



Connection Points In Conversation at The Art Station, Sunday 24th April 2022

Fiona Grady - FG
Clare Palmier (The Art Station) - CP
Emma Hill - EH
Livia Wang – LW

CP

Welcome everyone to [The Art Station](#), really pleased to see you all. Lots of people we haven't seen here before and lots of familiar faces. It's great to be doing face to face events again, nothing quite like it!

We've got our first conversation focusing on [Fiona Grady's Connection Points](#). An amazing installation that has transformed the windows of our 1950's Telephone exchange which was installed last October. And today Fiona is going to be in conversation with [Emma Hill](#), the founder of [Eagle Gallery](#) in London. And Livia Wang who is the Creative Director of [Van Gogh house](#) and [San Mei Gallery](#) in London.

We are looking forward to their conversation.

The Art Station is an arts charity that is supporting contemporary practice here in East Suffolk, both supporting artists and creators and also providing an art and learning programme so people can access high quality practice. So if you're not on our mailing list please sign up!

Over to you!

FG

Thanks Clare.

I was just going to start quickly by introducing myself and telling you a little bit about the work and then letting Emma and Livia to introduce themselves to you and then well have a chat.

I'm Fiona Grady I'm an installation artist and I mainly make site specific and site responsive work which essentially means that I am invited into different environments to create artwork. It's not always a gallery context, often it's in public spaces or it could be in someone's home. And the idea with my work is that I create abstract geometric quite colourful motifs and installations which I find different ways of occupying spaces. I'm often given a brief such as someone wants a painting on a wall or a window and then I just go from there really.

This project with The Art Station was initiated about a year ago now, I was originally invited to take part in an exhibition called '[The Waiting Place](#)' which was curated by [Ann-Marie James](#), an artist based in the area. She invited artists and writers to send postcard size work to The Art Station which could then be put in the group exhibition. It also existed online as a digital virtual gallery space. When Ann-Marie approached me about it I said I could always post you some vinyl instead which then became this conversation with Clare and the team at The Art Station about something bigger. I started thinking about how to use the windows in this building to help announce that they were here and bring together different elements such as the project space, the studios and the different co-working spaces in the building. To have something that both exists inside the building as intimate moments but also to be seen from the outside, particularly in the evenings when the lights turn on. It turns the building into a lightbox and a living artwork.

We started talking about this about a year ago and then quite quickly it developed into a project that we got Arts Council funding for. It was also an education project, we worked with some of the local schools, Saxmundham Primary School and also the High School to do a couple of different projects where we encouraged young people to create their own vinyl installations and commission themselves. And with the primary school we talked about 'what it is to be an artist', getting them to play with the vinyl and make their own versions of installations for their own school. And at the same time looking at artists that influence my practice.

So that's a quick overview of the project.

EH

Fiona it's not something we've ever spoken about before, but where I was first introduced to your work very much through the prism of some of the writing you would be doing for [Saturation Point](#), which is a web sometimes exhibition site for constructivist and geometric interested artists. You were also working at that time in a gallery. I came to your work very much through 2D manifestations and it was interesting to hear you describe yourself as an installation artist today because I wanted to ask you how would you turn your practice. I wondered was that way of working and that approach in terms of an environmental practice something that you could aim towards or is it something that has developed gradually through opportunities that you've been given or made for yourself.

FG

For me I describe myself as an installation artist but primarily I would say the focus of my work is drawing. The installations have almost become a 2D/4D response to drawing. For example, when I was studying for my MA, I was looking as at a lot of painting on paper and then it moved into wall drawings and it was partly influenced by artists I was interested in at the time, such as [Sol Lewitt](#) and [Bridget Riley](#) but also, a sense of when you choose a bit of paper or a canvas, what size do I start at? I never felt very satisfied with starting with a sheet of paper and working on that. By working on walls and windows you had these limitations and frameworks that were already there and then it was really just an idea of how to frame and expand the work and use the predetermined structures but also allow the architecture to intervene and influence what might happen to the work too.

But as you suggest a lot of it has been down to opportunities, one of the reasons why I started to make window installations was because I was making wall drawings adjacent to windows and I noticed how the shadows from the windows would cast boxes of light on the geometric forms I was painting. I was really interested in the way the surface of the paint such as egg tempura was reflecting the light a little bit, it was giving it this glossy sheen and bringing it to life and changing throughout the day.

I got invited by a gallery to make a series of wall drawings and the asked me if I wanted to do something on the window and it went from there really.

EH

And that was how long ago?

FG

I finished my MA in 2011 and then that exhibition was in a gallery in Leeds called [Bowery](#) in 2014. For that I used opaque colour vinyl. But when I started using it lots of other artists and people, I knew came to me asking if I'd used this sort of vinyl, just by approaching other companies and asking what ranges they had and taking away pieces and playing with them it sort of spiralled from there really.

After that I did a residency at [The Art House](#) in Wakefield where I was really able to work around the building and use the windows and play with that. It keeps on growing, The Art Station is the biggest installation on a window I've done to date. I can't really make this kind of work unless people present opportunities to me. It is always motivated and influenced by what I'm invited to do next. Although a certain amount of that is me seeking out people to ask; to use their windows or make something on one of their buildings.

LW

I guess that idea of limitations is actually really exciting and starts making me think about your body as a big limitation as well. At what point in your work does the conversation about scale come in? Is it when you first meet the building, how big it is or is it something about the vinyl as well, where you make cuts in it?

FG

Yes.

The vinyl come in quite standardised sizes and there's definitely an element that I use my body and other people to help install the work, I do like the idea that it has a kind of human expanse to it too. That you can kind of feel the sense of this, although it is neatly presented, that someone could have put the vinyl in there. We work using scaffolding towers, a lot of it is to do with the equipment that we have access to, how comfortable everyone is and working within the health and safety limitations. As an artist you have to have insurance to do these things, there's often a rule about how high you can go and all of those things. Although some of the more challenging architectural spaces we've used different kinds of scissor lifts. I did a project in [Canary Warf](#) which was on glass structures where the windows were sloping inwards so we had a spider lift that had legs that could hold it in place and a little cabin that people could move backwards and forwards in which was being controlled by someone else on the ground! So, a lot of these things depend on the budget and the technical ability of the people helping me to make the work. I try not to allow these things to be too limiting but I like the fact that it has a sense of being made by a human too.

EH

Because your practice kind of involves in some senses a very strict adherence to these strands (when I first met you) that went back in a sense to the idea of an artist choosing to have a set of predetermined rules that would give them formal structures to play with. Working from that point outwards which can create surprisingly expanded networks of either imagery or form. It interests me that a lot of your projects like this involve untrained volunteers to cut out the pieces accurately for the pieces to work. There's a calibration of something that is very controlled and precise with something that has to have enough leeway to deal with mistakes.

Looking at your drawings downstairs, you took the grid, a sort of modernist regular framework of windows and counted panels. From a relatively simple remit of this shape, that alludes to the idea of the wires in the units in the Telephone Exchange, you've ended up with the layering of the windows in this room to alter the dynamics of the image. How much do you play with the idea of something that starts quite precise but then is very open to chance elements? Would you say that this installation pushes this further than previous works you've done?

FG

This one has been quite interesting because each pane of glass in each window is exactly the same size or width so when I was approaching with how to work with the building, I drew it out in a grid and thought I would slot and arrange the shapes. All of the arcs are the same size the colours vary and how they're arranged varies a little bit too. Where the arcs curve at the bottom where you've got these little quarter circles, they fit within the larger arc that they've been cut out of.

I've always been interested in jigsaw puzzles and I feel that the artworks I make now are like collages or puzzles where I've created a grid and a set of parameters and then I'm working out how to arrange and navigate them. And I think when I first started working in this way, I was looking at systems I was looking at multiples of numbers I liked, I often worked in multiples of three and used creating a starting point and allowing it to grow and expand. But as the installations have got larger and more complex, I've had to work with people and guide them through making the art and I've also had to be a bit more prescriptive in how I do it. Originally I didn't know what the art work would look like when it was finished, I just knew what the starting point would be and would think about the kind of motion I would want to create with that whereas with this I knew exactly how it would be at the end but for the frontage of the building its all one pattern that moves along whereas for these windows behind I decided to be a bit more playful and rather than deciding exactly how the shapes would be arranging them in a way that felt quite aesthetic.

And actually, for these windowpanes the glazing panels that are on top of the building's main windows they're all slightly different sizes, so I've had to cut the vinyl in a way that makes it look like they match up exactly but some of them are actually a little bit narrower or shorter in certain places. So, it's been working out how to navigate a sense of balance whilst feeling playful and free moving. It's nice because the glazing panels do move back and forth so when you want

to open the windows and let some air in you create these new arrangements that are more incidental, ideally with architectural sights in the future I will work with modulent systems and moving panels to create work that is constantly changing

EH

And how wide did you first go when you knew you were going to be working here? Did you take in the whole territory around the building or did you work very much from the building outwards when you were thinking about it.

FG

Well, we decided to use the main L shape of windows but I felt the windows them self were enough because they're also activated by daylight so the gesture of putting quite simple arcs on the window is one thing but the way they expand within the space and change I felt didn't think they needed more. Although it doesn't look particularly minimalist you can see in certain ways it does too so I was quite enjoying the fact it would expand and generate more within it, what's been nice is when you open the doors you can see the shadows falling along the corridors and reflecting on the windows behind you and its constantly finding new spots where it appears to increase. It's been up for six months; the position of the sun and the lightness of the days has changed too throughout that time which has been really interesting.

LW

I really like this idea of finding spaces in modernist concrete frame buildings or modular buildings that's a really interesting thought, what would happen if you were presented with a Tudor barn or something where the openings are very small and how does this relate to stain glass windows, I'm guessing the ones you grew up with?

FG

Yeah, I've been looking at stained glass quite a lot so I did spend a bit of time doing some adult learning courses doing stained glass. I found because of the leading process it feels quite heavy and there's also the connotations of it being in religious settings and storytelling whereas with vinyl its nice because its light and free you can layer and colours and it doesn't cast shadows that are anything but the colour which I really like to.

LW

It's interesting too because vinyl also has these cultural and economic connotations as well, so we've been talking about shop fronts, that's where we normally see vinal. We understand it in a commercial setting. You cut your vinyl out in a hands-on process, very different from it being printed from a roll or something like that

FG

Yeah, but I buy the vinyl per roll and then I either get it Lazer-cut or in this situation we used stencils and hand cut. What I really like about using rolls of vinyl is you get the intensity of the colour, if you digitally printed you would lose the colour. There's also the physical aspect, you can see the way that the pieces join together and overlap and it builds these layers up on the glass too which I really enjoy. The process of making is important within that. One of the things we enjoyed doing was working with the volunteers and a lot of the people helping were artists, creative people based in the community but also students from the [University of Suffolk](#). Many of whom hadn't had an opportunity to make this work before, so it was nice to do something hands on and practical. It was more about what it's like in the daily life of an artist where you're a fabricator and project manager and all these different things too.

LW

My background is in architecture, so I'm really interested in Fiona's work in relation to buildings and architecture for obvious reasons. Coming from The Art Station its fascinating thinking about how this building's opened up and managed. Your work seems to have crossed the boundary about what art is and what design is. What you were talking about earlier made me think, how do you communicate your work to be installed? So much of your job as an architecture is doing drawings and those drawings are like contracts that have to be read by loads of people to communicate your standards and different materials are used. What are the drawings you're producing to show the volunteers?

FG

I do a lot of digital drawings so I use a lot of different programs, I map out and do quite basic drawings of the windows. I learnt quite early on how important it is to communicate because when you're an artist you just think about the creative elements and the enjoyment of bringing these things together. I had an installation I designed so I had forgot to include the gaps between the windows where the wall was so I felt when I was designing it looked quite intense then when it spread out it looked much sparser so I had to keep changing it to get the intensity back. When you look at something on a computer screen there's a certain skill to then expanding it into a physical situation.

CP?

Do you start with a plan of what you think is going to happen with things like colour choice, with no deviation or do you have a period where you're sort of aiming to do what you've designed but during the process of actually putting up the installations that you make different decisions?

FG

I always try reach an end point before I install so I know exactly how it's going to be, because of the practicality's of getting the materials together and then actually installing it. Originally when I was doing it nobody was paying attention, I could do what I wanted and change it as I went along but more and more now it's important for everyone to know before I install it how it's going to look. As I said when I started doing system spaced work, I'd make a border of things and allow it to self-generate whereas now the decisions are made in advance. Because I do the installations quite regularly each time, I can reflect on ones I've done before, I think I've used these colours before, so I'd like to try something a bit different.

For example, when we approached this project, I talked to Clare about the heritage colours of the building and thinking about what would sit well in the environment. There was a lot of greens and creams and blues I wanted to pick up on and because it is a working space and one of the sections of The Art station is a co-working space, I wanted to make sure the colours weren't too overpowering. I wanted it to still feel like a conducive and relaxed environment to make work in whereas the vinyl installation that's in the main space is very hot red orange yellow colours that physiologically could have a more negative impact and be distracting if you're trying to create work. I always welcome feedback from people who access the artwork being in the environments and about how they feel about it too.

LW

I can imagine your relationship to sunlight must have changed now you've been doing these vinyl works. You've been working in healthcare spaces and obviously there's so much to do with natural light and peoples wellbeing. I imagine that in one way you must have become more scientific with your understanding in the way the sunlight comes through. Or do you just leave it up to chance and weather?

FG

When I do installations, I always do site visits in advance so I can walk around and see how people access the space and how much light it has and where would be the optimum place to place it. I also like to talk to whoever is running the project, how the rooms are being used and accessed. If they take photos and send me images that helps. A lot of the

work I've done has been in the UK which is funny because everyone says it should be in Spain where there's constant sun. But I do like the fact that it's not always sunny because then when the sun does come through it becomes quite manageable, I also like how the work is quite fleeting. In Suffolk we've had really great weather and when I was installing the work in October there was still quite a lot of intensity of light which was great and because it's not too built up, when the sun comes up you get a full blast of it.

EH

What I like about this piece is that it operates internally and externally. The two times I've been here in the winter when the light comes very flat this way. Or today when there's a very different thing going on with the light. One of the things I realised was that this work alerted me to the landscape outside- not necessarily to the landscape you can see. If you'd just travelled on the train from London that sense of green that a city person doesn't have, that intense green out the corner of your eye that you only get in a more rural place. What I also like about this work is at night when the buildings lit from inside it becomes absolutely this very adamant sculpture which is like a lightbulb going 'here I am'. You can see me from presumably quite far away. I wondered if the action and the response in the community has been vocalised, you can't miss it at night, can you? You'd have to be looking at the pavement if you did. Has that drawn people from round here in- that wouldn't have come here otherwise? Has that been intriguing to people?

FG

The Art Station team might be able to say a bit more about that. When I was working with the primary school the children, I spoke to had told me they'd seen it and there are quite a lot of events and activities in here which is nice, so it does help to highlight and draw people in too. I did something with the [University of Brighton](#) where we illuminated it as well and it really does highlight and brighten up the place. One of the things that's been lovely about spending time here has been about when it's dark here, particularly when you get further out into the countryside and it's dark, all you can see is the stars. I like the idea that you come through the country and there's a bright light box that you pass through and I hope that people do see. One of the things we've talked about is how vinyl is often used in a commercial way especially in signage and advertising. But you don't always know how much people will think about it or if they'll think of it as an artwork or not. To have it in this space which isn't a commercial unit maybe then heightens the effect of the vinyl too, it's that bit more unexpected.

LW

On that point, we were talking about the material failure earlier when it starts to bobble and have slightly wobbly edges and I was wondering would you try painting on glass? You mentioned your drawings earlier and you were using egg tempura and wall paintings and things like that, what is it about vinyl, is it the fact that it's so readily applicable? Would you be interested in painting?

FG

Definitely would like to because I do quite a lot of Screenprinting and I'm interested in the idea of Screenprinting on to glass, I have done a little bit of painting on to glass but I'd like to do something on a large scale and I think the vinyl's a great way of setting that ambition in place, on that scale it wouldn't have been possible for here unless we'd had a very different budget with it. I like with vinyl that it's temporary, it doesn't always have to be here, so it makes the moments you see it here that bit more special. I would like to do some large-scale screen printing or glass fusing is another one I've been looking into too. So, I think hopefully these things will just keep getting bigger and more ambitious as I go along.

EH

For an artist, presumably, hopefully, this way of working that you've been developing might lead to larger scale more permanent installations and this is something that you probably know more than me, but gradually sense of how people

are commissioning artists within, when I first started working there was a huge debate going on about the visual art world, campaigning for the 1 percent they have in America so that art is actually commissioned as part of the process of the Architectural commissioning of the buildings. I think while public art is beginning to develop a lot more than it was 30 years ago here, it still seems to operate like, 'these are the artists that are going to be asked to come'. I was looking in CenterPoint recently and they've had a very good art consultant working with very good artists but the art felt still not quite integrated with what was around it. We're not so great in this country at bringing artists on board early enough to then have really magnificent pieces of public art that you sometimes see in America where it's been thought through much more early on.

LW

It makes you think how can you enjoy, take pleasure and interact with artwork because on one hand what sounds so great about this installation was the work you did within the community which is a really important part of artists work. Sometimes people think that's the bit people take as the interaction but for the pieces entire lifetime you want people to take pleasure, enjoyment and meaning from it. Obviously, you want something that's integrated in the building and has space for a viewer and thinks I'm going to set aside this generous moment for anyone to stop by, look at it and enjoy it. It's starting to make me think about how buildings can allow for that to take place as well.

EH

Well, this is what's interesting about the hospital rooms you've worked in.

FG

There are 2 different organisations there's, I've been working with [Guys and St Thomas's Trust](#) I've just been installing a piece for them in a teenage cancer unit which is an interesting and pioneering project. The ward has been designed so it feels more like a hotel or a sophisticated student halls. They've approached six different artists we're all making commissions that are being put in at the same time as the building's being developed. But this is actually a refurbishment project, if it had been designed for the building that had been built it could have been a different kind of question. For this piece I'm making a vinyl which has been really interesting just thinking about the therapeutic qualities of the work too.

EH

Have you been given parameters of the commissioners to work with or have you been left to work freely?

FG

Well, it's been a sort of interesting negotiation because there's certain things that have been pre-determined, the interior design, themes have been worked out before the installation so there's quite coral and natural tones within the building, when you envisage a vinyl work, I can show the colours I can use but you can't then imagine it on the window, how you see the transparency and the actual light. Until it is installed you can show examples of the work and how it might look but when you put it up, it does change. Luckily it looks even better than on the computer screens which is always a nice moment. I haven't had a piece yet where my works been designed first and the buildings been made around it.

LW

No, but you can imagine a way it's been integrated into the design team; you have design team meetings with the engineers and the people designing air ducts and interior designers, you could introduce artists early on in that process.

EH * * *

Well, I think that the job of the artist often is to alert you to the things that actually you see every day and you don't notice and that sense of while I wouldn't necessarily say these colours instantly remind me of the heritage colours of the building, I think if you've grown up with buildings like this in the background. That slightly green colour that is a very municipal colour of a certain age, that sense also of just slowing down a moment so you notice something such as the texture of the floor, the opposite in a sense of the imposition of the artists idea. I think good art always does that somehow. It's not necessarily the thing you were expecting to get from it that you can get from it.

I always remember there was a wonderful, I think it was [Patrick Heron](#) writing about being in a [Prunella Clough](#) show, this text arts that he'd come out of the gallery and started noticing what was under his feet on the pavement. And actually, it's a very good and acute reading of what a Prunella Clough painting actually is and does because it is both describing about how she makes images that are often as if you are looking down on to something like a map really. And again, alerting you to some wonderful arbitrary 'this is a piece of coloured plastic next to where the pavement has been worn.'

If you are describing to somebody why that can then become a really compelling visual image you'd think it sounds mad but in fact it brings in to one moment all sorts of different observations about where memory goes and how subjective one's perspective of an art work actually is, you can be with 20 people in a room and they will all be picking up something slightly different from this thing that an artist has actually presented and I think the resonance of work I've often found that work that is sight specifically made has a slightly different sort of delivery somehow, I don't know what it is but that idea of context, we see some of the famous things that we see, say [Goya's black paintings](#) that we now see in a museum but were in fact what he painted around him around the walls of his house at a certain point in his life, it will be interesting to see how many parts of your installation are kept up afterwards because that sense of it being here in its fullness at the moment, but there's a moment where it will also come down and it will be by the record, I don't know how you've made records of this have you filmed it or just photographed it?

FG

We did a mixture; we did a time lapse of the installation process. We took quite a lot of photos of the installation; people have come back at different times to capture it in different lights and every time I come back, I find something new to photograph. You get the main photographs, the window and the impact and then you start taking photos of it on a plant leaf or a chair. It's always exciting to find these new details, like you were saying about the texture of the pavement and looking at the floor, here you can see the way that the coloured shadows sort of soften in colour and texture then it's often influencing printmaking and drawing and things like that, these shadows kind of inhabit you in one way or another.

LW

I guess it's just been so successful in creating an environment or an atmosphere maybe that's what you're speaking about as well. A painting or anything like that, you'd be able to create an atmosphere around it. That doesn't need to be in the same room but stays with you after woods. I guess it will be interesting to know what's the network that's been created by this work. I kind of understand before you make work the research that goes in to it such as reading about the building or listening to stories about it, but there's also the conversations that happen around the work after woods. Has it led you on to any unexpected strands?

FG

I think these things you reflect on over time really, when I do future installations, I'll often say to whoever I'm working with who's commissioned it, what other works I've done so far interest them. You start to see patterns in certain buildings. I had a couple of projects where I was working in, Carnegie Library. I did an exhibition in one and then I got invited to do a residency in another one six months later. Then you think 'well I approached the window this way, so I'll try it this way next time and see what happens.' It's nice because you build up a knowledge and understanding about what happens each time and it makes it easier to approach future installations. I just want to keep pushing it forward and

trying different things so sometimes I'll use vinyls that are mirrored to reflect the environment whereas with this one I just wanted to let in as much light as possible. It's always changing and evolving which is exciting.

LW

In terms of the kind of ingredients that go in to these works, how often is the heritage of the place and the story embedded into them?

FG

It depends really. Often, I work with quite modern buildings just because of restrictions with older buildings. I've not actually been allowed to put things on to the windows, it's risky if it's got old glass panes- to put it on to take it off again- so it does tend to be more contemporary buildings at the moment. I always try to find out as much about the buildings before I design the artwork. Going back to what Emma had mentioned about you seeing something and it then reflecting and referencing other motifs or seeing patterns in the building. I'm always looking for little details that can inspire the work too. Sometimes it can be walking down the street and seeing interesting fences, window shutters or something like that which could then be a starting point for me to think 'I could work with these shapes.'

When I did a painting of some red squares in an exhibition, somehow there was this Architectural detail in the exhibition where a square was painted somewhere higher up in the building and the curator had never noticed and asked, 'Did you paint that?' I didn't, I don't know where that came from. When you sit in these environments you observe. It does change the details that you notice and I really think that from my work there's the initial impact but also, I want people to spend time and contemplate and reflect in a space and if it makes them read the building a little bit differently or create some kind of emotional connections that's really exciting to. I like the idea that it is for the quite observer too.

CP

Can I just talk about how it's been for The Art Station; I think the timing of it is significant. It was put up last October when the world was in a strange place, it's a building that primarily has been closed since 1986. It was an organisation working up here, essentially it went from being an employer of the community, working in telephone exchange, whole families worked here to being closed since 1986. I think this sort of large-scale installation has been part of the journey of the building but also the town, so it's characterised the town in a different way, the motif of the running dynamic of the wires, telephone wires, also sort of resonate with the skies the landscape and the rivers.

And the coastline, particularly the rivers that are very much a part of this landscape so you for the people of the town it's been important as a way of taking ownership of the next stages of Saxmundham, what happens next. So, at Christmas we lit it from inside. It was a huge Christmas event where we closed the town, there was a performance in the street. It's an event that hadn't happened for a long time, a thousand people came to the town during that evening. To see this building lit up in the landscape was really significant. I think the work has really integrated; with the town, with the building, with a feeling of now and a feeling of hope and optimism and dynamism. So, thank you.

FG

Thanks, has anyone got any questions?

Well, it's more of an observation. When I first came here, I really found the building fascinating. I guess it's hard not to imagine all the people that worked here and the secret life of the building, but for me when I lived in houses, when you get up at strange times or when you get up very early, you see loads of sunlight in a weird or unusual place. It's quite nice imagining the secret life of this early morning that maybe nobody will witness. That only the building has experienced. I like the idea of it being alive, that's really sort of magical isn't it. Talking about the joy in the building, and on this building. My Sister was the curator of [Goldfinger's house](#) which is a national trust house in Hampstead. A lot of

the difficulties of it was managing Goldfinger and his wife's stuff. His wife's stuff was everywhere, it was a classic male and female war thing. He had all these lists of what he didn't want on the shelves when he died. In the end they went with,

'We're keeping it how it is was.'

She contributed financially, usually to his career. there were all these sort of soup cans in the kitchen. With all her stuff they left out. It was sort political decision to make. Who gives who what joy or not. That really frustrated me, because it was all in his diary. Something similar happened to me when I did a commission at Kettles Yard, [Helen and Jimmy](#), what she wasn't and was allowed to have. I think that must be very hard to create something that's not neutral, almost like a homeopathic drop so something small but can maybe magnify or gives you a way into viewing something in a whole new way, it's kind of magical.

LW

Just thinking about it being this one thing on a surface, like we were saying earlier, vinyl is not even a millimetre thick so actually if you melted it all down it would probably be just the same as that water bottle which is crazy. It can have such a huge three-dimensional impact. You were saying you wanted it to be here to be quietly contemplated in a way, but it sort of almost has the power of sound work or something. It fills the room.

FG

I think that says a lot about the effect of the colour really because essentially that's what it is. It's these colour gels that then transmit the light really.

LW

It's amazing walking down that really long corridor and peeking into each room and each room just feels totally different because they're painted slightly differently or cluttered in a different way and I guess your work really allows that to be enjoyed.

EH

Did you get people who worked here come when you opened?

CP

Yeah, we opened the downstairs in September which is before, yeah people have been back in and it's been quite an emotional journey for people who have worked here their whole lives. I think to see this building re-purposed in a creative way with a connection to community is a really positive thing.

EH

It's great because it's nothing like this, but [Artangel](#) did a show at Reading jail around the time of Oscar Wilde, I think it was the anniversary of the ballad of reading gaol. That was a very interesting experience in the sense that they'd got major, major artists putting works into that environment. Actually, the environment was so loaded. Both historically and visually. They had Wilde's cell with all the books he was allowed to have which was a very small number of books.

One of the exhibits was his handwritten first draft of the ballad of reading jail. It's last kind of manifestation had been as a youth detention centre, so they did have people that had been prisoners coming back into this art installation. Then they had very famous artist, but their work actually couldn't quite register against the kind of context of this really terrible

prison with these minute cells. There was the hall where they were allowed to go to for prayers once a week, but they had drawings to show they had to go into little booths so at no point did they ever see each other. That was an example of a very interesting project that involved artists and artists' works going into a space where actually the art just couldn't really quite compete with all the other resonances going on. I think to get the balance right is actually quite hard, I think. It would be interesting, I think it's quite a difficult prospect for artists to sometimes go into areas where, I mean [Kettles Yard](#) is a difficult one because the space is somehow so curated anyway. For an artist to go and work with that while the space already has all these extraordinary things going on is quite a hard, I think.

Not sure who's speaking? ***

Yeah, I think so many people say, 'God I'd love to live here' and I have thought that but the more I've discovered about it the less I've thought that, about Helen being very ill and not being able to have hot baths because it would mess up the paintings. They were put there to create the idea it was a very relaxing environment to live with art. I wasn't supposed to say that [Jim Ede](#) was gay and in love with [T. E Lawrence](#), poor Helen that was just madness. You talking about the Reading jail made me think about [Neil Cummings](#) and [Marysia Lewandowska](#). They did this thing in [V&A, Ceramics Gallery](#) (which is supposed to be the least visited area). They just added the sound of people eating and knives and forks clattering against ceramics and it was kind of amazing because it was the smallest drop of something that bought the whole place alive. As you were saying I don't think you can ever compete with the amount of ceramics. There's no other way you could have done it but it's kind of magnified the meaning of it.

EH

So, have you got more projects lined up?

CP

Yeah, not to this scale, but you know the next six months we'll definitely be looking at other ways to work with the windows. Thank you all very much for your contributions that was really interesting.