

Interviewee Name: Caroline Bowditch

Interviewer Name: Erin Scudder

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Length of Interview: 46:29 minutes

Transcript

Erin: Can I invite you to introduce yourself however you would like to?

Caroline: Sure. So I'm Caroline and I am the CEO and artistic director of Arts Access Victoria, who are obviously a partner in this project. But also outside of that, I have my own creative practice. And am a performance artist, working mostly in dance theatre and choreography and teaching and facilitation. And yeah.

Erin: And how did you first - how - which experiences and which people first got you into the arts?

Caroline: So I was always - when I was at high school, because I wasn't going to be ever a sporty type as a wheelchair user, I was always strongly encouraged to head towards the arts. So I trained in music and did lots of singing and learnt the piccolo, and so was a - I would say, a musician first - but also was involved in theatre and drama and was involved in the school musicals, and all those sorts of things. And then I finished high school and went to university, and basically did a Bachelor of Arts in primary teaching, and I majored in performing arts, so - which allowed me to continue to work in music, so, and also in drama. But I also had to do dance as part of that. And I didn't necessarily love it. The dance teacher had no idea what to do with me, so would kind of tell me to sit off to the side and make up my own version - and - of what they were doing. So: "look at a normative body and work out how your very nontraditional dance body does anything like that." So I didn't love dance at all at university. Finished my degree, went into administration working and was invited - got a call kind of out of the blue in - so I graduated in about '92 - ('cause I'm really old, Erin) - and then I got a call about four years later in '96 from Arts Access Victoria actually saying, "we are coordinating a project called moveable dance; and Candoco Dance Company are

coming to Australia for the first time; and we want to bring a group of people together who have some performance experience, to gain dance skills so that they are prepared and can be part of masterclasses and workshops with Candoco and have a sense of what's going on. So I went and did this 12 week course in contact improvisation, which is where I met the wonderful Janice Florence.

Erin: I'm a fan!

Caroline: And I solely blame my career in dance on Janice and the love of dance that she embodied in me as a young - well, still relatively young, I suppose, 26ish, I was - person, and I really felt that, because of the way that I was being taught, the types of experiences that I was having, it was the first time that I felt like I'd really landed in my body and started to appreciate the extraordinary things that this body - that I'd grown up feeling was awkward and wrong in all sorts of ways and didn't belong - but all of a sudden I was seeing what it was capable of, and I was really allowed to explore my physical limits, which I hadn't necessarily been encouraged to do.

Erin: Right.

Caroline: Based on the nature of my disability. And dance really allowed me to do that.

Erin: Yeah. Beautiful. And what projects did you get involved with going forward after that?

Caroline: So after that 12 week thing, that was when we - a few of us - so there was 12 people in that course, and eight of us decided that we wanted to keep working together. And that's where Weave came from 25 years ago.

Erin: Yeah.

Caroline: And so I continued to be with Weave for the next six years until I moved to the UK in 2006. And the whole time that we would be putting work together and performing, I kept thinking, "Oh my God, imagine if I could do this as my day job. Like, imagine if I could do this and be paid and this could be just what I do and I could be a

professional artist." And so I'd kind of have these very dry jobs during the day. And then I would dance at night for joy, for pleasure.

Erin: Yeah.

Caroline: And so, yeah, we did I performed quite a lot with Weave.

Erin: Yep.

Caroline: Yeah. And, until I moved overseas.

Erin: Yeah. And then you worked on projects like "Falling in love with Frida" - and what were some of the other - the solo work, right?

Caroline: Yeah. So I arrived in the UK in 2002 with none of my qualifications, neither primary teaching nor genetic counselling, which I'd retrained as - actually - being -

Erin: They wanted you to do it all again?

Caroline: Yeah, basically. So I kind of went back to things that I loved. I'd also, because I was moving over to get married, I wasn't able to work for the first little while, so I became a full-time bride, just planning a wedding and doing all the things.

Erin: Yeah.

Caroline: But - so I went back to singing, and I went back to dance, and I started to kind of get in touch with the local dance development agencies, kind of saying "what do you have available?"

Erin: Yeah.

Caroline: "I really want to dance - what are my options?" And I was offered another mentorship with Candoco.

Erin: Oh yeah.

Caroline: Which brought loc- - again, it was a bit of a repeat of the the Weave story, really - it brought a group of dancers towards me that had an interest in inclusive dance.

Erin: Mm hmm.

Caroline: And we then set up a company called Fathom. And we went on to, to work together and make work together - primarily based on improvised performance. So very strongly based still in that improvisation space. And then in 2005, I trained in choreography with East London Dance. They ran a project that was called Cultural Shift. And I was one of five choreographers that they - disabled choreographers - that they selected to be part of, part of the corps. Yeah, part of the course, really. And so Jo Dunbar - I don't know if you've connected with Jo yet -

Erin: Not yet, but she's on my list.

Caroline: Yeah, but Jo was also part of Cultural Shift, so Jo was one of the other choreographers. And that's where I made my first work, which was called Tear, and that was a solo. And then I just progressively I got various commissions, I applied for money, and I kept making work over the next - yeah, I suppose until 2008? And then I got the job as dance agent for change with Scottish Dance Theatre. Where I continue to make work and perform with them. But in-between times I had kept dancing with Fathom, I'd also joined up with another dancer called Fiona Wright, to form a company called Girl Jonah. And we performed at some bigger festivals that - I didn't really understand the significance of them at the time, but like British Dance Edition, and Dance Umbrella, and Dublin Dance Festival. So, as a little Australian, I was just like [inaudible] - but some people were like, no, no, this is, this is -

Erin: Major!

Caroline: - this is kind of significant.

Erin: Yep.

Caroline: This is, this is kind of big stuff. And I was like, oh okay, great. Okay. Yeah. And then once I finished with Scottish Dance Theatre, I, I was really heavily then into making my own work. So that was Falling in Love with Frida. I worked a lot with Skånes Dansteater in Sweden, almost replicating the project that I'd done, but on a much smaller scale. So I would go and spend three months with them at a time, making work, teaching, teaching other people, teaching the trainers, all those sorts of things. And yeah, Falling in love with Frida, and then moving into making work for young audiences and really interrogating the absence, I suppose, in a way, of disabled performers in work for young audiences. That became the thing that I'm still interested in ...

Erin: Yeah.

Caroline: ... and still passionate about. But yeah.

Erin: That goes back to your teacher training as well, I guess.

Caroline: Yeah, I suppose in a way, except that I was trained as a primary school teacher and we went really young, so we went - one work is aimed at under ones, so tiny babies. And then the other work is aimed at three to eight year olds. But we've realized that it's kind of available to anyone. And I think the tiny baby work really grew out of my physicality and where I felt safe. So I worked with my partner Laura as a co-creator, and Laura basically designed the set in proportion to my body. So it was really the first time that we'd flipped things. The nondisabled dancers weren't - or performers - weren't allowed to stand up, even though they had that capability, because I wanted it to stay really low and I wanted the dancers or the performers to be accessible to the - to our audience. And, I don't think I realised at the time how significant that was as a thing to kind of go - "No, no, I know you've got all that standing up ability, but actually I'm not interested in it."

Erin: Yeah.

Caroline: "And we're going to move the world down, and we're going to move it to my level, and I'm going to actually limit you in your usual capability."

Erin: Brilliant.

Caroline: To kind of go: "yeah, I'm going to restrict it."

Erin: Yeah. And along the way, apart from - like has it all been smooth sailing? Apart from the positive experiences and the good influences and the opportunities, what are the barriers or the obstacles or - been that you've come up against? Or conflicts.

Caroline: Yeah. I've been really well supported, like I've been really well supported, by lots and lots of people. So much so that there was a project that I was involved in - again with Candoco, interestingly - but where it was kind of this - there was several days of conversation that we were having, and because I was so well-supported in Scotland, especially - by Creative Scotland, by the community, by the sector - I really started to question whether I could still call myself a disabled artist in social model thinking, because social model is all about barriers. But actually I wasn't experiencing any. I was applying for money; I was receiving it. I was finding accessible spaces. I was finding people that wanted to work with me. I was being programmed into venues - like I wasn't experiencing barriers. And so in a way - and that was a huge kind of thing to process in terms of going: what does that say about my identity? Because obviously I still have a physical impairment and that wasn't going anywhere. But, in an arts context I was no longer experiencing those barriers.

Erin: That's extremely interesting because we talk about the medical model and the social model, but I have never thought about what happens when the social model is fully realised. Does disability go away?

Caroline: Yeah.

Erin: How does it affect your identity? That's super interesting.

Caroline: Yeah. It was a very interesting point. Have I met barriers? Absolutely. And most of them I put in my own way.

Erin: Right. Can - what are some of those?

Caroline: I think that I've had complete creative crises where I've just been like, I can't do this. I don't have any interesting ideas. I can't - I don't know what I'm trying to say. I can't make any more decisions. So I think many of the barriers that I've created have - I've - have been my own imposter syndrome. And I think that continues. And also, working with myths. I think there is a lot of myths that surround disabled artists about how unwanted we are, how - how people aren't interested in our work, how no one is going to come. Like, I think that's all myth. Mythology. Because actually I have stacks of evidence that says the complete opposite of that, in that there are festivals that sell out because disabled artists have a huge following. Particularly in the UK. Less so here, I would say. But I, I do question, Erin, a lot, how much we perpetuate the barriers for ourselves, how much we perpetuate, and therefore it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Erin: Right. Yeah.

Caroline: And that's really controversial to say, because people are like, "no! It's not true!" And I think, I think there is an element of truth to that too. Like -

Erin: Yep.

Caroline: - but I think there are parts in the - of the world where it is - and maybe it's - I also just want to acknowledge the huge privilege that I have had in being white, articulate, not messy, very happy to play the party line. I make very acceptable work that pushes boundaries but isn't outrageous. And I think all of those factors also have been part of my success journey.

Erin: Right. Yeah. I just want to pick up, up on what you said before about the popularity of Disability Arts and sort of go into that question about the bigger scene. So what degree of awareness and engagement do you think the public have of Disability Arts in Australia? And has that changed or evolved over the, over the time that you've been involved in the arts?

Caroline: It's actually been really interesting having gone away, and come back.

Erin: Right.

Caroline: And seeing just how little shift it feels like there's been. Like - on average, the support available to deaf and disabled artists, nationally, in terms of funding, is about half a million bucks. I don't think that's grown a lot in the last 20 years that I've been away. And when you compare that to a country like the U.K. and you see £13.9 million invested in - unlimited over ten years - that's not significant growth.

Erin: Yeah. No, it's not. Yeah.

Caroline: And it becomes really easy to see why U.K. based artists are international superstars and sell out shows and are being booked on the big stages. I also think another really interesting comparison between the U.K. and here is the fact that in the U.K. the work of deaf and disabled artists is prioritised. There is a commitment to prioritising the work of black, disabled - basically anyone who's marginalised. And that's really evident in the recent successful kind of organisations that have come in to Arts Council England's portfolio. And I just don't think we have that prioritisation here. I don't feel like we are biting that bullet and just kind of going - so, to change the system - (sorry for my) - to change the system, we actually have to prioritise it. We actually have to actively make that choice and put our eggs in that basket and say, we're going to focus here.

Erin: Yeah. Do you think in Australia there have been any major milestones or landmark moments that have progressed things in the last 50 years?

Caroline: Oh. Nope. I mean, I think it was really interesting for me when I was - back in 2016 - I remember there was this massive thing about Australia Council committing \$1,000,000 to deaf and disabled artists over three years. So it was \$333,000 a year for three years. And they saw this as massive. And essentially that supported 15 artists. With ten grand each. Like - nothing. Or 20 grand max each. And it's like - so it, it doesn't surprise me that the work of deaf and disabled artists still is perceived to sit within a community arts context.

Erin: Yeah.

Caroline: That it's not worthy of being on our main stages. I think there's a lot of - the other thing that happens in the U.K. is there's an organisation of - like there's interesting

collaborations that have happened. So there's a brilliant - you maybe have heard of it, Erin, but there's this amazing project called Ramps on the Moon - and basically it brought together five major theatres, regional-based theatres, to work with a group of artists - disabled, deaf and disabled artists - to make accessible work, to go on to those stages, and then it would tour, to those venues.

Erin: Yeah.

Caroline: So there's been a lot of kind of this collaborative thinking about the ways that we can come together. We can pool our resources, we can produce incredible work, and then we can show that work on these massive stages and - I don't see that happening here.

Erin: Yeah. Part of this question asked, what do you think, in turn, the public would say? I think by public they mean the non-disabled, mainstream public. What would they say are the milestones or big major happenings? And what do you think their level of engagement with Disability Arts is here?

Caroline: So -

Erin: Is there more work to be done.

Caroline: Yeah, I mean, if, if I actually think about it, things like - there used to be a festival called Awakenings. So I think that was a really big thing. I think Art of Difference was led by the city of Port Phillip was a really big thing when it happened. I think Alter State is going to be a really big thing going forward. I think Undercover Art artists' festival and that, emerging. I think, Wendy Martin being at Perth Festival and programming really big work of disabled artists on those main stages as part of a mainstream festival - I think those things are really significant. But that's because Wendy had an experience of programming Unlimited in London and she brought that wisdom and those connections with her to Perth. And went, "this is what we're going to show."

Erin: Yeah. So what you're saying speaks to this question about whether your work - and the artists that you work with - is present where you want it to be, is being seen,

where you want it to be seen, and if not, where do you want it to be seen? What are the places and the, the venues?

Caroline: I think we're seeing a recent phenomenon happening at the moment. So Julia Hales, who you may know of, based in Western Australia - You Know We Belong Together - so Julia's work, first presented as part of Perth Festival - commissioned by Perth Festival - has just been shown at Sydney Opera House.

Erin: Whoa.

Caroline: And there is an ambition for Arts Centre Melbourne to also program that work. That's really significant.

Erin: Yeah.

Caroline: Kind of those big players being involved. I have questions about the hunger of disabled artists here and expectation of them to - because there's been such an absence on main stages for so long, I'm not sure if artists that we're working with currently - and I think it's different with the young cohort that we're working with at the moment - but I think for many established artists at - currently, I'm not sure that there's even a - like there's a bit of a failure to launch. Like, I think no one's kind of going, "I really want my work to be shown at the NGV. I really want my work to be shown at Art Centre Melbourne or at Sydney Opera House. Or even better, internationally." Like I just, I have questions about the ambition.

Erin: What do you think is driving that lack of - launch - launchination?

Caroline: Partly that work's currently not being programmed there, so people aren't seeing themselves on those stages or even seeing that as a possibility. I think there's real confusion about how, how you even penetrate an organisation like Arts Centre Melbourne to have your work presented, and I think that's been one of the most common questions around Alter State is - how do we get in, how do we get to be part of it? And there's very little transparency around that.

Erin: Yeah.

Caroline: I also know from the other side, from being within ACM for the last nine months that it's - there's so many hoops to jump through to get work programmed there.

Erin: Yeah.

Caroline: So many approval processes, to even - and so much justification. And I have huge ambition of changing that. But ... I don't know whether it's laziness, I don't know whether it's lack of opportunity to meet other venues and for venues to kind of go, "we really want your work, or we'd love to work with you." I sort of feel like there's a lack of connection between potential venues and artists to even dream together.

Erin: Mmmmm. Interesting. One of the reasons why The Gathering is so important.

Caroline: Yeah.

Erin: In terms of - you've got an amazing body of creative as well as managerial and production and choreographic work. What is your current work look like? Your - the current scope of your work creatively and professionally, and what - what's motivating you, your work in the Disability Arts space at the moment?

Caroline: I would say my current, my current creative work is very much on hold, other than the occasional times that I get to

Caroline: - like a couple of weeks ago, I, I taught a workshop slash masterclass on Universal design and dance. So it was working with a group of dance teachers to skill them up, I suppose. And every year I get to run a residency at Lucy Guerin. But it's not - I don't prioritise it enough. And so I kind of go into those spaces not really knowing. I've got access to a lot of artists, but I'm not sure that I'm making the right invitations to them to come and be part of something. So that's, that's interesting. I am dreaming about still making work for young audiences. Because I feel like that's - yeah, there's still something there for me about how we're connecting with eenie weenie disabled people. I still feel like they get left behind a lot. And, I was recently thinking 'cause in '24, which is going to be a ma-hoo-ssive year, but in '24 it'll be ten years since I made Falling in Love with Frida. But '25, in '25, it'll be 20 years since I started choreographing. So

there's a bit of me that almost wants to, that is keen to do a bit of a retrospective in terms of -

Erin: Yes, please.

Caroline: - showcasing the work or the journey of an artist, or -

Erin: Yep.

Caroline: - how things changed over that time. What did I learn, what have I learned? But also just exposing or reopening that work. To kind of, what would it be to show that to a new audience?

Erin: Love that.

Caroline: And, and I'm also really interested at the moment - I don't know if you're talking to Andy Snelling, but if you're not, Andy would be amazing.

Erin: I'll make sure that I look into it.

Caroline: So Andy is based in Adelaide.

Erin: Oh yep.

Caroline: And is just an incredible artist and has a hidden disability - does identify as being disabled, and is making - well, yeah, is in the process of making and exploring and being curious about what it is to really make accessible work from the inside. So Andy is one of those people that I'm just like, "Oh my God, I want to work with you."

Erin: All right. Ah, Andy - so I will definitely look into Andy Snelling.

Caroline: Yeah. So I'm really interested. I think my passion is currently sitting in - how are we actually working with the next generation or the emerging generation of artists to really think about access as a juicy creative opportunity.

Erin: Yep.

Caroline: How are we even thinking about - how can we think about changing the aesthetic and really moving into that space where access is not a choice, an add on, a bolt on, any of those things, but it's part of what we're doing. It's just part of what we do.

Erin: Yep. When you say changing the aesthetic. What do you mean by that?

Caroline: Well I think when you add access into the picture, the aesthetic that we're used to - and also when you put different bodies on stage - you change the aesthetic that we're used to. Like if you have a disabled body as part of a dance company, it kind of throws the usual aesthetic of dance out the window because it doesn't - it's not doing that anymore. It's doing a different thing.

Erin: Yeah. Do you think - here comes a yes or no question. Would you consider your arts political, your practice political?

Caroline: Ah - sorry, I'm just writing myself a note of these things that keep coming up for me. Yes.

Erin: Yes. And do you -

Caroline: Because despite what I'm saying, or - by putting a non-traditional dance body on stage, someone that's visibly disabled, we're making a political statement. Whether we want to or not.

Erin: Right. And do you think that that's - that being political is an important measure of a work's success? Or if, if yes, or not, or if, if there's - in which other ways do you think the success of the creative work should be measured?

Caroline: I think its success should be based on the conversations that it starts.

Erin: Mmmm. Good answer. Yeah.

Caroline: Yeah.

Erin: What kinds of conversations around identity do you think are circulating in the Disability Arts space? Maybe starting with the question of how would you yourself like to be identified?

Caroline: I am a very proud, disabled person. I think there are big conversations to be had around Disability Pride. I feel like something happened, Erin, during COVID and the lockdown. And I feel like lots of people got diagnoses. But diagnosing, diagnosing as being neurotypical and the neuroatypical - so having some sort of neurodiversity. And I find that fascinating. So I feel like there's a whole generation of people that are now grappling with that, coming to terms with that. Really thinking about that and how that plays out in their life. There's always something really interesting for me about having a visible disability that I can't deny whether I want to or not. It's not something I can disclose. My queerness - I have a choice about who, how safe I feel and who I disclose that to. But my disability is like, it's in the room here. It's already - people's assumptions and beliefs about me are being triggered the second they see me. And so I think there's a huge a huge weight actually, that people with invisible disability carry that I don't.

Erin: Hmm.

Caroline: About who do they feel safe to tell this information to? Who do they feel they want to share this information to? How embedded is it in their identity to kind of go, I'm a really proud - so I'm mentoring an artist at the moment who I've known for 20 years. They were the first dancer I ever made work on, and they've just had a diagnosis as of autism. And our conversation now is about. How is how are they embodying that information? Like how is it impacting who are they chosen - choosing to share that with?

Erin: Yeah.

Caroline: And it's, it's huge. So again, that's another privilege of mine is that I don't - I, I can't deny it, so I don't have to choose.

Erin: That's interesting framing that way, a bit, that way because - some people have said, you know, have framed it in the way that, you know, people who have a visible disability don't get to choose, whereas people with invisible disability maybe do get to

choose. But. But, I - it's really interesting, what you're saying is that it's also when - you might have a choice, but also - it's there, the barriers there. How do you embody that? Yeah. And you mentioned your queerness. And the next question, I was going to say, what do you think the additional challenges are for, for artists that have, you know, more than one identity that's - might be considered minority or marginal or - what do you think the unique challenges are, there, when you're a disabled artist who also identifies intersectionally in other ways?

Caroline: I personally haven't experienced any barriers other than when we took *Falling in Love with Frida* to Sweden - and I always think about Sweden as being a very politically progressive country? But because I talk about lesbian sex in the show, it had an 18 plus rating.

Erin: Oh, wow!

Caroline: If it had been heterosexual sex that I was talking about, it would have been a 16 plus. And I found that fascinating.

Erin: Yeah.

Caroline: It's been - it was really interesting to - so lots of people describe the baby show as being very queer, because the costumes are completely non-gendered; Snigel - because it's a snail, was always referred to as they, because snails can be either gender, they're not - they're genderless in a way.

Erin: Yeah.

Caroline: And that was, I suppose that was a kind of secondary thought that came. But there was a whole - there was also something, some research being done called Gender Saurus Rex about how gender is presented to young audiences as well, and how, how are we creating queer spaces for young people or how are we creating queer work for young audiences. So we never specifically set out to make Snigel queer, but the nature of the company is that a lot of us were, and so it just kind of happened in the work.

Erin: Yeah.

Caroline: Yeah.

Erin: And I guess, like you say - another way to look at it is, you know, Snigel's a sn-, a snail, so it's they, and snails can be either gender, so in a way it's really - like, it's not even like - you're just presenting things the way they are, as opposed to, for example, intentionally applying a layer of gender on top of it.

Caroline: Yeah.

Erin: Then for other people to read that as explicitly queer is another layer of the audience's own.

Caroline: But it was queer people reading it as queer.

Erin: Right.

Caroline: So it was queer people coming and going, 'oh my God, it's so queer,' rather than any straight people coming in, I think Snigel's queer. But it was queer people recognizing themselves in it.

Erin: Yeah, well, that's very empowering. Yeah.

Caroline: But I think, Erin, the reality is that, even all my intersections ...

Erin: Yeah.

Caroline: ... and I talked about this on International Women's Day at a thing I -

Erin: Yeah.

Caroline: - talked about is that I very much identify as a woman, I am a cis woman, I always have been, and I'm very proudly a woman. But for a lot of my life, I've been completely asexualized. Because I'm disabled. And that to many people is what I am,

and that is my only identity and my gender or my sexuality doesn't even come into that picture. In actual fact, it blocks everything else. So, I've spent my whole life going to non-gendered toilets, which for some is really a great thing now. And that's where we're moving to. But it wasn't - it's - for lots of disabled people, it's not a choice about whether you, what toilet you go to, you go to the accessible toilet and that innately is non-gendered so - I think for me, there's interesting things that have been coming up around that. I think I have, my queerness hasn't always been able to play out because so much of the queer community and events for the gay community are run in really inaccessible venues, so I've kind of taken it where I could. And again, it's like my other identities don't necessarily - they all get a bit quashed by the big disability stamp that sits over all of it.

Erin: Right. And like, it's like - the way the discourse that exists around how we talk about or frame disability sort of squashes the ability to talk about those other identities. Yeah, it's interesting. I interviewed someone the other day who made the point about how many opportunities there are for solidarity that aren't being explored or made the most of. They were talking in particular about the, you know, projects of decolonisation and how it would be great if people could see that disabled people are really, really good at pointing out when systems don't work!

Caroline: Yep.

Erin: ... and pushing for change, and how - how great it would be if we could foster solidarity between those groups instead of seeing them as competing, or just that they cancel each other out.

Caroline: Yeah.

Erin: I think we've gotten through pretty much all of the questions except for the most important one, which is, what do you think I haven't asked you that I should?

Caroline: I think there's a question always for me about ... there's this beautiful Mia Mingus quote called leaving evidence. And I think my question is around - what's the evidence that we want to leave? What's the story that we want to tell throughout this whole thing? What are we aiming for? Like - that thing about - we talked about me

realising that maybe I wasn't a disabled - I couldn't call myself a disabled artist anymore. Is that our ambition, that we will never have more barriers?

Erin: Hmmmm that's a good question.

Caroline: We at AAV, our vision is for cultural equity. So, what is that for people, and is that actually what people want?

Erin: Someone asked the question, 'do we really want to leave the margins behind?'.

Caroline: Yeah. Is it safe - is it safe here? Do we feel - yeah.

Erin: Well how would you answer that - what would you like to see -

Caroline: I was ... I was recently - well, not recently, a couple of years ago - part of a, a zine that got put out by a company called Metal that was headed up by Kate Marsh. If you haven't read Kate Marsh, Erin, have a look at Kate's work.

Erin: I will, thank you.

Caroline: But yeah, I, I wrote about how much room there is in the margins, like - and I did it written in the side of a page. Like if you think about a ruled page, like lots of people are in the rules, but if we're in the margins, there's no lines there.

Erin: Yep.

Caroline: We can go in whatever direction we want in a way. And - yeah. And how hungry are we to really be in the spotlight.

Erin: Hmm.

Caroline: Because I don't feel that hunger.

Erin: Yeah.

Caroline: So. Yeah.

Erin: It's going to be very interesting to see - we're getting to the point where, you know, we're getting quite a few interviews and transcribing them and starting a process of analysis and comparison. And what's really striking is the absolute richness of difference in people's responses. And going into each interview, I just know now that everyone's answer is going to be completely different, and something that's really valuable is being able to talk to people one at a time.

Caroline: Yeah.

Erin: So that you get that. Yeah, it's going to be interesting to see what level of hunger or what level of other things is expressed across society.

Caroline: Yeah.

Erin: Yeah. Is there anything else you'd like to add before we wrap up?

Caroline: I don't think so I just am, I'm really appreciative of your time and your questioning because I really find this - on reflection, there's something really interesting about talking about these things in an academic space. Not that feels hugely academic, but my, my, some of my great, greatest breakthroughs have come through being questioned by people in an academic sense. So, yeah, I just really appreciate being in this space with you and your questioning.

Erin: Thanks, Caroline. Well thanks for making time to be here. I'm really grateful that I didn't interview you first because I feel like it's been a steep learning curve for me, and I'm actually going to go back and redo a couple of the first interviews because - yeah, I, I'm not a career academic and I'm also not a journalist. So it took me a bit to find my feet like, 'oh, what's the style of questioning? You know, how should we go about this? Which of the many possible questions should we be asking?' So I'm learning.

Caroline: Yeah.

Erin: Yeah. And it's pretty amazing to be in the position where I get to talk to people like you. It's pretty cool - loving my job. So yeah.

Caroline: That's so good, I'm so pleased.

Erin: Yeah.

Caroline: That's good.

Erin: I will follow up with - the transcript will go through our amazing robot little thing and then I will tidy it up and I'll send it to you along with the video to review and make any edits or omissions or requests or anything you like before it's archived anywhere. And I'll also get in touch maybe with you and Ayse as well about the Arts Access materials, archival materials, and whatnot.

Caroline: Yeah.

Erin: Yep.

Caroline: Because - yeah no, you go.

Erin: I think that I know the process that Annie and Bree have started developing in order not to be too onerous is that we can put together like a document of preliminary links that we've found from available online resources and put together a preliminary draft and present it to you guys to fill in the blanks, especially in terms of, if there's anything archival or physical on site that would need to be scanned, etc.

Caroline: Oh my god, so I - the thing that I've got is - and I talked to Rachael about this and Rachael is really keen to have it, is that I have the history - all the minutes from the Theatre of the Deaf meetings -

Erin: Oh, wow.

Caroline: - ever, that occurred.

Erin: Yep.

Caroline: So I have them in my possession because I was sent them by the last chair of the organisation. And they - and Rachael was like, can you scan them all - and I was like, we don't have capacity to do that, but I have them as physical things.

Erin: That might be something I could come down and do.

Caroline: That would be amazing.

Erin: My librarianship, my photocopying skills.

Caroline: Yes, amazing!

Erin: Yeah.

Caroline: Because I think it would be incredible for you to, to actually come and visit us and be able to look at the archive material that we have and - not all of it is digitised in any way, shape or form. And - but the really lucky thing is that because we had a 40th anniversary, a lot of it - well, almost ten years ago now - but a lot of it was gathered. So there is kind of a - lots of that material has been brought together. But it would be amazing to have you come and just be able to show you through stuff.

Erin: That would be amazing for me. I would, I would absolutely love that.

Caroline: Yeah.

Erin: I know that - I think - Eddie and Bree were talking yesterday at the meeting about setting up a couple of more catch ups. So maybe we can talk through that and, and see how we could resource that and when it would happen.

Caroline: Yeah.

Erin: Yeah, but I think that sounds like a great plan and something personally I'd be really interested in doing.

Caroline: Yeah.

Erin: Cool. All right. Yeah. I'll let Eddie know and say that we've, we've sort of started talking about it, and there's a lot of physical material, we'd need to be across that,so.

Caroline: Yeah.

Erin: Sounds good.

Caroline: Yeah, that would be great.

Erin: Okay, well, I won't take up any more of your time, but thank you so much. I've really enjoyed our talk and yeah, I hope you have a great rest of your Tuesday.

Caroline: Thank you so much.

Erin: And hopefully I can see you in person soon!

Caroline: Yeah, that would be amazing. I - what was I going to say - I look forward to the transcript because there -

Erin: Yes.

Caroline: - actually was something in there that I said that was useful that would be interesting to have as a prompt for myself.

Erin: Sure.

Caroline: So I look forward to seeing that when it is, whenever it's ready.

Erin: Okay, great. I'll get on to it. All right.

Caroline: No worries. Thanks Erin!

Erin: Thanks so much Caroline.

Caroline: Pleasure. See you later.

Erin: See you later, bye!

Caroline: Okay bye!