Transcript: Art Fund Interview with Andy

Speakers:
Ana Baeza Ruiz
Andy (pseudonym)

Ana Baeza Ruiz [00:04.259]: Thanks Andy very much for this particular part of this interview, the purpose of which is that you reflect on your experience taking part in the MoDA project as a whole, we're going to look for what we're looking for your honest reflections there's no right or wrong answers. We just want to know what you think what your experience has been, and this will help staff in the Museum of the future, to learn how they can do things differently if there's other projects that they run… So with that small intro I'm going to jump straight in with the question very general question quite straightforward: how would you describe your participation in the project?

Andy [00:52.620]: could you word that any definitely sorry.

Ana Baeza Ruiz [00:55.740]: yeah sure, so how would you say that you've been involved in the project, so you think of your role taking part in the project within your team, how would you describe what you've contributed to the team.

[…deleted section here that had to be repeated as Andy's sound failed, and Andy turned off video]

Andy [01:42.780]: Yeah, about the participation it felt very much like everyone was sort of treated equally, I felt like I was contributing to it, and it was all sort of appreciated to the same standard what we were sort of adding to the group, and our ideas and stuff and it was really appreciated, because it was nice to feel like that, within our local team.

Ana Baeza Ruiz [02:08.430]: Is there anything in terms of what you feel you brought to the project, whether it's specific skills that you could expand on, and in that sense?

Andy [02:18.840]: I think in terms of sort of using the knowledge I already had about different ways in which social media was used, I found it was quite nice to apply this to a different scenario to what I'm used to university and other work I've done, and sort of bring in that past experience. And learning from everyone else, and how we could all contribute towards making the content that we need to create.

Ana Baeza Ruiz [02:52.020]: Right, okay well I'll move on to the next question which is around your learning, and this is again what things do you think that you've learnt in the course of the project, this could be anything from technical skills to soft interpersonal skills. It's your space to just reflect on what the different skills that you feel you've learnt or that you've acquired through this involvement, through your involvement in the project.

Andy [03:22.020]: And I think in terms of technical skills I didn't I didn't have much experience with creating video content and things like that quite new to me; like we used we made some Instagram reels and used Canva, which I had never used before. And it's something that I think sort of made me sort of push what I can do, and what I want to be able to do. And just generally really contributing, and I think I was quite nervous to sort of apply for the for the project, and just in terms of sharing my ideas and being confident, so we had to sort of like many presentations in that and just really pushing myself to contribute. Not just let myself listen to what everyone else had to say but make sure that my ideas came across as well, I think that's probably the main thing that I've learnt.

Ana Baeza Ruiz [04:15.720]: Yeah I think that's a skills that can be quite challenging, you're putting yourself out there, so I think that's yeah it's great to hear that the product has enabled that in in one way. And I think this links to another question which is around how you've collaborated. And you were touching on that already a little bit in at the beginning, very beginning of our conversation, but I'd like just to explore in

a more detail what are your thoughts on the way in which everyone communicated and collaborated during the project and you might want to comment on your own group, you might want to say something about other groups, things that you observed, and maybe also the project leaders, what role they had in in the communication side of things.

Andy [05:07.680]: I think, obviously we worked through Teams, so it was really easy to communicate with each other anytime we needed to. And in the group that I worked with we had like a WhatsApp group so we could always sort of asking quick question if one of us was panicking about what we were creating or if we just really had any questions and so that was nice. And it was nice and during the sessions how we would sort of be assigned the task and then sent off to complete it as a little group and then feed it back with Zoe and Sian. I thought it was quite… that sort of balance between working with them, but also working in our group, so that we have that kind of independence, sometimes it'd be tasks that we did on our own, and then bring it together. I will say we didn't really… I don't know whether it's because I'm not from Middlesex and I don't know who knew each other within the project, but I didn't really get to see or communicate with the other groups, but I guess because of like timetables and stuff it, it was hard for us all to sort of… I was at uni Friday afternoons when the other group was so we couldn't always it probably wasn't that easy but it would have been nice to sort of see what other people were doing and how they would get it all as well.

Ana Baeza Ruiz [06:30.510]: I'm going to move on to a different question, which is about the broader framework of this project, which is inspired by the Let's Get Real model that is about experimenting it's about trialling through those different iterations. Now, I wonder if you could explain in your own words this model of working experimenting that was using the project and how you found it and what you think you will take away from it.

Andy [07:15.300]: Sorry, could you repeat that…I wasn't sure if you'd finished or if it was my Internet it was working and then it just went quiet.

Ana Baeza Ruiz [07:21.240]: Oh sorry yeah. Basically, the question is um it's about this experimental model of working with a different iterations and the trial and experiment. So could you explain this model of working and experimenting and how you found it and what you think you'll take away from it.

Andy [07:44.250]: I think it's not a way that I've ever worked before and I really liked how with each iteration we at the beginning, we as a group we discussed what we wanted to achieve from it, and we have like am a form that we filled in. And so we could assign each other tasks and sort of, say, this is what we want to do, this is how we want to do it, and this is what we expect to find. And then it made it really nice to reflect at the end. Because we had all that of what we how we felt the beginning of the iteration and then, once we've made the content week by week, and seeing the results as they come in how our opinions were different, like the second iteration and how we thought things that would work didn't. And how things that we weren't sure would work, how they did work. And then how we could use that and apply it, and by the third iteration of what we've learned quite a lot of what worked and how we could quickly really quickly put together the form, I thought it was really helpful. Like reflecting on what we'd learnt, as well, like you could see it written down so once we got to the third one, we had all this information that I think normally it's not something that I would do, and I think it's something that I'd like to think about in other work I do. I think it was quite motivating, to be honest and look back on, and I really liked the framework experience yeah.

Ana Baeza Ruiz [09:06.450]: Right so we've talked about collaboration teamwork, and I want to bring up a question that's more also about your individual contributions and how you felt that your input was valued and incorporated in the project, you did mention something about everyone being treated equally, at the very beginning. So could you give some examples of how you felt your input was valued.

Andy [09:31.740]: I think when we when we broke off to work in our little group we all sort of made sure that we'd contributed like. I felt like I gave an idea and we used it, or if we didn't, we discussed why. It never felt like if we didn't use an idea that it was sort of for bad reason. It felt like it was for our sort of

development, maybe, because we did find…I'm very guilty of it as well, having too many ideas at the beginning and sort of narrowing it down to just one. And then, when we did a group presentation at the end we divided into three sections and we all took one on because there were three of us, we took one each. And it felt like I had my own bits, contributed my ideas and opinions, and everyone got that…yeah like I said I think I'm not sure how else to put it, other than people like…like my opinions and suggestions were really valued. Can't think of anything more specific than that sorry.

Ana Baeza Ruiz [10:35.310]: No that's great, and I think it's something, though, that we might take for granted, but I think actually it can be quite exceptional that you work in a group where this happens so I'm curious, what do you think was happening in the group that enabled for this sharing on an equal footing, did you have any sort of ground rules…What was it about the group that allowed for this sense of equality, I guess, we can say?

Andy [11:04.980]: um yeah I feel like it is quite like in other the things I've worked on it's quite rare that you feel like completely…Maybe it was because it was quite a small team and we didn't specifically say, these are our ground rules, and this is how we want to be treated within the group. But it kind of was like unsaid sort of rule and I thought, if I had a problem within the group which I didn't it was a lovely little group to work in I felt really comfortable to talk to them, and I think, maybe creatively and in terms of everything else and where we had different skills and sort of different ways of looking at how we were making the content, it felt we're all on the same page. And I think that helped in terms of like when it came to feeling valued and equal and appreciated because we I don't know, it was very unsaid, but it felt like it was there.

Ana Baeza Ruiz [11:54.540]: yeah sometimes I think these things is difficult to explain, and also it's part of the feeling that you have, I think, in that situation, it's not something that can be rationally explained. But anyway, I think you've given some clues there as to those sort of tacitly greed ways of being with each other, which I think is you know it's important to think about and. I'm going to move on to a different set of topics which are more about how this project sits within the wider world of work and during the weeks of the project there's been a number of guest speakers from different institutions that you've had access to. How well do you think this worked as a way of bringing different perspectives?

Andy [12:39.450]: I really liked it, especially because, I'll be honest, when the job popped up I'd never considered any kind of work within like museums sector or anything. And I just saw that it was social media content creation, and that was what I was interested in, I thought you know what, I think I can I can give it a go it's kind of along my interests and stuff. And I think then having that insight into all these different opinions that came from sort of different places and hearing people talk, quite honestly, and quite openly, about their careers. And how it wasn't something that they considered and sort of was really interesting and really insightful. Because it's nice to hear, especially because obviously everything's changed quite a lot in the past couple years and that it's nice to hear that people are still like making these career paths and not being afraid. So a couple of them, I can't remember specifically but a couple of them said how they had a completely different degree to what they ended up doing but it's still something they enjoy and they feel passionate about. And how each of them had sort of such a different view on how we use social media because it's such a massive thing that I mean everyone is involved in social media, so it's such like a broad topic to have that kind of like that bit of knowledge about it was really, really interesting.

Ana Baeza Ruiz [14:06.030]: That all of this is very positive, is there anything that of how these perspectives were platformed in the project that you would have done differently? or Maybe you don't, so you know this is…

Andy [14:23.820]: No, I think I do, I found…I mean obviously it would have been nice maybe to speak to the people, ourselves, but I know logistically that can't always be worked out, but I think that's, the only thing that I can think of that I could feel feedback…

Ana Baeza Ruiz [14:45.600]: Okay, so the idea behind any kind of work experience project like the one that you've just been part of is to in some ways, increase your knowledge about the world of work, to enhance

your confidence in thinking about applying for jobs, you still some way away from doing so, or perhaps you are actually I don't know, maybe are already part time so I don't know how much you're thinking about this now, but do you have some comments on how well this aspect of the project has worked for you?

Andy [15:18.720]: It's definitely, obviously, as you said, things like this are designed to build confidence and skills and that goes without saying, but I think it's how we look at the skills. I think, often sort of, and I know I struggle with it personally, and this is something that I think has been brought to the front of my mind when we did in the last session. We did the closing presentation about what we've learnt and stuff you find yourself talking as a team, and how we did this as a team, and we did that as a team, or we learned how to use this. And I think it's really important obviously that is amazing how people work in teams, but to also say how you did it personally. And I think the project has really brought that to the front of my mind and how I need to make sure that when I'm talking about my skills I'm saying this is what I did within the team as well, it's skills that I know. And I think I am probably going to be off applying for jobs, like but it's definitely sort of like given a bit more of a boost, my confidence in myself and the experience I've got, which is obviously very important with this kind of work.

Ana Baeza Ruiz [16:27.060]: That's really great to hear that this project has worked like that for you and, and I think with this we're moving on to the final question, which is that MoDA might want to run similar projects like this next year or in future years, so this is, this is a two part question: the first one is, would you recommend this to your friends why yeah, so why not, and the second part of the question is, are there any changes that you might suggest?

Andy []16:57.570]: Yes, I would recommend it. I think it's been overall, it wasn't…I think it was a little bit not what I expected it to be. But I wasn't quite sure what I was expecting either, but I know when I started, I was like oh it's a little bit different, like the way things worked, obviously everywhere works differently. Because I did a similar project at my own university as a student Ambassador. And I thought it might run similar but it didn't and I think that was quite a nice surprise. But overall it's been such a really comfortable and sort of welcoming environment to be a part of, especially not coming from Middlesex university. Because that made me nervous, because obviously I don't go to the university, I was like 'is this going to be weird for me?', but I found it really comfortable and that's really important to me, and I think just based off that I would recommend it and bit in terms of [17:49.050] the second part of question about any improvements or anything, I think I really I can't think of any to be honest, because I found it really like clear week by week and all the information on Teams so easy for everyone to access. If there was anything like if I was unsure on what was happening like next week in the project like, if I wanted to know what was happening in a play that's our next month or anything, it was really nice to see all the statistics and analytics from Instagram and then everything we were doing. So I don't think I could think of anything that I would recommend to improve it, because it was I really enjoyed the project.

Ana Baeza Ruiz [18:38.460]: Well that's great I mean that's great feedback. Okay, well, we do have a couple more minutes we have we've run through all the questions, but we have time if there's anything that you'd like to add that you feel you haven't had a chance to share yet about any aspect of the project.

Andy [19:02.640]: No, I think, I mean I really enjoyed it and it's been a really nice experience working with new people and working in something that I hadn't thought of working in before and just the sort of everything I've learned and take away from it it's been no just that it's been a really nice experience, I've really enjoyed it.

Ana Baeza Ruiz [19:23.190]: Alright well thanks so much Andy and that's yeah that's brilliant to hear that it's been such a positive experience. I'm going to stop the recording now.