

## One & Other Project

*My name is Verusca Calabria and I am here today to interview you to find out some basic information about you and also to find out about your motivations for deciding to stand on the plinth. First of all could you state your name and surname, your date of birth if that's okay and where you come from.*

My name is Rachel Wardell, my date of birth is 22<sup>nd</sup> of April 1974 and I currently live in Sliford, Lincolnshire.

*Okay so what brought you to decide to stand on the plinth in the first place?*

Well, I heard about the project a while ago, I think probably when it was first commissioned and then I for some reason checked on the website just to see what's in with it and then saw the application was still open and I found the project fascinating, hmm, I liked the idea of the public art and it being accessible to everybody and I liked the idea of representing just normal everyday people, hmm, sort of looking at sort of everybody across society, a cross section and so getting a chance of looking everybody and I like Antony Gormley's work, I heard of him, I am originally from Newcastle so I was very aware of the *Angel of the North* and liked it and so I also wanted to do something to show my children that anybody can be involved in anything either in the arts or in something like a project like this you know it doesn't matter that I am just their mum anybody can be involved I just wanted to maybe inspire them a little bit, when they are a little bit older you know they can do anything they want as well.

*Okay that sounds really fascinating. So what are you actually planning to do on the plinth?*

Well, I didn't actually expect to get a place so I wasn't sure what I was going to do and then when I found out that I got the first place, I realised how much media exposure it would get and generally how much attention, I felt that I wanted to do something worthwhile with it and because I wasn't doing it to showcase myself for anything particularly about me. I wanted to represent a cause or a charity that I felt I could really support so I contacted the NSPCC and asked if I could do something to support them and raise awareness so I'll be standing with a large sign to, just highlighting the help line that they provide.

*And are you going to do that for the whole hour?*

The whole hour, yes. I'm not doing anything else, I'm not going to perform or, I think I didn't want to do anything that I thought would be beyond me and I'm not sort of a performer, I'm not even particularly confident, so I didn't want to, I didn't know how it would feel so I didn't want to do anything. I didn't want to let myself up to trying doing things, you know, I wanted to keep it as simple as possible because I didn't know how I would feel when I get up there and I didn't want to do something that could go wrong, but also for me the idea of the project is simply to have a ... that they are doing anything, so I just want to get up with a stand.

*I understand, so what kind of impact do you think your performance will have?*

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I don't know, I find it really ... hopefully on the sort of personal level, for me the impact would be ... I would feel amazed that I have actually done it because actually, you know, when I applied I didn't think I'll get it. I hadn't really thought through how I would actually feel doing it and I think I underestimated the scale of the project so for me it would be a lot of personal satisfaction having done it and hopefully like I said it will inspired my children for the general public hopefully it will help raise awareness of the charity but also hopefully just what I have interpreted as being Antony Gormley's idea which is just to say here is one ordinary person at this moment in time and that would mean just a normal woman, a normal mother and showing the thing that I care about at the minute is children so I don't know what effect it will have, hopefully it would be a positive response but I hope it will just sort of reflect part of society which is sort of a normal mum staying at home looking after children.

*I understand, okay, so how do you feel about going on the plinth?*

Really excited actually but very nervous, I don't know, not nervous for anything in particular but I keep trying to think am I nervous about something going wrong, not really I think it's a big event I suppose although I know technically it kind of, what the stages are, what is going to happen, the whole experience is so totally unknown, you know, I've just got that slight sickness, slight bad moment like you have when you are doing an exam coming, that's how it feels.

*Which really brings me on to the next question. Do you have any particular hopes or particular fears about standing on the plinth.*

I hope I can relax enough to enjoy it, hmm, and I hope that I don't get any negative responses I suppose but that's probably just a personal feeling of 'Oh please don't be nasty to me', and I kind of hope Antony Gormley. I don't know, it's hard to know exactly what he is expecting and I hope that he is not disappointed really that it fulfils what he hopes as part of the project, I think it probably does for what I sort of read but, you know, I just hope he feels happy with it.

*Okay, if I just bring you back a little bit to talk about how you heard about the project?*

Yes I can't, all I remember it's just, it was just sitting there in the back of my mind and every time I go on the internet I have a list of things that I think 'Oh yes, I must have a look at that, I must have a look at that' and I kept forgetting to go on and look at it, one day I remembered to go on and have a look and just searched for Trafalgar Square and then came across it and I thought 'Oh it's still on, they haven't opened up applications yet, wow, I'll put my name down to say I am interested, email me when it opens and then I'll worry about it whether I want to do it then you know and then I got the email through and opened it and it was my birthday and I thought 'Oh I think it was one of those mad, it's my birthday, wow I should do something', so I applied and didn't expect to get it.

*And what happened when you found you that you were going to come on board and you were going to be the first person as well?*

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Well I gradually found out about it in stages. I got the email and just saw the title of the email 'Congratulations you've been accepted', but I didn't have time to read the whole email so I didn't realise what date it was, 'Wow that's great' and then the next day came and I thought 'Wow that's really early on in the project', then later on checked the date and thought, 'Oh that's the first day that would be really, yes, that's really exciting but' and it wasn't until I actually got a phone call because nowhere on the website did it say what actual time did the project started so although I knew I got the nine o'clock and I had a suspicion that might be quite early on I was kind of hoping it might start at midnight which would mean I wouldn't be the first person but then I've got a phone call, 'Look do you realise you are the first person?' And at that point I kind of 'Well in for a penny, in for a pound, I might as well, I don't mind.' They were saying do I mind there are things like interviews, do you mind, you might get quite a bit of media attention, I kind of didn't mind that I think I still underestimate quite how much but at that point I decided that I would do something for the NSPCC. I had sort of thought, well, I accept that there is going to be tensions trying to say positive things trying to deflect that attention away from me and on to a charity.

*So that's great, why did you choose this particular charity out of all the others?*

Well I'm a mum with two young children and I think I read somewhere, something Antony Gormley said about it would be interesting to see what people do, they've got one hour, they can say anything they want to the world, and I kind of, you know, what is the most important thing to them and I... sort of thought it makes you really sort of think actually what is the most important thing to me and what do I want to say to the world well if I am going to say anything this is kind of what I would like to say you know we need to help children who are at risk and although I'm involved in a couple of local children's charities I didn't think it was kind of right for them I didn't think there would be anything really for being for this kind of exposure instead of National organization people have heard of, the NSPCC the work they do is really important.

*Thank you, is there anything else you would like to add before we end the interview, any thoughts or feelings?*

No, I don't think so, just that I am really looking forward to being able to relax and watch anybody else, I'm still really excited about the project, you kind of, once you've been accepted you kind of get so involved in yourself on what am I going to do that you start to feel you are losing sight of the project as a whole and I am still really excited about the project and I am still very, very excited to see what everybody else is doing so I'm kind of looking forward to when my bit is over and that's quite good that I'll be right at the beginning, I want to relax and see what everybody else is doing.

*Okay, thank you and good luck!*

Thank you.