

One & Other Project

[The interviewer's voice is much quieter than the interviewee].

My name is Paula Testa, I'm conducting this interview on behalf of the Wellcome Trust for the One and Other project by Antony Gormley in Trafalgar Square. The date is the 3rd of September 2009 and the time is 1.17 p.m. please could you tell me your name, your age and where you are from?

My name is Oliver Campbell, I'm 34 and I'm from Somerset.

And have you travelled from London especially today for your hour on the plinth?

I came up last night and stayed with friends.

And has coming to the Square, seeing the plinth in action, how you imagined it would be?

I had been here before and I looked at it yesterday and I'd seen the plinth before so it's fine so it was exactly as I imagined it.

And...

But not exactly as my friends imagined it, funnily enough. I was telling them, when I was plotting this, I was telling my friends to come and have a look at it because actually people have all sorts of ideas about 'Oh yeah you can do this, you can make speeches' or, you know, do small things and make [things] and they just disappear in the Square so yeah, I think it's quite important actually.

And how does it feel to actually be here as a plinther rather than...

It's made me much more nervous. Yes, tried to sleep last night, I did sleep you know OK, not as well as I hoped.

And what is about the project the first appealed and made you apply?

I think, like a lot of people, a lot of friends applied as well I only found that out now, I didn't know what I was going to do when I applied but if something came up with it, I could always say no and then I thought I'll give it a go. I came up, yeah crumbs, I had a whole month to decide, that should be easy, and then I kept changing. I couldn't

One & Other Project

get people together to try and decide so I talked to some people about this idea and 'that's good' and then I'd go somewhere else and I would have another idea so to keep my own personal vision was very difficult.

And what is your interpretation of what the hour is about?

[Pause] Well, yes, I thought about a lot of things, I thought about the best thing would be to entertain, probably not educate, you know, not elucidate just kind of entertain like a good art piece does so it should be visually interesting. The sound gets lost in Trafalgar Square, there are people watching from all around technically so it would be nice if people could see it from all over the place and again the sound is very bad it gets ruined, and stuff, so I was trying to make something that was visually impactful as possible with a certain amount of repetition because people only stay and watch a piece, you know, if you go to the gallery you only watch a piece for 5 minutes or something maximum but probably not even that so like any art piece, whatever, I don't think you necessarily, as opposed to performance art, is kind of different, you know, if you are in Bath or a street performance in Edinburgh, whereas the fact [is] it's on a plinth should make it different than just street performance.

So what is it you have decided to do with the hour?

So bizarrely I've decided to go into a tent and blow up balloons not balloons but blow up animals and hold them out the door [chuckles], yeah.

Why did you decide to do that?

Well to be honest, I can justify, you can justify anything really. That is kind of tricky, I came up with all sorts of things, yeah. I mean really it just looks quite fun when the tent goes a bit mad, basically it sort of shakes about and then the fact I am throwing out all of these animals felt a bit biblical, sort of like I'm creating life if you like, and the tent is the womb, you know, there's all sorts of shit you can talk about if you want [chuckles], doesn't mean anything.

Will you be visible at all?

Well before I will be visible, a green man outside dancing around, yes and exploring and then I'll go into my tent and unravel things and then in the end I'll come out and hopefully my tent won't blow away because it's very windy, it's very windy.

What's the green man?

One & Other Project

So the green man is a thing I did before; a guy I called *Gunther* who is a massively pretentious artist and, yep, he makes films well he made a film where he removed himself from the film hence the green suit because you can green screen it out basically he made a whole film and then he took himself out of it.

Will Gunther be on the plinth for the whole hour?

Yep, I was thinking of going up as me and turning into *Gunther* but I didn't. I thought 'fuck it', I'm just going to [chuckles].

So will you go up as Gunther?

Yep as soon as I get on the platform I think I'll be *Gunther*.

So is this something you've done before then, are you an artist by trade or..?

No, no I find the whole thing quite absurd really.

So what is it that you do do?

I do lots of things, I've been teaching quite a lot recently, I've been doing teaching; Science and Maths only up to GCSE as beyond that A level gets a bit tricky, yeah, but just tutoring, private tutoring in peoples' houses, yea, so some of them, you often go and stay at their house basically so it doesn't matter where it is anywhere in the country sort of thing.

And do you do other things around that as well?

Yes I do that and then when I'm in Somerset I help my father with property, he has a few properties that always need something done to them, yeah.

And do you enjoy teaching?

[Pause] Yeah, I know lots more than small children, which is very important, no actually it keeps you sharp and makes you realise that you don't know, yeah, and they can still come up with questions, they are pretty bright some of them, some aren't, I shouldn't say that, but anyway, yeah, they are quite bright and they can ask you, if you are dealing with scholarship kids or something going to you know a difficult school then the questions could be pretty much anything which keep you

One & Other Project

lively. I don't know how people do teach things like History and English and stuff because like I don't know like some of the interpretation if you are going through a book and you teach English or something that interpretation could be wildly debated or you can hone in on different points. How the hell do you teach? How do you select a book? Whereas with science, it's kind of easier to teach because you know roughly if it's right or wrong but you still get surprised, I could probably do some revision myself.

So have you got an interest in the artistic side of things or are you more a science and maths and..?

No I'm more of everything, yep umm. I'm trying to think about what art I like. I do like art. I think I don't like the fuss about art but that's alright and then people have decided, you know have decided, to turn it into a commodity that's worth millions and millions, you know fair play to the [inaud] as well if they can do it, if they can persuade someone to pay the money. I mean probably I don't like it if public money is spent on it. I don't really like it, you know, money can be better spent, I think. I can't see people making a good case. I personally would like to try more painting and drawing just so I could appreciate old masters and more classical art because again, to be honest, most of us are just going on their word for it, that this is good or this is worth, you know, I think the State or the charity or whatever should pay 40 million quid for this painting and I'm well, I don't know, I'm sure it's old but, yeah, putting a price on art is always tricky, not that I think, but obviously art you know gives different ways of looking at the world and can be great, but I'm not a big fan of video art which is probably why I couldn't have a crack at it.

Where did Gunther come from?

Because originally we were gonna make a film. I do make films as well and I was originally gonna make a film with a man with a green suit. I can't remember what we were going to do with it so it was basically bursting our own bubble when we realised the absurdity of it but then you can watch a film and actually think, well he's got a point, so that's the point. I think you can do anything and justify it later, like the tent the animals came first. You know if you wanna read things into it, you can, but it doesn't, yeah, I think a lot of art is possibly like that. But, yeah, I like to do more painting and drawing definitely, I think [inaud] that yeah [very long almost comical pronunciation of yeah].

What's your background, how did you get to do what you are doing today?

Teaching because I went to university [giggles] and that's what you have to do and then I did biology, worked a bit in natural history film making like that, made a film in America about wolfs that didn't do anything and then made a few other films, short

One & Other Project

films really, and where am I today? Well that's probably why I am where I am today, sitting here, yep.

And outside of work what other kind of things do you enjoy doing?

[Pause] well how do you not come up with a cliché after that [giggles]? What are your hobbies? Can I give anything that is beyond [pause], crumbs, I do anything really, yeah, everything has been done really. I like making things, I like going on horse treks I'd like to play more polo, like tennis. I've only realised I'd like to play more polo I've not even played, I've only been playing polo once and I loved it so that's what I mean by playing more polo, but if anybody listens to this ever give me a call if you want me to play polo. I don't know why you would umm I like to go to foreign countries, not necessarily just because I like new experiences, it gives me new input, yep, I used to be so... when I was at Edinburgh University and I literally, sometimes wouldn't go to well, I had [only] been to [the] parts of Edinburgh that were very close and they would still almost be an adventure so it doesn't take much for me to have an adventure. I can just go somewhere because it's very slightly different. In fact somewhere I'd never been so if I go to foreign countries that are totally different it's like a total reboot and I just get more input. I don't necessarily process it at the time or necessarily enjoy it, it's just a sensory overload and then that makes me come back and see England and my life in a different way.

Have you got anywhere on your wish list of places to go?

Umm, yeah, like everywhere. Umm, well see I'm not that bothered by Australia but I've got some cousins who are there who I've never seen and I wanna go see the Great Barrier Reef before it disappears and is destroyed, but that would unfortunately entail burning massive amount of CO2 on the way there, which is a Catch 22. But sod it, we are all going to warm up anyway so I might as well go and see it so I can tell my kids about it yeah 'all those things that you can't see now I saw them and they are overrated don't worry about them, look at the size of our TV you can watch it', where else do I want to go? Everywhere, I wanna go back to Africa, yeah, I really want Africa because there's not too many people. Yeah, like India was fun but it's full of people and very grey sky, have you been to India? Very grey skies bizarrely, mountains are good though, quite like to go motor biking through more like the mountains of the Himalayas and things and horses, more horse riding, horses are good. Umm I recently discovered about pills that I don't [make me] vomit when I go sailing so that would be quite fun, but I need someone with a boat. I think there's lots of people of boats who don't have enough friends or friends with time so I quite like to know who they are and I can go on their boat because hiring them seems to cost a fortune. Yeah obviously I need some rich friends who have [access to] polo and sailing, but like I said, I'm quite happy to, you know, going to Hampstead Heath, you know, which I've been to like three times or something in my entire life because I used to be in London more, yeah.

One & Other Project

What other things are important to you?

Umm obviously friends, family number one. Sanity is quite good. Sleep is pretty vital, kind of informing the first one. Umm freedom, don't like rules that are, I think, England is losing its way a bit with rules, doesn't realise that rules are more of a guideline in some cases and that if you are, you know, wise and to be honest some police are great, I don't have trouble with police but some, whatever, not just police people who do laws, what's the word? I don't what it is anyway, protect laws so eloquently that they can be a little overzealous and not realize that there's actually a lot of very cool people out there and probably if you start with that theory then everyone is quite cool. Then you'll make the world a happier place, yeah It's the little things I think, I have a problem with England. I love English people. I love my friends. I love my family and the countryside, the whole of England, everything about it. But unfortunately we are 16 (60?) million people getting a bit close together and the rules. People just have to chill out [chuckles], piss. It's not really a new concept but it's quite simple. Any more than that and you start being prescriptive and you start saying rules and it's all bullshit again, yeah, you are a very good interviewer, yeah.

What would you like to get out of this experience if anything?

Umm I don't know. A really hot girlfriend? Yeah, umm, cash would be good, umm beyond that I don't know. Self- knowledge, conquering fears, umm more smiles and laughs in the world, big hat, more cracks at polo, yeah.

What does it mean to you to be able to be one of the 2400 people going up on the plinth?

It means that I got chosen out of a hat [giggles].

I know you need to get ready for your hour.

Thank you very much.

Thank you.

Brilliant.

END OF RECORDING



One & Other Project