

One & Other Project

My name is Alex Webb I'm here on behalf of the Wellcome Trust, it's the 7th of September 2009. Could you please state your full name, your date of birth and where you are from?

I'm Claire Ross my date of birth is the 17/12/ 85 and I came from Brighton today.

So when did you first hear about the project?

A friend told me about it I think he found out about it on line and just started ranting at me about it, so.

And what inspired you to take part?

He put my name forward, he asked me if it was all right and yeah whatever I didn't pay much attention and then I got petrified oh shit.

So what happened when you heard you got a place, what were the emotions like?

I was really shocked and just like oh crap what the hell am I going to do, you know, because I hadn't thought about it at all and forgot all about it really so I was very, very surprised.

So what do you plan to do with the hour?

I really don't like people watching me at all I'm really, really nervous about being in front of people so I plan on just being particularly nervous and like going with that and curling up in a ball and do whatever I feel like doing not trying to hide it at all so that's pretty much it, not very interesting.

Okay and do you think standing on the plinth will have some kind of impact on you?

You say you are quite an introverted person anyway.

Yeah I am quite but if a group of people knew me I entirely come up you know but if you are watching me it's terrifying.

Yeah, yeah, and are you involved in the creative arts?

Sort of yeah, I've got quite a few artists friends, I've got a good friend who showed me about this as performance art he does a lot of stuff I help him out with a few things so, I'm kind of half involved in it.

So could you tell us what your background is and maybe where you grew up and..?

I was born in Edinburgh and lived in Scotland all my life went to uni in Sterling moved down to Brighton about last October so not that long ago I found Scotland particularly boring there wasn't really very much going on there at all so yeah so I've been in Brighton for the past [inaudible] trying to find a job and completely and utterly feeling like what's like to find a job been exploring London quite a lot got friends here which is very nice, I've just been accepted for a job at the job centre which is going to be a nice doddering job you know, but I like, I like painting quite a lot and read and write and make clothes and things like that doing creative things.

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I mean would that be like, is that something you'd like to do as a career, you are talking about fashion?

I don't know it kind of, I want something creative as a career like making things or I play a couple of instruments and so I don't know I really have no idea of what I want to do, not admin work really you know, just see what happens.

So what are the reasons for choosing Brighton to live?

Well it's close to London, I used to come to London every month and it was a pain in the arse but I didn't want to live in London as I find it really intense, a bit stressful and it seemed a really good place, there is a big art scene there lots of interesting people, a bit different you know. So it was very different from Scotland which was a big factor in it.

Yeah, I see. So you, what was it about Edinburgh that you didn't enjoy so much?

Edinburgh is a really nice place but I just find it a bit kind of narrow minded and a bit dull really, like in London you can find ... if you want to do anything you can find some scene for anything you know as all this stuff is going on. But as far as Scotland goes there's usually things going but you have to look for them and quite often happening in small scale things which ... I lived in Stirling for the past four years and that was just nothing in Stirling at all you know, the most boring place ever.

And who would you say you are doing this for going on the plinth?

I'm doing it for myself I guess and I really thought a lot about not doing it just cancelling ... but I can't do this at all and I thought it would have been disappointed with myself if I didn't, if I missed this opportunity. It's quite a cool thing to do to be involved in this, you know, I would have been really disappointed if I didn't do it so I guess I'm doing it for myself.

So what did you study in school then, what are your interests?

At uni I did English literature [noisy traffic sound in the background] I read a lot and found quite an easy subject to do. I started off doing history and Spanish that was just, I couldn't get my head around it you know but I was also ... like reading and write rubbish about what you just read what was good about it. I'm quite good at that so I like writing. I wanted to be a writer for a while but not so much anymore, music is a big one, when I was in school I did like advanced music and things.

What did you play?

I played violin and bass guitar and drums, so that's quite good. When I moved down to Brighton I had to leave all my instruments in Scotland because I only had half a car worth of stuff to bring down with me so I've not played anything for ages. I really miss it but.

Have you not been back since?

I went up for Christmas for a week and I said wow I don't really miss this place that much at all so I keep wanting to go back but it's quite expensive and it seems more

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effort than it's worth really but yeah.

What would you say is most important in your life at the moment?

Most important in my life, probably people in my life because it's been really quite tough being in Brighton I moved down with my partner and then we broke up about a month later and he went back to Scotland. So suddenly I was in a city I didn't know by myself with like nothing at all, no job, no people I knew or anything, oh god, so I've made a lot of really good friends since I've been down here they support me a lot. And my boyfriend Benjamin had been fantastic and helped me through some really dark times you know, right now the most important thing to me is just people that have helped me through in the past, that's really nice.

And if you were to describe yourself, what would be the main thing you would say?

I don't know I'm quite creative and everything and ...

So you definitely would like to do more creative things when you, you say you just got this admin job.

Yes that's just to get some money together, do it for a year or so see if I can then disappear somewhere else, do other cool things, learn stuff and things.

When you say disappear you want to move out of Brighton or?

Probably yeah, I don't like the idea of being too stuck in one place, there's a whole bunch of things going on and I want to go and explore and stuff, so.

So like travelling?

Yes.

Where would you like to go?

I'm thinking Australia right now because they speak the same language as me which is very useful and quite a lot of people are going over there. It seems the place to be at the moment so I think that would be quite interesting listening to some fun things that are going on over there.

Have you been involved in the performing arts before or any kind of performance?

A couple of things yeah, through my friend mostly he's like through a performance company person so I've done a couple of ... helping out with a couple of things, did a thing at *Torture Garden*¹ quite recently a performance there.

Can you tell us about that?

Yeah it was about taking people's burdens so him and Rachel Perry were like on stage and they got burdens and I [inaudible] into their skin so like the people in the

¹ *Fetish Club*: www.torturegarden.com/

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audience brought down whatever their problem was on a card, passed it to me and I saw them they became absorbed [?] and the next thing they did a ritual with the person's burden sent the card back to them and it was you know a kind of spiritual thing also it was kind of arty pretty as well they had a big bird costume thing on and it was really quite like you know.

Sounds quite intense.

It was really intense.

The pair of you doing that must have been quite overwhelming, was it quite overwhelming or?

During it, it was okay I was on stage and everyone was watching me and I was like completely just doing that. Afterwards I just collapsed in a heap, I was like god you know because the whole intention was like taking people's burdens and stuff I didn't think it would affect me that much oh just put some [inaudible] not problem you know but I was really shocked you know. It completely overwhelmed me afterwards, you could see the artist Rachel you know because during you could kind of express discomfort and that was part of the performance it quite cool but had to keep it really professional you know I'm being the secret [?] person it was just afterwards there was this wave of, god I don't know, but it was fun.

Do you think that's something you'd like to do more often, I mean kind of performance work?

I think so yeah but I've not really got the confidence to do my own thing if I am helping someone else and being part of the performance that's great fun I really enjoy it but whenever I come up with an idea I think I would probably be quite rubbish so I don't have the confidence to do anything with it.

Okay.

So it's not sure if it's something I want to pursue myself or not, so yeah.

And about going up, I mean hopes, fears, expectations of going up there?

I am really, really nervous. I'm feeling quite shaky so I hope that I don't entirely freak out and I'm just, yeah, people watching. I have a couple of friends coming to see me. I didn't tell people about this at all because I thought if I tell people they can watch this online and that's going to be even worse for people to see me so I'm very nervous about people I know particularly but I'm sure I'll be fine and they'll be coming up saying, wow, that was cool I'm glad I did that.

So what are you imagining it to be like being up there?

I don't know, I'm quite aware it's quite far off the ground really so I'm a bit not scared of heights particularly. I'm a bit kind of uncertain though so I imagine I'll be quite kind of like scared of the edge just a little bit and I really don't know, to be honest, I guess I'll find out, yeah.

And do you think the project is a good representation of the UK?



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I think it's a great idea. Actually when I first heard of it I thought it sounds all right and I looked online and I saw people doing nothing and I was like it's pretty boring isn't it? You know walk past and nobody is ever doing anything interesting and then when I thought more about it and I was like it is actually really genius to take people up there and see what they do, you know. Like the people who are doing nothing you know, maybe they'll be doing nothing that's what they do sit there and do nothing creative it's like them being themselves again and I thought that was such a cool idea, yeah.

That's great. Well thank you so much for the interview, pleasure to meet you, thanks.

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