

A: Before we begin, I have some demographics questions I'd like to ask. The first one is how do you identify in terms of your gender?

E: Female.

A: And what would you say is your ethnic or racial identity?

E: White British.

A: And can you tell me a bit about your current family arrangements? You've mentioned that you have a child.

E: I am single parent.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A: How old are you?

E: 37.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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A: And I know it's a bit hard to answer, but how many times would you say you have visited the Manchester Craft and Design Centre?

E: Well, I take my tour groups in there, so I've been quite a lot. I think I've been like a hundred times or something.

A: And when you go there with your tours, do buy something or to browse, would you say what your average spending is?

E: Quite low usually, I often just go there for the café, so it may be just like £10 on occasions.

A: I can say £0 to £10, if you happen to buy something. And what would you say your average spending is in other craft and design spaces in general, per visit?

E: I don't really visit anywhere else like that, unless I'm on holiday or something, so it would be a lot less. Yeah, I can't think of anywhere else like this that I go to.

A: It can be other things that have to do with craft, you've mentioned that on holidays, would you say it's like £5, £10?

E: Yeah, I mean I buy quite a bit of artwork through Etsy and that sort of thing, so I may get a print for £20 but it would only be infrequently.

A: That's okay, I'm just trying to get a sense of spending in art, craft and design and the Craft and Design Centre, so it's just an estimate.

E: Yeah, less than the Craft Centre, averaged out anyway.

A: Perfect, so that's all in terms of demographics so we can begin. Just wanted to say that if there's something that you don't feel comfortable answering that's perfectly fine, you can say that you don't want to answer this question and we will move on, and I also wanted to say that everything you say will be confidential and anonymised, so there won't be a way to link back anything you'll say to you particularly. So, can you tell me a bit about yourself and also about your relationship with craft and making?

E: So, I enjoy making and doing craft things myself but I'm not very good at it, so it's just a more of a way to pass the time. I kind of do more stuff like knitting, sewing and making textile things, but I'm very interested in what other people can do and I've tried to run my own exhibitions before, not of my work, but curating other people's work, and a lot of my work life relates to art in the city, so it's something that I'm really interested in, but not active in.

A: You've mentioned that you have curated exhibitions for others in the past?

E: Yeah, I did an exhibition called Street View, and that was mostly illustrations of Manchester, but there were also some people who made cardboard models of some of the architecture around the city and there are a few videos as well, but it wasn't very craft so much, it was more illustration.

A: And you've mentioned that you're very interested in the crafts of others, can you tell me a bit about why?

E: I think maybe it's just something that has always been in my family, wouldn't say anyone in the family has been very talented at craft but everyone's been keen to do it, so I just find it quite fascinating to see the talents of others, really, and in terms of the Craft Centre, I like how some of it is quite localised, you can find things that relate to the city within that craft.

A: You've mentioned that craft was something that was common in your family, can you tell me a bit about that in terms of how making and craft was common in your family, growing up?

E: Yeah, again, it was more things like making clothes and making handmade dolls and things, anything kind of knitted or to do with wool, and then I was just encouraged from young age to do a lot of art and making, so it was just a part of everyday life.

A: Is this something that you do with your child as well?

E: I do, but I don't feel as, I don't feel like I'm a very good teacher, so we do try to do quite a lot of craft, but I feel like I struggle a bit with teaching her the right methods. She's only 4, but when I was 4 I was already knitting and I don't, I feel so overwhelmed as to how to teach her that we haven't tackled that yet.

A: That's really impressive that you were already knitting at 4.

E: Yeah, not very well.

A: Still, though. Who was teaching you in your family?

E: My mum, my mum was really good at it but she's got arthritis in her hands so she can't teach my daughter now, she struggles too much to hold the needles.

A: And you've mentioned that you do some knitting and some sewing, is this something that you enjoy doing yourself?

E: Yes, I really like, recently I've been making wall hangings, just from felt and then stitching patterns on it with fabric, so it's really basic but I've found that it's been a nice way to relax in the evenings, rather than watching TV and listening to podcasts.

A: And you've mentioned that you've been doing this since young age. Have you tried different things during this time, or was it more or less the same techniques that you would be working with?

E: I like to try different things, but it also means that I don't go that deep into one method. Last year I tried to do something completely different, wood burning and wooden spoons, which I really enjoyed but it didn't feel like I was getting better at, so I like to just try things but then I quickly move on to something else.

A: And do you do any types of workshops or events to learn new techniques?

E: No, I would like to but the nature of my work just means that usually I am working when those kinds of things are scheduled, so I can't do evenings because it's difficult for me to get childcare and then at the weekends I run tours, so I kind of miss out on all the chances to go to workshops.

A: I don't know if you've thought about this in those terms, but what would you say that craft and making mean to you, as a woman?

E: Yeah, I haven't really thought about it like that. I mean it's almost like a bit of a tradition in the family, and in other families, that women are the makers, so I think it's been a nice kind of like family tie through the generations, we don't really have any other traditions,

we're not a large family but it's nice that we can all, as women, sit down and do craft together and talk about that, it helps to bond with other women.

A: Have you ever bought anything that was considered feminist art, or more political?

E: Yeah, I have quite a lot of illustrations and prints, I've got a few pieces that I've got from the People's History Museum that were about the suffragette movement and turned into a print and have a few political ones. I got a new print recently about trying to be active in politics and the importance of that, so yeah, it's quite important for me to have that in my art.

A: What draws you to those types of artwork?

E: I don't know, I think it's something that I want for my daughter to see and to question as she grows older because it's always stuck with me, the artwork we had in my house growing up. It wasn't political, it wasn't very good, but it's always in my memory so I think it's important to have these kinds of points of education almost around the house.

A: And how about the feminist art that you've bought from People's History Museum about suffragettes and women?

E: I think some of the political stuff like that and feminist work, I'm also driven to it because of the, if they are giving charitable donation, or it's going towards building up that cause or movement, sometimes I buy work just because of that rather than personally liking that piece. I bought some pieces recently by an artist who printed a lot of work about Black Lives Matter and when I'd looked into her history, she'd done lots of charitable work and prints about women working in agriculture and things I've never thought about before, so I've bought her work because it meant that I could donate to places I wouldn't have discovered by myself.

A: Definitely. And you've mentioned before that you like some things from the Craft and Design Centre because they're more local and also about the city. Does that, is that something that you pay attention to when you buy art?

E: Yeah, but I don't particularly, I like if it's more kind of subtle and there's elements of the history or the architecture in the artwork, but I'm not thinking of something that you'd find in a souvenir shops that has Manchester emblazoned on it, it's more like, there's a studio where there are tiles with birds on them and I would be drawn to the tiles if the bird was one I've seen in Manchester, so it's not really like in-your-face Manchester history or connection, but just something that personally makes me think of it.

A: It made me think that because, for example, with the suffragettes there is a link with Manchester as well.

E: Yeah, there was an exhibition there last year or the year before, I can't remember the artist's name but it was a ceramics exhibition and I think she had some suffragette pieces in there which made me take notice of the exhibition, but pieces that I wanted weren't specific to Manchester but that's kind of what drawn me in.

A: It's really interesting what you've said before that it's not necessarily that you'd be attracted to a piece itself, but you wanted to support certain organisations.

E: Yeah, I mean obviously, by supporting the artists in the first place, that's a great thing to do as well but I think it's just something I'm trying to be more aware of, especially being on low income, that if I do buy a piece of art it needs to be good enough that it was just aesthetically pleasing, but now I feel I have to give a bit more generously to other people, as well as the artists I support.

A: How do you think you came to this realisation?

E: Through my work, I give a share of my profits to different local charities and I just, I feel like, I don't know, you need to support other people who are doing that and it doesn't, it feels like it's coming down to all the independent artists and not the big corporations anymore, and it shouldn't have to be that way but you know that the money from an independent artist is going to that charity and it's not going through charity manager, and it's not being filtered through all these different people so that actually your donation ends up amounts to nothing. I don't know, I think it's more of a choice, isn't it, so even if you've shopped at Tesco and Tesco gave 10% of profit to a charity, you don't know what that charity is, it's not something you think about when you shop in there but if it's a local artist, they often tell you what the cause is and you have a bit more autonomy in where your money goes.

A: I absolutely agree with you. In terms of the Manchester Craft and Design Centre, you've mentioned that you do some work there as well, you do tours; can you tell me a bit more about the work that you're doing?

E: Yeah, so I have a few different tours but the one that goes through the Craft Centre is about the recent history of the area – well, recent-ish, since the 70s, and how art and ceramic art helped turned that area around and the Craft Centre was kind of at the heart of that, but I feel that it's really overlooked by tourists and I try to raise the profile a little bit, so I take people in there, tell them about its history as a market, but mainly I focus on its history as a Craft Centre and yeah, just try to encourage the groups to come back another time and look around, and shop there if they're there for; you know, if they're visiting Manchester for the weekend, this is a bid of a hidden gem to check out, but most of the people on my group are actually Manchester residents and that doesn't mean that they're aware of it either, a lot of the people that I take in haven't been in there before, so it's nice to see them discover a new-old place for the first time.

A: This is actually one of the questions that I ask people, are you aware of the Manchester Craft and Design Centre's history?

E: Yeah, so going into the market history a little bit, I tend to talk about the market stalls that are still there downstairs, and I talk through who one of the stall owners was, because she was a woman so it's a kind of feminist section of the tour, when we talk about female traders, and I think everybody has got an idea that it was a market but they don't realise the extent of how large the markets were in that area overall.

A: I mean me and my research partner will definitely need to do the tour, and hear more about the actual history of the place.

E: Yeah, come along. Yeah, so the artwork in the Northern Quarter that popped up since the 90s, a lot of it was kind of dreamed up in the Craft Centre, even if it wasn't made there or by those artists, but plans were made to make the street signs of the area and that sort of thing, so a lot of important decisions about the Northern Quarter were made in the Craft Centre, and I think that's an important history to try and tell people about because it isn't recorded anywhere and nobody, unless they were there at the time, nobody really knows about it, so I'm just trying to make sure those histories are talked about.

A: Since you are definitely aware of the Centre's history, I'm going to ask you which aspect of its history do you find most fascinating?

E: I like the kind of interim time when it was the end of the fish markets but before it was really the Craft Centre, I think it went through a phase of being a little bit of everything, so florists and whoever wanted a stall, and like it was clearly going through a lot of uncertainty, that whole area closed down around the same time but it just continued, and it's just even though so many people in Manchester haven't been, it's managed to keep going for all that

time without closing down and that fascinates me, really, because I don't know how they did it, in area that was vacant for 15 – 20 years at one point, they still managed to succeed.

A: I know that you know a lot about the Centre, but do you remember how you've first found out about them?

E: No, I really like to walk and try to discover new places, so I guess it must've just been an afternoon of walking around and spotting it for the first time. I don't know how long it was between seeing it and actually going in there. I think what's always interested me physically about the Craft Centre is the space around it that looks like it should be a public square and it isn't, and at one point there were seats there in the 80s and they were taken out and a road was put in, so I'm drawn to these kind of empty public space. That's probably what's drawn my attention to it, more than the public itself, wondering what's going on there. But no, I don't remember my first actual visit.

A: Do you remember what brought you to the Centre the last time you've visited?

E: Well, I was there for a tour on Friday, I know it's not open but we were outside there, but if we're talking not workwise, I just like to, if I'm in the area, I'll always walk through there even if I don't have reasons to come in, I think it's nice to go in and just see what's happening. I like that little kind of stage area where they've had little exhibitions in past, I'd go and see if that's changed. Sometimes even just the flyers that they have there for what's going on in the city, I'll go and check those out and recently I was there for a council meeting as well, so it's not always stuff that's specific to the Craft Centre but just the space itself.

A: You've mentioned the exhibition space; have you seen any of the exhibitions and how do you find the exhibition space in general?

E: Yeah, I have been to see a few. I'm never quite sure you can get, with it being on that stage area, don't know how interactive you could be with the stuff, so I think I really like the

space but I don't know if you could maybe do with a bit more guidance? I mean because I've ran tours in there, I should know a bit more about what's going on but I find it difficult sometimes to track down a staff member who can inform me what's going on in there.

A: And how about the shops and the overall building, how do you find it?

E: I really love it. I think sometimes the upstairs can be overlooked, so I make a point of taking groups up that way. I really enjoy the space and the light, I love the café space where it is and everybody working there seems to be really friendly, but sometimes, I don't know what it is, but sometimes there are shops that I just never go in, and I don't know why, I don't know if it feels just a bit too closed off, I don't know what's in here; I just tend to stick to the same ones, for some reason.

A: Can you walk me through your visits, not when you're with your groups but when you go by yourself; do you go into most of the shops, do you go only to the specific ones, like you've said?

E: So, I'll go in and look at the exhibition. Sometimes I really like that little space they've got for kids now, even though my daughter is probably a bit too old for it, but I'll sit down near there if I'm with my daughter and she can play for a while because there's nowhere really else she could play in that whole area of the city, really, so we can spend quite a long time in there and I'll have a drink from the café while she plays, then I tend to look in the windows of a lot of the shops downstairs, I'd go into the studio 4, I think it is, usually to talk to the guy who works there because he knows loads about Manchester's history so I'd catch up with him, and then upstairs, I think again it's more of a case of window shopping, and it depends if I'm with my daughter or not; if I'm with my daughter I'll probably avoid going into some of the shops because I'm worried she'll break things, because it's quite a small space, so we'd usually just use the café and communal spaces if it's me and her.

A: Do you find the building to be family-friendly?

E: Yeah. I feel like I can really relax in there and you're not upsetting anybody, that family space is really cute, it doesn't feel, I don't know if it's the acoustics of the building or what but it always feels nice and calm in there, so yeah, I think it's really nice, just apart from the concern of maybe breaking things.

A: You've mentioned the family area, can you tell me a bit more about the family area of the Centre?

E: Yeah, I mean it's only a tiny little corner, but if you have a few dress-me-up things, a few books, that's all that you need, really, if you've been walking around the city and it's all about doing grown up things, then it's just a nice bit of relief for kids to have some time where they feel they can have a bit of fun and it feels safe, they can't easily run out of the doors which is always a concern, so it just feels like a nice kind of, like a bit of a sanctuary.

A: So, thinking in terms of your visits to the Centre, can you recall anything that has drawn your attention from the moment you've walked in?

E: Well, usually it would be the exhibition space and it's just the overall appearance of it, the place, like you're always drawn to look up to the glass roof and just how light it is. I think the jewellery cabinets down by the original stalls by the back entrance, they always seem to have people gathered around those and they draw people in, I'm not sure if it's just because there's a bit more space in that particular section to look around and you don't feel under pressure to buy anything; people seem to gather in that space. Yeah, I can't think of anything in particular. I really like the stairs as you come down them at the front of the building, where they've put ceramic work on the stairs as well, like pigeons, so it's nice to see that the art isn't just in the shops but kind of scattered around the building itself as well.

A: Are you aware of any other similar spaces?

E: In Manchester?

A: In general.

E: I can't think of anywhere exactly like that. I know there might be places that, you know, physically look like it but they do something different in there, and obviously with the rise of food markets again, you do feel like you could experience similar thing physically but it's not the same offer once you're in there. Nowhere feels as light as Craft Centre does. No, I can't name anywhere in particular that feels like that.

A: What do you mean by "feels light"?

E: It just feels really natural and well-lit, you know, if you go to Mackie Mayor or another market building, it's quite industrial feeling and a bit darker; this just feels like it changes with the weather outside, you can go there at Christmas and it feels like a really Chistmassy, festive place to be, but go in there in summer and it is a bright, open space and it feels like a summer space as well.

A: You're absolutely right, now I'm thinking about it, it does change with the weather. Can you tell me a little bit about your interactions with makers?

E: Yeah, so I talk to people sometimes just from a research point of view, I've spoken to a lot of people in there for work reasons, and if I'm talking to anybody for other reasons, it tends to be stuff that has a connection or relation to the city, I feel like I can speak to them more about the city than I can about arts and craft, so you know, if there's a necklace that has a skyline of Manchester on it, then there is a discussion point there and can have a chat about it, and if, you know, you can see them at work as well, it's always nice to ask them what they're doing as long as I feel like it's the right time to do that, I don't want to disturb people while they're at work, but it's nice to see them making the craft and that's a good thing to discuss.

A: How do you feel when you walk in the studios?

E: It depends, really. I mean it feels very welcoming and I feel at home there, like I should be there, but it's also, personally I've got some social anxieties so I can find it overwhelming to be greeted in every shop that I go into, because I then feel under pressure to, not necessarily to buy something but it can be quite intensive if you are triggered by lots of social interactions to go into 5 or 10 different spaces in a short period of time and have all those people to deal with so yeah, it depends how I'm feeling on the day.

A: Do you ask the makers about the materials or the processes of making? You've mentioned that you feel more comfortable talking to them about Manchester, or about work.

E: I have had some conversations with, there's an artist, she doesn't actually have her own studio there but she sells in somebody else's studio, sometimes she's there and she's taken me through quite a lot of detail of the work that she does and what it means, and if she hadn't had done that, I probably wouldn't have appreciated it as much, so that's been really interested to hear from her about what her work means and the materials she uses, but I can't think if I've really talked about materials or anything with other people. No, I can't think if I spoke about it with anybody else.

A: That's okay. How do you feel about the diversity or lack of diversity at the Craft and Design Centre?

E: I don't think I've actually really considered it, yeah, probably could be more diverse. I think in terms of gender-wise, I think part of the reason it feels a comfortable space for me is because it just feels like the women hugely outnumber men, so that may be a part of the reason why it feels so welcoming to me, personally, but yeah, I hadn't actually thought about the diversity in terms of race and that sort of thing before, and that does feel like a very white space.

A: How do you feel about the product range at the Manchester Craft and Design Centre?

E: I think it's a very good range, I don't know if the choice is good but maybe there could be more affordable work because I don't tend to spend as much on arts and crafts there as I would like to. I'm sure there is more affordable stuff in there but perhaps I haven't been to those particular studios and shops, I tend to be drawn to ones where the artwork is beautiful but it's not something I can imagine being able to afford for quite some time, and I think some of the exhibition work have been very interesting to buy, but I feel like I didn't understand how to; like there's been flyers to say go to the office or ask for this particular studio, and it's always made me feel a bit, I don't think overwhelmed is the right word but I think I would like it if somebody was there, welcoming you to the Craft Centre, who can tell you about all that stuff, rather than you having to go and hunt it out.

A: Especially if you're looking to buy some of the artwork from the exhibition spaces, they should be making it easier to get information about that. I wanted to ask you about the prices at the Centre, how do you feel about the prices overall? Can you tell me a bit more about that?

E: Yeah, I just think the stuff that there is affordable work but it's not anything that particularly appeals to me. I think the prices are right when you see how much work goes into the art, but it does make it difficult, especially if I'm telling people this is a good place to get gifts for people if they're here on holiday, you don't spend that much money on gifts for people if it's a nice souvenir, so I don't think there is as many affordable options as there could be, and it's not that I expect a piece of work to be dramatically reduced in price, but maybe there could be smaller versions of that work, or different options; but then I think it also feels right for the kind of space that it is, that those prices are set how they are so yeah,

I'm not sure. It would be nice if there was a bit more affordability, but I totally get why the prices are set how they are.

A: Thinking about prices and handmade products, how do you feel about handmade products versus more mass-produced, high street products?

E: I tend to stay away from anything that is mass-produced. At first, that was more of a case of wanting something that was more unique, but now in terms of sustainability, it feels like if you're spending a bit more money on a unique piece then you're less likely to, you know, replace that; if you've bought a vase from a high street shop, you may get bored of that and replace that because it's cheap to do so, but if you're buying something handmade, then it's something that you'll keep for ever, hopefully.

A: How do you feel about the handmade products that you have in your house?

E: Yeah, I really love them and I think I'd like to be a bit of function in them as well, so I don't, one of the reasons why I probably have not spent more in the Craft Centre is that I don't really want to go for anything that is purely ornamental; even though I have quite a lot of art on my wall, if it's a ceramics piece I tend to want it to be, I have a really nice jug and it's mostly ornamental but I know that I can get a use out of it as well, yeah. Sorry, I forgot what I was talking about. So yeah, I feel like it's very dear to me to have these handmade pieces.

A: Thinking about your visits to the Centre again, how long would you say they are?

E: Probably, I mean there's times when I just cut through, but I'd usually be there for about 15 minutes if I'm just looking at the shops, but if I go to the café as well, I can be there for, like, 45 minutes, yeah.

A: And when do you normally visit, which days and times?

E: So, usually around about lunchtime midweek, and then weekends is in the morning, about 11 o'clock, and then I'm often there on days when it's closed as well, so I do think it's a real shame they don't open on Sundays because I'll always be in the area and it feels like a very Sunday place, somewhere that you'd like to take some time strolling around, so I would definitely be there a lot more if the hours were longer.

A: You've mentioned before that you've visited with your child; do you normally visit by yourself or with other people?

E: It's usually by myself. I think I'd use it as a meeting point if a friend from another city is here for the weekend or something, then I may meet them there because even though it's kind of hidden away, no one's had any trouble finding it before. I don't tend to meet up with the friend and then take them there.

A: I wanted to talk to you if you've taken anyone specific to the Craft and Design Centre.

E: Yeah, I think I have but it all depends on the friendship, I guess, doesn't it? I don't drink so that's the kind of place I would take somebody to in the evening if it was open in the evening, but it's just the hours often don't work out to take people there because it's clashing with my hours and that sort of thing.

A: But you've mentioned that you have visited the café and said you like going there as well.

E: Yeah, it just feels like a nice space because you're right in the middle of everything but you don't feel exposed, so it's got this kind of cosy feel, the prices are good, it's small menu but it's always really nice and fresh and you can see it all in front of you, and the women who work there are really friendly as well.

A: We've talked a little bit before about workshops and events and you've mentioned that you don't necessarily have the time for workshops, but I wanted to ask you if you've ever attended any events or workshops at the Centre specifically?

E: I went to some of the Christmas programme last year, there was a choir in there at one point, I've been to some exhibition launches in the past and I've been to external events where they've just used the Centre as a meeting point as well, like the Northern Quarter Forum, local residents' association, so I've been to that and I've also used the space as well for [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A: And how did you find those events, like the one for Christmas that you've mentioned, with the choir?

E: Yeah, it's really nice. I mean apart from the Christmas one, I think it's been quite a long time since I've gone to the launches so maybe it's not too great on those, but it's always felt like it's really nice atmosphere and the, I think they've been quite good times, those Christmas one, where they've worked well for all ages; I don't think I went with my daughter but I could have done, it wasn't too late for her bedtime or that sort of thing, so yeah, it's like they're pretty good with what they put on.

A: Do you take any photographs when you visit?

E: Yeah, I take them quite often. Usually if I go upstairs, I take pictures just to show how it looks from up there; I don't tend to take many of the arts and crafts work, unless it's the exhibition, but I take them off the historical bits, the old stalls and when I take groups as well,

as soon as I take them upstairs, everybody gets their camera out so people love to take pictures up there.

A: Do you post them online, the photos that you take?

E: Not that many, no, although I've filmed the outside of the Craft Centre for different Instagram videos and those things in the past, so I'd include the outside of the building in little videos. I don't tend to share the pictures that much, though, I think if I did it would be more art-based, like the temporary exhibition, I'd probably share pictures of that.

A: And have you ever taken photographs of things that you have bought?

E: Yeah, I can't think of anything in particular but if I buy something from a local artist, I always share the pictures on Instagram so people can go and visit and buy from them as well.

A: Do you also send those photographs to family members or friends?

E: Sometimes, yeah, if I've got something that I'm really enamoured with, then I'll share that with people, but it tends to just be more an Instagram thing to large groups of people.

A: And how do you find the Craft and Design Centre's online presence?

E: I'm not really sure. I don't go to the website that often, I think I've always found out what I've wanted to find on there, I think they've been really good on social media, especially since lockdown started, keeping people informed on how to shop there and make appointments, and I think they did, there was something that happened recently that was promoting the artists live on Instagram, it sounded really good but I couldn't, I forgot all about it. It feels like they're doing a lot of good stuff online lately and the fact that they've kept, they did a history project a few years ago and had a blog about it, and I think that's really great and it still exists, and they don't shout about it enough, they could continue to share that and people would still be interested.

A: And do you follow them, right?

E: Yeah.

A: Have you ever used any of their online shop or the think that you've mentioned, it was a pop-up sale they did on Instagram recently?

E: No, I've never bought online. I have tried to when there was an exhibition, the one I've mentioned earlier, I think it was feminist ceramic exhibition, I tried to buy online but I think you had to go into the Centre and I just got a bit confused about who to speak to and how to buy, whether the pieces were even sold out or not, so I think the temporary exhibitions would really benefit from selling online.

A: And do you follow any of the makers online?

E: Yeah, but usually because of things that Craft Centre has done, you know, they've tagged the individual artists, so if I've discovered them that way then I will follow them. I can't think of who I follow, but I'd say probably 20% of people in there.

A: And which is your favourite studio at the Centre?

E: I think the one I spend the most time in is the tile, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. I think I kind of split my time between several of them and I don't necessarily have a favourite in terms of what they are producing, but I just like to see the changes and I think that's important to me, if they're changing their stock and designs; doesn't have to be very regularly but if there's something new to see every couple of months, then I'd be drawn to that studio.

A: And you've mentioned that you have visited a few times, so you can understand if there's been a change.

E: Yeah, and there's just a few places where, like I've said before, I've not been in and I don't quite know why, so I think if there was more of a, like I know it's very open and you can talk to the makers all the time anyway, but I think it may help if there's someone not ushering you in but just a voice to greet you when you arrive and to tell you that you can go in all of these places, because sometimes some of them look just like they're studio-based, and I know that they still sell but I'm a bit apprehensive to go in some of them.

A: Do you remember which is your favourite thing that you've bought from the Centre?

E: I can't remember. It would've been something ceramic, but I can't, I got quite a lot of ceramic pieces and I can't remember what's come from where.

A: Can you think of anything that you've bought during your visits that stands out?

E: I've bought some nice jewellery from there before, I got a ring from there, but I can't remember which studio it was. The reason it stands out is just the fact that, you know, it's been handmade by somebody and to me, that's still quite a rare thing these days, most people just buy their jewellery and have no idea who made it and where it came from, so it always feels special if it's a piece of jewellery that you've met the person who made it or even seen it being made.

A: You've mentioned before that you tell people it's a good place to buy gifts; have you bought any gifts from the Centre?

E: I'd bought earrings for somebody from there and like a, it's not really a tile, it was an ornament so I've bought a few but I think, again, I would have bought more had I been able to visit at the times that it's actually been closed, because I'm in there so often and working at the same time, I often don't actually get to spend much time browsing for things anymore. Definitely around Christmas I'd bought gifts for people from there as well.

A: I don't know if you've noticed because of your work or during one of your visits, but have you noticed the donation boxes at the Centre?

E: No, no I haven't.

A: Have you ever donated to crafts and arts organisation, for example going to a museum, using donation box or in a different way?

E: I've never done it through a donation box. I buy, if it's a gallery or museum, I tend to always buy something in the gift shop, even if it's just a postcard, less as a gift or a reminder but just because it feels like a way to support that space other than giving a donation. I can't think what else I've done but I know I have supported places like that before. I volunteered before because when I've had more free time, I felt like that was one of effective ways to help organisations, so haven't done it at the Craft Centre but it is something that I'd consider

A: Would do you think that you'd prefer to buy something smaller, like a postcard for example, to support the space and not use the box?

E: Yes, yeah, I would.

A: Why would you say you prefer that?

E: It's something that I can use. I mean I'm just a bit torn, really, I'd buy it if it was something that I really liked but I wouldn't just buy it in place of a donation if I then thought I probably won't do anything with this because I have a concern about sustainability and materials being produced that would just end up being recycled and that sort of thing, so I think it would be nice to have both options.

A: Would you say that you would be more or less inclined to give at the moment, with everything that is going on with the pandemic?

E: Yeah, but I think it's quite tricky with that sort of space; do I want to give money to the Craft Centre, or do I want that money to then be distributed to the makers? It's a bit more difficult to, like who do I want to support, is it the Centre or the individual artists? And it would be the Centre, but I think maybe if there were options that you can donate to the Centre but here is a list of artists who you could also choose from to kind of tip or something like that. Yeah, I definitely would be more inclined to donate something.

A: That's a tricky one because you don't really understand how, if you donate, are you supporting the Centre only or are you supporting the Centre and the artists.

E: Yeah, and I suppose the artists have got the chance to still sell online so I think it would be the Centre I'd support over the artists, but yeah, it's hard to know.

A: How has the pandemic impacted your engagement with the arts?

E: I've still bought some new art and I've actually, probably, on average bought a bit more and I don't know if that's because I'm trying to support the artists or because I've been stuck at home and I'm looking just online and on Instagram more so I'm seeing more stuff that I want. I think the recent stuff I have bought hasn't necessarily been tied into lockdown, but it's been more stuff like Black Lives Matter movement and that sort of thing. Trying to think what I've bought recently, and yeah, everything had been more political that I've been buying during lockdown but hasn't directly related to Coronavirus.

A: Are you planning to visit the Centre when they reopen in August?

E: Yeah, I've already been telling people because obviously I couldn't take my touring group in there this week, but I've been making people aware when it reopens and I've got it in my diary as a reminder, so yeah, definitely will be a welcome return.

A: How do you feel about visiting those types of spaces again?

E: I feel like the Craft Centre feels like quite a safe space because it's large and airy, and going into individual studios, obviously smaller spaces, but it feels like somewhere that is really going to be doing it right and they've had a lot more time out than when I go grocery shopping, that's being used all the time, so I feel like it would be quite a safe space and it helps that it's well ventilated with the doors at the front and the back, so it's not something that would put me off going there at all.

A: How do you feel about working again with your tours?

E: Yeah, I mean because we're outside for 99% of the tour, it's not something that I don't have any issues with doing tours at the time, I just need to speak to the Centre about how comfortable they are with groups coming in and what restrictions they have, but at the moment, all the groups are going to be quite small anyway so I don't think that it's going to be an issue. You know, everybody that's booked on has said they will adhere to social distancing, so I feel very comfortable about it.

A: Do you feel that social distancing measures or wearing a mask will have an impact on your visits?

E: It will if it's a large group if I'm working, but not if I'm just there for pleasure, it won't have any impact for me unless I'd forgot to bring a mask with me that day or something, but no, it wouldn't prevent me from visiting any less frequently than I do.

A: And how do you think the pandemic will impact the Centre and also other similar spaces, in terms of visitors, events and so on, both in the short term and also in the future?

E: Yeah, I think it's going to have major impact. I mean a lot of places will be a bit quicker to recover, especially if you're comparing the Craft Centre to Mackie Mayor just because it's another market building, then people are very quick to go back to food and drink, but maybe don't see it as important to go and shop. I think what's more important than ever for places

like the Craft Centre is a good signage to make people aware that they are there in the first place. It's okay for it to be a hidden gem when you've got a fairly regular footfall in the area in general, but if that footfall is dramatically cut, they need to shout about themselves a bit louder on the streets, it's not just about social media; if you look at the signage around Northern Quarter, hardly any tells you where the Craft Centre is so I think that's not on them, it's the Council and people who have some control in that area, so things like that will really help them, I think, because I think it's going to be a pretty slow recovery, especially looking at bookings on my tours, I'm having at best 5 people whereas it used to be 30 people, and people feel quite safe doing outdoor walking tours so I can imagine how it is for indoor spaces, based on that as well.

A: Yeah, that's actually an issue for some people and definitely the Craft and Design Centre can do a bit more in terms of shouting about themselves and just making even the neighbourhood aware of their existence.

E: Yeah, and I think, I don't know if Craft Centre has any ownership of that space outside or if it's a part of the housing estate, but that would be a perfect way to bring people to the Centre, if they could have a presence outdoors on that small square. I've seen that space used for people doing free yoga classes before, and even that doesn't have to be something that the Centre are doing, but if something is happening in that space, that can still engage you with the buildings around it and you're more likely to go to the Craft Centre, so I think looking at that outdoor space would be very important.

A: Thank you so much, I don't have any more questions. Is there anything else you'd like to mention that we haven't covered in the interview?

E: No, I don't think so, no, I just hope that they do well and recover quickly.

A: Thank you so much. I will stop the recording now.