

Hello my name is Kate Rowles and I'm interviewing you for the Wellcome Trust as you are taking part in Antony Gormley's artwork One & Other. The date today is 3rd of October 2009 and the time is 5.35 p.m. If I can please ask you to say your name, your age and where you are from.

My name is Tom Magill. I'm 53 years old and I'm from Belfast.

And how are you today?

A bit stressed.

What are you stressed about?

Well just getting all the technical stuff into gear before we go and I'm just conscious of the time that's all.

Okay, what was it that made you apply to be part of One & Other?

It's a great idea. Antony Gormley has come up with a great idea about using public space and giving people access to participate in the art history culture of the nation, it's a great idea and I'm proud to be part of it.

And when you found out you had got a place on the plinth, how did you decide how you wanted to spend your hour on it?

I spoke to my colleagues that I work with in Belfast and we decided what would be the best use of my hour on the plinth.

And what decisions did you make?

To represent the organisation, the charity that we work for, and that's the Educational Shakespeare Company. We are an educational charity based in Belfast, ESC is an award winning educational charity the website is www.esc-film.com, we work with marginalised groups including prisoners and ex-prisoners, homeless people and youth at risk. The ESC has just created a world's first, making a feature film with long-term prisoners and cast ... as cast in a maximum security prison in Northern Ireland and you can find out more about the film on our website which is www.esc-film.com. Of the film, Michael Bogdanov said, 'stunning Shakespeare forged from the scrap of people's society.' Augusto Boal, Nobel prize nominee 2008, said, 'If our prisoners would be better citizens transforming themselves from society around them.' And that whole notion of transformation that Antony Gormley talks about is first of all why we were attracted to the idea about his idea of using of art as transformation and how it can transform people and ultimately transforms societies. So Ken Branagh said that our work was an important work that speaks eloquently and Ken Loach said this is a strong and imaginatively conceived film, the actors are remarkable and the Northern Ireland voices are very powerful. So what ECS does, it has enabled people to understand and transform their own lives by using their own stories as the material for creating drama and film. Turning stories into films enables them to see where they are and where they want to be and so it helps our audience to understand where they are coming from and why they are the way they are at this point in their lives so when people are given the opportunity to recognise and understand themselves the knowledge gained often creates a radical transformation in their lives they start to change in their own time and their own pace so you can learn more about our film work or make a donation at www.ecs-film.com .

So are you going to represent your charity on the plinth or the work that you do, how are you going to do that?

Well we had planned and edited an audio, a one hour audio of drama, films, sorry drama, poetry, songs and comments from prisoners and ex prisoners who have taken part in our work. So I have a CD, you know, with all of those voices on it and we are just waiting to see if we can actually get the battery to power the CD player to share it with people in Trafalgar Square otherwise I'm just going to have to remember what they said or remember as much as they said and say it myself.

And what does it mean to you personally to stand on the Fourth Plinth?

It's a great honour, you know, to be part of this because it's a world's first, it's a great opportunity to be here in the centre of London and to be sharing exactly what, I mean for me it's like a symbol of the freedom of expression and I think Antony Gormley has done the nation a service making the Fourth Plinth accessible to people so it's a great idea and I'm privileged and proud to be part of it.

And what's your role with ESC?

I'm a founder member and I'm currently the artistic director so I directed the feature film that we made which was an adaptation of Shakespeare's Macbeth with the men in the maximum security prison in Northern Ireland. I'm also an ex prisoner myself so I transformed my own life using creativity and using drama and using art so I speak from first hand experience when I'm talking about using art and education and creativity to transform lives because I know that it works and that's and that's another reason why I really resonate with Antony Gormley and his work where transformation is such an important part of what he's trying to do.

How did you get to where you are today?

How did I get to where I am today? By the road less travelled. Let's say it's been a hard tough journey but I've really enjoyed it and I mean by following my passion, by following what I love doing and by keeping at it and not being swayed by rejection and failure and you know that kind of stuff. So I do it because I love doing it and we are very lucky to have amazing committed volunteers working with us to do the work that we do so persistence if I had to come up with one word it's basically persistence it's what's kept me here.

Did you experience anything like the work that ECS does when you yourself were in prison?

No, I didn't. There was no opportunities for creativity when I was in prison. I mean there was the nearest I came to it was through education and then through education I found creativity but that was in the '70s when I was in prison so you know things have moved on quite a lot and there's more opportunities for prisoners and people who fall through the education system or for whom the education system has failed to find opportunities for creative expression because I believe that creative expression is a barometer of our health and if we don't have access to creative expression we are much less healthy. So it's imperative that more people become creative because creativity is a wonderful way to keep ourselves healthy to keep our relationships healthy to keep everything healthy and happy and flowing you know I'm convinced by the power of creativity to transform people's lives.

Can I ask you a little bit about yourself?

Yes.

Perhaps where you are from, maybe start there.

I'm from Belfast and I grew up when... the troubles or conflict was just beginning to happen in Northern Ireland and so we moved when I was a child about twelve years old to England and I found it very, very strange to be you know having a Belfast accent living in England at that time. Britain has become a much more multicultural society now but in the late '60s it was very, very racist, it was very bigoted, it was very sectarian and it wasn't a really nice place to be for immigrants because that's basically what we were, we were the kind of like a wave of Irish immigrants coming into England and so I experienced a lot of racism... when I came to England first. But you know I also met a lot of great friends as well and then it was later that I found out that my parents were actually from a mixed marriage which I didn't know before so that means one person was catholic and the other was protestant. I found out my mum was catholic and that was a revelation to me you know when I was twenty-three years old to find that out and so what it made me want to do is examine my own cultural identity and find out who I was and where I came from and find out why my mum had hidden this secret from us all of her life and so it kind of brought me back to Belfast so I was away from Belfast for twenty-two years and didn't come back. When I got out of prison I went into education and I did my O

levels and my A levels and went to university and got a degree, came out of university and went and worked as an actor for fourteen years and toured all round England, Scotland and Wales. I suppose the highlight was playing at the Carphone Warehouse in Covent Garden and that was great after we won a French first and [?] picked a French award at Edinburgh and that was great, that was a wonderful experience and that was in 1986 in a play called *The Hooligans* and so then I got into, after acting, I got into directing. I met a guy called [? Ulessa Amhad Uladdi] from [? Chapel] in Leeds who introduced me to directing and I learnt that from him when to work with the kind of African theatre company for a couple of years in Leeds and then I went to university and did an MA in cultural studies and oh, where are we? In 1990 about '91 I went back to Belfast and began to find out who I was and where I came from so I went to work in an area called the New Lodge which is a working class area of Belfast and you know I'm from North of Belfast originally and so going back there was an amazing experience because it enabled me to find my roots and find out about my family and find out about my mother and my grandmother and where they from and I was able to go there and make peace for myself because I was very, very confused just about who I was. I was ashamed of who I was, I hated myself, I hated my name, I hated Belfast, I hated all that and that's what actually drove me back to Belfast to find out all of those things about myself and to make peace with myself really and I did and then in 1993 I went to work with Michael Boyd's Shakespeare's company so that brought me back to London. they were based in Bedford square which is not too far from here and I worked there for a couple of years I really enjoyed working with Michael and then Michael asked me to set up a branch of the English Shakespeare Company in Belfast but I dropped the English and substituted it for Educational, so that's how ESC was born because ESC, you know, when I was in London was the English Shakespeare company and they used to do national tours everywhere so I planted the seed, or Michael helped me plant the seed in Belfast, and so ESC ... he was the first patron of the company, Michael and then August Boal, who's recently died in May this year, became a patron of the company and we were very, very lucky you know in terms of our patrons and the support that they gave us. So that's a bit about me and a bit about my journey.

And now you are the artistic director of this company, what are your ambitions for it?

I want us to do another Shakespeare, I want us to adapt. I want us to adapt another Shakespeare play for film, I want us to do the *Tempest* next and set that in a prison and the guy who played Duncan in *Mickie B*, I want him to play Prospero so I'd like to raise about 500,000 pounds which is not a lot of money in terms of filmic terms but it's a lot of money to us. I'd like to raise about half a million pounds to make this feature film using prisoners, using ex prisoners now based on the *Tempest* that's what I'd like to do next and that's our next project. What were your three words you chose to describe yourself in your profile?

Creating, radical, transformational.

And who are you doing this for today?

I'm doing it for the Educational Shakespeare's Company ESC-film.com.

Before you go and stand on the plinth, is there anything else you'd like to mention or say as closing words?

I would just like to say to all of the volunteers who work for ESC for nothing, Kirsten, Tim, Fiona, Simon, Nigel, Lisa, Sam, Tom, all of them who work for nothing and many, many more I'd just like to say thank you all guys for making this possible, thank you.

Thank you.