

## Transcription of conversation with Stacey and Tina

**Amelie** : What has it been like to be a part of Artists First?

**Stacey** : Nice making new friends and to be part of a team. Because you *are* part of a team.

**Amelie** : Yeah - it's not just about yourselves I guess. It's actually being part of a bigger group.

**Stacey** : You look at other peoples work and you give them suggestions if they want it. Sometimes Brian\* used to be sat next to me and I used to do very complex drawings. He would always say to me 'you need to put less detail into it' .

**Amelie** : Oh really!?

**Stacey** : I was always putting plenty of detail into it so I could add loads of colour to it.

**Amelie** : It's different opinions and different feedback from each other which is quite interesting in a group...

**Stacey** : Well it helps really, because otherwise you can't really get it working together.

**Tina** : We also get to sell our artwork .

**Amelie** : That's so exciting I imagine : you're selling *your* artwork. You get to speak to people.

**Stacey** : We've had exhibitions as well. Sometimes people ask you 'how did you make it' . Sometimes we sell it but it just depends on whether they like it or not I suppose.

**Amelie** : How does it feel when people are at an exhibition and they see your art and ask you questions, or say 'I love that painting' or 'I'd love to buy that' ... feels good I imagine !

**Stacey** : It inspires you to make more, especially when they really really like it. You think 'ah well, if they like that picture, I'd do it in a slightly different way' and then it would be OK.

**Amelie** : When you've gone to other exhibitions has that maybe inspired you with your own art?

**Stacey** : If we take our sketchbooks with us, we can draw something and then we can develop it in the art room. We've done that a couple of times. We've taken a sketch when we've gone to the RWA, come back and then made it into something bigger.

**Amelie** : How has it felt to make your own art and your own paintings?

**Stacey** : We've got inspired by books and different colours and different things that you can use like pastels and paints. You can just make it as thick as you want to. It makes it stand out a lot more.

**Amelie** : Do you feel like being part of Artists First has shown you how to paint in different ways or develop your own styles?

**Tina** : Develop your own styles.

**Amelie** : Have there been any particular highlights or really great moments from your time at Artists First?

**Stacey** : Chatting to friends and people that actually want us to do art. Because sometimes people think 'oh no - you don't need to do that' .

**Amelie** : People who encourage you and support you.

**Amelie**: What about any particular workshops that you've been a part of ... perhaps someone called James Lake ...

**Tina** : Yeah. We've been to his place.

**Amelie** : Yeah. He does these cardboard structures doesn't he. And that must be really interesting because that's so different to painting!

**Stacey** : Cardboard is a lot harder to work with. You've got to cut it to size and all sorts.

**Tina** : And there's the glue aswell !

**Stacey** : Finding the right glue to stick it with ...

**Amelie** : Well it's brand new materials and a brand new way of working isn't it. Even just looking at the structures that Andy has on the wall there ... I would have no idea how you do that !

**Amelie** : This may be a really difficult question to answer, but when you think about all the paintings that you've done - each of you - are there any that you remember really well ?

**Tina** : That one I've done (points) .

**Amelie** : Ah, that's your self portrait Tina. I love that ! I love the hair. Stacey, does anything come to mind or is it all a bit of a blur considering you've done so many?

**Stacey** : I've done musical instruments and I did a beach scene and a lot of copying from books but not - if that makes any sense - sort of making it my own.

**Amelie** : So kind of using it as a starting point and then building on it?

**Stacey** : Cos that's when the detail comes into it.

**Amelie** : You can build I guess on the first sketch or first drawing.

**Stacey** : If it doesn't look enough you can always add more.

**Amelie** : So that actually sounds Stacey like detail is quite a big part of your artwork.

**Stacey** : I find if there's not enough detail, it looks boring to me, whereas if I put more detail into it, at least there's a lot more to look at. It's like the cage one I did - remember that cage - with Bryan in the cage . Well that one, I thought, it's alright having a bird and a person, but it's not enough. You need to put more into it.

**Amelie** : Has Artists First changed the way you think about yourselves?

**Stacey** : Yeah. Given me more confidence when I'm with other people - but it's got to be with people I know. Not with people I don't know. Cos when I first came here I didn't talk hardly. I was quite quiet. It took me about a year after Bryan started talking to me - that brought me out of my shell.

**Tina** : That gives confidence.

**Stacey** : It makes all the difference when you find somebody you can chat to.

**Amelie** : Well you can bounce ideas off each other can't you and you can talk to each other about your art. It brings it to life I guess.

**Stacey** : Or if you're not sure which colour will go with which, then you can just say 'Do you think this colour will be alright with that?' and sometimes they'll say yes or sometimes they'll say 'No - maybe we ought to go for this colour'.

**Amelie** : It's helping each other out isn't it.

**Tina** : And supporting.

**Amelie** : So more confidence. That's brilliant. Do you think that's also come from having a skill which you can share with friends and family ?

**Stacey & Tina** : Yeah.

**Amelie** : How do you feel about the future, building on from your time at Artists First? And it might feel a bit mixed - a bit happy and a bit sad.

**Stacey** : I'm not really sure.

**Tina** : Bit sad.

**Amelie** : Well it's a change isn't it.

**Stacey** : Definitely a big change, cos we've been doing it for about 10 years or more but it needs to be done. But I just wish it wasn't yet. Everything's got to stop somewhere.

**Amelie** : That's it isn't it and we hope we're going to find ways to continue with your artwork. But you're right - it's a big change. So apart from Artists First giving you the opportunity to do your art, what I think I'm understanding is that also, being part of the group, getting to know people, has been really important. Well, you've both contributed so much to Artists First. Andy has spoken so much about both of you and we have everything crossed that even though Artists First is coming to a close, your artwork continues.

\*Brian Davis - former member of Artists First.