

Interview 205 - Rebecca- 23 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?

Rebecca: I viewed it at the, the opening a couple weeks ago, was it, and then I have kinda taken a look in a couple of times while I have been passing through.

Alex: Far how long were you at the exhibition, would you say, at the opening?

Rebecca: about half an hour altogether. Maybe a few more minutes including your talk.

Alex: And then you said that you have gone back a couple of times just as you have been passing through, about how much time do you think you spent in the exhibition during those?

Rebecca: Altogether or each time?

Alex: Each time.

Rebecca: oh just 1 or 2 minutes.

Alex: During any of these times did you visit the exhibition with anyone?

Rebecca: Well there were other people at the opening, but otherwise no.

Alex: Did you have any conversation with anyone at the opening of the exhibit?

Rebecca: You briefly, and a colleague I think as well.

Alex: Do you remember what you talked about in any of these conversations?

Rebecca: Um, I think I pointed out a couple of pieces that had stuck me and talked about kinda the comics medium in general, I guess. And, I think I pointed out that the space was actually a really nice one for something like this.

Alex: Why did you say that about the space?

Rebecca: Cause I think that there's this kinda of enough space so you can kinda pause and look at one thing at a time, but if you take a step back you can kinda see the different works and how they kinda fit together. So it I kinda quite easy to both focus and get kinda an overview. And, it's not like a museum where you have to walk around and then your legs get tired.

Coding Density

Motivations for going to exhibitions
PE or Social Programming (drawing here too)
Value of GME
Sociocultural or sociopolitical memory or association
Popular culture memory or association
Personal memory or association (reliability)
Personal reading exp interpreting text and image FEELINGS

Spatial Experience (also affective quality)

Social Experience

Temporal Experience (also

Alex: Do you remember what works struck you?

Rebecca: I think this is one of Carolina's. The text is, hang on, yeah, I think this is actually called VAST/O, maybe, so the text is "the notion of existence, the perception of existence is acknowledging the body" and then there is this image, this outline of a humanoid figure and then with, it is hard to tell if they are actually standing on a line or if it is a shadow, and then it says the "body stops, becomes a place" and I found that quite fascinating. And then it was with these kinda similar line drawings, like Landing on Phobos which I think is the Mars moon right? Demos and Phobos, so Phobos is fear, so yeah, and then, I found the bell jar one, also, oh there was one to do with a bell jar somewhere, because I have just been rereading Sylvia Plath's The Bell Jar, so it was an interesting sort of, so I literally had it with me in my bag at the time and so that was an interesting synchronicity seeing that visual expression of what I felt to be a similar emotion to this textual, as the novel actually.

Alex: And then you said you discussed the comics medium in general with your colleagues, was that in general to the exhibition or...?

Rebecca: Just in generally really. I think it was kinda sparked by your talk. And kinda our experience of reading comics which for me is very limited. A part from kinda children's stories, so yeah that was sort of, sort of "oh I didn't know you were in to comics" sort of thing.

Alex: Do you remember what order you viewed the exhibition in?

Rebecca: Yes, I would have started from the left of the kinda of entrance bit and would have worked my way around clockwise. So, the VAST/O piece is one of the first ones I saw.

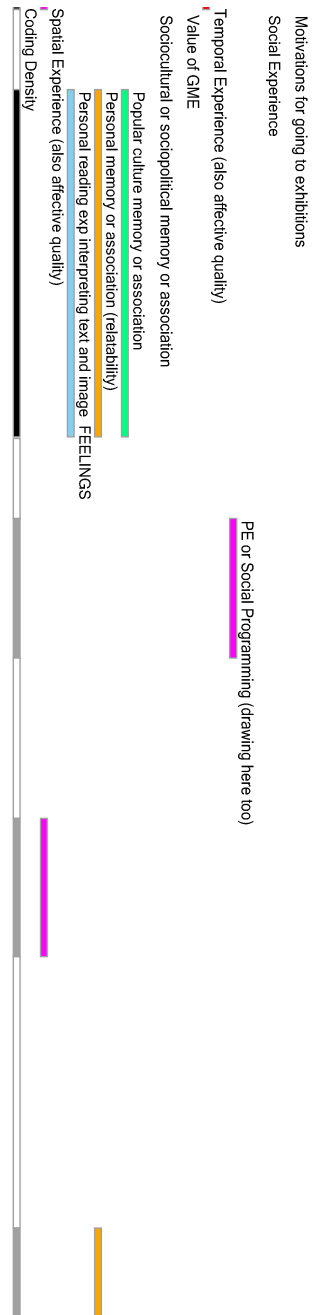
Oh and it actually took me a while to figure out there were works on kinda the outside wall as well, so those are kinda the ones I looked at when I was getting coffee or whatever in Starbucks. I was like "oh, those are there as well, I should take a look."

Alex: A part from what you have described to me already, can you describe your experience viewing the exhibition overall?

Rebecca: Um, that is quite a general question. Could you break it down a bit? Like what sort of...?

Alex: When you walked through clockwise what was your experience the pieces were there any, other than the ones you pointed out already, that struck you or that you were contemplating?

Rebecca: Um, there are a couple in colour that I remember. It seemed to be, so there was a close up of a girl on the grass (Two Windows), something like that and then a zoom out and sort of a view from space. And remember looking at that



because it reminded me of like childhood summer and the country side. And, um I think in terms of kind of the experience, I think, I think I more kinda of drifted through than kind of, um, thought okay I am going to spend five minutes looking at this and five minutes looking at this, so instead of kind of, I don't think I had sort of, I don't think I was very intentional when looking at the pieces, I think I just kind of drifted and stopped if something struck me.

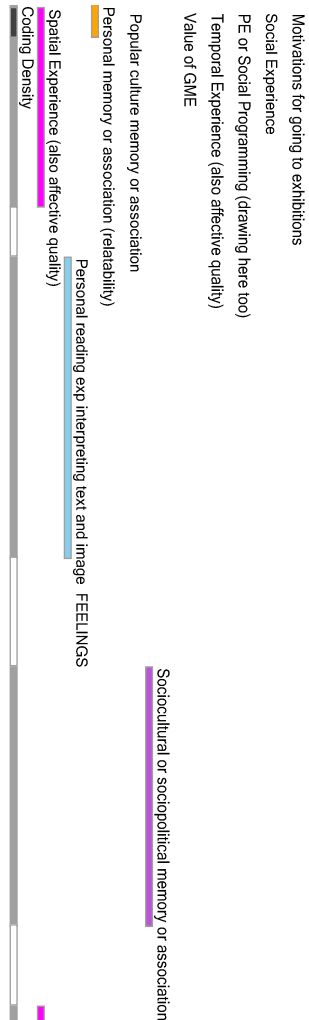
Alex: Would you say that is typical for when you go to exhibitions?

Rebecca: Yes. Very much so. And I think, yeah, I think I am sort of a drifty person anyway. But I think when something did struck me, I did sort of spend longer looking at it, thinking about it and I think, I think what was interesting, because I kinda of had been expecting it to be more about kinda of physical health rather than mental health, I am not quite sure why or I can't remember if you've talked about it, or what time you talked about it before, but I found the kind of visualization of kind of interior emotions and kinds of interior states of mind really interesting. And I think it might have been because of my previous kind of experience with, very limited experience with Graphic medicine, had been kind of comics to do with cancer and that kind of thing. That kind of disease or injury or so on. So I was, so I remember thinking about okay, so why is this graphic medicine rather than just kind of art in general, rather than a kind of visual expression of the artist's feelings and thoughts and states of mind, so what actually puts it in to this category I guess but then I don't know. I, so...

But like, um, the nightmare painting, Fuscelli, from like hundreds of years ago, I mean kinda like visual representation of some sort of anxiety or phobia or nightmare right?, but then that's a painting and its art, but these are kind of doing the same thing in a way and because, and so I guess it is the sort of comics text that put these into a narrative of mental health and mental illness and a more kind of sequential and like you were saying in your talk positions them in a kind of narrative rather than a just kind of one off expression of angst. I guess. And, I don't mean angst in a trivialising way, like in its original kind of Germanic kind of way.

Alex: So than what was your, um, experience of the comics medium in the exhibition?

Rebecca: I think it kinda broadened my view of what comics can be because my, again kind of quite limited view of comics is sequences on a page and generally sort of bordered and there's sort of and there's like dialogue and speech bubbles that kinda thing. Very kind of conventional, um, cartoon kind of thing. So I guess it kind of oh well if this is a comic than the medium is bigger than I thought it could be. And I think, but overall there of course was the framing, the paratext of the exhibition and the kind of framing of those pieces in that space which did kind of give it a cohesive theme and kind of border of conversation between the pieces as well. So, I don't know really. I mean I think if it had all been in a book I probably wouldn't have been



as interested. But I think kind of because the kind of, gallery experience and the chance to drift, I guess, I kind of what made it engaging for me.

Alex: Why were you interested in viewing the exhibition?

Rebecca: Well I am a friend of the curator and I have met one of the artists and I am interested in their kind of work. And of course I wanted to support their work as well.

Alex: you have mentioned a few, several things that came to your mind when viewing the exhibition, such as childhood summers, Sylvia Plath's Bell Jar and then this, could have just been in the interview, but the nightmare painting (Rebecca: mmm – *I think agreeing that*), but do you remember anything that came to your mind when viewing the exhibition?

Rebecca: Well I think the, um, the body becomes a place struck me because my thesis was on elegy and the geographic imagination and the things I looked at was how in poetry the body becomes a site where as kind of a site of death and memory and loss or whether it is kind of the survivors site of mourning, grief and the attempt to kind of embody that so I think that's why that kind of particular text and image spoke to me. but , yeah, I think, I can't remember any other associations.

Alex: Did you do any drawing in any of the activities...?

Rebecca: No.

Alex: How did you think anxiety was experience for you in the exhibition...hold on let me...how did you experience the topic of anxiety in the exhibition?

Rebecca: it seemed to be something quite claustrophobic. And something quite constricted and I think that kind goes back to the Bell Jar (Tied up?) idea and I think there's some kind of, it was represented in a way that kind of made the figures seem small? Or kind of shrinking under it, I guess, or through the pressure of it, yeah, something that is quite compressing or claustrophobic. And I guess kind of not, not taking up space in a way that they normally would.

Alex: Could you elaborate on that?

Rebecca: I am thinking now of kind of the pictures with the zooming out (Two Windows) and in a way the kinda of zooming out makes the person tiny, makes them small, makes them tiny in the vastness of the universe, I guess, and I think that could be quite anxiety provoking, and I think also in the kind of, um, I am just looking at a photo (checking phone), I guess there is the kind of sense like in Tied Up, the kind of the central figure only takes up half the page and there is this blank space around it that kind of dominates. And so I kind of see that as kind of constricting the person.

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Alex: Well I just have one more question for you and then I am going to open it up to you, but what was your overall impression of the exhibition after having left?

Rebecca: I think it was really interesting. I think it was, yeah, it was something different for me to look at and think about. But then it tied into a lot of texts and associations I already had.

I think, like I said, I think it kind of broadened my idea of what comics can do, what kind of graphic art can do. Yeah, I thought, yeah that's about it.

Alex: Was there anything that my questions didn't get at that you would like to add about the exhibition?

Rebecca: I guess it is kind of interesting because Carolina is Portuguese, right? And you are American and the other artists are...?

Alex: British and Portuguese

Rebecca: so there's this interesting kind of cultural mix there but it was still kind of quite universal. And, yeah, I mean the captions were in English so it would be interesting to know, kind of Carolina's process of coming up with them or doing them and what she thinks about that, but yeah I think that's. that would be something I would have liked to know more about, the kind of, or maybe there was information I just didn't notice it, the kind of process of creating and curating it.

Alex: Just a follow-up to that, um, was there something, was it the English being used, was that tied with, because you said it still felt universal, and I was wondering how that came across perhaps?

Rebecca: Oh no I meant in terms of the images. I mean, rather than the text. Yeah.

[End]

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