

# HouseFound Symposium

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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## SPEAKERS

George Bastow, Elle Chante, Level Centre, Bella Milroy, Katie Walters, Ed Perry (Ban Summers)

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### Level Centre 22:59

Hello to those of you that are waiting for us at home we just giving it a few more minutes just to let everybody into the room. Thank you Hannah, we're excited to have you and the team from the Belgrade with us as well. We're just going to give it another minute and then we're going to start so just bear with us. I've just seen that Separate Doors have joined us, hello Ness thank you for joining us. We've got Attenborough Art Center as well, amazing our neighbors and peers just down the road in Leicester. I have just seen Hubbub have joined us as well, amazing stuff. Hubbub just recently did a residency here at LEVEL Centre. Just going to give it a few more seconds and welcome everybody into the room and then we're going to get started. Okay, I think we're going to start I think some people are going to join us within time, so let's get started. So, my name is Kerry Andrews, I'm the Executive Director at LEVEL Centre. Thank you so much for joining us here today and to learn more about HouseFound, and really working with artists who have difficulty leaving the home. I'm a white woman, I'm in my mid 40s, I've got dark, curly hair with a bit of red in it. I've got a statement necklace, it's yellow and grey. I'm wearing glasses because I am actually reading some words to you. I'm sitting in LEVEL Centre next to my brilliant co-host and colleague Katie Walters. Katie is my co-host and co-producer of HouseFound, this event in collaboration with their company Radical Body. There's a black curtain behind me. There's also a plinth and on top of the plinth, there are some plants, there's a card that has the LEVEL logo on it, and behind that there's a white board that says HouseFound the hashtag HouseFound. We want to welcome all delegates from across the UK and even internationally. Thank you for joining us, we're glad that you're here because it means that you're interested in working with artists who have difficulty leaving the home. We want you to be inspired. We want you to take something away from the event and we really hope you find it useful and informative in what you do at the organisations you work for. Before I talk about HouseFound and the brilliant day that we have ahead of us, I actually want to tell you a little bit about LEVEL. Once I've told you a bit about LEVEL, there'll be some general housekeeping and a bit of an update on the running order of the day. So about LEVEL. For those of you that don't know us, LEVEL Centre is a charity. We're based in Rowsley in Derbyshire, we're in a rural location. We have a purpose built accessible contemporary arts centre, and we opened in 2008. We are a National Portfolio Organisation of Arts Council England, and we are becoming the national go to contemporary arts hub for the learning disabled community and disabled creatives working within visual, performing and digital arts.

Our projects celebrates the arts that difference makes. We're developing artists of the future, working with disabled creatives and supporting the wider community. We present interactive digital installations. We host artists residencies in this space that I'm sat in right now. We host critical conversations. We champion artists who have difficulty leaving the home. We run performing and visual classes on site and online. We tour into day centres and work in SEN schools. We've got four freelance Artistic Associates. We have disabled visual artists Bella Milroy, and you're going to meet Bella a bit later as she is one of our panelists at this event. We've got disabled spoken word artists and change maker Katie Walters of Radical Body, who's our lead artists and co-producer of HouseFound. We also have digital artists Darius Powell, and Darius is working behind the scenes today in helping us make and deliver HouseFound. Level provides respite for parents and carers. We support wellbeing and social interactions to combat loneliness. Everything we do has a value. Our creativity goes beyond creativity. We're offering experiences that make a difference. We work with learning disabled people, and disabled creatives to create projects that develop our community's unique creative abilities. We celebrate the art that difference makes. In April 2021, Katie joined us as an Artistic Associate, and through a series of conversations HouseFound was born. Today sees the start of that conversation with all of you delegates at home, who work in visual, digital and performing arts. We want to embed change. We want you to consider ways to nurture, support, commission and present artists who have difficulty leaving the home. So a bit of housekeeping. This is an event that is reliant on the internet, we are hosting it online. We hope that there aren't any problems today, but you know, we could experience some technical problems. If we do, there will be a display that will be a holding slide until the problem is fixed. If you experience any problems throughout the day, please email [info@levelcentre.com](mailto:info@levelcentre.com). That's [info@levelcentre.com](mailto:info@levelcentre.com). We've got three wonderful BSL interpreters with us for the whole day. We're joined by Ali Gordon who's signing for me right now. We also have Laura Goulden, and Rachel Veazey. They're going to be alternating throughout the day, you will be able to adjust your screen at home by dragging the line to change your view. So you can make the BSL interpreter bigger for your needs. We also have a live transcript enabled. We want you all to engage with today on social media as much as possible. Let's get HouseFound trending, so we would love you to engage with HouseFound on social media and please use the hashtag [HouseFound @levelcentre](https://twitter.com/levelcentre). All of our speakers and performers today are artists who have difficulty leaving the home. There may be times when some of our artists, panelists or performers need to leave a conversation because of their condition. Should that be the case, a speaker will rejoin when they are able, and they will just turn the camera off. But we are working with artists who have difficulty leaving the home and there is a possibility that one of our speakers might have to leave a session, so we just want you all to be aware of that. Between each conversation, there's going to be a 15 minute break, that comfort break in that time we will have a holding slide up, and that will appear on your screen. We're asking all delegates to listen and engage today. We're not going to be answering questions live, but if there is a question that you'd like an answer to please do send it to us. What we're going to do is we're going to collate those questions, compile responses, and share the responses with everybody as a follow up to the event. So a bit of an overview for the day. Could we have a slide up please Adam, with the overview of the program of the day. The first session is an introduction to disability arts. That's going to be led by Katie and that's going to start at 1.30pm today. During that session, Katie of Radical Body will cover some introductory information about working with disabled artists. They will explain the terminology that will be used throughout the day, as well as some useful frameworks for understanding the experiences of disabled creatives. We then have a break, and then the next session is at 2:45pm, which is Barriers to Entry. In that session you're going to meet our wonderful panelists who will be joining Katie, and you're going to be introduced to each panel member. In that session, panelists will discuss the issues they face in trying to build a career in the arts. The discussion will be focused on the limitations of traditional access provisions, and

the barriers that panelists really want employers to know and understand. In the third session at four o'clock is called Models of Success. In this session, panelists will bring examples of access in the arts that have worked really well for them. They are going to interrogate the successes of projects that met their needs, and identify patterns between them, considering how these projects addressed the barriers that they usually face. In the final session at quarter past five, Next Steps, we are basically going to be using the learning for all of the previous sessions, both panelists and attendees. So all of your delegates at home work together to identify some actionable steps that arts leaders can take to improve their interactions with artists who have difficulty leaving the home. We're going to then create a document and detail all of our findings together with any questions that we receive, and that's going to be formalised and share to all delegates after the event. Then we're going to talk a bit about our plans to create a festival called the HouseFound festival and we hope that many of you today are going to join us on that journey. You would have been sent two links today. You've got the link now which is the webinar and then we move over to YouTube this evening to watch the performances. The day ends with three performances, performing live in their own homes. We've got Connor Alywood, Rick Dove, and Elle Chante. Originally, we advertised Cathy Mungall-Baldwin as performing live, but unfortunately, Cathy is unwell and unable to perform. So we really want to thank Elle, who stepped in at short notice to take that performance slot. We're going to talking more about the next steps and learning to be shared following this event. But as I said, the performances aren't taking place on this platform, they are on YouTube, and we will remind you of that towards the end of the day. You should have received that separate link but if you haven't, please email [info@levelcentre.com](mailto:info@levelcentre.com). Now, the reason that there's a separate link is because the HouseFound symposium festival concept would not take place on Zoom, but obviously, the symposium model Zoom makes the most sense. So we're using that platform, but not for live performance. Zoom for the symposium and YouTube is for the live performance. We want to demonstrate that you can have a live audience in a venue, whilst watching live performance by artists who have difficulty leaving the home performing in their own homes. I also want to thank Arts Council England and Derbyshire County Council for supporting LEVEL centre. Now I'm going to be handing over to the amazing artists and co-creator of HouseFound, Katie Walters who has developed this project in collaboration with their company Radical Body. Before we start the Introduction to Disability Art session at 1.30 Katie's just going to sort of talk a bit about why today is so important. Over to you, Katie.

K

Katie Walters 36:35

Thank you. Hi, my name is Katie Walters. I am a poet and playwright, as well as co-founder of disability arts organization Radical Body, which is focused on creating new performance opportunities for performers who have difficulty leaving the home, or otherwise face barriers to entry into the arts. You're going to meet my wonderful co-founder later, Elle Chante, she is a huge part of what we do as a company so I'm really excited that you're all going to get to meet her. I am a fat, white, non binary person. I use they/them pronouns. You probably can't tell from the crops that you have of me, but I am a wheelchair user. I'm currently using a manual wheelchair with a very snazzy teal frame. I'm wearing bright yellow dungarees with a bee pattern and a red jumper with a black and white collar. So I'm really, really thrilled that LEVEL have seen some potential in the work that I'm trying to do both as an individual artist and as a part of Radical Body, in improving access to the arts for people who struggle to leave their homes. I sort of started the company and started trying to pursue this kind of work, because when I fell ill with a serious chronic illness, I found that my career in the arts just hit a brick wall. People stopped being interested in me, people didn't know who I was and it was really, really hard for me to build up a reputation and build a career if I couldn't physically leave my

home and get out to art events. I like to think I'm quite good at what I do, and I think there's lots of other people out there who are brilliant performers. Who are making important and vital art that we don't get to see, because our current arts industry just isn't set up to provide opportunities to people who can't get out. So that's really the core of HouseFound festival and HouseFound Symposium is the desire to increase access for people who struggled to get out because they are capable of producing brilliant art and we as country deserve to see it.

L

### Level Centre 38:57

Absolutely! Thank you so much, Katie. The next session starts at 1.30. So we are going to take a short pause now until 1.30. At 1.30 you'll be rejoined by Katie with the Introduction to Disability Arts session, so we'll see you all back at 1.30. We're now going to have a slide up. That will be the pause moment. Thank you everyone. We'll see you shortly. Hello everyone. For those of you who have just joined us, my name is Kerry Andrews and I'm the Executive Director here at LEVEL Centre. I'm joined by my amazing co-host and co-creator of HouseFound, Katie Walters of Radical Body. We've already gone through the welcome, so now it's the start of our first session, Introduction to Disability Arts being led by Katie of Radical Body. So I'm going to now hand over to Katie, who's going to lead this next session, thank you.

K

### Katie Walters 50:40

Hello, I'm just going to start sharing my screen to give you some visual points of reference for what I'm talking about. Unfortunately, it looks like I don't have permission to screenshare right now. So hopefully someone can sort that for me. So the reason I wanted to run this session and run it first, is because I feel like it's really useful for everyone here to have a baseline of information about disability arts, and what our current situation is before we start trying to change it. Okay, I've got I've got screen sharing up, we're good. Yeah, I want us all to be on the same page when we start. So I'm actually likely to be explaining a bunch of stuff and then telling you that it doesn't necessarily apply here. But that's because I think in order to challenge the status quo, we need to all have a good understanding of what it is. So the first thing I actually want to discuss today is problematizing, the word housebound. Which I understand might sound a bit out there considering the name of the symposium. Here at LEVEL and at Radical Body, we try and avoid using the word housebound, because it's quite a weighted term. It's difficult for people to understand whether the term housebound artists really applies to them. For example, if I am able to leave my house once or twice a week to do essential activities, like shopping or medical appointments, then it's difficult for me to identify as housebound, because it's such a weighted term, and it has such an absolute definition. But I really need the sorts of support that we're going to be talking about today and trying to facilitate change towards any industry. I might be excluded from opportunities that were put out into the world with the word housebound attached. So instead, what we've been trying to do is come up with an alternative term that's a bit less sticky, and a bit less stigmatizing. What we've landed on is people who struggled to leave their homes, which is unfortunately a bit wordy. It doesn't feel ideal, but it's the language that we have right now. Hopefully, in the long term, better, more accurate terms will emerge, but we don't have them yet. So that's the language that we're going to be using today. So, a big thing that I also wanted to explain is the difference between person first and identity first language. This difference is a real point of contention in the disability community, some people prefer person first language and some people prefer identity first language. I'm going to explain to you what the difference is and the

reasoning behind different people's preferences. When we use identity first language, we refer to someone's identity markers as an adjective, so we would say a non binary person, a white person, or a disabled person. When we use person first language, we refer to those markers as nouns, like a person with non binary, a man with whiteness, a person with disability. You might notice that some of those examples feel a little bit odd. We usually don't use person first language when describing people's identity markers. There was a dedicated effort in the late 80s and early 90s, from disability rights activists to change the way that we talk about disability to use this person first language. Now the reason for that is because we want to encourage people to think of disabled people as people first and our conditions or our disabilities second. Some people feel that referring to us as disabled people, is kind of dehumanizing, and kind of stigmatizing and encourages people not to think of us as individuals, but to think of it as a sort of amorphous group. Some people prefer this term, because they feel that the failure to separate our personhood from our disabilities leads to dehumanization and stigma. You might notice that I don't feel that way. I much much prefer using identity first language. I have been referring to as disabled people all day, and I will probably continue to do so. There's a couple of reasons for that. A big reason for my preference is that I feel that I am defined by my disabilities, and I'm okay with that. I don't want to separate my disability out from who I am as a person, because it's integral to my identity. It completely changes the way that I look at the world and what my perspective is on big concepts like nature and politics and time. So I think that's a valuable experience, I choose to wear that proudly, I don't want to have it as an afterthought when I'm describing myself, I want to put it front and center. Another reason which is a little more abstract, is that I feel that my disability is not a modifier to my personhood. What I mean by that is that, when you refer to someone as a person with a disability, it sort of implies that the disability detracts from the personhood, that a person exists that is separable from the disability. It's sort of a heavy noun that you're carrying around with you, and that makes me quite uncomfortable. Personally, I feel that my disability is a big part of my personhood, and I don't want to imply that a version of me might exist, who doesn't have those conditions. This is not a resolved issue. I've been pretty clear about my preferences, but you won't find that everyone feels the same way. I think probably broadly speaking, more people right now prefer to be referred to as disabled people but it's really, really important to address people's preferences on an individual level. Find out what people are preferring themselves, what they want, how they want to be referred to. The most important aspect of addressing people with disabilities or disabled people is treating us as individuals, understanding our preferences. It can be a little difficult if you're running, say, a call out online, knowing how to refer to people. Generally speaking, this is an issue where I would suggest taking an organisational stance, pick how you're going to refer to people in the abstract, and stick to it. If you encounter people who feel differently, you want to be referred to differently, then you can speak to them differently on an individual level. I think that this kind of links into the social model of disability, which I'm going to explain now, because another reason why some people prefer to be referred to as disabled people, is because they think that disabled in that term is verb. That we are people who are being disabled by society, and that sort of core of the social model of disability. The social model is pretty essential to understanding the perspectives and working patterns of most disability arts organisations operating in the UK today. It's an extremely important and influential model of thought that grew to define disability activism, from the 60s to the 80s in the UK, and now remain central to most forms of disability advocacy. So historically speaking, we have addressed disability by the medical model. What the medical model means is that we look at disability as something that is afflicting people, something that we should try to change or omit or cure. That the problems that disabled people face are caused by their disability. The social model of disability understands disability to be a consequence of an inaccessible society. So rather than looking at us as flawed individuals, trying to change the individuals, it puts the onus on society to change

and improve and make things better for us. I think that's really, really important. Working as a disabled artist and encountering bigger organisations trying to make a name for myself, when I'm essentially competing with non disabled people, I quite often get looked at as awkward, as difficult. That's something that really scares me, that my career might be negatively impacted, because I'm labeled as difficult because of my access needs. So it's really important to me to make sure that everyone I work with has a good understanding of the social model so that they can see that the things that I bring to them are not my fault. They're the result of a structural issue of an inaccessible society. I also want to clarify that this model isn't perfect. When the social model was first created, it wasn't really intended to be applied to everyone, to be a universal prescriptive solution. So there are some people who feel a little bit alienated if you were to understand them solely by the social model of disability. A lot of that comes from people who live with chronic illnesses, and variable conditions rather than static conditions. For example, I have an energy impairment, I live with chronic fatigue syndrome. Even if everything in my life were made 100% totally accessible, I would still have really limited energy, there will still be things that I wouldn't be able to do, because I'm just too sick, and that's okay. I don't want to pretend like those limitations don't exist to me, I'd rather acknowledge them and try and live my life around them. So for me, personally, I don't identify with the medical model, I much prefer to use the social model. But I do understand that those experiences that I have, are part of why some people feel a little bit uncomfortable using the social model in a prescriptive way. So that's just another thing to be aware of. I think this is going to be a running theme today. People have different preferences, and you need to find out what people's individual needs are, rather than trying to find a one size fits all solution. Speaking of chronic illnesses, another theory, a framework that I think is really useful for understanding the experiences of creatives who live with chronic illnesses, is The Spoon Theory. So originally created by Christine Miserandino who is a disability rights activist who lives with lupus. Spoon Theory is a metaphor designed to help non disabled people understand what it's like to live with complex conditions that are variable and that require constant energy management. So the spoon metaphor, is actually arbitrary, but it gives people sort of a physical representation of energy and quantifying energy is useful and trying to explain to people why it's difficult to manage your energy. So spoons represent the finite amount of energy that people with chronic conditions have to work within our daily lives. Basic activities will use different amounts of spoons and usually people with chronic illnesses don't have enough of them to get through a normal day. So I have an illustration for you here, which is a representation of the different amounts of spoons that some activities might take up. So as you can see, there are things there that some people wouldn't even think about using energy like getting out of bed or getting dressed. Those are things that non disabled people can do pretty easily. So recognizing them as a part of our energy use, I think is important as a baseline. Then you can see that other essential activities take up much more spoons, like making and eating meal or going to work or going shopping. Those are all things that we need to do to live. This diagram encourages you to limit yourself, assume you have 12 spoons a day, but try and figure out what you would do with them. What would you have to sacrifice? What would be most important to you? I think that this is a really useful way of encouraging people to think about how life is really different for people who have to do this complex energy management maths in the background every day. That can really impact our work lives in ways that may be difficult for people to understand if they don't have this baseline knowledge. So for example, my workday usually starts at midday. This is because getting up earlier is very tiring for me, I need more sleep than other people do. I need to sleep for at least 12 hours a day. So getting up early, means I'm sacrificing some of that sleep, and I have less spoons available to me. To attend a meeting at 10am, I might have to sacrifice some essential self care, like washing, getting dressed, getting out of bed. But I can still do that I can make that decision, it's down to me, I can sacrifice those aspects of self care to attend one early meeting a week. But if people

keep asking me to do that, suddenly I have a problem. The things that I choose not to do in order to attend those meetings, cumulatively, I can't live without them, that would ruin my life. So I have to have a boundary that I don't do those early meetings, or that if I do them, it's only in exceptional circumstances. Which has been kind of difficult for a lot of people I've worked with to understand, they see that I can do something one day, and don't understand why I'm refusing to do it the next day. I think this is a useful way of explaining to people and a useful thing to have in mind when you're engaging with disabled people who have energy impairments or conditions that are difficult to manage in this way. I think the spoon model can be really helpful as a starting point for understanding energy management. I also feel that it's a bit reductive. It's a tool for getting to the point of understanding roughly what happens to people, it's really oversimplified. So for example, I don't have the same amount of spoons every day. Sometimes I wake up and I have two and I can't do anything, and that's really important complication. I think energy isn't neatly quantifiable in this way. It's just a tool for understanding the decisions that we have to make. I want you to understand this and remember it but also bear in mind that it's much, much more complicated than this. The decisions that disabled artists are making every day to build a career in the arts are unimaginably complex. There's one more concept that I am wanting to introduce you all to today, and that's Crip Time and this is much more abstract. So it might take me a bit of time to explain. It's a concept that I think is really, really important for understanding a lot of the problems that disabled people face. It's not necessarily one that everyone will understand by name, I think most disabled people will relate to this experience, but the theory itself isn't particularly well known. So just want to flag that I suppose. I think time is a natural extension of spoon theory. It refers to the ways that living with disability can impact the ways that we experience time, and how that differs from the experiences of non disabled people. So time is theoretically objective but in reality, all of us understand time by how long it takes us to do things. So if I asked you how long is an hour? Well, it depends what I'm asking you to do with it. If I'm asking you to write an essay, it's not much time at all. If I'm asking you to brush your teeth, it's way too much time. So of course some people will be fast at some things and slower others, but generally speaking, non disabled people are able to do roughly the same amount of activity as each other in 24 hours. Those 24 hours are worth roughly the same amount to people who don't live with disabilities. It's a little bit different for disabled people, because society is built around an expectation that we will be able to keep up with the things that non disabled people do with their 24 hours. So maybe in 24 hours a non disabled person is expected to travel to and from work, work for seven hours, make and eat three meals, take a shower, do some laundry, exercise, socialise and then go back to bed and be ready to do it all again the next day. I think that we expect way too much from everyone, as a society, I don't think it's actually feasible for non disabled people to do all of those things, but they come a lot closer than I do. So if I try and guess how much time it would take me to do all of those things, to go to work and to make food and to wash. It would take me like maybe a week, one day, I can work for three hours and take a shower. Another day, I can see friends. There's quite a limitation on how much I can do with my day. Practically speaking, one week for me might be roughly equivalent to one day for a non disabled person. Even though theoretically, we're all working with the same amount of time. It takes me seven times as long as other people to get things done. Effectively, I live one day for every seven days that non disabled people do. I get 52 days in a year, in the long term that really stacks up and my perspective on time becomes distorted. In my daily life, I sort of built my life around that time, around the understanding that it just takes me longer to do things. But working in the arts, I'm still completely expected to work to non disabled timeframes. So open callouts expect me to turn around an application in four weeks. Festivals expect me to be able to bring a show with eight weeks notice. If you swap those numbers for days, they seem ridiculous. Practically speaking, that's what disabled people are living and working with, and this is a structural issue. These timeframes exist because the

industry is built around non disabled people they're the industry standard. And they stay industry standard because everyone works to those expectations. Funding bodies expect to see results for small projects in six months or a year, when a team of disabled people might realistically need two years to achieve the same outcome. The difficulty that I face in working to nondisabled timeframes makes it much harder for me to access opportunities, which makes it harder for me to build up a reputation, which makes it harder for me to build a career. Producing new work on longer time frames makes my CV less impressive, makes me less relevant to my field and makes me less visible to people with power to affect change. I'm really lucky that I have been given this opportunity by LEVEL Centre that they don't mind that I'm living on Crip Time, and that they have chosen to work with me. Not everyone does that and that's something that we need to change. I think it's really important for me to start the day by explaining Crip Time, because it goes some way towards capturing the scale and complexity of the issues that we're going to be discussing today. It's totally systemic, the cumulative result of lots of small factors that over time build up into a huge and impassible obstacle. The problems we're going to talk about seem intimidating and huge. But if we can disrupt them when they're still small, you have the power to make bigger change. As arts leaders, we have the power to recognize and remove those small barriers when they come up, to keep them from snowballing into larger barriers. I sincerely believe that together our actions can build a better future for disabled artists. I'm really grateful to you for being here today and joining me in trying to make that happen.

L

Level Centre 1:14:59

Thank you so much, Katie. I hope everyone at home has really taken something away from that. I've been working with Katie now since April 2021 and as an organisation at LEVEL Centre we've learned so much. Katie has really helped shape LEVEL Centre and what we do going forward. We've definitely been learning from Spoon Theory and Crip Time. For example, we're really flexible about our meetings, and when we meet, we're able to counsel them, because we know that Katie might be experiencing fatigue one day. It is a really flexible model, and I'd be more than happy to talk to other leaders and other organisations about a venues perspective of really embracing and working with artists who have difficulty leaving the home, and artists who encounter fatigue, it is a very different way of working, but it's an exciting one. It's always changing, and there's always something fresh and new to learn. So, yes, I really hope that you're all taking something away from that first session, which is really going to provide the framework really into some of the conversations that happen later today. I'm aware that a number of people have been putting in the chat about whether or not this is being recorded today. Yes, this whole symposium, the HouseFound symposium is being recorded, and everybody that attends HouseFound, will be receiving some follow up information from us following the events, especially around the information that we gather collectively in the Next Steps session, and the recording will be available. So rest assured, you will have access to these amazing slides and information that Katie has shared around the Introduction to Disability Arts. As we said at the very beginning, and at the welcome at the start of the day, we are taking breaks. We are taking breaks, as we finish the sessions, because we are working with artists who have difficulty leaving the home and who require some rest time. So the next time we come back, we'll be entering the Barriers to Entry session where you'll meet our other guests speakers of the day. That starts at 2:45pm. So you now we'll have a break until 2:45. May we suggest that you're back by 2:40 and on standby, so that we're good to go at 2:45. Thank you so much everyone. We will have a look at some of the messages that have been put in the chat, and we will start to collate some responses that will follow this event. Thank you everyone and we will see you at 2:45. Thank you everyone and see you soon. Hello and

welcome back everyone. Thank you so much to everybody who's joined the HouseFound symposium already today. We had a great introductory session with Katie on an Introduction to Disability Arts. We're now entering the second session, and that session is Barriers to Entry. Before we start the panel discussion, just to remind everybody that this is being recorded and will be available afterwards. Please tweet HouseFound, #HouseFound @levelCentre, we would love to get HouseFound trending out there. We really hope that there's lots of you taking a lot of amazing nuggets away from the information that Katie shared. In the next session, we are inviting in our guests panelists to join us. In this session, panelists are going to discuss the issues they face trying to build a career in the arts. The discussion will be focused on the limitations of traditional access provisions and the barriers that the panelists wish that their employers understood. I know as somebody who's been working with Katie on HouseFound as an Artistic Associate of LEVEL Centre for the past 10/11 months. There's a lot that I've learned, and I cannot wait to hear some more examples from our wonderful panelists. So Adam, who is working in our tech room, it'd be lovely. Now if we could now welcome in our panelists to join us for this session. Thank you. So we have Edward Perry joining us. We have Elle Chante. We have George Bastow. And we have Bella Milroy. Just waiting for everybody to join us. What we're going to do before we start the conversation about Barriers to Entry. We'd really love everybody, all of our guests panelists to do an audio description of themselves. So shall we start with Ed Perry, please.

E

Ed Perry (Ban Summers) 2:07:50

Hi, everyone. I'm Edward Perry and I'm a musician and producer as Ban Summers. I also have a radio show on Unmade radio in Portsmouth where I play disabled artists. I am a white male wearing a green fluffy hat and headphones. I've got long brown hair and I'm wearing glasses and a navy jumper. Behind me is a pale cream wall. I'm sat in a brown chair by a window, and there's records just behind me.

L

Level Centre 2:08:25

Wonderful. Thank you Ed, can I hand over to Bella now?

B

Bella Milroy 2:08:39

Hi, everyone. My name is Bella Milroy. I'm an artist based in my hometown of Chesterfield, North Derbyshire, not far from Rowsley where LEVEL is based, where I'm also one of the Artistic Associates. Just a short image description for you here, I'm a white woman in my early 30s. I have an oval, round face with round cheeks and overgrown buzzcut hair style, dark hair, dark glasses, over ear headphones, an orange wool jumper with a blue collar, pale white skin. In the background, there's white walls and the sofa with lots of messy cushions and blankets.

L

Level Centre 2:09:27

Brilliant. Thank you, Bella. Elle would you be able to introduce yourself please?

E

Elle Chante 2:09:31

I'm Elle, I'm a singer, songwriter and producer and the other half of Radical Body. I hope people can hear me okay, so I've had a bit of a message about unstable connection. I'm wearing a brown jumpsuit. I have gold glasses on, hoop earrings and a very big fluffy afro. I'm sitting in front of a white wall, next to my guitar with a mic stand in front of my face.

L

Level Centre 2:10:13

Thank you Elle and finally over to George.

G

George Bastow 2:10:16

Hello, everyone. I hope everyone can you hear me I'm George Bastow. I'm a writer, poet and blogger from North Warwickshire. I'm a full time wheelchair user with quadriplegic cerebral palsy. My image description is, I'm a white male, pronouns he/him with long brown hair, black glasses and a rather fetching crimson trilby.

L

Level Centre 2:10:42

Wonderful. Thank you, George. For those of you that've met Katie, earlier on today but we'll just get Katie just to reintroduce yourself just in case anybody's just joined us.

K

Katie Walters 2:10:50

Hi. Yeah, I'm Katie. I am an Artistic Associate here at LEVEL and one half of Radical Body. I am a poet/playwright. I am a fat white person with bright blue hair tied back in a bun. I am a manual wheelchair user, although you can't see my wheelchair in frame right now. I'm wearing bright yellow dungarees with a bee pattern and a red jumper.

L

Level Centre 2:11:23

Thank you so much Katie. There are some comments coming through about volume there is a live transcript available. So do feel free to use that at home, if you're having difficulty hearing as well. So I'm going to ask the first question and then leave this wonderful panel to have an amazing conversation, we have just under an hour and sort of five minutes before the end, I will come in and just remind everyone that we're approaching the end of the session. So I suppose really, this session is called Barriers to Entry and it'd be really great if all of the panelists could think about a challenge they've faced when working on a project that has been specifically designed for disabled artists and what you encountered and how you overcame anything. Does anyone have any thoughts, anyone want to kick off with that? Who would like to go first?

K

Katie Walters 2:12:22

I've worked on quite a few projects that were designed for disabled artists. I think something has been a really major barrier for me, even when projects are trying to cater to my needs is a sort of focus on like practical physical access, that does not come with an understanding of the sort of social structures at play when working with a disabled person. So I've had a lot of trouble with people sort of not really understanding that my condition is variable. With people not really understanding the timeframes that are at play when I'm trying to produce art, and why those are different from the timeframes for other people. That's something that I found really, really challenging in terms of building up a career and like making myself heard. I can get into the building in a wheelchair, if I'm lucky. Usually, once I'm there, people don't really understand that disability effects more than just those practical, physical aspects. I don't know if that makes sense to anyone.

**E** Ed Perry (Ban Summers) 2:13:48

Yeah, I found, especially where I have a music background, there really is the expectation to kind of be there in person performing and networking them with people. As working as a kind of indie-rock musician, I kind of feel like there are standards at play that you kind of have to live up to. So in terms of releasing my last album, I felt like I had to try and get out and play live a few times. But really, that was more about me, trying to live up to expectations of what I should do around an album release, rather than working on what was actually right for me. The energy, the time and the money that is put into these things, is a lot harder when you're not doing stuff all the time. Like for some people going out and touring is really the biggest part of that album release. Whereas for me, it was kind of creating the album, and then seeing the reaction to that but really that's the starting point of where you're supposed to go. So really being present, playing live, networking, there are all kinds of standards that it's not that easy for me to live up to. You have to think, where am I within the sort of indie music sphere? What I've found out is trying to not live up to those expectations might actually help. But those expectations are still there in everyone's mind, as I approached them to work with them.

**B** Bella Milroy 2:15:47

I think going on from that, essentially, where access exists currently within the art world, across disciplines is that it is so little considered in the first place. Then if it is actually considered, as Katie was talking about, it is very one dimensional. What's lacking in the kind of broader understanding of what access means is that, it obviously there has to be that foundational level of facilitation of lots of different possible aspects of support. But also it has to be bespoke, it has to be what the individual needs and how to work within that. I think what you were talking about there Ed, about that requirement to physically turn up is a really, really big aspect of the way in which so much of the Arts works like that. It's really challenging, when that's just not really possible a lot of the time. I often think that, there's the making bit, there's the doing bit of a project or a commission or something like that and then there's all of these peripheral components, in which access also needs to be apportioned to as well. Like you say Ed, talking about the album and then there's the display and engagement and with all of that, that's a whole other job.

**G** George Bastow 2:17:44

For the 100th anniversary of the 1918-1919 influenza pandemic, we've teamed up with Ed and Bella on

Exactly. I would concur fully, if I might jump in now. I would agree 100% with Ed and Bella on this. One point I would like to raise, is within our society as a whole, everything has worked upon a basis of assumption. For instance, I'm a poet, and many spoken word nights or open mic nights, more often than not, they'll be held in a room above a pub, and you'll contact the people running it. Very well meaning, very wonderful people who unfortunately, don't have any lived experience of disabilities. I'll say is your event accessible? And they'll say sure, sure, come along, open mic, that'd be wonderful. Then you get to the venue and they've failed to mention that there are steps leading up to the venue to get in. Then there's another set of steps to the room above the pub where the open mic night is taking place. Obviously myself as a full time wheelchair user in a powered wheelchair, steps and stairs are my kryptonite. So unfortunately, as much as there's an openness and accessibility in people's hearts, venues are very static things. I think people need to and arts organizations and venues need to realize that there are many facets to access. Not only in terms of are there ramps into the venue instead of steps, but some people are full time wheelchair users like myself, who cannot walk at all. Some people are part-time wheelchair users and they can walk a short way. There's no one size fits all when it comes to disability. So when we are working with disabled people, it is always paramount to have an open dialogue wherever possible. Just explain the needs of the individual and build up from there, as opposed to making assumptions So as simple as it is, I would say, open dialogue is the key to everything.

E

Elle Chante 2:20:25

I would definitely agree with what George said. I am often unfortunately, on the receiving end of people not understanding. They have this idea of what being disabled looks like, it's not it's not always going to be that. Just to go over what I said that I struggle with multiple illnesses, so I've got joint Hypermobility syndrome/EDS and Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome and that means that I suffer with a lot of joint pain and I can also pass out when I change posture. Those outcomes out quite serious for me, I struggle with a lot and I have a lot of pain, tiredness, fatigue, etc. Even if you've asked about access beforehand, you go into the venue, and if they think you look okay, then you're just abandoned, and it's really frustrating. Sometimes, I think people don't always about understand mobility aids, that sometimes you do have them sometimes you don't have them. For people that have variable illnesses, sometimes I might need to use my walking stick. If I've done prolonged things that will aggravate my legs, so I might not have my walking stick, but will still want to use a lift because then I'm preserving my spoons. Sometimes people think that if you've got your mobility aid, then then you need to use to use a lift and don't necessarily understand that it can be fluctuating. You might need to use it at different times basically.

K

Katie Walters 2:22:50

Something that I feel is a real common area here for all of us is that so many of the different barriers that we face are fundamentally due to other people's expectations. The expectation that you will be able to go upstairs. The expectation that having a walking stick, some of the time means that you're fine the rest of the time. The expectation to perform being an artist is something that I have definitely gotten from what Ed and Bella were saying about being physically present. So much of being an artist is actually secondary to the art is all the things that people expect you to do, to show the world that you're a good artist. To be the things that people with the power in the industry want you to do or be. Sometimes I feel like, my ability to create art is completely irrelevant to my ability to succeed as an artist, because the things that

have mattered in my career, the things that've made huge differences are all to do with people seeing me at the right time in the right place. It all comes from being able to be present and be an artist in a way that other people want me to be. That's really, really hard when you can't get out of the house to show people that you care, to show people that you're doing things, that you're making things and that's a barrier that I really struggled to overcome. Being able to show people that I am actually making good art, without ticking all the boxes that they want me to tick in terms of publicity and attending events and generally performing being an artist.

L

Level Centre 2:25:05

I think that's a really important point. I think it'd be really lovely to hear from all of our panelists about the difficulty in building up that portfolio or inability to participate and kind of expand upon that a little bit more. You know, in terms of timelines, how things might take a much longer timeline, because of the the processes or the energy levels or things that you're going through. It'd be really lovely to have a bit of a chat about that difficulty in building up your portfolio or inability to participate it, can we delve into that a little bit more?

B

Bella Milroy 2:25:39

Yeah, I have, I have some immediate thoughts, unless there's anybody else that I'd like to kick off. When I acquired my disability as a young person, I was in my final year of my BA at art school. It took me then three years to return back to complete my degree. Even then, whilst that was a very, at the time of very positive experience of going back, I had a very understanding staff team that allowed me to do things on my own terms. It was a very self directed course that meant that I was able to shape it in a way that it was led by my capacity. As I have got older and understood my access needs better, understood how transformative it can be to have more disabled peers around you in spaces like that. It's really allowed me to understand the amount of effort that took to actually do just that one year. I mean, regardless of the fact that it took that bit longer to return back to my studies. I don't like referring to it as a delay, because I feel like that positions my time in a very specific way of I just spent three years in this static bubble waiting for life to begin or something like that. If we think about this on a really practical level, in terms of access to paid employments, the ability to live independently, things like that, life was not moving in the same way as the rest of my peers who had gone on and graduated. I was in the fortunate enough position to have been in higher education in the first place and I think that's a very familiar experience for lots of disabled people and artists, in general. I would say it's interesting to reflect back on that time now, it's seven years ago that I went back to do that final year. I think if I was to do that now, I would do things very, very, very differently because I think again, would be in a familiar experience for lots of people, like disabled artists is the way in which sometimes even the really positive experiences are often led by your own...It's you doing the positive things. Sometimes it takes further reflection on those moments to be like, oh, yeah, I really could have done with someone saying, what do you really need here? Or how can this be better? Or how can we assist you to have things like more access to leisure time or social time that isn't just a complete eight months of just solid work and recovery time? Those kinds of questions. I think without those disabled-led peers and assistance it really staggers that progression.

G

George Bastow 2:29:39

I think you're exactly right. One thing I would like to bring into the equation is virtual and hybrid events, such as this for instance. As I've said before, I'm a poet and as Katie said in there earlier presentation with us disabled folk, it can take us some extra time to get to places and actually attend venue and every facet of every moment of our day needs to be accounted for. Like for instance, as I'm doing this event now I'm sitting in a in an armchair, but obviously when I need to get around and move around outside of the house, I need to be in my wheelchair. So it takes time for me to physically be assisted and transferred into my wheelchair. So that takes a bit of extra time, whereas an able bodied person would just get up and away we go. Nothing to do with my disability, but it does have a factor because I am based in North Warwickshire, I'm in the very middle of the Midlands, so therefore, I'm equidistant from almost everywhere. So there's the extra time I need to put on the transport to get to places and arts events, which often take place in cities near me, Coventry and Birmingham, that kind of thing. So the work I was doing and the projects I was involved in, there was an awful lot of time management that needed to go into play, before I could even consider performing or creating any work. What shocked me in a very good way was during the pandemic, when things went virtual. For the first time, my performances and opportunities skyrocketed. My level of spoken word gigs also skyrocketed, because it was just a case of me sitting in my chair, setting up my tablet, and performing and away we go. The barriers became removed overnight, and geography became fluid overnight. So the geographical barriers that I would have faced disappeared, and I'm on Zoom doing spoken word events with people from all over the country, and often all over the world. We're all zooming in or live streaming in via different apps and it was a beautiful experience. That's not to say that we can't access physical spaces as well, just with a little bit of extra assistance, and a bit more of an open dialogue. It's just all about adapting. During the pandemic, everybody, regardless of their ability or disability, had to adapt, whether we wanted to or not it was a necessity. So we all adapted and made choices and we started thinking as a collective, as opposed to a series of individuals. When we think about the needs of the collective, things come together more quickly and more cohesively as when we're thinking just purely on an individual basis. When we start thinking, what works for everybody, instead of what works for a smaller amount of people, that's when change happens, because that's when open dialogues can take place, and empathy can be employed into situations.

K

Katie Walters 2:33:32

That really, really resonates. Something I just very quickly wanted to touch on as well. You said that the travel isn't relevant to your disability and I think I it absolutely is because of how wildly inaccessible public transport is. I think that's something really important to acknowledge that, theoretically, you can take your wheelchair on a train or a bus, but in practice, I've been trapped on so many trains. I've had people not let me on buses or trains because they've got prams, or I've had people just had a bus arriving to find that the space is full, and only one disabled person can be on the bus at once.

G

George Bastow 2:34:21

Sorry, Katie, but I do want to just say quickly, if we were beginning to talk about public transport, I believe we'd need another three panels. Just to go through all of the accessibility nightmares that I've experienced through public transport. People very well meaningly and very kindly say to me, well, it's quicker than driving if you get on a train. But we can't just get on trains as full time or part time wheelchair users because even when we booked in advance,

a day or two days in advance...and I'd be interested to know how many fellow wheelchair users here today have had this experience...where even when you book two or three days in advance, and you go through all the protocols, you're supposed to do, you turn up at the train station on the day, and the member of staff who was promised would be there with a ramp isn't there. You cannot access your ramps, you cannot get on the train, you miss your train your lumbered at the station. It's because these things are multifaceted things, there's orders being sent secondhand to members of staff, and the needs of people are being conveyed to members of staff and things aren't always clear. Everything becomes so convoluted that, these experiences that are simple for able bodied folks become really, really difficult and really complex for us. It's down to a fundamental, societal misunderstanding of what our impairments entail, and what our impairments present. That's not necessarily anybody's fault, I'm not blaming anybody. I'm just saying that because disabled people, and neurodiverse people have so often been left out of vital conversations, and society wide conversations, we have not been able to get our points across in the way that we have needed to. So our realities, and our daily lives have been being negatively impacted as a result. That's not through any body being unkind, or through any body being dreadful. In in some cases, it's just a case of completely overlooking things because it isn't a part of everyone's experience. It doesn't get factored in, because it's not ubiquitous for everybody.

L

Level Centre 2:37:03

That's really, really well put, and thank you for sharing that experience, especially the travel ones, we know that that could be a three day conference it's in its own right. I would really love to hear from both Ed and Elle about the timelines to making your work and how it works in the fields that you operate in. It'd be lovely to hear a bit from both of you.

E

Elle Chante 2:37:29

Thank you. I'd like to just quickly jump on the back of part of that last conversation about barriers facing work. I think the one that I find that happens the most all the time across the art sector is that everybody always seems to be in panic flurries of doing last minute things, and as we've established, that doesn't work for disabled people. A lot of the time, as soon as you start making things spontaneous with last minute changes... I've gone somewhere before and they're like 'Oh, we're not rehearsing here anymore. Can you just drive off to such and such over, like partway across the city'. As soon as all that starts happening, it automatically becomes inaccessible, even if there was a lot of planning and stuff that happened beforehand. If people start making last minute changes to like events and things, it very quickly goes to pot. It becomes very straining on disabled participants, disabled artists. I think part of that comes because a lot of disabled people aren't at the forefront of accessibility as well. We're often added as a little add on like, oh, and it's accessible. like, Rather than have they actually considered accessibility for the process, have they got people doing access consultation around the project, you know, that sort of thing. How involved are disabled people there. I feel like there's a lot of misplaced faith on the systems to support disabled people, that doesn't necessarily exist. We've just obviously touched a bit on public transport. Other things like, access to work is a great system in theory. How it works out for everybody is not always the same. I've been applying for access to work. I applied for it in September and it only got sorted in February, even though it used to be a week. To get a call back and it took three months. Sometimes organisations, as a people said, they mean well. They'll be like 'oh, you know, you

could do this, you could do that and access to work helped here and la la la'. But they don't necessarily work for disabled people. I think it's just really good to be mindful as organisations that it would be great if it did work, but a lot of disabled people are falling through those gaps. There's a lot of gaps, you know, down to like radar toilets that nobody told me how to get a key for, and stuff like that. Unfortunately, when you disabled people don't give you a leaflet of all the things that you can have help with, you just have to discover them. Like, like some Dungeons and Dragons thing of little notes of 'oh, there's a clue there'. Unfortunately, they won't tell you about things that you might be entitled to.

E

#### Ed Perry (Ban Summers) 2:40:35

Well, yeah, it's kind of like the first half of my music making career was, I didn't even know that I was disabled. I've never actually been given the words, never been given the permission and I'd not been given the the tips to be able to navigate that. In a city like Portsmouth, I've already been around the block, then suddenly I've had this epiphany, it came when I was diagnosed with more conditions, and I also took a break from uni. I went back after the maximum amount of time, but I had worked at uni previously in the studio as a placement student. So I was in a unique, privileged place where I knew the staff, I knew how the year was going to go. There wasn't necessarily that many surprises, but in reality, I couldn't attend that many lectures. I got flu once, and it meant there was a whole load of work that needed to be extended. I went to the office at university and they said, well, you're not going to get an extension for flu. That's kind of a misunderstanding, the fact that I've missed two months, because I've had the flu, it's not like a normal flu. It got to the point where I started not going to lectures, because I had the confidence that I could do the work and I just kind of had to take my own route. It meant that I was getting emails from the university where they were like 'well you might not be able to graduate if you don't hit this certain percentage of attendance'. It was like, well, if I hit that percentage of attendance, I'm not going to graduate. In terms of knowing people in the music scene in Portsmouth, I've then come to them with different sort of access requirements or different ways that I've got to work and it goes against what their vision of me is. So it means that you're met with some sort of resistance. Which, it's not a horrible resistance, but you're trying to change somebody's perception of you. Sometimes even talking to people that you know, it's even harder, I had it when I was in the band, which I had to stop. There was a misunderstanding of why we wouldn't be able to practice the day before playing a gig, or even on the day of playing a gig. They'd know me for so many years as being able to do certain things that I then couldn't and pushing against that change is really hard. I think when people are trying to tell you their access requirements, people think that that's something that you're very confident in and they think that's something that you know everything about, but like Elle was saying, you're actually given tiny snippets, or there might be a tweet from someone, or somebody might say about their access requirements, and you're just constantly getting these bits of information. Not only would it be helpful for venues, organisations to ask about access requirements, but also know that things can be different day to day, week to week. It can be a very fluid process. Also, asserting those access requirements isn't always easy.

B

#### Bella Milroy 2:44:11

It's extremely vulnerable making to assert that kind of information to someone you don't know, to talk about something that's very private. That in itself is a very vulnerable place to be but also it can be met with really hideous gatekeeping. It's very commonplace for organisations to

ask for benefit forms, because you want a plus one seat for your carer. I'm talking about like an artist talk, it's it would be laughable if it wasn't so horrible. I really related to what you're both saying there about access being something that you think you know all of the details of. I think for me a question of what do you need? Is the question that I will spend my life trying to figure out, what I need? Sometimes it's a question that feels unbearably heavy and makes me very sad, because there's periods where I find it extremely challenging to articulate what I need. Then other times, there's more dynamism behind it, and it can be really exciting and wonderful. But yeah, it can be a really challenging question in itself.

E

Elle Chante 2:45:58

I totally agree with that. With the venues just to say that I work with Attitude is Everything and they're doing a really great thing at the moment called Just Ask, and it's encouraging venues to ask about access needs, rather than having to have the artist go through terms saying please, can I have this? Please can I have that? And I think that will make like a really big difference to artists. But yeah, I totally agree, especially with the push back. It's hard enough to say as it is, and then when people come back and say 'but you don't look like there's...', it's really frustrating.

K

Katie Walters 2:46:42

Yeah, that's kind of a couple of things, I really would like to dig into a bit there, if we've got time. One of them being that difficulty in knowing and articulating what your own needs are. I was in a workshop a while ago, where the question was asked, what would a truly accessible, creative practice look like for you? The answer was, I absolutely don't know and I think there's a very good chance that it doesn't exist. This is a constant process, and to feel comfortable in articulating what I need to the venue. I need to know that, that venue is flexible to the process, is willing to come with me on the journey of identifying what the issues are that I'm facing, because you can't anticipate everything that could go wrong with the process. No matter how much risk assessment forms want you to believe that you could. It's going to be a process, access is a conversation. It's not something that you do, and then it's done. It's something that needs to be constantly changing, and adapting and growing. The vulnerability is something that I also really want to acknowledge. It's very, very painful, in terms of trying to figure out, how much can you ask for before your career starts being at risk? How many complaints can you make before people start labeling you as difficult. When you've had really negative, sometimes even traumatizing experiences, that you cannot go public with any of that, because it would impact your career. A lot of the time it would impact the people who are trying the hardest to help you and all of that is so complicated. It's sort of actively painful for me, all of the time, when I'm trying to build a career, and I just feel like there's a real silence around issues like this. Like not wanting to acknowledge how complicated access is. Not wanting to acknowledge when you've screwed up and you need to do better. The safest and healthiest creative relationships that I've had, have been in contexts where I know that whatever my problem is it will be heard and I don't have to be scared that someone is gonna snap back at me for that. I don't know quite what it is that makes me feel safe, but it's really tangible when I have that security.

L

Level Centre 2:49:43

Just from a venue perspective, as somebody who is working with artists who have difficulty leaving the home. Katie is an Artistic Associate at LEVEL Centre, and so is Bella Milroy, one of our other panelists. For venues out there who are listening to this it's brilliant to be challenged. I love the fact that Katie and Bella challenge me. I love the fact that they are helping us as an organisation try to do things in new ways, try to think of different ways to do things and being flexible. I think if there's one thing that you take away, the venues that are here today and organisations, is work with artists who have difficulty leaving the home is thrilling. You will get so much out of it. You will be challenged, and you will change the way you think and feel. Katie has been with us as Artistic Associates since April as a change maker. This event today is really about celebrating artists who have difficulty leaving the home. So I want to say that Katie being worried about being that challenging voice, actually is really important that we have those challenging voices, and that is challenging us as venues and organisations to make change, and that's why HouseFound has been born, and while we're having these conversations today. I'm gonna hand back to Katie, but I just wanted to give a bit of a venues perspective, because I think it's really important for you at home to know how thrilling it is. I think more venues need to be working with artists who have difficulty leaving the home because there will be amazing outcomes.

K

Katie Walters 2:51:14

I have seen a question. Will the panel give some guidance on good practice to move forward with? The answer is yes. The next two sessions, the next one is going to be talking about what has worked for us and some models for success. The final session is going to be about very practically coming up with a list of practical actionable things that venues and arts organisations can realistically do to help, so yes!

E

Elle Chante 2:51:56

I just want to also say that, I think sometimes it's important to like recognise that you may be making something more accessible for somebody with doesn't mean that they're not still gonna have a hard time. They're still valid to come into work being grumpy because they're in pain or feeling tired, or they might still be late sometimes, because they're still having those problems. It doesn't mean that what you've done isn't helpful for them to access their career and the opportunities, but we're still very fallible human beings and our problems are variable. We might have days, that might have been a complete nope, but is now a maybe because of access.

G

George Bastow 2:52:50

What I would say briefly on the subject of challenge, and the perception of difficulty with working with disabled artists, or neurodiverse artists. One thing I would say is, somebody once said that disabled people are a bit like broken computers, when that isn't the case at all. People with disabilities are not broken computers, we are merely different operating systems. Say for instance, if an able bodied person was a PC, somebody who is neurodiverse, or somebody who has a disability would be a Mac. We have to extend that metaphor further and think of it not as a challenge or a difficulty. But merely when we are working as disabled artists with arts organisation, it might be helpful to think of 'oh, I'm not working on a PC today, or with a PC

today, I'm working with a Mac today. So I'm not going to be able to use Microsoft or Word or Excel, but I can use Pages, and I can use Notes'. So it's just a way of working things around differently and doing things that little bit differently. As Kerry so eloquently said, it's not about things necessarily being difficult, or being hard or complex. It's just a case of switching your thinking just as you have to switch your thinking when you go in between a PC computer or a Mac computer. These switches and these tweaks often seem big and scary, but in practice, they're not always as arduous as they seem. They just a little tiny tweak that can make life so much better for everybody.

E

### Ed Perry (Ban Summers) 2:55:00

So often, these different ways of looking at stuff, I think actually open people's minds to better working practices. Taking a different view or a different way of doing things can actually advance what would be people's normal practice. Where you're talking about timescales a little bit earlier, if we talk about industry standard. So they would be expecting you to do sustained promotion, which is stuff again outside of the art, and say for music release, say a single every six weeks. Now, it's a bit weird to be saying I need to produce art in this very cookie cutter kind of way. That isn't really applicable to how I work. Things will come out when they're ready but if I'm to do that, I'm then releasing to Spotify for no monetary return, and I'm playing in a game that is kind of rigged a little bit anyway. So kind of working outside of those confines, maybe doing something less often than other artists do, actually creates a different kind of opportunity for me to release music in different ways or do stuff on different timescales. There was an expectation that a lot of people during the lockdown would be releasing loads and loads of art during some of the most traumatic times in our lives. Again, that expectation is ridiculous. Also the expectation when I release something is that I would perhaps be sharing it live, which I can do at the time, and that would be where the money comes. A lot of these expectations don't actually add up to good artistic practice. It's more about what people who are maybe 10 levels above you in terms of capital scale, those things don't really actually apply to everyone else. So thinking about stuff in a different way, including timescales is helpful.

B

### Bella Milroy 2:57:26

Yeah, I completely, completely 1,000,000% agree. I wouldn't be able to express how much I agree with that, that everybody wins, everybody benefits from learning about those different methods and models. When you kind of come up against those systems that you continually don't fit into, is mentally really, really exhausting to constantly be butting up against that. When we're actually talking about barriers, one of the things I kind of noted down earlier and some of what we've been talking about. If you require your disability at a certain point in if you already have a career, or if you don't have a career, and you're starting from scratch as disabled. I think for me something that I've had to kind of like...I don't know if combat is the right word, but have these experiences that is a real deep sense of poverty of aspirations and what I thought I could achieve in my career. I mean, I still kind of cringe a bit when I say career, because it feels a little bit absurd. Making art has always felt like the only thing I could ever do, because of the way my body does not fit into any kind of model of working. Even within that, the idea of actually making money from it and actually continuing and sustaining a living from that has felt very far away until not that long ago. Yeah, that poverty of aspiration of what you think you can achieve in a career because you're so up against those systems.

**K** Katie Walters 3:00:04

Yeah, so Kerry, just let me know that we've only got five minutes left. So there's something that I want to kind of quite quickly say, and then if we've got anyone else who has finishing thoughts, we can move on. I think something in what you've been saying there Bella about, everyone winning when your access is good. It's so easy for access to become seen as a problem, as a difficulty and it's beautiful, right? Access is love. It's a messy and a complicated, and a deeply rewarding process. You need to go in expecting work, and also expecting wonderful outcomes, because that's what it's about really.

**B** Bella Milroy 3:00:53

Completely, completely. I think those mutual exchanges of care and attention to how things are produced, made and engaged with...I can feel my heart now just like 'it's good, it's a good feeling'.

**E** Ed Perry (Ban Summers) 3:01:24

You'll find the more you discuss with artists or whoever it might be about access, the more that you'll realise that access is actually an important topic beyond people who struggled to leave the house. I think you'll find that there are things that lots of people wish that they could say that would make their experiences within artistic practice better. The more you think about it as not just being a thing, for people that struggled to leave the house, and more just a general respect. I think that would make people embed it within their organisation a little bit more, but yeah, there's a lot of issues around that. So the more you talk to people, the better.

**L** Level Centre 3:02:18

Great! Well we're coming to the end of our first session with all of our panelists. As you all know, those of you who are at home, we want to take significant breaks. We're working with artists who have difficulty leaving the home, who need rest periods between the sessions. So we're now going to wrap up this session, which was called Barriers to Entry, and we'll reconvene at 4pm. The next session is called Models for Success. So we'll be having a different conversation in that one, slightly more cheerier notes. Then the session after that is Next Steps of how we can look to make change collectively together. So thank you, everybody. Thank you to all of our panelists, and our BSL interpreters for that session. We're going to turn our cameras off now and we're going to return at 4pm. Thank you, Adam, if you could put up the Models for Success slide and we will see you all at four o'clock. Thank you. Hello, welcome back everyone, we're just going to give it one more minute and at four o'clock we'll get going. For those of you that are still with us, remember the hashtag is HouseFound, hashtag HouseFound @levelcentre. So this session is called Models for Success. I'm just going to give it one more minute and at four o'clock dead on we'll get going, which is right now. So models for Success, in this session our panelists are going to bring examples of access in the arts that've actually worked well for them. They're going to be interrogating the successes of projects that have met their needs, and identify patterns between them. They will consider how these projects address the barriers that they usually face. So what we're going to do now is I'm going to pose a question, and then we're going to have another fruitful conversation with our wonderful

panelists. For everybody at home, we have exactly the same panel as we had in the last session Barriers to Entry. So we're not going to be introducing everybody again. So Katie, can you talk about a successful experience of working as an artist?

K

Katie Walters 3:21:22

Yeah. So interestingly, the experience that I kind of wanted to bring to the table today was not particularly designed for disabled artists at all. It just happened to work out really well, and I think that in and of itself is interesting. At the end 2020, Elle and I were commissioned to create a minute long film, on the topic of 'it gets lighter from here'. Loads of people in our area were commissioned to make those films. It was, I think, run by Culture Central. All across the West Midlands, people made these films and posted them on Twitter sort of sporadically through the day, I think there was like 40 of them or something. I mean, the lead in time for that project was another story entirely. We had like a week, and it was very stressful, but the actual experience of going through and looking at what other people have made, I found really, really rewarding in a way that I wasn't expecting at all. It's really difficult for me to engage with events where I feel part of the creative community, because I'm autistic, as well as physically disabled. Those two things combined make it really difficult for me, sort of dealing with lots of people in environments with lots of other people like my peers. A lot of the time, I just kind of hide in the corner and I don't say anything, and I feel awful. Having all of these short films on Twitter, gave me the experience of going through and finding all of the short films, and they're like a good digestible length for me. Seeing what the people who made them were saying about them, and seeing how people were responding to other people's films, was this really interesting little like microclimate of local creatives in lots of different forms. Celebrating the solstice, at the end of a very difficult year, in lots of different formats. Overall in a way that was extremely accessible to me. I ended up spending like my whole day, watching those films, which I hadn't been expecting at all, because it's usually so difficult for me to engage with things even online. I sometimes have trouble because it can be really tiring being on Zoom for a long time, Which, admittedly, I'm doing that today, we'll see how I go. I think for me, that was a really interesting experience. It was actually quite meaningful to me that, this experience had been created for anyone. I think there's an implication sometimes when something is made for disabled artists that it's, it's own thing, it's somehow worth less than other people's art and that's nonsense. It was nice for a format to be found for arts from everyone. There was something that felt really nice to me about being able to participate in the same way that other people could. That's kind of my success narrative. I'm really interested to hear what's worked for the rest of you. Then we can maybe have a conversation about what are the common aspects that have worked well for us? And how can those be useful to venues moving forwards.

E

Elle Chante 3:25:38

So me and Katie, as Radical Body have been on a program called Springboard, with the Belgrade that kind of helps companies, which is not performative necessarily, but ended up being quite performative. We've been on it for about two years, but essentially, it was a really positive experience of a partnership with a venue. They helped us in many different ways. Particularly, I think Hannah's gone now, but Hannah was a contact at the Belgrade and was extremely helpful. We produced and created Seasick, which we had done previously at Warwick Art Centre. Seasick is a play about someone with a chronic illness, which is spoken word and music and live looping, etc, which was directed by Alexandra Whitney. I found it really helpful,

because throughout the entire process, we were asked about what things might work for us? What times will work for us? What spaces might be helpful? We were consistently in a conversation, it was really easy to be put in contact with people, when we had specific questions about other things. When we went down to rehearse for our working days, which were feasible for us. We had somebody to talk specifically to about access, and we felt very catered for. I think, obviously, whenever you go to venues and other things, there still might always be things that I like or didn't. There's always going to be some sort of problems, but I think the most important thing is that you have somebody to talk to about the problem. So you know how to fix it, rather than getting stuck in situations where you don't know who to talk to, and you don't have any contact. I found that relationship with Belgrade and Seasick in its entirety, to be extremely helpful, and was probably one of the best relationships I've had with a company. Which again, it wasn't an opportunity specifically for disabled artists, but was just really extremely accommodating, understanding and treated us with respect at all times throughout the entire process. I really appreciated that.

K

Katie Walters 3:28:33

That's something I actually want to just flag a little bit there with our experience with the Belgrade, which has been really amazing. It was not an environment where nothing went wrong. It was an environment where everything went wrong, and we were very well supported for dealing with that. I think that, that's a really important distinction when we're talking about access, because I think a lot of people are put off by the expectation that they need to get everything right. Realistically, that's not going to happen.

E

Ed Perry (Ban Summers) 3:29:12

I'll step in. So I kind of wanted to talk about something that isn't quite within my artistic process, but it's kind of become a massive part of what I do at the moment, and that's the radio show that plays disabled artists on Unmade radio in Portsmouth. I was lucky and privileged within a couple of aspects probably more as well, but I knew the two people who were starting the radio station. So I have that personal knowing them made things easier. As we were still within lockdown, there was kind of an understanding that people would be recording radio shows from home so I had in mic, I had like a couple bits of equipment I could use. Within the sort of lockdown setting, there was a bit of flexibility and trust. I agreed that it would be once a month, which means that I'm not overdoing it, I'm not committing to too much, there's an understanding that if I can't do a radio show, that is also fine from the people that run the station. That sometimes things happen with how I am, there needs to be the understanding that sometimes it just isn't going to happen. By not having to go into the radio station, there's a lot of energy saved within me being able to record it from home. Not only the energy saved, but the fact that I can do it in bits and pieces. I can start recording bits of the radio show on a Monday and I could still be working on it on a Friday. I managed to do bits, that kind of work in little chunks for me rather than having to do a two hour radio show in one day. So there was some things that were lucky in the aspects of the beginning of the radio show that definitely worked at the time and still work even now. With everything still going on in global health, I don't want to be going into studio where there's been people kind of constantly there. One of the great aspects about the radio show that I've been proud of, and it's not about sort of social media numbers or anything like that, but the radio station has said that, that show in particular has got the most interactions on the radio station. That's kind of interesting to me, I think there

might be several aspects of why that's true. One, it's got clear identity, where I'm playing disabled artists, and the show will be known within that identity. Also that, it's something to get behind. There's an aspect of it that isn't just a music show, there's a reason that that radio shows there, and it's to try and equalise the music industry in some way. Rather than disabled artists being shut out, let's shut everyone else out. Also the fact that because it's a radio show that I've got control of, and it's a more localised radio show, and it's online. The music and sound and even poetry that I play, doesn't have to be recorded to this standard that perhaps nationwide radio would be insistent upon. I can play sounds that are work in progress, that are demos, that perhaps wouldn't be played elsewhere. I'm really proud of that, that exists. A an indie kid I kinda like the the underground and outsider aspects. So yeah, there's even when Katie had done the piece with Ace Ambrose, and is it 12 minutes long?

K

Katie Walters 3:33:32

Oh, it's very long.

E

Ed Perry (Ban Summers) 3:33:34

But I've played it twice on the show now and I revel in the fact that pieces that are over 10 minutes can get played. It feels like a little bit of rebellion. I've got I've got so much out of the show. I do kind of tag everyone on the socials, I've seen quite a few people then go and follow each other. Hopefully there's an aspect of community that comes from that, I'm honored to be part of that.

G

George Bastow 3:34:20

I've got several examples, but one example, very recently that worked incredibly well for me. I'll just preface this by saying that, as well as being a full time wheelchair user because I have cerebral palsy. It's a very multifaceted, complex condition. I also struggle with fatigue and energy limiting difficulties as a result of that. One of the organisations that I've been fortunate enough to do a lot of work with over time is Writing West Midlands, who are a great organisation and work in many different facets. I run and co-run their spark young writers groups, for young people. I participate and put together workshops for young people through Writing West Midlands. One thing they do every year is the Spark Summer Writing Challenge. Where young people who take part in their groups from all over different areas of the region come together for one week, and all work together and create a vast amount of new creative work in one big group. In 2021, this all took place on Zoom. Now, when it's taken place in, an in person setting before it takes place in Birmingham, at Birmingham University. But because it took place online, I was offered to be an assistant writer to co-run this group with Writing West Midlands online. Their level of understanding and their level of compassion was extraordinary. I don't use that word lightly because they knew my fatigue levels, and my energy levels. They spoke to me beforehand and said 'this is a five day commitment. If you do work with us, you'll be working with us throughout the whole week. So how can we work with you to preserve as much of your energy as possible? So you can give the best of yourself to the young people within this setting.' I said to them and explained to them that I need to do my physio every day for one hour a day, and it would usually fall within midday. Like Katie, I need a lot of extra sleep and I don't always get up early. This started in the morning, and was very much within a school

day setting, I needed to get up early and still find time to squeeze my physio in. So what Writing West Midlands very kindly did, was they said to me, 'I tell you what we can do, instead of you having to duck out one of the sessions, and do a physio and miss the session. For continuity, what we can do is give everybody an extra 15 minutes during the lunch break and that will give you your time to eat lunch, and do your physio regime as well'. It wasn't just the fact that they included me and brought me in, but it was the fact that they tailored the day, not only to accommodate me, but they did so in a way that would accommodate everyone as well. It was just very, very refreshing before I even signed on for the project. They were flat out and straight down the line and said, How can we help you? This is how you can help us. How can we help you? It was that level of openness and transparency and as Katie says, of love and compassion that made all the difference and enabled me to do something that within the traditional physical space would have been near enough impossible. Just the transport to Birmingham and back every single day for five days would have been enough to wear me out in terms of my levels of fatigue. But because it was virtual, we were able to make something happen that would have never usually happened. It seemed like a very, very special environment to be in. So that was the one that worked out well for me in my experience.

B

Bella Milroy 3:39:13

That was really lovely to hear that, thank you George, and everybody's as well. It's always like such a such a good feeling to hear those kinds of positive experiences like that. When we're sharing about working experiences with other fellow peers and disabled artists, I often feel like I'm one of the really lucky ones that has a lot of really positive experiences of working with other arts organisations and projects and things like that, that do genuinely have an authentic investment in committing to access in all of its this forms throughout. If I reflect on the positive experiences for me, they've all been based around time. That wonderful thing that you were referring to, initially, CripTime being the format in which we make stuff happen. Sometimes, from the get go that's been the basis and sometimes we've gotten two months in and been like, No, it's not gonna happen, and we have to completely reschedule an entire program. If I think of some kind of early points in my career. Part of an award that I won from the birth rights collection biennial award was a residency at the Women's Art Library at Goldsmiths in London. I recommend anybody connecting with them, they're an incredible space Althea Greenan is the curator there. It was a three week long residency. I really related something George was saying earlier about, like, the, the geography of where you're based, being a further compound of how you experienced not being able to get out of the house very often, like me, myself being based in Chesterfield in North Derbyshire. It's not the middle of nowhere, but in terms of its distance to where a lot of stuff happens, it requires substantial effort and planning. It's not a day trip away from most places, it's going to be overnight. Very much starting from scratch. You look at a three week residency in London, from where I was, it's just like, well, I can't do that. I just can't do that. How would I do that? It took lots of very gentle back and forth of conversations. Just what Katie was talking about, access is that conversation of how can we take it from you can't do that, to how can we then make this an open thing that better reflects the way in which you do things. So it went from a solid three week block to a staggered week at a time over the course of one summer, where I would go down and stay for a week. Which again, in itself was no small effort, that required lots and lots of strategic components to make that happen. Again, Althea was just an incredible, there wasn't one part of that, in which she saw that as some tedious administrative task, it was very much like the fabric of how we were doing things. The magic of that, meant that my time literally was expanded, because it went from a solid three week block to June through to October and in the entire run. The wonder of how that came about allowed space and time to exist in the sense that Crip Time really reflects. Everybody

benefited from that. I got to sit with ideas for longer. The physical time that I was there was richer, because my capacity was greater. When I was home, again, I was able to expand upon the ideas that I was building. The whole thing turned into a really wonderful project that was far bigger than what it initially ended up being with of that initial three weeks. Essentially, every successful positive accessible projects that I've worked on has been versions of that of like, time building and extending upon that.

L

### Level Centre 3:44:41

Just as a venue, obviously here at LEVEL Centre. We've got two of our wonderful Artistic Associates on this panel. We have Katie, who's obviously our co-curator at this event, and we have Bella Milroy. Just from a venue perspective, in terms of models of success, both Bella and Katie have challenged us as a venue of how to work and how to think differently. I think the key thing that I would give to venues and organisations who are here with us today is flexibility. I had to learn about the their fatigue patterns. What time of day works well for conversations with Bella is different to what time of conversation works with Katie. At times we've had to find times of the day when I've wanted them to come together, but they have different time zones in terms of how they operate within the day. So moments of flexibility and finding something in the middle that would work for both parties to be able to have a conversation. As a venue, it's been a huge learning curve for us in terms of understanding these, but I think if anything, what we're going to learn from this year of having both of them with us as our Artistic Associates is new ways of working as a venue. This is something that I will take forward and for the rest of my career, and I hope that more venues work with artists who have difficulty leaving the home, because it will change the way you approach projects or think about things or timescales. I know they've said that conversation earlier around timescales. So when we did the call out for the HouseFound performances of what you're going to be watching, at the end of the day, the combination of this event. We allowed an extra long, large lead in time to allow more people to have time to apply. Things like that, we've just changed our models of practice. I think they are models for success, not just for our Artistic Associates, but for us as a venue we're taking on that learning. So I think the key thing is around being flexible. Sometimes I might get a message from Bella going, 'I just can't meet today I'm too tired', and that's okay. I think it's really about flexibility and listening. Knowing that you will have that conversation at some point. It might not be when you had originally planned it for, and that's okay. Obviously, today delivering Housefound, there was a specific day because we wanted all of you at home to be with us for this event, and we've been working towards this date. It hasn't gone unnoticed that Katie's had to build up a lot of energy in order to have a full day. We started it at lunchtime as well to enable Katie to have some more rest time in the morning. In terms of models for success, there's a lot of learning for us as a venue in delivering this event today that I think has been a really important factor as well as from our panelists, but from us as a venue.

K

### Katie Walters 3:47:29

Something I found particularly nice about my work here with LEVEL is that I've been able to take naps. Yesterday asleep on the sofa, and when I was here doing prep in December, I spent a lot of time lying on the floor. Which I think is an experience that a lot of people who live with chronic illnesses will relate to. It's a right pain not being able to lie down wherever you need to.



**B****Bella Milroy 3:48:03**

I don't want to speak for the both of us Katie, but I think you're open about the learning curve, Kerry that it's been in terms of like understanding, good practices of access, and that kind of thing. I think what's been really wonderful about the work that I've been able to do with you a LEVEL has been that it's never felt like I've been a teaching moment for you, in a kind of really hollow sense of what that means. That's something that I know, lots of disabled artists find that so fatiguing, having to be constantly, that that kind of teaching moment for lots of people that you work with. They cost you just this little tiny bit of your humanity, you know, and it's never felt like that working with you in that way. As an artist based local to LEVEL, again, speaking about the geographies of where we're based impacting how we're able to access those kinds of opportunities. It's really, really rare, so being able to have that so local and then also to be bespoke to when I'm able to turn up is brilliant. So yeah, it's a good model.

**L****Level Centre 3:49:31**

If any venues out there want to talk to us about our experiences of working with Artistic Associates and artists who have difficulty leaving the home, please email [info@levelcentre.com](mailto:info@levelcentre.com). We'd love to have a conversation with you because we want more venues and organisations across the country to be supporting artists who have difficulty leaving the home, to be commissioning artists who have difficulty leaving the home, to showcase artists who have difficulty leaving the home and presenting artists. We'd love to start that conversation, if anyone wants to talk to me as a venue perspective, I'd be more than happy to have that conversation. Let's get back to what this session is about the models for success. There's some more things that we want to touch on.

**K****Katie Walters 3:50:14**

So I think there's a couple of really clear common threads between all the projects that we've talked about, even though they're quite different. We've got some mentions of like, good, integrated use of digital technologies. We've got a kindness and flexibility and attentiveness on behalf of the people that we're working with. We've got engaging on the terms that we are disabled and that whatever opportunities we're working on are going to have to be built around those needs. I think those are three things that I personally feel are quite common between what we've been talking about.

**E****Ed Perry (Ban Summers) 3:51:13**

The flexibility is something that's come up quite a bit, especially with what you spoke about George, and what you'd spoken about Bella. Not thinking about the rigidity of how you thought maybe a project was going to be delivered, get in the way of the project actually being delivered. What's more important is the project being realised than it happening in the way that you perhaps thought it would. The element of trust that you give people. Assuming that the extra time that Bella was given was going to be her just wasting everything, that time wasn't wasted. I think it sounds like it actually added up to a more whole project where you actually got to think about a lot more. It sounds like that impacted on your enjoyment, where maybe you enjoyed that a lot more.

B

**Bella Milroy 3:52:18**

Oh, yeah! 1,000,000%! Definitely! It made my relationships with the people I was working with so much stronger. With the artists I was reaching out to so much more significant. I think the work I made was better and more interesting. I think that's something that we don't talk about across the arts, is that we want to enjoy this thing. We want to have a nice time doing it and making it happen. I think that it should be a really important part of building that trust and through access, how are we going to make this enjoyable? So much of how we have to work comes at great personal cost, and be it in the price we pay with our bodies in fatigue and pain and all the rest of it. We want to we want to be having a nice time at least, alongside getting paid and all the rest of it. But yeah, I think it's really important that you say about the enjoyment aspect should be considered for everybody.

E

**Elle Chante 3:53:29**

I just like to add on to that as well because I feel like I have a slightly different perspective on some parts of finding it difficult to leave the house as well because I am also agoraphobic. So I have a mental health condition, which means that it's quite stressful for me to like be outside, be in large groups of people. I think it's really important to kind of note that disability is often just seen as a physical thing, but that mental health does play into it, and a lot of the time it's quite intertwined as well. So I think it's just really important to like acknowledge mental health in that as well and I felt the safest as an artist is where it has been a conversation where I felt like I can trust the person I'm talking to because the physical disability can be emotionally quite difficult to deal with as well. It's important that people are aware of that aspect of the process as well.

B

**Bella Milroy 3:55:18**

Definitely. I know myself, in what you were saying there Elle about the mental health aspects of that. What I've noticed, as my career has gone a long, is allowing room for my access needs better reflecting my varying degrees of mental health capacity that I have. It's really challenging, just how much easier I find it to advocate for myself when I'm in sky high pain, and that feels much more straightforward to be able to say. I can't do that on a day, where my mental health is really bad, that feels much harder. I think that's a big, big gap in terms of being able to have those conversations in a way that's trusted and respected in that sense. Something that I reflect on, within these positive experiences of facilitation of access, and that kind of thing is the traps that still exist within that as well. I know sometimes I can find myself, whether or not if that's a conversation, or in an email, just of gratitude overload, on my hands and knees, like, 'thank you so much for doing this very basic thing. I'm so grateful, thank you'. I have to take a minute and realise, how many times have I said to Kerry just like in an email about having to rearrange on short notice. 'Thank you so much for understanding, because I've had such a difficult time with this or whatever'. It's really okay and that's something I'm still trying to figure out. There's that internalised ableism bit of taking up too much room already, can't possibly, you know, got to be extra grateful for bare minimum stuff. That's definitely something even within positive aspects of successful access requirements being met, I still find myself doing that. I don't know, I don't want to not say thank you, but it's reflecting on the ways in which I don't need to. There's thanks, and then there's over doing it.

**L** Level Centre 3:58:21

I think as a venue, I remind Bella that there is no need to apologise. We've got this understanding that Bella is an artist who has difficulty leaving the home and will suffer fatigue. I think is about when you're working with artists who have difficulty leaving the home as a venue, you develop that relationship and that dialogue and that trust between one another. I know that Bella still sends me those emails of thanks that there's no need to thank me, we're just rescheduling and that's okay. As venues out there and organisations it is that listening and care and that level of support that you need to give. The rewards of working with artists who have difficulty leaving the home who are amazing, and we've got an amazing group of panelists here today. It's worth every moment, so there's no need to apologise.

**E** Ed Perry (Ban Summers) 3:59:19

Also we are artists as well. So there's a lot of artists, there might be famous musicians, that are notoriously difficult and they can dine out on that. Yet, we feel like we're bringing all the burdens of the world into Kerry's email box.

**E** Elle Chante 3:59:57

Just on all this subject, I think it ties into one other positive thing that I've experienced. I feel like just access, I know we've said it being a conversation and stuff. We've really picked apart some of the things that make some things difficult and access riders can be extremely difficult. Like I said, writing it out, and Bella you saying, spending your whole life trying to figure out what do I need? And people being like, tell me what you need! A lot of the time without prior conversation or without any feeling of safety. Suddenly, I have to write all my PTSD triggers down on a piece of paper and serve it to you and feel okay about that. It's just really important to have a conversation, have a conversation, have a conversation! It makes so much a world of difference to disabled artists, safety is extremely important. Obviously, you're asking us for the information to try and help us. It's more helpful if it is a conversation rather than just, 'I'll give you this part of me and you respond'.

**B** Bella Milroy 4:01:15

Yeah. Yeah, I definitely agree. I think there's been times when I've worked in a more curatorial role, where I've worked with disabled artists, where sometimes even asking the question I know, is, in itself a job, and I don't want to have to add to their workload of having to articulate something. It's about spotting those moments when actually capacity is even at a point where someone can't actually tell you what they really need. Some of the positive ways in which I've managed to navigate that has been like, actually offering, a bullet point section of possible solutions or outcomes, and saying, like, I'm open to anything and everything, here's what we could do. Of course, X Y, Z is led by your capacity and pace. That's been incredibly rewarding to work on those terms. It goes beyond the stuff to how to be a great facilitator of accessing the stuff that they need.



E

Elle Chante 4:02:37

I think check-ins as well, through the process are also just really important. Especially when dealing with artists that have variable conditions, but anybody as well, because you know, you might be like, 'Oh, I'm fine with this', and then partway through block 'Oh, actually that's quite difficult, and maybe we need to change that'. Check ins are just really important between the artists and organisations to just see how things go as they go along, rather than necessarily expecting that they'll be a certain standard, and that will be upheld the entire way through the process. We're also discovering what works for us a lot of the time.

K

Katie Walters 4:03:32

Something I'm increasingly learning is that to foster a successful creative relationship with a venue or organisation or commissioning body, there's a level of time budgeting that needs to happen just for trust. For basic conversations, getting to know who you can talk to and about what, because I think something that we have found very difficult when we've been offered the opportunity to take our show *Seasick* to festivals, is sort of suddenly moving from an environment where we've been sort of comparatively very well looked after by staff in a building to go into a venue we've never been to before, and not even knowing the names of the people who are going to be working with. That's really, really important to give that time to develop a relationship where you can feel safe and comfortable talking about really personal things, and you can trust that that stuff is going to be received with dignity and respect. You can't necessarily as a venue just expect that a disabled artist is going to immediately trust you and immediately ask you for what they need because of the parade of bad experiences that we've all had leading up to this point. If you're wanting to foster positive relationships with with people who struggle to leave their homes, you just need to sort of take into account the fact that these negative experiences will have existed, and then there's gonna be a level of mistrust that you need to work on before thrusting someone into the depths of a really involved creative project.

B

Bella Milroy 4:05:40

Going back to that big question of what do you need? Not only is that something that you're constantly figuring out for yourself anyway, in varying degrees. I always think with any kind of creative project or anything like that, that it's a totally different animal by the time you've gone from the initial idea process to actually the production and the finished project. Even if you have a very considered, detailed access point at the beginning, we're going to do this and we're going to provide X,Y,Z to all of these artists. By the time you've kicked off production, you could encounter a whole different set of needs and requirements that the artists didn't know they needed, up until that point. It goes back to there needs to be a continual and evolving process what needs to be better supported, and better reflected in what are you actually making happen.

E

Ed Perry (Ban Summers) 4:06:51

You could book something in months and months in advance. It's unpredictable to know where you're actually personally going to be at, at that point. You can take a guess, but that continual conversation, the check ins. You're going to have a more rounded view of what's going on,

leading up to whether it's a gig, or an exhibition or anything.

L

Level Centre 4:07:23

A bit like today, we didn't know if all of you would be well enough to be here today, or something may have prevented you from being able to be a panelists. We invited you all but would you all be able to be here, and it's the unknown as well being prepared for that as an organisation or venue. Being mindful of that there could be change it quite short notice. That's part of the process of working with artists who have difficulty leaving the home and allowing that flexibility, which is why we said at the beginning of the day, the panel at some point might need to take a break, or might turn off their screen or might need to step away because they need some rest. It's about building all of that into a project or a day. Luckily, we've had all of you for all of the sessions so far, which is wonderful, but I do appreciate it is very tiring for everybody too.

K

Katie Walters 4:08:29

I have something to raise, but it's topic change. So if anyone else, particularly George, I'm aware, you might have had a window to speak on this. So if there's anything anyone wants to contribute first, then let me know. Yeah, so I think something that I would quite like to talk about is the use of digital technology in creating and sharing art, and how that's helpful. Also how we all feel about that, because it's quite a complex thing. As a performer to perform virtually it gives you a new opportunity that you haven't necessarily had before, but equally, you don't necessarily have the same audience response. That's something that takes adapting to. I'm curious about what aspects of working with technology feel the most successful to everyone? And what aspects feel most difficult? For example, I've definitely found that sharing footage online is easier than performing online, I would find it very difficult to perform directly to camera. I'm just curious what other people's experiences with those kinds of issues is.

G

George Bastow 4:09:54

Sorry, can I just jump in first guys, does anybody mind? It's just that this is a subject that's very close to my heart. Since 2020, the vast majority of creative projects that I've done, have either been hybrid or virtual specific. I know all of my experiences doing virtual and hybrid events, as attendee and as performer have been almost 100%, positive. As virtual and hybrid events are a very, very new thing, everybody's main approach thus far has been to try and emulate the experience of a live theater gig, or a live gig in any venue, and transfer that to a virtual setting. For many reasons which we haven't got time to get into, the environment and the vibe of the theater can never quite be captured in a virtual setting. That leads a lot of people to believe, particularly non disabled people to believe that virtual or hybrid events are just a poor relation of traditional live events. I don't think that's the case at all. My point being here is, virtual and hybrid events are a completely new space. As LEVEL have proven, with great aptitude and with great talent from everybody involved today, that they are a completely new animal, and we need to look at hybrid and digital events, on their own terms. We're at the vanguard of something that could be really new and really interesting. You have the capacity to engage not only an auditorium, but people from all over the world, and to get revenue from all over the world as well. I hate to bring in the old subjective of finances. But there you go, so we could

potentially reach a global audience. I think what we need to start doing, is doing virtual specific stuff, and playing to virtual event's strengths. By which I mean, as disabled artists and artists who struggle to leave the home, we need to start engaging with theatre makers and art makers to say 'we have this idea, we have that idea'. All the world is a stage after all, to quote, that other Warwickshire poet, William Shakespeare. All the world is a stage and we need to start turning our homes and our workspaces into stages and say to arts organizations, 'do you have the option of giving us a certain amount of time, or a certain amount of finances, to be able to create a theatrical setting within our home environments'. Perhaps make pieces of work that are genuinely new, and that do we engage new aspects of accessible engagement. Look at it as a completely new art form, instead of an alternative to theatre, we need to look at the virtual hybrid setting as an extension of theater, another facet and another way of creating work. Just as television is different to radio. We also need to open the dialogue about the ability to perhaps do a hybrid event that can also be streamed into a theatrical space, much like LEVEL are doing, but on a more theatrical scale. To do plays, possibly from home and spoken word pieces from home, that happen within a self contained world that then can be shared virtually into a theater space, so you can fill your auditorium and you can also reach a virtual audience as well. We need to think less and all and more all together. Think about what we can do that's new, instead of trying to copy something that already exists.

L

Level Centre 4:14:48

Thanks for that George. Everything you said is really what we're going to be talking about a bit later when we announce HouseFound Festival. Which is very much building upon everything that you've just said there. That's part of today, establishing that framework and model and getting partners and organisations to come on board to develop the HouseFound Festival. Which is very much about celebrating performances at home, giving them the showcase, the commissions, the profiling and we'll be talking about that a bit later today.

K

Katie Walters 4:15:29

I do want to flag for George. First I want to say, I think that you have really beautifully and eloquently explained a wonderful vision of what the future of theater could and I think should be. I think you're probably going to be really interested in one of the performances that we have tonight from Connor Aylward, who has received funding from the Arts Council to build a home performance space. He's going to be really pushing the boundaries of what performers can do from home in a very exciting way. So I think that very much resonates with what we've been talking about today.

E

Ed Perry (Ban Summers) 4:16:19

I just want to say as well, it's been a while, or even before the pandemic, where cinema were showing performances, live shows then obviously, things are more and more accessible with it being streamed online. There really has been demand for people to see stuff streamed into their homes or into physical spaces. It's been proven and maybe it just needs people to not think we've got to go back to what we did before, but as George said, to think about how it's actually going to be.

K

Katie Walters 4:17:42

Yeah, I think that's a really lovely note to end on. As long as everyone is feeling happy. You know, it's really exciting to be imagining a path to a future for the creative industries that would be accommodating of our needs as people who struggled to leave the home emotionally and physically. That also is taking full advantage of the amazing technological opportunities that we have right in front of us at the moment. I think those things need to go hand in hand. We need to focus on trust and empathy and flexibility, as well as focusing on technology as a really brilliant practical solution. We can't have the benefits of one without the benefit of the other.

L

Level Centre 4:18:39

Thank you so much to Katie and to our panelists on the Models for Success session. I think there's some really lovely examples that were shared there and some positivity, amongst the challenges that everybody can face at times. The next session starts at quarter past five, it's the final panel discussion ahead of the performances. We now have another comfort break, that takes us to 5.15. When we do come back at 5.15 we're talking about Next Steps. We would really encourage an active dialogue from our delegates and audiences at home as well as our panelists around the next steps and what we can do collectively to make change, what we might be able to talk about together about some things socially and embed change into organisations. So we're going to come back at 5.15 to talk Next Steps and everything we explore in Next Steps we will be formalising and making a note of and sending out information to all of our delegates following the events over the coming months of what we've explored and experience. Also at that time, we're going to share with you the link for the performances that we've got. We've got three amazing performers who are waiting in the wings to perform at home and to perform to us live, and we're also going to have a live audience here at LEVEL centre watching the live performances at home by artists who have difficulty leaving the home. We've got a wonderful piece by Connor Aylwood, as Katie's already mentioned, we've also got Rick Dove and our wonderful Elle Chante who is here, one of our panelists today. We also have a short pre recorded piece by Cathy Mungall-Baldwin, who unfortunately is unwell today. Thank you, everyone. We're going to wrap up there, take a comfort break and we're back at quarter past five. Hello and welcome back everybody. You'll notice that I'm here on my own at the moment. As you know, HouseFound is a concept where we're working with artists who have difficulty leaving the home. My co-presenter today is just needing to take a rest break. So for the time being, you have me Kerry Andrews, the Executive Director at LEVEL centre and our wonderful interpreter, Ali Gordon. This session, Next Steps, it'd be lovely if we could welcome back Elle, George and Ed, thank you so much. We may or may not have both Bella and Katie rejoin us, both of them are needing to take a little bit of a rest break. So this session Next Steps, what we said in this session is it's really about using the learning from the previous sessions. All the conversations we've had with you as panelists, and also some of the comments that you as attendees have given us today, and what we want to do is we want to work together. What we really want to do by the end of this session is to find some actionable steps, or a pledge, or something tangible that people can embed within their organisations or venues to make some change. If we really want arts leaders to take some actionable steps how they can improve their interactions with artists who struggle to leave the home. Then what we'll do is, we're going to collate all of these responses and thoughts and we will detail those findings, we will share those findings with all of you delegates, following this event and formalize those. So, it'd be lovely to have a bit of a open conversation with our panelists and

everybody at home, feel free to comment in the chat button or posting questions in the q&a, because this is the active session where we really want to give some thoughts and ideas. I know I've got some things that I'd love to bring into the mix, but it'd be lovely to hear a sound bite from some of our guest panelists today.

**E** Ed Perry (Ban Summers) 4:40:56

Some of the big things that I was picking up today and I guess there's some things that I was aware of from what I'd been doing, but the flexibility. Hearing about Bella's example of rather than being a three week intense period, things became a bit more flexible, where things were dragged out in a way that might be a lot more manageable. Same with what George said, where somebody had actually come to him and said, 'How over these days, can we make it easier for you to participate in a way that would work over the five days and be as less detrimental to your health as possible?' I think that when you go into a project, you might have an idea of the timescales and how things might go, but be really open to discussing the realistic possibility of how these things are going to be shown or exhibited and to do it in the most sustainable, and nicest way.

**L** Level Centre 4:42:18

That's really brilliant! I think from my perspective, one of the things is from the first sessions that Katie led around introduction to disability arts. I think all arts organisations should really learn about The Spoon Theory and Crip Time, for when they're thinking about developing Commissions or projects, and really factoring that in. I think all staff need to learn about that and be informed about that. So for me, I think for venues, that'd be a really good piece of learning material to happen. Elle or George, do you have anything that you want to add to the next steps and venues to take away from today?

**E** Elle Chante 4:43:04

I think putting effort into having conversations before the start of projects with disabled artists. To make an effort to make them feel safe, and not just demand access riders and information about their conditions from them. That would be really helpful.

**L** Level Centre 4:43:27

That's a really good point, about the safe aspect and feeling comfortable and confident enough to be in a safe place and not feel like you've got a hold back from telling the realities. I think the safe space is very much something that venues need to consider. Just before we come to you, George, I just want to read out Julia's comments. Julia's first actionable step is to consider the perspective and flexibility of time for their artists in terms of responses and work and upcoming residences. If a week's residency needs to be stretched out, then we are open to that dialogue and listening is key. That's a really brilliant thing, Julia, and we love that you've already given yourself an actionable step to take forward from today. George, what venue takeaway do you think you want to share with venues and organisations?

G

**George Bastow 4:44:23**

Well, can I just say a big thank you to Julia for putting that forward immediately. I think I speak for all the panelists when I say my heart's been lifted by your level of understanding and consideration there, so thank you for that. What I would say just to continue on from what I mentioned earlier, is the level of flexibility is greatly appreciated. That level of flexibility can also work both ways. By which I mean, when you are willing to be flexible with us, for our physical needs, we can as disabled artists be very, very flexible with you in terms of the creativity that we're putting out. Obviously as we've learned from our conversations throughout the day, disabled artists and disabled people just live and survive every day, we have to think outside the box, to use that old cliché. We have to think outside the box to come up with new ways to even get out of bed, or new ways to navigate around our homes. Because we are used to thinking in abstract ways, and thinking in unique ways, that is reflected within our artworks and within the projects we create. If you were taking a chance on us, and getting us to create work with you, and projects with you, that would definitely come through. We can create work that nobody else can, because of our unique perspectives, and our unique insights. Not necessarily purely on the theme of disability, but because of how differently we see the world as a whole, the work we create is different as well. You're getting bespoke, or you would be getting bespoke pieces of art that are truly different and truly reflect sections of society that have, up until very recently, been underrepresented in the sector.

L

**Level Centre 4:46:42**

Absolutely, absolutely. Thanks for that George. I think another thing for venues and organizations who are with us today, there is some basic kits and digital kits that you could invest in as an organisation, in order to have artists who have difficulty leaving the home perform and create. We're going to pull together a very simple kit list following this event for people to learn what kind of kit would be needed to work with artists who have difficulty leaving the home. There are some brilliant cameras you can get and microphones, and it doesn't have to be loads and loads of kits, but having that kit available so you can freely collaborate with artists who have difficulty leaving the home. This would be a really small step for your investment as an organisation to really engage in that dialogue and conversation. So we're going to pull together a kit list of things. You'll see this this evening, we've got three wonderful performers performing. I think you'll be able to see that, you know, it's not a great investment, but you can still host performances in your venue with a live audience, but with artists performing in their own homes. So that digital kit list is something that we want to collate and share with you. George, your whole thing around flexibility has been a key theme through all of the sessions today. Is there anything else on flexibility that anybody else wants to add?

E

**Elle Chante 4:48:11**

I just wanted to add in about kit. That's something that Radical Body has really been looking at for a while. We did a scratch night to test that out and we had some funding from the Blagrove trust, to look into kind of these ideas, and it's something that we're really passionate about. As part of that, just talking about finances, we have some kit that we're happy to rent out to organisations. It's really important to us, and obviously to LEVEL to make sure that, that platform is there for disabled artists. Whatever we can do collectively to make sure that disabled artist's voices are heard.

**L****Level Centre 4:49:05**

Thank you so much Elle. What we'll do, when we send out the information to all of you following this event, we will definitely put the details about being able to hire equipment from Radical Body. I think another word that's come up quite a lot today is the word trust. It'd be really lovely if people just want to sort of think about venues, and that dialogue with venues. I think as venues and organisations, we really need to trust these amazing artists who have difficulty leaving the home. Trust in terms of timelines, in terms of flexibility, trust that one day they might not be able to do something but they will get to it when they're able to. I think trust is a really key word in this inner partnership, you might decide to develop with an artist who has difficulty leaving the home. I have great trust in Katie and Bella who are Artistic Associates, who are part of this project today, and great trusting in having our wonderful panelists with us. Trust is key. I'd love George, Ed or Elle to elaborate really on that trust, and building trust with colleagues, peers and venues and what that means to you as an artist.

**G****George Bastow 4:50:29**

Trust is everything, because and I don't mean to get unnecessarily deep here. We as disabled people, as a social minority. Only in recent times have we been included into these conversations at all. The very fact that we are here speaking today, and that LEVEL have created this magnificent event is a huge sign of progress in itself. The very fact that all the wonderful delegates are here and willing to listen is yet more proof that that progress is ready to happen. Trust is everything. I know that for many arts organisations this is a step into the unknown, or the unexperimented with, to use a better term, but if you are willing to engage, we will show you that we are more than worth the investment. Not only the investment in financial terms, but the investment of the most valuable currency in the world, which is time. Time can neither be bought nor sold within itself. If you give us that trust, we will repay it. We will do something incredibly special and we will do something that's never been done before. We will come into the vanguard. We will show what can be done. So if you're willing to give us the space, we will give you the product and we will be very grateful and very ambitious to work with you and support you in anyway we can. As long as the communication is there, and the intent is there. They are the seeds that grow the tree.

**E****Ed Perry (Ban Summers) 4:52:37**

There's so many instances where disabled people, people who struggle to leave the house are not trusted. That's by government accessing services, benefits, and the power of that trust is actually worth so much more than a lot of people could know. Disabled people who do artistic vocations are used to working with a lot less than, say, non disabled artists. Again, like George was saying, what we're creating can be so different because we see the world so differently, that trust and investment can bring about stuff that has never been seen before or created before. That trust will be paid back because it's something that's so often not given to disabled people.

**L****Level Centre 4:53:49**

That ring fence of investment is a really actionable step. I know that a lot of arts organisations and those that are National Portfolio organisations or those that are considering applying to be National Portfolio organisations, we would really love when you're thinking about your commissions and call out and projects over the next three years, to really consider ring fencing some opportunities for artists who struggled to leave the home. What we really want as an outcome from today is more commissions, more opportunities to support artists to experiment and test ideas. Give them the opportunity to experiment at their home, and providing those platforms. I know we're going to be talking about HouseFound Festival in a bit, but for us what would be a really lovely actual outcome is that everyone could just at least perhaps consider it in their future planning as they build towards developing their business plans. It'd be lovely to get some more comments from those of you are at home right now as a delegate, any thoughts or things that we can take away from today? We've had that comment from Julia but it'd be lovely to get a few more comments from you at home. I think it'd be really nice to consider that some venues might consider specific commissions, to commission an artist to create a piece and for them to perform it at their home. That leads us into HouseFound Festival which we'll touch on in a bit. It's worth noting that everybody's CV looks different, especially for an artist who has difficulty leaving the home. To not overlook artists who have difficulty leaving home. Artists who have difficulty leaving the home really need to champion that they are an artist, who have difficulty leave the home. We need to collectively raise this platform and profile. Is there anything else Ed, George or Elle you really want to add to that, from your perspectives?

E

Elle Chante 4:55:54

Yeah, I think I would just like to say that over the last two years, obviously with Covid things have changed a lot technology wise. I think what was really interesting about Covid was how quickly access came into action when it was everybody's problem. All of a sudden, live streaming is this and theatres are live streaming that and it became something that we made space for because everybody needed it. It's just really important we move into another space now, as we're moving further away from Covid, that we don't forget that there are people that still exist in these spaces, I exist in this space. On top of that, there's so many positive attributes to the online world, it does exist as a community and has done for quite a long time. Obviously, things like zoom, Discord, were being used more often during lockdown, but spaces like Twitch and other places, online radio, has been around. I think it's something that is going to be part of our world, and there's no reason why we should not exist in those spaces. We're already here, everybody's been online. It's important to let disabled people exist in these spaces as well, because we've been here for such a long time. We've already been experimenting, we've already been performing from home, we've already had these ideas and made the most out of small spaces and done setups and things like that. I think it's important to give disabled people those opportunities when possible.

L

Level Centre 4:58:02

So maybe that was one of our call to action. More opportunities and more experiences and utilise the experience and expertise that's been gained over the past few years, and the digital platforms and how we can really grow and build upon those. I think, grow and build upon those is really something that we're planning to do with the HouseFound Festival. I want to ask the audience a bit more about areas in their lives when they think they could commit to creating some change and supporting artists who have difficulty leaving the home. If anyone has any

thoughts they want to add, we'd love to see them coming through in the chat. Any other sort of final thoughts from our panel from today in terms of next steps, what is your next step? What would you like to see as your next step? Can I go to you Ed first?

E

Ed Perry (Ban Summers) 4:59:01

My next step is thinking about what makes sense to me to do with my energy, and to what I want to do artistically, thinking about how I can put that energy into the most valuable time and space possible. There is a chance that I'm not actually going to perform in venues again now, because the energy expense and the time expense as well as the monetary expense, overtime it's felt like it's it makes less sense. I'm really interested to see what tonight is like, because for me personally, performing on a stream and then possibly putting it into a into an actual space is something that is really interesting to me. I'm interested to see how performance could work, whether I could do one filmed performance and it goes out to different venues, or performing in a venue, but it's going out online. How I'm going to do that. I think for me, how I bring music to people is going to change.

L

Level Centre 5:00:22

That's a really positive and exciting thing that you recognised, that you may not ever perform back in a venue. The new models and ways of working is a new area to discover and develop, and may change the way you create, develop and present your work. That's almost creating a new way of working and that's really exciting. There's a lot for us all to learn about these new ways of working. What would be your next step George?

K

Katie Walters 5:00:57

My next step would be, at present I'm working on completing my debut poetry pamphlets. I'm also working on a couple of spoken word projects, that could be performed. At the moment, I'm looking at virtual opportunities, because as a clinically extremely vulnerable person entering packed out spaces might not be the safest thing for me right now. Obviously, performing in physical spaces when it is safe to, never say never, is always something that I'm open to. Also just creating spoken word shows, and my debut pamphlet are my immediate next steps. Expressing through poetry, some of my lived experiences, but in a creative way that isn't necessarily always on the nose. I like to create a breadth of work that encompasses life as a whole, not just the parts of my life that are confined to disability. Disability will always be a key part of my work, because it's a key part of my life. We can't separate the two fully, but there is that diversity, that it's important to keep things open.

L

Level Centre 5:02:26

Fantastic, thank you George. Really the same to you Elle, what are your next steps?

E

Elle Chante 5:02:34

I think personally I just put an EP out on Sunday, so I'm looking at that. I'll be sending it over to

I think personally, I just put an EP out on Sunday, so I'm looking at that. I'll be sending it over to you shortly Ed. I've also been awarded an Arts Council grant to look at creating a sustainable performance practice, because I felt like it was something that was just completely out of my reach with the tools I had at the time. I have took part in a few too many developmental programs where access needs just weren't budgeted for. You know, the start of each vocal lesson being like everybody signed up, it's just frustrating. I felt like I needed bespoke help to do that, and that's something that I'll be doing in the next year. Hopefully to create better pathways for myself, and as Radical Body to help other disabled artists. It's a giant thing that I've spoke about, that I feel like you get to a wall sometimes and you're not able to do enough work to get to the help, because of how much barriers there is. Personally, I'm going to be looking more how to create a sustainable practice for myself. Then as Radical Body we're looking at just really trying to hack the system, and make things more of a level playing field for disabled artists. The arts wasn't made for us in mind. We do participate. We are there in the industry, even Lady Gaga having fibromyalgia. We're already in the industry, and I think it's important that we're respected as such, and that people take steps to acknowledge that and help us where they can. Radical Body is going to be developing that. We're thinking about creating a database of disabled artists. We really want to help the disabled community and platform disabled community because it's really important to us, and we believe that a lot of amazing disabled artists are just incredible performers, and it's just unfair to not have them be seen.

L

#### Level Centre 5:05:21

Thank you so much for that Elle. The database, the fact that your EP just come out, there's so many amazing things that you've just shared with us. There's a lot of next steps happening with you, and that sustainable practice. Congratulations on that grant! I can't wait to hear more about that. We've just had a comment come through from Janet. Janet has said, 'I've been really interested by the early comments about access riders', they begun residencies with a conversation about what we might need to put in place in order to help artists make the most of the opportunity, make it work best for them, support them to make their best work. They've wondered whether that was enough? And been given the number of advice sessions on access riders that seems to be going around at the moment, but after this session they're going to stick to augmenting their conversational approach, and not beat themselves up to produce an access rider. Well that's fantastic Janet, that you feel that you actually may want to think about things differently. Today has really been about wanting people to think differently. In terms of next steps for us at LEVEL Centre, we've been working with our Artistic Associates Katie Walters to create this event HouseFound. HouseFound really is the start of a journey for us. We really want to continue to support artists who have difficulty leaving the home. We have artist residency throughout the year, and that is something that we're going to continue to offer. I suppose really, our call to action is to everybody who's joined this event. We really want to collaborate with you, partner with you and have conversations with you. We want to share our experience of having an Associate Artist and artist who has difficulty leaving the home, work with us on projects and conversations and dialogue. We really want to share our best practice with you of how that has been, and we'd be really open to having those conversations with you about how that's worked for us. In terms of this evening, and just to talk a bit about the performances. So we have got three performers who are going to be performing this evening, the performances start at 6.20, and that's going to be on a YouTube link. As mentioned, at the very beginning of the day, the performances are not happening on Zoom, because Zoom is not the platform we would use as an organisation to present artists who have difficulty leaving the home. Somebody has just asked, 'is there an email address we can have to get in touch

regarding partnering or something related to today's topic?' Absolutely, the email is info@levelcentre.com, and I'm just putting that in the chat for you. Please get in touch with us to info@levelcentre.com. Tonight, we've got three performances and the idea is, is that we as a venue are going to be watching with a live audience and with you at home as delegates watching artists perform live in their homes. This is an experiment, but this is the start of a concept that we want to develop. We want to develop this into the HouseFound Festival. Now we're looking for partners and organisations to join us to become partners in the HouseFound Festival. The aim is, in a year's time to have a number of organisations across the country, to commission artists and to support artists who have difficulty in leaving the home in the areas that they live. The idea is that we bring that together to create one sort of hybrid national event, HouseFound Festival. More information will follow on that. We've just had another comment come through and I'm just going to refer to that please bear with me. 'Hubub are very experienced at providing accessible opportunities for the learning disabled and non disabled community, but they think less so for how this would relate to any potential team members who are disabled. We notice at this moment with a creative practitioner who has cerebral palsy, when we used to be in a physical inner space together and suddenly to adapt this. I think we could do more in terms of recruitment and representation for practitioners, not just participants.' Carla at Hubhub, that's a really good takeaway from today and something that everybody can learn from. Thank you so much for sharing that. I think we can all do more in terms of recruitment and representation for practitioners, not just participants. I absolutely hear you there, Carla and that's something that could be a call to action for all of us today. Going back to that performance model, there are going to be three performances this evening. We will be sharing a YouTube link towards the end of this session and at 6.20 we will go live with the performances. The performances are comprised of three live performances, and one pre recorded performance. To recap, for those of you who weren't here at the beginning of today. So we've got three live performances, they're going to be happening live in their homes, and obviously, Elle on the screen will be performing live in their home. We also have Connor Aylwood, Rick Dove and unfortunately Cathy Mungall-Baldwin, who was originally going to perform this evening live, they're unwell, so Elle has stepped in at short notice. In terms of the performances, as I said before, they are going to be taking place on a YouTube platform and not Zoom. That's because when we're going to be hosting events in the future, live performance in the home are not going to happen on a Zoom platform. You should have received a separate link, but if you haven't received that do email info@levelcentre.com, towards the end of this session, we will also post in the chat function. In terms of the performances that we've got later today, we're going to have a pre-recorded performance by Cathy Mungall-Baldwin, who's going to perform an original folk song and it's called Multicolored View. We then also have Connor Aylwood who is going to perform Mindfulness Light: 50%, less likely to cause you to try real yoga. We then move on to Rick Dove, a spoken word artist who's going to perform Diary of a Butterfly. Then we're going to finish off the event with three original songs by Elle Chante, who's one of our panelists today, and then we will do a bit of a wrap up event. So I would really love to go round the panel just now before we wrap up and take a break before the live performances. Could you perhaps say one or two words that would sum up your experience of today? Or how you feel?

E

Elle Chante 5:12:56

I genuinely feel excited. I feel like this has been a really big step and it's really just lovely to feel the community as disabled artists on this panel as well. To hear similar experiences and the things we've come out with. So I'd probably say excited and communal.

**L** Level Centre 5:13:19

Thank you so much Elle. Ed, could I go to you next? What would sum up today for you? Is there a word or a couple of words that you would use to sort of frame your experience?

**E** Ed Perry (Ban Summers) 5:13:30

Communities, definitely one. There's been things that we've spoken about that I've really related to, and things that I've said that other people have agreed with that just makes you feel understood. And sharing some of our experiences as well, will help that understanding. I've learned a lot today, it's not like I've come here and just wanted to talk, I feel like I've I've learned a lot from everyone.

**L** Level Centre 5:14:05

Wonderful. Thank you, Ed. George, how would you sum up today for you? Are there a couple of words that you would pick to kind of sum up some of your feelings or how you feel about today?

**K** Katie Walters 5:14:16

To use just two words, I would have to say enlightening and progressive. The very act that we are all here. The very act that we are here as a community and that we are communicating freely, is an act on loving revolution. I feel that progress has been made, and the very fact that we have so many listening ears and people willing to engage is a very positive forward movement. I just want to thank everybody in the audience at home for their time. I want to thank Kerry and Katie, and everybody LEVEL, the wonderful BSL interpreters, the wonderful tech team for making this happen and go so smoothly. So thanks, everybody.

**L** Level Centre 5:15:07

Thank you so much George, for those wonderful words. So in terms of HouseFound Festival, today was really the launch of HouseFound as a platform to start a conversation, a dialog, to really get people thinking and organisations thinking about how they might work with artists who have difficulty leaving the home. We've had four sessions, we've had the Introduction to Disability Arts where Katie talked about Spoon Theory and Crip Time and I think there's a lot of learning to be had there for organisations. We then moved into the session around Barriers to Entry, within that we've heard firsthand experience from our wonderful set of panelists, I think there was a lot of learning that came through from that session. We then moved into the Models for Success, and I think there has been some great examples shared today that will really challenge us. In terms of this session, Next Steps, today was the start of that conversation for HouseFound, establishing it as a concept. Now we're making HouseFound Festival in collaboration with Radical Body. This is all subject to fundraising, today is the start of planting that seed. We hope to have a festival in 2023, but that is subject to fundraising, and if not, it will happen in 2024. Today was the start of that conversation and dialogue with our

community, our peers, and arts organisations. We want as many of you to come on board with us, and hopefully be inspired by today and really want to get involved with that concept. So we're going to be following up after today with everyone about HouseFound Festival. We would love for more of you to join us on that journey and be part of that national conversation of HouseFound Festival. I would like to say a massive thank you to Edward Perry, to Elle Chante, to George Bastow, to Katie Walters, my co-creator of this event and Artistic Associate in LEVEL Centre. To Bella Milroy, our Artistic Associate, who's also had to take a rest, and to our wonderful BSL interpreters Laura, Rachel and Ali. We are finishing slightly ahead of schedule, which means that there will now be a break until 6:20pm. At 6.20 we will go live on YouTube with the performances. Just a reminder that the performances are happening live in the performer's homes, we are going to be a live audience here at LEVEL Centre, and you are also going to be a live audience in your own home as a delegate watching HouseFound. Adam, it'd be really brilliant if you could post the link to the YouTube within the chat function now to make sure that everybody does have it. You can also email [info@levelcentre.com](mailto:info@levelcentre.com) if you haven't got that link. So there is the link for the performances. We will be going over to YouTube and we will be on that platform from 6:20pm. We would ask you to arrive by quarter past six, just to be there ready to go when we go live with the first performance. So a huge thank you to everyone today. A huge thank you to all of our wonderful audience speakers and BSL interpreters, the team here at LEVEL Centre and those that have been working behind the scenes on the technical side of things. Thank you so much for joining us. We really hope this is the start of longer term collaborations and conversations with you all. So for myself at LEVEL Centre, thank you, thank you from the bottom of my heart. This really is the start of a wonderful new adventure for all of us. So we will see you at 6.20 for the live performances. Thank you everyone.