

the Whitworth

Podcast transcript

June 2026

A WALK IN THE PARK - EPISODE 7

A Walk in the Park is a podcast series from the Whitworth. A university gallery, set in parkland in central Manchester. Hosted by the Cultural Park Keeper Francine Hayfron, each episode takes a look at what is happening inside and out at the Whitworth.

EPISODE 7 – *Delaine Le Bas: Un-Fair-Ground*

In this episode we take a look at the exhibition “Un-Fair-Ground”, by the artist Delaine Le Bas. One of the most distinctive voices in contemporary art, Le Bas is renowned for her work addressing nationhood, belonging, gender, and identity, using a diverse range of media.

Listen as we find out about her journey as an artist, her creative process, the importance of collaboration, and what it means to work beyond the studio.

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A WALK IN THE PARK

EPISODE 7- SPEAKERS

Francine Hayfron (FH) - Cultural Park Keeper at The Whitworth, The University of Manchester.

Delaine Le Bas (DLB) – Artist. Her first solo show in Manchester presents an expansive overview of the artist’s groundbreaking feminist practice from across the artists' career with new pieces, shown in dialogue with artworks from the Whitworth's collection.

Valentin Diakonov (VD) – Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art

A WALK IN THE PARK

EPISODE 7

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Francine: Hello and welcome to A Walk in the Park. A podcast that takes a closer look at some of the exhibitions and work taking place inside and outside of the Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester.

My name is Francine Hayfron, I am your host and Cultural Park Keeper at the Whitworth. And in this episode, we take a look at the exhibition Un-Fair-Ground by the artist Delaine Le Bas.

This month, the Whitworth will present a major new solo exhibition by the artist Delaine Le Bas, one of the most distinctive voices in contemporary art. Le Bas is renowned for her work addressing nationhood, belonging, gender and identity using a diverse range of media. In this episode, we talk about her journey as an artist, her creative process, the importance of collaboration and what it means to work beyond the studio, listening to land, sound and ancestral knowledge.

This turned out to be a conversation about making as a way of living, about art as a form of care and about the power of voice spoken, sung and shared.

Hi Delaine and welcome to the Whitworth Podcast, A Walk in the Park. How are you feeling today?

Delaine Le Bas: Very good. Thank you. Good to be in Manchester.

FH: It is really good to have you here as well. And this morning we are sat here in the Alex Bernstein Garden and it looks like the rain is holding off for a little bit.

Thank you very much for joining us today. For listeners who might be new to your work, how would you describe what you do and what drives you to someone who's never seen your work before?

DLB: Well, I work across all media, so it's painting, installation, performance, sound, film. I collaborate with other people on that because I'm not an expert in some of these fields, and I don't pretend to be.

So, for my soundscapes, I work with Justin Langlands, and I've worked with Justin for a long time now, at least 16 years. I knew Justin before that as well because his part of Pressure Drop. Okay. So, Justin is based in Brighton as well as who's close to where, where I live. I work with Laszlo Farkas on my films.

Laszlo is originally from Hungary, but he's in Berlin. And then for performance I work with Hérā Santos and Ronke Osinowo. And, for this, I will also my son will also, Damien James Le Bas, will also be doing something. And then the scenography I work with my partner Lincoln Cato.

FH: Amazing. So collaboration is something that we will talk a little bit about later.

DLB: Okay.

FH: And so your show Un-Fair-Ground opens here at the Whitworth on the 13th of February. Can you talk us a little bit through the show and what visitors can expect to see?

DLB: Okay. So it's Un-Fair-Fround ground split up. Un Hyphen Fair hyphen Ground. And that's the title of the really big painting that's in one of the gallery spaces here.

And that was produced in the, unfairground without the hyphens at Glastonbury Festival, thanks to Sam Haggerty, who runs the unfairground there. Glastonbury. And I was assisted by Rose Wolpe. So this is massive painting. So Rose prepared the background for me and then it was done free style basically. So it's got lots of different elements and characters from previous works, but new works as well, including these Exquisite Corpse figures that I do.

And there be some fabric ones of those hanging in that gallery as well. So you get to see different interpretations of one piece of work, really. So that's the title of the show, but, and I've split it up because I've got a thing about language. So there's usually lots of bits of language in the work, because I'm really aware that language is used as a weapon against people.

Many words have more than one meaning as well. So someone can be telling you one thing and you can interpret it as something, but they're actually saying something else to you as well. And that, I think, is a massive exclusionary tool

that's used politically and it's highly weaponised. So, there'll be some of that in there- that'll be in the performance as well.

There's three gallery spaces as well to go through, and it's a little bit of a journey. And one of the spaces is a performance space. And there will also be work in there by two artists from Venture Arts who will be coming in to make work. I'm not collaborating with them on the work, they're making their own work that will then be placed in the space, because I also believe in sharing the space if you come with other people, because to access space to show work is very difficult for so many people as well. So, for me it's about sharing and trying to include as many different people as possible within the space and the programs that happen as well. It's really important.

FH: Fantastic. Okay, so we'll come and talk a little bit about particularly the performance space later and more of the collaborations. Just going back to a little bit about yourself really, and how you started. Do you remember the moment when you first realized that making art was not just something that you did, but it was something that you are?

DLB: I think I always knew this in a way, from when I first started drawing and making things. I used to make a lot of stuff, but I do a lot of drawing with my my, he was my great uncle, actually, my Uncle Eddie, and he used to he was obsessed with Veronica like so he used to sit there and do my hair like Veronica, like his mum used to watch all these old films, but I sort of in my head, I sort of had this idea of I was doing something other as I was growing up, and that was sort of really in my mind.

I wasn't quite sure what it was. I didn't go to school that much, but I was really interested in on clothing and music, and it was music that really drove me to go to old school. I wasn't old enough for punk, but when I heard Polystyrene and I heard Identity, it made me realize for the first time that someone was sort of talking about something that I felt really related to me as a person, and how I felt to be in the world.

So it was music and clothing that drove me to old school. And so I did textiles there at a local art school.

FH: And have you ever made music yourself?

DLB: I make it with Justin. So sometimes he does things with my voice. Yeah. So yeah. And it's something so I really, I really love the soundscapes that are really sort of integral part of the work in a way.

And then for the opening here as well, Laszlo will be coming as Laszlo DJs as well. So we will be playing music actually in one of the spaces.

FH: Fantastic. Brilliant. Okay. And so obviously you, have Romani heritage. How has your Romani heritage shaped the way that you see the world and the way that you make work?

DLB: It shaped my well, my world in many ways, I suppose, because I became very aware a very, very young age. I suppose when I started school, I'd been protected up until that point about, how people treat people who are different in any way at all whatsoever. So that was quite a sort of sobering moment, I suppose. And I took that onboard, I think, really early.

And, so I've always been in a position of viewing things, I think, in a slightly different way, and also because...I have to talk about the fact that many people don't think I am who I am because of what I look like. And so therefore, I think in many situations that made me very even more acutely aware of racism and all of its really insidious forms, because people didn't think about what they were saying in front of me.

I mean, Adrian Piper as an artist talks a lot about this. Made a little work about that with The Calling Card for example? And I think, yeah. So it's informed my work in that way. I think greatly. And being on the peripheries, I suppose, of society in a very different way and being aware of like how law works for some people against them and how others get away with absolutely anything.

FH: Is that always at the forefront of every kind of piece of work that you do? Or if you found over time things have changed? I just feel like in recent times what's going on in the world, I can imagine it's only more kind of at the forefront.

DLB: Well, it's there, but it's there in different ways. So I'll often revisit pieces of work and bring them into the work. And there's, there's some work in here that that is archival work, really, but it's being present in, in different ways. So like the wallpaper that we've had done is an old piece of work, which I actually did in 2004, 2005, when the Conservative Party then wanted to get rid of the Human Rights Act, we know and we know where that's taking us at the moment.

So this has been ongoing. So being aware of those things and realizing they don't go away and it doesn't seem to matter what government is in, they all seem to want to take that away from us, which is absolutely disgust me.

FH: Yeah, yeah. And tell us a bit more if you can describe a bit more about the wallpaper I was having a look at this morning. Absolutely love it. But yeah, for obviously those listeners who can't see it and might not be able to get up to see the show.

DLB: So it's a piece of work that I did. It was...it's originally it's quite a big painting. It's like, I think it's about five foot by five foot, the painting, it's got like

a blue background and it's actually an outline of me and my late husband as two figures that I've worked into.

And so it's got collage and things on it as well as writing. I've also got a painting of a bit of textile of Medusa coming out of my stomach. I'm slightly obsessed with Medusa, for different sorts of reasons. It's also got this text that was in all the tabloids and the broadsheets in 2005, and the Conservative Party put these adverts, and which was directly aimed at the gypsy Roma and Traveller community and wanting to take the Human Rights Act specifically away from those communities at that time, so it's quite politically loaded and it's called Meet Your Neighbors, which was actually taken from The Sun newspaper at the time when they were running these headlines.

So it was a front page of theirs, which also had a photograph, even though it was in 2005, the photograph was actually from the 80s of travellers. So I've used that, but I've tried to turn it on its head, and I did succeed in turning on its head, because this piece of work was in the first Roma pavilion in Venice Biennale in 2007, and it was also the title of the book that was made in order for us to get that as a collateral event of Venice Biennale.

So I like to think that I took something and I turned it into something really positive. Yes. And it's got things like... I did the I made these rubbish dolls that were made of plastic bin liners with the little plastic doll faces. So yeah, it's taking all of those things about rubbish and demonizing people and making it into art.

So yeah, so that's one piece and we've turned it into wallpaper. So the actual painting is not here. Okay. But it's wallpaper instead, because that's something the Whitworth have done historically with different artists. So we decided we'd do it as well for this show.

FH: Wonderful. Okay. And so this exhibition provides new insights into your practice. And it will feature new works such as The Witch's House and Garden alongside more recent works as we've just mentioned before, Un-Fair-Ground, which was created for Glastonbury in 2024. When you begin a new piece, where does it usually start? Is it like with a feeling, a memory, material or sound?

DLB: It's all different sorts of things really. I mean, I've constantly got, as you can see, I've got a pile of books here, which I've always got a notebook in my book, in my bag, always got some pens.

It might be writing something or drawing something, might be something I hear, might be some music, might be even a sentence I hear, just in passing someone saying something, a headline I see on the newspaper. It can be any sort of things. It might be something I buy even because I buy little strange little things in secondhand shops. And the item, the work might not look anything like it, but it might trigger something in my head.

It might be the colour of it, it might be the fabric that it's made out of. Sometimes it's fabric, like in the show. You see a lot of a particular sort of fabric that's like the tracing. There's sort of mix between tracing paper and tissue paper that I work on, and the fabric is very similar to that. So I'm always looking for things that can replicate how I work, because I work quite small because I don't have a studio at home.

FH: Okay.

DLB: So my biggest space is my garden. And that's where most of my painting happens at home. So, when I'm in a space like this, I just, I go a little bit over the top, I suppose, because I'm like, cool. This space, I can paint, I can paint, I can paint!

So I just get all the fabric out and start doing that. So yeah. So some of the work's quite small, but then it explodes into these big pieces. So it's, there's all different sorts of things. I often create a playlist of something as well when I'm working. Because I tend to listen to things as I used to when I was younger, I listen to things over and over again.

FH: Yeah, it's the best way. Okay. I like the idea of playlists as well. Do you keep those in archives and then maybe come back when doing other pieces?

DLB: I think that playlist will get through because sometimes certain records reappear as I think, you know, we've all got favourite tracks that we like to listen to.

FH: Yeah.

DLB: So yeah. So some things come back and then sometimes I'll just someone might suggest something to me or, you know, sometimes I've got friends that send me something.

I've got a really good friend who lives in Amsterdam and an amazing, as _____ was saying, you should listen to this. So he sent me something in London. *
00:14:28:01 - 00:15:01:02

FH: And your work often feels intuitive and layered. Can you talk us through what it's like inside that process?

DLB: It emerges, in a way. So, sometimes I've got a little drawing and then it might become a costume, but it might be a painting as well.

And sometimes the smaller works, the bigger works or like aspects of that, but they're not completely the whole thing. So a lot of the painting that I've done for this, like for the performance space, is from the residency I just did at Palmira Contemporary and Pilani in Italy, and the paper work, if you look at the paperwork that I've done and then you look at the painting, you'll see elements of it, but you won't necessarily see all of it.

FH: Okay.

DLB: So it just it really depends. And sometimes I decide to work into things a lot more. And I used to do a lot of embroidery and I still do some embroidery but not as much as I did. I've sort of exploded out of the embroidery and the embroideries have become paintings now. So a lot of the painting, you'll see, some of them reference older embroidery.

So there will be one embroidery, and if you look at that, you'll see that element reinterpreted in lots of different ways.

FH: Okay, okay. So do you work towards a clear outcome from the beginning, or do you let the work tell you where it needs to go? Kind of sounds like...

DLB: It's like a combination of both, really, because once I get into the space, I start really feeling the space. And I'm very interested in changing the space so that when people I know, a lot of people visit certain galleries and spaces on a continual basis, so when they come to see something more I want them to feel like they've almost walked into a completely different space. So I'm really interested in the architecture of the space, how you change that in some sort of way, because also when you put certain things in it, it changes the sound.

Certain colours change the actual feel of the space in terms of its dimensions, even. You can make spaces feel a lot smoother and a lot more intimate, for example. And very often it's dependent on the space and where it is and what the history of the space is. I'm also trying to create a safe space because even up until recent times, many people like myself wouldn't have been in these spaces.

It wasn't a space where we had accessibility in terms of our work or what we do. So to me, that space needs to be almost like re-formed in some sort of way. So there's a sort of comfort to it for people who if, like I just said in recent history, wouldn't necessarily even been in there.

FH: Yeah, I was just going to say that

DH: I'm very aware of that.

<Laughter>

<Musical interlude>

FH: Yeah. Okay. So when it comes to what you mentioned it before, like you don't have a studio at home and your garden is like your studio. It feels quite appropriate for us to do this interview outside here. And you often make your work outdoors. So what changes for you creatively when you're making work in open or natural spaces?

DLB: The main thing is the weather. So taking the big painting that was made at the, Unfairground at Glastonbury, you can imagine the artwork is made outside there generally. So everyone's completely reliant on the weather. So you have to work at quite a pace. So it's you... that's what that's the one thing, also you've got to allow for if it rains, it's going to change what it is you've done.

I'm quite happy to go with that. Obviously it's not for everyone. So I quite you know, sometimes I'll do something in the garden and the weather will be fine. And then while I'm doing it, the wind might come along. So that changes it. If it rains, that's going to do something else to it.

And I just sort of allow that to be part of it really. For me it's a different it's a different... it adds to the process. It's sort of a technique in its own way, and I'm so interested in more making. Of course, it creates different marks because I see all it all as making, even the stitching is mark making. So I just see it all as being a different form of that. But yeah, I mean, it's really I love being outside. I mean, know I'm out in all weathers.

FH: Yeah.

DLB: You know, just in all sorts of weather. And we were down on the beach and it was, I mean, I think everyone was walking along there like this because the wind was like, absolutely crazy.

<Laughter>

But I love it.

I just find it really invigorating. I live near the sea, so I'm constant... I don't care what time of year it is, I'll be down there and all of those because I just feel the nature is so powerful.

FH: And I was going to say so, like you mentioned about like working at a pace, but also about like the weather. Does that, does weather and movement feed into your thinking and your body, actually, as you work as well?

DLB: Yeah, I think I'm trying to keep that, the energy, the sort of the energy of it really in a way, because it's like when we were in only at Piani Contemporary for the residency, we were really close to the beach and it was really deep, really quick.

So it's very different to the sea that I know where I live, where the tide goes right out and you can walk right out. Not the case here where we were at. So there's a tiny little bit of beach and then literally went right down. So you were really close to really deep water. So it moves completely differently.

The light's different on it and everything. So for me all of those things are part of it.

FH: And does working outdoors connect you to ideas of freedom, ancestry or ways of living? And making that kind of resist containment? I'm wondering if that's part of the draw.

DLB: Yeah, I think it is that, but I think it's something that should be for everyone. I mean, we have very little access, actually, as the general public to most of the land.

FH: Yeah.

DLB: So...and to me, to be able to, make the most of that is really important. And it should be something that everyone also... a place where everyone feels comfortable because I know some people don't feel comfortable being in the landscape, because if you look at most pictures that we see or paintings, even historical paintings, many of us aren't there even though we were there.

And even if people put us there, those paintings aren't shown. Which to me is also a great disservice. And if more of that was shown, it would also give a different idea of the country and the people that have been here for a very long time, longer than most people would, you know, imagine that they'd been here or know that they've been here. And so all of those things are all, to me, important. So a lot of my work, it was only just recently I realized just how much my work is about landscape as well. I mean, I was involved in radical landscapes at Tate Liverpool with Darren.

FH: Yeah.

DLB: Darren Pih is now here.

FH: Yeah.

DLB: So that was, for me, that was a great show to be involved in because that was what that show was addressing, actually. And I feel that there's so much work that exists, historical work exists that could be pulled out, that would change that narrative. So yeah, a lot of the work that I make is actually about landscape.

And it is interesting because I've started to look at that more, I suppose, in my own practice.

FH: Okay.

DLB: But I think a lot of people are dealing with it as well, because obviously we don't have that much access to a lot of the land and even a lot of waterways as well.

FH: Yeah.

DLB: And of course, they're ruining the waterways, you know?

FH: Okay, tell us a little bit more about the installation of the Witch House and Garden. And I'm quite intrigued to know what interests you about folklore and the concept of witchery. You mentioned a little bit for your obsessed with Medusa at the minute, but tell us a bit more about this.

DLB: Well, I did, a whole... I mean, I've got this book here, which will be because there will be a in one of the spaces, there will be a table with books and that will have some books and also have some catalogues. I haven't got many catalogues of my own, but one I have got, which is Witch Hunt, which is just show that I was commissioned by Aspects in Portsmouth, to do, which took place in 2009.

And then it went to Chapter in Cardiff and it went to Context Gallery and Derry and then it comes when Campbell Works in London, and I did a load of research around witch hunts and what happened. It's obviously it's very disturbing and it's even more disturbing that obviously witch hunts continue into the present day. They just take different forms.

Unfortunately, some people come to a very unpleasant end as well, because of them. And it's, it's this whole thing around anyone who's different in all sorts of ways or has a political difference can be witch hunted. And the original ones were witch hunts tied in with capitalism. Obviously there was the, the plagues. And because the population was you know, there were so few people left that everyone became more equal at one point.

But then, of course, you can't have women being equal to men, and you can't have the powers that be having any sort of threat. So therefore it was used as a means to control. And just make women producers of work basically. And to get rid of all of this knowledge that was there. So, there were so many people that knew so much about medicine and natural healing and with midwifery, also contraception.

FH: Yeah.

DLB: So all of those things, sort of what's out really in a way. And then it was pushed underground. And if we look at the word 'magic', the word magic means is 'to do' as well. So it's so what I feel I'm doing is magic because I'm just doing what I can do. So, yeah, it's a, you know, terrible history, terrible things were done to people.

Anyone could be a you didn't matter who you were. Keep accused of being a witch. And then your all your possessions would be taken, your home, your land. And if you had money, you know, you paid for your until you paid for your torch, you paid for your own execution. Everyone divvied up all your stuff afterwards. And it's just, you know, whole places were wiped out because of it, especially once you go into Europe as well. So yeah, terrible history with it. And I was just... I was interested in it as a subject, but the fact that it just continues as

well, really, we don't, well, you know, most of these things we don't get rid of, and as with a lot of terrible things that have happened in history, we don't seem to learn from them either. And witch hunts being one of them.

And that's why in a lot of countries now, you know, people still get killed. And because they've been accused of being witches for all sorts of reasons, usually the same reasons as were historical, because someone wants something that they've got.

FH: Absolutely. And so when people... what do you want people to kind of see, feel when they come?

DLB: So the Witch House here is quite, quite different to the historical, installation that I created because it's like more of a physical building and it's got different works from the collection in the Whitworth that I did different sort of searches on, to find things. So there are quite a variety of works that will be in there, but it's also got the wallpaper, Meet Your Neighbors.

So it's also like some of these artists in their own time, even though people rave about them, they didn't have such a good time in their own, in their own lifetime. William Blake, for example, being one of them. So yeah, it's, it's sort of trying to bring that. And also there are some images of, of witches as well.

FH: And the garden gives you, I guess, that connection to outside. I love the fact that we're bringing a garden indoors.

DLB: I'm really, I'm sort of, a lot of the painting that will be in there, some of the bits of mine sort of relate to that as well.

So, yeah, it's...it's trying to bring an element that I suppose there's a little bit of this one painting of the sort of setting a landscape as well, that will be in the witch's house. Okay. So, yeah. And a sort of a garden, sort of a little bit Wizard of Ozzy as well. You know, I'm sort of a bit obsessed with art because my uncle, my nan, you know that I remember the first time I ever saw that. And also. So it's like the black and white thing and then the Technicolor. Yeah. Sort of the sort of bang with the color. Yeah. And my ideas around landscape as well. So there's some strange, there's some strange trees that are in there that are sort of formed from the human body because, you know, we're...all of this is connected as well.

We're all connected to everything. So if we feel like we can just get away with, like, ruining everything and there's not going to be some serious consequences to that, then we're a bit stupid.

<Musical interlude>

Mary, Mary, quite contrary. How does your garden grow? With silver bells and cockle shells and pretty maids all in a row. Mary, Mary, quite contrary. How does

your garden grow? With silver bells and cockle shells and pretty maids all in a row.

<Musical interlude ends>

FH: So moving on to collaboration and exchange. Collaboration, as we said before, seemed quite central to your practice. What do you love about making work with others?

DLB: Well, I can do bits of film but I can't put it together. And also, what I love is to hand in something to someone and then they do their magic because they can do that and I can't. So the film that's showing here, when I gave Laszlo different bits of film and what he created from that, by thinking about a bit of film footage that I sent of him, of my eye blinking, is what he conjured for me.

So that's what I love about it. And this time with Justin, we'll have some conversations. I might have even recorded a bit of sound for him, send him a text or a little drawing or something, and then he does a similar thing. Okay. And it's the same with the performance we have. I might give a text, but I've got... so like we've been looking at *The Mask of Anarchy* by Shelley because obviously that relates to the Peterloo Massacre that happened in Manchester, but also because Shelley wrote that when he was in Italy and, I was in Italy, and I've been thinking about this text for ages, so it seemed really appropriate to use that. And actually, even though it was written in 1819, I think it was, if you read it, it could be now. So that's the sad thing about, you know, you just think, why don't people learn, you know, it's like corruption and, and, you know, bad politicians. So yeah, we, you know, why can't we move forward in a positive way?

So the collaboration there is handing those things to people and then seeing what they want to also bring to the table with that. So the performance is a mix of us working together on that. And then I might do the costumes, but then it's like, well, where the people want to move, what do they want to bring to it? Do they want to write a text? And then we, we perform it together.

So then we come to the space together. So we spend some time in the space together as well before the performance, for example. So like Ronke, hopefully Harry will be here as well, and my son Damien. And then we will spend some time together like how are we going to move through the space as well? And are we going to, you know, interact with the audience? You know, what's going to happen? And then there's a little bit of improvisation as well. There's always a bit of that as well. So we always allow for that.

FH: Okay.

DLB: And each performance is always different.

FH: You said earlier on that you're inviting, artists from Venture Arts to come in as well? Can you tell us a bit more about that kind of... I know you said it's not like exact collaboration like that, but you're inviting them to respond to work?

DLB: So because the Whitworth work a lot with Venture Arts, the idea was that, I just thought it would be good for artists to come in and just be in the space and just be able to just show their world.

It's just because, you know, it's great art. I mean, I've seen some of the work and it's really great art, so I just feel like it's, to share the space. To me, it's really important. I struggled for years trying to get space in any sort of gallery anyway, so I just don't want to just...I don't want to forget that.

I don't want to forget how difficult that is to have a space, and also just to see your work in a different context, not just on your own wall in your own room somewhere. And there's some amazing art out there everywhere. And so to be able to include artwork and also allow people to have the space to maybe make something and think, yeah, it's in there with these other things as well.

So yeah. So it's not always possible because it's not always possible in the space or it's not always possible because you, you're also not there, you know, to make the connections with people as well, because Whitworth have a longstanding relationship as well with ventures. So, those sometimes those collaborations can't take place because, you know, even establishing relationships.

So people also feel secure and safe and happy where they are as well, rather than just like dropping people into a situation. And then there's no, there's no, there's no care because, you know, that four letter word is badly abused word in the art world sometimes. And I think that that's really important that you try and do things in the best way that you can, so everyone feels comfortable and everyone gets the best outcome that they possibly can for me.

FH: And that leads very neatly onto the next question I wanted to ask you about. How do you build trust and care into the collaborative processes, especially across different communities and disciplines?

DLB: With the people that I work with, we've all got longstanding relationships, so we have like lots of conversations. We also spend a lot of time together. So we're friends.

We're almost like a sort of extended family in a way. With other things, it's much more difficult. And this is why for me, it's really important that if I'm working somewhere, the place I'm working already has longstanding, established relationships with people, that it's much better for them to negotiate that for me, because I'm going to go, you know, I'm only going to be here for the time that I'm here, then I'm going to go off somewhere else.

So, yeah, I can connect with someone and bring them into the building. But then I'm leaving. So it's really important that what happens is that there is a longstanding relationship, or at least they've started to establish something and they're going to continue it rather than this drop in and drop out thing. Because for me, I find that greatly problematic because I can't, you know, I can only be here for a certain amount of time anyway because I don't, you know, I don't live in Manchester, I live on the South coast.

So it's really important that the other people that are involved in the whole thing have that connection. So because that's how I work with the people that I work with on a regular basis, we've got longstanding relationships and understandings between each other. Because otherwise misunderstandings do happen, unfortunately. And of course, even when things are well established, sometimes that can happen.

But I think it's just about taking as much care as possible, you know? And we can all make mistakes sometimes. And that's, you know, that can be completely unintentional. So you've just got to try and make sure the bad things don't happen.

FH: And can you tell us about a collaboration that really transformed how you think about your work?

DLB: Quite a few I suppose, in a way. My most recent one would be with Lincoln, because Lincoln made furniture and works and interiors. And because of that, it's really helps me expand what I do in a way, because he, he not only knows people that can make things, but because he can make things. He did make things himself.

He has a different understanding of technically how to put things together. And also not letting me limit... if I've got no idea how I'm going to make that kind of thing. So that's really expanded things. I mean, it's just means that things are getting bigger in some ways.

<Laughter>

But that's really, it's quite amazing because it doesn't... it's like not having any limits on it really, in a way. And also because I might have an idea, but technically I wouldn't know how to make that manifest itself into the magic. You know, the magic that someone else can do that I can't do because they have the skill to do that.

So that's, yeah, even with Justin, with the sound, for example, the things that he can do with sounds, because he can take my voice and all sorts of magical things. Laszlo with the film.

You know, it's great working with Ronke and Hera with the performance. Yeah. I mean, it's, also working with some of the curators I've worked with. Because

they're just giving me the freedom... Even being here, you know, just being given the freedom to be in the space and work on paint, for example. So there's lots of different collaborations that I've had. I've just enabled the work of, okay.

FH: And as part of the show, you have collaborated with the Musgrave-Kinley Outsider art collection that we have housed here at the Whitworth. Can you tell us a bit more about this?

DLB: Well, I've got a long-standing relationship because my late husband's work is in that collection, so I knew Monika. I never met Victor, unfortunately, because he'd passed by the time I got to meet Monika. But that was in the late 80s and so some of the works for me, it's like visiting old friends, because they were in her house when the collection was on South Lambeth Road, in her house, and it was at that house...it was the first time I ever saw Paula Rego's work, because Monika had some of Paula Rego's work in the house. So the Madge Gills...it's like seeing old friends because that was the first time I saw them and I saw works by Pearl Alcock and I met Pearl a few times at different shows and things.

So I have a different relationship to the artwork because of personal connections with it really, in a way. And to me, I always saw it just as art. So, talking of Manchester, you know, I remember Tony Wilson saying to me, it's all art.

I switch sides, like, I don't like the label so much. So to take the label out of it for me is really important and just see the work as works. And there's some really amazing works out there that people make everywhere, all over the place. And, to just put them in the space, put in a plinth or hanging on the wall and just look at and just absorb it and just maybe think about it in a different way.

So also we're hanging things in a slightly different way. And, you know, we've used this text by Clémentine Deliss called The Metabolic Museum, which is about how museums change, how works presented, and things as well. So there's a bit of that going on as well in the show. So I'm sure some people might not like the way some things are hung, but, you know, it's like if it was in my house, this is what I do with it.

Yeah. So I was sort of trying to treat a bit like that. Obviously some things have to be presented in some ways because of the care that's needed for them. So a lot of textiles have to be shown in particular ways. I don't show my textiles in that way, but that is sometimes seen as being slightly problematic, obviously, because textiles, if you touch them, the oils on you from your skin, degrade them and things like that and the light effects and all sorts of things.

So there are difficulties around how some things have to be presented because of their age and the quality of them already. Because some things are already in repair and obviously textiles do not withstand the test of, you know, they're not like stone sculpture, for example. And this is why so many things, we don't know

how beautiful they were because they just disappeared because of what they were made out of.

But I'm interested in that. I'm interested in the degrading of that as well. So I'm interested in the fact that some work doesn't... The painting from Glastonbury under normal circumstances, would have been recycled and remade into something else. So it was only because I had a conversation with Sam and we decided to keep it. But that wouldn't technically, under normal circumstances, that wouldn't exist. So that's another thing now, depending on where art is made and the context it's in, it gets transformed into something else.

FH: A question I was going to ask you towards the end, but seems quite fitting to us now is I was going to say, why now? Why here in Manchester? But it feels like you touched upon a few of those things. That connection with the Musgrave Kinley collection. You know, even that statement from Tony Wilson, I mean. Yeah. Why does it feel like this is the right time now?

DLB: So, well, it's been a long time. I mean, it's been a long time coming that many more people who make art are now being included.

They should have been there a long, long time ago, because there's lots of people in the art world who profited from looking at those things and not giving credit where it should have been given. So I just think there's amazing things that all sorts of people make, regardless of their background, where they've come from, how old they are, as well, who make amazing art. And so, can we just not look at it for the art that it is and just see it for what it is?

So, for me, it's a... it's been a long time that this should have been more visible. And it has been in the last few years but, and it's coming more to the forefront, but it should have been happening a long, long time ago, really, because so many people have known about all this amazing work that haven't been saying so it's not it's like like a badly kept secret, really.

FH: The spice at this point, I also posed the question to the Whitworth's curator of the show, Valentin Diakonov, why should this exhibition happen here at the Whitworth?

Valentin Diakonov: Well, there are many reasons for this, I think, for this exhibition happening now at the Whitworth. One of the reasons is, is that we're huge fans of Delaine and have been for a while.

And, you know, half of the team at least wanted to do a project with her for a long, long time. Also, we have her ex-husband, who passed away, Damien Le Bas. We have his work as part of our collection of outsider art from the Musgrave Kinley collection. So it makes a lot of sense to kind of, you know, not exactly reunite them, but, you know, build up on that relationship that we already had.

But then the, you know, in the wider scheme of things, now, when the art world has expanded quite a bit and we are trying to look at all the canons, you know, European art history from a very different perspective. I think Delaine, emerged with this guiding light for us. So she took some, you know, staples of the collection like a William Blake watercolour of the Ancient of Days. Everybody loves this. But she put work like that in a conversation with self-taught and neurodivergent artists, with her own thoughts on how, you know, culture works and how imagery works, and how it can be both innocent and scary. And she created this history, this like lineage of art, which is completely peculiar to her from one side and on the other side, it makes us appreciate, you know, the visionary small makes us appreciate the underdogs more.

And that just focuses, us on the magic part, the the the way... the way art can kind of induce and sustain visions that, make us, make us more aware of, you know, who we are and our connections, you know, connections beyond the usual, you know, beyond the usual social cues that people get in museums.

So the exhibition looks nonlinear, feels nonlinear, and it should be experienced as this drift almost, you know, drifting through eras, everything mixed together. But everything makes sense because this is this, you know, magic spark in each work from the collection and Dylan's practice, obviously, there's this magic spark that just, you know, makes everything sensible in the wonderful visionary and the completely non-canonical way.

<Musical interlude>

FH: Music and spoken word are such powerful elements in your practice. When did sound first become part of how you work?

DLB: I was always interested in it, but didn't really... It was when I did Witch Hunt. So I'd my sort of... I'd made a really sort of rough film that I'd just recorded a bit of like sound and bits of music that I like, which I probably shouldn't have been doing. But I was, for when I did finished finale and, in 2007, and I'd made this film in about 2005, actually, and I made another film, but it was just like me, like putting things together in like video recording from the television with the tape recorder going and whatever so it was, it was all. And it was only when I did Witch Hunt that I really, really asked Justin that if he would start working with me with some sound. And that's when we really started putting things together. So it's been about 17 years now. Let's start to think about it. So yeah. And so we because there's a, there's a text in the book. So we did the, the first one we did was Witch Hunt which is, was, was a text that's in here that my son wrote actually that which is in response to a conversation we had while I was making the work, actually in the gallery space. It was based on telephone conversation. Then he wrote a text. Then I recorded it with Justin, and then Justin did something with that, with some sound and with me singing at the beginning of at the end of it.

FH: I love that.

DLB: So that was the first one. And we've, that's been played a lot when the installation has been on. But we've also we also put it in, I remade two pieces of work because a lot of the so the, the, the basis of that original installation exists, but a lot of it does, because I had to because of the land my parents was on, there was a planning issue and I had to stand in a field and burn a lot of my work. So a lot of the work I had that was big panels and stuff all had to be burnt. And, so I remade these little buildings. We made them for Tramway when I did Glasgow International there. And in two of the buildings we had the text, we had the text printed out, and we had headphones for people to listen to the soundscape, because it's just really it's probably more it's been more relevant in the last unfortunately, in the last few years, due to some of the content that it's talking about. That it was even at the time when we did it, when I was talking about it and when I was really talking about some of these things. So, yeah, it becomes sometimes it's like, it's like it's a bit hard to hear it.

Yeah. So yeah. So yeah. So my son's written a lot of that. I write a lot of text, but my son also writes a lot of text for me as well.

FH: Okay. And, just sticking with music. I mean, we're going to come back, hopefully we'll, maybe read one of your spoken word pieces for us later. But, we talked about, Unfairground and creating that mural at Glastonbury Festival and, you know, working with the elements and at a pace, what was that experience like, apart from time being something that really kind of drives it? What was that experience like creating, work in that space?

DLB: Well, it's interesting because the time element is, you know, you make it over a matter of days. So that painting was done just like literally over a matter of days, Rose got the background prepared for me. Then I was there. I think we did it in total of six days. Okay. Because obviously everyone's got to share the equipment as well and stuff. So there's, there's, you know, you're up and down and cherry pickers and things like that, Rose has got a license for that.

So I'm in my hard hat and high vis and so you, you've got a very small amount of time to do something. The most amazing thing about it is the festival's on for the full four days. I mean, most people go on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. It opens on the Thursdays. There's four days, there's four days, and it's like 250,000 people there or something.

And of course it's to really be seen at night. That's why we've got that gold, the gold disc that's on it because, Rose got this special, like powder, this gold powder. So when the lights on, it really pops. It doesn't pop as much as a colour when the light isn't on it, because if you look at the top of it, you'll see some holes where the lights come through that go down on it.

So at night it's all lit up. It's the most amazing thing about going to Glastonbury and seeing the work that is at nighttime when there's just like thousands of people, especially down in that bottom quarter where everyone goes down there and dances all night, basically. And just to see so many people experience... it's completely different environment for all to be in, in a way, but it's also really great environment and natural environment, really, because, historically at different times we were surrounded by art of all different sorts. We've just don't, it's not just, not there most of the time now...

So to see it in that space and also for just that amount of time, and because I've worked a lot in Berlin at the Maxim Gorki Theatre with Shermin Langhoff is the director there. So, so being in the theatre is a similar thing. You know, they do that because their productions run for weeks and weeks and weeks. They've got a continuous rota of productions, and some productions will only be on if they're doing like an art event. Those productions might only happen like 4 or 5 times. So it's a completely different experience working on things like that where there's as much, so much intensity, so much work put into something that's for a very, very short amount of time. And then it might just disappear.

So it's not like it's not like where you make a big painting and it's shown for years, and then it goes in storage and it comes back out again. I mean, this stuff gets recycled, most of it gets recycled into something else. So it's a completely different way of art being produced, seen, experienced with music, with all different sorts of lighting and stuff and things.

So the lighting is very, very different. Because it's, it's put on the pictures and it's put on the artwork in different ways. Things are lit very differently. You've got all that sound going on, that cacophony of sound. You've also got all the people, because it was like trying to get a photograph of that at Glastonbury with no one in it..

<Laughs>

Was very difficult because when we were making it this, all the equipment around all the time, there's always someone in high vis. And then if it's another time, there's just hundreds and hundreds of people.

FH: Yeah, yeah, I was going to ask you about that whilst you're creating it. And obviously all the sounds and the music from the festival, like, is that kind of influencing how the piece kind of came out?

DLB: Well, because when you're there, there's no there's no music. So it's very different. So you'd finish the piece. So it's because it's complete. So you're making the works that this whole build goes on, the build goes on, and then people start coming doing the artwork, and everyone has a certain amount of time to do it because obviously the equipment you not everyone could be working on everything at the same time. Stuff like that. So there isn't, there

isn't, there isn't the sound initially. You're in the countryside and you can hear the bus, so it's a completely different. But it's so vibrant, the pace, it feels like that music is happening. Yeah. I mean, in my head, obviously in my head it's happening and its sort of coming to life in my head.

So, this is the other thing I like the space in here as it's emerging. It's what's already in my head. And it's sometimes it's really difficult for me to articulate that. The same with the piece for Glastonbury, like because I work freestyle. So that was completely freestyle, that piece. I'm just doing it as I go. So, I've got some rough ideas.

So, it was sort of based on, I'll get one of my books out here for you. So, it was sort of based on some of these old embroideries I did. But, you know, so you can see bits of it on there, but it's also nothing like these at the same time, because I'll do one figure and then I'll think, oh yeah, without thinking, needs to go there and I need to put that above it.

So, it's also emerging as I'm going along and that's all work on that. But in my head I'm composing I suppose, it is like music, you know, it's different sort of composing here. It's doing it with figures and colour and paint and stuff. So yeah. So it just sort of like grows up. And then I could go further.

FH: Brilliant. And, going back, thinking about sound, what does a human voice allow you to express that visual forms alone might not?

DLB: Well, with the performance as well, often something's happened. So, I, I don't watch television, but I'm aware of the news, and something might just come up, and then I'll have to put it into the work and just has to be there. And I think also the voice is very I mean, we can talk very quietly and we can be very kind in what we're saying, but we can also be quite aggressive if we change the tone of...

So the tone of our voice is really...it has massive impact on whoever we're talking to and also the language we use, how we use language. So it's... sound has this massive impact. But also for some people it's completely and utterly unbearable, because I've got a friend who suffers from hyperacoustic. So to be in the street is really difficult for him with the sirens going off or the reversing sound that's on vehicles, for example. So, for some people, it's absolutely torturous to be in a certain amount of sound as well. Sound can also be used to torture people.

Yeah. So, it has all these different qualities. And so I suppose sometimes in the when we're using the sound, sometimes we don't have it. And then sometimes I'll put it on and sometimes it might be the end of the piece, sometimes it might be the beginning, sometimes it might run all the way through it. And sometimes we're playing with the sound. So sometimes, like if I'm at the Gorki, I can. I can

actually manipulate the sound while I'm actually performing with the headphones on and stuff as well.

So, it just depends what the technical set up is that we've got to work with. I'm also quite good at projecting my voice, because I've done a lot of stuff performing just out in exterior spaces with no equipment at all whatsoever, so I can really yell to. Sometimes when I go into a space I'm very aware that I can project my voice in that space, and I won't necessarily need maybe a mic, but also sometimes you do because also sometimes people can't hear.

So, to be able to give that little extra strength to the sound enables everyone in the space to be able to hear it as well. So, it's really, and then of course, some people can't hear at all. So, to be able to visually maybe create something else is also important. And also think about that. So hopefully we'll have one tour which will be a BSL tour as well for people.

Because when we're talking about exclusion, lots of people are excluded for all different sorts of reasons. So, it's also trying to build into it for that not to happen, if possible. Because I have worked so long in the area that I've worked in and everyone talking about exclusion all the time, it's like, well, yeah, there's lots of people that still feel excluded so can we just try and bring as many people in as possible?

FH: And do you experience spoken word as storytelling, protest, ritual or something else entirely??

DLB: All of it. It's everything. It really is everything. I mean, I love, I love hearing, I love the cacophony of sounds, you know, like sometimes you got even when I was up at Piccadilly, you know, you got different people. It was someone shouting or someone saying something religious, someone else doing something else. Someone just like maybe singing. I've been to places where I just hear someone singing and it's just quite amazing. I was in Seville when someone was just walking down the street singing, and it was just beautiful. And when I was in Napoli there were some opera singers practicing on stage and you could just hear them above, like all the scooters and everything but I also like that mix of the sound together.

FH: So, this is a good opportunity. Now as we sat, as I told you before, this is one of my favourite spots here in the Whitworth, the Alex Bernstein Garden. And it feels like the perfect spot to maybe hear one of your spoken word pieces, if you wouldn't mind sharing with us a few here.

DLB: I can read a little one, a small one. It's very short. This one. But did this in Italy. I wrote it in English, but then sometimes I translate it into the language where I am sometimes like, get someone to do it for me, because that's obviously better, because sometimes my translations especially are line with my limited computer skills...

It speaks to me like a shell to my ear and red bursts from flesh.

So I... and this is up on the wall in the show. They're actually at the moment. So anyone who is Italian and please, anyone who's attending excuse my Italian to this not great...

Mi parla come una conchiglia al mio orecchio e rosso esplode dalla mia carne.

So I'm often writing things out. Most of my writing happens in the morning when I wake up. Sometimes, let me see if I can find something that's a little bit longer in one of these. Okay, so I read a couple days ago I was writing these when I was in Italy, and it comes from... where is it?

I just found it. I mean, I was it was the it was the Shelley thing. It's the Mask of Anarchy that was really in this book, because obviously it was written in, he wrote in Italy. And, where is it from something. Yeah. So this is the first verse of it.

As I lay asleep in Italy, there came a voice from over the sea, and with the great power forth that led me to walk in the visions of posy.

And that's how it starts. Because I was in Italy. I was like thinking I was just meant to... That's been kicking around in my head for ages. This Mask of Anarchy thing by Shelley but because I was in Italy, it really came to the forefront. And of course, I knew I was coming here. And so it was it. So I just, I was writing loads. So this, so this, this one I wrote on Sunday, the 9th November. Usually, sometimes I put the time in as well when I write them.

It breathes as my skin moves,

In yellow glass, the moon has its face.

I hold it in my hands as the sun in apricot turns the sky to something else,

Their fins taking them back under to where we first began.

Monday the 10th of November

From sleep and dreams.

In that half-light of the early hours, they appeared

To me from Blake, the dividers

Speaking to me of all the ills of the world,

While the sea breeze and silver jumped from its skin.

FH: I don't know if it's because I've just come from before, obviously the space of where your work is, but it's almost as you're reading it. I can see pictures and being created in front, and I just think if you hadn't have been a visual artist, do you think you would have been like a performance artist?

DLB: I loved writing at school, like, writing English language and English Literature and my favourite things, I mean, I write a lot. I mean, the books are just full of my ramblings some people might say. But I do... I mean, I write a lot and I'm really interested. I'm just really interested in trying to describe how I feel in writing as well as the painting.

So yeah, to me, it's an important part of what I do. I think in a way. And when my late husband died, I wrote loads. I mean, I just did loads and loads of I mean... I do these books all the time anyway, but it was a way of me really dealing with the grief as well. And the time when my nan died. I mean, the work for the blog was nominated for the Turner Prize was all about that as well.

So there was a lot of writing in that. And yeah, and I mean, I love performing. I mean, I can hear my late husband say to me, oh, actress in that sort of Kenneth Williams voice, because I do really love performing. And I suppose working at the Gorki has enabled me to do that. So whenever I do shows, performance is a big part of the work as well.

To me, it's really because I also think it's another way that people respond to the work. And for me, also, the performance is really about the people that are there with me. So I'm even though some of my performances are filmed I prefer when they're not, or if there is a film I'd I prefer if it's like a film made from it. So it's sort of trying to capture something of it, because I think performance is really about being in the space with the people. You know, it's a bit like it's great listening to music, but it's so different when you listen to someone performing live, isn't it? It's completely different.

<Musical interlude>

FH: What does performance offer you as an artist that static objects can't?

DLB: Moving through the space, being present at that moment with the people that are there. Because I was always quite, I used to say to my husband, my late husband all the time, like, you know, we've got to be in the now. And it's something I often use to say if I was in the pool was like, we'll be in the now.

And when I came, I, you know, I left my husband, I came, I went to the shops, the launderette came back. And in that time he had died.

So that made me even more like, you know, we haven't got time to mess around, you know, it's like. So the performance enables me to really express that, I think be quite physical about it and vocal about it at the same time and really express that in it. So sometimes I can be quite visceral in that as well, because if something's happened, then I feel like it's a way of being able to express that.

Sometimes it's good to... also in the space, I try and also encourage people if they want to be part of it, to be part of it as well, because I think that we live in a time where so much emotion is sort of suppressed, really, in a way. Like when someone dies who's really close to you, if you work somewhere, you don't get any time off, you're just supposed to get on with it.

I mean, it astounds me. It just... I mean, I was constantly after my late husband died, like, they have these bereavement teams at different places, like a building society or bank or whatever it is. They're useless and people just don't understand. If you've got to keep repeating the same thing about someone who's close to you and what's happened to them, just the trauma of that is unbelievable.

And no, there's no and there's no like this. There's no real care around it. Like, you know, no help with like how you need to take care of yourself. Like, if you're not eating and you've at least got to...and you need to drink water, otherwise you're going to be ill. But like, even these basic little things or like the money you're entitled to that no one tells you about, for example. And, and then you have to organize so many things.

So, for me, it's like the performance is a way of just being able to be really expressive in a different way that I can't do with the painting. Yeah. And to be present in it and to be able to be like, be joyous also, you know, like I can be quite negative. It's also like, don't let them. Still, you mustn't let our joy be stolen from us either as well. You know, like it's really important for me to express though, for us to be together and be quite, free in our expression of our love for each other as well as performers and so all of those things for me are really important to express. Because we don't get... I'm not going to get a second chance at this. So I'm grabbing it and just running with it and whatever direction I can take it. And it's like, for me, that's the most important thing to do and just really feel, you know, I feel very blessed that I can do what I can do in the spaces that I can do it in as well, and I can share that space with other people, and hopefully they can feel comfortable enough to also express how they feel and maybe produce something that they really want to produce and have the freedom to do that.

You know, I used to do a lot of work in schools, and I used to, it really used to frustrate me that so many children who are so brilliant at art are just, like, told that they're not any good at it. You know, it's like it's so I just it's heartbreaking. And so for me, it's just like, let's just let's just run with as much as we can and let's just try and make spaces where people can feel cared for, feel that they have the space to do things, and that we can share that with each other and be a bit more positive and not so negative, even though I talk about negative things in my work.

<Laughs>

But it's like it's also we need to get rid of that, you know, we need to be able to express that as well. And then once that's done, it's like we've expelled it. It's like it's over there. Yeah, it cast it out.

FH: And so in the performance space that we have here, what kind of things can people expect to see? What's going to happen?

DLB: We will do a performance for the opening. So I see it as like it's like oh, it's like opening the space really in a way for everyone. And my son will do something. Ronke will do something. We'll do something together as well. Yeah. It'll be a mixture of things, really. Let it be a surprise.

And there'll be traces as well, because the costumes and things will then become part of the exhibition as well. So people will be able to see that. And usually if there's texts and things as well, I leave those in the space. So there's always the remnants, there's always sort of the, the trail of the performance as well left within the space as well for people to see.

So it's not sort of cleared away because I also think that's part of it's like the process of it as well. And it's quite nice for people to be able to see that, that process. Also, even if we're not there, the trace of us still is.

FH: Okay. So lastly, what do you hope that listeners to this podcast and visitors to the gallery feel or carry with them after encountering your work?

DLB: I just want them to experience it, I suppose. Really. And not be... I... it's just my way of being in the world, my way of seeing the world. And some people might want to share that, other people might be disturbed by it. Other people might be quite happy about it. But that whole mix of reactions is part of what it is. And, you know, we all experience things differently.

So it's just my it's just it's just my way of being. And I've been asked to go into the collection and the things that I've picked out from the collection in my sort of random sort of search that I did for it as well, in many ways. So it's...it's and the collection here is quite extensive and they've got amazing, beautiful things in the collection. And then obviously working with Valentin, who's the curator here. When I was looking for things, I found things, but also he will pull things out because he knows the collection better than I do. Because I was also going on what I could see online. But, you see, sometimes you just get a description and a name and you don't...actually, there isn't an image of the work.

So some things came from my visits to here, finding things and.... Yeah. So there's a, there's a whole selection of things. Right? There's some shoes that come from different places and there's some costumes as well from the collection. So there are some textiles from the collection as well.

So hopefully there's like different things that also people won't have seen before that have come out or may have been shown, but way, way, way back. So there

might be new things for people to see, but also the way we've put them with other things as well and the way we've done this place. So hopefully it'll be a different experience.

FH: Wonderful. At this point in your life and career, what does artistic freedom mean to you?

DLB: Artistic freedom means to me exactly what I'm doing at this moment in time.

And that's magic in itself. It's also other people creating those spaces and giving you the opportunity to do it as well. So it's also about a whole lot of people enabling as well, I suppose. And having the, to do the... Because some places can still be very exclusionary. So you need, you need to be a, there needs to be a will for people to want to do that as well. And some people do have that will, which is really powerful.

FH: And finally, one last word. What would you say to or what advice would you give to younger artists from marginalized or nomadic backgrounds who are trying to claim space for their voices today?

DLB: Just keep doing it. That's all I've done. I mean, initially when I was doing it, it was really, really difficult and my whole thing was I used to show in all sorts of places, go anywhere and show my work.

And people say, well, why are you going there? It's the middle of nowhere or blah blah, blah, blah blah blah blah. My whole thing was if I just keep going and if I just keep showing in the end, I'll be in so many places all at once that no one will be able to ignore me and look at what's happened.

So it's. And I still keep doing it. I mean, I still keep doing it now because I'm just like any opportunity to show anywhere. I'm like, yeah, why not? Because all sorts of things have come out of that as well. The different people that I've met or people who were in like a really remote place somewhere, ended up somewhere else, and they've asked me to go back there.

So it's also it opens up all sorts of opportunity. You never know who you're going to meet, what type of work you're going to make. You know, I went to Zimbabwe with Christine who is a curator, working with basket weavers who made the most amazing work. We met the most amazing people. So all sorts of, you know, like, you just you just don't....

You just don't know. And we've worked together ever since because of that. So. And then, you know, I've got a really good friend, Alex, who I met through that trip as well. So it's all of these things. So yeah, just, just keep going. Just keep going because that's all I can recommend. Me and late husband, did all sorts of jobs as well to make the work that I wanted to make.

So that's another thing that's really, really important that you make the work you feel you need to make. You know, I did cleaning, we did market city car boot sounds. We sold flowers on street corners. You name it, we did it. But it enabled us to make the work we wanted to make, which then other people saw and liked what I did.

It means I've never had to compromise on the work I make either. So I make the work that I want to make all the time. So yeah. So just keep going. I know it's difficult. It's not easy. It's so difficult. And you haven't always got everyone with your back either, you know, because sometimes you're doing something that you're the first person in your family that's ever done it as well. And that's really that's not an easy thing to do. And I know that. But trust in your intuition and having your own faith, in what it is you do. That's gonna be a driving force. Thank you so much, Delaney. This has been a truly inspirational chat today, and, feels like one of the most inclusive conversations I've had in a very long time.

FH: So thank you very much and I look forward to seeing the show. It feels like one of the most inclusive conversations I've had in a long time.

DLB: Well, thank you for asking me. And it's been great to sit in the garden, I've taken my shoes because it's like a perfect space for me to. So thank you.

FH: Brilliant. Thanks.

A huge thank you to Delaine for the insightful conversation and snippets of her new soundscapes featured in this episode, and also to her partner Lenny, and to the curators of the show, Valentine Diakonov and Hannah Vollam.

Delaine Le Bas: Un-Fair-Ground opens at the Whitworth on Friday 13th February and runs until the 31st of May 2026. Also available from the Whitworth shop will be a range of exhibition merchandise, including recycled jewellery and vintage sweatshirts and t shirts featuring hand printed designs from Dylan Labar made by local artist Wendy Roby. Head to the Whitworth Shop to browse and purchase online.

That's it for this episode of A Walk in the Park. Until the next time. Thank you for listening.

A WALK IN THE PARK

EPISODE 7

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