<u>**Transcript: Art Fund Interview with Rowan**</u>
Speakers:
Ana Baeza Ruiz
Rowan (pseudonym)

Ana Baeza Ruiz [00:07.259]: Rowan, thank you very much for joining on this in this interview today, in which we're going to be discussing some of the aspects of the project that you've been doing it MoDA. And I come here is an external interviewer so the purpose of this interview is to ask you to reflect on your experience in taking part of the project as a whole and I'm hoping that the fact that I'm external to it means that you feel you can be honest and frank about your reflections. There aren't good answers or bad answers, here it's just about what your experience has been in this project, so the various subjects we're going to touch on: around your participation, the learning that you've been developing in the course of the project, communication within the project and then some aspects about the external guests speakers that have been taking part and also how this project relates to the wider world of work outside of university.
Okay so just to start with a very simple, quite straightforward question is, how would you describe your participation in the project?

Rowan [01:14.190]: It's been very interesting, it's been challenging because, obviously it was a new setting, whatever is new to me it's going to be challenging because I have to adapt to a new situation. But it's been very interesting also, not a stressful environment, so there was time to kind of adapt to the briefs and to the group members and like kind of get to know each other, a little bit to get the project going… and yeah then yeah I like the fact that it felt a bit in between learning and working.

Ana Baeza Ruiz [01:59.640]: Excellent, and I think this leads on to the next question quite well, which is about what you've learnt in this project, so if you could list, this can be specific things, it can be skills. What do you feel this project has given you as a learner?

Rowan [02:15.690]: yeah so, I had a good basis of like digital skills, because of the course I do. But still, it was obviously an opportunity to put those into practice in a bit of a more working environment. And so I learnt like on a very like technical basis, I learnt to ideate content, discuss it with the group, to kind of come to a conclusion together and schedule, post it, design it. I had never used really Canva collaboratively so that was an extra thing that my course hadn't taught me, so that was good. Then also and we learned like about meeting people from the industry kind of it gave me a bit of a wider look to like what kind of like what you can do with digital media in the arts and culture sector, I think, because in my course it's very, very like they tell us like what how we can apply your skills on like various different fields but it's never been like so kind of narrowed down to arts and culture, which I think would be something that I would be interested, and end up in one day. [03:42.780] And then also like soft skills like communication and time management. The people that I worked with I didn't know obviously, before starting, which was good, because it just teaches you something that maybe university can only teach you, to a certain point, because after a few years you're probably going to end up working with the same people and there's not that sense of novelty... It was good to kind of be confronted with people with different like academic backgrounds and even different personalities, different like ways of working. And yeah time management like just fitting in this project with other projects.

Ana Baeza Ruiz [04:38.580]: That's really useful to hear, I wonder if there's any specific examples that stand out around, some of the group dynamics or some of the skills that you've picked up in that sense.

Rowan [04:52.440]: yeah so, for example, the content that my group and I created was kind of infographic carousels, which is a format that I've seen on Instagram throughout like always it's very popular, but it was kind of good to put into practice actually doing the research, narrowing down the research, then also designing but kind of keeping in mind that I wasn't in designing for myself, but I was designing for an institution, so I had to kind of match the brand that they already have. And also the fact that I was designing my content alongside my group members, because they were designing their own content, so there kind of had to be that kind of back and forth, to see whether the content was coherent stylistically, even if, like the tone of the copy was the same. [05:53.730] Yeah and then, as far as like team dynamics, I think, just that, first, obviously, you have to kind of understand where we are all, on which level we all find ourselves in at the moment, so like in terms of digital skills in terms or just research skills in general. So someone has to kind of break the ice at the beginning, but yeah it ran smoothly after the first session.

Ana Baeza Ruiz [06:22.410]: Great and maybe we can explore this a little bit more, which leads to my third question, which is around communication within the team. What are your thoughts on the way in which everyone communicated and collaborated during the project, you might want to comment on your group on, things that you observed in other groups on the project leaders. This is an open space, but around those key themes of collaboration and communication within the team.

Rowan [06:48.720]: Yes, obviously, because it was online, all the communication with online. So within the group we had to choose one kind of main media because, Teams didn't work for everyone, I myself wasn't really familiar with teams, so we kind of went to a more familiar one, Whatsapp. I mean at times like it, I there have been like a few times, where I felt like maybe there could have been more communication within the group, like when we have to post things. Maybe, sometimes I felt like we could have like there wasn't as much organization as I wished there was. But then in the end the content was created and posted on time, so the end result was good. [07:45.240] And in my communication with the project leaders like obviously because we had weekly meetings, whatever got lost like during the week could be picked on again during the weekly session. The fact that it was on Teams for me always meant that it was a bit outside of my normal communication range, because there really are used other platforms, but MoDA had kind of like its own platform and a few times. Maybe during the week I would remember like that I would have to like actively go and teams to see whether there was any update. Apart from that, it just in ran smoothly, most of the time. I never felt like I didn't know what I was doing, I mean at first it was a bit… [08:39.840] I needed a little bit of an extra explanation about the actual project, like to what degree we were free to create the content. I think I needed a stricter brief, but then I realized that it wasn't necessary that we could kind of do however we liked, say create as much content as we wanted, schedule it for as many days of the week as we wanted, because it was kind of in our hands to then reflect on the choices that we made. But once that was made clear then kind of the second and third iteration that we did was just very much more smooth.

Ana Baeza Ruiz [09:25.140]: I think yeah that covers a lot of ground and think it leads to thinking about this, the model, the broader model of the project, which is linked to the let's get real model of experimenting, of trying things. How would you explain this model of working and experimenting that was used in the project, how did you find it and what do you think you'll take away from it?

Rowan [09:51.450]: At first was a bit I thought it was a bit limiting in a way, even though, one the one side I realized that we could do a bit of anything on the other, we kind of had to really take each variable very seriously in order to be able to say what worked and what not, I felt like at first, I was a bit not resistant, because obviously I worked with it, but I was I needed some time to realize the actual the function that this the structure had because it is more because, like in my general knowledge of like social media marketing and social media content there are different variables that go into creating

a post and creating content…you're going to have hashtags you're going to have design, you can have different type types of promotion. But in this specific strategy we had to choose one variable, hashtags for example, and then see what that would bring. So after the first iteration it became much clearer, because we were actually able to build on kind of previous analytics. And obviously we understood that the less variables, the easier would have been to reflect on each change in our content and so yeah and the other just made sense. It helped me to understand like how [11:38.220] analytics actually work because it's not something that I've really ever used, because I don't use it personally and for other projects that have done it was never really the point. Whereas I felt like here the core of the project was to kind of look at analytics, interpret them and make use of them in a like in a useful way, so in a way that makes, informs future choices.

Ana Baeza Ruiz [12:11.400]: Right so that's interesting that the model became clear to you as you were in the process, at the beginning it was not, it's interesting familiarizing yourself with that process. In that sense there is a more individual question about your work and your contribution to the project, whether it was in the form of feedback input, your contribution, how do you feel all of these were values and incorporating the project, and can you give one or more examples about that. So this is about your input, how do you view your input and your contributions were incorporated and valued in the project, and this could also be feedback say around how the model was working

Rowan [13:14.190]: Yeah I thought I was involved in all of the steps of the process, like both in like inside of my group, like we really split the work, the work equally and made sure they be heard every point of view, but then there was never like any contrast, and we all kind of agreed on the choices that we made. And then also like because obviously the way it would work is that we would decide and then we're kind of we're kind of had to like pitch an idea. And even from the project leaders is always been like they always shown to be interested in our point of view, like, even though there was all this kind of strict way to work, they still valued are in my point of view and there was a lot of like what I appreciated was that there was a lot of like kind of group work in individual rooms and then kind of feeding back into the main room and like explaining with feedback, so I thought that was like a good system to kind of keep the conversation going and so that the project leaders would always know what we're about to do, and why we do it and yeah....

Ana Baeza Ruiz [14:43.410]: Excellent so we're going to move on to a slightly different set of questions that lead more to this connection between the project and industry. And the first question I wanted to ask you is around guest speakers, there's been a number of guest speakers that have come from different institutions and have been involved in giving (I think it's been) mostly remote talks that you've then been able to watch. And how do you think this worked and as a way of bringing those different perspectives, did you find that input useful? Or, is there something that you also feel that could have been done differently, and maybe we can go with one question at a time so maybe that's, the first question to really think about is how do you think it worked bring these different perspectives for the teams and for you individually?

Rowan [15:35.190]: Yeah, so as I was saying before I thought it was really useful that all these speakers came from the same sector, the arts and culture sector, because obviously this experience for us like provides an experience that it's that we can directly like show as part of our portfolio if we wanted to join that environment and yeah it was it was good, also to know, because, especially digital media there's so many hidden jobs that people don't necessarily know about. And I personally always like to just know about what people do, for what kind of organization they might work, what kind of actual… like it was good to have that insight and what kind of things they actually do, and how they use social media for these kind of institutions.

Ana Baeza Ruiz [16:39.840]: So this is all really positive, do you think there's anything about the input that you received from these guest speakers that could have been done differently?

Rowan [16:50.520]: I mean, obviously, like everything was online, and I know why because, obviously, we were meant to be split into two groups. But probably would have been nice to like meet someone in not in person, but like virtually during a call because that can kind of form a bit of a bond like obviously we can still like connect with them on LinkedIn. But to kind of be able to like ask a few questions, maybe have a bit of a chat of some sort to kind of know bit more in depth, even though normally to talks with a quite covered quite a few things. Yeah I think that would be the only negative aspect.

Ana Baeza Ruiz [17:35.730]: Great, so I will say that the bringing of people from industry as you've said yourself, is around putting you in touch with that other world of industry and the world, the world of work that you might be going into soon when you finish your studies. So there is this idea in the project of increasing your knowledge of the world of work of enhancing your confidence when thinking about applying for jobs, do you have comments on in this respect, on how this aspect of the project has worked for you. You've touched on a few things already, but if you'd like to either say anything else or to summarize, that would be great.

Rowan [18:21.000]: Yeah, I think, in general, at the end of this, I can say that this is a valuable experience that I can put on my CV but also like talk about in a potential interview because whether that interview, because I will most likely end up working in digital marketing or something similar. So this experience will be valuable anyways. I kind of lost the thread…

Ana Baeza Ruiz [18:58.800]: Don't worry, you can just stop and start again.

Rowan [19:02.040]: OK so again, the question was in like an overall thought in general…?

Ana Baeza Ruiz [19:06.330]: yeah just some your thoughts on how this aspect of the project around giving you preparing you for future work and future apartment.

Rowan [19:14.940]: Yeah yeah, so I do think that this was a valuable experience and, like in terms of like I can put this on my CV and in my portfolio and like I can talk about this, like in potential interview, because most necessarily I will be ending up working in this field, in the digital medium, digital marketing, even if it's not necessarily the for the arts and culture. But I think that yeah I did like in some respects it still felt like it was a project kind of as part of my university degree, so it didn't feel 100% like a working environment which is not a bad thing, I think it was kind of a good in between experience. But I think I did gain, like every new project that I took on with university just gave me confidence. [20:13.680] Just gave me the opportunity to meet other people expand my network, because in the end, both the project leaders and the other group members of the project are people that can be potentially be in my professional network. And then yeah in general, like just yes, that mixture of soft skills and hard skills that I think every experience is valuable, but especially this one, and especially because of my can future aspirations I think I can definitely take a few elements from this.

Ana Baeza Ruiz [21:00.990]: yeah and I guess that there are skills that you've referred to earlier in the conversation that would be specifically useful for the sort of sector that you are interested to go into right, so some of those soft skills is that what you were referring to when you were saying these soft skills that you've gained…
Okay, great well I think let's just finished with them with a more general question which is for MoDA museum to consider the project on the whole, and how they might make changes in the future. So this

question really is about, if MoDA was to run a similar project next year or years to come, would you recommend it to your friends who are students as well, and if what if, yes, why or why not? And are there any changes that you would suggest?

Rowan [21:53.250]: I would definitely recommend it as a project. One thing that I think it would be worth maybe changing is …so right now we all worked in different groups and each group did their own like independent work. But realistically for an Instagram page, content has to be quite coherent the start, stylistically, tone of voice, type of content, so maybe to kind of have a bit of a more interactivity between each small group, because I think it was nice to work with a smaller group rather than seven of the people, but to have a bit more kind of insight and what other people are doing so that the end result is a bit more coherent.

Ana Baeza Ruiz [22:51.450]: Okay, great that's fantastic, thank you very much Rowan it's great to hear that the project has been useful for you in so many different ways and I'm going to stop the recording now unless there's anything else that you'd like to add.

Rowan [23:08.250]: No I'm okay for now.

Ana Baeza Ruiz [23:11.400]: I'll stop it.