes I get, I like to understand things, and when I don't I get a little bit frustrated, so I don't spend, I don't actually spend too much time trying to understand this, I'm like I don't get it move on to the next one and see if I get it, right, so, like those, the pieces where the xrays and the pieces of Two Windows and Reality, I saw the two windows are completely different, I don't get it, I just move on, that's my, like the only impressions, but like overall I can see that there was like one big topic. But yeah, and I probably, the way it was curated was so people could follow it through, because I don't know, I felt fated to do the same



order, so I think that, I never felt like oh this should be here, this should be there, I thought that the order was correct and I felt like I could follow it.

Alex: Well that's all I have for your unless there's anything that you thought my questions didn't get at that you would like to share.

Mara: Hmm let me think. No I think you covered it all pretty good. Yah. Yeah I think I repeated myself but.

[End]

Motivations for going to exhibitions
Temporal Experience (also affective quality)
Personal reading exp interpreting text and image FEELINGS
Spatial Experience (also affective quality)
Personal memory or association (reliability)
PE or Social Programming (drawing here too)
Value of GME
Social Experience
Coding Density