

Lizzie Lovejoy 0:15

(Intro) Hello, everybody, welcome to the Change of Perspective Podcast, where we look at the world of creativity and art from many different perspectives. I'm your host, Lizzie Lovejoy, Artist of Change for ARC, creating work to celebrate the North East. Today, our topics are curation, working side jobs, and collaboration, and I'll be talking to Beatriz.

Hello, everybody. Welcome to the Change of Perspective Podcast. I am your host, Lizzie Lovejoy. And today we are talking to Beatriz. How are you doing?

Beatriz 0:45

Hi, I'm doing well, thank you. How are you today?

Lizzie Lovejoy 0:48

I'm good thank you, yeah. Tell me a bit about yourself.

Beatriz 0:52

Hello, everyone. I'm Beatriz. I'm originally from Brazil. I'm now based in Newcastle. And I've been working as Programme Coordinator at The NewBridge Project since February.

While I was in Brazil, I did my undergrad in Museum Studies. And then I had like about two year work experience at the Indigenous Museum in Brazil that really shaped my practice. After that, I lived in LA and London. And I was just sort of working for free and testing the water in like different forms of organisations like in institutions within the arts, sort of like from literally like commercial galleries to like, fancy museums to like art fairs, and eventually doing like DIY exhibitions in like cafes and stuff. And I think like all those experiences, sort of like shaped my practice, at least you're like, know what I don't really want to do or don't really want to be part of.

And then eventually, I just moved to Glasgow for an MA in Curatorial Practice at the Glasgow School of Art. And then I would say that now, my curatorial practice is very much like research led. And my main interests are sort of, colonial studies, like Latin American epistemologies, and, like performance art as well and I think, like, when I'm working with artists, I like to like encourage them to sort of collaborate with each other and experiment with mediums

outside their practice. And yeah, just like sort of work towards creating a safe space for them to do it.

Lizzie Lovejoy 2:32

So you said you worked at the Indigenous Museum, and it shaped your practice a lot, in what way has it shaped your practice?

Beatriz 2:38

I would say that, like, learning to be more like responsive, rather than, like proposing things. I think, we used to do a lot of like workshops, and we used to have, like, indigenous people working in every different area in the museum. So like, there would be there like, obviously, like for installs, but like conservation, like admin, like your head, like some filmmakers very much involved.

But there's so many different communities, like different indigenous communities, just in Brazil, we think I might be wrong on this, but I think are over 100 right now. So it's just a lot of different cultures for you to really know everything, and you kind of just need to respond to what they want. Even like, whatever, you know, especially working like, studying like Museum, Museum Studies, you sort of have those frameworks that you learn, to, to work under. And then when you were working in a place like that Museum, you just see that none of that is exactly the truth that like, you just need you to work around, like what's good for, for the communities, that are still alive and, and how you can like actually support them to like thrive.

Lizzie Lovejoy 4:00

I hadn't thought of it like that before, of looking at it as a - just in terms of having that kind of freedom to explore what you are, rather than saying we want to know this specific thing, getting people to actually express who they are and what their culture is, and what their ideas are.

Beatriz 4:16

Yeah, there's this example that I always give, but like we had, we used to do like workshops, because we had like a very extensive collection, like I think was like over 18,000 items. And we had obviously some, some of the artefacts are quite old, and the communities sort of lost the practice of like how to do

certain things, how to make certain objects. So we would like work with anthropologists to like, offer them the opportunity to come to the museum and relearn those practice.

And a lot of them would just say no, a lot of them would be like no, we're not interested. Like there's just no reason to do it like, we don't need to do it anymore. And we would be like, whoa. But like, that's our job like, to conserve it, like to preserve this object. And we want it, we want to offer it to you and they will be like, no, we are not interested because sometimes like, the object sort of carries practice that their ancestors would be involved with that, once they passed, if they are not the ones teaching, like it doesn't make sense, because I guess like oral history is a lot about like morals, like your ethics, like your ways of, like existing rather than something that you need to learn, is a skill you need to learn. So like, like the object is not that important. In fact, it would be more about like having that person that should teach rather.

Lizzie Lovejoy 5:56

Yeah, it's more about the tradition side of it than it would be about an industrial side of things. Obviously, you've said you've worked all over the place, what brought you to so many different locations?

Beatriz 6:07

I guess, like a lot of it was like, just, like personal life, like, like, sort of meeting people and like jumping from one place to the other, like changing plans, because, I don't know, you think you - you met the love of your life or like you think you met like, like this city is, like the city of your dreams, and then you get there, and it's just very expensive and kind of S*** So I don't know, I guess it was just like trying to experience things in different locations. I also think that, you know, back home, there very little job opportunities, and like very little, you just don't have much like perspective of going anywhere. So unless you're very rich, which is not the case.

Lizzie Lovejoy 7:03

I guess leading on from that, obviously, now you have your new role that you started a few months back now, at The NewBridge Project. How are you finding it and what's going on?

Beatriz 7:15

Yeah, it's been amazing. It's, sometimes I just wake up and I'm like, is that even true? Like, because it's been really good. I was like, lucky enough to join an organisation that feels like really welcoming and really friendly. Like, like, for real, like, I feel like I've made like real friends at NewBridge, it's just like a breath of fresh air. Once you already know how like cynical the art world can be like to find people that are actually just really, really good and supportive.

And yeah, and then like, it's a busy period for us, because we're like moving buildings. So we're like leaving, right now we have like two spaces, one like in town in Newcastle that we just left last week, and one in Gateshead and we're moving to a new space in Shieldfield. And it's like quite exciting, because we get to have like all the studio members in one building with the gallery and like our communal spaces and like the bookshop, so we sort of like bring everyone together. And then there's just like so much else going on, like coming up.

We have like a few like call out for programme called For Solidarity that we do in collaboration with the Solidarity Economy Association, and we sort of map organisations' projects and individuals in the region who offers like alternatives to mainstream economic systems. And in this year, we are focusing on D Grove, and we have like a call out for like high investigators to join and support them like doing research or just like developing projects and stuff.

And then we have a programme called Collective Studio, we have another call out coming up soon, which is like an annual development programme for like early career artists. And it's very much based on like peer support, and like community building, we have every year cohort and very soon the call out is going to be out, then we have like our 11th birthday coming up as well. And it's gonna be, well we were doing a 10th birthday last year, but then the pandemic hit so we're doing the 11th instead, and it's gonna be throughout a few months starting in the summer, gonna have a few different events and like exhibitions around it.

And we're sort of departing from this idea like the title is like Blazing New Worlds and it's just going to be opening ourselves for critique and inviting people that we worked with in the past for some like evaluation like having space for like reflection, what we want to be, how we want to do things now

and in the future and sort of also like at the same time allowing us to rest and recover and like have some fun and laughter, like this past year that has been so brutal, I guess.

We also have sorry, so much stuff though. We also have a new like programme committee coming up soon. So we have like a programme committee to sort of, it's also a development programme and have a new committee joining. So there will be a call up for that as well. And we're going to sort of restructure, like the shape of it to make it more like inclusive, and to yeah, make sure we are enabling people from different backgrounds to join. And then we're also going to be working with like some older organisations, like artist led organisations. So it's like, a both way thing that while we are like restructuring our committee, we can also have advice from them and give them advice and just like share learning.

And then I think like, just with all of that, we also have a programme called Create Disrupt that just started. It's a programme to support people that haven't been to university. And we also just had a youth worker joining our team to lead youth programme for youngsters in Shieldfield where we're going to be based, so there's like so much going on. And yeah, it's just really good to be with a really good team around me, so I can be supported in the middle of all of this, because it's a lot.

Lizzie Lovejoy 11:17

There is so much happening right now, I had no idea that there was that much going on in NewBridge right now. Just because I'm interested, how are you finding the Newcastle-Gateshead area?

Beatriz 11:25

It's really beautiful. And it's, it's so sunny, like, I just can't believe obviously had a month in the entire country that was very bad. But since I moved here in February, it's been like very sunny, and everyone's really friendly. I guess like coming from Glasgow, it's a similar vibe. And in the sense, but yeah, it's been really good and just love to walk around, you know, like, because right now we're based in Gateshead but I live in Newcastle. So I need to cross every day.

And I just walk here and I love that I need to like cross the bridge, see the river every day, because I lived in London for four years or something, and I just would never see that river. And then every once in a while I would look at it and I'm like, oh my god, there's a river. So beautiful. Yes, I forget it. It's here, you know. And I just feel like a bit more in tune with the city.

Lizzie Lovejoy 12:24

It's funny you say that actually, because the Tyne is completely the centre of Newcastle and Gateshead and everything that tends to happen around there.

Beatriz 12:31

Yeah, exactly. And it's, it's funny as well, because obviously, in Glasgow, I lived in the south side and worked in, in the city centre. So I would cross the bridge, and I would look at the river but there was not much going on, by the river is just very dead. Like there's some residential areas, I guess, but it's yeah, not, not many bars and like people running every day, you see just like getting more like inspired?

Lizzie Lovejoy 13:01

Because I don't know if you've been down Ouseburn, but Ouseburn's like a whole artists section that's just over the river. So yeah, I find that fascinating, that round here, this area, that tends to be what we base everything around.

Beatriz 13:13

I know, it's beautiful, yes. And I think I think that's just how it should be really. Like, I think human life is has been always based around water. So like, why would you go away from it? I guess like the kid thing. One is just expanded so much. And it just you just wouldn't see it anymore. Because you don't, you don't go around the city anymore as a whole. Like you just stay in a section while in Glasgow. I just don't know why. But if any Glaswegian politicians are listening to this, please have a plan in place. We want to occupy the river.

Lizzie Lovejoy 13:54

So the next question that I want to ask is, what's your favourite project that you've worked on? And this is like any project, whether it's solo, collaborative, personal, professional, what's your favourite one?

Beatriz 14:05

Can I have like a favourite? Like, I think maybe I do. Ha. I think all of them sort of were helpful in different ways. I think the exhibition that I did last year, in March 2020, at the Gallery of Modern Art in Glasgow, called Seen in the Dusk was quite a big learning just because it was so intense and quick, like and it went from like a very small project was supposed to be a publication and then like, everything sort of just developed in a very organic way.

And I sort of got to have all these elements that I enjoy in a project, watching things develop in the organic way, as I said, but like working with an artist that I've worked previously, so like continuing that, that collaboration, and then so it was with Jina Song and Martha Panagiotopoulou and while I was with working with Martha, for this publication, we ended up like having a chat with Jina, then Jina joined the project, and, and they really sort of complemented each other. And Jina was very ambitious and just like comes up with like all these amazing ideas. And then Martha just responds to things very, very quickly, like, execute things, like put them into, like, in a way that you can visualise them. And it was just like, yeah, it was, it was amazing.

I think like we were all in the same headspace. And we had to deliver a lot very quickly. But we really had like our heart on that. And also, through that, I had both artists like, trying something new outside their practices as well, which was really amazing. So yeah.

Lizzie Lovejoy 16:08

I love that when you're working with people, and you just instantly both lock into the same wavelength. And you're like, okay, we can do this. Gotta love that. Obviously now, with the NewBridge Project, the funding for that, for your position has been through Jerwood. And so I know that obviously, you've been having various meetings with Jerwood and talking to them. How are you finding all of that? Have you learned anything new or found out anything interesting?

Beatriz 16:36

Yes. So it's been - it's been really good. I think it's really amazing that we have a cohort. And I think it's, you know, it's not like an isolating experience, we always have each other to sort of go back to. And I think this is like, the beauty

of this experience. Yeah, of course, like from Jerwood itself, like, it's amazing that they have programmes like this this fellowship in place. And yeah I just hope we have like more chance to connect with the fellows. Because I do think it's a very strong cohort.

I think like, yeah, there's some some of the practices that I'm like, quite impressed. Like, I just really want to work with people, as well. I think like, the only thing that does worry me, though, is I feel like Jerwood have been doing, they've been doing this bursary for a long time now, right? Like, maybe 10 years or so. And I just don't know, like how much it takes to, to have, like, significant change, like to really like change our world sort of thing, you know, especially like for people they are in position of power. So, yeah, let's see how long.

Lizzie Lovejoy 18:02

I would be interested to know, actually, who's been on the Jerwood scheme in the past? And what they've progressed onwards to.

Beatriz 18:08

Yeah, cuz I think that's like, an anxiety that everyone has, right, like, cool, I'm doing this like one year fellowship, then what? Like, and I think I think I had this conversation actually, with one of one of Jerwood's people and they were like, yeah like, we've been doing this for, like, 10 years. And like every cohort that comes here, they say the same thing. Like they have the same like, like similar experience, similar challenge, similar? Well, maybe we're gonna have to be doing this for over 100 years. I hope you guys have enough money because everyone needs support.

Lizzie Lovejoy 18:45

I'm interested, actually, you already said earlier that part of the reason you ended up going to lots of different places is that funding wasn't necessarily available in each location that you went to, you find different problems with that kind of thing. I feel like that's a constant problem, unless you're already rich to start with. Getting through this industry can be nightmarish. So what's your experience been with finding funding?

Beatriz 19:08

Like you mean, in terms of funding through like Arts Council and stuff? Or like...

Lizzie Lovejoy 19:13

Just in general, in terms of sustaining your own career and...

Beatriz 19:16

Okay, yeah, no, I always worked, like I always had side jobs, like always had full time jobs pretty much like while I was in university, I was working 30 hours a week, which is almost full time. And before that, I was I always worked full time, like I just never, I've never had any government support or anything, especially like as an immigrant, I guess I didn't have like student loan or I just couldn't apply for any of that. So just saved money. Working in hospitality.

Lizzie Lovejoy 19:49

I feel like that's a lot of the experience of a lot of people in this industry. I reckon most people in the Jerwood Fellowship Programme. That's been where we're at is 'oh, you have to work for free!' And it's like, you can't afford to work for free. And so you end up with a million side jobs or like one main job and trying to focus on getting everything else on the side.

Beatriz 20:09

I think like, but I think that's, that's really important, because we know that this is the only way to do it if you don't have any jobs. But then like, I think it's sometimes people don't fully realise the burnout that comes with it, and like how exhausted you are in the end, and how much you actually start hating everything you do. Because you just don't have time to, to rest and fully, like, think about anything else. I think like, yeah, like living in London was really important for me in that aspect.

Because in London, I was working 48 hours a week in hospitality and then doing like all this, like volunteer and like, side projects, and like, DIY exhibitions, and everything else on the side, but good. I don't even remember like going out that much. Or like, you know, fully like enjoying London, it was just like, like trying to, to make money and save money.

And then like once I left and moved to Glasgow, and had the opportunity to work just three days a week, rather than seven days a week, I was actually able

to think about like my practice and what it means to maybe work independently and like the other routes perhaps.

Lizzie Lovejoy 21:39

I think London specifically is quite insane for that. Everyone I know who works in London, it's like that's what they're doing in London. There's no actual personal life, everything is just it's all about work. And I think that's a cultural thing in that area. But I also think it's just because it's an expensive place to live, it becomes that, it's like a vicious cycle. So on a lighter note, what are you working on right now?

Beatriz 22:03

Well, apart from everything that I mentioned with NewBridge, of course, I'm still continuing one of my projects called Colere, which is like an online platform to sort of focus on artistic practice that operate outside narratives and aesthetics from the global north. So I started like, last few years, just some like interviews with my degree show budget, which was very low, just to pay the artists from for like some some of their time. And then now I'm just trying to apply for funding to be able to maybe support some digital commissions. And so yeah, that's that's the plan for now.

Lizzie Lovejoy 22:45

Is there anything that you want to be able to work on in the future, it's not necessarily something that you're immediately able to work on. But you know, you have a dream, and that's the direction you'd really like to head, something you'd really love to do.

Beatriz 22:57

You mean more like a specific project, or more like...

Lizzie Lovejoy 23:03

I mean, anything really, anything that you... like your goal, like specifically creatively more than anything? What is it that you want to do? What do you want to... yeah, what do you want to, what's the dream project I guess? It's okay if there isn't one or if you don't know.

Beatriz 23:19

I don't think there's a dream project. I think like, yeah, I do have like ideas that I would like to do but yeah, they all come like with a bit of struggle here and there, like none of them are really perfect. I think all of them need like a lot of developing or development right now.

You know what I really always thought I really want to do like when I'm older, like maybe like in my 50s or something? I want to work more with like education, still in the arts but maybe like, just working with like young people. But that's like a personal thing is just because like I don't want to have kids. So like when I'm like older just want to like still be around like young people, because that's life in its best form. Yeah, maybe when I'm like retiring from all my curatorial roles, work with a charity, like for young people.

Lizzie Lovejoy 24:20

I think that's vitally important as well in terms of like creativity and young people, being able to either inspire or just let people know that they can be creative because it surprises me how many people are just like, 'Oh, no, I can't do any of that'. Or, or they've had parents that said they shouldn't do any of that. Because that's a whole thing. But yeah, that's actually, that's really cool. I wasn't expecting it. But I totally agree, because I also don't want to have kids but also like the idea.

Beatriz 24:45

Yeah, yeah right? Like, yeah, no, every time my friends say they don't wanna have kids, I'm like, let me tell you my plan. Because everyone's like, cool, but what about when you're old? Like miss having like, kids around I'm like, n, because I'm gonna be full of money working in this charity that I don't know which one haha.

Lizzie Lovejoy 25:04

It'll be there in the future. Work it out then!

Beatriz 25:08

Well if you start the charity then just let me know.

Lizzie Lovejoy 25:11

I guess the last question is, do you have anything else that you want to share or promote?

Beatriz 25:17

No, but like if, I mean anyone wants to see my projects, I think just going to my Instagram is very much the easiest way. It's @johnimonlydancingagain, which is also my favourite David Bowie song.

Lizzie Lovejoy 25:34

Thank you all so much for listening. Thank you, Beatriz for being here. It's been a great conversation. So see you guys next time. Bye.

Beatriz 25:43

Bye.