Transcript: Art Fund Interview with Alex

Speakers:
Ana Baeza Ruiz
Alex (pseudonym)

Ana Baeza Ruiz (00:02.700): So we're recording okay. Thanks very much Alex for coming to this interview, and we are going to be talking about your experience in the MoDA project. We're going to be running through a series of different questions that touch on an aspect of your participation your learning and communication, so the purpose of this interview is to ask you to reflect on your experience of taking part of the project as a whole and as I said earlier, we're looking for honest reflections, as you feel is appropriate there's no right or wrong answers here. It's just about how your experiences with the project how that can inform projects in the future, that the museum, I want to do so, this will help staff learn how to do things similar or differently. So I'm going to just jump in straight away and ask you: How would you describe your participation in the project?

Alex (00:52.710): Yep, working with MoDA was like honestly was really great experience for me because I got to know a lot about the marketing aspect of the industry as well, so I mainly worked on content creation and animations, and we used videography department so while my colleague focus more on images I focused more on videography and like kind of (?) videography kind of content. So yeah that's the department that I worked with.

Ana Baeza Ruiz (01:26.460): Excellent, and in that process of being involved in the geography but also working with your other teammates that we're working on other things, how what things did you learn in that process was it things around videography, or other skills, that you think you've developed in the course of the project.

Alex (01:44.820): Oh yeah it has, because one of the restrictions that we had to face was that in MoDA, I was, I was kind of to work with what I had well, so the websites and found footage that they already have, and then we edited. So it was kind of difficult in that part because it was I already took like edited videos and had to edit them again so. So I did not have the liberty to you know go to motor and shoot my own footages, so it was just kind of limiting in that part and yeah so working with what they already had, and we already had a time limit of four hours per week, so it was kind of difficult in that sense. It would have been like better to get a bit more leverage on that and, second, of all one thing I discovered was that not everyone knows re-directing and videography stuff, so my colleagues were kind of struggling when there was a point when we all had to work on videography and making reels. So yeah they were kind of struggling on that as well, and they were like asking me how to do that video thing, which software to use and yeah so that's one thing I learnt that not videography is not for everyone and that's what I learnt from doing that.

Ana Baeza Ruiz (03:02.910): I think in that sense I think it's interesting you talk about how you have brought these skills and then these other students didn't actually have their skills, but you were working as a team so would you say there was something that you learned as part of this project in working collaboratively that perhaps you hadn't done in some other projects before.Was there anything new in the team skills, I guess, you could say that this project opened up for you.

Alex (03:28.470): So yeah so when we did I mean when we were discussing like how to approach this. The first iteration we kind of got the sense that videos were doing better, so in the second iteration we all decided to do like the videos we all agreed to it, but the end when we started at people were kind of struggling to do the videography and stuff, to edit mainly, so what I learnt was to impart my knowledge, I guess? So, actually they would be contacting me in between, sending me text messages like how to do that part, how to resolve (?) and stuff, so yeah I had to go out my way, and then - you know - send them resources like how to do this, how to do that, so teaching them actually taught me more on it. For example, like Canva, that's a website I didn't know can manage videography but one of my colleagues discovered that

we could do videography of that so I kind of learned that from that. So actually imparting my knowledge on videography and reels kind of taught me more on that aspect as well.

Ana Baeza Ruiz (04:41.760): Quite interesting, so different teammates teaching each other different skills. Great, so I think that leads to quite nicely to the other question that we have here, which is around how people were communicating within the groups. What are your thoughts on the way in which everyone collaborated and how they communicated during the project? Was that was there something about what you observed in your particular group or in other groups or maybe how the project leaders were managing different situations, things that stood out for you in terms of the collaboration and communication aspect of teamwork?

Alex (05:20.580): mm hmm well in terms of teamwork, I would say for the most part we did agree with each other, but I kind of got this feeling that sometimes people did not agree and I that if you had like more time to you know get together and meet that would have been like better to, you know, understand why people do not agree with this particular stuff and why we could how we could navigate to you know, find a better solution so yeah having more time would have been like really better because sometimes I had this feeling that a few of them would are kind of reluctant to do videos because they are not so knowledgeable in that aspect so and, you know, getting more time would have been better for me, I think, would have worked better, more than four hours a week, would be pretty good to you know convince or get convinced how different departments work, you know.

Ana Baeza Ruiz (06:20.700): Have you experienced other teamwork situations where you've had more time and that's enabled the project to move forward in a better way. Outside MoDA, are you comparing it to other experiences outside of this project.

Alex (06:39.780): Oh yeah definitely. Definitely, it has a, for example, the group work that I'm doing right now for my university for our final project, we had initial idea that was not working well and we had like months to plan; so each discussions like kind of led to another, and we had to like change the whole plan as it went on. So yeah I for me at least having more time to solve the issue. So that's my personal experience.

Ana Baeza Ruiz (07:10.230): In that sense, and there's another thing that I think it's because it's worth have having a discussion about which is this model of working that the MoDA project was trying to put in place which is around being experimental and the Let's get real model that they probably talked to you about. So I wondered what your thoughts are on this, how you would explain this this model and how did it work for you? How did you find it and what did you take away from it?

Alex (07:41.310): Well, it was really interesting for me because I haven't done an experimental model on social media. So what we normally do is make, and then follow the trend see what works and we just follow that, and you know, we did not do a iteration-based experimental model. And there are pros and cons to it, I would say. Pro is that you can actually figure out like what is working, what how people are orientating towards a particular media and other stuff. But that is one of the cons as well because social media is like not predictable at all so, for example, I'm doing some reels, for now, and it's not working for now. (08:25.890) And in experimental way we say it's not working, so we do other stuff but sometimes if we keep doing it enough, it could work, it could follow traction, you know, and go reach more audience, it could take off. So I think following iteration method is good, but you know, in that sense, I think that it would work better if we had more time to work on it. So we, I think we had like three months to work on MoDA and we had like three iterations as well, so if you had like more time to work on each iteration that would have been better, to know the actual results because I kind of felt that we did not have enough, we did not do enough to make a difference, I would say. Yeah that's my thoughts on it.

Ana Baeza Ruiz (09:24.150): Great and ambitious is that something that you felt you could feedback in the process of doing the project, about this need for time. Do you think there are opportunities during the project for feeding back on the methods that would be followed?

Alex (09:45.720): We have we did have feedback sessions after each iteration, and because social media is so unpredictable like, especially Instagram, you can't actually analyse where it's going on, you know. So sometimes we were very puzzled, how did that not work, because it worked the first time, and second time it did not work at all, the views were like drastically down. So we already confused in that aspect. Sometimes we figured out that you know the content is not that engaging, the story in this way did not work, there was too much information, it's very overwhelming. But sometimes you're like okay this worked previously, but this time it did not work, so you're really confused in that aspect.

Ana Baeza Ruiz (10:36.660): And you've spoken about a lot of the work that you've done in the project has revolved around videography and making reels so I wanted to ask you how you felt your input - in terms of your work, but also your ideas, the feedback - how that was valued and how it was incorporated into the project. And could you give one or more examples.

Alex (10:58.020): Well my work was, I personally had got a lot of skills from it, so I did a little bit of animations in the reels as well, so I had a lot of, I kind of learned a lot about animation (?) my skills on it. And in terms of feedback, so the videography things worked out very well during the first iteration. The reach we got compared to other posts was really good, but for the second iteration onwards we did a few, was like really low - we got really less views and not much engagement. We (?) how and why it was the first way around, but unfortunately we cannot get a solid answer so it was kind of disappointing in that sense, I would say. Yeah so we did not have a clear answer, why it was not taking as much traction like we had the first time. Yeah the feedback, I did get some feedback on the videography part. Yeah it was helpful for the most part, for example, the design aspect and how the colours and all that stuff. But in terms of actually getting the numbers, like the audience, I think I could have gotten like more tips on that aspect.

Ana Baeza Ruiz (12:23.700): Right thanks for sharing that. And during these weeks there's been a alongside Shannon and Zoe there's been other guest speakers from different institutions that have come in spoken to you and I wondered how well do you think that worked bringing these other perspectives bringing people that are from the outside the university, already in workplaces, like cultural institutions…what were your impressions of this, to what extent was it useful, couldn't have been done differently, do you have any views on that?

Alex (13:05.640): Yeah. I would say that some both most best part about working with MoDA, that we got to hear about a lot of speakers who has a lot of industry knowledge. One of the cons was that it was pre-recorded session so we could not ask many questions, I mean we really listened to it and Zoe did say if we had any questions you could pass down to her, and you know she could ask the guest speaker. But it is not the same, as you know, as asking the person live. So yeah it would have been better if they joined the call live, but yeah I understand it is hard you know the time constraints and everything. But in that aspect yeah. But in terms of talks and everything yeah I just really good most of the guest speakers they shared a lot of industry knowledge and the videos we watched were very insightful I got a lot of good tips from there as well.

Ana Baeza Ruiz (14:08.670): yeah and I think this partly is the idea behind the project is to give you that work experience in some ways, whether it's by hearing the speakers, or the work that you're engaging yourself, which can increase that knowledge of the world of work and ideally, enhance also your confidence when thinking about applying for jobs where you can apply these skills. Do you have comments about this aspect of the project and how well the project you think is equipped you for thinking about that wider world outside of the university.

Alex (14:47.280): Right definitely because working alone I would I mostly found it easy but working in a team was really hard. When I was actually put in an environment where I got like work with others and you know the museum managers and everything, and do meetings every week every week it actually improved my communication skills and my collaboration skills and. Yeah it, it was definitely helpful for my industry, plus I got to improve my portfolio, I could actually show my work that I've done. Plus, it also gave me a lot of soft skills as well, like I got to talk with my teammates and figure out how things are not working, how it's

working, especially this experiment experimental format is a testament to that. Because it's basically analysing each data and what went wrong and that is like really crucial in social media and I have never done that, before. So really analysing data and getting tips on that and collaborating with others and finding out what went wrong with each data I actually learned a lot from that.

Ana Baeza Ruiz (15:59.970): Great so, so I think there's Just one final main question and, if you like to add something at the end that we opportunity for that. But this is around projects in the future so MoDA might like to run similar projects next year or the year after would you recommend it to other friends or students that were like yourself at Middlesex or other universities, why, yes, and why not and are there any changes that you would suggest.

Alex (16:32.460): Definitely, I would recommend that especially to people for in the media and social media sector, I would definitely recommend to it, I would suggest that if you're a particularly interested in this museum setting, it will be better for you. Like there are people who are into media and stuff but not much into history and museums, so if they are not in that in that category I would tell them that this is mainly focusing on that history, and you know we'd be working with our collections and artifacts. So yeah they I would say, they need to be particular particularly invested in that aspect as well to really enjoy the work. If not, it can actually move your other skills as well, like we talked soft skills and your media skills as well, but it would definitely help to be interested in the museum and historical aspect of it yeah, so I would definitely recommend my media friends to take it up.

Ana Baeza Ruiz (17:33.060): Right and any changes that you might recommend way that you think would be would make the project stronger?

Alex (17:40.470): Oh yeah. One thing I noticed is less groups would be would be good. So we had like three groups to work with, and we always have to look what each was doing, and we had like made sure that each group was not repeating the same thing. And yeah I would say, less so people would be nice, so we have like small cohorts so we probably work as like a one whole one big group that would have been better and yeah to meet offline if that's possible, so everyone could pitch in together and the whole work environment would be better if people could meet together. Yeah that's all I got for now, everything else is pretty good.

Ana Baeza Ruiz (18:30.060): Great well, thank you so much Alex Is there something you'd like to add about the projects, anything that you felt it's been left unsaid.

Alex (18:41.220): And pretty much everything went well, I would say, if you have more iterations will be better because I kind of have had this incomplete feeling. At the end I kind of thought: did I do much, did I actually make a difference? In that sense getting a bit more time to work would have been better, like instead of extracting to four hours per week; I understand there are budget constraints and everything, but if we could leverage that, more hours to work would be better, and more time to work would be better…yeah that's my only concerns for the next participants.

Ana Baeza Ruiz (19:20.970): Great okay thanks so much I'm going to stop recording now.