

## One & Other Project

*Hello my name is Kate Rowles and I'm interviewing you for the Wellcome Trust as you are taking part in Antony Gormley's art work One and Other, the date today is the 6<sup>th</sup> of September 2009 and the time is 3.20 a.m. if I can please ask you to say your full name, your age and where you come from?*

My name is Anne Tickell and my age is 57 and I come from London and live in North London at the moment.

*And how are you today?*

I feel very well, slightly bemused, but it's a wonderful experience so far and Trafalgar Square is somewhere I travel to very often so to come in a completely different role at a time that I'm never normally here, it's exciting.

*And can I ask first of all what was it that motivated you to apply to be part of One and Other?*

I've always been rather fascinated by the 4<sup>th</sup> plinth, I'm very interested in art history I spend a lot of time in the National gallery so I always look at the fourth plinth and joining in all the debates so, and just not very long ago, [I've] been into the Antony Gormley exhibition at the Hayward Gallery and I was very enchanted by all the figures that were all over London so I thought this was an added inspiration to sign up.

*[Background noise] and when you found out that you had got a place on the plinth, how did you decide to spend your hour on it?*

Well I talked to those who knew me well and said what shall I do? And one person came up with the idea saying 'you are always endlessly mending the ancient patchwork quilt that you've had for years and years' and, in fact, I started when I was about 17 or 18, I was nursing at the time and doing night duty, and then it was quite small and it was growing bigger and bigger and now it's the size of a double bed and it always needs repairing and it's full of lots of memories. It's got my grandmother's old coat in it and it's got a bridesmaid dress in it that I've been and so on. So it's quite poignant and I keep adding to it all different bits from my friends and relations.

*Wow, what was it that first got you to make the patchwork quilt sort of begin?*

I've always liked making things with my hands and I think it was partly that thing of, at the same time of the day, it is how you have to stay awake. But in those days with nursing the wards were quieter. Everyone was fast asleep, you wanted to sleep and something like sewing or knitting is what everybody did in those days so I started and it got bigger and bigger, and it got bigger and bigger really remarkably fast and, of course, you get encouraged by others so you carry on doing it and now I don't make new ones really but I like to repair the old one.

*And what does it mean to you the fact that you are going to be standing on the fourth plinth?*

## One & Other Project

Well it's hard to say really. I think it's really exciting having seen it up there and seeing all the various people up there. The idea that I would be up there is the most astounding idea. But quite, it's hard to say, it's really rather unbelievable that it's actually happening because I, first of all I didn't get a place on the plinth, then obviously somebody turned down the fact it was 4 in the morning so about a week after I got it and I thought 'wow', clearly I had to take it, because the chances like that - there's only one in 30 chances of getting on to it so I'm very pleased to be one of those 30.

*And how often do you work on your quilt now?*

Oh now probably every, 3 or 4 times a year I have to start adding patches in when I have time. Really it's often when I go away I think I take it away with me if I'm staying with friends. I dragged it around with me [giggles]. It's a pretty mammoth thing so it takes up a lot of space but I thought it might look good on the plinth, I don't know, a bit colourful.

*Yeah, so you are going to be working on the quilt while you are up there.*

Yes, I thought so. I thought I would mend one or two patches and I've always remembered those patches as the Artichoke [inaud] or the plinth patches so I thought that would be quite a good thing to do.

*And you mentioned you used, you were a nurse at the time when you sort of began working on the quilt, are you still a nurse?*

I wasn't, well I'm still, I suppose because once a nurse, always a nurse. But in fact I then moved and went and did a degree in History of Art and then moved into publishing and I published children's books and I used to work on an archaeology magazine and I've just trained to be a guide so I keep moving on, careers keep changing.

*And what's, where are you going to be a guide?*

In the City of London, so I will be trying to devise somewhere and some means of taking people around the city of London.

*And what's important to you in your life at the moment?*

Well I suppose my family. I have 3 children and a husband and friends are enormously important to me, I suppose, they are really the crux of it and from there anything that can keep my interest going, I have my fingers in lots of different pies, so I suppose that's probably what it is, I think, being stimulated is the most important.

*And what sparked your interest in being a guide, why did you decide to do that?*

Well, because I thought the thing about being a guide, you have to learn a lot yourself beforehand before you can impart knowledge and it's partly that fun thing about learning things and looking at things and one of the things that came out about

## One & Other Project

doing this course is how little we observe. I'm always noticing that, now I am suddenly having to look at every blue plaque or every building and seeing how it looks and what the history is behind it and questioning how and why things are and why streets are the way they are, if you look into it, it's very interesting how the cities evolve and change and keep moving.

*And why do you think it is that you decided to go from being a nurse to studying the history of art?*

I think I became quite selfish. I worked as a nurse for about 5, 6, 7 years and I suddenly wanted to do something for me and I was accepted by the University of East Anglia and I just wanted to go. I carried on nursing while I was there but then studied on two completely opposite things. I think they probably suit two different aspects of my personality.

*And the childrens' books that you published?*

That was actually chance. It was nearby, I joined it, I got, I had been working for Granada Publishing years ago; Granada Television owned a publishing company before I had my children, I worked there, and one of my children is very disabled so I didn't work for 20 years and so I basically slipped back into work which was easy and available.

*And how do you see yourself now, how do you describe yourself?*

Well I'm sort of middle aged and moving on into getting into 60 being 57 so it's a strange time. I suddenly realise I've got a lot of time to myself but you never know how long health is going to holdout so there's a slight desire to grab at as much as you can which is part of why I want to be on the plinth because if you are given the opportunity you don't say no to anything. because you realise you haven't got always the chance to have another go when you can when you are younger or most times you have when you are younger anyway. So I think that's probably how I feel myself now.

*Have you got your site set on anything that you want to do in particular?  
In life or?*

Yes.

Not particularly, I like time to do the guiding I've only just started so I need to get my courage up and to take forth and to become more professional at it, so yeah.

*And your children, are they grown up now?*

Yes my youngest is 22 and he's here tonight and I have an elder daughter in America and then my middle daughter is profoundly handicapped she's at the moment living away in Kent. She's just left ,she left college last year so she's now living away from us but so in a way that's given me more freedom to go round and that. We can see her when she comes home at weekends and things, but she's not

## One & Other Project

around all the time which suddenly has given one the chance to expand and do other things.

*And is, how is that, do you think that has had an impact on you?*

Oh very enormously, quite enormously because for many years I didn't work outside and of course it affected the family. She's absolutely loving and sweet but she's going to be 26 on Tuesday and she is probably like a 2 year old so she's definitely affected the family. But we are lucky we all, her brothers and sisters adore her and you know we've managed to keep together as a family which is really nice but certainly it stopped what work I might have done in different directions, I stayed at home which is why things like sewing can actually take place because I'm not there trying to earn heaps of money, so.

*What experiences do you think have really shaped you into the person you are today?*

Goodness knows [chuckles]. That's quite a hard one, I think it's quite a lot of, it might have to do with certainly with Charlotte, you become, you get your balance right about what matters in life and things you used to think are important don't feel as important. I think something like that matters and I think probably my husband he's very different to me, I'm very practical he's very full of words and full of jokes and gestures and so on. He's a journalist but I think probably we've absorbed a bit of each other's personalities so I think that's made quite a big difference, we are lucky enough to have lots of friends and again, they can influence a lot as well so I think it is all these different aspects.

*Did you grow up in London?*

I grew up in London and then I swore I'd never come back I went to Scotland and East Anglia and in fact when I met Tom, my husband, he's very much a Londoner, I came here and the more I live here the more I like it. Actually I think as I grow older the energy of London, I find very exciting and I think that just the fun, the colours and the shapes and just everybody, it's just so interesting and there's always too much to see, which I like that feeling there's too much to do, there's too much to see.

*And what kind of experience do you hope to get out of taking part in One and Other overall do you think?*

Well, I think it's that old thing of being, thinking above a world in which some things are very familiar, but very unfamiliar. Because there you are high above everybody else, up there, as I said the place that I endlessly walk past, scooted past whatever the weather and I think just that old set [?] of being familiar and unfamiliar. But I don't know it is until I get there. I can see that it's very exciting up there even though you stand from down below looking up and think that person is just up there you know but I can see it from the other way around.

*What normally brings you to Trafalgar Square?*

## One & Other Project

The National Gallery, most of the time. Yes, I have to be honest, but my daughter is getting married in St. Martin's in the Field next summer so that should be rather nice so we would be coming over [chuckles] for other reasons too it would be nice and significant for that.

*Having studied the history of art, do you have a favourite artist?*

No I haven't. I always used to think I like quite old fashioned, I mean sort of quite standard stuff. I said things like Gormley, Antony Gormley's stuff I certainly saw when his last exhibition [was] at the Hayward. It's, I'm spreading my wings rather again at the Hayward and the latest one sticks to mind, whatever it is, you know looking into the minds of artists, I can't quite remember the title of it, yeah that was another fascinating one because that type of stuff is normally something I am not normally interested in, I did like Antony Gormley's little fields of men that was at the British Museum. I really enjoyed those but I've also been studying lately the Renaissance, the early Renaissance, and you suddenly see the quality in that so it's very difficult. I used to have a favourite artist which was Rembrandt which I still love but certainly I've moved on finding others very much more exciting.

*What are your passions in life?*

I do love art. Actually, yes and if sometimes I feel a bit low, I can go to a really good exhibition. One that can stimulate me in some way. I come out feeling very buzzy I can't quite explain why but I do, I certainly can feel that, I you know, that sense quite rare feeling, I am really happy and sometimes I feel like that.

*And what do you think of this project?*

I think it's great fun. I mean I can't say that I can take it desperately seriously but I think it's great fun and I think it, actually, it makes it lively and I do think things that are livelier [need] to be commended. Especially, I mean the trouble with statues so often, they are all rather sort of pompous and all these generals that nobody has ever heard of and so on so this sort of thing I think is great fun. I think the fourth plinth ought to be kept empty for new ideas even if I don't like particularly what's there, sometimes that doesn't matter, I just think it ought to be there, it makes one stop and think about sculpture much more and then if you just got, as I say, some fine gent nearly always gentlemen, to be honest apart from the odd queen standing on a plinth or riding on a plinth or whatever it is that they are doing.

*Do you have any, we haven't talked about this so far, but do you have political views?*

Not particularly no, I mean I find most politics depressing so I'm not particularly aware, I'm a leftie more than a rightie but somehow I'm very soggy in the middle I have to be honest.

*And can I ask about your upbringing?*

Yes.

## One & Other Project

*What was your upbringing like?*

I was, I suppose, I was brought up in a sort of middle class family. I have one brother and we never had much money. We had sort of mince on Monday and Shepherd's pie on Tuesday I do remember that. Holidays were going to stay with my grandmother and that sort of thing, but it was a very secure, slightly dull upbringing, I think, which was in a way probably the kind you can give your children, give them the chance to go travelling because that's another thing I love is travelling and I have travelled a lot in my time.

*Any particular places that stick in your memory?*

Well I spent a year in the Far East which I found travelling around there very exciting. I love Italy and I am learning Italian. No I think nearly there are lots of, Finland I spent 3 months there when I was 17 or so. That was quite, that's when I learnt you could live on your own. It was OK, I was with a family but their language, their English wasn't so good so one was quite isolated. So no.

*And who are you doing this for today?*

Well, I'm probably doing, I don't quite know, probably for me, probably I'm afraid to say, I'm slightly regretting I didn't come as one of my daughter's charities. I'd rather quite like to have. I suddenly thought I should have made more of a fuss about that but I didn't think about it properly so I didn't, I'm really doing it for the fun of it to be honest [chuckles].

*And is there anything else that you would like to add, any closing words?*

Not particularly but thank you very much for the chance of doing it, really, I feel very lucky and very honoured.

*Thank you very much.*

**END OF**