

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A: Yeah, and how do you identify in terms of gender?

R: Female.

A: And your race?

R: White British.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A: Great, okay. And your age?

R: 30.

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

A: Yeah, that's perfectly fine. And how many times have you been in the Craft and Design Centre?

R: Quite a lot, really, because when I first finished university I volunteered there, and then also, I mean that was about 8 years ago, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A: So, how many times would you say you'd been there in total, approximately?

R: Overall? It's quite hard, I'd say at least over 20, is that an alright way to...

A: Yeah, and how much would you say that you spend on average in the Centre, every time you visit?

R: When I go there? Well, quite recently I'd gone for lunch there quite a few times, so I'd say about, if we take away the volunteering, because that's something different, isn't it, I'd say half an hour?

A: And in terms of money that you spend on average, every time you visit?

R: Well, it all depends, really, because recently I've been going for lunch, but then also my wedding ring was bought in there, so that would up the average quite a lot, so it's hard to say. Should I say over time, or just an average?

A: Yeah, just on average, over time, how much, an approximate estimation, how much would you spend? Like, sometimes it might be more, other times might be less.

R: Yeah, like I guess sometimes I may for lunch and spend £10, but I've also bought my wedding ring in there that cost £200, so I don't know.

A: Okay, that's fine. And how much would you say you spend in terms of money for craft and design in general, on average?

R: Well, I'd say overall, because of my wedding ring, and it's maybe been like £300.

A: Right, okay. Great, so that was just kind of in terms of demographics, so do you want to tell me a bit about yourself and your relationship with craft?

R: Yeah, well I guess I like, so I go to the Craft Centre because I like to look at the exhibitions, and also to look around the shops as well, but my personal relationship with craft is that I probably do it quite a lot in my spare time, so I, you know like embroidery hoops, I do my own embroidery stitching, so I do that. I guess it's a hobby for me, I guess you can say

that, and then also, my relationship with it is that I'd often then think to, like, buy it for presents to people, just so it's not only something that I've got an interest in.

A: What types of crafting do you do, because you've said you do some crafting?

R: So, myself, I do the embroidery stitching, you know how you get the hoops and then you put the fabric over it and stitch patterns over it, that would be what I do myself.

A: Okay, and how did you develop your interest in crafts? Was craft making typical in your family, growing up?

R: Not particularly growing up, I wouldn't say so. I think like my mum does quite a lot of stuff now, she's like older and doesn't have a lot of children running around the house, but I'd say that when we were younger, that wasn't anything that she had the time to do, I don't think. More my own relationship would have probably come when I was an adult myself and wanted something to do with my spare time, that I could do at home and it just something to sort of, a hobby to do, really.

A: Okay, so what does craft mean to you? Why are you interested so much in it?

R: I think the reason why I make stuff myself is because I find it, especially now I've got a little girl, I like having something to do that isn't just looking after her, so something sort of to make for myself, that I've made, so on a day, like I look after her all day and then she goes to bed, and it's something that I can do in the evening.

A: Okay. So, have you thought about what types of crafts do you normally buy?

R: So, in terms of buying things, I don't buy loads of things, but I think if I was to buy something it would, to be honest I don't often buy things for myself like that, it would mostly be a present, and it would be to buy something from like an independent maker as a present for someone.

A: Have you bought any craft or any art that is feminist or political? Anything in relation to craft that is feminist or political?

R: I don't think so, no.

A: Okay. So, how did you first find out about the Craft and Design Centre?

R: It would have been when I was doing my university course, and just finding out about places in Manchester that were related to art and design, really. I mean it's probably from walking past, to be honest, because it is near where we used to hang around and where I lived.

A: Okay. Do you remember your first visit there? Could you describe it to me?

R: It would've been a while ago, but I think it was because my mum came to Manchester for a day, and it was just to show her something different because we're from like a small town that wouldn't have somewhere like that, so it was to show her something new.

A: Okay, so do you normally tend to go there with other people, or bring other people to the Centre?

R: Yeah, so people who aren't from Manchester, I think it's a nice place to take them, I've taken my grandparents in there before. It's quite a relaxing setting.

A: Yeah. How did they find it, your grandparents, your mum, other people you went with?

R: I think people I've taken always liked it. I think it's quite a unique place, really, there are not many other places like that, so I think they've enjoyed seeing it.

A: What do you mean by unique, what do you think makes it unique?

R: I guess there's, I think the building itself is interesting because it's an old fish market, isn't it, and then I think the exhibition space, they've always got interesting exhibitions on, and the

makers are independent, you're not going to, like, it's different from a regular high street, isn't it? And also, and I think as well, the café is really nice as well, I've taken people there for something to eat.

A: Yeah, so are you aware of the history, and you know that it was previously a fish market and everything? And is the history important for you in terms of the space and in terms of the Centre?

R: I think so, yeah. I think that's quite an interesting element, isn't it?

A: Can you tell me a little bit more about that, why do you find this interesting?

R: Oh sorry.

A: That's fine, just want to know.

R: I feel like I'm just getting my brain engaged because I've been furloughed since March, so I feel like I've not really done anything like this. I think it's just an interesting part of Manchester's history, I guess, and the Northern Quarter, to think of what, because the Northern Quarter now is sort of, like, it's just all bars and stuff, so it's nice to think how it was when it was all a bit more sort of, yeah, what it used to be, I think that's interesting.

A: So, there is an element of nostalgia there, maybe?

R: Yeah, I think so, yeah.

A: Okay. What brought you to the Centre on your last visit, do you remember by any chance?

R: The very last time was to go out for lunch with my friend and her baby as well, because now they've got this little bit in the corner where is like a soft play mat for babies to play, so we've taken the babies there because actually, there are not that many places, because both babies were moving and there are not that many places in the Northern Quarter where you

can get baby out of pram and they can move around a bit in a café area, so we wanted to do that and needed more space so we could be there for a bit longer.

A: So, you find it family friendly?

R: Yeah, definitely. At the age my baby is at the minute, definitely. It's hard to say when, you know, she's older because I guess I won't know, but definitely currently.

A: Right, right, okay. Okay, that's great. Can you tell me a bit more about your different visits there? Think about the moment you walk in, for instance, can you describe me a little bit more about some of your visits in the Centre?

R: Well, I guess some of them have been more sort of, I guess you can say some of them are sociable, so it's like go to the exhibition space, or to have lunch, or to meet friends, but then like I've said, I've also bought my wedding ring there as well, and that was quite nice because I had like a, because the person made it especially for me, so it was nice, because I sort of always, because I've been there quite a lot with friends and family, so it's quite a nice, it's nice to relate it being made in quite a special place as well.

A: Yeah, okay. Do you recall anything specific that drew your attention during one of your last visits, anything in particular that you thought was unique or different?

R: I guess that was nice as well because we got to see the man make the ring, which I don't think in many places you could do. He invited us behind the little counter so that we could look, so that was quite special.

A: Okay. Are you aware of other similar spaces, like Craft and Design Centre in Manchester?

R: What was that, sorry?

A: Are you aware of similar spaces like the Craft and Design Centre?

R: I can't think of anything else that would be similar. I guess there's more pop-ups and markets for people to sell things, but I think the Craft Centre is quite unique, and it's the shopping area but it's also the exhibition space, and also the café as well, so I can't think of anything that's got all of that, really. I think other things have got elements of that, but not all of it.

A: Okay. And when you do visit the Centre, do you go to different studios and do you have any interactions with the makers? Can you tell me about the interactions?

R: Yeah, definitely. Yeah, well I think they're always really, whenever I've bought anything from anyone in there, like I've said I've bought my wedding ring, the man was really nice and friendly, and we had good rapport with him, and then I've also bought gifts for other people in there, and I think they're always really friendly, very welcoming. I think it's good because they're good if you want to buy something, but I don't think they make you feel bad about just browsing, which is quite nice because I think in some small shops, you can be made to feel a bit awkward if you're going in and just having a look around, but I think they've got the sort of technique right in sort of just making it quite a welcoming space to also just having a look and a bit of a browse.

A: So, it feels like being welcome when you're walking into studios?

R: Yeah, definitely.

A: Okay, and how do you feel about diversity, or lack of diversity at the Centre?

R: In terms of the makers?

A: In terms of the makers, in terms of the visitors, both actually.

R: I mean I guess there's something, I guess one thing would be the sort of, you know, you could argue that some of the stuff is at quite a high price point, and is there lack of diversity



in one respect and everything is quite, you know, is it excluding some people who may not be able to afford, that sort of diversity if we're talking about that, and the café's is not cheap either, so I guess maybe more could be done to make it more welcoming to all sort of people who'd be able to pay different things to be there, that's one thing. But then, I also understand that things are expensive to make, so it's hard to get that, to do that. That's probably the only thing I thought about previously in relation to diversity throughout the Centre, I don't think I've thought about it in any other sort of way, really.

A: Okay, but you do feel that the prices are a bit high?

R: Yeah, I guess that's one, in a way, is it really, one argument could be, you know, is it really sort of catering to the whole community, is it welcoming to everyone if it's an expensive place to be, I guess it's what I'm trying to say.

A: Yeah, that's perfectly understandable, thank you. How do you feel about the product range, the different craft objects in different studios and different products as well in the Centre?

R: Yeah, I guess that sort of relates to what I was saying before, is that, you know, I don't think there are many things in there that you could spend less than £15 to £20 on, and maybe they need some stuff, you know, there are some special things, like a one-off, lifetime purchase that you spend more money on, but maybe there is an argument that you need some, sort of some products that are a bit of a lower price point to sort of get other types of people going there, I guess.

A: Okay, and what about the building itself, the different shops, exhibition space, how do you find it?

R: I think that's, like I was saying before, that's a really nice aspect of it, and it makes, yeah, the exhibition space, I've seen some good exhibitions there and it always looks nice at

Christmas when it's dark outside and they've got the lights, so yeah, I think the building is really nice.

A: Okay, and what about the days and times that you normally visit? Do you tend to visit the Centre at specific days or times?

R: I think it's more, because I work nearby, I'd say over the last few years it's been lunchtime during the week when I would have gone there.

A: Okay, and that would be normally going to the café, for instance, or just browsing?

R: Yeah, I'd go in for a look around with friends, or go in to buy a present perhaps.

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

R: No, I haven't actually, no.

A: Okay, and during your visits, do you take any photos, or do you take any photos of the things that you've bought? Do you tend to post these photos online, on social media?

R: Yeah, maybe not, I maybe wouldn't post things that I've bought, I'd maybe post more like if the exhibition looked nice, and my friends would be interested in seeing that, I think I'd post about that, but I don't know, maybe just generally I wouldn't post things that I've bought because I think that looks more showy-offy, maybe? Yeah, but if there was an exhibition and I thought that if I've posted it then my friends might go, I'd do that.

A: So, it would be more about the actual experience that you're having there?

R: Yeah, rather than things that I've bought, yeah. But I think that's not to do with the Craft Centre, I think that's more in general what I just think about people posting stuff they've bought on Instagram.

A: So, it would mainly be Instagram where you're posting pictures and stuff.

R: Yeah, yeah.

A: Okay. Do you follow any makers online, are you familiar with their online presence, and the online presence of the Craft and Design Centre?

R: Yeah, I follow the Craft and Design Centre, and then also some of the individual makers as well to see what they do, and I think the stuff that Craft and Design Centre Posts is nice, it's good to see what the makers are doing and good to see what exhibitions they have as well.

A: How do you find the Centre's online presence?

R: I think they've got a good online presence, I think they've got a good balance between sort of showing some of the behind-the-scenes stuff and good balance of posting some of the products, but then also some of the space in the exhibition space as well, so yeah, I think they post some nice things.

A: Have you, by any chance, used their online shop in the past?

R: No, I didn't, I didn't know they've had one, actually.

A: Okay, yeah.

R: I had no idea that they had one.

A: Okay. Going back to the actual Centre, to the physical space, do you have a favourite studio? Can you tell me a bit more about that?

R: A favourite studio, well I like, is it called &Made, I think, and she does the knitted woollen scarves, and they're like little, yeah, lots of little ornaments and things like that, I'd say that's one of my favourite ones. I've not really ever bought loads from there, but I just

quite like going in. I've bought one or two things, but I just like going in and seeing what she's made. I don't know if that's the right answer, though.

A: No, there are no right or wrong answers. What is it specifically that you like with that particular studio, is it the objects or something else?

R: Just the objects, I guess, they just always seem well-made and quite, yeah, I just think that I like the stuff that she makes, really.

A: Okay. A similar question, what's your favourite thing that you've bought from the Centre?

R: It would probably be my wedding ring, I think. I can't remember the name of the guy that we'd bought that from, it was jewellers in the top left corner, and it was nice because he made it and it was a bespoke thing that he made for us.

A: Yeah, so in terms of one of the reasons that you like that wedding ring is because it was handmade?

R: Yeah, handmade and the design of it was my idea, and then he was able to make it how I wanted, and then how I was saying before, it was nice because it's then tied to Manchester and tied to that place.

A: So, there's a sense of locality as well.

R: Yeah, definitely.

A: Okay. What else have you bought during your visits; can you recall any other objects?

R: I've also bought some, so for our wedding cake I've bought some cake toppers from the &Made place, I've bought a brooch [REDACTED] bit, and what else have I bought? I've definitely bought a lot of birthday cards and things like that over the years

because, like I've said, our office is just around the corner, and a lot of other gifts as well for the colleagues from work.

A: Okay, so what made you buy these different things from the Centre in particular, and not from somewhere else?

R: I think there's two things, really. It's to do with, like, the, you know, if that's what you're looking for, if they look nice and are well made and it's what you're after, it's not just buying for the sake of it, but then also the second part is also buying something that is handmade and ethically made in Manchester, rather than buying something from [REDACTED]s or the high street or something, so buying something that you know is made well, and then by buying it you're supporting a local business.

A: So, you've got a preference for handmade products rather than mass produced ones.

R: Yeah, I think where possible. I mean, ideally it would be nice to buy everything in that sort of way, but I don't really have the money to do that. So, more if I was buying something special, like a present or something, then yeah, I try to do that in that sort of way, if that makes sense.

A: Yeah, definitely. And how do you feel about the handmade products that you own? I mean you did mention the wedding ring, but in general?

R: Like I've said, I've bought it not just because to support a local business and an independent maker, but also because I liked them and thought they looked good, and what I was after as well, and they were a good quality.

A: And because you did mention supporting the Centre and the local community and everything, have you used the donation boxes at the Craft and Design Centre before?

R: I don't think so, to be honest, no.

A: Okay. Have you ever donated to any arts and crafts organisations in the past?

R: I don't think so, no.

A: Okay. At the moment, would you be more or less inclined to donate to Craft and Design Centre, or to any crafts organisations?

R: At the minute, because of everything that is going on? It's hard, really, because I think ideally, you know, I'd like to donate to loads of different things, charities and help local businesses, but because my own situation is that I've been furloughed and don't know what the future of my job is, I'm sort of really only spending minimal money, so I wouldn't really, you know, I'm just buying the basic stuff, so I don't, you know, ideally I would like to but I think at the minute, until stuff settles down a bit, I don't really feel like I'm in a position to do that.

A: So, on unrelated note, how do you feel that Covid-19 has impacted upon your personal engagement with arts in general, and with cultural institutions?

R: I mean, because my, it's hard because I've got a little girl I feel like, so I've been furloughed and during lockdown she sort of took up all my time. I think if I've had more time, I would have done more, like, you know, watched the streams of theatre and things like that online, but during lockdown I just really didn't have the time because she sort of is all-consuming. I mean definitely, before all of this we used to go to the art gallery all the time, we'd go to the theatre quite a lot, and in Manchester the majority, because I know Tate Liverpool is now open, isn't it? But I think a lot of the Manchester places are still shut, but you know, I will go back to them when they reopen. I feel wary going to the theatre, you know, sat in the room with a big group of people but I think with the arts organisations I will go back there when they open.

A: So, I suppose, you haven't visited the Craft and Design Centre since the lockdown?

R: No.

A: Okay, and are you planning to visit soon?

R: Yeah, I would. When it does open again, I will go back, yeah.

A: Okay. Do you feel that with, you know, all social distancing measures, wearing a mask and so on and so forth, all different measures in terms of social distancing will have an impact on your engagement with different art spaces and the Craft and Design Centre?

R: I think with the Craft and Design Centre, I'd feel completely fine about going back there. I mean, I guess one argument and one sort of thing to think about it is, so I'm still furloughed from work, but when we do go back, I don't know if we'll be going back to the office, which is in town, so I think it will change, I won't be there as regularly because I won't be in an office nearby and I don't, you know, there's probably an argument that the Northern Quarter will, if people aren't in the offices, would it be quite different around there? But I think if I was in town I would still go, and I wouldn't feel worried about going.

A: Why would you not feel worried, specifically in the Craft and Design Centre?

R: I think it's because I know it would be handled properly and carefully, and measures would be in place, and also because it's quite an open space, isn't it, and I know the studios are quite small, but I'd imagine it's only one in, one out in there, so you know, the bit in the middle is quite a big and open area, so I think yeah, I think I'd feel comfortable sitting in there. And like I've said, I feel like they'd handle it properly, so you know it would be safe.

A: As opposed to going to the theatre, for example?

R: Yeah, I think there's something about sat in a room with crowds that's different, maybe. I don't know, it's hard to say, you know, isn't it because theatres aren't open yet but, you know, when they are maybe we'll be in a different position in terms of ... I think what's been

hard is that, you know, you are sort of, in lockdown you couldn't go anywhere, you shouldn't be doing anything, and then quite quickly it's sort of changed to be like oh, you can do things now but there's not been that much reassurance and, I don't know, I've personally found this whole thing really confusing, coming out of lockdown, I just find a lot of this stuff contradictory so it's hard to think about going to the theatre and being in a big group but maybe, stuff changes all the time, doesn't it, so maybe in a few weeks, or a few months, we may feel differently about that.

A: So, what do you find most confusing and contradictory, especially when it comes to visiting different places like the Craft and Design Centre, or the theatre?

R: I guess what's confusing is, you know, the virus is still around and the guidance was sort of, in the spring time it was you should only be going out if it's essential, and then it's changed to you can do things that are non-essential now with the measures in place, but then I just find that hard to sort of get your head around a bit, and I think what's harder as well is we've got an 18-month old who can walk around, she's not very good at social distancing so it's hard to, I just find it, you know, if I'm out and about with her and she doesn't do social distance very well, so that's another thing to sort of think about, I guess.

A: So, how do you feel, you know, with Covid-19 and everything, what's your personal view that the virus will impact the Craft and Design Centre and other organisations when it comes to arts and culture, in terms of visitors, events and so on, in the short term and in future?

R: In the future, I think, my personal opinion would be that if stuff continues as it is now and the virus is sort of kept at a low level in the UK, and it doesn't peak again, hopefully sort of with time, you know, people will gain more confidence and start going back to things again if stuff stays as it is now, and I think there can be a positive future for the arts and culture venues, and people will gain that confidence if stuff stays at bay, but I think the problem



maybe is that if there's another peak, or another wave, I sort of struggle to see past that, if that makes sense. I think if that happened, it then would be hard for people to have that confidence to start going to things again.

A: So, it's about individual trust and confidence, and fear, I suppose?

R: Yeah, definitely, and I feel like it's different people's circumstances as well, isn't it, because, and like I've said that's my personal opinion because I don't live with anyone or regularly come into contact with anyone who's considered vulnerable or more at risk, whereas I think if I did I would definitely feel different about this thing and maybe wouldn't go to things that weren't essential because there's always a risk of you picking something and then bringing it home, I think, so I think I'm probably in quite a lucky position in that. Does that make sense?

A: Yeah, yeah, definitely, it's just another question about that: do you feel that there is a thing that from the point of view of Craft and Design Centre, for instance, or any other art spaces like the theatre we were discussing before, do you think that there's anything that they could do when it comes to, you know, re-establishing some sort of trust or confidence?

R: Yeah. It's hard, really, because I think what the individual organisations are doing is really good, and I've seen on the Craft Centre's Instagram, they've put up about cleaning everything and, like I've said, I know the distancing measures will be in place, and it will be the same at the theatre as well. I don't think, I'm not sure if they could do much more to regain confidence when the media constantly worsens things up and is reporting on the cases and talking about second waves in Spain and things like that. I think there's only a certain amount that individual organisations can do when all of that is going on on the side, because it's that kind of stuff that gets into my head more, I think, rather than a day-to-day situation, if that makes sense.

A: Yeah, that's great, thanks a lot for that. So, final question, hello? Can you hear me?

(37:10) Okay, so final question, can you still hear me? So, just the final question and going back to some of the things we've mentioned at the beginning: in general, what does craft mean to you as a woman?

R: Can you hear me still? Yeah, what was the last part of that question, what does craft mean to you as ...

A: As a woman.

R: Oh, as a woman? I'm just thinking. Well, I think for me and it's probably, I'm probably just rambling and it's not a very developed idea, but I think for me, having a 18-month old because her dad works, I am her main sort of person, sort of carer, craft is then a bit like an escapism. That's not meant to sound negative on the baby, more it's just escapism and doing something for myself when so much of me is taken up by someone else, if that makes sense. I don't know if that's really hard for you to write down.

A: That's fine, like an escape from everyday life, in a sense?

R: Yeah, everyday life, and I don't think it's like, and I'm not saying because my everyday life is negative, it's more that it's a change for me and it's something, it's a change and it's something for myself, rather than doing something for someone else all day.

A: So, like an escape from a daily routine, without negative connotation, of course.

R: Yeah, yeah, definitely.

A: So, what is it, you know, because you did say doing something for yourself, so why do you consider craft being meaningful for your own self, something personal, in a sense?

R: I think doing the embroidery that I spoke about at the beginning of the interview is quite mindful, I guess, and you can really sort of focus on it and just sort of shut everything else

out, and I think by doing it as well, it also makes me feel like I've achieved something tangible because when you're bringing up a child, it's sort of like, it's really hard, it sounds really weird but you're like oh, I got through the day and she's fine, I'm fine, and she's doing really well, but then it's like it's the next day and there's no, like, it's hard to see results, if that makes sense? That sounds really weird, but throughout your life you go to school, you do an exam and then you've done it, but then when you've got a baby, it just sort of feels really like, I don't know, just sort of, and I like doing craft because I sort of made something at the end of it, and this isn't meant to sound negative about the baby or anything.

A: No, just the kind of tangibility of craft is what you enjoy.

R: Yeah, definitely, whereas in other parts of my life, massive parts of my life sometimes it's hard to see something tangible, whereas with craft you can do. And just this simple feeling of like, I do achieve things every day when looking after my little girl, but it's hard to see that sometimes, but with craft it's like I've made this, and I've done it.

A: Okay, so it's the kind of fulfilment that you get, you can actually see what you've made and feel proud.

R: Yeah, and I do obviously feel all this stuff about my little girl as well, it's just, I hope you don't report me to social services!

A: No, obviously. Okay, that's great. I think that's all actually, do you have anything else to add in terms of, you know, your relationship with craft, the Craft and Design Centre experience or anything at all that you would like to add?

R: No, I don't think so. I guess just going back to the coronavirus stuff is just that my hope would be that all these places do stay open in Manchester because it's hard to see what the city would be like without these sorts of places, so yeah, my hope is just that stuff sort of keeps open and stuff can work back for people again.

A: Yeah, I hope so as well. So, thank you so much for the interview. [REDACTED]

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