

Audio title: Katya O'Grady_8thOct2013

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Debs Thank you ever so much for coming along and doing this. As I say, it really is nice to see you again. The reason why I wanted you to be part of this interview is because the way you came from a fine art background and then tackled the Riddle Route project and the way that you worked through that and it became a project for the cathedral, so the interpretation of that and the whole process of that. Is that okay?

Katya Yes.

Debs So how did you become ((laughter)) a fine artist or designer? How did you get to do what you were doing there?

Katya To become a fine artist?

Debs Yes.

Katya I was never interested in a craft. I needed ((?)) perfectly and it just takes time to learn to do something perfectly, whether it is draw, sew, knit, paint. But in order to be slightly more conceptual and work with different interpretations of things you have to constantly exercise your brain so it's less of working with your fingers and hands, it's more working with your brain and thoughts and research as well, different ideas. So you kind of copy the theorists that are out there and you put it through yourself through your knowledge. So that's why I always kind of liked fine art and the conceptual art in particular.

Debs So would you say then it's more about solving things?

Katya Yes, you can say alternative solutions.

Debs So you're kind of doing work that not just pleases you visually but actually answers a question or solves a problem.

Katya I would say it states a question.

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Debs Rather than answers? Ah.

Katya So if somebody came and views fine art or conception art my aim is they look out for the question. So it helps them to form related question about an idea being presented rather than answer some question so it can mean that.

Debs Right, so you're posing the question rather than giving an answer?

Katya Yeah. Well, that's the idea ((laughs)) I don't know how it comes out.

Debs It's really clear because I get involved with Winchester Design Forum and other things and there's café culture as well, and so you have the art based and then you have design based and quite often the argument is, well, if you're a craftsperson or an artist you are doing what you want to do rather than as a designer solving a problem.

Katya Yeah.

Debs So in my interpretation of what you just said then what you're doing as an artist is actually putting a question out there for somebody else to go away and solve, or to think about.

Katya Yes. That's why I decided to train as a designer because some of those questions it's very fulfilling to answer yourself to find a solution.

Debs So where did you do all that?

Katya What?

Debs Your fine art, yeah.

Katya I did fine art... you mean university or...?

Debs Yes.

Katya Yes, I did Wimbledon.

Debs Wimbledon?

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Katya Yeah, print and digital media fine art. So it's quite close to the other design because print and digital media are based on a design, on a very visual outcome. But I wanted to challenge that visual art difference.

Debs Okay. I should have asked you that ages ago ((laughter)).

Katya I only have an answer now, when I can look back at it.

Debs Okay. When you're doing it you're not quite so sure, it's the reflection therefore of what you've done?

Katya Yeah.

Debs Okay, so that is quite important in this as well as I'm doing a lot of action research through this and in fact the whole study is taken through an action research cycle, so three cycles. So always the reflection of what... i.e. the reflection of my ((?)) this project even, so it's good to see that it's practised out there as well by actual artists. So that's good. So why did you choose the Riddle Route to do when you were on the MA? Is it something that personally interested you, the challenge of taking that up. Because I know it's for part of the MA that you're doing with us but you could have chosen any project really, but you did kind of look at that a bit.

Katya It already had a brief, I never work to a brief. All my work was more like I'm expressing myself, my ideas, my problems, they demand questions. This was a brief and that was the challenge I went for because I'd never worked on a brief; I wanted to see how can I... not just to please myself with my work but someone else as well. And on top of that it's not just a client to please and kind of bring in with the order but a wider audience so you have users, you have visitors, so you have kind of like generalised the idea of a user eventually. So

clients, it's kind of like mixes together. And that was my challenge and it's why I decided to do it.

It wasn't really my cup of tea in terms of outcome and visuals, because it's a very visual project and I have to create lots of pretty pictures for it.

Debs But you did it so well and the one thing that... I highlight this project to a lot of people because you did actually work through it so thoroughly and you could see your thought processes almost.

Katya Okay.

Debs At that the different meetings that we had. And it was really interesting to see the way that you were working through that because you really did attack the flow of the way that people should learn or walk through the cathedral and things like this. And there's a lot of people who just wouldn't have done that, they would have just 'I need it to be this way' or 'I want it to be this way because it works in my head to be that way', but you really did work it through.

Katya I think the flow, it was a conceptual part of this project; this is what kind of relates me to fine art. It's kind of how a visitor user thinks, how it uses, what kind of experience again bringing it. But instead of making it difficult for the user to use something, which is usually seeing the fine art but in the conceptual art, so if audience comes to view some crazy paintings or some crazy installations they come out with a question, what was it? Why do they come here, what do they try to see? So this way I can try to do that flow, it's kind of like avoid, avoid the question how to use it. It should be absolutely laid down in front of you and you kind of know ((?)) where to go and how to come back. So it does kind of like work in reverse, like a mirror image of what I wanted to do.

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Debs That's really interestingly put.

Katya Did I?

Debs Yeah, that's really good. I haven't been down to the cathedral since but I know it was certainly being used.

Katya Are they still using it?

Debs Yeah.

Katya Does it need any upgrading or anything?

Debs I don't know; I haven't been down there recently because this particular year's project is actually with the Royal Green Jackets, so I haven't contacted Cheryl for a year, I suppose, so I don't know if they are still using it. But it's interesting that you said about the visuals, that the visuals weren't your cup of tea but they were, what...?

Katya The most important part of this project. Yeah.

Debs Yeah ((laughter)). But they were really good visuals and the way that you worked through those visuals was quite labour intensive as well.

Katya Yeah.

Debs Explain to me about the background that you did, because that was a lot of work.

Katya Research into the visuals?

Debs Yeah.

Katya It was pretty much easy, to be honest. It was hard to create them, it was using new programmes, I had to learn new programmes, but in terms of what I'm going to use it was very easy, because the project came to me already called Riddle Routes, so route maps, old paper, heritage building, it kind of just falls into all these understandings of what a heritage is. So it's rolls of old paper which is yellowed with

interesting bright pictures in it. And then obviously then it was the idea of age groups, it should appeal up to 12 year old ones, so you just introduced stylised contemporary smileys to that.

So it didn't really need too much of a psychological research of a group, it was obvious. So I think this is that kind of a problem of all heritage projects; it's how we perceive old things, we're perceiving yellowed paper and maybe faded photographs in a way and maybe a violin playing in the background.

Debs Yes, it's our perception of how it should look.

Katya Yes. So in terms of visuals it wasn't that... well, because it's a commercial project it's not a big challenge, so if you want to portray something from the 15th century you just put a sepia on it.
((laughter))

Debs Yeah, I suppose there is that. But you did do a twist though, didn't you, you did a twist on some of the images. Do you remember?

Katya I embedded them into the paper and made them hand-drawn.

Debs Yes. There was also, was it Jane Austen with an umbrella, or somebody with an umbrella?

Katya Ah yeah, Jane Austen costume. It's working the ((?)) so you think about Jane Austen you think of a lady in a dress, an umbrella, a nice hat. Yeah, that's images were being fed through media, so you just reuse them.

Debs Yes, that's true. It works so well and even now it hasn't aged; because it's aged already it hasn't aged. And the questions again, you worked through all the questions didn't you?

Katya Riddles.

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Debs Yeah, the riddles. So how did that go? How did you manage to do that?

Katya I collaborated with my friend who's a writer and it was quite fun. It took about a week to write all the riddles. ((laughter))

Debs That's quite a long time isn't it!

Katya Yes, because you have an answer and you have to state a question, so that's again coming back to that conceptual thinking; where is the question, where is an answer. So we had an answer because we had a station, the cathedral ((?)) each one belongs to a different era or somebody's grave, so they have an answer so we needed to make a question for that answer so that was quite interesting. Because, you know, what do you ask about?

Debs So really it was the whole concept of that then actually falls in line with your concept as an artist anyway when you're posing the question, so it worked quite well in that respect.

Katya Yes.

Debs So you were pleased with the outcome?

Katya Oh, that's hard to say. No, I'm never pleased.

Debs Okay, and is that the artist part?

Katya That's the designer part.

Debs Designer part?

Katya Yes, designer part. Now looking back at it obviously it's been about a year and a half since it came out and I think the graphics were too complicated, they were nice but I think the graphics were too complicated for a small screen, especially that new aisle seven, it's so simplified. I'm not sure if it's a good move, it's worth having such a

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simple icon, or it's a bad move. But definitely it says everything is going to very simple graphics to give you on screen.

Debs Something that you can scan through and see very quickly.

Katya Yeah. So I believe my graphics, although they represented old times and old maps they were too complicated to see the screen.

Debs Okay. Because there was talk about putting it on a tablet wasn't there?

Katya Yes.

Debs Which would have made better sense of the visuals in some ways because it would have allowed the children to see it better and be shown easier. We didn't quite get there did we really with that?

Katya No, we didn't get to put it on tablet.

Debs So if you'd had more time and more budget and better, or later, use of technology, would that have changed? Would you have changed a lot of what you did or not?

Katya I think at the time it's quite ((?)) the technology we used because we only used iPhone for it. But I think if you have an app or some kind of that experience project somewhere out there we have to constantly update it; that's my belief, because technology updates, a year we see graphics on the screen changes. So if you say something a year ((?)) is beautiful, we look at it now and think it's over-complicated and there's too much detail.

So I think if you take a project like this you have to maintain it for as many years as it's on; you have to change your graphics, you have to change your flows, to adapt to the market, if you like, to how...

Debs It needs to be refreshed continuously.

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Katya Yes. Because the way we use interfaces now, it changes from month to month.

Debs Yes, it does.

Katya And we are dictated it.

Debs Even Google changes its strapline doesn't it, every so often. So when you look at that even the letters are differently portrayed. So yeah, things are moving apace. But there is something to be said for something that stays the same and familiar for a while, do you think? Or does that not follow through?

Katya I think you just leave it for heritage ((laughs)). It should stay the same as it was thousands of years ago, wherever it made modern days I think it should be made to be changed easily.

Debs Yes, that makes sense. ((Aside re heat in room)).

So as an artist how would you tackle that as a commercial project, not as a designer but as an artist how would you have tackled interpreting or engaging children at the cathedral? Do you see what I mean? Because you picked up that as a brief and then you worked to that brief and took it forward and created a really lovely object out of it, a use out of it, but if as a designer, sorry as an artist, you looked at that again knowing that children needed to learn things about the cathedral, how would you approach that? How would you do that again? Would you do an app or something like that, or would you do a load of images or something like that?

Katya If I didn't have a brief?

Debs Yeah, if you didn't have a brief, the children can fit around the ((?)) learn stuff about the cathedral?

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Katya I think we're coming back there to the original idea that heritage places are still behind because we need to get people through the door to make their readiness. So from that point of view and although I'm very digitally based and I spend a lot of time in front of different types of screens I still believe it's not enough of physical interaction. So if it wasn't a brief in which I have to design a digital app potentially each child has its own phone and in solitude explores the cathedral I would probably make some kind of activity with the children.

Debs So they actually engage with it more.

Katya Engage with each other as well as the building. But that's pretty much because I'm pregnant and I'm thinking babies now! ((laughter)) And how I'm going to bring them up. And obviously I have my nephews who are super unsocial.

Debs Oh really?

Katya Yeah, in real life. And very social in the virtual life.

Debs I think that happens a lot. The whole Facebook entity is a massive with even the students here, living their life through Facebook. My niece is on there now and she's like, don't want to do my homework, and then you can see her dad respond saying, 'Hard luck, get on with it'.

Katya And they're probably sitting interesting the same room on one couch.

Debs Yeah.

Katya And then come back again. So heritage – oh – in museums, cathedrals, houses, all are there to be visited because originally they were built to physically enter them and to physically experience

them. And I don't believe that digital representation which we have on screen or maybe in the future it's going to be just implanted in our memory, it won't replace that. So if it was in the brief I will try to make an interaction project inside a building rather than the solitude of the on-screen.

Debs Yeah. I would agree with that, and you have done some installation work, haven't you?

Katya Yeah.

Debs I remember that. So again the difference between the artist and then the brief, the designer person, with the Riddle Route you had to work with Darren to make it happen, to make it work, whereas maybe in your installations that you've done with your fine art it's you, on your own possibly. Is that correct? So you can do whatever you want, choose, to do.

Katya It's going to be the way you want it to be. Not always I can make it myself, I have to hire people, I have to collaborate, but I don't take no as an answer, because working as an artist I'm the client and I dictate what should be done and I learn how to do it myself or I subcontract someone to do it. Then working as a designer I have to compromise a lot.

Debs And how do you find, because again this is about curator/designer relationship and stuff so the curator is often the client, the designer is having to solve that problem and yet work with the client because they maybe have a clear idea as the artist, a clear idea of what they want to do, and yet the designer knows, or thinks, that they maybe cannot be done in that way. So how did you find the relationship with Darren in that sense? Did you find that he was coming up with suggestions or things that you might say, oh, it needs to work in this

way and he'll say, well actually Katya it can't. Did that kind of thing happen in the relationship?

Katya Yes, of course it happened. Of course he pointed out lots of things that could have been done better and things that cannot be done and finding out the solutions. But I think maybe because of the way Darren is, he's really good to please, so he finds a way. I don't think there was anything in this project we had to avoid, but once again because this project was based on examples of tens and hundreds of others, so we didn't go into inventing anything brand new. But I think that that's why we managed to avoid problems.

Debs I know from working with Darren that you only have to suggest something and he's aware and going with it and make it happen.

Katya Trying to make it for you.

Debs He's very good at being very helpful and conscientious, and making sure that those things... because he can see the idea himself too and see, and maybe he will come back with a better way of it working that as a designer initially you hadn't been aware of because you don't know the capability of the code. Certainly when I've worked with Paul I'll be designing something, i.e. the Talking Horse, and then I'll ask Paul, who's the web person, well I want it to do this. And he said, 'Well you can't, it won't work that way'. 'but it's got to work that way because otherwise....' And you have that...

Katya Because this is how I want it to work, so that's the artist talking in you.

Debs Yeah. So you think, well, you've designed it in this way, you want it to happen in this way, and then it's finding a way of making that happen and getting people onside, do you think? Or is it just that it won't happen and you have to put up with it?

Katya No, this is if I do an installation, it has to happen, no matter what, it doesn't matter how much it costs or who's going to do it but on the Riddle Route project with Darren I think that none of us said that this is how it should be. We kind of collaborated and I asked him can it work this way, and he said let me think about it. And I said, well, if it's not going to work this way maybe we'll try something different, so we always had an open end, it never was such a rigid thing, I want it this way; we always had kind of like open ends, we can make it better, let's see how we can make it. I think it was personalities clicked in that way.

Debs Yeah. And so in order to have a good relationship with somebody else in a team you need to actually...

Katya Involve them in the process.

Debs Yeah, involve them in the process but also click, as you say. You need to be able to understand that person, work with that person.

Katya Yeah, and just respect what they do.

Debs Exactly, yeah. Because some people don't do that and some designers can be quite arrogant and say, well, no, I'm right, you're wrong, and that's it.

Katya No, that's my vision and I'm an artist. ((laughter)) So maybe you're not a designer then ((laughter)), if you're an artist.

Debs Yeah, so I think there are a lot of designers who are artists fundamentally, but they're earning their living by solving problems.

Katya Okay.

Debs Do you see what I mean?

Katya Lucky.

Debs ((laughs))

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Katya They're so lucky.

Debs Yeah, so the commercial, although you're well paid because it was a BMA project but the commercial aspect then of doing the Riddle Route, how did you think that works with other projects you've done? Do you see what I mean? That was you and Darren really with the client.

Katya Yeah.

Debs You may have done other projects where there's been a lot more people.

Katya Like on a larger scale?

Debs Yeah.

Katya Yeah, on a larger scale. ((?)).

Debs Maybe on a larger scale you go into a project not as the person who's directing it but the person who's helping or assisting.

Katya Yeah, the person with no opinion.

Debs Yeah. So then your own artistic ideas don't get voiced, or can't get voiced, because you're not there in that position, and this happens a lot to people, including myself, you do something for somebody and you're just a little pin in the equation really. And you can see how things could be bettered but no-one's asking you your opinion to tell them. So does that happen for you?

Katya Yes, of course. And I suppose there have been ((?)) curved because making installations of film I did try to collaborate with people; I respect the video, respect their opinion and I always tried to invite them to tell me where I'm wrong, even though I know in the end it's going to be the way I want it, that my final idea will be probably kind of shaped by their comments in a way, and probably didn't change a

lot from the original one. But as I say, if you're going to work on a big commercial project you have to lose your ego, especially as an artist and having your own vision, and as a designer maybe having a bit more knowledge about how images work, how colours affect, how a flow works as well. And sometimes you kind of lose the purpose of that project; why are you here if you cannot bring your expertise to the table, you cannot give your advice. It may be wrong but it sometimes can be conceded and the ((?)) can come out from this.

You can put it to bad management, I guess. But I guess this is what happens everywhere.

Debs It does. It is what happens most places, yeah. And there will be always people, or there'll be project managers, whether it's a curator or leading up a design team, who have a vision and put a team of people together but it may not be the correct team or he/she will put the team together but actually what are they there for because that person might do it all themselves anyway. Do you know what I mean? And not listen or heed the people in the team. Or just basically not respect the skills that they've brought onboard in fact, and therefore listen to them for those purposes. And that's one of the things that this is about really, is the fact that is making sure that those relationships work, in a way, and then that those teams are the correct teams, and that people think about that much, much more before actually getting on with the project. Yeah? Would you agree that that is perhaps...?

Katya I can say from my own experience where there are two types of curators. Curators who curate artists and curators who curate designers. So we're talking about presenting fine art, usually the curator already comes to work which is already made by an artist. So in that term for curators is a lot easier to present it. So work is there,

they've seen it somewhere else, and all they have to do to feed it in the right queue or apply it within some architecture.

When we're talking about curators who work in museums or cathedrals and try to introduce innovations, kind of to change the experience of a place, usually the curator comes up with an idea and sub-contracts the artist or designer. And from this point of view the curator becomes the artist who dictates his rules to be a designer. And if you think designer is a professional one who is supposed to dictate the curator, so that's a big mix about it. So I think this is where they should be really separated from two different areas, which is art, which is the artist working in the studio expressing his own thoughts, ideas, making crazy things, and the art gallery curator comes in, see the crazy object and puts it in his corner and in a completely different area then you have a building with a thousand years of history which has to be reinterpreted.

And I think working just with designer and curator projects like this is nothing; it should be historian, it should be some kind of a psychologist who can analyse with behaviour with visitors. And politics come into that as well, because it's very easy to misrepresent the historical facts.

So I think this is like big twist coming there.

Debs So there's a very different... So you're saying basically that the curator of a fine artist's work, or somebody like an art gallery or some such, is really just positioning work in a method that's maybe going to excite people who come to see it. Yeah? Or engage people who come to see it.

Katya Yeah. The different approaches.

Debs Yeah, but they don't... Well they might need to know the people that they're inviting to come and see it or the standard gallery audience, they might need to know the psychology of those people still, but they don't need to be historian or any of these other knowledge experiences, they don't have to have that. Whereas you're saying a curator at a heritage site or a museum needs to be aware of so very much more in order to be able to interpret the information that that building contains.

Katya Especially interpreted in new media. It's very different than... you take in Victorian times, you'll put in a glass cabinet. It's all the ((?)) how you interpret something. You put it in a glass cabinet and you put cabinets in a row along the wall, but when you're using new media to represent historical fact this is where big complex issues come into it. And curator and designer, it's not enough to represent it properly.

Debs So the word becomes very different, or the person becomes very different really in that space, doesn't it? And really they should be relying a lot more on how that is achieved through the design team really. Yeah? Is that what you're saying?

Katya Yeah. But not a teamful of designers, so the people of other professions, yes?

Debs Yeah. So somebody who knows how to market something. Somebody who knows technical platforms and things like that and so on, so that there's a mix of people, each with a skill set that is different to the other, but knows how their skill set works with the other, if you see what I mean. That's what you're saying?

Katya Yes. Yeah.

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Debs I couldn't agree more! ((laughs)) It's very difficult for the designer, I'm a designer, kind of, but I prefer the illustrative side and stuff a lot more. But we have our differences in what is good design and what is not good design. So even in that, just those two people, our outlook is very different. So if you've got a whole team of designers like that you're probably in for trouble ((laughter)), a lot of conflict. But then again it could spark ideas, do you think?

Katya Yeah, definitely.

Debs So initially it could be good to set it down in front of a load of designers and for them to spark ideas off each other, but then the team comes away and so on, maybe. Is that what happened, is that what's happened for you in other jobs, have you done any more work?

Katya ((pause)) Yeah. No, I'm just trying to put my thoughts together. If you're talking about team I think it comes back again to the management of the team. Bad management makes a bad team in a way. And once again a problem with heritage is that lots of people believe that it should be as it was thousands of years ago, nothing change in there. And this is what you have to deal with when you try to produce something. And they fight not to bring any changes. So they kind of want you to bring a change but they still fight against it; they resist changes.

Debs They want things to go the way they want it to go?

Katya Yeah. They want something carved in stone and they say, 'Oh, I wanted it to be on an iPad,' and when you try to present it on an iPad they say, 'but I still want it to be carved in stone,' ((laughter)). So that's quite hard. And we often forget that audience is a lot wider and audience thinks differently than they do. So for some reason

with the Riddle Route the iPhone project was only targeted for children up to 12. And you think, but someone in their fifties might use an iPhone and would like to use this. I don't know, people in their fifties were too intelligent to use iPhone, they don't ((?)) they read encyclopaedia and they do proper research. And that's a big mistake, to kind of impose your own opinion on the audience.

Debs Because I believe that everybody is really different and that our cultural background, external and internal influences, it just changes the way we interpret information that's being given. So that could be to somebody telling you a story, it could just be the way you read something on the web, the way that I might read something or take a message from something is going to be, perhaps, very different to the way that you will, and the next person. So how to factor that in when you are designing for those people, when they're all so very different, and looking at information, or interpreting it in a very different way to the way that you, as the knowledge provider, give that information. Your expectations are that they will take it, or receive it, in this particular way, but in fact they don't because of something that's happened to them in the past and they bring that experience with them and so they perceive that information in a very different way. And so therefore their emotional response is going to be very different perhaps, if there is any emotional response.

And I know one of the projects you're involved in, I think there was an awful lot of people with very different experiences and assumptions of knowledge, rather than knowledge, and assumptions of knowledge of their team, from things that you've said in the past, it was going to be fraught with difficulties in getting something out.

Katya I think that the other project I worked on, the main problem there was that it actually originated as an art project, as a conceptual artistic

project, there are different cathedrals around the UK, they used to represent completely different ideas, idea of a shelter and idea of being in a safe place, and it obviously was connected to nature as well. So it was very conceptual artwork, I would say. And the artist who came up with this idea tried to put it forward. And this is when I think the whole... when things went wrong, when they're talking about creating a heritage project and they're talking about artist and the curator and the gallery, they tried to make an artwork into the commercial project. And I think this is a big mistake because I think commercial projects should originate as a commercial project. They should be really focused, what do we want to do here, what is our aim, what do we want to portray, which historical facts do we want to show and how? Rather than taking an artist with a conceptual artwork and saying, 'Oh, I really like your conceptual artwork, let's see how we can make money on it.'

And this is the whole communications gain lost because someone is pushing towards conception side saying 'Oh, but I want an idea of security,' and someone is saying, 'We want to raise money.' And obviously this is people management again, this is where it doesn't work.

Debs Yeah. But it is quite interesting, I've only really just been giving... I gave a lecture yesterday on project management to the first years and I've just given a lecture on heritage interpretation to the second years who are doing an interpretation project with the Royal Green Jackets. And everything that you've just said has just been echoed in those presentations that I've just given. So therefore your understanding, I don't know what it was before, but it's certainly grown from your experience therefore of working with that

particular project and also the Riddle Route, I would have thought.
Or did you already have that experience of working with...?

Katya Well I didn't have any experience working on commercial projects beforehand, that was my first commercial project, which I really hated. But I learned a lot from it. I learned that you want to make money you put ((your leader aside?)) and you recognise a leader and you follow steps of the leader. And you have to have very good ((sighs)) diplomatic skills if you have your own opinions and you want to pull it through you have to do it very carefully. This is working in a team.

Debs So it was a big learning experience?

Katya Yes. In terms of how to communicate with people it was a very big learning experience. And clearly it's really nice to work with like-minded people and it's very terrible not to. ((laughter))

Debs Yeah. I would have thought so, very much.

Katya And for some reason I always made the work. I always tried to make work and project it straightaway, play it straightaway, and have someone to see it because my final destination is being viewed. Then they have such a big project, I think where it was lacking, obviously because of financially they cannot every step to check everything, how it's viewed in the place when it's going to be shown.
But it was very little consideration of audience, very little consideration of them for some reason.

Debs From what you said earlier I'm wondering whether their consideration of the audience was people exactly like them.

Katya Yes, that was the only consideration.

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Audio length: 60:24

Debs So this is what we want and this is what... so what everyone else will want because this is what we want.

Katya Yes.

Debs So, yes, that's not really the way to look at it is it?

Katya But it's not reaching their target, if it's heritage place they want people through the door. We only have a hundred people of the same views but you have thousands who have different views, so why don't you open up slightly wider so everybody else can come in, so you can bring your revenue in again. Because that was the aim of the project, to raise money.

Debs And my assumption is that it was a major, major project and a lot of important people involved and a lot of money involved. And yet nothing more has been done with that project, or if it has it's not reached me. Not that it should reach me but I am always open to anything to do with heritage, I'm always looking. And I haven't seen anything more about this. And yet in the very, very early days I spoke to Rowley and there was some input for us to do to perpetuate anything that was produced out to the general public. And that could be happening but I haven't seen anything.

((?)) Media, you do type in and search for this kind of thing, but nothing that I've noticed; I don't know if you know if anything's been done with it since?

Katya No, it's from... we can call it marketing, so that project was the start of something bigger, it wasn't successful. No, I think it was never commercially successful either.

Debs Right. It's amazing isn't it?

Katya This is my knowledge of it. Yes.

Audio title: Katya O'Grady_8thOct2013

Audio length: 60:24

Debs But maybe if the team had been different or more insightful perhaps it would have been more of a success.

Katya Yeah, I absolutely agree with you, because we had artists working on it. Artists have the copyright, it belongs just to them. When you have a team of designers the copyright's slightly more transparent and spread over it, so any project afterwards has any ideas in terms of brochures, screens, any visuals that can bring any money in. When you have an artist who make work as an artist he owns it, he wants for himself or herself, doesn't want to distribute it. But when it's a design team design team thinks of a lot of different outcomes; it's more commercial.

And that was the problem, it wasn't design team working on it, it was artists working on it.

Debs Yeah, and being very precious about...

Katya Very precious about their work, very protective, I'm talking in terms of visuals, as well as script and the scenarios, because they were artists as well.

So when I come back I think it didn't succeed because they had artists working on the project, not designers. Too many egos involved. And everybody hold onto their own piece.

Debs So it wasn't that collaborative?

Katya No, absolutely it was not collaboration. Hold onto their own piece and didn't want to change it. And in the end it didn't work. We didn't have a dialogue within each other. But it's my opinion; unfortunately I wasn't allowed to be involved in it.

Debs But I think your opinion holds a great deal of weight. It is a shame, a big shame, what they did, because it could have been so much better

if it had been much more collaborative, I think. Much richer, for everybody involved as well. I mean their own experience within that process would have been much richer, let alone the audience.

Katya Yeah, I think audience wasn't considered at all and even in terms of how much of a stage audience can see, that was jeopardised as well. So basic things.

But once again it's because it's artists not designers who are working to it. But I don't say artists are not professional people, they are very professional, but they're very selfish and they cannot change easily, or change their work.

Debs So going back to your Riddle Route, it is actually more successful because it's being used. That's Paul.

Katya I know it's...

Debs Did he just ignore you?

Katya Yeah, he just walked past ((laughter)). He didn't recognise us.

Debs As an artist he's not very observant! I'll get him in a minute.

But, yeah, the Riddle Route is much more successful than that is.

Katya Well the Riddle Route was just me and Darren.

Debs I know, but it was...

Katya It's easy to find one person you click with, rather than finding ten people you click with.

Debs Yeah. But yours – I won't say 100% – but yours is still being used. Oh, he's with a group of students. So yours is still being used whereas nothing appears to have happened with the other project.

Katya Yeah.

Audio title: Katya O'Grady_8thOct2013

Audio length: 60:24

Debs So you've both got it right, even though, okay yes it was just two of you so it's easier to control and to work and to collaborate. But the other one could have been such a big thing and could have been carried through so much more than the one event. So it's a shame because they've lost that media hype that was originally involved.

Katya Yeah, expected.

Debs So what do you want to do now? I know...

Katya Yeah. Have a child, yeah.

Debs Yeah, baby. But what are your plans going into the future? Are you going to do more commercial design work or are you wanting to be the installation artist or...?

Katya I think if I can combine both that will be perfect because it teaches me a lot, being a commercial designer; it teaches me a lot about conceptual art, because being a commercial designer you learn about audience and you learn about how we see things and how we use things, people, I'm generalising. And once you know that you know the psychology between human behaviour then you can put it next to the question you want to stand in the conceptual art, and you can work together quite well.

Debs So you, in some ways, being an artist or a designer, either, you do need to understand human beings and you need to have a psychological understanding of how people are going to perhaps view your work and engage with your work, so view with the artist and engage as a designer maybe.

But it is interesting to note that a lot of people, artists, don't get that.

Do you know what I mean?

Katya I think it depends on which media you're working with. If you're working with old-school media, drawing and painting, it's more about expressing yourself, unless you're painting a portrait to an order. But still again you just express yourself and make it to particular rules, so you use oils, you use brushes, which have been used for hundreds of years. But if you're working with a new type of media, which is a digital media, any type of it, then you have to know how people can react to it. Because you're looking for a new niche of understanding, of human understanding.

Debs Yes. It's a different form of understanding isn't it?

Katya Yes. And you still can find it, because with the work of a lot of digital artists they can't find it, they're still looking for that niche, where does digital media art stand next to painting, with the drawing, and how do you define it? It's hard.

Debs We have a friend who's doing portraits at the moment and she's putting them up on Facebook because you can see her progression. And she's getting so good, I think she's got an exhibition coming up because she's doing quite a few quite quickly, and some portraits can be completely lacking in the personality of the person that's being portrayed. Do you know what I mean?

Katya Yes.

Debs And it can be really flat. And I think that can happen with digital art, it can be flat, there's no emotion, nothing to evoke an emotional response from you in it.

So in my perception the way that digital media works is the fact that you do it in an interactive way, so that it's all flat, there's not much emotion there, instead you're making information available in a way or something that people can interact with and then gain their own

emotional response from the way they engage with it. How you do that with a portrait I don't know.

Katya Well what is interaction with a portrait, it's just a visual interaction.

Debs Yeah. Exactly.

Katya When you're talking about digital media it's a lot of different forms of interaction. You bring senses, you bring touch, you bring movement, smells, but smell probably comes more with architectural art ((laughter)) because you can contain it in something. So from interaction it's a lot more based interact with digital media; you can touch, you can speak, you can blow, you move through it, you can move at it, you can move it. Then with the portraits it's mostly visual.

I'm not saying it doesn't happen, the experience of traditional art doesn't happen on a deeper level. As you say, some portraits they just speak to you and you see a person and you know the life they live. So you still interact on a very deep level because it brings the thoughts in your mind and you kind of make up the story in your mind.

Debs Yes.

Katya Then digital media has to tell you a story. But once again the most ideal interaction, it's like a painting art, the digital art will give you that process. It's implanting memory.

There's a Schwarzenegger film, what was it? It's a very old one. Back to the Future I want to say. This was when he was married to Sharon Stone, he had memories implanted in his head and he really believed in them. So that's the idea of interactive digital media, because these memories are created digitally and they implant into his brain. So it's very similar to painting, as you say. You look at a painting, you know the character of a person. You kind of guess how they lived and what

they did. And there should be some digital media object that gives exactly the same interaction. Maybe you look in it, maybe you smell it, maybe you touch it, but it brings that story in your mind. It's unique to everybody.

Debs Yeah we were doing exactly that just now, and the fact that we had this red coat from a Lieutenant Anderson, which you don't know when you're looking at the red coat, and it's got a bullet hole going through there, out through there, but it is just this red coat. So I was getting them to tell me – the same group that's with Paul at the moment – getting them to tell me what they thought about that. If they went into a museum that would be all that they saw so what was coming into their heads looking at that.

Katya Making up their own story?

Debs Yeah. But they were a bit blank, they weren't really getting it. Do you know what I mean? Until you start to say his name and that he survived that.

Katya You guide.

Debs Yeah.

Katya You guide the experience.

Debs Exactly, yes. You guide their experience and then I gave them the...

Katya Is it true experience then, if you guide it? Is it?

Debs Well, yeah, exactly. But I did the research, found out about this thing and then put it up and they read it and they started to think much more about what that was. But again you had about four pages of text, slides of text, whereas with digital media you could then put that in an animation or you can put that figure there floating in and

out holographic presentation, and show what happened to him and then show the context of the battle that he was in and so on.

Katya That's presenting true facts. Okay.

Debs Yeah. Whereas the Talking Horse is a lot of true facts mixed up with a lot of fictional life, if you see what I mean, of those people.

But it actually then began to realise that actually that coat provides an awful lot of information if they're guided in the right way of engaging with it, if you see what I mean. So therefore the curator and the designer have to make that possible, don't they?

Katya Yeah.

Debs So the curator, in the sense of there's the jacket, we need to tell a story about this, and then is it the curator's job to dictate that story, or is it the designer's job to dictate that story. Or is it somebody, a psychologist, who'll understand how the audience might perceive that in the first place?

Katya It's all three of them. I think a curator should be slash historian, they can show that really true facts are presented.

It depends what you want to create in an audience. Do you want them to have their own opinion or do you want them just to learn something?

So if you want to learn then you have an historian who is a curator and makes sure the facts are not misrepresented, there is a designer who thinks that outfit, and I think a psychologist tell you how to apply it.

The ideal interaction with something like this is invisible to the audience, you don't know what you're being guided.

Audio title: Katya O'Grady_8thOct2013

Audio length: 60:24

Debs Yeah. So if as an artist you had that jacket and it's got five or six shots of it, different angles, and if you put that in a gallery what else, or is there anything else, you would put with that?

Katya Yeah, would I put a text next to it saying 'this is a red jacket full of bullet holes'? No. No, I think if you put it in a gallery visually you can't really exaggerate it. You can suspend the jacket between glass walls and make the bullet holes more exaggerated by shattered glass. You can introduce some music, so you enhance the experience again. But again you guide someone. Without any words, without any dates, to make up a particular opinion about it. Maybe how it is.

Debs Yeah. So we're going to see wonderful stuff from you later on.

Katya Hopefully ((laughter)).

Debs Because your images that you did for the end of year show...

Katya Oh yeah, I didn't get to see that.

Debs They're still up in my office.

Katya Okay.

Debs Yeah – well I hope they are. So you can have them now if you want. If you want to take them with you.

Katya No.

Debs No? Okay.

Katya No space in the cupboards!

Debs I might put them up in the studio. But those are quite amazing, when they were put in a row and it really got people to question what that was about.

Katya Yeah. Someone with dirty hands tries to work.

Debs What is all this about. And then...

Audio title: Katya O'Grady_8thOct2013

Audio length: 60:24

Katya It's ((?)) digital.

Debs Yeah. And then when you actually said, well actually it's how you interact with a phone the light bulb clicked with everybody looking at them, ah yeah, oh yeah, kind of thing. But up until that point they wondered what they were.

Katya Yeah, just marks in the walls. I had them actually screen printed and etched as well so we had that taken into a deeper level of mark making. So how do ((?)) in these print to make marks, and we use our fingers to make marks. But what are the marks represent? So these marks represent digital screen interaction, which can be anything behind it.

Debs No, it was really good.

Katya I'm glad about that. ((laughter))

Debs Posing your question again.

Katya Pardon?

Debs That was posing your question again as an artist.

Katya Yes.

Debs So it was really good. I think that's it.

Katya I hope I answered some questions.

Debs Yes, you did.