

Transcript - Platform Graduate Award: Starting out as an artist in 2021
Thursday 28 October 2021, 6.30pm

Kate Mahony: Hello, everyone. Thank you for joining us this evening. And welcome to *Platform Graduate Award: Starting out as an artist 2021*. First of all, the Platform Graduate Award 2021 is a series of three solo exhibitions by selected BFA graduates from the University of Reading, Oxford Brookes University, and the Ruskin School of Art, University of Oxford. Here, we're going to be in conversation with our Platform awardees. We've got Fetine Sel Tuzel, Bevan Hill, Will Griffiths, and Beth Simcock, who have all recently graduated, and have just exhibited at Modern Art Oxford.

We're going to use this Q&A to discuss what it is like to be an early career artist in 2021, and graduating from art school. This should be hopefully be helpful for art school graduates, people just about to graduate, non art school graduates and early career artists as well. So we're going to be talking about what's it like to be an early career artist, and also find out their plans for the future.

So I'm just going to kind of give you a little bit of history about the Award. For those of you that may not know, the Platform Award is led by the Contemporary Visual Arts Network South East (CVAN), showcasing emerging talent in the region. Platform enables emerging artist talent to further their practice and to exhibit within an arts organisation. This year, the award was supported by four gallery partners. We've got Aspex in Portsmouth, MK Gallery in Milton Keynes, Modern Art Oxford, and the Phoenix Art Space in Brighton, and the selected artists have exhibitions at each venue this autumn.

I'm your host for tonight, my name is Kate Mahony. I am an artist and Fine Art lecturer at Oxford Brookes University. And I also work as an Associate Artist at Modern Art Oxford. I've also run the City as Studio programme with Creative Learning for the past three years. This evening should work by... all of the audience are totally welcome to use the chat function. So write in any kind of questions that are coming up, any discussions that you want to kind of pursue later on in the conversation. My guess is the Q&A is going to be roughly about 1 hour/45 minutes, then we'll allow for some space for the audience to ask some questions. I'm going to let the artists introduce themselves a little bit more, and their work properly. So first, I've got Fetine Sel Tuzel who graduated from Reading University with the exhibition *places and faces*, in 2021. So Fetine would you like to share your screen please?

Fetine Sel Tuzel: Yeah. So hi, I'm Fetine Sel Tuzel and my piece, *places and faces* is a two-channel video installation. It is a psychogeographic exploration of cities and people. I am fascinated by the connection between people and open spaces. So my practice mainly considers psychogeography and

the question of how do different places make us feel and behave? My practice tends to observe and question how these experiences in open spaces can be so similar, yet so unique to one another. And the conflict in Cyprus has been an enormous impact of my life, which is why I always find myself turning back to this historical issue. I am presenting this two-channel video installation, and the intention behind it was to be able to show the juxtapositions, the contrast and the harmony of urban spaces, and how an individual or a stranger feels and behaves in different environments.

Kate Mahony: Thank you so much for attending. And I look forward to kind of picking your brains a bit later on. So next, we have got with us, Bevan and Will who are an artist duo from Oxford Brookes University, so Bevin Hill and Will Griffiths and their exhibition *Real Art for Real People*. Would you like to share your screen and just tell us a little bit about your work?

Will Griffiths: Yeah, no problem. Yeah, so our project is, well, as you said, Kate, it's *Real Art for Real People*. It's basically a body of AI-generated work. And the ideas we deal with, a sort of like a re-evaluation of what it means to make art and what it means to be an artist. So using artificial intelligence, we've sort of offloaded the creative process to an AI in sort of a reversal of a lot of contemporary art makers processes, where they'd give their work to assistants to materially realise the work. And so we essentially use the AI to generate concepts and designs, and then the only role we have in that process is the material realisation of it. So yeah, that's, that's basically like, where we're coming from.

Bevan Hill: I think that's part of it, as well as sort of what it is to be an artist in the contemporary situation amidst a lot of technological developments, like artificial intelligence, which can have the potential to supplant human creativity and the thought process that goes into making art.

Will Griffiths: Yeah, it's basically just that, like it is dealing with what it means to make art in today's environment, you know, like, taking ourselves out of that situation, and our only role in the process being the open material realisation of these works.

Bevan Hill: And the contemporary situation in terms of the business side of the art world, because obviously, we're flipping it on its head in terms of how most artists operate. And in doing so it's sort of

like a reevaluation of the importance of engaging with materials as well, because we've created a scenario in which that's our only measurable contribution to the finished work.

Will Griffiths: Yeah. Yeah, that is a small slideshow.

Kate Mahony: Thank you so much. Yeah, I'll be looking forward to kind of talking ready-mades and the digital sphere and the physical sphere later on in our Q&A. And lastly, but not least, we've got Beth Simcock from the Ruskin School of Art, University of Oxford and her exhibition that is still currently on at Modern Art Oxford, called *The Zodiac*. So, Beth, would you like share your screen?

Beth Simcock: I'm Beth and I just graduated from the Ruskin, and my exhibition, *The Zodiac* is, as you said, Kate, on until the thirty-first of October. And for this Platform exhibition, I presented a large painting installation, which is titled *The Zodiac* itself. And the installation occupies the far wall of the gallery space, as you can see here, and it's made up of 12 individual canvases that measure one metre 15 each square. So the total installation measures just under seven metres, and about 2.3 metres high. And serendipitously happens to fit really beautifully into this space, like just comes up just to the beam there. And each canvas in the installation corresponds to a sign in the astrological calendar. And it begins with Aries in the top left corner there and goes clockwise in a cycle from there. But the painting installation also, obviously, has this more linear narrative structure that goes from left to right, as well as each canvas holding its own internal logic that corresponds to those set of beliefs. And the exhibition also features a QR code on the wall that I worked on with Modern Art Oxford to write a Horoscope for their blog that can be accessed from the space if you scan this little QR here. And that's just on the right beside the painting.

Kate Mahony: Thank you, Beth. And I love how like you're still kind of like, one foot still in the digital space, and then one in the physical. And I think that there are a few, quite a few overlapping concerns within all of your exhibitions that I really would like to maybe pull apart a little bit further in our conversation. There is this relationship between these in-between states, whether it is the relationship with the audience and the viewer, and these kind of accidental videos and associations that come with these two, kind of two-channel video works, or the relationship between the physical and the digital. And I really want to, I guess this will kind of start moving into my first question really, about how you've had to kind of tackle the last year, and how did it feel to be selected for the award? And how did you feel about your last year of study with the upheaval of lockdown and the pandemic and going

from face-to-face to online to face-to-face again? And you know, how was that informed and infiltrated into your choice of what you wanted to show for the Platform Award? I guess I'm going to start maybe with an order and then I might rejig it. So, you know, Fetine would you like to start?

Fetine Sel Tuzel: Yeah, I am so pleased as it is a great experience to have my first solo exhibition in Modern Art Oxford. It also felt amazing to have this opportunity right after graduating, it really motivated me a lot for what will happen after graduating, and my last year of the of course has been affected from the lockdown and pandemic. I have missed our studios a lot and seeing people, getting constant feedback as well as chatting. So trying to create this in our homes was a bit of a struggle but I think it kind of prepares us for the real world as well.

Kate Mahony: Yeah, definitely. And did you always work in moving image or did moving image start coming through in the final year?

Fetine Sel Tuzel: Yeah, it kind of came after I guess I was working with drawings and paintings first and then I felt like I had experience and I was good at it. So I thought like, in my last year as well I thought like it was the practical way of sharing my ideas, capturing the moment, it was the right medium to share my thoughts I guess.

Kate Mahony: Yeah, and there's also this kind of allowing the moving image to kind of allow chance kind of occurrences to start to unfold, and more associations and rhythms to kind of come in and move out and, and I guess thinking a little bit about chance makes me kind of move straight on to Bevan Will, what is your kind of take on the pandemic, getting the Award, etc.?

Will Griffiths: Definitely, I feel like especially initially, like when it first happened, I think we were in second year, second semester or something, it really did like impact it because we were in separate locations as well. Especially because we're a duo, we make artwork together, it was really difficult in that sense. But I feel like you know when it started opening up a little bit and we were able to like come back together again. The work that we've sort of created is really like a response to that situation. Because in a sense removing ourselves from the creative process in the way that we have is like a byproduct of the detachment we felt from like, you know...

Bevan Hill: ... being removed from the studio environment.

Will Griffiths: being removed from the studio environment and stuff so, I feel like it negatively impacted us at first but we've adjusted and I feel like it's a very timely piece because of, you know, everything opening up a bit. The idea of re-engaging with materials and creating stuff together again. It was really, it's been really good to be fair. And in terms of being selected for the Platform Award obviously it's been like a complete honour, we didn't expect it at all and it's really benefitted us working with the gallery, the technical team, with the social media side, just working with Andy and Scott, and Sarah Mossop, as well like in terms of the actual curation of space. It's been invaluable experience. But yeah, we were really happy with where we are at the moment.

Kate Mahony: Excellent. And like, I'm going to ask a bit of a nosy question. But how as an artist duo, did you find when you were in lockdown, what were your main modes of communication and collaboration?

Will Griffiths: Yeah, so I imagine, I'd say and when it when it first happened, it was really difficult because we were separates. So like, our main mode of communication was just like text and Facebook, like, we were basically just communicating over text. So the work we were making was very different to what we had planned originally, because we started this semester, and we were making these installations together. And then when it all kicked off, we were completely separate, and we were making very different work to what we usually do. So yeah, it affected it, quite drastically, in a sense, in that in that way. But then also, when we got together again, like it's double the urge to just start engaging and making with materials again. So we were both just like, yes, go on, let's properly like engage with, you know, painting and stuff, stuff that we hadn't even really done that much of before. Like, in our time at university, it made us realise the stuff that we'd been missing from our practice quite a lot.

Bevan Hill: And when we were housebound, effectively we, I think we gravitate towards digital media, because it's sort of what you have at your convenience. We didn't really have a lot of space to work as well. So I think that as Will said, when, when we started that, that semester, the first semester of the second year, when the first lockdown happened, we had been making installations that were, you know, we plan to fill whole rooms and things like that, but it's just the app, the access to the space that was limited, and, obviously materials and things like that we saw gravitated towards digital media,

because yeah, it's sort of easier to do when you're just in your house. And I think that that's fed into *Real Art for Real People* as well, because obviously, that sort of was affected by that in the first half of our third year.

Will Griffiths: So there was like a duality, there wasn't the fact that we were forced to sort of experiment with digital media. But then as well, when we eventually got together we were...

Bevan Hill: I think, at first, it took us, it caught us off guard, and we had to adapt to it. But I think by the time it happened, again, with *Real Art for Real People*, we kind of like took control of it and used it to our advantage. Yeah, and we sort of poked fun at that situation as well, by creating the scenario where everything is generated by technology. So we sort of tried to use it to our advantage in that sense. And then when things reopened, we were just really eager to, you know, just explore materials again, and just kind of get back in touch with it all.

Kate Mahony: I think it's quite interesting in a sense that the pandemic is almost, lockdown kind of gave you an extra collaborator, in a sense of that with the internet, you were like, okay, we've just gained another, another artist in the sense. It's a really nice kind of way to utilise and bounce back from these new restrictions that you guys really work with. And, Beth, I would like to hear, what are your thoughts?

Beth Simcock: On the pandemic? Well, there's definitely, of course, an element of what the others have mentioned, definitely at first, it was almost like a survival mode type situation, where you're suddenly without the studio and then having to find new and inventive ways to make work. But I found for me, actually, that once I got over that initial kind of shock of maybe not having like technicians at my disposal, etc., that in some ways, it really pushed, change and pushed my practice. And I would joke sort of that I was going into my artists garret, because I had to work outside in the garden. And in the winter months, that meant gloves, coat and going outside, but there is something about that. That strangely worked. And from that I started to go much bigger too. Because I thought if I'm learning to make stretches by myself, I might as well go for the bigger size. And then I think when I finally got back into the studios, that was when I started working on the *Zodiac* piece, and I took that attitude with me very much and was like, what can I do with this space? And in the studio that I had, not what I was given, but I ended up taking down some walls and putting some beams up to support the work. I was in this like mezzanine space in the studio. And we were literally going with, originally, I wanted

them to be 120 squared, 1 metre 20. But one of the technicians pointed out to me that if I just shaved five centimetres off, they would just fit in floor to ceiling. So it was really like, I think it taught me in some ways to make the most of what was there. And then in terms of the Platform Award, like the others have said, it's been really, really amazing. Like in this point of my career, of our careers, to have people take your work really seriously. And like very actively engage with it across like all the platforms as well, with the Digital team and Creative Learning, in sending emails to Holly several times, like in the evening, I just had like an idea. Like really great, just to be like listened to and supported in that way. And then it really alleviated that, like void that came right after finishing university and wondering what I was going to do next to have like, a big project like this, to focus towards, was really great. And I really like that. I know that not all of the Platform, award partner galleries, do exhibitions as solo shows, I think that's particular to Modern Art Oxford, maybe one or two others, if I'm right. So that's also been the amazing opportunity too.

Kate Mahony: Excellent, and what I think is quite interesting is what I love the snugness of like, how the paintings fit in space. And it's quite funny to think that, you know, in the pandemic, and lockdown, I noticed quite a lot of artists, you know, made their work a lot smaller, because maybe it was in response to the space they then had to work in, you know, so working tabletop or on their laptops, but you know, you just thought I'm going to go bigger. Which I think is, I think is really great that it kind of really influenced your attitude into kind of how to respond to site. And to kind of really push it back, you know, and play with scale and have that confidence, as well.

So I'm going to kind of I guess this starts to kind of segue into my next question, which is really, and I think some of you guys like started to say something and I was like oh no, no, that's the next question... So how did your final degree show work? How does it differ from your Platform exhibition? Maybe it didn't differ at all? Maybe it's completely different. And also, it might be really good to tell the audience because I know, because I asked earlier, you know, what was your kind of exhibition experience for your final degree show? Because I realised like, I know, for instance Oxford Brookes had a physical show, but it was, it was close to the public. So and I know, every different art school had a different idea. So if you could, you know, tell everyone that too, that'd be really good. So I'm going to start I'm going to the other way. So I want to go Beth first. Just to, uh, you know, shake it up. Beth, um, how did the work kind of change from your final degree show? Or did it at all?

Beth Simcock: Um, well, I remember I think this is like one of the first questions that I asked Bevan and Will and Fetine, when I met them in person first was like, did you guys get to have a degree show? And at the Ruskin, I know that we had a digital show, and they told us very early on with the institution

that it was going to be online, which I think also, in relation to your earlier question, Kate, it changed. I think that was almost the intention was that knowing that the end result, if you want to think about the degree show that way, would be online, maybe changed the way that people thought about how they were making work. And for that show, I did upload a kind of flattened digital version of my *Zodiac* piece. But alongside that, my graduate class also put out two books that we published, of artists work, bios and this section at the back that we included for responses. So each person was assigned another artist in our year whose work they had to write, or make, or do something in response to, and record that for the publication. And I was very heavily involved with that. So that was something that I really enjoyed. And something that I think we wouldn't necessarily or definitely, almost definitely wouldn't have done, had it not been for these particular circumstances.

And a group of us also exhibited at Unit 1 Gallery in London, they put out an open call for graduates to submit a degree show. And so I think there are about 17 of us that took part in that exhibition, and I put in a different piece for that. It was when I just started working on the *Zodiac* canvases. I was like, there's no way I'm going to have seven metres worth of painting, ready for this show that's in two, three weeks time, and people are going to hate me if I take up the entire gallery. So I made another piece, which was this, these double-sided paintings like this, that you could walk around and they were on a stand. But I actually think that doing that work was also really useful when I was thinking about the *Zodiac* and other work that I've made since, because it was all to do with like, the painting as prop and a 3D object, something in space, that could be modular. And then working with, yeah, a painting that was lots of paintings seemed like a natural progression from that. So that's my long answer.

Kate Mahony: Nice. Well, no, I can definitely see this whole kind of expanded form of painting and questioning even what is you know, what is painting in 2021? And by inviting the viewer not only just to maybe walk around it from other work, but also then to like, scan the code and, you know, and actually interact with it on a deeper level and start to unpack some of the images from the work as well. I mean, oh wait, I mean, this and that, and starting to have these conversations that may be, you know, in a usual gallery situation we don't always talk about - I wish we did! – horoscopes, ideas, technologies, you know, we should have more of that really. Excellent, very good answer. They're brilliant. So now we've got Bevan and Will, hello.

Bevan Hill: Well, so, yeah. Okay. As you said, obviously, Oxford Brookes did have a degree show, but it was closed to the public. So I mean, we were really grateful to still have a degree show because I know that the previous year had to submit online, which would have been really tough. So we were quite thankful for that gap year we took in the end . But yeah, the difference really, between the

degree show and Platform exhibition was just I think, it's sort of credit to the technical team as well for helping us to just take the presentation to the next level. And I think they deserve a really big hand as well, because obviously, they were stretched to the limit with the Anish Kapoor exhibition, especially when they were setting up our work. So I think it was really, really great of them, because they managed to book in all the time for us that we needed, and it was like, really professional on their behalf. So that was great. And I think also, the difference is just that it's just really great to be exhibiting in a professional context, as well, as opposed to the university context. And there are certain elements of our work particularly like we, we had the book that goes alongside the exhibition, with essays that we wrote on the work under fake pseudonyms, of fake critics. And it's elements like that, that we tied into the social media aspect. So things like words, in a new way, in the professional context, sort of lended a new dimension to the work because obviously, when you have the context of an established art institution that sort of has more gravity really. Like when you're doing something like that, so I feel like it's sort of that kind of little playfulness that we tried to put into it sort of came off better in that sense, I think because out a bit more like authority to it.

Will Griffiths: But, and also just the work in general, like assessing the value of these, like digital images that we've like translated into, like a physical, you know, like big 1.5 minutes square oil paintings, like having them placed in that setting really poses the question a lot harder than it would like in a university setting. Because, you know, you're asking the public whether this art is deemed worthy of you know, standing on the walls of an established gallery, you know, with Anish Kapoor in the main gallery, then like us down below, you know, it's really interesting, that relationship.

Bevan Hill: The transition from the university context to the professional, I'd say, yeah. And I think that MAO were obviously really, and the Platform initiative, as well, I think it's just like a really great springboard for transitioning through that, you know, going from being a student to transitioning into like, a professional setting, I think it is really great how it does help you to make that leap, and it makes it seem sort of more within arm's reach than, than it does as you leave university, I think. So yeah, it's been really great.

Kate Mahony: Oh, excellent. I mean, I'm so pleased the work got to be in the public realm, because your work really does need to be activated by the public. It's almost like another missing piece, but almost another collaborator in a sense, you know, quite greedy. With the online and the public. So, yeah, no, and I could definitely see like, how it needed people to kind of walk around and really ruminate with it and add to it and, you know, watch the videos, and the sculptures all interact as well.

So, yeah, it's definitely like it needed that puzzle piece, really that activation of putting it in that live space. So yeah, very good. Very good answer. Excellent. And Fetine, hello Fetine. And what is your, you know, did anything change? What was your experience of showing your final degree show?

Fetine Sel Tuzel: Yeah. So, I am so glad that we had the chance to have a degree show. We didn't have a graduation event, but it really became a closure for us. We also had a live streaming event, but the fact that we had the chance to invite our friends and family to the degree show was a good end. And in terms of my piece, I have exhibited my piece almost exactly the same way in our degree show actually. And the space I have exhibited my piece during the degree show was our AV room. So that space was a lot darker than the Creative Space at Modern Art Oxford, but I think both spaces gave the audience the experience to observe *places and faces* closer.

Kate Mahony: Yeah, definitely. And your work got to be exhibited at the same time as the opening of Anish Kapoor, so it was really lovely to kind of see people kind of entering and exiting the space and really kind of taking time to see those, connect those kind of visual connections, those sound connections, that were kind of happening between the two places, and how nature kind of interacts with architecture and vice versa. Really, I think, you know, it's a really successful piece. And yeah, again, it needed that kind of activation of people to sit there. And I really enjoyed watching people like, pointing and being like, oh wait, yeah, it's like this - kind of starting to kind of kind of emerge from the work as well. So it just needs that extra puzzle piece, doesn't it?

Fetine Sel Tuzel: Yeah, and it was an eight minute long video. So some people ended up drawing some of the scenes as well on the feedback books. So it was all really interesting.

Kate Mahony: Excellent. So it's already starting to kind of feed back into you know, maybe potential, you know, new lights drawing works next. Nice one, guys. Okay, well, I guess then this is going to kind of flow into, so what have you learned from exhibiting to the public within an arts organisation? So, you know, like you've all said, it's a massive achievement, and to be able to show at Modern Art Oxford and probably such a massive learning experience. So I'd really love to like kind of pick your brains and hear how collaborating with the Modern Art Oxford team and all of their wide range of expertise, how has that impacted your practice and your thinking? And how does it feel to experience show your work on that kind of platform as well. So I'm going to kind of just, you know, start in the

middle now, just to kind of, you know, keep you on your toes, Bevan and Will, do you have any thoughts, what was it like to kind of show on that scale?

Will Griffiths: It was, it was brilliant. It was like, it really bridged the gap from, I think we said it in the previous question as well, you know, it bridged the gap between like a university and a professional setting quite a lot like, more so than obviously we've ever experienced. But like working with those the digital side of it with Cecilia and Andrée as well. And they didn't phenomenal job of posting our work on their stories and that on, like, official posts and stuff...

Bevan Hill: ...and from what we sent as well, you could tell that they really understood exactly what we were trying to do. Yeah, definitely. Yeah, 100%, from the summaries that they wrote, and things, were really impressed.

Will Griffiths: It was very much like a back and forth of just like, figuring out what the best thing would be for our work. Yeah. But then also with Andy and Scot and Sarah. Showing the work in a different space is like quite a big thing as well. Obviously, regardless of what the work actually is, to make sure that the lighting and subtle things like that, are like, you know, on the button, it was, it was amazing, like, they were very knowledgeable. And it was, it was really interesting to, you know, gain that experience, but also, I feel like taking that forward. In terms of our practice, and how that's impacted our practice, I think that we're a lot more aware now of, I think if we were to make new work, we'd think a lot more about how it was to be presented in a public setting, because I feel like at university, you know, you do think about that, and how it's going to be received by people. But when you see people walking around, like discussing your work and stuff, it really like, it's been like a really important...

Bevan Hill: It makes you consider the audience a lot more as well. And I'd say as well, it's, as Beth said, I think that the MAO team as well, were, I think the most important part of it really is just that they take it really seriously. You know, it's like, at university, it feels like a bit of a trial run, in a sense. And then because, you know, you feel like you can make mistakes, it's a learning curve. And I think the great thing about MAO is that it eases you into that professional setting, because they're really serious about your work and how it's going to be presented. And I think that that's really good.

Will Griffiths: Yeah, and also just seeing Fetine and Beth's work as well, in in the same space, like it makes you like very aware of, of like, how different types of work can be presented in a space, like, you get taught this stuff at university, but it's very different actually seeing it firsthand, like manifest in a gallery setting.

Kate Mahony: Yeah, definitely, you have to kind of go through that element of like, translation into the actual gallery space. And, and in the sense, when you come out of university, and you start kind of collaborating with, with galleries, it really is that that kind of to and fro, it's not just I've got an idea, and here's the room, off I go, it's very much about, okay, how can I be responsive to the site, you know, how can the work or the concepts be refined, so it's in line with maybe the ideas of the institution, or in line with other shows that are happening, or any kind of threads of thought. So you start to kind of have conversations with the curators, and, you know, and they might help you frame the work in a different way that maybe a lecturer or one of your peers might do that as well. So I mean, it's a massive achievement, to be showing at that level already. And also, I wonder, because you work so much with the digital realm, and you did find maybe more collaborators within working with Modern Art Oxford as well. Did you utilise Modern Art Oxford's platforms or online platforms at all, Instagram and any of those kind of things, as well to kind of advertise the work?

Will Griffiths: I feel like one of the main things that really fit with the piece, because obviously we had those essays in the book that we presented under like fake pseudonyms, but it really brought like a new dynamic to the piece having the essays published on the online platform. I feel like it made it a lot more open in that sense, you know, because you don't actually have to go to the exhibition to read about the work and stuff, you can find out more about it in this online platform. And it's also quite funny in that sense as well, because it's like this dichotomy between the digital and the real again, like, we've fabricated these art critics and been quite self reflective on our own work. But having it in the digital as well really, I feel like it plays into it even more to be fair, in quite a funny way. It's quite playful in that sense. And I think that's what was really great is that I feel like the digital team, Cecilia and Andrée, they really understood that from the get-go, they knew exactly what our intentions were, and they really brought it to the fore, and it just looked great. We were so happy with that happening.

Bevan Hill: And it helped to augment the work as well, it was something that, because obviously, at university the sort of, I guess it's like the marketing side of it as well, the social media tie in, and everything, like that is something that you don't even think about when you're at university, because you're obviously not, you know, presenting it to the public. But that's part of the transition into the

professional setting is the experience with that. And I think that doing that definitely augmented the work because it's an extra element. And as you said, people that can't make it to the physical exhibition, there's still something there. And it's also, obviously, even if you did make it to the exhibition, it's something to sort of look at, at home as well. And it's just like supplementary material really, it's really good.

Will Griffiths: Especially because it's the type of, I think it's the type of work where you'd have to, yeah, sort of sit with it for a bit. But yeah, no, it's been great, though. Like, it's helped us see our own work in a new light, which is, I think that's the most important thing, you know, taking forward. We've really like, seen, there's developments that we've gauged from what we've done at Modern Art Oxford, that will take our practice in a new direction. It's been, it's been really good.

Kate Mahony: Excellent. And I love the way that you know, how you've kind of created this, like self generating artwork that it kind of, like, it starts to absorb and eat and kind of like, produce more and more and more, and how like, you're using even just the platforms that you show in now you're starting to kind of engulf their ways of working, or their ways of showing, or the institution, you know, and you kind of spit that out again, so it's like, *The Machine!*

Will Griffiths: I think honestly, more so than the actual objects that we've shown, the process is the key really, like you could show the work a million times under the same name, and it would just be like different, you know, everything, like the most important thing is just that, the process of unloading everything onto this AI.

Bevan Hill: That's what we always said as well really, the products of the artificial intelligence are kind of throw away because you could just generate another one. We accidentally deleted a couple of the paintings, but we just generated more. It sort of doesn't matter because it's the process and the implications of doing it that's really what's significant.

Kate Mahony: Brilliant, you've made a framework so you're just going keep like taking it to the next place. Next. Fetine, I would love to hear your thoughts on your experience of showing at Modern Art Oxford and what was gained and learned from that experience.

Fetine Sel Tuzel: I have learned a lot as this was my first proper exhibition within an arts organisation. Exhibiting at Modern Art Oxford gave me the perfect experience of seeing how everything goes in a more professional way with all the procedures, contracts and everything. And Modern Art Oxford's team was really lovely and helpful throughout the whole exhibition. We have got to see and experience how things work from an inside point of view as well. And in terms of my piece, the team had small suggestions from an arts organisation point of view, I guess, which really improved the work in a detailed way. And I am also happy that I met Beth, Bevan and Will as well. I love their art. So yeah, it really felt amazing to see and exhibit my piece in the gallery, so yeah, I am so pleased.

Kate Mahony: Were there any particular things that maybe you had to tweak? Or, you know, like maybe putting things on a continuous loop or...?

Fetine Sel Tuzel: Yeah, the continuous loop was a bit hard thing to do. So they had to reset the projectors every hour, I guess.

Kate Mahony: Did they? Yeah, the realities of moving image. Takes work I love that idea that it requires a human. That's brilliant. And Beth, how about you?

Beth Simcock: Um, yeah, I mean, I would echo what the others have said, too. I think for me, a real learning curve was just like how many elements that are to that process, like things that I hadn't really conceived of even before. Were almost every exhibition that I've taken part in in the past has been handing over a wet painting, you know, letting someone find a place for it on the wall somewhere. So to then have my eyes opened to that whole process, and how much goes into scheduling a show in an exhibition like this, even having an opportunity to talk to some of the curators about their wider programming and how those shows are planned years in advance even. Yeah, it came down to technical things too, like with the installation. I remember coming in after the paintings had been put up on the wall. And it was to have a conversation about lighting and where the signs would go, the captions. I sort of, I came in, and the paintings were up and I was like amazing, looks great. Without realising that, you know, that's not even half the process yet. And how much something like the kind of lighting used just changed the whole atmosphere of the piece, like Bevan and Will were saying about how the space is transformed between the different artworks that it held but also like, on

another level, like with the with the same artwork, how much can be done to completely shift that atmosphere. And it's so subtle. Yeah, and that was something that I hadn't fully appreciated before. And also, as I said, like the digital team are wonderful too.

Kate Mahony: That's excellent. I love how you mentioned how, like working with the curators or talking to the Creative Learning team. I think what can be so valuable about working with an art institution is just starting to really demystify, you know, how these things work within, like, who makes the decisions, you know, how do things get put together? And you're totally right, Beth, it is quite mind blowing that some of these shows are put together years in advance. So it's just trying to think about how, you know, can you start kind of maybe aligning yourself with, you know, galleries or events or things to apply for in the future that you're starting to kind of, that you have to start kind of planning ahead as well. No, that's so that's so brilliant, a really, really great insight there. So really, now I kind of want to know is, so knowing everything that you know now, from exhibiting your work through the Platform Award, what advice would you give to any upcoming graduates or early career artists who want to present their work now? You know, what would your kind of key advice be to young artists? Fetine, would you like to go first?

Fetine Sel Tuzel: I guess I would suggest to them to be confident of their work while working on it. And while presenting it. I mean, trusting yourself and your art is a big step. You should like your own art before anyone else, I guess. I think that was my first step. I really, I was really confident. I was like, I am proud of my work, so I guess, yeah.

Kate Mahony: I love that. Yeah. Like, you know, you've got to like it! And that sometimes can be a real struggle.

Fetine Sel Tuzel: At first I really hated it. Like, while working on it, I was like, I don't really want this piece to be a boring piece, because I have worked with a lot, because I have been on my laptop like, hours and hours. And I was like, this is a boring video. And I was like, I need to stop thinking like this. So I was like, Okay, I like my video.

Kate Mahony: How long did it take for you to kind of complete the whole edit? Because I guess, did you have to go back to Cyprus to get the footage? Or how did that work?

Fetine Sel Tuzel: Um, like, I had a big archive. So like, over the year, I shot a lot of videos, and some of the footage is from the last summer and some of the footage, I asked my parents to go to that place and film the place. So footage, like filming wise it was for over a year, I guess. And then editing wise, I have edited everything over a month. Because while editing you realise some mistakes or like you need some more shots in between, or writing the text, so I guess, editing wise, it was a month.

Kate Mahony: Excellent. Very good. Very good advice. So like your work and get your parents to get involved?

Fetine Sel Tuzel: Yeah.

Kate Mahony: Sound advice! Bevan and Will, any kind of advice for young graduates, budding artists, early career?

Bevan Hill: I think we'd say the same as Fetine as well, I think that it's important to stand by your own ideas and to just follow it through, because I think that that was part of the learning curve that we went on in our third year, which was just I think that, you know, early on in university, I think that it's normal to turn to your tutors quite a lot and to, well, that's part of it and learning what they think. But I think that part of it in your third year, what happened for us anyway, was that we started to trust in our own decisions without having to, like double check them.

Will Griffiths: And enjoy it.

Bevan Hill: Yeah. And we just thought, you know, we normally, we just, we know that this is right. So we'll do it. And we started to just trust in ourselves. And I think that that's like, quite crucial. And I think that I'd say for young artists that are trying to present their work, then I'd say just do whatever you can

to engage in the local art scene as well, because I think it's really good to get connected with people around you. And, you know, if there's one thing that we've learned from the last 18 months or so it's that sitting in your bedroom isn't going to get you very far, you've got to reconnect, and you've got a sort of drive to get in tune with people in your local area. And I think that's part of the great thing about Platform as well like meeting Fetine and Beth. And hopefully, we'll stay in touch as we progress in our careers.

Will Griffiths: Yeah, and also being in Oxford as well like, and having this opportunity, that's like something that's been really good for us. Because, you know, as Bevan said, it is all about just engaging with your local community, basically. And there's a lot to be gained out of that. And I feel like we were both a little bit naive to that, before we got this opportunity, really, because we didn't really expect it, like we did sort of apply for it, you know, off the advice of our tutors. But, before that, we didn't really know what the next step was. But I think it's easy to underestimate how valuable it is to really engage with the opportunities that are thrown your way, and to really believe in yourself.

Bevan Hill: To be proactive and to seek out these opportunities as well. Because, you know, it doesn't always come knocking on your doorstep, you've kind of got to find what's out there and take it.

Will Griffiths: And if you believe in yourself, other people will believe in you.

Kate Mahony: Exactly, that's very good advice. I love that. So like kind of, you know, trust yourself. And yeah, engage in your community or find your people ultimately, because, you know, it's going to be recent graduates and your peers that are you know, you're all out in the world now. So, you know, if things don't happen straight away, and you're applying for things, make things happen as well. Start, you know, find spaces to exhibit and you know, let people know over social media, and spread the word, and you know, go and see other people's work and have those exchanges.

Will Griffiths: I remember when we were in second year, we had a professional practice module, and you did a lecture as well Kate. And that's the thing that like, I remember it was just about because I remember you were saying that you were in London and you were doing your band stuff with random

sheds. And, and I remember you said like, on the performance pieces. Yeah. Yeah, the most important thing is to just really engage and create these, like new collectives with other artists.

Bevan Hill: Stay in touch with people in your cohort or university as well, I'd say. Yeah, definitely. Because you can all help each other along, I think, you know, we did sort of keep ourselves to ourselves a lot. But I feel like, we probably would have gained more from sort of interacting with people a bit.

Will Griffiths: It's partly the pandemic.

Bevan Hill: Yeah, it's good to get out there and just try to help each other along as well.

Kate Mahony: Excellent. Oh, I'm so pleased. You remember that? And, yeah, just to give I guess, anyone some context. I when I left my BA, a million years ago, in 2012 from Goldsmiths University, I started up a Garrage in Bethnal Green, with Aaron Williamson, and Jordan McKenzie. And I started a series called Looper for two years, where I invited a whole bunch of performance artists to try out stuff for one hour. And yeah, and that's really, that was my life kind of raft, to, you know, keep me making really, and yeah, this is totally a secret release to find your people and just cling on to them. And it's great, you know, you've already kind of got that now, when you've got Modern Art Oxford, and you've got Platform. So you know, keep you know, please just keep in touch and use these kind of networks. And I don't want to say things like networking and things, but yeah, it's important. Excellent. And Beth, any advice?

Beth Simcock: Um, yeah. Well, along the lines of what Fetine was saying, I remember, one of my tutors at the Ruskin sort of gave me the parting advice that if there's one thing that you take from art school, it should be having confidence in your work. And I do think that's definitely very important. And that there's also this tightrope like balance that you have to strike, and I definitely haven't got it down, of like both being confident in your work and also not too self-serious, or too precious. I think, like you have to maintain, you have to be open to criticism, also, just the right amount. Yeah, which is like maybe a difficult thing to learn, and probably a constant process, at least that's what I'm finding. But, when I managed to reach those points, that's always when I learned the most, I think. Yeah, and I think

another piece of advice, post art school, is to readjust your balance when it comes to making. I think the whole time that you're in the art school institution, there can be a pressure or an expectation that you have to produce at a certain steady rate, or there's like an expectation of a continuous output. And in my experience, my limited experience, that's not necessarily what life is like, post art school. So I think that's an important thing to bear in mind, too.

Kate Mahony: Oh, yeah, definitely. Like when, out in the world, and then you're like, oh, my gosh, I've got to try and navigate, like, having my own practice. Do I need a studio? And also, how am I going to kind of make money if I'm not necessarily going to, you know, sell my work, or is my work even sellable? You know, like, good, I mean, performance, right? So it's trying to then kind of maybe readdress or rebalance, okay, how do I how do I produce work? Or, what is my rate of production or making, and also, yeah, be nice to yourself, please be nice to yourself about that. It does take a time to just to kind of readjust a little bit. And also, I feel like going to art school is such a gift because it really is about kind of giving you an approach to going into the world as a kind of problem-solver. So, you know, as a painter, as a moving image, video artist, as an installation or multimedia artist, no matter what you go into, you're going to still be an artist doing that, even if that's administration, or teaching or a cleaner, or, you know, or you actually just carry on practising throughout and making money that way. You're always going to see it through an artist's perspective as well. And that is so valuable. And honestly, I could just go on about that forever, but that's excellent advice. And again, please use us all of your newfound friends networks and things, you know, because it never hurts to be like, Hey, you don't have any jobs going? Any of those side hustles, you do kind of become quite the entrepreneur, as an artist as well because you end up with a lot of skills to work with.

So I guess the last thing I would really like to ask, before we open up the questions to the audience is, is there any kind of up and coming work or Instagram handles websites, information that we can find out more about your practice that you'd like to share with us at this point? It's also totally fine if you're like, I haven't got anything but you know, like, that's okay, as well. Maybe you're just going out into the world of work. And that is just as valuable. So I'm going to start with Beth.

Beth Simcock: Well, I've been working in a garage too actually, post uni. And yeah, I'm working towards a body of paintings. I have exhibitions kind of forming in my mind, but not materially yet. But yeah, that's kind of, my canvas stretches are getting progressively less wonky. And I'm still pushing scale as much as my space will allow, or as long as the timbers that I can buy from Homebase are. Yeah, I have a website which is www.bethsimcock.co.uk and Instagram, which is @beth.simcock and I

will put them in the in the little chat here so people can see those. And that's where I post my most recent work and projects too.

Kate Mahony: Excellent. I also did see you're on the cover of a magazine, your paintings?

Beth Simcock: I was recently yeah, there's a magazine called Artists and Illustrators. And every year they run a student, an annual Student Edition. And this year, I had a painting on the cover and also an interview and it's free to read on their website if anyone's interested in that.

Kate Mahony: Very cool. That is quite amazing to already be on the front of a magazine. Really excellent Beth. Fetine, would you like to share anything that you're kind of up to, or any handles or anything?

Fetine Sel Tuzel: I am currently still at the creation process. I don't have any new artworks yet, still working on my ideas. I am also experimenting with different mediums now as I have been so digital through this time, so no new artworks yet, but you can find my work on my Instagram account which is @seltuzelart. I will also share it on the chat. Yeah, I am still trying to figure out my life.

Kate Mahony: Oh my goodness that never changes you know. Excellent and also, I realise you guys have been very busy with your exhibitions at Modern Art Oxford, so it is okay to have a rest as well. Brilliant. Yeah. So if you want to pop anything in the chat. Brilliant, and then also last two, Bevan and Will, do you have anything up and coming you'd like to share?

Will Griffiths: I think the main thing is our Instagram handle that is @hillandgriffiths

Bevan Hill: We'll just put it in the chat.

Will Griffiths: Yeah, that's a good idea. And then in terms of up and coming projects...

Bevan Hill: ...we're just continuing to think on the same themes really about the machine aesthetic. And, and like the process of reinterpreting in physical media. And I think that the piece that we've just exhibited, I think has opened up quite a fruitful painting process that we want to just keep pushing further. I think that that's just what we'll continue to do in the future.

Will Griffiths: Yeah, we'd never really painted before this piece. So, I think that we've sort of unlocked something in ourselves that we're really interested in pushing forwards. I think we're interested in thermographic imaging and stuff at the moment, just like other tech, sort of technologies, that also push that, I mean, conceptually push that idea of machine learning, machine ways of seeing. Yeah. And a bit of a nod at the art world, and how that's going on at the moment.

Kate Mahony: Nice, well, the machines are the future. So, you know, you might as well just, you know, bring them along as a collaborator. So, you know, excellent. Well, I encourage the audience to blow up the chat, ask any kind of, pop some questions in. And I would really like just to take this opportunity to just, you know, say a massive congratulations to all three of you, for such incredible exhibitions, that are completely different, and yet kind of, you know, like, lots of kind of connecting themes and inquiries, but really, like mature and experimental and risk-taking shows. So you know, massive well done, it's such a big achievement. And also, I want to say thank you to Platform and Modern Art Oxford and the team for putting on this event. And inviting me, hopefully to you know, that I've kind of done you all justice and made a little bit of sense. Is there any questions in the chat that we can kind of throw out to our artists, or anything, please don't be shy. I know that the sound won't work, so you have to type it. Now. I'm just double checking the chat. Thanks. Oh, yes.

Bevan Hill: While we're waiting, I'll just say thanks, Kate, for leading a great discussion. You've been brilliant as well.

Kate Mahony: Thank you!

Beth Simcock: Thank you, Kate.

Fetine Sel Tuzel: Thank you so much.

Kate Mahony: Is there anything you'd like to add while I'm... oh, Sarah's just asked, what are you hoping to do next? Fetine, what would you like to do?

Fetine Sel Tuzel: I guess, I am planning to do a masters next year. So yeah, I am currently trying to figure out which course to go for. While doing that, I want to create more and earn money.

Kate Mahony: Excellent. That's very good. Yeah. If you want to if you want to pick, yeah, mine or anyone else's brains, you know afterwards about MAs, and things, please feel free. And then Bevan and Will, what are you planning to do next?

Will Griffiths: I think that, especially after, I think, when we finished our degree, and especially now having shown at Modern Art Oxford, I think we're both feeling like the best way forward, for us two, would be to just carry on making work, and, and trying to like feel out the public sphere, basically. And like presenting our work in more galleries and just to carry on making work. We'll probably carry on pushing the threads that we've sort of unravelled from our current exploration because I think there's a lot of potential there. But I think we're very open to exactly what it is that we make next. And I think that we'll try to just have fun making paintings and stuff. But yeah, I think that our eyes are set really like on the local scene, just showing more work. And just to carry on making stuff.

Bevan Hill: Yeah, and just continue along with a thread that I think we've started on from our current practice, I think we feel like there's a lot of mileage in it. And we want to just keep pushing it.

Kate Mahony: Nice. So when are you talking about like the Oxford scene or London scene or all the scenes?

Will Griffiths: Probably both to be fair like Oxford's a really great place for the arts. But I feel like we are thinking very much about London, just because that is like the hub of basically everything that's going on. Like, it is a very good place to be. So I think that we'll definitely be looking at Oxford and London as a like a main conquest.

Kate Mahony: And Beth, how about you?

Beth Simcock: Yeah, I'm really looking to push my practice as much as possible. And, I think I'm considering a master's in the future, like Fetine. But at the moment, I'm doing that, well, not myself, because as we were talking about earlier, it's all about these like communities, I'm really lucky to have met some great people through art school, and through Platform too. And, yeah, I've been spending time also in my local community art centre in Brighton. And working with projects like that, that are more public facing, but I'm hoping to be able to do some more exciting exhibitions in the future. That would be great.

Kate Mahony: Nice, yeah. Get in with the Creative Learning.

Beth Simcock: Yeah. And writing too, because that's another facet of my practice.

Kate Mahony: Nice. Excellent. We've got a few questions now. Everyone's had a bit of a think. So here, I've got one for Will and Bevan, how did the duo come about? And are you planning on continuing to work as a duo going forward? Oooh!

Will Griffiths: Well, we knew each other before university, actually, which is a bit, you know, it's not, it's not a usual thing really, like, usually you sort of meet people at uni, and then you might consider doing that. But we've known each other for years. And I think that plays into it a bit. Because we used to make music together, well we still do make music, but when we were in secondary school, we'd make music together, and we really bounced off each other quite a lot. And then we both we both wanted to do art. And initially at university, we were separate, like, we were doing separate works. But then in the end of first year moving onwards, we just managed to hash out a really good working relationship.

I feel like we both enjoy it a lot more together. Because the conversations we have just really like engage us. Having another person is really beneficial in that sense, because it really makes you think about your own thoughts and, and how you can contribute to something bigger than just yourself as well. Like, it's really, yeah, you know, that's how it sort of came about. And I feel like we'll definitely be doing it in the future. I can't see us doing like doing it separately, to be honest. Like, I think that we're both really like happy with how things are going and happy with what we've built.

Bevan Hill: At least at the moment because there's not a reason not to really, but I think that, I know that everyone's different in how they work as well. But like for us it feels as though we sort of bring out the best in each other as well, it feels like we work best by bouncing ideas off each other and just sort of you know, just through our discussions we kind of just touch on all the concepts and just sort of bring something together, and I think that, it's probably a lot to do with you know our friendship as well and yeah...

Kate Mahony: Excellent. Well so we've got really a new like Fischli and Weiss, Harrison and Wood, Jake and Dinos Chapman, bring on Will and Bevan, yeah! Excellent. Um, good. Another question. Yeah. I wonder what you see as your future careers. You are obviously really talented and it must be difficult to see the way forward from here. This is from Barbara Simcock. I wonder if she is of a relation to Beth. Beth, would you like to answer that?

Beth Simcock: She is, hello! Ah, I want to... I am an artist, I would like to continue being. And if I could make that the only thing, well, in my day to day life, I'd be very happy with that. But for the time being, there are other things that have to be juggled. And as long as I'm occupied in some creative field, I'll be content I'm sure. But yeah, the art is, and will be, my primary focus in whatever form that takes, I don't see that changing. But I've been doing some freelance work for galleries and in the local art centre, and thinking about my options there, and what I can do in the meantime.

Kate Mahony: Really, really good. And Fetine or Will and Bevan, would you like to kind of answer that question? Yeah. Fetine, you first.

Fetine Sel Tuzel: I would like to stay an artist as well. But I think I don't want to be just an artist through my life, I want to do different things alongside as well. I am really interested in galleries, as well. So I thought my masters maybe could be related to galleries so that I could do both of them. Maybe... so it is still not fixed, so it's just an idea.

Kate Mahony: Excellent. Get in with Creative Learning. That's the future. Excellent. And Bevan and Will?

Will Griffiths: I can't really envisage a future where we're not making stuff to be fair. I think that that's just, I feel like we've sort of found the thing that we're really passionate about, you know, definitely. And I think that that's really lucky that we have so young as well, but I don't think that we're going to do anything else apart from making art and making music. Like it's just like, it's everything that we are really.

Bevan Hill: In response to the question as well, it definitely is difficult to see a way forward because it's not an easy path to become a practising artist. But, you know, because there's like, the financial struggle of being an early career artist, and everything like that, and you've got to manage your time, and you've got to make the effort to really continue with it. But then I feel like, it's certainly been made easier by Platform as well, because it does give you that springboard into the professional sphere, and it makes you think that it sort of is something that could be achievable. You know, like when you leave university, I feel like it's easy to feel lost. And,

I want to be a practising artist, but it seems like, you know, you feel a bit silly to say it, but I think that the brilliant thing about the Platform Award is that it gives you that platform to exhibit your work in the public space and to feel as though you know, it's not so daunting. Yeah, it's not so daunting, you know, unachievable, to actually make a career in some capacity in the arts. And that's just what we want to do really, just keep pushing.

Kate Mahony: Well, I mean, if it helps anyone, the first job I had straight out of Goldsmith's was, I was selling lemonade on Borough street market. So I was literally like the HSBC girl in the advert selling lemonade.

Beth Simcock: I mean, I think it all does feed back, though, doesn't it? Kind of like whatever else you do, like what Kate was saying earlier. Whatever you end up doing, you're always coming at it as an artist and there is always that element of yeah, whatever other life experience you have, or what is thrown at you will just be processed through that machine, somehow anyway. It feels that way at least.

Kate Mahony: It just becomes a performance right? So this is probably the last question. So we've got, you and your peers have all had to get used to showing and collaborating digitally. Are you going to carry on doing that or now that you have exhibited physically, will you be looking at physical, IRL - in real life collaboration - rather than Zoom? Or are you benefiting from being able to collab over WiFi? So, I'm going to start with - Oh my God, there's more questions, Ah! The chat is blowing up.

Beth Simcock: I was going to say there's some in the Q&A as well.

Kate Mahony: Shall we go to working online, digital collab, Bevan and Will?

Will Griffiths: I think it was definitely eye opening, working digitally, because it doesn't make you consider, when you're forced to do anything in a certain way, when the boundaries of what you're allowed to make are narrowed. I feel like it does force you to create something that you'd never think of before, but I feel like we probably will just stick to, you know, talking together, creating work together and like physical exhibitions. I feel like, it's probably better to look at it that way, as well, considering that things are sort of dying down a little bit as well, in terms of Covid at the moment. But, no, it's been really useful to collaborate digitally.

Bevan Hill: I think it has its place, it definitely does, it's obviously just another avenue. And, you know, when the need arose, and we couldn't, you know, get together in real life, then it was, it was quite useful to be able to use that, you know, otherwise we'd have been bugged. So it does have its place, definitely, but I feel like it's not, it's not a comparison for the real thing, I don't think, because I think that a lot of, well, a big part of collaboration is it's not just the information that you get, you know, like, you could get the same information from an in-person conversation as you could from a text message, but I feel like part of it is just connecting with people. And, you know, I think a lot of it really, just connecting with people in the real world.

Kate Mahony: Although, you know, we still can't quite shake off the Zoom, you know, we're still here, in this space. So I wonder if we're still going to, we're always going to have a little bit of this kind of, one foot in the real life and one foot in the digital now, you know, maybe this is just the future. You can certainly, like reach a lot more people, you know, when we can get a lot more done in our day, because, you know, we don't have to travel so much. Anyone else like to add? I'm really aware of the time, oh, my goodness, there's so many questions. I can see there's one, there's one for Beth. Beth, great to see you, did the Horoscope writing happen simultaneously to the making of the piece or before or after?

Beth Simcock: Oh, that's an interesting question. And something that came up quite a lot in the planning and programming of the exhibition. Because I remember in the kind of initial stages talking to Sarah Mossop about this, because the piece, funnily enough, had actually begun as a piece of writing, it was going to be a short story called *The Zodiac*. For a while, I was like working on it with a writing mentor that I had at the time. And I just couldn't get it to come off the ground, you know, get to the first page and get totally stuck. And the guy that I was working with would be like, oh, you know, I feel like you've got the start of something here. That's really good. But he knows it wasn't going anywhere. And then eventually, it came out like a totally different way in this painting series that was exploring all the same themes.

And when I started talking to Sarah, about planning this exhibition, and she'd also been in touch with my tutors and like, understood from me and from them that the writing was a really important part of my practice. And we were like, how can we almost tie this back in? Because I'm so interested in these intersections of the word and the image. I spent quite a long time thinking about this because originally we were going to have writing on the walls in the gallery space, and it was going to maybe even be to do with this short story, as like a setup for the paintings. And I decided against that for a lot of reasons, I thought it could either be too hand-holdy, or alternatively very confusing. And when we had the opportunity to work with the digital programming with the gallery, I thought using the Modern Art Oxford blog would be a really interesting space to explore, like creative writing in this kind of similar way to like what Bevan and Will have done with using their fake art critic blog post. It became like a fictional space almost. And, yeah, I moved away from the idea of the short story and ended up writing horoscopes that were to do, I think it's described on the kind of social media and on the little caption in the space as, 'between like the esoteric practice of astrology, the occult science, and the back pages of gossip magazines that I remember getting my hands on as a teenager'. I guess like today, it would be like a costar app, or like a Snapchat thing, but the kind of horoscopes that they give you. Yes, that's where it came from. And that was sort of, towards the, to come back to the question, it

was after the piece was made, but during the programming of the exhibition, and then it all happened quite naturally. Finding a way to tie that back to the space again.

Kate Mahony: I must say it's very fun, and actually scarily accurate as well!

Beth Simcock: Oh good.

Kate Mahony: Okay, I keep saying it's the last one, but the questions are so good. Um, okay, I'm going to kind of just throw out here. I'm so sorry about that. I'm probably not going to get to you. But I'm just doing a really bad job of timekeeping. Did you all set out to be artists, when you first started your degrees? I think this is a really nice kind of ending question. So Beth?

Beth Simcock: Um, yeah, such an amazing question. I'm going to say, no, actually, I would say that I wasn't sure. And I happened to have a really great art teacher in sixth form, which was a new thing for me, I don't think I'd really had one before. And I'd always assumed that I was going to do something else. And one day, I would spend all my free time hanging out in the art room. And then one time, he just kind of turns to me and says, Well, obviously you're going to do are, aren't you? I kind of went, Oh, yeah. And that all fell into place for me. But still, I think I went to my art foundation with the expectation that like, Oh, this is maybe what's going to tell me that this isn't right for me. And then it went the total opposite way. I think it's kind of been like a snowball effect since. So yeah. And I'd say that you don't have to be sure of that from the beginning either.

Kate Mahony: That's an excellent answer. I love how honest you were as well, like no! Fetine, how about you? Did you set out to be an artist when you started your degree?

Fetine Sel Tuzel: Kind of yes. But I wasn't really sure what to have as a career as well. Like, I wasn't really sure. I didn't really have a future plan. So I really enjoyed art, creating art, and I really wanted to be an artist, but I was keeping options open as well. Like, maybe staying in academia, or, I don't know, it was just an open idea, I guess. But then after the degree, I guess, like during the lectures or getting

to know our lecturers, tutors and everything. They just, the art world really seemed more and more interesting during the degree, so I guess, yeah.

Kate Mahony: I think that's great. And like, you know, I totally understand that whole kind of anxiety of like, what am I going to do as a career but, honestly, I think everyone should go to art school, because it is just, you know, just to kind of get that new perspective on life and, you know, everything then becomes, well, it's a blessing and curse. Everything becomes potential material for work, forever. Make, you know, thinking about everything. And Bevan and Will, did you set out to be artists when you first started your degree?

Will Griffiths: I don't think we did, no. Don't think we had a clue what we were doing to be fair. We were both interested in art.

Bevan Hill: I think for us, like, we knew that university would just be three years to just have a think about the universe and everything. Like, yeah, we just, we wanted to just take that time out, to get to libraries to think about things and just to develop ourselves. And I think that it naturally just came about that. We just really enjoy doing it. And I think that yeah, I mean, as the years went on, I think that we just became more, I mean, especially in third year, I think we just really got in tune with the idea of doing it. And also, I think, partly because it felt more of a possibility as well.

Will Griffiths: Yeah, it also just became a bit of our lives as well. Like, by third year, we'd stopped thinking about it as a degree, you know, like this term, we want to get this mark to make sure we get a BA or whatever, I think, by the end of it, we were just, we didn't, yeah, we didn't really care about any of that. We were just like, we are basically just living it, we are artists. We're enjoying it. So we're going to carry on doing it, basically. But no, we definitely didn't start out with that mindset. And I feel like, you definitely shouldn't have that expectation. I mean, it's great if you do, it's great if you do know what you want to do, but I don't think you should, you don't have to know, you shouldn't hold yourself to expectation that, you know, like what you're doing at the age of 18 or 19, or, you know, whenever you start your degree.

Bevan Hill: I think it's just good to have an open mindset, really, and just to think, think of a degree as a learning, you know, well, it's just a place to develop your thoughts and your thought process and, you know, develop yourself as a person more than an avenue to get the grade to be able to do a certain job, you know. It's about developing yourself, I think, and then if you fall into something, that's great.

Will Griffiths: Yeah, and luckily for us, it was art.

Bevan Hill: ...which is convenient, because we did pick that course, right?

Kate Mahony: I love that, in that it's always the kind of classic last semester of the third year when the penny drops and you're like, ah, you know, like, now you know, and then you see like, I'm ready now I know what I am, and then that's the point they're like, goodbye.

Beth Simcock: It sneaks up on you.

Kate Mahony: Yeah. Every year yeah, no joke. Well done. Okay, well, well done guys. I'm going to kind of wrap up now. But oh, I love this. Yeah, you are all such gifted and amazing artists. Good luck to you all. Yeah, I completely echo that. Thank you so much, everyone, for the questions, all of your wonderful thoughts and feedback. I really hope that people find that useful to think about, I hope it's given other people confidence and hope you know, to show and try and experiment and explore. So with that, I'm going to say good night I think. Good night everyone. Do you want to wave at the camera just to be nice, and just wave. Alright, guys, goodbye. Thank you.