

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A: Okay, so just to let you know the interview is being recorded as well, is that okay with you?

R: That's fine.

A: So, I'll start with some general questions in terms of demographics. Can you tell me your gender and your race?

R: Okay, male, White.

A: Okay, and your current family situation?

R: Separated.

A: And your age?

R: 44.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A: And how many times have you visited the Craft and Design Centre in the past, approximately, more than 20, 15?

R: Probably about between 10 and 15 times.

A: Okay, and what would you say is your average spending at the Craft and Design Centre?

R: I would say in the region between £20 and £30.

A: And your average spending in crafts and design in general?

R: Probably a little bit more than that, anywhere between £20 and £40.

A: That's great, thank you. Just to start with some initial interview questions, can you tell me a bit about yourself and your relationship with crafts?

R: Okay, where to start, really? I like nice things, I didn't realise that I kind of liked nice things, if that makes sense, until probably about 5-10 years ago, and kind of realised my taste was slightly different to others, I like something that is unique and individual, and I like detail and the kind of makers and crafters tend to hit those spots, especially people who put the effort to design stuff that is nice and has a, either nice feel or nice look, little flourishes that

they individually put in their work. With regards to crafting in general, I do craft a little bit myself, but I tend to either make or buy the kind of, where I can, the nicer flourishes for myself or for others. I will make or buy kind of Christmas presents, birthday presents, cards and things like that, but yeah, that's one of the reasons why I've found the Design Centre; my girlfriend mentioned it a while back, and yeah, we went and it was a kind of an eye opener because I didn't really frequent that part of Manchester or Manchester at all, so yeah, to find this place full of kind of very, very talented makers and crafters was really nice, and since then, kind of every time I have people visit from either different parts of the country or abroad, I've tried to, and if we've ended up in Manchester, I've tried to push them towards the Craft and Design Centre because it is so nice, the makers in there are really friendly, you can talk to them, yeah. Is there anything else?

A: Yeah, so you've mentioned you make different types of crafting yourself, can you talk a bit more about that? Are you using specific materials, for instance?

R: Currently I, a lot of it is papercraft, I've just started doing kind of decals and other vinyl kind of things, my daughter is massively into Harry Potter so it's a very good thing to be able to make things that she wants, but she can't really find, either on the high street or anywhere, or online, apart from obviously Etsy.

A: Are you also making crafts with your family, with your daughter?

R: No, she tends to give me the ideas and I tend to experiment in regards to how I'm going to do it. If it's possible, whether it would meet my kind of ideas as a maker, so yes, so she just tends to leave me to it so her attention span is probably not long enough to be able to, like, cover the whole, entire making thing. She does like helping me out, so she would, like, load the (XXX 9:21) machine, or help me weave the vinyl and stuff like that, but she's rarely in the process all the way through.

A: How did you develop your initial interest in craft, was craft and making typical in your family, for instance, when you were growing up, or later in life?

R: No, growing up I had a scrapbook but it wasn't really used, and as I've grown up, I've heard about people using scrapbooks and things like that, and my mum took to making cards probably about 10 years ago, for Christmas and things like that, and it started off with one of my friends saying that she needed some birthday invites, so I cracked open Photoshop and kind of designed her some very basic invites, and it's kind of gone on from there, and kind of friends of friends have been asking for invitations, business cards, that kind of thing, and then as time has gone on, things have got more intricate, bespoke envelopes or kind of papercut crafts, which was all manually done, and then probably about 6 months ago, I was looking at getting an embossing machine, but then looking at the prices, it very quickly grew into getting the (XXX 11:04) which is really good and has allowed me to then do other stuff for friends, like cake toppers and kind of layered paper art in frames and things like that, so yeah, it's just, but mainly as an adult; as a child, I would play with Lego, that was probably about it, I didn't like glue or anything like that, whereas now, that's perhaps slightly different.

A: That's really interesting, I suppose for now, you're doing that as a hobby or are you also selling the things that you make?

R: Mainly as a hobby, although depending what people ask for, I may, I mean I'd never charge for my time, but depending on what people are asking for, I may ask for some money for the materials. Not selling to make a profit.

A: So, what does craft mean to you as a man?

R: I guess it's basically a way of expressing myself and, as I say, I like intricate, I like detail, I like knowing that something's been made not to best of my ability or to whoever's ability, so yeah, it's an outlet for that when I don't really play a lot of sports, I don't have a massive

interest in cars, I don't have any other pursuits but I do like to tinker around with ideas, wonder if I can make that or this needs mounting and can I make it out of cardboard, or would I need something else? You know, kind of just to be able to express my creativity and, you know, not necessarily to make, but the stuff that I buy as well, you know; a lot of the stuff that I do buy is very nice in a unique way, and I think it probably describes me better than any kind of mass-produced, shop-bought kind of things.

A: So, something more personal, in a way.

R: Yeah, definitely more personal and kind of fitting me and my sensibilities better.

A: Okay, that's great. How did you first find out about the Craft and Design Centre? You've mentioned your girlfriend had told you about it before?

R: Yes, she introduced it to me, so we were meaning to go for quite a while but I think either at the time their opening hours were a bit skewed, or maybe they closed for a while, I can't remember, but it was probably a good 4 or 5 months after she'd mentioned going to the Craft and Design Centre that we eventually got to go, and yeah, it's very nice. I like the fact that there's always this little stage area where there's usually something going on, and that they still have the original windows from the fish cellars, and the fact that the building has been very well aesthetically kind of modernised and yeah, and it is particularly big as well, with both being downstairs and the upstairs too.

A: What do you mean by aesthetically modernised, can you tell me a bit more about the building?

R: Yes, so the building, from what I remember, used to be a fish market or a market of some description, so at least in a couple of places they still have the original shop windows with the, I'm sure that the fish sellers, I'm pushing the, because you know, it's one of those things, you walk past it a lot, so I think they're fish sellers, kind of the original name plaques above

the windows and yeah, it's very similar to the stuff that they're selling, it's not a mass-produced kind of, soulless building; it has a history and as I've said, it's nice feeling to be in a place that is as old as it is but used and used well, very similar to kind of Mackie Mayor in Manchester and I'm sure there are other places in Liverpool as well.

A: Okay, so do you remember your first visit to the Centre? Can you describe it to me?

R: Yeah, just about; I remember being in awe and a little bit overwhelmed because I've not really, obviously not been in to crafting and making a lot, it was just really nice to be able to, like I've said, overwhelming but really nice to be in a place that had all these people with so much talent, and in one place; it was just kind of like a kid in a candy store, see this, look at this, have you seen that, that kind of thing. It was really nice and exciting and yeah, I did enjoy it immensely. I don't think I've bought anything the first time but yeah, it was really nice.

A: Okay, and what brought you to the Craft Centre in your last visit? When was your last visit there?

R: I was looking for a birthday present, my girlfriend wanted one of the long-stem kind of cut-outs from one of the makers there, and they, I know you can buy the stuff like that everywhere but to support local people and a local business as well, I decided that I'd get them from there.

A: Okay, that's great, and can you tell me a bit more about your different visits to the Centre, your actual experience there? Thinking about the moment you walk in and anything that draws your attention as you walk in and how you feeling?

R: Okay, usually when I walk in, the first thing that hits you is the kind of stage area, bunting, so especially because that changes on a semi-regular basis, it's nice to see what kind of stuff they got.

A: Do you mean the exhibition?

R: Yes, I called it stage but anyway, the exhibition stage, they obviously change, that's always nice and it's always my first kind of call just to see what's going on, and then, yeah, to have a look around. Usually I go from the downstairs to the upstairs and kind of stopping at some of my more favourite makers, so there's the maker who does the tiles, it's always really nice to look at, and always, I don't know, it's always one of those things when you were a kid, I think I'm always there with my hands behind my back so I don't touch anything because I don't want to break anything even though I am 44 years old, I'm still thinking like a 7-year-old. I always spend a lot of time upstairs in Made by And, especially with the little peg dolls, always really excited to see what she's doing with them, and yes, sometimes it's very nice to see a new place open, it's always very exciting because, you know, new possibilities and other times it's a little bit sad if either, well not necessarily sad but a lot of the shops are run by single makers, so if they're on holiday or something like that, it can be a little bit disappointing, but you know, it's kind of then, I suppose you go and visit them another time. I suppose it's nice and welcoming, and exciting to go because you never know what's going to be there, so yeah.

A: And do you interact with the makers? Can you tell me a bit more about your interactions with them?

R: Some more than others, probably the one that I spoke with the most is, I'm sure her name is Andrea, from Made by And, she used to work in Chorlton at the studios that made all the kids' shows, so like "Where the wheel is", (XXX 21:53) and stuff like that, so talking to her not necessarily about, sometimes about what she's actually making but sometimes about kind of where she's worked before, it's really, really interesting, especially because half of it is something new and exciting because of what she's making or knitting, the new patterns she's

got or new colours, and half of it is kind of very nostalgic because, you know, reliving kind of stories and stuff from the TV shows that I knew as a child.

A: So, are you visiting any other similar spaces? Are you aware of any other similar spaces, not necessarily in Manchester? Could you tell me a bit more with your experiences with them as well?

R: Yeah, in regards to individual makers, I've been to the Peace Hall in Huddersfield, which is really nice especially now, I think I've visited there possibly about a year and a half ago and really enjoyed that, it was a beautiful day out and very nice with the food and the makers as well, and that's kind of the only other permanent place that I've been. I did visit the International Festival of Makers the other year which was amazing, kind of really enjoyed that, it was such a great weekend just to go out and meet and see all these people and their crafts; you know, sign painters to kind of having a try out with the sewing machine which I've not done since I was 14 years old, to making samosas and visiting the maker rooms, watching people doing 3d printing, CNC and yeah, and again trying all the lovely food and drink, obviously cider, gin, it's going back in a big way, to obviously people who have made it and it was very good, but I think that was the only couple of places that I've been, I don't think I've been anywhere else with a lot of makers. I was just thinking, I went over to like a makers' event over in Sheffield, but I can't remember what that was called.

A: That's fine, thanks for that. Going back to the Craft and Design Centre, how do you feel about the diversity or lack of it at the Centre?

R: To be honest, I've not really thought about diversity in regards to the makers, I think it's got a good diversity in regards to the items on sale, it's not like, you know, it's all full of card makers, tile makers or people with clothes or other fabrics, or anything like that; you can go and get a very varied experience. In regards to the makers, to be honest I'd been more



interested generally in the things that they're making as opposed to, I can't remember ever going in and thinking oh my god, you know, this is feeling particularly white or it would be good to see any more demographically diverse people here, it was, yeah, kind of, I don't know how else to describe it.

A: No, that's fine. What about the visitors and the audience there?

R: From what I remember, it's always been diverse; I mean probably, you don't get, like; from what I don't remember, I can't remember ever thinking that this place is full of white people or full of any particular race or religion, however, probably I think it seems to be generally, age-wise, more middle-aged people, doesn't seem to be many young people, doesn't seem to be many of the older people, from what I remember, but I guess kind of with what's being sold, that kind of fits the demographic of what's selling because, you know, young people don't tend to go out and buy vases, you know, obviously I'm being very stereotypical here, and older people like what they like and, you know, with less extendable income, so yeah.

A: Okay. So, you've mentioned before that you go there with your girlfriend and your daughter as well; do you also visit alone, and have you taken anyone else to see the Craft and Design Centre?

R: Yes, so I've taken friends and family that have visited there, and I don't think I've visited alone. I don't tend to go into Manchester by myself a lot, usually it's for work, when we were working in offices, way back when, so yeah, I've been with lots of people, friends and family when they've visited but I don't think I've ever been there by myself.

A: Okay. Have you attended any events or any workshops there?

R: I am aware that they exist because my girlfriend has been to one or two.

A: Okay, but you haven't attended any? Okay, and when you visit, do you take any photos during your visits, any photos of the things that you've bought? Do you post photos on social media or anywhere else online?

R: I'm not a massive social media fan, however, my girlfriend is so when we'd gone, she would tend to take the photos and post them. In regards to me taking pictures, I do but it's more in regards to interesting shapes, colours and things like that; not necessarily of the items but just parts of items, and every now and then the actual building itself because, as I say, I really do like the building.

A: But the building, do you think it's family friendly, do you think it is for a certain audience or not?

R: I don't know, depends on what your definition of family is because I have seen people with pushchairs around, but then there's probably not a lot in there for 5- to 10-year-olds because their tastes vary lots and personally, I don't think that would be a good use of the space there to have kind of a kiddy area, I don't think that's not what it's for, but it is family friendly, I would say, but just not for kids when they're very young. I would have to take my, as I've said she's 10 now, but when she was younger I tended not to take her in because I didn't want her to break anything, and it's not just for that I would have to pay for it, it's the fact that somebody's spent time and energy to actually make something and for that then to be broken and never being used, to me that feels like a bit of a waste, so yeah, going back to family friendly, yes, it's fine but yeah, it really depends on the age of the family, really.

A: So, you do come back a lot to the building, in the discussion we've had so far you did mention the building a lot, you've said that you find it really interesting and like the building and everything.

R: Yeah, like I've said, if I'm ever in Manchester, even if the building is closed, I do tend to kind of detour to it because, again, it is a nice building and the roads are a little bit quieter, kind of the side streets on its own, and there's the little commune, hall-viewing thing which, there's usually something in there which is nice to see, and yeah. I do like the building a lot, I think what they've done with it is really good, especially with the other decision that have been made with regards to old buildings in the Northern Quarter, it's nice to see something that is being used and not being knocked down and redeveloped into flats.

A: Yeah, so inside the building, do you have a favourite spot or a favourite studio maybe, can you tell me a bit more about that?

R: My favourite spot is probably just inside, near the exhibition because it's very bright, it's very light, even on the darker days you still have the light streaming through, and it just feels very, especially with the white paintwork and things like that, it feels very light and airy, and just kind of almost like holiday-feeling, if that makes sense, so that is my favourite spot, especially because a lot of the time they'll bring bunting and things kind of between the balconies, so it's nice to kind of just stay there and look up, and kind of soak it all in, that's probably my favourite kind of feeling to start off with. And in regards to my favourite maker – no, not really; as I've said, I do like Made by And but yeah, off the top of my head, the tile place with curved ceramics is really nice, I do like them, I spend a lot of time in there, and yeah.

A: So, is it the things that they make that you like?

R: Yeah, so the ceramics, I think a lot of it is because it's very fine ceramic, and she's doing things that you'd usually wouldn't see, so everyone knows that ceramists make bowls and cups, and things like that, whereas to make them into something that you actually hang on the wall and are curved, and shaped like they are, it's interesting, I like to see what she does with

that. In regards to Made by And, I like the intricacy with her work, it does seem to be very detailed and I especially do like, she does little peg dolls for events, like weddings and parties, and things like that, individual people that are going to be there, like bride and groom, and to see her kind of transpose people's looks into being a peg dolls is really interesting. Again, she has very good use of colour and shape as well, in the stuff that she makes.

A: So, is there a, do you have a favourite thing or a thing you like the most from the ones you've bought from the Centre, or from one of the studios that we've just talked about?

R: No, I mean the kind of wooden (XXX 36:08), I do like looking at them a lot because they're very simple but they're very effective, and yeah, I think that's probably my favourite thing. The other stuff is very, very nice as well but just the (XXX 36:30), I like the simplicity of them, they're kind of, I'm having trouble describing but they're just very nice, very effective and very well done.

A: That's fine, great, thanks. How do you feel about the prices?

R: Sometimes they can feel a little bit expensive, but that's probably because we see the kind of supermarket prices for things, and once you actually kind of look into what it takes to make something, and what it then takes to make a living from doing it, I think the prices are really reasonable. There's, like I remember ever going into any of the shops at the Craft and Design Centre and think this, I can remember going in, thinking this is expensive to what I want to pay to fill this space, or to do this, but I can't remember thinking that's too expensive for what it is, so yeah.

A: So, there's never like a tension between handmade products and mass-produced ones?

R: Yeah, so a handmade product, you know, it takes, I mean I did start to think about it a lot, kind of you've got to take into account everything, it's not just this is a bit of wood, it's the time that goes into designing it and your different iterations, then you've got to get this made,

and then you've got to, you need to stock so you need a store for people to buy them, so you know, it's more along the lines that the makers have to do it very, it's a juggling act in regards to I need this much money to live on and I sell this amount of whatever it is, how can I make this much money to live on, how much do I have to charge for this to survive off it? And they do a good job, as far as I'm aware, no one I feel is overcharging for what they do, and you know, it's just a little bit nicer to have something made by a person as opposed to by a robot.

A: So, on the other hand, how do you feel about mass-produced products?

R: It depends what it is. If it's something that's very simple, that kind of needs to be not necessarily disposable but it's more functional than anything, then yes, I find that mass-produced items are probably going to be a better deal, but if there's something that is particularly nice, or that I want to have on show, or that I would like to have a flourish of some description, then yeah, I tend to stay way from mass-produced stuff. Especially because it's the makers themselves who are making the decisions in regards to the quality of the materials that they used, whereas mass-produced stuff I find a lot of the time it's not a decision, or the decision is made more along the lines of hitting a price point, whereas I think with the makers, their interest is making something nice as opposed to making something to make a profit.

A: So, it's like an ideological choice for you as well.

R: Yeah. I mean especially these days, I try and shop as local as possible because what annoys me a lot of the time is when restaurants or shops shut down and people complain, they're like it seemed like a really restaurant, I've had a look at their menu and the food looked really nice, and I'd be like did you go, and they're like no, that's why! If I can shop or

purchase from an individual seller where I know that the money will go to someone, as opposed to paying stock dividends, then I most likely will.

A: Okay, so related to that, have you ever donated to arts or craft organisations? Have you used to donation boxes at the Centre?

R: I have, but not that often, actually, now I think of it, yeah, once or twice but not lots, which I kind of kick myself about now.

A: Okay, okay, and at the moment, would you be more or less inclined to donate?

R: More.

A: More? Okay, why is that?

R: Well, obviously with the pandemic going on, I know lots of people don't have the ability to do their thing, so there's a lady who does walking tours around Manchester who is really good, and obviously with rules, with the lockdown and now the situation I am currently in, she can't do her walking tours so she's lost that income, so yeah, I mean she's started up a (XXX 43:04) account so I've subscribed to that, obviously to do my bit. I've done a bit of, there's a potter down in Portmadog who did a kind of fundraiser type of thing and I've put some stuff for them to keep, because these companies and these people need cashflow, whether they're selling stuff or not, they still have outgoings, whether it's rent for store or storage for their stock, or kind of trying out new things for the different season, they still have outgoings and they still have to live, whereas I can make a decision that I don't want to make anything, I don't feel like making anything; they don't have that ability, they need to make to survive, unless they start to, again, start to get part-time jobs or whatever, but that takes the time and energy, and away from doing what they're doing best, which is making stuff.

A: So, in terms of your own engagement with the arts, with craft, with cultural institutions and organisations, what has been the role of the pandemic into your own engagement?

R: I think it's been devastating to the arts in general, kind of with theatres especially, kind of with the 2m, 1m, however many metres that they come up with next, you know, you can't make the money to put the performances, and I know that lot of them have moved online which has been absolutely brilliant, but yeah, it's not the same. I've done a few of the comedy online things and it's just really odd, it's still funny but it's just a very different experience, and yeah.

A: How is that different for you, online?

R: It's still funny but with there being no laughter track, I mean if it was laugh-out-loud funny, you were probably less more likely to actually laugh that loud, if that makes sense? Because there's no one there, so yeah, it was still very good and I got to see people that I wouldn't usually see perform because the tickets were like £3-£4, and I didn't have to spend £10 on parking and all that stuff, so you can make one step back with spending money to see people you wouldn't usually see, so that bit I feel has been good, but you know, the rest of it as a whole, the arts in general, has been terrible. People with less money, people with less time, people with more strains to stay alive, kind of the last thing they want to do is either make or buy, or go to places because either they can't, or there are other things that need to be done.

A: So, what about the Craft and Design Centre? Have you visited the Centre since the start of the lockdown, or plan to visit it at some point?

R: To be honest – no, but that's more a timing thing, with my daughter's mother is a key worker so my time is taking up with my daughter, homework and reading, and all that stuff, and my weekends, to be honest, I've not really looked at going out, just trying to keep my

exposure down, however, on the flipside to that, even though I've not been to the Centre, I still follow quite a few of the makers there on Instagram, so yeah, I've still been engaged with them, can see what they're doing but I've just not been to the Craft and Design Centre; however, as soon as I feel that it is safe to go again, I definitely will be looking at going.

A: You've mentioned that you follow some makers on Instagram? Do you also follow the Craft and Design Centre? Do you visit their website? Have you used their online shop?

R: I haven't used their online shop, but I do follow them on Instagram and yeah, I follow a couple of the makers as well.

A: How do you find their online presence?

R: The online presence is good, the website is well set out, the UA and UX is definitely good so yeah, I mean I've got no issues with that at all.

A: Okay, that's great. So, final questions, going back to the pandemic. You did mention that you haven't visited the Craft and Design Centre before, have you visited other arts organisations, or how do you feel about visiting them again?

R: I would like to do it as soon as possible, but at the moment, with the way the pandemic's been fought, I don't feel that I want to put myself in that risk.

A: Okay, and with social distancing and things like wearing a mask, for instance, do you feel that this will have an impact if you decide to visit in future, for your own experience?

R: Yeah, so it's difficult because personally, if everyone was following the rules then I don't think we'd be in the situation we're in right now, so it's not necessarily that I feel that social distancing and wearing a mask is going to make me change my decision to go; what would change my decision to go is other people wearing masks and social distancing, so yeah, that's kind of the thing that's in the forefront of my head at the moment. Very similar to you could



be driving along, doing 30m/h but then you have a crash with someone doing 60m/h and driving like an idiot, even though you didn't do anything wrong, and I feel like that the whole mask wearing and social distancing is a bit like that, it only takes one person to not be social distancing and mask wearing for things to get ruined.

A: So, you're more afraid of other people being there if you decide to visit a place of like that?

R: Currently, it's not that I'm afraid of them and I's not like I don't go out, you know, I'm not a prisoner in my own home but I'm just very aware that I want to try and limit my exposure and my daughter's, and my girlfriend obviously, so yeah, that's where I am.

A: Okay, that's great, thank you so much. Is there anything else that you'd like to add, based on the discussion that we had, about Craft and Design Centre, about your own involvement, anything at all you'd like to add?

R: No, apart from what I would say, the Craft and Design Centre is a wonderful, amazing place and the Manchester and Northern Quarter would be, they would lose out if it wasn't there.

[REDACTED]

R: Thank you.