

Applause: Sam Martin and Sue Jo Wright's transcript.

*Sam: Hi how are you?*

*Sue Jo: I'm well thanks, and you?*

*Sam: I'm good. I'm very excited to interview a fantastic Deaf artist.*

*Would you like to introduce yourself?*

*Sue Jo: Sure! I'm Sue I'm a Deaf artist, I grew up in Sydney.*

*I work as a visual artist, the medium I work with is photography, film and textiles, incorporating them in different ways.*

*You work with so many different mediums. Art is really diverse, isn't it. Nothing is the same it's all very different. I was really excited to watch your video called Applause... right?*

*Sue Jo: Yes it's Applause as in the sign applause in Auslan.*

*Sam: Can you tell me how you created this work, how you were funded and your concept?*

*Sue Jo: Well the sign for applause is a special, unique thing in the Deaf community. It's a visual applause that's part of our deaf culture and my family. The original idea was to use textiles, to make gloves, use some old gloves and some new gloves. I wanted to use some really old gloves and some brand-new gloves to represent a generational aspect and have the waving as if they're floating on a wall, then film them over a period of time, then compress the time so they would be all waving at the same time, that was my original plan, but it changed, which is normal when developing a work. I discussed this with the grants funder to change the concept. I wanted to make gloves myself, but it was harder than I thought. I was able to get some older gloves, but I couldn't get any new gloves. I asked around to see if I could get some made but they had no idea how to make them, they said it was difficult to make. So, I dropped that idea. Then I put myself into the story. I had a large piece of cloth I thought it would be nice to cover myself and have the words 'hearing impaired' across my forehead. So, I embroidered the words and then covered myself with that cloth, so you couldn't see my face.*

*Sam: When I watched that it felt like the person had been labelled hearing impaired. It felt like they were constricted or overwhelmed by that label. So that they couldn't breathe it looked like they were 'labelled' it was very interesting, I was wondering, as I have seen some of your other work Sue and I have seen the changes over time, and now its interesting to see you in the work covered with the cloth. Why did you choose that cloth, and why did you decide to include yourself and not use another person. Did you have a specific reason?*

*Sue Jo: Yes, I did decide to put myself into this work, because I grew up communicating orally, I didn't start learning Auslan until I was about 10 years old. I thought I'd include myself in the work as part of my journey. It's common for hard of hearing and deaf people have the same experience and learn Auslan later in life. Many people like myself feel lost at the start of their journey, being the only deaf person in their family, having to try to speak and listen. I was labelled as hearing impaired, like it was a bad thing, I was a bit confused about that label growing up. I realised that was the wrong label for me. You should see me for who I am, I'm a human, so that's why I decided to be part of the work to show my ability, that I have feelings, I'm a person, I have a family, I have friends but still people see you're hearing impaired, that's a bad thing so I changed my video to show my experience, part of my life.*

*Sam: I wanted to ask you about your editing, you used a lot of different techniques it wasn't just filmed from start to finish. I really liked how you reduced the frame size, smaller and smaller and smaller when I watched that I could feel that constriction as it got closer and closer. It felt like the room was closing in and that cloth with the label, it was powerful. The person was becoming more constrained by that label. That's how I saw it, but did you have any other intention behind it?*

*Sue Jo: Yeah, it was deliberate, to create that feeling of constraint. As an editor, I had all the frames and I wanted to play around with them, moving them around on the screen, playing with colour, darkness and light. I didn't want to have it filmed from start to end, I wanted to add interest. I'm not particularly technical with filming but I wanted to experiment, and I'd like to do more work with film in the future.*

*Sam: When I watched your video towards the end....wow....I saw that struggle that determination at the same time the editing became jarred. Can you tell me why you decided to do that at the end?*

*Sue Jo: That's a very good question. Well, I love watching people perform, particularly dancing and because I'm Deaf I can't hear the music, one example that really inspired me was by Pina. She's famous director, very creative and she performed a piece with music but as I can't hear that music the dance performance expressed the music for example there was a dancer and she became very frustrated, so her movement became very agitated. I was like wow that was a really visual representation of the music...I didn't need to hear anything because when I was watching it I really see the sense of the music - the frustration, the struggle expressed in their body language and gesture, their movement. They danced very slowly and then it became very fast. I really connected with that. I wanted to incorporate that sense in my video with the editing. As you saw there is a slow beginning and then a frantic struggle being constricted. It's so VISUAL.*

*Sam: Wow I could really feel that struggle in the video, at the end finally there was freedom. When I watched the end there was one a part that looked like a rebirth actually like a birth, like a new person was born, the freedom to become the real you. And when I watched that I was touched because like so many of us in the deaf*

*community we have a similar experience growing up, labelled as hearing impaired then deciding this isn't who I am. I have a new identity a new experience, it's like I have this other identity that I didn't know about. The identity of hard of hearing or Deaf is what I choose, not hearing impaired, that was my moment of freedom. In the video I felt that feeling of freedom. Did you have the same experience Sue, as you put yourself into the work?*

*Sue Jo: Yes that part was a big release, expressing freedom by being still and calm finding my identity, it was deliberate so the movement was very subtle and calm but you will notice the eye contact with the viewer. Up until that point you have no eye contact with me under the cloth, then with that freedom at the end then there was engagement with the audience, the eye contact, the pride, and confidence. That's exactly how I feel about my life's journey.*

*Sam: I think we should wrap up the interview, I could talk for ages about this work, but to wrap up my last comment about your video is that I'm really pleased I saw your video because watching you in your work you encapsulated you message so succinctly in the performance by using film, textiles, the cloth and the gloves in one short 3-4 minute video . As you said there were changes to your concept but the images in your work ...wow...I'm really excited about what you might do next. Do you have any plans of what you will do next? I'm excited to see more.*

*Sue Jo: Oh yes I have so many many more projects, yes definitely. I have plenty of ideas.*