

**Transcription of discussion held at the exhibition *Participation*, at The Poly,  
Falmouth, 27<sup>th</sup> October 2007**

Transcribed by Sarah Matthews

Magda Tyzlik-Carver: ...inaudible...in January, all the artists who were based in and around University College Falmouth were invited to come in and participate, and it was also open to different media, so even though it was a call sent out from iRes, which is engaged in research into connections with network art etc, therefore that was quite important. We received 16 responses, and 10 of those responses are here, and I'm just going to say quickly that I think each of those works is a completely different kind of participation, and I think what kind of participation that is something that both the audience and the artists decide for themselves, but this is how I would like to pose the first question: why did you decide to use participation in your work, and what did you expect from that?

Sarah Matthews: I think I personally wanted to make my work quite fun and playful because a lot of people I know really don't know very much about art ...inaudible...and I wanted to make it easier for non-art audiences to engage with it. I've been quite pleased that a whole variety of people of all ages, including children have...inaudible.....

Ana Carvalho: ....inaudible.....second part of something I did three years ago, ....inaudible...

Susan Corke: I responded to Magda's call partly because I was intrigued that it was coming from interactive art, but it was open to everyone, including illustrators and graphic designers and I find that I wanted to think about how illustration could be participatory, and on the illustration MA at the time we were looking at issues of authorship and narrative, the idea of that the author or the artists rather than the start of the process of participation via imagination, learning, and the reader or the viewer has as much input in to the conception of the work as the author. That was one thing and the other thing was that I had been looking at spaces that you can't go into or interact with physically, and I had been looking on my research at peepshows and toy theatres and pre cinema entertainment, and I had become attracted to creating semi illusory spaces that you can't physically enter, only look at, and the subject matter was to do with not being able to get back to childhood, not being able to get back to dreams, and the idea that there are some places that you

can't physically go, and almost a sense of forbidden space, that when you do look at them then you participate as a voyeur, you're complicit in the act of looking, so there's a sense of something that is slightly naughty, but I kind of wanted to emphasize the act of looking, but looking as also participating.

Magda Tyzlik-Carver: If anyone wants to ask any questions or add anything please do

Unknown A: When you came up with this concept how did you differentiate between concepts of interactivity and participation? You've got this concept of interactivity which engages the person receiving or consuming the thoughts or concept, usually a virtual, high tech domain, but is your idea of participation...

Magda Tyzlik-Carver: My idea of participation is... I don't know what it is, I think the most interesting aspect of it is, something that allows for engaging and getting involved, but at the same time it is done under quite strict rules that are already established, and that are in this case established by the author of the pieces, and I think this is the aspect of participation that interests me, how actually you engage with participation, and are we likely to follow those rules...we were discussing this early actually, and also on the board<sup>1</sup> there are two quite interesting notes, one is saying that it is not participating, the other is saying that it placed itself away from the other notes because it doesn't want to be involved and I think that these are the aspects that interest me.

Sarah Matthews: The same thing happened with the board game (Return Journey) actually as well, obviously the games are made for people to play, but there are quite a few of them that have in the rules 'this game can't be played', so people are participating but trying to rebel within that structure.

Megan Wakefield: That's quite interesting, one of the things that interested me as well is that people are quite caught up with the idea of being allowed or not allowed to do something, and I think, in researching participatory practice I went to this festival in Bristol<sup>1</sup>, and there was this work *Litter Picker*, and it was just picking up litter and finding out where it's from, and there was always this thing of people saying 'is this the right thing to pick up', and I think there's always this thing, concern I think of being permitted to participate in a certain way, and I don't know whether that's our education or what...

Sarah Matthews: I think you can't really say they can participate in the wrong way and I think there's quite a fear when you're engaging with

someone else's work that you might ruin it, but maybe there's a point when you've put the work out there that you can't really go back and...

Magda Tyzlik-Carver: I think the question about participation is really quite interesting because actually one might think that interaction is much more engaging because it allows you to discover the rules for yourself, maybe its more like an experimental situation than participation.

Unknown A: You can participate in an event by sitting in a theatre seat, but interaction implies...

Magda Tyzlik-Carver: But at the same time I wouldn't compare them in that sense, one and the other, because I think they're two quite important elements and perhaps for me participation has more to do with the power relations.

Unknown A: You could ask the question why would anyone come to this exhibition?

Magda Tyzlik-Carver: Why did you come?

Unknown A: Because I imagined it would give me some kind of insight into work that I'm doing around interactive broadcast programme development because broadcasting is moving into cross platform development where the audience is becoming much more an integral part of the process of developing ideas, and you have to start asking those question, why on earth would an audience what to come into this world you're developing

Jem Mackay: Well its about control isn't it, a lot of people want to have a good say about what's being broadcast, in the past it would be one person saying it to millions of people, but like with U-tube you've got millions of people saying it to millions of people.

Jane Bailey: I wonder if its useful to make any kind of distinction between the user generative where people are just making their own content, and interactivity because there are always sort of limits but in interactivity they're much more set by the artists, or creator where there's as I say your talking about rules there where maybe there's a smaller number of options or your control over that content or what might happen in response is much less than if you're just able to make your own piece of work which is what your talking about

Unknown A: I was thinking about video games that my son plays where you have to kind of run over prostitutes and bang people over the head

with iron bars in order to get enough points to progress to the next level, and those are quite big rules to go along with. It kind ...

Jem Mackay: ...rules to break rules, its an interesting thing

Susan Corke: One reason why I like participation is that I think computer games are very controlling and your ability to have a say over what's going is actually limited, you get successes by learning to abide by the rules whereas you go to an art gallery to look at a painting you could be there all day and leave the actual space, imagine what it might be like to in the painting or be in that era or what the artist may be thinking, and there's very little control anyone can have over what's going in your mind, and I find that much more liberating and freeing from participation,

Jane Bailey: I think that ties into that idea with the interactivity there's the notion there that becomes you are interacting you are having control whereas in fact it might actually feel like your not, there's perhaps a mismatch in the way its sometimes put forward.

Sarah Matthews: Maybe that comes back to participation as the creation of meaning, rather than just looking and continuing on going, and in that sense I think.....so long as we can go beyond just looking

Megan Wakefield: I think there's as well an idea that's something to do with the gallery space as well, a self consciousness about being observed or directed, that I think possibly people naturally rebel against or often, something like you (Susan Corke) were talking about the time you can look at a painting for, you can control it, but I think with participatory work is the different level of control that you really have in your kind of conception of how you're being directed by the makers of that work or by the curators or commissioners and how much freedom you have within that or are supposed to have, like with your project it was your original idea but then within that they could do what they wanted, but I think there's other things where the awareness of observation is an important thing in participatory work, that what you're doing is being recorded, and directed to certain degree, and for that to work it has to be recorded or documented to a certain degree,

Ana Carvalho: inaudible

Sarah Matthews: inaudible...and what would it be like to not participate...

Jason Cleverly: With the research that I've been doing, we've noticed especially with didactic museum interactives that collaboration between

people who are then engaging with the object, artefact, interactive are teaching each other how to use it or observing from a distance and then going on to engage is really important and that lessons are learnt from talking to others about what the machine means or what the artefact means and yes you learn a hell of a lot more that way, its been found than if you just look at it on your own. If you're talking about it someone else or your receiving information about it from someone else its highly critical

- Ana Carvalho: I was going to say that people started using it and talking to their friends
- Sarah Matthews: One of the nice things about the exhibition and it being billed as participatory is that people have felt really comfortable talking about the work, touching things, getting involved and learning things rather than just reading off the plaques.
- And it extends far beyond the space then
- Sarah Matthews: I think part of the reason I wanted my work to be participatory is that I wanted people to have a more direct engagement with it and obviously it has a more powerful impact on them if they able to talk and tell a friend and continue to think about it.
- Megan Wakefield: I wanted to ask how the artists felt about aesthetics, how that worked within their work.
- Sarah Matthews: I thought quite a lot about the way I wanted mine to look, I wanted it to look colourful and playful and engaging and possibly like things that people have seen before at playschool or school, things that people wouldn't be intimidated by.
- Unknown A: That's interesting, this thing about playfulness the kind of regression, playfulness seems to be a key element in a lot of these things.
- Sarah Matthews: Not necessarily as childishness but that people feel they can touch and pick up and feel quite open to. .because for a lot of people who are not involved in studying or making art its really quite intimidating to go near art or to express opinions about it.
- Jason Cleverly: In a way what you've created is a design process, so that you could almost just package this up and sell it as a make-your-own game.
- Sarah Matthews: Possibly if you just look at the table and what's there but its about making a map journey so that other people can then play your

game and complete these journeys, so its about completing journeys through fiction. I think I wanted people to engage with my work because they would get something out of it.

Jason Cleverly: There's always that reward factor, I think that's what I was hoping for with mine, to just have this series of unique things you've just created and to have that little moment of... I very much controlled the situation, but it's got loads of different variations within that that people can take away.

Tim Shear: I think that's true a lot of pieces that you try to make interactive because if your defining interaction you have got to set up controls for people to participate in the way that you envisioned. I've tried to hide the technology to make it less of a barrier, at the end of the day its quite simplistic, people can just do predefined things that have just been hidden, to try to make it as accessible an interface, similar things can be done with musical key instruments but its just a different way of getting someone to use a similar bit of software and redefining its use.

Megan Wakefield: How important are the images on the film?

Ana Carvalho: The images they are not that important as final result as the process of recording them. I've been recording journeys from Falmouth to other places where I've gone in the last year, starting in November, so basically I didn't change anything going back to your question, I just played what came out, mind you at some point there is some selection as I have to select small clips from hours and hours, so yes there is some selection, so that's how I got the images into this as well as the sound.....

Magda Tyzlik-Carver: I was going to ask you Jason if you've noticed any new pieces in yours?

Jason Cleverly: There are yeah, there's some bits, that was the idea hopefully that people could put their own things, but almost anything you put in ..actually I scrunched up some of your post-it notes<sup>1</sup> and it was nicer than some of the things I put in to begin with so that's the nice thing that you can put in anything.

Tim Shear: ....how people have sometimes changed things in ways you don't expect them to and you're not quite sure how much people will put underneath there and how they will interact with stuff, no matter how much you plan it and think about how people will use stuff the reality is very different and its been quite interesting to watch.

Jane Bailey: I'm interested in things that people can obviously sort of access or interact with in an obvious way so that might be an interesting contrast there so you can see at times people interacting, do you get a sense of what they're getting from your work and how does that work, because when you're talking about the imagination, are there ways to access...

Susan Corke: Well I'm fascinated by watching people looking and I think there's kind of two broad reactions<sup>1</sup>, one is very dismissive, nothing happens so people move on very fast and the other amazing thing is with the children who you'd think would get bored the quickest spend a lot of time really looking, and I've heard a couple of kids say things like 'I want to get inside' and I think that's quite pleasing for me because I kind of want them to be spaces people will remember and dream about.

Jane Bailey: And that might just hang there as a question...

Susan Corke: My prime reason for wanting to make those spaces is that they're space that I wanted to be in when I was a kid.

Jane Bailey: And maybe that question then comes back to when people are interacting more physically with work are you curious then because sometimes I've made work when there's a physical interaction or have been a participant in others work, just because I'm in it that doesn't say much about the nature of what's going on there so I've been a participant in someone else's work and later I've heard the artist talk about the work and their version of it has been very different from my experience as a participant which started me questioning, which is why in this case I've done something which is... there isn't any obvious participation, because that set me thinking about my own work which I'd set up which was participatory, there's someone there and they're doing something but I'm not quite sure what this means to them whether the nature of that exchange...

Magda Tyzlik-Carver: How important is that to you to know that?

Jane Bailey: Its become more important, and it still is with

Tim Crowley: I think its fundamental thing, and artist wants to translate and idea, and wants the person who sees it to see what that idea is, or what that intellectual resolve is be it.....inaudible..... painting or sculpture....., so I think an artist wants to translate what they're trying to say

Sarah Matthews: But surely you can never absolutely translate anything, because everything is...inaudible.....How far can that be stretched before the artist is just using people in the creation of their work....

Megan Wakefield: .....there's participation and something that happens after it, I think its very difficult to assess the value of participation its an interesting area I think.....do you benefit from participating, and does that matter or not

Jane Bailey: And also for me is it harder to reflect when your in the middle of the work which you are if your participant or if your in that is it more difficult to reflect on that

Tim Crowley: .....reality um in fact I think that every viewer will get something different form the same piece of work as someone else.....but interactivity takes it one step further towards that invisible goal....

Jason Cleverly: So is this exhibition more about widening participating than it is about the artist creating something they're happy with, this technology which children all sorts of people quite familiar with, is it trying to widen the net...

Sarah Matthews: I don't think it is because we haven't ...inaudible...

Jason Cleverly: But should I, should we be looking for more people, for more demographic

Sarah Matthews: Not necessarily.....

Jason Cleverly: But isn't that preaching to the converted.....

Unknown A: There are other things aren't there, its not just about communicating an idea or a concept, what about an effect, what about moving out of the passive and into the active and saying my work will empower my audience and they'll walk away and say yes, I can have an influence in that fabric of reality out there and can engage with it ...that's not passive....

Magda Tyzlik-Carver: I agree about motivation, why do they even bother to come and participate, why do we want to get everyone here, art has always been a niche thing apart from blockbuster Picasso type things, but I don't think necessarily its such a ...I think this is also a socially engaged situation, the fact that it is only us here mainly the artists who participated, and people who're somehow connected to the art or the university, that is quite telling, and I suppose we don't



participate in every situation, and whatever we take out of this we will, and if we are planning to work with this, we will

Jason Cleverly: When you sort of have a strap line of interactivity and participation, you want to see how many different kinds of people engage or sponsor that work...

Magda Tyzlik-Carver: Absolutely and I see...

Serena: ...inaudible...interactive...the chances are.....the line between commercialism and art has been crossed and there's that gap between where interactive art and commercialism...that's the bit I presume this kind of art...

Magda Tyzlik-Carver: I think for me actually it would be if we're talking about participation in that context it would be important not to bridge those gaps but make them bigger because I think that is quite important to keep those words separate, but then how do you make that gap visible without making it exclusive...

Serena: ...that's what I'm saying.....

Magda Tyzlik-Carver: This is exactly the question we started with when we were meeting up at the research meetings with the artists involved and which was mentioned in the text, about non-participating, and I think non-participating for whatever reason, I think it is also quite an important element.

Jane Bailey: I think you just used the phrase passive engagement, passive interaction, what would that be?

Serena: If one is perceptual and to stay in that person's imagination and memory and the other one actually you have to bring all those qualities to apply to something, I'm not saying I have any answers....going to movies, some would say its interactive, some would says its passive...inaudible...

Susan Corke: That's another area that's really interesting....

Megan Wakefield: Do you think participatory art is a means to....inaudible...

Susan Corke: I don't know I find it quite difficult the whole thinking about everything together, but I just know what I like, and I think I'd like to preserve some space and time in this whole interconnected world where you can just go and quietly look and think and I don't want every museum to have knobs and buttons, I want there to be

spaces that you can just escape to, whether that's just in your head or...

Megan Wakefield: inaudible

Jane Bailey: Its also interesting when we were talking before both put forward proposal and work, where there's no obvious physical interaction, we've both come from a background of physical interaction in our work professionally, and perhaps that's the interest in us both wanting to move away from that

Susan Corke: I think I noticed when I was looking at my peepshow one thing I'm again pleased about is that you do really have to look because the lens isn't really good enough, and the small aperture, you have to bend over and really look, whether that makes you conscious of the act of looking, and the same with Jason's piece whether people looking through that aperture that they're both about looking in some ways, and reflecting on the act of looking..

Magda Tyzlik-Carver: Yeah I definitely thought about your work and Jason's work, maybe because of that lens in the middle of it but I always thought there was this connection between ...Jason's work is really physically interactive, and yours is totally cutting out that possibility, its not there, that is really quite interesting the juxtaposition of both...

Jason Cleverly: One of the problems working with screens is that screens draw your eye, and the balance between that glow of the screen that's magnetic to the eye, and trying to balance that with something to go around it is quite interesting to me, so it was sort of selling an aesthetic, and then sneaking in the screen that allows people to engage..

Magda Tyzlik-Carver: But at the same time your work is really quite illusionary, because it is a huge clock, and also the screen because the colours are so bright, and its almost like you've tuned...and I think this is really quite an interesting effect, because you took that thing which is just a box of matches suddenly under the screen it becomes a different character almost, you detach yourself from it that moment when you put something in and it becomes something else

Jason Cleverly: I felt a bit guilty telling people look at these things how marvelous they are because you can just look at them anyway or get a magnifying glass, so it's a bit preachy in some ways and I'm a bit worried about that but it works anyway....that's what we do

anyway we collect shells and things off the beach and even if they're insignificant they become talismanic almost...

Unknown A: Commercials spend a vast amount of money doing the exact same thing, enhancing the qualities of something

Jason Cleverly: Well one woman said she had lots of jewellery but she hardly ever wears it, but it would be quite nice to see it, as a selector, different ways in which it could be adapted to different things, take it to different venues empty perhaps

Magda Tyzlik-Carver: It would be great if there were some people from the audience, I was wondering about the difference to participation in the physical space and participation in the intimate and how that when you're talking about authorship and participatory nature how if the participatory nature changes, subtly in one and the other space, and especially here in your (Chantal Brooke's) work *Bind*, and then you have the documentation of the people participating in that piece so there are those questions of whose piece is it etc, so you might consider that, and then Ana's work where she tries to get people involved or she tries to involve people without them realising and then Jem's work which is actually probably more collaborative than participatory a piece of work where actually they are producing something and putting it out and being acknowledged as contributors, and this space in which it happens, ...have you thought about it? I've been thinking about it, this idea of everybody now participating in this internet culture, uploading things...because we do, its something we don't think about ..so immediate, so I'm thinking how does this process of participation in that situation is different from the participation in your piece where the people did put up something, they created work and they allowed you to put it on your exhibition, so obviously the obvious situation where one is object one isn't, issue of being involved and being credited

Tim Crowley: inaudible .....changes and that was....

So the physical thing...

Magda Tyzlik-Carver: But this like Jem's work is exactly that is it also and event, because now it runs throughout the exhibition so this is very similar

Susan Corke: .....are the most important, I hate it when technology gets introduced it replace ideas, and the ideas should be appropriate with any use of technology, whether it's a pencil or a computer. What I like about this one (Chantal Brookes' *Bind*), this idea of a quilt being translated into a 3D physical thing it that sense that quilt making is essentially participatory as a process, so it's a very right concept to make that work be, but there's a very telling difference when you see work and there's no idea, somebody's just got carried away with this great bit of kit and it kind of just leaves me cold, but where the ideas have made appropriate use, and the ideas have come first, again whether it's a pencil or a computer use to make that idea explicit then I think that's likely to be successful.

Megan Wakefield: I think a lot of the works...inaudible...yours is the idea of binding and bonds and I think that's also why participatory artists are often co-opted to create a sense of community by urban planners and things like that, but it is also being used as a way of making art more democratic – but I think its nice in this exhibition because it doesn't seem like you've imposed any view or social policy on it, there's no pedagogical thing saying 'you shall get this out of it', and its quite free like that, but still with the....there's like a deemphasizing of the individual and even with yours because I'm thinking of like ....inaudible....

Chantal Brookes: I think that's really interesting because I found that too with my work, where it was collaborative but had space for the individual at the same time, where I initiated the idea, when the people started making their own objects then it told their own stories and life experiences, and you recognize those, so instead of trying to force anything on them I left it open because I thought that it would be really good to include people coming in right from the word go, so to give me things that they wanted to, and whatever someone threw at me, we had to work with that.

Megan Wakefield: What if...inaudible...expectations....

Chantal Brookes: I came up with the idea of a quilt, I took it from...inaudible... the original, its that lovely idea... I was looking at intimacy, and the way I experience intimacy is through friendships, so I thought that would be a really good way to use the idea of quilt making, but to put a spin on it, because I'm an installation artist, I use objects, that was the criteria.

Megan Wakefield: But there's still an underlying idea, this idea of intimacy that you've linked to quilt making and I just wandered if someone could have used those objects to express something completely

different – I suppose I'm thinking of the idea of democracy and community, and within that there will be people who say 'well that's not how I see it' and someone might not respond in a way.

Chantal Brookes: That's good, I like people to say....inaudible...

Jem Mackay: I think like you say the element of randomness that comes out of participatory art, I feel that's true of collaboration as well, is that if you have group of people there are times when its worth more than the sum of its parts – where does that actually take place is what I'm interested in, where is collective intelligence worth more than the single expert somewhere just trying to dream up how it should take place.

Unknown A: Some of us buy into the idea that experts are best and some of us free thinkers can acknowledge the possibility that there are other options and I suppose what we need to do is encourage relations that give people the confidence to trust their thoughts and believe their thoughts are as good as anyone else's. I think if we're in the creative area that's one of our primary functions, is to get people into a position where they can actually look at something with their own eyes. I think its a difficult thing to get to.

Chantal Brookes: inaudible

Sarah Matthews: Do you feel comfortable displaying the work and not having name tags of the people who participated – is that a conscious thing?

Chantal Brookes: Well I wanted it to be a kind of – because their experiences are so intimate and so personal, I wanted to give them a degree of anonymity – I don't think you need the names, I don't think they're that important – I think the experience is important and what you get from that as an individual, rather than saying this work is about this, so its nice to get the audience feeding in with their own personal...inaudible..

Sarah Matthews: So I suppose in your sense the photos...inaudible...

Chantal Brookes: Yes, and its also just cataloguing the events that took place, because I think especially installation art you have to experience it there and then, so if there was a workshop up and running that would be really good, but because there isn't, that's the only way I can document it.

Sarah Matthews: I was just wondering about how in galleries we always have names of the artist attached to the work, but with work like this a lot of

people often contribute to making things happen, and for my work I was half thinking about the plaque that has my name on it, whether I should leave a space for participants to write their name on it, if they feel like it, and I didn't do that..

Megan Wakefield: Like co-authors or something?

Sarah Matthews: Well yes, because they change the work and did things I wasn't expecting them to do, and when I was printing the maps for them to draw on I was thinking should I leave a little blank space for a name, where they could put their name, but I left it off because I didn't want people to ..inaudible...but some people have left their name, and its quite nice that they've chosen to say 'I made this', and some people have chosen to leave it, most people have been quite happy to leave their work here and assumed that it becomes part of the whole rather than for them to take away, but I'm not sure I'd feel comfortable putting these maps into a book for example, and putting just my name on the front.

Magda Tyzlik-Carver: I have a question I would like to ask you Chantal...inaudible...

Chantal Brookes: ...inaudible...guide them but on the day they started making they just went straight for it, they just started ripping and cutting and I thought this is great, I'm not going to interfere because this is – it was obvious they are individuals to the audience but I think they...like a collective, but they're not a collective at all, they're just individuals, and they've got all this stuff on their minds, and they're going to come and make what they want or not bother, like with *Participation*, so I just thought that this was their experience...they're going to get from it, and they're going to give to me, like I was saying earlier it is that exchange, and that was more important than what was the individual idea, and stronger for it.

Magda Tyzlik-Carver: What do you say to that Jem?

Jem Mackay: Yeah, I definitely think its richer for it. I'd like to go back to the thing about authorship, I think that's really important. For mine, I really want to make sure that everyone gets acknowledged, but some people didn't want to be acknowledged, which is your point as well, so I don't want to force that, and the funny thing with a web scenario is that you have to lay down those rules very quickly, so like in a forum there's the date, there's the author, and there are very rigid rules, its laid out in a very particular way, and I don't to impose that structure on different sensibilities, some people might like that structure, some people won't, and I think that comes into

authorship as well, so there is actually a page called contributors on there, but hardly anyone has signed up, people I've known have contributed I've put up myself, but no-one has actually said...

Megan Wakefield: Have you agreed that with them?

Jem Mackay: Well the ones that I've put up I know won't mind, I just don't think they've found that page, but I'm conscious that there are some people who might well mind that their name is associated with this project.

Tim Shear: Your project is quite a lot different from a lot of web applications like that though, on all these things like YouTube and these other sites where people post and write blogs and make stories and all that kind of stuff in general, its very normal to have a date posted, who it was authored by.....

Jem Mackay: Its just getting away from this hierarchical scenario really, like YouTube, I think you're saying everything put onto YouTube is owned by YouTube, so if people write their own songs, copyright suddenly becomes Google's, its ridiculous, so that comes because hierarchies have to do it a certain way. I want to see how it can be done a different way, and to open up processes so its very mess I think, if someone says...

Sarah Matthews: Are you still actively changing it at the moment or are you just leaving it now?

Jem Mackey: Well yes I am still, its full of bugs at the moment, I've come across a couple during the exhibition, I am continually making changes to it yeah.

Sarah Matthews: Do you think its important to leave it alone and let it have its own life or is it ok for the artists to keep being involved and changing things?

Jem Mackay: I want it as much as possible to have its own life, but I'm aware that on the web you have to think in terms of something called critical mass, where it only gets its own life when a certain number of people know that it exists and are willing to contribute regularly which is why I put a finite date, the deadline is the end of the exhibition for this, cos if I just left it open it'll trail off and just nothing will happen, so if I say the end of the exhibition is the deadline for this piece, people get the motivation to say ok oh, I'll commit two hours before the end of the exhibition, but it would happen..

- Susan Corke: I think with your work, and the way Chantal's works is very brave, I couldn't do I, I'd be terrified of giving up...control, I've always been a bad sharer, I was never very good at participation at school, and I liked to do my own thing, I'd get my own bits and go away and make my own thing, and it would be totally mine, and the way you're working is so alien to me, I just couldn't do it, its not in my nature.
- Unknown A: Its kind of interesting, this idea of visibility and anonymity, and its relationship to Banksy and others like that, there's something about putting your head over the parapet, being seen, but you must also have the right to be this amorphous, characterless blob. Surely an audience without any kind of definition is less of a thing than an audience where people don't mind putting their names down, they're bringing their whole histories to the event.
- Sarah Matthews: But I think I wanted it to be easy for people o make these maps and participate, because I thought then they might give a genuine input, whereas I think if people had been obliged to put their names, they may have hesitated more.
- Tim Shear: Do you think that's the same with your piece Jem, do you think if people had to sign up and register it would be a barrier to them?
- Jem Mackay: A massive barrier, massive barrier.
- Tim Shear: Yes, that's what I thought, its quite interesting to see the way you've played with it so you don't have to do that.
- Jem Mackay: Its risky was well, because people can take...
- Tim Shear: I was quite conscious of the fact you've obviously thought long and hard about that.
- Unknown A: There are too many opportunities on the net for people to hide in the shadows, got to drag them out into the sunshine.
- Tim Shear: Especially on web stuff, if you don't make people put their name to stuff, sign up for stuff, its very easy for people to hi-jack it, to take control.
- Jem Mackay: Funnily enough what I've found is that very few people want to destroy that, people want to destroy the Microsofts of this world because its so closed and they own the monopoly, but because



you're open, very few people, and there are people, but as long as you've got some kind of back up system.

Megan Wakefield: This is all fascinating, I know creative collaboration is the area of your research anyway, but with people, with all of these models, non-hierarchical models I suppose.... and also their quite anti-market a lot of them, its hard to produce a commodity from a lot of the work, except for the work where there's objects attached I suppose.

Unknown A: You can turn anything into a commodity.

Megan Wakefield: Well I suppose, even if its just a...inaudible....property.

Sarah Matthews: Has anyone had any experiences during this exhibition where people have participated wrongly or done anything unexpected?

Serena Rogers: Well I just saw that young kid go up to that (Jason Cleverly's work) and basically because he couldn't work it out in the first 3 ½ seconds he just left it, and he didn't bother to read the thing, he just went off and didn't come back, even though a girl came and was turning it, and it happens a lot, that people don't have the patience or they're not looking, they just want instant...

Unknown A: I did think about the fox on your one (Susan Corkes' toy theatre) that if I pull it would lots of lights come on.

Susan Corke: I thought it was quite funny because I didn't mean it in that way at all, but I suppose it kind of emphasizes a point, that nothing's going to happen.

Tim Shear: I think the funniest part I saw was when the school kids came in for Tim's (Hodgeson) workshop, and they started messing around with the floor (Tim Shear and Ana Carvalho's dance floor), and the teacher jumped up and said only one person at a time, and I thought 'why've you only got to have one person on at a time?', but because she said it with quite a lot of authority, and they almost listened, but I think the best bit was the fact that they totally ignored her.

Sarah Matthews: inaudible

Magda Tyzlik-Carver: inaudible

Tim Shear: ...inaudible...computers, rules you make it, most interactive computer games, the amount of rules and physics people have

written behind it is all very much controlled, its interesting to see other people's take on participation, bits that are not so often looked at as interactive, it depends on how you look at it, its quite interesting to see other people's viewpoint

Jem Mackay: Following that up, Brendan's Pure Data stuff, and this is probably geek talking here, but the way that Pure Data works is really about participation because you've got connections between this module that does this and this connection does that, and its really interesting how computer programming has, is becoming, more collaborative in the programming itself.

Brendan Byrne: That is one of the problems of Pure Data, that so many different versions of it exist, so many people are building on it all the time – it didn't work the way I wanted it to work – its working on three screens now, but the way I think about participation s the social relations and power relations, and the amazing thing is that people, despite the massively individualist late capitalism, we still like working collaboratively, we still keep working together – and I just want to use the bit that doesn't work on here, which is sound, which in audio art exhibitions is quite trickiest, and sometimes it impinges on other people's work, and I just want to use that as a quality, so that people would be in a state where they actually worked together because of the underlying sounds. But the weirdest thing is that in making it the help has just been so brilliant, hundreds of people, ex-students, current students, people turning up with loads of stuff to help me make it work, enormous amounts of people coming along to try and help me, its just been incredible, which has got nothing to do with the piece of work, but its been a ridiculously beautiful thing actually. But yes Pure Data and lots of elements of software does work in an entirely collaborative way. I think its...inaudible....

Megan Wakefield: But people still have the idea, that's still affected by the environment, the rules of participation will still be open to the effects that its Falmouth Poly now, and a lot of people coming in are coming to see an art exhibition, and to what extent that affects the rules of participation, what they'll do and what they won't do, I wonder if in a different setting it would be different, people would allow themselves more freedom, or a different sort of freedom.

Sarah Matthews: But maybe Falmouth Arts Centre is quite an informal space anyway, its not exactly a white cube, and maybe because a lot of students have been in here with their own exhibitions, it makes them feel more comfortable in this space.

Magda Tyzlik-Carver: And I think also having a table in the middle of the room somehow helps to gather around, and even if people have some objections or distance to the idea of being a little bit more social, it helps, not to have these objections.

Megan Wakefield: inaudible

Chantal Brookes: inaudible

Magda Tyzlik-Carver: If you feel this is the end of our conversation, thank you...

Unknown B: Can I just say I think its important to have this kind of thing in a rarified space. Brendan was talking about how we all actually despite capitalist society do actually collaborate, if you think of all the systems where you do actually trust someone else in that system, you trust the bus driver to stop to let you off the bus, maybe something like this is another different level of participation, collaboration, interaction, just thinking about the systems that we all use..

Magda Tyzlik-Carver: And I think especially when we were meeting through Open Research meetings, from April till just recently, I think that was something we were kind of discussing and that was coming out through presentation and research that was done to get these works ready, and I think probably the research situation is more visible than in the gallery situation, where probably there is a different objective, where there's the....of the whole thing, and I suppose also there's the thing that maybe does the....have a....in fact which is happening in the gallery, its trying to break this, and its not a very original idea, but its already disturbing that, I mean for us...but I agree yes. Thank you.