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Softening Corners: How a Carefully Considered Hospitality Operation Impacted an Educational Institution

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Softening Corners:

**How a Carefully Considered Hospitality Operation Impacted an
Educational Institution**

A thesis submitted to Technological University Dublin in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the award of Master of Arts in Gastronomy and Food Studies

by

Jennie Moran

Supervisor: Margaret Connolly

Technological University Dublin

School of Culinary Arts and Food Technology

May 2023

Declaration of Authorship

I certify that this thesis which I now submit for examination for the award of the Master's in Gastronomy and Food Studies is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

This thesis was prepared according to the regulations of Technological University Dublin and has not been submitted in whole or in part for an award in any other Institute or University.

The Institute has permission to keep, to lend or to copy this thesis in whole or in part, on condition that any such use of the material of the thesis be duly acknowledged.

Signature: Jennie Moran Date: 15/05/2023

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jennie Moran', is written on a light-colored background.

Abstract

Enter quickly, as I am afraid of my happiness!

(Derrida, 2000, p.131)

This research project is an attempt to bridge the gap between the philosophical ideals of hospitality and the hospitality industry, by examining how a carefully considered hospitality operation impacted an educational institution over the course of eight years. The aim of this study is to demonstrate that the application of the philosophical ideals to a commercial hospitality setting yielded profoundly positive results. The primary research was compiled by the author conducting a case study of her own food business, Luncheonette which was located in the National College of Art and Design in Dublin.

A strong motivation behind this thesis is to present an alternative model for hospitality in an institutional setting which could be useful to others. The term *Softening Corners*, used in the title refers to the additional yielding layer of humanity which thoughtful hospitality can bring to harsh space. This research has been informed by the literature surrounding the philosophy, sociology, etymology and historic origins of hospitality. A qualitative approach was adopted to collect primary research. Nine semi-structured interviews were conducted with students, staff and visitors to the college. The interviews were juxtaposed with a collection of autoethnographic research compiled by the author, outlining the experience, knowledge and skills gained by operating a college canteen which had an unforeseen impact on the institution it served. These two sources of data are treated to a thematic analysis and arranged into seven themes, each one acting as a response to the directive: How to Soften Corners. The findings of this research study reveal that the influence and legacy that this active hospitality practice had on this educational institution was profoundly positive and far beyond any expectations of what an institutional catering operation could achieve.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Softening Corners: How a carefully considered hospitality operation impacted an educational institution.

1.0 Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Definition

This research project has emerged from an unmanageable curiosity around hospitality. The pursuit of a Masters in gastronomy has imposed a shift in appetite for greater depth of knowledge and understanding across a wide range of topics. Surface grazing of data will no longer suffice. This thesis is the result of feasting ravenously on the philosophical and theoretical material relating to hospitality, followed by an acquisitive hunt for manifestations of these ideas within the hospitality industry. Here I found an intriguing void in the literature. The purpose of this thesis is to examine the practical application of theoretical hospitality within the context of a specific commercial hospitality setting. The schism between these two versions of hospitality is unexpected and unfortunate. It seems the word “hospitality” has been devalued of its original meaning and is associated now with an industry that is struggling with a mass exodus of those wishing to be part of it. I believe that this study is a timely and worthwhile revisiting of these origins. It will add to the research canon by bridging the gap between the philosophy of hospitality and the hospitality industry, using a case study of a food business called Luncheonette which was located within the National College of Art and Design for eight years.

1.2 Positionality of Author

Full disclosure: Luncheonette was my business. I set it up in NCAD in 2013 as an art project. During its eight years of trading in NCAD, Luncheonette became an unlikely food destination, drawing crowds of visitors daily from outside the college and much publicity and acclaim including the prize for Irish café of the year at the 2019 Food and Wine awards. More importantly, I gleaned from feedback from the college community that it was having a positive impact in unexpected ways. Here was an ideal opportunity to dissect a commercial hospitality business through the lens of the philosophical research conducted.

Locating this study within an educational institution offered an appealingly contained site of enquiry. The task of gauging the impact of the hospitality offering within this institution

appeared feasible in scale. There was access to interviewees who possessed a wealth of knowledge from their lived experience of Luncheonette, some of whom could offer additional theoretical insight from their specific academic fields. Another asset to this research site was the knowledge and experience that I had gained in the eight years of operating Luncheonette. This could provide autoethnographic data which would complement the interviews.

1.3 Rationale and Justification for Research

The original meaning of hospitality describes neither the host, nor the guest, but the unexpected relationship of mutual trust which exists between the two parties. This system for accepting strangers into our lives was established in every corner of the world and represents a profoundly beautiful human impulse to share with others. Sadly, this original meaning has been all but erased from the contemporary literature surrounding the hospitality industry. I feel it is timely and urgent to journey back to these roots; to take the essence of this philosophy and impose it back onto the hospitality industry.

Luncheonette was a business which practiced an active approach to hospitality with awareness of the original meaning. This approach yielded unexpected and profound results in the community of the institution it served. It is incumbent upon me to collect and process these findings so that they can be useful to individuals in the hospitality industry and those invested in improving the way in which a public facing institution, amenity or organisation functions.

I have embarked on this research, on this Masters in fact, to provide myself with cultural, historical, philosophical and sociological context for the knowledge and experience that I have gathered. I wanted to learn what exactly has been happening, below the surface, during those eight years. This new foundation of knowledge has informed the process of collecting data now so that it can have a deeper impact.

It is also incumbent upon me not to contribute to academic dissertation clutter or waste the reader's time. This thesis has grown from an acute desire to discover more about the practice of hospitality. There was no option but for me to conduct this research. I hope that this passion and urgency makes its way onto these pages.

1.4 Working Title

Softening Corners: How a carefully Considered Hospitality Operation Impacted an Educational Institution.

Softening Corners refers to the conscious act of applying an extra layer of humanity, porousness, poetry to an institution or amenity. This is done in a way which honours the job of work to be carried out in this space, and looks after those that run and use this amenity.

1.5 Main and Sub Research Objectives

The main research aim of this thesis is to present evidence that a thoughtfully designed site of hospitality located within an educational institution acted as a powerful tool to dramatically enrich the lived experience of those that operated and used this institution.

The following research objectives will inform the overall findings:

1. What does the literature reveal about the philosophy, history, theory, and etymology of hospitality?
2. What are the obstacles in implementing the ideals of hospitality theory in the context of commercial hospitality?
3. How can guests in institutions be given more visibility and thereby agency, using sites of commercial hospitality such as coffee shops and canteens?
4. What evidence is there that carefully considered hospitality can have a positive impact in the institution using Luncheonette as a case study to gauge the scope of its impact.
5. How can this data be presented in a way which is legible, interesting, and relevant with a view to shaping it into a model for other institutions?

1.6 Outline of Research

The data which forms the primary research of this thesis consists of personal narratives, experiences and opinion. A qualitative approach has therefore been adopted. The case study

presented uses data collected from interviews and an autoethnographic account. This will be explained further in the methodology chapter.

1.7 Outline of Research Chapters

This body of research is divided into six chapters, summarised below:

Chapter One – Introduction.

This chapter introduces and contextualises this dissertation. It provides context in relation to the author's unusual position within the study and makes an argument for its contribution to the academic canon surrounding philosophical hospitality.

Chapter Two – Literature Review.

This chapter is an examination of the literature surrounding the philosophy, history, theory, etymology of hospitality and attempts to bridge the gap between these and the hospitality industry. The review is presented as a series of letters from myself, as proprietor of a hospitality business, to five individual theorists whose writings have proved instrumental in the secondary research. The letters cover the following topics: Unconditional Hospitality, The Welcoming Act, Mutual Hospitality, Commercial Hospitality and Hospitality in Institutions.

Chapter Three – Methodology

This chapter accounts for the qualitative research methodology adopted in this thesis and provides further context around the use of autoethnographic research. There is also a justification offered for the linguistic tone adopted in this thesis which might be at odds with expectations around academic research. This is strategically designed as a manifestation of the hospitality that is the thematic focal point of this study, welcoming the reader inside the structure of the study. It also relates to my entanglement with the subject matter.

Chapter Four – Data Analysis

This chapter details the processing and distilling of the data received from the primary research into coherent themes which connect the interviews conducted with the autoethnographic account.

Chapter Five – Discussion of Findings

This chapter will collate the findings from the primary research with those of the literature review using the themes identified in chapter four.

Chapter Six – Conclusion

In this chapter I will pull the entire research body together and demonstrate that I have completed the research objectives and answered the main research aim.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter has set the scene for you dear reader. I have imparted the passion and urgency I feel in relation to this body of research and marked out the journey ahead for you. In the following chapter I will present you with the findings of my secondary research into the philosophy of hospitality.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.0 Chapter 2 – Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will present findings on the origins, history, philosophy, theory, etymology of hospitality. Continental philosophical essays, books and speeches; historical accounts of the origins of hospitality; etymological dissections; sociological books and articles; contemporary industry-rooted handbooks; critiques; everyday theory were examined and reviewed.

As outlined in the introduction chapter, part of my research aim is to bridge the gap between the philosophical ideals of hospitality and the commercial hospitality industry. Precisely because I did not find satisfactory connections between these two aspects of hospitality in the literature, I found myself longing for an opportunity to poke and prod these authors further on the subject, forming an internal discourse with these theorists, imagining what I would say if they were in front of me, or indeed still alive in some cases. In this vein, I have decided to structure the findings from the literature review as a series of five letters to thinkers and practitioners whose work has had a major contribution to the secondary research.

The series begins with a letter to Algerian-French philosopher, Jacques Derrida in response to his 1996 lectures, “Foreigner Question” and “Step of Hospitality/No Hospitality” (2000). This letter is on the theme of unconditional hospitality and fraught with frustration with the absolutism of Derrida’s articulation of the law of hospitality. It also addresses the origins of the practice of hospitality and the etymology of the word. The second letter is on the subject of the welcoming act and is addressed to French philosopher Anne Dufourmantelle in response to her essay, “Hospitality - Under Compassion and Violence” (2013). Here I am exploring various practices around admitting strangers and exploring ways of imbuing the guest with identity and agency. The third letter is to Belgian born philosopher, Luce Irigaray and discusses ideas around reciprocity and coexistence in response to her essay, “Towards a Mutual Hospitality” (2013). The fourth letter is to French Jesuit and cultural critic, Michel de Certeau and probes into the guilt associated with commercial hospitality. The final letter in the series is addressed to a hospital coffee shop operator, Ms. Molloy-Dowd in response to an unexpected gesture of hospitality performed; a gesture which has had a significant influence on this research project by demonstrating the power of hospitality to impact visitor experience in an institution.

2.2 Letters

2.2.1 Number One – Unconditional Hospitality

Dear Mssr. Derrida,

Mounted on the wall of the dingy office of the college canteen that I run, is a photocopied extract from your 1996 seminar, *Step of Hospitality/No Hospitality*. Here in this speech, you lay down “*the law of absolute, unconditional, hyperbolic hospitality*”. Here, an inkjet printer has committed your words to paper so that I might be reminded constantly of the impossibility of the task at hand:

Let us say *yes to who or what turns up*, before any determination, before any anticipation, before any *identification*, whether or not it has to do with a foreigner, an immigrant, an invited guest, or an unexpected visitor, whether or not the new arrival is the citizen of another country, a human, animal, or divine creature, a living or dead thing, male or female.

(Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000, p. 77)

Ire

I have developed a complicated relationship to this scrap of paper. Quite often I am compelled to seize it from the wall. I have even considered ingesting it – chewing up your words, saying yes to them all with my mouth, letting them inside my guts where their meaning can be absorbed and finally excreting them, happily.

As a proprietor, I am haunted by this outlandish, unfeasible set of demands. The basic law of unconditional hospitality states that I, the host, must welcome each soul that crosses the threshold and cry out to them, ‘Enter quickly for I am afraid of my happiness!’ (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, citing Pierre Klossowski, 2000, p. 131). As you yourself point out, this law is difficult to obey. Doing so requires us to defy other, practical or “juridico-political” as you refer to them, laws which protect and preserve us. This makes it an unlawful law. This contradiction is infuriating, Mssr. Derrida. I am aware that you have not made the rules but are merely describing them philosophically. However, I wish that you might sully your lofty hypotheses ever so slightly with a hint of practical solution. In relation to this impossible dilemma, you simply conclude with: “It *must* remain so.” (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000, p. 135).

These words send me into histrionics. I have snarled at them, at you. “Oh shut up Derrida, you don’t know what it’s like to run an extremely busy socially engaged food enterprise”. At the same time, and in keeping with the theme of antinomy, I am also extremely grateful to you for teaching me about ideal hospitality. No one else’s words have imparted so clearly the sacredness of the guest/host relationship. In my more generous moments, I am able to see the words, “Let us say *yes to who or what turns up...*” as a sort of prayer, something to aspire towards, but often fail spectacularly at.

Knife edge linguistics

As a follow up to this vital philosophical ground rule, it has been helpful to me to explore the etymology of hospitality. ‘*Hostis*’ is the Indo – European root and it describes neither the host nor the guest but the relationship between the two (Visser, 1991, p.91). The meaning is reversible. It bounces from one to the other for as long as both parties are held in their protective bind. Hospitality is the space of possibility that opens up between guest and host when both parties willingly engage in this precarious mutual trust. According to structural linguist Emile Beneviste, almost all roots and derivatives of the word hospitality describe the act of creating “equality by compensation” (Beneviste, 1973, p.71).

Here below are some intriguing samples:

Hostis – stranger who has equal rights to those of Roman citizens; one who repays my gift with a counter gift; an enemy

Hosti-pet – he who predominantly personifies hospitality, is hospitality itself

Hospes – guest/master

Polis – master of house/clan/lineage; husband; power

Dem-Pol(i) - master; one who assumes a representation which gives him authority over the house/family

Redhostire- to repay a kindness

Hostimentum – compensation for a benefit

Hostus – the amount of oil obtained in one single pressing; a counterpart

Dea Hostilina – The one who equalized the ears of corn and ensured work was accomplished

Hostia – the victim who serves to appease the anger of the gods

While accumulating this list of derivatives of the word hospitality, it occurs to me that a common theme is reciprocity. They all refer to the action of rebalancing; equalizing; making right. These stems of words describe a cautious negotiation. There is much tension implied. The *hostis* is a stranger, a re-payer of gifts but can also describe an enemy. There is no room for complacency here.

Which came first?

I am thinking of you now M. Derrida, as I sift through this etymological archaeology, all concerned with meticulous guest/host balance sheets. I am on the lookout for different kinds of linguistic artefacts which might better reflect your unconditional hospitality; that is the gushing, pure, breathless desire to throw open one's doors and scoop in the wayward creature. I confound myself with an infuriating quandary regarding which came first - the impulsive ushering or the code system. Which is more strongly rooted in our human nature – the urge to welcome or the instinct to protect ourselves? This line of questioning thankfully proves less ludicrous the more I poke at it. Levinas' thoughts on this are beautifully unambiguous. For him: hospitality “does not start with fear of the Other... it begins even before fear arises; it starts with the I who is uniquely chosen – the chosen one – to be host to the Other. (Meijer-van Wijk, 2017, p. 47).

Why was hospitality invented?

Hospitality exists because there appeared a stranger on the road. People started to leave their own homes and villages and became unknown somewhere else (O Gorman, 2007). Of course, we are accustomed to viewing travel as a positive opportunity for personal growth, but “travel to the ancients represented suffering, even penance” (King, 1995, p.221), something to be avoided at all costs. We need only look to the connection between the word travel and travail (Leed, 1991, p.6) to find the long associations with arduousness. But let us think back to the *Hostis*; the linguistic balance sheet and its defensive undertones. As well as toil, journeys

ignited terror - “to be without shelter for the night could mean death by exposure to the elements or wild animals, or robbery and murder at the hands of highwaymen” (King, 1995, p.221). There needed to be a system whereby a stranger could be offered shelter within a mutually beneficial agreement of trust. To admit a stranger into the home is dangerous, as indeed it is to be admitted. I understand why the etymology is so imbued with tension. Both parties share equal risk. *We promise faithfully not to bring harm to one another, for an agreed length of time, at a specific location.*

Here – look Derrida – we stand at the fulcrum of this mesmerising dance of reciprocity, and I am moved and heartened by its beauty. We can visualise clearly the core meaning of hospitality, which is not about the actors - the characters of guest and host with their motives - but the bind between them; the fizzy electrical current bouncing between the two promisers. It gives me profound joy to dwell on this gorgeous, ancient, universally authored agreement between humans. I marvel at it and speculate briefly at the possibility of such a practice originating in our time. I can return now to my irritating conundrum regarding whether the impulse to share our homes with strangers preceded the impulse to protect ourselves from them. It seems to me now that hospitality permits both impulses to exist freely and simultaneously, though they appear opposite. It is designed to accommodate both the impulse to share and the impulse to protect ourselves. In fact, it requires both, for without the mutual risk, there is no fizzing or bouncing. Here perhaps is the antinomy you describe between the law of hospitality and the laws of society. The unlawful law.

Mssr. Derrida, thank you. For being a thorn in my side all these years. You give me pain and suffering. I know I will never do right by you. You ask the impossible. You know this. Even still, I am glad you are here with me, my disapproving northern star. I will keep your words close to me and continue in my vain attempt to live by.

2.2.2 Letter Number Two – The Welcoming Act

Dear Mme Dufourmantelle,

The bold indignation with which you begin the piece, ‘Hospitality Under Compassion and Violence’ (2013) is reassuring to me and warrants no justification. The notion of hospitality having become “a gateway to hell” is not unreasonable. Let me tell you, the situation has deteriorated since you wrote this in 2013. Having submersed myself in your words these last few weeks, I have been prompted to learn more about you. You are poetic in your expression but there is real-life clout too. You have plonked your philosophical self in the world, not adjacent to it. I am focusing on your work relating to hospitality, but I do have some awareness of your ideas on risk and embracing danger as part of living. I am greatly saddened by the discovery that your own life ended a few years ago in this exact beautiful gesture, on a beach in St Tropez, swimming into choppy water to save two children.

This means that you missed life over the age of 53, including a dreary worldwide plague which has imposed upon all our lives for over two years. And we are lacking your philosophical response. I would have loved to seek out your speculation on the impact that this pandemic will have had upon hospitality – significant I wager – but first perhaps we must emerge from it. In his book, in ‘Discipline and Punish’ (1995 [1975]), Foucault traces contemporary systems of discipline back to the restrictions imposed during the seventeenth century plague in terms of spatial partitioning, surveillance, curtailment. These actions are of course, in diametric opposition to the unconditional hospitality that you and Jacques Derrida celebrate so vociferously.

There is a connection between these curtailments and the rage with which you begin your essay, disgusted by the ugly, systematic version of hospitality employed by the state to control movement - a perverted reappropriation of a sacred thing. This pandemic has accentuated the oxymoronic roots of the word ‘hospitality’ from which we have both “host” and “hostile” (Beneviste, 1973, Visser, 1991). It has re-programmed us to look upon the “other” as a potential harbinger of disease. We have been warned to close our doors. It recalls to me your description of “a fully armed technological gate, serving as a limit and a threshold” (Dufourmantelle, 2013, p.13).

There have also been strange moments of human connection against the odds. Inner-city apartment dwellers played bingo together from their individual balconies. Quarantined Italians sang from their windows. Thresholds became microcosms. Doorstep dramaturgy. I would very

much have liked to approach you in a few years to hear your thoughts on the unexpected legacies of this prolonged event during which the visitor carried extra risk, moving outside of the village was even more dangerous, and the impulse to embrace was quashed, all of us frightened, stuck on doorsteps with our un-embracing hands hanging impotently.

“hurry up and come in” (Derrida, 2000 p.123)

You describe hospitality as “a pure event” (2013, p.13) which precedes thought or idea. I imagine here an impulse, or even something more immediate, like a synaptic transmission – unconscious, involuntary, vital. A welcoming twitch. “Come here to me”, as we might say in our Irish vernacular, or “be my guest” as you put it (2013, p.13). The urgency with which the stranger must be welcomed is curious to me, as is the ushering action. “Enter quickly as I am afraid of my happiness” says Derrida (2000, p. 131). Why such hustle and bustle, I wonder? To hesitate here, for even an instant, is taboo.

You cite Derrida with regard to the quandary of the unquestioning welcome. “Is it more just and more loving to question or not to question? to call by the name or without the name? to give or to learn a name already given?” (Derrida, 2000, p.29). This brings to mind the trope of immigrants choosing an anglicised version of their name, possibly for the benefit of lazy, xenophobic locals. To scoop a stranger into our home without asking them who they are is a complex gesture. It is potentially generous but also potentially, quite ignorant. “What right do we have to ask strangers to abandon their rules and adopt ours?” (2013, p. 15). It reduces the guest to an indiscriminate lump and limits their capacity to engage in mutual hospitality.

Your fellow theorist, Luce Irigaray posits an interesting alternative to this jostling motion in her essay, ‘Toward a Mutual Hospitality’. It is as though she has slowed down the act of welcoming and muted the volume. Unhurried, it becomes possible to examine the choreography of the roles of guest and host. She advocates a pause here, before ushering in the stranger, to register them. “Before feeding or sheltering the other, it is important to ask him or her what they expect from us” (Irigaray, 2013, p. 49). She recommends linguistic economy: “The first word that needs to be said to each other by way of welcome is our capacity for remaining silent.” (Irigaray, 2013, p. 48). I like this idea very much, but I have not yet learned how to carry it off in day-to-day, practical terms. My work is in hospitality, so I think of it often. I have begun with attempts to use my eyes to welcome, more than my words. “I see you” they whisper out over my protective face covering.

Sexy Stranger

You broach the idea of mutual hospitality too when you discuss *theoxenie*, the ancient Hellenic figure of a god arriving at the door, disguised as a wayfarer. This character introduces us to the possibility that the “hosted guest (is) the mediator between two divided spheres, the one that allows a community to grow, coming both as a threat and as a gift” (Dufourmantelle, 2013, p.14). The idea that the guest might bring positive change is both ideological and practical. In a world without hosts and guests, everyone has remained safely tucked up in their own homes and villages, satisfied with their lot, eating alone, “like a lion or a wolf” (Fischler, 2011, p.539). These here roads lead to endogamy, a stuffy kind of self-pollination and eventually, the annihilation of civilization.

As you remind us, the roots of the word hospitality provide insight into the sense of mixed blessing. Ghostis describes neither the guest nor the host but the relationship between the two parties. It is helpful for me to think of ghostis like an electrical current which exists between the guest and host. It is frightening and dangerous, but also thrilling. It has the capacity to energise, illuminate, amplify our moments of shared human experience. But if we do not insulate ourselves, this mysterious current can harm us.

I imagine you taking issue with the concept of protecting oneself from the stranger, the guest. However, I am referring more to the necessity to protect oneself from the law of unconditional hospitality. I have been trying to abide by this law in my hospitality practice for almost a decade now and find that I struggle. I want to protect myself in a way which is “legal”. Neither yourself nor Derrida have offered much in the way of practical tips here! Derrida names the conflict between the law of hospitality and the laws that protect us from it, using words like, “aporia”, “insoluble antinomy”, “collision” (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000). He moves no further in solving these paradoxes. When I am cooking in a professional kitchen, certain rituals help to make the transition from female-human-with-complicated-life to open-handed-provider. Hair braided tight, hands scrubbed of the world outside, nail polish and jewellery removed, an apron donned. Accoutrements of frivolity do not belong here. Nothing dangly. We must put ourselves away. These are helpful gestures and are akin to preparations for battle. An armour of sorts.

Transcendence

You mention the fantasy of the foreigner as “one who might come in order to dispose of you or your property, or to seduce you” (2013, p.15). The stranger might disrupt our lives with their foreign magnificence. They might ravage us. They might make us despise our husbands, kill our fathers. They might “impact our inner selves” (2013, p. 22). Or they might just ruin everything by showing us the limits of ourselves. Derrida refers to this version of the stranger as a liberator and an emancipator, who in fact “holds the keys” to free the imprisoned master (Derrida, 2000, p. 123). “The guest (hôte) becomes the host (hôte) of the host (hôte)” (Derrida, 2000, p. 125).

Mme Dufourmantelle, is it too bold to claim that hospitality is inherently linked to the human impulse to better ourselves? “To think is to invite, to offer shelter to the other within ourselves, the other as the possibility to be(come) ourselves” (2013, p. 14). May I apply reductive examples to your poetic stanzas by speculating on the intent of the wayfaring stranger? Travel in ancient times was a treacherous business associated with suffering and penance (King, 1995, p.221). It was not undertaken lightly. Why, pray, have they left home, become unknown, unrecognised, risked their safety by becoming a stranger? Is it because they are, in the words of poet Adrienne Rich, “alive to want more than life” (2013, p14)? Their human nature requires them to reach for something beyond the scope of what is directly in front of them.

I have been moved by Levinas’ description of the opportunity for transcendence in the actions of hospitality, particularly as this was a philosophical response to surviving World War Two in a prison camp and witnessing the devaluing of human life. He writes so beautifully about the honour and privilege that it is to receive people: “Remember that before anything else - any claim or conversation - I am always automatically a host bearing responsibility for the strange Other, who is my guest” (Meiher-van Bijk, citing Levinas, 2017, p. 49). These words are echoed by you and Derrida in relation to wayfarers making good hosts: “Perhaps only the one who endures the experience of being deprived of a home can offer hospitality” (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000, p. 56).

Mme Dufourmantelle, I have found immense richness in your texts and your refusal to remain untangled from the duties of human coexistence. Thank you. There is so much more I would love to ask you about.

2.2.3 Letter Number Three – Mutual Hospitality

Dear Mme Irigaray,

Will you endure a moment of fangirling? I'll try to gush thoughtfully and economically.

Goodness - what a relief! Encountering your essay, "Towards a Mutual Hospitality" has had the same effect as someone wrenching open the curtains and letting in sharp shafts of light, uncomfortable initially, then revealing brand new information about the space which I had been fumbling around in the oppressive half-light for...well a bit too long. I have operated a hospitality practice since 2013. I can now begin to understand what it is I have been doing. You have introduced a new set of rules around hospitality, offering different options, positing hitherto unthinkable approaches. Your ideas made me look at the familiar work of other hospitality theorists with slight disdain, for now the established rules seem stuffy and dusty and diminutive in scope. You have introduced vastness. You discuss hospitality in primordial terms and let us look at ourselves as if from the perspective of extra-terrestrial anthropologists.

Theoretical context

I began this hospitality project as an artwork and had armed myself with texts on hospitality from Derrida (1999, 2000), Levinas (1969, 1987), Dufourmantelle (2013, Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000) along with works rooted in visual culture and experience from theorists like Nicolas Bourriaud (1998) and Walter Benjamin and poetic Michel de Certeau on everyday life (1984, 1998), breathing hope and resistance into the tiny miniscule actions of ordinary people going about their lives; his sociologist collaborator Luce Giard (1998) and her unusual perspective on nourishment; anthropological writings from Mary Douglas and Anna Meigs opened my eyes to the universe of food and pollution; of course Foucault was there, lurking in the background, with the worst, scariest possible scenario. My practice encompasses a socially engaged art project and a food business and falls awkwardly between all these theoretical stools.

No Pressure/lots of pressure

The faces of these theorists, with which I made a point of familiarising myself, were lodged with my own inner critic, picking at me and calling me out to myself, sometimes to each other. None more than Mssr. Jacques Derrida with his unyielding demand for pure, unconditional

hospitality – to give “all of one’s home and oneself, to give him or her one’s own, our own, without asking a name, or compensation, or the fulfilment of even the smallest condition” (Derrida, 2000, p.??). To me, he was like a parent who asks the impossible and is never happy with their child’s efforts or achievements. I try to obey him. I know with certainty that it will never be enough. I continue, learning to live with the shortcomings.

Mind Blown

You, Mme Irigaray have thrown me completely by providing a new set of laws. I cannot say yet whether your demands around hospitality are any more achievable, but they are wildly different to those of Mr Derrida. I find them very closely connected to the original meaning of the word hospitality, *ghostis*, which refers neither to the guest nor the host, but the relationship between the two parties (Visser, 1991, Cheah, 2013); the magic fizzing particles which exist temporarily in this infrastructure of shared protection. I have latched on to this concept because I find beauty and hope in it, and because I can easily relate it to the moments of human shared experience which I try to create in my practice. You lay out your rules in almost architectural terms, presenting a radical new spatial interplay between guest and host. You also impose extreme changes to the pace of welcome, which I will discuss further. All in all, I find your conceptualisation of hospitality to be very relatable to me as an artist.

The antechamber of possibility

Imagine this scenario:

Host positioned proprietorially at threshold, stranger arrives, host ushers stranger in, guest is passive receiver of host’s generosity, guest must not cause disruption, host has power and honour, guest is not to be questioned. This manifestation of hospitality with which we are familiar, you refer to as a “unilateral and condescending gesture toward one more destitute than oneself...” (Irigaray, 2013, p.43). In striving for the hospitality of “coexistence” (2013, p. 43), you make countless fascinating amendments to the exchange. Firstly you ask that the host steps out beyond the threshold, leaves their domain or “space already assigned to us by a logic proper to a particular culture...” (Irigaray, 2013, p. 43) and meet the guest in a new space, where neither party belong. You suggest nature as an ideal place for this interaction. This relatively neutral environment prevents the host from “assimilating” guest into their culture, swallowing them. This new approach is counter-intuitive for the host, who is urged to heartily bundle the stranger into their dominion without hesitation, without examination.

Here is a spatial delay which offers both parties an opportunity to learn about each other. “It is crucial that the place of hospitality permit each one to feel free” (Irigaray, 2013, p.47). I think a lot about this space and how to create it in my hospitality practice. Where might I fit in this intriguing pause? How might I create time and space to “welcome the difference(s) between our guest and ourselves” (2013, p. 47)?

You also provide guidelines for etiquette in this antechamber – silence and nakedness. This is interesting. The moment where host and guest encounter one another is an intense one. The impulse to welcome unconditionally is in competition with the impulse to protect ourselves. There is a lot of hustle and bustle around traditional hospitality, where guest is incorporated with great haste into the dwelling, as though a hungry cyclone will pluck them away if they hesitate for a moment longer. This fuss provides welcome distraction from the intensity of the moment. It diffuses the scariness of what is actually happening. If we remove this fuss, are we not left to face the intensity?

The first word that has to be said to each other by way of welcome, is our capacity for remaining silent. This sign of welcome shows that each one accepts to leave the circle of one’s own discourse - or usual house of language - in order to listen to what the other one wants to say, wants to address him or her, from a horizon of language that is unknown to them.

(Irigaray, 2013, p. 48)

I enjoy playing around with ways in which to do this in the day-to-day commercial hospitality setting. Occasionally I sit down with people and say nothing for a tiny moment before taking an order. I have not yet had the courage to experiment with nakedness in this context! I jest. Of course, I appreciate the wider meaning of that term naked, which you share in your text – “without being already submitted or compared to customs that might thwart or mask their natural belonging through cultural difference(s) that would render them irreducibly unfamiliar to one another”. I think you refer here to the shedding of one’s own prejudices and preconceptions and I like the idea of psychologically stripping oneself of those layers as preparation for the host/guest encounter.

It’s not about the people

The encounter you prescribe resembles a sort of meditation – a process that allows for transcendence. The primary outcome of this approach is that the focus is removed from the

protagonists - guest and host - and placed upon the new relationship between them. It is a celebration of *Ghostis*. The fizzing particles. It is easy to take this image one step further and imagine these moments of shared human experience producing a sort of energy. Theorist Theorist Bourriard, delivering a keynote address at the TU Dublin MA Art and the Environment event, spoke about energy possessing greater aesthetic currency than beauty now, here in the Anthropocene (Bourriard, 2020). I believe that vibrant moments of shared experiences carry vital weight and power and that the sort of hospitality you describe is central to these moments.

Bigger picture – hospitality and the earth

Taking the focus away from the actors, guest and host, allows us to think bigger. You help with this by reminding us of hospitality practices inherent in nature. The propagation of our species after all, is rooted in hospitality. We are welcomed into a woman's uterus. We are fed from her body. If we are lacking in nutrients, they are offered from her bones and teeth. We suck milk from her nipples. Here is 'the law of absolute, unconditional, hyperbolic hospitality'. Derrida - see this! During the sexual act, our body welcomes parts of another's body into it. We tuck them into us, greedily, repeatedly. We buzz off each other. *Ghostis* fizzing once again, this time with possible biological repercussions! Our species has also enjoyed unconditional (up to now) hospitality from the earth. We have been feasting away on all that is offered and when supplies ebb we work away on the bones and teeth. Hospitality is as deeply programmed into humans as DNA.

Hospitality = in our DNA

You are doubtless aware of Derrida's discussion of the antimony of hospitality – the paradox of *the* law of unconditional hospitality versus the laws of society which protect us. I have admired the breathless exuberance of the host who has "no more urgent concern than that of letting his joy shine out upon anyone who, of an evening, might come to eat at his table and rest under his roof from the fatigues of the road" (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000, p. 77). I have dug deep in my own reserves as a host, for this exuberance. I must admit occasional suspicion/frustration at this unquenchable desire to share. It is supposed to be pure and unconditional, but it is often found adjacent to fear and judgment, by society, by the gods dressed up as wayfarers, sent to test us - "Thus any failure to act appropriately is treated with social condemnation" (Lashley, 2017, p. 3).

What was sharing between all the children of the mother, in particular, as Earth has become a welcome tinged with moralism and paternalism, a welcome of the strange or the foreign, the one, he or she, with whom it is difficult to share and who is considered to be more or less inferior to oneself.'

(Irigaray, 2013, p. 42).

I have wondered where it originated, this impulse to welcome the stranger. Perhaps the reason we humans all experience the same impulse to welcome strangers is because we have been welcomed, into our mother's womb and onto the earth. As Derrida and Dufourmantelle suggest, in order to be a host you have to have been a stranger (2000, p.56). Are you suggesting Mme Irigaray that we have all been strangers?

Let me return to the antechamber. Another noteworthy outcome is that, although the focus has shifted away from the actors, guest and host, and towards the new shared experience/energy/particles, something interesting is happening in the background. Where before, the guest was a passive amenable imposition, an indiscriminate lump if you will, now they begin to have agency. They have sat in an antechamber together in silence and absorbed each other. And now, the attention has been successfully dragged away from the graciousness of the host and the guest has been bestowed with an identity and a culture. A space has been created for transcendence. An opening up of "the circle of the horizon within which we stay" (Irigaray, 2013, p. 47). The guest is now invited to impact the domain of the host and possibly change their lives forever.

I will sign off now Mme Irigaray. You have shown me a new set of rules which have exploded the old rules and my head. You have connected hospitality to profound ancient primordial practices of the earth. You have highlighted the potential role of the guest to change our lives. The experience has been otherworldly and energetic. Everything is slightly different now. Thank you.

2.2.4 Letter Number Four – Commercial Hospitality

Dear Mssr De Certeau,

Over the past few weeks, I have been constructing an argument in defence of commercial hospitality and looking for theoretical backup. It has been a frustrating pursuit. The discourse is narrow and leans towards the pragmatic. Usually, I am all for pragmatism; I love nuts and bolts. However, I have, of late been submerged in a complex philosophical multiverse with Derrida, Levinas, Homer, Dufourmantelle, and many other ideasmiths and I am not yet ready to emerge. It is proving difficult to disentangle myself from their oozy, sprawling interconnected conceptual tendrils to the neat, compartmentalised texts on commercial hospitality.

This morning, walking to buy coffee I thought of you and asked, like I have many times before, “what would Michel de Certeau say about this?”. I am puzzled that it took me this long. Not because your connection to commercial hospitality is obvious, but because you have been my go-to theory mentor for as long as I have been making public facing projects. Your inclination to celebrate the powerful agency of ordinary humans and their capacity to resist systems of oppression, such as capitalism, of course belongs at the heart of enquiry into the possible benefits of commercial hospitality.

The first conceptual (and in fact moral) hurdle is Derrida. (For our purposes I will direct my ire at Derrida. I am aware that this scapegoating is unfair for he is articulating a law which he did not write.) He states emphatically that true hospitality cannot expect anything in return. We must “give the new arrival all of one’s home and oneself...without asking a name, or compensation, or the fulfilment of even the smallest condition” (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000, p. 77). Yes – he acknowledges the impossibility of this law, but in stating it like this he places all of us mortals who live in defiance of it in a slightly shameful position, something akin to original sin.

For to be what it “must” be, hospitality must not pay a debt, or be governed by a duty: it is gracious, and “must” not open itself to the guest [invited or visitor], either “conforming to duty” or “out of duty”...this hospitality of paying up is no longer graciously offered beyond debt and economy...

(Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000, p. 83)

His advocacy of this ancient and sacred practice shines a dreadfully unflattering light upon any form of hospitality that is governed by reciprocity. The hospitality which I practice involves a monetary exchange and I think of him often at the end of the day in my café, logging the day's takings as I "fumble in a greasy till" (Yeats) like a greedy rat. The prohibition of exchange, or even the expectation of exchange, as described with language such as "impure" and "violence" (Dufourmantelle, 2013, p. 15) has been a hindrance to me. I am relieved to see this quandary shared by Gerasimos Kakoliris:

Another problem (or "advantage" for some) with Derrida's "hyperbolic" ethics of hospitality is that it retains us in a permanent situation of "bad conscience," or "guilt." The "absolute" or "hyperbolic" law of hospitality precludes someone from ever being hospitable enough. Therefore, one is always guilty and must always ask for forgiveness for never welcoming the other enough.

(Kakoliris, 2015, p. 151)

By giving unconditional hospitality the status of "mystical experience" (Dufourmantelle, 2013, p. 16), it makes it difficult to discuss the possible merits of reciprocal hospitality without feeling mercenary and vulgar. But try we must!

Firstly, allow me to contextualise (bemoan) the afore-mentioned frustration with the literature I have found in defence of commercial hospitality. Elizabeth Telfer has written a piece entitled, 'The Philosophy of Hospitableness', and is often cited on this topic. I find Ms Telfer's argument to be reductive and flawed. It centres around the idea that commercial hospitality's saving grace is that those employed to operate these sites are likely to have traits of "hospitableness".

This theory brings to mind the characters celebrated by you, urban "confidants" (de Certeau, 1998, p.77) like your 'Robert the Greengrocer' and 'Old Michel' whose wife, 'The Dairywoman', who "was a sort of mother for all the neighbourhood children" (1998, p. 83). These characters populate our neighbourhoods, if we know to look out for them. They are found in the hospitality industry as they are found in shops, factories, libraries, banks, hospitals. They impose human presence upon our city scape. They soften the corners of our institutions. Their miniscule tactical gestures accumulate to provide a body of evidence that we resist the systems of oppression which aim to reduce us to isolated faceless consumers. Instead, we are the authors of our geographies. We set the tone of the atmosphere, we reappropriate these

public spaces, some of which are commercial, by adding layers of shared experiences which compact to form rich spatial heritage to be shared by all inhabitants.

For Ms Telfer to suggest that the hospitality industry is acceptable because it has locked in a workforce of these kind, soft characters is reductive and potentially patronising. It positions hospitality as a sort of vocation which traps those who have received *the calling*. Furthermore, she states that the incentive to go above and beyond with hospitality is rooted in the motivation to hold down the job. As has been demonstrated by the recent global, post-Covid, hospitality industry staffing crisis, these jobs, it transpires, are not desirable. In this country 87 per cent of hospitality businesses were still finding it difficult to recruit staff in July 2022 (Mc Donagh, 2022).

George Ritzer's essay, 'Inhospitable Hospitality' (2007) questions the changing role of commercial hospitality and the potential growing inhospitality therein, which seems promising. However, Mr Ritzer has chosen to locate his musings in highly profit-driven "cathedrals of consumption" (2007, p. 130), namely fast-food franchises such as Mc Donald's. He is quite valid in acknowledging that the features which render these establishments successful are not those generally associated with unconditional hospitality. He names efficiency, predictability, calculability, and technology as trends which threaten the authenticity of the commercial hospitality experience and calls upon us to resist these advances. He cites the Slow Food movement as a beacon of hope ("a religion for the privileged" is how Suzanne Zuppello (2018) describes the often prohibitively exclusive, over-aestheticised "cult-like" movement).

He concludes by scraping the barrel of grim consolation with the possibility that new consumers of hospitality will be so accustomed to this sub-standard version that they will forget there was ever anything better, and be satisfied in their ignorance. How insulting and snobbish! To discount fast-food restaurants as inhospitable to me, is over-simplistic. I would even argue that according to certain aspects of the basic law of hospitality, they are even more compatible. In Mc Donald's and Starbucks, an individual may enter and receive service without any interrogation or questioning. The fastness is compatible with the swift ushering in of the unconditional welcome – "Enter quickly, as I am afraid of my happiness" (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000, p. 131). The guest is offered space and privacy, unquestioned, uninterrogated. This could not be possible in a slow food experience, or indeed in a private house.

The afore-mentioned texts have posited commercial hospitality as an attempt to emulate private hospitality by using terms such as “simulations”, “fakes”, (Ritzer, 2007 p.134) and “a false commercial imitation” (Telfer, 2017, p.58). I would like, in your presence, to dislodge commercial hospitality from the shadows of the domestic sphere and explore its merits as a public space.

You describe very beautifully the importance of the home but also the drawbacks of closed private spaces which can place the inhabitant under a sort of “terrible house arrest” (de Certeau, Giard, Mayol, 1998, p. 148). “The private space must know how to open itself up to the flow of people coming in and out, to be the passageway for a continual circulation, where objects, people, words and ideas cross paths; for life is also about mobility, impatience for change, and relation to a plurality of others.” (de Certeau, Giard, Mayol, 1998, p. 148). Although you are referring here to a domestic setting, this image fits exactly with my aims for a vibrant commercial hospitality setting.

Your description of stress of being a guest in another’s home and the need to “remain in his or her place” (de Certeau, Giard, Mayol, 1998, p. 145) is in wonderful contrast with Boswell’s extolling the virtues of the tavern below:

The master of the house is anxious to entertain his guests – the guests are anxious to be agreeable to him; and no man, but a very impudent dog indeed, can as freely command what is in another man’s house, as if it were his own. Whereas, at a tavern, there is a general freedom from anxiety. You are sure of a welcome; and the more noise you make, the more trouble you give, the more good things you call for, the welcomer you are.

(Telfer, 2017, p. 65 citing J. Boswell, 1934)

I have plucked out these portrayals of domestic hospitality as restrictive to raise the possibility that commercial hospitality might, unexpectedly, provide the guest with more freedom, and therefore comfort. It leads us on nicely to the wider role that sites such as bars and cafés play in our towns and cities. Geographer David Bell’s perspective is most welcome here. He references environment-behaviouralist, David Seamon’s use of the beautiful term, “place ballet” to describe “that part scripted, part improvised, largely unspoken dance we all do around each other as we go about our daily lives” (Bell, 2017, p. 32).

I have had the pleasure this morning, of revisiting your chapter on walking in the city (de Certeau, 1984). Your beautiful prose is a tonic to me. These pages are inscribed with layers of highlights, arrows, boxes made by me over the years of navigating a public-facing art practice. I smile to myself now, realising that these dog-eared pages have come to resemble the city scape that is described upon them. In your exploration of “habitability” (1984, p.105) you write that what makes cities and towns liveable-in, is their capacity to be “believable” (1984, p.106); what makes them believable are the “stories and legends that haunt urban space like superfluous or additional inhabitants” (p. 106).

“Relics”

“Debris”

“Shadows”

“Fragments of music and poetry”

I think of these things as dust, almost like archaeological matter, which lodges in our cities and is proof that we inhabitants share experiences here and that we add our own poetry to the pre-authored, ordered space. It might not be visible, this dust, but it is palpable in other ways. I started using hospitality in my art projects as a way of catching this dust. I would find spaces which I felt were too sterile (and therefore not “believable”) and gather people together in them to share a meal. Through these moments of human intertwining, “wordless stories” (p.106) are formed in these spaces, and they change.

I fear I have taken us on a self-absorbed detour, but I want to lay a good foundation for philosophically justifying commercial hospitality. “Cafés are places in the city in which we have come to expect conviviality between the unacquainted” (Laurier and Philo, 2006, p. 3). They are places where people can sit alone together with food and drink as a decoy. David Bell cites historian George Chauncey’s lovely line about how certain versions of “privacy could only be had in public’ (Bell, 2017, p. 32). This endearing paradox expresses perfectly the freedom afforded to guests at sites of public hospitality. They provide democratic anchors to the inhabitants of cities and towns. Here, author Geoff Dyer describes the significance of his coffee and doughnut ritual while living in New York:

Delectica had been my base, it was the point from which my sense of familiar and localized happiness had spread. It was the epicentre of my well-being – what Marx, in a non-pastry-related context, termed the heart of a heartless world.

(Dyer, 2010, p. 164)

Well Mssr de Certeau, please accept my gratitude.

Airing these questions with you has given me succour. I have washed my hands of the ickiness of the greasy till. I am freshly bolstered in my belief that sites of commercial hospitality have the capacity to puncture the occasionally unfriendly landscape of our towns and cities with warmth and humanity.

2.3.5 – Letter Number Five – Hospitality in Institutions

Dear Ms Molloy-Dowd

We crossed paths around eight years ago in your coffee shop in Holles St. hospital. I had stumbled in after a horrifically gruelling gynaecological appointment. I sat down to compose myself before leaving the hospital. I had lost my colour and was slightly teary. You placed a cup of tea in front of me, without saying anything.

I don't imagine you will recall it, but I have revisited this gesture countless times, dismantling it and putting it back together again. I think about its precision. This action seems miniscule. Its financial and human resource costs were negligible. A tea bag costs a commercial caterer under four cents, the cost of 200ml of boiling water is probably too low to quantify. The tea, from conception to delivery, probably took under thirty seconds. The impact of this small act was profound however and will stay with me indefinitely. I try to imagine if it had never happened, if the gesture was withdrawn from history; the countless scenarios which might have prevented you from following through with this kind impulse and how different I would have felt leaving the hospital that day.

I work in hospitality too, within institutions (a college for a long time and now a museum) and I have been wondering a lot about ways that hospitality spaces can help, or indeed hinder institutions. The cup of tea you gifted me that day is the most perfect and eloquent example of a hospitality space valiantly rescuing its institution. There is a French theorist Marcel Mauss who wrote about gifts. He believed that it is a mistake to think of them as “inactive” objects and that they contain a little bit of the essence of the benefactor. “Souls are mixed with things; things with souls. Lives are mingled together, and this is how, among persons and things so intermingled, each emerges from their own sphere and mixes together” (2002 [1950], p. 25). Isn't it something, Ms Molloy, to think that you presented to me a tiny amount of your soul in a paper cup full of hot liquid in a hospital coffee shop that day, and that I received it and allowed it to change me?

I entered the hospital that day to receive medical care. I approached the front door. A preliminary admittance into the building was granted by a security guard. A receptionist approved my entry and issued further instruction. These actions are associated with hospitality. I was the wayfaring stranger, arriving at the threshold. I had left the safety of my normal surroundings and I was asking to be admitted into this building in order to benefit from the services housed within. The hospital is the host. My crossing the threshold means that we

entered into an agreement of mutual trust, such as strangers do when they play by the rules of hospitality.

In the very first chapter of her book, *Take back the Tray* a critique of food in institutions, Joshna Maharaj emphasises the relevance of hospitality in sites such as hospitals and universities.

Ultimately hospitality is about humanity: it's a relationship between the person serving the food and the person receiving; it's anticipating needs and offering kindness, usually in the form of a good meal. Hospitality lets food service workers be caregivers.... (Maharaj, 2020, p. 17)

This is interesting to me Ms Molloy-Dowd because it is precisely what happened with us. The mechanics of hospitality in institutions are a little ajar, perhaps because they are set up to provide a service and that becomes their primary function. Traditionally, hospitality exchanges rely on tools such as food, shelter, entertainment. The guest can gauge the welcome of the host by the quality of these offerings. The more extreme the conditions, the greater the obligation on the host to be lavish (King, citing Arthur White, 1995, p.221). In an institution, the service provided therein, say - healthcare, is the main job of work and supersedes the delivery of traditional hospitality. I presented myself to the hospital that day for a specialised medical attention, not for unconditional welcome, food and shelter. However, that is not to say that this is acceptable to absolve the institution of all responsibilities relating to hospitality. It seems to me that someone, somewhere in that institution will have to pick up the pieces, as you did with me. You, in your capacity as a caterer, took over the caring duties which the healthcare workers were unable to deliver. Had you not intervened, I would have stumbled out onto the street, wholly failed by the institution.

There is another aspect of hospitality which institutions struggle to deliver and that its guests continuously crave and that is a palpable feeling of human connection. Let us look back to the wayfaring stranger on the threshold. Luce Irigaray suggests that the best way for host to meet guest is to resist the urge to usher them into their domain in an effort to assimilate, but rather slowly, thoughtfully “welcome the difference(s) between our guest and ourselves” (2013, p.47). This is the hospitality of “coexistence” (p.43). In this practice, the guest is seen, really seen, and given agency to have an impact.

As Levinas acknowledges, in welcoming a guest, and embracing the “infinite otherness of the other” (ref) the host must be prepared for complete transcendence (Meijer-van Wijk, 2017, p.

46), “This is a somewhat troubling endeavour as the encounter with the other might change us – it calls us into question” (Levinas cited in Meijer-van-Wijk, p. 48). This hospitality of coexistence, with free-flowing transcendence and an open invitation to the guest to effect change, does not seem compatible to the efficient delivery of a service in an institution.

To function smoothly, an institution implements systems which maximise their capacity to perform their function with the (often stretched) resources at hand (financial, technological, human). An unfortunate by-product of this drive for efficiency is the “dehumanising” of the guests of the institution (Maharaj, 2020, p.20). Michel Foucault is vehemently critical of this approach in healthcare, and other institutions. He refers to this reductive practice as the “medical gaze”. “If one wishes to know the illness from which he is suffering, one must subtract the individual, with his particular qualities...at this level the individual was merely a negative element, the accident of the disease, which, for it and in it, is most alien to its essence.” (2003 [1963], p. 14).

Humans don’t enjoy being dehumanised. We reject it and resist it. Our humanity is a fizzing energetic vital substance, incompatible with repression. As Michel de Certeau argues (in fact in direct response to Foucault), systems of order which impose a “grid of discipline” (de Certeau, 1988, p. xiv) will prompt us to invent artful “technologies” which “short circuit” those systems. These technologies might range from riots and protests and strikes to more discreet forms of “antidiscipline”, (1998, p. xv) which involve the reappropriation of space – where people construct a poetic layer of humanity within the constraints of the organised systems. This is what you did Ms Molloy-Dowd. I met you in this space, built from the compacted layers of human resilience. You forced the institution to see me and remember me and be impacted by me. Together we created a sculptural glitch.

I have found in my work within institutions that this poetic reappropriation of space pairs up nicely with hospitality, exactly as it did with us in Holles St. The sites designated for sustenance, kitchens, tea trolleys, coffee shops like yours and mine, provide favourable conditions for the cultivation of human resistance. As sociologist Claude Fischler puts it: “Commensality produces bonding. In apparently all cultures, eating the same food is equated with producing the same flesh and blood, thus making commensals more alike and bringing them closer to each other.” (2011, p. 533). Sites of hospitality set the stage for shared human experience.

To feed a guest, we must encounter them physically, accommodate their bodies in a considered space, over a period of time. We ask them to place their trust in us and open their bodies in acceptance of what we have prepared. We have to look at people when we feed them. We possibly get a better glimpse at the guest, in these moments than those who run the institution. Foucault discusses the advent of medical imaging at the end of the eighteenth century, in ‘The Birth of the Clinic’ and how, ironically it makes doctors see less of the patient (2003 [1963]). The posture of the guest is slightly altered too, in and around hospitality sites because they provide a neutral space, slightly removed from the function of the institution, a “heart of a heartless world” (Dyer, citing Marx, 2010, p. 164). In instances where the delivery of these services is strained or compromised, hospitality workers can be allies, as you were to me.

If hospitality sites occupy the space between the institution and its guests, food forms the language between the two. I have strong opinions about the power of the particular food offering to make or break a relationship, as does Claude Fischler:

the eaters life and health are at stake whenever the decision is taken to incorporate; but so too are his place in the universe, his essence, his nature, in short his identity. An object inadvisedly incorporated may contaminate him, insidiously transform him from within, possess him or rather depossess him of himself. (1988, p.280).

Joshna Maharaj does not mince her words on this subject: “That lacklustre tray of food and a campus food court full of global franchises tells patients and students that they are not worth any more than this, shitty meal after shitty meal. This is certainly not good service, and it dehumanizes and disappoints.” (2020, p. 20).

You and I did not have an opportunity to exchange views about the quality of food in institutions. This is a complex and unwieldy topic which I have chosen to sidestep here because I felt it more urgent to convey to you my gratitude for the profoundly meaningful expression of unconditional hospitality which you offered me from the confines of the imposed order of this particular healthcare institution. And to learn more about it. I wonder now how many times you and your colleagues have performed this rescue.

2.3 Conclusion

At the crux of this research project is the problematic barrier between the philosophical ideal of hospitality and the commercial hospitality industry. Over the course of this chapter, I have endeavoured to bridge this divide by tracing a trajectory from the theoretical origins of hospitality to its practical manifestations in a commercial setting. I have explored the etymology of the word, the concept of the unconditional welcome, the potential for transcendence which the guest brings, the alternative practices of mutual hospitality. I have sought absolution for my sins as an operator of a commercial hospitality venture and I have highlighted the capacity of active hospitality to effect profoundly positive change in the context of an institutional setting.

Conducting this body of secondary research has had an unfathomable impact on my hospitality practice. It has afforded me with vital new perspectives on the urgency of articulating our attitude to the stranger, and the possibility that this person brings opportunity for transcendence and is here to rescue us from ourselves. The task of applying this approach to the hospitality industry is an exciting one filled with learning and adventure.

Chapter Three:

Methodology

3.0 Chapter Three – Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research methodology used in this study and justifies its application within the field of interpretivism. I adopted a qualitative approach to compile the primary research, comprising two separate strands of data: interviews with students, staff and visitors of Luncheonette and an autoethnographic account from the perspective of the operator (me). I will also provide some useful context below in relation to my positionality as researcher. I will justify the use of an autoethnographic approach, including a rationalisation for the linguistic tone used throughout this thesis. I will outline the design of the case study, the formulation of the interviews and the process of thematic analysis used to process the findings.

3.2 Context

Luncheonette was in operation from 2013 to 2021 as an art project/college canteen in the National College of Art and Design. It was undertaken by me, as an individual visual artist with no previous experience of running a food business. Before this, I had been exploring the use of food and hospitality in the context of visual art and discovering the powerful impact of such welcoming gestures. I used food as a decoy – a device for making strangers feel comfortable in site-specific art installations. I established Luncheonette in NCAD as a continuation of this approach, so before it ever became a business, Luncheonette was an art project; a holistic, carefully considered site of hospitality designed to maximise moments of human shared experience.

In transitioning from an art project to a commercial hospitality model, Luncheonette adopted an unorthodox hybrid approach. The prioritisation of fully-immersive hospitality experience over financial gain might have rendered Luncheonette's survival short-lived. However, what transpired was an institutional catering operation which was unrecognisable as such. During its eight years of trading in NCAD, Luncheonette became an unlikely food destination, drawing crowds of visitors daily from outside the college and much publicity and acclaim. The legacy that is most interesting however, is the impact that Luncheonette had on the lived experience of the staff and students inside the educational institution.

The purpose of the primary research conducted in this dissertation is to gauge this impact through the application of a case study. The urgency in doing so relates to the desire to collate a specific set of skills, knowledge and experience from this active hospitality endeavour so that it can be presented as an informative pilot project for other institutions and those operating within the hospitality industry.

3.3 Research Aims

“Personally, I consider that any piece of research should have a beneficial or practical goal for all the people involved in it” (Mendez, 2013, p. 282). I concur. My motivation in performing this research is to convert specialist knowledge into a practical set of tools informed by the following:

1. The philosophical, theoretical, historical, sociological, geographical and etymological literature relating to hospitality which is presented in the preceding chapter.
2. A case study of Luncheonette in NCAD, using mixed qualitative methodologies, comprising:
 - a. Interviews with students, staff and visitors of Luncheonette
 - b. Autoethnographic account

3.4 Research Focus

The purpose of this research is to investigate the impact of carefully considered hospitality in an educational institution, emphasising the value in applying the philosophical ideals of hospitality. The task is to present evidence that a thoughtfully designed site of hospitality, such as a cafeteria, can act as a powerful tool in enriching the lived experience of those that operate and use this institution, using Luncheonette in NCAD as a case study.

In doing so the following research objectives are addressed:

1. What does the literature reveal about the philosophy, history, theory, etymology of hospitality?
2. What are the obstacles in implementing the ideals of hospitality theory in the context of commercial hospitality?

3. How can guests in institutions be given more visibility and thereby agency, using sites of commercial hospitality such as coffee shops and canteens?

4. What evidence is there that carefully considered hospitality can have a positive impact in the institution using Luncheonette as a case study to gauge the scope of its impact.

5. How can this data be presented in a way which is legible, interesting, and relevant with a view to shaping it into a model for other institutions?

3.5 Methodology

The research approach adopted is positioned in the realm of interpretivism because this study is collecting data on the impact which a particular social reality has had on a community. “Interpretivism is based on the assumption that reality is subjective, multiple and socially constructed” (University of Nottingham, n/d). The findings of the primary research have been shaped and moulded by the thoughts, actions and agency of individual contributors in a way which could never take place in a positivist approach. As might be expected with an interpretivist study, I have used qualitative methodology in the collection of data.

“Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p.4). As stated in the introduction of this chapter, there is an urgency in collating the knowledge and experience gained from running Luncheonette because it defied any expectations of what a hospitality offering in an educational institutional setting might achieve. Because I am the designer, owner and operator of this anomaly, I can give accounts of the risks taken and mistakes made. It was also vital to elicit data from those who used Luncheonette in order to gauge its impact. This information was collected in a case study, using qualitative research methodology.

3.6 Qualitative Research

“If you’re purely after facts, please buy yourself the phone directory of Manhattan. It has four million times correct facts. But it doesn’t illuminate” (Borel, citing Herzog, 2016, p. 91). This quote from documentary filmmaker, Werner Herzog provides a fun but facetious perspective on the virtues of qualitative research. “The selection of a research design is also based on the nature of the research problem or issue being addressed, the researchers’ personal experiences, and the audiences for the study.” (Creswell, 2009, p. 22). My problem, experience and audience combined with the scope of research, and the holistic approach are such that I have eliminated Positivist and Pragmatist approaches, opting instead for a qualitative approach. “Whereas a typical quantitative research project identifies and investigates the impact of only a few variables, qualitative research attempts to explore a host of factors that may be influencing a situation” (Hancock and Algozzine, 2006, p. 8). The data for my primary research consists of personal narratives, experiences and opinion - tools which would prove ill-fitting in a quantitative approach (Mendez, 2013, citing Marshall and Rossman, 1999). In addition, the primary research for this project is conducted through observations made in their natural environment or “everyday situations” (Silverman, 200, p. 7).

3.7 Linguistic Hospitality

Look at any handbook on your shelf and what you’ll find is that most chapters are written in third-person, passive voice. It’s as if they’re written from nowhere by nobody. The conventions mitigate against personal and passionate writing. These books are filled with dry, distant, abstract, propositional essays.

“That’s called academic writing, darling”

(Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 734)

As previously discussed, the motivation for conducting this primary research is the collation of skills, knowledge and experience gathered by me over the course of eight years, which I believe to be valuable to others. I cannot be extracted from this process. This is a realisation that took place early on in this process and has led me to adopt an autoethnographic approach, to be discussed further in this chapter. However, I would like to dwell here upon the intimacy between myself (the practitioner) and the phenomenon under investigation, because this entanglement has an impact on the delivery of information and the language used.

This level of proximity to the subject matter is referred to by Méndez in the context of listing the advantages of an autoethnographic approach: “it allows the researcher to write first person accounts which enable his or her voice to be heard, and thus provide him or her with a transition from being an outsider to an insider in the research” (2013, citing Hitchcock and Hughes 1995). I have struggled with removing my voice from this chapter. “When I tell a story about my own culture, how can I create the appropriate distance within myself (i.e., from my experiencing self) to speak authentically?” (Wyatt, 2006, p. 815). In the story of this research, I am the narrator and one of the characters featured. In addition, I can all but picture the faces of those listening.

This entire body of research is about the practice of hospitality. In a curious sort of osmosis, I observe that the ancient laws and customs associated with the guest/host experience have seeped into every aspect of the research: if I am to share this material, it must be done in the spirit of hospitality. This is a story to be told in a convivial setting. The readers here are guests. They are seen and acknowledged and seated close by. The decision to write in the first person is a strategic one. I wish to use this as a device which brings the reader in to this cosy entanglement and allows them to feel part of it. Wyatt explores the ethical and spatial repercussions of these decisions: “The third person can sound distant and disembodied, the tone of the omniscient, invisible author” (Wyatt, 2006, p. 815). The pronoun is used here like a seating plan. My using the first person, is an invitation to the reader to feel welcome ushered in.

3.8 Timeline of research

Table 1: Timeline of Research

January 2022	Outline of key topics for Literature Review
February - May 2022	Reading and researching for Literature Review
May - July 2022	Collating material gathered; processed as a series of five letters, each one addressing the research objectives
August - October 2022	Interviews conducted remotely by research assistant. Autoethnographic research written and compiled.

September 2022 – January 2023	Research paused to facilitate hospitality themed artist residency at Artsadmin in London entitled, “Say Yes to Who or What Turns Up”.
February 2023 – April 2023	Interviews and autoethnographic research processed with thematic analysis. Seven themes were identified which connected the two bodies of research.
April -May 2023	Data distilled into findings and formulated into a discussion. Conclusion drawn. Thesis Submitted.

3.9 Secondary Research

The secondary research presented in the literature review involved delving deep into the origins, history, philosophy, theory and etymology of hospitality. This, as expected, proved fascinating and insightful. Continental philosophical essays, books and speeches; historical accounts of the origins of hospitality; etymological dissections; sociological books and articles, contemporary industry-rooted handbooks; critiques; everyday theory were examined and reviewed.

A comprehensive review of the literature uncovered a dearth of evidence connecting the philosophy of hospitality to the contemporary commercial hospitality practices within the industry.

The secondary research was divided into the following categories:

- Unconditional Hospitality
- The Welcoming Act
- Mutual Hospitality
- Commercial Hospitality
- Hospitality in Institutions

For each category, the relevant literature was grouped together and structured as a letter from me to the primary theorist/informant in that category, juxtaposing related and opposing ideas to theirs. I am aware that in doing so, I have allowed a little more of myself into the literature review than is customary, but this small breach has allowed me to speak directly from my heart and my genuine interests and it has helped me enormously in identifying the criteria for the primary research.

3.10 Primary Research

Having provided an account of my own store of knowledge/experience and explained my approach to the relevant literature, the next task was to gauge the impact that Luncheonette actually had to the community around it through a case study, using mixed qualitative methodologies, comprising:

- a. Interviews with students, staff and visitors of Luncheonette
- b. Autoethnographical account

3.10.1 Autoethnography

Autoethnography, applies the use of the researcher's personal narrative to a particular phenomenon (Mendez, citing McIlveen, 2008). "Autoethnography has been described as an approach to research and writing that "seeks to describe and systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno)" (Mulcahy, 2020, p.29 citing Ellis *et al.*, 2011). It is a by-product of the 'narrative turn' which took place in the field of social science in the mid-1980s. This departure proved controversial and was referred to by Atkinson and Silverman as "a blind alley," a "preoccupation with the revelation of personal experience through confession and therapeutic discourse," "a vulgar realism," and "hyperauthentic," "misleading," "sentimental," "exaggerated," naively "heroic," and a "romantic construction of the self." (Bochner, 2001 citing Atkinson and Silverman 1997). These attributes are no more appealing to me than they are to Atkinson and Silverman, however I have chosen to adopt autoethnography as a key research approach on the basis that provides me with the best opportunity to use my own experience as a source of data (Méndez, 2013). Simply put, it converts my personal entanglement with the phenomena under investigation and converts it from a problem to an asset.

I had to find a place in this case study to give an account of my experience of designing and running Luncheonette. I am putting this account under the heading of autoethnography with some slight reservations. It is autoethnographic because as "architect and instigator" (Mulcahy, p. 29), I am well placed to tell this story. I was there for eight years, in the thick of it all. Roulston defines autoethnography as "an approach to research that puts the self at the center (sic) of cultural analysis" (2018). Chang's version "combines cultural analysis and

interpretation with narrative details” (2016, p.46). Chang asserts that autoethnography “transcends mere narration of self to engage in cultural analysis and interpretation” (2008, p.43). Without sociocultural contextualisation, it disregards ethnography and rests within the realm of autobiography and risks becoming ‘self-indulgent’ and ‘narcissistic’ (Atkinson, 1997; Roulston, 2018). This is the reason for my trepidation. I would like to curtail the autobiographical aspects and use my account as a connective tissue between the literature and the data gathered in the findings. “The key is to connect the personal to the cultural” (Chang, citing Ellis and Bockner, in 2016, p. 46). This description by Kyratzis and Green of autoethnography involving a double narrative process is most relevant to my particular approach: “one that includes the narratives generated by those participating in the research, and one that represents the voice of the researcher as narrator of those narratives” (Mendez, 2013, p. 280). An autoethnographic account of operating Luncheonette in NCAD from the perspective of myself, the operator is to be found in Appendix A. For consistency, I present the research within the same themes as the interviews: Say Yes to Who or What Turns Up, Make Space, Gather Dust, Share Heritage, Nurture Bodies, Celebrate Ritual and Leave a Trace.

3.10.2 Justification for case study

A case study is the most efficient delivery system in the journey from A to B.

A = the analysis of the impact that carefully considered hospitality site has had on an institution

B = the presentation of Luncheonette as a successful, implementable pilot project which can be applied in other institutions

Using a Case Study model allows me to apply this powerful, new wealth of knowledge relating to hospitality as a lens to analyse Luncheonette as a real life, concrete example of a dynamic hospitality site; to understand it scientifically and gauge its impact. Robert Yin defines case study as “an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (‘the case’) in depth and within its real-world context” (Yin, 2014, p. 16). Another definition from Hancock and Algozzine is: “intensive analyses and descriptions of a single unit or system bounded by space and time” (2006, p. 11).

The phenomenon which I am attempting to investigate is the power of carefully considered hospitality intervention to effect change in institutions. The real-world context is Luncheonette. The space is NCAD and the time is 2013-2021.

This case study will use mixed methodology – Interviews, Autoethnography, Archive material.

3.10.3 Interviews

Part of the urgency felt in relation to gathering data to present Luncheonette as a pilot project, is because the community around this project is, as in the nature of academic cycles, in constant flux. Those students in NCAD that encountered the newly established Luncheonette in 2013 are now long graduated, married, parents, emigrated, superstar fashion designers etc. It is eight months since Luncheonette moved from NCAD. There is a sense of this community slipping away and a time pressure in catching them before they disappear/forget.

The interviews were semi-structured. Questions were shaped to encourage elaboration from the subject. The majority were carried out by a research assistant, Megan Luddy O'Leary. This is a conscious decision to allow for greater candidness from those with whom I have formed social connections and friendships. All interviews were carried out through the online application, Zoom. This facilitated conversations with those not local and also provided an additional audio recording. Nine interviews were conducted, each one roughly one hour in length.

3.10.4 Rationale for Chosen Participants

The interviewees were chosen carefully so that the following three contingents are represented. The first cohort is the students of the college. There were two students interviewed. One student (STU 1) was in attendance in NCAD the year that Luncheonette opened and the other (STU 2) was there when Luncheonette closed. Their contribution was invaluable as they were the intended guests of the institution. The ways in which Luncheonette affected their lives was of primary importance in this case study. The next cohort was NCAD staff. This category of interviewees was sub-divided into academic staff, non-academic staff and directors. Academic staff were chosen from different schools within the college (Design and Visual Culture) so that their separate field of expertise could provide additional insight with their observations. This

group was very invested in the success of Luncheonette. They were also in a position to provide helpful historical context because many precede the establishment of Luncheonette. The inclusion of non-academic staff allowed me to include a security attendant in the interviews, which added the perspective of a co-host. I was lucky to have an opportunity to conduct interviews with two directors of the college. DIR 1 was running NCAD when Luncheonette was setting up and DIR 2 was there for its departure. The insight from both of these has proven vital. The last cohort is a regular visitor from outside the college community who had a separate set of insights.

All interviewees gave written consent in advance of the interview. The interview questions differed slightly for each cohort, according to their particular background. Interview recordings were transcribed and analysed and stored on an encrypted laptop. Individuals names and identities were anonymised to protect their identity.

3.10.5 Data Analysis

The nine interviews were analysed thoroughly. Forty-one codes were identified, twenty-two of which were pre-determined and nineteen of which were emerging. Seven themes were formed from these codes. These themes were presented as a set of guidelines in response to the directive: How to Soften Corners. The autoethnographic research was analysed and arranged in these corresponding themes

3.11 Conclusion

This body of research has been created with heart and urgency and a sincere belief that, had it not been created, there would be an opportunity squandered. Here is an opportunity to interrupt the narratives formed about institutions as impenetrable and austere. I have here accumulated the story of how these formally structured spaces can be made warm and soft and poetic. Hospitality provides us with a set of tools to craft motifs of humanity into the fabric of these buildings. I know, because I have witnessed it and held these chisels. This body of research is an account of how and why this was done and what the consequences will be.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis

4.0 Chapter Four - Data Analysis

4.1 Introduction

Having luxuriated in the fascinating literature surrounding the philosophical, theoretical, historical, sociological, geographical and etymological background on hospitality, it was now time to address the absences I had encountered. These gaps in knowledge proved heartening in one way – I was relieved that the research I needed and wanted to carry out had not already been done. The distinct lack of material around this subject did however instil a small crisis of loneliness and self-doubt - *Why has no body asked these questions before? Is this subject in fact, irrelevant? Have I exceeded an acceptable level of speciality? Is this an exercise in vanity? Etc, etc.*

I swiftly dusted myself off and muted this timewasting crawl-thumping. I remembered the beauty inherent in hospitality - it is a manifestation of all that is good and decent about us. I reaffirmed the urgency in raising awareness around systems for welcoming strangers in an increasingly xenophobic cultural landscape and articulating the impact of these actions in everyday life.

The main gap in knowledge concerned an ironic disconnect between theoretical hospitality and the hospitality industry. There was also virtually nothing available on the impact of theoretical hospitality in institutions. I knew that I had access to solid material and could provide structural integrity to this knowledge hole. Let us imagine a sort of epistemological concrete: there was the information I already possessed, from my own autoethnographical research into providing considered hospitality in an institution for eight years. I saw this as the cement – important, useful for binding other material together but rather brittle without an aggregate. I needed to incorporate some sand and gravel into this knowledge mix. I had easy access to information which would reinforce my autoethnographical account by conducting interviews with those that engaged with this hospitality. With this case study, my lived experience could carry more weight and provide a solid reliable filling for the information cavity.

This chapter will outline the process of reviewing these two distinct piles of information and forming a coherent system for relating them to one another.

4.2 Analysis - Interviews

As described in depth in the previous chapter, my research methodology was qualitative. I decided to begin with the analysis of the case study and then shape my autoethnographic account around the themes found in the nine interviews. Over repeated active listening sessions, I conducted data analysis. On the advice of Braun and Clarke (2006), I temporarily parked concern regarding the validity of the themes and on what grounds a particular piece of data earned the status of theme.

When initially compiling the questions for the interviews, I used my research objectives as a frame of reference, paying particular attention to the third and fourth objectives:

1. What does the literature reveal about the philosophy, history, theory, etymology of hospitality?
2. What are the obstacles in implementing the ideals of hospitality theory in the context of commercial hospitality?
3. How can guests in institutions be given more visibility and thereby agency, using sites of commercial hospitality such as coffee shops and canteens?
4. What evidence is there that carefully considered hospitality can have a positive impact in the institution using Luncheonette as a case study to gauge the scope of its impact.
5. How can this data be presented in a way which is legible, interesting, and relevant with a view to shaping it into a model for other institutions?

For the purposes of this thematic analysis, I revisited these same research objectives in order to sharpen the focus of the investigation. This would imply that my approach to finding themes was theoretical or deductive. It was most certainly my intention to impose a “pre-existing coding frame” onto the material (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.89). However, as I listened more carefully to the interviews, I was taken aback by the prevalence of interesting but unexpected emerging codes, which did not fit neatly into the coding frame. This inconvenient revelation prompted me to embrace an inductive approach and allow myself to be led by the data; to include these ill-fitting emerging codes, trusting that it would all gel coherently eventually.

4.2.1 Interview questions

Here below is a demonstration of how the set of interview questions were informed by research objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4:

1. The philosophy, history, theory, etymology of hospitality

- How welcome did you feel in Luncheonette?
- What do you think Luncheonette's attitude towards its visitors was?
- Describe interaction with Luncheonette staff?
- What was the atmosphere like?
- Outsiders were permitted to visit Luncheonette, did this cause problems for NCAD operations?

2. What are the obstacles in implementing the ideals of hospitality theory in the context of commercial hospitality?

- What did the college require of the catering operation? Was there any formal criteria? What did you need the caterer to deliver? (For NCAD senior management)
- In reference to NCAD waving rent, was it difficult to make the argument for this to the NCAD Board at the time?
- Would you describe Luncheonette as profit driven?
- Would Luncheonette work as a franchise?

3. How sites of commercial hospitality, such as coffee shops and canteens, can provide visibility and thereby agency to the community of an institution?

- Is food important to you? If so, how?
- Did you have any particular special requests?
- Do you have a sense that your presence in Luncheonette was felt or made an impact?
- Did you feel relaxed there, free to be yourself?
- Have you ever been in the kitchen?

4. What evidence is there that carefully considered hospitality can have a positive impact in the institution using Luncheonette as a case study to gauge the scope of its impact.

- Did you ever bring friends, family or guests from outside NCAD to Luncheonette?

- Did you use the dining room for meetings?
- Did you make any new acquaintances in Luncheonette?
- What difference did Luncheonette make to your time in college?
- How connected do you think Luncheonette was to NCAD
- Did Luncheonette provide you with anything that should have been provided by NCAD?
- Did you observe any changes in the behaviours of staff/student body after Luncheonette opened?
- Did having Luncheonette in NCAD impact your job as director in any way?

4.2.2 Interviewee code

DIR 1 – NCAD Director

DIR 2 - NCAD Director

STU 1 – NCAD Student Alumnus (2014)

STU 2 – NCAD Student Alumnus (2022)

VIS 1 – Visitor from outside NCAD

ACA 1 – Academic Staff (Design)

ACA 2 – Academic Staff (Visual Culture)

NAC 1 – Non-academic staff (Admissions)

NAC 2 – Non-academic staff (Security Attendant)

4.2.3 Pre-determined codes and emerging codes

Here are the codes that I was looking for, and found in the interviews:

Table 2: Pre-determined Codes

Pre-determined Codes	Addressed by interviewee
Visitor loyalty	ACA 2, ACA 1, NAC 1, NAC 2
NCAD community investment in Luncheonette	NAC 1, ACA 1, ACA 2, STU2, STU1, NAC 2
Democratic space	ACA 2, VIS 1, ACA 1
Positive reputational capital for NCAD	STU 2, DIR 1, ACA 1, NAC 2
Conviviality with staff	ACA 1, STU 2, NAC 1
A sense of welcome	STU 1, VIS 1, ACA 1, NAC 1, ACA 2

Trust	ACA 2, STU 2, VIS1, ACA 1
Atmosphere	ACA 1, STU 2, VIS 1, ACA 2, NAC 1, NAC 2
Quality of food	ACA2, VIS 1, DIR 2, STU 2, NAC 1, STU 1, NAC 2
Creativity of food	ACA 2, ACA 1, VIS 1
Multi-use amenity	ACA 1, ACA 2, NAC 1
Not profit driven	ACA 2, STU 2, ACA 1, STU 1, NAC 2
Luncheonette = Asset to NCAD	DIR 1, DIR 2, ACA 2, STU 2, ACA 1
NCAD learning from Luncheonette	DIR 2, ACA 2, ACA 1
Conviviality	ACA 1, DIR 2, STU 1, NAC 1, ACA 2
Shared experience and collectiveness	ACA 2, VIS 1, STU 1
Contrast to previous canteen	ACA 2, DIR 1, NAC 1, NAC 2, ACA 1.
Design	ACA 2, ACA 1, STU 2, NAC 1, VIS 1, NAC 2
Productive “wrong place”	ACA 2, ACA 1
Reciprocity	ACA 2, VIS 1
Institutional wellbeing	ACA 2, ACA 1,
Love/hate relationship to the queue	STU 1, ACA 2, ACA 1, STU 2, NAC 2

Here are the emerging codes which provided worthwhile disruption:

Table 3: Emerging Codes

Emerging codes	Addressed by interviewee
Immersive experience	ACA 2, VIS 1, ACA 1, STU 1
Proprietor's presence	ACA 1, ACA 2, NAC 1, DIR 1, VIS 1, NAC 2
Café as artwork	DIR 2, DIR 1, ACA 1, ACA 2, VIS 1
Sanctuary	ACA 1, STU 1, STU 2
Importance of music	VIS 1, ACA 1, ACA 2, STU 2, NAC 2
Value €	ACA 1, DIR 2, STU 2, NAC 2
Unpretentiousness	ACA 1, DIR 2, ACA 2
Anxiety of Luncheonette leaving	ACA 1, DIR 2, DIR 1
Pride	NAC 1, ACA 1, ACA 2, STU 2
Joy	ACA 1, STU 1
Sustainability	DIR 2

JM welcomed into NCAD	NAC 1, DIR 2, ACA 1, NAC 2
Appropriateness as art college cafe	ACA 2, DIR 2, DIR 1, STU 2
Added value	DIR 2, ACA 2, STU 2
Language on menu	ACA 2, STU 2, VIS 1, ACA 1
Secret space	STU 2, VIS 1
Long table negotiation	STU 2, ACA 1, STU 1
Attempts to poach Luncheonette to another institution	VIS 1
Care	ACA 1, VIS 1, STU 1

4.2.4 Choreography of codes into themes

I use the word choreography here because the material gathered in this case study refused to stay still. I would find a code, position it next to another code and watch as it wriggled over somewhere completely unexpected. These pieces of data were sentient and fizzy and slightly impudent. This was what prompted my adopting an inductive approach – I had to yield to their wilfulness. The next task involved arranging these codes into conceptually coherent themes. Here I would look to my fifth research objective for guidance:

SRQ 5: How can this data be presented in a way which is legible, interesting, and relevant with a view to shaping it into a model for other institutions?

As stated in the previous methodology chapter, the motivation behind conducting the research for this Masters dissertation is a practical one. I have gained a highly specialised set of skill and experience which I believe to hold value in a wide set of applications. I want this information to be useful to others. It was logical then to consult the body of autoethnographical research, which tells the story of running Luncheonette and allow the interview data to follow the same chronology of this story.

4.3 Autoethnographic Analysis

4.3.1 How to Soften Corners

As detailed in the introduction, *Softening Corners* is the title of this thesis and refers to the act of using carefully considered hospitality to add an extra layer of humanity, porousness, poetry to an institution or amenity.

To arrange the forty codes identified in the interviews into coherent themes, I have followed the seven categories outlined in the autoethnographic research (Appendix A). This also provides a helpful bridge between the two distinct sources of data. These seven categories are laid out in the form of a step-by-step guide to *Softening Corners*. Here below is a summary of the autoethnographic research arranged in the categories which inform the interview themes.

4.4 Autoethnographic research categories/Interview themes



4.4.1 Say Yes to who or what turns up

This category looks at the attempt to establish Luncheonette as site of unconditional welcome within NCAD and how these principles can be applied to a commercial hospitality setting. I am using this section to gauge the perceived sense of welcome, and conviviality communicated in interviews.

Six of the nine interviewees expressed distinct feelings of welcome and inclusivity, one was relatively ambiguous on the subject. The two remaining interviewees, who did not comment on it, were the two college directors, whose interviews were structured differently.



4.4.2 Make Space

This category examines how Luncheonette provided a new social amenity in NCAD. The space itself was designed to maximise moments of human shared experience. Each and every component of the design was carefully considered and had a role to play in delivering an

accessible, democratic spatial resource. Here I am measuring the relationship between the design and the functionality of the space. All nine subjects interviewed commented on the impact that the design of Luncheonette had on their overall experience.



4.4.3 Gather Dust

This category investigates the relevance of Luncheonette's unorthodox business approach. It was initially conceived as an art project, so the main focus was the provision of a fully-immersive, hospitable experience. A business model was adopted so that staff and suppliers could be paid, but it was not motivated by financial profit. However, because this approach was care-centred, it garnered extensive customer loyalty, which safeguarded its commercial viability. Here I am collecting the distinctions made between Luncheonette and a conventional institutional catering provider.

Seven out of the nine interviewees described being part of an immersive experience. This was perhaps the most significant emerging theme as this was not pursued in the questions and was clearly meaningful for participants.



4.4.4 Share Heritage

This category identifies the potential for a hospitality practice which embraces reciprocity and celebrates the idea that the guest has arrived here on our threshold to save us from ourselves. Luncheonette strove to create a cosy, atmospheric corner within this educational institution. It was essential to me that there was a visible porosity to the space – that guests could feel seen and noticed and part of the story that was being told. I wanted to find as many ways as possible to articulate the impact of those who visited Luncheonette, to tell the story as it was being written. Here I am looking for signs that visitors felt seen and that their presence had an impact.

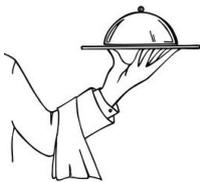
Eight out of the nine interviewed demonstrated a feeling of collective commitment towards Luncheonette. Five subjects expressed a sense that Luncheonette represented the essence of the college.



4.4.5 Nurture Bodies

This category looks at how food was introduced as a device to get people to sit together and form connections. Again, it was a component of the fully immersive experience, initially considered as an art material. It had to function creatively. The more culture in the food, the richer the experience. I am looking for interviewees impressions of the food offering here.

This section presented unanimous overwhelmingly positive accounts of the food provided in Luncheonette. These accounts included remarkable emotional associations with the memories of the food.



4.4.6 Celebrate Ritual

This category provides a descriptive account of an extremely hands-on approach that was adopted to operating Luncheonette. I made a commitment to performing the daily rituals of hospitality, almost like a vocation. I did it with my heart and soul. It was very emotional and high risk. I stayed close by and placed myself personally responsible for all aspects of the experience. This was not the action of micro-managing, but rather a fear of missing part of the story. I am gauging here the impact of my presence as proprietor or host. This was a strong emerging code, not sought after in the questions and was cited by four interviewees.



4.4.7 Leave a Trace

This final category is an attempt to gauge the impact that Luncheonette had on the wider educational institution and is the most directly related to the main over-arching query of this thesis. It is also trying to create a snapshot of the attitude to Luncheonette's departure from NCAD and the shift in culture of staff and students.

Significant and complex revelations emerged here. Eight interviewees expressed heartfelt accounts of an important and lasting legacy. The ninth interviewee was a visitor from outside the college community who was not in a position to contribute.

4.5 Categorisation of forty codes into seven themes

Using the categories described above, I arranged the codes identified in the interviews into these seven themes.

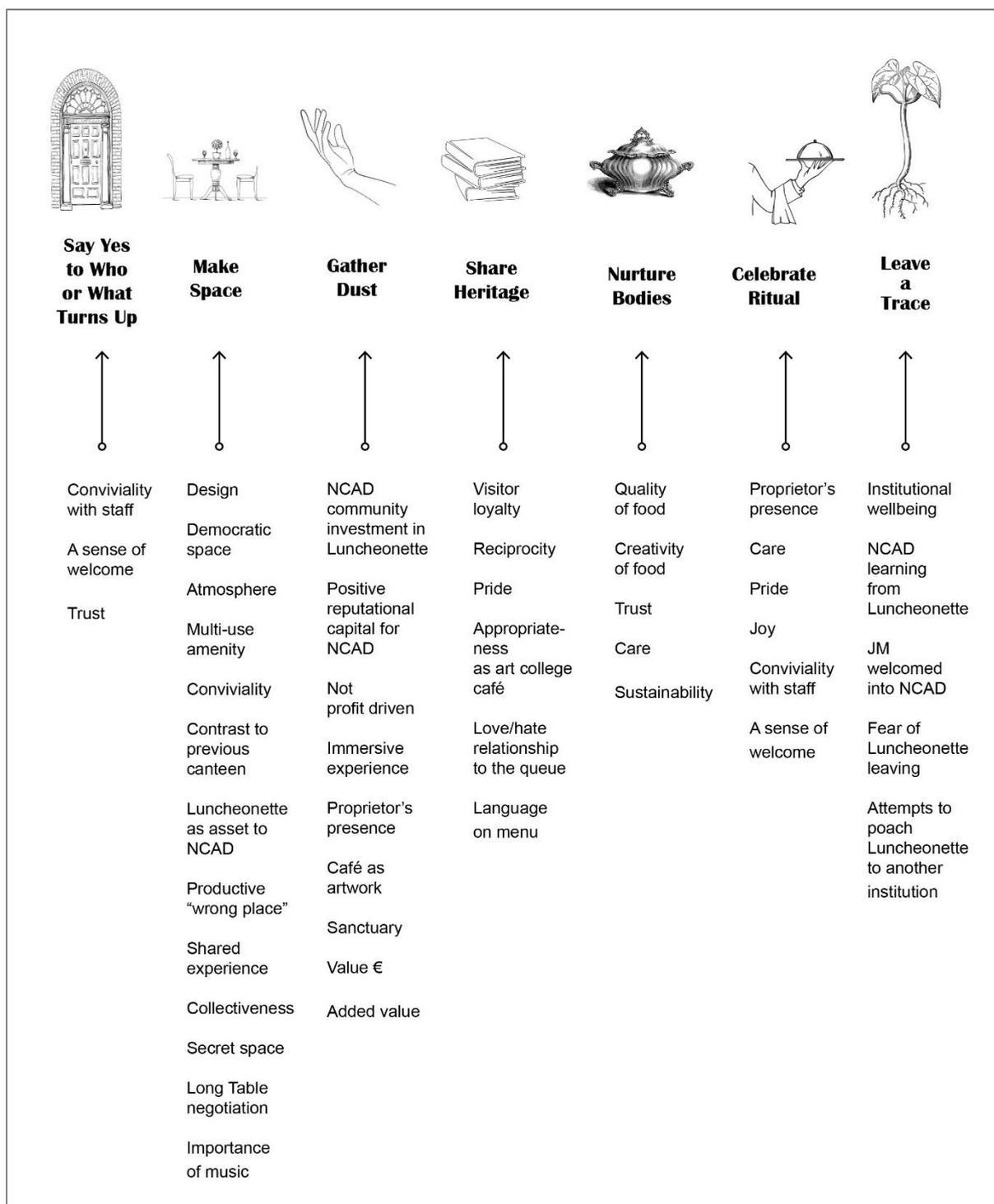


Figure 1: Categorisation of codes into themes

4.6 Conclusion

The nine interviews conducted yielded a vast wealth of insight into the impact that Luncheonette had on NCAD and the autoethnographic research compiled compliments these interviews very effectively. The process of identifying these seven themes which bridge the two sources of primary research was challenging but the task of finding commonality between

the two has provided an extra layer of rewarding insight. I believe that I have successfully incorporated the solid matter of the interviews into my autoethnographic cement and am hopeful the mix will prove solid. The extent of new knowledge and understanding I have gained exceeded my expectations dramatically. These findings will be discussed in detail in the following chapter under the same seven themes.

Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will be discussing the primary research material, presented in the previous data analysis chapter, and juxtaposing it with the secondary research material presented in the literature review. I will be presenting these findings within the same seven themes formulated in the data analysis. The primary research conducted has proved to be enormously informative and insightful and this material has paired very well with the secondary research. I invite you to interpret this as a gentle signalling that there is a lot to get through in this chapter. To this end, I have divided each theme into subheadings where relevant, to provide optimum clarity. The motivation for these concise divisions relates to SRQ Five - How can this data be presented in a way which is legible, interesting, and relevant with a view to shaping it into a model for other institutions? I want the findings to be as accessible as possible.

5.2 Literature Review - Aide Memoire

It seems timely here to remind the reader briefly of the subjects discussed in the five letters which comprise the Literature Review:

- Unconditional Hospitality – This letter to Jacques Derrida expresses my frustration at the prohibitive, unyielding nature of his articulation of the law of hospitality and introduces us to Ghostis.
- The Welcoming Act – This letter to Anne Dufourmantelle questions the uninquisitive nature of the greeting described in her writing and introduces the possibility of the guest possessing agency and offering opportunity for transcendence.
- Mutual Hospitality – A letter to Luce Irigaray, which thanks her for offering an alternative model of hospitality which permits us to look at, and really see the stranger before we drag them in.
- Commercial Hospitality – An affectionate chat with Michel de Certeau, which celebrates the possibility for shared connection in public spaces, such as cafes and posits these spaces as sites which provide conviviality between strangers.
- Hospitality in Institutions – A thank you letter to Mrs Molloy-Dowd, a cafeteria worker in a hospital who showed vast kindness with a small gesture of hospitality, thereby prompting me to write this dissertation.



5.3 Say Yes to Who or What Turns Up

5.3.1 Overview

The title of this theme is a direct reference to Derrida's criteria for unconditional hospitality (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000, p. 77). Although I could never measure up to the unachievable standard set by Derrida, his writings have helped establish Luncheonette's code of welcome. As expressed in the autoethnographic research, "In my more generous moments, I am able to view these words as a sort of prayer, something to aspire towards..." (Appendix A). It has been heartening to see traces of the writings of Derrida and Levinas in the feedback given on the welcome received in Luncheonette.

As revealed in the corresponding category of the autoethnographic research (Appendix A), the intention with Luncheonette was to aspire towards an unconditional welcome for guests. The insight gained by conducting these interviews shows that visitors, by and large, remarked upon a welcoming experience. The two main findings are, firstly that Luncheonette provided an autonomous social space in NCAD which remained separate from college issues; secondly, that staff and students reported a positive change in behaviour in Luncheonette.

5.3.2 Autonomous social space

NAC 1, refers to a "safe space". STU 2 describes the experience of entering Luncheonette as "ritualistic" and likens it to burrowing down somewhere warm and inviting, putting on a blanket and feeling safe from the pressures of college. She contrasts this feeling with the intimidation felt at other college social gatherings. ACA 1 describes Luncheonette as "such a bloody sanctuary". ACA 2 compares Luncheonette to a recent experience in a hospital café where "everything about the offer that's presented there to people, it just says they don't really care", whereas in Luncheonette there was a line of communication between guest and host which he articulated as, "join us in giving this thing a go".

I would like to reference here the work of Anne Dufourmantelle, in particular her discussion on the extent to which a welcome should be unquestioning. "Is it more just and more loving to question or not to question? to call by the name or without the name? to give or to learn a name already given?" (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000, p. 29). Luncheonette's code of welcome

was based on *taking the guest in*, however the meaning is twofold: I wanted to receive people physically of course, but I also wanted to discover them; to “welcome the difference between” us, as Luce Irigaray puts it (2013, p. 47).

5.3.3 Positive change in behaviour

These accounts were unexpected and fascinating. This was not a pre-determined theme and there were no questions included which naturally opened this up as a subject. NAC 1 provides great insight here by contrasting the atmosphere in Luncheonette, where nobody is cross about things, to that of the NCAD staff room, where it’s more tense and people are cross about things. She references an unwritten agreement made among staff that Luncheonette was to be kept separate from college staff issues, “this is how you behave when you're there. This is how it feels, everybody is welcome, and everybody is allowed to, kind of, have that sort of space”. ACA 1 also stated that Luncheonette facilitated the type of discussion and “the kind of craic” that was difficult to have elsewhere on campus and that “bitching” didn’t take there the way it did in the staff room. STU 2 speculates that the environment in Luncheonette imposed an “extra kindness” on people there.



5.4 Make Space

5.4.1 Overview

Luncheonette was designed and built as a place for people to connect with each other (Appendix A). The aim was to interrupt people, spatially. It had to look and feel different to a college canteen. I built as much of it as possible with my own hands. All of this was done in the hope that in this unfamiliar, unexpected environment, people might open up and share in the experience, creating a new underbelly within this educational institution. This relates directly to Ghostis, the Indo-European root of the word Hospitality which refers neither to the guest nor the host, but the bond formed between the two parties. Designing a space which celebrated co-existence removed potential power imbalances between guest and host and placed the focus on the unexpected connections that formed.

I am asking now, did it work, my plan? In this section I will report my findings on the following subjects: first impressions, using a site-specific approach to the design, keeping it real, the provision of a new social amenity or “wrong place” and the importance of music.

5.4.2 First impressions

Reminiscing on the set up of Luncheonette, NAC 1 describes “this mad woman in her dungarees (who) was up and down and setting off the alarm and all sorts”. The scene outlined here would not have been unusual in the National College of Art and Design. If you will endure a brief digression here: it is interesting that this 2013 moment was referenced in the interviews and only now am I seeing its significance. Here I was sanding the seven and a half metre long tables I had built in the hope of bringing people together. The sawdust raised from my prolonged sanding escapades kept activating the college fire alarm. Each time, the entire population of the administration, admissions and senior management staff were dragged out to the front square to stand in the sun, chatting, with the air of mischief that fire drills often impose. I stood sheepishly amongst them, accounting for myself, accepting playful admonishment. I have learned from conducting these interviews, that before it had made its first cup of coffee, Luncheonette had set the scene for new moments of conviviality.

5.4.3 A Site-Specific Approach

The design of the space has been referenced in all nine interviews. It has been referred to as “a wonder to behold” (NAC 1), an “intentional but not imposing”, very effectively curated interior (VIS 1), a consolidated “sculpture” (DIR 1), “a complete project” (ACA 2), “a lovely environment” (STU 2), “a beautifully crafted experience” (ACA 1), “amazing...cosy and comfortable” (STU 1). These comments indicate that Luncheonette registered with the college community as a carefully considered design project. It was speaking their language. It was also relevant that the person overseeing this endeavour was also the person doing the sanding and would later be found dishing out the soup. As outlined in the corresponding category in the previous chapter, these moments of meeting the NCAD community in this preliminary phase proved vital to the level of collective commitment.

5.4.4 Keeping it Real

Although the space was thoughtfully created as an interactive art installation, I am relieved to discover from the interviews, that it was not found guilty of that onerous crime of “taking itself

too seriously” (ACA 1). VIS 1 comments poetically, “I stumbled across the word earthy, or climbing into the earth...I think she probably really worked with what was there to build that earthiness. And the music kind of sliced through that then, just at the point before it would all get too earthy or too serious”.

5.4.5 A productive “wrong place”

As expressed in the conclusion of the autoethnographic research (Appendix A), important things happen in the wrong place. Breakthrough tutorials, delicate negotiations, heart to heart chats were all written into the design brief for Luncheonette. I am scanning these interviews for evidence that the design of the space helped people to make connections. The first point to note is that because there was a new space that allowed staff and students to share a social amenity, and this was new behaviour in NCAD. Both academic staff interviewees commented on the value of the informal learning which took place in Luncheonette. STU 2 also comments on the humanising effect of sharing meals alongside tutors. The shared tables helped to create a democratic space.

It provided a new space of conviviality between staff too. ACA 1 describes the Luncheonette queue as a “turbo charged water cooler”. ACA 2 refers to “softly professional” and NAC 1 refers to Luncheonette as a place where she often got to meet for the first time a colleague with whom she had been in email correspondence. This brings to mind the term coined by environment-behaviouralist, David Seamon, “place ballet” which is used to describe “that part scripted, part improvised, largely unspoken dance we all do around each other as we go about our daily lives” (Bell, 2017, p. 32). I hope that the design of Luncheonette helped to provide a good space for this important dance.

5.4.6 Music and Diversion

Music was an important strategy for breathing life into the queue and this emerged as a significant contribution in seven out of nine interviews. “The music was always a presence” (ACA 1). “I do remember the music not being as heavy as the, as the floor, or as dark as the lighting, or as solid as the benches, if you know what I mean” (VIS 1). There were other forms of entertainment too. Because the lighting was soft and low in the public space of the café, and bright and glaring in the open kitchen, it had the effect of a theatrical spectacle, particularly around lunchtime, when there would be a team of students volunteering with the chefs. Here

was a ready-made kitchen reality TV show for those inclined to watch, as referenced by ACA 1. Each day the menu changed. I took liberties here and used this concise A5 size page to reveal as many stories as possible, using playful food prose. These were posted at the beginning and mid-point of the queue in order to provide a talking point for those waiting, as referenced by STU 1: “it was great being in the queue, because you're literally talking a lot about food”. ACA 2 seems to have astutely registered this intent and makes the point, in reference to incidental trivial conversations which took place in the Luncheonette queue, that these unexpected interactions are “a big part of being alive”.



5.5 Gather Dust

5.5.1 Overview of Findings

This section is called *Gather Dust* in reference to the ideas expressed by Michel de Certeau around “habitability”. De Certeau uses words like “debris”, “relics”, “fragments of music and poetry” to describe the criteria necessary for a place to feel “believable” (De Certeau, 1984, p.105). I set Luncheonette up as a business which prioritised shared experience over all else in an attempt to create a believable place; as a site for “conviviality between the unacquainted” (Laurier and Philo, 2006, p. 3). I am presenting here discoveries made about the importance of the fully-immersive experience to the success of the business, contrasting the previous NCAD canteen, highlighting the importance of financial accessibility, identifying added value and finally, showing that all of this makes for a successful business model.

5.5.2 A Fully Immersive Experience

As explained in the corresponding category of the autoethnographic research (Appendix A), Luncheonette was an art project before it was a business. Through these interviews, I have learnt just how important those roots were to the community around it. I had probed for perceptions around value and whether it seemed profit driven. I had not however expected such a response in relation to the provision of a fully immersive experience and such worth to be placed on the creative aspects of the business.

NAC 1 describes eating in a really beautiful space, “well it was an installation I suppose”. VIS 1 felt like he was “part of an experience...I was within something...there was a completeness to it...relentlessly complete”. ACA 1 refers to a “beautifully composed” intentional experience that had been set out, which could not be replicated or franchised. ACA 2 refers to “a cultivated, cared for, transformation of what could be done in there” and when asked about what he liked most about Luncheonette responded:

It would probably be...this kind of sense of it as a totality...Everything mattered, and everything mattered together...it was all done with love, I guess.

5.5.3 Previous Canteen

Some staff could recall the previous canteen operation, although ACA 2 would rather repress his memory of it! Terms used to describe it were “unhealthy” (NAC 2), “unappealing” (NAC 1), “not an experience of choice” (DIR 1) and “Filthy” (ACA 1). DIR 1 points out that it was not a destination, in the way that Luncheonette was. Nobody was coming to visit the canteen from outside the college other than “people who maybe were trapped in the college”. Interestingly Both ACA 2 and DIR 1 commented that there was no relationship between it and the cultural context of the college. DIR 1 also observes that it was not owned by the individuals who worked there. These two latter points provide interesting contrast with Luncheonette which was deeply rooted in its cultural context and was designed, built, run and operated by its owner (me). It is also surprising to me that these particular differences were valued by the college community.

5.5.4 Financial Accessibility

The question of value was raised intentionally in the interviews. When I set up Luncheonette in NCAD in 2013, the college management waived any rental fee and offered to cover the cost of all utilities. I considered this as a form of subsidy, and it facilitated a very reasonably priced menu. Having been an NCAD student myself, I understood the relationship between productivity in college and access to good food. I needed to pay staff properly and cover costs but had no expectations around large profits. I was intrigued by the unfamiliarity of converting an art project into viable business and employer. The margin for profit on food in Luncheonette

was extremely tight, however due to the widespread support from the college community, the volume of customers was large enough to make it financially viable and indeed, profitable.

Because of the peculiar juxtaposition of art project and food business, I was curious to discover which of these two models felt more dominant to visitors. When asked if they saw Luncheonette as profit driven, some responses were, “No way, Jesus Christ!” (ACA 1), and “I mean it wouldn't occur to me to use that kind of language” (ACA 2). In fact, several interviews immediately diverted to considering alternative forms of profits generated. “It did almost certainly generate massive other dividends.... I think it was definitely profitable in social and cultural...sense” (VIS 1). Interviewees made the connection between the low price point and the openness, how Luncheonette was “incredibly affordable and therefore accessible and therefore democratic”. STU 2 comments, “I really appreciated that it was affordable...I don't know how they were doing it. But I'm so glad that they could”.

5.5.5 Added Value

This leads me on to gauging the perceived added value that Luncheonette brought to NCAD, which is something I listened very astutely for because this might provide important insight into the overall impact that it had on the college (this being the overarching query of this thesis). ACA 2 mentions it explicitly, “there was a huge degree of added value from Luncheonette”. This is something that was broached with both college directors in relation to the rent waiver. DIR 1 speaks about how any financial implication to NCAD was offset by new positive reputational capital provided by Luncheonette. He recalls the surprise at encountering business acquaintances entering NCAD to have lunch in Luncheonette. DIR 2 reiterates this, “the value to the college of Luncheonette far outweighed any income that we would ever get”. DIR 2 adds insight which makes direct connections between Luncheonette and student application numbers, “it was also a big recruitment driver”. She estimates that any income gained by imposing rental fees to Luncheonette would likely render it unviable. She speculates that without Luncheonette there would be a marked reduction in student numbers. The money gained by imposing fees would be immediately offset by four or five post-graduate students deciding to study elsewhere.

5.5.5 A Successful Business Model

As DIR 1 points out, using the principles of an art practice to run a business might seem unorthodox, or even ill advised, but in this situation, it was the very thing that “qualified” Luncheonette to succeed. Indeed, it was located in an art college, where such qualities are extra appreciated, however I would argue that this is a model with universal appeal. Building a hospitality business upon the principles of a creative practice breathes life into it and gives it scope to continuously grow and develop. It presents itself as a project rather than a company. Yes, it poses risk, as pointed out by DIR 1, “it was an experiment...I think what Luncheonette proved absolutely, concretely was, you can do it, you approach it differently... think about it differently, and you can do it”. As I have reported in the autoethnographic research (Appendix A), and has been confirmed by these interviews, de-prioritising financial profit and focusing on the overall experience, gained Luncheonette an extremely loyal customer base and, indirectly secured financial success.



5.6 Share Heritage

5.6.1 Overview

Hospitality, when it is functioning properly, facilitates exchange of culture and knowledge. A guest will bring you tales of far-flung places and new ways of doing things, but they will also teach you about yourself. I learned through these interviews that, with Luncheonette, guest and host were learning from each other, and a new shared heritage was forming. This section knits together Luce Irigaray’s theories on mutual hospitality and Michel de Certeau’s ideas on the importance of stories.

According to de Certeau, in order for a space to feel good, or believable, we need be able to feel the “stories and legends that haunt urban space like superfluous or additional inhabitants” (1984, p. 106). The system of welcome as laid out by Luce Irigaray offers the guest agency to be part of this story, or indeed to shape it. With Irigaray, we are permitted to look at the guest in a way which Derrida forbids. Both of these ideas relate to the Luncheonette’s endeavour to

create a shared heritage and populate this institution with the stories of those passing through it.

Here in this section, I am looking for proof that Luncheonette helped NCAD to absorb the stories of the individuals that pass through it; to see them and remember them. I will show how Luncheonette captured the essence of the NCAD community and describe the resulting collective commitment.

5.6.2 Capturing the Essence of NCAD

When Luncheonette opened in NCAD, the college was experiencing a period of transition and there was tension between staff and management. Interviewees present during this time describe finding common ground in Luncheonette. In relation to the discourse about what NCAD should be, ACA 2 refers to the generosity, hospitality and inclusiveness experienced at Luncheonette and cites it as “returning to some notion, of something that NCAD needed to have at its core”. “You just kind of needed to look at Luncheonette, you know, where things were high quality, where things were cared for, where there was thought behind things...”. NAC 1 comments that “in many ways it captured the essence of what was NCAD” and that as a living, breathing collaborative creative community, it “matches what the college is saying it is”. DIR 2 observes that “the sort of values of Luncheonette felt very aligned to the values of a lot of the people in NCAD”. The two earlier comments, from more seasoned NCAD staff, ACA 2 and NAC 1, reveal an interesting attitude of NCAD staff looking to Luncheonette to remind them of their own ethos.

5.6.3 Collective Commitment

I was hoping and was pleased to find evidence of a collective commitment to Luncheonette from the NCAD community in the interviews and they certainly delivered. Responses revealed that interviewees felt a strong connection to the endeavour and that their individual contribution mattered. NAC 1 recalls. “There was a lot of positivity and trying to help this venture get up and running and give it the support”. ACA 1 adds too that “I would have very much have seen it as something we needed to get behind and support. ACA 2 mentions a perceived expectation of the NCAD staff and student body, “Luncheonette created something, which was...a service but it was also about a community, and if you're part of that community, then you show up”.

He compares this community to a congregation, as opposed to a consumer base and when asked whether he thought Luncheonette needed him, he speculated that Luncheonette needed people to come and take pleasure in what had been prepared. VIS 1 comments also that Luncheonette needed people to care for.

VIS 1 compares the impact that the Luncheonette visitors had to that of a theatre audience who bring a particular energy to the offering. He then proceeds to share a fascinating impression of Luncheonette as being both compressive and expansive, “the intimacy of climbing into the ground, and the expansiveness of feeling part of something that was, you know, quite big”.

The autoethnographic account of “Sharing Heritage” (Appendix A) focuses predominantly on the collection of recipes donated to us from students and staff of the college. This was not really discussed in the majority of interviews, with the exception of STU 1, who had given us his mother’s recipe for Masoor Dal and with DIR 1 who commented, in response to accounts given of this recipe sharing:

But that can only happen because the process is porous, rather than lopped off. You know that it...it comes back to that idea of reciprocation, you know, there's a give and take, it's a negotiable space...And it then means that it's a participatory process, actually.

STU 2 provides an interesting approach to collective commitment by describing a kind of performative comfort: “I think that when you visibly and loudly enjoy a space in some way like, that other people are like, kind of, given permission to enjoy it as well, and to like, make yourselves at home.” STU 1, who also worked in Luncheonette recalls noticing this collective commitment in the form of repeat customers, “it is so important to have the same people coming again, because that's...where you know that this means something to them...that was of value, is of value and it was felt”. ACA 1 likens Luncheonette to a small village, which sums this up very nicely.



5.7 Nurture Bodies

5.7.1 Overview

Food was introduced to my art practice as a device to take the awkwardness out of bringing people together. Luncheonette was a formalisation of this device. The thinking was that the more interesting, creative, and cultured the food offering, the deeper the connections made over it would be. It was a storytelling tool. I will share my findings on how food was used to deliver affection, the role of trust and the other forms of sustenance provided.

5.7.2 Inherent Affection

As discussed in this section of the autoethnographic research (Appendix A), when compiling the menu for Luncheonette, I consulted my twenty-one-year-old-NCAD-student self. I recalled the energy required to fuel the gushes of productivity and emotions, and designed a menu which nurtured these outputs. There was an inherent affection in the task, and this was delivered openly through the food.

I was pleased to discover through the interviews, that this affection was palpable to Luncheonette visitors. As articulated by ACA 1, “The food could only be made by someone who wanted you to be happy”. VIS 1 recalls the luxury of not having to stress about making a choice on the menu because all the options were “just all incredibly well considered and cared for...so that kind of instilled a basic form of trust”. NAC 2 asserts this, “you knew you were gonna get something that was really lovely. And good for you...your visitors would be really impressed”.

5.7.3 Trust

Food was used in Luncheonette as an excuse to see people and form connections. I am mindful once more of Luce Irigaray and her ideas around seeing the stranger (2013). You must look at people when you are feeding them, you must meet their eyes and impart your intention to cause no harm. It was insightful to hear about the process of establishing this level of trust when Luncheonette first opened. This took time to build. STU 1, who did not come to Luncheonette initially, comments:

Once I started going there regularly, and having...more meals, I was just like, "This is so good" ...It would give me a joy. And I would look forward to it. And I think that would only happen if I trusted that place.

ACA 2 mentions suspicious rumblings because the food offering had deviated from standard canteen fare. Then, slowly, “people were won over, because people tried things, give something

a go, because someone would recommend it, or if you try one thing and then the other thing would, you know, be trusted?" ACA 1 describes giving Luncheonette the benefit of the doubt,

God there's things like, you know, an aubergine muffaletta sandwich that you could not have convinced me to eat if it was not made by Jennie and then I'd eat it and they'd be my favouritest thing ever you know?.

STU recalls the spectacle of the open kitchen, "It's hard not to trust something when you can see it happen before your eyes". NAC 2 (a security attendant) was observing proceedings from the delivery gate, and was satisfied that we were using produce which was "all top quality and well sourced".

5.7.4 Beyond Sustenance

Food is powerful stuff. Here again we are operating in a bind of mutual trust established through Ghostis. Food is serious and deeply personal, as Claude Fischler emphatically relates:

the eaters life and health are at stake whenever the decision is taken to incorporate; but so too are his place in the universe, his essence, his nature, in short his identity. An object inadvisedly incorporated may contaminate him, insidiously transform him from within, possess him or rather depossess him of himself. (1988, p.280).

Some interviewees referred to instances when the food served by Luncheonette functioned beyond the provision of sustenance.

DIR 1 speaks about a holistic approach to nourishment,

I don't just mean X amount of proteins and vitamins going into the body, because we could just have bottles of tablets to do that...But there was certainly...the idea...that the college was about a certain kind of nourishment through creativity for the individuals involved for you know, for wider society.

STU 2 and her friends had formed a social gathering around a particular roast tomato and red pepper soup which was served with orzo pasta and wild garlic smush,

I don't think any other place ever will, ever has, made such a perfect tomato soup. And...every time one of us spotted it on the menu for the day, the day was like, you know, that much brighter, that much better.

VIS 1 recalls ordering food for a work gathering and describes the “wild” reaction.

It broke down barriers...it became an anchor in conversations...a place in conversations where everyone could meet....it was a classic icebreaker...that then made the rest of the session more productive.

STU 1 recounts the emotional significance of being fed in the context of economic and time pressures,

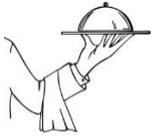
I just do remember that there were days where it would be my first meal. And that's sort of you know, it's not just food going in it but it's just like, treating hunger and that is a bit of an emotional situation, for you know, for a lot of people that is like... I've been hungry for three, four hours now and this is that first few bites of food.

Food is emotional and it is levelling. I was relieved to discover that Luncheonette food was considered “accessible, down to earth and finest quality and beautifully composed with integrity” (ACA 1) but “never pretentious” (ACA 2). There is a memory described by NAC 2, of standing next to our extractor output vent and speculating, “oh god what are they making? you know, that smells really good...you'd be dying to go down and see what it was”. This image of our basement kitchen sending good food aromas to unexpected corners of the campus and interrupting people sensorially gives me great heart. I will end this section with a quote from ACA 1:

My colleagues would all laugh at me...how happy the food in there makes me, at times where I'd just be like, everyday, doing big long sighs as I bit into a mirror glazed brownie.

The expectations around institutional catering provision are low. Luncheonette defied these expectations by delivering good food on a large scale and receiving gastronomic accolades from the food industry in acknowledgement. Here is a model for a college canteen which was awarded Irish Café of the Year. Food allowed us to administer care to the community of NCAD.

As Joshna Maharaj points out, “Hospitality lets food service workers be caregivers” (2020, p. 17).



5.8 Celebrate Ritual

5.8.1 Overview

If you venture towards the deep dark Appendix A of this thesis, you will find a corresponding section to this one, which contains an intimate love letter to the daily rituals of running Luncheonette. I have explained the unorthodox business approach which Luncheonette adopted in the “Gathering Dust” section above, which was based on the provision of a fully immersive experience. Much like the food, lighting, atmosphere, music played their part, so too did I, as host.

As stated in the previous chapter, this was not motivated by distrust in my team or a desire to micro-manage my colleagues. It gave me profound joy to be there, every day, administering the countless tiny ceremonies of hospitality, both performing and observing. I offered food, shelter, care and entertainment and received in return joy, energy, motivation, energy and conviction. In this section I will discuss the importance of poetic punctuations to the daily lives of the NCAD community and the impact of the proprietor’s presence.

5.8.2 Poetic Punctuations

The act of interrupting the day’s endeavours with miniature indulgences has an air of mischief about it which reminds me of Michel de Certeau’s wonderful celebration of *microtactics*. These are the actions of ordinary people who, acting on desires, become “poets of their own affairs”, thereby altering the “space ordered by the organizing techniques of systems” (de Certeau, 1988, p. 34).

VIS 1 refers to the importance of food for nourishment but also for providing an opportunity to retreat, “because it punctuates the day, and because it's a necessity. Having food is a retreat

then from all of the other enterprise or endeavour of the day”. NAC 1 also celebrates the significance of these rituals in the working day, “you have your coffee, you have your lunch, you know, they are important parts of the day, and if there's something nice happening in them, it makes...the day better, you know”.

I tried to instil the weight of these moments to my Luncheonette team, that no matter how busy we were, to try to find a tiny gesture which matched the weight of the small but important moment. I was amazed to learn that this was noticed by ACA 1, “We would always have said that it was a Jennie thing, or Jennie told them to do it, but everyone was really good for like, making eye contact and saying thank you, and like small graces...there was always some kind of sense of engagement.”

5.8.3 Proprietor’s Presence

The importance of the proprietor’s presence, which emerged in the primary research, brings to mind de Certeau’s homage to the characters or “confidants” (de Certeau, 1998, p.77) who add colour and familiarity to our neighbourhoods. I suppose my presence in Luncheonette every day helped to articulate its importance to me. I chose to be there. I dressed up. I approached each day like a new event. I offered myself forward as “confidante” to the NCAD community.

I was taken aback by the impact of my presence as host. This was an emerging theme in the interviews which made me slightly embarrassed. This information was expressed to Megan, my research assistant, and would almost certainly not have been shared directly with me. I knew that it mattered to me, to be there and have learned now that it also mattered to guests. “Jennie created an atmosphere...She's formidable, you know, but unbelievably welcoming with that” (ACA 2). “Jennie being kind of like a captain on the bridge...she's as a kind of a force in it...even down to her dress and stuff, would be very visual high vocal and she steered the ship with a very clear sense of what she wanted it to be like without any pretence” (ACA 1). This is interesting because I did consciously dress with a sense of occasion going to Luncheonette, mostly for my own affirmation. I am surprised that it was noticed. “I think (her) presence had a lot to do with the sense of welcome and hospitality” (DIR 1).

It is understandable that guests would look to put a face to a site of hospitality. It is clear from the views expressed in these interviews, that having someone present there every day, embedded in these rituals, highlighted their value to the NCAD community.

There is something emerging in this section, which provides a new offshoot in my ongoing argument with Derrida. As described in the afore-mentioned love letter (Appendix A), I relied heavily upon a system of exchange with my Luncheonette guests. There was the monetary exchange but I am referring here to the other things; the surprises that feed the heart and soul, in the form of technicolour exuberance which bounced both ways across the counter and gave heart. I experienced a daily palpable craving for these things and in doing so, defied Derrida's requirement to "give the new arrival all of one's home and oneself...without asking a name, or compensation, or the fulfilment of even the smallest condition" (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000, p. 77). I would be dead in a lump if I performed these acts without some sort of exchange.



5.9 Leave a Trace

5.9.1 Overview

In this section I will share my findings on ways in which Luncheonette impacted NCAD as an institution, how it left NCAD and what its legacy is. This is a weighty topic in terms of the richness of the data collected and the emotional complexity. Feeding people and looking after people is an intimate business. Listening to interviewee accounts of what this meant to their day to day lives has been intensely moving. I will now regain composure and present these findings in the following subheadings: Pride, Welfare, Influence and Fertile Ground.

5.9.2 Pride

One of the changes Luncheonette imparted was a new sense of pride reported by staff. NAC 1 reminisces about the early days of Luncheonette, "It was, a place that that everybody could agree was, you know, we were proud of. It, kind of, was representative of, kind of, the best of us. And the best of what the college was trying to achieve". She observes too the reaction from visiting academics, "they all came in and they were all jealous...So it was like something we had, that was better than anybody else had, any other student, any other university student cafeteria type facility". ACA 2 reiterates the appreciation expressed by external examiners and reports noticing a general increase in visitors from outside NCAD, "Luncheonette became

something that, you know, the wider world was drawn to, and that was really good”. ACA 1 regularly brought in senior figures from private sector agencies for partnership meetings and witnessed these visitors “inventing excuses to have meetings” in Luncheonette and eventually just coming on their own. DIR 2 refers to Luncheonette as a space where NCAD could be promoted. VIS 1 even attempted to bring Luncheonette to another university campus!

5.9.3 Institutional Welfare

“Kindness, good service, and hospitality should not be things with a price tag but essential values of any kitchen and dining room. (Maharaj, 2020, p.40). Another strand of Luncheonette’s impact on NCAD relates to institutional welfare. STU 2 speaks emphatically about its importance to her college experience: “Like, if it weren't for the Luncheonette, we'd be gone”. She reports finding a feeling of safety in Luncheonette than she felt was missing in the wider context of NCAD, “somewhere to totally shut down and log off...maybe NCAD should have provided somewhere like that, but Luncheonette did it perfectly and I'm not sure that they could have to that same degree”.

DIR 2 shares findings from a 2021 campus development consultation with NCAD staff, the dominating request from staff in relation to the kind of spaces needed on campus was for “more Luncheonettes”. DIR 2 comments, “I suppose it sort of highlighted the absence of that kind of warm and welcoming and flexible space elsewhere”.

ACA 2 believes that Luncheonette helped to foster a sense of community in the college: “I think better relationships were created, you know, a situation was available for people to connect...In a sort of sense of institutional wellbeing, it had a real value.” ACA 1 also refers to Luncheonette as the social “nexus” of the college, “it felt a little bit like NCAD's home”. Like STU 2, he acknowledges that the service provided by Luncheonette would not have been possible for NCAD to provide, “It was like the best, the best of NCAD and it couldn't have been done by NCAD itself, you know”. ACA describes Luncheonette as “a lovely place, a happy place”. In the *Gather Dust* section above, I have quoted DIR 2 referring to the role Luncheonette had in helping to recruit students. ACA 1 refers to Luncheonette rendering NCAD “unleavable” for staff and shares an anecdote about refusing a much better paid, more senior job at another college because of Luncheonette.

STU 1, who was an international student from India, paying non-EU college fees makes a distinction in the feeling of generosity experienced in Luncheonette in contrast to the wider experience of NCAD.

I think I paid €17,000 at that time. And after that they were asking 100 Euro fee to use the workshop...Yeah, and then...you come to a cafe and you get such big portions of food and such good food for very affordable prices. And that's why I kind of disassociate Luncheonette from the college.

I feel this is perhaps an unfair comparison with the college's duty to impose these fees, however I include this story here because it offers important insight: it demonstrates the role Luncheonette played in providing an exception to an overall feeling of financial opportunism. In a sense, Luncheonette provided damage control on behalf of NCAD, holding up a sense of the ethos that those in NCAD wanted for the institution.

5.9.4 Influence

There have been open and direct references made to instances of NCAD staff looking to Luncheonette as a role model. DIR 2 offers wonderful insight, largely informed by a comprehensive strategic review undertaken in NCAD in 2019. "I think we've been informed by Luncheonette you know, and Luncheonette's helped shape the values and the thinking in the college, about how we run ourselves and how we, you know, the kind of values we need to hold ourselves accountable to". DIR 2 provided one of the most significant findings in this case study, reporting a discovery made from the same strategic review consultation with NCAD staff, "people recognise Luncheonette as being the space in where most of the good ideas they felt most proud of started". This line functions as a consolidation of this entire body of research and answers, with alarming economy the questions asked throughout this thesis. This consolidated so many of the key themes of this research such as institutional welfare, conviviality and the provision of a productive "wrong place" which allows the point of hospitality to support the work of the institution holistically and organically.

5.9.5 Leaving a Fertile Ground

It was awfully hard to leave NCAD. Feel free to consult the detailed, histrionics laden account of the process found in the autoethnographic research (Appendix A). There were certain things that provided important reassurance at the time.

Firstly, NCAD was in a better place and was not as reliant upon the sanctuary that Luncheonette provided. Yes, there was some anxiety expressed about Luncheonette leaving. ACA 1 comments, “Basically, for years I was just worried she'd leave and she did eventually...”. DIR 1 also refers to this same worry emerging during board meeting in the early years of Luncheonette. However, the truth was that it was ok to go because NCAD just felt less unstable. As DIR 2 reveals:

It was interesting because when I started in the year 2018, if Luncheonette had gone, it would have felt absolutely catastrophic in the college. Because it was the one thing that people felt really, kind of, positive around. It was a real beacon.

She shares an observation on the reaction in NCAD when we announced the Luncheonette was to close, “People were sad, of course, really sad, but excited for Jennie, but also felt confident that something would come that would be great. And it would all be okay”.

It is important to acknowledge that, in the true spirit of Ghostis, as I was providing hospitality to the NCAD community, I was also receiving it. I was welcomed and supported from the get-go. As NAC 1 points out, “I think she felt part of the college in a way that I suppose, a provider of a canteen service, you know, a standard Brambles or something, wouldn't feel”. As a result of conducting this primary research, I believe that NCAD's active witnessing of Luncheonette's impact in the college has empowered them in their role as hosts and given them encouragement to adopt this approach themselves.

NCAD were adamant to continue working with an independent food operator and to maintain the same level of service. NAC 2 comments astutely, “I think it set a standard, you know, for catering on the campus, I can't see anything worse, a step below Luncheonette, being acceptable now”. As it turns out, Siobhán, who had worked as head chef in Luncheonette for five years, has taken over the running of the canteen in NCAD as her own business, The Goodies. This is a wonderful outcome and has made for minimal disruption. DIR 2 affirms that, “it's great that Siobhan's taken over and it hasn't changed in feeling and character”.

5.10 Conclusion

The overarching aim of this study is to present evidence that a carefully considered hospitality operation impacted an educational institution, through the application of an active hospitality practice. In this chapter, I have constructed considerable proof of the scope and depth of the impact that Luncheonette has had on NCAD. I will outline here the most significant and insightful findings in relation to this evidence.

To begin with, the atmosphere of welcome in Luncheonette created a new social amenity in the college and altered the behaviour of the college community. Luncheonette's unorthodox structure as a hybrid art project/food enterprise was revealed as a strength and played an important role in its financial success and public recognition. This was achieved by the creation of a fully immersive experience which generated a climate of collective commitment and co-creation among the community of the college and secured a loyal customer base. Luncheonette performed unexpected institutional welfare functions in NCAD uniting staff, bringing pride to the college community, affirming, strengthening the college ethos, bolstering student numbers, retaining staff talent. It made a real quantifiable difference to the lives of its community, boldly defying expectations of the role of a college canteen. Lastly and most significantly, as revealed in recent strategic review and campus development consultations with staff, it was proven that Luncheonette had influenced NCAD and emerged as a guiding model, raising a sense of possibility, encouragement and inspiration; providing a dynamic manifestation of what could be achieved through hospitality. As this study draws towards its conclusion, I believe that the findings presented in this chapter provide comprehensive evidence of the positive impact that a thoughtful hospitality operation had on a wider institution.

Chapter Six:

Conclusion

6.0 Chapter Six - Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

In this final chapter, I will address the research questions set at the beginning of this project and draw conclusions from the research conducted. I will mention the limitations of the research conducted and argue its value to the hospitality industry as a useful set of guidelines for hospitality providers operating within an institution or amenity.

6.2 Concluding the MRQ and the SRQs

I will now revisit these research objectives and demonstrate how they have been fulfilled.

6.2.1. SRQ 1 - What does the literature reveal about the philosophy, history, theory, etymology of hospitality?

The theorists whose work I have pooled from have formed an unlikely chorus, accompanying me throughout this research, weighing in vociferously, and often, disruptively. Derrida is omnipresent, like a disproving parent, never fully satisfied with the condition of the welcome, inspiring, nonetheless. Anne Dufourmantelle (2013) helps to bring this philosophical enquiry into the world and reminds me in her essay, “Hospitality Under Compassion and Violence”, that hospitality is political and urgent. Our attitude to the stranger arriving at the threshold of our state borders, and the way we treat new arrivals is drifting dangerously far from the ideals of Ghostis. Michel de Certeau (1988) gives heart in the value of adding layers of poetic geography onto imposed systems of order, which is what *Softening Corners* is all about. Luce Irigaray (2013) opened up a whole new universe around alternative systems for welcoming which has provided me with a wonderful alternative to the strictness of Derrida.

This incongruous hoard of thinkers has allowed me to decipher the primary research with a sort of three-dimensional x-ray vision, adding depth, complexity and urgency.

6.2.2. SRQ 2 - What are the obstacles in implementing the ideals of hospitality theory in the context of commercial hospitality?

As outlined in the beginning of the data analysis chapter, the secondary research exposed a schism between the philosophical construct of hospitality and the hospitality industry which has greatly informed this project. There is a significant Derrida-shaped obstacle to contend with. The absolute law of hospitality, according to himself, demands unconditional welcome with no expectation of exchange. Naturally, this poses a problem within the context of a food business.

The “guilt” (Kakoliris, 2015, p. 151) associated with Luncheonette’s status as a commercial hospitality venture greatly influenced the primary research. I actively pursued feedback in relation to Luncheonette as a business model. However, as detailed at length in the discussion chapter, the interviews revealed that there is a sliding scale to commercialism and that profit can be calibrated in social, as well as financial dividends. The philosophical obstacles were in fact, overridden by more interesting and worthwhile social gains. As discussed in the previous chapter, de-prioritising financial profit allowed Luncheonette to focus on the creative and experiential assets, secured a loyal customer base and therefore, indirectly safeguarded the financial stability.

6.2.3. SRQ 3 - How can guests in institutions be given more visibility and thereby agency, using sites of commercial hospitality such as coffee shops and canteens?

This thesis is arguing that a point of hospitality contained within an institution has the capacity to effect radical change. As referenced in the literature review, the etymology of the word hospitality is rooted in reciprocity. The guest should be greeted as someone vital, sent to save us from ourselves; someone we cannot live without, and not reduced to “one more destitute than oneself...” (Irigaray, 2013, p.43). The application of a mutual hospitality practice celebrates the agency of guest and empowers them to impact the space.

It has been revealed in the primary research, that this approach, which allows the guest to feel seen, was of paramount importance to the visitor experience in Luncheonette. As outlined in the previous chapter (code), food is the ideal medium for this exchange. This material is to be placed inside the bodies of the guests. The action demands trust. Luncheonette used food to maximise opportunities for highlighting the visibility of the guests. A holistic approach to design and the fully immersive nature of the experience also played a vital contribution to the creation of a shared heritage which invited guests to play an active role in the story of this place.

The result of this visibility was a feeling of porosity. Here, in this busy college campus, there was a warm, glowing hearth where we were cooking the family recipes of our community. It is proof that an educational institution, like NCAD could be impacted by the individuals that passed through it; that it *took them in*, and will remember them after they are gone.

6.2.4. SRQ 4 - What evidence is there that carefully considered hospitality can have a positive impact in the institution using Luncheonette as a case study to gauge the scope of its impact?

Institutions such as universities and hospitals have a job of work to perform. As discussed in Chapter 2 (code), they are set up to provide a service and that becomes their primary function. Luncheonette was an eight-year long experiment into what happens when an institution allows its hospitality provider to help it. The findings from this case study show a profound impact. The interviews cite instances where Luncheonette was used by the college to articulate the values of NCAD. It aided the college in recruiting students when application numbers were dwindling and was referenced explicitly as a factor in retaining staff talent. It has also been referenced as a guiding influence during an NCAD strategic review, helping to inform the college and shape its values. Lastly, on a campus designed to educate creative practitioners, it provided a place where “the good ideas (staff) felt most proud of” were generated (DIR 2).

The research conducted shows that the impact that Luncheonette, as a carefully considered point of hospitality, had on NCAD is profound. It had an overwhelmingly positive impact on the daily lives of its community, and it also influenced college policy and values. These outcomes are not traditionally found within the remit of a college canteen. Something important and unexpected happened over the course of these eight years. This thesis is a methodical demystification of this “something”.

6.2.5. SRQ 5 - How can this data be presented in a way which is legible, interesting, and relevant with a view to shaping it into a model for other institutions?

That the lives of thousands of people were improved, and policy informed by a college canteen is remarkable. This thesis has focused in on the case study of Luncheonette in NCAD because there is a unique set of knowledge and information contained therein. Although the findings are rooted in this set of circumstances, I believe that they provide insight which can be applied widely, to be discussed further in the contributions section below.

With this in mind, the findings from the primary research have been presented in the format of a *How-To* guide. Each of the themes identified responds to the directive: “How to Soften Corners” and present key insights into how and why Luncheonette worked.

Step 1. Say Yes to Who or What Turns Up

Step 2. Make Space

Step 3. Gather Dust

Step 4. Share Heritage

Step 5. Nurture Bodies

Step 6. Celebrate Ritual

Step 7. Leave a Trace

My autoethnographic research presents findings from the perspective of operating Luncheonette under the heading of these directives. This corresponds with the thematic arrangement of the findings from the nine interviews conducted. Here the intent is juxtaposed with the lived experience. The result is an in-depth set of guidelines for those interested in the power of hospitality to change the way institutions function.

6.3 Limitations

One limitation is the proximity between the researcher and the research material. This has been an ongoing challenge throughout this project, mitigated greatly by engaging a research assistant to carry out the interviews. The conclusion drawn is that the value added by my provision of the autoethnographic account and the access I had to valuable primary data exceeded any drawbacks.

6.4 Contributions of the Research

The worldview around institutional catering is a quagmire of low expectations piled upon even lower standards, surrounded by the fetid air of defeatism. There is a perception that it is not possible to feed people properly and joyously on a large scale. I found (and founded) an anomaly with Luncheonette. Here, in this qualitative study, is a set of essential guidelines on how to defy the expectations surrounding what a point of hospitality in an institution might achieve. These guidelines are greatly reinforced by the thorough application of the philosophy and theory of hospitality discovered in the secondary research. As a result, the insight offered in this study is therefore quite unique.

The findings contained herein are relevant to individuals/organisations invested in improving the visitor experience and working conditions of a public facing institution, amenity or organisation which could be located in the realm of healthcare, education, criminal justice system, social services, community organisations and cultural amenities. This research is also of value to those operating within the hospitality industry.

6.5 Recommendations for Future Research

There has been an over-arching sense of urgency to this research project around capturing the treasure trove of valuable insights gained from running Luncheonette in NCAD because of the unforeseen impact it had. This necessitated adopting quite a narrow focus. It would, no doubt, have proved worthwhile to contrast Luncheonette with a hospitality provider in another institution, such as a hospital. This was consciously dismissed at the early stages because the task of connecting the philosophical ideals of hospitality with the hospitality industry was more pertinent to the main research question.

6.6 Overall Conclusion

In drawing to a close this body of research, I am sitting face to face with my primary research task – to show how a carefully considered hospitality operation impacted an educational institution. This journey began with the happy task of immersing myself in the powerful literature surrounding hospitality. I am greatly indebted to the writers and theorists who have recontextualised the field of hospitality and shown me that these laws and rituals are profoundly beautiful and embody all that is good and decent about us. It is the spirit of human co-existence made visible and recognisable.

I approached the study into the impact of Luncheonette in NCAD with two major concerns - that I would find sufficient evidence and, that I would be able to connect the philosophical ideas to the practical findings. The nine interviews conducted yielded a tremendous quantity of overwhelmingly positive, insightful and articulate feedback in support of my claim, as demonstrated by the large number of findings outlined in the discussion chapter. In the process of conducting these interviews with members of the NCAD community, vital pieces of information were shared which otherwise would never have come to light. Through this body of research, I have gained concrete insight into the scope of the positive impact Luncheonette

had on NCAD and this has allowed me to shape the data into a model for other institutions and hospitality operators to benefit from.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Autoethnographic Account

Here follows an autoethnographic account of operating Luncheonette in NCAD from the perspective of myself, the operator. For consistency, I am presenting the research within the same themes as the interviews: Say Yes to Who or What Turns Up, Make Space, Gather Dust, Share Heritage, Nurture Bodies, Celebrate Ritual and Leave a Trace.

This research comprises my own intent and observations but has been enriched by the above interviews. Again, as in the first half of this chapter, I am guided here also by my fifth research question:

SRQ 5. How can this data be presented in a way which is legible, interesting, and relevant with a view to shaping it into a model for other institutions?

Therefore, the following section is still formatted as a non-didactic How-To guide designed for people who are interested in new models of hospitality.

Say Yes to Who or What Turns Up

First things first.

Before we delve into the story of Luncheonette in NCAD and how the corners got softened, please indulge me by thinking about hospitality, because it was at the centre of everything.

The law of hospitality is profoundly beautiful. It is also however, infuriating, unfeasible, impossible to abide by, especially for those attempting to eke out a living from it. The word hospitality has been devalued of its original meaning. It is associated now with an industry that is struggling in the aftermath of a mass exodus of those wishing to be part of it. I want us to rehabilitate the word hospitality; to pick it up and dust it off, rummage around in its past, manage its expectations, send it back out into the world, bold and unapologetic.

Hospitality

exists as a response to the movement of humans....people straying from their towns and villages in ancient times. The prospect of leaving one's own surroundings to become a stranger elsewhere was an awful one, prompting dread and terror in the heart of the sojourner. To be without shelter for the night could mean death by exposure to the elements or wild animals, or robbery and murder at the hands of highwaymen.

Movement is, and was, inevitable.

So, out of necessity an agreement was made by social groups of diverse cultures all over the world, which facilitated the admittance of strangers into a private realm.

An infrastructure of shared protection was designed.

This system works on the basis of mutual trust: the wayfaring stranger is invited to have food and shelter on condition that they bring no harm. The host in turn vows to keep the stranger safe under their roof and is afforded an opportunity to prove status and honour. There is more than meets the eye to this exchange though.

The mesmerising etymology of the word ‘hospitality’ gives us poetic insight into the mutuality of the practice.

‘g^hóstis’

is the Indo – European root and it describes neither the host nor the guest but the relationship between the two. The meaning is reversible and bouncy. It flows from one to the other, like an electric current, for as long as both parties are held in their protective bind. It is the space of possibility that opens up between guest and host when they willingly engage in mutual respect. Here, anything is possible.

We can see from this that hospitality is so much more than proprietorial host fussing over compliant visitor. It is the spirit of human co-existence made visible and recognisable and embodies all that is good and decent about us. What I love about ‘Ghostis’ is that it allows for a mutual exchange between guest and host. It invites us to consider the visitor as someone interesting and indispensable; someone who will bring new ideas, show the host new ways of thinking, new ways of seeing themselves. Just as the guest needs the host, so too does the host need the guest to rescue them from their own echo-chamber.

In the cold dingy office of Luncheonette I had mounted on the wall a crumpled, photocopied extract of philosopher Jacques Derrida’s 1996 seminar, ‘Step of Hospitality/No Hospitality’ which sets out, in no uncertain terms, ‘the law of absolute, unconditional, hyperbolic hospitality’. The passage which I look to begins with the sentence,

‘Let us say yes to who or what turns up, before any determination, before any anticipation, before any identification, whether or not it has to do with a foreigner, an immigrant, an invited guest, or an unexpected visitor, whether or not the new arrival is the citizen of another country, a human animal, or divine creature, a living or dead thing male or female.’

This unassuming piece of paper carries surprising weight. The outlandish and unfeasible demand imprinted on it tells me what the aim is – to welcome each soul that crosses the threshold and cry out to them, ‘Enter quickly for I am afraid of my happiness!’ (2000, p. 131). Sometimes I growl at this sheet of paper in frustration.

I fall short and sometimes I fail spectacularly.

“Oh shut up Derrida, have you ever operated a food business?”

I try again. It works sometimes.

In my more generous moments, I am able to view these words as a sort of prayer, something to aspire towards and I am thankful because no one else's words have imparted so clearly the sacredness of the guest/host relationship.

Derrida, thank you for being a thorn in my side all these years. You give me pain and suffering. I know I will never do right by you. You ask the impossible. You know this. Even still, I am glad you are here with me, my disapproving northern star. I will keep your words close to me and continue in my vain attempt to live by them.

Looking to philosopher Jacques Derrida's impossible decree, "Say yes to who or what turns up..." (Derrida...) for guidance, I embedded this as a core element of every aspect of the operation, in particular staff training. I lumped them with the weighty conceptual significance of our duty as hosts: to provide unconditional welcome and to see the visitor as someone who we cannot live without. I also offered practical analogies such as – imagine every student in the queue has chosen to spend their bus fare home on a Luncheonette coffee and now they will have to walk home. This coffee must be extra good and should be offered with grace and ceremony required of such a sacrifice.

It is difficult to dissect a sense of welcome. It seems safe to assume that the front of house staff carry the weight of the burden but I believe that if the atmosphere, food, lighting, smell, sound, temperature is off, there is only so much that the quality of the service can deliver. I viewed these elements as interconnected parts of an engine.

Make Space

In July 2013 I stood in the semi-derelict empty canteen space and stared at it for hours and hours, or maybe days and days. In an unlikely turn of events, NCAD had decided to give me the keys of the former canteen and their blessing to reopen it as an extended art project/college canteen. They knew me as an NCAD Sculpture alumnus who had recently started bringing soup on Wednesdays.

Wait though, let me take you back a little further to October 2012

I had been working full time as an artist in a nearby city centre studio and got wind that NCAD had lost its canteen. This news burrowed into the back of my mind and gave me an itchy unsettled feeling. I hated the idea of the college left entirely without a point of hospitality. It was like taking the kitchen out of a home and expecting everyone to readjust. I had started using food in my art projects as a way of getting people to feel comfortable in spaces, so I was extra perturbed at the action of taking it away. Without a definite plan, I scrubbed my flat and

everything in it and invited the health inspector over to visit. I then started to make soup from home and bring it to NCAD once a week. I kept up this strange ritual, disruptive and unprofitable as it was, because I enjoyed the diversion from my isolated studio practice. I made a flippant comment while handing soup to the director of the college about reopening the canteen and that is how I came to be sitting there with the keys in my hand.

I was astonished by this leap of faith on the part of NCAD. I remember very clearly standing alone in this musty abandoned basement, squealing with excitement. I felt extraordinarily lucky and swore to make it work. I had never operated a food business or managed staff before, but I had been collaborating with others and running several public art projects so these were the skills I would pool from.

I built an infrastructure for minding people using the contents of my own sculpture studio. One might not choose an underground dining room but I decided to embrace the tucked-away, safety refuge aspect. One visitor likened the experience of descending the stairs to Luncheonette to climbing into the earth. The other positive thing was that without natural light, it was easier to set the atmosphere. I made a lighting installation using a collection of 51 plastic and milky glass vessels, illuminated with low wattage bulbs. These lights gave a translucent glow. They were not there to expose anyone. The intention was to reference the role of the hearth, something to draw people in and sit around.

A seven-and-a-half-metre long table for people to sit alone together was built from lovingly sanded, de-commissioned scaffolding planks, along with custom made benches in each of the four round alcoves, for more private gatherings; two separate rectangles and a little table for children. Tables were designed for shared experience - sitting alone together. Benches instead of chairs for squashing/sprawling. Wood that feels soft. That summer was spent sanding tables and wiring lights; repeatedly setting off the smoke alarm with my sawdust, smiling sheepishly at the curious admin staff who had been dragged out of their office yet again by the screechy bell.

Lots of people called down to visit and watch the progress. I worked closely with an electrician who told me all day, every day that I was wasting my time making delicate lights; that they would all be smashed in a week and students would wrap the wires around their necks and choke. I was asked about the food and told what a mistake it would be not to have sausages and chips. I was urged to mount framed posters of impressionist paintings on the walls. I was advised not to bother making special ceramics because they would be stolen.

Thankfully there was also an immense wave of constructive encouragement. The repeated evacuations I caused with the smoke alarm provided lovely impromptu networking sessions.

The college staff introduced themselves and told me exactly how they could help. The fashion department made me a set of custom designed aprons. Attendants helped me carry the heavy scaffolding planks down the stairs. Students popped in and asked if they could help make furniture. Despite my reluctance to accept this offer, each morning when I arrived in, anonymous helpers would have swept up the mountain of sawdust into neat little piles. The requests from students to help and be part of the process continued. They suggested volunteering in the kitchen once we opened and we came up with a system where people would come for an hour and help during lunchtime in exchange for their meals that day.

Then – Wagner:

A beloved café near my house sadly closed around this time. Tiesan artfully combined a classy thoughtfully designed space with a friendly local neighbourhood atmosphere. Visits there felt like being in a five-star hotel for the duration of a cup of coffee. There was beautiful food and always some kind of surprise - a new dish, an interesting conversation, a lovely song. It was a place where people might be flirting gently in the background and ideas would come to you over strong coffee. An alive place. It was dreadful to lose it but the blow was softened because, by some very beneficial alignment of the stars, the talented chef and co-owner, Wagner dos Santos decided to join me in NCAD. This was a landmark moment which remains very vivid to me still.

There are people whose lives are a series of meanderings from one fabulous opportunity to the next. Being of the overthinking/hard graft persuasion myself, I have always felt distinctly separate from this cohort. I pull and push and drag and shove. There is usually a dense thicket of unfavourable odds to wade through and fool-hardy levels of persistence involved. Now before me was a most unfamiliar sensation, akin to gliding or floating; peculiar, but not without its appeal. First NCAD and now this talented, experienced chef had opted to take a punt on me. Something had started into motion, and it was gathering its own independent momentum, not reliant upon my pulling, pushing, dragging or shoving. An infrastructure and community was forming by itself and it looked like it would remain standing if I stepped away. This was an extraordinarily exciting feeling and is one of the best by-products of my moving from a studio-based art practice to a social enterprise.

The food:

I tracked down my 21-year-old art student self and reminisced about college life. I imagined myself in my dusty pink cowboy boots at the door, in the queue. Swooning and sighing. All histrionics. Unsure yet attitudey.

The menu was built around the things people need at that age (arguably any age). Some ground rules were laid. There must always be something comforting, something restorative and something indulgent on offer, in some shape or form. The exact details would change each day to preserve us all from boredom, but the categories remained constant. And we had to always invent new dishes and serve food that would not be found anywhere else. Ceramic vessels were made especially to fit these offerings. Big bowls for hearty stews. Cups without handles for warming hands.

Signage:

Visual information/ branding/signage was consciously kept low key. As the point of hospitality in an art college I am aware of the need for space which doesn't ask anything more of the eyes. The textured brick walls and earthy tiles provided just enough intrigue for middle distance staring/daydreaming. I also feel that the lack of visual identity material allowed the space to feel more domestic and less like a canteen.

Recipes:

Because of this afore-mentioned stroke of luck, with Wagner and later Siobhán, I had brilliant chefs but also steady companions who wholeheartedly supported my ideas around creating a point of hospitality in the college. Their kindness and openness created an atmosphere of welcome in our kitchen which was vital to the running of Luncheonette. On Sundays I would share an online timetable of available volunteer slots with students who had registered interest and it would be full within an hour. The presence of students in our kitchen was one of the most important elements of Luncheonette. This wonderful brigade brought fun and conviviality. They sang and danced and gossiped and slagged. They cried too sometimes and took time out over cups of tea in our crappy office. They interrupted us in such a beautiful way and rooted themselves firmly into the core of the place.

Here the impossible had happened – in the basement of a large educational institution, was a warm, glowing hearth where people could accumulate over food and feel like a family. We learned from each other. We threw parties in the kitchen. Birthdays. A heart-breaking funeral. Weddings. Protests. A céilí on the tables. Using the dishwasher as a drum. Dance competitions in the queue. People kissing in the queue under mistletoe . A friendship that developed over the red soup. Luncheonette provided a soft pocket within the institution where people could share experiences on their own terms.

A note about music

Music, like food, is a beautiful way of holding people together, stretching out the chance for human connection, bypassing conversation with dancing, being next to each other in a clump

of collective emotions, while every fucking stupid thing that is going on in our lives waits outside, where with any luck it might just shrivel away.

DJing and Cooking are the same action in lots of ways. Both involve treating bodies to “lived sensory moments” (Kathleen Stewart), giving something small, reading the response, watching like a hawk for signs that it is taking effect; looking across the room checking that synapses have been put to work. Language usually just gets in the way.

What might be going on here?

Here is a group of people, this is what I think they need now.

This was an important tool in Luncheonette.

Setting the tone for a gentle morning with something that communicated reassurance and humanity. The McGarrigles, Ivor Cutler, Molly Drake, Ewan Mc Coll, Oumou Sangare, Bill Evans, Colleen, Sandy Denny, Moondog,

Some mornings felt epic though and we would have to blare Jacqueline du Pré’s Elgar’s Cello Concerto in E minor.

But Friday mornings were different. We went through a (short) phase of wearing formal gowns on Fridays. There was an air of frivolity. Fashion tutors would request Charles Trenet and people would waltz.

For Elevenses I remember a lot of yacht rock and R&B to go with the coffee and buns.

Lunch was a free for all. 90’s Techno, stupid soundtracks, Afrobeats, filthy pop, Cumbia, Punk, Post-Punk...

Then eventually the lunch queue would end, and the chaos would abate. Reeling slightly, the team would catch each other’s eye in recognition that everyone had been fed and we had survived. Time to go on our breaks. Musically, we would take it down a notch. Something sort of emotional and romantic. Dionne Warwick? Neil Young maybe. “Is it hard to make arrangements with yourself?....”

The final phase was motivational music to help us tidy up. Our beloved barista, Eóin marked the end of each day by closing over the doors, turning on the big scary bright lights and blasting

Stevie Nick's "The edge of Seventeen". Raffa had the last say, arriving in the late afternoon to conduct the daily rescue effort, usually finding us in a post-adrenaline slump. He liked to usher us out of the way and attack the place. Emotional Brazilian power ballads kept him company while he lovingly arranged everything for us for the next morning. The incongruous assemblage, these unlikely accoutrements of hospitality, polished and laid out like surgeon's tools. Finally, the music stops, the doors are closed and the place is left in peace to absorb the day.

Gather Dust

Although Luncheonette functions as a business, it is firmly rooted in an art practice. I saw it as a fully immersive, experiential installation.

The aim was to create a place for humans to connect with each other

To bring new cosy warmth and conviviality

To create a shared heritage

The first step is getting people to be in the same geographical space together, or at least alongside each other so that their stories can merge momentarily.

I don't mean the life stories that we have all told a million times

I picture instead the invisible pollen of ourselves that contain our memories, our dreams, our yearnings, our breakages. I imagine that we leave fragments behind us, especially in places where we have shared something, like a meal or an experience. I think too that the more these fragments accumulate in a place, floating and swirling and intermingling, the more genuine the place feels. There is a shared human familiarity that we can sense, and it is a good feeling.

This invisible emotional archaeology, this dust, makes for believable spaces. It lodges in corners, gently softening them, accumulating layers of "rich silences and wordless stories" (Michel de Certeau, 106). We can't see this dust, but we know it's there. It provides reassurance:

This is a place in which others, before me, have laughed, daydreamed, loved, argued, rested, napped, cried, invented something. I can be here.

This dust offers us habitability.

Everything Luncheonette did was an attempt to gather this dust; to make stories visible, tangible, palpable. This might strike you as an unorthodox business objective. I will attempt to make a case for it (keep an open mind).

Before Luncheonette was ever a business, it was an art project, which used food to create opportunities for shared experience. This was the whole purpose. It subsequently adopted a business model so that staff and suppliers could be paid. It had to be financially viable to keep going but it was not profit-driven. Success was measured by the quality of engagement with those who visited. Key performance indicators gauged atmosphere, conviviality, hospitality as opposed to number of new customers per month, average spend etc.

Luncheonette was designed by asking: how can this space best provide opportunities for humans to connect meaningfully with each other? What is the ideal infrastructure for shared experience? Each component had a strategic role in creating a fully immersive experience.

Long tables for democratic conviviality,
Chunky wood for solidity,
Soft glowing lights for warmth,
Earthenware bowl for earthiness,
Hearty food for emotional restoration,
Cups without handles for warming hands,
Minimal visual information for optical salve,
Small menu for simplicity,
Reasonable prices for accessibility,
Policy of never turning people away who couldn't pay for Derrida
Daily changing menu for regular visitors,
Open kitchen, brightly lit like a stage for queuing spectators,
Playful language used to describe food for diversion,
Music chosen for accentuating the given pervasive atmosphere,
Aprons designed with fashion students for functionality and creativity,
Dishes served from college community recipes for shared heritage,
Front of house outfits chosen for communicating a sense of occasion,
Flowers and foliage scattered everywhere for reminding us what is happening above ground,
Staff trained in the art of communicating recognition and gratitude for split second exchanges..

The idea of operating a business which functions in order to foster opportunities for shared experience might seem unorthodox, but it worked. Luncheonette was the first canteen operator to succeed in NCAD. It attracted continuous positive publicity and was awarded Best Café in

Ireland at the 2019 Food and Wine Awards. Creating a fully immersive experience around care secured collective commitment from the college community, which in turn provided financial security. At times it felt very like a co-operative model. In short, it worked.

Share Heritage

The next part of the Softening Corners challenge, after collecting stories and creating a space for shared experience, involves finding ways to articulate these things to others. For this task, I rely heavily on food because it is a language that is common to us all.

Luncheonette was consciously set up in a way which left space open for visitors to have an impact. This open space was commandeered beautifully by the college community. I witnessed a heartening collective commitment which would manifest in small and big ways. Without ever being asked, visitors started to clear the dining room table after themselves. Gardeners would proudly present gorgeous produce from their vegetable patch. Bags and bags of cooking apples in the autumn. Thoughtful music suggestions. The director of the college's secretary, Marion, would bring hay from her horses for us to cook ham in. A mature student from Sculpture, Mags loaned us her love heart pastry cutter for Valentines Day scones. A tutor from the Media department, Leah, once presented us with lovely Aughadown cultured butter from Cork for our Thursday morning staff toast ritual.

Although these offerings ranged in scale, the accumulation was profound. It meant that we existed in the consciousness of our community as a space that people felt they could have a distinct contribution to. They were seen and valued. Our kitchen door was open (we didn't actually have one).

One vital manifestation of community support was the volunteer program initiated by students, involving one hour of helping out in the kitchen in exchange for that day's food and a 20% discount the rest of the time. There could be up to three students in the kitchen at a time. Depending on when they came and what was happening in the kitchen, students could be prepping, cooking, baking, doing dishes. The first slot was at 11 am and when sandwich-making was usually the priority.

The arrival of this fizzy gang into the mid-morning production regime was one of my favourite sights. Our kitchen had to make room for singing, dancing, ranting, gossiping and all the new energy. These students were our guests of honour. Firstly, they helped us massively in a practical way. They dug us out when we were under extra pressure and bolstered us with their support. They also provided us with lovely insight into college life, opening up a line of

communication with the student body which guided us in how best to look after them. And, very importantly, they shared their family recipes with us.

These priceless offerings were graciously received into our repertoire. We would discuss the recipe with the kitchen team, where possible testing the dish out together and deciphering its scalability. Under the watchful eye of the recipe donor, our chefs would figure out the best way to translate a family dish into lunch for 500 people. The dish and its benefactor would be featured on the menu which was circulated to the student and staff body. Often friends, family and classmates would be invited along to share the dish and the glory.

I am now the honoured custodian of this beautiful piece of food heritage, formed by the generosity of students, staff and visitors. This collection of recipes is Luncheonette's solid gold treasure trove. This is proof that we were all here together in this moment; that we really saw each other and willingly shared our precious and intimate food heritage. It is proof that an educational institution like NCAD was impacted by the individuals that passed through it; that it saw them and will remember them after they are gone. Because Aoibhinn was here in 2013, we had beetroot burgers. Because STU 1 was there in 2016 we had Masoor Dahl. Because Jenn was there in 2017 we have Butterless Butternut Squash Cake. And so on. We swallowed this shared heritage into our bodies and incorporated it into our cells.

Here we were, engaged in a beautiful dance of mutual hospitality. Real life 'Ghostis'. The guests had become the hosts. We were learning from each other in an environment of trust and respect. Food is primordially linked to our continuance, what we eat is the poetry of our survival. It is imbued with pride and humanity and therefore identity. Here, in the basement of this busy Dublin art school, we were cooking together and telling the story of ourselves.

Nurture Bodies

Luncheonette started using food as a device for getting people to delay in places that needed human presence. It is less weird to be sitting, shedding dust in a place if you are sharing a meal with others! To me, it is a lovely decoy.

Having said that, this food must be thoughtful and excellent; made with honesty and kindness, using good ingredients, working with the seasons, showing respect to the farms, animals, and planet. The offering must attempt to gauge the diverse range of requirements that might be presented.

Having thought carefully about the reasons why we eat certain foods at certain times, I listed three important food roles that would need to be addressed each day by the Luncheonette menu:

To restore

To comfort

To indulge

You might be restored by a cup of fresh mint tea one day and a grain pot another. Comfort could be delivered in a bowl of coconutty Urad Dal or indeed the lump of parmesan mash found on top of ‘Stewp’. Indulgence is even more of a shape-shifter and might come to you in an espresso-glazed chocolate brownie or a warm, soft, melted Gubeen cheese and balsamic onion potato bun. It didn’t matter as long as these emotional/physiological requirements were met somewhere on the menu every day. We have to presume that everyone sitting down in our dining room wants to have a small feast and that everything is an occasion.

A note on food safety:

I was very scared when I started using food in my art practice because it can kill people. I did very elaborate and advanced HACCP food safety training and made sure all the people working in the kitchen in Luncheonette were up to scratch. However I also think a lot about other invisible things that can be transferred through food, which can bring great benefit or cause harm. There is a tribe in Papua New Guinea called the Hua tribe who have incredibly strict rules around the preparation of food because they believe that food gives or takes power (which they call nu). Along those lines, I do believe that people preparing and serving food have the power to imbue it with magic powers. I believe that the intent towards the eater is of vital importance and that there has to be love and generosity in the action.

You, cooking this food, whose mouths have you in mind?

Who owns these lips that part for you/because of you? What do you want to say with this food? Is your heart whispering secret messages with your careful actions, that not even you can hear? Peeling, chopping, beating, waiting, poaching, reducing, watching protein coagulate, sugars caramelise. Irreversible processes. You can’t un-cook food, no more than you can un-declare love.

Here with this food your body is telling wordless stories to another person’s body. With your actions, you are producing a substance which another will admit into their system. This substance contains “vital essence”, present in food and transferable between objects and organisms (Anna Meigs).

The eaters life and health are at stake whenever the decision is taken to incorporate; but so too are his place in the universe, his essence, his nature, in short his identity. An object inadvisedly incorporated may contaminate him, insidiously transform him from within, possess him or rather depossess him of himself. (Fischler, 1988, p.280).

Celebrate Ritual

To be the first to arrive here in the morning is a triumph. It is almost impossible to beat the vegetable delivery. Their day starts at an hour most commonly associated with raging parties. Sometimes when they are behind schedule, we catch Mick, the delivery man flinging the produce from over his shoulder and tell him to be nicer to the onions. He remembers doing his rounds on a horse and cart. He probably knows more about the resilience of onions than we do. Sometimes he issues us a riddle on his way out the door. In our make-believe delivery man pageant, my vote goes to Vlad, the baker, who I suspect might be a benevolent vampire. He is always exhausted from baking all night and takes naps on giant sacks of flour. He has a house full of fostered greyhounds and very kind eyes. A runner-up is the milk man because of the time he produced roses for us on International Women's Day, having never previously uttered a single word, and the other rep. with the glad eye for our chef, who gifted her with 5 kilos of butter roses, subsequently crumbled into a scone mix. And of course Noelie, the butcher who never leaves without affectionately slapping the piece of meat he has just delivered. We all love Billy from Klee Paper too, because he is so giddy and he showers us with praise and encouragement which we lap up, delighted.

These early morning operettas unfold, with no one watching except the ancient walls. Quiet rituals of hospitality performed again and again. An unlikely cast. Family of sorts. The rest of the Luncheonette gang trundle in sleepily. I ponder suitable music choices, trying to tune into the morning's frequency. The first cups of coffee are delivered into the chefs. Gentle slagging starts as we all commit to the process of waking up. Kitchen banter. The intimacy of conversations without eye contact. Hands busy. Things are funnier this way.

There is a window of the morning when everything is semi perfect – clean, ordered, set up. The day is laid out before us, crisp with potential. It is all to play for. This moment is fleeting-sometimes just a split second. Everything after that brings various levels of chaos. Sound, colour, smells, emotions, atmosphere. Boom! With a nod of agreement, we open the doors to the day and relinquish all control over the proceedings. We have no idea who/what will present itself, in what numbers, what the nature of the requirements might be. We have a plan of course,

and systems and a back-up plan and alternative systems, and contingencies. But still – we are opening our doors to a corner of the world in the hope of delivering unconditional hospitality and that is not nothing.

For 8 years I started my days like this, in this unexpectedly beautiful underground space. Each morning with a sharp intake of breath, I gauged the weight of the immense task at hand, wondered if I was up to it, felt consoled by having succeeded the previous day and leapt blindly into the fabulous abyss.

Another day, another set of miracles. Another series of encounters with humans from whom joy sprays like a burst pipe (and we know all about them). Here in this corner of the world, people are different. They are nothing like customers. They never behave like “the general public”. They are visitors. But the kind of visitors one awaits impatiently because they bring surprises that feed the heart and soul. Their technicolour exuberance bounces across the counter and gives heart. It tells me that I am in the right place with the right flapjacks. It provides both buoyancy and grounding. And tops up my belief in this mad project.

Leave a Trace

A 'luncheonette' is a light-on-its-feet food station. It is flexible and adaptable and can even move from place to place to serve its purpose in different contexts, for different reasons.

I brought Luncheonette to NCAD in 2013 with the intention to stay for one or two years. I settled in, allowing layers to develop. It grew steadily. But in depth not width. I resisted invitations to expand Luncheonette into other sites. I can account for this reticence in a few ways. Firstly, I did not want more than one Luncheonette. Yuck! I was very present in the day-to-day running of the place and couldn't imagine it otherwise. Mostly, I was having too much fun in NCAD, learning so much from being there every day, meeting visitors, washing dishes, planning menus, learning from chefs; all the while watching carefully for signs of impact on the college.

In 2019 we were awarded Best Café in Ireland at the Food and Wine awards. Imagine! We were astonished even to have been nominated - that a college canteen could be given this sort of recognition from food critics was indeed heartening. When they called Luncheonette out at the ceremony, I sat there for a long time frowning, immobilised with the shock of it. Eventually someone elbowed me out of my daze and told me to get up and take the prize. This was a gorgeous moment for all our team, past and present. We floated around in the aftermath, bolstered up by this accolade and determined to do right by it. We closed when Covid landed

and then tried various incarnations, all of which created distance between us and the students. We were no longer able to bring people into the kitchen and I really missed this aspect. When it came to reopening properly, there were a lot of new mysteries to solve, and exciting design challenges. I was gathering myself to go into fix-it mode, notebook out, inventing and reimagining. I recall most vividly sitting in my garden and experiencing the shocking realisation that, this time, it would not be me doing the solving. I could see with absolute clarity that the time had come to hand the reins on to someone else.

I had created Luncheonette as a mobile hospitality service, designed to travel to sites where it was most needed, like a strange ambulance. NCAD had held me, mesmerised, for eight years and now it was just simply time to go on to the next challenge. This revelation was both exhilarating and awful. I had put my heart and soul into this place, and I loved the bones of it and the people in it. If it hadn't been for the rude interruption of Covid, I might have forgotten to ever leave. There ensued an obscenely messy outpouring of emotion (mine) in the boardroom over a conversation with college management about leaving. The news was received with kindness and support and we made a plan to work together on a nice transition and set to work finding a new canteen operator. I understand now that the decision to leave, though profoundly sad, was manageable because it was clear that the college was no longer in a hospitality crisis and it was ok to take Luncheonette away.

Leaving is a very important part of the hospitality exchange. If the guest doesn't leave, the whole system implodes. NCAD was a gracious host to Luncheonette and supported me generously from day one. It is a place and community that has a firm hold of my heart. Over the course of the eight years we fed roughly 600,000 souls. I am amazed how many of those faces pop into my head, and how often, visiting me still in my memory. It's a lovely feeling.

Important things often happen in the wrong place. I seem to do my best problem solving in the shower, for instance. Learning happens through informal chats in corridors and queues. I wanted Luncheonette to provide the very best version of this "wrong place". I wanted to open up a space in NCAD, specifically designed for moments of human connection. I believe these moments to possess exquisite potency. They bring richness, colour and poetry to our daily lives. They remind us of the world outside ourselves. These split seconds surprises ignite a spark of energy that fuels us. We crave it, this vital, precious natural resource. I spent eight years in the basement of NCAD using food, lighting, atmosphere to harness this energy. It was a strange job to have, but I loved it.

Luncheonette's journey since leaving NCAD has been an adventurous one, involving a year long project in Dublin's Hugh Lane Gallery and a strategic hospitality residency in a London

based arts organisation called Artsadmin. I have been back in NCAD too, swapping my role as dinner lady for lecturer, which feels new and great. I am working with other cultural institutions now (theatres, galleries, festivals) exploring ways in which holistic hospitality practices can be embedded into their sites, articulating a meaningful welcome; all the while reinforcing the request to take pause when approaching the guest on the threshold. What I learned over the course of eight years running Luncheonette in NCAD is that, before assuming the role of charitable host, remember that this person has, quite likely, come to rescue you. They have arrived with untold secrets and gifts. They will teach you new things, about the world and about yourself, and show colours that you didn't know existed. Life before them, or without them, will seem insufficient. Six hundred thousand times I witnessed the profound impact that a thoughtfully welcomed guest can have on a place, and indeed its host.

Appendix B - Categorisation of Interview Data into Seven Themes



Say Yes to Who or What Turns Up

Gauging the perceived sense of welcome and conviviality felt by visitors.

Interviewee	Say Yes to Who or What Turns Up - Data excerpt
NAC 1	I think it really worked beyond what you could imagine something like that would do. It was transformative in the space.

Interviewee	Say Yes to Who or What Turns Up - Data excerpt
	<p>When you're down in the Luncheonette, and you're, kind of, waiting to get your food and you're in that atmosphere, nobody is cross about things. Whereas you could be up in the staff room...and staff might be there being cross about things.... It's a bit more tense in the staffroom....but you don't get that in the Luncheonette.</p> <p>It was welcoming. It was busy...welcoming.</p> <p>It was a kind of a safe space in a way, maybe that's the word. So it was kind of like, there was an agreement to everybody, this is how you behave when you're there. This is how it feels, everybody is welcome and everybody is allowed to, kind of, have that sort of space.</p> <p>The atmosphere was always respectful, I suppose, of everybody who was there. Whether they were students, staff, you know, it was respectful.</p>
VIS 1	<p>I always felt welcome, and embraced.</p> <p>The other thing that struck me was students there meeting colleagues or friends who brought their own lunch. And that, and that was okay, too. Which made it feel I guess, it made it have the energy of a picnic...That felt very progressive.</p>
ACA 2	<p>Yeah, the attitude to its visitors was warm and inclusive.</p> <p>The staff were kind of, you know, friendly and welcoming, you know, the place had a sense of welcome, you know, think of the Greek notion of guest friendship, that this sort of this concept, and it's kind of classical Greece of is it Xenia, I don't know I think it's Xenia...the concept, which is just all about the responsibility of a host to create this condition of guest friendship, when someone is welcomed in, you know, they are, the guest is a friend, and you can't break that law. That's one of the</p>

Interviewee	Say Yes to Who or What Turns Up - Data excerpt
	<p>worst laws to break, the law of hospitality.</p> <p>Very, very welcome. But to the point of being a little embarrassed, because sometimes I ended up there so long, that maybe people wondered, did I ever do any actual teaching or anything...Because, you know, it felt good to be there.</p> <p>I've spent the last week, most of the last week, in a, in a hospital in Belfast, where I've been visiting a sick family member, and the cafe, that we've been going to routinely, most days, the food is just appalling, and everything about the offer that's presented there to people, it just says they don't really care, you know, they don't care what kind of food is served, or it's just food to be served. The relationship of Luncheonette to its visitors was also one of, you know, speaking to them in ways which sort of said, try this, or, you know, join us in giving this thing a go.</p>
DIR 1	
STU 2	<p>It feels like you're burrowing down into something like warm and homey and comfortable. Like I don't know, putting on a blanket, or getting into bed nearly,</p> <p>like it's it has that like, ritualistic...like, you go downstairs and it's like, warm and safe and away from horrible, horrible, like, college work.</p> <p>Overall, the atmosphere is like, extremely - this is home, this where we belong, like, chill out, have a breather. And that long, big table as well, is so like. inviting. As in like, you have to sit beside someone, and they can talk to you and you can talk to them.</p> <p>Maybe it's something about how lovely the environment is, that people are like, always willing to extend that extra kindness or something. But yeah, I felt very welcome especially after the first few times it's kind of like, oh, it's okay, I can be here...there's no secret code everyone is welcome here.</p>

Interviewee	Say Yes to Who or What Turns Up - Data excerpt
	<p>I think I struggled to like feel at home there (NCAD) in the first couple of years. When like, your friendships are still kind of forming. And you don't really know where you belong, or who you belong with like so in those days, the Luncheonette was like, my favourite thing to do. I was like, "this is where you go, if you're like scared to go to huge drinking events later in the evening, like, you're allowed to go to the Luncheonette. And like, you're welcome there again."</p> <p>It was just like, the perfect place to, like, put you at ease...So having that space that's so inclusive is like- inclusive and particularly, I do mean inclusive in a small way where it's you're a part of something that you don't know how to be part of. It's so important. Like that was like what allowed me to get comfortable and to make friends, I think.</p> <p>I probably did cry in there at some point because that was college, like four years of rising or falling emotions. There's no way that I didn't, but in any case, you're safe there. It's not like- nothing can hurt you. All the bad stuff is outside so it doesn't matter. If you cry in there like, no one's gonna judge you...So much nicer to cry there than in the library or the studio you know.</p>
NAC 2	<p>It was fine...Quite friendly like</p> <p>A little bit of banter or something with the staff in the queue... that was it. But yeah decent vibes, like I said the music was always interesting.</p>
ACA 1	<p>I think the place is intensely welcoming in, kind of, the consideration of the experience.</p> <p>I think it wanted them (visitors) to be fed and made happy. And I'd say that's probably it was that straightforward.</p>

Interviewee	Say Yes to Who or What Turns Up - Data excerpt
	<p>You could have the type of discussion there that and the kind of craic that you wouldn't have in another place.</p> <p>Ref. Luncheonette versus staff room: "It really depends in my mind on how much bitching you want to do".</p> <p>It's such a bloody sanctuary you know.</p>
STU 1	<p>It was good, happy faces. "How can I help you? What would you like today?" And yeah, trying to make that small difference in people's days.</p> <p>It became my place to go. I invited a lot of friends, that was like every opportunity, I would try to go there. And then I started seeing how everyone felt by going over there. And I think that was the whole idea that we've talked a lot about, like we want to create that haven where you've had a couple of really difficult lectures or you've just had a really tough meeting with your supervisor or something like that. And you just want to come to Luncheonette, not go somewhere far and have that moment of peace or just relax or think of something else for 30/20/30 minutes or one hour or something and then go back to your thinking and things like that.</p>
DIR 2	



Make Space

Here I am measuring the relationship between the design and the functionality of the space.

Interviewee	Make Space - Data excerpt
NAC 1	"...over the summer of 2013, there was all this noise going on down in the basement and all the dust rising and all the, you know, sanding and sawing

Interviewee	Make Space - Data excerpt
	<p>away so there's a lot of activity and this mad woman in her dungarees was up and down and setting off the alarm and all sorts.</p> <p>It was a wonder to behold. It was just a beautiful space for a start, which was really appreciated in the college.</p> <p>I've met people I didn't know, yeah, or that I wouldn't have met you know. I've met, I would have met say staff that you're emailing or that you're kind, of you know, been in communication with and then somebody says, "Oh, this is such and such" you know, and then you say "Oh, right. Yeah. Nice to see you."</p> <p>Well, I've gone there occasionally with colleagues or other colleagues who kind of just needed to kind of, you know, unload about something or have a chat about something, and it might have been quite emotional. I have, yeah. So we've gone and sat in the corner, and you had a chat about something private or something. And it might have been emotions involved. Yeah, I have that. Yeah.</p> <p>It didn't matter whether you went down on your own or not, there was always somebody standing in the queue, who you'd chat to. It was a great place. Actually, I often did kind of business, waiting in the queue.</p> <p>Somewhere, you know, and I suppose all of that was in a low key way, you know, it was kind of...I'm sure there was thought and there was, you know, deliberate kind of intent in a lot of it, but it was low key and not in your face.</p> <p>Yeah, the music, the playlists, love that, there was always lovely music playing. There was always great music. So it was nice. Yeah, music was always good.</p>
VIS 1	<p>And it was always nice to observe the relationships between those who work there and their peers or colleagues.</p>

Interviewee	Make Space - Data excerpt
	<p>It was clear that she had curated that interior, very effectively, you know, superb. The lighting and the basic arrangement of chairs, which was, I suspect, very intentional. But not imposing. No, I would have wondered in the back of my head around all the banal things about you know, light levels and... You know because when you get into developing spaces, it's just endless regulation.</p> <p>I stumbled across the word earthy or climbing into the earth. It definitely, there was a kind of an earthy character to it. And part of that was serendipitous maybe with the quarry tiles that pre-existed Jennie's takeover, but I think she probably really worked with what was there to build that earthiness. And the music kind of sliced through that then just at the point before it would all get too earthy or too serious.</p> <p>But I do remember the music not being as heavy as the, as the floor, or as dark as the lighting, or as solid as the benches, if you know what I mean. So it was definitely a counterpoint there, and probably the flowers, if I remember correctly. And then the kind of lights in the middle of it all.</p>
ACA 2	<p>Music was a factor, as well. So the playlists that would be in there were always, I don't know, they seem always just right, you know.</p> <p>...tutorials can be quite formal things. But sometimes a chat can be helpful to a student in a non-tutorial way, where you just, you know, you're not necessarily having a structured discussion, but you might just be having a, you know, a discussion that has educational merit, but it isn't, it isn't part of the official teaching. And that kind of thing was possible in Luncheonette...the learning is continuing to happen in sort of non-directive ways....You know, the sense in which the conversations that are the really important conversations happen outside of the classroom. [inaudible] Now, they happen outside of formal spaces.</p>

Interviewee	Make Space - Data excerpt
	<p>My first impression of it..., well, I mean, that it was in terms of ambience, completely different. And that in terms of things like lighting, and, you know, the style of the tables and everything, something that was a complete project had been realized...without having kind of intervened architecturally, it was now a complete thing that made sense as an art college café, without having any art on the walls, right? You know, it managed to situate itself within you know, an idea of art and a kind of, you know, a domain of design as well in a way that felt true and appropriate.</p> <p>The experience of going was one that I suppose there were, it was spatial, as much as you know, to do in any way with food. The booths that were in there, suddenly felt like places that you could be either productively alone in, or you know, comfortably together with one person or small groups. It could be, you know, it could be really convivial and it could be really, you know, usefully professional.</p> <p>That's, you know, a big part of being alive, is these little kind of moments where you may just chat to someone that you didn't expect to chat to.</p>
DIR 1	<p>In terms of the creativity that went into your food, and how you created the environment, downstairs for that food to be experienced for that nourishment to be provided, that it was functioning on a number of different levels, all consolidated</p> <p>by your own background as a creative artist... That your sculpture, if you like, was the totality of the process that you were delivering, and not simply, as I say, the proteins and the vitamins that you were delivering.</p>
STU 2	<p>There's people that I know here. It's so nice to be reassured that they exist.</p> <p>I think that a space that's so like warm and alive does need to be lived in. I was never like, thinking about that at the time. Like "I need to be here for</p>

Interviewee	Make Space - Data excerpt
	<p>the Luncheonette". But like a space like that does need people to be in it to be what it is, which is like somewhere that people are. So it does need people in it.</p> <p>It's not like some dingy basement. It's like this warm, nice place. "Come down and you'll see and then you'll tell other people about it and we'll all go in together". It's very community-drawn in that aspect. It's not like there's a huge sign pointing towards it. It's like needs to be built by everyone who goes there. So yeah, I suppose that was needed by the Luncheonette...Maybe not so much needed but like wanted and appreciated.</p> <p>But like people are always so happy to sit down at a table with complete strangers and like eat soup.</p> <p>I liked that it was <i>our</i> place. It was like this little gem of like, a Dublin cafe/restaurant is like, it belongs to NCAD. And it's our place.</p> <p>Ref. eating with tutors: "But if you just happen to be next to them you're like, "oh, I can be kind of chill around this guy now...(I) don't have to be smart, (I) can just eat (my) soup."</p>
NAC 2	<p>Ref previous NCAD canteen: ". A greasy spoon, sausages and rashers and toast and fried egg. Not healthy. Tasty though!... yeah well it was okay but...good is probably a stretch."</p> <p>I remember her salad bowls, recycled washing machine doors.</p> <p>I went once myself and my wife, my then partner, now wife, and I, and Jennie had like a late night thing for dinner, various courses and stuff like that, in the evening so that was nice.</p>

Interviewee	Make Space - Data excerpt
	<p>Ref. first impression: “Oh I was delighted...Like Jennie had interesting lightning, nice music, the place was tidied up and the food was 100 times better. Fresh healthy stuff. Nicely spiced, stuff from the Middle East...Mexican stuff, the "If a burrito was a soup" was one of my favourites. And then the odd times she'd do...she had venison burgers one day and it was just amazing, like really good. Yeah, so no I loved it from day one, yeah.</p>
ACA 1	<p>Ref previous NCAD canteen: “It was filthy and it was, from a kind of catering point of view, everything maybe bad about the traditional model of brought in catering canteen where fairly low grade food and no love. I just remember everyone used to eat sausages and beans and chips. That was kind of the safest thing. All the leftovers went into the vegetable container”</p> <p>I suppose on the first entrance, like markedly different and nice and her sculptures and light fixtures are very idiosyncratic, I suppose they're kind of not something you'd see. The music was always a presence. Jennie had great taste in music...., when you meet the selection of food and you see the prices you're like, Jesus christ!</p> <p>Ref: Anything unusual? “So much of it, like the sense of it being handmade and made with purpose I think, is really cool. Things like the big tables, the large communal table, you know, it's more possible to get in and out.... if you're determined! There, in that vein of things that you mightn't choose it out of convenience, but you benefit from having, you know, like it's that kind of conviviality of the space.”</p> <p>I think convivial is the word I'd use. It's space for joy.</p> <p>...the music is there to, maybe, take away sound of your own voice because it's so busy, you can kind of leave yourself in the noise of it all.</p>

Interviewee	Make Space - Data excerpt
	<p>Probably a huge part of what I, the magic of Luncheonette as it was, of being introduced to things but in a way which was accessible both financially and maybe like...it wasn't exclusive like, it was the definition of the accessible it was cheaper then going to Centra. And you would find out that Gubeen cheese melted on roast shallots was the nicest thing in the fucking world and you'd have never thought of that. It was great.</p> <p>There's a huge a huge kind of wealth and a different take and I suppose there's other places in Dublin like Fumbally and that, but they'd be three times the price and I wouldn't find them as welcoming because they're, I find them a bit, they take themselves a bit seriously without seeing what they do well.</p> <p>They were always happy enough to help people; they were very, very open. And I think by and large people treated them with the respect that they deserved. You know? As I say it wasn't transactional.</p> <p>They'd give me the coffee I wanted and they'd even give it to me in the cup I wanted if it was there...she had a couple of small cups...that like your mother might have...That we had, that actually my mother actually had!</p> <p>Ref: atmosphere: "The music and noise in the room, it's kind of a noisy room anyway. That's like a pub. You know that you have a certain amount of noise to make you feel that you can make noise yourself as well. Music would often be brilliant. You know you can be dancing away in the queue."</p> <p>I keep coming back to the word convivial but it's the kind of it's how I see what she was trying to do. The level of lighting, kind of creating glowing spots while keeping the whole thing you know pleasantly atmospheric, very result very considered and lovely. A very happy place.</p>

Interviewee	Make Space - Data excerpt
	<p>It was a very open kitchen, very, very open, like you can see right into it. In itself, it's, you know, the beautiful stack of vegetables and sometimes people, you know, just inside the door and it all adds to the sense that they're doing something they're liking.</p> <p>But the queue is a great place for talking. And often, like maybe particularly a colleague, people who work there, you could talk to someone you wouldn't eat with in the queue. I mean, and that might be how you get to know them and you could catch people going in and out and they'd have a word with you. Like I suppose the trope is like the water cooler type of thing. Yeah, it's like an absolute turbocharged water cooler of like an 18 person put them in a queue. You can really get business done if you need to, soft and hard business.</p> <p>It was a nice place to, a third place kind of, to work.</p> <p>It was a beautifully crafted experience, which was just a lovely thing to meet in your day. Yeah, like any kind of communal space that's well used, and well loved, it very much helps cement the bonds between people because there's this sense of meeting and feeling like that you are connected to the people maybe you work with or study. with or are part of the college with or whatever.</p>
STU 1	<p>And that was my first impression. Just how, how cosy it was. I think yellow lights make it cosy, and then the furniture and then I think the flooring, the brick, and everything just gave that atmosphere of that space being very cosy. But also, you know, it's like the entry is a bit small? Congested with the people coming down, but then suddenly it opens up. And then on the right when you see those big, that big hall. That was my first impression of how, first of all, how amazing it was. And yeah, it felt very cozy and comfortable.</p>

Interviewee	Make Space - Data excerpt
	<p>It has to be a good wholesome meal, because this is probably the only good meal they'll have the whole day if they're students. It has to be affordable for them. And just that space, the music, the relaxing, you know, all of those small, small things that we're talking about. And that would only happen when you know, when you were really thinking about the customer rather than your business.</p> <p>Ref. the queue: "It was also conversational, right? Where you kind of, you know, chatting, and kind of talking about Luncheonette. Wondering about, you know, because you would put that menu at the door as well. So people can already start making those decisions or start thinking about what it's gonna taste like. So you're also talking about that. And I think, you know, now that you asked me, and I'm thinking, it was great being in the queue, because you're literally talking a lot about food. And you're talking about oh, have you, did you try this last week? It was so good. So you kind of... those kinds of conversations were happening."</p> <p>...I was also front of house, sometimes. I knew what it meant, right? When you see those people, when someone is coming, and then you, just by chance, you asked how's it- what's going on today for you, and then boom, they will just start talking about, like, okay, that, that felt nice to hear about that story, or that person talking about some experience or that small interaction, and that does mean something.</p>
DIR 2	<p>I think for a lot of staff... They really liked the fact that it is a space where they can interact with their students.</p> <p>I mean, I know for a lot of students, we would hear from students regularly enough that, you know, I think Luncheonette wasn't big enough, and that the queues were kind of frustrating. And they wanted other spaces as well, or, and particularly people who wanted to be able to bring their own food and not be buy... you know, we know, absolutely, that there aren't enough spaces</p>

Interviewee	Make Space - Data excerpt
	<p>for students on campus, it's something we're really trying to address. So it didn't meet all the student needs by any means... but I think for a lot, for a lot of students, it was an important social space.</p> <p>It was exactly what it needed to be. Yeah. I mean, the menu was really the sort of clarity of the menu. I think really, people really worked. They love that sort of routine of having their porridge and then having their grain pot or the, you know, and the price point was very good, you know, always very good.</p>



Gather Dust

Here I am collecting the distinctions made between Luncheonette and a conventional institutional catering provider.

Interviewee	Gather Dust - Data excerpt
NAC 1	<p>You know, students and staff mingling, just eating you know, just a nice relaxed space, where you could bring people and be proud of it.</p> <p>You could always rely on it on being kind of, you know, true to itself and not selling out.</p> <p>It's just beautiful. I loved the lights and the, you know, the tables, so the whole thing was just lovely. It was just wow, really nice. And it wasn't, you know, I mean, it was I suppose there's, there's some kind of nice cafe things around. But that was very nice. That was probably the nicest. It was like, it was like an installation, you're eating in a really beautiful space. Well it was an installation I suppose.</p>

Interviewee	Gather Dust - Data excerpt
VIS 1	<p>There's nothing like it. So I went to college myself, I went to college in UCG and UCD and throughout a previous professional career, and worked on construction projects, and third level. No I've never seen anything like it.</p> <p>I certainly felt very much without sounding too kind of cheesy, part of an experience... From the level of lighting, to the type of lights, to the long bench to the smaller benches, to the music to the staff, everything. So what was the first experience? First, want of a description, maybe that I was within something if that makes sense. There was a completeness to it.</p> <p>Much less transactional</p> <p>Without kind of over-egging it, it always felt like a privilege to be there.</p> <p>You know, I think there was so much that made up that atmosphere that if one was flailing or drooping that another aspect of that atmosphere probably picked up and compensated if you know what I mean... I think because it was such an ensemble it probably had the capacity to ebb and flow a little bit within its own sphere.</p> <p>And I know profit can be calibrated or measured in different ways. Look, no, I wouldn't have...described it as profit-driven in the traditional sense of financial profit. But it did almost certainly generate massive other dividends.... I think it was definitely profitable in social and cultural...sense.</p> <p>You know, there's lots of people, or there's lots of places and people who you know, do one or two things great. But there are very few places I think that have a handle on food and place as a whole and that's I think what was unusual about Luncheonette, it's completeness. It was a complete thing.</p> <p>Ref. institutional food: "Definitely within the higher education sector, outstandingly unusual"</p> <p>Ref. value: Yeah being incredibly affordable and therefore accessible and therefore democratic. But being relentlessly complete. You know there's lots of cheap food and I'm sure for a fiver you could've climbed out of</p>

Interviewee	Gather Dust - Data excerpt
	<p>luncheonette across the road to Tesco Express and picked up you know a bunch of food. Yeah so in that it, and we didn't talk about that, it was made very accessible by the fact that it was very affordable.</p>
ACA 2	<p>Ref. previous college canteen: "I would like to repress any memories of that really... But it didn't feel like it was anything that fitted in the environment... it bore no meaningful relationship to the culture of the college.</p> <p>Ref: Luncheonette: I started almost living there</p> <p>...an awful lot of what was being done in Luncheonette had personality, you know, and it felt, you know, it felt that things were, I don't want to use the word curated, because it's an overused word, but it certainly felt that things were cared for. And things were and, you know, the details mattered. And the details to do with, you know, how you bring people together, as well as how you sort of, provide for them.</p> <p>And, you know, the concept of the Gesamtkunstwerk or, you know, the total work of art. And in a way that's the kind of you know, it's a sort of social sculpture version of where you get every detail of this environment has you know, a site-specific kind of recognition of what it is as a space as a sort of possible place, but also a cultivated cared for transformation of what could be done in there. From as I say, the music through to the, you know, the furniture, to the bespoke lighting, then into the varieties of ways people might encounter each other.</p> <p>Luncheonette was not like...some functional business which had, you know, which the college had to offer. It felt like something which was created for and with students in ways appropriate to college life, in ways that we're going to kind of help to sort of foster positive dimensions of college life. And it did all of that with great sort of care for the details of what it's like, you know, to be with others.</p>

Interviewee	Gather Dust - Data excerpt
	<p>It wasn't some sort of speculative provocation, you know, it was something that was grounded a little more in, in the kind of ongoing labour of this, you know, there's a kind of just kind of, love in that, or something, that there's this sense that, you know, this thing's is rewarding, but it's going to be hard work to keep going.</p> <p>This is where you start an art school - you start an art school, with the cafe.</p> <p>In the case of Luncheonette, it was a little bit more like you didn't need artworks on the walls, because the whole thing was being configured in a way which had a kind of, you know, creative power that was valid on its own terms.</p> <p>Ref: What did you like most: "it would probably be...this kind of sense of it as a totality, you know. That it became a, you know, it was, it wasn't just that I liked the flapjacks the best or, you know, I liked having a quiet seat? I liked having a quiet seat in there with that music and those people and that lighting and, you know. I liked that it all mattered, everything. Everything mattered, and everything mattered together. And that all that was being done to create a place that would be great for me, great for others. Great for the people who work there. But it was all done with love, I guess.</p> <p>Ref. Profit-driven: "I mean it wouldn't occur to me to use that kind of language.</p> <p>You know, except if we kind of completely, reimagine what we might mean by profit. What kind of a gain, there might be out of that venture. And all of the things that, you know, luncheonette and its customers profit from are, you know, we're, t's sort of, you know, commitments. You know, it's kind of everything it cultivated and cared for, you know, there was a huge degree of added value from luncheonette. Beyond the sort of, you know, finances and hard numbers.</p>

Interviewee	Gather Dust - Data excerpt
DIR 1	<p>Ref. previous canteen operator: "...there was no there was no market, no audience, nobody coming into the college to visit the canteen, other than people who maybe were trapped in the college... it was not an experience of choice"</p> <p>Ref. previous operator: "On every front, it was an inadequate experience that was on offer for people and obviously, they stayed away. The organisation got into difficulty. It was a catering organisation. It wasn't run by the individuals who worked there. It was a bigger catering organisation, which was used to a sort of what I would call industrial food process, really, not customised, not addressing the context at all in any way"</p> <p>If you remain trapped in a business model mentality, then you know, I'm sure somebody with a different perspective would have looked at it... If they looked at it from that perspective, would say, well, this doesn't work, therefore shouldn't be done. But what occurred to me, first of all, the quality of the food that you were providing, in that incredibly improvised way in the student union space was great. So it starts with that. It starts with me eating the soup and thinking "this is really delicious. This would be great."</p> <p>It just seemed to me that there was a continuum there, where the creativity could also flow into the provision of nourishment... Therefore, the very thing that would disqualify you from a business model perspective, was the actual thing which qualified you at that point at that time to do this in the college.</p> <p>And yes, there was a risk, but having had the sort of...the serendipity bit was to do with the fact that the experience had been so bad previously, and had clearly failed, that our model, you know, which was based on the business model, you know, get the food as cheaply as possible. Cook it in certain basic ways, and so forth, you know, mass produce industrial process, all of</p>

Interviewee	Gather Dust - Data excerpt
	<p>those things. That had so obviously failed, that there had to be an alternative. So there was a sort of curious conspiracy of circumstances that made the idea that the creativity shouldn't stop at the top of the stairs, in the student union space, and become something else, you know, the activity in the college, that then downstairs have become something else. So that fitted with what you were doing in terms of... on that small scale.</p> <p>It was an experiment.</p> <p>Ref. rent waiver from NCAD: "Oh, no, that changed for you...For the service that we were getting a lot back seems to me, because I started to meet people in the courtyard who were coming from outside, they were coming from the National Digital Research Centre, for instance ...And I was wondering "what are you doing in the courtyard?" "we're going down to Luncheonette." Word of mouth and people were coming in, it became a destination.</p> <p>Ref. trope that that food in institutions cannot be good: "And there was this this regular sense of hence, you know, coffee machines, you know, the solution is coffee machines, depersonalise it, make it a system or whatever. I think what Luncheonette proved absolutely, concretely was, you can do it, you approach it differently.... Think about it differently. And you can do it"</p>
STU 2	<p>I really I really appreciated that it was affordable, because so many things aren't especially in Thomas St. was like steadily getting more expensive. But yeah,</p> <p>not at all profit driven. Yeah. Never occurred to me...I don't know how they were doing it. But I'm so glad that they could.</p> <p>But it's definitely more intimate than going to any other café</p>

Interviewee	Gather Dust - Data excerpt
NAC 2	<p>Most of the staff, the academic staff, loved it. The students, I mean it took off. Stuff was very reasonably priced.</p> <p>Ref. visitors from outside NCAD coming in to eat in Luncheonette: “It was kind of, from our point of view, it was a bit problematic til we got used to it because eventually like she had, kind of, regulars so you got to know the faces and all that... There's a certain Luncheonette <i>type</i> that comes in and goes to Luncheonette and gets their lunch and goes away again!”</p> <p>Ref. any positive impact for NCAD of visitors from outside: “Well I suppose it's kind of the connection between ourselves as an institution and the locality... I mean if NCAD was gone from Thomas Street the area would notice, there'd be a lot of businesses gone so from that point of view. But then culturally, as well, I suppose it's important...”</p>
ACA 1	<p>I would go there pretty much nearly everyday. It's so good. We often say it's so good that you can justify bringing in your own lunch. It's so reasonable for what it is.</p> <p>I suppose was the degree of taste and personality and curation and consideration for good food, and the general atmospherics and the vibe and stuff.</p> <p>I suppose it's where you read the temperature of the place.</p> <p>I think it was a very intentional experience that she set out.</p> <p>And I think that's very interesting to see. I don't know how many canteen operators or people working in them would be known by the director of a college, but like you would be sure that a few of them would be in our place. Because it was clearly so nice, it wasn't transactional in that sense. You</p>

Interviewee	Gather Dust - Data excerpt
	<p>weren't going with expectation and demands, you were going to kind of play the game, as it was laid out.</p> <p>I thought it was just beautifully composed...that's what I loved about...this couldn't be replicated or franchised. No one else doing that sort of thing would do it in such a Jennie-ish, like, sound straightforward, commonsensical way. No one else would even consider making it so cheap. Very unique and lovely.</p> <p>Profit driven? No way, Jesus Christ. We just couldn't ever figure out how they were able to do it... It was very focused on being accessible in the most important sense... I think it was very consciously there to give people access to really good food.</p>
STU 1	
DIR 2	<p>So it felt like it represented what people wanted to experience in the college. The fact that it wasn't a kind of nameless branded corporate cafe that it was kind of came out of an art practice that it had this kind of, conceptual starting point that this idea of hospitality and sustainability and sort of a modesty to it as well you know, the simplicity of the foods, the simplicity of the but effectiveness of the decoration and the way that Jennie had kind of adapted the space I think people felt really reflected what they wanted....things that felt important to them within their own kind of work and their own motivations to be involved in art and design.</p> <p>Yeah, so it felt very much an extension of the college life rather than just a space where people had a cup of coffee. You know, in other campuses the cafes are very functional and don't have an identity that seems to align in any way they feel like a kind of a management space that is made available to people to go in and have a cup of coffee whereas Luncheonette felt like it was coming much more from the students, from the staff, from the kind of, the making that happened in the college and the work that happened in the</p>

Interviewee	Gather Dust - Data excerpt
	<p>college, rather than just being you know, a space that was created by nameless managers.</p> <p>We operate under really, really rigorous procurement rules. Now Jennie was... the cafe was tendered and she was there through procurement. But because the value of the contract was really small, it didn't trigger into these bigger frameworks. But if the value of the contract... if she'd been a bigger, if it'd been a bigger campus, the potential money to be earned would be much greater. So, you have to go into a different level of procurement. And you have to have a certain amount of employees, you have to have a certain turnover to qualify, you have to have certain kinds of insurances in place. So someone like Jennie couldn't do it. So it was one of the real areas where NCAD's scale really kind of worked to our favour.</p> <p>I mean, Jennie didn't pay the college rent, it was, you know, it was a very small scale business that was really just about supporting Jennie.</p> <p>And each time she had to reapply, and it had to be an open competitive process. And she always won it, of course, because she did an amazing job and did put together a very clear proposal, but she had to go through that process. We couldn't just let her operate in it without that.</p> <p>Ref. rent waiver: "Occasionally there'd be mumblings from certain people in the finance department, but it was never a question for me that we would do that because the value, and I think if it had come to the senior management team, and any kind of strategy that would have put Luncheonette at a risk would have been really firmly opposed, because they absolutely were right, in seeing that the value to the college of Luncheonette far outweighed any income that we would ever get"</p> <p>It was also a big recruitment driver, you know, students came to the college on open day. It was one nice, you know, it was one of the sort of nicer spaces</p>

Interviewee	Gather Dust - Data excerpt
	<p>we could show people. And, you know, so the finance,... as soon as you looked at it as a business case, the value of the rent, which might have... so if we'd gone down a different route, if we charged any rent, you would've gone, and not out of kind of, you know, being difficult because she genuinely couldn't have paid it. So if we'd moved to a kind of more commercial model and brought in a kind of larger company. So, and I'd understand this more from sort of talking to people in the sector. But if you're running five, or six cafes, your cost base is much, much lower. So you might be able to afford to pay rent, because you'd have a kitchen elsewhere, you'd be mass producing stuff and bring it in and... but Jennie's cost base as a kind of loan producer, making everything from scratch, in her own kitchen was high, so rent would have just crippled her.</p> <p>But if we had just made the decision, so for a small rent, we would have moved to a kind of Brambles or Aramark, or one of the bigger kind of producers, we would have lost so much money elsewhere, you know, it would have been really, really stupid business decision, because the rent, people think that these kind of spaces are quite profitable, but say, in IMMA, for example, the cafe in IMMA, the rent is only like 25,000. Nothing. And that's a much, you know, that is open all year round. It's seven days a week, it's got... because you also have to think, you know, for a college cafe, you've got the summer months are closed, so she was only a sort of a nine month business.</p> <p>So, you know, any feasible rent would be such a paltry amount, and even though yes of course yes, the college was very, very broke in 2018. And you could have thought on paper that makes sense. You'd have lost that in four or five, four or five post-grad students not applying, because they think the college is really grim.</p> <p>So the financial gain would have been minimal. So, there was, you know, in any utterance of "oh we should be getting money from it" was just quickly</p>

Interviewee	Gather Dust - Data excerpt
	<p>dismissed as, even... it wasn't just that kind of sentimental desire to support Jennie, it also was a, you know, a clear business rationale.</p> <p>And I think Luncheonette was held very, you know, was really kind of held and valued by the staff as an example of where creativity was applied into a sort of project that had a purpose and real function within society. And I think that's something that underlies an awful lot of NCAD's thinking.</p>



Share Heritage

Here I am looking for signs that visitors felt seen and that their presence had an impact.

Interviewee	Share Heritage - Data excerpt
NAC 1	<p>In many ways it captured the essence of what was NCAD</p> <p>There was a lot of positivity and kind of trying to kind of help this venture get up and running and give it the support.</p> <p>Ref Luncheonette staff: “You felt like this was somebody, you know, familiar, that was kind of that was part of your life.”</p> <p>I suppose the Luncheonette matches what the college is saying it is. So it's a collaborative creative community that's kind of getting together to kind of, learn, work, whatever.</p>
VIS 1	<p>Ref first impression: “Very curiously, kind of both compressive and expansive, if you know what I mean... You know, because it's below, below ground. And I think there's a lot of the initial experience was to do with climbing into the earth. And then, you know, seeing the light through the</p>

Interviewee	Share Heritage - Data excerpt
	<p>glass block of the street. But yeah, if I was to try and put two poles on it, it would be the intimacy of climbing into the ground, and the expansiveness of feeling part of something that was, you know, quite big.”</p> <p>My memory would have been kind of a passive inclusiveness, if that makes sense.</p> <p>In terms of an impact, gosh, I wouldn't...I think collectively the patrons had maybe a collective energy.</p> <p>I think, so yeah. I think, you know, if you think of it in a theatrical sense, there's the stage, there's the actresses, there's the direction, there's production, there's the audience. And, you know, I do believe the audience in that setting brings a particular energy, but I think it's quite similar. And I think it was quite similar in Luncheonette. I think the crowd, the patrons, the people that came there I think they did bring an energy. Yeah, definitely.</p>
ACA 2	<p>When it first began, I think it was a resetting of the tone and ethics of NCAD. I think it was, you know, it was certainly returning to some notion, of something that NCAD needed to have at its core, you know, whether it was this sense of generosity, hospitality, you know, inclusiveness? You know, all of the things that we could say about luncheonette were like, there. There's your... there's NCAD, you know. And as arguments were emerging about, you know, what NCAD should be like, you know, what, what direction should it take? You just kind of needed to look at luncheonette, you know, where things were high quality, where things were cared for, where there was thought behind things.</p> <p>So like, there was even the language that Jennie would sometimes use in writing little things...on the menu, or whatever. And the ways things were described in the menu, where there was no effort to sort of make it kind of highfalutin, it would often be in a very, very casual language that, you know,</p>

Interviewee	Share Heritage - Data excerpt
	<p>reflected something, Jennie's personality and the personality of others involved. It was, you know, there was, again, a kind of generosity, in all of that.</p> <p>Yeah, I mean, it was generous towards people that luncheonette...but it sort of asked for something back didn't it? It sort of said, you know, why don't you join us in giving this a go.</p> <p>Ref interaction with staff: "I mean, one of them eventually ended up as one of our childminders!.. That was because really, just the daily interactions and chats and so on...if I was going to a café down the street, I don't think that would be possible...There was something about their environment, which lent itself towards, you know, towards those kinds of things...</p> <p>Oh, yeah, actually, one...student (staff member) also made a Halloween costume for one of my kids...From chats over the counter... good, easy interactions that often then led to the unusual extensions of that.</p> <p>Luncheonette created something, which was...a service but it was also about a community and if you're part of that community, then you show up.</p> <p>They needed income, I suppose they also needed that, they needed a community, didn't it? They needed to be like almost, to use a kind of religious term, like a congregation rather than a sort of consumer base. So it was, it was a, you know, a community of people who came and shared space together. And you know, I took pleasure in what was being prepared, I suppose. Yeah. Like, anyone who cooks something, wants to see the smiles on the faces of people who eat it... well it needed us to not be assholes you know? It needed us to be humble. And to be you know, just someone in the community without hierarchy.</p>

Interviewee	Share Heritage - Data excerpt
DIR 1	<p>Ref. Students sharing recipes: “But that can only happen because the process is porous, rather than lopped off. You know that it, and it comes back to that idea of reciprocation, you know, there's a give and take, it's a negotiable space...And it then means that it's a participatory process, actually”.</p> <p>You know, without tripping onto a bigger argument, which I also make in another context, or other contexts regularly is about the importance of participation. The real value of art lies in the participation of the viewer, in the creation of meaning. And I think that applies to...your situation... as well.</p>
STU 2	<p>The people around you would take you in if they wanted to like, I had so many meals with people who just had nowhere else to sit because that was like what you did. You know you would have a little chat and maybe you'd never talked to them again but like you had soup together.</p> <p>Once you occupy a place enough with the same kind of -ish group of people you are, you know, you're rooted there, like, you've been there enough times that that's something that does belong to you, again. So it's something that is supposed to be shared. I think that's really nice. And the whole place is like for sharing like the long tables and the small space. And I don't know, just the way interactions are handled like I just think how giving it is, was like the best thing if you were to sum all of that up.</p> <p>When you're giving someone the secrets to how Luncheonette works, it feels like I don't know, like some religious figure, like giving the inner sanctum key to a little child who is going to learn so much.</p> <p>Every voice in like, a cacophony kind of does add something, I suppose. And I think that when you visibly and loudly enjoy a space in some way like that other people are like, kind of given permission to enjoy it as well. And</p>

Interviewee	Share Heritage - Data excerpt
	<p>to like, make yourselves at home. So maybe not in like a long lasting permanent way. But in the way that like everyone who goes there passes on their comfortability in the space to the next person who goes who then passes it on to whoever they bring. And that kind of thing. So like, feeling at home there, I think, is probably what you give to other people</p> <p>Like, you spend so much time like, "I don't care about this, I don't care about that" even like, "I don't care about what he said in my crit that was kind of mean" that like to go into a place and admit that you do care...And that you really like eating and talking and being welcomed somewhere. It's like, a real vulnerability that needs to be encouraged...it's where you like can admit to stuff.</p>
NAC 2	<p>I was in a hurry, I was in, I was getting my food and I was gone but... that was it so. But if there was a chat to be had, no problem stop and chat.</p>
ACA 1	<p>Oh, yeah I'd always be chatting and annoying them. As I say very kind of familial or maybe I've never lived in a small village where I integrated with everyone, but maybe a bit more like that.</p> <p>I try to generally have warm words or heap some praise on some morsel I was eating so I would of yeah they'd know who I was alright. They might not know my name...And I like that as well because Jennie's sound I would feel free as someone like not from Dublin, you know, to go in and you know do real talk, like, you know, as opposed to kind of having to try to plámás or...</p> <p>I'd cook a lot and I suppose that's part of the joy there. I'd definitely have things that have trickled into my own cannon from being exposed to them there (Luncheonette).</p>

Interviewee	Share Heritage - Data excerpt
	<p>I would have very much have seen it as something we needed to get behind and support.</p> <p>And some students would have like worked in the kitchen and it's great for you know, a lot of things we'd be doing in design. You'd be sending people out to research like say someone's doing a project on food waste. going into Jennie was always great for bringing people in, showing them, telling them round or the chefs would have been the same.</p> <p>And that the others...you'd often have people working there for a good number of years. And they might go off for a while, and then like, come back again. And that was all kind of familial too... lovely, and tended to be lovely people who kind of got into it.</p>
STU 1	<p>But then as I started with my cooking journey and started working in Luncheonette, you know, I met people who were cooking a lot of different stuff, a lot of stuff. The food that I prepared for myself also kind of diversified.</p> <p>And it needed all of us. And I think this was a conversation that I had asked, that we had, and then I'd ask like, "is it better to get new customers all the time, or the same customers coming again and again?" And that was the, you know, it later, it struck me that it is so important to have the same people coming again. Because that's, you know, that's where you know that this means something to them. And you have that constant client, as well. Yeah, and that's why I do feel that, well it is a business, it needed students coming, but then I think those regular students who come for the morning coffees or their lunches or things like that was of value, is of value and it was felt.</p>
DIR 2	<p>I knew it was very valued in NCAD. I didn't think I understood quite how much when I came in. But I certainly was very aware that it was a really important part of...and the people in NCAD were very proud of it.</p>

Interviewee	Share Heritage - Data excerpt
	<p>I think what was very clear immediately was that the sort of values of luncheonette felt very aligned to the values of a lot of the people in NCAD.</p> <p>People loved it. Absolutely loved it. Particularly, you know, people like external examiners and people who worked in other higher education institutes, were always very jealous that they didn't have something like that, because I think they sort of recognised the fact that it was kind of developed by an ex-student that it started as an art project that it was, you know, it really came out of the work of the college not.... wasn't a kind of corporate franchise, people were very jealous of.</p> <p>And is very important to the staff, and I think, you know, particularly for the fine art staff, they were very proud that Jennie was a sculpture graduate. And that she had sort of taken her work in this direction, because it's very important that we, you know, help students see a creative career as a very kind of diverse and engaged career. And not one where you're just kind of... particularly as a fine artist, just waiting for somebody to give you a show that you can't- you know, Jennie is a great example of someone who kind of left college and went out there and sort of defined a very personal practice that is both an art practice but also a business and a space of community and it sort of impacts people.</p>



Nurture Bodies

Here I am looking for interviewees impressions of the food offering.

Interviewee	Nurture Bodies -Data excerpt
NAC 1	<p>I trusted the food. Trusted absolutely.</p> <p>You just knew, you know, if you ordered the lunch through Luncheonette if you were going to be down there, you just knew what you'd get would be really nice, interesting, good food. And it would be, you know, in a nice</p>

Interviewee	Nurture Bodies -Data excerpt
	<p>environment, and that ...the people who... your visitors would be really impressed.</p> <p>So those nice soups are great in the winter. They were just lovely. You know, you knew you were gonna get something that was really lovely. And good for you</p> <p>Well, the food was gorgeous</p>
VIS 1	<p>One of the things I enjoyed about luncheonette is or was that you really could just not have to make a choice. You know, because the pot or the soup or the sweet, or whatever it was, they were just all incredibly well considered and cared for before they were put in front, you know? So, maybe, personally, that kind of instilled a basic form of trust</p> <p>But then I asked Jenny to cater a few events. The reaction was wild, like, in the way that it broke down barriers...when we broke for food the food was, you know, people were talking about the colours of the food and the taste of the food. And, you know, there was an initial kind of, you know, slugging that I was bringing some sort of weird food up to where we worked. And then afterwards, you know, hands down everyone's was like, you know I got texts afterwards about food.</p> <p>So it became something then it became an anchor in conversations that...it became a place in conversations where everyone could meet. Do you know what I mean? So because everyone was then talking about the food and the textures and as well as its taste. And it surprised me, the degree to which they enjoyed that food and it was a classic icebreaker. Also, then, we're all suddenly standing, gathering around the food, talking about the food. I definitely felt , and I'd be super sensitive to it because I had brought the food there, but I definitely felt it opened up...It opened up general conversation</p>

Interviewee	Nurture Bodies -Data excerpt
	<p>that then made the rest of the session more productive, or certainly more... you know brought things closer to the bone.</p>
ACA 2	<p>I ended up almost getting like just overwhelmed with how good the food was, you know and just slightly obsessed by it to the point where both the food and the coffee I was almost kind of it wasn't that I wanted to go to work I wanted to go to luncheonette.</p> <p>When Luncheonette started, I know that some members of staff were like, I don't want to eat that weird food, you know, I don't want to eat that, you know, stuff that isn't sausages and chips. But, you know, mostly, as the game was raised as the, you know, as the food became more interesting, people were, you know, people were won over, because people tried things, give something a go, because someone would recommend it or if you try one thing and then the other thing would, you know, be trusted?</p> <p>Ref. Mixed feelings about Borscht: "Like, virtually every album I can think of, by bands I admire has a song where I'm a bit like,"eh" you know, even the greatest, greatest albums have like one song where it's like, "that one, ugh it's a little bit...". And it's almost like that one being there is part of a process where, you know, everything else around it, then, you know, improves. Or do you know, like the Japanese concept of wabi sabi like, you know?</p> <p>Luncheonette was definitely always kind of helping to kind of foster a sense of, sort of, you know, your food life can be a little better daily in a non-pretentious way. These kinds of small steps in these kinds of directions, you know, it was always gorgeous. And it was always clever. There was a kind of wit in the food as well. If you know what I mean, like, just in terms of the way things might be described. And so on...But it was never pretentious.</p>

Interviewee	Nurture Bodies -Data excerpt
DIR 1	<p>Well, I mean, it's that word nourishment. I mean, an all the, all the levels in which you can use the word nourishment. I don't just mean X amount of proteins and vitamins going into the body, because we could just have bottles of tablets to do that. So that that's fundamental. But there was certainly, to my mind, and I'm not sure I have articulated this in any sort of formal way. But the idea was nourishment that, you know, the college was about a certain kind of nourishment through creativity for the individuals involved for you know, for wider society and so forth.</p>
STU 2	<p>Like it is very transparent. Like you can see the kitchen behind you behind them. So it's like, "Oh, there's the vegetables. There's the pots. It's all real." It's hard not to trust something when you can see it happen before your eyes.</p> <p>I don't think any other place ever will, ever has made such a perfect tomato soup. And again, because it was like something that everyone shared like every time one of us spotted it on the menu for the day. The day was like, you know that much brighter, that much better you're always looking forward to it, like because it was like a group thing we're like "we all know that this is the soup to get and everyone else who doesn't is a fool"</p>
NAC 2	<p>My co-workers would like plain food. Some of them were a bit "oh you know you can't get a sausage..." You know, missing what they were used to, whereas I like food from all over the place. It's nice to have healthy options you know, because around NCAD...it's just like chippers chippers chippers, pizza, pizza, pizza, Kebabs. So, if you want something of an evening you're looking at a massive coronary by the time you're 60.</p> <p>It was different from what was available on Thomas Street at the time. It's changed a bit now. It's gone quite foodie around the area. Maybe she kicked it off.</p>

Interviewee	Nurture Bodies -Data excerpt
	<p>I was more keen on it than I'd say my colleagues. Like some of them wouldn't eat spicy food or " oh god, no that's strange" you know. Whereas I do like all that sort of stuff. So I was happy, that's the main thing!</p> <p>I was glad of it. You know what I mean, a nice, tasty soup and an interesting sandwich everyday, you know?</p> <p>You know that small garden? Like there was days if there was something going to be made later on you just... because of where it was the fence and all that from the back of the kitchen there...you'd be getting these smells, you'd be going "oh god what are they making" you know "that smells really good" and you'd be dying to go down and see what it was.</p> <p>I know from the deliveries and stuff like that, the ingredients were all top quality and well sourced.</p>
ACA 1	<p>And the food could only be made by someone who wanted you to be happy.</p> <p>You'd parse through Jennie's menus she's clearly engaging with a lot of contemporary trends and debates and or movements in food, but she was never shiteing on about it. These things made it to the table if they had, if they appealed to her for a start, so it was personal. It wasn't market lead. It was always like what Jennie wanted or thought was good. And that's what generally was good.</p> <p>My colleagues would all laugh at me, like you know, how happy the food in there makes me, at times where I just be like everyday doing big long sighs as I bit into a mirror glazed brownie. "This is so fucking good, like you can't get this shit". And that's the difference of art in something you know like anyone can make something and anyone can do a recipe but Jennie's tastes and I suppose ability was such that she knew what is important in and stuff. And the rest of the team too I'd say she certainly didn't invent them all. But yeah, so I was very aligned to her take on cooking and food and all the things I like. It was accessible, down to earth and finest quality and beautifully composed with integrity as opposed to Instagram in mind you know.</p>

Interviewee	Nurture Bodies -Data excerpt
	<p>Exquisite jewels of cakes that would be sitting at the corner. And so more often than not a bun and a sandwich special most commonly the big bread and whatever kind of composition she had in it. God there's things like, you know, an aubergine muffaletta sandwich that you could not have convinced me to eat if it was not made by Jennie and then I'd eat it and they'd be my favouritest thing ever you know?</p> <p>There'd be some things that wouldn't [inaudible] when you when you actually make a thing with personality then it's not always going to be to everyone's taste or like what they eat and that's fine. Like beetroot, very popular in NCAD apparently, not my thing but I viewed it more I suppose like if you went to see a musician and played the songs they wanted to play that's fair enough, you know, as opposed to the one you want them to play again and again and again.</p> <p>Everything was outrageous, you know. Just someone who gets food and it can be anything...that sort of clarity with food...but just composition, the love, the treatment... so much, and so much done so well. And that's a really rare thing to do...And you can teach anyone the job but you can't necessarily teach feel, you know and understanding.</p>
STU 1	<p>Once I started going there regularly, and having started having more meals, I was just like, "This is so good". And literally, that would be much better than (what) I was cooking, in terms of nutrition value. And taste wise, it would give me a joy. And I would look forward to it. And I think that would only happen if I trusted that place.</p> <p>I just do remember that there were days where it would be my first meal. And that's sort of you know, it's not just food going in it but it's just like, treating hunger [laughter] and that is a bit of an emotional situation for you</p>

Interviewee	Nurture Bodies -Data excerpt
	know, for a lot of people that is like... I've been hungry for three, four hours now and this is that first few bites of food.
DIR 2	I always had my lunch there and it might well be a takeaway, but always because the food is so good. I love the soups and then always get my coffee there in the morning and if I was having a meeting internally or externally, I'd always try to have it in Luncheonette unless it was really busy over lunchtime, but yeah, I used it a lot.



Celebrate Ritual

Here I am gauging here the impact of my presence as proprietor or host.

Interviewee	Celebrate Ritual - Data excerpt
NAC 1	<p>Jennie was there behind, you know, really, her presence was very, she had a big presence, you know, she was there, she was there every day.</p> <p>But you'd hear the hum, the hum of the chat downstairs rising up, and the smells, the lovely baking in the morning and all the lovely smells. So it was just, part of the part of it all, you know, and I love the hum of the chat.</p> <p>I do miss it when it's not there. It's just this hum. You know, and when everybody's there, and it's kind of 11 o'clock, or 12/ one, you know, there's this hum. You know there's lovely smells in the morning when the baking is going on. And then there's this lovely kind of music of all these people talking, you know, so it's lovely. Yeah.</p> <p>And all those rituals in the day where you've kind of, you know, your working day has kind of, you know, you have your coffee, you have your lunch, you know, they are important parts of the day, and if there's something nice happening in them, it makes...your day, you know, makes the day better, you know.</p>

Interviewee	Celebrate Ritual - Data excerpt
VIS 1	<p>Food is very much...those who make food, I think it's very much a form of care. And I suppose they do need people to care for. I'm struggling to answer that question. Because I don't... I mean, it needed me as a customer. And maybe it needed me as part of that aspect of caring.</p> <p>You know, because we spoke yesterday about the role of food and the importance of food, you know, it really is. It's a source of, we spoke yesterday that it would be nourishment. But it is a retreat as well of sorts, you know, because it's, you know, because there are... because it punctuates the day, and because it's a necessity, having food is a retreat then from all of the other enterprise or endeavour of the day.</p>
ACA 2	<p>Jennie created an atmosphere...She's formidable, you know, but unbelievably welcoming with that. And, you know, always, always good with like, you know, I don't know, there'd be like a little bit of gossip or like a little bit of, you know, something weird has just happened and you know, those little, tiny bits of chat that you know, are a distraction, are brilliant, brilliant ways of creating a welcome.</p>
DIR 1	<p>Ref. Luncheonette expanding elsewhere: "Our anxiety was about your presence... I think presence had a lot to do with the sense of welcome and hospitality and hospitable..."</p>
STU 2	
NAC 2	
ACA 1	<p>Jennie as well is a very forceful character. Like, I didn't, I didn't obviously know her at the start. She's a brilliant manner, I of being so blunt and direct. It's very refreshing.</p> <p>And so she's as a kind of a force in it was very clearly there. Even down to her dress and stuff would be very visual, high voal and she steered the ship with a very clear sense of what she wanted it to be like without any pretense. So I think that was always really striking to me was Jenny's lack of pretense</p>

Interviewee	Celebrate Ritual - Data excerpt
	<p>and artifice in doing something that's so cool is what really makes it extra cool or extra special. Like if you have someone doing just what they think is right.</p> <p>I think and it was just that thing of having someone who, no bullshit, straightforward, but delivering the goods and not caught up in the game.</p> <p>We would always have said that it was a Jennie thing, or Jennie told them to do it, but everyone was really good for like, making eye contact and saying thank you, and like small graces...there was always some kind of sense of engagement.</p> <p>Jennie being kind of like a captain on the bridge.</p>
STU 1	
DIR 2	



Leave a Trace

Measuring the impact Luncheonette had on NCAD, leaving a good fertile ground for the next host/guest.

Interviewee	Leave a Trace - Data excerpt
NAC 1	<p>I suppose it was a very unifying kind of, you know, element to the campus, when it opened. Everybody could agree that that was just wonderful.</p> <p>RefUCD academics: “but they all came in and they were all jealous and all like, you know...So it was like something we had that was better than anybody else had any other student, any other university student cafeteria type facility”</p>

Interviewee	Leave a Trace - Data excerpt
	<p>I think she felt part of the college in a way that I suppose a provider of a canteen service, you know, a standard Brambles or something wouldn't feel.</p> <p>Ref 2013: "it was a very unhappy time, particularly unhappy time with students and staff. But the Luncheonette was the one unifying thing that everybody could agree on was fantastic. And that it was one of the, it was kind of the best thing about NCAD. In many ways at the time."</p> <p>Ref. impact of Luncheonette on NCAD: "It was quiet and understated. But it was enormous."</p> <p>Ref. creative collaboration: "And represented it and maybe kind of reinforced it and maybe reminded us that that's what we're supposed to be doing"</p> <p>It was, a place that that everybody could agree was, you know, we were proud of. It kind of was representative of kind of the best of us. And the best of what the college was trying to achieve. And it made a huge difference.</p> <p>At the time, when the college had kind of, you know, was experiencing a lot of kind of trauma, I suppose quite a traumatic time some of those years it was a space that was agreed on by everybody as a good thing. You know, whether you were kind of the most hated person on the board, or the most hated, you know, staff, you know, director or the most, you know, whatever you were, you know, the students who was whatever that, you know, everybody agreed that that was a good place. It was a good space, it was something we could be proud of.</p>
VIS 1	<p>I've tried to bring Luncheonette, to Grangeegorman where I work, you know, so I failed in terms of getting Jenny to come over and procure for the work. But I did manage to kind of drop it in, and it was transformative.</p>

Interviewee	Leave a Trace - Data excerpt
ACA 2	<p>Luncheonette became something that, you know, the wider world was drawn to, and that was really good.</p> <p>I think, genuinely helped to foster a better sense of community in the college. There were some people who didn't go to luncheonette. Some members of... certain members of staff who continued to do their own thing, and so on. That's fine. Not everyone has to do the same thing. But, but among the people, I think, who went regularly, I think better relationships were created, you know, a situation was available for people to connect, that was not forced, it was, you know, it was kind of constructed, but organic at the same time. So it made an unbelievable difference, like in terms of that popular term that we use today well being, you know. In a sort of sense of institutional wellbeing it had a real value. But it wasn't bland in that regard. You know, you know, it was, as I say, you know, your term like you went on a journey with it.</p> <p>When it first began, I think it was a resetting of the tone and ethics of NCAD. I think it was, you know, it was certainly returning to some notion, of something that NCAD needed to have at its core, you know, whether it was this sense of generosity, hospitality, you know, inclusiveness? You know, all of the things that we could say about luncheonette were like, there. There's your... there's NCAD, you know. And as arguments were emerging about, you know, what NCAD should be like, you know, what, what direction should it take? You just kind of needed to look at luncheonette, you know, where things were high quality, where things were cared for, where there was thought behind things... it was more than that it fitted into NCAD, it was resetting NCAD. It was really kind of helping to kind of make NCAD you know, return to some fundamental guidance.</p> <p>And generally people from let's say, for example, external examiners, they loved it, they would always come and express great appreciation for what we had there.</p>

Interviewee	Leave a Trace - Data excerpt
DIR 1	<p>I'm remembering some conversations, maybe even a board, an anxiety expressed that you might move on. You might get an offer to start your own franchise operation, you know, because I could certainly see the format, working in a museum or gallery, or other situation.</p>
STU 2	<p>Like, if it weren't for the Luncheonette, we'd be gone...I would say was one of my favourite things about where I went to college. And the time that I spent there.</p> <p>I think sometimes (Luncheonette) felt safer than NCAD...like okay, maybe NCAD didn't provide a safe space or something. But again, like the luncheonette did provide that, and having somewhere to totally shut down and log off is really good...Yeah, maybe NCAD should have provided somewhere like that but Luncheonette did it perfectly and I'm not sure that they could have to that same degree.</p>
NAC 2	<p>I think it set a standard you know for catering on the campus, I can't see anything worse, a step below luncheonette being acceptable now.</p> <p>I miss it, I miss it. I wish it was still there.</p>
ACA 1	<p>I think like Luncheonette was the social meeting point, the Nexus as it were of college.</p> <p>I always found it to be an incredible space. So many people we bring in, to be honest, for many years, it was the only asset the college really had because it was a place you could bring in, you know, senior directors from a government body who you wanted to do a project with and they would think it was gorgeous and cool and start coming up themselves sometimes for lunch or inventing excuses to have meetings.</p>

Interviewee	Leave a Trace - Data excerpt
	<p>Basically, for years I was just worried she'd leave and she did eventually but like...</p> <p>I'd say a lot of us kind of had a sense maybe of gratitude about the place. It was very much appreciated, you know. Very much appreciated, I'd say very widely, you know, people knew it was special. It was like the best, the best of NCAD and it couldn't have been done by NCAD itself you know.</p> <p>Ref. Luncheonette leaving: "Yeah, we were all gutted, we were talking about changing jobs and stuff."</p> <p>It felt a little bit like NCAD's home. And you're bringing people into your home and they all loved it and I'd say to a person they loved it in terms of just the vibe and the weird art students and the music and the food and like just a happy place and not a kind of cold, sterile industrial canteen like. And some of that might be incidental but...so much of it was done intentionally by Jennie I'd say had the eye for it and understands what the atmospherics and what things do [inaudible] in spaces and how food can change it.</p> <p>I tried to let them know they were appreciated and it was appreciated because it was and I also felt that it was important that they felt that and so they'd stay if nothing else. And so that they'd see it as working for us [inaudible] and that people really appreciated it. That's probably all I tried to do.</p> <p>I'd have the warmest feelings for the place. It was a lovely place, a happy place. Yeah, I mean to say that about your work in NCAD who the fuck says that about their work? Happy place?! Normally, they're kind of political or they're manky..</p> <p>Sure it made the place unleaveable. I got approached for a senior job, it would have been two whole levels up from where I was in like a proper University,</p>

Interviewee	Leave a Trace - Data excerpt
	<p>a functioning University...it would have been the massive salary increase for the rest of my days and I was very thrown up by this door opening that I never sought. And you know, really thrown between, the work would've been shitty, the place wouldn't be as much fun as NCAD and [inaudible] colleagues. But anyway I was in total existential crisis, I didn't know what to do the next day after being brought out to that place and kind of given a tour by fancy people. I was in the queue in Luncheonette. It was like Durrus and roasted shallot ciabatta and like [inaudible] or something one of the savage soups. The buzz was there and the queue was there and all the cool students were there. Like fuck this why would you go and leave this behind you? You know, I have this in my day...You have a moment of joy in my day every day. Why would I leave it for money?</p> <p>But yeah, it was a measure of the impact of the whole thing... it was the best bit of the college.</p> <p>I think the college is very grateful, because a lot of people remembered how lifeless the space was and how important and how unreplaceable. I mean, there was this, you know, the morbid bit in me, kind of talking about always being worried it would end. It was totally known that we couldn't replace this, you know, and so I think, I hope we didn't take it for granted.</p>
STU 1	<p>I remember being in the studio sometimes and people are saying, "Oh, I'm so hungry" at 12 o'clock and there would be messages or people would be saying, and I was like "oh soup is not gonna be ready for 45 minutes." [Laughter] And you know, those things are happening because Luncheonette meant so much for people in NCAD</p> <p>I don't know I could be wrong, but then it could be because there was something about thinking of the student first and business second. Which I think NCAD was not. This is again, biased. I was a foreign student and not on scholarship or anything. So for me, it was like, after paying 20- I can't</p>

Interviewee	Leave a Trace - Data excerpt
	<p>remember how much I paid. But I think I paid 17,000 euros at that time. And after that they were asking 100 Euro fee to use the workshop or studio fee. And it was those kinds of things. I was like, do you not see 17,000 euros for coming to your college and you're still asking for? Those kinds of small, small things. Yeah, and that was not you know... you come to a cafe and you get such big portions of food and such good food for very affordable prices. And that's why I kind of disassociate Luncheonette from the college.</p>
DIR 2	<p>If you went to meet anyone, they'd always be really keen to meet you in Luncheonette and talk about how great it was for the..., you know, how they felt it really kind of represented the best of the college.</p> <p>Luncheonette felt like a kind of space that people could feel that they could be, you know, positive about NCAD and promote NCAD.</p> <p>Just to say it's great that Siobhan's taken over and it hasn't changed in feeling and character. And you know, that we're very keen that there wasn't a massive.... It's nice to have a different, Jennie was very keen that somebody could come in and take on the mantle and develop it but not... It's nice that it's in the same spirit and character.</p> <p>Because we would always subject to space, people would always, immediate instinct would be to use Luncheonette. And you know, Jennie would do the food for the board meetings. Now we wouldn't bring the board down there. But they would always really looked forward to their Luncheonette lunches, after the board meetings.</p> <p>Ref. visitors from outside NCAD using Luncheonette: "But I think it was very good for the college, but also very good for Jennie."</p> <p>I mean it was interesting because when I started in the year 2018, if Luncheonette had gone, it would have felt absolutely catastrophic in the college. Because it was the one thing that people felt really kind of positive</p>

Interviewee	Leave a Trace - Data excerpt
	<p>around. It was a real beacon. Now, when Jennie told myself and Jerry that she was going, we were upset. But we, you know, she gave us loads of notice. And we could see a kind of smooth transition. But actually, the reaction in the college was really interesting. People were sad, of course, really sad, but excited for Jennie, but also felt confident that something would come that would be great. And it would all be okay. And it didn't feel like the only thing in the college that people... but actually in 2018, 19, I think if luncheonette had closed, the staff would have been absolutely devastated, it would have been a real blow to morale. So it kept.. It was really important in morale in some quite difficult years.</p> <p>Yeah, and it was interesting when we did a lot of work in 2018 and 19, around the strategy, and then consequently, around the campus development. We did a lot of consultation with staff. And you know, in the strategy, one of the things we really looked at was the kind of values that people, started the strategy was thinking about the values of NCAD and what people felt represented NCAD, and luncheonette was quoted so often in the kind of staff consultation as being a kind of tangible example of the values of NCAD.</p> <p>And in a lot of the consultation, people recognise Luncheonette as being the space in where most of the good ideas they felt most proud of started. Particularly where it involved cross college collaboration. Because one of the things you know, that is very difficult to engineer with the architecture that we have, is people from both staff and students from different departments or faculties kind of coming together, and finding out more about what each other are doing, they will want to do it, when they do do it, really good things come out of it. But if you're constantly just channelling people into their spaces, it's very hard for that to happen. But Luncheonette is a space where that happened.</p>

Interviewee	Leave a Trace - Data excerpt
	<p>But, so, when we were doing the campus development consultation with a lot of staff, which was through 2021, when we were all kind of on and off campus. And thinking about the sorts of spaces we needed, everybody kind of basically said more Luncheonettes, you know, like more spaces where people can sit and chat and have a coffee and kind of test ideas together. So it was a very strong creative hub. An engine in the college.</p> <p>I suppose it sort of highlighted the absence of that kind of warm and welcoming and flexible space elsewhere.</p> <p>Luncheonette did really genuinely, I think it really genuinely kept a kind of a glow around the college at a time when recruitment was more challenging. I mean, we're in a much stronger space now. And recruitment is really strong, but it's part of the mix that makes people, I think, identify NCAD as quite a unique space, and they, you know, they can see themselves there as quite a kind of particular type of community. And if we've taken that away and put in something very bland and corporate, we would have lost, I really genuinely believe would have lost a lot of students.</p> <p>It all comes back to the sense of Luncheonette, reflecting the values of NCAD. And, you know, NCAD can't promise students access to fancy swimming pools and football pitches and, you know, high tech computer labs, but it can offer students the opportunity to be on a campus that has a really particular energy and culture and sense of community. And that's what luncheonette communicates.</p> <p>I think we've been informed by Luncheonette you know, and Luncheonette's helped shape the values and the thinking in the college, about how we run ourselves and how we, you know, the kind of values we need to hold ourselves accountable to.</p>

Interviewee	Leave a Trace - Data excerpt
	<p>I'm really delighted that Jennie is coming in to teach in first year is that the partnership between luncheonette and NCAD absolutely continues but just in a different form. I think Jennie was right. Its role within the college as a sort of nurturing provider probably had run its course because if it wasn't inspiring Jennie anymore, then it wasn't that NCAD was ready for it to go, but if it wasn't working for Jennie, then it had run its course... I think it kind of opens up more opportunities for Jennie to become embedded in the research and the teaching in NCAD. So I don't think.... I think it has a lot more, I think that partnership has much further to go, but probably is better, if she's not tied into getting up at four in the morning and baking scones, and you know, the kind of.... it's a tough call what she was doing.</p>

Appendix C: Interview with DIR 1

Jennie 0:00

Brilliant. Okay, thank you so much for giving your time. I'm hoping that this won't take any more than an hour. And if we could start, will you tell me... Will you tell me when it was that you worked in NCAD?

DIR 1 0:23

I worked in NCAD from September 2008 until December 2015.

Jennie 0:41

And would you mind? Can you describe the catering operation that was in place... when you started working there?

DIR 1 0:52

Yeah, it was, I would describe it as a canteen type operation. Very basic. Sort of orientated towards what I would call fast food. Although it wasn't really fast food, you know, it wasn't good fast food, it was the lower end of the fast food spectrum. In terms of the, if you like, the raw materials, and the forms of cooking that were used. Now, I'm not an expert in that. And I couldn't break that down, technically. But it was very, very basic. And I knew that when I started, and I would occasionally I would get coffee in the coffee shop and so forth, and would occasionally eat there, but rarely eat there. I think there was a pattern in the college that you would only eat in the canteen if you had to, either economically, or timewise or... it was not a destination experience.

Jennie 1:59

Okay,

DIR 1 2:00

For people. Either in the college, and there was no there was no market, no audience, nobody coming into the college to visit the canteen, other than people who maybe were trapped in the college, if they were external assessors and they'd be taken down for a coffee or a sandwich or whatever, or a meal. So I think it was not a debt, it was not an experience of choice is how I would describe the catering operation there.

Jennie 2:26

And-

DIR 1 2:27

It functioned really as a canteen.

Jennie 2:29

Okay. And did you oversee, changes in between the time you arrived and the time I arrived to the operation? [Inaudible] the operation change?

DIR 1 2:41

Yes the operation that existed when I arrived, I'm just trying to remember the exact sequence but it basically ran aground economically. And the problem was that people, people were not using it. And I know from experience because I in working in IMMA at the Royal Hospital, the banqueting department in the Royal Hospital, which would do state banquets and all the sorts of big events. They also ran the coffee shop and the downstairs vaults area as a coffee shop with the capacity to do lunch. Now, their style was very traditional, very meat and two veg type approach now with some variations around that. But it actually did a very good job. But it for for quite a long time in the museum, it was not... it was the sort of service, it wasn't the destination either. It was better than the experience offered in NCAD. But it was not a destination you know, and that is a sort of understandable thing, because the idea was a museum., or at least that museum, was very much to nourish people when they had already decided to visit.

Jennie 3:57

Yeah.

DIR 1 3:58

As opposed to attract them by the experience of being nourished.

Jennie 4:04

Right.

DIR 1 4:04

And there's a sort of, there's a negotiation between those two offers. You come to see the museum, experience the art, and you'll have sort of decent foods during your visit. It was

obviously essential in Kilmainham, for instance, that we provide nourishment. It wasn't in the study centre, there was no alternative. So if we were going to attract people to the museum, we had to have sufficient... that was changed then with some changes in personnel in the museum. So there was a process of change there as well. We did some surveys, we did a massive audience survey in 1994 after the museum had been open for a while. And one of the issues was to do with the quality of food being offered, the quality of nourishment once you had made the journey to the museum. Now obviously the constituency within NCAD was not a visiting constituency.

Jennie 5:04

Yeah.

DIR 1 5:05

It was a constituency in a sense, it overstates it, but a trapped constituency-

Jennie 5:10

[laughter] yeah.

DIR 1 5:10

or numbers of staff and students, and then some external people who would be coming in for a whole variety of reasons. So it was very... I'm trying to think of exactly the right word, it was unavoidable that there would be traffic to the canteen in NCAD because there was a population in-house. But therefore, that should have made it economically viable, I would've thought.

Jennie 5:37

Yeah.

DIR 1 5:38

So that's a measure of how inadequate the quality of the food and the service and the other thing is, and all of these things interconnect, the environment was awful. The actual physical environment in which you would sit down and eat your food, the furniture... There was an attempt long before I arrived to have it designed but it was done on the cheap financially. Now, that isn't to say and I think the case with luncheonette was you know, you designed it on the cheap financially

[laughter]

But with imagination!

Jennie 6:20

Yeah.

DIR 1 6:20

The previous setup, lacked imagination, to say the least.

Jennie 6:24

Okay.

DIR 1 6:25

So as it became worn it, it added to the totally inadequate experience that was on offer. When you went down those stairs to the basement. On every front, it was an inadequate experience that was on offer for people and obviously they stayed away. The organisation got into difficulty. It was a catering organisation. It wasn't run by the individuals who worked there. It was a bigger catering organisation, which was used to a sort of what I would call industrial food process, really, not customised, not addressing the context at all in any way. You could have found that canteen in factories up and down the country probably. And that's, the association that would sit in my mind that it was like a factory canteen. And there were attempts to change that. But then the economic issues became so bad that it actually collapsed.

Jennie 7:19

Right.

DIR 1 7:20

There was no service available for a while.

Jennie 7:24

Yes, I was going to ask about that as well. So that must have been some time around maybe 2012, or something like that is that's when I was doing soup there. But I gather it had been closed a little while before that?

DIR 1 7:36

It had been closed a little while before that. And we were in what felt like lengthy discussions with the students. Because there was a, curiously I felt a point of view coming through the Student Union reps, now, it may have been just the reps, or it may have been a body of opinion in the students, I can't be sure, because sometimes we had really terrific student reps. And other times we had very, very weak student rep. So I can't remember I know then, we had lengthy discussions about what could be provided. At one point, it was sort of dispensing machines, coffee machines, and, you know, those terrible machines where you can get sandwiches, and you know, they'd be filled up every day or something, some arrangement like that. But I think that was informed again, if I remember the discussions, right. That was informed more by these particular reps wanting to keep that space for their parties.

Jennie 8:34

Okay, yeah, that makes sense.

DIR 1 8:36

There was certainly one year where the two of the reps were elected, I know. And it was around that approximate period, were elected on a platform of "they can organise great parties". And we ran into trouble with those anyway, which you were aware of later on.

Jennie 8:55

Yeah.

DIR 1 8:56

Because they often got out of hand, and we had issues with the gardai and so forth, and local residents, all sorts of things were done. But part of that, I think, was the idea that that space could be kept for party time. Therefore, it would be simpler to have machines in the corner, that you wheel them out of the way. And then you've got a free space for parties. So that idea that we'd have dispensing machines, slot machines almost for food and drink. We didn't accept

that at all and I believed, and we talked to a number of catering organisations, but I just believed sort of on principle, it must be possible. And that coincided with you serving soup,

Jennie 9:42

Right.

DIR 1 9:43

In the student union space,

Jennie 9:45

And was it, you know, in the time when it was dark, and there was nothing down there in the canteen space, was that stressful for you from a management point of view? Like was it an issue from students and staff that there was no canteen or could it actually have gone on, you know, with those-

DIR 1 10:02

No it was an issue as I mean, that's why I was referring to what felt like lengthy, it may not have taken a long time, but it felt like it was always on the agenda at both management meetings and the meetings with Student Union reps. We met every week, and obviously, there'd be almost daily contact with them. It was always an issue coming and going. And then I don't know if it was a student rep or a student through the reps, came up with their own business proposal.

Jennie 10:33

Really?

DIR 1 10:34

Which didn't make any sense, at all. No experience. I don't know who they had been talking to. I can't even remember the detail of it. But it came back. And we had an uncomfortable period with the student reps at that time, because we were sort of saying no, it must be possible to have, you know, a coherent approach to nourishment in the college, I'll put it like that. A coherent, high quality approach to nourishment in the college there had to be a way of doing that, without charging people a fortune, and without costing a fortune. And we backed off, the idea of what percentage of return should come back to the college because our view was, the

issue was to provide a service for the staff and students primarily. And then for any visitors coming in for practical purposes, into the site. So we weren't imposing any heavy repayments back to the college or rent or anything like that. The idea was the service and you know, of an affordable service obviously it has to work, it has to make sense, all of those things. But we just we just sort of believed it must be possible somehow. And then, you were I think I just was in the student union area one time you were serving soup, I bought some soup with the bread and it was delicious. And I think I just on one occasion, I just came to you and said "would you consider" or else Damien came to and said-

Jennie 12:12

Yeah I remember that kind of clearly. Because, I think I'd been doing it a few months at that stage. And it was a really funny thing. You know, I was just, I had heard that NCAD had lost its canteen. Even though I hadn't been near the place for years, that really troubled me. Because I just thought it's desperate if a campus has nothing. Where you can like you know, you get a fright, or you're knackered or you're, you know, just, you're just absolutely need someone to give you a cup of tea. And there's nobody in that whole place to do it, I thought was desperate. So that's the key to getting... making soup. And I was working around hospitality in my art practice and kind of looking at food as a way of getting people to delay in places. So it was weirdly appropriate. And then I got the health inspector to come to my flat in Rathmines. And then once a week we would come with soup, and it was kind this funny disruption. You know, it made no sense financially. But I just kind of kept thinking, "Okay, I'll do this another few weeks". And I remember you coming and saying to you kind of half in jest, "I should open that canteen again." And then, you know, within a remarkable short space of time, I had the keys of the space and was down there sanding furniture.

And I'm really interested in what, what fights had to happen, or, you know, what was the conversation around the risk involved in handing the keys of the place over to basically a sculpture alumnus who, you know, had never had a food business really? It was just, I found it remarkable that I was taken seriously. And I just thought in no universe before or after, would that ever happened again. So I'm really curious about the background. And you know, what went on?

DIR 1 14:02

If you remain trapped in a business model mentality, then you know, I'm sure somebody with a different perspective would have looked at it... If they looked at it from that perspective, would say, well, this doesn't work, therefore shouldn't be done. But what occurred to me, first of all, the quality of the food that you were providing, in that incredibly improvised way in the student union space was great. So it starts with that. It starts with me eating the soup and thinking "this is really delicious. This would be great." and my thought process was if all we provided downstairs was that; nice breads, soup, teas and coffees, it's better than what we had.

Jennie 14:52

Okay.

DIR 1 14:53

The other idea which we were trying to argue more generally in terms of changing the course structure and introducing issues around first year, and what first year should be about in terms of not just the dexterity of the hand and eye and making art, but issues of communication, issues of negotiation, and critical thinking and so forth. It just seemed to me that there was a continuum there, where the creativity could also flow into the provision of nourishment, that there was a continuity there. Therefore, the very thing that would disqualify you from a business model perspective, was the actual thing which qualified you at that point at that time to do this in the college.

Jennie 15:38

Right.

DIR 1 15:39

And yes, there was a risk, but having had the sort of...the serendipity bit was to do with the fact that the experience had been so bad previously, and had clearly failed, that our model, you know, which was based on the business model, you know, get the food as cheaply as possible. Cook it in certain basic ways, and so forth, you know, mass produce industrial process, all of those things. That had so obviously failed, that there had to be an alternative. So there was a sort of curious conspiracy of circumstances that made the idea that the creativity shouldn't stop at the top of the stairs, in the student union space, and become something else, you know, the activity in the college, that then downstairs have become something else. So that fitted with what you were doing in terms of... on that small scale. The question, obviously, that we had to

wait and see, it just seemed immediately worth a try, is whether it could scale up. And it did, and it did scale up.

Jennie 16:48

[laughter] And were there kind of arguments that had to be had with the board at the time? Or was it just-

DIR 1 16:57

No I don't remember...you see, we were in the throes of lots of change issues then because at that point, the cuts had started to really take effect, the very deep cuts we had had, had to take effect. So everything we were talking about at the board was about change, everything. And so this was... the change agenda was on the table. Now, it became very difficult, latterly, following on from that, because just my own view is that there were certainly some staff, I think, who encouraged students to resist change. But the fundamental resistance to change was coming from a core group of staff who had been in the college for a very long time, and simply weren't, weren't up for a change agenda. I would argue that's my perspective on it. And it became more and more difficult. But at that point, this was... so there was no, I don't remember any dramas at the board about this. We set out what the proposal was, how it would work. And then I think the experience, the actual experience was so good that no questions arose thereafter.

Jennie 18:15

Right. And you mentioned there a concern, you know, that maybe a risk or concern, would the operation be scalable? Were there other kinds of concerns at the time or things that you were, you know, were hanging in the balance that you remember being worried about? Handing this over to someone, an individual?

DIR 1 18:37

Yeah, but our concern was the pressure that would come on you in running an operation on a larger scale. And, you know, that would be pressure on you to deliver.

Jennie 18:49

Yeah

DIR 1 18:49

And it was daily. So the issue was, because to some extent it was an experiment.

Jennie 18:58

To me too! [Laughter]

DIR 1 18:58

We were saying 'look this is absolutely worth trying.' And that principle of at least trying something was better than the status quo. Right, the historical status quo, or the proposals that, in as much as they were proposals, that were floating around, in terms of that interregnum status quo, when there was no service provided at all. So it was absolutely worth a try.

Right.

And as I say, I don't remember any dramas at the board.

Jennie 19:34

Ok.

DIR 1 19:35

We, we also agreed that we would we would try to provide whatever support you would need in terms of setting up and running an operation. And so that was the idea and it was really start something off. Yeah, creative energy involved in this and see where it goes.

Jennie 19:55

And then, you know, I was trying to understand as well, like from... And you've touched on this a little bit. But from your perspective, you know, as the director of the college at the time or part of the senior management team, like, what was it exactly that you needed the canteen to deliver on? You know, what was the gap that you most urgently needed to be filled by the hospitality operator?

DIR 1 20:22

Well, I mean, it's that word nourishment. I mean, an all the, all the levels in which you can use the word nourishment. I don't just mean X amount of proteins and vitamins going into the body, because we could just have bottles of tablets to do that. So that that's fundamental. But there

was certainly, to my mind, and I'm not sure I have articulated this in any sort of formal way. But the idea was nourishment that, you know, the college was about a certain kind of nourishment through creativity for the individuals involved for you know, for wider society and so forth in terms of the role of the college in the culture, and that as I said that should run through the whole process in the college, you know, without-

Jennie 21:10

Yes,

DIR 1 21:10

-without romanticising it or sentimentalising it in any way, it just seemed to me that that was a thought process to hold in mind. And therefore this is, in terms of the creativity that went into your food, and how you created the environment, downstairs for that food to be experienced for that nourishment to be provided, that it was functioning on a number of different levels, all consolidated by your own background as a creative artist.

Jennie 21:45

Right

DIR 1 21:45

That your sculpture, if you like, was the totality of the process that you were delivering, and not simply, as I say, the proteins and the vitamins that you were delivering.

Jennie 21:55

Yeah. And, you know, when I moved in the arrangement with the college was that I was charged no rent, and that also that all utilities were kind of taken care of by NCAD. Did that change for me or was that always the situation?

DIR 1 22:13

Oh, no, that changed for you.

Jennie 22:17

Oh did it ok [Laughter]

DIR 1 22:17

No, that we decided that, what we would do is we would give a period, and I can't remember if it was one year or two year, but we would give you long enough for it to work. There's no point in setting up, if you'd like an experiment, and then not give it enough time to work through, to modify, to adjust, to change and then work so that was a deliberate scenario, to try and encourage. And our argument was that we could always, uh, you know, renegotiate, I can't remember if we gave you a term it then to be reviewed. But the idea was at some point, we would sit down and review it in terms of how it was working for you and how it was working for the college.

Jennie 22:59

Ok

DIR 1 22:59

But with the college-

Jennie 23:00

-yeah that, that never happened. [Laughter]

DIR 1 23:02

All right. Well, but that means it was working for the college.

Jennie 23:06

[laughter] Yeah.

DIR 1 23:06

I mean, in that totality sense. It was working for the college.

Jennie 23:10

Yeah.

DIR 1 23:10

And that seems to me to be, that's the rent.

Jennie 23:14

Yes.

DIR 1 23:16

For the service that we were getting a lot back seems to me, because I started to meet people in the courtyard who were coming from outside, they were coming from the National Digital Research Centre, for instance, because I was working with them so I could recognise them. And I was wondering "what are you doing in the courtyard?" "we're going down to luncheonette." Word of mouth and people were coming in, it became a destination. And it was very particular because I remember [inaudible] came in one time in that period, and sort of was just fed up, getting an O'Brien sandwich again, you know, and whatever, you know. But that process, I think we went through that and out the other side of that process, and we were into a different set of experiences with the service and the nature of the food that you were providing.

Jennie 24:13

And it was, it was something that I really consciously wanted, because I used to feel when I was an NCAD that it was the college in some ways was sort of a bad neighbour, you know, smack bang in the middle of a very tightly knit community, but you were immediately questioned when you went in the door by the attendants you know, "what can I do for you. And I really wanted people to have a reason, a valid excuse for being in there. So I don't know, I don't remember that being a big negotiation. But did that cause controversy or was it just something maybe to be negotiated between the attendance and the public then because there were more people coming in with strangers.

DIR 1 24:56

Well you see, I without going off on a big seminar about the relationship with community and so forth. I mean, that has always been a very big important thing with me, in each of the situations that I've worked in whether it's, you know, on one scale or another scale, it seems to me that a publicly funded institution, it has responsibilities to the public. In a college situation, it has obviously responsibilities to the students, to the staff, all of those things, quality of experience, and duty of care and all of those things. But it's a publicly funded institution. And I always thought it was the architecture of NCAD was slightly regrettable, in that it was a defensible, almost a fortified position.

Jennie 25:40

Yeah.

DIR 1 25:41

And my feeling was, and when I started enunciate this as one of the strategic change processes that should come in to the nature of our teaching and learning. As well as behaviour of staff, the attendants in the courtyard and at the gate and so forth, that it should be a welcoming process, and that we would have to go out and work in a way within the community, immediate community context. So you know, a committee existed for the encouragement of investment in Dublin eight and the development and working with the tourism authorities and so forth, because it was a really neglected street, Thomas Street it was overlooked entirely, you know, people only went through Thomas street to get to Guinness.

Jennie 26:30

Yeah.

DIR 1 26:30

Or culturally to get to Kilmainham and so forth, you know. So for me, that was always woven into the processes of change that we were trying to produce, that there would be relationships with the street.

Jennie 26:46

Yes.

DIR 1 26:47

Community in a way, which built trust, and therefore would in time overcome that issue of having policemen on the gate, sort of. And one of the first things was that you wouldn't prevent people coming in, there used to be a barrier in that archway that an attendant would lift or not lift depending on the judgement that they would make now, that disappeared shortly before I came away, but that idea that this was a fortified place in some way. I often have conversations with people who would say things like, "I always wondered what went on in there."

Jennie 27:31

Yeah.

DIR 1 27:35

Talk about looking down the tunnel, looking through the archway and wondering what went on in there exactly.

Jennie 27:40

Yeah.

DIR 1 27:42

So any way, either in terms of educational policy, content of courses, introducing, as I said, the first year ideas of not outreach, but communication, about reciprocity, with the community, about, as it were, striking a bargain with different community organizations in terms of work and so forth. And as I started to say that that agenda needed to be inbuilt into our educational offer, not because I dreamed it up myself. That's how other creative educational situations and institutions were beginning to work in the most dynamic way. In different parts of the world, mostly in Europe, actually, interestingly, some in Britain as well. And therefore, this was a dynamic that I believe the NCAD had a, because of its location, not in spite of its location, but because of its location could actually be in the sort of advanced guard of a reconfigured educational offer that would I, create a place for the graduates within community and society.

II

DIR 1 0:00

and not as artists apart from community and society, which is the historical model that I felt... It's not that it should be shut down. The idea was that it should be expanded. And the phrase expanded academy had a degree of currency with some staff. But as I advanced that process, I think that was the straw that, now it didn't break the camel's back, but that started it was that and the debates I had with certain members of staff, who felt that wasn't the job of NCAD. That the job of NCD was to produce individual practitioners, highly skilled, individual practitioners in their field. And I saw no contradiction between doing that, and doing the expanded academy at the same time.

Jennie 0:50

Right. Yeah.

DIR 1 0:51

But that, that's where some some faultlines started to open up in the process in the college. But I still think that's the agenda for any publicly funded institution, publicly funded organisation. The beneficiary of that investment should be the public, in the widest sense of society. And in an educational situation, it's to produce graduates who's who are capable of making a contribution to society, however, that is done. An individual practitioner, or working in a collective or whatever, across all the fields that we covered in the college. So therefore, the approach with you wasn't singular in that sense, do you know mean,

Jennie 1:39

Yeah.

DIR 1 1:39

It wasn't sort of an isolated concession to an individual.

Jennie 1:45

Yeah.

DIR 1 1:45

It was linked to a larger strategic process and was absolutely consistent with that larger process and that larger dynamic.

Jennie 1:52

It's nice to understand a bit more about that, because you know, you'd pick up bits and pieces, but I wasn't aware of that in the wider context. And so, I suppose, what did you... I suppose with me, was I an anomaly in that I was kind of a small business an independent business? reviously, my feeling is that it was all larger kind of franchise, large corporations.

DIR 1 2:28

The previous operation were not quite franchise, sort of franchise, somewhere in between franchise and branched office.

Right.

If you know what I mean?

Jennie 2:37

Yeah.

DIR 1 2:38

And they're the models that that didn't work. But it wasn't, it wasn't really anomalous, for the reasons I've just run through, you-

Jennie 2:49

No, just in in relation to the other previous-

DIR 1 2:53

And I remember saying with Joe Mulholland as the chair. And he got it, exactly. I said, "what we've got know in the canteen area is, if you like a creative practitioner".

Jennie 3:09

Yeah.

DIR 1 3:10

Who's making great food. It's not just that, "oh, well, this is this is okay. It's rubbish food. But it's great sculpture."

Jennie 3:18

[Laughter] yeah.

DIR 1 3:18

You know, it was a creative- And that was understood, that was taken again, because we were having constant discussions about change. And I was writing documents for the board, framing the specific changes we were trying to create within NCAD, but placing those in the context of a wider historical necessity for change. I don't want to over egg the pudding here. But that was

my job as director in a period of crisis in terms of funding, the funding crisis and crisis for the society in the recession, then what would NCAD's place be in the present and in the future? And why would we go in any particular direction? Because you see if you remember, it was mooted by a government report in 2009./10 that we would simply amalgamate with DIT and Dun Laoghaire.

Jennie 4:15

Yeah, there were always those kinds of things.

DIR 1 4:16

All rolled together. So the idea was, well, if we're saying NCAD should be distinct, then what is the distinctiveness about NCAD? So we were in the middle of all of those discussions. So it wasn't anomalous at all, to say, we have an individual creative practitioner engaging in this activity, stroke, providing great food, you know, it was completely consistent.

Jennie 4:39

And were there any new challenges with that in terms of say, you know, the financial repercussions of no longer asking for rent and other...?

DIR 1 4:51

Well I think once we took it out of the business model, model.

Jennie 4:56

Yeah.

ACA 2 4:57

And placed it elsewhere it was repositioned, the process was repositioned in terms of service. That there was a high quality service offered to whoever was using the college, you know, [inaudible] whatever the range of students, the staff, the visiting lecturers. And then, and it was based on word of mouth, and you started to get reviews and so forth. So people were coming in from businesses around Thomas Street.

Jennie 5:26

Yeah.

DIR 1 5:27

To to have that experience. And they kept coming. And therefore it was working, the point was that it was a multi level sort of process, to my mind, which connected at different points to different levels of ideas of service.

Jennie 5:44

Yeah.

DIR 1 5:44

And the idea of service [inaudible] back.

Jennie 5:46

I used to quite like the spectacle of the mix, you know, that queue. And there would be, you know, barristers in it and the students, and sometimes people would be bringing, you know, there were students with children who bring their children in and staff, and I used to get mileage out of the mix of people and you know, think about the possibilities that have come out of the conversations that people were having with strangers in the queue and things.

DIR 1 6:13

Yeah, yeah.

Jennie 6:15

And I got quite... So I mean, I liked that for me, because I felt like that was actually, you know, that was referring back to some of the things I had in the proposal, originally, which was that like, that I wanted NCAD to be a better, to help NCAD be more hospitable to the public. And the other thing I wanted to think about was, there were moments when I was operating the canteen where things would go, you know, there'd be crazy stuff happens in old buildings and crazy stuff happens in kitchens. But you know, there was a time where the front of the oven door exploded, or whatever, and the oven was out of action. And we were all baking from home and bringing things in. And I kind of thought to myself, "This is... what would happen in a situation where this wasn't a small business and someone operating it, who was actually there in the day to day." In that kind of situation me, you know, the college doesn't have cake for a few days when the oven business is out of action. So I think in a way, I think there was a certain

cuteness, but not like, not cuteness, because it wasn't intentional. But there were kind of funny advantages in a way. Because like, this was my heart and soul was going into this, I wasn't going to stand there and not have cake for whatever length of time. So we wanted to do whatever it took and go over and beyond in ways. So I think in funny ways that like I think it is a kind of a smart move for an institution to pick someone who is going to be there in the day to day standing over it and whose reputation is on the line or whatever. So-

DIR 1 8:02

But that's yeah, but that's because it's based on a reciprocal relationship.

Jennie 8:09

Yes.

Yes. And that was very much felt.

DIR 1 8:13

What I would say is, and this is something I apply to the art process in general, not a rhetorical relationship.

Jennie 8:19

Yeah.

DIR 1 8:20

You know, so it's what I call a horizontal relationship, rather than a vertical relationship, you know, in terms of authoritative and just that that conjures up a completely different working methodology.

Jennie 8:37

Yeah.

DIR 1 8:38

In terms of expectations, your expectations, our expectations, once you actually reposition the process in a different space, then you can think like that. And if you think like that, then I believe almost anything is possible.

Jennie 8:52

Yeah. And it's funny now, you know, I just digress for a second in doing this master's and reading loads and loads of different philosophy around hospitality. I've actually learned a lot about what it is I was doing.[Laughter]

DIR 1 9:05

[Laughter]

Jennie 9:05

You know, students who were asking if they could volunteer, and they would come in for an hour, and they would help with baking or making sandwiches or doing dishes. And actually, through that point of contact, it was kind of a beautiful way for the student body to become part of the operation of the canteen. And so now we're serving their family recipes. And they're kind of bringing in, you know, their cousins because their dish is on the menu. And then in a way, it's sort of proving to them that NCAD is noticing them, you know, it's like, the institution is seeing them pass by and it's going to remember them because it's eating their food. And so those layers actually, which I didn't expect, and you know that I didn't, I didn't build them in initially, but they became the rich, you know, the most valuable part of our thing.

DIR 1 10:02

But that can only happen because the process is porous, rather than lopped off. You know that it, and it comes back to that idea of reciprocation, you know, there's a give and take, it's a negotiable space.

Jennie 10:15

Yeah.

DIR 1 10:17

And it then means that it's a participatory process, actually.

Jennie 10:23

Yeah.

DIR 1 10:24

You know, without tripping onto a bigger argument, which I also make in another context, or other contexts regularly is about the importance of participation. The real value of art lies in the participation of the viewer, in the creation of meaning. And I think that applies to the situation that you're, your situation situation that you're describing, as well.

Jennie 10:45

Yeah,

DIR 1 10:46

There's no actual difference in the reciprocal relationship that works there that confers value on the experience.

Jennie 10:53

Yeah. And that's something, reciprocity is a thing that comes up a lot as well, in and around hospitality. And there's, you know, there's a few different approaches. There's the approach of like the host that's saying, "Oh, this is my beautiful house, and you can come in and you can be welcome to everything. And I'm going to be very proprietorial, and I give you unconditional access to everything I have." And then there's another approach that is sort of like, "Well, I'm actually quite interested in you, and what you might bring and how you might change our lives if you come into my house." And so actually, I think what I was more interested in doing, by instinct, was the second version, which is like, "Well, who are you exactly? And what might you have that we learn from and that, you know, you might impact and change?"

DIR 1 11:38

Well, that's interesting. Again, as we talk, I'm remembering some conversations, maybe even a board, an anxiety expressed that you might move on. You might get an offer to start your own franchise operation, you know, because I could certainly see the format, working in a museum or gallery, or other situation.

Jennie 12:04

Yes and that did happen a lot, you know, there were loads of lovely invitations and offers and things. And my thinking was, "well, I'm still learning here. And they're still, you know, it's still not exactly there yet." And then, so I wasn't ready to...

DIR 1 12:20

But our anxiety was about your presence.

Jennie 12:24

Yes.

DIR 1 12:24

You know, that if you had set up your other operation somewhere else, then you wouldn't have been around NCAD as much. And I think presence had a lot to do with the sense of welcome and hospitality and hospitable.

Jennie 12:41

Yeah.

DIR 1 12:42

The hospitable experience and your own presence in that experience was a big part of it. And...

Jennie 12:52

Yes, and it's also, you know, that would be an alarm bell going out, you know, it shouldn't be technically.

DIR 1 12:57

I know, I know that. How you would, how anybody can manage that situation where you, you retain the very quality that makes it work, but at the same time are not denied the opportunity to expand your practice. In whatever way you know, it's a sort of negotiation, it's a space for negotiation, but it was a thing. There was an awareness in the college of that issue at a certain point.

Jennie 13:26

Yeah, I'm actually hilariously, there were lovely conversations with someone who was working with Grangegorman Development Association about setting up in the new to TU Dublin campus with 23,000 people. Which I decided not, you know, that that wasn't really why I was getting into all this. Now, there's been so many interesting avenues. But I mean, you've covered

loads of stuff, which I was going to try and get indirectly by asking much smaller questions so it's actually really helpful. And then I don't know if there are questions with the concrete things. Do you think that it changed any behaviour of staff and students with luncheonette?

DIR 1 14:24

Well, I think you see, we had the, I'll sort of simplify down into two processes. We had the process before. And there had been various iterations of the canteen service before I arrived in the college. And there was a sense coming out of that, it's not possible to do it.

Jennie 14:50

Yeah.

DIR 1 14:51

You can't provide a high quality experience in sort of a service situation that will provide continuity. And there was this this regular sense of hence, you know, coffee machines, you know, the solution is coffee machines, depersonalise it, make it a system or whatever. I think what luncheonette proved absolutely, concretely was, you can do it, you approach it differently.

Jennie 15:20

Yeah.

DIR 1 15:21

Think about it differently. And you can do it. You can't do it, if you occupy the same position. You know, it's the, you know, the parallax idea that you change the meaning of the whole field, if you change the position from which you're observing it. You know, so it's like, again, I use it in the lecture hands, [inaudible] of the two ambassadors and the anamorphic skull between them, and the viewer, looking frontally at it, you can't see what this is, it's just grey and black marks on an always incredibly realistic painting. But if you move 11 feet to the right, it becomes a skull. So it's a memento mori. So it becomes logical, it becomes legible, sorry. And, the viewer becomes a participant in the creation of that new meaning. So my view is always you should be triangulating to new positions, because then the whole thing looks different. Yeah. And what you can do in that field becomes different because you're not lifting a paintbrush and saying, "what will I paint?" You're saying, "What's the situation? And what does the situation need?" And that's, I would say that unconsciously that what was learned from luncheonette.

Jennie 16:37

Because I was-

DIR 1 16:39

It was situationist you know, if we were doing an art history discussion, you'd be back to the situationism, in the 60s and so forth. But it's a situationist perspective.

Jennie 16:50

Yes, and it's someone kind of connected to them that I always very much looked to as a kind of philosophical mentor is Michel de Certeau, who writes so beautifully about the way that people consume things, is how they can express-

DIR 1 17:07

Hello?

Jennie 17:07

Hiya. Did you lose me?

DIR 1 17:11

I did just for about a minute there it just froze.

Jennie 17:15

I just was talking about Michel de Certeau, and how I was really inspired by his beautiful ideas around the way that ordinary people consuming things is creating resistance. And so I think, you know, in NCAD, I was sort of the way I thought about it was okay, NCAD, as an institution has a job of work, it's very stretched, it needs to do as much as it can, its job is educating people. My job here is to soften the corners of this institution, so that it has, you know, everyone can go on with their business, but they know that there's a place which is soft, and is going to kind of catch any fallout from an institution with an intense job of work, you know, where there may be students who, like feel that they weren't seen in a lecture, that they can come down, and they feel that they be seen in a hospitable context. So that's kind of what I was doing. I was sort of trying to-

DIR 1 18:17

Well I think that was created. And you know, our colleges are particularly intense, I think any educational situation today is intense, because of expectations, and so forth, and pressure, but an art college, it's very, very personal. And, you know, you can be in a crit and come out of it feeling absolutely devastated.

Jennie 18:39

Yeah.

DIR 1 18:40

Without anybody having set out to devastate you.

Jennie 18:43

Of course.

DIR 1 18:44

The result of that, you know, people can be very fragile. I mean, there, there were all sorts of issues arising all the time in terms of what we catch now under the heading of mental health issues really coming out of that pressure, because it's, it's me, who's making this work that somebody is dismantling in front of all the other students, and that's a very particular kind of intensity and pressure. So a space like that. Absolutely. I think it did work like that. I think it did fulfil that function for people.

Jennie 19:18

Yeah. And you used to visit it yourself as a customer kind of quite regularly.

DIR 1 19:25

Yeah.

Jennie 19:25

Yeah. And then, lots of staff did and it was kind of... I have an impression that it was a new thing for staff and students to be eating together in a space.

DIR 1 19:26

Yes.

Jennie 19:29

[Inaudible] impression as well.

DIR 1 19:43

On the scale in which it happened with luncheonette. There was always some staff that would be downstairs and I would always have gone downstairs but there was a pattern of staff leaving the campus at lunchtime.

Jennie 19:56

Yeah, which you can understand-

DIR 1 19:58

Oh no, of course of course. But it's about the scale of the Exodus relative to, you know, when you'd be in the, as you say, I think the queues are a very interesting, sort of test for that in terms of the mix of people in the queue. Queuing up for lunch or even just down for a coffee and a sandwich or whatever, at other times in the process, that certainly did shift, that did shift.

Jennie 20:25

And does that create any, you know, if me describing there, what I considered my role to be in kind of creating a soft corner of the institution. Do you think that that made an impact over time to the college? You know, I was wondering, when I was leaving after being there for eight years, how maybe NCAD learned to lean on that a little bit more over time, you know, the college sort of learned to get the benefits of knowing that there was a soft corner. But do you, do you think that...?

DIR 1 21:11

[Inaudible] as you were aware, because you were involved in some very fraught discussions with student reps. Where after various parties and they left the place in a mess and so.

Jennie 21:20

Yeah.

DIR 1 21:21

And we were having... lots of tensions arose in my last couple of years, as I say, for a whole variety of reasons. And so it became NCAD became a very fraught place in that period, probably up to 2015, couple of years up to 2015. And I would like to think, it's not that people were reporting back to me in some formal or even informal way. Yes, that's what it did. But you'd like to think that that was a space that wasn't touched, although it did touch it a wee bit. If you remember, we had a particularly fraught conversation with the later student reps about one occasion where we were saying, right, no more parties in luncheonette.

Jennie 22:16

Yeah.

DIR 1 22:16

Because, you know, we tried it before. And it didn't work. And now, you're not doing whatever you do in the campus. And I was having serious doubts about, and this obviously contributed to the tension. But about the fact that the student union then latterly, in certainly in the year before I left, had again reverted to party time. And the student reps, you know, saw themselves as providing parties essentially. And in fact that our meetings often became so pointless that another group of students got together and I can't remember what they called themselves, but became a sort of lobbying, energetic group of protests around certain issues. But I'd like to think that broadly speaking, that luncheonette wasn't touched by that, and would have been seen, and I would hope people's own art practice as well wouldn't have been as it were contaminated with that, because the actual antagonisms existed within only a part of the college population anyway, rather than the whole population, as I find with my own contacts with people, but there was a noise. I'll put it like that, there was a noise of antagonism and so forth around and there was a silence otherwise, of people not being involved in that. So I'd like to think that that did exist somewhere in the college and luncheonette, would have been one of the places definitely.

Jennie 23:53

Yeah, like that, you know, that situation that you're talking about was interesting, because it was, you know, I, after someone put a fire extinguisher off in the canteen, and I came in to serve breakfast, and there was this layer of toxic dust over everything. Then there was this, you

know, argument where I was saying, "Look, my job is to be able to provide hospitality and I can't do that."

DIR 1 24:21

Yeah.

Jennie 24:22

If we can't ventilate, the place it's breaks, you can't really clean it. So I felt really protective over it. And then it got kind of, like I really fought to protect it and keep it safe as a point of hospitality. And that was interesting, because, you know, there was resistance to that. And I totally get that as well, because Oh, my God, I mean, there's nothing like the parties in NCAD as I remember, as a student. And they're really important. So I empathised with it. But then there was a big situation where a lot of people were kind of also sticking up for it and trying to protect it. You know, other students and that, that were saying, "actually we need it to be there."

DIR 1 25:03

Absolutely. No, that's what I'm saying that there was a whole series of views, but there was a particularly noisy cohort. And I can't remember the reps names now but that conversation, we had up in my office where I thought they were being very aggressive and unreasonable to your proposition that that had to be protected. And my view was that having, as it were run out of rope with the Student Union in terms of their use of the space, and what that was diminishing, in terms of your ability to provide the service. On all the layers we talked about, providing the service meant. Yeah, that and I just think that, that, and other then students and speaking up, you know, at different times around specific issues, it was very interesting, when students spoke up against what I would call the sort of a differently constituted noisy cohort, that always seem to be creating the noise. But you'll often have in the student rep meetings, I think, a debate among the students themselves, which was very interesting to see.

Jennie 26:22

Yeah, I suppose that's only right. Yeah. I remember one email that came around that time was from a student who said, "you need us more than we need you." Which is actually totally true. You know, there was nothing, I couldn't exist without the support of the students. And then, you know,

DIR 1 26:41

Corollary to that was the idea, which was said in that meeting by one of the reps, that that's a student's space only, as if it was an exclusive space. And I thought it was so ironic that there was a student rep, arguing for other spaces for inclusion and so forth, and then insisting on a sort of exclusive space, in luncheonette. Or, as they'd have called it, their space. You know, and a completely weird articulation of a sort of selfish view of things, whereas everything else had been about a shared approach to that service to that facility, what that service was about.

Jennie 27:26

Yeah.

DIR 1 27:27

It was very interesting, revealing take on things actually, you know,

Jennie 27:33

Yeah. But I must say, that actually the student body and the interaction with the student body is, I knew that when I left NCAD I would miss it. But I mean, I can't underestimate or I did underestimate how much you know, just how, how absolutely magic it was to get to be around.

DIR 1 27:59

What are the college doing now? Are they, have they got another-

Jennie 28:02

Yeah, they have the woman who was the chef with me, Siobhan applied, I was encouraging her when I knew I was leaving. And she applied for the tender. And she won, so she has operated it from...? I left in December, I'm not sure. I think a few months later, then she opened it. And she operated it. And I think, as far as I know, the plan is that she'll continue to do that.

DIR 1 28:27

Right.

Jennie 28:28

So she was the chef there with me for maybe four or five years.

All right.

[Inaudible] although her background is chef.

DIR 1 28:41

Alright, is it still called luncheonette?

Jennie 28:43

No, no, no, that's me. Like that's the kind of food and hospitality branch of my practice. So I'm going to wind down from the Hugh lane at the end of August and then move over and do a project in London with an organisation called artsadmin for a few months, and then come back and just kind of stay mobile, I think.

DIR 1 29:05

Yeah.

Jennie 29:06

Because I realised that, you know, what I love to do is kind of step in and try and do that thing of softening a corner somewhere. Maybe the Hugh Lane didn't maybe need as much softening. Yeah, I felt kind of like that part of me, which I've learned that I can do well, was a little bit redundant there.

All right, right.

But I mean, it was just a lovely kind of,

DIR 1 29:35

Yeah,

Jennie 29:35

- normal time. [laughter]

DIR 1 29:37

Good.

Jennie 29:39

And I am doing lots of nice things outside with the Abbey and... I thought...

DIR 1 29:45

Oh right yeah, there's real, god when you think about it, even casually, there's a range of organisations in that whole constituency.

Jennie 29:53

Yeah.

DIR 1 29:54

That would probably welcome the way you do things.

Jennie 29:57

Exactly. Just to learn about how to be more hospitable and what the kind of hospitality you want to do is and how exactly you want to communicate it and what are the tools. So yes i didn't know that that was a thing but I've kind of been asked to do it a few times

DIR 1 29:54

Yeah, great.

Jennie 29:57

Well this has been so fascinating and really insightful. I feel I know so much more now about what was going on.

DIR 1 What was going on, yeah. Yeah it's all coming out in my book. [Laughter]

Jennie

[Laughter] Thanks a million for your time

DIR 1 Not at all

Jennie

And for doing this fast and everything.

DIR 1

And when you listen to the tape sure just if anything else occurs to you you can just bang off an email or ring or something you know.

Appendix D: Interview with DIR 2

Megan 0:01

Sorry, I've got three now, so hopefully, it should be okay. Great. Great. Thank you so much for doing the interview. I might just jump in if that's okay?

DIR 2 0:12

Yep, sure.

Megan 0:15

So here's a conversation with DIR 2 . Thank you so much again, for your time. When did you start in NCAD?

DIR 2 0:26

In January 2018

Megan 0:29

And was this your first time with a role like this in a sort of education setting?

DIR 2 0:34

Yes, yes, it was. Yep.

Megan 0:38

Can you remember any of the main issues about the college that you were anxious to address when you started?

DIR 2 0:43

Oh, well, there were many at the point of starting, there were a lot of financial issues. And I mean, and the college had had some... a lot of kind of adverse publicity around some governance issues, which a lot of work had already been done on. But there was still considerable work to be done. And there had been a number of years with an outsourced HR function, and that has created a lot of difficulties internally. So the initial concerns were very operational and functional around getting the kind of mechanics of the college working better, so that the staff could then be supported to really support the students and the teaching and learning. And a lot of issues with the buildings, some of which remains, some of which we've addressed, but primarily concerns around health and safety and some of the kind of conditions in certain buildings and some of the practices. So there's a lot of kind of cleaning up work, initially in that first year.

Megan 1:53

Huge job really,

DIR 2 1:55

Yeah, but I wasn't alone doing it. And a lot of progress had been made before I started but yeah, there was.. it was a challenge.

Megan 2:06

Luncheonette reopened the canteen in 2013, which was like a few years before your arrival. Did you have any expectations around it, as you were going in?

DIR 2 2:13

I was very familiar with it. And I knew probably more my previous role, I'd been director of Imma and had been sort of working as a curator for a number of years and Jennie had done some work with us. We'd done quite a lot of work with food. In the most part, the outdoor programming that we'd done, and working, particularly with Michelle Darmody who had been sort of curating a number of programmes with us and Jennie had been involved in those. So I was probably initially more aware of Jennie through her kind of art practice. Or Luncheonette within a sort of appearing at art events or being part of programmes. I had been to luncheonette. And you know, when meeting colleagues from NCAD, you know, when I'm meeting people about different projects, so I was very aware of it. I knew it was very valued in NCAD. I didn't think I understood quite how much when I came in. But I certainly was very aware that it was a really important part of...and the people in NCAD were very proud of it.

You knew that reputation before you even started?

Yeah, I think just from because I knew a lot of people who worked in the college and, you know, if you went to meet anyone, they'd always be really keen to meet you in luncheonette and talk about how great it was for the..., you know, how they felt it really kind of represented the best of the college. Particularly in that those few years, you know, 15, 16, 17 were very difficult years in the college. So that sort of, you know, once luncheonette had opened in the years that followed, the staff had to endure a lot of very difficult times. So I think they really valued luncheonette during that time.

Megan 4:04

Okay, like people kind of brought it up in the context of the college, having difficulties and that being...

DIR 2 4:09

I think it was just, you know, it's the, there was a lot of very bad publicity around the college at the time, because there'd been this.... it was.... in the public account, there'd been appearances from the sort of management team and the Public Accounts Committee, and that was, you

know, they weren't alone in that, a lot of other higher education institutes were but that's never nice for the rest of the organization because it's, you know, it's bringing to the fore the problems rather than the great work that actually was always going on at the same time, right. The teaching never diminished. And, you know, the commitment of the staff never diminished. But people weren't talking about that, they were just talking about the financial problems or the governance. And then there was a lot of very publicly played out disagreement around the change of degree from four years to three year, and particularly around the kind of issues with space and overcrowding that that created. And so there were a lot of there was some quite highly visible student protests as well, around that time. And, you know, I think for the staff, that was just a very difficult time, because the one thing that, you know, people who are work in NCAD are very, very committed to it, and they want to feel kind of proud of it. And I think luncheonette... it wasn't that people sort of said, Oh, everything's [inaudible] things they could be really proud of in the college. So they were always very keen to show it off. And, you know, sort of profile it as, as an important part of the college because there was so much negativity, even though through all of that really good work was still going on. And, you know, students were still making great work and the teaching standards didn't, didn't diminish, but there was so much discussion around the problems, that luncheonette felt like a kind of space that people could feel that they could be, you know, positive about NCAD and promote NCAD.

Megan 6:14

Very interesting. Do you recall any initial impressions when you did start as director of NCA- of the Luncheonette sorry.

DIR 2 6:27

As I said I was aware of it before so it wasn't new to me, but I think what was very clear immediately was that the sort of values of luncheonette felt very aligned to the values of a lot of the people in NCAD. So it felt like it represented what people wanted to experience in the college. The fact that it wasn't a kind of nameless branded corporate cafe that it was kind of came out of an art practice that it had this kind of conceptual starting point that this idea of hospitality and sustainability and sort of a modesty to it as well you know, the simplicity of the foods, the simplicity of the but effectiveness of the decoration and the way that Jennie had kind of adapted the space I think people felt really reflected what they wanted....things that felt important to them within their own kind of work and their own motivations to be involved in art and design

Megan 7:42

It kind of felt in touch with what the people working in college...?

DIR 2 7:45

Yeah, so it felt very much an extension of the college life rather than just a space where people had a cup of coffee. You know, in other campuses the cafes are very functional and don't have an identity that seems to align in any way they feel like a kind of a management space that is made available to people to go in and have a cup of coffee whereas Luncheonette felt like it was coming much more from the students, from the staff, from the kind of the making that happened in the college and the work that happened in the college rather than just being you know, a space that was created by nameless managers [Laughter] I don't know if that makes sense, but...

Megan 8:33

Yeah! Yeah, I just graduated that really syncs with what I would have experienced it being like and everything so yeah,

DIR 2 8:39

Oh when did when did you graduate?

Megan 8:41

I just there...well actually November but I just finished my final year there.

DIR 2 8:45

Oh, great. Oh, so you're about to Oh, congratulations. Which course were you on?

Megan 8:50

Oh thank you. I was illustration.

DIR 2 8:52

Okay, very good. Great.

[Laughter]

Well, then you'll understand what I'm talking about then

Megan 8:57

Yeah, just to give you a [Laughter]...

DIR 2 8:58

[Laughter]

Megan 8:59

I remember it! It was good. Did you visit luncheonette much in the day to day?

DIR 2 9:06

Yeah, I did. I mean, I always had my lunch there and it might well be a takeaway, but always because the food is so good. I love the soups and then always get my coffee there in the morning and if I was having a meeting internally or externally, I'd always try to have it in luncheonette unless it was really busy over lunchtime, but yeah, I used it a lot.

Megan 9:26

What was it like sharing social space with staff and students in the canteen?

DIR 2 9:32

Very nice. And I think it was one of the you know, I mean, there is a separate staff cafe and a staff canteen, and some staff use that and obviously that functions for staff that want to bring in their own food and you know, that's more of a kind of self catering scenario, but I think for a lot of staff... They really liked the fact that it is a space where they can interact with their students. And because the thing is, as you know, from your experience of NCAD, the staff are very committed to their students in perhaps ways that...because, you know, with a studio based contact, and there's a much more deeper engagement with the students' work and they get to know their students much better than say somebody who's teaching history or geography or business studies, you know, there's a much closer kind of connection. And they, the staff always talk a lot about, they see their role as a kind of co-learning space. And they learn a lot from the students. So I think they, you know, they really liked the fact that there was never a sense of, oh, we want our own space, and students should have another space. I mean, I know for a lot

of students, we would hear from students regularly enough that, you know, I think luncheonette wasn't big enough, and that the queues were kind of frustrating. And they wanted other spaces as well, or, and particularly people who wanted to be able to bring their own food and not be buy... you know, we know, absolutely, that there aren't enough spaces for students on campus, it's something we're really trying to address. So it didn't meet all the student needs by any means. Because you know, students have different... but I think for a lot, for a lot of students, it was an important social space. So you probably in your time, it was probably close a lot of the time, wasn't it? Did you have your first year would it have been?

Megan 11:35

We had a good go first year and some of second year, and then most of final year we kind of lived there [Laughter] a nice stretch

DIR 2 11:43

Was it take-away for a lot of was it final year when your final year was? Well, then it was Siobhan, wasn't it and then take-away? Anyway, yeah, it kind of changed over Jennie finished Christmas.

Megan 11:56

Yeah, we got that just before Christmas. I did Studio Plus as well. So...

DIR 2 12:01

Oh, okay. Okay.

Megan 12:02

I was there for ages. [Laughter]

[laughter] Very good

DIR 2 12:06

And It's great that siobhan's-

Megan 12:11

Sorry, sorry. Go ahead.

DIR 2 12:12

Sorry. Just to say it's great that Siobhan's taken over and it hasn't changed in feeling and character. And you know, that we're very keen that there wasn't a massive.... It's nice to have a different, Jennie was very keen that somebody could come in and take on the mantle and develop it but not... It's nice that it's in the same spirit and character.

Megan 12:34

Definitely the same spirit for sure. That's lovely. Did you bring many guests to Luncheonette?

DIR 2 12:41

Yes, yep.

Whenever I mean, it's so hard to think because the last few years, had nobody on campus. But prior to COVID. Yes, lots. I mean, if ever I had a meeting and it made sense, I'd always have the meeting in luncheonette. And we'd, you know, with things like external examiners. And, you know, if we had a conference, or anything like that, we'd use luncheonette in the evenings and Jennie would do dinners. And it was great. It was a really, really lovely showcase.

Megan 13:21

Yeah, external examiners have been brought up a few times in terms of like having meetings there, which I think is nice.

DIR 2 13:27

Yeah. Because we would always subject to space, people would always, immediate instinct would be to use Luncheonette. And you know, Jennie would do the food for the board meetings. Now we wouldn't bring the board down there. But they would always really looked forward to their Luncheonette lunches, after the board meetings.

Megan 13:46

What was it like bringing them into that? What was.... how did people who didn't know about it, maybe interact with it?

DIR 2 13:55

Well I mean, always very positive. People loved it. Absolutely loved it. Particularly, you know, people like external examiners and people who worked in other higher education institutes, were always very jealous that they didn't have something like that, because I think they sort of recognised the fact that it was kind of developed by an ex student that it started as an art project that it was, you know, it really came out of the work of the college not.... wasn't a kind of corporate franchise, people were very jealous of. That we were able to do that because in larger institutions, you can't do that because of corporate, you know, because the National Gallery is just the you know, the procurement rules are insane. And someone like Jennie couldn't function in a, she could never be in Trinity to UCD or a much larger Higher Education Institute.

Megan 14:45

So the sort of smallness of the college helps in terms of..

DIR 2 14:48

Yeah, yeah. Because of the procurement rules, we operate under really, really rigorous procurement rules. Now Jennie was... the cafe was tendered and she was there through procurement. But because the value of the contract was really small, it didn't trigger into these bigger frameworks. But if the value of the contract... if she'd been a bigger, if it'd been a bigger campus, the potential money to be earned would be much greater. So, you have to go into a different level of procurement. And you have to have a certain amount of employees, you have to have a certain turnover to qualify, you have to have certain kinds of insurances in place. So someone like Jennie couldn't do it. So it was one of the real areas where NCAD's scale really kind of worked to our favor.

Megan 15:41

So interesting. So even things like health and safety, or insurance and stuff like that, wouldn't have been as feasible?

DIR 2 15:48

No, I mean, obviously, we.... not to say that we didn't sort of have checks, you know, she had to... there were certain. Yeah, and Jennie is absolutely kind of higher, whatever it's called, the health, the food, high Sic, or whatever it's called the you know compliance. So all of that paperwork had to be in place, but what she didn't have to have was a certain level of liability in place as a company, and a certain turnover and a certain amount of employees.

Megan 16:15

Okay.

DIR 2 16:16

So part of the reason say that the National Gallery thing kind of panned out is because their cafes is much more... is heavily profitable, because of its location in the center of town. So the only people who would be eligible to apply for that contract under public procurement rules, would be companies of a certain scale. And that's how you end up with companies like Aramark getting them because you have to have, you know, you have to be really quite a major kind of corporate business. So small scale cafes can't function in that way. And they have and the key aspect is liability. You have to have massive kind of liability cover in place. It's ridiculous, it's totally ridiculous. But...

Megan 17:00

Yeah it sounds, it's extremely frustrating.

DIR 2 17:02

Yeah. But it's just to do with public procurement rules. But anyway, because NCAD's cafe was very low turnover. I mean, Jennie didn't pay the college rent, it was, you know, it was a very small scale business that was really just about supporting Jennie. We were able to procure it in a much more, keep it under a certain threshold. The tendering process is much less complex.

Megan

That's Fascinating. I didn't know any of that it's very interesting [Laughter]

DIR 2

Yeah. [Laughter]. But we had to be very clear that Jenny, you know, we had to be very careful that Jenny was originally I don't think she was, she just came in and took it over. But then she did go through, I think several rounds of the contract was only for a certain amount of years. And each time she had to reapply, and it had to be an open competitive process. And she always won it, of course, because she did an amazing job and did put together a very clear proposal, but she had to go through that process. We couldn't just let her operate in it without that.

Megan 18:05

Interesting. There were a lot of visitors from outside NCAD in Luncheonette, especially at lunchtime. Did you see that as a positive or a negative thing?

DIR 2 18:15

No, I mean, I think the only negative I think, is that sometimes it just impacted on the college community's ability to access it at lunchtime, it could get a bit busy, and people get frustrated with the queues. But I think it was very good for the college, but also very good for Jennie. Because students alone were not a business for Jennie. And we were always very concerned that it remain viable for her and that's why COVID was so challenging. And, you know, because it wasn't, it was a very tightly run thing. You know, it wasn't, and she did a lot of outside work as well and catering. And you know, we were happy for her to do that. And she'd use the space in the evenings for private events and things to, to help keep it ...so the outside business was very important for Jennie because it bolstered her income. And I know that was one of the key challenges in COVID, even when she was able to open just in the first year when she had the yellow truck upstairs and was doing takeaways. We had a lot of debate at the time about how we could allow access from outside clients. Because without them it was very difficult for her to do it. So we did it through a system of queues and different serving hatches and stuff so that because we couldn't sort of... we couldn't open up the campus to outside people at that point. But it was very critical for Jennie that she still had that. Now it was a much lesser... because people weren't in offices. The demand was much less as well. So it was really challenging for her but the... when the, you know pre-COVID, the balance of NCAD staff and students, outsiders and external events just about kept it going for her. But it's, you know, it wasn't a high profit endeavor.

Megan 20:16

Were there any ways in which luncheonette made your job easier?

DIR 2 20:20

Sorry, say that again?

Megan 20:21

Sorry. Were there any ways in which luncheonette made your job easier?

DIR 2 20:26

Oh, lots of ways yeah [Laughter]

Megan 20:31

[Laughter]

DIR 2 20:31

It was, you know, it was particularly... I mean it was interesting because when I started in the year 2018, if Luncheonette had gone, it would have felt absolutely catastrophic in the college. Because it was the one thing that people felt really kind of positive around. It was a real beacon. Now, when Jennie told myself and Jerry that she was going, we were upset. But we, you know, she gave us loads of notice. And we could see a kind of smooth transition. But actually, the reaction in the college was really interesting. People were sad, of course, really sad, but excited for Jennie, but also felt confident that something would come that would be great. And it would all be okay. And it didn't feel like the only thing in the college that people... but actually in 2018, 19, I think if luncheonette had closed, the staff would have been absolutely devastated, it would have been a real blow to morale. So it kept.. It was really important in morale in some quite difficult years. Yeah, and it was interesting when we did a lot of work in 2018 and 19, around the strategy, and then consequently, around the campus development. We did a lot of consultation with staff. And you know, in the strategy, one of the things we really looked at was the kind of values that people, started the strategy was thinking about the values of NCAD and what people felt represented NCAD, and luncheonette was quoted so often in the kind of staff consultation as being a kind of tangible example of the values of NCAD. And when we did the campus development, one of the things we were... we've really prioritized in the campus development is more space for interaction. Because as you know, from being in NCAD, you know that there's very little space for casual engagement. It's everyone's in their studios, and we're so tight on space, that there's nowhere for people to kind of just have a chat or and luncheonette is, you know, became that. And when we were talking about the needs of an art and design college, and the need to support creativity and kind of new ideas and people to kind of test themselves a bit. And that casual interaction is often the starting point for that. And in a lot of the consultation, people recognise luncheonette as being the space in where most of the good ideas they felt most proud of started. Particularly where it involved cross college collaboration. Because one of the things you know, that is very difficult to engineer with the

architecture that we have is people from both staff and students from different departments or faculties kind of coming together, and finding out more about what each other are doing, they will want to do it, when they do do it really good things come out of it. But if you're constantly just channeling people into their spaces, it's very hard for that to happen. But luncheonette is a space where that happened. And still does with Siobhan. But the importance of that was really, I think, particularly felt during COVID, when people weren't on campus, and that sort of sense of distance between pupils, became even stronger. But so when we were doing the campus development consultation with a lot of staff, which was through 2021, when we were all kind of on and off campus. And thinking about the sorts of spaces we needed, everybody kind of basically said more luncheonettes, you know, like more spaces where people can sit and chat and have a coffee and kind of test ideas together. So it was a very strong creative hub. An engine in the college.

Megan 24:26

Like a good overlapping point.

DIR 2 24:29

Yeah,

Megan 24:30

for various departments and things, even just students and staff.

DIR 2 24:33

Right, yeah. Cuz you'd see someone and then people would have a chat and they'd say, "Oh, we're doing this, are you doing that?". And then an idea would emerge and so lots of staff said that kind of cross departmental projects came about through meetings in luncheonette.

Megan 24:47

That's very interesting.

DIR 2 24:48

Yeah.

Megan 24:50

Were there ways in which it created challenges, Luncheonette?.

DIR 2 24:56

That luncheonette created challenges for us?

Megan 24:59

Yeah, in your job and in the college maybe?

DIR 2 25:04

I think really the only challenges was I suppose it sort of highlighted the absence of that kind of warm and welcoming and flexible space elsewhere.

Megan 25:19

Yeah.

DIR 2 25:19

So, you know, which was not news to us. And as you know, and is a big focus now, and as we think about the campus development, but it... we would hear a lot, justifiably, from the Students Union about the absence of other kinds of spaces that could function like that, because particularly as I say, when it got crowded with people from outside the college, it felt like that was too difficult for the students to access. They wanted [inaudible] kind of meeting space and social space, and the concourse and Students Union just don't have the same feel to them. I mean, we've improved them, but you know, they still architecturally are really challenging.

Megan 26:04

That's interesting. So what changes would you have liked to have seen in Luncheonette?

DIR 2 26:11

Oh, I think I genuinely would say nothing at all.

Wow ok

It was exactly what it needed to be. Yeah. I mean, the menu was really the sort of clarity of the menu. I think really, people really worked. They love that sort of routine of having their

porridge and then having their grain pot or the, you know, and the price point was very good, you know, always very good.

Megan 26:42

NCAD waived the rental fee for Luncheonette in 2013, and that sort of allowed for-

DIR 2 26:48

Sorry say that again, sorry the lines just a tiny bit bad say that again?

Megan 26:51

Oh sorry so NCAD waived, sorry I'm just coming closer [Laughter]

PART II

Megan 0:00

NCAD waived the rental fee for luncheonette in 2013. And then that helped with that price point, this sort of provision of like friendly, affordable options for students and staff. Which is unusual for college, because they usually kind of looking to get some income from the hospitality provider. Was there ever any pressure to reinstate the fee? And if there wasn't, why wasn't there I suppose?

DIR 2 0:26

Occasionally there'd be mumblings from certain people in the finance department, but it was never a question for me that we would do that because the value and I think if it had come to the senior management team, and any kind of strategy that would have put luncheonette at a risk would have been really firmly opposed, because they absolutely were right, in seeing that the value to the college of Luncheonette far outweighed any income that we would ever get. So, you know, even.... because it was also a big recruitment driver, you know, students came to the college on open day. It was one nice, you know, it was one of the sort of nicer spaces we could show people. And, you know, so the finance,... as soon as you looked at it as a business case, the value of the rent, which might have... so if we'd gone down a different route, if we charged any rent, you would've gone, and not out of kind of, you know, being difficult because she genuinely couldn't have paid it. So if we'd moved to a kind of more commercial model and brought in a kind of larger company. So, and I'd understand this more from sort of talking to

people in the sector. But if you're running five, or six cafes, your cost base is much, much lower. So you might be able to afford to pay rent, because you'd have a kitchen elsewhere, you'd be mass producing stuff and bring it in and... but Jennie's cost base as a kind of loan producer, making everything from scratch, in her own kitchen was high, so rent would have just crippled her.

But if we had just made the decision, so for a small rent, we would have moved to a kind of brambles or Aramark, or one of the bigger kind of producers, we would have lost so much money elsewhere, you know, it would have been really, really stupid business decision, because the rent, people think that these kind of spaces are quite profitable, but say, in Imma, for example, the cafe in Imma, the rent is only like 25,000. Nothing. And that's a much, you know, that is open all year round. It's seven days a week, it's got... because you also have to think, you know, for a college cafe, you've got the summer months are closed, so she was only a sort of a nine month business.

So, you know, any feasible rent would be such a paltry amount, and even though yes of course yes, the college was very, very broke in 2018. And you could have thought on paper that makes sense. You'd have lost that in four or five, four or five post-grad students not applying, because they think the college is really grim.

Megan 3:14

Yeah,

DIR 2 3:14

And lost that immediately. Whereas luncheonette did really genuinely, I think it really genuinely kept a kind of a glow around the college at a time when recruitment was more challenging. I mean, we're in a much stronger space now. And recruitment is really strong, but it's part of the mix that makes people, I think, identify NCAD as quite a unique space, and they, you know, they can see themselves there as quite a kind of particular type of community. And if we've taken that away and put in something very bland and corporate, we would have lost, I really genuinely believe would have lost a lot of students. So the financial gain would have been minimal. So there was, you know, in any utterance of "oh we should be getting money from it" was just quickly dismissed as, even... it wasn't just that kind of sentimental desire to support Jennie, it also was a, you know, a clear business rationale.

Megan 4:14

And that was sort of true.... That was sort of understood across the board like across a lot of-?

DIR 2 4:20

Yeah, I mean, it really rarely came up as an issue. I mean, as I say, it might, the budgets might have, might have come up from certain voices in the finance team, but never pursued it wasn't, because you're never going to kind of get 100... If the rent had been half a million or something that would have been a different conversation. But you know, the levels of rent that you could actually really expect from something of that scale, with the kind of timelines... There's a lot of times, there's no weekend business, there's no evening business, there's no summer business. It's not a profitable space, we probably would have been very challenged to find somebody to take it on really. And I think also, before my time, but I think in that period in 2013, when there wasn't a cafe, was so bad. That again, I think, you know, there was a real recognition that a functioning cafe was of much greater value to the college than any financial return.

That actually completely answers the next question as well, which was, [laughter] was there a benefit for NCAD in having Luncheonette over a large scale franchise ,chain catering company?

Huge, huge,

Megan 5:43

Made more business sense, as well as?

DIR 2 5:45

Yeah, because it is, I mean, I think as I was saying it all comes back to the sense of luncheonette, reflecting the values of NCAD. And, you know, NCAD can't promise students access to fancy swimming pools and football pitches and, you know, high tech computer labs, but it can offer students the opportunity to be on a campus that has a really particular energy and culture and sense of community. And that's what luncheonette communicates.

Megan 6:20

I suppose, having said that, and acknowledging that overall, it was more beneficial. Were there any drawbacks to having luncheonette over a large scale franchise? Or a chain company?

DIR 2 6:33

No. I mean, I suppose the smallest, smallest smallest, might be more involvement from us in terms of the sort of maintenance of the space and that kind of stuff, but really, it's very minor. And I'm sure, we weren't always as on it as we should have been in terms of supporting Jennie, you know, with the maintenance, because we've got a small maintenance team. So I'm not, you know, it wasn't like we were kind of giving her a top class support service.[Laughter]

Megan 7:03

[Laughter]

DIR 2 7:04

Got better. At times, I think it was a bit challenging for her, more. Because if something broke, she didn't really... it wasn't always immediate, that it got fixed or dealt with in the way that it would have been in a bigger campus.

Megan 7:20

And then I guess, the not having the rent as well, like, would make that...that it wasn't an immediate sort of like, "okay, something's broken, fix it" maybe a bit more understanding there

DIR 2 7:30

Yeah, so there wasn't like, you know, I suppose, yeah, she felt she couldn't make the demands on us in the same way. But I know it was frustrating at times. Yeah. Because, you know, particularly at certain times, you know, it got better before she finished, but certainly sort of 17/18 the maintenance team would've been under huge pressure with a lot of issues happening in the building. So luncheonette would always be lower on the priority list. So she had to she did have to deal with some quite [inaudible]

Megan 8:15

Sorry you just broke up there

DIR 2 8:17

Sorry, she had to deal with some quite big operational challenges at times when she was going and she might not have had pieces, key pieces of equipment working or she had a leak or something like that, you know, it wasn't easy for her at all.

Megan 8:33

Okay. Do you think luncheonette would work if there were more than one? Would you have felt comfortable if there was another operation somewhere?

DIR 2 8:45

Yeah, it would be ...if you had the money [inaudible] and you know, and the yellow van was a really lovely addition in COVID. And if we'd been able to keep that going with luncheonette, but I think it just is financially not viable to have the staff up there and downstairs, Jennie did look at it carefully, but it would have been great to have that available as well, you know, particularly in the summers because so many students use Red Square, so it would have been great to have had more luncheonettes. But it's tricky for Jennie to... it's tricky the same challenges are there for Siobhan. If you have your kitchen staff and then you've got serving staff, if you add another serving point, you're not necessarily making that much additional income to pay for the additional staff costs.

Megan 9:37

So if the financial viability of it would be...

DIR 2 9:41

Yeah. Yeah, I think you know, the college would have to subsidize it if we were looking to do that.

Megan 9:51

I think we've kind of ...we've talked about this a lot throughout the interview but do you think Luncheonette's values were aligned with those of the college?

DIR 2 10:01

Yes, I mean, I think probably in fairness, I'd say, the staff and students of the college rather than the college institution itself. Certainly at the beginning, I'd hope it's more aligned now with the college but I think it probably was aligned with the NCAD community, rather than the

college as a kind of corporate institution. I hope now it would also reflect the kind of ethos of the institution.

Megan 10:32

Like you would think of it more now than in previous years...

DIR 2 10:35

Yeah. Yeah, but I think we've been informed by luncheonette you know, and luncheonette's helped shape the values and the thinking in the college, about how we run ourselves and how we, you know, the kind of values we need to hold ourselves accountable to.

Megan 10:54

I'm just going to turn my video off to try and improve the line a little bit.

DIR 2 10:59

Maybe on my side, actually. ..So oh no I'm on the right side, sometimes if I'm working at home sometimes if I have got two channels, but I'm on the right one.

Megan 11:11

I'll turn mine off anyway just I think it's probably.... there's thunder here so it could be that. Anyway, sorry. Were there aspects sort of within the realm of that, were there aspects of the NCAD's strategic review that luncheonette helped to deliver?

DIR 2 11:31

Oh, not deliver, but. So it really informed it because I think it helped people visualize something that they felt they wanted the college to kind of represent, or you kind of hold as central.

Megan 11:59

A through line rather than a direct, sort of, one to one?

DIR 2 12:04

Yeah, yeah. I mean, Jennie was always, although officially not a staff member, she was absolutely a staff member. So she would have been invited into the staff consultations and into the kind of the process. I can't remember whether she came or not, you know, not everybody

was actively at meetings, because it depends on people's schedules and stuff. So she may well have contributed in that space on an individual basis, but luncheonette was a key touch point that was referred to at several points during the process.

Megan 12:45

Again, you've been wonderful about kind of talking about this sort of thing already. But could you maybe describe any ways in which luncheonette impacted NCAD outside of the provision of food?

DIR 2 12:54

Well, I think key things... Yeah, I mean, I think providing a sense of kind of pride and identity at a really dark time.

And then kind of beyond that, when that was less core, I think, providing a kind of inspiration for... I think one of the key things that unites a lot of NCAD's staff and students is a real belief in the value of creativity, as it kind of has a role in society. And that, you know, art and design exists beyond the kind of gallery spaces and beyond kind of commercial spaces. And I think luncheonette was held very, you know, was really kind of held and valued by the staff as an example of where creativity was applied into a sort of project that had a purpose and real function within society. And I think that's something that underlies an awful lot of NCAD's thinking.

And is very important to the staff, and I think, you know, particularly for the fine art staff, they were very proud that Jennie was a sculpture graduate. And that she had sort of taken her work in this direction, because it's very important that we, you know, help students see a creative career as a very kind of diverse and engaged career. And not one where you're just kind of... particularly as a fine artist, just waiting for somebody to give you a show that you can't- you know, Jennie is a great example of someone who kind of left college and went out there and sort of defined a very personal practice that is both an art practice but also a business and a space of community and it sort of impacts people. And you know, so I think it's great she's going on now to do this work in London and sort of step back more into the sort of art and research space in a way because that's really where her work has come from. But I think that the fact that she made a very functional business and social space and space of community out of her art practice was very inspirational and very important to a lot of staff and NCAD. So I

think that also was an important influencer, was referred to a lot by people. You often heard people talking about it in that context.

Megan 15:44

Yeah, and the fine art element of it and everything because I was in design, and that's kind of emphasized a lot. That social aspect, but I can imagine

DIR 2 15:52

Yeah,

Megan 15:53

more unusual, or very interesting to have a model of it anyway, just within the college.

DIR 2 15:57

Yeah. And it was great to have it sort of [inaudible] in the college from an NCAD graduate. And she's teaching, she's gonna be teaching now with us. So that's great. She's been doing a little bit over the years for me teaching in first year and stuff. So she was always viewed first and foremost as an artist.

Megan 16:16

That's great. I'm almost jealous. I would've loved to have had her in first year! [Laughter]

DIR 2 16:20

I know yeah. She's a really important voice to have in the college.

Megan 16:29

This is the last question. Do you think that with more time Luncheonette and NCAD could have achieved more together?

DIR 2 16:40

Actually I think... I mean, it's my sincere hope.. And so I'm really delighted that Jennie is coming in to teach in first year is that the partnership between luncheonette and NCAD absolutely continues but just in a different form. I think Jennie was right. Its role within the college as a sort of nurturing provider probably had run its course because if it wasn't inspiring

Jennie anymore, then it wasn't that NCAD was ready for it to go, but if it wasn't working for Jennie, then it had run its course. And obviously the last two years with COVID were really challenging for her. So I totally, totally understood her decision, but I think it kind of opens up more opportunities for Jennie to become embedded in the research and the teaching in NCAD. So I don't think.... I think it has a lot more, I think that partnership has much further to go, but probably is better, if she's not tied into getting up at four in the morning and baking scones, and you know, the kind of.... it's a tough call what she was doing.

And you know, that there was a relentless routine to it. And if she's freed up from that, we can probably work with her in a slightly more fluid way that will benefit, have great benefit to us both, I think. Particularly as you know, as the field becomes more visible and more active within the college, I mean, Jennie, that was a space Jennie had advocated for for a long time, but she's very interested in working in that space and looking at how she can, you know, start to sort of grow and have a fully sustainable kind of model of operation with own-grown vegetables and the kind of cycle of compost and and then working with students to think about, you know, different kinds of new types of food and more sustainable sort of food choices and more indigenous futures, all those kinds of things, you know, that there's a huge scope for us to work on with Jennie.

And interestingly, actually I mean I haven't discussed this with her at all, but, you know, we were... the teaching Council are very keen that domestic science becomes more prevalent in schools and your immediate reaction to that is what, you know, and why would you do that, but actually, if you think about what domestic science is, and it's kind of cooking, and sewing, and these are all skills that actually are going to be really, really important in a more sustainable society. It's actually a really important area; they're very keen to develop something in that space. And if we do, you can see someone like Jennie being critical, if you approach domestic science through that lens rather than just oh, let's just teach girls to cook. And so, but it's about being able to make and mend your own clothes and eat well and eat responsibly.

Megan 20:00

Feels very connected to sustainability.

DIR 2 20:02

Yeah, I mean because immediately it's funny when we had the conversation and it was first mentioned, my sort of more old school reaction was, "Oh, why would we want to go near that? Like it's good riddance of that in schools?" And then you actually think about it and you think "Well, no, that's an amazing thing. It's a really important thing for schools to now be dealing with"

Megan 20:19

and very-

DIR 2 20:19

Yeah. And it can be a really exciting area of study, and a really dynamic area of study.

Megan 20:31

That could be great.

DIR 2 20:34

Yeah, you'll have to come back and do it.[Laughter]

Megan 20:38

[Laughter] Yeah I want to be involved now!. Thank you so much, there. That was fantastic. Thank you. Very thoughtful answers and you're very generous

DIR 2 20:48

So Nice to meet you. And good luck with the next- what are you up to now? What are your plans? Kind of the next?

Megan 20:56

I'm doing an Erasmus plus in Granada, actually.

DIR 2: Oh, fantastic. Well congratulations

Megan: Thank you.!

DIR 2: I hope that goes well.

Megan: Thank you and good luck as well with more running and more college directing!

DIR 2 21:11

Thank you. Okay, talk to you soon.

Megan 21:15

Thank you.

Appendix E: Interview with STU 1

Jennie 0:03

Okeydoke. Hello, STU 1. Thank you very much for agreeing to be interviewed. So this is the 10th of August 2022. I am going to ask you about the impact that Luncheonette had on you as a student in NCAD. And I realise that there's a slight... it's slightly complicated in your case, because you also became part of the team and a friendship was developed. But sure I'll ask these questions, and you can address them as best you can.

So can you tell me when were you in NCAD?

STU 1 0:50

So I joined NCAD in 2013 September, end of September, or early September, sorry. And then I was there for a whole year, doing a full time Master's course. 2013/2014.

Jennie 1:05

So you joined the same time as I did?

STU 1 1:07

Yes

Jennie 1:09

And how far were you living from home at the time?

STU 1 1:13

So home was in India, is in India. So I had traveled from India, I think late August. And that's about 8000 miles.[laughter]

Jennie 1:26

[laughter] Far.

STU 1 1:31

Yeah, very far.

Jennie 1:34

And did you cook for yourself at the time?

STU 1 1:39

Yes. Throughout the year I was on student loans. So I didn't have much money in my pocket. And I was, yeah, most of my food was being cooked by myself.

Jennie 1:57

And then did you bring food from home into college?

STU 1 2:02

Yeah, yeah. For the first few months, I was literally cooking every evening. And then I would cook two portions, one for dinner and one for the lunch that I would bring to college. Yeah, that was the setup. And yeah, and then in term two, it changed a little bit because I got a job,

which was in Luncheonette. And a few of my meals got covered while working over there as well. So that changed a little bit, but my cooking continued for dinners at least.

Jennie 2:40

And is the food that you were cooking was it mostly food that you had grown up eating? Were they family recipes?

STU 1 2:52

Little bit, but then there was always the issue of time. So a lot of my meals were like, can we bother with that? It's taking too long. I'm just gonna do something very quick. So that was the problem, that it was a lot of the same stuff that I was cooking every week. I would have, but I had come with that. If you remember that I had come with these photocopies of recipes from the different recipe books and things that... so basically, I had never done cooking before I got the visa for Ireland. That was literally two weeks before I came to Ireland. So I was that spoiled child who never had to do anything. And literally, my cooking skills got developed over Skype calls with my mom in the evenings when I'm cooking. I was like, "Okay, this is burnt. What do I do next?". And that's how, you know, so I would say yes, they were home recipes. They were, you know, things that I was more used to. But then as I started with my cooking journey and started working in Luncheonette, you know, I met people who were cooking a lot of different stuff, a lot of stuff. The food that I prepared for myself also kind of diversified.

Jennie 4:13

Okay, and can I just go back to something you said there? So you didn't ever when you were growing up, kind of stand in the kitchen with your mom or whoever was preparing the food and sort of pick things up? You were kind of always sort of separate from that practice at home. Is that right?

STU 1 4:36

Yeah. So growing up till I was 18. Yeah, we've never had to worry about it. Mom, and then her help, who would come to prepare food once a day, they were mostly there. And then sometimes, you know, we would have the challenge where the boys in the house will prepare and then we'd literally make a mess and order food online. That was the limit. Then for four years, I was doing engineering in another city in India, where I was living in a hostel and we had a hostel mess. So I mean something like instant noodles or things like that something breakfast food,

we would... I think those skills were there. But cooking a proper meal? Where you spend 45 minutes cooking, chopping, mixing things and the magic of spices and all those things. They were, that was not there.

Jennie 5:34

And would you say the food is important to you?

STU 1 5:39

Yeah. Yeah.

Now, even more. Maybe, if you're asking me about 2013/ 2014, it was less important. Now even more. Working in Luncheonette for two years in a cafe, that, you know, that values food so much. And then traveling for so many years. So I don't know, the answer would be a bit different if I had to go back to 2013 versus 2022. Now I also have food allergies, so it has become even more. I'm very cautious about what goes in. Which were not there in 2013/14. So yeah.

Jennie 6:17

So at the time, it was kind of fuel to keep going and learning in college? And to get through the day?

STU 1 6:26

Yeah, 100%, I was coming after four years of studying directly into another year of studying. It was my fifth year of studying, and that had become the relationship of daily meals. Where, "You hungry? You eat". Yeah, and I think that changed very soon. But obviously, we would enjoy the Sunday meal, even in the first four years of my college, my Bachelor's where we, you know, a few friends from hostel, we would go out to a restaurant and go for a meal or something like that. But that's all we could afford.

Jennie 7:06

Once a week.

STU 1 7:08

Yeah, everything else was just, you know, the hostel mess, which was by mess I mean, the canteen. Mess is a word which they use in armies in India.

Jennie 7:19

Yeah! I used it for an art project. But I kind of like it because it is messy.

STU 1 7:26

Yeah! And I would say out of what, 12 meals a week, I would probably enjoy two. It was just literally go late in the evening, when you're hungry or in the middle of classes for lunch or something. Just have like, a quick rice and dal or something like that. And then keep going. Yeah, but that's why the value of going back home was always like, food.

Jennie 7:53

Really? Ok so it was very different.

STU 1 7:56

There would be like I think two weeks, two times a year? Would be the case? And then before coming to Ireland, I was at home for almost two months, three months. So that was also like a lot of good food. And then I came to Ireland, I was like, "woah", I felt it even more because coming up with... and then...yeah, that's a very long answer for your very simple question.

Jennie 8:19

No, but it's interesting and relevant. So back to NCAD experience. Did you go to Luncheonette much when you were in college before you started working there? In that, it was three months?

STU 1 8:32

No. And I think we've talked about, I couldn't afford it that's why. Yeah, it was very sad. The only thing that I had tried till Christmas time was one Flapjack and one brownie. Yeah, and I had to be a bit of antisocial guy as well, because other people who were from Ireland, they was like, "Oh, we're going to go for a coffee at 11 o'clock do you want to come?" And I would just act that I'm busy. That was the sort of situation. But I think it's like, post-January, it changed. Then I was like, going to Luncheonette almost every day.

Jennie 9:12

And I mean, obviously there were 1100 students in NCAD. I certainly didn't see 1100 people in the canteen every day. So I think you know, you were very much not alone, even if it felt like you were. And what was your first impression of the canteen then, when you did come?

STU 1 9:34

Oh, I have so many photos from that day.

Jennie 9:38

From that day?

STU 1 9:39

From the first time I went. Which was when the college had started and I think it was Orientation Week. Would that be correct? Were you on in that week?

Jennie 9:49

Maybe just getting ready to open? Yeah.

STU 1 9:52

Yeah. But I think so if not that day, but I remember there was one day where all the light fixtures were there, the long tables were there, everything was on. And it was like you would not expect to see that in the basement. And that was my first impression. Just how, how cozy it was. I think yellow lights make it cozy, and then the furniture and then I think the flooring, the brick, and everything just gave that atmosphere of that space being very cozy. But also, you know, it's like the entry is a bit small? Congested with the people coming down, but then suddenly it opens up. And then on the right when you see those big, that big hall. That was my first impression of how, first of all, how amazing it was. And yeah, it felt very cozy and comfortable.

Jennie 10:45

And did anything about it strike you as unusual? I mean, you've maybe covered that a little bit. Just now, but anything that seems strange about it.

STU 1 10:56

No, it was just unexpected. Not, not strange or unusual, but it was unexpected, like, "Oh, wow". You know, because there was some parts of the buildings of the college that I had already seen, which was like, "oh, yeah", you can see, because it's an old you know, on the granary building site, some of the rooms over there is like, wow, you can see the structure really. And then room, space wise. From the exterior, obviously, you see that oh, this is, you know, there's some history to it. But from inside, also some rooms, they've kept those old structures, and things like that. So then when you come to the basement into that Luncheonette space, it's a whole different part of the building that is very different as well. And then also, if you see the design school, that design building, which is all very new, glass building, again, that's very different. So that's why I think Luncheonette was probably the last room that I saw. And that's why, yeah it was unexpected.

Jennie 12:05

Okay. And were you made to feel welcome, would you say in the canteen? Or did it come across as a welcoming space or neutral or sort of unwelcoming? How would you describe the...

STU 1 12:22

Again, I think it's, I think this you will not hear this from the other students. But for my case, because I had my own bias of not being able to afford things. My like, "Oh, this is a place I cannot go". Yeah, I'm just thinking about it right now, I'm just we're talking about six, seven euros, which is not, you know... but then at that time, that was the situation it's like, "I can't afford a soup. I can't afford, you know, going for that". So that was my inner bias, which kind of made me think, "No, you can't go there. Do you do want to do something this Saturday, then you can't go there to the cafe, Monday to Friday", something like that.

Jennie

And ironically, like a lot of people, and it was actually a lot of people brought their own food and ate it in the dining room, which was absolutely permitted. So-

STU 1 13:29

Oh I don't think I knew that!

Jennie 13:31

Yeah, I probably should have made that more obvious.

STU 1 13:35

I didn't know that. And we just had a microwave in our studio. So it was literally lunches were always like that. And sometimes, on an off day, if the sun was coming down, we would go and sit outside. Well, that was the case. But then I think, come January, and how my own situation changed, it became my place to go. I invited a lot of friends, that was like every opportunity, I would try to go there. And then I started seeing how everyone felt by going over there. And I think that was the whole idea that we've talked a lot about, like we want to create that haven where you've had a couple of really difficult lectures or you've just had a really tough meeting with your supervisor or something like that. And you just want to come to Luncheonette, not go somewhere far and have that moment of peace or just relax or think of something else for 30/20/30 minutes or one hour or something and then go back to your thinking and things like that. So I started seeing that later on. From Tom too. And yeah, that has stayed with me.

Jennie 14:49

Did you feel relaxed there or kind of free to be yourself?

STU 1 14:53

Yeah

Jennie 14:54

Obviously once the barrier of feeling like you couldn't go there at all was removed.

STU 1 15:04

Again, that barrier was just my own creation. It was my own facade. But once I had a sort of an income coming, it automatically went away. And no one had to do anything. Nothing changed from outside it was just that, yeah. And yes. And it was always lovely. Sometimes I would also come on my own, and just sit on one of those long tables and just look at people. Because overall, I'm such a huge fan of, I was and still am, of all the people who go to NCAD. So it's always nice to just like, you know, be that fly on the wall, be on yourself and just be there in that space. And people are chatting, and things like that. And that's also a great part of Luncheonette, in that NCAD space, which was those long common tables. Where you don't like other cafes, like you have your own small tables on the side and just sit by them.

Jennie 16:09

And what do you think Luncheonette's attitude to the visitor was?

STU 1 16:19

In terms of objectives?

Jennie 16:22

In terms of what do you think we thought when we saw people coming through the door, as the staff?

STU 1 16:33

Yeah, I think that was definitely, and it came across from everything that Luncheonette was doing, was that what we're doing is very important for their day. And this is... it has to be good coffee, it has to be that good piece of sugar, right? Something, it has to be a good wholesome meal, because this is probably the only good meal they'll have the whole day if they're students. It has to be affordable for them. And just that space, the music, the relaxing, you know, all of those small, small things that we're talking about. And that would only happen when you know, when you were really thinking about the customer rather than your business. ...The first couple of years, it was not making that much business sense to do all of that, when it was still growing. But it was there from day one.

Jennie 17:30

And what was your interaction with the Luncheonette staff like? Did it stray beyond ordering and paying for food?

STU 1 17:38

Say that again, the last bit?

Jennie 17:39

Did it go beyond ordering and paying for food?

STU 1 17:44

You know, the first interaction was with you. [laughter] When when I had come with my CV [laughter]

Jennie 17:55

[laughter] I think I was washing dishes at the time.

STU 1 17:59

That was a big part as well is like you found empathy. Like, you know, there's nothing, there's no real job. And that was what the interaction was like, but that's off. You know, that's one case. That probably does not happen with all the other students. But yeah, that was the interaction. But after that it was every time I think, whenever I came in the term one, a few times, when I did come. It was good, happy faces. "How can I help you? What would you like today?" And yeah, trying to make that small difference in people's days.

Jennie 18:37

Okay. So did you feel seen in a way that, I mean... did you? Do you think that, obviously before you started working there, that the staff would remember you?

STU 1 19:02

From the initial visits, maybe not. But I think that became more important, with more months passing. I don't know if it was always there from day one. But, yeah, it's difficult to say. [inaudible] I was there very few times, and then quickly in it.

Jennie 19:26

Yeah. And did you trust Luncheonette?

STU 1 19:31

Yeah. 100%. But by trust, what do you mean? [inaudible] I mean, the quality of food?

Jennie 19:40

Yeah, you're saying now that you have to think very carefully about the foods that you're putting in your body because you have allergies, and you've also you know, as with decisions around your diet. In the same way that like, here's a group of people who are preparing food, which can either provide you with power or harm you. And they're putting together, that can be done in a way that it becomes very wholesome and restoring or very dangerous. And then... you know, I believe that there are other kinds of energy going into that preparation as well.

From the attitude of the person who's preparing the food, and, you know, it's to say, at the time when you were there, Wagner was cooking, and I think he, as a chef, uses food as a delivery system for joy and kindness. So anyway, I am now biasing your question terribly.

No, I just mean, you know, in terms of, I found, as an artist, it was very scary using food because it has the potential to harm people so terribly.

STU 1 20:55

Yeah.

Jennie 20:56

So I suppose in those kinds of ways that people are putting their energy and also, you know, microbial problems potentially?

STU 1 21:08

Yes, once I started going there regularly, and having started having more meals, I was just like, "This is so good". And literally, that would be much better than I was cooking, in terms of nutrition value. And taste wise, it would give me a joy. And I would look forward to it. And I think that would only happen if I trusted that place.

Jennie 21:39

Do you think Luncheonette needed you?

STU 1 21:42

As a customer?

Jennie 21:44

As a customer, before you started working there, yeah.

STU 1 21:47

Yeah, yeah. And it needed all of us. And I think this was a conversation that I had asked that we had had and then I'd ask like, "is it better to get new customers all the time, or the same customers coming again and again?" And that was the you know, it later, it struck me that it is so important to have the same people coming again. Because that's, you know, that's where you

know that this means something to them. And you have that constant client, as well. Yeah, and that's why I do feel that, well it is a business, it needed students coming, but then I think those regular students who come for the morning coffees or their lunches or things like that was of value, is of value and it was felt.

Jennie 22:36

Okay. Do you remember any particular sounds or smells?

STU 1 22:45

Yeah, the coffee, and a bit dancey music. But that will also change. I think the mornings are very quiet. It's like, "okay, let's get your coffee and start concentrating". But then, yeah, come lunch, both one o'clock, two o'clock, it got a bit more happening. So I have those different times of the day. Sound is very much, it stays in my memory. The coffee machine, that stays. And then it's the basement so it's also with no real windows so that it was always there. I don't have smells from the kitchen. But that's just for me. Because I was working in the kitchen. Yeah.

Jennie 23:31

When was the best time to go there, do you think? What was your favourite time there?

STU 1 23:38

Early lunch, I think. Just when the first sandwiches are coming out, and the food was really hot, piping. And before the one o'clock rush, 12:30. Sometimes it's not ready and there's some pressure inside. But, you know, the room is still calm. And I kind of liked that because you've given your three hours. I love the environment of 09:00, 09:00 to 10:00 as well or 10:30. But then there's also that stress of starting the day. Of what's coming or I have to do these things. But then, that's why I had the practice of going to the studio. I was literally opening the studio every day half eight, I would get in and do my first three, four hours and then kind of like take a little bit of pause and go back again.

Jennie 24:28

And what did you usually order in Luncheonette?

STU 1 24:34

Yeah, I think I was usually soup/sandwich because at that time I was eating all sorts of bread. Now it would be slightly different. Yeah, most days it would be soup/sandwich. Or either of them.

Jennie 24:49

Yeah.

STU 1 24:50

And then later on, I'd also become a massive fan of the flapjacks.

Jennie 24:54

[laughter] The flapjacks! And can you describe the queue?

STU 1 24:59

The what?

Jennie 25:00

The queue

STU 1 25:03

The queue to get food?

Jennie 25:04

Yeah the queue to get food exactly.

Sometimes that would be very, I remember it's sometimes quite long and I used to be very conscious of the time that people spent in that queue and trying to keep it to a minimum.

STU 1 25:23

Full transparency. I was cutting the queue a lot. [Laughter] To Wagner to get my sandwich [Laughter]

Jennie 25:33

Ok [Laughter]

STU 1 25:34

But sometimes if I was there with you know, other people, someone from my studio, some colleagues then I would, but it was rare [Laughter]

PART II

STU 1 0:00

No problem.

Jennie 0:03

Now, so, you think-

STU 1 0:12

Sometimes I would be coming with other students or someone else. And then I would be queuing but that's fine. I think that's, that was the... it was also conversational, right? Where you kind of, you know, chatting, and kind of talking about Luncheonette. Wondering about, you know, because you would put that menu at the door as well. So people can already start making those decisions or start thinking about what it's gonna taste like. So you're also talking about that. And I think, you know, now that you asked me, and I'm thinking, it was great being in the queues, because you're literally talking a lot about food. And you're talking about oh, have you, did you try this last week? It was so good. So you kind of... those kinds of conversations were happening. And yeah, and it was fast moving, because you know, it's not like you... I think that's the advantage is the soup was always ready, or the sandwiches were ready. So it's like, "what would you like?" boom, "next". Rather than, you know, how the other chains would. Like if it was that sort of a queue in a McDonald's? They would be [laughter] [inaudible].

Jennie

And other things that you remember being kind of frustrating or annoying, about Luncheonette? In general?

STU 1 1:46

No. No, no, no memories like that.

Jennie 1:40

And did you ever bring friends or family from outside the college into the canteen?

STU 1 1:46

Yeah. So as you know, I was living in a hostel with 210 beds. I did. Yeah. And I think a lot of people came and went, and we didn't even know. But I just mentioned to them that, because the place that I was living was literally 200 metres from the campus. So there were people and then later on, I did have people visiting me. And then when that would happen, I would bring them if the Luncheonette was open, I would bring them for a meal.

Jennie 2:17

Yeah. Okay. And did you use the dining room in Luncheonette for college work or meetings or, you know, stuff not related to food?

STU 1 2:26

Meetings maybe, maybe a couple of meetings later on once I started getting projects. So I remember doing a couple of meetings. But mostly no, no college work. Yeah, I think the degree that I was doing was, unfortunately, either you needed to be in the workshop or needed a laptop. And I was not carrying my laptop over into Luncheonette.

Jennie 2:52

Okay.

STU 1 2:53

Yeah. Yeah, we had a good space in the studio. So everyone had a proper desk and a screen and everything. So we didn't need it

Jennie 3:01

I see. And did you make any new acquaintances or kind of share experiences with strangers in luncheonette?

STU 1 3:12

Yes, but that was more by being part of the team.

Jennie 3:16

Okay. I see. And do you have a sense that your presence in Luncheonette was felt or made an impact? And if I can confine this question to you as not a member of the team, but as a visitor? You know, do you think that we noticed... well, I kind of have asked this in a way already, but what might we remember about you as a, say, a customer or visitor?

STU 1 3:52

That's [inaudible] because...I would be only... but the recipe that I gave.

Jennie 4:05

Oh, yeah,

STU 1 4:06

It became a regular of ours for a few years. That was, you know, that. But I don't know if I would have happened if I was not part of the team. And also yeah, I don't know the sort of impact that me as one customer out of maybe 100 /120 every day, was making. Definitely it was but I don't know how. And, you know, probably it was not communicated. So I wouldn't know if I was, you know, it was more like, a one way thing for me as a customer. Where I'm going because I like it, I like the food and everything. And I really, it means something to me. But now that you ask the question, obviously, you know, these customers meant so much for the Luncheonette as well. But that's not how I felt about it.

Jennie 5:06

Okay.

STU 1 5:08

Does that make sense?

Jennie 5:10

Yeah, I think it makes sense. So I suppose probably there was maybe two or three people working front of house. And we would always, we would refer to people by, say, their coffee order, you know, like, decaf-oat-flat-white-guy, or, you know, mocha-with-an-extra-shot-person, or ...we often didn't have names-

STU 1 5:47

Yeah.

Jennie 5:48

-but we would remember people by the singularity of their requirements or their choppiness or, you know. Because this is... there was... every day when I would open the doors, and sometimes I would feel uncertain about the day ahead, you know, or am I up to this crazy task of opening these doors to everything that the day might bring? And then immediately when people start coming in, that anxiety or doubt would evaporate. Because people would bring such, kind of reassurance.

STU 1 6:32

Yeah.

Jennie 6:33

And so yeah, every person sort of brought a little bit of that reassurance and a little bit of energy back, you know, there'll be an exchange, of course of money, but also of energy. You know, people would give a little bit of energy that would allow me to put more energy into giving back to the next person or whatever.

STU 1 6:54

Yeah.

Jennie 6:55

So I'm kind of...it's, I suppose, when I'm wondering about how might we remember you or how might your presence have been felt, I suppose it's kind of in reference to those things. Like the kind of interaction that you had with the team, or how hungry you were, how much you needed?

STU 1 7:22

I think this helped, and I think that was felt indirectly. So that was not... the first thing that comes to mind is like, I get a lot from Luncheonette and that's why I go. But then indirectly, by Luncheonette being such a place which gives... Why would I want to keep going to Luncheonette when there's also Tesco right across the street. Was it Tesco or something else?

Jennie 7:45

Yeah.

STU 1 7:46

Yeah. So you know, what did we work? I was coming over there. Once I started coming more regularly. And that was because I was made, well I was treated specially, that would not happen in the other cafes on Thomas Street, for example. Yeah, and then what you just said, I know that because I was also front of house, sometimes. I knew what it meant, right? When you see those people when someone is coming, and then you just by chance you asked how's it- what's going on today for you, and then boom, they will just start talking about, like, okay, that, that felt nice to hear about that story, or that person talking about some experience or that small interaction, and that does mean something. But I think it's not the case for every single customer, every day. It might be like, you know, today, you know, Luncheonette front of house had conversations with these 15 customers, but then they were the other 65, probably they were just like- they came for the sandwich, got a sandwich and then left. Something like that.

Jennie 9:00

Yeah.

And did you ever have a kind of... do you associate... This is a strange question. Did you ever have an emotional experience in there or in the room, in the dining room or something kind of that impacted you on a level that was you know, beyond the ingesting of a lunch or a flapjack.

STU 1 9:32

It's a bit difficult because [inaudible]

Nothing comes across but I just do remember that there were days where it would be my first meal. And that's sort of you know, it's not just food going in it but it's just like, treating hunger [laughter] and that is a bit of an emotional situation for you know, for a lot of people that is like... I've been hungry for three, four hours now and this is that first few bites of food. For me is a state of being. And yeah, I remember those kinds of happenings.

Jennie 10:19

And did you experience NCAD as a welcoming space?

STU 1 10:25

Yeah. 100%. And it was because of the people.

Jennie 10:30

Right

STU 1 10:31

Yeah. Overall there's this layers of race, for me layers of, you know, being a foreigner and things like that. And somehow NCAD was that comfort zone. Which was not the case in other parts, I think back in 2013. I know it's only been eight, nine years, but then things were still different. And Ireland was still not that used to people from... but I was the first person from the subcontinent in the college. So yeah, I was told by the college team that you're the first person first student from the subcontinent? I don't know if it's true or not.

Jennie 11:15

Wow, seems crazy

STU 1 11:17

Yeah. But after that, there's been a good few students are from the subcontinent. Yeah, NCAD was always. And I was having so much fun, all day, every single day. Yeah.

Jennie 11:34

And then do you think that lunch would have made a difference to NCAD? As a college experience?

STU 1 11:42

Yeah! And I think all of this that we've talked about, in the last 55 minutes. Imagine that not being there the previous 10/15 years? Like, students, like all of these things that we've done, it was not there. At least I don't know of how it was before you were a student there. But at least since you were a student there, and then you took over, I know that it was not there. And it makes such a massive difference. Again, this college, as I'm facing it right now, we don't have a cafe but we have a pub, where, you know, it's like a bar, sorry, not a pub a college bar. And that was special for this because all the conversations happen after five o'clock on Thursdays or Wednesdays or Fridays, over there. And that space is so special. Imagine if there was a lunch room like that. But I think, I've talked about today is this guy, the "Food for All" project, the

Hari Krishna people, they kind of, you know, all the food which is going to be thrown away from supermarkets, they take it and they cook food. And that's that space for the scholars. And it means so much, people they come sometimes. That guy is a bit...he's in his own world sometimes so sometime he comes at 1:30. People are waiting since 12 o'clock. And that means so much and I think that was literally the case in Luncheonette. I remember being in the studio sometimes and people are saying, "Oh, I'm so hungry" at 12 o'clock and there would be messages or people would be saying, and I was like "oh soup is not gonna be ready for 45 minutes." [Laughter] And you know, those things are happening because Luncheonette meant so much for people in NCAD. And then later on also from, you know, people working outside, but on the same street coming into Luncheonette as regular customers. So it meant something, definitely.

Jennie 13:27

Thanks STU 1. I have three more questions and then that's it. How connected do you think that Luncheonette was to NCAD? Say, do you think they're on the same page in terms of atmosphere? Tone? Ethics?

STU 1 13:46

Maybe not. I don't know I could be wrong, but then it could be because there was something about thinking of the student first and business second. Which I think NCAD was not. This is again, biased. I was a foreign student and not on scholarship or anything. So for me, it was like, after paying 20- I can't remember how much I paid. But I think I paid 17,000 euros at that time. And after that they were asking 100 Euro fee to use the workshop or studio fee. And it was those kinds of things. I was like, do you not see 17,000 euros for coming to your college and you're still asking for? Those kinds of small, small things. Yeah, and that was not you know... you come to a cafe and you get such big portions of food and such good food for very affordable prices. And that's why I kind of disassociate Luncheonette from the college. But that's college as an admin. But then college as the design department where I went, I think that was much in line because it was very casual. And I appreciate that much more after the last one year of coming to a very academic college like this one where it's like, one hour lecture, five minutes of question and answer. If you have more questions, book 20 minutes on my schedule, which is probably not available for the next three weeks. Very, you know, it's very, in a way corporatized. So that access is not there, but then the casual nature of just, like knocking on your professor's door or meeting them on the corridor or just finding something. Which is

NCAD, which is an arts college, which is also probably the difference between London and Dublin, was it was a continued thing in Luncheonette as well, which is very free flowing, very casual, does long tables, there's no like, you know, structure and things like that. Which, in that way, yes, there's a clear link between NCAD as a place and Luncheonette as a place. All my answers are essays [laughter].

Jennie 16:11

No, that's, that's perfect. Actually, the last two questions you've already answered. I'm pretty sure. Yeah. Yeah, you have. So STU 1, thank you so much. That's really, really helpful. I think it's very, very difficult for any subsequent interviews to match up to this. But so thank you very much. That's really generous.

STU 1 16:42

Actually, when we meet, when you are over here I want to know what did people say about how they felt on whether they were having an impact on Luncheonette?

Jennie 16:53

Yeah.

STU 1 16:53

I'm pretty sure... Yeah. I struggled with that question. But yeah, I'm curious to know how they felt. Because in a way, I also want to know, as someone who worked in Luncheonette [laughter].

Jennie 17:03

[Laughter] Yeah. It's complicated. And do you mind if I ask you, are there any questions in there that you find problematic or uncomfortable? Or, you know, sort of across the line in any way?

STU 1 17:19

No. You know that question of “did you find something strange or unusual” is what you asked? Yeah. As someone who's done a lot of research as well, I don't think you're, you're gonna get an answer to that question. If you're asking it.

Jennie 17:43

Yeah.

STU 1 17:45

Maybe if you have, you know, a research assistant asking who's very neutral or something like that? It might work. Not that I had anything, but because I'm so much in love with that place, but then maybe someone who's not been there that much, they might have something but you know, you might want to re-check that question.

Jennie 18:06

Yeah. Okay. STU 1, thank you so much for your time. That's really, really generous.

Appendix F: Interview with STU 2

megan 0:01

Very exciting. Shall I begin? Thank you very much for the interview. You're great. Good guy for doing it.

STU 2 0:17

Thanks for asking me!

megan 0:18

No problem. The first question is who are you?

STU 2 0:24

I am STU 2. I'm a student or I was a student, I've graduated now. In NCAD I was in illustration. Who am I otherwise? I think I am a nice person. I think I like to have friends that I like to have, because of luncheonette obviously, I think I like to have like, nice intimate moments, especially when you are all together and you have something to focus on and something to centre in your conversations. So like food or games, or dancing, so, yes, I think that's everything. So that is what I would define myself by. There you go. Is that what you meant?

megan 1:14

Oh!

That's lovely

It's very open ended. I like where you went with that. That was nice. Lovely.

STU 2 1:24

Okay. That was that was... yeah thank

When did you go to ncad?

Between 2018 and 2022, although I've sneaked back in now. Because I'm doing some beekeeping, which I guess it's still 2022 but it's past my time. So four years, but now I'm in the beekeeping so I still be in there which is nice, I suppose.

megan 1:54

That is nice. I'm gonna turn off my camera because I think it's making my connection worse. Sorry.

STU 2 2:01

Ok will i turn my off?

megan 2:03

Um, yeah, maybe do just in case it might improve things slightly sorry.

STU 2 2:08

Okay.

megan 2:12

Okay. Okay, thank you very much. How far were you living from home when you were going to NCAD?

STU 2 2:20

From my home, or?

megan 2:23

From your home. Like, were you living at home or were you living far away from home and how far away?

STU 2 2:29

I was kind of, I'm kind of between two places. So neither of them were too far from each other or from NCAD. So I was at home in my family home. And then I was over in the liberties. All of those are like within 30 minutes of a walk from each other, and with NCAD in the middle, so I wasn't ever far from home. But sometimes, distance isn't as important as like when you decided to, I don't know, strike out, be an adult, like you think that you have to be self sufficient. I think sometimes it's harder to [inaudible] you kind of know that you can go back, but it's like stubbornness not to retreat. So not very far from home. But it's like, when you're, I don't know, like, I was like, 19 when I moved out so when you're that kind of age, you feel like you can't really go home? Now I do! Now I'm better at it! But yeah, never, never. It was never not an option for me.

megan 3:25

But it was like when you were 19, you were like, I cannot go home because it's just there. And that will be too like...

STU 2 3:32

Yeah, like I'm like 19 now and I have to be like living my student life. And also I was alone in a house that I felt like I had to look after so it was like a little lonely. But again, it was one of those things that when you're growing up you feel like you have to do rather than something that didn't have to happen and so I could go home whenever I wanted to. And I was always happy to, well, my parents were always happy to receive me. [laughter] Anyway they still are!

megan 4:05

[Laughter]

Did you cook for yourself at the time when you were living... when you were in college?

STU 2 4:13

I actually back when I first started living alone [inaudible]cooking for myself. I think it was like the time that I started doing it because my family is very much every day.

megan 4:28

Oh STU 2 sorry. You broke up a lot there.

STU 2 4:32

Okay, where did you leave me?

megan 4:34

At the very start. Sorry

STU 2 4:38

That's okay. Recovering my train of thought. I think I was saying that. I didn't cook much at the start but it was kind of how I learnt because I didn't really have that much opportunity because cooking was such a like my dad's thing at home like it was he cooked the dinner. Everyone sat down to eat it, every day. And there was like, I don't know it was always like school so you wouldn't have to like cook for yourself at lunchtime. And if I did make something it was something very easy that probably like even less cooking than microwave stuff. So yeah, I definitely started cooking when I moved because it was, it was kind of...

obviously you have to do it. And I have grown to do it like three times a day. I love it now. Clearly, I'm still trying to figure out how it works. So, yeah, I didn't but now I do!

megan 5:28

And kind of part of the like moving away from home thing you were like, I can't go back for my meals. I can't go home for like-I just gotta figure it out now. I am responsible.

STU 2 5:38

Yeah, yeah! I don't know what I was thinking. It was like some sort of, "I'm an adult now. I have to do everything that adults do. I have to cook all my meals. And I don't know never talk to my parents because I hate them because I'm an adult now!" [Laughter]

megan 5:55

[laughter]

STU 2 5:55

I don't know what...but yeah, definitely like again, like my dad. Like my parents are happy to receive me and my dad is so into like a family meal. I think he just read a book that said they were really important to sit down with your family at the end of every day and check how everyone's doing. So he's definitely taken that on board in his like personal belief system. I think my mom has this thing now, because my brother is also away from home where she's trying to get us to come home every Sunday for dinner. But before then, unless it was asked I would never go.

megan 6:30

Okay.

STU 2 6:31

Yeah. It was invitation only.

megan 6:38

But now it's more like, you're like, "Okay, I am an established adult. I can go back whatever I want now."

STU 2 6:43

Yeah, yeah, it's like, I've struck out enough on my own. If I go back it's not a sign of like pack weakness. It's just like "I'm hungry and I don't have any food or money." [Laughter]

megan 6:58

[Laughter] "I can admit that."

STU 2 7:03

Well, at least I know that this is my fault and I can fix it.

megan 7:09

Did you bring food from home into college?

STU 2 7:16

This is actually something I was thinking about ahead of this interview. I did sometimes, I'm actually really bad for if I make food I can't stop myself from eating the whole thing. I don't often have leftovers unless it's like a lot of food. But I would often...I'm not a very organised person. So if I did bring food in, it was rare. And when I did, I don't know if this is too early to mention to luncheonette, but I would always every day without fail it was the day that I really wanted something on the menu that I had food with me. So-

megan 7:49

yeah!

STU 2 7:49

Yes I did bring food in. Did I eat it? No. But I did bring it in and then brought it home for dinner. So yes I did.

megan 7:58

That's so true. That used to happen to me all the time, I was like "dammit why do I have pasta today!" [Laughter]

STU 2 8:05

[Laughter] I know, so annoying. And like it's always because of the nature of the you know, the menu you're like, "I have to have this today!"

megan 8:12

Yeah.

STU 2 8:13

"It's never happening again. Or not for a while." Yeah, but I mean, I guess it meant like dinner was planned.

megan 8:20

True! Is food important to you? If so how?

STU 2 8:30

Sorry?

I didn't hear that for some reason?

megan 8:35

Oh, sorry. Is the connectio okay, can you can you hear me?

STU 2 8:39

I yeah, I think the connection is okay. My ears are the problem in this case.

megan 8:43

That's okay. The question is, is food important to you? And if so?

STU 2 8:50

Yes, food is important to me. I love to eat it. So that's stated for now. And also. Well, first of all, I'll say I had a burrito from bounceback today and it was like a magical, magical experience. I hadn't had one in so long and I was sitting there with like one of my new like, friends from beekeeping. And I was like, she [Inaudible] And I was like "this...like burritos are friendship to me". I was like I was reccounting one of my friends one of my best friends like from when I was a teenager. We used to get a burrito together every Saturday. And we're

still friends now. And I was like "this is the first time I've had a meal with you and it's a burrito like this is like a friendship food. I had it all my friends in college." Like I said I think like centering I don't know having something to focus on to like, fill kind of time and silence with your friends like I don't think you need to be talking all the time and having food in the middle of that is so important. I think it's because my dad had such that sit down have food at the end of the day thing. And it would always like you'd be lucky if you got out of dinner like in under half an hour. So I think there's definitely like a ritual element to food. For me, like it's, it's for... Obviously it's for nourishment. But it's also for like... words evading me...like communication? Community? That kind of thing. So yeah, it's really important to me actually, I, most of my friends really enjoy food. So when I see them, it's over lunch or dinner, or maybe breakfast if you're on time.

megan 10:28

[Laughter] That's so lovely! And like the whole thing of having to...like, it's hard to have really relaxed friendships when you're starting them out. And like having that, like having a burrito with a new friend is a good way to just be like, "Okay, now we can comfortably be in silence together, because we're eating a burrito and that's good."

STU 2 10:48

Especially because a burrito is so hard to eat! So I was like, "Wow, I've never seen you eating before. And it's a burrito of all things." Like it does take- you have to be comfortable enough in a silence to like, eat around someone like you have to you know, you have to get used to that. And I think that casual sort of comfortability is extremely important to friendships.

megan 11:12

That's lovely. That's such a nice answer.

STU 2 11:15

Thanks! All For you [Laughter]

megan 11:18

[Laughter] I think I know the answer to this. Did you go to luncheonette while you were in college? How often did you go?

STU 2 11:25

Yes, oh!

megan 11:28

Expose yourself!

STU 2 11:31

Yeah, I did go. And I went at least three times a week. And that's being like, maybe one week, I didn't go to college every day. I went in the mornings. I didn't really get into coffee until later but I would go in the morning. And I would have like a mint tea if it was cold, or something. And then so that's like, I already was only counting lunch. So then the number goes up. But I went whenever I liked anything on the menu, because I often did not have lunch planned. And the food was so affordable that it didn't like... at the time. It didn't really matter if that I was like spending €3 on soup every day. Was it €3?

meg luddy 12:12

Yeah €3 for the soup. Wasn't that crazy?

STU 2 12:14

Yeah, that was crazy. But I yeah, I went to a lot. Like, and sometimes I would be alone. But I did... I did always try to drag people along with me. Because, again, food is about talking for me, so yeah. So much. I wasn't able to obviously as much because of like COVID And then final year was so busy. So definitely my heyday was back in first and second year. That's my highest concentration of luncheonette attendance.

megan 12:48

[Laughter] How would you decide you would go to luncheonette? Like on a given day?

STU 2 12:58

Okay, so if I wasn't late in the morning, which was rare, I would go in because I don't know Dublin mornings are never that nice. And then if I was hungry, that's kind of like it was just the only place to go really like unless it was like packed out the door. Or I didn't want anything that was on the menu. Like if I was hungry, that's where I would go unless I had packed lunch that I would eat so. Especially also now in fairness, it's not all me instigating

Luncheonette with other people. It's so easy to be completely involved in whatever you're doing and someone then like sidles over to you and taps you on the shoulder and is like "want to get a coffee or want to go to the luncheonette?" or something along the lines of general like Luncheonette-ness. So it definitely, it felt so mischievous. Like it's so "let's go to the Luncheonette" like little goblins going. Like it always feels like such a treat that feels like it should be illegal. So yeah, it was always an indulgence, definitely when I chose to go.

megan 14:08

That's so cute. What was your first impression of the canteen? Do you remember your first time like going down there?

STU 2 14:15

I think my first time doing done there was like, one of the open days? I was like 17 or something and I was in my stupid little school uniform with another friend and he was in his stupid little school uniform. And I think we went down and obviously it was super busy because when it was an open day and I felt like there were like [inaudible] people in the place. And [laughter] I was like deeply afraid. I was like, "Wow. This looks so cool. Wow, no wonder art college like no wonder the art college canteen is like so cool. Why are there so many people here though?" I think I was afraid just because of the sheer amount. I think it was an unfair day to judge it by. But like I was struck by how nice it was even then and I think I was not to be like, "I know what nice is". But my dad does- he took us out to restaurants all the time because he loves food as well. So I went in and I was like, "wow, this is nice, even by my standards".

megan 15:12

[Laughter]

STU 2 15:11

"Even by my standards really nice". Which is horrible. [Laughter] But it was cool. And I don't even remember if I ate anything because I was like, so intimidated by the huge crowd of possible art students. So, yeah, that was [inaudible]

megan 15:25

Did anything about it strike you as unusual, like the canteen and the setup and everything?

STU 2 15:41

I think the fact that it was underground in the first place was kind of shocking to me. Like, I was like, 'Oh, it's just there!' like it was under your feet. But also I really liked the kind of like, warmth underneath it that was so like, it was so busy. But it wasn't like, I don't know, our canteen in school, one long counter, where they were like three women who would chop stuff up for you. And like it was school like and it was so huge and like, noisy with like student girl chatter and like it almost made you agoraphobic. It was so...

meg luddy 15:41

Yeah.

STU 2 15:45

I felt so like cosy in comparison. Like it was like, warm brick with like soft like lights, which I thought were so unusual as well. Like, I loved that it was like nothing was unrelated to what was going on down there, which is like eating and drinking. I remember that. That was and also I was like, wow, people must like this place if it's this busy. Yeah, that's kind of what struck me.

Someone described it as being like climbing into the earth. And I thought that was so nice.

Yeah, yeah, I totally agree with that. Like, it feels like you're burrowing down into something like warm and homey and comfortable. Like I don't know putting on a blanket or getting into bed nearly like it's it has that like, ritualistic... I mean, obviously if someone is coming up the stairs and you're gonna go down it's a little awkward and breaks that up. But like, you go downstairs and it's like, warm and safe and away from horrible horrible, like college work.

meg luddy 17:20

Yeah.

STU 2 17:20

So yes down into the earth sounds perfect to me.

meg luddy 17:24

How welcome did you feel in luncheonette?

STU 2 17:29

Pretty welcome. Very welcome. I mean, I don't ever remember feeling unwelcome, you know, I thought it was like, overall the atmosphere is like, extremely this is home, this where we belong, like, chill out, have a breather. And that long, big table as well is so like inviting. As in like you have to sit beside someone and they can talk to you and you can talk to them. Obviously, I was like 19 so you're a lot shyier, when you're still growing into yourself.

But like, it's very much like... People, like I remember when people come out and talk to you. Like, everyone's, you know, they're doing their jobs. They're like, getting you the food that you want. And they're like charging you and then they're giving it to you, but like, everyone was so happy to be there, because it's such a nice place.

Like everyone was so happy to be like "hello how are you?" they'll have a chat with you if they can and mostly they could because, like, if it's just like, "Oh, I really like your shirt today" or "yeah, you're soaked. Well, it's horrible out!". And you know, like everyone is I don't know, maybe it's something about how lovely the environment is that people are like always willing to extend that extra kindness or something. But yeah, I felt very welcome especially after the first few times it's kind of like, oh, it's okay, I can be here like it's not like I don't have to be like a real NCAD student or like there's no secret code everyone is welcome here.

meg luddy 19:00

I don't have to prove myself to get in here.

STU 2 19:02

Yeah, and I feel like so much of our college is like "I have to prove myself to get in here" like literally you do have to prove yourself to get in, in the first place but like.... it's such a scary time like developing what feels like the friendships that are going to like be there for the rest of your life and like your whole career and everything to have like this... even going even if you're like "I'm actually really shit at art" is really nice. [Laughter]

megan 19:32

Yeah, and even that thing about the long tables and like, like when you're 19 or like younger and like still shy and stuff. It was nice to go in there and to be like even if you didn't have friends you were in a friendly space?

STU 2 19:46

Yeah. Yeah. The people around you would take you in if they wanted to like, I had so many meals with people who just had nowhere else to sit because that was like what you did. You know you would have a little chat and maybe you'd never talked to them again but like you had soup together.

meg luddy 20:01

Yeah! What was your... you were kind of talking about, like chatting to the staff and stuff. What was your interaction with them like? It kind of went beyond just like ordering and paying for the food?

STU 2 20:13

Yeah. Yeah it did. I don't know, you would like, say "hello, how are you?" that kind of thing and I feel like I'm kind of extroverted. So I think I actually they were always really like, I mean, it's just being at art college is like, so they're always really cool and really nice and smiley. And like because they're not that many of them, you kind of get used to seeing them. So like, you remember that one them, or this one girl wore something really nice last week, and you're like, "oh my gosh, she's wearing something really nice again", and you'll say, "Oh, I really like your dress." because it's, you know, how you kind of establish these things. And she would always be like, "Oh, I really like that". Or if I commented like, one time "Oh, I really like your tattoos" because there was this guy who had finger tattoos. And he told me, "Oh, I hate them." And I was like "Oh no!" [Laughter]

[Laughter]

And I was like, well, "They're out there because like you're handing things to people" and he was like, "I know."

Oh no!

And I was like, I was like [Inaudible] or something. But, you know, when you're about to eat something, it's always that kind of relief of like "it's okay, I can sit down and I don't have to be hungry anymore." And also, they're like, they can kind of do what they like down there. It feels, even though there can be queues out the door, like it doesn't feel like rushed or anything. Like you're taken time with. And, you don't begrudge that because when you get up there, like you have time, it's not like anything unwieldy and long, but it's enough to be like, "Enjoy that." "Thank you. I will" and like, you know, just asking if you want- I think I do this in other places. But like, if you want something in it, especially with the soup when you have to add like rice or like coriander or something, when it feels like personalised and like they're as involved in it as you are. It's really nice.

meg luddy 21:50

Oh, yeah!

STU 2 21:52

Yeah. I don't know, why that just came to me there. Because like at my job, I would be like "do you want syrup" but I wouldn't offer it. And I know that in the soup and things it's right there. But like, unless you ask, usually you don't get so it's nice to be asked.

megan 22:07

And you're kind of involved in the back and forth?

STU 2 22:09

Yeah! Like "yes, I do want honey, you're so nice. Of course I want honey". And then "Actually I really like this." And like, I don't need to ask for it because it's always on offer.

That's such a good point!

Yeah. Thanks!

megan 22:24

No, but like, kind of like if you're in someone's house and they making you dinner, they'll be like, "Oh, do you want this with it? Or whatever? Or do you want it with that or like," and that's very unusual in a

STU 2 22:32

Yeah exactly, you're right, you're right.

meg luddy 22:36

That's so cute. And you would remember them and have interactions with them. Do you think the staff like would remember you? Or like certain members of the staff would remember you? Like you felt kind of seen by them?

STU 2 22:48

I think sometimes I pass people on the street. I know there's one girl she was there like a lot. And I always thought she was like, really cool. And I think she said she liked an outfit to me once and I was like "Score, yes. She thinks I'm cool? No way!" But I passed her on the street and like she has kind of smiled at me in a way that is like, "Oh, I know you" and I will believe, "yes, she does know me." So like kind of in that way that you're walking around the city together. And you're like, there's people that I know here. It's so nice to be reassured that they exist. Yeah, so I think so like it's not big the space, in the college? So yeah. I'd say so.

megan 23:33

Did you trust luncheonette?

STU 2 23:35

Yes, yes, I did. I did once...because I have a couple of food allergies. I did once have to ask if something was cooked enough. So I'm allergic to raw tomatoes. And like, for some reason it never occurred to me to be like, Oh, what if I'm allergic to this? Because it feels so experimental. And, the menus are just kind of like, vague in a nice, fun way. But it never occurred to me to be like, oh my gosh, what if I'm allergic to this? But there was one that was like "tomatoes that's slept in the oven". And I was like, how cooked is that? [Laughter]

meg luddy 24:07

[Laughter] How long did they sleep?

STU 2 24:08

[Laughter] Yeah. Like was it a nap or was it a kind of an eight to 10 hours?

So I was talking I think I talked to one of the chefs and I was explaining to her and she was like, "we'll just do them extra for you". Or like without them or something? But like the fact that I could've asked something like that? And in fairness, it was really quiet that day, but that I could ask something like that was like, made me be like, "Okay, I can ask for something like that". And also, like when you're there it's like, "Oh, does this have that in it?" Like it is very transparent. Like you can see the kitchen behind you behind them. So it's like, "Oh, there's the vegetables. There's the pots. It's all real." It's hard not to trust something when you can see it happen before your eyes.

megan 24:55

That's o nice. That's good as well because the next one is actually "did you have any particular special requests and were they met?" so I feel very much like the tomato one is a good example of that.

STU 2 25:06

Yeah it was such a weird request, it wasn't like "oh can I not have those" it was just like "can you just cook them a bit more?" [Laughter]

[laughter] Really zap those guys/

Yeah. Make 'em brown make 'em black. [laughter]

meg luddy 25:21

Do you think luncheonette needed you? And like how do you think they might have needed you? If you if you do.

STU 2 25:32

I don't know. I suppose I mean, obviously a business needs a customer... It does when it's quiet feel like it needs you, not in like a business.... I feel like everyone down there is like happy to be doing whatever they're doing. But sometimes when you're down there, it's like the space kind of like I was talking earlier, about how I felt like I was living in the house by myself and I had to like look after it. Like I think that a space that's so like warm and alive does need to be lived in. I was never like thinking about that at the time. Like "I need to be

here for the luncheonette". But like a space like that does need people to be in it to be what it is, which is like somewhere that people are. So it does need people in it.

And also, I think I was pretty good at getting other people down there with me. Because when I'm enthusiastic about something, it's difficult to get me to stop being enthusiastic about it. So I was very good for dragging people down. Even if they weren't into the food or like, you know, ate like, pasta with butter on top for every meal of their lives. I was like, "Come down and just like have a drink or something have like, a cake or like just something small." I think, yeah, I think it's so hidden away that it does need people to kind of be like, "it's you know, it's nice. It's not like some dingy basement. It's like this warm, nice place. Come down and you'll see and then you'll tell other people about it and we'll all go in together". It's very community drawn in that aspect. It's not like there's a huge sign pointing towards it. It's like needs to be built by everyone who goes there. So yeah, I suppose that was needed by the Luncheonette.

megan 27:20

That's so nice.

[Inaudible]

meg luddy 27:26

Sorry?

STU 2 27:29

Maybe not so much needed but like wanted and appreciated.

meg luddy 27:33

Yeah. What was the atmospheric like? Do you remember like particular sounds or smells?

STU 2 27:44

Yeah, it's not very. It wasn't a very, kind of tall rooms. So it had that like nice feeling of, you know, like, chatter going around everywhere when it was busy. I don't know if [inaudible] there was busy that.

megan 28:01

Oh, you're breaking up a bit there.

STU 2 28:03

Hm?

megan 28:04

You just breaking up with it, though. So.

STU 2 28:07

Okay, what was I saying?

megan 28:09

Oh, that's good. You were like, "it wasn't a very tall room."

STU 2 28:11

Oh, yeah. Like it felt kind of like, you know, everything was close. So that sounds would very much reverberate. It, it wasn't like someone said something and it would be like [Inaudible]. Everyone's like eating or like typing on their laptop having or like, just, I don't know, tapping their foot . You know, like small noises but it was always really like people are here like, this is like a huge base that like is a nice... like people enjoy it. And you can hear that and you could always sense that people were enjoying themselves. Obviously. It's like I see that person, they're laughing. But like people are always so happy to sit down at a table with complete strangers and like eat soup that day that it was like wow, this is somewhere that is worth seeing because... I think it was really nice. Like it was just so-

megan 29:09

Oh no.

PART II

Megan 0:00

We are recording once again, sorry for the technical difficulties

STU 2 0:05

Beyond your control.

Megan 0:06

Beyond my control. What was the best time to go to luncheonette?

STU 2 0:15

Before lunchtime, so lunch time was at one in college, it would be like, quarter to one. So get in there, get your food, minimal fuss get a lovely like seat to be in and you still get to be there when everyone is there. Because then you're like, "Hey, how are you?" to everyone. And you got to like, be there when it's full and busy. Because it's like, and also you're like, "this is the prime time for my stomach to have something in it". So it's kind of like [inaudible] people is like the nicest I think atmosphere? I think yeah, that was really the best time although, when it's really quiet like in the mornings, and it's raining outside. So nice as well. And then like, I don't know, an hour before it closes and they've kind of gotten a little creative with the music is fun too.[Laughter]

Megan 1:05

[Laughter]

STU 2 1:07

I think one day we were there, there was like one album on repeat. And it was like... were you there?

Megan 1:14

I don't know,

STU 2 1:17

I think it was it was all one artist and it was like an artist that everyone knows but you don't hear that much. I don't remember who but it was like notable because it was that artist the whole day.

Megan 1:27

All day?

STU 2 1:28

Yeah. And the afternoon anyway. But yeah, I mean every time was good to go. And it's so suitable, especially when you're sitting under the kind of glass of the street and it was raining and it was so warm and you had like something to eat or to drink. That was really nice as well. But like, I think it shines the best when it's busy and full.

Megan 1:55

Even though the quiet bits are nice as well. You're like "the busyness that's the best one".

STU 2 1:59

Yeah, yeah, I think so. Because, again, food, community, they're extremely interlinked and nice. But it's good that it went between the two of them so you could have both or either. Especially if you have a little bit of work to do on your laptop in the morning. Like you can get that done while you drink something nice and cosy but also you have the big rush.

Megan 2:25

Yeah! What did you usually order in Luncheonette?

STU 2 2:31

What did I used to order?

Megan 2:31

Yeah

STU 2 2:34

Most things?

Megan 2:36

[Laughter]

STU 2 2:36

A couple of things that I... [laughter] Most things. I have a couple of things that I probably don't like, like I I kind of learned how to eat food there which is probably weird to say but

I've always been a picky eater because I have so many allergies and I was like an eldest child so you're always more nervous about like trying new things when you're like "this could kill me I could die " [laughter] also you like I don't know I just wasn't that into meat and stuff but because it was vegetarian. I was able to eat more stuff and then I was like " woah vegetables can be nice" because I was always just like they are a little too close to -I'm allergic to like fruits mostly.

Megan 2:36

Ok.

STU 2 2:40

So I would always be nervous that I would try something new and I would like break out into Anaphylaxis.

Megan 3:21

Oh god.

STU 2 3:20

When I... I think I've previously kind of been saying a lot of the luncheonette movement in my group of friends for myself but one of my friends she, I don't know it was so obvious to her that you would like have like, I don't know... Foods that I wouldn't have considered eating before because I like just hadn't had it or didn't like think that I would like it so she was always just like "why wouldn't you eat that?" I'll be like "Okay, I'll try it" and because it's just a select menu you can you don't want to get stuck in the, even though things recur, you don't get stuck in the "I'll have this today this today this today" and you aren't given the chance to be boring so you can't be. So I would eat most things like sometimes there would be a day where nothing on the menu was like speaking to me which is fair because I'm sure those things spoke to other people in the way that things that I wanted to eat didn't so it's good and inclusive in that regard...

But yeah, I ate most things and I learned like about how many things that I like. When I kind of got over "okay actually food is safe for me like you're allergic to things that you know you're allergic to and like it's not gonna hurt you and if you don't like it you don't you like finish it" once you kind of get over that like I was excited to try new things like I was like,

"What's this flavour? I don't know this flavour I'll have this. This is really nice" like and I was always so like surprised by how excited I was to try new things. Which was really fun. So, yeah, although that being said if there was a couple of things on the menu I would always get them even if there was something I hadn't tried. Which is like the roast red pepper and tomato soup with orzo and herb mush, and maybe wad there walnut in there? I don't know but that was like, our, my group of friends that was like our thing that we loved to eat. Because it was all the types of things that a soup should be. It had that warm goodness, but it's also kind of like broth, like, in a way that it was like, there were things to see, I don't know, it was just a really good soup. And it had like, the fun added bit of orzo, which I'd never seen before. So I just really loved it. And it's so simple. And when you do a classic so well, it's like, obviously, you're gonna have that to eat, because it's like, you've eaten tomato soup your whole life. And you're like, "This is the perfect one. This is the one that I've been waiting to eat." Every time I've been eating tomato soup since then. And I can't eat those like Cully&Sully storebought tomato soups anymore, because it's not good enough.

Megan 6:05

[Laughter] Doesn't measure up!

STU 2 6:06

Yeah.

Megan 6:09

Yeah, the like rice or grain or whatever, like little scoop of it on the top of the soup, like changed the way I think about soup. It was like, "wow, I have no idea you could do this." Incredible.

STU 2 6:19

There can be a fun little thing to chew on. And you know what, you don't have to just drink soup, like you can eat it too [Laughter].

Megan 6:29

And like, I didn't know you were more nervous of vegetables and stuff, because they would have been kind of similar to the fruits and things you're allergic to.

STU 2 6:38

But also my yeah, my household growing up, obviously, it was kind of like a two veg and meat situation. Because my dad is- he used to be vegetarian, he quickly got tired of like the repetitiveness of the amount things you can eat or something? Which like there's so many things you can eat in the world. So it's the same either way. But he cooked steak, and I didn't like steak. And it was always the thing that was there like every other dinner. So I was kind of just like potato, broccoli, chicken. And then because it was home cooking, it's like, still good and nice. But like you get into the thing of like, "this is the only food that I know how to eat and can eat" because yeah, growing up, it was just very much like, I had to be like, made sure that my food didn't interact with the food that I couldn't eat that I was allergic to and that I was scared of. So when that weighs on your mind, because I was two when I got diagnosed with that, so when that weighs on your mind that much it does make you nervous about eating new things like when you're like, "oh, this could potentially be the end."

Megan 7:44

Yeah,

STU 2 7:44

And I still kind of have that, but only about things that I think are like related moreso to you know what I'm allergic to.

Megan 7:50

The like internal logic makes more sense now of like, what is likely to be.. Yeah.

STU 2 7:58

Yeah very much.

Megan 8:00

Have you ever been in the kitchen?

STU 2 8:03

No, no.

Megan 8:04

Me either!

STU 2 8:06

I came close I think when I was discussing my tomato slept in the oven issue. I got to stand where the little entrance sheet thing was. I mean, it was like, where the magic happens, you know. But also, I feel like they really knew what was going on in there. You know, the rhythm was right. And it was... like you kind of were in the kitchen because it wasn't like there was a door in the way you could see into it. And probably you could go in there and just be like, "Hi, like what's going on?"

[Laughter]

Yeah, and they keep like the interesting bits up close, like you see all the fresh vegetables that are going in. So yeah, I mean, as in the kitchen as you can be when you're not cooking, I would say.

Megan 8:53

Can you describe the queue?

STU 2 8:56

The queue... very long. [laughter] It went on for a while. I don't know, I'd say it was pretty orderly. Sometimes you would be queued all the way back to like the long table.

That was always a bit of a nightmare. But because there's people sat on either side of you like you kind of end up having a chat with them. If you knew them especially. Like obviously, it's the people that you go to college with. So there'll be people you know and you say hello to and because the queues right by the door like you're not bored? I don't know if that was actually on purpose but if it was, that's very clever. Because there's someone coming in, there's someone coming out, you're kind of occupied the whole time. You're not like left there thinking about how you're waiting and how long you've been waiting. Like there's people on one side bringing their food into the room there's people on the other side, going to the end of the queue. Like you're entertained pretty much. Yeah, it was not bad. Like many, many worse queueing experiences and fewer that were better, you know?

Megan 9:56

Not bad as queues go.

STU 2 9:58

No really not.

Megan 10:01

What did you like the most about luncheonette?

STU 2 10:07

That's a big questions isn't it?

Megan 10:08

I know!

STU 2 10:12

I liked that it was kind of exclusive, which maybe is the opposite of the intention [Laughter]

Megan 10:18

[Laughter]

STU 2 10:19

But I liked that it was our place. It was like this little gem of like, a Dublin cafe/restaurant is like, it belongs to NCAD. And it's our place. And I don't know, if you were supposed to allow people who weren't students into it, but when I did do that, it felt so like sharing, like, some secret with them and like, so special and like... Obviously, like, I think I do have an issue where I might sometimes fall into gatekeeping things, but it was like, so good and perfect. And also harder to access for other people that like when you show them it's like, special-er, or something like?

Megan 11:05

Yeah

STU 2 11:05

It's not like you just walk in off the street, you have to go into the college and you have to like kind of find your way there. It's confusing, I think sometimes when you look for the first time. But it's definitely more intimate than going to any other cafe. So it was nice that it was like, so based in the community and so, like, rooted there. Yeah, from that, I would say like, it was nice that I was there with my friends all the time. You know, it's like, once you occupy a place enough with the same kind of -ish group of people you are, you know, you're rooted there, like, you've been there enough times that that's something that does belong to you, again. So it's something that is supposed to be shared. I think that's really nice. And the whole place is like for sharing like the long tables and the small space. And I don't know, just the way interactions are handled like I just think how giving it is, was like the best thing if you were to sum all of that up.

Megan 12:07

That's so nice. Yeah, I think like I know what you're saying the exclusiveness of it sounds kind of bad, but it was nice that it just felt like it belonged to the college and like you felt like you were in the college because you were there. Because it's kind of hard to feel like you're part of a-

STU 2 12:20

Yes

Megan 12:20

Yeah.

STU 2 12:21

Yeah, yeah. You were in the community definitely.

Megan 12:23

Yeah. What did you like least about luncheonette? Was there anything that frustrated you?

STU 2 12:35

I don't know sometimes it would be a couple of days in a row where you were like, "Ugh, I don't want this food either." And it was like when it return to me. And I don't know I mean sometimes obviously the the opposite of what I just said there, sometimes you don't want to

see the people that you're around and there's very little you can do about that, like just "hello, hi."

Megan 13:00

Yeah.

STU 2 13:02

But again, that's that's like the ups and downs of like a community space. Like least, something that frustrated me? I don't think I was particularly ever frustrated by anything. No. Other than what I said which is honestly that was complaining just to have something to say.

Megan 13:29

[Laughter] What was your favourite luncheonette food?

STU 2 13:32

Yeah, that was the roast red pepper.

Megan 13:34

Yeah

STU 2 13:35

Although I also loved the roast orange things. I don't know if you remember that the roast orange things.

Megan 13:43

No...were they the cakes?

STU 2 13:45

No. Oh, not the cakes. But also I have to say the squash cake. So good. My favourite cake ever.

Megan 13:51

Oh yeah god.

STU 2 13:52

No, it was a wrap. And it had like... I think it was just called roast orange things and it was like squash, sweet potato and like carrot maybe?

Oh yeah!

And they were just sort of chopped, roasted and then they were put in a wrap with kale and like a lemony... it wasn't feta but like cheese of some sort.

Megan 14:11

Yes, I do remember that now.

STU 2 14:12

Really good. And I had not thought that I would like kale or whatever cheese that was before I ate it. And then I was like, "Wow, this was really good". The centre of our luncheonette love came from that roast red pepper and tomato soup. So that was definitely my favourite thing. And again, it's an unrepeatable soup experience. I don't think any other place ever will, ever has made such a perfect tomato soup. And again, because it was like something that everyone shared like every time one of us spotted it on the menu for the day. The day was like, you know that much brighter, that much better you're always looking forward to it, like because it was like a group thing we're like "we all know that this is the soup to get and everyone else who doesn't is a fool" [Laughter] "And everyone that doesn't get how good it is, doesn't get this excited, they don't see the light the way we do" [Laughter]

[Laughter]

So obviously you get to share the excitement and , then you get to share the soup. So that's a double goodness there.

Megan 15:16

That's so true, a lot of people did not get that soup. Like they were like "that's a nice soup but I don't know why you're so excited." [Laughter]

STU 2 15:23

Yeah, I know. I was like, "Guys, it's roast red pepper and tomato soup day." And you and the others would give me "Yeah!" and everyone else would be like, "Oh, that's real cool."

Megan 15:34

"Oh, nice soup." [laughter]

STU 2 15:38

"Okay, there's soup every day." [laughter]

Megan 15:42

Did you ever bring friends or family from outside the college to Luncheonette?

STU 2 15:47

Friends or family? Yes, I did. Yes. Okay. This is allowed then [laughter] I wasn't sure.

Megan 15:52

It was allowed.

STU 2 15:54

What?

Megan 15:54

It was allowed. Revealed. Confirmed. [Laughter]

STU 2 15:57

It was always just the "are you a student here?" question that maybe was like is the price different or are they just not allowed?

Megan 16:01

Yeah, no, I know.

STU 2 16:02

Okay, but yeah, I brought my.... I think I brought my dad, I definitely brought my dad. I may have brought my mom I'm not sure. And I brought my friend Matthew, who was there for the

tomatoes in the oven incident. Very delicious ciabatta in the end of it all. So. And yeah, was always really nice and good. Especially when there was space. I actually took another friend. And we sat up... That's actually, to go back to the frustration point, yeah, sometimes there wasn't enough space to sit down there, which is like when you go to luncheonette you want to sit in the luncheonette.

Megan 16:46

Yeah.

STU 2 16:46

That's, what I'd say for that. But yeah, we sat up in the concourse instead of inside. But yeah I brought two friends and my parents, definitely my dad. And they were all very different experiences, because we ended up in different places at different times. Yeah. So Matthew, and I were there nearly, pretty late in the day. So it was quite empty. And we were at the long bench. Noone was there, except in like, one of the little nooks. And we had, like, you know, the big old conversation about whether the tomatoes had slept long enough.[Laughter]

Megan 17:27

[laughter]

STU 2 17:27

My dad came and it was a very busy day, and you're in one of those tiny little tables where the queue is.

Megan 17:32

Yeah

STU 2 17:32

So everything's very, like, small and quick movements. Like sitting over your food, like, "this is mine". I had like a little grain pot. And I think there may have been, I don't know, if there was a whole clove of raw garlic. Or if it was just like... I don't know, but I ate it. And it was one of the most interesting culinary experiences.

Megan 17:58

[Laughter]

STU 2 17:58

It was bizarre.

A whole clove of garlic?

Raw yeah.

Megan 18:04

Interesting. That's intense.

STU 2 18:06

I don't if it was on purpose or not, but I was like, "whoa". So that was very different to Matthew because it was so busy and like, so busy, and so noisy. And then my friend Sophie, I brought her like, we went in we got soup then we went back upstairs. So it was more of a transactionary thing, not staying in. But yeah, those are the people I brought. I don't remember if I brought my mom, so I probably didn't, because I would.

Megan 18:32

Yeah. Did your dad like it? Or what did he think of it?

STU 2 18:38

I think he's quite like a big man. Like he's very tall. So I think maybe if we'd had space at a bigger table, he would have liked it more because he was tucked into one of the tiny little tables with the like stool.

Megan 18:49

Oh yeah

STU 2 18:49

And like all these people, and it was like a very quick kind of lunch thing. I think he did like it. I think he's a bit of a meaty man though. [Laughter] So I think he would have appreciated a meat option. Like I don't think it was necessarily his thing, but I don't think he saw it in the

way that it was, where it's a space like you stay in like it he was like, "Hello daughter. How are you? Like, bye" rather than sitting in, and like, eating together and having that experience. But yeah, I honestly do think if you hadn't been cramped away, he would have enjoyed it a lot. [Laughter]

But Matthew loved it. And Sophie, this is very unfortunate Sophie she...this is my other friend that I brought upstairs she actually was sick the day of, so she ate her soup and then threw it all up.

Oh no!

I know and she hadn't thrown up in several years, and she's kind of a weakling, a fainter that sort of thing. So she smells tomato soup now and she feels ill because-

Oh no that's terrible!

[Laughter] I know it was just a bit unfortunate for her.

Megan 20:00

Poor Sophie

STU 2 20:00

And I would be like making soup and she would be upset about it.

Megan 20:04

Oh, no. Trying to recreate the roasted red pepper and she's like, "please don't please stop".

STU 2 20:11

And she was upset about it as well, because she was like, "I know how much you love that soup. And it was really tasty. But I just... that was the last thing I ate." Yeah.[laughter] That's so sad.

Megan 20:19

I know [laughter]

Oh, god.

STU 2 20:23

Yeah.

Megan 20:26

Did you did you ever use... You kind of said you did there actually, but did you ever use the like dining room of luncheonette for college work or for meetings? I'm not sure what meetings would be... I don't want to put words in your mouth. Maybe you had meetings there?

STU 2 20:38

Maybe I did have meetings there. [Laughter] I think I may have like... bring a notebook. Put some brainstorming in it.

Megan 20:50

Yeah.

STU 2 20:51

I would see people like writing away on essays and stuff. But I wasn't much into that. I don't think mostly because it was like, why would I bring the work that I have to do that I don't want to do to the place that is very safe away from work. But I mean, when it was quiet in the morning, that was like the perfect place to do work. Because there was coffee right there. You have like Wi Fi and you were alone and it was quiet so. But yeah no, I wouldn't disrespect the space with my horrible [inaudible]. [laughter]

Megan 21:24

[Laughter] Infect it with... Did you make any new acquaintances or share experiences with strangers in luncheonette?

STU 2 21:37

Yes. I said earlier that sometimes you'd end up just sitting beside someone because that was the only space that was available.

Megan 21:44

Yeah.

STU 2 21:45

I remember I had a whole conversation with this person who sat in one of the nooks which is, I think kind of a strange place to sit in when there's nowhere else to sit.

But like, it does make it like this is a group of people who are having a conversation.

Yeah!

We had a whole conversation about like astrology or something? Which actually did put me on to like, I only really knew stuff about like planets, but it was like houses were mentioned and other things that I didn't know about. So it was interesting and educational as most meetings with acquaintances are. And then, I think at one time, we sat at the table, very close to the... it's gone now, but very close to the actual, like, counter. And it was like all of our teachers or professors, and it wasn't really so much as a meeting or like a chat, but like, it was definitely hardcore eavesdropping.

[Laughter]

[laughter] Because we had a table together, and they were like, talking about work. And honestly, I think that eavesdropping is one of the things that like makes, I don't know, human life fun. Like, because they everyone knows you're eavesdropping. It allows you like a certain degree of performance. And like, and also like, if you're not doing it in a way that's like, discreet and like, secretive, if you're like kind of open about it they can obviously censor themselves. So like, if I'm like, "Oh, they're talking about some work gossip." Like, I don't really remember what they talked about. But I just remember being like, "I shouldn't be allowed to hear this". Not because it was anything bad, but because I was like "They're too good. They're too smart. Like these are the teachers of our, you know, future minds."

[Laughter] Yeah, I mean, every day that you sat at the long table, you would have a couple of words with a stranger but nothing sticks out specifically in my mind, like, kind of you have to

negotiate the space of like, well "we'll move here if you need to let a friend in or I can go on this side of the table. That's okay."

Megan 23:44

Yeah.

STU 2 23:45

Because it's [inaudible] yeah, like you have to be like, because it is all of your space, you have to agree that this is how much you're going to take up of it and like that you're sharing as well. So those were like, so common, that you don't think about them.

Megan 24:01

Yeah, I feel like I had so many minor interactions with like tutors and stuff that were actually quite nice. They're just like, "oh, yeah," and like was also eavesdropping on them and stuff, but yeah. Yeah, it was nice.

STU 2 24:15

Yeah, it was nice because like, it's, I feel like NCAD is very special in how close your relationships are with like your tutors and professors. So.

Megan 24:24

Yeah.

STU 2 24:26

Like critical cultures people you wouldn't know that well. And you could like hear them and be like, "Oh, these are still people and like, it's so interesting how they don't just teach something because they are paid to do it. Like they actually have a passion" which you can hear from like, their conversations and stuff.

Megan 24:40

Yes. Yeah, that's true.

STU 2 24:43

And also, it's like, I don't know, I think the way that you watch like someone conduct themselves, like when they are a teacher, it's something that you can learn from as well. Like when someone knows that many things it's easy to learn stuff when you're just like not saying anything and listening.

Megan 25:06

Yeah. And just taking that in. And when you're not like caught up in being kind of like, afraid of how you're interacting with them, because like they can be intimidating because they're your teachers and your tutors or whatever. But if you just happen to be next to them you're like, "oh, I can be kind of chill around this guy now".

STU 2 25:23

Yeah, you're just having your lunch. You don't need to be smart about it.

Megan 25:27

[Laughter] Exactly. You don't have to be smart, you can just eat your soup.

STU 2 25:32

Exactly. Yeah, I think that's nice.

Megan 25:38

Did you ever get talking to visitors from outside the college and the canteen?

STU 2 25:43

I feel like I did. I don't, I don't think it happened a lot. But I remember there was I think one man who came from outside, and he just had to be explained about how it worked. I think...

Megan 25:55

Okay.

STU 2 25:57

He just wanted- he was like, "Where's the queue?" And then he was like, "where's the menu?" and all this kind of thing. I remember he was nice and enthusiastic about it. Unless I'm making this up. You know, sometimes a memory doesn't feel real.

Megan 26:09

Yeah.

STU 2 26:10

Maybe I'm making it up just to have something to say. But I think I think it happened. He had white hair. I think. And he seemed quite enthused about at all. So that was nice. I think it's really nice to, again, like, include someone in something that's kind of exclusive. So like, when you're giving someone the secrets to how luncheonette works, it feels like I don't know, like some religious figure, like giving the inner sanctum key to a little child who is going to learn so much.

Megan 26:43

Yeah. Welcome to the secret club.

STU 2 26:47

Yeah, exactly. I'm so happy you could be here.

Megan 26:50

I'm thrilled to have you.

Do you have a sense that your presence in luncheonette was felt? Or made an impact? Like do you think they noticed you or what might they remember about you?

STU 2 27:02

I think I went enough that I was noticed for sure. Some of the staff like I think I would have seen them on the street and they would be like "Hello, hi!", and just like a thing that acknowledges that we have spoken in our lives. I don't know why. Every voice in like, a cacophony kind of does add something, I suppose. And I think that when you visibly and loudly enjoy a space in some way like that other people are like, kind of given permission to enjoy it as well. And to like, make yourselves at home. So maybe not in like a long lasting permanent way. But in the way that like everyone who goes there passes on their comfortability in the space to the next person who goes who then passes it on to whoever

they bring. And that kind of thing. So like, feeling at home there, I think, is probably what you give to other people.

Megan 28:06

That's really nice. Like a chain of it having a lived -n feeling just like you're passing on that like, yeah,

STU 2 28:12

Yeah, exactly. Because you do sometimes need to be given permission in a space to occupy it.

Megan 28:17

Yeah. That's really nice. Did you ever have an emotional experience there?

STU 2 28:31

I mean, I would call some meals , like a religious experience.

Megan 28:36

Yeah.

STU 2 28:38

Like, sometimes you would sit down, have whatever you were eating and like, I think... I love one of my favourite things to notice when I'm eating is like, you're having a chat with your friends. You sit down, you open up your, like food and like everyone goes quiet.

Megan 28:51

yeah I love that.

STU 2 28:52

I think it's funny, but I also think there's a really special reverence in it. That's like, we're like "we take this bread today" kind of thing. And I really like that. I think there's something really special about that. Which is always a little bit emotional, if you get carried away thinking about it, you know?

Megan 29:09

Yeah.

STU 2 29:11

I probably did cry in there at some point because that was college, like four years of rising or falling emotions. There's no way that I didn't, but in any case, you're safe there. It's not like nothing can hurt you. All the bad stuff is outside so it doesn't matter. If you cry in there like, no one's gonna judge you.

Megan 29:35

That feels very true. I feel like I have also cried there and no one was weird about it.

[laughter]

STU 2 29:41

Yeah right? They all, they're students like it's a community everyone knows, they've gone through it, like they've been there or they will be there and they're not gonna begrudge you your outburst.

Megan 29:49

So much nicer to cry there than in the library as well or the studio you know?

STU 2 29:52

Yeah, the library is horrible, horrible over light.

Megan 29:55

Exactly.

STU 2 29:56

Creaky horrible place. And you actually have to do the work there as well.

PART III

Megan 2:07

What difference did luncheonette make to your time in college?

STU 2 2:11

I think it made a world of difference. Did you? Sorry. Do you have a further thing to say?

Megan 2:17

No, sorry, that was the question.

STU 2 2:20

Oh,

I thought I heard like a follow up to that. I think... often when I thought about college, I think I struggled to like feel at home there in the first couple of years. When like, your friendships are still kind of forming. And you don't really know where you belong, or who you belong with like so in those days, the luncheonette was like, my favourite thing to do. I was like, "this is where you go, if you're like scared to go to huge drinking events later in the evening, like, you're allowed to go to the luncheonette. And like, you're welcome there again."

Megan 2:20

Yeah.

STU 2 2:52

And like, it was like, every day, I was like, trying something new or like eating something, like really beautiful. And I think that was like...there was like, probably like a running joke. Like, if it weren't for the luncheonette we'd be gone. Which is funny now, because we're gone and there's no more Luncheonette. So I kind of like that we've sort of taken it with us even though it did leave before we were gone.[Laughter] But I yeah, I don't know, I would say was one of my favourite things about where I went to college. And the time that I spent there. Yeah.

Megan 3:28

Me too. I know, we joke about it, but I honestly was like, "God, were it not for the fact that we only had three months left," if it wasn't there, for most of college, I don't know how I would have felt about it.

STU 2 3:40

I don't know either, like it was just like, the perfect place to, like, put you at ease and like, allow you to, like, take a break because the whole place is so... I don't want to, like speak badly of like peers and stuff. But everything is so you know, I have to show who I am, I have to speak out. And you have to like, there's definitely like a code of like, how to act or how to dress. And that can be very oppressive when you don't think... like you don't have the key to the code. You know? So having that space that's so inclusive is like- inclusive and particularly I do mean inclusive in a small way where it's you're a part of something that you don't know how to be part of. It's so important. Like that was like what allowed me to get comfortable and to make friends I think.

Megan 4:34

I think you're right, I think the fact that it was almost a little bit exclusive to the college was why it felt so... it made you feel like you were a part of the college. Yeah, that makes so much sense.

STU 2 4:48

Yeah, exactly.

Megan 4:51

Did you experience... you kind of talked about this actually, just in that question, but did you experience NCAD as a welcoming space?

STU 2 4:59

Yeah, I find that harder. Like everyone always talks about how welcoming it was. And how like, they all felt like everyone was so nice, but I think everyone was so...and this is just like first year, you know, this is like people who don't really know what's going on.

Megan 5:14

Yeah.

STU 2 5:15

Yeah, my initial impression, like the whole place had such a lovely like vibe of like people who were happy to be there and really, like, excited to be there as well. But I remember in

first year, it was like everyone was so trying to do the right thing that like nobody... everyone was like... I don't know, there's this, like internal energy there where you're trying to figure yourself out and you're trying to, be like "I'm cool people like me," which like, we're all, I'm guilty of, we're all guilty of it, I think.

eah.

But where, like, you can't focus on like, genuinely connecting with people, because you just want to be friends with people who will get you, I don't know, invited to more stuff or like, help you to be better at art or like, give you more like connections to stuff or like, show you how to dress. I don't know, there's others...definitely in like, such a place where like, beauty is so appreciated. Like, it's hard to get into that, especially when it's like a specific style. And this is after in fairness going to like a uniformed like private all girls school, like there's a bigger cultural shift for me than there were for most people. And trying to express yourself after years of being like, not allowed to is much, much harder. So I'm sure that most people maybe didn't have that same experience. But the attempts to fit in, in the first while kind of made it harder to actually make friends and feel at home. I would think, which is why I think luncheonette was so important.

Megan 6:45

That's so true. I feel like that first year as well, like the pressure to be enjoying it and because it had that reputation as like a welcoming space and like this really fun space. Like I feel like a lot of people feel like when they're in that first year, they can't admit that they're finding it difficult and not enjoying it. And that makes the whole thing much harder.

STU 2 7:05

Yeah, what you said about... the first thing that you said there, like to look like you're enjoying it. Yeah, definitely that that was the hardest. Yeah, you got that. [Laughter]

Megan 7:18

[Laughter] Thanks

But I feel like what you were saying is very true.

STU 2 7:23

Thanks.

Megan 7:25

Yeah, and I guess this is the same thing. But do you think Luncheonette made any difference to NCAD?

STU 2 7:29

Oh yeah. A lot. Because yeah. What NCAD itself, like what students kind of focus on it so much more like concerned with like, nightlife and kind of... There's something so cold about that aesthetic, like the kind of Berlin aesthetic that I think is quite prevalent there. Where it's all like leather and silver and drinking and smoking and like, it's so... I don't know, it's not bad and it is, like, fun and everything. But in my mind, it contrasts quite directly with like, the warmth and openness and welcomeness of Luncheonette. Yeah, but like, allowing, like, having that contrast is good. Because it says that that both things are possible. And the stuff in between, too. And like, I don't know what could've been there or what will be there instead that could have kind of offered that same like affirmation of like, "just because this is the way that other people are doing it doesn't mean you have to do it that way" is really, really important.

Megan 8:38

That two sides to the coin like that. Yeah, because even if you want to do both, you do need the other... Yeah, like, even if you are really into that, I think the Berlin aesthetic is a very good way of putting that that kind of cool, cold smoking thing,

STU 2 8:45

Like aloof thing.

Megan 8:53

Yeah, everyone needs a break from that. Even if you really love it. [laughter]

STU 2 8:57

Like, you spend so much time like, "I don't care about this, I don't care about that" even like," I don't care about what he said in my crit that was kind of mean" that like to go into a place and admit that you do care.

Yeah.

And that you really like eating and talking and being welcomed somewhere. It's like, a real vulnerability that needs to be encouraged. So yeah.

Megan 9:20

That's very true, I think. Yeah, because there's a lot of that like, you want to be so self aware in an art college that you don't even like, you don't even mind criticism. But like yeah, you do, I do. Yeah, I really think you're so right. You could go into luncheonette and be like " That actually hurt my feelings". [Laughter]

STU 2 9:37

Yeah, it's where you like can admit to stuff like. Even the studio itself is so cold. Like, the lighting and the furniture and everything. But yeah, it's nice to have something that...and I'm sure that I felt everything was warm and cosy that having an aloof, cool space would be good too. Like, it just you need to like each side.

Megan 10:00

Yeah.

STU 2 10:02

To have all the possibility you can.

Megan 10:06

And that's such a good student perspective as well, because I think if you are working in NCAD, as a staff member, you have the benefit of knowing a lot of people around you and experiencing it as a kind of friendly place you go to all the time, and that, you know, you've old friends there. whereas if you're there as a student, you're there for a short period of time, and things are a bit intense and a bit like, you're all kind of like, you know, showing off a bit and that kind of thing. It's more important to have that I guess. Yeah.

STU 2 10:33

No, definitely. Yeah. Yeah, it is. It's much, it's a much different experience. Because you don't have to show off when you're staff. You're in there. You know,

Megan 10:44

Yeah you're there, you made it. You're good. How connected do you think luncheonette was to NCAD? Do you think they were on the same page in terms of like atmosphere and tone and ethics?

STU 2 11:00

Like I said, they've got different vibes going on. But that's like, not NCAD as like, a whole that's just how like a good amount of people would dress or act. So I think sometimes it felt safer than NCAD. Obviously the last year, there was a lot of unhappiness, with how certain things were being dealt with. And I think there's still is. But like, the luncheonette is like they're hardly like getting involved in the student politics, but maybe they were, were they?

Megan 11:31

I don't know.

STU 2 11:33

Oh, because

I feel like they, I don't know. I feel like it's a place where they kind of stand up for you.

Megan 11:39

Yeah I imagine they'd be sympathetic.

STU 2 11:43

I think obviously, like the ethics are really good in NCAD like, doing those, like consent workshops, and everything in first year was really important. And like everyone, you know, the like, Student Union, like sign off where it's like, "respect other people, respect yourself", like that kind of thing.

Megan 12:00

Yeah.

STU 2 12:00

And I think there is really good kind of engagement with that there. But that feels so student led, student driven, like collective and so does like the luncheonette. It's different to what I would describe as like the NCAD management style? But I don't know I feel like despite difficulties with like, expressing yourself and like pretending you're having fun, and I think that when it comes down to it, like they do share their values in that like art is about sharing something. Like wanting to give someone something or wanting to make something, to create something that people enjoy, which is exactly what serving food is. So yeah, I think that like what you're too scared to admit when you're trying to be cool and I don't know worth something is that you actually do care. And luncheonette kind of makes that step a little easier. So yeah, I think at the core of like, what NCAD is as like student body and kind of like most of the staff and everything stand for is like yeah, caring about stuff, so with Luncheonette there.

Megan 13:35

Did luncheonette provide you with anything that should have been provided by NCAD? Do you think?

STU 2 13:44

I don't know. What should NCAD have provided? You know, like it feels like felt like such a hands off laissez faire, do what you want thing. Yeah, I felt like I don't know. I thought yeah, part of something in the luncheonette. Probably this is like... I found it harder than most people I think here to like, get into NCAD so maybe this is like a bit bitter than most other people would talk about what was provided by NCAD but like, yeah, it just felt so much.... I don't think like in terms of material or advice necessarily was provided but certainly like yeah, it just made you feel like safer like okay, maybe NCAD didn't provide a safe space or something. But again, like the luncheonette did provide that and having some where to totally shut down and log off is really good. And like there are places where you can like, not go to college, but like when you're in like the Red Square or you're in like the concourse and stuff that's still like, kind of a bright public space. I guess it just doesn't have the aesthetics of like somewhere safe and warm in the way that the luncheonette did. Yeah, maybe NCAD should

have provided somewhere like that but luncheonette did it perfectly and I'm not sure that they could have to that same degree.

Megan 15:17

Yeah. Okay, this is the last question. Would you describe-

STU 2 15:24

Wow!

Megan 15:24

I know crazy. You've done such good answers.

STU 2 15:28

Cheers. Cheers. Yeah.

Megan 15:30

Would you describe luncheonette as profit driven?

STU 2 15:34

No.[Laughter]

Megan 15:34

[Laughter]

STU 2 15:37

I don't know how they were making money most of the time other than the sheer volume of people going in. Going in and seeing three euro for soup. Unbelievable. And that was before you know, that was the before times before inflation. So like, even like, I don't know actually how inflation works. Like I've just revealed but I feel like things have become so much more expensive like when you pay less for a soup than you do for a coffee in like any other place... Like I don't actually... was it NCAD funded or something like? I don't know, I really I really appreciated that it was affordable, because so many things aren't especially in Thomas steet was like steadily getting more expensive. But yeah, not at allprofit driven. Yeah. Never occurred to me.

Megan 16:09

Yeah.

STU 2 16:09

Yeah, I know. They were I think they were there because they wanted to be that's kind of how it felt.

Megan 16:40

That's so true. And that it got more dramatic with time because everything else was increasing so much. Like the price of coffee was increasing so much. If you had to go somewhere else, you'd be like, "how are they doing it?"

STU 2 16:50

I don't know how they were doing it. But I'm so glad that they could.

Megan 16:53

Yeah, me too. Me too. Oh, my god. That was great. Thank you so much, STU 2. Thank you very much for your great answers, it was lovely. I'll stop the recording now.

Appendix G: Interview with VIS 1

VIS 1 0:33

Hiya, Megan.

Megan 0:33

How's it going? Hi VIS 1, sorry about that.

VIS 1 0:37

Not too bad at all. Thanks for your patience.

Megan 0:39

No, no you're grand. Sorry about that, sorry the zoom didn't work.

VIS 1 0:44

That's okay. The next catastrophe is when I'm gonna run out of battery power but if I do we can pick up the conversation from where we left off.

Megan 0:51

Oh, no worries, no worries if you need to run and grab a charger or anything don't worry about it. I'm in no rush anyway So it's all good.

VIS 1 0:58

I'm actually out in the middle of [Laughter] . I'll show you where I am. If I can do this.

Megan 1:06

Oh, wow. Oh my god. That's glorious.

VIS 1 1:09

Yeah, I'm in the wilds of Kerry at the moment.

Megan 1:11

Oh, stunning I was gonna say it looks like Kerry. It's beautiful. Whereabouts are you?

VIS 1 1:18

I'm on Valencia Island.

Megan 1:19

Oh, gorgeous. Oh my god, lovely. I've been to the Maharees a lot with my family. So that's yeah, that's gorgeous.

VIS 1 1:25

Okay,

Megan 1:26

Very nice. No better place to be right now.

VIS 1 1:29

Exactly.

Megan 1:30

I might record this there. If that's okay, you're just gonna record it on my laptop. If that's alright, with you?

VIS 1 1:39

No problem. And sorry, the form you sent me I just have no access to a computer to be able to tick it and to sign it. But that's all fine.

Megan 1:48

Oh, that's grand. No worries, whenever you have a chance, it's all good don't worry. I'm just going to make sure that my phone is recording this and my laptop just because ...I'll make sure it doesn't decide it doesn't want to work all of a sudden. Okay, perfect.

Thanks so much for doing the interview. I think Jenny's really happy that you're doing it and everything. It'll be very interesting and everything to hear.

No, no problem.

Might get into it. If that's okay, I just might start straightaway.

Go for it

Won't take away too much of your time in Valencia in the sun. So thank you very much for doing the interview. We might just start with what your name is and your occupation if that's okay.

VIS 1 2:47

Yeah, no problem. My name is VIS 1. And I'm a public servant. I guess I work in the realm of the built environment as a developer within the built environment.

Megan 3:04

Okay, and when did you start going to luncheonette?

VIS 1 3:11

Probably, gosh, maybe three years ago. Yeah, in and around? Probably.

Megan 3:20

Do you remember why you started going?

VIS 1 3:24

I think I had heard about it from buddies, you know, from people who I'd respect their kind of general outlook on life. And it had come recommended. I had always gone to the end of your show in NCAD. And I was quite curious to know that there was, you know, something rumbling in the basement. Yeah, so it was definitely word of mouth.

Megan 3:57

Did you have a connection to NCAD before that? Did you have like a personal connection or professional connection even?

VIS 1 4:06

No. And I think that's what made luncheonette maybe particularly special for me because I was an outsider. Because it was literally underground. You know, I was very conscious, sorry

not that I was made feel this way in any shape or form, but I was conscious that it was a treat to get in so deep into NCAD. And then, you know, and then beyond that, and all the specialness of luncheonette, but that was definitely I think part of the attraction.

Megan 4:43

Felt like a secret club?

VIS 1 4:47

Definitely, without, you know, bizarrely, you know, like the, you know, yeah, definitely. Without all of the kinds of pejoratives of a secret club or a cult if you know what I mean. And I did end up trying to bring people there I, like I've been trying to, I failed but I tried to convince Jenny to pitch for work. My work as a developer includes developing property for technological university Dublin, where Jennie is studying, but I don't work for TU Dublin. But I had been trying to get Jenny to pitch, and to bring the project over the river to Technological University, Dublin, because the other part of my life, I'd been very conscious about how food is procured, you know, by public bodies at a large scale. And the outcomes are really, really poor. And what Jennie was doing, you know what Jennie does, is something that's really quite rare. Anyway, this is a long winded... I have over the years, brought people to luncheonette to try and cajole them through food and through the experience. And I was, you know, particularly people, like people in the Students Union, in TU Dublin. And I was really, I was really struck by how I just assumed, all you have to do is come to luncheonette, and then you'd get it. But I was struck by how some people didn't get it. So that kind of then loops back to this idea that some form of a benign cult. If you kind of got it, if you got it, you got it. And if you didn't... but I naively thought I could deconstruct some of these procurement barriers by just having people there for a cup of soup.

Megan 6:53

I get that. Yeah, it's interesting, like, you will be so aware, coming from, like other institutions, like universities and things, just how special it is.

VIS 1 7:03

There's nothing like it. So I went to college myself, I went to college in UCG and UCD and throughout a previous professional career, and worked on construction projects, and third level. No I've never seen anything like it.

Megan 7:20

Yeah. Just to get back to the, I'll jump back to the questions a little bit. But had you been inside NCAD before you visited luncheonette? Or was it?

VIS 1 7:31

So I'd been to the end of year shows

Megan 7:32

Oh the end of year shows yes, yeah. Yeah.

VIS 1 7:33

Yeah. Obviously, there's a very particular there had been a very particular atmosphere around those pre COVID. And I had always lived in the area. So I had, yeah.

Megan 7:47

What was your initial impression of the canteen the first time you went in there?

VIS 1 8:00

I think very much there was, there was a trigger that there was something special, you know. Before I'd even tasted the food. And only after that did it dawn on me and only after that did I find out that Jenny, you know, there was a maybe a form of art practice in the whole endeavor. It was very...I certainly felt very much without sounding too kind of cheesy part of an experience, you know. From the level of lighting, to the type of lights, to the long bench to the smaller benches, to the music to the staff, everything. So what was the first experience? First, want of a description, maybe that I was within something if that makes sense. There was a completeness to it.

Megan 9:00

Did you feel relaxed there when you went down? Sort of like...kind of a free space

VIS 1 9:05

Yeah. Yeah. Completely, completely. Very curiously, kind of both compressive and expensive, if you know what I mean. You know, because it's below, below ground. And I

think there's a lot of the initial experience was to do with climbing into the earth. And then, you know, seeing the light through the glass block of the street. But yeah, if I was to try and put two poles on it, it would be the intimacy of climbing into the ground, and the expansiveness of feeling part of something that was, you know, quite big. And, you know, obviously, I think it harkens back to that point, that I wasn't a student of NCAD so I wasn't part of the scene. But I was alongside part of that scene. And it was okay to be so.

Megan 10:06

Yeah, I was gonna ask you about that actually, like, did you? How welcome did you feel in luncheonette? Like as someone who wasn't coming from it?

VIS 1 10:13

Oh completely

Megan 10:13

That's great.

VIS 1 10:14

Yeah, completely. And that would be I mean, obviously Jenny has a very big energy and a very kind of inclusive spirit. But as I say, but even before you got or before I got to the counter, you know, my memory would have been kind of a passive inclusiveness if that makes sense. You know, there are other places around town, like I live quite close to the Fumbally. And there's very much a sense of the scene at the Fumbally cafe. You know, and there's obviously a big interest in food and atmosphere and all of the same areas that Jennie touches on but Luncheonette was something very different.

Megan 11:03

Less transactional, almost

VIS 1 11:07

Much less transactional. Yeah. Yeah. But also that part of like, you know, I'd have limited experience with the world of art practice, or the, you know, the academy when it comes to, you know, art, learning and teaching. But that didn't matter. You know, like, I met all sorts of people there. I don't mean I encountered or bumped into, but I would arrange to meet all sorts

of people there. Who were even further from that world to me. There's something about what Jennie created there that made that entirely legitimate, you know.

Megan 11:54

Yeah. And you were kind of aware going in that, like, visitors from outside the college were welcome that it wasn't like a closed space? So you were kind of able to have these meetings and everything?

VIS 1 12:03

Yeah. Yeah. Although not advertised, I guess. And I guess there were kind of, there were very transactional reasons for that. It wasn't a public cafe, it was to do with food in the institution. So yeah, but I think it would have been pretty obvious that I wasn't an art student. But that didn't matter. Sorry the other thing that struck me was students there meeting colleagues or friends who brought their own lunch. And that, and that was okay, too. Which made it feel I guess, it made it have the energy of a picnic.

Megan 12:47

Yes,

VIS 1 12:48

You know, and the fact that Jenny was very supportive or maybe how supportive or not, she certainly was... that that was permitted. That felt very progressive.

Megan 13:01

Very understanding.

VIS 1 13:05

Very understanding of it yeah

Megan 13:06

What do you think, I guess this is related actually, but what do you think Lajeunesse attitude towards visitors was?

VIS 1 13:16

I think it was a tacit... I think I can only go by my own experience, obviously but I always felt welcome. And embraced, you know, as a customer. And like, it's funny, the only kind of checkpoint was when you go to pay and Jennie'd ask you "Are you a student or not?" You know and at that point you had to [Laughter] And I guess maybe that was also a legitimate question to staff. Maybe that was the point that the students there was a concession for students. I don't know. That was the only kind of point where you thought you might be outed you know.[Laughter]

Megan 14:00

[Laughter] That's interesting. I didn't know that happened! Very interesting. But besides that, it was kind of...?

VIS 1 14:09

Oh, entirely, entirely.

Megan 14:13

And, what was your sort of interaction with the staff like? Like, did it kind of go beyond just ordering and just paying for the food? Was there kind of chats and things?

VIS 1 14:25

Yeah, yeah, but of small chat more so with Jennie I'd say, than anyone else. But yeah more so with Jennie. And I guess kind of prodded and poked then because I wanted to know how it had come to be. Because, you know, my work is not the procurement of food, but it's the procurement of buildings, and that's all about relationships and getting the right people in the right place to make the right buildings for those who need them. And the third food but is the same although there's probably less value placed on people and people's agendas. But I probably prodded and poked, excuse me, the background to it all, which Jennie. So my interaction would have been really with her but with everyone else, you know, obviously extremely cordial and friendly and welcoming. And it was always nice to observe the relationships between those those who work there and their peers or colleagues who come to

Megan 15:32

Yeah. Kind of calming almost.

Sorry not to go back to what you were saying before. But just because you're in development, I think it's interesting that you would have been more aware of the space as well. And like, I think it's cool that you were saying that going down into the space and into the basement was kind of like going into the earth. Whereas like, I feel like a lot of the time things in basements can be kind of anxiety provoking. It's like, interesting, like, were you? Would you have been asking Jennie a lot about the space itself or about just the whole mechanism, I suppose?

VIS 1 16:10

No, I don't think I actually did do that with her because it was clear that she had curated that interior, very effectively, you know, superb. The lighting and the basic arrangement of chairs, which was, I suspect, very intentional. But not imposing. No, I would have wondered in the back of my head around all the banal things about you know, light levels and... You know because when you get into developing spaces, it's just endless regulation.

Megan 16:48

Yeah

VIS 1 16:49

There's quite a bit of reluctance to try and do something that might expose people to risk. You know, and I'm very being very general, too. And the reason I'm being general is contrast it with what Jenny did. Like, you'd find one person like Jenny to set the lighting that low, and you'd find 100 people to tell you why you couldn't set it that low, why it was a threat to health and safety or insurance or whatever. So yeah, no, I don't think I teased it out with Jennie but it was very, very evident.

Megan 17:31

Did you feel kind of seen when you would come in? Maybe like, did you feel like maybe the staff, like there was a recognition? Or like, yeah, I guess, did you feel like they would remember you?

VIS 1 17:43

Oh very much so yeah.

Megan 17:52

Is food important to you?

VIS 1 17:56

It is, it is yeah. Yeah [Laughter]

Megan 18:03

[Laughter] How is it important to you? Like, in what ways? Like, could you tell me about, what it's like in your life and everything? Or like, what do you think its role is maybe?

VIS 1 18:18

What the role of food is? Like, it's a fundamental nourishment of pretty much every aspect, you know, physical, mental, social. I think there's, I was thinking about this chat last night, and my mom worked all of her life. And she cycled. I grew up in Galway city, and she always would find somewhere to treat herself. And I don't necessarily mean with, you know, a fancy cake or something but like a well made bowl of mushroom soup. And more often than not, it was, you know, somewhere slightly on the periphery. And so food was important to her and I think I got it from her and then I definitely think, she's never been or she had never been to lunch, but I think she really would have liked it. So there was probably somewhere there a connection to my mom with everything else that was, you know, part of that made up luncheonette. Yeah food, I guess, food it's just the- Sorry that's just a reminder that my battery's low so... We'll keep going but apologies if I do drop off Megan when I get back to the house I can recharge and and we can pick up. But I think maybe it's the elemental character of food. You know, the pretty crude fact that if you go long enough without it you're goosed.

Megan 19:57

I guess building off that then because it's so important and like, so just like baseline importance, like did you trust lunch? Yes. Because food is what's going to nourish you for the whole day.

VIS 1 20:09

Oh my god. Yeah. One of the things I enjoyed about luncheonette is or was that you really could just not have to make a choice. You know, because the pot or the soup or the sweet, or whatever it was, they were just all incredibly well considered and cared for before they were

put in front, you know? So, maybe, personally, that kind of instilled a basic form of trust, you know, as part of the transaction piece, you know, "What would you like to eat?" "I would like this" "There you go," that there was really no real need to ever have to negotiate in the menu. You know, although, it was always a pleasure to read it. You know, I certainly felt like "What would you like to eat?" "I don't know, you tell me". Do you know what I mean?

Megan 21:18

No I do

VIS 1 21:20

That way that you would trust Jennie and the team to have considered the menu in such a fashion. You weren't necessarily being forced to make a choice.

Megan 21:32

Yeah. I don't know about you, but I'm terrible for a panic order and then having to repeat something and being like, "Oh, I wish I...", I never experienced that in there. It was always just whatever you picked was gonna be...perfect

VIS 1 21:45

Exactly. That's how high the bar was, you know, there was no, I've never ordered something there and thought "I should I should've had that" .

Megan 21:54

Yeah yeah! Did you have any, just like in the realm of that trust thing? Did you have any particular special requests? Or like, even dietary things or anything like that, or just requests?

VIS 1 22:09

No, no, not particularly. I did about maybe about six years ago now. I stopped eating meat purely from environmental concerns. But that never posed an issue at luncheonette. You needn't have even have had to identify as being vegetarian or other. Because the range was so solid.

Megan 22:39

Yeah, I'm the same. I just thought it was. It was great for vegetarians. You didn't even feel like you were being a nuisance or anything. It was really nice in that way.

VIS 1 22:46

No

Megan 22:46

Do you think that Luncheonette needed you? And like how do you think they might have needed you?

VIS 1 22:58

I don't think so, no. I think I needed Luncheonette far more than...

Megan 23:00

[Laughter] Like, you didn't feel any sort of... God what's the word? Reciprocal, I guess? Or like, was there a kind of a give and take there?

VIS 1 23:17

I don't know. I mean, like, without kind of over egging it it always felt like a privilege to be there. You know, and if a week went past when I didn't make it there was definitely a longing to come back. But was it reciprocated? I don't know. I mean, food is very much those who make food. I think it's very much a form of care. And I suppose they do need people to care for. I'm struggling to answer that question. Because I don't... I mean, it needed me as a customer. And maybe it needed me as part of that aspect of caring. I mean, I'll put it this way, I always felt welcome there.

Megan 24:13

That's nice. I know we've talked about it, but it's kind of a nice question so I might go back to it. What was the atmosphere like?

VIS 1 24:27

I stumbled across the word earthy, or climbing into the earth. It definitely there was a kind of an earthy character to it. And part of that was serendipitous maybe with the quarry tiles that pre-existed Jennie's takeover, but I think she probably really worked with what was there to

build that earthiness. Excuse me. And the music kind of sliced through that Earth then just at the point before it would all get too earthy or too serious. [Laughter]

Megan 24:58

[Laughter]

VIS 1 24:58

Yeah

Megan 25:04

Yeah. Do you remember any particular sounds or smells actually?

VIS 1 25:12

I don't, I don't-

PART II

VIS 1 0:00

It all just kind of swirls into one. But I do remember the music not being as heavy as the, as the floor or as dark as the lighting or as solid as the benches, if you know what I mean. So it was definitely a counterpoint there, and probably the flowers, if I remember correctly. And then the kind of lights in the middle of it all

Megan 0:28

That's lovely. What was the best time to go there, do you think?

VIS 1 0:35

Oh, I tended to go, I tended to try to go, you know, just after lunch. I think after lunch, there was definitely a sense that a lot of people had been cared for. But there was less of a queue. And the energy was still in the air for most people. So yeah, definitely. Just after lunch.

Megan 1:00

It had been lived in, so everyone was a bit more relaxed...

VIS 1 1:03

Exactly! Yeah. The sandwiches were still warm.

Megan 1:10

What did you usually order?

Generally the grain pot. And then whatever stew or soup was around. More often than not, the, I'm pretty sure it was vegan, chocolate slice that might have been made from [inaudible] no sweet potatoes.

Sweet potatoes, yeah!

Unknown Speaker 1:41

Yeah

Megan 1:43

Very nice. The grain pot and the soup together or the grain pot or the soup? Depending on the day..

VIS 1 1:50

Both together actually yeah.

Megan 1:52

Lovely.

Have you ever been in the kitchen at luncheonette?

VIS 1 1:58

No, no.

Megan 2:03

Me either actually I'm very curious about that question. Can you describe the queue? Just like lining up.

VIS 1 2:14

If I ever got there at the wrong time, or the, you know, the busiest time, you'd kind of enter perpendicular into the queue, you know, and the queue was always very tightly packed. And you know, generally you know, say single file, but really quite well packed so you had to negotiate your way through there and then generally loop around to the back. But yeah, it was a chatty queue.

It was it was a chatty, chatty, well packed queue.

Megan 2:48

Good for not intentional eavesdropping, but I feel like I had a lot of snatches of conversations in that queue.

VIS 1 2:54

Yeah without a doubt

Megan 2:57

And then I guess, also, coming away afterwards with your food trying to like get around the snake. Trying to get through it, although you probably avoided it coming later in the day probably wasn't as bad.

VIS 1 3:08

I tended to

Megan 3:11

What did you like most about luncheonette?

VIS 1 3:17

Probably the easiest answer is the atmosphere because the food is so good. You know the food was just at a level that it's easy then to wrap around all the other pieces that work so well. You know, the fact it was underground, the fact that it was within an institution. The fact that it was on the periphery for me, obviously not for people who went to NCAD it was quite central. Yeah, so. I guess the catch all for that is the atmosphere

Megan 3:59

The opposite of that then. What did you like least about it? What would have frustrated you?

VIS 1 4:06

Going there and it was closed.

Megan 4:08

[Laughter] Oh.

VIS 1 4:10

Missing, you know, missing the seasonality, about it you know, which is you know, it's I mean, again, back to the earth it was a bit like a vegetable that kind of bloomed and flowered at a particular time and. But yeah jaysus going there and figuring, you know, it was... because oftentimes when you'd go through that hall, where the pool tables were in the access into the Students Union, you wouldn't necessarily know if it was open or not particularly if you came off peak. Before I guess it probably closed around four-ish but if he came between two and four. But yeah that was the biggest frustration not knowing that it wasn't open.

Megan 4:46

And going down the stairs and then realizing it was closed. Devastating

VIS 1 4:51

And knowing that the alternatives were you know... and you're back in the room. Do you know what I mean you had to kind of go and just hunt out the least worst sandwich somewhere.

Megan 5:02

Yeah, yeah the quality just dropped. Actually that's interesting. The next question is what would make you choose to go to an alternative Cafe spot for lunch or whatever?

VIS 1 5:18

Very little. Very very little other than maybe geography or maybe I found Luncheonette great for you know one on one meetings that I've had with people but if there was a much... Having said that now we have a [inaudible] at one time bring four or five people there. And it was

really not necessarily to converse with them but for them to converse with luncheonette, do you know, for them soak up the atmosphere and have a sandwich. But maybe geography or scale you know needing to meet, ah in fact no we did yeah. There was one time when we hired the Harry Clarke room and I had brought people over from Dublin 7 largely because Jenny would be able to cater that room but then again that wasn't luncheonette it was you know Jennie and her food. But very little only as I say if I was in the wrong part of town or if I needed to meet a big bunch of people.

Megan 6:21

Okay. That makes sense.

VIS 1 6:24

Sorry and other than that overdoing it. You know, I don't you know, there was never a week where I went there every single day.

Megan 6:29

Yeah.

VIS 1 6:31

Consecutively

Megan 6:35

Do you think that would have made it less enjoyable, almost?

VIS 1 6:41

I think so. Yeah. Yeah, I think so. And it wasn't that you know, those other days I would have brought my own lunch to work and it wasn't you know, going out to lunch wasn't a ritual thing. But I think going there every single day wouldn't have done it for me

Megan 7:04

Almost like the thing with your mother like it almost has to be a treat. Like it almost has to be something that's...

VIS 1 7:12

Mmh. Yeah I think so.

Megan 7:17

Did the quality of service and the offerings of sleep food fluctuate much?

VIS 1 7:21

Not that I would have noticed. You know, I think there was so much that made up that atmosphere that if one was flailing or drooping that another aspect of that atmosphere probably picked up and compensated if you know what I mean. But no, not that I would have ever noticed. And not that consistency was a prerequisite either you know if that if that chocolate finger the sweet potato, vegan chocolate finger you know was slightly gooey or slightly harder so be it. No, I think because it was such an ensemble it probably had the capacity to ebb and flow a little bit within its own sphere.

Megan 8:15

That makes sense. Did you have a favorite Luncheonette food?

VIS 1 8:23

No

No. Maybe that for me is the strength of its whole being, that it wasn't a particular sandwich or a particular grain pot.

Megan 8:36

That's nice. You weren't going hoping it would be something in particular you were just happy to ...

VIS 1 8:40

No no. I was going to be there.

Megan 8:43

Yeah. That's really nice actually. You've kind of answered this but did you ever bring friends, family, colleagues to luncheonette? You brought colleagues but I guess maybe friends and family?

VIS 1 8:55

Very often. Very often. Family no actually. Family, no. I would have loved to have brought my mum there but that just didn't work out. But no family, no.

Megan 9:07

But lots of friends.

VIS 1 9:09

Yeah,

Megan 9:09

Lovely. You were saying you did use the dining room for meetings but usually they were smaller ones, kind of it would be harder to to have a bigger meeting there?

VIS 1 9:22

A bigger meeting within luncheonette? No yeah it just wouldn't, just not the space for it you know?

Megan 9:33

But then one on ones were okay?

VIS 1 9:37

Oh very much so. Yeah, very much so. You know, whether it be in the booth or across the long table at the back or at the corner of the table near the door. Yeah no kind of, one on ones and threesomes and four.

Megan 9:55

Yeah, that's... was there a particular spot that you would have thought was better for having meetings? Or was it kind of whatever you were given you were happy with?

VIS 1 10:05

Personally the booth under the street, that was always a prime spot. But no, other than that happy to pull up a seat or wobble on to the bench.

Megan 10:19

Yeah, I always thought the booths were nice if you wanted to have a kind of private chat with someone, like a little, nice little corner. Did you make any new acquaintances? Can you describe any interaction with NCAD students, staff or like other visitors I guess if you met anyone else there?

VIS 1 10:37

So not... I don't know how this happened. Whether it was through Luncheonette or not. You studied in NCAD?

Megan 10:47

Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

VIS 1 10:48

Brian, is a Brian Ward in the department of sculpture, Brian?

Megan 10:53

Oh, yeah, I was in design but I think Brian, yeah.

VIS 1 10:58

Yeah, maybe no yeah it's not Brian Ward... I mean, well, I know another Brian Ward but... He's in the department of sculpture. We worked on a project together in the locality. One of his students came forward, and he's actually built a sculpture in the park that we worked on. But I can't remember. I'm pretty sure the connection wasn't made through luncheonette but then having gone to luncheonette, I would have seen Brian and kind of chit chatted and caught up with him. But no, I don't think I made any new friends or acquaintances directly through the experience of luncheonette. SOrry other than Jennie, I didn't know Jennie beforehand.

Megan 11:46

Oh true! Yeah

VIS 1 11:48

But not that I can remember. But I would. I would see people there subsequently, that were part of NCAD. But I think the connections were separate.

Megan 12:07

But you kind of were able to build up the connections then I guess in that spot.

VIS 1 12:11

Yeah Definitely

Megan 12:11

Yeah. Interesting. Do you think you might have been more likely to make connections with people in NCAD because you were in luncheonette or because you kind of had that connection to NCAD then or was that just unrelated I guess?

VIS 1 12:30

I don't know, hard to answer. I mean, I'd like to say yes. And it feels yes, there's a right answer. But I'm not too sure if I independently if I would have made you know, current connections into the world and NCAD. Like there's a number of architects who I know in the area who lunch there and you know their friends from other experiences and so on. I don't think I struck up acquaintances nor do I think... you know, maybe oh, I don't know maybe that question's appropriate for me because I am not from the world of NCAD so therefore, you know, was luncheonette the condenser that you think it might be? No, not for me.

Megan 13:26

Yeah, it doesn't necessarily... Yeah. It's kind of hard to track as well.

VIS 1 13:29

But you know maybe part of that is because I was there to be tangential- at a tangent to the whole thing. I wasn't seeking to be part of that world and I was quite happy to be there, but apart.

Megan 13:44

That was part of the enjoyment of it, nearly.

VIS 1 13:47

Yeah, maybe. Yeah.

Yeah.

Megan 13:52

Do you have a sense that you're...

Oh! oh, he's gone.

VIS 1 15:09

Just I'll say them to you just in case they don't come up in the forthcoming questions.

Megan 15:13

Perfect

VIS 1 15:14

One of them was around the family and I did, I actually brought my kids separately to luncheonette. And they really enjoyed it. And the other one was, I did take, I did ask Jenny to cater some work events over in Dublin 7 where I work. And that was transformative. Because I was talking to you about the fact that I had brought people from different groups of people that I work with to luncheonette, you know, and it didn't have the effect that I thought it was gonna have. But then I asked Jenny to cater a few events. The reaction was wild, like, in the way that it broke down barriers, may be a bit extreme, because they were colleagues and the sessions were kind of reflecting sessions, you know, reflecting on a year's worth of work and reflecting on stuff that didn't go wrong stuff that could go better and all the rest. And when we broke for food the food was, you know, people were talking about the colors of the food and the taste of the food. And, you know, there was an initial kind of, you know, slagging that I was bringing some sort of weird food up to where we worked. And then afterwards, you know, hands down everyone's was like, you know I got texts afterwards about food. So since that time, I've tried to bring luncheonette, to Grangegorm where I work, you know, so I failed in terms of getting Jenny to come over and procure for the work. But I did manage to kind of drop it in and it was transformative. So I just thought I'd say those two things to you. Just in case they don't come up in the last questions.

Megan 16:56

That's very interesting. I don't think they were gonna come up so I'm glad you I'm glad you said them. Did it have an effect after that do you think in TUD?

VIS 1 17:10

Not too sure. I'm not too sure. I don't work with TUD. I work with a government agency.

Megan 17:18

Oh sorry

VIS 1 17:21

But sorry, there were events where I had TU Dublin colleagues there. I'd say it did in the way that you know, something sticks with you and people take it away themselves at a personal level. Yeah no I'd say it did, but I wouldn't be sure.

Megan 17:37

So interesting. I'm just trying to... I'll just pull up the rest of the questions there. So just making sure I have the right ones and I'm not skipping any.

Yes, we did... I'm just gonna go into do you have a sense that your presence in luncheonette was felt or made an impact? Like do you think they noticed you and like, and do you have any idea what they might remember about you?

VIS 1 18:13

Well, I think I was certainly as a regular patron, maybe welcomed and acknowledged. So. So therefore recognised yeah. In terms of an impact, gosh, I wouldn't...I think collectively, you know, we spoke quite a bit yesterday about Jennie's energy and about that pervading everything in terms of atmosphere. I think collectively, the patrons had maybe a collective energy. But personally No, I wouldn't know.

Megan 18:57

But maybe as part of that group, you felt like you were...

VIS 1 19:01

I think, so yeah. I think, you know, if you think of it in a theatrical sense, there's the stage, there's the actresses, there's the direction, there's production, there's the audience. And, you know, I do believe the audience in that setting brings a particular energy, but I think it's quite similar. And I think it was quite similar in Luncheonette. I think the crowd, the patrons, the people that came there I think they did bring an energy. Yeah, definitely.

Megan 19:30

Do you think they would remember anything about you in particular?, Or do you think you were just kind ...

VIS 1 19:36

No, no.

Megan 19:39

Apart from Jennie maybe

VIS 1 19:41

Say again?

Megan 19:42

Apart from Jennie maybe?

VIS 1 19:44

Maybe I don't know.

Megan 19:47

Did you experience NCAD, not luncheonette, but NCAD as a welcoming space?

VIS 1 19:54

Not really actually. Bar the opening night I always did feel like I was sneaking in. Because there's two guys in particular in the hut. Like, you know, that's their job. I'm trying to do a really really good job actually keeping an eye on the place. But I always did feel a bit under surveillance, by those two.

Megan 20:22

Is a bit of a ...Yeah, it's interesting how different Luncheonette, like bringing people to luncheonette is to bringing them onto the campus or whatever. I always felt a bit more like covert when I was on the campus properly.

VIS 1 20:36

Yeah

Megan 20:36

That makes sense, though. Do you think luncheonette made a difference to NCAD? And if so, how?

VIS 1 20:45

Oh I'd imagine it did. And I can only kind of overlay my own experience on, you know, project, you know, in a conjectial way, my experience of what the impact was on NCAD. But also actually from observing the, you know, from observing groups who I'm pretty certain were staff and students of NCAD. I suspect it had a very positive impact, a very wholesome impact in the fullness of that term.

Megan 21:23

I'm gonna just go back, what was it like bringing your kids in that time?

VIS 1 21:30

They really liked it. Yeah, I think they were quite small at the time. So you know, maybe, like, four ish, my daughter was four-ish my son would have been maybe six-ish. And I brought them both separately. I think they liked it, they definitely sensed it as being somewhere different and I think maybe it goes back to that bit that we were talking about yesterday about going into the basement. But yeah no, they really liked it, they really liked the food.

I mean, it's different. When you bring kids that young to somewhere else where there aren't any other kids, you know, there's an immediate signal that they're in, you know, in adult

spaces. Or certainly there weren't any of their peers around. But yeah no they liked it they really liked it.

Megan 22:31

Kind of similar to when you brought your colleagues and friends there it didn't, didn't really make sense to them. But then when you were able to bring it to them, it was able to be more transformative.

VIS 1 22:42

Definitely. Definitely. And that's an interesting point, because it wasn't necessarily the same cohort, let's say that I brought there originally and then brought into them. It would have been some small overlap. Yeah, there would have been some overlap. But for them, you know, at different points in life, I think they were more open to it on their own terms. You know, when it was maybe just the food, or maybe when they weren't so enveloped in the complete thing, if that makes sense.

Megan 23:20

I guess there's two elements to going underground. It can be very, you know, nice and intimate and it can also be a bit overwhelming

VIS 1 23:27

Yeah, yeah yeah.

Megan 23:29

And just how do you think it was transformative for them when they got to interact with the food?

VIS 1 23:37

Oh. I had comments about the color of the food. The whole sensual spectrum, the color in the food, the textures, the tastes. Because... and that was very much bringing luncheonette into the context of catering that's available there, which is you know, pretty, pretty run of the mill.

So it became something then it became an anchor in conversations that...it became a place in conversations where everyone could meet. Do you know what I mean? So because everyone

was then talking about the food and the textures and as well as its taste. And it surprised me, the degree to which they enjoyed that food and it was a classic icebreaker. Also, then, we're all suddenly standing, gathering around the food, talking about the food. I definitely felt, and I'd be super sensitive to it because I had brought the food there, but I definitely felt it opened up...It opened up general conversation that then made the rest of the session more productive, or certainly more... you know brought things closer to the bone. You know, because we spoke yesterday about the role of food and the importance of food, you know, it really is. It's a source of, we spoke yesterday that it would be nourishment. But it is a retreat as well of sorts, you know, because it's, you know, because there are... because it punctuates the day, and because it's a necessity, having food is a retreat then from all of the other enterprise or endeavour of the day. So it's that as well. And so then, when, you've got a group of people, and they're a bit suspicious about the food and they're surprised about the food, and they're enjoying the food, it's a nice sidestep.

Megan 26:09

When you go down that... When you can take a break like that, I feel like, things that are on the backburner can come out, because what's at the front of your brain has been replaced by the food. So you can kind of talk about other things then a bit.

VIS 1 26:23

Yeah, I think so. It's a retreat. I think when you stop and step back and you take that break you can probably... and you enjoy it so much. To an extent, I think you're replenished in every manner.

Megan 26:47

That's fascinating, so interesting. It's kind of like a similar role to what I thought it did in NCAD. It's interesting that it sort of crossed over like that in a different space. How connected do you think Luncheonette was to NCAD? Just to go back to NCAD. Do you think they were on the same page in terms of their atmosphere? Or like even their ethics or the tone or anything?

VIS 1 27:15

I'm probably unqualified to say because I don't know that much about NCAD other than the annual show and the physical environment. Both from... To the extent to which I know

NCAD it felt integral. You know, it felt very natural. But I wouldn't know the kind of cultural character of NCAD really, I literally I only know it from a hand's distance.

Megan 27:52

That's interesting from the step back, though, to see what that perspective is and everything. Also very, very interesting. Would you describe Luncheonette as profit driven?

VIS 1 28:09

No, but I also wouldn't, sorry and I know I'm stretching the question, but I wouldn't necessarily consider profit as a pejorative. I think it would be important that it generates a profit.

And I know profit can be calibrated or measured in different ways. Look, no, I wouldn't have from the outset I wouldn't have described it as profit driven in the traditional sense of financial profit. But it did almost certainly generate massive other dividends.

Megan 28:57

Like different forms of profit? I know profit being kind of a loaded term, but...

VIS 1 29:03

Yeah, no and I think it was definitely profitable in social and cultural and... Yeah, social and cultural sense. But I would have anticipated that it wasn't financially profitable.

Megan 29:27

Was there anything unusual or unexpected about the place about Luncheonette?

VIS 1 29:34

Anything unusual or unexpected about the place?

Megan 29:39

Yeah

VIS 1 29:39

It's completeness. You know, there's lots of people, or there's lots of places and people who you know, do one or two things great. But there are very few places I think that have a handle on food and place as a whole and that's I think what was unusual about Luncheonette, it's completeness. It was a complete thing.

Megan

That's very interesting and I suppose you have a lot of experiences with institutions and the food they provide. like that would be unusual among that specifically or just among everything?

VIS 1

Definitely within the higher education sector, outstandingly unusual. Within food maybe its not so unusual at the extremities of food, at really expensive restaurants maybe they're really complete things too. But not in other territories of food that I would've known.

Megan

Unusual on its own as somewhere being affordable-ish and not on that...

VIS 1

Yeah being incredibly affordable and therefore accessible and therefore democratic. But being relentlessly complete. You know there's lots of cheap food and I'm sure for a fiver you could've climbed out of luncheonette across the road to Tesco express and picked up you know a bunch of food. Yeah so in that it, and we didn't talk about that, it was made very accessible by the fact that it was very affordable.

Megan

Great. Wow! that's all of them I think, thank you very much for doing it broken into two sections as well. They were great answers as well, thank you so much, very interesting.

VIS 1

No problem and nice to meet you Megan and best of luck with the rest of them

Megan

Thank you very much, lovely to meet you too and best of luck with the rest of your holiday now.

VIS 1

Bye now take care

Megan

Bye

Appendix H: Interview with ACA 1

Megan Luddy 0:00

That'd be great. Thank you. I'm always worried when I just have the one, I've been burned before.[laughter]

ACA 1 0:06

I know exactly yeah

It doesn't matter how prepared you are, there's always some palaver

Megan Luddy 0:14

Literally always.

ACA 1 0:15

Okay, that's recording on [inaudible] hopefully.

Megan Luddy 0:18

Perfect. Yeah, I think the audio is much better as well. So that's good. I'm gonna get straight into it so if that's okay,

ACA 1 0:25

Go for it!

Megan Luddy 0:25

Thank you so much for doing the interview and everything.

ACA 1 0:29

No worries at all

And how long have you worked for NCAD?

ACA 1 1:08

Since about 2013

Megan Luddy 1:10

Okay.

ACA 1 1:13

Multiple times from 2015

Megan Luddy 1:19

Right. Do you remember the canteen before Luncheonette or was that a little bit before your time?

ACA 1 1:24

No, I was a graduate of NCAD too so I remember the full glories of the previous canteen!.

Megan Luddy 1:28

Okay!

ACA 1 1:30

Back in the early 2000s probably Jennie did as well actually she was probably a year ahead of me I think. So yeah, very different so I remember it well.

Megan Luddy 1:42

Did you visit it often?

ACA 1 1:45

Well, it was the kind of only place to go as a student I suppose particularly in the rain. But it was you know, it was back in the days where you could smoke inside, you could smoke inside in the basement of the canteen

Megan Luddy 2:01

[Laughter]

ACA 1 2:01

[laughter] it was filthy and it was, from a kind of catering point of view, everything maybe bad about the traditional model of brought in catering canteen where fairly low grade food and no love. I just remember everyone used to eat sausages and beans and chips. That was kind of the safest thing. All the leftovers went into the vegetables container [laughter] [inaudible].

Megan Luddy 2:34

[laughter] Do you remember when Luncheonette opened?

ACA 1 2:39

It was already in place when I started. I think Jenny had just done the first year or two of doing the soup on the table upstairs. And then she was probably only in it for maybe a year or so when I arrived into it, but not the opening of it but it was relatively new when I first met it.

Megan Luddy 3:01

Okay.

And do you go there often when you're working in NCAD?

ACA 1 3:08

Yeah, normally I would go there pretty much nearly everyday. It's so good. We often say it's so good that you can justify bringing in your own lunch. It's so reasonable for what it is.

Megan Luddy 3:24

I suppose just I'm not sure what your background was before NCAD but was it new for you to be sharing like a social space with students as a non-student?

ACA 1 3:35

No, no, I wouldn't have thought anything about it. I suppose certainly I did my PhD in Edinburgh and worked previously at IT Carlow which would be in an Irish context. But yeah, it was a general shared canteen space and it generally is in a lot of colleges. I think there was a staff canteen actually in Carlow but no one went to it. It was the worst. But no sharing it with students, no I suppose was new [inaudible] I suppose was the degree of taste and personality and curation and consideration for good food, and the general atmospherics and the vibe and stuff.

Megan Luddy 4:21

And do you think there's like good elements to sharing like, students and staff sharing that sort of social space together?

ACA 1 4:30

Yeah, I think it's really important. I think like luncheonette was the social meeting point, the Nexus as it were of college. And like while you might be trying to avoid a student, because you know you're teaching them or whatever, knowing they exist and seeing into their lives and then viceversa they're able to see you having a laugh at lunch or relaxing, is all really important and it's all kinds of... I suppose it's where you read the temperature of the place, where you might get a sense of like [inaudible]...

and particularly in NCAD because it wouldn't be so hierarchical compared to maybe like a UCD scale University where you know, you're very rarified... [inaudible] to just be all piling in together and having to negotiate spaces on benches and not tip over the seat getting in. And also just to hear the shit that young people go on about, [laughter] you know, while I might think I might think I'm young, you know, you realize that things have changed. Also nice to hear that crack of that age.

Megan Luddy 5:45

It's interesting you said the thing about possibly wanting to avoid students as well, because I was wondering if there's frustrating elements to that as well? Like, sharing that, that social space being... I'm not sure if there's staff areas and stuff as well, but like, if that's the main social space.

ACA 1 6:01

Yeah there is a, there is a nice staff room actually above the gallery, mainly seems to be used by some of the diehards, or maybe the older generation who keep to themselves and meet up there. To be honest, I've never really got into and aside from being a bit further away than Luncheonette I think an awful lot of my colleagues, certainly the younger ones, you'd see in luncheonette every day because they appreciate maybe it's not so alien, perhaps if they had been there for forty years they might find it a bit different I don't know. It really depends in my mind on how much bitching you want to do. [laughter] If you want to not have any staff or

any students or even any other staff that you don't expect around you go to the staff room i think. Luncheonette sometimes is just overrun you know...

Megan Luddy 7:03

Yeah. So you were there, about a year into it opening up. What was your first impression of the canteen?

ACA 1 7:14

That's a good question. I suppose on the first entrance, like markedly different and nice and her sculptures and light fixtures are very idiosyncratic, I suppose they're kind of not something you'd see. The music was always a presence. Jennie had great taste in music. And a lot of the people who worked there would also have kind of stepped up and tried to play good stuff which adds a lot even though you might be shouting to try and be heard over the counter it sort of insists that this is not just a place of like commerce. And then obviously, when you meet the selection of food and you see the prices you're like, Jesus christ! [Laughter]

Megan Luddy 8:02

[Laughter]

ACA 1 8:06

I was brought in with people and they were like "we're getting a soup and a sandwich and a flapjack" So it's so different to your kind of standard fare where you're really looking for the worst option, the kind of plethora, cornucopia of things

Megan Luddy 8:26

Yeah, I guess you've kind of answered this a lot, but if you have anything else to build off of, did anything about the canteen strike you as unusual?

ACA 1 8:36

Well, yeah, I suppose. So much of it, like the sense of it being handmade and made with purpose I think, is really cool. Things like the big tables, the large communal table, you know, it's more possible to get in and out.... if you're determined. There, in that vein of things that you mightn't choose it out of convenience, but you benefit from having, you know, like it's that kind of conviviality of the space. Jennie as well is a very forceful character. Like, I didn't, I didn't

obviously know her at the start. She's a brilliant manner, I of being so blunt and direct. It's very refreshing and NCAD, where... you're an NCAD graduate yourself Megan?

Megan Luddy 9:27

Yeah, I know what you're talking,

ACA 1 9:29

Then you know the vibe.

Megan Luddy 9:29

Exactly. Yeah.

ACA 1 9:34

And so she's as a kind of a force in it was very clearly there. Even down to her dress and stuff would be very visual, high voal and she steered the ship with a very clear sense of what she wanted it to be like without any pretense. So I think that was always really striking to me was Jenny's lack of pretense and artifice in doing something that's so cool is what really makes it extra cool or extra special. Like if you have someone doing just what they think is right.

Megan Luddy 10:14

That's very interesting that you say that, that like that it was unusual, not just as the canteen, but actually within NCAD itself because of Jenny's manner and everything, like the directness of it.

ACA 1 10:25

Jennie's manner yeah. I did a workshop with all the staff in the design school, and they were trying in 2017 to do one of those strategy things, you know, because NCAD was obviously the organisation was struggling a lot and had kind of suffered a lot in the preceding 10/20 years. So it was a kind of strategy thing to get a sense of what staff want and what we should be doing and also to bring people on board with the changes, but I remember one of the most popular ideas, in terms of received most votes, was "Jenny for president" [Laughter]. Jennie for Director, I think and it was just that thing of having someone who, no bullshit, straightforward, but delivering the goods and not caught up in the game. You know, that's always the problem

in the arts is people who play the scene but do feck all versus people who do great thing but don't play the scene and don't get invited maybe

Megan Luddy 11:35

Yeah, very true. And then I guess how welcome did you feel in luncheonette when you used to go down there? Or when you do go down there?

ACA 1 11:45

I suppose this is [inaudible]... The place is intensely welcoming the kind of...

Did we lose signal there?

Megan Luddy 12:08

Yeah, I think we did. Sorry.

ACA 1 12:10

We're back though are we?

Yeah we're back again. Sorry. Got interrupted

Yeah, so I think the place is intensely welcoming in kind of the consideration of the experience. And the food could only be made by someone who wanted you to be happy. But then you wouldn't know, as I was kind of saying in the sense of Jennie being kind of like a captain on the bridge, you wouldn't necessarily be hit with false niceties. You know, it would be direct or kind of moving along. But, again, I would appreciate that, because I'd appreciate the honesty of it myself. Yeah, I always found it to be an incredible space. So many people we bring in, to be honest, for many years, it was the only asset the college really had because it was a place you could bring in, you know, senior directors from a government body who you wanted to do a project with and they would think it was gorgeous and cool and start coming up themselves sometimes for lunch or inventing excuses to have meetings. And so it is just a kind of a lovely, without having to have that American level of kind of false nicety.

Megan Luddy 13:28

Yes, I get you. And then I guess sort of building off that did you feel relaxed there? Or was there any sort of pressure around the scene I guess?

ACA 1 13:39

No. Yeah, I think convivial is the word I'd use. It's space for joy, like, you know. From the little booths, you know, because of just the layout of it, and how she's run it... the little booths where the queue might fall on you allowed a certain spacing and gathering of groupings and then piling into the big tables and kind of, you know, you could have the type of discussion there that and the kind of craic that you wouldn't have in another place because the music is there to maybe take away sound of your own voice because it's so busy, you can kind of leave yourself in the noise of it all. So I'd say it's a very comfortable place in the important things.

Megan Luddy 14:34

What do you think luncheonette's attitudes toward its visitors was?

ACA 1 14:42

You mean people coming in from outside?

Megan Luddy 14:43

I think everyone but that as well. But I think anyone who was coming in

ACA 1 14:50

I think it wanted them to be fed and made happy. And I'd say that's probably it was that straightforward. There was no you know, you'd read, you'd parse through Jennie's menus she's clearly engaging with a lot of contemporary trends and debates and or movements in food, but she was never shiteing on about it. These things made it to the table if they had, if they appealed to her for a start, so it was personal. It wasn't market lead. It was always like what Jennie wanted or thought was good. And that's what generally was good. I think yeah, like, it was only ever set up to just fill a gap like that people should have. [laughter] I think that's very true. I think it was a very intentional experience that she set out. And that the others.. you'd often have people working there for a good number of years. And they might go off for a while, and then like, come back again. And that was all kind of familial too... lovely, and tended to be lovely people who kind of got into it.

Megan Luddy 16:15

And then I guess from you being in there a lot, what was your interaction with the staff like? Did it sort of go beyond, stray beyond ordering and paying for the food?

ACA 1 16:25

Oh, yeah I'd always be chatting and annoying them. As I say very kind of familial or maybe I've never lived in a small village where I integrated with everyone, but maybe a bit more like that [laughter]

Megan Luddy 16:46

oh yeah?

ACA 1 16:46

There's a certain you know, you could be waiting for ages, you might have 20 minutes to grab lunch, and you'd end up with three minutes with, you know, with your sandwich in your hand. No rush on people, people do things at their own rhythm and stuff like that. But that was the most positive to my mind, it sort of added to the authenticity of how they were approaching it. And yeah no, very much I mean, all of the people who worked there would've been part of the college community would have been, it would have been, and they'd be known, and you might not even know their name, but you'd know them and see them out, maybe, or anyone in the college would know. And I think that's very interesting to see. I don't know how many canteen operators or people working in them would be known by the director of a college, but like you would be sure that a few of them would be in our place. Because it was clearly so nice it wasn't transactional in that sense. You weren't going with expectation and demands, you were going to kind of play the game, as it was laid out.

Megan Luddy 18:01

I like as well the analogy of integrating into village, especially, just from what you've said about how there wasn't a lot of false niceties, and I feel like when you're really in a village people say hello to each other, but you don't have to hang around pretending you want to talk to each other all day either.

ACA 1 18:16

Yeah, yeah it's more important that you acknowledge they exist and than that you hold them back chatting or whatever.

Megan Luddy 18:26

[Laughter] Yeah. Did you feel seen in the Luncheonette, do you think the staff would remember you as you came in and out?

ACA 1 18:33

Ah they would, because like, compared to a student we're talking about eight years of being in there all the time but yeah they would. And as I said I try to generally have warm words or heap some praise on some morsel I was eating so I would of yeah they'd know who I was alright they might not know my name again they'd know from the context of... [inaudible] [laughter] And I like that as well because Jennie's sound I would feel free as someone like not from Dublin, you know, to go in and you know do real talk, like, you know, as opposed to kind of having to try to plámás or...

Megan Luddy 19:30

It's a nice relief

ACA 1 19:30

It is yeah, it's such a bloody sanctuary you know. We're still reeling from her moving on to other things. But just the spirit of the place, you know, and the spirit... I assigned most of the credit to Jennie and I have no idea of i the back end, you know, so I'm sure there's loads of people that definitely you know, the chef's like Ferda (?) and Sinead would have all added to it. You know that sense of vision and clarity. . What they call [inaudible] clarity, but I like that sense of why we're doing it the way we're doing it and what we're trying to achieve.

Megan Luddy 20:10

Did you trust luncheonette?

ACA 1 20:17

Yeah. Implicitly. Explicitly. Like I wouldn't like all the stuff I hate the truth you know I hate beetroot I see their role in society and food. They're not my thing. There would be days where I would go down and there wouldn't be anything that I'd really want. I'd just want the plain

sandwich or something. But that would be infrequent and I would trust entirely yeah so I mean we got her to do [inaudible] catering for like receptions or events you know or where you might have people come to the end of a project and be presenting the work and doing bits and that and all over yeah. trusted her all over it.

Megan Luddy 21:03

Is food important to you?

ACA 1 21:06

Yeah. Yeah, I'd be into it and I'd cook a lot and I suppose that's part of the joy there. I'd definitely have things that have trickled into my own cannon from being exposed to them there. Probably a huge part of what I the magic of Luncheonette as it was of being introduced to things but in a way which was accessible both financially and maybe like...it wasn't exclusive like, it was the definition of the accesible it was cheaper then going to Centra and you would find out that Gubeen cheese melted on roast shallots was the nicest thing in the fucking world and you'd have never thought of that it was great [laughter]. There's a huge a huge kind of wealth and a different take and I suppose there's other places in Dublin like Fumbally and that but they'd be be three times the price and I wouldn't find them as welcoming because they're, I find them a bit, they take themselves a bit seriously without seeing what they do well. Like Jenny would always see that she's just giving people good food, she's passionate and clearly thinking deeply about it and creative... So tone for me and I suppose that's just my personality you know and I'm not a scenester.

Megan Luddy 22:39

So is the sort of role of food, is more straightforward then? For you it would be kind of a... sorry not to put words in your mouth, what do you think the role of food would be for you?

ACA 1 22:55

I suppose I'm a very practical cook, my da was a cook. I grew up knowing how to fry an onion. I wouldn't be constructing some Ottolenghi 75 ingredients just for the sake of it like you know, I'd be very like what's reasonable. So pragmatic I suppose as opposed to or kind of grounded sounds like [inaudible]... I wouldn't be going off on food missions, I don't have the time, I have kids [laughter]. My friend has food projects where he'd cycle off to like Fallon and Byrne and get 50 quids worth of ingredients for dinner for two and it would be a composition. It was like

trying on a new dress or something you know. I wouldn't be that kind, I would have a very keen sense of quality. My colleagues would all laugh at me at like you know how happy the food in there makes me, at times where I just be like everyday doing big long sighs as I bit into a mirror glazed brownie [laughter] like "This is so fucking good, like you can't get this shit" [laughter] And that's the difference of art in something you know like anyone can make something and anyone can do a recipe but Jennie's tastes and I suppose ability was such that she knew what is important in and stuff. And the rest of the team too I'd say she certainly didn't invent them all. But yeah, so I was very aligned to her take on cooking and food and all the things I like. It was accessible, down to earth and finest quality and beautifully composed with integrity as opposed to Instagram in mind you know.

Megan Luddy 24:53

Yes. Like with a pragmatism.

ACA 1 24:56

Yeah, yeah. And just doing it because it feels right rather than doing it because you think it's cool. That always shows through. The ham sandwich would be a great example of that. Plainest ham sandwich in Ireland but still a very good sandwich.

Megan Luddy 25:17

It's all about the bread and the ingredients

ACA 1 25:20

That's it and again bread is another thing. So yeah, bread would be a massive thing for me in terms of like quality of bread changes everything. I'd far rather a plain sandwich with good bread and butter than like something you know something that's kind of like a gross amount of food inserted into a bad roll is a crime. [Laughter] It has its place now you know after a few pints and the day after [Laughter]. It's not, I'd much rather better and less in terms of food. Yeah, that's very much what they'd use even though less doesn't really do justice to the amount of lovely...

Megan Luddy 26:02

Did you have any particular special requests when you were in luncheonette? Or like allergens or just requests and were they met?

ACA 1 26:14

I wouldn't really have gone asking for too much. Like I did see people going in getting their own bread and different things done or like getting things taken out whereas I would've been too frightened to disrupt. It'd be like asking a painter to paint over something. But yeah like with coffee and that they'd give me the coffee I wanted and they'd even give it to me in the cup I wanted if it was there... No, I mean they were very approachable. And some people were treating it like it was their mother who loved them and really wanted to spend five minutes understanding their needs and but that's NCAD too and people wander around in their heads [inaudible]

Megan Luddy 27:06

Sorry, were you saying they had like a special cup they could give you?

ACA 1 27:10

Oh, it wasn't that it was a special cup for me at all, she just had a couple of odd sized cups

Megan Luddy 27:13

Oh sorry!

ACA 1 27:13

I basically like black coffee that's about like two inches of water, not a full mug of Americano, halfway between an espresso and an Americano. And she had a couple of small cups that were like two or three small cups that like your mother might have.

Yes yeah.

That we had, that actually my mother actually had. [inaudible] That was the fullness of my requests "I'll have that cup there please"[Laughter]

Megan Luddy 27:43

[Laughter] They were happy enough to do it, though usually?

ACA 1 27:47

They were always happy enough to help people; they were very, very open. And I think by and large people treated them with the respect that they deserved. You know? As I say it wasn't transactional.

Megan Luddy 28:06

That's interesting that you said that. The next question is do you think luncheonette needed you? So maybe not transactional? But do you think they had a need for you and...

ACA 1 28:16

I was definitely keen to support it and very happy to offset any plans you might have about like buying lunch everyday, or buying catering anyway with the fact that you were keeping it going, you know. When Lockdown came and she was working out of the trailer and she was getting hammered for business with the reduced student numbers and just general kind of change. I was asking like could we pre buy sandwiches for the year to give her some cash? No, I would have very much have seen it as something we needed to get behind and support. Not that it wasn't, at times it was chronically busy. You know half of Thomas Street was going in there from, the digital hub and all the techie places that were kind a few days going in there for lunch. Which was a pain in the hole when you kind of work there and don't have very long left for lunch because you were working all the time. And then, but that was fine, that was part of it. Delighted for them to do the business would have been the view on it. Basically, for years I was just worried she'd leave and she did eventually but like [laughter]

Megan Luddy 29:34

[laughter]

ACA 1 29:35

[inaudible] by buying brownies that's my excuse yeah. They are so fucking good though

Megan Luddy 29:42

They are so good. I'll be not impartial they are fucking amazing. What was the atmosphere like? Do you remember particular sounds and smells and things in there?

ACA 1 29:57

Yeah. Smells. I suppose, smells a little bit. More so from eating things.

PART II

ACA 1 0:02

the music and noise in the room, it's kind of a noisy room anyway. That's like a pub. You know that you have a certain amount of noise to make you feel that you can make noise yourself as well. Music would often be brilliant. You know you can be dancing away in the queue. No like I keep coming back to the word convivial but it's the kind of it's how I see what she was trying to do. The level of lighting, kind of creating glowing spots while keeping the whole thing you know pleasantly atmospheric, very result very considered and lovely. A very happy place.

Megan 0:54

What was the best time to go there, do you think?

ACA 1 1:00

12:25 was what we settled on after a few years [laughter]

Megan 1:07

that was really tested

ACA 1 1:08

That was like if you could in anyway getaway then you'd be, there'd be knocks on the door and like we used to go there for lunch together. Now part of that is I have a good department of people who get on, which isn't in any way the norm in NCAD or colleges in general or workplaces in general but we do but also going to luncheonette was a great thing to get back. When Luncheonette closed in the summer because we used to extra courses sometime it's sad for anyone that we're still around you know we like get a burrito, "I think I'm just going to get a toasted sandwich" it was like there was no coherence anymore but when Luncheonette was there, that's what we were doing. Unless, it was mushroom sandwich day. Then you'd go "right, elsewhere" [laughter].

Megan 2:06

So not the mushroom sandwich but what did you usually order in Luncheonette?

ACA 1 2:12

Normally the special, sometimes the soup and often one of the beautiful little cakes. Exquisite jewels of cakes that would be sitting at the corner. And so more often than not a bun and a sandwich special most commonly the big bread and whatever kind of composition she had in it. God there's things like you know an aubergine muffaletta sandwich that you could not have convinced me to eat if it was not made by Jennie and then I'd eat it and they'd be my favourite thing ever you know? That was always kind of the best way to have bread and the special. And then the special really dominated and particularly maybe since COVID where they were running on a reduced menu and it was mainly just the special. It went flying and when you talk about trust yeah that's a key factor there. You'd need to trust someone to be introduced to all that strange stuff sometimes.

Butternut squash in a sandwich like you know or I think it was the first time I had cauliflower since I was a kid because I decided the smell of the house was awful but when she did it on our burger I was like well it's worth a try anyway. Even a cauliflower burger would have made me laugh if someone else had made it but yeah, no definitely. I forgot what the question was getting carried away...

Megan 3:53

No no it's okay it was just about what you would usually order but I feel like that's all very related.

ACA 1 3:58

There'd be some things that wouldn't [inaudible] when you when you actually make a thing with personality then it's not always going to be to everyone's taste or like what they eat

and that's fine. Like beetroot, very popular in NCAD apparently, not my thing but I viewed it more I suppose like if you went to see a musician and played the songs they wanted to play that's fair enough, you know, as opposed to the one you want them to play again and again and again. [laughter]

Megan 4:38

Yeah. Have you ever been in the kitchen?

ACA 1 4:47

I have been in the kitchen to probably like sign for something or like dropping back if [inaudible]. But yeah, that's that's as far I don't think I've gone past the threshold or the table at the door.

Megan 5:02

Okay.

ACA 1 5:04

Now it's very accessible sight-wise, you can see in the kitchen. And some students would have like worked in the kitchen and it's great for you know, a lot of things we'd be doing in design. You'd be sending people out to research like say someone's doing a project on food waste. going into Jennie was always great for bringing people in, showing them, telling them round or the chefs would have been the same. So I'd actually have a sense of how they run the kitchen from both seeing into it and what students have shown and told me too.

It was a very open kitchen, very, very open, like you can see right into it. In itself, it's, you know, the beautiful stack of vegetables and sometimes people, you know, just inside the door and it all adds to the sense that they're doing something they're liking.

Megan 6:05

Can you describe the queue

ACA 1 6:10

Long, meandering and slow. The queue when you talk about actually bumping into like, different students and stuff the queue is the most interesting place to really see students in their pomp and all of the kind of growing into an adult and finding yourself and defining yourself and all the NCAD foppery as well like. Yeah, it could be terribly long, like some days, and it was never a question of whether it was worth it or not, it was more if you had time or not. But the queue is a great place for talking. And often, like maybe particularly a colleague, people who work there, you could talk to someone you wouldn't eat with in the queue. I mean, and that might be how you get to know them and you could catch people going in and out and they'd have a word with you. Like I suppose the trope is like the water cooler type of thing.

Yeah, it's like an absolute turbocharged water cooler of like an 18 person put them in a queue. You can really get business done if you need to, soft and hard business. So very much part of it and then the hilarious like I find I just find NCAD students hilarious like. I was one but we were... I was one and maybe I still think I am one but it's a unique place. [laughter] People don't get to carry on like that outside of there too much

Megan 7:54

Were there frustrating elements to the queue as well?

ACA 1 8:01

No, I mean [inaudible]

Service as I said, they were always fairly relaxed. We would always have said that it was a Jennie thing or Jennie told them to do it but everyone was really good for like, making eye contact and saying thank you. and like small graces were fixed you know, there was always some kind of sense of engagement. So when you got there early you were delighted, but when you were waiting for other people and they're humming and hawing and then service is kind of relaxed. Relaxed isn't it they're working hard like but they're not, it's not set up like a Ford assembly line, you know, they're not shoveling out [inaudible]. Things are being put together for people individually. So no I wouldn't say it would be frustrating. There'd be times you'd be looking at people because [inaudible] getting their like weird coffees and taking ages and it's like they've never thought about [inaudible] what they'll get. That's queues it's the same in Lidl.

Megan 9:15

What did you like most about luncheonette?

ACA 1 9:20

Everything. [laughter] No, I thought it was just beautifully composed. And singular in that it was so, [inaudible] linked to Jenny. You know, that's what I loved about...this couldn't be replicated or franchised. No one else doing that sort of thing would do it in such a Jennie-ish, like, sound straightforward, commonsensical way. No one else would even consider making it so cheap. Very unique and lovely.

Megan 10:12

What did you like least about it? What frustrated you about it?

ACA 1 10:19

Besides from the mushroom sandwich? [laughter] I think convenience might be something like that. Nothing really like I've accepted as tumultuous. I wouldn't want to change it because you have to have it as it is I suppose. No like I suppose the closing in the summer and even then you know because it was so, such a-

Megan 10:59

Oh sorry you cut off a bit there,

Sorry ACA 1, you cut off a bit there.

ACA 1 11:13

Can you hear me now?

Megan 11:14

Hello

ACA 1 11:17

Hello

Megan 11:18

Oh yeah you're back again sorry yeah yeah

ACA 1 11:23

No I was just saying I think I was saying the fact that Jenny used to go off and do stuff in the summer and wanted like that was part of why she did Luncheonette she could have something where she had time to have creative space. So you'd accept that, you know, that was very fair so that's all I was saying [laughter]. She'd look after us so well for the year so then she deserves her summer as well. Yeah, I'd say a lot of us kind of had a sense maybe of gratitude about the place. It was very much appreciated, you know. Very much appreciated. I'd say very

widely..you know people knew it was special. It was like the best, the best of NCAD and it couldn't have been done by NCAD itself you know.

I'm getting all sad now Megan [laughter]

Megan 12:25

Aw! [Laughter] I know I'm devastated as well. Yeah

ACA 1 12:25

Yeah, we were all gutted, we were talking about changing jobs and stuff. I totally understood it [inaudible] because she was probably trying to be sound I don't know you know, actually you know, she kept the prices reasonable she like it was all the same which probably wasn;t...[inaudible]

when the [inaudible] installations got sort of semi butchered by electricians in the summer and all her lights were lieterally like [inaudible] we were all just like "oh fuck, that could be the thing that tipped the scale". [inaudible]

Megan 13:25

Yeah, I relate we were all talking about dropping out when it stopped [laughter]

ACA 1 13:29

[laughter] Then you look around and you're like ah you know what it's actually stille gonna be better here.

Megan 13:40

Got about three months left. I should probably [laughter] What was your favorite luncheonette food?

ACA 1 13:52

Well I mentioned the brownie, I suppose that needs special mention. The Durrus and shallots sandwich was outrageous, the muffaletta was outrageous, the cauliflower burger was outrageous. I have quite a few. I thought it was all very good.

There were little financiers I think they were called little almond buns and stuff like that. Everything was outrageous, you know. Just someone who gets food and it can be anything...that sort of clarity with food I suppose for me it's always about, do people understand what's happening here? Are they? It can be an onion and a piece of cheese or like a shallot and that kind of thing everything but just composition, the love, the treatment. [Inaudible] so much, and so much done so well. And that's a really rare thing to do. I don't think... my dad actually, my mother, my parents, did hotel and catering. And you can teach anyone the job but you can't necessarily teach feel, you know and understanding. And that's, that's kind of that's present in all of my favorites. And I'm sure if I liked mushrooms and beetroot I'd see it in those things too. [Laughter]

Megan 15:17

[Laughter] Did you ever bring friends or family from outside the college to Luncheonette?

ACA 1 15:21

Yep, yeah. All the time. My mom I'd say actually kind of nearly went into it on her own once. You know she came up from Galway to just try because she'd be curious. [Inaudible]

A friend was onto me last year and she was like "I'm up on Dame Street now you know we can meet up". I was like "Ok great come up here some time for lunch." She was like "Well, we could go somewhere else, you know,". [Laughter] Wouldn't occur to me. [Laughter] You could go somewhere else like. Unless you've a real craving for something like a falafel or something you know that you couldn't get. But no and you know, I was saying about bringing in external people like related to work, or external examiners, we pretty much told the college to do all our external examiner's on it, you know. And they'd want to come back and they'd want to help and we'd kind of it would help change the tone or something like that, from what could be business or, you know, them trying to be analytical and write down things that aren't good, it would change it into friendship and a helpful dynamic, you know. On that kind of fence, you know you're bringing.... It felt a little bit like NCAD's home. And you're bringing people into your home and they all loved it and I'd say to a person they loved it in terms of just the vibe and the weird art students and the music and the food and like just a happy place and not a kind of cold, sterile industrial canteen like. And some of that might be incidental but but so much of it was done intentionally by Jennie I'd say had the eye for it and understands what the atmospherics and what things do [inaudible] in spaces and how food can change it

Megan 17:33

Yeah, definitely the external examiners. Did you use the dining room for meetings and college work? Beyond the external examiners?

ACA 1 17:44

Did I use Luncheonette?

Megan 17:46

Yeah, yeah yeah just the eating area...

ACA 1 17:50

Yeah if you could, it wouldn't be that I mean, it would be pretty busy over on our side. If you could, anyway, swing a meeting to be over there, you would try to.

Megan 18:01

Yeah

ACA 1 18:01

Would use it sometimes....you know it would be quite quiet, like 11 in the morning or three in the afternoon after the main lunch. And so if you were trying to get something done and shared officesyou could hope to go and ensconce yourself in one of the booths and get a bit of work done and hope that people would see the laptop. It was a nice place to, a third place kind of, to work.

Megan 18:27

Did you make any new acquaintances or sort of have any experiences with strangers in Luncheonette?

ACA 1 18:43

I'm sure at some extent, as I say you'd often, you'd more often be, meeting strangers who you know if you like. You know people who you might be acquainted with but wouldn't talk to or you might get talking to students on a different level to teaching.

But....No, I'm not that social [Laughter]. [Inaudible] not like I'd have in the pub at 11 o' clock [Laughter] [Inaudible]...but more a measure of already having a bit of acquaintance with like rather than anything else.

And you'd have the odd kind of exchange and particularly when you're sitting in and out and people you would be forced to anyway to kind of maybe ask can you sit in or whatever that kind of thing. It'd be majority students in there and I wouldn't be kind of breaking into student conversations too much like as a far too old lecturer. Let them do their business and not let on I'm listening. [Laughter]

Megan 19:51

I think kind of the same question. But did you ever get talking to visitors from outside the college in the canteen?

ACA 1 20:00

Probably not too much. No. A lot of them coming in to use it would in ways I'd almost feel like they might be kind of a bit furtive about it they wouldn't be sure if they're allowed. And like that often people with their own one or two people you know from the office. So we wouldn't... I suppose you didn't want to be too welcoming either because you'd want to get a seat. [Laughter]

Megan 20:32

Someone might buy all the sandwiches you know. Do you have a sense that your presence in Luncheonette was felt or sort of made an impact? Like do you think luncheonette noticed you?

ACA 1 20:46

I would say I mean kind of what I was saying about the small graces were present. They were ubiquitous like in the sense that everyone said hello everyone working there now said hello. And they always said thank you very much when they gave you your food even though you felt you were robbing them. And so on that we have a level I think across the board everyone got it. And Jennie has a very kind of lovely straightforward manner and she would give everyone a very straightforward hello.

Now and then I'd have a bit of [inaudible] conversation with them. Just brighten their day up or not [inaudible] but I don't know I wouldn't be the kind to say I had any impact. but I certainly felt that I needed [inaudible] and we got on, in our own terms, well. I don't think I was annoying to them. [Laughter]

Megan 21:56

[Laughter] Do you think, [inaudible] sorry?

ACA 1 21:56

I'm just saying sorry Jenny if I was! [Laughter]

Megan 22:06

[Laughter] as she's listening back. Do you think they might have remembered anything about you? Or like what they might have remembered about you as you were going in and out.

ACA 1 22:17

My enthusiasm for the buns probably. [Laughter] Ah look, I did. I like to acknowledge good, I like to acknowledge quality when I see it.

Megan 22:27

That's nice!

ACA 1 22:27

And I was fairly gushing at times. You can ask her that one if that's ok. [Laughter] I'm from the west of Ireland and of that generation that you ask me do I have an impact, "Oh god I hope not" [Laughter].

Megan 22:53

[Laughter]. There should be a different style of questions for you know, yeah.

ACA 1 22:58

I suppose I tried to let them know they were appreciated and it was appreciated because it was and I also felt that it was important that they felt that and so they'd stay if nothing else. And so

that they'd see it as working for us [inaudible] and that people really appreciated it. That's probably all I tried to do.

Megan 23:27

That's lovely. I guess because it was a place where you could, like you were saying, it was kind of like the home of the college and it was kind of a nice place to take a break. Did you ever have kind of like an emotional experience there?

ACA 1 23:43

Every day I had a brownie, I think I had an emotional experience.[Laughter]. My colleagues would all have been laughing at me like "you just get so much pleasure out of this food"[Laughter]. So I mean I had lovely times there, I had great times with people. I suppose like any good thing you know it's difficult to sometimes extrapolate the effect of it until it's gone or if you have any, maybe if you had been trying to use the canteen before, you know, luncheonette opened and then you saw the difference in it. No, I'd have the warmest feelings for the place. It was a lovely place, a happy place. Yeah, I mean to say that about your work in NCAD who the fuck says that about their work? Happy place? . Normally, they're kind of political or they're manky or they're, you know. Perhaps even I mean, things like the forced table they might even have, they'd moderate conversation and they might even moderate the tone of things in a way that kind of islands seating around under large open space. You might get more bitching you know if you're sitting kind of in a large anonymous hall and colleagues giving out about shit to each other . There's plenty of that somewhat tempered by the fact that you're in a public forum and maybe that there's like students beside you and so stuff shouldn't be [inaudible], but maybe brought the conversation to a more helpful place. [Laughter].

Megan 25:23

Definitely, I think, yeah, I think food definitely counts as an emotional experience, I think it makes or breaks the day for me so I really get that, I go on emotional journeys myself.

ACA 1 25:36

Absolutely.

Megan 25:38

What difference does Luncheonette make to your time in college or to your time in college?

ACA 1 25:44

Oh, sure it made the place unleaveable. I got approached for a senior job, it would have been two whole levels up from where I was in like a proper University, a functioning University. I didn't seek the invite, it was someone who kind of knew me and so it was a kind of huge compliment. For me, it was more of an existential crisis. But it would have been the massive salary increase for the rest of my days and I was very thrown up by this door opening that I never sought. And you know, really thrown between, the work would've been shitty, the place wouldn't be as much fun as NCAD and [inaudible] colleagues. But anyway I was in total existential crisis, I didn't know what to do the next day after being brought out to that place and kind of given a tour by fancy people. I was in the queue in luncheonette. It was like durras and roasted shallot ciabatte and like [inaudible] or something one of the savage soups. The buzz was there and the queue was there and all the cool students were there. Like fuck this why would you go and leave this behind you? You know, I have this in my day I literally [laughter] you mightn't have asked the best person for a recommendation for Jennie but. You have a moment of joy in my day every day. Why would I leave it for money? Luxurious decision to be able to make but yeah, it was a good reminder of the things that do matter to me anyway. So yeah. I said it to her when she was leaving, I said "I shouldn't have said that to you now." That might be twisting the knife when you're kind of probably making a difficult decision, but it was the measure of the place and of my own stupidity I suppose [Laughter].

Megan 27:56

That is amazing though. That's huge.

ACA 1 28:00

Yeah, literally standing in the queue, looking at the first menu on the first pillar, you know, as you go inside the door. And just like going, "What the fuck would you leave this behind for?". So hopefully, you know, Siobhan is doing well and hopefully when things kinda settle down then it can kind of keep going in its own form, whatever form she does with it. But yeah, it was a measure of the impact of the whole thing. And I mean, we would have we'd often say that, more like we were joking, about leaving when she did. It was kind of... it was the best bit of the college. NCAD is a difficult place to be a student, it's a difficult place to work. It's brilliant because of those difficulties in many respects. But it doesn't make it easy. You know, it's functioning at times and Luncheonette was just functioning beautifully.

Megan 28:55

It's interesting, you went there because the next question is, do you experience NCAD as a welcoming place? Just the college as opposed to Luncheonette?

ACA 1 29:15

I do, yeah, I do. I have good colleagues. Good department. They're all sound and I think a lot of other places other departments wouldn't necessarily have that dynamic. So they mightn't feel it and. Yeah, I do, I suppose in answer to your question, I find it a welcoming place. I find the attendants are kind of the heartbeat of the place as far as I'm concerned, they're the presence. The atmosphere and the kind of [inaudible] of the place is, is very real. You know, I've studied there as an undergrad and then I went to In the UK a few years later to do a masters, and ended up doing a PhD and stuff. But that was a very sterile place. There is a huge sense of community in NCAD. To the point like, if you're out now, but if you meet an NCAD grad or whatever, you know, you'd given them enough time to find out if you want to give them any more time. [Laughter]

Megan 30:25

Exactly

ACA 1 30:25

So it is yeah, I do think it's a welcoming place. But, you know, you can't extrapolate things like Luncheonette being there and stuff at the time from that and how much of an effect that might have had on it.

Megan 30:38

You gave a pretty class answer to this already but just in case you have anything else to say about it. Do you think Luncheonette made any difference to NCAD?

ACA 1

Ah it did yeah. I suppose it provided a shared lovely experience for everyone in the college and most people in the college engaged with it in some form. Not everyone, you know plenty of kids and even adults would prefer to have a chicken filet roll down the road. But it was a place to come, a place to meet.

PART III

ACA 1 1:36

It was a beautifully crafted experience, which was just a lovely thing to meet in your day. Yeah, like any kind of communal space that's well used, and well loved, it very much helps cement the bonds between people because there's this sense of meeting and feeling like that you are connected to the people maybe you work with or study. with or are part of the college with or whatever. But yeah [inaudible]

Megan 2:07

How connected do you think Luncheonette was to NCAD? Like do you think they were on the same page in terms of like, the atmosphere and the ethics and stuff?

ACA 1 2:23

I would I'd know like senior management who love it. I don't know, about like, the political the back end of things in terms of wrangling over rent or access or whatever. But I know on a personal level, most of the people who would comprise the institute like the senior [inaudible] would all have seen it as brilliant and seen huge value in it. Love Jennie. Like, yeah, as far as I know, on a personal level. As an institution, I would say yes, because they gave her the space and like they, you know, I don't know what the actual reality is [inaudible] reduced rent or something like that, whether that's true enough, and maybe [inaudible] or something but she... I think the college is very grateful, because a lot of people remembered how lifeless the space was and how important and how unreplaceable. I mean, there was this, you know, the morbid in me kind of talking about always being worried it would end. It was totally known that we couldn't replace this, you know, and so I think, I hope we didn't take it for granted.

Megan 3:47

Do you think luncheonette provided you with anything that should have been provided by NCAD?

ACA 1 3:55

I don't know, again, I'm not of the generation where I think I'd expect too much from an institution or from a job. Provided [inaudible] we were very lucky to have her. I suppose you could, certainly if it went, it would be very clear to everyone that providing a shared space,

providing food and the basics of that are not just a luxury. But that they can be quite instrumental in a place to kind of tie a place together. Whether it's a should or not, is a matter of what you expect from work. [Laughter]

Megan 4:48

This is the last question. Would you describe Luncheonette as profit driven?

ACA 1 4:53

Profit driven? No way, Jesus Christ. [Laughter] We just couldn't ever figure out how they were able to do it. And like, just, you know, be I'd be looking at it going, Durrus cheese, that costs you know, 12 euros for a small wheel and there's two or three big slices here. Someone's roasted shallots for the night and there's a roll which probably costs a euro because it's from like a fancy, cool bakery and you're getting it for four quid. And you're like, how? How is that not [inaudible]? So no, I would say I would view it as a nonprofit. And I don't think a nonprofit would be able to deliver things at that price either. It was very focused on being accessible in the most important sense. I would feel, you know, like we were all coming out of the recession there. Back then, like things were, you know, people were skint like and it being accessible, probably is something that's, you know, was a bit easier to kind of see the importance of I don't know, maybe for students in particular. There mightn't not have been as many part time jobs for students and stuff whereas a lot of them tend to work now. And a lot of them have a fair amount of income, I suppose. Well [inaudible] but never any [inaudible] everyone but. But no, I don't think it was profitable. I think it was very consciously there to give people access to really good food. And the rest of it was just kind of the brilliance of Jennie in terms of this is how it should be done. So no. Does anyone give you one word answers, in then these interviews or does everyone shite on about [Laughter]

Megan 6:44

[Laughter] Well we're looking for, I think the shiteing on is much better than the one word answer. So I haven't gotten any one word answers yet but. [Laughter]

ACA 1 6:57

[Inaudible] "Do you think it's profitable" "No"

Megan 6:57

"No", End of. [Laughter]

I'm delighted when people have a lot to say about it. I think it's great. God Yeah, thank you very much for your long answers. Actually, it's much easier than having to draw them out.

ACA 1 7:11

No worries I do this, what you're doing, sometimes so I know it's easier to just go at it.

Megan 7:15

Oh, thank you.

ACA 1 7:18

Sure I love talking about it

Megan 7:18

Pleasure to talk to you. It was great.

ACA 1 7:21

Yeah, thanks very much Megan, lovely to speak with you. Good luck with it. I hope you get out into the sun now or the shade maybe.

Megan 7:27

You too.

ACA 1 7:29

Good luck with the writing up. I'll send you through the recording here on my end if it works.

Appendix I: Interview with ACA 2

Meg Luddy 0:01

I might jump into it if that's okay, thank you again for your time for doing this

ACA 2 0:05

That's ok

[Text removed for anonymity]

Meg Luddy 0:27

And are you full time or part time?

ACA 2 0:28

I am full time?

Meg Luddy 0:31

And how long have you been working in NCAD?

ACA 2 0:35

I am going to guess that it's 18 years.

Wow

I think. I'm not sure. I think yeah, I think I started in the 2004 academic year.

Meg Luddy 0:47

So you were there very much pre luncheonette?

ACA 2 0:52

Pre-luncheonette. Yes, exactly. That's an important thing to know. Yes. So I have a sense of its impact in that regard.

Meg Luddy 1:01

And do you remember the canteen that was there before luncheonette?

ACA 2 1:16

You know, in that, I would like to repress any memories of that really.

Meg Luddy 1:20

Sorry. Sorry about that you broke up a bit at the start thing I just got, you would like to repress any memories of it [laughter]

ACA 2 1:28

I mean the canteen that was there before and it was very much like a familiar and traditional kind of canteen. I don't remember ever having eaten food there. And I would be very lazy sometimes about eating and that if there's, you know, chips and sausages available, I would, you know, greedily go for it. But I think it was that kind of menu a lot of the time. And stodgy.

And, you know, not especially interesting, but I don't remember eating there much. And I don't remember spending much time there. And it felt like, I suppose the college had to serve some kind of food and drink, you know, I was just part of the sort of standard expectations of what an institution would offer. But it didn't feel like it was anything that fitted in the environment. I remember. There were pictures of things like, you know, on the walls, because it was an art college cafe, there were things on the walls, like, you know, pictures of an Impressionist exhibition in posters for an Impressionist exhibition in, in Paris or something. That's not precisely the correct reference, but it was, you know, art posters.

Meg Luddy 2:55

Yeah

ACA 2 2:56

And so the sense of how you make it at an art college cafe was to stick some posters up that you know, that vaguely relate to art. But that kind of decoration had obviously no relationship with the sort of artistic interests of the staff or students. So yeah, it was a place that was, you know, a convenience in the college, a facility in the college, but it bore no meaningful relationship to the culture of the college.

Meg Luddy 3:29

Do you remember Luncheonette opening?

ACA 2 3:33

I do. And I remember that there was a terrific buzz about it, and I had, I hadn't taught Jennie, but I had taught people who were... I think Jennie might have been finishing in the year I started so that might be a way if I can check exactly what year I started, but might have been in the same year as Michelle Brown and some others who I did teach. When it started, yeah, there was definitely a buzz about, excuse me, about what it would be and so on. But I can't remember what the reason was when I didn't go down there straightaway. And maybe because I was in a habit of going out for lunch outside and I just got into a routine of that. So I didn't, I mean I went down for a look, but I don't go and get into the habit of it. And then I think it may have been that one colleague went away for a couple of weeks and the person would have usually had lunch with and I started going down and I ended up almost getting like just overwhelmed with how good the food was, you know and just slightly obsessed by it to the point where both

the food and the coffee I was almost kind of it wasn't that I wanted to go to work I wanted to go to luncheonette.

Meg Luddy 4:57

[Laughter]

ACA 2 4:59

So it I mean, in the early days of it, I was, you know, only occasionally kind of dropping in to see what it was like and then I started almost living there.

Meg Luddy 5:09

I can relate to that quite a few days when I was encouraging myself to go into a studio. So you wouldn't have gone there particularly often initially, but then you kind of...?

ACA 2 5:22

Initially no. And then and then partly for the food, and also, I suppose it was a stage, I wasn't really drinking coffee, and then I started to drink Jennie's coffee or luncheonette's coffee, which is strong. And, it Yeah, it was very, very. That was almost like an addiction then. I mean, I don't sound that's a terrible way to put it, but it was really...it got kind of desperately needed.

No, but then to be more, perhaps more helpful in relation to those things. The experience of going was one that I suppose there were, it was spatial, as much as you know, to do in any way with food. The booths that were in there, suddenly felt like places that you could be either productively alone in or you know, comfortably together with one person or small groups. It could be, you know, it could be really convivial and it could be really, you know, usefully professional. But then also the big table lead to a different kind of sociality, and, you know, there were these and, you know, side by side encounters with people, you might know, a little bit or you might, you know, not know, at all, and, you know, sometimes people converse, sometimes they didn't, but it was, you know, that situation, you know, facilitated these more sort of incidental recurrences.

And then, the other thing, I mean, there's lots of other things, but in getting into the habit of going the, like, music was a factor, as well. So the playlists that would be in there were always, I don't know, they seem always just right, you know, I don't remember a time going in and I'm

thinking to myself I wish they would change the music or I wish they would change the song. You know, there was always so much about that, perhaps because an awful lot of what was being done in luncheonette had personality, you know, and it felt, you know, it felt that things were, I don't want to use the word curated, because it's an overused word, but it certainly felt that things were cared for. And things were and, you know, the details mattered. And the details to do with, you know, how you bring people together, as well as how you sort of provide for them.

Meg Luddy 8:04

That's interesting about the music. I hadn't thought about it before, but it was, as well as being good, specific, like, it was almost less grating, because it wasn't, like, just like, nice ambient music it was kind of there.

ACA 2 8:18

Yeah, absolutely. You know, and I can't tell you the amount of times that I mean, I'm pretty into music. And, you know, I read a lot of about it and you know, listen to, you know, a huge range of stuff, but I can't tell you the amount of times something would be playing and I would either Shazam, it or ask Jennie or someone what the track was, and then that would go into another playlist of my own. So that kind of thing was part of what made it special. And then, you know, you ask more things and I'll see if...

Meg Luddy 9:01

Yeah, I guess maybe going back to the thing you were saying about those incidental interactions, around the long tables and stuff like that, was it...I guess, because you've been in NCAD for a while, was it new for you to be sharing social spaces with students?

ACA 2 9:14

Yeah. And that's, that's an important thing to bring up, because there's a degree of uncertainty around that now. There was a time I think, you know, a long time ago, in NCAD where there would have been a lot more socializing between staff and students. And, you know, in some ways, that's a great thing and some ways it's a really unhealthy thing. And, in luncheonette, there would be times you'd be sitting with students and, you know, as a staff member, you wouldn't necessarily know whether students would want you near or not, certainly, I wouldn't have wanted to kind of impose my presence on that with anyone around you know, I mean,

these are this is a space for students to, as well as staff to, you know, relax, be together whatever else, and you don't really want to kind of be forcing people into sometimes a, you know, a conversation that might be, you know, intimidating or burdensome or, you know. And as staff members, we have to recognise a certain degree of kind of power that we have, you know, sort of social power, because we're older, because we're moving more confidently and experienced.

And even if you don't mean to, you can end up kind of dominating, you know? And so to be in a situation like that, around that long table, where if you sit down, and you enter a conversation, you might find because your member of staff you end up talking more than anyone wants you to talk. So I've always been apprehensive about, you know, I don't know, entering conversations with students unless you're specifically welcomed into it. That's all caveats. But the other side of this is that what you did get were a little very gentle incidental moments where you'd see people coming and going, or you'd say hello to people, or you'd have little passing chats and so on.

And then maybe the other thing might be occasionally when someone, maybe... tutorials can be quite formal things. But sometimes a chat can be helpful to a student in a non tutorial way, where you just, you know, you're not necessarily having a structured discussion, but you might just be having a, you know, a discussion that has educational merit, but it isn't, it isn't part of the official teaching. And that kind of thing was possible in luncheonette. Sometimes, you know, you might meet, you know, a couple of students or something, and you'd be able to have a chat.

And, you know, it was an easy case to do that without feeling the pressure of, you know, students having to take notes or, you know, so there's something about that. There's a thing there, I mean, in the old building of the Glasgow School of Art, the Macintosh building, at Glasgow, it was designed in some way so that every little corner you turned might have a little seat or it might have a little place to lean or that every part of it had a place for an encounter or a place for, you know, reflection or thinking. And in a way, luncheonette serves a good part of that function at NCAD of being a place where you might just stop for a minute, or you might sit down for a minute and chat to someone or you know the learning is continuing to happen in sort of non-directive ways.

There's a documentary I don't know whether you've seen it. A writer called Fran Leibovitz. She's in a film that Martin Scorsese made about her it's on Netflix

Meg Luddy 13:05

Yeah!

ACA 2 13:07

Did you see it?

Meg Luddy 13:07

Is this "Pretend It's a City" or "Public Speaking"?

ACA 2 13:10

Yeah, yeah "Pretend it's a city."

Meg Luddy 13:11

Oh that's great yeah!

ACA 2 13:12

Yeah. And she talked about smoking cigarettes outside bars or something. And she said, "See this moment, this smoking cigarettes outside the bar? That's the whole history of art." You know, the sense in which the conversations that are the really important conversations happen outside of the classroom. [inaudible] Now, they happen outside of formal spaces. And I suppose, in terms of meetings between staff and students, or discussions between staff or students, those things sometimes which are unplanned, you know, on, you know, a little less forced, are possible within that environment. So there is a kind of educational potential there. But I wouldn't want to sort of overstate that that's ever become a thing that we've tried to utilize, you know, because I also want the space to be remembered as a space where kind of students were kind of free of the pressure of their kind of classes and seminars, you know, their studios and whatever. I don't know, does that make sense?

Meg Luddy 14:27

No, it does. I feel like there was a good atmosphere, you could say hello to, if you were a student, like a staff member, but you wouldn't necessarily have to be drawn into a conversation

with them. And that was kind of true of everyone. Like if you were in your group, you could say hello without having to be then. Yeah. But I'm glad that you brought up the other elements of it as well, because I feel like it's hard to get people to talk about maybe the bad sides of the social sharing and stuff... the sharing the social space as well.

ACA 2 14:57

Yeah, I wouldn't go so far as to say to talk about that as a bad side, more just that I think there's a responsibility in staff to be respectful of, you know, of a student need for, you know, independence from their, you know, from perceived authority status. They have to be able to be kind of a community of learners who kind of, you know, work together and, you know, have kind of all the benefits of a sort of peer engagement without always having staff over their shoulder.

Meg Luddy 15:39

Thank you, that was very interesting. What was your first impression of the canteen?

ACA 2 15:46

My first impression of it..., well, I mean, that it was in terms of ambience, completely different. And, that in terms of things like lighting, and, you know, the style of the tables and everything, something that was a complete project had been realized. My first impression around the time wouldn't have been as sort of formulated as this, but certainly you would have gone "Wow, it's all different", right, you know, without having kind of intervened architecturally, it was now a complete thing that made sense as an art college cafe without having any art on the walls, right? You know, it managed to situate itself within you know, an idea of art and a kind of, you know, a domain of design as well in a way that felt true and appropriate.

And, you know, the concept of the gesamtkunstwerk or, you know, the total work of art. And in a way that's the kind of you know, it's a sort of social sculpture version of where you get every detail of this environment has you know, a site specific kind of recognition of what it is as a space as a sort of possible place, but also a cultivated cared for transformation of what could be done in there. From as I say, the music through to the, you know, the furniture, to the bespoke lighting, then into the varieties of ways people might encounter each other. So, you know, queuing might be a pain in life, right? But in luncheonette queueing wasn't... depending on how the queue might be queueing was okay. The music was good, it felt ok to be there,

you'd have short chats with people that you might not, you know, sometimes some of your best planning work is done in the queue. And, but so all of those things, that the way they came together was, was important. And then, because the, I mean, like, all good, you know, hospitality.

The staff were kind of, you know, friendly and welcoming, you know, the place had a sense of welcome, you know, think of the Greek notion of guest friendship, that this sort of this concept, and it's kind of classical Greece of is it Zania, I don't know I think it's zania...the concept, which is just all about the responsibility of a host to create this condition of guest friendship, when someone is welcomed in, you know, they are the guest is a friend, and you can't break that law. That's one of the worst laws to break the law of hospitality. So that the new luncheonette was not like...it wasn't like some functional business which had, you know, which the college had to offer. It felt like something which was created for and with students in ways appropriate to college life, in ways that we're going to kind of help to sort of foster positive dimensions of college life. And it did all of that with great sort of care for the details of what it's like, you know, to be with others.

Meg Luddy 19:56

And, yeah, thank you that very much answers the next question, but I just wanted to give it to you in case you want to elaborate on it. Did anything about the canteen strike you as unusual? And I suppose that was very much it striking you as unusual as a canteen, but possibly as an artwork as well, it also struck you as unusual?

ACA 2 20:17

Yeah, I mean, there have been over decades, different varieties of artworks that, you know, that sort of create kind of communal eating and drinking situations. And in different ways, those artworks have had a kind of avant-gardist inclination, in the sense that they're like, we're going to, you know, change what an artwork can do, we're going to, you know, expand the definition of art. But, I mean, literally, I followed in those kinds of traditions, but maybe, because it was, it wasn't some sort of speculative provocation, you know, it was something that was grounded a little more in, in the kind of ongoing labor of this, you know, there's a kind of just kind of love in that or something, that there's this sense that, you know, this thing's is rewarding, but it's going to be hard work to keep going. So it wasn't... as an artwork, in that tradition of artwork, symbol, food, maybe the sense of endurance or something around it was different to other

artworks like that have done that. I don't know, I can think of an artwork where the sort of the dining scenario isn't just a sort of performance, you know, or a short one off with a kind of real, you know, active ongoing devotion and commitment and collective commitment. I'm sure there are examples. I mean, one point of reference that might be useful...it's not an artwork, but at the Städelschule in Frankfurt, which is one of the best art schools in Europe. Except that they don't offer degrees, they don't you know, you don't come out, necessarily with a qualification, you've just been to the Städelschule.

They... myself and Francis Halsall were there a few years ago and the artist Douglas Gordon was talking there about the cafe in the Städelschule . And just saying that, you know, this is where you begin. This is where you start in art school. You start in art school, with the cafe.

So it's like, almost like the kind of the spirit of art in an art school, whatever that might mean needs to come through in the spirit of sociality, communality, hospitality, that the art school is fostering so and their cafe was really good. And it was comfortable. And it was a little bit more like, you know, a cafe with a cool artwork by an amazing artist. I think it was a [inaudible] artwork or something they had on the wall. It was a really significant artist with a significant artwork commissioned for that space. But in the case of luncheonette, it was a little bit more like you didn't need artworks on the walls, because the whole thing was being configured in a way which had a kind of, you know, creative power that was valid on its own terms.

Meg Luddy 23:59

That's interesting in terms of the, like, the Fran Lebowitz thing again, like you really need to start with the smoking area or with a cafe and like, that's where the heart of it sort of comes from in things. Yeah.

ACA 2 24:11

Yeah.

Meg Luddy 24:11

I really found that as well, sorry, I wouldn't be as well versed. But I really, I was trying to research a lot of things for my final year project about that sort of more consistent cooking installation, and it was very hard to find anything besides like, Jennie that had been done. I'm

sure it exists, but it Yeah, I really I know what you're saying it's hard to, beyond the relational aesthetic stuff, it's kind of hard to...

ACA 2 24:31

Yeah, because I mean, like another person who was at the Staedelschule, as a teacher, Tobias Rehberger has created kind of Cafe environments. So like, if you go to the Venice Biennale, in the central pavilion, a cafe that's in there designed by Tobias Rehberger. Or, you know, there's other ways in which artists have designed Cafe environments, but it's not the same thing as developing a whole kind of aesthetic around different kind of food and you know, sociality, and all of that...yeah. I don't know what else to add.

Meg Luddy 25:16

No, thank you. Sorry yeah, and I also feel like you possibly mentioned this before, but um, how welcome did you feel in Luncheonette?

ACA 2 25:25

How welcome?

Meg Luddy 25:26

Yeah.

ACA 2 25:28

Very welcome. Very, very welcome. But to the point of being a little embarrassed, because sometimes I ended up there so long, that maybe people wondered, did I ever do any actual teaching or anything?

Meg Luddy 25:42

[Laughter]

ACA 2 25:44

There would be times when I'd come in first thing in the morning, and, you know, get like egg on the bread, I never, I don't eat porridge I never went for the porridge but then go and sit in a booth, and I might not have a class til like, you know, one o'clock or something, half one And

so I'd be there all morning, and I'd prepare the class there. Because, you know, it felt good to be there. And people, you know, sometimes sat down for a couple of minutes.

ACA 2 26:12

So it was incredibly good as a solitary space, as well as a social space. I found it really good working there. And, yeah, so maybe I ended up there too much. But very, very welcoming. And I mean, there were practical things, sometimes if the queue was too long, you know, at lunchtime you wouldn't stay, but or, you know, maybe, you know, sometimes there weren't enough seats or that sort of thing, but that would mean then, you know, being there earlier, or, you know, coming back a little later. I don't know what else to say about welcome. Other than, you know, I do think that you know, how welcoming it was, you know, a lot of that comes down to Jennie, you know, I mean, Jennie couldn't do this whole thing by herself, obviously, because she had a big team of people but, but Jennie created an atmosphere. You know, and like, don't get me wrong, I know this is being recorded, right? So this she'll probably laugh at this but Jennie's intimidating [laughter]

Meg Luddy 27:33

[laughter] I can admit that!

ACA 2 27:33

She's formidable, you know, but unbelievably welcoming with that. And, you know, always, always good with like, you know, I don't know, there'd be like a little bit of gossip or like a little bit of, you know, something weird has just happened and you know, those little tiny bits of chat that you know, are a distraction are brilliant, brilliant ways of creating a welcome.

Meg Luddy 28:17

I think that's impressive that she does have that intimidating like, aura, but you still feel like you can stay there for you know what I mean like, three hours doing whatever you're doing? Like I did that as well and I still felt like it was okay to do that.

ACA 2 28:33

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, intimidating is a really-

Meg Luddy 28:38

Yeah it's a bit strong.

ACA 2 28:39

Yeah, it's a bit strong. It's just formidable is a better word she's just impressive

Meg Luddy 28:43

Yeah. She's got presence.

ACA 2 28:46

Yeah.

Meg Luddy 28:48

I'm sorry. I am still amazed that you picked up your caffeine enjoyment in Luncheonette. Were you saying that earlier? That you only started drinking coffee there?

PART II

ACA 2 0:00

I would talk so fast. And you know, with such enthusiasm, I'm sure people thought I was clearly mad. But the coffee and coffee certainly set me off.

meg luddy 0:13

Probably good for those lecturing moments.

ACA 2 0:16

What's that?

meg luddy 0:16

It's probably good for those lecturing moments, you know?

ACA 2 0:19

Oh, yeah, absolutely.

meg luddy 0:24

Good performance

ACA 2 0:25

And, yeah, do you have other questions?

meg luddy 0:27

Yeah, sorry, I'm getting distracted by that. What do you think Luncheonette's attitudes toward its visitors was? You were talking about that hospitality dynamic and that guest dynamic.

ACA 2 0:42

The luncheonette attitude to the visitors was, you know, as it should be, it was welcoming. And, you know, lots of people came from outside and from the sort of neighborhood kind of offices, and whatever else people, you know, that worked more broadly on Thomas Street. So there was the relationship to visitors was, you know, great affection for students, great understanding for students, you know, warmth towards staff. But also, luncheonette became something that, you know, the wider world was drawn to, and that was really good. There was an expectation, I think there as well, like a really simple one that you would get in lots of places where you have to tidy up after yourself, and so on. I think sometimes the people from beyond NCAD didn't necessarily, you know, always do that, you know, , but this, you know, the spirit of the place was generally, you know, come sit with others tidy up after yourself, you know.

Yeah, the attitudes to its visitors was warm and inclusive. And, you know, it was also I suppose... I've spent the last week, most of the last week, in a, in a hospital in Belfast, where I've been visiting a sick family member, and the cafe, that we've been going to routinely, most days, the food is just appalling, and everything about the offer that's presented there to people, it just says they don't really care, you know, they don't care what kind of food is served, or it's just food to be served. The relationship of Luncheonette to its visitors was also one of, you know, speaking to them in ways which sort of said, try this, or, you know, join us in giving this thing a go. And, you know, it also said, "Look, here, a member of staff has recommended this thing, so we're going to do this thing," you know. So like, there was even the language that Jennie would sometimes use in writing little things that even though they're on the menu, or whatever. And the ways things were described in the menu, where there was no effort to sort of make it kind of highfalutin, it would often be in a very, very casual language that, you know,

reflected something, Jennie's personality and the personality of others involved. It was, you know, there was, again, a kind of generosity, in all of that.

You know, as I said to you, I mean, if there's sausages and chips there, and that sort of thing, people will probably eat it. When Luncheonette started, I know that some members of staff were like, I don't want to eat that weird food, you know, I don't want to eat that, you know, stuff that isn't sausages and chips. But, you know, mostly, as the game was raised as the, you know, as the food became more interesting, people were, you know, people were won over, because people tried things, give something a go, because someone would recommend it or if you try one thing and then the other thing would, you know, be trusted? Yeah, I mean, it was generous towards people that luncheonette...but it sort of asked for something back didn't it? It sort of said, you know, why don't you join us in giving this a go, like borscht for instance, right? The big purple soup? I don't, I didn't really like the borscht but I kind of like that, you know, that it was the spirit of "okay, this isn't the world's, you know, easiest soup in the world [Laughter]. You know, but we think you'll love it." And maybe there are other things that grab... you know, things were being tried, you might not have expected before, but they were, you know, they were either worth a try or they were, you know, really, really worth a try.

meg luddy 4:54

But either way they'd ask you to kind of go on the journey, and just....

ACA 2 4:57

That's a really good way of putting it. Yeah, yeah. And, like, going on a journey is right because in a way, you know, there would be small evolutions in the food. And you would I mean, there's lots of regular things, but what you would, yeah you.... would try something [inaudible] actually be trusted?

meg luddy 5:19

Sorry about that. About the cutting out. We might go back to.... Oh, sorry. Yeah, we were talking about that sort of interaction-

ACA 2 5:29

Did you need to record again?

meg luddy 5:32

Oh thank you. Yes, I will actually on this as well. I have a few going but I'll do this as well. Thank you very much. Yeah, I might go back to the sort of interactions with staff and then just sort of for you, personally, what was your interaction with Luncheonette staff like? Like, did it kind of go beyond just ordering and paying for food?

ACA 2 5:55

Yeah, well, I mean, one of them eventually ended up as one of our childminders.

meg luddy 6:05

Oh wow

ACA 2 6:11

Just want to check, because I know this person may have changed their name. Yeah, I haven't kept up to date with how they're getting along. But the then student who worked behind the counter became someone who looked after my two kids when they were a little smaller. That was because really, just the daily interactions and chats and so on. I had felt that I'd been looking for a childminder and I felt that person's manner would be appreciated by the kids. And it was. So they were really, really well liked by my two boys. So that's one instance, maybe, you know, if I was going to a cafe down the street, I don't think that would be possible. Even if that person was an NCAD student, I don't think that conversation would have been possible somewhere else. There was something about their environment, which lent itself towards, you know, towards those kinds of things. Other engagements with staff I'm trying to think?

I don't know, I mean, the staff over the years, you get a sense of different personalities, some people are quite, you know, kind of reserved, and you know, civil without being kind of friendly, and then other people are more open. And it was all okay. There was no expectation that every staff member had to be like a Starbucks employee or something. They were, it was okay for them to be, you know, a little down or a little slow. Or you know, they didn't have to be corporate cheerful. But generally they were hospitably themselves. I'm not sure what else to say other than.... Yeah, everyone was terrific. Yeah. Oh, yeah, actually, one... It's funny talking about my kids. One student also made a Halloween costume for one of my kids.

meg luddy 7:48

No way

ACA 2 7:51

Yeah. From chats over the counter. And I paid her to. She was a fashion student. And I paid her to make something. Yeah, I mean, I don't know. I don't know why these conversations happened. They were possible. You know?

meg luddy 9:18

Yeah. They had that potential for something like that to happen.

ACA 2 9:21

Yeah.

meg luddy 9:22

That's so cute.

ACA 2 9:24

Yeah. I don't know what else to say about staff just, you know, good, good, easy interactions that often then led to the unusual extensions of that. But none of it ever felt awkward or forced. People were working, but they didn't necessarily think that they were, like it didn't appear that they were, you know, working to a certain set of rules or anything.

meg luddy 10:03

Like the sociability wasn't, sorry?

ACA 2 10:11

Oh I was just saying I didn't put that very well.

meg luddy 10:14

Oh no I think that made a lot of sense. Yeah. I guess the next question-.

ACA 2 10:23

It's breaking up a wee bit

meg luddy 10:24

Yeah, sorry. I think [inaudible] bit weird. Sorry [inaudible]. Sorry about that. [inaudible] My end, I'll try this.

ACA 2 11:04

Seems you've gone there Megan,

meg luddy 11:06

Sorry. How's that? Is that slightly better, the sound?

ACA 2 11:12

I can hear you anyway. Yeah. Well, we'll just see how we get

meg luddy 11:17

Yeah, hopefully sorry. I think that's my end. I think my phone might be acting up slightly. Sorry. Just to go back to that. Can you not? You can't hear me?

ACA 2 11:38

Yeah, it's a little bit glitchy but I can hear you.

meg luddy 11:41

Okay. Sorry about that. Hopefully, it'll improve a little bit. Yeah, I think it might be the battery. Sorry. Hopefully that will work. No, but that's interesting that you were saying that level of interaction happened with the staff. The next question is, did you trust luncheonette? And I guess you definitely trusted certain staff, members of the cafe and stuff. But then I guess the cafe as a whole as well.

ACA 2 12:15

Sorry. So the question is, did I trust luncheonette?

meg luddy 12:19

Yeah, sorry.

ACA 2 12:22

Yeah, that's a really good word, actually. Because maybe, as well, for a certain kind of, like, relationship building, you know, as you're getting used to, you know, a person in your life, you're also able to kind of, if that person recommends a TV show, you might say, Okay, I'll give it a go because I trust you, you know, or a restaurant or whatever it might be. And I suppose Luncheonette, yeah. Had that. Yeah. You could, you know, you could trust that, you know, you can try food, or you know, that, you know, it would be the right kind of environment to bring people into. There's also, when Jennie would cater, you know, other events, special dinners and so on, you trusted you know, that that experience would be one that would be appropriate. And, you know, interesting. Yeah. So there was definitely a sort of trust building thing. I wonder, is that reciprocal? I don't know whether there was some kind of something expected of people who came regularly from luncheonette, was there a sense in which, you know, somehow there was a trust in the, in the community of, you know, customers? Yeah.

meg luddy 13:57

Maybe in terms of the thing you were saying about the borscht, you know, that demands a certain level of, I don't know if trust is the word, but definitely respect for the people who are coming in that they'll be up for that almost or like...

ACA 2 14:11

Yeah, absolutely. But I suppose maybe also, there's a sense of, you know, consistency and regularity. You know, one of the things that they...luncheonette created something, which was you know, which was a service but it was also about a community and if you're part of that community, then you show up. And so, I guess once we started coming we felt, you know, we wanted to keep coming.

meg luddy 14:50

Is food important to you? And if it is, how is it important to you?

ACA 2 15:00

Yeah, I don't know I have a funny.... it is. Yeah, it is, I'm not a good cook. I'm not. You know, I'm not a bad cook. I like really, really good food when I can get it, I can be quite lazy about food. I'm very lazy about vegetarian food, one of the great things about luncheonette was I might go a full week without eating any meat because of what Luncheonette offers.

So I mean, I don't have a sort of devoted kind of, you know, relationship with sophisticated or interesting food. But a situation like Luncheonette helps to foster that. You know, it makes you think about it, it also gives you sort of a sense of option and opportunity in relation to food, sort of opens things up a little. Like going back to that hospital example that I used before. What they seem to presume, in some ways, is that the sort of, you know, chips and burgers and stuff they're offering is what people want. That's what they want.

And I know at NCAD that there were people, who wouldn't go to luncheonette, because you didn't get chips and burgers and stuff well you do get burgers, but you know what I mean? But, if you were to go on the journey with luncheonette, something would open up, you know, your habits would change your, you know, your preferences would change. So something like, you know, my relationship to food is, you know, yes, like nice food and reasonably open minded, you know. Can cook a little not great, my wife's a good cook. But I can be lazy about it but something like luncheonette was definitely always kind of helping to kind of foster a sense of, sort of, you know, your food life can be a little better daily in a non pretentious way. These kinds of small steps in these kinds of directions, you know, it was always gorgeous. And it was always clever. There was a kind of wit in the food as well. If you know what I mean, like, just in terms of the way things might be described. And so on...But it was never pretentious.

meg luddy 17:48

Yeah

ACA 2 17:48

I don't think... There was a great sense of, you know, anyone could try this or, you know, play with it. A good sense to get, like in an art college that people are sometimes just playfully trying something out.

meg luddy 18:07

Yeah, I feel like the hospital example is quite a good, dramatic one just in terms of like, I was also visiting someone pretty regularly. I can't remember what year but I would have been in luncheonette a lot as well at the time. And it wasn't so much that it was the like... I suppose they're very unusual foods in luncheonette but it was more so that they seem to care about what they were giving you as opposed to the hospital I was visiting didn't particularly seem to... because there is a way to do the kind of chips thing where you do still feel like they're trying

to give you a bit of energy or something or I don't know. Yeah, I feel like it was a good one to bring up. Because they're both institutions and everything.

ACA 2 18:45

Yeah, yeah. And, I mean, the people who work in a hospital situation, they work really hard, and they may have put thought and care into what they're doing. But it still seems to be based on a really kind of lowest common denominator idea of what people want. And sometimes, luncheonette, I think, when you sort of give people you know, another option, different kinds of opportunities, small changes, in what they might, you know... people will go for it, and they'll go for it if you can win their trust.

meg luddy 19:24

Yeah, the trust thing again, that's so true. Did you have any particular special requests in Luncheonette and were they met?

ACA 2 19:35

[Inaudible] You know, I didn't eat certain things. I didn't don't like porridge so I didn't eat porridge. Not sure what else. But from my perspective, I know that question has a specific relevance to people with particular dietary needs, but from my perspective, one of the nice things was that I wasn't being picky that I was able to just go "Yeah, no, give me it as you have it. I want to have it as you designed it."

meg luddy 20:05

Yeah.

ACA 2 20:07

But you know, I don't have dietary requirements. I don't know whether other people, you know, have specific needs [inaudible].

meg luddy 20:15

Yeah, it's nice, though, if you don't, that you could just go and, like, trust what they were going to provide you with?

ACA 2 20:22

Yeah. And often, like the things that, you know, in some ways I wouldn't, I wouldn't normally take like horseradish or something. You know, not something I want. But maybe if I ended up in something I'd go like, "Well, you know, like, Okay, well, I'll give it a go. "

meg luddy 20:43

Yeah.

ACA 2 20:44

Because in the context, I expect it's gonna work.

meg luddy 20:50

You kind of mentioned this before that, maybe they did and there is a sort of reciprocal thing going on there. But do you think luncheonette needed you? And kind of how do you think they needed you?

ACA 2 21:02

God, yeah, I mean, obviously, to turn up and buy things.

meg luddy 21:07

Yeah.

ACA 2 21:07

Because they needed income, I suppose they also needed that, they needed a community, didn't it? They needed to be like almost, to use a kind of religious term, like a congregation rather than a sort of consumer base. So it was, it was a, you know, a community of people who came and shared space together. And you know, I took pleasure in what was being prepared, I suppose. Yeah. Like, anyone who cooks something, wants to see the smiles on the faces of people who eat it.

Yeah, I mean, in that sense, yes. It was a kind of... That would have needed...what else would they have needed? I don't know.

I mean, as staff, maybe there's a there's a way of thinking about meetings, you know, because, you know, it's more than it being, you know, a sort of student cafe, you know, it was a place as

you mentioned at the beginning, you know, where there might be, you know, passing encounters, either just social or intellectual, between staff and students, but that it needed us to be...well it needed us to not be assholes you know? [Laughter] it needed us to be humble. And to be you know, just someone in the community without hierarchy.

meg luddy 22:56

That's a very good point. Yeah. Someone else mentioned that it was a kind of a space where people would be a bit calmer and there wouldn't be those kind of confrontations that might happen in other spaces but that was as much from your like, from what you're saying that's as much from you showing up and doing that as opposed to like... it's yeah, that's very reciprocal that everyone agrees to have it be a nice space I guess it's a very basic way of putting that but?

ACA 2 23:25

Yeah, yeah. I don't remember, I mean, despite their you know, the various tensions between staff members that's inevitable in any big institution or even small institution, I don't remember ever having a cross word with anyone, not that I have huge fights with people in NCAD anyway but.

meg luddy 23:52

Definitely not in Luncheonette [laughter]. Yeah. And then going off that I guess. I remember you were talking about the music and everything but what was the atmosphere like in general? Like do you remember particular sounds and smells and things?

ACA 2 24:09

It depends on the time of day. I mean, I often liked it most first thing in the morning and I would sometimes come in and the benches wouldn't be taken down and sometimes you'd have to take a bench down off the chair and actually one time I actually dropped a bench on my foot and had to go to a&e.

meg luddy 24:28

Oh!

ACA 2 24:30

But it was fine. I just hobbled around for a couple of days. But that was just because I was a complete idiot. [Laughter]

meg luddy 24:39

[Laughter]

ACA 2 24:39

But...Oh Jesus you should really cut that, don't-cut that out of the recording

meg luddy 24:50

[Laughter]

Leave that out of the chat [Laughter]

[Laughter] Liability purposes.

ACA 2 24:53

Yeah. But no at that time of the morning you'd come in and it would be, a few regulars in first thing. You know, there'd be a bit of space and, you know. I generally get tea first then get a pot of tea, and that like the egg in the bread and go and sit in the booth. You know, for a while, I tried to make a commitment to just read first thing and not do any kind of laptop stuff, you know, that went well for about a month a week maybe. But that sense of coming into that really calm environment first thing in the morning, maybe having a little, you know, few pleasant words with whoever was behind the counter. And yeah, there would be a big thing of porridge, I wouldn't have that. But there would be smells of coffee and all that kind of thing, you know, general sense of sort of, you know, focused kind of business in the kitchen. Yeah, I mean, it was nice to come in at that time. And then, you know, you get like these swells of activity around like eleven o'clock and so on. And, you know, it's mad busy lunchtime...I mean different times of day there were different, there was a different feel to it but I think I particularly like that first thing in the morning. I'm not sure whether that answers the question but

meg luddy 26:18

No it's nice

ACA 2 26:20

But there was definitely a sense of rhythm and you know, mood changes, you know, as the day went on they all had different kinds of meaning and value.

meg luddy 26:40

What did you usually order in Luncheonette?

ACA 2 26:43

Well, I don't know. Francis Halsall claims that it was... I think he claims that the half soup was his idea, right?

meg luddy

Ok [Laughter]

ACA 2

Which might be completely wrong, right? But we were getting this for a while. It might be like either a sandwich and a half soup. Or you'd be getting you know, like a grain pot and a soup or something. But for a while I was getting the soup and the sandwich and it was just like it was always amazing but too much so the half soup thing became... became something. So generally I was trying to in terms of what I ordered, it would be like any sandwich. Sometimes the ones with meat sometimes not and then I would always want to try the grain pots and I really, really liked the kind of burrito soup one, if the soup was a burrito or if a burrito was a soup thing. There was another one that was a kind of slightly spicy soup. I can't remember what it was called. And yeah, beetroot burgers and all these things that were really great. But I also ate a lot of flapjacks.

meg luddy 28:13

They were popular!

ACA 2 28:19

With the yogurt on them.

PART III

ACA 2 0:00

I had way too many. I must have been piling on the pounds but I would order those. And then as I say, I would order one egg in the morning.

Yeah, I mean, it's kind of everything except for borscht really. Which wasn't that it was bad. It just wasn't for me.

meg luddy 0:23

Yeah, I feel like if they can't turn you on to it, it might just be a... you know, it's not. You're not friends with the borscht, maybe. I am also not friends with the borscht [Laughter].

ACA 2 0:34

Like, virtually every album I can think of, by bands I admire has a song where I'm a bit like, "eh" you know, even the greatest, greatest albums have like one song where it's like, "that one, ugh it's a little bit...". And it's almost like that one being there is part of a process where, you know, everything else around it, then, you know, improves. Or do you know, like the Japanese concept of wabi sabi like, you know?

megan 1:02

Yeah

ACA 2 1:03

Where, you have a porcelain vase or something that has like, the tiniest imperfection, and it's [inaudible] you know, that's where the beauty [inaudible] somebody's saying that the borscht [inaudible] [laughter]

megan 1:22

oh no

Have you ever been in the kitchen?

ACA 2 1:26

No. And I know that staff and students at one stage, I don't know whether it lasted, were able to come in and do things. I suppose it's gone away?

Have you?

meg luddy 1:51

I haven't, I've never been in there. But apparently it was common from the question. I didn't realise people were going in and I didn't know that was allowed. Can you describe the queue? I think we talked about-

ACA 2 2:06

Can I describe the queue?

meg luddy 2:07

Yeah.

ACA 2 2:07

So the queue would be... right. Sometimes you'd go and join the queue, and you get some lovely person that you don't talk to very often. You know, like, someone like Leah Hilliard, right? Who's in media who you don't get to see that often. Enter the queue and then, by the time you get to the front of the queue, you know, you've had, like, the most hilarious chat, and, you know, really [inaudible] day, might have been that chat in the queue. Or I'd bump into someone like Siuan Hanrahan and there'd be some [inaudible] bit of academic business around, you know, student grades or something, and we'd have to work at a time when everyone could meet. And suddenly in the queue, you get that thing finalized, you know, where after like, 20 minutes in the queue you could, just do it. So the queue could be this place of kind of convenient, quick business, or of, you know, sort of incidental kind of, you know, wholly trivial, but brilliant chats, or a little moment of, you know, taking out my phone, you know, checking, you know, changing my fantasy football team, you know. So just like, I think I said before, like, you know, we're trained to think of queueing as a sort of pain in the ass, like, a drain on our time. But mostly queueing, in luncheonette was, you know, listening to music, maybe chatting to someone, you know, it's okay to not be quick.

And then if you, you know, if you needed to be quick you didn't you just, you didn't queue, you know, you came back later or something. So, I mean, I think, yeah, there's probably a whole kind of philosophy around that, that would relate to different kinds of international food cultures. But, you know, the idea that we would, you know, get a really nicely made coffee, and, you know, and others around us would get really nicely made freshly made coffees, but we would absolutely have to have it within, you know, a minute. I mean, in some countries that would be absurd right? Because if the thing is gonna be done nicely, it's gonna be done well and you're gonna have, you know, a little interaction like that, you know. And that also, we saw during COVID how much we lost from incidental interactions. From things like queues or encounters, you know, with staff and coffee shops and all of that, you know. All of that was gone in my most ways overnight. And, you know, that's, you know, a big part of being alive. Is these little kind of moments where you may just chat to someone that you didn't expect to chat to. I'm not saying queueing is great. Queueing wasn't an issue for me in luncheonette, because luncheonette created a brand in which slowing down for a minute was okay. Maybe even important.

meg luddy 5:38

Yeah. Like a pocket almost of time.

ACA 2 5:44

Yeah.

meg luddy 5:46

What did you like most about Luncheonette?

ACA 2 5:56

I mean, if I think it would probably, it's probably not the most helpful answer, but it would probably be that, that it was.... this kind of sense of it as a totality, you know. That it became a you know, it was, it wasn't just that I liked the flap jacks the best or, you know, I liked having a quiet seat? I liked having a quiet seat in there with that music and those people and that lighting and, you know. I liked that it all mattered, everything. Everything mattered, and everything mattered together. And that all that was being done to create a place that would be great for me, great for others. Great for the people who work there. But it was all done with love, I guess.

meg luddy 6:52

Like a complete experience.

ACA 2 6:54

Yeah.

meg luddy 6:56

What did you like least about it? Was there anything that frustrated you about it?

ACA 2 6:59

I'm sure I can come up with something. No, no, I mean, no, I don't think there was a thing I liked least about it...No, I think I would just be sort of coming up with something for the sake of it.

meg luddy 7:29

Sure. Did you ever bring friends or family from outside the college to Luncheonette?

ACA 2 7:35

Yes. Lots, you know, almost kind of nervously like you're introducing your, you know, your partner to your parents. You know, it's just you wanted people to, you know, you wanted the people who were with to like it?

meg luddy 7:59

And get it.

ACA 2 8:00

Yeah.

meg luddy 8:04

You talked about using the sort of those alcoves for reading and sort of working on your own in the morning, but did you use the dining room for meetings as well?

ACA 2 8:16

A few things where there would be a need for a kind of informal meeting, you know, myself and some other members of staff, visual culture and fine art, you know, you might have small groups three or four, where you go in, you know, you'd sort out something that you need to sort out. But I didn't tend to use it a lot for like, really hard, formal work. You know, just sometimes, you know, an informal chat to work through something we were working on. Sometimes you might have meetings with someone from outside, you know, someone who's visiting from, you know, visiting the college for some reason, you know, so you might have a meeting there, where you're like an external examiner or something, you might sit and talk there, but you wouldn't have your external examiner, formal meeting there you'd just meet people for breakfast there. So a certain form of meeting happened, but also a form of meeting that made the other meetings easier if you know what I mean, because you could do little bits of things there in that environment. And generally people from let's say, for example, external examiners, they loved it, they would always come and express great appreciation for what we had there.

meg luddy 9:33

Nice, like it's a good place for initial sort of, like informal just having a chat moment.

ACA 2 9:40

Always conscious too, I mean, with meetings that, you know, there might be people in the next booth or sitting nearby who were not at meetings and wanted to, you know, be relaxed and so to have, you know, academic staff kind of, you know, topping the table if they disagreed or whatever would it be just really wrong. So a certain kind of working through something in an informal way. Yes. Anything that approached formality would have been, I think, inappropriate.

meg luddy 10:15

You kind of talked about becoming friendly with staff and things. But did you ever make any new acquaintances or have experiences with strangers in Luncheonette? Like there would have been people coming in and out a lot?

ACA 2 10:28

No, but I'll tell you an odd one right? I mean, yeah, maybe getting to know people or encountering strangers. Someone I know a little, I was in the queue with that person, once. The queue was quite slow that day. And the person was chatting to me about something that was

happening in his life. He ended up telling me, like, every single thing about personal hardship that had happened to him, and how far that he had sunk in, you know, in terms of mental health, and all this stuff. And I really know the person only to say hi to every now and then. But in the queue in that moment, this kind of went like you know just way further in terms of that person's inner life than I could possibly imagine. And whatever it was, in that moment, this person felt that this was, this is a moment to kind of unload all this stuff and then sat afterwards and talked and so on and so on. But it was a really, it was a really peculiar one, for whatever reason, that person thought at that moment in that queue, waiting for flapjacks or coffee or whatever, that he felt comfortable enough to start talking about something that had been really a strain in his life. So, in a way that was to do with luncheonette and to do with that guy, but I suspect it was also something about the way in which, you know, you stand talking to someone you don't know that well, and if the environments, right suddenly you feel like you can say things you've never said before. So that happened. Yeah, I mean, there are other things I guess. You'd see regulars in Luncheonette. Maybe you would say hi to... I don't know, I mean do you have a particular kind of encounter in mind? Or a particular kind of...?

meg luddy 12:31

No, no, that's fascinating as well. Yeah, I just I feel like the queue was an interesting place for that to happen. People you didn't know that well, feeling comfortable. I've had that happen. Not quite that intense, but similar sort of things where I didn't know people that well like acquaintances, and yes, it's very interesting, that it was a space like that.

ACA 2 12:52

Yeah. Yeah. And it's funny as well, like, you know, in the queue too, you know, where you get like... you over hear little things that people are saying and get all sort of insights into student experience. I saw once a one student put ten sugars in a cup of coffee, I was like "woah, ok".

meg luddy 13:12

[Laughter] That's how things are going.

ACA 2 13:16

Is that what people do today? Anyway, no, yeah. There were little moments like that. Again, I don't think you'd be doing that in Starbucks, I just don't think.... I don't mean the sugar I mean, the-

meg luddy 13:35

No, yes sorry. Yeah. Do you have a sense that your presence in luncheonette was felt or made an impact? Like do you think they noticed you?

ACA 2 13:46

Only probably, in that they wanted to make space for others. Like, "is he still sitting there all morning?" [inaudible] that table. I don't know maybe? Yeah. I'm not sure.

megan 14:08

What difference does Luncheonette make to your time in college?

ACA 2 14:12

I think I said earlier, it definitely made me want to be in college at times when I wasn't needed. If I didn't have to be there sometimes I wouldn't be there but with luncheonette there I would prefer to be there than to be at home or whatever. It was a good place to work. And a good place to not work [inaudible]. So all of these things added up to you know, good reasons to be there. Yeah. What was the question again?

megan 14:50

It was just kind of... Do you think your presence had an impact in Luncheonette?

ACA 2 14:54

Was that not the question before?

meg luddy 14:59

Oh, my God, sorry, it was. Sorry I have the wrong one pulled up. What differences did Luncheonette make to your time in college? Sorry, that was my fault.

ACA 2 15:05

I mean, it made a difference in terms of the sense of yes, I wanted to be there. It also, I think, genuinely helped to foster a better sense of community in the college. There were some people who didn't go to luncheonette. Some members of... certain members of staff who continued to do their own thing, and so on. That's fine. Not everyone has to do the same thing. But, but

among the people, I think, who went regularly, I think better relationships were created, you know, a situation was available for people to connect, that was not forced, it was, you know, it was kind of constructed, but organic at the same time. So it made an unbelievable difference, like in terms of that popular term that we use today well being, you know. In a sort of sense of institutional wellbeing it had a real value. But it wasn't bland in that regard. You know, you know, it was, as I say, you know, your term like you went on a journey with it. And-

megan 16:30

Hi sorry about that ACA 2.

ACA 2 16:32

That's okay, it just stopped. Anyway, we're probably nearly done

meg luddy 16:36

Yeah, sorry, this is running a bit long. I might just ask you two more questions, if that's okay?

ACA 2 16:40

Yeah. Did you need to put the thing back on?

meg luddy 16:43

Oh, yes, actually I will. Thank you. How connected do you think luncheonette was to NCAD? Do you think they were on the same page in terms of atmosphere and tone and ethics?

ACA 2 17:00

When it first began, I think it was a resetting of the tone and ethics of NCAD. I think it was, you know, it was certainly returning to some notion, of something that NCAD needed to have at its core, you know, whether it was this sense of generosity, hospitality, you know, inclusiveness? You know, all of the things that we could say about luncheonette were like, there. There's your... there's NCAD, you know. And as arguments were emerging about, you know, what NCAD should be like, you know, what, what direction should it take?

You just kind of needed to look at luncheonette, you know, where things were high quality, where things were cared for, where there was thought behind things, you know, where there was, you know, a good experience of kind of that connection, all of this stuff, you know, that

maybe in some parts of NCAD in certain ways were breaking down or had at various stages, you know, prior to Sarah Glennie being around, you know, there were things which were kind of cracking in NCAD a bit. But if you, if you looked to luncheonette, you could see things which were, you know, which were, it was more than that it fitted into NCAD, it was resetting NCAD. It was really kind of helping to kind of make NCAD you know, return to some fundamental guidance.

meg luddy 18:36

Sort of Lighthouse.

ACA 2 18:38

Yeah

meg luddy 18:38

And then last one, sorry about the length, would you describe luncheonette as profit driven?

ACA 2 18:45

Profit driven?

meg luddy 18:46

Yeah.

ACA 2 18:49

I mean it wouldn't occur to me to use that kind of language.

You know, except if we kind of completely, reimagine what we might mean by profit. What kind of a gain, there might be out of that venture. And all of the things that, you know, luncheonette and its customers profit from are, you know, we're, it's sort of, you know, commitments. You know, it's kind of everything it cultivated and cared for, you know, there was a huge degree of added value from luncheonette. Beyond the sort of, you know, finances and hard numbers.

megan 19:48

Thank you very much. Thank you. You were very generous with your time and your answers.

ACA 2 19:53

Just ended up chatting.

meg luddy 19:56

It was great, thank you so much,

ACA 2 19:57

Because I was having coffee before hand

meg luddy 19:59

[laughter] I benefited from the-

ACA 2 20:06

If anything comes up or you've got a question about anything... Sorry for saying Jennie was intimidating.

That's okay, don't worry. I think it's okay.

meg luddy 20:16

Thank you very, very much. Yeah, they were very thoughtful answers, very interesting.

Appendix J: Interview with NAC 1

megan 24:24

So might just jump right in.

[Text removed for anonymity]

Meg Luddy 0:38

And are you full time or part time?

NAC 1 0:40

Sorry?

Meg Luddy 0:41

Are you full time or part time?

NAC 1 0:42

Full time. Yeah, full time. Full time. And I've worked in the college since 2011.

Meg Luddy 0:48

Great. Great. Thank you so much. That was the next question, thanks!

NAC 1 0:50

Okay, [laughter]

Meg Luddy 0:55

So you were there before 2013 when Luncheonette...?

NAC 1 0:57

I was. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. So I was there... started in 2011. And I think downstairs, there was some sort of a cafe thing arranged for maybe part of the time and then it kind of disappeared. I don't think they were able to make money at it. And it just wasn't working. And nobody ever ate there. [laughter]

Meg Luddy 1:27

[laughter]

NAC 1 1:29

Yeah, sorry. Can you just give me one minute, the cat wants to get in?

Meg Luddy 1:36

Oh no worries take your time!

NAC 1 1:36

She's meowing here. Sorry, she'll probably start making noise now at us. Yeah, no, that's fine. So yeah, so in 2013. I think Jennie used to come in and out of the college a bit doing pop ups. She you know, doing soup in the concourse and you know, maybe the degree show or whatever. She was kind of beginning to become a bit familiar around the campus.

And then I don't know what her.... I don't I don't know her...what her link to college was, who it was through exactly. I don't remember- I wasn't involved in any of that. But I was. But we just you know, over the summer of 2013, there was all this noise going on down in the basement and all the dust rising and all the you know, sanding and sawing away so there's a lot of activity and this mad woman in her dungarees was up and down and setting off the alarm and all sorts [laughter] I think it was the I don't know the dust was setting off the fire alarm and all of this all summer so we were all there, "what on earth is going on downstairs?" But then she opened

the luncheonette which was just you know, amazing when it opened. So I don't know whether you want me to talk a little bit about that or?

Meg Luddy 3:03

Yeah, I might just go back for a second if that's okay, sorry? Just in case

NAC 1 3:07

Don't want you to miss any of your questions there.

Meg Luddy 3:08

Thank you.

Do you remember the canteen that was there before, I know people were avoiding it but can you describe it?

NAC 1 3:16

Yeah, I do. Yeah everybody avoided it. You could get coffee but the coffee machine was the same as the machine up in the staff room. So there was at that time some kind of coffee machine. It wasn't a full barista machine but there was some sort of you know...you could get that same coffee up in the staff room. It was kind of you know, chips and chips and stuff and maybe... I have a memory of... kind of maybe sausages and things I don't know, I never actually ate there. I never actually once ate there, it just was unappealing. It was kind of like the old style work canteen, you know lift up, this might be "what's that that's kind of spaghetti" not spaghetti bolognese but maybe something ricey or you know chili con carne or something and then chips and beans or whatever, but I don't think many people ate there.

They certainly could not make any money. They weren't able to turn a profit on it anyway. So at that time, the, what was it called the gallery down the road from the campus was kind of like the staff canteen really. Staff would have gone off, you know, wander down the road into the gallery to have their kind of coffee at 11 o'clock or whatever. Yeah, so that was Yeah.

Meg Luddy 4:49

Wasn't very visited.

NAC 1 4:50

Yeah. Yeah, that's all I remember about it. Vaguely. And would never... I actually don't think I ever ate there. You know?

Meg Luddy 5:00

Okay, thank you. So going back to what you were saying so you remember luncheonette not just opening but preparing to open-

NAC 1 5:07

Preparing to open, I remember preparing to open and then opening. And it was really, you know, it was a wonder to behold. It was just a beautiful space for a start, which was really appreciated in the college. It was a beautiful space, and the food was just lovely. It was just, you know, really nice food, good food. It was, you know, JennIE was there behind, you know, really, her presence was very, she had a big presence, you know, she was there, she was there every day. It was staffed by - there were a lot of students who were kind of, you know, serving and all of that so there'd be familiar students.

So it just was a very, very, I suppose it was a very unifying kind of, you know, element to the campus, when it opened. Everybody could agree that that was just wonderful. You know, nobody ever disagreed that that wasn't a good thing or a wonderful thing.

At that time, in 2013, there was a lot of, I suppose, difficulties in the college, there's a lot of discourse, there was a lot of disagreements about various, you know, directions, the college was taking. There was a lot of discontent, there was kind of various unrest. And over that year, you know, over the coming years, there was a lot of kind of, you know, there were kind of various actions and things going on at the time. I'd have to think about the actual sequence of it all, but it was a very unhappy time, particularly unhappy time with students and staff. But the luncheonette was the one unifying thing that everybody could agree on was fantastic. And that it was one of the, it was kind of the best thing about NCAD. In many ways at the time. And people who, at the time we had, we had started, we were working with UCD, that was kind of the beginning of they were our academics- Sorry, that cat is now...

I don't know if you can hear her. She's very old and deaf, so she doesn't realize she's so loud. Cmon missus over here.

So visitors used to come into the campus, you know, I remember, you know, from UCD,

I remember, you know, we would have dealt a lot at the time with the head of architecture there, and that, and the head of design in UCD. And I'm just trying to think of his name, but they all came in and they were all jealous and all like, you know...So it was like something we had that was better than anybody else had any other student, any other university student cafeteria type facility. So it really was kind of, you know, just constant positive positive, not a, you know, agreed by all this was, you know, a really lovely place, really lovely space. I think the fact that it was such a lovely space as well, you know, it's down in the basement. So there's no natural light.

But it was just such a welcoming place, you could go in and sit down. Somewhere to go and session, "will we go down, have our coffee downstairs," and you could actually sit there and chat. And you could bring, you know, visitors down there, if you had people in, you know, the board used to meet down there. And they would have a big table reserved, and they'd sit and they'd eat the same food in and amongst all the..., so it was really, I suppose, in many ways it captured the essence of what was NCAD or what.... I mean, there was all this negative, negative stuff going on and a lot of disagreements about stuff. But essentially, there was always in essence an agreement, what NCAD was, and what the good things about it were. And I suppose luncheonette in many ways, was kind of a manifestation of that it was where you could still despite everything else, you could still go there.

You know, students and staff mingling, just eating you know, just a nice relaxed space, where you could bring people and be proud of it. Oh, yeah. So anything else? I don't know, what else what other memories I mean, there would have been I mean, it was just lovely, you know, and then at the degree show, it kind of moved outdoors and it kind of provided the food and the drink and the ambience and all of that for the for the degree show, which was the other great day in, NCAD, during the year. So you know, if there were, you know, ministerial visits or you know, other kinds of visits, you know, the luncheonette would provide the food and the, I suppose the hospitality for those events, and you could always rely on it on being kind of, you know, true to itself and not selling out. And it was still, this is what it was. And so visitors got to see that and got to kind of experience it. And yeah, so yeah, yeah. Anything else you want to prompt me because I'm trying to think of other aspects?

Meg Luddy 10:27

I was gonna ask, did you go often when Luncheonette was there?

NAC 1 10:30

Yes. I used to go every day.

Meg Luddy 10:34

Oh, yeah,

NAC 1 10:34

I would go twice a day. So I went down to see it was underneath my office, or we were very close to it. So I used to go get my coffee in the morning. And try not to make eye contact with the scones, you know?[Laughter]

Meg Luddy 10:50

[Laughter]

NAC 1 10:50

Try not occasionally. They have to be, you know, occasionally the scones would kind of get the better of me. So that was the morning and then I usually went if I was on campus, I'd go in and get something for lunch, you know, the soup or whatever else. And then sometimes in the afternoon, or a little bit after lunch, I might get the, you know, the lemon kind of drink with ginger and that, and that was lovely and soothing and not full of caffeine. So yeah, I would have gone generally when I was on campus. And when it was open during term time, I would have gone probably at least once, twice, sometimes three times during the day.

So yeah, I did go a lot. So I was upstairs, my office is directly upstairs. So I got all the smells drifting up. Because there's a door in my office that actually leads to the stairs that goes down into the

Meg Luddy 11:54

Yes yeah.

NAC 1 11:55

But there's this door that comes up. And sometimes people will be downstairs, it was very noisy downstairs and they'd go into the stairwell to have a private conversation, and I could hear the whole conversation.[laughter]

Meg Luddy 12:09

[laughter]

NAC 1 12:09

Because I was there. And it was as if they were in my room talking. But you'd hear the hum, the hum of the chat downstairs rising up, and the smells, the lovely baking in the morning and all the lovely smells. So it was just, part of the part of it all, you know, and I love the hum of the chat. And you know, it meant it was term time, as opposed to summer is different. It's quiet.

So it was, yeah, it was a really nice.... It was just part of the routine and part of the college. So yeah, and, you know, I would have gone, you know, down on my own, you know, gone down with colleagues, somebody was around, "let's go get a coffee," you know, and it didn't matter whether you went down on your own or not, there was always somebody standing in the queue, who you'd chat to. It was a great place. Actually, I often did kind of business, waiting in the queue, somebody needed to have a chat, which was there. So you'd have the chat, or you'd have the conversation or people saw you and they wanted something, to say something or they needed something from you. So there was a lot of that in the queue.

While you're going in to get your lunch, a lot of that, you know, or people you mightn't see, you might only see in a big meeting, you know, twice a year, they're there and you get to chat. So it was a space for you know, meeting other colleagues without having to kind of arrange it, particularly, you know, they would be there? So that was always nice. And it was always nice to see the students and see what they're wearing and see what shoes are on this year

Meg Luddy 13:52

Yeah!

NAC 1 13:52

So that was always great.

You know, you just had to try and avoid, you know, 11 o'clock, or, you know, there were certain moments where, like, you know, it was just everybody was there. But, no, that was great. Yeah, it was nice to see colleagues from around, you know, other parts of the campus and to see the students. And I often met students, and chatted to them, and I would have met them on the way into the college, either at an open day or at some kind of other event. And you see them standing there, and you have a chat, and it's kind of "Oh, you're here now, and how is that?" so that was always nice. And then as they kind of went on through the years, you'd see them again, time to time.

Yeah, so when I worked upstairs. And at that time, there was a lot of kind of, a lot of the colleagues in my office would have been there a long time. And were a bit suspicious about this kind of luncheonette downstairs, and never ventured down. They felt a little bit kind of, you know, maybe intimidated by it or a little bit what's all that down, there might be funny food. So, one point kind of shortly after it opened, maybe a couple of months after it opened, we all went down and we had a lovely lunch there. And they were kind of delighted to get down there and see what all the buzz was about and see what was happening and see what they'd been hearing about and they would have...and like everybody from the area would have popped down to get their..... Once they got familiar with it and once they knew what was there, they were popping down to get their scones or their coffee or their whatever.

Yeah, and it was nice people from outside from the street used to come in and kind of people working around who knew about it used to pop in to get their lunch, you know, pick up lunch or whatever. So it's always quiet when they're not open, campus always feels kind of off. There's kind of it's working, it's term time students are in, staff are in and then there's the times when nobody's there, and it's just there's a lot of staff like ourselves, the kind of the Student Services staff or HR accounts, we're all there when nobody else is there. At that time, we got to wander out onto the street, and we see what it's all about out there. And we become refamiliar, you know, with whatever the new coffee shop is on the street. And so, yeah, so that so yeah it's fine. Although it is nice when it's back. It's nice.

[Inaudible]

Meg Luddy 16:24

Sorry just that marker of it becoming lively again.

NAC 1 16:32

Sorry?

Meg Luddy 16:33

Sorry just that marker of it becoming lively again.

NAC 1 16:33

Yes, exactly.

Exactly. Yeah, yeah, yeah. So yeah, so I think, it really did you know as a space where you could get lovely food, and you could go and chat and relax, and, you know, eat good food and kind of meet all your nice colleagues. I think it really worked beyond what you could imagine something like that would do. It was transformative in the space.

And, you know, what the impact on the college was? It was quiet and understated. But it was enormous, you know, it was, you know, and it's really hard to imagine not having something similar there. Now, you know, I know Jennie has moved on but Siobhan is there now, and she's kind of, it feels similar, you know, there's the same kind of food and ethos to the place. So it's like, figuring out this kind of thing and space and this area in that kind of, you know, context really works. And it does, and Jennie's gone, but it's still working in a similar way. You know, it's still there. It's still, yeah. So it's been a bit sad over COVID. It's been so patchy and in and out. And, you know, that's been kind of hard for the staff to kind of run that, but it's hard for anybody trying to do anything over the last... So that's all done. Now. We're all back to normal. So looking forward to next year, and, you know, [inaudible] occasional slow. Yeah.

Meg Luddy 18:15

Just to go back to what you were saying about it being nice to sort of get that interaction with the students. You were there before luncheonette was around. Was that new to sort of be sharing social space with students?

NAC 1 18:26

It was new. Yeah, it was, there was no other social space? There was no social space actually. No, not not. I mean, there was a staff room. But that's kind of noisy and loud and busy. And it's not quite the same.

Meg Luddy 18:44

Yeah.

NAC 1 18:45

It didn't, it didn't have the same sort of ...it didn't have the same impact for some reason you know. It wasn't as friendly? Or as kind of...you know, when you're down in the luncheonette, and you're kind of waiting to get your food and you're in that atmosphere. Nobody is cross about things. Whereas you could be up in the staff room, which is kind of white and open and besides, you know, the director's office and beside the boardroom, and staff might be there being cross about things and they see you and they might just, you know, it's not as.... I mean, people aren't unfriendly, but it's really not... It's a different atmosphere to the luncheonette, which is, I suppose it is a neutral space. But it's... neutral sounds bland, but it's neutral plus lots of nice...

Meg Luddy 19:38

Yes.

NAC 1 19:39

warm, welcoming, you know. But it's not... Yeah, it's not, I suppose, it's not a college space and stuff as such.

But certainly I haven't thought about that. But the difference between sitting down in the luncheonette or sitting in the staff room to have coffee Well, apart from the fact that the coffee would be much nicer [laughter]. It's a bit more tense in the staffroom, or has been, you know, it could be more tense. You know, it's a bit more, because the college can be quite oppositional in terms of there's this group, or there's that group where they think- you know. But you don't get that in the luncheonette. You didn't get that in the luncheonette in the queue. So whether it was students or whether it was staff, it was a different kind of interaction. But definitely, in terms of just meeting students and chatting and seeing what they're wearing, and you know, hearing the chat, that would have only been, in the luncheonette.

You know, either waiting to get your food or if you sit down on a table, you know, the communal eating? You know, you'd have students and staff kind of sitting around or sitting at the same table. What was I thinking about there? Yeah, the music, the playlists, love that, there was always lovely music playing. There was always great music. So it was nice. Yeah, music was always good.

Meg Luddy 21:10

Were there-sorry.

NAC 1 21:12

Go ahead.

Meg Luddy 21:13

I was gonna ask you about the students/staff sharing space thing, were there any sort of frustrating elements to that? That kind of like having to...?

NAC 1 21:22

No.

Meg Luddy 21:22

No?

NAC 1 21:23

No, I don't, I don't recall any. No. I mean, I suppose if there was a long queue, you'd kind of, you know, "we'll come back," you know. But that wasn't a staff/student thing, it was just, you know, there were lots of people there. And it didn't even feel that frustrating, you know. And over the years, I suppose the people who work there, you'd get to know them, they'd be there a couple of years, or they'd be back or they were doing something and, you know, they're off to do their masters or they're off to do whatever, and then they're back, you know, so it was nice to kind of, you know, the staff coming and going was a nice aspect of it as well.

Yeah.

Meg Luddy 22:05

I feel like maybe you've answered this, possibly, but what was your first impression of the canteen?

NAC 1 22:10

Oh, wow. It's just beautiful. I loved the lights and the, you know, the tables, so the whole thing was just lovely. It was just wow, really nice. And it wasn't, you know, I mean, it was I suppose there's, there's some kind of nice cafe things around. But that was very nice. That was probably the nicest. It was like, it was like an installation, you're eating in a really beautiful space. Well it was an installation I suppose. I mean, the lights were lovely. And the glow from the lights. And there was always, you know, an interesting piece of vegetable or something. [Laughter]

Meg Luddy 22:48

Yeah!

NAC 1 22:48

Somewhere, you know, and I suppose all of that was in a low key way, you know, it was kind of...I'm sure there was thought and there was, you know, deliberate kind of intent in a lot of it but it was low key and not in your face. So you didn't feel you were being you know, fed, you know, a particular you know, experience. It was kind of low key and not you know in your face or overwhelming

Meg Luddy 23:17

Did anything about the canteen strike you as unusual?

NAC 1 23:22

Anything strike me as unusual? Well, I suppose. Maybe initially, I kind of went down. It was unusual in that it didn't look like a lot of spaces. I mean, what was nice when it was being put together, the board at the time, which was kind of probably under all sorts of stress and strains. At that time. I think they came together and they sourced different things for Jennie, you know, kind of maybe chairs or this and that. There was a lot of positivity and kind of trying to kind of help this venture get up and running and give it the support.

Now that wasn't what you asked, but it just occurred to me there. No, no, I liked the trunks, the tree trunks and the bits and pieces, you know, it was lovely yeah. And she had these upcycled kind of glass bowls that were from, you know, washing machines, I think, she used to serve salad in. So a couple of years, she let me borrow them so I could use them at higher auctions because we were putting badges or something in.

So you know, it was all very, very happy to, you know, if you want to, you know, she was very, or she is very...I think she felt part of the college in a way that I suppose a provider of a canteen service, you know, a standard Brambles or something wouldn't feel. You know, she did, she had come from the college. She was a student. But she really felt... I think...she was treated like she was part of it, and was supported in the way that it was important to support her, that she could kind of keep going. And she was... I think she felt like she was part of the college. You know, I mean, she'd been to college there. She knew. She knew maybe a lot of the staff, she probably knew some of the students still or whatever. And would have kind of come across people at different kinds of events, I suppose who were there.

Meg Luddy 25:30

Did you feel welcome in luncheonette?

NAC 1 25:33

Yes! Completely, everybody was welcome. So you went down, and there was a ...andwhen Jennie was there, you know, obviously, she always had a chat and "how are things and what's that was happening?",and you know, a bit of gossip and, you know, whatever. But if she wasn't there, and you were still welcomed there was still, you know, the kind of the ethos of the other staff was the same, they were welcoming. They were always friendly. They were always you know, so the ethos of all the staff, that's very... you know, and you could see them working away making, you know, you can see the kitchen, you can see them working, you know... And it always felt welcoming. Yeah.

Meg Luddy 26:16

Yeah, and I guess in a similar sort of thread, like, what do you think Luncheonette's attitude towards its visitors was?

NAC 1 26:24

Um, it's, you mean, external visitors or NCAD?

Meg Luddy 26:29

I think anyone, I think both.

NAC 1 26:30

Yeah. I think they were always I think it was always welcoming. It was always, you know, "How are you, you know, are you having a hard day? You know "what's happening any fun going? What's going on?" you know. And I think then, you know, people who went regularly would kind of similarly ask, you know, the staff who were there making the coffee or, you know, getting the scones or getting the soup, you know, would be having a chat with them, how are they? "What's going on with you?", you know, "what are you up to?"

Meg Luddy 27:01

Kind of going beyond just the ordering and the paying for the food, you'd have more interaction?

NAC 1 27:04

Much more. Yeah, much more. You felt like this was somebody, you know, familiar, that was kind of that was part of your life. You went down got your coffee from somebody who knew a little bit about you, and you knew a little bit about them, or, you know, yeah.

Meg Luddy 27:18

Do you think the staff would remember you? And like, you kind of felt seen by them? That you were being remembered as you came in? Or?

NAC 1 27:24

Oh, yeah, yeah. Yeah, I think so. Yeah, well I think so they remember the coffee I drank? Yeah, but it's more like, "hi, how are ya?" Yeah, you felt like, you know, it isn't that big a community coming and going, you know, it wasn't that big a number of different people. So, yeah, people remembered you. Yeah, absolutely.

Meg Luddy 27:51

You being the neighbour I guess as well. They probably....

NAC 1 27:53

I was a neighbour. I was. [Laughter]

Meg Luddy 27:58

Upstairs!

NAC 1 27:58

Upstairs, yeah. Upstairs hearing the conversations, the private conversations.[Laughter]

Meg Luddy 28:01

That's so funny the amount of conversations I had in that stairwell and I had no idea! [Laughter]

NAC 1 28:06

Ah! [Laughter] Oh really?

Meg Luddy 28:06

I'm sure they weren't particularly interesting.

NAC 1 28:15

I was up here and people would run in to have a chat and that was right...You know, I was probably out that day, though. I probably wasn't there.[Laughter]

Meg Luddy 28:20

Yeah yeah yeah.[Laughter] Probably wasn't that interesting anyway whatever it was...

NAC 1 28:25

Yeah. Because people used to come into my office, "Oh it's a lovely office. What's that noise?Where's that noise coming from?" And it was this hum coming up, you know, it was like this, you know,...it was lovely actually.

PART II

NAC 1 0:00

I do miss it when it's not there. It's just this hum. You know, and when everybody's there, and it's kind of 11 o'clock, or 12/ one, you know, there's this hum. You know there's lovely smells in the morning when the baking is going on. And then there's this lovely kind of music of all these people talking, you know, so it's lovely. Yeah.

Meg Luddy 0:20

That's gorgeous

NAC 1 0:20

Sometimes in the evening, I'd be there working late, and there was some nice event going on and I'd be saying "oh that sounds interesting" "I won't crash it though". I'm sure I could have crashed any of it though!

Meg Luddy 0:33

Yeah, I feel like it wouldn't have been a problem.

NAC 1 0:34

It wouldn't have been a problem. I'm sure it wouldn't have been. Yeah, yeah. So we did occasionally. At Christmas, there were a few times where we kind of all sat down and had pizza and brought a bottle of wine. It would have been nice to do more kind of social things there. I think, you know, as in just, yeah, more kind of social events for staff, you know, just you know, things that we got more involved in. But, you know, all of that is kind of I suppose getting more complicated. And, you know, the luncheonette isn't there 24 hours a day, it's there in the morning to you know, a certain time kind of mid afternoon. Yeah, yeah.

Meg Luddy 1:26

Did you trust luncheonette?

NAC 1 1:29

I trusted yeah, absolutely. I trusted the food. Trusted absolutely. Yeah, I think if you were going to ask them to serve, you know, say, you have visitors in and you kind of now, it didn't matter, you know, that, you know, just colleagues say, doing something similar in another institution.

And, you know, we might have been hosting the meeting this year, or this month, you know. You just knew, you know, if you ordered the lunch through luncheonette if you were going to be down there, you just knew what you'd get would be really nice, interesting, good food. And it would be, you know, in a nice environment, and that you would... the people who... your visitors would be really impressed, for a start, but really kind of, you know, really kind of interested in what was going on and interested in this kind of, you know, that this was you were showing them a part of NCAD that was kind of, you know, in a way I suppose, that was particularly special to NCAD, but also kind of captured the essence of it, you know, in a way. You know, that kind of collaborative creativity kind of bit that we, you know... I suppose the luncheonette matches what the college is saying it is. So it's a collaborative creative community that's kind of getting together to kind of learn, work, whatever. The luncheonette matched that perfectly, you know, because it was doing the same in food and in, you know, in its kind of remit, what it was there to do.

Meg Luddy 3:16

Kind of represented what the whole thing was supposed to be?

NAC 1 3:19

Yeah, exactly, yeah. And represented it and maybe kind of reinforced it and maybe reminded us that that's what we're supposed to be doing at times, you know.

Meg Luddy 3:28

Yeah. Yeah.

NAC 1 3:29

So, yeah. Yeah.

Meg Luddy 3:34

Is food important to you? Sorry.

NAC 1 3:37

Is food? Yes, it is. Yeah, I think. I'm not a kind of a fancy fancy food person. But nice, good food. Yeah, it is. It is. And coffee is important. And all those rituals in the day where you've kind of, you know, your working day has kind of, you know, you have your coffee, you have

your lunch, you know, they are important parts of the day, and if there's something nice happening in them, it makes makes your day, you know, makes the day better, you know. So those nice soups are great in the winter. They were just lovely. You know, you knew you were gonna get something that was really lovely. And good for you. Yeah.

Meg Luddy 4:24

Yeah, it was nice to have a treat that was also nourishing, I guess.

NAC 1 4:28

Yes, yeah. Yeah. Yeah. The treats were good. Yes. Mmm. Yeah the treats were good.

And you know, at meetings or whenever, you know, Luncheonette was doing catering they would be cut up into little you know, treat sizes and that was always nice. You didn't have to have a whole brownie, really what you wanted was like a little square so it was nice. So she kind of didn't do, deliberately, didn't do toast and she didn't do toast and rashers and rasher sandwiches and all those things. But I suppose after big nights like you know, the balls, or that she did some variation, some take on them. There were kind of, you know,kind of some, some take on it, you know. So there'd be nice, there were rasher sandwiches occasionally. Not that I was at the balls now but for the poor hungover students. But she never gave into the toast and all that because as she said, if you offer toast, that's all people will eat. The students will come in and they'll want toast. So I think... if you're willing to go with it, it kind of opens you up to different you know, different kinds of, you know, different foods that you mightn't have tried or, you know, there'll be something new in that you could kind of, you know, yeah. Yeah.

There's the cat again

Meg Luddy 6:00

Sorry, yeah, is she ok?

NAC 1 6:02

I don't know if you can hear or not but she's very loud. And the washing machine section of the orchestra has taken off as well. That's working from home.

Meg Luddy 6:14

[Laughter] I know it well, there was thunder here earlier while I was doing a different interview, and I was like, "Oh my god"

NAC 1 6:21

Was there yeah? Yeah, I haven't had thunder here actually. Not that I've heard anyway. Yeah. But I was in the office Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. So I just work at home a couple of days a week. At this point.

Meg Luddy 6:40

Yes. Especially during the summer, I suppose it's probably

NAC 1 6:48

It's been a good summer. Yeah,

Meg Luddy 6:50

I might turn off my video, I feel like it might be making the sound connection a bit worse. I'll just flick it off for a second.

NAC 1 6:57

What I'm gonna do is just close this door here. Just give me a minute and I'll...[inaudible]

Meg Luddy 7:00

No worries

NAC 1 7:58

Just see if I can get the cat out and turn the washing machine off. Yeah.

Meg Luddy 8:03

No worries!

So yeah. Oh sorry I might go back to a few questions if that's okay.

NAC 1 8:13

Yeah.

Meg Luddy 8:14

So just next one is, did you have any particularly special requests? And were they met? Like any... anything at all really?

NAC 1 8:26

Special requests...I would've, over the years, in terms of food?

Meg Luddy 8:31

Yeah, in terms of food, I think possibly.

NAC 1 8:32

[inaudible] Well maybe not special requests, but you know, asking, so if somebody was in for lunch, just kind of sorting out what would be, you know, what's the best thing to serve? Yeah, a couple of times, I kind of said, "These people are coming down or, you know, I'll bring them down." And that would have always been met and, and remembered and met. Occasionally, I've borrowed things from Jennie and hopefully brought them all back. You know, "oh do you have one of those we could use," you know as I said the bowls and things. And that was always done. Yeah, yeah. So yeah, but no food kind of, you know, allergy type things or you know, yeah, nothing specifically, you know, I can't eat that. Could you do it that way? No.

Meg Luddy 9:30

Okay. Thank you. Do you think luncheonette needed you? And how do you think they might have if they did?

NAC 1 9:37

Do I think luncheonette needed me? I think we luncheonette... Yeah, I do think so. Yeah, I do think so. I felt they were always it as an entity, you know. They were always very welcoming to staff.

And if I was kind of...I was a staff member. I was a particular kind of staff member I was on the administration. I wasn't an academic staff member, I wasn't a student. I was, you know, NCAD has lots of different people working in it from attendants to administration to, you know, academic staff. And I think they did want me as part of that one of those cohorts. I think they

wanted, you know, attendants, I think they wanted students, I think they wanted senior staff. I think they wanted junior staff, I think they wanted, yeah, I think they welcomed everybody from the community, the NCAD community.

Meg Luddy 10:36

What was the atmosphere like?

NAC 1 10:40

It was, what was it? It was welcoming. It was busy, welcoming. I suppose efficient is kind of one word, but it was kind of ...you went there for a purpose. The purpose was you know, you were getting your food you were getting [inaudible] along the way.

You weren't over hurried, you weren't kind of you know, but it wasn't too kind of... weren't too many delays. It was... so the atmosphere was, as I was speaking about earlier, it was a kind of a safe space, in a way maybe that's the word it was, and that sounds a little bit kind of overdramatic, but in that you weren't going to kind of meet an angry student or other staff member there, because they weren't going to be angry or tricky with you, if you met them there, you might meet them somewhere else in the college and there might be a problem.

So it was kind of like, there was an agreement to everybody, this is how you behave when you're there. This is how it feels, everybody is welcome and everybody is allowed to kind of have that sort of space. So I had lots of business chats, as in business, you know, it might be about programmes or developments or student recruitment or whatever, or the exam board coming on. They were never...they were always kind of those kind of necessary chats but they were never the difficult... You know, finger pointing in your face. Why did you do that? Or you need to do this. It was never... The atmosphere was always respectful, I suppose, of everybody who was there. Whether they were students, staff, you know, it was respectful

Meg Luddy 12:35

Temperature lowering almost.

NAC 1 12:37

Yeah. Listen, this cat is howling here. I gotta let her out again

Meg Luddy 12:40

No worries

NAC 1 12:42

Sorry about this!

Meg Luddy 12:43

No, you're grand, don't worry! I know the way.

NAC 1 12:51

[Inaudible]from home when I'm not here, she just... I don't know what she does all day. But when I'm here, she has to come and think she has to meow loudly at me several times a day anyway. Yes. [Laughter]

Meg Luddy 13:10

[laughter]

NAC 1 13:10

She's really very old, she's about 16.

Meg Luddy 13:12

Oh yeah.

NAC 1 13:13

Cmon. Yeah. Anyway, sorry, go ahead.

Meg Luddy 13:16

No you're grand don't worry. What was the best time to go there? What was the best time to go to luncheonette?

NAC 1 13:22

I liked going there kind of at about quarter to 10. So there...Yeah, because it was quiet. The scones would be just out nice and fresh. It was the morning. It was first thing before everything got too busy. That was the time I liked best. And the other time I liked was kind of just after

lunch. When the lunch crowd was beginning to go it was kind of a nice quiet time as well. Listen, there was lots of nice... it was nice to go when it was busy because you'd meet people, you know? Yeah.

Meg Luddy 14:05

What did you usually order in luncheonette?

NAC 1 14:10

Coffee and then soup. And so coffee in the morning. And as I said, occasionally a scone when I could no longer resist. I didn't...The flapjacks I didn't have regularly because they actually just sent me I think there was too much sugar or something. And they made me very hyper. Although everybody loved them, I just found them way too..way too. But I loved the homemade jam. I loved...I loved the jam. I loved the scones and the coffee. The two together were gorgeous. I also really liked the soups. And yeah, sometimes the grain pot sometimes you know, but I suppose it was a nice predictable range of there was always something in a grain pot, there was always a sandwich, there was always a soup. You know, and there were treats, you know. So you could choose which bits you wanted.

Meg Luddy 15:14

Have you ever been in the kitchen?

NAC 1 15:16

Yeah. I went in to collect something or yeah, I've kind of been in. I have actually been in the kitchen. I've stood at the side of the kitchen chatting to Jennie sometimes, you know, when we're near the [inaudible] thing. And I have gone into the back once or twice looking for something maybe with somebody or with Jennie just while she's trying to find, I was looking for maybe some kind of bowl or something. And she kind of "come in and have a look at this". Yeah, so not often but a couple of times I have. Yeah

Meg Luddy 15:53

And we've kind of talked about it as being a good place for the chats and seeing what the students are up to. But

NAC 1 15:58

Yeah,

Meg Luddy 15:58

Could you describe the queue?

NAC 1 16:00

The queue [Laughter] Well, the queue was... it was your colleagues, it was people you hadn't seen, it was the staff, say in September, it was the person who'd been away all summer and you hadn't seen them. It was the new students coming in. It was the old experienced... those kinds of people from the college that you mightn't have seen. So it was kind of your people. Yeah, so I always enjoyed the queue, actually, because it was always kind of who was in front of you? Who was behind you? You know, you could have a little chat, you know? Yeah. And it was always kind of...it was never kind of an unpleasant experience. Sometimes if you came down and the queue was long you just kind of said, "Okay, well, I'll come back later". But if you had, you know, if you had the time or you weren't unduly, it was kind of part of it, just, you know, chatting to whoever was there. And sometimes there were people in from the street or you know, outsiders who would have a bit of a chat as well. You know, who were kind of interested in what was going on?

Meg Luddy 17:10

Yeah so, would you get talking to people from outside the college occasionally?

NAC 1 17:15

Would? Yes, yes. So there would be people from working around the area coming in to get their coffee or their lunch or whatever they would they would maybe have heard about it or know about it. But the luncheonette never had a sign up.

Yeah.

Yeah so there was no sign and I had said to Jennie, "will you not put a sign up?" But she kind of "No" didn't put a sign up. She didn't. Or whatever. She had her reasons, I'm sure. And it probably didn't need a sign you know. So yeah.

Meg Luddy 17:50

What did you like most about luncheonette?

NAC 1 17:52

Well, the food was gorgeous. I also liked the lighting and the tables and seating arrangements. I liked all that. I like that it was what could be a pretty grim space, but it was actually not grim because of the way it was furnished and lit and decorated.

Meg Luddy 18:22

What did you like least about it? Was there anything that frustrated you about it?

NAC 1 18:28

What did I like least about it? I suppose sometimes, if there was something you weren't that fond of, you know, it might have been there a lot in terms of tastes. I'm talking about a taste like if there was a taste of something, like dill for instance. I remember dill. And I'm not the biggest fan of dill. I don't hate it but maybe I suppose that might be. But it wouldn't have stopped me getting the sandwich or getting the...you know, going there or whatever.

Meg Luddy 19:15

Then I feel like I have an idea of what it might be. But just in case I'm wrong. What was your favourite luncheonette food?

NAC 1 19:23

Might be the scone, well scone first or second scone and the soup, but I probably have fewer scones than soup. So they were lovely, but I didn't have them all the time. And I wouldn't have one every day. Yeah, actually, the other thing I really liked was if you hadn't had breakfast, the brown bread with the kind of egg on it, you know, the [inaudible]. That was really nice. Just remembered that, that was nice. So if I hadn't had breakfast rather than the porridge or whatever,

yeah.

I would have that, because I actually thought that was really nice.

Meg Luddy 20:04

I had forgotten about that

NAC 1 20:04

Yeah. Yeah, so I like the fact that you could have a really nice breakfast.

Because quite often, if you've missed breakfast, you know, the options are just, you know, pastries, or that kind of you know. Whereas you could get something quite kind of what you might have at home, either porridge or a piece of bread and an egg or something. Without doing a big palaver, of a big kind of brunchy thing, it was kind of breakfast, you could get breakfast, and you could get lunch, and you could get your coffee break, something, treat. Now, if you did all three, it'd probably be too much food. But you could do you know, one or other or you know, one or two of those. But actually, yeah, no, the breakfast. I've just remembered the breakfast. I didn't often do that, because I would eat breakfast at home generally.

Meg Luddy 21:00

Yeah.

NAC 1 21:00

But if you didn't have breakfast at home, that was, it was breakfast that was, you know, without going for a big brunch thing. Or without going for a pastry thing or a fry thing, it was kind of something that was... You really felt was... actually the food if you ate it there your lunch or your breakfast you did feel like you'd eaten well you know?

Meg Luddy 21:19

Yeah.

That's very true as well, that there isn't a lot of options like that you either end up with your pastry, or you end up with your huge brunch.

NAC 1 21:27

No, yeah, your huge kind of brunch thing. So most people don't, that's not what they have for breakfast, you know, you either have, you know, porridge or a cereal or a piece of toast with, you know, an egg or a bit of banana or something. So that's actually, you know, so it was actually a nice... It was kind of a good option.

Meg Luddy 21:51

And did you ever bring friends or family from outside the college to Luncheonette?

NAC 1 21:55

I did occasionally. Yeah. You know, if people were coming in to meet me or whatever. I'd say, "Oh, look, we will go there." Yeah, I did. Yeah.

Meg Luddy 22:09

And you were kind of talking about it as a good space for people to have maybe more calm conversations? And maybe friendlier conversations?

NAC 1 22:18

But yeah, I didn't use calm but actually, that's probably... all the conversations would have been calm that I experienced. Whereas you know, in the staff canteen as such, I've had a couple of kinds of, you know, weird interactions, which were a bit of "what was that about?" you know?

Meg Luddy 22:36

Sure [laughter]

NAC 1 22:37

Whereas I never had that in in luncheonette. It was kind of like, the atmosphere created or whatever wasn't conducive to being kind of, you know, the opposite of calm or whatever. Sorry, this cat is now.

Meg Luddy 22:56

Joining the interview.

NAC 1 22:58

Yeah,

Meg Luddy 22:58

Hello!

NAC 1 23:01

She usen't to like Zoom meetings, but now she's gone more deaf she doesn't really...they don't bother her too much.

Meg Luddy 23:12

[Laughter] So did you ever use the dining room in Luncheonette for meetings and college work and things?

NAC 1 23:18

Yes, I did. Yeah. Yeah. Yes, yes. So might be, you know, you're in a meeting and you want to follow on "let's go down and get coffee and we can do that now". Or, you know, certain types of meetings, you know, if you're meeting one person you might go there. Yeah.

Meg Luddy 23:39

Do you ever make new acquaintances in luncheonette?

NAC 1 23:41

I've met people I didn't know, yeah, or that I wouldn't have met you know. I've met, I would have met say staff that you're emailing or that you're kind of you know, been in communication with and then somebody says, "Oh, this is such and such" you know, and then you say "Oh, right. Yeah. Nice to see you." You know, yeah, I have met people that I haven't met before. Yeah.

Meg Luddy 24:05

A face to a name

NAC 1 24:07

Sorry. Yeah. Exactly. A face to a name. Yeah. And quite often, people would bring in say if they had external examiners in they'd bring them down there and if you were kind of in the queue behind they might introduce you...

Meg Luddy 24:26

Do you have a sense that your presence in luncheonette was felt or like made an impact? Like do you think they noticed you or what do you think they might remember about you?

NAC 1 24:37

Hmm [Laughter]

Well I think they remembered me or they noticed me or whatever. Yeah, I don't know what they'd remember about me. The woman from upstairs comes down and gets her coffee, you know? Certainly Jennie and I would have had the chat or the bit of gossip you know. But yeah, I think they would remember me as somebody who works there or who's you know, part of the college, you know?

Meg Luddy 25:15

Did you ever have, like an emotional experience there?

NAC 1 25:24

Did I ever have an emotional experience there? Well, I didn't...

Meg Luddy 25:31

In any sense.

NAC 1 25:30

Like have I ever gone there and I'm upset, or somebody else's upset, that kind of thing? Well, I've gone there occasionally with colleagues or other colleagues who kind of just needed to kind of, you know, unload about something or have a chat about something, and it might have been quite emotional. I have, yeah. So we've gone and sat in the corner, and you had a chat about something private or something. And it might have been emotions involved. Yeah, I have that. Yeah.

Meg Luddy 25:38

Interesting.

NAC 1 25:39

What kind of a difference did luncheonette make or made to your time in college?

Well, I think it's kind bit more what I was saying, initially, when I was chatting to you, it was just the kind of there was somewhere there that you could go. And there was always gonna, you know, you're going to get a nice reception, you were going to have your coffee or your food or whatever.

And I suppose it was like another kind of leg of the whole experience. You know, you go into college, there's your staff. There's your colleagues, there's your, you know, what you do, your office, you go there every day. It was just like, part of your day, part of your work, part of your day, and a pleasant part and never not a negative part. Yeah. So. I just I suppose the answer is it became just a part of your working?

Meg Luddy 27:17

Yeah.

NAC 1 27:19

And if it wasn't there, or some version of it, wasn't there it would be terrible.[Laughter] It'd be terrible now, it would be terrible. Having experienced that.

Meg Luddy 27:29

Having had it and everything?

NAC 1 27:30

Yeah. Yeah.

Meg Luddy 27:32

Do you experience NCAD, kind of just as a whole as opposed to luncheonette, as a welcoming space?

NAC 1 27:40

Sorry, do I experience?

Meg Luddy 27:42

NCAD the sort of institution I guess, as a welcoming space?

NAC 1 27:47

I do, actually. Yeah, I do. I do. I know there are certain bits that are trickier than others, but in general, I'm comfortable with it as a kind of a space. And I experienced it as welcoming. Yeah. I mean, I experience, you know, the attendants, you know, colleagues, I do experience it. You know, the students are there, you know, I always feel positive about it as a place when I go there. I rarely dread it. I don't dread it. You know, as a workspace. Oh, God, I have to go in and, you know, horrible, horrible. No, it's always, you know, I do experience it as a welcoming place.

Meg Luddy 28:30

Oh that's lovely. That's good.

Do you think that luncheonette made a difference to NCAD?

NAC 1 28:38

Yeah, I suppose reverting back to what I said initially?

Meg Luddy 28:41

Yeah.

NAC 1 28:43

It did. Yeah. It was, a place that that everybody could agree was, you know, we were proud of. It kind of was representative of kind of the best of us. And the best of what the college was trying to achieve. And it made a huge difference. Yeah.

Meg Luddy 29:01

Yeah. I think sorry some of these are coming back to things that you

NAC 1 29:05

Yeah, I would have said in the beginning. Yeah.

Meg Luddy 29:07

But just in case you have anything else, I won't skip them in case you have anything you want to add anything.

NAC 1 29:10

Yeah

Meg Luddy 29:10

But yeah, I think you were saying this already, as well. But, how connected do you think Luncheonette was to NCAD like were they on the same page-

NAC 1 29:10

I think it was very connected. Yeah. I think it felt part of it. Very quickly from the start. I think it felt like it was kind of part of it, very connected. I would say. And I would say then, I hope they felt connected you know, as an outside service, I hope that yeah. We felt it was part of us rather than an outside provider coming in to provide a service. So I hope luncheonette felt similarly kind of included to them. I think they did. I think they felt relaxed enough about it as a space, you know.

NAC 1 20:33

We felt it was part of us rather than an outside provider coming in to provide a service. So I hope luncheonette felt similarly kind of included. I think they did. I think they felt relaxed enough about it as a space, you know? Yeah.

megan 20:49

And you were saying as well that it kind of acted as a good reminder of what the college was going through?

NAC 1 20:54

Yeah. Yeah. acted as a good reminder of? Well, I suppose it was... I wouldn't say it's a reminder of what the college went through. At the time, when the college had kind of, you know, was experiencing a lot of kind of trauma, I suppose quite a traumatic time some of those years it was a space that was agreed on by everybody as a good thing. You know, whether you were kind of the most hated person on the board, or the most hated, you know, staff, you know, director or the most, you know, whatever you were, you know, the students who was whatever that, you know, everybody agreed that that was a good place. It was a good space, it was

something we could be proud of. And it was, you know, we had done something good by having it there. You know?

megan 21:46

Yeah. Do you think luncheonette provided you with anything that should have been provided by NCAD?

NAC 1 21:55

Well. No, not really. No, I wouldn't say that. No. Because I think some of the things it provided me with, you know, the college would have provided I mean, I think some of the things it provided were kind of over and above, kind of extra things in that extra space of welcoming or extra, you know, but no, I don't think it provided things that the college should've provided in some other way.

megan 22:27

This is the last question now. Would you describe Luncheonette as profit driven?

NAC 1 22:33

As profit driven? No, I suppose it had to kind of, make it's kind of... I was aware that it had to make enough money to keep going. I mean, you know, it needed to make money to pay the salaries and provide a living for the people who work there, or who owned it or whatever. But I don't think it was overly profit driven in its motivations. No.

megan 23:10

Great, thank you so much. You were very generous with your time and with your answers. They were great. Thank you.

NAC 1 23:16

Yeah. I'm sure Yeah. Hope. It wasn't too circular. And-

megan 23:19

No.No not at all it was perfect

NAC 1 23:21

Good and that's great. And thank you for putting up with the cat and putting up with...

megan 23:31

Not at all!

NAC 1 23:35

She's 16 and deaf and a bit of arthritis and all of that. But anyway, no, she's fine. So yeah, no, good. Good luck with the research and, you know. Hope you get your interviews done and you get you know, insights needed and all the rest. And it was nice to kind of reflect on it actually, because you move along, and you kind of forget where you were at a time, but when you go back to think about it, you know, you reflect a bit about that. It is good to do that.

megan 24:13

Yeah, and have a bit of a record, lovely.

NAC 1 24:17

Yeah. Yeah.

megan 24:18

Well thank you so much NAC 1!

NAC 1 24:18

Thanks, Megan. And if there's anything else let me know. Okay,

meg luddy 24:23

Great. Thank you so much!

Appendix K: Interview with NAC 2

Megan Luddy 0:00

Okay, I might get started so if that's okay?

Thanks so much for doing this NAC 2. You're very good to do it.

I might just start with asking you what your role in NCAD is?

NAC 2 0:12

I'm an attendant [text edited for anonymity].

We look after just general inquiries from the public, post, setting up rooms, moving stuff about, opening up the place locking the place at night, chucking out people that shouldn't be in. Be nice to people who are on campus. Keeping an eye out for student's well being. Nice job. Varies, different every day is the same, every day is different. It's nice.

Megan Luddy 0:56

And are you full time or part time?

NAC 2 0:59

Oh full time yeah, I'll be 15 years now by the end of the month so.

Megan Luddy 1:01

Wow. So you started 15 years ago in NCAD?

NAC 2 1:06

Yeah 2007.

2007.

Megan Luddy 1:10

Wow.

Megan 1:11

So you were there sort of pre-luncheonette-

Megan Luddy 1:14

Oh yeah!

Would you describe the canteen before then?

NAC 2 1:18

[Inaudible] rest that was the firm that was there. A greasy spoon, sausages and rashers and toast and fried egg. Not healthy. Tasty though.

Megan Luddy 1:30

Yeah? Did you go very often?

NAC 2 1:31

Yeah probably more often than I should have. It depends we work shifts. So when you're on an early shift you [inaudible] chips so if I was on the early shift I'd have the sausage sandwich a couple of times a week.

Hard to resist.

Megan 1:45

Good as well.

NAC 2 1:47

Yeah well it was okay but...good is probably a stretch.

Megan Luddy 1:50

[Laughter] And do you remember when Luncheonette opened?

NAC 2 1:58

I remember before luncheonette opened I remember the....have you heard of govindas in town?

Megan Luddy 2:04

Oh yeah.

NAC 2 2:05

The Hare Krishnas, a couple of those people used to come in.

I think on a tuesday night or something like that and they'd come into the concourse and it was kind of set up and they'd do dal and

Megan 2:14

No way!

NAC 2 2:14

The students used to get that then for a couple of euro and if I was on the late shifts, I'd go and grab some. And then after a few years of that on Thursday nights, Jennie Moran started appearing with a hot plate and a big pot, doing dal and a bit of rice and all that sort, so used to get that as well. That was before Luncheonette so.

Megan 2:34

And then when it kind of opened up, do you remember like the... I guess when it was being set up and everything as well as it actually opening?

NAC 2 2:43

I can't remember us being hugely involved in the set up? Because you know it was their own business except for the college. SO like we'd move college furniture around but Jennie's kind of an independent sole trader kind of thing going on there. So she looked after that. I mean, we've given a hand over the years with bits and pieces but uh... not directly involved.

Megan Luddy 3:07

So when they were setting up they were just kind of working away?

NAC 2 3:09

Yeah, yeah safety at times... [inaudible] the furniture changed, the lights changed and stuff.

I remember her salad bowls, recycled washing machine doors.

Megan Luddy 3:22

Oh yeah?

NAC 2 3:24

Very clever, yeah.

Megan Luddy 3:24

That is clever.

Megan 3:27

Do you remember what the attitude was towards the new canteen? Like amongst your co-workers and things?

NAC 2 3:35

My co-workers would like plain food. Some of them were a bit "oh you know you can't get a sausage...". You know, missing what they were used to whereas I like food from all over the place.

It's nice to have healthy options you know because around NCAD you've got Vincenzo's chipper, you've got pizza, you've got other Morelli's chippers, oh what the one on Francis street? It's just like chippers chippers chippers, pizza, pizza, pizza, Kebabs. So if you want something of an evening you're looking at a massive coronary by the time you're 60, so.

Megan Luddy 4:12

Yeah.

NAC 2 4:14

So it was good I was more keen on it than I'd say my colleagues. Like some of them wouldn't eat spicy food or "oh god no that's strange" you know. Whereas I do like all that sort of stuff. So I was happy, that's the main thing.

Megan Luddy 4:32

[Laughter] Did you think it was going to work when they kind of opened it up and everything?

NAC 2 4:38

Yeah, definitely! Because I mean, most of the staff, the academic staff loves it. The students, I mean it took off. Stuff was very reasonably priced. So I thought yeah, definitely.

Megan Luddy 4:53

I guess part of luncheonette was that people from outside the college would be welcome to eat there. Like did you notice that happening?

NAC 2 5:00

I did yeah. And it was kind of from our point of view was a bit problematic til we got used to it because eventually like she had kind of regulars so you got to know the faces and all that but generally our policy was like watching the gate and if someone wasn't a student or staff and they were coming in you'd go "well hold on a minute, who are you, where are you going?" because you know it presented a security risk, that someone could come in, "Oh where are you going?" "Oh I'm going to Luncheonette." But in fact, they're going into the Granary to steal laptops or iphones or money or you know what I mean, it presented a problem for us so...we didn't mind it in-house, were a bit wary of it when it opened up [[inaudible]. There's a certain Luncheonette type that comes in and goes to Luncheonette and gets their lunch and goes away again

Megan Luddy 5:00

And you see kind of the same people over and over again coming in and out?

NAC 2 5:51

Ah, yeah. Or a certain type, you'd spot them.

Megan 5:54

Oh ok. But it was complicated at the start because you...

NAC 2 5:58

Well Yeah, yeah, it just took a while to get it down. Hey Katie you come to say hello.

Katie, Katie Taylor there.

Megan Luddy 6:11

Katie Taylor in the flesh [Laughter]

Megan 6:12

Were there any positive impacts for NCAD do you think from those people coming in like that? Those increased numbers of visitors from outside?

NAC 2 6:25

Well I suppose it's kind of the connection between ourselves as an institution and the locality. I mean, there's always been its own interaction. [Inaudible] Like the guy who runs the Centra across the world, all summer long "oh when are they back when are they back" I mean it was a big part of their business. Chadwicks always [inaudible]. I mean if NCAD was gone from Thomas street the area would notice, there'd be a lot of businesses gone so from that point of view. But then culturally, as well, I suppose it's important to be.. like the [inaudible] local Liberties group used some spaces in the college to put on a play.

Megan Luddy 7:09

That's great.

NAC 2 7:11

Terribly organized and all that sort of thing, there were about twelve people at it [inaudible] but they tried you know.

Megan Luddy 7:17

And it's a space as well I guess, which is good.

NAC 2 7:21

Yeah, yeah.

Semi-public if not totally public.

The gallery, the gallery, attracts a nice little bit of footfall depending on what's going on. Certainly the openings are well attended.

Megan 7:31

Which is probably difficult for ye as well, because it's another one of those things where people are coming in, and out but you have to keep an eye out.

Unknown Speaker 7:37

Ah you don't mind it if it's a thing like that.

Unknown Speaker 7:38

Oh right.

NAC 2 7:39

Who's going to come to... The local crackheads wouldn't necessarily turn up at the door on the night of an opening because they don't know.

Nothing against the local crackheads, but you know.

Megan Luddy 7:56

No yeah.

NAC 2 7:58

At the same time I can't let them in. [Laughter]

Megan Luddy 8:01

Yeah, your job.

NAC 2 8:03

That's my job.

Megan Luddy 8:06

And in that vein, I guess did luncheonette make your job in NCAD easier or harder?

NAC 2 8:13

Um.

Megan Luddy 8:14

Is it kind of hard to...?

NAC 2 8:15

It didn't really have an impact...and not from a work point of view it didn't really you know?

Like I said, there was a bit of nervousness at the start just because, you know, attracting people in from outside but the people it attracted from outside were no problem. Just we got on with it you know... but as for creating extra work or doing anything like that for me personally, for the others, I can't say.

I was glad of it. You know what I mean, a nice tasty soup and an interesting sandwich everyday, you know?

Megan 8:46

It was good?

NAC 2 8:50

Mh.

Megan Luddy 8:51

So, I think you did, but did you go to luncheonette a lot while working in NCAD? Like, how often would you?

NAC 2 8:57

Yeah, but I mean, I'd go and I'd take it away.

Megan Luddy 8:59

Oh, yeah, yeah.

NAC 2 9:00

The way we work, we have our own little canteen just beside where we sit looking at the gate. If you're on your break, here, you go into the canteen beside in case something happens you're right there and you can kind of help out with something. You know if the fire alarm goes off, or someone comes in and needs [inaudible] out. So you can't really go off and have your lunch.

Megan Luddy 9:22

So you weren't really hanging out in it as a space you kind of had to go in and get out pretty quickly.

NAC 2 9:26

No, I went down "What's for lunch today? Ok." And if I was into it I'd get it and take it away or sit down and scoff it within about 30 seconds. Rinse out the bowl, drop it back, say thanks very much much and that was it. So I didn't get to hang out in there really, I went once myself and my wife, my then partner, now wife and I, and Jennie had like a late night thing for dinner, various courses and stuff like that, in the evening so that was nice.

Megan Luddy 9:53

That's interesting, because the kind of next question is about sharing a sort of social space with students but in some ways, I guess that didn't really apply because you were in and so quickly... but I guess maybe in the queue, was it kind of new or interesting to be sharing social space with students when you're used to not really like having much of an interaction beyond the chat?

NAC 2 10:13

Like, you know, the concourse area?

Megan Luddy 10:16

Yeah.

NAC 2 10:17

So on Thursday nights, in particular, the Students Union, would have music, or live bands or a quiz or some sort of thing going on there. And that goes on until about half eight quarter to nine. We'd be like "Lads turn it off, we've gotta close at nine get everyone out" There'd be "oh [inaudible]. Oh one more song" or whatever else.

Unknown Speaker 10:40

So you normally left like 10 to nine, because we'd want to get home.

NAC 2 10:44

And then back in those days, I mean, they'd be over and back to Lidl and cans and it can get a bit messy. So the sooner you start trying to get them out, the better.

So that's, that was their social space, and we pretty much had to maintain a kind of authoritative stance. So you wouldn't be in there having cans with them having the laugh you're at work so. You know, so you couldn't really intermingle.

But certainly, I mean, we'd have banter with them, have a laugh. A bit of craic with them during the day or if you saw one that was looking a bit upset you'd be like "you all right?" or whatever so you know.

You'd get quite friendly with some of the students. Some of them keep themselves to themselves, that's fine. Others are very friendly, very chatty, that's fine. A mix, like anything else in life, but. So we would mix a bit with some of the students like some of them after work you'd go out for pints with them the odd time have a bit of a laugh.

So in the workplace itself you wouldn't be socializing with them. It would be wrong.

Megan Luddy 11:49

Yeah.

NAC 2 11:50

Oh, Jesus.

That's Xena warrior princess the other cat.

Megan Luddy 11:59

[Laughter] I like the two names.

NAC 2 12:01

Yeah.

Megan Luddy 12:04

Both good fighters I guess.

Megan 12:09

That makes a lot of sense, though. Like, I mean, I guess it would. I didn't know ye had your own canteen so that you wouldn't have been sitting down in luncheonette. But that makes sense that you couldn't have even if you didn't have your own canteen.

NAC 2 12:22

We're on our break but we have to be available.

Megan Luddy 12:23

Yeah, you're still on?

NAC 2 12:25

Yeah. I mean, it'd be very rare. That something would happen, that you would be disturbed on your break. But just in case, mostly for fire alarms, things like that you know.

Megan Luddy 12:34

Yeah.

What was your first impression of the canteen? The first time you kind of saw it?

NAC 2 12:44

Oh I was delighted. The other place was kind of... It was [inaudible] it was a kind of a greasy spoon/cafe kind of a thing. [Inaudible] on the tables and everything. Like Jennie had interesting lightning, nice music, the place was tidied up and the food was 100 times better. Fresh healthy stuff. Nicely spiced, stuff from the Middle East,... Mexican stuff, the "If a burrito was a soup" was one of my favorites. And then the odd times she'd do...she had venison burgers one day and it was just amazing, like really good. Yeah, so no I loved it from day one, yeah.

Megan 13:27

Did anything about it kind of strike you as unusual compared to other canteens and stuff? I guess you were kind of saying it's very different from a greasy spoon but?

NAC 2 13:34

Well it was different from what was available on Thomas Street at the time. It's changed a bit now. It's gone quite foodie around the area. Maybe she kicked it off. But there's lots of more interesting places around there. Since then, you know?

Megan 13:50

yeah. How welcome did you feel in luncheonette? I guess that's a weird question because you had to get in with the-

NAC 2 14:03

It was fine

Megan Luddy 14:03

What do you think their attitude towards their visitors was in Luncheonette, like the staff?

NAC 2 14:13

From the staff in Luncheonette, towards visitors or?

Megan 14:16

Yeah

NAC 2 14:16

Quite friendly like. The people making coffee could speed up a bit. They were quite...[laughter]
If you were going down to get something, on your break and you were ordering a bowl of soup and you were behind someone ordering two coffees like, good luck. Come back in 20 minutes. Yeah. No offense but they're students. And not only that but they're art students so... you know, there's normal life and then there's art students and people who are into art because you're just wired differently. Your brains work differently.

[laughter]

My sister is an artist so I was like when she'd go to the shop for bread she'd come back from some other shop with not bread. Some other thing and it's just the way it is you know, and I mean fair play to you creative and interesting and all that but... you know?

Sometimes you just need your soup

Art students are great but not ideal canteen staff I think... their mind is elsewhere [laughter] but that's okay

Megan 15:19

Yeah and the queue could be quite long as well

NAC 2 15:21

Yeah and slow that was the thing you know? Yeah I mean if it is long and there's hope that's one thing but if the queue is just long and it's gonna stay then...

Megan 15:31

Would you just duck out and come back or?

NAC 2 15:33

Oh I would yeah I'd go [inaudible] and get a bag of chips yeah...I didn't have time

Megan 15:40

Yeah. What was your like your interaction with the luncheonette staff like? Did you kind of talk to them beyond just ordering and paying for food? Would you've been chatting to them?

NAC 2 15:50

Oh yeah I mean it'd depend. Yeah you'd have the chats with them but they're busy as well you know? And I always got on well with Jennie...and then Siobhan who's running the...the ancestor or not the ancestor but the descendant of luncheonette so she's there now.

Megan 16:12

Yeah

NAC 2 16:16

So she was working as a chef for Jennie and she's still there she's trying to make a go of it [inaudible].

Megan 16:25

You wouldn't really talk to the others as much...it'd be moreso Jennie and then Siobhan?

NAC 2 16:29

Jennie in general yeah but Siobhan..you'd say hello to Siobhan one day she'd say hello back another day, [inaudible] she's busy but I get it you know?

Megan 16:41

Yes. Did you feel kind of seen by them do you think the staff would remember you coming in and out?

NAC 2 16:47

I'd say so yeah.

I was in a hurry, I was in, I was getting my food and I was gone but... that was it so. But if there was a chat to be had, no problem stop and chat.

Megan Luddy 17:01

And the consistency I guess if you were in there like relatively regularly? Even that in and of itself would....

NAC 2 17:11

As in the food?

Megan 17:14

Just that you were in there a lot they'd probably get to...

NAC 2 17:16

Oh yeah yeah. I mean, then if there was problems if something if the fridge broke down and there was a flood or something like that they'd let us know and we'd get on to the Facilities Manager. It happened more often than it should have but.

Megan 17:33

You'd be helpful in that kind of stuff?

NAC 2 17:36

Well just what I can handle I'm not a plumber you know

Megan 17:39

Yeah

NAC 2 17:39

So yeah. But.

Megan 17:43

Did you trust luncheonette?

NAC 2 17:46

Ah yeah. Why wouldn't I? What was in the food, what are you telling me?

Megan Luddy 17:52

[Laughter] It's a bit of an intriguing question

Megan 18:01

Is food important to you?

NAC 2 18:03

Yeah.

Megan Luddy 18:06

Do you think it's got like an important role in your life?

NAC 2 18:09

Yeah, I'm gonna make a chilli today, so that's nice, so looking forward to that. We like, myself and the missus we like our food so,[Inaudible] we'd have a fair bit. We went to Variety Jones there during the summer.

Oh cool.

Went to Bordeaux a couple of weeks ago on our holidays and booked a Micheline star place there. And we watch Master Chef, we're foodies, we like our food, yeah.

Megan 18:41

Woah. What was the Michelin star like, that's so cool?

NAC 2 18:43

Very nice. L'Oiseaux Bleu, the Blue Bird in Bordeaux, it was lovely yeah. again. It was pigeon, pigeon was the main I wouldn't be a big fan but everything else was gorgeous. Like gorgeous.

Megan 18:58

That's very French I feel like the-

NAC 2 19:01

I've wept in restaurants like, I love food.

Megan 19:03

Oh really?

NAC 2 19:04

Yeah oh. Like you get something that's perfect it's just it's like a piece of art, you know it is a piece of art.

Megan 19:12

Yeah, I feel like in luncheonette as well whenever I got food in there I was always like, "oh thank god." Just like emotional response to it. Wow. Did you ever have any special requests in luncheonette? And like did they meet them?

NAC 2 19:31

No, no I left them to their own devices. Like I said, the venison burger thing was amazing you know so. They weren't meaty.

Yeah.

They weren't big on meat, but I mean they weren't adverse to it like you know so.

Megan 19:48

Would you mind the... did you like that it was kind of more on the vegetable side of things, I guess?

NAC 2 19:57

I mean I've no issue with vegetarian food, I do vegetarian chilli which I'd like just as much as my beef chilli. And I liked it because it was healthy you know what I mean, and I was getting a break from stuff... and the flavours you know [inaudible]. Some people love the beetroot burgers, I was never a fan of the beetroot burgers..just not for me. I mean and I like beetroot and all that but just...

Megan 20:25

Couldn't do it.

Unknown Speaker 20:26

Yeah, I mean I tried it and I said no.

Megan 20:30

I was talking to someone else about the borscht, did you ever have that the beetroot soup?

Megan Luddy 20:33

Yeah I had the borscht with the little bit of yoghurt on top.

I struggled with that one when I was in there [laughter]

NAC 2 20:39

Yeah it was a bit like beetroot...

Megan 20:43

Central

NAC 2 20:45

To the power of x, like yeah.

Megan 20:49

What was the atmosphere in Luncheonette when you were down there?

NAC 2 20:56

I couldn't tell you, you know what I mean, the night we went with my wife that was lovely. Other times like I say I was in and out. A little bit of banter or something with the staff in the queue... that was it. But yeah decent vibes, like I said the music was always interesting.

Megan 21:19

Yeah, a lot of people have mentioned the music being interesting and like-

NAC 2 21:23

Oh yeah I think that was a big part of it.

Megan 21:27

I guess if you're in the queue as well you're kind of paying attention to it because it's...

NAC 2 21:30

Yeah, yeah. I would have known a lot of it as well and gone "oh yeah...".

Megan 21:38

Do you remember any... Actually well this kind of covers that a little bit but you remember any particular sounds or smells that you would have noticed in the queue when you were down there?

NAC 2 21:45

Like if you're out the back in you know those garden space beside where NIVAL is? The old [inaudible] building?

Megan 22:02

Oh yeah yeah.

NAC 2 22:02

You know that small garden garden? Like there was days if there was something going to be made later on you just... because of where it was the fence and all that from the back of the kitchen there [inaudible] you'd be getting these smells, you'd be going "oh god what are they making" you know "that smells really good" and you'd be dying to go down and see what it was.

Megan 22:23

[Laughter] You'd be waiting at 12 o'clock for the soup to be ready.

NAC 2 22:27

Ah no nine half nine.

Megan 22:28

Oh that's even worse! There's hours to go!

NAC 2 22:33

Yeah but you know you'd go "that smells great, what are they doing?"

Megan Luddy 22:37

Yeah what are they doing down there?

NAC 2 22:38

Yeah, and you know regularly it was appetising.

Megan 22:43

What do you think the best time to go down there was?

NAC 2 22:47

Oh around 12. Like as soon as the stuff was ready you get in gte out before the hoard descended on it

Megan 22:56

I feel like it got very crazy around one o'clock, it would just...

NAC 2 22:59

Yeah I mean forget it. I mean I went down loads of times, saw the queue and was like, "I don't have time" and I didn't have time like I had half an hour for lunch I couldn't spend 15 minutes in the queue.

Megan 23:09

No No

NAC 2 23:10

So sorry, Jennie.

Megan 23:12

Yeah, I think its good. I think she wants some pros and cons I think a lot of people have been talking about-

NAC 2 23:19

Well I mean that's a, it's a con for me but it's a pro for her, she's busy.

Oh true. What did you usually order in Luncheonette when you were down there?

Oh always the soup and the sandwich of the day. And if I wasn't keen on one or the other I'd just go for one or the other. If I didn't like the sound of it. [inaudible] on the day if I didn't like the sound of something, you know "not for me".

Was there usually something-

[inaudible] I'm not a fan of aubergine so, that was probably...

Megan 24:04

Was there usually something each day? Or would there ever be a day where you kind of be like, "well, there's nothing I gotta go somewhere else."

NAC 2 24:12

The odd day there'd be something that just wouldn't appeal to me, you know?

Megan 24:19

Would you get a tea or a coffee as well? Or would you be just-

NAC 2 24:23

Oh yeah loads of coffee over the years yeah, coffee coffee. Good coffee as well.

Megan 24:31

Slowly made but [laughter]

NAC 2 24:34

Ah yeah but if you went at the right times.

Megan 24:37

Yeah. Yeah, I feel like we've talked about the queue a lot, but could you describe the queue?

NAC 2 24:46

Long. I mean, I'll go [inaudible] But yeah, I mean, if you're in the queue you'd see people chatting and you know, no one was getting stressed. Sometimes I mean, staff would be going "oh it's ridiculous" and tearing the head off, but you know.

Megan 25:12

Would you kind of chat to people in the queue?

NAC 2 25:15

Oh yeah very popular with staff, you know the academics?

Megan 25:23

The luncheonette was very popular with?

NAC 2 25:24

Oh yeah yeah.

Megan 25:27

And would you have like sort of small chats with I guess academic staff or other staff or anything?

NAC 2 25:32

Oh yeah, like we're, we talk to everyone it's part of the the job you know, because you find out "oh we're having this thing in a couple of weeks and" and "oh yeah."

Megan 25:33

Have to prepare for that.

NAC 2 25:33

Yeah have to know what's going on.

Megan 25:54

What did you like the most about Luncheonette?

NAC 2 26:00

Consistency you know you always got nice tasty bowl of soup, tasty something or other on the side. Reasonable price. Just consistency and the fact that it wasn't... that it was healthy you know? And the music.

Megan 26:21

The music kind of combined was good.

NAC 2 26:26

Yeah it was nice to dip in get your grub, go.

Megan 26:35

I forgot as well, towards the start, or not towards the start but earlier on there wasn't a lot of healthy foods that you could get on Thomas street quickly like if you needed to get in and out very fast.

NAC 2 26:49

Oh no, yeah.

Megan 26:50

Yeah maybe Centra but even that's a bit yeah.

NAC 2 26:56

Even that's, you're looking at Jambons and sausages and spicy chicken fillets. they have a salad bar thing but [inaudible] bit of tomato lettuce [inaudible] you know? things

Megan 27:22

What did you like least about luncheonette? What frustrated you about it?

NAC 2 27:45

...I'd rather not say.

Megan 27:47

Okay

Did you have a favourite food that used to show up?

NAC 2 28:00

The burrito soup was great.

Megan 28:03

Okay.

NAC 2 28:06

And there was a...anything with harissa was nice.

Megan 28:15

Like a nice spicy kinda... I really liked the burrito soup as well, it was really good. You were saying you went to I think an event with your wife? Did you bring friends or family to-?

NAC 2 28:29

Just the two of us.

Megan 28:30

Just the one time?

NAC 2 28:32

Just the one time yeah like her job is crazy as well so. We were meant to be there, I don't know, like seven or half seven and we didn't get there until like half eight because her job. But yeah.

Yeah, no, it was nice evening. [Inaudible] Well here's your starter, here's your main, here's your dessert, then it's over. But then that was our fault, well it was her fault but... it would be nice to do it at the right pace you know?

Megan 28:44

Yeah.

NAC 2 28:44

But that's not down to Luncheonette. But everyone seemed to be having a great time you know. Nice.

Megan 29:05

So there wasn't really any other time you were able to bring like friends or-

NAC 2 29:13

It just didn't [inaudible] got in the way.

Megan 29:20

Yeah. did you ever use the... I think probably not because you were so quickly trying to get in and out but, did you ever use the dining room for meetings or anything like that? Or for work related to college even?

NAC 2 29:31

And no I was cornered in the dining room once by someone and, "oh c'mere I'll get you a coffee and we'll have a word" so I sat down and I got attacked by someone senior to me in the college and it was a very unpleasant experience but that's

Megan 29:47

Oh my god.

NAC 2 29:47

That's after Jennie left, just in that space you know. So no, no never used for, oh actually. Yeah. When we...I used to attend the board as a non-academic observer for six years and sometimes after the board meetings we'd all go down for a bit of food down there and decompressing kind of a chat after the meeting so that was nice.

Megan Luddy 1:31

And would that be kind of an afternoon sort of thing just like in the normal college period?

NAC 2 1:37

The board would meet once a month, maybe so.

Megan Luddy 1:41

Kind of once a month. Did you ever make any new acquaintances in luncheonette or kind of talk to strangers or anything?

NAC 2 1:54

I mean you'd chat to someone in the queue if you're in there but...no I never formed a friendship in Luncheonette...so yeah.

Megan Luddy 2:05

Would just kind of be occasional, well, that one sounded awful, but occasional conversations with other staff and?

NAC 2 2:12

Casual chats.

Megan Luddy 2:13

Yeah.

Did you ever get talking to visitors from outside the college in the canteen? Like people who were just coming in?

NAC 2 2:23

No, because they come to us when they come in the gate and we start there and if they wanted...we used to often say, "look if you want to get yourself a coffee, there's a canteen there," and sort of direct them, if they were made early for a meeting or whatever you know.

Megan Luddy 2:36

Yeah, sort of funnel them that way. Do you have a sense that your presence in Luncheonette was felt or made an impact? Do you think they like noticed you? I think there was a kind of a question about them-

NAC 2 2:53

I don't know you'd have to ask them, like I'd always like if something was particularly good, I'd always say great thanks, show them the bowl, spotless you know what I mean? So...

Megan Luddy 3:02

They probably did then!

NAC 2 3:02

I hope they appreciated it.

Megan Luddy 3:02

You ok?

NAC 2 3:02

No, the cat just launched herself about six feet.

Megan Luddy 3:02

Oh jesus [laughter]. Are you alright?

NAC 2 3:16

Yeah, no I'm grand.

Megan Luddy 3:26

Oh, sorry. I couldn't see her [inaudible]

NAC 2 3:27

No no no.

Megan Luddy 3:27

Okay. Do you think luncheonette made any difference to NCAD?

NAC 2 3:37

It probably prevented a few heart attacks.

Megan Luddy 3:43

Yeah.

NAC 2 3:47

And I think it set a standard you know for catering on the campus, I can't see anything worse, a step below luncheonette being acceptable now. So.

Megan Luddy 4:04

So do you think, the kind of the first thing you said, it kind of calmed things down a lot?

Which?

It kind of calmed things down a lot, because of the heart attack thing?

Oh no, I just mean as in-

Oh like a true heartache, sorry I was wondering yeah

NAC 2 4:17

Yeah

Megan Luddy 4:17

Yeah, sorry, I misinterpreted that. In terms of the health?

NAC 2 4:28

Yeah, yeah, just.

Megan Luddy 4:34

How connected do you think luncheonette was to NCAD? Do you think they were on the same page in terms of their like atmosphere and ethics and tone and things?

NAC 2 4:47

I think it was its own thing. [Inaudible]

Megan Luddy 5:01

Did luncheonette provide you with anything that should have been provided by NCAD? Do you think?

NAC 2 5:14

I didn't expect anything more from it than it offered me, you know what I mean? Transactional. Here's money. Here's food. Thanks. [inaudible] But that's all I want from a canteen or a restaurant is...

Megan Luddy 5:35

Kind of straight forwards interaction.

NAC 2 5:39

Yeah. What more do you want from... from that, you know? It is what it is.

Megan Luddy 5:48

This is the last question, would you describe luncheonette as profit driven?

NAC 2 5:53

As?

Megan Luddy 5:53

Profit driven?

NAC 2 5:57

I'm sure it was to survive, you know what I mean. But I think I always found the prices very reasonable so I don't think there was...you know. People are entitled to make a living but there are certainly no... they've never struck me that that was the sole intention of the business, you know? I know from the deliveries and stuff like that, the ingredients were all top quality and well sourced. So yeah.

Megan Luddy 6:30

Would you have seen the deliveries happening and everything?

NAC 2 6:33

Oh, yeah. Or if security had forgotten to open the door to the concourse and the deliveries came they'd leave them outside the door to the concourse

Ah ok.

And then when the doors to the concourse were open we'd have to bring them down. So, could have done without that, but yeah.

Megan Luddy 6:52

Yeah. Okay. I think that's all the questions. Thank you so much. Thanks very much for the interview.

NAC 2 6:57

I miss it, I miss it. I wish it was still there.

Megan Luddy 6:59

You miss Luncheonette?

NAC 2 7:00

Yeah.

Megan Luddy 7:01

Oh, I'll tell Jennie. I'm sure she'll be glad to hear that.

NAC 2 7:04

All right. Well, best of luck to you.

Megan Luddy 7:06

Thanks, NAC 2. Thanks so much for the help and thank you for your answers. They were great.

NAC 2 7:15

No problem

Appendix L: Blank Consent Form



School of Culinary Arts
and Food Technology

Postgraduate Research
Participation Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM Research Involving Human Participants

Project title: How carefully considered hospitality sites can impact institutions		
Principal Investigators: Jennie Moran (Supervisor: Margaret Connolly)		
<p>BACKGROUND: For this study, participants will answer a set of questions about their experience interacting with Luncheonette in NCAD</p> <p>All of the information gathered from you will be anonymised – you will not be identifiable in the final report.</p>		
<p>Participant Declaration: <i>Tick yes or no as appropriate</i></p>		
I have read or have had the information sheet read to me and that I understand the contents.	Yes	No
I have been given an opportunity to ask questions and am satisfied with answers.	Yes	No
I consent to take part in the study.	Yes	No
I understand that participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time.	Yes	No
I understand that withdrawal will not affect my access to services or legal rights.	Yes	No
I consent to possible publication of results.	Yes	No
I (the participant) give my permission to: Use the data obtained from you in other future studies without the need for additional consent.	Yes	No
<p>Researcher Declaration: <i>Tick yes or no as appropriate</i></p>		
I have explained the study to the participant	Yes /	No
I have answered questions put to me by the participant about the research	Yes /	No
I believe that the participant understands and is freely giving consent	Yes /	No

Participant's Statement:

I have read, or had read to me, this consent form. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I freely and voluntarily agree to be part of this research study, though without prejudice to my legal and ethical rights. I understand I may withdraw from the study at any time. I have received a copy of this consent form.

Participant's Name:

Contact Details:

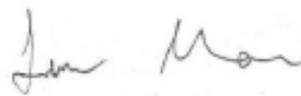
Participant Signature:

Date:

Researcher's Statement:

I have explained the nature and purpose of this research study, the procedures to be undertaken and any risks that may be involved. I have offered to answer any questions and fully answered such questions. I believe that the participant understands my explanation and has freely given informed consent.

Signature:



Date: 1st of February 2023