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Mon, Jan 15, 2024 12:12PM • 23:53

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

studio, people, space, building, work, belonging, feel, home, year, uni, art, school, college, interesting, place, designed, takes, history, mentioned, experience

**SPEAKERS**

Asuf ISHAQ, Student 2, Student 1

**Asuf ISHAQ** 00:04

So the mic is on now. That's working fine. So what I'll do for the volume, okay, so I'll start with so belonging to university, what does that mean? I mean, I use the word University, and sometimes I use the word college or college. So, I mean, maybe there has like, some sort of importance, but I mix it up. So it's useful for them. So to explain, so what? What is belonging to the university space? What does belonging mean to you? Does the building does the building enhance your sense of belonging? Can I build? And also can a building do this? So you want to just do you want to start off? Or you can start? How does a building? I mean, we normally think, Okay, what do we think of belonging? belonging? What, what does belonging mean to you?

**Student 1** 01:23

Not really sure, because I've, I'm someone that's never felt like I belong, anywhere. I've always had the kind of opposite experience where I feel like I don't belong, and I'm always slightly on the outsides of things. Yeah, I think it's really wide, very affected by spaces and my surroundings is like, it's more the physical side, that makes me more like I belong somewhere than the kind of like, non physical aspects of it.

**Asuf ISHAQ** 01:55

So so what would that be friends of family? And is that what you? What do you mean?

**Student 1** 02:02

So I mean, like space, so the opposite is more space. I don't feel like I, I always feel like I'm slightly on the outside of things, which is why I like changing scenes, and I like travelling by myself and stuff. Because I always feel like, I'm much more connected to the place that I'm in than the kind of people around me and stuff. Yeah,

**Asuf ISHAQ** 02:22

yeah, that's interesting. And yourself.

**Student 2** 02:26

I think I'm quite similar. I don't often feel like I belong. So I feel like I almost hold back from getting like really settled into a space. Because I don't know, I always just so like, for example, when there have been times where we've been in a space, and then everyone's picking their kind of where they want to work. I usually, I'm just like, everyone could pick a space, and I'll like, fit in somewhere. Because I'm, yeah, I don't know, I think I feel a bit outside of it as well. But I also think belonging kind of is having a place. And I think the kind of system we've had is that you don't really have a set space, because we all move around quite a lot, and have to make room for each other. So yeah, I don't know. It's quite a big question.

**Asuf ISHAQ** 03:12

Yeah. I mean, you've heard the expressions, like, you know, Home is where the heart is, or, you know, bricks and mortar are not a knock community of family but it's, it's, it's the relationships. And of course, in this context, in a university or life in education setting can Kenny can please be, can have a place of study be placed upon or feeling on? Ethics.

**Student 1** 03:53

I mean, last year, the studio that we were in, I wanted to be there more than I wanted to be at my flat. So it was I was very much there from like, eight in the morning till kind of closing time. Because even if I wasn't working, it was just nice to have somewhere. And I just sat and kind of read a book or something. So yeah, like I have my little area that can exist.

**Asuf ISHAQ** 04:13

Yeah. And and what you were interacting with, of course, of the students appears in the studio as well.

**Student 1** 04:21

Yeah, I was, I think, again, the setup last day suited me because my, my section was very much my section. And it was like, I could kind of choose when to go around people's studios and chat to people and when to just revert back to my little space. Yeah, which I think suited me quite well, because it's, it's like you've got your place and you can decide when to go and move to someone else's space to talk to them. Whereas no one ever really imposed on mice. It was quite a personal bubble that I had set up.

**Asuf ISHAQ** 04:53

And you have a lot to be you have a use for personal space. Yeah,

**Student 1** 05:00

yes for being kind of enclosed.

**Asuf ISHAQ** 05:02

And would you say working in the studio, you rather keep home separate, as as more relaxing leave and not not take work at home and see the studio more as a place where you go and make and think,

**Student 1** 05:17

yeah, I've never been able to work from home because I'm too busy distracted. So it's like having a studio is very specific place for like, just working an existing.

**Asuf ISHAQ** 05:27

Yeah, yeah. And for yourself, how do you? How do you kind of what's your routine? Do you use the studio in a good way?

**Student 2** 05:37

I don't use it as often because I live in Croydon. So it's kind of a long sort of journey. It's not too long, but. And I have room at home to work. But I do think I get really distracted at home, like every five seconds. So I would like to come in and use the studio more. But I think especially at this time of year, I'm just like, I don't want to I don't want to go in like, well, I don't mind going in. But it's the journey there and the journey back.

**Asuf ISHAQ** 06:06

Is it takes time, or is it costly as well? Both really takes time. And that becomes a hindrance. Like, yeah, barrier.

**Student 2** 06:16

Yeah. And also, I just have my own space at home. And you

**Asuf ISHAQ** 06:22

have all your equipment there. Yeah. Do you have the same equipment here?

**Student 2** 06:26

I probably bring stuff in if I needed to. But I usually work from home. But I kind of feel like I'd like to come here just to feel more well, like connected. And yeah, now that social aspects. Yeah, because I feel like in second, like first year was quite everyone was getting to know each other. And it feels much more relaxed this year, because everyone already knows each other. So yeah, I would quite like to come in more. But I always just end up staying home working because I don't really want to lug all my stuff in.

**Asuf ISHAQ** 06:56

So ideally, if you had I mean, we're talking more about students at the moment, or where you can, for example, in the studio, what would be the what would you do to make safe to make more frequent trips to the studio? Do you have a space? Do you have a nice space where it's kind of

**Student 2** 07:18

fibre? Or? Yeah, I don't have like a set space because I'm not in a lot. So I don't feel like I should really have one that no one else can touch. But I do have a table kind of like an area where people I know are and I could probably go sit there. If I came in? The I don't have like, I don't have work up or anything. So. Okay. I don't like have.

**Asuf ISHAQ** 07:39

But do you have work? At home? Yeah. Well,

**Student 2** 07:43

not because I work in the kitchen. So I usually have to move that. But in my room I have, like work. I do have a desk in my room, but it's kind of dark in the corner. So I go in the kitchen and getting everyone's way. But yeah,

**Student 1** 07:58

yeah, for me, it's very important to have the studio got the kind of object permanence thing where if everything I need is within sight and reach, I can't comprehend it. It's there. So I do struggle going from my house to the studio. Because unless everything is just all in one place around me, it's quite hard when it gets fragmented and bitty to kind of go back and forth and stuff.

**Asuf ISHAQ** 08:19

Yeah, no, I think I think it's it that's, it works like that, doesn't it? That you when you see things, you're you've got everything up that you can you can make connections you can see or see possibilities. I think it's quite important to have things up and in view and you know, sometimes on the computer things like are in different folders, so you don't get a sense of an overview, I suppose. Is that is that is this what you mean? Right? Yeah, like

**Student 1** 08:49

I need to be very, like visually laid out for me to kind of I can't, if things just in my head, I can't perceive it as like an actual thing that I need to do. Yeah.

**Asuf ISHAQ** 08:56

Yeah. Okay, so I think we would kind of whiz through this question. It's going back to belonging, I mean, the studio studios, I mean do you feel comfortable and, and, and, you know, this as a studio, that it is yours and you I mean, I have enough discussion. You know, imagine if we had, yeah, you can you can say what you want, but it's but this current situation do you feel? It's, it's, it's, you know, if you feel belong, you belong to that space, and you know, you feel at home,

**Student 1** 09:54

not this year, and last year, I would have definitely said yes. And this year I think because The new building and stuff I do not in the slightest. Yeah.

**Asuf ISHAQ** 10:04

Yeah. Yeah. And when when you, you know, when, when you go to when you apply to an art college, what what were the ideas in your mind about what an art college is as a building and the rest of it,

**Student 1** 10:26

I think because my parents both studied Fine Art, right. So I very much saw photos of their experiences and stuff. I know that, particularly with fine arts very studio based. So it's kind of gone with my expectation that that was going to be a major part of it, which is in the studios together and making work. And I mean, even kind of other generations of my jokes, but how everyone did painting is just smoking in the studios and not actually doing a painting. Yeah, but it's like, just as a kind of community and stuff was quite nice.

**Asuf ISHAQ** 10:58

So you had a bit of insight of from kind of experience of your parents, which did you have kind of a view of what college is going to offer a place,

**Student 2** 11:14

I didn't really know. Because I didn't really know anyone that did fine art. But then I did a year at another uni before I came here. And like it didn't really work out. So I applied here and everything. But um, that was different, because at the start of the year, we were like, given a studio and we all had like our own space, and like everyone had loads of space, and you could leave your stuff there and come back and put your stuff up on the wall. And I thought this unit would be similar because it's like, quite big uni and like a London art school. And then we got here and it was like there wasn't really a lot of space for everyone. There's actually so many of us. Last year, we had like quite a small studio. I didn't come in a lot, again, because I work from home. So it's kind of alright, but then when I did come in, it was the second studio we ran, it was like so cramped, I always felt really cramped in there. And I didn't feel like I wanted to sort of sit down and work there. But it was it was nice. That building obviously it was the main building. And it was nice was I feel like here. I mean, just now when I went to the toilet, it's like there's water all over the floor. It's just a bit. So it's kind of like, I don't know if I'd want to sit here for a whole day and get working because and it's not inspiring wood. Yeah, it just feels like we are like, in a bit of a sort of shed, not a shed, because it's obviously nice to share. But

**Student 1** 12:45

this isn't designed to be an outbuilding the other college has been there for hundreds of years or whatever. Yeah, it's an art college. Yeah. So there's a lot more history involved. And it's been a lot more kind of carefully designed and pasture it. Whereas this is the very kind of Stockman building that's designed as a food bank.

**Asuf ISHAQ** 13:08

Would you say that, you know, those kind of Victorian, you know, purpose built art colleges, that when you when you're working in that space, then you feel part of history or power. Yeah, there's some belonging in our history board. Not necessarily our history, but more in the history of our schools that you and you're taking on that tradition. Yeah, definitely. So that would make you feel more, more home. Yeah, I mean, do like, Okay, I wanted this on here. Yeah, experiencing it.

**Student 1** 13:43

Because I mean, even you know, cuz I started the graphic design course, and partly why it switched was because that was the modern building. And that was hot. desking. But I couldn't do that. So I needed a space to make work and, and I wanted to be in your building, which was quite to like, choose your course, based on the building was quite a big thing for me. Like I wanted the studios, I wanted to be in the building because I felt a lot more inspired.

**Asuf ISHAQ** 14:03

It was really interesting, isn't it? I mean, this is what I'm trying to understand. Can Can is, is there a disconnect then if if you know students who apply to an art school and they have a vision of what, what that is and then when you come here, it's and if you take out the whole tradition and history of those schools then becomes Yeah, this this. This is like a neutral clinical kind of building, isn't it and low low ceilings were compared to say like grand architecture,

**Student 1** 14:41

natural light as well. The other building was saying yes.

**Asuf ISHAQ** 14:47

Okay, now this sort of just checking the question. Okay, so So what They will with you. I mean, I know. You mentioned the, you know, you're here. But yeah, can you tell us tell me a bit more about? When are you here? without getting in trouble? When he? You know, not necessarily, it'd be interesting to get a sense of your routine. And the reason that you when you do come in what I mean, what do you do? And what would you do more of if you will come in more frequently?

**Student 2** 15:40

I think I usually come in to this building I come in if we have like a

**Asuf ISHAQ** 15:45

one to one. Yeah. There's a lot of people who do that. Yeah.

**Student 2** 15:48

And at the start of the I was coming in more and like doing some sketching and stuff like that. But then, I guess with this group project, I haven't been here as much either, because we tend to just meet up in other places. I mostly go in like for lectures and stuff, which is the other building

**Asuf ISHAQ** 16:08

other places somewhere in the buildings you meet that you got the what if the lectures with the with the project?

**Student 2** 16:15

Oh, we tend to me in the other building? Yeah, like go to the canteen or something? Or we went to an exhibition for one of our meetings. So. But yeah, I probably haven't been here as much as I should be. But I'd like to, especially when the group projects done, I want to bring work in and actually, you know, make the most of being at this uni. Yeah.

**Asuf ISHAQ** 16:41

Yeah, I think a lot of people, where do you think that comes from? Do you think people have all set up set at home? Or and maybe maybe COVID plays a part that you can either have that? Or? Or you have, you know, people have jobs, part time jobs? And also, like, if you have a setup at home, or are different look like a different studio? Would? Yeah, I mean, you wouldn't know the answer to this, but it's just like, What do you think? The reasons are? Okay, for you to come less in the studio?

**Student 2** 17:23

I think, apart from

**Asuf ISHAQ** 17:25

practical, yeah.

**Student 2** 17:31

Yeah, I don't know. I don't. I think COVID probably did have a part in it, just for everyone. Because I feel like I don't know, people aren't as kind of talkative. And so I mean, I'm one of them. I'm quite socially anxious person, but like, but I think this is better because people know each other. But last year, it was like, when we get to come in at the start of the year, and doing these exercises kind of get to know each other. That's kind of like helped me. Yeah. Yeah, it's when it's forced, it's quite awkward. And I think honestly, the main thing for me is, because of the travel, it takes like an hour and a half. And so obviously, there and backs, like, three hours in my head. And so and I have things to do at home. And it's like, it takes up a lot of my day just to get in. And then I feel like, when I am here, I'm thinking, I want to leave before like the school kids are on the buses and trains. Forget this time of year before it gets dark. And so it takes an hour and a half. Yeah, well, that's like maximum if it's long, but And it depends. I mean, I can get a bus that goes all the way to Croydon or train. But yeah, I think it's just probably the practicality of it.

**Asuf ISHAQ** 18:47

Yeah. You mentioned just briefly about if it's forced to kind of interact or like do, okay, you know, projects or social events or introduction that you mentioned. I mean, if would you think, I mean, the more you do interactions that the more you know, become more comfortable. would, you know, if say if the course is doing more of these events, like going to a gallery, maybe doing more like a pop up shows or other, you know, all kinds of things which help bonding and like getting to know each other and breaking the barriers of these barriers? If would you can you recommend anything to kind of break these barriers down?

**Student 1** 19:43

And I feel like a bit like you were saying that, like for socialising almost has an adverse effect and people don't want to kind of get involved if they're told they have to. Yeah, whereas I think just being in the studios and like having the choice to walk around and get to know people But there's only there's quite a few people in, like George and Ruben who have kind of started doing things independently as a group because they gravitated together. And it's independent. It's not someone saying you have to do this in a group go do it. Yeah. So I think people are a lot more hesitant if they're not making their own decisions. But yeah, it's I mean, it's different. So I mean, I've always, I'm quite independent, and I'm quite content, doing my own thing. I'm quite content, working with other people as well. Whereas I think I'm slightly older, I guess, and other people, because I have noticed, it's like some 18 year olds, I guess, because they've gone straight from school, and then COVID, and then the head, they're a lot less likely to kind of actively go out of their way to engage with other people and just get on with stuff and kind of have that proactivity. That's interesting.

**Asuf ISHAQ** 20:49

Yeah.

**Student 2** 20:49

Do you think there's something to be said about like younger people with COVID? Because I interrupted this school life as well. Yeah. I have just noticed, like, people are a little shy. I didn't. I was done at school by the time COVID came about, and so I'm a bit older as well. And like, yeah, it's also I think, going to uni is quite scary. Like, I didn't go to uni 18 Because I couldn't have done it. Honestly, it is funny for me because I used to have terrible social anxiety when I was in high school and stuff. And it's only since finishing my foundation course and then having time out your job and your existing and kind of moving to London and then going into university that I'm feeling a lot more able to socialise into the elements stuff. Yeah, to do that and to fit into this environment. Having had time out of it. Yeah.

**Asuf ISHAQ** 21:44

Interesting. You say something about being what scared or of universe or intimidated by you, but it was the word used. The the Is it scary?

**Student 2** 21:59

Yeah. I think Yeah. At and, and also, because this is like a prestigious art school. And also, I don't think there's a lot of younger, like, really young people here because the other unit was like, everyone was 18. Yeah. And I was 22 When I started, and it was a bit like, people were saying I was old. I've never been. But then here I feel like there's like a real range of people.

**Asuf ISHAQ** 22:26

Yeah. It's interesting. It's the reputation or the, you know, feeling a little bit hesitant or feeling this. This pressure, you know, going to a place with you assume it's, you know, as disruptive. No exclusive or good reputation. Yeah, that's a really, that's really interesting, I think. What about the building that I mean, the building itself? Is that intimidating. The other one? Oh, yeah. Yeah, go anywhere? I think.

**Student 2** 23:02

So. No, I'm trying to remember how I felt like when I first arrived. I don't think I was, it was the building welcoming. Yeah, I'd say it was a bit like there's a lot of it, I guess. So. I remember when we did like a tour, I was like, Christ like this. Never gonna remember like, where everything is. But I really liked the building we were in last year because it was kind of the older building. I thought that was really cool. And like the architecture, and I felt like there's a history of artists that have been here and that's really cool. Yeah, but I think it was intimidating. But I don't know if it's because of the building. It's just because it's, I'm quite an anxious person. And it's like going into a new situation. Yeah, those new people is always going to be quite scary to me. Yeah. So you