

## One & Other Project

*My name is Verusca Calabria and I'm here today to interview Oliver Jackson on the 15<sup>th</sup> of April 2010 at about 4 p.m. and we are in Brixton. So Oliver just to bring you back to your time when you went on the plinth, which we just checked, it was the 12<sup>th</sup> of September 2009, to recap you had gone on there and you wanted to create a portrait of yourself through the members of your family and that your wife was very unwell at the time, what happened since that time?*

Yeah well my wife died two weeks afterwards which I suppose has affected my life subsequently really, yeah.

*And how are you at the moment?*

Yeah I think I am OK really. Yeah, I think I'm suffering some kind of trauma. It's affected yeah, it's affecting the way I'm feeling quite a lot really more than, more than I expected yeah, not initially but the first couple of months or so were OK and then maybe it's because there was a lot to do, you know the administering of the funeral and sorting out financial things and what have you and, yeah, from Christmas time for a couple of months, it was pretty bad but hopefully it's improving now but that might be the consequence of the spring coming along which is always more optimistic, but on the whole, yeah, it's affecting me worse than I had anticipated, but then I think I realised something that this was probably going to happen so.

*Just to go back on some of the things you mentioned in the pre-plinth interview before you actually stood on the plinth, you mentioned about wanting to make sense of what was happening to you with your wife who was terminally ill at the time, how did it happen when you were up there how did you really feel to be on the plinth and talk about your family?*

[Pause] Well at first, if I can say my stint was at 3 o'clock in the morning so I felt a great obligation to entertain anybody that might be there and [if] I got the gig in mid-afternoon I would have felt more of a need to put on a performance. But from what I felt I wanted to say and do, [it] was probably the ideal time for me to be on because I felt I could talk about whatever I wanted to and anybody who stopped by wouldn't be that interested anyway having just been kicked out of a club and I very much doubted there'd be too many people watching it live so, yeah, I think, I used it as a kind of catharsis on coming to terms what was happening. You know when something as traumatic as this is happening, you know you haven't slept properly for a long time and most of your waking time is taken up with organising somebody else's life and even when you've got some moments of time for yourself it's difficult to step outside but the plinth being a completely new and kind of artificial environment for me, it was quite good, quite cathartic and I felt that the people, I was talking about my family wouldn't be watching either which it transpired was not the case because Katie my daughter was at home and she actually watched it live with Alison but immediately afterwards I wondered if maybe I did, maybe I made a mistake, I wasn't sure how Alison would take it really and as I said on the plinth she was the butt of our jokes of the family, but in a nice way, and I didn't want it to come across that this is how I wanted to remember her. I wanted to remember her when she did make the children laugh, you know and I think as it's true with all events it is things like listening to well listening, hearing a Gin P.. [incomp] or if somebody mentioned Bob Man.. [incomp] or

## One & Other Project

you are driving past Tulse Hill that's, those are the times I would be caught short thinking about Alison and there'd be other times when it would be on dates that are particularly pertinent to her, or both of us, those are the times you get tripped up or when things are mentioned out of the blue and those are the times that the most difficult to control because they do spring up on you, yes, is that OK? OK.

*Sure thank you, so looking back at the time to recapture you mentioned how you felt when you first came off the plinth and you were worried about how your wife would feel about having gone on the plinth, did you two talk about it afterwards?*

Umm, no, umm, no I was in the car driving back immediately afterwards. I got in the car it was 4.30 in the morning, I drove home and I picked up a newspaper and I wasn't aware that she watched it even so you know I thought a) she was sleeping a lot and, you know, I think she would have been more scared than anything of what I might have done or said, I don't think she would have expected me to have said what I did, I think she would have thought maybe I would have stripped off or something you know something quite exhibitionist which is not at all like me but I think her view of me and other people's view of me are probably quite different normally but I got home and my daughter Katie, it was about 7 o'clock when she came down and said that she watched it with Alison and it's quite nice and I went upstairs I went to bed and [pause, Oliver starts crying] and she just turned around and gave me a squeeze which is nice and that's really that was all the talking about it that we did really.

*Were you aware that she would die quite soon after that, was it evident?*

I think I mentioned on the plinth that, yeah, we both realised that she wouldn't make it to Christmas but she went downhill very quickly that following week. She was OK but the week after that I helped her to go to the loo, it was on the Monday and afterwards she just collapsed in a heap on the floor and so that was the last time she got out of bed and the nurses were excellent they came around every day and just checked on her and by about Wednesday she was losing her powers of concentration. She kind of drifted off so I called my son up he was up in Balmoral [castle] so he came down and so Thursday, she knew who people were and on Friday, Friday night she drifted into a coma and died on the Sunday morning so it was very rapid and it was painless; they put a morphine, you know syringe, drip in. I just stayed with her, her breathing got heavier and there was lots of fluid in her lungs she didn't seem to be in any pain and then she stopped breathing on the Sunday so you know she wanted, two things she was frightened of a) bits of her shutting down and b) having a painful death. She died at home in her own bed and I think painlessly as much as I can judge and as far as anything goes it's probably the best it could be.

*Would you mind talking about how she got diagnosed and how long it took to get to what happened basically?*

No, no that's fine, do you want me to? OK she was first diagnosed in October 2005. She mentioned to me that she felt this lump but she was always a bit concerned about these kind of things so I said we get it checked out so she did and that was, yeah, obviously when you get diagnosed with something like that. It's quite traumatic but they thought they caught it early enough so she had a mastectomy in April/May

## One & Other Project

2006 and they took out the lymph nodes in her arm as well, it was quite a big operation. She had some reconstructive surgery as well, they took bits from her stomach and after that she was went on a course of treatment and had radiotherapy as well and it seemed to be OK and she was checked out, she'd go back every 3 months and it seemed to be OK and so for the rest of 2006 and 2007 we were leading a fairly normal life. She went back to work and I was due to go to *Macgill University* [Quebec] for a year in October 2007 and almost a year I suppose to the day after the operation, they found secondaries in her lungs and in her liver and they said they would start chemotherapy and at Brooks Hospital [Cambridge] and also there's some drug company, I can't remember which one it is, that has a lab there. They put her on these trials straight away so that was quite a blow and again they checked her, they'd take her blood quite regularly to see if it was controlled and it seemed to be going OK until about, until about kind of another year, I suppose, where the treatment stopped working so they put her on various other trials and this went on till about June/July last year 2009 where they said there's nothing more that they could do but there's this new treatment down at the *Royal Marsden*, am I OK talking about this?

*Of course yeah, thank you.*

In London it was an unlicensed trial, but Alison was just desperate. She said she'd do anything, you know,, anything was better than nothing but then she started getting yellow and her bile duct was blocked so initially they thought they could put a stint in to release it because they wouldn't take her down to the *Royal Marsden* unless her bloods were adequate. They can't put you on trial if you are too far gone so it looked as though that's what they were going to do. She got admitted back to *Addenbrookes* [hospital in Cambridge] to have the stint put in but the guy, the empathic specialist I suppose you call them, he felt that he really wasn't worthwhile, it wasn't just the blockage in the bile duct there was the liver had been compromised too much. He said he was happy to operate but it wouldn't alleviate any symptoms and the chances of successful operation were 50:50 and that's when he gave the prognosis of [inaud] of being 5 weeks from the state she was in then which was not too far wrong, so.

*Do you mind if I ask you how her death affected your children?*

[Pause] My son I think he has been affected more than he thought. He came up to Ealing – he works in London at Buckingham Palace and he came up in June and we went out for a drink and we were just talking about it and you know I was saying that mummy had much longer really and he asked what would I do and I said I don't know because I don't know how it is going to affect me and I remember he seemed quite puzzled he said you must have some idea and I said 'no', you know, and I think he was a bit, yeah, I think he just thought I was being a bit dramatic, but I think he realises now that just because he didn't see her everyday it doesn't mean that her loss wouldn't have affected him. My mother died when we were living in Italy and I would fly back at weekends to see her and I had my own family and the kids were still quite young and you know to all intents and purposes my mother was just somebody I knew who I liked a lot but she was longer a quotidian part of our, of my life, and I remember it, it really knocked me for six when she died and I think that's

## One & Other Project

the effect that it has had on Sam, my son. I think he has been more emotionally affected by it than he thought but he is a strong headed man. Katie, yeah, she's been very good about it really, but she is and she talks about things a lot more. Sam is quite quiet; he's a bit like me, he tends to hide his feelings, but Katie has at around the same time 2 or 3 of her friends [who] have had mothers who have died of the same thing so there's been quite a good network. There's one boy in particular who sent Katie a book which she said he found very helpful. It was about coping with the trauma of death so she had a really good support network. A friend of hers died when she was at school, she got ran over when she was on her bike crossing the road, I think just the suddenness of the terminality of death hit her then when she was about 15 or 16 although she wasn't a close, close friend of this girl, things like that affect the whole school and then last year she was in her final year at Oxford and she was sharing a house with two other girls one who's boyfriend had graduated the year before and he'd taken a gap year; he was in Peru and in April he fell off a mountain and died which really affected obviously Katie's flatmate just before finals so I think she was quite close to the trappings, if I can say it like that, around sudden trauma like that. But again she's fairly pragmatic. I think it helped [that] she had been due to [go to] France to teach but she put that off until after the funeral. In fact Alison died the day before she was due to start teaching, but she stayed until October and then went to Paris. I think in a way that helped in a completely changed environment but you know if there can ever be a good time for something like this to happen this was probably it. I think had it happened 10 years earlier, then as a family we would have been devastated because the children would have been at home still and had it happened 10 years later then I'm not sure I would have been physically strong enough to be able to look after her at home so I think things like this you must gain whatever crumb of comfort you can rally from circumstances, so.

*OK, we just took a small break, to avoid some noise on the recording, I was just wondering how Alison lived her illness since clearly she was informed about it from the beginning.*

Yes she was amazingly positive about it really. You know after the initial shock she thought 'OK, what can you do about it?', let's get it done. So I mean I could have got through the operation she went through, it was very long; it took about 8 hours. I'm not very good in hospitals anyway and afterwards yeah, she was fine, you know for her, it was nothing. They put a port in because her veins ended up being so difficult to find, they put a port in so they could just inject the drugs straight in and also I think when she had her chemo, I would rather just not have been operated on, gone out [?] but she was very positive about it and even until, basically until, the liver specialist said 'that's it', I think that's the first time she really thought it was going to kill her. She always hoped sometimes she would get fairly desperate saying you know they must find something soon, but until she was actually told she just, yeah, she was very positive about the whole thing she worked even last year, she worked much less she would work [from] about 11 and come back about 4. Her employers, John Lewis, were just fantastic about that. But I think she saw that as a temporary bleep and that she would go back to full time work once it was all cleared up and it was only really once the liver specialist said that, yeah, we were approaching the final chapters that it really hit her and I thought it might just, my mother got very bitter towards the end towards my father she, it seemed that all this rage that had built up was just coming

## One & Other Project

up and it wasn't nice because she was a very sweet woman and I thought that might happen with Alison but not at all she just took each day as it came really she was very sweet.

*And how do you keep in touch with your daughter in France?*

We speak most days, we Skype each other and it's quite cheap over there. She's been back a few times so I mean, further to what I was saying, how they reacted to Alison's death, I speak to Katie now probably 6 days out of 7, I speak to Sam maybe once a fortnight once every 6 weeks.

*How old was Alison when she was diagnosed?*

How old was she? She was diagnosed in 2005 she was born in '52 so '53.

*Can you tell me a bit about her life, what she did, you know, before you met each other and what she did for work and the kind of thing?*

Yeah, well she was born in Kuwait. Her father works for some American oil company and she went to school here in the UK, in England, Box Hill School. She went to university she went to [incomp] which is a weaving college for borders, she was very artistic, she was very good at drawing and she was very good at weaving when I met her. She had this huge 16 shaft loom. I don't know if that means anything to you but it's a huge great loom we had in our room in our house in Camden, it was a foot length and the whole house would thunder if she wove away she was very, yeah, very naïve in a way she always thought the best. Do you want me to talk about her as a character do you mean?

*Yes that would be good as well, yeah.*

I used to say she would have been happier if she'd met an accountant or something, did I mention this? No. She would have liked to have settled down and have a steady life and know each year what she was going to do. I think she thought it was a bit of a helter-skelter ride, hitching up with me really because shortly after we met, we remember history differently, I remember just saying that I'd had enough of London for the time being that I wanted to move out. She tells the children I just came home one day and said 'I'm going, you can come if you want to'. I don't think it happened like that. We moved down to Bath which was no big deal we had no ties but we didn't know anybody, we had no work and then we got married in Bath, she loved it. We had the kids there and she had a wonderful life and I wasn't enjoying it and so eventually I said, 'let's, while the kids are young, take them somewhere where they can have a proper life' so we went to Italy. She of the four of us, she took to it the worst really, the least. The kids loved it and I loved it but it was hard for a couple of years. We didn't have much money and I think she did, yeah, she wished we'd still be back at home in Bradford on Avon in Wiltshire, but it's funny you know. We'd come back here and people come to see her and say 'Oh, it's so brave of you' and Alison would say 'it's OK if you put your mind to it' and this is the Alison the children will recognise [chuckles]. But yeah, I think she was never decisive. You'll ask her a question, even do you want to go to the theatre tonight? or do you want to go to the

## One & Other Project

cinema? She'd never make her mind up even with small things so she tended to leave me to decide things and she was happy, you know, she was happy being involved. There's, have you ever had? Can I talk to you?

*Of course.*

Have you ever read *A Dance to the Music of Time*?

*No I haven't.*

That's Anthony Powell. It's a series of books which chart, it's, it's supposed to be fiction but basically they chart his life from when he was at Eton up to the '70s really and the characters reappear all the time and there's a man in it called Widmerpool who first appears in the first book and somebody pours porridge over him at a meal and everybody laughs at him. But he's happy because he's part of it. The fact that he's the butt of their jokes doesn't matter, he's part of it. He ends up being a cabinet minister towards the end of the novels but not in the Widmerpool kind of way. But Alison was happy being part of it, she enjoyed, yeah, she wasn't a big instigator, mover or shaker, but she enjoyed being part of the group. When she worked, I call it Robert Sell, because John Lewis used to be called Robert Sell in Cambridge, they had a dramatic club there and she took part in productions there which comes across as quite a timid shy woman but you know it takes some balls to get up on a stage and perform so she had a lot of very evident talents and a lot of hidden talents as well she was a fantastic cook. I did actually manage some kind of encomium at her funeral I chose to talk about that aspect of her I can elaborate if you want or not.

*Of course, yeah.*

Well I just said that when we first met, it was in 1978 in those days British food was even worse than it is now. You eat especially, I was a young 22 year old in London, and you eat mainly to just line your stomach for taking some punishment down the pub and so at her funeral I [mentioned I] used to eat Vesta meals; did you ever see them? They are a horrible, horrible meal but I met Alison. I invited her around to my flat and made my *piece de la resistance* which was just a cottage pie but made with real meat and real potatoes and I said it must have worked because she invited me back to her house, her flat and she cooked this fantastic [meal], the house was awful, I ended up living there in Camden. It was horrible, a horrible house we lived there for 2 and a half years. It didn't have a bathroom, it had a shower cubicle, it had a plastic blue shower cubicle in the kitchen but when you turned it on, it was electric, you had to turn off all the other electrical appliances in the house otherwise the fuses would blow and the fuse box was in the basement underneath the laundrette. It was above a shop on the Camden Road and it was, there were inches of water in the basement, it was horrible. So four of us lived there; me and Alison and then Alison's brother Andrew and his girlfriend. At the time he came and lived there so I remember these winter nights, we would be there around a candle while we'd take it in turns to rush in and out of the shower. It was horrible but anyway and that was the only water in the whole house and I went there and Alison cooked me this fantastic meal with fresh vegetables and I thought 'wow, you know, I must, I'm in here you know, she's gone through all this trouble' but I realised the next day when we went up to Inverness

## One & Other Project

Street this is what she did anyway it wasn't that she had done it for me, that's the way she lived. So at the funeral I said that's the kind of person she was she took trouble over the little things in life but she was the first girlfriend I had really who cared about things like that you know, yeah.

*You mentioned earlier that she struggled living in Italy, why was that?*

[Pause] Things that she liked doing, she could spend all day doing, like cooking or gardening, she loved things. She didn't want to do, she didn't do, she did a PGCE here in London when we came back from Italy and then started teaching and she found that very difficult working out lesson plans and sticking to them. She was much more, she would have been a great teacher 30 years [ago] but nowadays when you have to be more structured and she had a really traumatic year teaching because she wasn't prepared to do the boring mundane donkey work attached to teaching and she was like that in her life, you know paying bills or whatever eventually she'd leave me to do it or writing to people and in Italy she felt she'd pick up the language just by talking it. I'm very fond of languages, I went to Siena for a while to university there to learn the basics and then I'd read the newspapers and Alison just felt I'll make it up and so she would, she'd make mistakes. I remember the kids would be in the supermarket or whatever talking to a friend and she would make a fundamental mistake with the grammar she'd say talking about herself '*sono andato*' and I remember the kids saying '*sono andato*' ah ah, you know mummy can't speak it properly so she didn't integrate and then when things got hard, well she did integrate but she didn't enjoy doing the hard things in life really and when things got hard she didn't want to work really, you know, there was a time when we both had to get jobs. She didn't like the work, she would end up not doing it and it must have been hard for her but it's, you know, I know a lot of people like that, you know, they just don't like doing things, they don't want to do and if you play your cards right, if you organise your life properly you can get around not doing them really.

*When you got back from Italy you mentioned in your previous interview you set up a company but you didn't mention what you were doing.*

This one here in the UK do you mean?

*Yes when you got back from Italy.*

When I was in Italy I worked for a company in Citta del Castello near Perugia that made machinery for the graphics industry large *cellofannatore*, and *poly-baging machine* [?], they call them in the UK, and I used to kind of run their overseas sales department. It was, there are only 3 companies in the world really that make machines at that level [of] which two are Italian and it was a very domestic set up. Most of the clients were Italian so I was brought on board to kind of get overseas sales going and it's not to my credit at all, but the company grew very quickly and mainly down to the efforts of the boss who was a very dynamic bloke and then when we came back to the UK I went back to doing the work I did before which was kind of building and decorating with a friend of mine who had a firm here and my boss in Italy contacted me and asked me if I'd like to work for him here in the UK developing the market here because there were new sectors opening up so that's what I did

## One & Other Project

working alongside the company I represented from here but being paid so it was a very complicated issue being paid by Italy. That didn't work out, there were conflicts so I set up the company with my boss in Italy with a view of developing certain sectors of the market here and that's what I did really selling mainly to newspapers. *So going back to yourself and your life, you mentioned you were born in Africa, how come?*

My father was in the army after the war. He didn't fight in the war, he was too young but he joined up after the war and I don't know, I think talking to him, I think times were so hard here after the war there was rationing and whatever and in those days there was still I suppose what we call an empire and in Africa there was I think the King's African Rifles which was a kind of well, a kind of domestic army made up of indigenous soldiers but they were managed by British soldiers so they'd go out there and help with the training of officers or whatever so he signed up to go over there and worked in Malawi and that's when he met my mother, my mother was born in Delhi and she'd come over to, shall I carry on with this?

*Yes of course, yeah.*

She'd come over to London during the war and she was used to hot climates and whatever. She didn't really like London. She had a fiancée who was killed in the war. He was a pilot and I think she had a fairly tough time. She joined what would have been a short hand typist [pool] in those days and so she asked if she could be sent to, they used to send civil servants abroad, so she got a posting there to work in the government offices in Zomba which was then the capital of Nyasaland and by all accounts there wasn't much to do not only in Africa but in all these places, the West Indies or Kuwait even there wasn't much to do so people would gravitate, you know, to the clubs and play a bit of sport and get very drunk and I assume that's where they met, so.

*Were both your parents British?*

Yeah.

*How come your own mother was born in Delhi?*

My mother's father was also in the army. He died when she was about 4 though and so her mother, my grandmother had a very hard life. She worked as a nurse in Calcutta hospital but my grandfather had been a mason so they paid for my mother's education and her sister, my aunt they went to convents up in the hills in Darjeeling. It sounds awful, they went there in January and they came back in October 9 months on and 3 months off. So I have a cousin, this is by the by, I have a cousin who feels it's no accident that Alison and I ended up together, the fact she was born in Kuwait and I was born in Malawi in Zomba. He was born in Simla in India, he now lives in Stockholm and he has a sister who was born in Buenos Aires and she lives in Sydney and he believes that's this stratum of itinerants that kind of, yeah, wonder around the world bumping into each other and finding them and ending up with them whether it's a valid thesis I'm not sure if I am qualified to say.



## One & Other Project

*Just to bring you back to your time now. You mentioned in the previous interview you were considering going to Japan as an idea at the time, what are your plans for the immediate future?*

Immediate future, I still haven't decided. I'm in the process of finishing off a house which should have been done a long time ago. It's taken me longer than I'd hoped but given the circumstances that was probably understandable. I would still like to, I'm thinking I might move on from where I am. I'm thinking of, I'm very much aware that I'm a person with a history that people are aware of and I'm not sure I'm very comfortable with that. As I mentioned to you, we sold our house in Italy and I'm not, I am unhappy in some respects because I have lots of good friends there still but I'm not sad that I wouldn't have gone there to be on my own, I don't think so, I would quite like to be somewhere where I don't come with this baggage, with this history, that I'm not the husband of Alison or I'm just Oliver who lived on his own so I'm not sure I was up in Scotland last week just looking around. I think it would do me good in the short term at least to spend some time on my own on mutual territory but I think I'll move from Ealing and just move into Cambridge. I would like to go to Japan but I've been looking at it and it's not as easy as it seems but I might do some, I would like to go back to Malawi but it seems the only programmes are the ones you pay and they seemed to be for gap year students whose parents you know got a reasonable amount of money because it's not cheap and it's good for them to see the rough side of life, but I'm not sure really how valid that is, so I might do VSO.<sup>1</sup> I think I met, I do 'Crisis at Christmas', I do that and I met a girl from VSO there which was trying to persuade me to apply so I may do that. I think it would help to get me out of any torpor I might still have over my condition, it's you know all in all I've had a pretty good life really. I'm maybe being a bit self-indulgent feeling the way I do.

*You mentioned doing charity work, is it, helping with homeless people?*

It's just this, yeah, at Christmas they open these centres for homeless people they can come have a haircut, get their feet seen by doctors there and they have various shelters around London. They have one for women only, one for dependents, rough shelters and I did it when I lived in London from 1996 to about 2000 and the last 2 Christmases I come down and I just work in the transport basically at night so if somebody needs moving to or from a hospital or if they need some supplies or whatever so I don't have that much contact with the guests as they are called but I quite enjoy that. Just well, I quite enjoy that, just feel there are people who aren't quite fortunate as me it's a very small way of trying to put something back I suppose, yeah.

*So OK the next part of the interview is really to ask you more about the plinth to go back to that time, I mentioned to you earlier before we were recording that there's only a 31 minute video clip of you on the plinth and I'm not sure why so I could only see some things you did or talk about during your time on the plinth so just to bring you back do you remember what you did for the whole hour, could you take me through what you remember?*

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<sup>1</sup> Voluntary Service Overseas

## One & Other Project

As I said I didn't watch it again. I feel I think I treated it to an extent as a performance once it's done, it's over. I have kind of views on art which maybe we get to afterwards so what I remember I did run through what I wanted to say on the plinth and there was too much of it so I thought I took chunks out thinking that would do but I wasn't, I hadn't prepared anything completely and so I didn't use up the whole hour. I wanted to say a lot more about the concept of the art and the concept of Gormley's concept of art, an hour upon the stage as it be.

*So Oliver to really try now to capture the effect that going on the plinth had on you, given the circumstances that you were in at the time and also to reflect back on the impact it may have had on your friends and family.*

OK, well the main thrust of what I wanted to say on the plinth, I don't think it really mattered that it was on the plinth. Maybe I took advantage of the fact the time I was on well, I know I did because I had a month or more, 6 weeks from when I was told that I was offered this slot, would I accept it so from when I heard that I'd been given this lot to the 12<sup>th</sup> of September events happened where it was quite apparent Alison wasn't going to be around much longer so I started formulating ideas of what I would use the plinth for although it was supposed to be a self-portrait taking into account my close family was mainly going to be about her because I wasn't sure if I would be able to do it when the proper time came, so I think relief that I got through it and I wasn't that emotional which I think the fact it was on the plinth and what was going on and the time of the day contributed to that and, like I say, going on afterwards I was ambivalent whether what I'd done was really right or wrong and then the passage of events over the following fortnight was [of] such an immensity, I think, with Alison going downhill and then dying, that I didn't spend much time thinking about it and to me it was the act of being on the plinth which was important and as with a live performance [and] walking off from the personal point of view I would have been quite happy if that had not been recorded, that it was done and that was it. But I see, I understand obviously that it is quite important that it is recorded and I'm quite happy because whoever might in the future look at transcripts or watch it or whatever will probably have nothing to do with me, you know, in a relationship sense as a snapshot of, as what I took the aim of the project to be, I'm happy that it went the way it did, but because [of] the personal events, I didn't think about it as much as I might have had Alison not gone downhill and died so soon afterwards. There might have been more time to talk about it, the impact it had on my family, I think again it's difficult to gauge because these aren't things you talk about over a cup of tea or whatever, quite a few of us are people of a few words, feelings are feelings and words are often inadequate to express feelings. I think that's the way we live anyway, emotionally. Alison and I loved each other deeply but we didn't feel the need to tell each other every week or whatever but I think that holds with the children, yes with all of us. Katie and I always blow kisses to each other on Skype at the end but that's just because we do, we have lots of little family habits but it affected my sister, my sister talks about it, well I don't know if it affected her more, she talks about my stint on the plinth rather strangely. She talks to other people about it as well but not so much about the personal aspect of it although I'm sure she does touch on it, I'm sure she mentions to people that don't know me that I did it shortly before my wife died but also just the idea that I mentioned about portraiture and how I hope to paint some kind of picture of myself using words describing my family. Yeah so Katie

## One & Other Project

commented on it a bit, she just said 'yeah it was good' but that was shortly afterwards. We haven't actually talked about it and like I say I didn't watch it again, I didn't feel the need to. I felt my 15 minutes on the night was all that was needed really.

*Now to look at the impact of the online audience did you make it known via any social networking site that you were going to go on the plinth?*

No.

*Did you read the comments people made on your One and Other profile?*

No.

*There were 3 comments.*

Really? No, it's, I repeat, well I don't know, hopefully well, the performance itself was the main thing and yeah it did affect me more than I am prepared to admit. I don't know maybe it did. But again, I think there'd be a certain type of audience watching at 3 in the morning. There are often things that I read, books or theatre to go to so I feel particularly moved by and I have the [inaud] unfortunately as yet not driven me to write to the people or to comment on it maybe I ought to do that but well I hope anybody who did watch it I hope somebody who watched it might have been touched a bit, but [pause] I used to want to be a sculptor when I was younger and I developed lots of strong views on art, one of which was [that] an artist should not really compromise. I know it's totally, I was an idealist, that you should create what came from within you and that was it and any compromise would diminish the quality of the art and it might sound facile or banal to say it but that's really the way I approach my stint on the plinth. OK I've been given this opportunity within certain parameters and given that current state in my life this is, what I'll do on it rather like a poet might be moved to write about nature, I'm sure it was spring time when Wordsworth wrote about daffodils. There's a Scottish poet called Douglas Dunn who wrote a book called *Eulogies* which was all about his wife dying of cancer so it was very much the moment he wanted to capture in that book and Ted Hughes' book on his marriage to Sylvia Plath so I think in art is perfectly valid I'm being very presumptuous here to say it's art but in the act of the creation it is perfectly valid to take that moment of your life and put it under the microscope and that, in my own rather banal facile way, was how I wanted to use the plinth.

*Thank you very much.*

So is this it?

*Is there anything you'd like to add at all or make comments?*

No I don't think so, it's been a blast. I must say it's been interesting, yeah and it's. you know. I don't know how, it was driven by this, but I think it's good. I just, it will feel a bit odd, that there's this bit of me stashed somewhere which probably may never be examined again but yes it's my little smudge on the world really.



## One & Other Project

*Thank you Oliver.*

**END OF RECORDING**