

NOT A WEBSITE

A play (sort of...)

Characters:

Emile- Freelance creator and educator. Into gaming.
Likes to be un-sensical.

Kate- Director of The Egg (a theatre for children and young people). Not into gaming. Tries to make
sensical.

Written by Emile Clarke, Kate Cross & Nik Partridge, this production transferred from Kate's Garden to the Bristol and Bath Creative R+D webpage and opened September 2020.

Kate's Garden

Kate and Emile sit a metre from each other across a garden table, a bowl of green and blue post it notes, two pens and antibac gel between them. Emile retrieves his phone and places it next to the bowl.

EMILE

Siri, record voice memo.
(The phone bleeps)
So, how do you wanna start?

KATE

Let's talk and people can take from it what they want...

EMILE

I think... I was thinking we could pick some post-it notes out and say...

KATE

Why don't we see if they tell a story, or see what story they tell...

EMILE

Shall we read out the important, most pertinent notes or..?

KATE

Well, let's read and if a conversation follows, let's have a conversation...

Emile antibacs his hands and selects a note.

NOTE

'Funding. Tech. Funding Funding Tech'

KATE

Ah, now I wrote that because...due to lockdown, overnight The Egg turned from being a "theatre" into an application and funding house.

EMILE

Oh, a happy obstacle?

KATE

No it's erm, it was, what was it?... An extraordinary opportunity because, all of a sudden The Egg is redefining and repurposing itself in this new world with technology and if you'd said we'd be doing this even 8 months ago, I'd go "get away!" because I was on a trajectory of making plays and touring around the world.

EMILE

Hmm...I love that with this new trajectory those plays can still tour but, I guess, in a new way, that's more accessible and potentially, easier.

KATE

That's right we're reimagining what touring plays look like through the work that you're doing, we're doing, taking work... expanding the experience in schools.

Kate picks a note

NOTE

'NOT A WEBSITE'

EMILE

I'd been set a goal of R+Ding (research and development) an online learning platform but since lockdown our screen time has rocketed and I'm grieving "in real life" learning. My results HAVE to be more

(MORE)

EMILE (CONT'D)

than just, like, a website. So this is my obstacle. What I'm swimming away from.

KATE

Well no, we don't want just a website, but if we're talking about schools, we're talking about the curriculum and I think there's more of a place for something fun and fruity that can reach a child through a website.

EMILE

Mmm. It's going to likely be a website, but holding the idea of "not a website" is enough to trust we're going to be more than that. The quest to find the fun and games within an educational tool and wrap it in a coolness that appeals to our target audience... bearing Maslow's hierarchy of needs and VARK (visual, audio reading and writing, kinaesthetic) learning styles in mind and coming back to urrm... inclusivity, in learning, that's really helped actually.

KATE

Well we've been on our own journey about how we learn haven't we? We've had to undergo a new learning experience on Zoom.

EMILE

Completely.

KATE

It's definitely made me, you know, internalise and examine how I learn, my own learning dispositions. As producers and creators we're always interfacing with our "audience". Taking away the nuance of liveness in a learning environment makes things... research language turns me off I'm afraid because it over talks about things and as a kinaesthetic learner I drown in it. In what way has VARK been helping you in this process?

EMILE

Remembering to celebrate how I learn. How we can lea-

KATE

How do you learn?

EMILE

Oh Absolutely kinas- absolutely through play, and play can exist anywhere as long as there's some sort of game or story. Thats the quest.

KATE

And sat in front of a screen doesn't help.

EMILE

Not if the 'K's are disconnected viscerally.

KATE

Mmm. I learn through play. I have to see something to believe it. It's why when I see a play that, ooh just turns me absolutely inside out intellectually and emotionally and all the rest of it, I then spend an awful lot of time working out why.

EMILE

You're having a physical reaction, that's kinaesthetic!

KATE

Yeah, even an intellectual reaction is physical for me, it, you know makes you fizz.

EMILE

(half singing)
YEEES! Fizz-ycal! Fizz-ycal!

KATE & EMILE

(singing)
Let's get Fizz-ycal! Haha!

They go to high-five but the distance and the reminder of cross contamination stop them. Emile takes a note.

NOTE

'Place , Learning & Creativity'

EMILE

Well... learning and creativity is the thing we're walking on and sometimes I forget I am walking on it, it's the pavement. Every R+D step I take has place (the website) and learning and creativity in it, but I'm so used to walking I forget what I'm walking on. (failing to stick note to forehead) This is a reminder not to take it for granted.

Kate quizzically takes a note.

NOTE

'An ambush of happy nerdy children'

KATE

What is...?!

EMILE

Haha, as in an ambush of tigers or murder of crows. This is about diversifying the playground. Making the website inclusive so children with an interest in, say, coding, can access the content as much as those interested in performing..

KATE

This is where this work really speaks about the systemic problems the arts sector faces on diversity, specifically about children's theatre, one of the bits of diversity that isn't quite right is the male female divide..

EMILE

Ah.. the reverse of that exists in tech..

KATE

Exactly and the notion that theatre is sissy, is female, you know, we've got to get rid of that.

EMILE

My take... you "save the arts" by including the people that have been excluded. A theatrical rebrand if you will. I mean, The people that worry "theatre is dying" refer to the industry not the craft. Story telling isn't exclusive.

KATE

The people who've been in the club for the last hundred years. Their version of it is dying, has died..

EMILE

Mmm, and if the people who are doing this work, the rebranding, get it right, it's just evolution.

KATE

The arts got owned by capitalism and capitalism was 'working', you know for some, until Friday 20th March 2020 and then overnight capitalism stopped working and overnight that version of the arts died.

EMLIE

Yeah. My confession is, when it happened I was like oh, I think I've been wanting this. I need change....I wanna see what the next thing is... theatre needs to become:

He finds the note

NOTE

'An inclusively cool sphere'

EMILE

The tradition of theatre has survived because it's liveness has been unreplicable, that's its appeal. Can tech make theatre more reachable? Yes, but are we then, like, altering theatre's form?

KATE

Maybe that's not a bad thing.

EMILE

I'm aware lockdown is a crap period and I have guilt watching someone- you- someone responsible for an organisation, absolutely 'in it' right now but... it's the chrysalis isn't it...

KATE

Or catalyst. Yeh yeh I agree.

KATE & EMILE

The bigger picture.

KATE

Everything that we were saying was wrong with the world, that needed to change, even though we were resisting that change, and we are the very perpetrators of, you know? Our heads still holding on to traditional value systems but our hearts knowing the globe is dying, poverty is increasing, wealth being distributed into smaller and smaller groups, but how do you change it?... And then overnight, such rapid change forced upon us.

A note is picked out by Kate:

NOTE

'STEAM not STEM'

KATE

The STEAM not STEM thing is... you need science, technology, the arts, engineering and maths working together. All those brains working to really really create something... This should give us the opportunity to step outside our world of the A, the arts, and be

brave and bold stepping into other worlds and have them step into ours. That's a possibility that I don't yet see but I still think it's a possibility.

EMILE

I see it in the gaming world. Such an ambitious crossover between those worlds exist within that industry! I think like...with reference to the learning modalities, when we step into those words we gotta, umm, celebrate that people have likely been learning a different way. Awareness of how we learn together is unity...synergy.

KATE

Exactly. How we share our jewels. That's what was actually really interesting when the Expanded Performance cohort came up, somebody said one of the research routes is expanded performance and I thought 'performance'? Do you mean as in performance? Like

(MORE)

KATE (CONT'D)

plays? The tech world is really interested in people who make theatre? Really? We're just little people that make little plays and put them on in front of little audiences, so you can't possibly think we're an outlet for your work! I mean, it's not that I don't see we could, it's just I'd always financially excluded myself from that world, because we're too small, our economy is so different. How can we come together when there's so much disparity? So I didn't really know what I had to offer apart from my honest insight. But I think I know now. And would you like to know what that is?

EMILE

Yes please thank you kindly.

KATE

I think what you're helping us to imagine and create has the potential to solve the problem of schools. I'm not suggesting we're going to change the world overnight, because no one single person does, but I think that there is a... there was a time in history, like early 90s when the teacher resource pack was invented, which sort of followed on from the National Curriculum being invented in the late 80s?

EMILE

(googling)

1988.

KATE

Yes, thank you, and those packs were for schools. Addressing little points on the curriculum, this bit refers to 3.2-

EMILE

And these bits are about Henry the Eighth's wives-

KATE

Yes and what they became were really kind of boring, dull, dry, tick box, e-book documents that people have been doing ever since. They're pretty much ubiquitous alongside every show thats designed for children and schools. I know why people did them. Trying to add value to the play, because it's very hard to

(MORE)

KATE (CONT'D)

demonstrate the full value of a 45 minute play, with all the upheaval and cost and blah-

EMILE

And more often than not it's easier for a school to just not come.

KATE

Mmm, and the resource pack made it easier.

EMILE

Quantifiable learning. Are you saying it's outdated now?

KATE

Well... we're still trying to add value, but with a whole new set of tools and imaginations and when we've worked out what it's going to be, we've created a template, blueprint or whatever, that others may follow.

EMILE

Like whoever did for that first teacher resource pack.

KATE

Right! Eventually we'll share this model, and there's also this idea about how children can leave their mark in a play, which this sort of addresses too. For example, in the world of early years theatre, there's this conundrum. What do we do with an impulse driven 2 year old who wants to interact and how we can manifest those impulses within the play? How can we let them leave their mark? That's what's important and I think technology is the answer to that.

EMILE

Yeah, autonomy often equates back to kinaesthetic learning for me.

KATE

Kinaesthetic impulse, sure yeh. I mean you can't do a play without a child wanting to touch the thing..

EMILE

My experience of theatre has been mostly very visual, very audible and the only thing that was kinaesthetic was the chair I was sat in. That's why immersive theatre has done so well. And now we have the opportunity to evolve that... that's what's exciting here. For the technologists to help lift the story off the page.

End