

This conversation took place at the Whitechapel Gallery on the 5th of March 2014 during one of the Youth Forum meetings.

How would you describe Duchamp & Sons? Who are Duchamp & Sons?

Aditi: Duchamp and Sons are young people who look at art through... wait, let me just try again. I know what I am trying to say but it's not coming out. We're like a group of people who look at artwork but in a more modern way. It's not like we are subjective or anything but we look at things from our own perspective. If that makes any sense...

Migena: I know what you mean! I feel that when we look at art we always try to think of ideas for something else. So when we are looking at something, we are just like *we can use that, we can use that...* I think that's what we do.

Aditi: Come on Alyssa... You've been here just as long as I have!

Alyssa: That's true. I don't know. I'd say that as a youth group we do all sorts of things: working with artists, questioning, learning, making...

Aditi: I think we try to be our own artists.

Alyssa: Yes, because not everyone actually studies arts. So that's kind of nice, you have all sorts of backgrounds and ages.

Aditi: We love art, and the point of Duchamp & Sons is that you don't need to be good at art in order to enjoy it or be a part of it. You can look at art from different perspectives, and Duchamp & Sons actually encourages that even more. Yes, it helps us bring that out in public.

How does it feel to be part of a group?

Halima: It's like working, but if I am not particularly good in something I can still take part in

other things that I am good at. There's not one specific thing you have to do, there are other things you can do. And every time when you come you feel like you're involved and you're working with people. You always feel like you're doing something. It's not like you're sitting down and bored.

Aditi: We like each other strengths and weaknesses, so it kind of works out in the end.

Ateshaam, you joined last year, how does it feel for you to be part of the group?

Ateshaam: Everybody tries to bring out each others' best, and even if there is a weakness you know that to help you they turn it into a strength that you can use to contribute to the group.

Do you think it is important for art museums and galleries to have youth forums or groups?

Migena: Yes, because we are the future, the future generation. We have different ideas from the old ideas. Everything that's going to happen, it's going to be from us. So, definitely young people should be involved.

Halima: Yes, after coming here I found out quite a lot about the creative area I'd say. Working with galleries, working with artists encourages you, and you want to do more. You find out so much, even if you're not taking part. I'd say since I've joined I learnt quite a lot. Not just because I want to do fashion but I know so much more. It's motivating you. So yes, it is really good to have something like that for young people.

Aditi: We're in the situation where people don't follow their dreams anymore, they are more like - can't be bothered, there's nothing left outside there for me, especially artists... It really brings out the artists in the community. It encourages them to follow their dreams.

Now if we focus on the exhibition, how would you describe that process of making the exhibition?

Alyssa: Long...

Aditi: Long...

Migena: All these different activities that we have been doing so far to put the exhibition together, you don't really see it coming together until you finally see it, until it's open to the public. You can plan it, but you don't actually see it, you don't think it's going to be done next week. There's so much to do, so it happens really fast even if there is a long process. I feel like we don't have enough time. There's a lot to do.

What were your favourite parts of the project and the ones that you liked the least?

Migena: I like the experiments with the light, like the reflective surfaces. That was quite cool.

Aditi: The clay one was fun as well, when we were working with the clay. We were creating sculptures out of the modelling clay and then we put all of them together as a structure and then we dropped it down into pieces. And then we sliced up the ball of clay and made something out of it too.

And how was working with such a big group of 30 people?

Elida: That's the best part isn't it? Because you have lots of different ideas from everyone It was inspiring, wasn't it?

Halima: And to be honest I missed quite a lot, but when I came in everyone is like telling me, we did this last week or in the past we do this so I was kind of getting it and now I have an idea of what's going on

Aditi: I think the best part about it is that it doesn't matter what university you're doing, what college you are from, or who you

are, all that matters is that we all have the same interest in art. No matter when you come in or whenever you go, everybody is so friendly that they would tell you what's going on anyway.

Alyssa: I think that it is hard though when you miss sessions. I know I missed sessions and when I come back I am like: *What?* But it is good that there are so many people, as everyone has so many ideas then it doesn't really matter in the end because you have enough people. If you had only four people it wouldn't really work but as you have thirty, then usually ten or twelve show up.

Halima: Yes because then someone can take over from you, and help you out. So you don't have to be like: *oh my days, what should I do?*

Aditi: sitting in the corner crying (laughs).

What do you think the role of the group was in making the exhibition?

Ateshaam: I think people won't realise when they see the exhibition how much of an effect we had on it. Because when you see an exhibition it is generally one or two artists, maybe more, but not necessarily people who are kind of practising artists. And I think that is interesting. It kind of broadens my perspective on what goes into an exhibition. It's not just one or two people, it's like a group. And there always something that you can tweak or fix, but the public won't see that it I guess...

And how was it working with the artists?

Aditi: It was fun! Wait, are we talking about the artists Steven and Nick? (laughs). The way I see it is that our ideas are the unmoulded clay and they are basically like the stencils. We put ideas on them and they bring it out into shape.

Migena: We were saying before that we don't know how the exhibition is going to turn out, but I feel like

the artists know how it's going to turn out, like they are not as worried.

Alyssa: I actually think that they are really worried because, it's their reputation, it's them who have to help deliver... they really sort stuff out.

Halima: They have been through this and they know how it should be. If it doesn't turn out right... yes, I think they have pressure on them.

Alyssa: Yes, they are not really nervous, it's not a big thing to get nervous about but I think Paul is worried if we are going to finish this on time.

Halima: The scaffolding one... I don't think there's something that can go wrong with that. It's simple.

Do you think it's important that visitors know that the exhibition was curated/made with young people?

All: Yes!

Migena: Yes, the TV screen is going to show the progress of us making the exhibition. I think that's a good idea.

And why is it important for them to know?

Aditi: I think sometimes you don't appreciate that there's a lot more behind the actual art piece... When you think of art you think ok there is some guy standing in the corner looking out of his window and just drawing, but no, that is not how it actually works these days. There is a lot more behind it and the moment that you suddenly realise it, you appreciate the artwork more. It's like the iceberg analogy, have you ever heard of that? It's like if you can't see what is underneath the water you can't understand why it's only that tiny bit at the top. Does anyone understand what I mean?

Alyssa: Yes, I think it's important because it shows people that it's not only famous artists that get

put into galleries, you can have young people who have ideas and thoughts, and can actually do things too. It's kind of nice and hopefully it can inspire someone.

Aditi: And show that they are not just a bunch of hoodlums who are running around the streets.

And would you like to know people's opinions after they visit the exhibition?

Aditi: Of course! Yes, it is always helpful to have their feedback. Constructive criticism is always the way forward.

Alyssa: Positive and negative.

Are you looking forward to show the exhibition to your friends?

Alyssa: Yes, actually I told all my friends yesterday to come to the private view.

Halima: And it's good to talk about, especially as I've got my interviews coming up, I can talk about the fact that I am working with an artist, creating an exhibition. It gives a good impression.

Migena: It's true!

This conversation was led by Carolina Silva, Phd candidate at Goldsmiths, researching young people's learning experiences with contemporary art.

Duchamp and Sons is led by Paul Crook, Whitechapel Gallery Curator: Youth Programmes.