

Transcription of conversation with Louise

Amelie: First question, what has it been like to be a part of Artists First?

Louise: It's been brilliant because I've got to meet new people, learn about their art styles. When I first started in the group I wasn't very sure, but the first person I met in the group was Emily and she'd not long started. When I saw the other people in the group I really liked them. They all looked like lovely people. And I like Peter's style because he's a portrait artist.

Amelie: So do you feel like working with other artists and seeing their styles, that's been something that you've really enjoyed?

Louise: Yes.

Amelie: Do you feel like you've changed your style throughout Artists First as you've seen others develop their own styles?

Louise: Yes. I've done a lot of things like pictures from books and magazines and even some still life.

Amelie: There's a huge range in your work Louise. One of the things that we've just been talking about is your cats - your cats that you have at home ! Am I right in thinking that you love painting your cats?

Louise: I do yes. I've drawn and painted my cats a lot. Even the ones I've sadly lost like Riley. I painted him to keep his memory alive. The one that went missing was called Shadow and he's in one of my paintings I chose.

Amelie: So a way of keeping their memories alive.

Louise: And I took the style from some other books like art books.

Amelie: I think that's the special thing about art. You can paint what is important to you and what you want to remember. Have you been able to share any of those special paintings with your family and friends?

Louise: I've shown my Mum and my Dad. They really like them. I think they want the one of Riley to keep his memory.

Amelie: I suppose exhibiting your work in exhibitions is another opportunity to show your artwork too.

Louise: I love that.

Amelie: This is probably going to be a really tricky question Louise, but do you have a favourite ever painting that you've done or set of paintings?

Louise: I did a big portrait of one of the founders called Mike - a big painting of him sat down with a cup. I like that one. That's one of the first paintings I did in Artists First.

Amelie: That's portraiture isn't it !

Louise: It is yes. He really liked it because he was one of the founders, Sarah's Dad.

Amelie: What a special painting.

Louise: One of the founders of Artists First. I'm working on one of his daughter.

Amelie: There's a continuation isn't there - Mike founded it. Sarah is still a part of it. I think that's the lovely thing and it adds to the family atmosphere in the group. You've all been working together for so long.

Louise: We have, yes.

Amelie: Have you seen over the years Louise, your style change or develop?

Louise: My style has changed a lot - different ways of drawing the faces and the outfits. Trying different backgrounds. I've improved a lot over the years.

Amelie: One thing that I notice is the use of bright colours in your paintings.

Louise: I used to use normal paint but when I found out about acrylic paint - it's better and brighter paint and it's made my paintings stand out really well. I've got bright colouring pencils from WHSmith and they bring out the brightness in my artwork.

Amelie: Yes - so you've been able to explore using different materials and what it looks like and feels like to use them.

Louise: I have yes.

Amelie: There's a lovely painting on the Artists First website called 'Leslie'.

Louise: I remember that one. Everyone likes that one because of how it looks. It doesn't need any background - it's perfect the way it is.

Amelie: It's very clean lines - a bright blue jumper and dark brown hair. Really lovely.

Louise: Thank you. I like that one too. I was going to put her name on it but I think Andy said ' just leave it as it is' .

Amelie: Really beautiful. There's another one here (*Untitled*) .

Louise: I remember that one because of the background I chose - bright yellow.

Amelie: Bright yellow background, bright blue eyes.

Louise: Makes it stand out really well.

Amelie: Yeah, absolutely. It's really bold.

Louise: I like to outline with a black line round the faces.

Amelie: So when you start a painting Louise, will you sketch it first with pencil?

Louise: I start with pencil first and then go on to paint.

Amelie: Lovely clean crisp lines. I wanted to ask you aswell Louise, what has it felt like to be an artist? Has it made you feel differently about yourself?

Louise: It has yes. Makes me feel good to know my artwork is getting around and other people are seeing it. Makes me feel really good.

Amelie: Have you noticed a change in your confidence?

Louise: I have yes.

Amelie: I think sharing the art brings it to life. When you present someone a painting that you've done, that's a special moment.

Louise: It is. I feel very good about my art getting around and showing other people.

Amelie: So leading on from Artists First and having been a part of the group for so long, do you have any specific hopes for the future in terms of your art?

Louise: I want to get my art in other places - to exhibit. I want to try and do a bit more still life. I still love drawing characters a lot and people.

Amelie: And I suppose when you're painting people, you get to spend time with them. You get to know them perhaps. See them several times. Are there any people in particular that you would perhaps like to paint?

Louise: Maybe some people from my Art-In-Motion group. I've done drawings of them but I would like to do some paintings of them too.

Amelie: Yeah. Sounds brilliant. Is there anything I've forgotten to mention in terms of your time at Artists First?

Louise: Think I'm all good.

Amelie: Thanks Louise - that was lovely.