

James Lake Online Talk Transcript

28 July 2021

Jennifer Gilbert: I'm Jennifer from the Jennifer Lauren Gallery, and I'm here today with James Lake. This is James' first proper live artists talk, and we're doing this today, as part of some funding that he received from Arts Council England to develop his practice, and his artwork, and lots of other things, he will tell you later on. Just to touch a little on James before he starts speaking. He is an Exeter based Sculptor who works with cardboard for its immediacy of availability and low environmental impact, and his disability and dyslexia influence his choice of material, and how he makes his sculptures. And this piece on the screen that we can see right now says James Lake sculpture. James you recently made this for your website as your kind of branding, didn't you?

James Lake: Yes, this logo has a number of different types of experimental cardboard processes, and I kind of wanted to show all the different ways that I work with the material of cardboard.

Jennifer: Perfect. So, our first question relates to this image we can see on the screen right now, which has a figure in the centre of it, leaning on what looks like a wire could be cardboard wire wheel. A big circular wheel with a full size figure standing on it, resting on a platform with a very bright wall behind it. So James, if we touch upon your studies, can you tell us about the kind of work that you produced on your BA in fine art?

James: Just to say my BA started at Wimbledon school, and then I transferred for family reasons to Plymouth University. And I tried when I was there to work with lots of different kinds of processes, and I think it was the early days for access for disabled people and degree courses. I had a few problems accessing kind of various things like metalwork and woodwork. So, having tried all these different processes I returned to cardboard and the figure actually inside the wheel is made from cardboard and paper. And this sculpture is called 'every man' and this is what I produced as my final degree piece, and it was kind of designed to be me. I don't know if you can see in the picture, there's a pressure pad, which is actually located under a mat in front of the sculpture. So, when you stand on this crash pad, the rocker kind of gently moves backwards and forwards and the wheel kind of gently moves from left to right, with a figure inside. And I kind of felt like that was a comment on the kind of fast pace of modern life and essentially, I think I also really wanted to see if I can make the biggest piece of sculpture for my degree show. I very much like that there's a very bright dark red wall behind this figure which has a tissue paper quality to it, so I kind of really wanted it to kind of stand out. It's a really nice piece of work.

Jennifer: It's amazing and until we were doing this talk I've never even seen this piece before so I was quite astonished when I saw it. And then after your degree did you stick with art or did you move into something else?

James: I was very fortunate that one of the students on my degree gave me the, the contact details of artists first and I began to kind of work with them. I worked with them regularly over a number of years and found them to be a brilliant arts organisation. And I think what was great was they kind of opened me up to the possibility of strength in disability art, in, in all its different forms, and I learned an awful lot through that process. I worked with them on a project, it was a hand project, and it was called Reflections of ourselves. And it was a collaborative project working with a number of different kinds of schools in Bristol, and we ended up making three giant hands. I realised that this was where my heart kind of lay at that point. And so, after my degree, I kind of worked a lot in community arts, and I worked in hospitals, kind of ran workshops in mental health settings, and also with learning disability groups, and this was very convenient because I did this at the same time as having a young family. I needed to pay the bills. I also didn't have a studio or place to work, that came later. I also studied in post 16 teacher training but I found the disability, and also my level of dyslexia difficult. Although I passed the course, it felt like one step too far so I didn't actually pursue that as a career, instead I went into working in schools. And I worked in schools as a workshop artist, which gave me all the fun of kind of making bits of art and bits of sculpture but less of the paperwork. So that's the route I took.

Jennifer: And just for anyone that might not know, artists first is an organisation that works with learning disabled artists in Bristol. So let's tackle the obvious question first. Why do you work in cardboard?

James: Well, actually this sculpture that you can see in front of you is a sculpture of my dad, and I started making this piece of sculpture before my degree course. And it was just in a room for long periods of time, kind of gathering dust hopefully not too many spiders, and after my degree because I kind of left the environment of university, I kind of wanted to kind of keep making art. In a way, I kind of returned to cardboard, just because it had all the qualities I liked before, which I can really enjoy and kind of really valued. Cardboard is lightweight and it was low cost. It was non studio based, because remember I didn't have a studio at the time. You didn't need any special equipment, and I could make it in small sections. I found also that there was a low environmental impact and I kind of like that. At the time, even though I hadn't really developed the idea that my using cardboard was a environmentally kind of effective way to kind of make sculpture, I mean that came later. And I use this process a lot, and I was very fortunate when I moved house, and a garage became available, so a workspace became available, and that's where I make a lot of my work now.

Jennifer: So this piece we can see on screen now is called sitting without purpose, and as you said it's your dad sitting in a very comfy looking armchair, made out of cardboard, wearing a pair of glasses leaning against his hand on the side of the sofa. And this is like you said quite an early piece for you but it's lots of people know you for this artwork. So exactly what was it about and where, where would be able to see it now?

James: I do think this is still kind of one of my strongest pieces of work now. This piece of work was made prior to being in education, and it's kind of made when I was in my early 20s and I was still living at home. It's a sculpture about my father, and you can see in his eyes, it's about him being in a position where he was about to be made redundant. And I was looking at kind of how he was feeling, and there was something about that kind of resonated with me. And I felt I was able to kind of catch, kind of how he was feeling and I think to some degree, I was also feeling in a very similar position myself. I was also stuck at home as I was attempting to try to get an artificial leg to help me with my mobility but it was unsuccessful. And I kind of felt I was a bit stuck in life. So I think together we were both stuck in this kind of situation so I was basically stuck at home and he was stuck by his employment options. And there was some kind of shared influences in the strength of the piece. And I think I kind of captured the kind of the emotions really well. So, this means this work actually has a long history. I made it, and then it went into kind of various rooms and went into storage and into galleries and then it finally emerged. I was kind of very lucky to have the support of Tony Heaton at the time when he was working at Holton Lee, and he was able to take the work and kind of look after it, which was great for me because I knew my work, but just on its own was just going to end up being damaged or damp or kind of filled with spiders, I suppose. After this, it eventually made its way to shape arts, and then it became part of the NDACA, which is the national disability arts collection and archive, which I'm kind of very pleased and kind of proud about. It's very nice to have this record memory of my dad actually, and it's now on show at the Bucks New University which is great to have this piece of work that's there.

Jennifer: And that's where the NDACA collection is housed actually. For anyone that is interested, they can google the NDACA collection. So James here's you sitting in your garden on the floor, very glamorous. So how exactly do you go from an idea that you might have on a piece of paper to the finished product. Can you talk us through how this comes about?

James: Well, first of all I'd like to say that that floor was very, very cold. I think that was the end of October time, and I think the weather was starting to change. I'm kind of sitting on a camping mat. It was not the greatest experience of my life kind of working in the garden. Yeah, so how does my work come to be? Well, I start off with small drawings and I like to work on A4 computer paper. I've done this through my whole artistic career and even as a student. I'm not great with high quality kind of paper, and sketchbooks. I like to be able to work on something that was kind of cheap and throw away. I normally make a sketch which is not the greatest

sketch in the world, it's just really for me to use, and then I take the sketch of the idea and I normally kind of produce a large scale template that is very, very thin but that I can kind of cut quite easily with scissors, and that gives me an idea of size and shape that for the object or the person that you kind of want to make. And once I have this template. I then kind of start using corrugated cardboard, which is kind of slightly harder to cut as it has an extra layer of durability and especially when you want to kind of make your work stand it up. It needs to have a bit more strength. So, I take these templates, and then I kind of build on to them with other sections until I get a cross section which gives me an indication of the form itself and possibly the rounded aspects of the piece that I'm going to make, so that it stops being a flat piece. I really like making and kind of working with small templates and small forms as well because I think it's really, really important to me and it kind of makes the process a lot easier when I work with small sections, because I'm able to kind of be more flexible. I can change what I'm doing, depending on kind of on how I feel, or what I see, or from what I read, so it can be spontaneous, I know cardboard doesn't have a reputation for being spontaneous, but you can change it quite easily.

Jennifer: And I've just dropped into the chat box a link to a post you've done on disability arts online that has one of your drawings. And why is it important for you to work with a theme or with an idea in mind for your artwork?

James: I'm very lucky to kind of get commissions I have to say I do like the idea that I could follow somebody else's ideas and themes. That kind of takes the stress out of the process and can be basic security both financially and conceptually when you're following somebody else's idea. But when I make my own work that's got to be slightly different. So, I do start with an idea but not ever really tightly focused on my work. My work tends to change or even come into focus a bit like a camera might come into focus when it's taking the picture, and the work is normally kind of provoked by that emotional response that I'm hearing, and then this becomes sort of an investigation into something I've seen or read or I've heard. I tend to give my work kind of simple titles because I don't have all the answers at that point. I don't know where it is going and simple titles seem to suit me quite well. And it also kind of gives me space to kind of change the nature of what I'm doing, so it might start off as something and then changes its whole kind of conceptual direction by the end.

Jennifer: Definitely. With your larger pieces that we've seen pictures of, on average, how long would that take you from start to finish to kind of put together?

James: If we look at the cardboard Butler that I made for hotel gotham, which is this picture you can see here now. This was kind of made over six weeks. Now, that seems like a long time, but normally I do have to do other work alongside commissioned work so I normally have ongoing kind of engagements with other different types of projects too. And the work that I do

kind of fits in and around that. Now with my cardboard technique, kind of over the years I have got a lot quicker in kind of manipulating cardboard and finding shortcuts for the work that I do. I think also it's kind of fair to say that because I'm in my kind of mid to late 40s now, and I've kind of, I've been moving around on one leg for quite some considerable amount of time, I think my disability, to some degree is starting to catch up with me. Where I'm kind of making gains in some areas, I'm kind of slowing down in others, so I'd like to say kind of six weeks is a good time to say I could make a sculpture, but equally I could probably make the working in four weeks, or just under four weeks as I did with the work you'll see what when I went to Italy, to make some sculpture.

Jennifer: And for anyone that needs it the piece that we have on the screen now. As James said is a butler, made out of cardboard with a towel, and he's got a walking stick. Yeah, holding a tray with a jug on it.

James: Yeah, supposed to be like a silver coffee jug of some kind.

Jennifer: Perfect. So you speak very openly about being dyslexic, and the work that you build. When you build your work, you piece it all together like a jigsaw, so can you tell us more about how that relates to your dyslexia because you've told me before and it was quite an interesting way of working?

James: So I actually kind of told my mum about this kind of aspect because she had kind of grown up with supporting me with dyslexia, my kind of whole life and she didn't realize that it was a part of my sculpture process but I'd like to say that I'm kind of making sculpture, and it's very similar to the way that I write. So I make work, or I write in terms of kind of fragments of ideas and these fragments get pieced together into a whole. And it is just quite a disjointed way to make sculpture. But I like the fact that I can edit things and correct them, as I go. It's similar to say a page of text for a Dyslexic mind. All the facts in the content are there but you have to kind of make changes to get the order right and make the work as efficient and as effective as possible. I kind of found that this way of working really did suit me down to the ground, so it wasn't just the dyslexia thing. It was also the fact that I'm just kind of working with small pieces and it kind of suited that the way that I kind of needed to work, because I do kind of work sat on the floor. It's kind of important that I can kind of move the work around me, rather than me having to move around to work but it's also kind of worth pointing out whether I make physical sculpture - I have looked at an anatomy books to work out proportions. I find it very, very difficult to retain all that information in its entirety, so I am focusing on kind of one piece at a time, and it allows me to gradually assemble the information I need, and then I piece it together and make the adjustments and then it becomes the sculpture that you see before you.

Jennifer: Definitely. It's nice to read in the chat that Miss Nettleton said she's had her work exhibited alongside your cardboard dad and she said it really was good too. So now we can see two pictures on screen from when you were part of the Lucca Biennale and on the left is a photo with you on your crutches, kind of delving inside the body of a very large sculpture, lying on the ground, and to the right is the finished piece. So the question that we're going to ask is, this was your piece from the Lucca Biennale in 2018. And how did that come about and what did you do for it?

James: So the story to this piece of work was. I was actually coming home from six weeks of school workshops and I was working in a local secondary school. I was working with students that weren't engaging with education and we had a really good run of making all sorts of kind of amazing things in cardboard from faces to animals and things like that, and I like had this email, kind of unexpectedly, and, and it was from a place called Lucca that I hadn't heard about before. And they were obviously kind of interested in me being part of their paper sculpting festival. There's one on at the moment. And to be completely honest, I thought it was a scam email. I'd been just working in schools and community art workshops for many years, and I really stopped thinking about the country and the wider art world. And I sent them an email kind of checking that this was a real thing, and it was, to my surprise, so a few weeks later I took a train to London and I met some of the organizers who were there, doing some, some other types of work and kind of fundraising. Yeah, so I met the director and I brought with me, a maquette, which was about just over a foot in size which was based on that year's kind of theme - chaos and silence. I came up with this idea because at the time I was again sitting on the floor of my garage. And I don't know whether you can all remember in 2018, we had a lot of snow, especially in the southwest, we had kind of snowstorms and it was very high. I think we had about two foot snow and it was very cold, and so I'm sitting on the floor in my garage and I was doing preparation for a community workshop, Actually I was going to be working with a scouts group about a month later and I thought well I had a bit of spare time I'm doing this now. And it kind of occurred to me that there was something kind of slightly absurd, and unusual about me sitting on this cold garage floor. It was white and it was snowing outside, and I was surrounded by all these pieces of cardboard, and they're these cutouts of cardboard giraffes and I thought well this is me and this is what I do. So this is kind of what I made. I kind of I tried to make a six-metre cardboard self portrait of myself engaged in making cardboard giraffes. There's also cardboard, a glue gun and there's cobbled masking tape there kind of down near the leg of the sculpture. And there was even a cardboard craft knife. I kind of went into all that type of detail. But it was just kind of an amazing experience and I think you can kind of see in the photographs with the sculpture, I had worked in a very large environment, but it had to fit through a small doorway, so it had to come apart in two sections. So one of the photographs is of the top section with my sculpture lying on its back, and I'm just reinforcing the hand section to kind of make sure that it all kind of stayed together on its journey on the lorry to the town square where it was exhibited.

Jennifer: Great. It does look incredible when you see it and Susan said that she loved seeing it in situ in the chat box which is amazing. And I believe that you were the only disabled artists there that you're aware of so what was the experience like for you as a disabled artist? I think we're just switching interpreters

James: So the experience was, I was the only disabled person that I saw when I was in the environment of Lucca, which is a medieval city in near the city of Pisa, which is up in the mountains, a beautiful looking place. But my experience. Well, I'm just kind of very lucky in that the organization paid for my travel, they made sure that I had ground floor accommodation, and prior to the event I'd had a film crew come over and actually filmed me working in my garage and also on my journey into working in secondary schools, and they were kind of with me so they actually kind of made sure that I got onto the plane, and, you know, kind of got to where I needed to go, so that was absolutely kind of brilliant, so I kind of felt kind of quite comfortable with that. I think my experience with kind of being disabled, I found, because 2018 was very hot. And I got off the plane in Italy, and it was about five or six degrees hotter, at least, the temperature continued to rise, and I do think I kind of lost at least a stone, going over for the four weeks that I was there, which I was kind of really pleased about but that was just out kind of how hot it was. And yeah, so kind of working as a disabled person, I think it was a very hard thing to do, kind of, physically, and I do think I was working at my absolute kind of limits of endurance. It was a very hard thing to kind of see, but it was kind of quite a unique experience too. So I don't think they had anybody else with a disability, and I've never tried to make a sculpture of this size, so nobody knew whether it was going to succeed or fail, I had no idea really right up to last week and that was kind of quite nerve wracking. But it. I kind of found also that working the way that I did, I wasn't able to kind of work at the same speed as everyone else so I kind of had to adapt and I ended up kind of taking small sections of the work that I was doing away with me to kind of work in my Ground Floor, Apartment. And that was kind of really good because I was kind of continuing kind of what I knew, but it also meant I could keep up to the speed of the other artists that are who were all able bodied. I just felt very sorry for the people who were living in my apartment block, because they all came many nights kind of to three o'clock in the morning, where I'd be cutting out pieces of cardboard. Yeah, it must have sounded like there was a six foot rats kind of living in the apartment. But yeah nobody complained, they're all kind of really nice.

Jennifer: That's good to hear but it sounds like it was a lot of extra stress and work outside of the time within the warehouse?

James: very much so. I mean some days, I work an entire day, I would come back at six or seven o'clock in the evening. Have a break for an hour, and then probably work till about midnight, but quite often I'd get up at four o'clock in the morning and do a number of hours

before I went back to the studio, and it was just kind of what I had to do, to get the work done but yeah, it was, it felt like a once in a lifetime opportunity, so I felt that I had to just give it everything I had, and see what happens.

Jennifer: Yeah. And as you said, you had the film crew come to your house and then and then they filmed you when they were there and they made a film called Paperman which made its debut at Manchester International Film Festival this year. This piece we can see on screen now is of your mom, and it's from the front view and from the back view of an older lady standing with her right arm in the air, and some words come out off the top of that onto brown paper and again, the whole piece is made out of cardboard. So James, I thought I'd asked you about the Arts Council funding that you got late last year, and what you've been using that for? I know that this piece was made within that timeframe as well.

James: I was kind of very lucky that I got to make that in the past year. Yeah, I was kind of very pleased with that. I think it's got a nice relationship to the sculpture of my dad, and the sculpture of my mom is, is her holding a pencil and she's writing into the sky, the words, time paths remains unseen. I think this was really important. I wanted to make a really strong sculpture of her and kind of celebrate her life, her achievements, but also kind of present a complete kind of picture of her with her all the ups and downs and the tribulations of life and actually inside the sculpture, you can kind of see that there's a cutout section which actually has a lighthouse, which kind of, you can see from inside, which has compression waves, and that there's lots of really nice kind of metaphors there to do with lighthouses kind of protecting you from crashing into the rocks and my mum, for many years, was a successful worker at a Family Centre. So I was kind of very pleased actually with the Arts Council funding, that I was able to focus on the things that I wanted to do. But the overarching kind of aims of the Arts Council funding were to actually to kind of improve me, essentially kind of try and turn me from a garage artist into an artist that could potentially kind of work in other kinds of settings and show work in other spaces. So, there was a professional development large kind of aspect to that. I've kind of been learning about skills, I've been learning about social media and kind of awareness of kind of how I write and kind of what I present. I've been doing a lot of this with support from Jennifer, I know there's had lots of notes and kind of very awkward emails from me over the past six to eight months but it seems to be going in the right direction now. And I've also had things, like I had mentoring from people like Tony Heaton, I've started writing a blog for disability arts online. So, alongside the developments in kind of promoting myself and kind of making work I've looked at ways that I can improve my website so I'd encourage you all to have a look at the website, if you can in the next kind of few days, because I think it's improved an awful lot. I've been looking at ways that I can kind of develop the things that I do in terms of workshop packs I've been looking about how can disseminate my artistic process and turn it into something that I can share and turn into a commodity, in terms of something that people could potentially kind of use or kind of buy into. So, these are all kind of important

aspects in terms of making my work kind of viable kind of long term. And so it's been a really good project to be involved in.

Jennifer: Great I've put your link to your website into the chat box. This is a very close up shot of one of your pieces of your son actually so people can see how you build up the layers of cardboard on his face. So I thought we'd finally end on the question as to what's next for you as an artist?

James: This piece kind of shows all the processes that I use within my work – the pattern and the flow and the identity of the work. I think it's something I've kind of been developing over a number of years. But I think what's next for me as an artist, obviously I can have these big hopes to increase my visibility kind of further. I need to use this experience to promote opportunities and generate opportunities for myself to make art. And now you can kind of see the work in a more kind of professionally presented way, I hope I can find new audiences for the work, and kind of gain chances to show the work in a variety of exhibition spaces. So, I have this kind of going, alongside my other potential opportunities. I might be working with libraries unlimited which is a libraries organisation, to build something that will not only be a sculptural object, but will also have access and operators within, that can be used for navigating the library, and also kind of help with building a community. And I'm working with another organisation here in Exeter called burn the curtain. So I'm going to make some work for them. I'm also working with another group called Eco Arts on some project - I've got a very busy summer. But I think what I'm kind of interested in is taking unusual opportunities that come my way. So, although I couldn't do it this time I was approached by Netflix in the last few weeks to try and build a 25 foot cardboard head. Now, I wasn't really in a position to take that opportunity as fully as I would have liked but those are things that I hope still come and that I can undertake in the future.

Jennifer: It was a very quick turnaround they wanted for Netflix wasn't it and they were kind of like we kind of need it now, but also you need to ship it over so there's even less time! But you're always open to those opportunities in the future!

Caroline's just popped in the chat box that she's loved your work ever since she saw it at Holton Lee, and she's happy to hear more about your work and that your art practice is going from strength to strength, which is lovely to read. If anyone wants to pop any questions in the chat, please do. I've spotted one from Andrew, that says, I'd like to ask James about reflections of ourselves, and his thoughts at that time on the materials durability and your thoughts on it now?

James: I very much like the idea that, essentially, cardboard, isn't material but if you put it outside it's not waterproof, it will be affected by the rain. So it has this kind of aspect to it where

it may not be durable in the same way that other materials like resins, or stone, possibly might be, but there's also the idea that, with cardboard and paper sculptures, if you look after it, and kind of take care of it, it can last a lifetime. So, some of you may not be aware that the sculpture that you saw of my dad in the armchair sitting without purpose is over 20 years old and it's still kind of going, I'm sure it might be a little bit on the dusty side, but it's the idea that the materials can be preserved. It's just kind of how you kind of choose to treat them, so I really did like the idea that the cobbled hands were made in that process, but also, you know potentially in the future, with a project like that maybe you could cast it in something more permanent but I think it was important with that project reflections of ourselves because it was about Artists first kind of demonstrating and teaching their skills to the school children and the working together. Those were the kind of important aspects of that project and I think it kind of bought together and kind of broke down barriers between different groups that never ordinarily mixed. I was proud to be part of it.

Jennifer: Great. Susan said that you're such an important artist in this contemporary world, which is lovely to read, what are the artists of these times inspire you?

James: Well, I'm not quite sure kind of where to start. I think there are a number of kind of different artists I do kind of respect a lot, who are doing well in the disability arts field. I think this is kind of really important when we kind of look at disability arts we can think about kind of groups of artists now that get the opportunity to kind of have work in mainstream exhibitions and those are the types of artists that I think are making the cutting edge kind of artwork. I mean I was very fortunate enough to work with kind of lots of different artists over the years and I learnt lots of skills. I think the kind of art that pushes boundaries and kind of breaks down the current divisions, kind of, between different types of people and connects people is good. It is the type of work that I would like to kind of be a part of, And, you know, who interests me most.

Jennifer: You very diplomatically did not name any artists, James. Maybe we should do a bit of bragging on your part, because you don't talk about it enough, in 2012 you got to work with the sculptor, Richard Wilson, the Royal academician on a project called Gold Run the remix installation that was shown around the country, what was it like working alongside someone like Richard on that project?

James: I think what's kind of amazing when you work with somebody like Richard is you realise not only is he exceptionally skilled and an important kind of figurehead of contemporary art, he was also a really nice person. I think he was kind of down to earth and he was the type of person that you could talk to, you know, in any kind of environment, and I think those are the people that are absolutely amazing. I think people that are kind of testing the waters and testing current boundaries as he does with his work all the time, do kind of influence you on

many, many levels, and I was, I was very lucky. Richard was taking his life in his hands and walking up the tallest ladder you could ever possibly imagine to kind of to attach a piece of wood into a 20 foot kind of running track that was kind of shooting off into the sky and I wasn't sure whether he had the insurance to do that. But people put themselves out for you in that way. And, you know, have that kind of generosity. And yeah, kindness really so I was just very fortunate to kind of be in his presence but I also kind of felt that if you're genuine, anything is possible and he opened art up for everyone.

Jennifer: Definitely. Tony (Heaton), I wonder if you could jump on the screen. Tony has been a big champion of James' work for a long time, and is from shape arts, and obviously has been mentoring, James and I wondered if you could tell us, Tony, What, why you like James' work so much?

Tony: Hi, Jennifer, I don't know if you can hear me. You took me by surprise. I was quietly watching the movie and listening to James. You're absolutely right. I've loved this work for well for years, actually I can't even imagine how many years ago. But when I saw sitting without purpose, I was absolutely moved by it. James talked a little bit earlier about the sort of pathos in his father's face. You know that expression for anybody that has not seen the work you know when you do look at it close up like that you can see, that sense of sitting without purpose. It's a fantastic piece of work. James is right when I was at Holton Lee I was the director there. And at the end of the exhibition. I said, do you want to come and pick up this piece of James, and I mean, my memory is not brilliant but he said something like, I haven't really got room for it Tony just throw it in a skip. I couldn't believe it. You know, I said to the staff. This guy he's mad, he just said throw it in the skip. There's no way we're throwing it in the skip. So me and Caroline talked about it and we put sitting without purpose in the conservatory next to my office in a farmhouse. It was almost like a work in situ, you know this this guy was sat in the conservatory looking out the window, and it used to freak people out in the winter if, if it was darkish in there,.They'd be like oh I'm really sorry to disturb you and they speak to the sculpture. The postman used to throw the mail very disrespectfully into your dad's lap, and it was a great talking piece. And I was delighted when, when we acquired it for the NDACA - the National Disability art collection and archive. As James said, it in the new university bucks at High Wycombe if anybody wants to see it for real up there, and I'm really proud that it is in the collection. And I think James is really modest about his work as actually his work's fantastic. I think he's one of those iconic, you know, disabled sculptors disabled artists, who's now got a long track record of making really interesting work. And I did think, you know what he always would you always be making work in cardboard. One of the questions I sort of said to him, are you going to make work in other materials but I think it's okay that you know to say, No, I'm really concentrating on this material. That's what I'm doing. And the other thing I just wanted to say is that for what a fantastic opportunity to work with Richard as well, and Richard Wilson who is a bit like James actually. I think he's one of the greatest British sculptors alive now.

Richard Wilson, if anybody's not familiar with his work, you really need to go and see it too. But again, he's so under the radar and such a brilliant artist and James was working with him. I just thought what a great, great combination. But I've been really proud to know James over the years and. And it's not been difficult to get enthusiastic and promote his work really so you're so good on you, James. Don't be as modest, you know, talk your work up man.

James: Thanks Tony.

Tony: And I'm glad you're doing this, this is great and I'm glad you're doing this, Jennifer, putting spotlights on artists like legends is a really great thing to do.

Jennifer: Thank you. So we've come to the end of our time and James I wondered if you had any final thoughts you'd like to leave everyone with.

James: Wow. I haven't actually given this one kind of much thought, but I would like to say that I very much hope that that anybody who's come in looking at the work that I've made, you can see how I adapted the process and how I work with my disability, to make it possible, and achievable. I'd like that to be kind of a good kind of end point really. I'd like for those of you that would like to kind of make art and not thought about making sculpture because possibly sculpture is too complicated. A thing to do, you could actually start making something simple with cardboard, masking tape and kind of see where it goes.

Jennifer: Definitely, Well thanks for that James. And thanks to the interpreters Siobhan and Alex today. And thanks to the Arts Council, as always for funding this and allowing the journey for James to progress and see himself as more of an artist. Thank you everyone for coming today. Have a wonderful evening and thank you for coming.

James: Thank you very much. Bye everyone.