



\* Okay... So we're recording. I, having done this before, am going to record on my phone just in case. So, let's get started... I think we're all set. So... This is the second of the round tables, this is the 'Compost' round table, I'm saying this for the purpose of the recording, mostly. But perhaps if I could just ask you to introduce yourself very quickly, just your name at this point so then I'll say a bit more about who you are.

□ Hannah Obee.

○ Wolfgang Buttress.

/ Amanda Briggs-Goode.

\* And this is Sam Thorne, chairing this session. So, this session is... The key word of this round table is 'Compost', which I think compared to some of these other key words in these other round tables is to me a little more oblique, maybe also a little more... I mean 'fertile', in a certain kind of way. I think there are certain different ways that we might go at this or take it apart... And, a kind of way that I, kind of, wanted to think about this... I wanted to jump back to where does this word come from? How has it been used, what has it meant?

Because I think that might suggest some ways that I think we might be questioning, circling around and so on... But before we get to that I just wanted to quickly introduce each of you so we know who we've got around the table. So Hannah Obee trained at the Wallace Collection, with an MA in museum studies from UCL. Hannah works as a curator and acting Head of Collections at Chatsworth, in Derbyshire, until her recent move to Harewood, at Leeds, to take up a new role, Head of Collections and Exhibitions. And that was a few months ago, you were saying-

□ 3 months, yeah 3 months ago-

\* Hannah is a Decorative Art Specialist... Co-ordinated a major re-display of the state department of Chatsworth, undertaking research into the Devonshire archive to underpin the project and I think the status of archive is going to be something worth talking about today. Hannah went on to lead the exhibition program at Chatsworth and is particularly interested in the continuum of contemporary collecting and commissioning at country houses and the importance of primary sources in communicating human narratives with audiences. And yeah, human and non-human is something I might be asking about at some point.

Dr Amanda Briggs-Goode is the Head of Department for Fashion, Textiles, Knitwear at Nottingham Trent University. As a researcher in the field of textiles, Amanda has worked with the lace archive at Nottingham Trent since 2007 and has established it as a significant lace suppository, partly through organizing a season of events in Nottingham called *Lace Here Now*, which was 2012... 13, and later through co-editing a book of the same name with Black Dog Publishing.

Hannah Obee      □  
Amanda  
Briggs-Goode      /  
Sam Thorne      \*  
Wolfgang Buttress      ○

Amanda has published, exhibited and presented widely on lace and printed textile design. And her earlier career was a commercial designer for interior fabric and wallpaper.

Wolfgang Buttress creates multi-sensory artworks that draw inspiration from our evolving relationship with the natural world. He explores and interprets scientific discoveries, collaborating with architects, landscape architects, scientists and musicians to create human centred experiences. Wolfgang has produced artworks on four continents. He is well known for the UK Pavilion, which was first presented at the Milan Expo in 2015, and *The Hive* which is currently at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew, in London. Which was in collaboration with the physicist Dr Martin Bencsik, BDP, I don't... Who are BDP?

○ Architects-

★ Architects, Hoare Lea and Simmonds Studio. That project, *The Hive*, has won over 25 awards and that's including the Gold Medal for 'Best in show'. Wolfgang's current projects include sculptures in Taiwan, US, Australia, the United Kingdom and he's just fresh back from Alaska. So look, to get things started I just wanted to offer a preliminary dictionary definition of 'compost', because it has some intriguing roots... I think. So, kind of, the standard definition of 'compost' is a mixture of decayed organic matter, which is used for fertilizing soil. So, dead leaves, manure, mulch... So you know, the kind of key ideas here are kind of; mixture, compound, composite...

I suppose the idea of once-living forms maybe generating new life. So I think this kind of 'back and forth' between the animate and the inanimate is kind of there for me, but it really, kind of... It's really all about, it's about stuff; it's about matter; it's about material; it's things that all of you, I think from different angles, concern yourselves with on a kind of daily basis. You're all involved with preserving things, bringing things together, people together making new things... But the word itself first came into the English language at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century... 1587, to be precise. It comes from an older French word and before that a Latin word, *compositus*, so to put together or to compose.

So I suppose on the one hand there's this, maybe this sense of; this is some of the traditional stuff of creative practice, of composition, of, you know, arranging things. But on the other, this kind of sense of nature meeting kind of culture, this might take us into conversations about the Anthropocene, or what is the human? Or non-human or post-human... So it feels like it's particularly fertile in that sense. And there are a number of, probably, sub-categories underpinning all of this. But, before we kind of get to all this I'd like to go a bit deeper into this idea of actually; what are we understanding by 'compost' here, today.

So I'd like to ask each of you, by kind of way of introduction, just to reflect a little bit on; when you got this invitation, or just thinking out loud here today... This word 'compost' what does it mean for you? Maybe Hannah, jump to you first-

□ Sure, yeah... I think when I first got the invitation I think it was... The reason I accepted probably was one of trust, really, because I thought well, if Nottingham Contemporary is asking me to do it, it's probably going to be interesting so I'm going to do it. And then I think it was just particularly that word, it was just one of those words where your brain just starts triggering off different things. And I think it was very much... I responded professionally in terms of my interest in archives, and experience with archives and collections. And actually thinking, you know archives *are* composts...

It's about layers that evolve that are added to over generations, and then it's about then how they influence and fuel creativity in the future. But also the sense that they're remnants of something that's been lost, something that's been enjoyed, something that's been experienced as well. So, for example your sort of eggshells and your peelings and your compost, we've consumed that and that's what's left over. And what comes down to, as in archives, is the remnants of an experience... And it's only a partial record of that as well, so it's incomplete. It's almost a memory, a bit like some of Lara's works... It's a memory of something that's happened.

And I find it very interesting thinking about what has survived? Why it survived? The stories that we get that we, as curators and archivists and artists and researchers, maybe bringing back to the surface... I started thinking of curators as worms, which was a very odd image... You know, sort of *aerating* compost piles and bringing this matter to the surface to share with people to then, sort of create new narratives with the people that it shared with... Yeah, I was just gonna' say, I just started thinking of all sorts of random ideas and so I just, sort of very quickly said "I'd love to do it" and the date didn't work out, so when it was rearranged I just thought, "yeah."

★ Here we are-

□ Here we are-

★ Curators as worms.

□ Yes, curators as worms-

★ Yeah, that's something to come back to... Amanda, how about you? I mean, you're somebody who's also *deep* in archives. I wonder what kind of connections this, this idea of compost has been creating for you?

/ Well, I think Hannah said a lot of it very beautifully, initially I thought about the same things that you know, the very physical activity; the *smell*. The word 'compost' conjures when I'm, thinking about the waste of everyday life and taking that to the space... And I have similar memories of taking out compost boxes and them being full of rotting food and smelling, and I, sort of did quickly make that kind of link with the *archive*, and I think particularly *layers*.

\* Mmm-

/ So I think that became quite an interesting idea. In terms of the archive that I work with, the layers of information that have come in, the different types of objects that have come in, the different periods of time... I could, make analogies to that layering in all sorts of different ways; different kinds of materials. I think there's something about the archive that we have that I think, coming from a museum collection, you know, you might not think of it in the same way but our lace archive was very unloved and uncared for, for quite a lot of time... So that that idea of rotting and deterioration, was part of my thinking in terms of thinking about that particular space... We have leather that's, on a daily basis, on the bindings of books, kind of falling off because it's not been conserved over a hundred fifty years in the same way that a museum collection might be.

\* That's interesting. So, I guess we tend to think of museum collections as being *static* somehow or being preserved, whereas as you say 'archives', it can be a much more flexible term; that can be stuffed under someone's bed, it can be unloved in a corner of a University... And there's a life or a, kind of a *death* to that experience to.

□ But also I think interestingly as well is the fact that like actual compost it's all organic matter and it is all deteriorating and actually as, you know even when you are able to, sort of *look after* it or you know, there's been a history of that as well, you know that all you're doing is staving off the inevitable... There is a slight, there is a futility to it, but there is, you know, you know that at some point it does want to get back to its original state and the ink on documents will fade; the documents, the paper, the velum... As you say; the leather, it does want to degenerate, doesn't it? And we're just staving that off, really-

/ And they're degenerating at different rates, aren't they? So the different materials change over time at a different rate. So I find that quite an interesting analogy. And I think, similar to you talking about your curators, I'm thinking about students, the artists who visit the archive to look at it as being the people who are bringing things to the surface, who are doing that rotation because people come in and they get excited and interested in different bits of it.

\* Because your archive is, I suppose *unusual*, in the sense that it's the archive of an art and design school, right? That it's now a hundred seventy five years, is the birthday this year... And so yeah, it's of a kind of very discrete amount of time but it's, it's almost by definition of early work, right? Of test pieces and so on.

/ And it's a collection of information that we don't know where it came from. That's again where it would differ from the sort of things that Hannah works with, we don't know where from where or when it came into the archive... We can kind of deduce some things. So, there's a lot of detective work but it's not been documented in the way that a museum would be. So I think, you know that, there is a real...

That brings a real richness with it. It's own kind of richness and its own uniqueness because actually I think a lot of it is the waste product of the lace industry and that was another way that I'm connecting to this word 'compost' really...

Because what a lot of our deduction tells us is that there will have been points, I mean, we know that there's some very specific parts of the collection where there's been a very careful consideration made about, "this is for the old school" and "this is very specifically to help the students learn," but I think actually quite a lot of it was probably the waste products of people clearing out their studios and saying, "do you think the art school will find that useful..." In exactly the same way that that still happens today with our relationship with the industry. So I think, you know there is a kind of a sense of people clearing out-

\* Absolutely, yeah.

/ And composting their stuff and putting it somewhere else-

\* Yeah, this is/can be less about acquisition, more about these, kind of forms of donation or gifting. Something before I turn to you, Wolf, something that both Hannah and Amanda what you were talking about reminded me of was that before I move to Nottingham, I was living in Cornwall, in St Ives and working at Tate St Ives, and Tate St Ives runs the Barbara Hepworth Student Museum and Studio, which it has, the Tate has done since the late 70s and I'm currently supervising a PhD student who's working on the status of that archive there, which is a particularly morphing archive... And it's a really fascinating history because Hepworth, as you might know, died in a fire in 1975, she was relatively late in life, she was drinking a lot at the time, she was smoking in bed, so on...

Very soon after, less than a year, the house in which she died in a fire was open to the public... Every mention of this fire was *cleaned away* and the studio itself was preserved as though she had just walked out to kind of get a cup of tea, something like that. But all of this was complicated by the fact that Hepworth's son-in-law, who happens to also be the major scholar on her work, also happened to be the director of Tate at the time. So he acquired this for the nation and then set about *choreographing* this archive, this kind of studio as archive or the other way round, as the way the he understood the work to be best read, and that's still the way 40-plus years on that when you go to visit the Hepworth Studio Museum, you're seeing things, and yet these kinds of layers that you're talking about are there because in the salty sea-air of Cornwall, all of these tools are heavily patinated, they're kind of rusting as piles of dust, the calendar from 1975 is curled and kind of browned and so on...

But one of the covenants of the family's will is that the garden must remain as though it was in 1975. So you have this perverse situation where a garden isn't left to grow, it's left as though it was in photos in '75 and yet the studio seems to be growing because it's growing these kinds of new layers.

And when I was there was this conversation, “Well shouldn’t we just conserve these things? These are part of the take collection, shouldn’t they be kind of kept as they were when they were acquired? Shouldn’t we clean off this rust?” And I realized actually no, this is how most people who visited know the studio and what they like is that, kind of sense of *aging* and so on... And so some of what my PhD student’s looking at is what kind of challenge does this pose to the museum when it’s thinking about itself as a repository of something that’s kind of static... How do you actually archive? What kind of value do you give to some of these waste products, actually, because plenty in the studio is these kinds of waste products, but these things that Hepworth probably never really wanted to be exhibited to the public, and it kind of gets at a number of different tensions or frictions that I think are there for institutions that claim to be preserving things in a certain kind of state... But it’s a kind of politics to that about, especially when you know, this is a national museum and this is the son-in-law of this artist who is-

□ It’s sort of where the profession and the personal *overlaps*, isn’t it, and it’s something that I experience very much working for houses where families still live there as well. And it is, it’s you know, it’s a construct... So all of his emotion at the time of his, you know of his mother-in-law passing is all tied into that and what he wanted to present... But also as you say, that fact that it is a *static*, I think that’s also another reason why I probably work in historic houses [still lived in by families] is the fact that I like the fact that it continues to evolve. It is sort of continuum. And that is the essence of creativity, yet her, because she’s no longer here *that* has come to a fixed point in time and it’s sort of you know, it’s very similar to the National Trust, what is it’s... What does it do now? What purpose does it serve? How is it being presented? What sort of layers are people putting on to that as well? And how it, how do you retain authenticity to it as well.

★ Yeah, and what does authenticity mean in this context-

□ Exactly. And I mean there, is there any in a sense? You know-

○ I think it’s interesting, what you said about lace though, I know a bit about it because Joy, my partner, worked there for a while, but you get the idea that lace is a collection of holes, it’s a collection of voids and it’s a collection of nothing in a way. The cotton itself, it’s organic and that has a sort of end, left to it’s own devices it will just go back to the Earth, it will rot. So its natural state is almost to go back to nothing. It’s a celebration something and of nothing, of nothingness. So in a way, to observe and watch it *dissolve* is in a way, though counter intuitive, quite natural.

★ And Wolf, how about you? Because for, for you, you know, when I think about your work I think about how you’re often kind of *brokering* conversations between the natural world and humans, you know, whether it’s working with bees and musicians or whether it’s working with the Sun and physicists... It’s often an ecological conversation, it seems to me. And I wonder how, for you, this idea of, this word of ‘compost’ kind of struck you?

○ I think it's the combination of the two words are – 'compost' and 'animism'. It's those two things which in turn are quite interesting. In animism, I suppose it is the idea that there's a spirit in everything... in every little thing, whether it's in a glass of water or an insect or a human or a mountain. So I suppose when we talk about this idea; does everything have their own individual spirit or is there one spirit? When everything decays and reverts to dust, atoms and it goes back to *nothing* we are all the same, you know, we're all star dust... But it was interesting with what you said before, that there's something about this notion of the Anthropocene and how human activity has affected it.

Historically it took millions of years to actually make marks and leave traces on and in the geological strata. The plastic, chemicals and waste we are putting into the world; we have made such an indelible mark in such a tiny space of time. Historically going you'd maybe have this sense that everything goes back to the Earth and that everything is connected and has its own cycle and somehow we as a species were more in tune and at one with it – the world as a super-organism, but it seems to me that we, as humans, are more and more out of whack and out of tune. We are changing what we are doing is changing exponentially.

And in the end, you know the Earth will carry on and we will die at one point, whether that's a hundred years, a thousand years, ten thousand years, a million years from now but the world as an entity will carry on. I think sometimes, because we are aware of our consciousness we also have this arrogance that everything is subordinate to us. We're just another organism which is currently living on this planet. We are not above nature, we are part of nature.

★ And that's I think the main... Yeah, what was kind of this notion of the Anthropocene, what it presents to us *is* actually a total collapse of the "we're separate from culture," it's like "...from nature," that we are actually the two have been completely and enmeshed. I read this book recently called, I think *The Shock Of The Anthropocene* and in part it was about the arguments about how to date where this new geological epoch might have started. Some would argue was the Industrial Revolution, others argue that it was the precise moment that the atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima, but others would say that it kind of goes back much further than that to the first Europeans to get to the Americas, for example... Is the kind of first time when you can actually see major deforestation happening.

But what's clear now is that, aside for many kinds of traces in the strata, one thing that I was reading that you can really, the future generations will be able to tell that we have been here, is the networks of subway systems around the world. If we, if our only trace was this one thing and going back to the idea of holes and layers, it would be only these wormholes! And-

□ It all leads to worms!

★ Yeah, which are left around, and are sufficiently deep and there are enough of them to, kind of tell that we have been here.

○ There is a place and underground vault in the very North of Norway called the Arctic World Archive, described as “a safe repository for world memory.” It is where they are working on how to document these days for future generations. In time that we possibly won’t understand the clues and our current language and the stories because everything changes and mutates. I used to think that the PDF or JPEG will just last for ever, they don’t. All technologies will one day erode and fade. And so, there’s this idea in thousands of years time will people be able to understand our language; how we actually talk to each other, because we’re leaving less physical things like writing in which you can decipher? As things become increasingly digital and things become less ‘written down’ in terms of what we’re leaving as a legacy... We think we’ve got all this incredible stuff around but then does that dissolve and lose its meaning faster than something like, I don’t know, carved Egyptian tablets or something?

★ One member of the secret committee once curated an exhibition about 10 years ago called *The Museum of Martian Art*, and the conceit of the exhibition was that people come from Mars, they’d be completely baffled by art history, and they created their own museum on Mars using the artworks as kinds of *artefacts*... But rather than showing it in the kind of conventional, you know, like cubism to this to this, they did things by *type*, of course, so you’ve got a kind of a minimalist monolith next to a fridge next to a Warhol, kind of *Brillo Box*, because they’re all the things that look the same, something like this... I like this kind of idea,, that some of this puts forward that yeah, these alternative categories or taxonomies will inevitably emerge because of what hasn’t been preserved.

□ Yeah... And I think that’s the challenge of digitization. And I think it was only the fact that also we don’t like the letter so we’ve got emails. And how is any of that going to survive as technology moves on at such an increase in place... Exactly what you’ve just said, Wolfgang, it’s what are we actually going to leave behind? Because, you know... Whereas something on *Vellum* actually, although I always think of it’s a fight to keep it, to keep it going, it actually does have a longer life span, or an Egyptian stele [inscribed stone or wooden slab] or something, does have more of a longer lifespan actually than what we’re doing now... And it was interesting on that State Apartment project that I worked on, it was the first thing that the Duke and Duchess did when they moved in, and it was in 2005, and I think it was at that point it very much got the Duke thinking, “well, how are we saving, even saving emails?” You know, “what is our archive for the future?”

And he was very specific... And that immediately got him into thinking “right, you know, you need to keep the emails and everything around this digitally and archive that,” and that sort of set off a policy in terms of you know saving, whereas once upon a time it would be sort of a printed invoice... But then that’s how you would find, how you find out who did something in 200 years time and it is a major issue; the fact that it’s so ephemeral in our conversations. But then I’m sort of thinking, *am I overthinking that*, because at the end of the day all that we’ve lost within an archive, we’ve lost everybody’s voices, all the conversations that people had even haven’t sort of necessarily survived and I thought maybe I’m just, you know, imagining the worst case scenario.

Yeah, but actually, you know, how many organizations do have policies and I have to say it was with varying degrees of success as well of actually thinking *how are we recording* in the way that the Ledger books and the, and things that I have used for research, from the seventeenth hundreds and before help me-

○ Take an example of *making things*, say a metal fabricator for example, had so many skills which were passed down from generation to generation, these were passed down orally and through observation. As the industry dies, the skills become lost and forgotten. What seems to be happening with say the last 20, 25, 20, 30 years is that things get designed with computers but then the programs change and it becomes more difficult or even impossible to read and work with all these older programmes and software... So all these things that we think are so technologically advanced can become obsolete so quickly. In my experience you have to go back to the physical drawings to work out the intent.

\* So that idea of *craft* being a kind of continuum, right? Or like, yeah, being handed down or taught shifts because it's a new program several times a generation.

○ Yes, I feel we're handing this information down through technology, but sometimes maybe a better way to do that is to have something physical or to tell it orally or to document it. I mean even what we're recording this conversation on now, this iPhone, I mean maybe in fifty, hundred, two hundred years time, you won't be able to work out, what we said from this piece of hardware, it probably won't even exist anymore. How do you preserve the ephemeral?

\* And Hannah, what you know, in your experience of having worked in these homes, which as you said are still like *living entities*, how aware are you of what's been lost?

□ I think a lot and I think it's a trap that you, sort of figure out, hopefully, pretty early on is the fact that you know you're only getting a fragment and I think particularly something of the size of collection that I worked with 14 years as well is the fact that you could think that you found evidence in the archive for a particular piece of furniture or particular painting or something and you think "Oh, yes, yeah, no, I recognize that and that's still in the collection now and that's interesting, that's where it was in 1770," or something like that. But then actually you think how many other of those that haven't come down to us, that haven't survived... So for me, being particularly interested in ceramics, I went through a process of going through a 1770 inventory of a China closet of the Countess of Burlington at Chiswick and I managed to actually identify some really specific things, still in the Devonshire Collection today.

But then other things and you think, "well that matches, but I don't know that that's the same thing because actually there are probably 10 more of those that got broken and were thrown away," and you have to be very careful to think, even though when you think you found a, you know, a real connection, it might actually, for all you know relate to something else and just hasn't survived...

And so you learn to be very very very aware of that and not, sort of jumping too far on and, and it was interesting actually because I was there when I started working for the generation beforehand, and then when the 11th Duke died and we obviously had to list everything, after that it was a long process obviously in a collection in a house of that size and made me realize, as we were going around trying to capture everything, realize that these inventories of 1770 and beforehand that I was looking at were literally a snapshot of *that* moment of *that* day, because I knew, I learnt from my experience that somebody will come in, look at everything in that room, but I knew that the next day a painting had already moved somewhere else.

\* Sure-

□ So things are getting lost. Even though you think you've got this very definite record and it's very *black and white*, in actual fact, it isn't at all... And it's, it can be... You just have to find a point of not being paralyzed by that, so you are actually willing to make connections and offer connections up, but without, but knowing that you can never actually be entirely certain-

\* Do you know how many items are in the collection?

□ Oh gosh, maybe, I don't know maybe 80,000?

\* Maybe 80,000... Right, yeah-

□ Plus? I should think, I mean... That's a pretty conservative estimate. I think the library alone is about 40,000, and then the archive, I mean, it would be extra, as well probably-

\* In my, I mean... In my very small experience to date of the Chatsworth Collection is that there's a general sense of what might be there, but you know, it's not as though it's a museum collection where there's a kind of catalogue where you can say, "I'll just go and check..." [There is a museum collection database for the Devonshire Collection that is constantly being added to and updated]. So when we were asking questions of the different curators, we were saying, "This is for a project that's opening soon with the artist Linder Sterling," and Linder would say, "Do you have any tapestries from India?"... And they'd say, "No, I don't think so, let me check," and then a week later say "No no, we found something"-

□ And then the elephant came out and then-

\* And then a silver elephant came out, yeah-

□ Which I had never seen in 14 years... And I think that's the thing, things are constantly appearing, and it's also about that *loss* of knowledge, isn't it? So, so probably somebody working with the collection a hundred years ago, they were called the librarian, but they were responsible for the objects as well and the archives, they probably would have known that...

But obviously that in, that knowledge gets lost and then someone comes in later... And it's actually something the, it was, when I first joined, there was a keeper there who's been there 30 years and he said "you will never know everything," and actually I was coming in with the Decorative Arts slant, particularly in ceramics and he said, "Well that's actually going to be really interesting because nobody has been here with your particular passion for a long time..." So it was almost like areas, discrete areas of the collection got their moment in the sun; different people coming in, different generations because you can never know it all. And that was really liberating because I'd come from the Wallace Collection, which was, I think, sort of about 6,000 objects and a very small archive where I always felt a real pressure to know the answer to everything and then I suddenly thought "you know what actually you can't, here..." And it was this very different-

\* That's it... It becomes more of a space of speculation. I remember after you left talking to Sash Giles about a book of spells-

□ Oh, that... The *Clavicula Salomonis*.

\* That's it, yeah. And I think I was asking her roughly when it was from and she said, "Well, I don't know," she said, "but I would imagine that it must have been pre-Scientific Enlightenment... It must have been after this, so probably it would be in about, I don't know the 1730's"-

□ That's really complicated as well because, that particular example, that's actually a copy of an earlier original spell book, as well... So it's actually a re-creation of an earlier original, that I think was done for like a member of the Italian aristocracy, I think or something like that. So again, that's got a really vague, murky... And you know, you can drive yourself mad trying to get to the bottom of things. I mean, I spent two years with the textile historian conservator Annabel Westman, trying to figure out which about, there were about 10 crimson Damask beds, at the time of the State Apartment, and then through the history of Chatsworth, we were trying to follow these beds around the building, you know... And we drove ourselves nearly mad trying to figure it out.

It was crazy because all the rooms change name, the descriptions of the bed changed as the textile faded over the years, so the yellow became a lot more prominent than the red because it was a crimson and gold Damask... And we were trying to find this trail and I mean, I think, Annabel got there in the end. But again, it is a lot of, it's that speculation, it's that educated guess a lot of it and it's very difficult to be more, the further back in time you go, to be certain about things-

\* And what happens then when someone like you leaves after 14 years, taking all of that, those experiences all those, kind of intuitions with you.

□ Yeah. I know. I think that's, I think it's just sort of *part of it* and then you get the next person with their interests and then they bring their own particular slant to it...

So I think it's a very positive thing. And I felt with leaving as well, although it was positive for me, it was actually very positive for the organization because I thought, "you know what, actually I would really like somebody new to come in at this point because it's a really exciting time and really take it somewhere else..." But yeah, you do lose a lot. I mean, the keeper that I referred to, who left after 30 years, I mean his knowledge... And everybody was saying, you know, we need to *download* his brain and you, you can't, can you-

\* Not yet.

○ Not yet. But it does, sort of feel like in the West we have this idea that somehow by preserving physical culture, this is what defines us. This our history and therefore us. But then say for example in Australia, the aboriginals, the oldest continuous culture in the world, the kind of *traces* they leave as a culture are quite physically minimal. It would appear that songs, stories and their deep connection with their environment and their sense of the infinity helps culturally define them. Because they are a nomadic culture, they leave very few traces in terms of buildings or churches like what we do in the West. This is how we tend to define ourselves in the West.

Things seem to be changing slightly now I think, but when the first white Westerners went over to Australia with an arrogance that these aboriginals were *heathens*, they're thick, they know nothing, they've got no history, they're kind of like animals... What is fascinating though is what is being discovered now is that the aboriginals are probably the oldest astronomers in the world, how they mapped the stars and how they mapped the dark spaces *between* the stars... They gave them all names and-

\* The spaces between?

○ The spaces between the stars, because there's so many stars in the desert, it's, they mapped the stars and the spaces in between... for example they have one inter star form called the Giant Emu, and at a certain point of the year, there's a shape, there's a *dark* space, and it does look like an Emu, and that's the time then when it's safe to go out and collect Emu eggs. So there's a really powerful relationship between the stars and their own culture.

\* Negative space is coming back again, I think isn't it... Lace or the stars-

○ And I think what we're doing in terms of astrophysics, what they're trying to discover and investigate is the space between stars that is dark matter... So we're just catching up the last 20, 30, 50 years about what's happening, and maybe the Aboriginals have known instinctively, intuitively, spiritually about what's happening between these dark spaces for 50 or 60,000 years.

\* And how are they doing, how are they doing that? This was with the naked eye? Or this was with-

○ The naked eye. And then they would map some of these things in some of their dot paintings, but most of them were passed down as fables, stories and songs... And, and these were *passed down* because as a tribe, because Australia is so massive, you could walk obviously miles and miles and miles and they'd use the stars to navigate by... And because the sky is so clear they could see the stars. It's really important for them which way to go or not... So they had a really instinctive, cultural as well as a scientific approach to how the stars moved across the night sky... Because this was not written down, we can think, somehow arrogantly think, that this understanding is less progressive than us in the West. But in a lot of ways, it's probably a lot more resolved. Which is... And I think that, kind of going back to you, that's what you were saying about the archive and, and somehow we collect all this sort of stuff and then this is who we are, this is kind of *what we were*, this is what we want to be-

/ I was thinking about that *orchestration* that you've got somewhere like Chatsworth at the pinnacle of one of our stately homes in the UK and what that's saying about us as a culture... you can pick up similar stories, but I suppose one of the things that the *layers* of archives, for me, are about the people and actually that's ironically for somebody who's focused on textiles and fabric through my profession and things I'm really passionate and excited about I've actually become much more interested in social history and, of that industry, but also production really. It's the, it's the history of production isn't it...

And I suppose when we completed the season of events *Lace Here Now*, we had a storyteller who, that... There's a book written by a man who came was -we would say now 'trafficked' - from London as a child ... It refers to a really horrible ugly underbelly of the lace industry. There was young boys and girls coming up from London from workhouses in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, being picked up on streets and coming in and working in mills in Nottingham. We know that because nothing was known about many of those children and if they died, unexpectedly or through an industrial accident whatever, they weren't buried in the churches because they were of no known religion and without families, so there are hedgerows around Nottinghamshire where there's kids buried under hedges. This man, who was one of those children, writes about this as an adult and he had an unusual story he taught himself to read and write and eventually became mill owner and, and it's that kind of underbelly...

So I kind of often get frustrated, I suppose that, that we can't share those stories in a more *overt* way when we coming into places like Chatsworth or into my archive, where people are just mesmerized by beauty and aesthetic but actually there are all of these stories to tell, and I was really reminded of this, this week when somebody shared a film called *Machines*, it's on the BBC and it's in an Indian mill, a textile mill and there's no dialogue, there's no narration, there it is. I've watched about 15 minutes of it so far, it's about an hour and a half and it appears to be just someone walking around this mill with a camera and there's kids in there falling asleep, you know pulling things through horrible machines... There's fire, there's all sorts of risks of where there's no health and safety considerations-like 19<sup>th</sup> century UK.

\* And it was just filmed undercover in this-

/ I don't think it's undercover because there's a bit where somebody's saying to these kids, "Stand up. Stand up, they're coming," there's a little bit of dialogue which is interpreted, but no real dialogue and nobody explaining, "we're now going into this room, and that room." So I was kind of reminded of this issue quite *overtly* by starting to watch that this week, but also... I don't know whether anyone came to Chatsworth from a project that was called *Slave Trade Legacies*?

□ Don't think so. Probably Harewood, because obviously part of that's got a slavery archive. Because Harewood, where I am now, obviously was built on the money from sugar plantations. So that's a massive part of it-

○ But most of the wealth was all based on the slave trade, that's where the money came from and that is, you know, it's a really ugly history-

□ And that is really hard to get your head around, I think, today... I think Chatsworth, no... I think that money originated in the break-up of the monasteries...

\* Yeah-

□ But not, not slavery-

/ So this project, is one that's been going on in Nottingham University and it has been specifically focused around getting a community of Afro-Caribbean people who have lived most of their life probably now in Nottingham and really sort of *cor-ralling* them and getting them to think as a community about challenging those kind of hierarchies of stately homes, of museums, of galleries to say, "Where has your money come from?" Or actually, "Where some of this art come from? Who's made it? And actually, why aren't you telling us about that? Why aren't you revealing that bit of the story?" And you know the word 'compost', of this conversation for me, this kind of this really... It is those layers. It is, isn't it?

Those layers of information where you can have that, you know, kind of *expert* eye telling you about a piece of ceramic or a piece of lace, but actually there's so many layers underneath that, that tell so many different stories. And people really connect to those social history stories don't they, as well then, you know, when you're talking about how things were made, where things were made, how many people worked in the latest industry, you know people kind of really fascinating, it hooks-

□ I think it's interesting, there's a really major shift within country houses, probably in the last sort of 18 months, particularly. I've sort of felt couple of years that it is very much more about, it's not about the object. You wouldn't necessarily say, "well, this is a vase, with the name of the model, with the date, what it was made of..." that very traditional approach. And that is what currently exists in most places, but there is very much a lot of research and talk about the human stories...

I mean, I can remember a few years ago going to the V&A and seeing that *Tomorrow* exhibition, you know where they wear, wear that... The apartment of a fictional character was reproduced, and that I came away from that with such, that really had a big impact on me and I came back and I looked at the state rooms, which I had done years earlier and I just said to everybody, "We talk about the objects, but what do you actually learn about the man that conceived them, why he wanted it, what the people that were involved in it." I mean we talked about maybe one or two in relation to some carving and I said, "What do you learn about the person when you come round Chatsworth?"

And actually it was sort of quite difficult because in those large formal spaces, it's not really about an individual, it's about theatricality, it's a theatre set but throughout the house and I've been thinking for years about how, how do you do that? How do you bring the people out and the stories out that are actually far, exactly what you've been saying... And actually there's a saying, the last sort of probably couple of years particularly, there's a big shift in terms of changing interpretation and it's about different voices and actually it's about creating something together rather than the idea, I think that idea of the curator deciding what is relevant, is so far gone... The pendulum is definitely swinging the other way, very much-

○ Because it's more than beauty isn't it. Because, I think, sometimes you go into these places and you might walk in the first room and they're usually pretty overpowering because there's so much stuff. And it's all incredibly well made and beautiful it becomes almost overwhelming, after the second, third, fourth, room you cannot take anything in. It's like we're you saying, Amanda, once it becomes real it becomes a story, you have an emotional connection with the thing, whatever it is, the object, the bit of lace, you know, the bit of cloth or whatever is, the painting...

And then it has a story and then you are connected; then it has relevance and meaning and sometimes the smallest, I don't know, less valuable thing can be the most revealing, the most wonderful thing rather than the most expensive or intricate.

★ Yeah. I mean, you've all talked in different ways about, I suppose, the darker side of Western modernity, the Enlightenment and the Renaissance, about how these industries are implicated with colonialism, by imperial plunder, the dark side of these industries of, and so on... And I think there's starting to be a shift in this kind of understanding of like "well, the reason these collections happened was because of you know X Y Z," but how do you, in your kind of what do you do about that? I mean, how do you, how do you tell these kinds of unspoken stories? I was, kind of really struck, Amanda, by this image of, kind of like dead children under hedgerows, you know, like how that's kind of an *indelible image*. How do you, working with an archive, tell these kinds of absences?

/ I think that's really hard. I mean, I think you know, the event that we had, we had *Lace Here Now*, and we really wanted to make sure that we had some opportunities, not just to celebrate the aesthetic and the beauty of the pieces and of the making, so we kind of purposely put some events in there that actually did tackle some of those insights.

We also got some film footage from MACE, of films of, that have been made, like little snapshots of newsreel stuff, of what it was like in a Lace factory... Because there is so much romanticism, there is so much imagery that romanticizes and people still don't make the link with machines and lace, you know, even though you talk about machine-made lace, they still think it's ladies with cushions on their knees-

★ Because of the, because of the delicacy of the thing-

○ But it was so loud, the machines, it must have been unbearable... All the dust in those places, you know, breathing all this crap in, you know there's no ventilation, there was nothing, breathing all this shit, it was really loud, it must have knackered peoples ears... Freezing in the winter, really hot in the summer, really unpleasant place to work and be... And then at the end of this pretty hard and dirty process something glorious and delicate arrives. It is delicate, sumptuous, as you say romantic and beautiful. But the thing about lace, it is all about sex, love and death? I mean, the actual symbolism of lace, it kind of-

/ Well, it gets used in really significant points of people's lives , doesn't it still-

○ Death and sex and marriage-

/ Yeah, marriage and babies and christenings. And it's that reveal and conceal exploration as well isn't it in terms of people's identity, but it is really hard to tell that story because actually loads of people just don't want to hear it. What I have been trying to do is capture stories of people who did work the lace industry, those kinds of oral histories, before they died because essentially they're in their seventies and eighties now and we, you know there are, there are a number of very small manufacturing areas of lace still but we're talking less than a hundred people working in the lace industry which once employed 25,000 people plus. So, you know, we really want to capture all those people who worked for Birkins and the lace companies, larger lace companies and actually we'd like to tell the story of the cleaner and would like to tell the story of the MD, and everyone in between.

One of my PhD students, Nicola Donovan, looked at some wages books in the archive that were donated, sort of fairly recently, and she found them really, really fascinating and she followed this woman called Anna Jaives, and she followed her all the way through this wages book which covered about 10 or 15 year period... And the reason she got fascinated with her, she was the lowest paid person in the wages book. And so she kind of tried to just track what was happening to her when she was getting paid and then there's suddenly this gap and she stops, and then she suddenly reappears again. And she managed to do a little bit of around census details and it seems that she was a widow and she was the cleaner of the factory and she'd clearly been ill at some point and that's where she kind of you know, she disappeared. And then she died in service. Nicola, as she was an artist, produced a performance about this piece and that was a really fascinating story to tell and she managed to communicate that to quite a lot of people.

But people are fascinated by people, aren't they. People do want to listen but not when they've come to see the archive. When they come to the archive, they just want to be, they want that *fantastical* kind of experience of looking at really lovely lace. You kind of have to pick your moment, I think, when you want to raise that sort of conversation-

\* And it's, yeah... Just when you were talking about that moment of being *in* the archive, I mean just in this last year having spent a lot of time, very different archives, both of the archives that you worked at and others is that, kind of intoxication of these spaces too, right? That very far from being a kind of dry, kind of public records and so on they're like, they're tremendously tactile and even overwhelming, you know the one I've been to, you know, anything from a V&A archive to a, kind of film archive that's literally in someone's cupboard in South London, there's this kind of sense of a kind of *immersion* in a world, however big or small... And it's kind of... When you were talking about the noise of the factories and so on part of it is that this is a kind of aural thing, you know, whether it's the kind of quiet ways or the rustles, or whatever it might be-

○ Well, the smell, you mentioned the smell-

□ Yeah, when you mentioned the smell, funnily enough I was just writing that down because I thought, "that really struck me"-

○ It does take you somewhere, doesn't it-

\* Yeah, I can never get rid of the dust... Like, even in the V&A, which I imagine is like a relatively clean environment, so like a day later I'm feeling like I'm continually washing my hands because this like *encrusted* kind of sense of things.

○ You've got part of the collection on you.

\* Absolutely, you know, absolutely.

□ Yes, your transfer your DNA onto it as well-

○ Breathing it in-

\* Yeah, yeah-

/ But they're quite rarefied environments, aren't they? And you feel, you know, I've been lucky enough to go to lots of archives and see things that most people don't get to see as well and you feel incredibly privileged, don't you? You do feel that you've entered a magical world and they do have all their own smells and they're like their own particular kind of lighting and then all of that kind of *fetishism* about gloves and sometimes you're not allowed to touch anything anyway... So I think that all becomes kind of very seductive part of that experience.

□ You're right it is and it is very much an experience as well, isn't it? And I think it's about how you, what comes out of it and how it becomes an experience for more people as well. And as you say, I think the way through that is into challenging things and bringing out different voices. So for example, a couple things we are doing at Harewood this year, one is sort of you know, it's a Chippendale Tercentenary [Thomas Chippendale, most famous English furniture maker of the 18<sup>th</sup> century] and of course, it's got the largest Chippendale sort of commission ever... So we're doing that but again, it was sort of trying to think of a way of doing it differently because it's been done really well about 12 years ago or something like that in a very, sort of traditional way that was appropriate, felt it was appropriate then... But then so now we sort of got, there is wonderful man Samuel Popplewell, who is the steward... It's a great name. It just went, makes me want to go away and write a book instantly, you know, and he was a steward at the time and he's the one that's actually facilitating all of the work and Chippendale's firm's coming in, they're putting up the wallpaper, they're not getting paid, he's the one that, sort of trying to, keep it all going when the money's not flowing and stuff like that... And that's really interesting, so trying to sort of use his words but again it's not complete enough to form a narrative for the whole exhibition, but then also thinking about, you know, looking at the reactions Chippendale interpret, you know, interiors at the time, so some actually loved it some thought it was the most revolting, over-the-top, ornate, you know, that they were disgusted by it,... You've got everyone from William Wilberforce to the local cleric. And they've different opinions on it. And so we're putting those up with the exhibition as well to try and encourage visitors today, because you're saying just earlier about the aesthetic of it, we presenting these things as though you should love them. You should walk into a Robert Adam and Chippendale interior and love it, who says? Of course you don't have to-

★ I remember going to-

□ And we want people to-

★ To realize that-

□ Yeah to think... You come in and you have your own experience, we are not telling you how to feel, which actually I think we've been very, you know not we as in Harewood but in general, cultural institutions have been guilty of... You know, we think we know what's best but like, going back to the, you know Aborigines, our idea that we know the right thing or we know what culture is and it's just so, it's just not relevant-

★ But how things can get mistranslated reminds me of about five or eight years ago I went to Versailles when they had that series of contemporary artists showing of the site and I went to Jeff Koons-

□ I wondered if you were going to say that-

\* And, you know it was, it was packed, mostly with people I think who were not there to see Jeff Koons, which were kind of dotted around the palace, and I followed around this American family just, we were moving at the same pace and also they were so fascinating, and they were complaining very loudly about these like Jeff Koons, these shiny Jeff Koons things being installed in these three different bedrooms...

And at one point, one of them said, "this is about the stupidest thing I've ever seen," and I thought, "well yeah, that's kind of, that's kind of the point with Jeff Koons' work..." Anyway, it's kind of the stupidest thing you can think of at the stupidest scale but also in the 1770s, these people would have been collecting Jeff Koons. Like, they would have been collecting Koons, they would have been collecting any of the other artists they're now reinserting, like Takashi Murakami or Anish Kapoor, these are the artists that would have been supported by that kind of generation. It's of a piece – there's a total continuum And it was a kind of amazing instructive thing to overhear that like misunderstanding between where these works are coming from it's like, these are the today's baubles of power, basically.

○ It's someone like Jeff Koons, always plays to that market. That's the whole thing. It's about the money. It's about the market and it's kind of shameless in a way but he plays it incredibly well, yeah. But it's-

\* Wearing his kind of Wall Street suit, the whole thing, yeah-

○ It's you know, he's a kind of *huckster*, he's very clever, he's fantastic at what he does and there's a kind of, depending on what your view is, there's a charm or a wit about it, as well possibly. But it the shiniest, the *blingiest* the most... I mean they're beautifully made and they're absolutely delightful in terms of how they reflect light and in some ways it doesn't matter whether you like them or not, it's kind of irrelevant. Yeah, but I didn't see them in Versailles, but I can imagine them being absolutely at home there, fitting in perfectly-

\* It was... Yeah, so perfectly-

○ But Versailles, it's that whole sort of thing isn't it, it's all about power and ostentation, "we can afford this," you know, everyone knows how expensive a Jeff Koons is and that's part of it. It's not just the piece, it's what it signifies, the money-

□ It's all about the status isn't it, I think. That's why I sort of find really refreshing with Harewood as well, there's the fact that they've got, right from the very beginning, they've had this encouraging sort of *new talent*. So for example, they supported, you know, they were commissioning Girtin [Thomas Girtin, watercolourist and etcher; friend and rival of Turner] and Turner [J.M.W. Turner; both were intrinsic to the establishment of watercolour painting as an art form] before, you know, particularly for Girtin, before they were successful... And a bit like actually the Devonshires with Lucien Freud, who was, who they knew they were friends with before he became the well known and revered artist that he was and that's what I particularly love.

It's when it's actually looking for somebody that, you know, working with unexpected people and actually someone, something completely new, as well... Because you do, it's a very much a two tone thing, isn't it? The majority of it is that status and that showing off and the positioning yourself in the society that and you also get that, that encouragement and that patronage of the unexpected, which I really enjoy-

○ But I think Chatsworth is very interesting for that. I gave a talk last year, we stayed over one and I walked around these back rooms and corridors and it was just, you know, it was just wall upon wall of the most amazing collection of objects, Contemporary Art plus the old masters... And I, he's a really interesting fellow that Stoker-

□ Yeah, he is, he's fantastic-

\* Stoker is the Duke?

○ Yeah, and when you walk around with him, walking past these things and he can be quite dismissive of some of these artworks which are probably priceless and he goes, "Oh that was my father-in-law's, bloody disgusting piece of work," and then he goes to another room and there's all these plates on the wall and they look really fantastic, "we just bought them at a car boot sale." They all work together as a collection and put together with a certain kind of colour and a certain sort of texture. I really liked them but their inherent value is nothing, like a few pounds each but as a statement and because of the context you see them in Chatsworth, you kind of imbue them with a "they must be really rare and extremely expensive because they're in Chatsworth." So the context makes you look and interpret them in a completely different way. And he said, "Ah no they're cheap as chips, but I really like them," and that's quite interesting with him. So he, I don't want to say subvert, but he certainly plays with it-

□ Subversion is... Oh, definitely, subversive streak and I've always loved that-

○ But that's really interesting, I think-

□ Really subversive, not unexpected, a real sense of humor as well. Not pompous is-

○ Cos' he's very cheeky isn't he?

□ Yeah, definitely which I, which was always really great fun to work with, and working with him on the collection and where he was acquiring particularly with a commitment in Contemporary Decorative Arts as well as Fine Arts was fascinating. It might be somebody that was down the road in Bakewell or it could be, you know, sort of somebody who's the top Australian ceramicist of our generation and if... There wasn't really, there wasn't a difference with him and we used to have conversations and he'd say, "Well, I'm not, I'm not I'm not a collector." People would say, "Oh, he's a great collector," he's saying "Well, I'm not a collector."

I just, I have what I love” and he said “I can’t call myself a collector, if people decide in the future that I am that’s, that made me, you know, whatever but actually I just acquire things I like.” And what, for him it’s about the people as well-

○ But it’s the stories as well, that’s what makes it an interesting experience rather than an accumulation of what’s received as the best of contemporary, Western art, or whatever it is. It’s that mishmash of things which gives it a personality when you kind of go in, and that makes it feel real.

□ And that’s I think some of the strengths of these houses, as well that there is that sense of personality or that individual in, particularly ones, the ones that are sort of still lived in and have those sort of family links, I think... But again in terms of *patronage* as well, so when it came to a major ceramic commission and we actually ended up with going with this maker, Jacob van der Beugel, who actually hadn’t had a major commission before and it was a three-year investment, in him and his process, enlarging his studios that he’ll be able to make a commission on that scale and I thought I was just brilliant to do that... And it was about the relationship. It was actually about the *talking* to the, to the artist and the maker, that was the really interesting thing for him. And the briefs would always often be very, very loose and very vague at Chatsworth as well which was quite difficult to artists and even Michael Craig Martin, when he came in with all his experience, he was sort of like, I don’t really think I want to mess with this house too much, I might just stay outside,” and they were like “no, no come indoors.”

★ I’m interested in asking, because we’ve been talking a bit about archives as these kinds of morphing spaces that are often changing with people, with the personnel but I think we’re also kind of assuming that archives have always been like that. So I’d like to kind of talk a little bit about, actually when did this idea in the west of an archive start to emerge? Because I don’t know. But then just before we get to that, I’m kind of interested in these houses that you’re talking about. When did they first start to be thrown open to the public?

□ Well that’s the thing. They’ve always, most of them have always been open, the big ones.

○ Oh have they?

□ Yeah, always have. So you go back to, they would always, they would usually be a day a week where anybody could present themselves at the door and they would be fed and shown around-

○ What? Even when they were first built?

★ Like 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> century-

□ Yeah, and that was how the housekeeper’s used to make a lot of money.

Because obviously these houses, like Chatsworth, were only lived in maybe, at two points in the year because they had, at one point, the family had 11 estates and they were just on this permanent tour, of all their estates to check all their different houses, basically, and clear out the sewage, you know-

\* So it was a kind of *secret*, that it was a secret business proposition for people who worked there-

□ Yeah, so they used to sort of keep it. Yes. There was a housekeeper... She's actually, Mrs. Hackett, she's actually painted on the ceiling in the state, in the Great Chamber in the State Apartment in the first room.

\* She's the one who the artist didn't like.

□ Exactly. There was an Italian artist, Antonio Verrio, so this is 1690s, and he, they fell out because he was constantly, you know, he wanted pasta, was very difficult about his meals. He was going out to local taverns. He was drinking too much. He was getting involved with local women and you can imagine this sort of housekeeper with a rod of iron, she looks quite fearsome... You know they fell out big time and so he immortalized her as cutting the thread of life, she's all in black!

\* She looks completely embittered-

□ She is a real crone, you know, and you think "is that fair?" Who knows. And that, yeah, that was how they supplemented their income, was by tours-

○ I always thought it was a post-war thing, when they were kind of running out of money-

\* I seemed that too.

□ Yeah, no. I mean on that, on that sort of scale, but no it's always been the case... But it's interesting in the 19th century you look through it and they have to, they have to hand their wages in from that and then it gets given back by the Mistress of the House.

\* Oh really-

□ It becomes more formalized. And then, and then you get, I think it was Horace Walpole that issued the first guide to his collection because his father's collection, the first Prime Minister, Robert Walpole, his collection was dispersed and you know, I think Catherine the Great of Russia, she acquired most of it and he was quite devastated by that... This idea of the ephemeral collection, that's not stuck in time and it can get broken up. And so when he got his own collection together, he wrote sort of a guide to it so that actually something would remain-

\* So when would this have been?

□ So there would be some sort of record... So this would have been... Oh God, I'm terrible with dates for a curator... So this is 1700's of a second sort of maybe sort of around 1770, second half [A Description of the Villa of Mr. Horace Walpole, 1774]... Something like that, and this was at Strawberry Hill-

\* So that's interesting because that's at the time then of the emergence of public museums in the west, right? In Western Europe, that at this moment when kind of princely collections are getting turned into yeah public collections whether at that's by the French Revolution and the Louvre getting turned over to the public or, or whether it's that these museums are actually starting to be built in the 1780s that kind of in tandem with that, they're starting to think of these private houses as-

□ And actually being a resource as well, but you know, they would open them up people, you know people, they were, sort of like a library for people to come and look at... You know, but I mean not everybody obviously, the majority of the population was working seven days a week, sort of six, six till midnight, so you know, they're not going to be able to read books or even have the time to read books... But yes, they've always been open. They've always sort of been hospitable. There's always been this sense of obligation. I think that's what you get with estates before the welfare system. They were the welfare system for rural, their communities. They were the employer, whether the conditions obviously, you know in our eyes today, *harsh* to say the very least but it was that understanding that if you looked after the family, they would look after you and even the village that I lived in until quite recently there were people retired there who'd always work at Chatsworth and they had houses for life. So it was sort of carrying on to this day. But it's an interesting point about museums as well because you know, like the British Museum founded on the Hans Sloane collection. So again individuals, starting off with one person's collection and then growing from that. So starting out from, it's extraordinary to think of something like that starting from one or two individuals as well, isn't it?

\* Yeah, and in the U.S. I guess with the kind of the industrialists and Robert Barons and so on, I mean they are, they're at the basis of most of the kind of major, East Coast anyway, museums, right? The Fricks, the... Whoever else-

□ Yes, who bought stuff from the Devonshire collection.

\* Oh, really-

□ There was, talking of archive, there was something in the archive and the 10th Duke arranged it I think and they never talked about price. It just wasn't the polite thing to talk about money. And you're going, "Oh my god, did you really let them go for that little?" But it wasn't polite to talk money.

\* But yeah, I had a question to which I have no idea of the answer but if we're thinking in Europe, when does this idea of the archive go back to? I feel quite comfortable with thinking about kind of histories of museums and galleries but archives, I don't know.

/ I really don't know the answer to that.

□ I think it's one interesting thing that I've seen just within my working life time is the fact that actually when I came archives weren't valued and actually what I realized latterly, what I'm experiencing is that actually, they are now, they now have a monetary worth, which it never had before. So, when major, sort of valuation has been done in the past, going back a few decades, there was no value given to an archive, in the last 10 years, there has been... And suddenly, actually they are now decided, it's now been decided they are worth a lot of money.

\* Right. Right.

□ Whereas they never had a value, a financial value on them, even in my time.

\* Yeah, that's interesting-

□ Which is extraordinary. But the history of archives I have no idea.

\* Yeah, if we were to speculate, what, I mean how might they have kind of *emerged*? When I looked up the word archive beforehand, I saw that it came from, there was a Greek root. I think *Arche*, which had in built some sense of a public, *publicness* to it. So I guess it is kind of sense of it always being a kind of public record rather than a kind of private collection.

○ I was going to say because that's the difference of a collector and an archive isn't it-

\* Yeah. It's got some-

/ But a lot of collections become archives, don't they-

○ Well that's the thing. And then you sort of think, "why does someone collect?" Is it, is it for a personal obsession or is it something to show off to the world? "Look how amazing I am, how rich I am, how interesting or how well travelled I am."

□ There you go, I think we failed.

\* Yeah, breakdown, yeah-

/ But it is an interesting point because I was thinking what does it-

□ Happen around the time of the Enlightenment when they're starting to rationalize everything but then, you know, I mean before documents were kept for a reason... That you know, like land auctions and things like that, but if then they're documents going back so, so Chatsworth was going from so like the mid-1500, the first Chatsworth before this current one was built in the 1680s onwards and, but there are documents going so far back [there was an Elizabethan house at Chatsworth that was replaced by the existing Baroque house; later added to in the 19<sup>th</sup> century].

So there's obviously this sense that you needed to keep sure letters and so on, from and account books from Elizabethan times even when you, even sort of you know, one-hundred years, two-hundred years later-

\* I guess the famous case of Shakespeare, right? Of us not knowing really anything much about Shakespeare's life, but what we do know, is that the bills of sale and so on that it's really like, "well, we know he was here because he was selling this house to this person" and so on. But these things were not being kept because he was understood to be of importance, which he was actually by the end of his life, but just because there were kind of public records and there was a sense of importance to that. I guess archives are often assembled in a, they're not thought of as archives until maybe the person involved dies? Or starts to think of it as an archive, you know that their collection, whether or not you think of yourself as a collector, your, you're kind of saying "I am spending money and time on this pursuit," whereas in archive if you're a writer is just it's the stuff that you know-

/ I wonder if it's got anything to do with kind of *modernity* and *otherness* and about whether, you know those collections from the first people who went to America or Africa or wherever, whether those collections in that sense of "Let's show the rest of the country..." Which I guess is what you saying is part of the museum's, beginning of the museums.

\* Yeah. Absolutely. Yeah. Yeah, and I remember kind of in a very contemporary archive that I was looking at once in New York, was related to the artist collective Group Material, who were very active in New York in the 80s and stopped in the mid 90s and their archive was given to I think New York University... And I was really fascinated by it because this kind of collective artist group working in tiny project spaces, shopfront spaces and so on, having very little sense that what they were going to be doing would have any kind of importance for the kind of subsequent decades for posterity, and also tragically this was the generation of AIDS wiping out kind of whole communities of artists in New York. So a number of Group Material all died in the late 80s and early 90s. So the archives really were just kind of whatever was left behind. It was like scraps and remnants and somewhat and so on... And so when it got to, it sounded rather grand this idea of it being an archive at NYU, but really it was cardboard boxes of flyers and so on, typewritten minutes from meetings of people bickering about how best you know-

□ That's the fascinating bit, that's the-

\* Absolutely that's the kind of radical bunch of young artists and writers and in the notes are fantastically boring, you know because they're thinking about how they can coordinate, collaborate in a kind of anti-hierarchical way, but you get these kind of radical politics but underpinning it is just this like boredom of bureaucracy, which we might be familiar.

/ If you go back to your story at the beginning about the curation, and about how people you know might in the future curate that sort of, those bits out that they don't want...

You know in the same way that we're talking about slave trade legacy of whatever and it's kind of what people then do with those archives, isn't it? And what the, what are the bits that we value right now, what might people value in 10 or 15 years time? So, you know the concept of oral histories is being, one that's being valued at the moment and in 10 years time oral histories may not be valued, you know what will happen to those things that have been collected by libraries around the country and what will be the next thing... And those kind of, the way things move on and grow and accumulate... And then I suppose we've been talking about your job, haven't we and about you in a sort of a long line of curators at Chatsworth and about your values and your interests getting their moment in the sun, sort of thing.

□ Yeah.

\* I've been thinking a lot recently about the question of *deaccessioning* or when museums sell or believe they have the right to sell parts of their collection. And in the west definitely there's always been this idea that that's absolutely not allowed, that this is a kind of cultural repository, cultural value that cannot be translated then into kind of financial things and then in the last 10 years, or since the financial crisis various museums in North America have deaccessioned large proportions of their collection... Because they've had them valued, they've said, you know, "We've got 500 million dollars worth of art here. Why don't we kind of sell some of this to keep the lights on." And it's been a big debate and I think the kind of weight of opinion still comes down on the side of, "well, you can't do this," because it opens the kind of door to, you know, all kinds of things, but I was listening to interview recently with Glenn Lowry, the long-standing director of MoMA, who said quite controversially that he thinks the deaccessioning is okay. He said he's alone in this at MoMA. But his reason is that he said, you know, "you're trying to build a coherent collection. It's got to be as strong as it possibly can be, people make mistakes over time. So as long as the kind of sales of works from the collection of being put only towards the acquisition of new works because I don't have a problem with it."

□ I think maybe that's the key thing though that, isn't it... That when it comes to covering running costs-

\* If it's operational-

□ If it's operational then... Because I know that there was the museum that, it was a couple of years ago now, that was sort of deaccessioned or lost its accreditation, because it sold... Where I work now at Harewood it's actually an accredited museum and a family collection at the same time, and a commercial business-

\* So does that mean you're actually not permitted to deaccession?

□ Oh God, you've got me there, there's a lot of paperwork I'd still need to read...

\* Because I actually have no idea.

□ Yeah, no, I think it depends again about who it is because there's an awful lot that's on loan to the trust [Harewood House Trust, the independent charitable educational trust that runs Harewood House, Gardens and Bird Garden], they're then rather than being owned by it as well. So it's an incredibly complex arrangement, a lot more complex than I was used to. Yeah, so and I just had to say I think in the first sort of two months I had to sign off on 10 year rolling loan agreements for thousands of objects as well, which was just sort of slightly mind-blowing to get, to get my, get my head around. But... So, it's an, it's an interesting thing because it's you know, it's something that is definitely a part of, been a part of my working life and it's amazing how emotional you can get about it as well, I think because you realize how much you invest in the things that surround you. I remember there was one particular old master drawing that went off on loan and it never came back because a decision was taken that it was to be sold-

\* So you get to say goodbye.

□ Isn't that, that was, you've taken the words out of my mouth, that what I was saying... Isn't that, isn't that ridiculous. It was a piece of paper with a drawing on it and I was upset that I never got to see it before it went, I didn't get to say goodbye. And that's like it's a friend rather than a sheet of paper. So I don't know what that says about me, but I felt a real sense of loss, irrespective of whether I thought it was the right decision, there was sort of almost, I felt sort of a brutality in how it was my, you know my relationship with that work could just, had sort of gone and I didn't realize it was going-

○ But isn't that why, in some ways, why we collect, why we have heirlooms, why we have these things to make us feel alive and possibly because in the West, we are really scared of dying and the fact that word we're flesh, we are bone, we're going to go back to dust and by almost having these things, these objects, they kind of define us, they kind of distract us from the fact that we are all going to die, we're going to go back to dust... And almost by having an heirloom, like I said, like a watch from your father that you pass on to your son or your daughter, is there a sense that there's more to life than just you just kind of going back to dust- we are trying to make sense of preserve time. This is a refuge from the perceived terror of the void and nothingness?

\* These things are guarantees... Even though it's, as Amanda and Hannah just said, these collections are kind of dying on a material level too, right?

□ There almost like little anchors, aren't they, I think there's so much truth in what you said just now and there are little anchors in that, isn't it, about your sort of *how you stay alive* or something. And I know that somebody close to me lost a parent and their only sibling within a couple of months of each other just a few months ago and it was just that, just that, that what it was... It's just such an extraordinary thing.

They were, when you, you sort of got to do, look at the funeral and what was going to be said and the things that came in the condolences cards, it's "this person is still alive as long as you're thinking of them" and things like that... All these sort of *platitudes* which are lovely and well meaning and actually do mean a lot to you when you've lost somebody but actually you just sort of think, again, that's slightly kidding yourself actually, you know... We don't want to accept that actually we do go and that those close to us go-

○ And maybe that comes back to the whole thing about 'compost', because even what you said, you know when you think of compost it's something, you know, it's fetid or rotten or smells but for me it's very natural kind of process and in a way if you accept that, it's not a bad smell it's just a natural smell, that's just the way of the Earth... And then maybe this is the connection between the idea of compost and archives, these things are dying, but what is it?

★ Maybe that's what's unsettling about this kind of idea of an archive that gets lost or damaged or destroyed or deaccessioned or broken up that there is within it some kind of tether that we like to think of as a kind of *continuity* and then when that cord is cut its distressing-

□ It's that marker in the sand saying "*I was here,*" isn't it? And I can remember when I was living in London and going to the local street market and there would just be people's, you know that awful, that thing when you go to a *car-boot* or something like that when you see people's wedding photographs in a frame and somebody's just selling off the frame... Or in an antique shop and you just think "who was that person, my god that was on somebody's chimney-piece probably once and meant a lot..." And I remember going to one stand and, in this local market, and the reason I'd gone was because we'd just been burgled and the police said, "well, you probably find if you go to the local market, some of your stuff will reappear" and I went along and there was you know, there was somebody's pills there, like they're you know, just their prescription there, you know sort of on this table amongst all this other sort of stuff that wasn't worth very much and I thought "My God, that's the intimate pieces of somebody's life, that's just on this, you know, this trestle table in the middle of the east-end..." Oh, you know, it was really uncomfortable!-

★ There's something there about randomness, I was-

○ I was going to say exactly the same word-

★ I was thinking about this at the... I was in Berlin at the weekend and I went to the Gemäldegalerie for the first time, the painting museum in the west of Berlin. I had never seen the collection before and I hadn't realized they've got two Vermeer's which is, you know, a big deal. There are only about 30 or so around the world and I was looking at it and one of these paintings, I'm just thinking Vermeer died pretty much penniless, pretty much unknown and his work was not thought of for 200 years, really... And it was like, so all of the collections that it's in now; the Rijksmuseum, I think the National Gallery has one, like the Louvre, the Met, dadada...

These all only acquired them in the kind of early 20th century. There was a kind of 250-year gap to which like Vermeer's kind of journey towards becoming probably now one of the most adored, revered, best-known painters, certainly of that period... And, and that was just because of the work of one art historian who thought he was pretty good in the 1880s, so kind of put together a catalogue *raisonné*. And if this kind of back to this question a bit of deaccessioning, if things had gone another way you could very well have seen Vermeer falling out of favor had he been acquired to start with and being rampantly deaccessioned the 19th century and he would totally be lost. You know, so I think that kind of questioned deaccessioning, its like "well, yeah, but whose call is it?" You can make the call now and like this does not feel so irrelevant right now, "I'm going to get rid of Jeff Koons," whatever it is... But who's to say?-

○ But it can change everything... It's a similar thing I was going to suggest as well, its that kind of whole thing of... You know, philosophy... The things that are still around; Aristotle and Plato, but a lot of the ancient work by the Greek philosophers were destroyed by the Romans and the Christians because it didn't fit in with their worldview. I read recently about Dimitricus and apparently he wrote the most amazing books and all that is left are fragments of poems written by his descendants and students and apparently if his original work was still around it could possibly change the way we think about the world, but it has been erased... It was just completely destroyed. And how we see the world is based on how it is, maybe not *curated*, but how was informed politically or religiously and that's how we see the world. Because people have made those decisions at certain points in time-

\* We're back to negative space again, I think, you know... I think of something like the Sappho's famous fragments and we're kind of, they're so beautiful to us now because they read like modernist poetry from the twenties, these like disjointed little lines and we know they were part of a much bigger *whole*, but then there are whole other schools of philosophers that we don't even know of-

○ But even how we kind of, how we may be sort of see those really beautiful kind of Greek statues, say for example, all white and pure-

□ That's just what was thinking of-

○ But they were so decorated at the time and really kind of, well apparently quite garish.

□ Really garish colours-

○ Yeah and now we see them as white and pure and minimal; almost a pure expression of the essence of the human form. They appear very different to how they were originally made. How the work was meant to be appreciated and how we appreciate them today is very contextually different. This is not to say it is wrong as everything is in flux and fluid.

\* Wolf, I wanted to ask you a little bit about supposed living archives and maybe just ask you to talk a bit about this project with the tree, with the apple tree. I know it's kind of on your mind at the moment because I suppose, reflecting on this conversation, yeah it feels like there's a connection somehow.

○ Well this is a project which I'm working on at the moment. In Southwell grows the original Bramley, first ever Bramley apple tree, which all Bramley apples have come from and it's dying, it's got a rare honeyfungus and has between two/three years left to live. There have been lots of grafts taken from this tree, so there are other trees which had been grafted from the original. This artwork which I am working on is to grow a new orchard and then put accelerometers and sensors on this new orchard; these sensors and accelerometers measure the vibrations on the dying tree and then my team are going to express these vibrations as light and sound as a sculpture. The actual key which that which the tree resonates in is in a C, so I've been working already with musicians-

\* So do all trees resonate in C?

○ I'm not sure. I'm not sure-

\* Just this one does-

○ A lot of things do, a lot of things connected with the Earth resonate in C. Bees do, so for example, and so it does appear that there's a lot of things which resonate in the key of C... So, there is something quite elemental and fundamental about this. And yes, the idea with this project is that these sounds and lights will be documented so the viewer and the audience will get to hear what's happening with this new orchard growing and that will be in a C major and the original dying one will be in C minor. The project will document and express the death of one and the life of another. I suppose it's maybe allowing the viewer, the audience to experience that, to feel it... Rather than going to see the tree; read a plaque that this tree is dying but somehow by expressing this transformation through the use of the senses we can internalize and subsequently more fully appreciate this feeling. It maybe goes a little bit back to what we were talking about before about the use of noise, smell and touch, if you can have these sensations inside your body rather than something... When you look at things it's obviously inside but as we almost overuse our visual sight we can become blasé to its impact. By using the sense of touch and noise they can be incredibly powerful... Because they're quite latent, I think a lot of us may say that a hundred years ago, our sense of smell would be so much more important... You'd use it every day to work out if your food was rotten or safe to eat.

□ Rather than looking at your use-by date-

○ But you only have to experience one smell and it can come from nowhere and immediately you can be transported back to your grandma's house back in 1973, it can be so much powerful and resilient that a photograph.

Obviously Proust wrote thousands of words on this very idea. Because we're so bombarded by visual images on a daily basis from all over the world it is easy to become immune to their meaning.

With this project it is documenting something which is both living and dying. So it is, it's kind of own kind of archive. I have been collecting and documenting this process since April 2018, there will be a database which will actually be the recordings the dying and growing trees.

But I suppose I am interested in the idea of expressing a trace and the now. And it goes back to what we were saying before regarding an archive; about having an emotional connection to something rather than just like an intellectual or visual connection to something. Hopefully this idea maybe reconnects you with the Earth for even a short while or with yourself. The fact that we're all gonna' die and we're all connected is powerful and comforting in a way. And maybe if you can have this kind of connection with nature and yourself... maybe that's a helpful thing, you know, rather than be so kind of *disconnected*... And maybe goes back to this idea that we talked about before, and this age of the anthropocene where we see ourselves so distant and disconnected from nature but no, but we are, you know, we're as much as nature as a tree or the ocean-

★ What kind of form will the project take?

○ Well it starts with the sound. So the first thing is to create a library of musical stems in the key of C as a live soundscape, that'll be the first thing. The sculpture and project will live here in Nottingham and at the Speed Museum in Kentucky, U.S., where the new orchard will be planted. I'll be working with U.K. based musicians to create the musical stems in C minor and with Kentucky based musicians including William Oldham (Bonnie Price Billy) to create the C major musical stems to express the new growing orchard. The sculpture will be expressed as a physical object which will live as an installation in the Speed museum in Autumn 2020. The piece will act as a meditative portal and conduit to express the light and sound of the old and new trees.

□ Are there any other trees near this, this Bramley tree, Bramley apple tree as well, or is it sort of on its own-

○ It's a strange weird little place, it's in an old courtyard virtually opposite Southwell Minster. It doesn't look particularly special and there are other trees around, it's not part of a wood or anything like this. Nottingham Trent University recently bought it the space and the tree for posterity.

This tree will die. We've now got a 3D scan of the tree. So I may probably have this cast at some point in either 1:1 scale or 1:2 so there'll be a physical representation of the tree, but it's just like a snapshot of what that tree really looked like... rather than what that tree was and *is*. This goes back to our earlier conversation about animism, I am more interested in trying to express the essence of what this tree is or was, rather than what it looks like.

□ I hadn't realized that, until recently, that trees communicate with each other through their roots-

○ Through roots and the fungi, yeah-

□ I thought that was extraordinary... And I was always thinking as well, sort of about, you know, they say that we only use, what percentage of our brain? That we use, it's a minority isn't it? And you just think "well, there's very little in the body, you know, but that isn't of use" and you just think again, it's that idea of "what have we lost. What are we not? What are we missing? What have we not understood like learning?" Like I've been learning a bit more about trees in the last year or so and just thinking all this knowledge that we're not aware of, that we're rediscovering-

○ Yeah and then you sort of think "well, it is it latent? Is it inside us already?" Or is it something-

□ Something that's been forgotten

○ Forgotten... Or is it something in which we potentially might need to use in the future. We might need to use, like what is our appendix and our tail for? Typically through evolution, we get rid of the things that we don't need... We only use a very small capacity of what our brain can potentially do, why is it there?

\* This idea that we have deaccessioned our appendix'-

○ But through evolution, you only use what's necessary, so why have we still got this incredible capacity to think, to dream, to rationalise-

\* But that idea of like future potential... Because, yes I guess we, when we think about this idea that we don't use much of our brain or whatever it is, it's always this like "oh, what ancient knowledge have we lost," but I hope this idea of future, of being future facing, if we are primed for what happens next.

/ I guess, but I guess, I don't know... I suppose that's being a maker, being involved in making there is that, that embodied knowledge, isn't there? That isn't, I mean it, I don't know enough about how the brain used to know if I'm making sense or not but, you know, when you're making things, when I'm printing, you know, it's actually my body that is telling me if I'm holding the squeegee at the right angle and the noises that I'm hearing, I know if I haven't put enough pressure on and the noise of the screen, the ink hitting the paper or the fabric... I don't know whether that's my brain or my body, or whether that's feeling-

○ It's probably both, it's like muscle memory, isn't it? You know and it almost becomes, the two things sometimes become one I think-

/ And that's the bit, isn't it, that people are mesmerised about lace-making or any other making that people might, it is you know, how did that, how did somebody do that?

How did somebody have that knowledge to make that? And I think a lot of... And that's why it takes practice and a long time to do something, isn't it? Because you've got to develop that muscle memory or whatever that embodied knowledge is in terms of how you can make-

\* Isn't part of that, why there is still this belief that craft can be taught but art can't be taught. Which doesn't that go back that far really, you know, we're talking about a hundred years or something like that, because before that art was maybe closer to craft and design, but that sense that you can teach something that's repeated, that's muscle memory where it's like creativity that's still more associated with the art side of the division is like, cannot be taught-

○ Yes it's almost this idea of the artist as a *savant* or the genius or almost on another sort of spiritual plane to the rest of society. I think an artist can offer new ways of looking and therefore experiencing the world. I don't particularly hold with that, but I think that was especially true in the 20th century, I think that was the problem and probably sort of still now, when people are very much kind of compartmentalized; you're an artist, you're a designer, a scientist, you're a musician. It's very much a 20<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> century idea, whereas prior to that, these divisions were less segmented. I believe that scientists and artists do can search and investigate similar things. We are trying to understand and make sense of the world that we live in.

\* Do you see that is shifting that, now that-

○ I do I think, personally I do... as the world becomes more complicated and entwined it can be hard to express or resolve everything with art... An artist and a scientist or an artist and musician or musician and scientist collaborating can try and make sense of the world. Art continues to change and evolve but in the end it's always about the idea... how to express that idea. But what is it all about? And sometimes you sort of think, "well the best way to think about this or to express this is to work with other people who know more about that area than you do." So you learn and then maybe you'll suggest some things; your take on the world is possibly slightly different to a scientist and vice versa. But between you find these liminal grey areas, you end up creating sparks and you can end up in all sorts of interesting areas... This feels amazing, you know, and can make you feel like a kid, full of wonder and you feel alive. It makes you feel like you're part of the world rather than kind of zoning down into this kind of little box, you know-

□ I have to admit... This is where I get on my soapbox and you're somebody who is going to have to stop me because I am so... I couldn't agree more with what... It just, it really... It's driven me mad, since I first got into museums, I can remember working with an head of education, who said - I was Decorative Arts by this point - and said "well Hannah, you know finally Decorative Arts is prose and Fine Art is poetry," and I think that I've never forgotten it... I sort of felt, you know, I don't feel violent many times in my life, but I really could have sort of smacked that person at that point because I thought, "Oh my God, you're responsible for education, education for everybody who crosses the threshold of this place" and it absolutely wound me up.

And it's something that comes back and actually throughout my career and, and something we're doing at Harewood next year and next March working with a curator called Hugo Macdonald and it will actually be challenging these hierarchies. And I mean it's something I tried to do back in 2015 at Chatsworth with an exhibition of contemporary seat furniture and bringing together, of what was classed as art, design and craft, and these false categorizations. And actually what was really interesting back in 2015 is when I was talking to some journalists from, you know, if they were *craft journalists*, they didn't get, they thought "well that shouldn't be next to that," and I actually had somebody come to me and say... Because we'd put a major commission by these designers Raw Edges, almost next to a room with Sheffield Hallam students chairs that we'd sort of funded and they said "Well, Hannah, I think that rather weakened your exhibition, putting those two together"... It was interesting, some designers considered, you know, there was one that sort of flew in from Asia [to oversee installation] and you know and very much for him, he was the artist, but why is he next to something that you could get off the internet... And well we were sort of playing with that and people found it really difficult, actually and within my organization, but also then the people that came to critique it, could only look at it through their *lens*, some of them, only some of them. And, and I just found, there was no blame attached to that in my eyes. It was just fascinating that that's where people were and these false, you know sort of *categories*... And you go back to the 18th century, the 18th century interiors, going back to sort of France that was all about an interior; the paintings, you know, getting artists like Boucher who's doing the paintings, he's doing the designs that go and served porcelain, he's doing theatre designs, he's doing everything and no one thing was higher than the other.

★ But I think the split kind of happens after him, right? Or it's a kind of, basically it's kind of romantic division-

□ But it's quite interesting, you go back to the Renaissance though and you've got the artists beginning to align themselves with mathematicians because they want to elevate their status in society. And so they start so, you know, with perspective and so on and they actually start bringing, working with mathematicians back then and then that sort of pushes, that bumps them up, whereas they were seen very much as not exactly *lackeys*, but they really didn't have the status that they went on to enjoy by the end of the Renaissance as well. So for me it sort of starts back its, it's then, it's that sort of positioning, that sort of jostling in society.

○ I think maybe it's a bit of a generational thing as well. A similar parallel to that was that I got invited to this art and architecture forum in London last September and the discussion was what is art and what is architecture? What are the connections and differences? There were a lot of old-school renowned architects, quite famous, well respected but a lot of them are now in their seventies and eighties and they were saying about architecture: "its most beautiful of the arts and of course I am an artist and an architect..." I was arguing against this saying it may well be some of your buildings are sculptural but they are not sculptures. Fundamentally for most of the time you are working to somebody else's brief even though your response is or can be creative it is design and not art.

\* You're working to commission-

○ Exactly, you're working to a commission, you wouldn't go off on your own back and design a bank for example... why on Earth would you do that? An architect typically has sorts of functional restrictions. As an artist I choose to work within parameters but the process and outcome is about the idea. I think that's the difference between artists and architects, in architecture there's always a brief in, you're a slave to the brief, but as an artist it's possible, just rip it up and do what you want to do-

\* That's it, architecture the most contingent, isn't it, of the arts whether it's a brief, whether it's money, it's like... they go where the money is, essentially, and they have-

○ Yes, and so it's very different and, and... And there are overlaps, creating spaces, it's about texture, form, light, all these sorts of things. You know, it's about an experience sometimes you know, so I think there are overlaps between what sculpture can do and what architecture can do, some of those grey areas are really interesting... But for those architects to say "I'm an artist," well, I really disagree with that. And again that goes back to what we were saying earlier about this overlap and how we kind of categorize ourselves. But I also think it's difficult, I wouldn't say for myself, I wouldn't call myself a scientist even though I've worked with scientists, I think we share similar kind of concerns, I think those concerns overlap, but we do define ourselves by titles I suppose, for good and for bad-

□ I suppose it's that since you can if, you know that, I suppose it's only when it gets to the point where it stops people from crossing those boundaries and when people get pigeonholed, which always frustrates me as well... And that sense that you can't, you're sort of this one thing and I think it's maybe not necessarily, it's about the way that it matters to some people that can holt creativity and a lot of time gets spent on sort of defining it and thinking about it and... And it is a way of, you know, of *status* which I just wish that, you do need a term for things, don't you, but I wish that the importance that people put on certain terms over others, you know, it is a very human thing, isn't it? You know, to make yourself feel better, very often you will denigrate somebody else or that sort of people do, isn't it?

\* Fiction/non-fiction, I think is a good example here, right? Like it's, it feels like it's now quite distinct. There are rewards for one not the other, you know, it's not really encouraged for novelists to also write essays or vice versa... But if you look any further back or like to the birth of the novel in 17th century it actually was profoundly essayistic, and essay's likewise always very novelist, you know, but it somehow preserved in these categories that again rose not too long ago, but there's a certain hierarchy that's still there... Which I agree I think is collapsing now. I think-

○ Especially for younger people... And I think for example with documentaries and what is fiction and non fiction. What truths can these tell us? I very much liked the work of Truman Capote, the idea of a real life story then becomes a novel, there's almost more truth in that somehow and, because real life is so often so much stranger than fiction, it can reveal so much more about us sometimes.

\* But it can be tricky as well. I mean like, you mentioned Knausgard and you know over the course of that, how many novels, six novel sequence about his life, there was, when maybe the third was translated into English I was reading an interview with him and there's, the interviewer saying, "You know what, the bit in the book where you're 12 years old and you're peeling potatoes and you're looking out the window and it's like a six-page passage of you peeling potatoes and your brothers walking towards the house across the field, and the intense boredom of that which is incredible to me, that you could put that in writing, and that could only have been live" and Knausgard said "No, no I made that up," and the interviewer was like, "You're a monster, what kind of person would actually make that up..." And so I think there's some really interesting negotiations between kind of arts and life what you can kind of get away with-

○ I mean, it's incredibly selective anyway. I mean, how you remember things anyway is complete selective depending on how you or where you are anyway, so you're always going to embellish it... The memory almost transforms into something else but that is not to say it is still not the truth. It's like sometimes you write something so many times, that it almost becomes a memory, it then becomes your truth irrespective of whether it really happened or not. It's interesting what you say about that, but then you think, "well is it, is he trying to write a bigger truth? Is it an atmosphere he was trying to convey..." But, but then you sort of I think, "well that's straying back into fiction, rather than non-fiction..." But I think that the interplay between these boundaries is fascinatin I think-

\* Something occurs to me to kind of loop back to our earlier conversation, can archives lie?

□ Oh, yeah, absolutely.

\* How?

□ Well I mean everything that comes down to us has been edited by someone else and it goes back to sort of what you're talking about Barbara Hepworth's studio and other things that we talked about as well... And what did you say, "history is, history is written, you know, by the winners..." So absolutely they can lie, I would say-

\* Because they're kind of poly-vocal, right? But then often there will be an editor or someone-

□ Things would have been destroyed. So I mean archives I worked with, say for example with the Devonshire archive, there's a period in the 1820s, which was when a huge amount of collecting and alteration was going on at Chatsworth, all gone. It was probably destroyed by the Victorians. It was at the time I think when the Duke had a mistress and not so, I don't know what else was going on, but they... And a lot of Georgina, the 5<sup>th</sup> Duchess, a lot of her work was actually redacted as well, you couldn't read, you know, somebody had gone back and crossed all out-

/ Is that the one the film was made about?

□ Yeah, that's the one... But they would literally destroy things as well. So actually you end up getting that, only what somebody else deems acceptable to survive... So you lose that sense of more than one voice sometimes, because you, and sometimes you're aware that you've lost it and other times you aren't, which is interesting. So how much was taken out of the equation?

\* So some of those might be about a directive but it also might be about a kind of, you knowing already what the institution would stomach or... Which is a kind of internalization... I think about this a lot, you know, this kind of, what does becoming institutionalized mean? And I think part of it is that second guessing of what might fly and what might not fly-

This remarkable piece of a kind of a *Dance Macabre*, these skeletons, by a guy named William Hallam Pegg, who studied there in the 1880s... Committed Communist who made a series of basically kind of like Marxist lace designs, right? And one is this kind of fantasia of the aftermath of the economic conference in the early 30s with these like skeletons and *Hammers and Sickles* kind of dancing in this composite city... And its kind of yeah, I mean it's a fascinating thing in that archive because it's like "wow, how would this have been stomached?" But yeah, it's great to hear that the Vice Principal or someone had it and their office, at some point-

/ But it's long gone and yeah, you know, but it might turn up somewhere, at some point-

○ That's it, a *car-boot* somewhere.

/ I think the thing I was going to say a little bit earlier as well, I don't know whether at Chatsworth you had this or at, I have to turn a lot of things away. So, you know, I get offered things that, I mean a lot of wedding dresses I get offered-

□ With all those big stories behind them, I should think as well probably-

/ Lots of offers of "we're clearing out this, we're clearing out that, we found this, I found that" and I mean, one; I have a really restricted space, so I try not to sort of engage with it and when you were talking about, earlier, we've had stuff from Nottingham Castle Collection. So a lot of things actually hadn't been accessioned in the collection before it got taken upon, taken out of the buildings that it was in Nottingham before it went out to Newstead, via the castle over, I don't know that happened over about five or six years, I think... So we have had some things that have been deaccessioned from there or not ever accessioned, that when they got things out, thinking about the space they had it was like, "do we really need this? Is this adding any more to our story of what we want to say you know, what we want to preserve and what we want to say about the heritage of Nottingham in lace-terms." So kind of, I have to ask very serious questions whenever anyone offers me anything.

I mean, not really, if somebody rings up again with a wedding dress from 1975, but you know... But yes, there are sometimes things that just peak your interest and yeah could be interesting, but I do try not to add to it, really because actually I like the idea that it... And I don't want to preserve it at all. It's a collection in an art school and it needs to be used and it should be used and you know, and that's the kind of approach that I want to take to it. But I do like the fact that it is a random collection that nobody went out specifically looking for anything. So it tells a story of a particular period, of a particular industry, of a particular region. And you know and I like that fact about it, really.

\* I went to, when I was in Germany last week, I was there partly to do research trips about the Bauhaus, because we're working on something related to the Bauhaus, next year is the Centenary of it being founded in 1919, and I went to Dessau which is an hour and a half outside of Berlin and it's where the Bauhaus was, between about 1925 and 1930, and this incredible building designed by Walter Gropius, the founding director of the Bauhaus, and it's move from Weimar to Dessau, and he got the budget to make this building and it's remarkable and it's incredibly well-preserved. So it feels like you're just getting out the train and turning up into like 1926 and it's still functioning school... And I'd never been quite sure how it survived and I found out a bit more and... So it was closed down under political pressure from the Nazis in 1930-31, they wanted to demolish it then, because this kind of like, you know, it's just incredible icon of international modernism, and they didn't get round to it because they actually found it was very practical to use as a hospital, a training college and so on. So there are these archive photos when, with the Bauhaus kind of typeface, you know the kind of famous Herbet Bayer font, taken down and replaced by Nazi insignia... And so then the kind of War comes and they don't get to demolishing it, the whole of Dessau is flattened but somehow the school survives. And so again, it kind of then lurches into like GDR-era and it's still being used as a, like gymnasium, sports hall, all kinds of different things... And at this point the kind of, the history of it as this progressive Art and Design college is basically forgotten about. And it wasn't until the late 70s, they started to think you know, locally, "you know what, we should do something about this," and so they put a call out to all of the people still living in Dessau, I guess sorts of Berlin, Leipzig, any personal collections they might have related to the Bauhaus to kind of bring it back together again... Some of the, I guess at this point, the late 20s, a number of the tutors were still alive, even though they were kind of dispersed. So almost in the manner of this community collection, but one that was dispersed very internationally, they started to assemble a collection and archive. But then it wasn't until the fall of the wall, in the early nineties, that they actually founded it as The Bauhaus Foundation. So this is kind of this fascinating thing of a belated recollection of the things like 50 years after the fact, that in a growing sense that it's kind of important. Whereas if you contrast that with what the kind of the other afterlives of the Bauhaus' that opened in Weimar and Berlin but also Chicago, they kind of knew from the get-go that it was important and they were keeping stuff. So the biggest collection is still in Berlin, even though the Bauhaus was only open there for two semesters, or something. So it was this, seeing this archive of photos of the building in different states of disrepair-

○ It was amazing!

\* Yeah. It was, it was kind of fascinating seeing quite an unusual archival history. And as a result, they still think of themselves as a kind of, primarily an educational foundation, whereas the others think of themselves as more of like holding these design and architecture kind of objects and, you know, the products of the school rather than the school itself. I guess it's kind of how it thinks of itself as an archive.

○ It's interesting, just the quality of the architecture that made it flexible, that it could have all these different uses and so probably the fact that it was so excellent in this design, even though that's what the Nazis were scared of, it actually kind of went beyond that and that's why it's still around now, because it's that that saved it-

\* Absolutely, yeah... And what you kind of realized as soon as you step into this place is that it *is* the curriculum made like into a building... It's kind of there, you walk into this kind of lobby, of course, there are no entrances or exits. It's all like completely, you know, just like *flatly hierarchical* and there's this Moholy-Nagy-designed space you walk into and on the floor in the tiling it's almost a constructivist diagram of the whole building... It's like the auditorium connects to the canteen, connects to the workshops connect to the sleeping spaces, and it's really, yeah. It's like, it is the curriculum. It is a diagram of what a school could be like. And as you say Wolf, it kind of functions then as many different things besides-

○ But it is amazing when things like that become more than itself and of itself. It's a bit like the Rennie Mackintosh Glasgow School of Art building. I remember going up there and I was only 18-19 and was thinking of going to study there, Goldsmiths or down here in Nottingham. I remember going in there and seeing all the details and it wasn't just a building, it was really, really impressive... You go in the toilets, you know, and all the soap dishes and the toilet holders are all designed by him, or the easels... That level of detail, it is like walking into this whole imagined world, you know, so in a way it was like a living history. It's an incredible thing. So I saw it a century after it was designed and built but was still a really beautiful and fully functioning art school where you thought about and produced art.

□ And really immersive, isn't it?

\* Yeah... Also in Dessau, maybe kind of connected to what we've been talking about, there's also some of the houses that the masters lived in so you can just go as like, all designed by Gropius and, so is the house that Kandinsky shared with Paul Klee which-

○ Madness, isn't it-

\* Which is crazy, right? Next to that Oskar Schlemmer and so on, but two of them were bombed and one was Gropius's and one was Moholy-Nagy's and they've argued for decades about what to do because the kind of base of the house existed and they had extensive designs but didn't know what to do with him, so they ran three architecture competitions and then each time they were like, "I think I know what, I actually, this isn't doesn't feel right."

In the end, what, what finally got built a couple of years ago by this young I think Berlin-based practise was, if you imagine almost like a Rachel Whiteread, a kind of ghost of these houses, so they still functioning, the volumes are all still the same but it's just made in kind of concrete, like the bunker that we're in now, completely featureless. So they detail, the windows are all still there, but none of the details. And you walk inside and you're in a kind of shell of the building... And it's almost disappointing going inside. You always wanted to be this completely inaccessible block of concrete, but it's like, it does something quite *potent* in terms of invoking, it almost feels like an exorcism, you know, invoking this like ghost house that's no longer this like beautiful atelier or whatever. So just, you see them on this like leafy quite kind of *boujee* suburban streets, you have these like the three chalets from the 20s with this like, *brutish block*. But yeah, it's pretty interesting and kind of connecting with what an archive is or isn't and you know, how it could be kind of unreliable. This is almost like a kind of self-consciously unreliable take on that, like we couldn't, *how could you?*

□ And the other thing, sort of even going on from that as well is the fact that we're looking at archives from our own perspective, as well, aren't we? So I mean they are echoes of a time that's gone before... But also, you know the whole work that Foucault was doing about *epistemes*, there's this sense that it's about you're not in the same mindset as the people that were living and creating those objects and those spaces and documents, as well. And you're aware of what's happened since then as well which colors you know, and to so, you can't, we are, we are a step away, we are divorced. There is some sort of veil always there, that we're not seeing them in exactly the same, the same way as they were appreciated then.

○ No I think it's really interesting and especially with what's happening now. I think in one of the main galleries in Glasgow, they're taking down paintings because they are politically insensitive and sexist. We are rethinking and re-curating our history. What happens to these paintings that are non longer shown? Do they get put in the archives and left as documentation for the past or do we see these artworks in a new light if they are re-contextualised? Our history is often painful and problematic How and what was placed on gallery walls then and what it said back to society at that time continually changes to how we can read and make sense of the artworks today.

□ Yeah, you know, so taking down sculptures which of course are on pedestals and plinths so you're literally looking up to them. But a sense of people that have perpetrated to our sensibilities, the most atrocious crimes-

○ It's like in America, I suppose, taking down all those statues from the south, you know-

/ Oxford University were saying it as well.

★ Yeah, Cecil Rhodes in Oxford, yeah... And Colston Hall in Bristol, as well, yeah-

□ So you are editing it. But then at the same time, these are not figures that you revere and the way that they are, they are, the statue is made is to be *revered* and remembered in a positive light, but actually that idea... It's a bit like with the concentration camps, retaining those so that actually people, if you put it out of sight and out of mind, is it easy then for people to forget and deny things? But actually if you keep them in the open, is it sort of a potent reminder, a warning-

\* I guess Germany's been one of the exemplars of this, hasn't it? Of preserving and facing-

□ Of not hiding the dark, back to the underbelly, isn't it? And not ignoring it, because it's difficult or challenging-

\* And there's also a lot of debate in Germany right now because they have been so, facing up to the 20th century that actually they've all been, increasingly the debate is turning towards "well, what about courage and colonialism? What about the German colonial project?" Which has been kind of overlooked because of the very understandable focus on the 20th century. And so, yeah these kinds of the status of these monuments and what gets preserved, I think it's really being called into question, more than you know, I can remember... In the last kind of a year or two, it's really, conversation has gone somewhere totally different.

○ And again, there is I suppose a parallel with that and I think what possibly what we were speaking first but, it's like when the destruction of these incredible sites in Syria by Isis. You feel and say "oh my God!" It hurts watching this; you are wincing! It's like, "oh my God," cause it's gone, and it's so finished. It's obviously done to help create that emotion and anger and an attempt to rewrite history and memory. This has gone on for millennia, you know, every generation or civilisation to a larger or lesser extent kind. I am thinking here, us lot sitting in this gallery here in Nottingham, we would probably say we could or would never consciously just destroy something which has existed for to 2-3,000 years, you would just never do it, you just sort of think it's a sacrosanct. Saying that we continually edit and curate our lives and the past on a daily basis not just in terms of art and galleries but how we present ourselves to the world through arts, design and social media.

□ It's making me jump back to deaccessioning as well and also say, what you were saying before about you don't know what future generation's going to be interested in. As well, and what's going to evolve and you're saying about the oral archive will in future, what is that? You know, what is going to move on from that as well? And I think that's one of the difficulties with deaccessioning, I think it's also a fear that actually you're destroying something that is, well, not destroying, or you're breaking apart something that people are going to look back on and take a judgment on because of course they're going to see it from their own perspective rather than ours, and I think it's one thing working in Heritage you, you know, particularly when you're sort of dealing with sort of CEOs and so on and you're thinking: "but actually we're here for one generation."

And actually there are generations before and there are generations to come and there is, and I think that does change the decisions you make and the whole push with conservation of course, you know, just trying to make it reversible wherever possible, because techniques will change, better ways of conserving will sort of come in as well. So, but at the same time, I think you can't be entirely hamstrung by fear at the same time. So it's a really interesting debate-

\* And it shifts so quickly I would say, when this, the Comodo Gallery that I was in, there were showing two Rembrandt's from the collection of Joshua Reynolds, who'd extensively repainted them, like three quarters of them. And he from his diary says that well; I'm proving these because they were not the best Rembrandt's. And it's only been in the last few years that through x-rays they can work out what, how much has been repainted and realizing what the kind of underlying kind of thing is, but than I was looking at this kind of thing, I mean that's incredible! That was happening then and that would have been not only acceptable, he was like very, very confident that he was in dialogue with him, helping out Rembrandt, because these weren't his best works versus, you know, a kind of supposedly, probably not kind of really kind of a iconoclastic work by like the Chapman Brothers in the 90s when they did those series of like scratching out Goya, or Rauschenberg with De Kooning in the 50s. So, yeah, these kinds of things that in the 20th century were kind of retooled as iconoclastic in some kinds of ways would actually just kind of standard, it was part of the conversation.

□ Yeah, I think things weren't sort of *revered* in the same way necessarily, in the way that we do... I'm just sort of thinking about tapestries in collections that you know, as well the fact that they would sort of be cut up and stuck together to fit a room as they move from one room to another and things like that. Whereas now, you know, we're sort of trying to preserve every, every original stitch, not even every original stitch, but the stitches of some of the treatments that have happened afterwards because then that tells you about the evolution of the, of the object and it's all part of the history and integrity of the object as well-

\* So has that moved towards now, this kind of acceptance that it's kind of palimpsestic, yeah, you shouldn't be kind of stripping back or no or... What's the current thinking on that?

□ I think it really differs. I think there is that sense that you should, you need to respect the layers of history, which sort of brings us back to compost doesn't it as well, but actually, but then I think it does come down... I think actually in practicality, it comes down to sort of the case by case basis as well, because I think if something, if there's been an intervention that actually stops you reading something in the way that it was intended, then would you sort of record the later intervention but then take it away in some instances because it actually, you know prevents the reading of it in the way that the person that created it intended it to read. But it's a really interesting one about that, you're talking about sort of the Rembrandt's because who on Earth is going to want to take away Joshua Reynolds' work in order to get back to a Rembrandt, you know...

So it's a fascinating... I think it's one where curators love going round and round and round in circles about.

\* Yeah, I wanted to... I think we've all kind of through what we do have these kinds of quite lived connections with archives and I think of being able to articulate how some of the idea of an archive might correspond to some of these kinds of ideas of compost or composition or whatever, but there are these other kind of subcategories that we've been presented with here that, for me anyway feel like they have that connection is a little more hazy or a little more oblique and I wanted to turn to this kind of question of artificial intelligence, and wondering like for you maybe just to kind of start off thinking about that, how, how if at all would you want to kind of connect the, join the dots between some of these conversations between compost layers, time, AI... Does that make any sense for you?

○ It seems like in a way... I think potentially could be one of the biggest social, cultural, political shifts is this whole thing about AI, and I think we're only just on the kind of cusp of realizing *actually these things starting to affect us*, even just with technology and-

\* When did you first become aware of AI? When do you... Because I remember... But when, when, do you, do you recall?

○ Well probably through science fiction films and it always probably sort of felt like it was something kind of over there-

\* Right? So this is like Hal in *Space Odyssey*, something like that-

○ So this is the 1970s ... And so yeah, it's probably through those kind of films, but for a long time it did feel like it was a *fantasy*. I think that whole thing about technology, how it's going faster and faster and faster with this kind of *vortex* and how we choose to be so dependent on it... Let me say for example, our phones. I mean, it's just like if you forget your phone in the morning, you have a really weird and uncomfortable feeling, you feel that you are disconnected from the world. You now see and experience the world through the lens of your phone more and more. They are incredibly useful but at the same time you think, "shit, is my my whole experience of the world now through this thing" and then you think, "okay, it's not part of me physically, but it's inside me and what is the next step, does it actually become inside of me?" But this thing about acceptance and death and compost, all of those things we perceive from a human perspective. What is the natural order of things? We are flesh and bone and we feel we are somehow in control of this, we feel we understand but almost as soon as you have this thing with kind of artificial intelligence, everything goes, goes to shit then... Because all our sense of how we perceive the world, what is important and what is real? What is not important? Everything is different. I think we're on the cusp of something, which is obviously incredibly interesting but kind of potentially terrifying-

\* Terrifying why?

○ I think in some ways, I think we, even though in our own kind of crazy ways, we sort of think we are in control... And I mean that 'terrifying', in the romantic sense of terror. We used to see nature as an expression of the the sublime where nature was always more powerful than us. And we had this romantic vision of the sublime and then in a way we tried to kind of harness nature, you know, that *we're in control, we're in control of it...* but almost through *us* trying to harness it through technology, we've almost sort of *squeezed* it and it's popped out over there. This new system could end up controlling us. We think we are the epicenter of the world and maybe we're not-

\* Because I was, you know thinking about this, I realized the first time I had some awareness of AI, I guess it was, you would classify as AI, was when that computer program Deep Blue, I think it's called Deep Blue, beat Gary Kasparov, the then-great chess Grandmaster... I think it must have happened in the early 90s and I remember being pretty young and seeing it on TV, and that was also a moment when actually chess was kind of televised which seems quite weird. It was a big deal. I can remember a number of names of chess players-

□ Probably needs to make a comeback actually, it would be a good fit with mindfulness, you know-

\* But I remember it, it was a tremendous embarrassment for Kasparov, and it was, it prompted a lot of *hand-wringing* I suppose and just like, *where is this going to go...* I wonder what, I wondered what kind of think "why did it feel so distressing?" And there was something about the sense of the computer, the interface then because it looked like crap, right? It kind of completely 2D, pixelated thing and yet it's-

○ It could do this... Well the tennis things just that, that-

\* Absolutely-

○ That's as, kind of sophisticated as it got in terms of games and stuff, then wasn't it-

\* So graphically it felt like super basic and I wonder if there was something somewhat sinister between this like very evident, already, gap between the intelligence underpinning this kind of interface and what, you know how you could see it. Whereas like now of course, that has been completely closed, that kind of idea of an *uncanny valley* or whatever has been completely kind of shifted. But that for me was like the first time I remember like becoming cognizant of what AI was, and it feels probably relevant that it was beating a man at a, one of the oldest kind of games known to man, you know, and so on. It's like something kind of quite mythic about that-

□ I think, for me, it was about sort of vulnerability as the whole human race, in the sense that, when we've lived in cities and so on, I mean our only predators are ourselves, it's not like in prehistoric times when there were dinosaurs or huge animals that were our predators, you know, we don't actually have any natural predators in most of our, apart from other human beings, in our everyday life these days...

And this idea that actually you are slightly, that you are invincible, convincing yourself that you're invincible as a race... And there is that potential that actually you've created something that is actually is going to wipe you out, and actually is that a bad thing, when you see what we've been doing to this planet frankly, you know, I mean at the end of the day, you think is it going, you know some things you said at the beginning, and obviously very much sort of present following your return from Alaska as well, I think what a mess that we sort of make of it but that idea, for me, I've always interpreted it as vulnerability, that sense that human beings aren't top of the tree anymore, that actually there's somebody new in town that could actually overtake the human race... And it's a lot about fear-

○ And the things we've actually created, and that's-

□ And we've created... It's like Frankenstein's monster or opening Pandora's Box.

\* And I think it's kind of no coincidence that, like this idea of that *we're going to get wiped out by AI* has really taken hold, most acutely in Silicon Valley. So you've got all of these kind of venture capital guys in, around Palo Alto really buying up patches of land, in places like Alaska, all kinds of islands, to kind of say when all of this falls apart, because of what we have kind of wrought, then we're all getting out of here... And they've all got tinned food, it's the kind of-

□ And they've got their communities ready to move into, haven't they-

\* It's the classic kind of Cold War imagination of like what surviving looks like, which is that why would you actually want to live in this world? Yeah-

□ I know... It's about like surviving a nuclear explosion. Why would you want to survive? Because everything you left and held dear would be gone, but then actually as human beings that is our strongest instinct, isn't it? Survival.

\* But our conversations about archives tended to be somewhat kind of *backward-looking*. I think we were trying to pull out how archives are also in the present tense and are always also evolving or degrading and so on... But I guess with AI, we maybe we're not far enough in to race any kind of history of AI, but we're already, you start to look to the future, right? As soon as you kind of... And I realized looking at this term, I barely know what it means, what the implications are-

□ I know, I said... I think that was probably the term that I struggled most with in terms of thinking about trying to bend my head around that actually and how that added up. But I think, I don't know, talking about vulnerability makes me think about archives as well, it is because we are so transient that actually having an archive that carries on is reassuring as well.

\* What do you think about to push on that, kind of this idea of what does the *artificial* in artificial intelligence mean? And what might that kind of bring to bare on what we, we were talking about; can archives lie? Can they mislead?

What would an archive as a kind of form of artificial intelligence look like? I think is what I'm asking-

□ You're stretching my brain... I'm not sure I've got an answer for this one right now-

\* But what does artificial mean as a term? Taking it aside from what it kind of *denotes* now, in what does, what is artificial intelligence? We started out by talking about authenticity-

○ But in a way, I think it's almost to me, it's almost, it's creating another being, it's almost like it's creating something which we're not in control of... So to me, it's-

\* Non-human-

○ That's not human. But it is because as soon as you say it's artificial, so I think it's not real, but it is real and it's in itself and I think it's almost, you can almost see its potential. I mean, that's something, does AI have emotions or feelings or... It's back to this, what are feelings? What are emotions? And I suppose going back into some of the words which have presented here, that the whole thing of animism, that somehow everything has its own spirit. Okay, there's AI and there is a robot which is artificially intelligent, does that robot have its own sense of it, of itself? Or does it, does it feel? You know, is there an sense of that?

\* And it's really telling, right? That we, the words we immediately grasped for was like Frankenstein, Frankenstein's monster. And why is our frame of reference limited to this like gothic novella written at the around an industrial revolution by an 18 year old woman, but was like narrated as the story goes on the edge of a lake telling ghost stories with Byron and whoever else, but that's still there's something, all the kind of things that we've articulated about what the challenges that AI presents, its kind of all there, it's at the dawn of industrialization.

○ Which is that fear of the unknown and I think it comes back to somehow we, especially that you know, the beginning part of 21st century, we still have this idea that somehow we're in control and, and I think what you said-

□ It's about learning that we are not.

○ Learning that we're not letting go in a way... And I think that's, that's the really difficult and challenging thing... maybe in the 50s and 60s, we had a knowledge, "we can do this, we've have nuclear bombs..." We've kind of got to the point now where it's so acute, it does kind of feel we have kind of come to some *crossroads* I think, you know environmentally, culturally, politically... all of these things, things do feel very fluid... technology, AI, it's a doubled sided sword. We love it and hate it, you know... It's like a knife, you can cut with it but you can kill with it... And so, it's only a tool but it's almost like this knife has its own life, this knife can do what it wants... I think that's the fear-

□ Doesn't it make it... I wonder if it also makes us question ourselves as well because, you know, I think we place a lot of importance on *feeling* and that being authentic and so on... But actually obviously you'll have scientists who will argue that love is literally just the cocktails in your brain and actually it's just how your brain communicates and how that affects your brain. So we sort of talk about the heart-

○ And the spirit, yeah-

□ And the spirit, but actually it's no more than chemicals, and so artificial intelligence is just a mechanical version of that, in a sense, and that's really unnerving. Because everything that we think makes us *us* and-

○ And unique-

□ And unique is actually just, you know, a chemical occurrence.

\* And our language kind of changes with that because it kind of... I was just thinking back, we were talking about stars earlier, stargazing, and in the 17th and 18th centuries, you would have talked about *star-crossed lovers*, right? Kind of *star-crossed destiny*. Now you talk about people having *chemistry*. That our kind of language does reflect these kinds of shift, but there's a slowness to it, that we still talk about head and heart kind of split. Whereas I think we kind of know that isn't really there, but there's a lag in terms of how we think of ourselves as how we are in the world and then also kind of what knowledge we have access to.

○ And I think there's a thing in interpreting about algorithms and I think that kind of plays into this in terms of how we engage with the world that I think with things like, let me say for example like using Spotify. I don't know whether you use it, I still buy vinyl, but I use it in the studio, you collate the kinds of things that you like and you do a playlist and then it gives you this daily mix, and the choices it suggests are music that 95% of the time you like. When I was a kid used to think "I'm in complete control of what I like, what I don't like, it's me, I'm unique, I'm an individual," and then seeing these algorithms are actually working out fairly accurately what it is that you're about, what you like, what you might not like that's kind of, it's fantastic, but at the same time really frightening, a bit freaky... Because this whole sort of sense that you are making personal decisions, or maybe you're not, it's just your body's doing this, you're hardwired and it goes back to what you were saying about this idea of feelings and the spirit and this all stuff, you know, is it something otherworldly? Is it something you know spiritual? Or-

□ Something beyond the flesh and bone-

○ Or is it not at all? Is it just synapses kind of things we're just kind of *hardwired*.

□ Am I not ready to accept that yet? And also when you do, what does that, where does that leave you? You know?

I suppose in a sense, but I think that algorithms, it's a really key issue, isn't it as well because the fact you are fed what you believe, agree with... So although, you know, the web in the digital age has opened up our world in every possible way, at the same time it's done that... So you will be fed the things that you agree with rather than anything that's challenging and wasn't there; was there a Dean that was speaking about free speech or something and the fact that, you know, about having controversial figures in that, that actually it was important, because it is important to learn to be challenged and actually, and to be you know, and actually that, that, that takes your thinking on, as well... Whereas if you're constantly talking with like-minded people, and actually you're seeing, you know *Trump*, *Brexit* and everything, you know, I mean, I thought the world had gone a long way and then actually suddenly realized that people like me thought had gone a long way, but for the majority of people actually they were really pissed off-

★ There was... In the, the snap-general election last year, I read afterwards the news items that had been most shared and liked by Labour-voting Facebook users were on fox hunting and the ivory trade. And now whatever else you might see the general election having been fought and lost over last year, these were not the key debates, right? So there's clearly a disconnect between a kind of public political discourse and a kind of private kind of social network kind of discourse. It's like really, this weakening, the democratic process and what, I mean that's almost like somewhat *comic* example of that and the kind of Russian collusion would be at the kind of more nefarious end of things but, yeah... I mean clearly that's been a shift-

/ It's also the Channel 4 news reader, who a couple of weeks ago had a debate within American academic who's quite Trump-like in his views about women and language, it was a brilliant debate to watch and then *Channel 4 News* had to get security in I mean, this is just one story amongst many in the moment, isn't it? Because she's now being the victim of all sorts of abuse from people who are like "how dare you give this guy a hard time." So yeah, I think there are some really scary things that are dystopian aren't they, in terms of technology, but maybe a hundred years ago, those dystopian views were about disease. And we still have those as well, you know, we've had this I keep picking up things about the 1918 flu epidemic and how many millions it killed and you know, we've got a flu epidemic and so on. So, disease is another one that suppose when you listen to scientists talking about disease, like flu-like viruses, they do talk about it a little bit the way we're talking about technology and technology's threats to us.

○ I was talking to this scientist recently, his primary research is about diseases, diseases which affect humans and he said "it's not the internet and probably not a nuclear war, it's going to be diseases which are going to probably wipe us all or a vast percentage of the world, if not in the next 5 years, 10 years, or 20 years..." antibiotics are becoming useless as we overuse them... and it is the sort of thing which no one's kind of talking about but really in terms of the threat to humanity, that's probably a bigger threat. And because we travel and communicate so quickly, how these diseases can spread so kind of quickly and mutate, probably more so than anything to do with artificial intelligence.

But it's something which is maybe so raw and powerful and visceral and I think in our arrogance as the kind of the human race we think, "well, we've got rid of this, we've got rid of this, we've..." Even like AIDS which we at one point in the 80s, it was the most terrifying thing, it's just "going to destroy everything and everybody..." You saw no way out of it and it's kind of been contained, obviously it's still tragic for the people involved in terms of how many people it's killing, it's less and less and less-

It's managed-

Its managed, and a-

In a difficult way but it's still managed-

/ In our privileged context-

In our... Yeah, exactly-

Yes very true-

\* Yeah, and I had to kind of question connect it to context I suppose about, about the future. It was thinking about, I think it's a line, it's either Douglas Coupland or William Gibson said, I think it's Coupland said "The future is already here, it's just not evenly distributed yet," and I'm not entirely sure what it means-

It sounds good though!

/ It takes me straight in my head to that that documentary that I was talking about machines and watching these people working in this mill in India and thinking that was Nottingham, 150, 160 years ago. So and you know having been to India quite a few times, that is my experience it is kind of *Blade Runner* and then I'm looking at Dickens, you know, it's, you just turn your head that kind of breadth of visual experience and you know... So I think that that really is really accurate description of the world-

\* But do you think then that means... How has all of this affected the ways in which we imagine the future? Because if you kind of think back to 50s, 60s kind of evocation of the future, *Jetsons*-type things, right? It's just like shiny, happy kind of hoverboard, you know or even kind of earlier to the kind of Arts and Crafts Movement, its kind of idea like well, actually-

It was full of promise-

\* Full of promise yeah, yeah-

And now it would, it seems, it seems to have flipped-

\* But it feels like we can't imagine very far now. I've been looking a lot in the archives of Allison and Peter Smithson, the brutalist architects, and in the mid-50s, they were commissioned to imagine a house of the future for an *Ideal Home* exhibition which was in 1956, and their response to the commission was that you, that they couldn't possibly in 1956 imagine further ahead than 25 years into the future. So what they produced was this house imagining what life in 1981 would look like but in some ways quite accurate and other ways quite outlandish. But looking at this I was thinking, could, no one would imagine life even 25 years in the future anymore, right?

O I mean, it's not, it's, it's almost impossible... I mean, it is impossible but the sense of it and I kind of think even like how, like say for example like the sense of these bigger waves and bigger movements, they just seem to be getting closer and closer and kind of smaller and smaller until it kind of comes this tiny little world... Like say in terms of youth movements, let's say for an example like fashion or music but as an example; from 1969 to 1976, you'd had everything from Rock and Roll, Hippie Culture, through, through to Punk Rock and then even electronic music and everything in between and in our imagination you sort of think that went on for years, for decades and decades, it happened like in less than 10 years, you know... And it, and everything just seems to be further and further and further, kind of compressed. So sometimes our imagination and our ability to dream is becoming less. It's almost we're living out ideas which were written by SciFi writers in the 50s, 60s and 70s, imagine even what's going to happen next year, two years, three years, I think even politically with Brexit with Trump, everything just feels very short term... We can't dream that in a hundred years time it's going to be fantastic, that, there's just seems to be this lack of vision. In post-war Britain we dreamed and created the the NHS for example, "we're going to do this," which will shall take a long time to implement. "It's going to be fantastic for our society in 20, 30, 40, 50 years..." these big gestures don't seem to be around.

\* Yeah, I feel like the kind of furthest ahead, I hear people speculate and mostly it's around automation, around self-driving cars, you know, it's a 2030 X number of whatever cars on the street... And that's kind of it, you know, but yeah these like grand projects like the NHS, like an Arts Council or like whatever it might be, those kinds of things don't-

O These big generous gestures are things which change society, these seem to be lost, I think... And yeah, everything just seems to be kind of *sshhwp*... a kind of coming to this point. So it's going to be a really important turning point and I suppose it goes back to that anthropocene thing, as well, kind of what we're doing now is just, it's just massive, you know.

\* I was reading the other day, this series called, it's called something like *95 Theses on the Internet*, and it's just this kind of technologist who has been developing these kinds of working propositions or provocations, and one is that the only countries who get the internet are China, Russia and North Korea.

I was like, you immediately want to kind of think, you know, think back at that and say “no, I mean, you know, like it’s, this is not where the kind of major platforms emanated from,” but then if you think about the last year or two, you’d have to say they are, they are winning-

□ Yeah. Yeah. Gosh, that makes you think.

\* How, how might we go about connecting some of these dots of, I mean, or where do you see some of these questions of morphing archives and cultural memory or cultural heritage or patrimony, that I think we started out by talking about, how do we kind of see the possibilities the dangers when connected to AI, to algorithms to new, newly emerging digital platforms. I mean are these things a challenge to the ways in which we conceive of archives. So what happens next? I suppose I’m asking for some speculation about what’s the, what are the possible futures of these morphing archives we’ve been talking about.

□ I’m at a very basic level and I’m sure everybody would be able to take this much higher than me, but is it about materiality in a sense? And there is you know, and I mean I think particularly when documentation, which obviously is a massive part now of some sort of collection as well, it was the sense of well, particularly with the archives of the future, well why would you keep the original piece of paper once you’ve scanned it in? And it was you know, and I can remember conversations around that, sort of probably about 15 years ago, and it was that sense of, but then it, and that’s the danger for me is what Wolfgang was saying about the way that technology is going so fast. Actually, you’ve lost something tangible and that it may not be readable in two or three years time. I mean, I’ve got lectures I gave when I was at Wallace Collection on floppy disks! I mean-

\* I remember those-

□ Yeah, *you remember those?* And when I moved recently, I chucked them all out because I thought, you know I’m never going to, I’m never-

○ My CD’s are going out, you sort of thought they would be there forever and-

□ Yeah, exactly... And maybe it just because I am somebody that you know that loves objects, maybe I, you know, it’s probably my bias or my nervousness... But I do, but I do think, it does sort of concern me sort of with everything being much more sort of digital and transient, you know, actually what is going to be left in a hundred years time from our generation.

\* Yeah. So there’s something about the kind of the continuity that archives can usually you know promise, I suppose the promise of the archive is some kind of fidelity or continuity, whereas as we said earlier, reflecting on the, are the devices that were surrounded by now, these are all things that are just going to be completely incompatible in-

□ And also, you know sort of the idea that you have Snapchat and it disappears after how many seconds or minutes or whatever, you know, I mean, it is so much more ephemeral now, isn't it as well? Whereas I suppose, you know, before you, you could, you know, you could sort of have your newspaper and it's you know, and it was on a *microfiche* somewhere you can through the machine and you find the old reports. But I don't know, maybe it's all being safe somewhere in some huge server under the ocean that which is not aware of, I don't know.

\* I guess the kind of, a positive side could be is generally held at the size of archives, how that might be affected that you know, thinking your archive, Amanda, it's however many thousand kinds of items and you're kind of limited by the size of the space you have and by the resources there-

/ And absolutely, you know because it's not something that's publicly owned, you know it's at the whim of another, and of the Dean who might come along in the future and say "why we got that, get rid of it," you know, though, I mean from time to time there are conversations about things in Nottingham joining together and being taken out of the art school, so there's all sorts of things that risk it... I kind of think there's something very comforting about archives, but I do think that's a generational thing... So, you know, it's that material culture isn't it. I mean I have made a shift with computing my head but there was a time, of quite a long time, I still liked to have the piece of paper. But this materiality is really comforting and-

\* Which isn't-

/ There's something solid about that.

\* Yeah. I mean Wolf you mentioned music formats, and something that's been reported on a lot is that not only are people streaming more and more from Spotify or whatever, but people, vinyl is selling better now, right? Year on year than it has for decades, cassettes as well. And so I think on the one hand things get more dematerialized on the other hand people get kind of more attached, young generations too get attached to the material. So I wonder if like archives might become hybrid. It's not just that they'll disappear into the cloud, but actually they might become more complex organisms where we rethink this relationship between the matter of them and what's somehow circling around them in the ether-

○ It seems kind you're looking back and I think because it has great examples of the design and art and literature, whatever it and wherever it is, it's almost the idea that there's a piece of art in that... It goes back a little bit what we're talking about before about some kind of hope and of possibility. With art, it can make you think and that can make you change the way you believe or feel and I think that's one of the most amazing things that art can do and maybe that's one of the things which can make us dream for the next century... That's why art, I think is probably more important now than it has ever been because it can allow you to think more than the next year, two years, five years or 10 years. It can allow you to dream.

Maybe with archives, you can go in an old historic house and you can see one thing and it can transport you and it can make you feel so absolutely amazing and it makes you think, it's makes you think about the future and not so much about the past because you think I can do this, "wow they did that then" and that maybe you're looking for a way of trying to resolve something because that inspires you to do that. So I think they are really positive idea generators for the future, that they're alive things aren't they, they're not just historical-

□ Absolutely alive.

\* But the flip, the flip side to that though, I think is that they can also, they become too much of a weight as well. I'm thinking specifically probably around artists now that something I've noticed a lot is that if you read artist statements today, and compare them with artist statements of 50 years ago, artist tend to say "I'm re-searching this" or "I'm interested in this" to which you might say, like, "I don't care, you know, what are you making?" But artists in the 60s probably through the 70s and probably not the 80s would have had no problem with saying "I am inspired by, I'm inspired by the work of this artist, I'm making work in response to whatever..." Now I feel like there's been such a thorough archival ternal tendency that many artists and this is may be quite a kind of limited, you know circles have adopted the kind of language of the curator, the researcher, the archivist by... And its, and it's like it's so thoroughly embedded. It's like these are people not for the most part researching any kind of like, you know proper way in real sense. There's like usually to be very cynical, it means like having kind of scanned Wikipedia for like half an hour or something. That's kind of... And that the same kind of goes for most contemporary curators, that your generalist see I feel this, you know, I'm kind of... Any exhibition I might make even if it's like two years of most of my time focused on it, it's still a very broad swathe of something that whole, you know hundreds of people have spent lifetimes working on a kind of small pocket of it. And I think there's something about talking about the field of cultural production here, a kind of reliance on the archive right now, which yeah, you can argue is freeing to a degree in that like they're much more accessible than they once were but I think is also I wonder about how it might limit music making, art making... That kind of constant awareness, my youngest-

/ Constant awareness of the past-

\* Of the past, of the past... My youngest brother and this is getting quite nostalgic, but my young brother is in his early twenties, I remember kind of saying to him once, first I remember saying "oh if you, what albums you listening to?" And this was some years ago and he kind of laughed and said "albums?" And, but then also what I remember when I was, you know a music obsessed teenager trying to define and, you know, obscure Detroit techno, krautrock records from Japan or whatever and it would take months. It was the search and it was a mail order and it was understanding how record labels were etc, etc... For my brother, he never had that because he, I could be talking to him about Detroit techno, the next time I'd see him he would have listened to every Detroit techno record made between like 81 and 89 because he could.

And so there's a kind of fantastic facility of fluency with these kinds of archives or whatever you would want to call them now that I think yeah, it's going to really shift the terms of production.

□ I just wonder sort of, thinking also about experiencing something and obviously talk years about things, about our experiences rather than sort of just something on a wall, and I'm just wondering about archives of the future, is it going to be, is it actually going to be about something, you know about just cameras just sort of filming, you know, daily life or big events or something like that. So it's almost, but in a way that somebody, you know, we sort of VR is it almost immersed back into it? So you are getting the sounds, the smells somehow, almost feeling the texture of something, that you're actually in it rather than looking at it from your time, and I'm just wondering an archive that's more experiential, that's immersive-

\* It's less of a noun and more of a verb, right? Or how kind of archive could be continually aggregating, recording, documenting-

□ Yes, and it's about you looking around and you know, maybe you are hearing or seeing clues rather than it being sort of a clue in an account book that tells you when a painting was with, you know, and but you're actually experiencing it as if you were there at the time... Being a part of it rather than looking through that veil, maybe... That's a way that technology will affect how we save information in the future.

\* And I think with that kind of point of uneven distribution the likelihood is that any rethinking of the archive in the coming decade, they're not going to be coming from public institutions, right? Or individual collections these are going to be like corporate projects, you know, the way that Google for a kind of fun can just archive the world, you know in like Maps or Street View or whatever and in a way that's, was not necessarily a business model just to like, "we've got a lot, we can do that and we might be able to create business of it once we've got this information," but I think this kind of privatizing of knowledge, I suppose is something that we are kind of coming up against more and these kinds of, they're taking on the roles of moving into some of the territory that we've, traditionally in the west, thought to be the kind of terrain of institutions, public institutions-

□ I was just thinking about the currency then-

/ It's currency and privilege, isn't it? Because, you know a lot of the world haven't collected stuff in the way that we have. So, you know either the kind of non-industrial parts of the world and, or the areas of the world where actually they've had to prioritize what, you know, what they spend in other directions. So it says something about our provision wealth doesn't it, that we got these archives and that we can make these statements about our culture.

○ It goes back to something you said before about, is it the search for the collection?

Does the more difficult search make the collection more worthy, like a record collection, if you're going around, if you're going in loads of crate boxes trying to find these things 20, 30, 40 years ago and you find it does that felt experience become more powerful, resonant and meaningful because of the the journey you've completed becomes part of the exploration? Whereas now you can change and buy a complete record collection within a couple of hours. You can change how you dress by going on Amazon and Ebay and just order a complete new wardrobe and dress like a completely new and different person 24 hours later. Whereas 10, 20 years ago, it was a search and struggle. And maybe when you make these kind of connections together, maybe it's more powerful, maybe you think things through rather than we can accumulate all this stuff, but is it just wallpaper, how much depth does it have? You have all this stuff in it and all the dots that sort of join but behind that what does it feel? What's it mean? What is it? Why is it resonant? Why is it not resonant?

□ And it is about that the... I remember thinking that about traveling when I was younger, you know, getting on a plane in London and then ending up in Bangkok and then, it had been a few hours and I just, I knew and I got there like I can remember going "I'm in Bangkok." It was about that sense of, you know, you can be anywhere in 24 hours in the group now, but then actually then you get there and you're still in your own world. So maybe mentally you haven't changed the culture that you're going into and then that can manifest itself in wearing inappropriate clothing, you know in certain countries and things like that, and you just think, and that sort of got me thinking, I could remember thinking, well, you know, it's probably quite a good idea when you have to go on a ship for like a month or something, because it actually gave you time to adapt to what you were doing, everything is so fast and so immediate now and there isn't that time for reflection, is there? And I think that's a big problem for business.

★ There's another, another Douglas Coupland line, I think he says "Jetlag is when your soul hasn't quite caught up with you yet," taking a few days later to arrive with you in Bangkok-

○ But it is a bit like that... The difference for example is when you drive to the South of France for example is a really different experience than flying there because you don't see how the landscape incrementally changes over time. So when you get to you destination you feel that you've arrived because you've seen and felt the changes, you've witnessed it, experienced rather than just flying there and there. And I remember a little thing, I suppose it goes back to this conversation about technology, I remember watching like *Star Trek* in the 70s and you used to get these mobile phones... it was amazing that you could walk around without being plugged in. You could have a conversation with somebody and see their face on a screen. You thought that could never happen in real life and then it happens and the weird thing is how *blase* we've become about it, *oh yeah, all right, okay, of course it can happen...* And if someone invented a new device which would allow us to fly first of all it would be feel and be fantastic, but we would soon take it for granted and move onto the next thing.

\* Well that we can press a button on your phone and a car can arrive to pick you up... And that can go from like being unthinkable, to getting into a stranger's car, to like now I find myself sighing when it's like more than four minutes away, that happens very quickly-

○ And you can be like the other side of the world and you can actually speak on FaceTime, call someone, to my wife, you know like this. Whereas only 10 years ago when I was in Australia, you're on the other side of the world, I was 12 hours behind I just felt completely disconnected... Whereas now you feel like you are there when you're not there and it is a strange thing, it is kind of liberating but you feel connected and disconnected at the same time.

\* And those like intangible dialogues when you were talking earlier Hannah about trying to archive emails, you know, it seems like quite a quixotic project, but how, what you know what this actually means for correspondence that we're now probably in what, the final generation where we will have let's say writers who you'll be able to write a biography of based on their correspondence, you know... I mean it's kind of, that's kind of done now and what will that mean for things like archives of, anything from how exhibitions were put together to anything else because these things actually will just be gone-

□ And a lot of times it's just about understanding the motives for why people did things. I think that's what we're going back to what you were saying at the beginning about we're interested in other human beings. There is that materiality as well, but we're sort of interested in the impulses of why people did things in a certain way. What was the thinking behind it? And a lot of it is incredibly boring as you say, as well, but it was interesting with, when I worked for the Devonshires as well, that the current generation is the first that is not writing a lot of letters and, that his parents generation, they weren't writing diaries... I can remember the Dowager when I worked for her, when she was Duchess and saying, "well I write my letters. I write a lot of letters" so that for her took the place of a diary so that people, if anybody was interested in future years to come, she left something behind. But now it's gone on a step again where it's more, it's emails that are composed by you know, by private secretaries that are then sort of going off as well. Whereas once upon a time you would have, you know, somebody's journal. And with, it's all sort of gradually shrinking-

\* Or even emails composed by algorithms now... I mean this kind of, I think still quite *newish* thing on Gmail, I've noticed on the app that if you, when you're replying to an email it will give you three or four pre-written options?

□ Oh God! I haven't seen that yet-

\* So it's kind of, I think it arrived on my phone a few months ago and it's always right, you know, it's like it will say "Yeah, good idea, go ahead" or, or just like "Let's talk next week" or whatever. So actually it's not only maybe written by private secretaries, it's like written by an algorithm somehow which completely depersonalizes any sense of correspondents.

□ Maybe, maybe it will be an artificial intelligence that actually collates our archives. That they actually form the, you know that it's artificial intelligence somehow creates an archive on humans-

\* Yeah. This is it. I mean it's... That's it. Where does it... Yeah, well, where does it leave all of us? I mean, there's kind of the question terms of automation-

/ Where does it leave irony and sarcasm and-

□ All the good things-

/ Yeah-

□ But actually will they not learn that as well, I suppose, you know, you mentioned *Blade Runner* and that moment where – which character was it, Rachel? – and she realizes that she's not human, that her memories have been implanted. That, she, the memory of her mother, I think it was something that wasn't, that's not right, that wasn't real. Yeah, yeah extraordinary.

\* I think that on that kind of moment of fake memories from the future or the past, I don't know which, and the idea of, I was just looking back over my notes, the idea of collection, a lace archive as a collection of holes... I feel like there's something quite striking about these absences but also sensations that we've been trying to kind of talk around, but unless anybody has final remarks, I think it might be a kind of interesting moment to kind of close-

○ It's one o'clock.

\* It's one o'clock already.

○ Bloody hell.

/ It's been remarkably interesting, I really had no idea.

\* Okay. Thank you, Lara.

/ Yeah, bye Lara.

\* Goodbye.