**TRANSCRIPT**

**INTERVIEW WITH CAROLINE GAUSDEN**

***CONDUCTED BY LOUISE SIDEY***

**THE GLASGOW WOMENS LIBRARY, THE UNIVERSITY OF STRATHCLYDE**

**Interview Status: X open to public** \_ confidential \_ anonymous

**Name of interviewee:** Caroline Gausden (C.G) (F)

**Date of birth:** -

**Name of interviewer:** Louise Sidey (L.S) (F)

**Name of videographer:** N/A

**Number of sessions:** 1 **Session** (9th March 2021)

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**Dates of interview:** March 9th 2021

**Language of interview:** English

**Name of transcriber:** Louise Sidey

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**Software used to read DVD:** VLC Media Player

**Editorial Note:**

The interview was easy to transcribe and all of the recording was audible and clear. Prior to the interview, G.M was given this sample list of questions:

So, to begin can you tell me a bit about your role with GWL?

How did you end up at GWL, what drew you to this specific institution?

Prior to the pandemic what was a normal working day like?

How have you had to adapt?

What is your workspace like?

What has been the biggest challenge?

What other challenges have you encountered whilst at GWL? And how do they compare to now?

Have you been surprised by anything you have enjoyed during this time?

You opened on Tuesday the 1st September on a phased return, what was that like?

What do you miss most about the library?

How have you found the transition onto digital online life?

How do you manage to find a work/ life balance?

Have you still managed to work with the community?

**Interviewee’s Biographical Details/ taken from GWL website:**

Dr Caroline Gausden is a new addition to the team having joined GWL in December 2018. Before working at the Library Caroline was based in Aberdeen where she completed a practice based PhD in Feminist Manifestos and Social Art Practice. She is a Development Worker for Programming, Curating, Partnerships and Participation at GWL. This role involves her moving between all the different facets of the organisation, from the archive to the library shelves and surrounding neighbourhood, to think about how the collection and public programme continue to speak to each other and to the diverse groups of people who are at home in the Library.

**Transcript and Time-Coded Summary**

00:00:01.170 --> 00:00:09.210

Louise Sidey: Yeah perfect so I’ve got you here on the ninth of March and just to get your oral consent before we start that you're happy to do this interview.

00:00:09.750 --> 00:00:10.019

Caroline Gausden: Yep, I am happy.

00:00:11.940 --> 00:00:18.150

Louise Sidey: Good, em okay, so if you just want to start by telling me a little bit about your role with the Glasgow women's library.

00:00:19.800 --> 00:00:29.760

Caroline Gausden: Yeah so I’m, my title is I’m a development worker for program programming curating partnerships and participation [laughs] so it's quite a long title, and I think it's what I do is it you know what between these areas, which are all kind of like threaded together in GWL anyway so yeah we you know we're getting a lot of em, so so basically I might work on events or I might work on exhibitions. But then it's about thinking about if we've got an event in what kind of materials that we got in the collection, that I could bring out or what kind of knowledge of we got in the volunteer group, to sort of like to add kind of depth to things and to make sure that different areas that because GWL is like a hybrid space so just to make sure like they're different areas of speaking to each other. So yeah that's that's sort of what I do so, I guess, I haven't got one standard thing a day, but my work with students with different students quite a lot recently supporting them in their research but it might also be that a student works on a project and on a particular aspect of the project. And then I bring that in or. As I said, I might work with artists or to produce one off events em or exhibitions. yeah. To the collections team and to the production coordinators and yeah kind of things. [laughs]

00:01:47.640 --> 00:01:54.750

Louise Sidey: It seems like it's like a lot of different threads together, quite a people facing role.

00:01:55.380 --> 00:01:56.850

Caroline Gausden: Yeah, yeah I think so.

00:01:59.010 --> 00:02:08.520

Louise Sidey: Yeah sorry I am just going to switch to better internet because this is quite glitchy. And and I guess like what actually brought you to GWL well in the first place, then?

00:02:11.910 --> 00:02:21.810

Caroline Gausden: Well, I was at art school and I was interested in social practice I was basically looking for practices that were like in different spaces and galleries and we're politically motivated and collective. And so I had a tutor at the art school called Fiona Dean who's also in our collection she's an artist. She said, you should really check out the women's library so that was quite a time ago and Adele supported me to do my research, like my master's research. On a project, they were doing and then that became a PhD and I went up to Aberdeen and I did a PhD and then so maybe almost 10 years between when I first found out, but it was over, and always kept in touch and that sort of figured out if I could yeah be helpful, or do program around it so yeah and then I came back in like the end of twenty, or came back or came for the first time as a member of staff in 2018 to work.

00:03:17.280 --> 00:03:30.120

Louise Sidey: Wow, god it is quite an organic transition then I guess for me being like a volunteer or like a volunteer but almost working kind of doing all that research and then slowly kind of like moving off and then becoming a member staff.

00:03:31.080 --> 00:03:38.040

Caroline Gausden: Yeah yeah, I think, so I think I got to know the library along the way, and I found that you know the whole library, but I think particularly Adele was like when you're doing your masters research I don't suppose, everyone has a lot of time to talk to you [laughs] and Adele is sort of made times, though, to kind of support what I was doing and was interested in so yeah so I gradually became a women's library expert.

[laughter]

00:04:01.680 --> 00:04:09.090

Louise Sidey: What, what was your PhD on, or on your Masters, and what was the kind of topic that you chose to do?

00:04:09.810 --> 00:04:11.310

Caroline Gausden: I did like em. The PhD was on, it was about feminist manifestos and I did it to consider like certain art practices act like manifestos basically. And so I was looking at social art practices and saying how do they behave like feminist manifestos basically, so that was my PhD and then before that I was looking at a project at the women's library had been involved in called elbow room, which was like a big collaborative project with a gallery of modern art. About yeah it was about violence against women so and yeah it was a good foundation for doing a PhD in terms of it already in quite political practice so.

Louise Sidey: Yeah

Caroline Gausden: But there were gaps I’m saying when I was working and not studying as well yeah

00:05:03.330 --> 00:05:16.020

Louise Sidey: Yeah and I guess it's just kind of interesting to see kind of like from your perspective that the library is almost like this artistic space, because I think all always kind of you think first and foremost most it's like this research kind of like library space, but actually for you, I guess, maybe is more of an artistic space as well.

00:05:22.650 --> 00:05:28.950

Caroline Gausden: Yeah I mean I think it's, it is, like a smuggled artwork I think it's like an artwork. But not everybody people go in there are people whose interaction with it will be as a library think of it as a library, but I guess the way I see it is like how would a library be if it was made by artists? You know, so yeah it's those things so those things.

00:05:49.350 --> 00:06:05.580

Louise Sidey: That's really lovely a is quite a nice, nice sentiment about the library really and I guess I’m like so what would your kind of just, casting our mind back kind to coronavirus and stuff what was kind of your role like before the pandemic if you can remember? [laughs]

00:06:09.180 --> 00:06:18.150

Caroline Gausden: Em, yeah like the things I described really like I’d be like either supporting other people to put on exhibitions or curating exhibitions. As a big part but then also talks and events, so I might have a day, where I'm going to look among the books and bring books out or in the collection, or two people are doing research in the collection. So it's getting to know. So there's no standard day I suppose. It’s getting to know what's in the collection in relation to other people's interest so always kind of like in dialogue with people I suppose. So for example putting on a heartland with katie and Laura and supporting them to do those things or working with a partner em, to sort of think about those things to think about how an event might be.

00:07:00.150 --> 00:07:00.540

Louise Sidey: Yeah.

00:07:01.590 --> 00:07:14.160

Louise Sidey: And I guess like in that sense, how have you found because so much of that is you, being in dialogue and kind of meeting lots of people have you kind of found the kind of online transition then because I guess it's really kind of effected that role?

00:07:15.120 --> 00:07:15.630

Caroline Gausden: yeah.

00:07:18.030 --> 00:07:18.630

Louise Sidey: yeah.

00:07:19.260 --> 00:07:21.210

Caroline Gausden: Yeah I don’t think it’s been easy. I don't want to be, I think. You know that they Sue and Adele put a number of things in place at the beginning of the pandemic that were quite useful, you know they said we're going to keep going and we've got these kind of we have in a way the systems that help us to communicate so we're already quite a communicative team I think we're not very siloed into our roles and I think the point of my role was to make sure that silo-ing was even less. So, like there are some physical problems with that, because you usually you would I would have a desk but then I would be talking to Katie over my desk and I’d be going upstairs and walking around. You know, speaking to different people are on front of house and. So, like, I think that they tried to counter that when we went into lockdown by putting these sort of different focus groups in place. So that we would have a reason to meet you know, so that we, we will continue to be aware of what each other we're doing, basically, and of course we sort of have team meeting which is another kind of platform in which we would share, like every two weeks, what we're doing so in that way those kind of forms are the same. So a bit different because suppose the problem is with like multitasking and my role, I think, probably the problem for everyone is that suddenly when things were quite varied and you're doing maybe three or four things at once, so you're holding a number of projects you've got, you've got body memory [laughs] of what you were you're in the collection, or you know and you've also got a lot of instances where you can just speak over a desk or somebody and find things out quite quickly so think. On the one hand, it's harder, it is harder to plan things because you have to set up a zoom and you can only really have a few zooms in a day I suppose. But then on the other hand, yeah I think I only noticed about halfway through the problem with everything being on in the same format is like it's quite hard to remember what you've done what you haven't done because you everything, instead of just being a variety of things, so those are my complaints. [laughter] But I think that Sue and Adele tried to set up the best possible systems for a situation where with a team that's tight knit and used to being with each other that isn't anymore. [laughs]

00:09:43.350 --> 00:09:43.980

Caroline Gausden: So yeah.

00:09:45.300 --> 00:09:45.750

Louise Sidey: yeah. I really get a sense of that like speaking to everyone, I think it is that kind of an element of you guys all missing the kind of network, I suppose that the Glasgow Women’s library operates as kind of that close knit notice that you guys have I think it's really nice to kind of hear that and how you've kind of managed to kind of replicate that I guess on zoom in a way.

00:10:07.470 --> 00:10:08.010

Caroline Gausden: We’ve tried, sorry my dog is not happy with me, sorry.

00:10:14.670 --> 00:10:15.300

Caroline Gausden: [inaudible]

00:10:18.150 --> 00:10:19.380

Louise Sidey: What kind of dog is it.

00:10:20.400 --> 00:10:25.140

Caroline Gausden: She’s little terrier she's a little old lady terrier we've adopted a her. She’s whining a bit she probably thinks I am eating.

00:10:32.880 --> 00:10:45.180

Caroline Gausden: Yeah so we I think people have made a really big effort like Katie made an effort to think about different ways we can communicate, so you know how to communicate like to try telephone calls, as well. And em like informal catch up so we've got like kettle chats, which was to try and replicate the the fact that you know you would just see people when you went to the kettle [laughs] and you.

Louise Sidey: Aw

00:10:58.290 --> 00:11:05.070

Caroline Gausden: Yes, it's not it's not ideal, I would like to go back into the space and just have a chat by the kettles.

00:11:07.440 --> 00:11:12.600

Caroline Gausden: And I still go in a wee bit in terms of looking at things in the collection I’ve had to go in. So yeah when I work with partners and to try and bring things out, so I do have that I have that kind of difference, which is good, maybe once a week or once every month or so ago and pick things up.

00:11:29.400 --> 00:11:40.770

Louise Sidey: Because I guess, yes, so what how have you found it then almost doing this kind of curating, because a lot of it must be almost online now opposed to actually creating kind of exhibits within the library space?

00:11:41.250 --> 00:11:53.460

Caroline Gausden: And yeah so we've just done, the first you know I guess it's been entirely online for this collaboration with Shetland Garda arts in Shetland who were working with us to produce an exhibition there was going to travel down and we just found out like, you know, a few weeks ago we're not going to be open in time, so is really disappointing to not be able to put our works out but I tried to do a number of things to bring the work across anyway. In different format, so we had like a celebration event. And I did interviews with the, there were four, artists so it kind of interviewed them on zoom with collaborators in Shetland to find out a little bit more about what I heard inspired their work, so it was all work about this activists archive and Shetland which is called, which is around the fire festival at Paleo. And so there's a group em campaigning for women to be included, because women are still not allowed to be part of the fire festival. So those are those were making work out of another archive. And they just basically looked to us, well are always sort of like, to offer solidarity. You know to being another place, that this kind of group could kind of find some support from so in terms of that and that those four artists work would have come to the library would have been up in their space in Shetland then come down but it hasn't been so. Yeah I did the interviews and then I went into the collection and I pulled different things out there that were sort of like to have a dialogue to try and make a dialogue with the objects and then I wrote a little blog so you can sort of see the artworks they did displayed them outside in Shetland and then our museum pieces. And then I did some work talking to volunteers about like so some things like Becky, for example, knows loads about knitting patterns that I just don't know, I don't either I don't know everything in the collection. Until knitting was a big part of one of the artists work, so I kept getting the volunteers involved with the knowledge of the collection, as well as a kind of like different pathway into knowing the work so yeah and that's still ongoing I’ll do a seeing things which I haven't worked out how I’m going to do yet, but it might involve me like holding up artworks [laughter] so yeah watch that space watch this space for that, but that's probably just you know different ways for people to see artists work so. It is just exactly kind of replicating the exhibition space.

00:14:21.390 --> 00:14:23.880

Louise Sidey: Yeah and I guess in some senses, I guess it makes it more accessible, because then, if it is online and people can kind of you're spreading the word but kind of the Shetland artists even further than maybe perhaps if it was in the library, I guess, it would have done.

00:14:36.000 --> 00:14:53.670

Caroline Gausden: Yeah, yeah I mean in terms of the celebration event we had like 86 people at that, and then they were from all over the world, so I think there was somebody from Kuwait at at it, so they they would not have been able to go either to the women's library or to the fire festival so yeah there are some some doors open when others close, but, and I think ideally what we're, I'm thinking that anyway, is how you can keep those doors open when you open other doors [laughs] and then there’s balancing how much works is when you are still working so. Even without the building there is still work.

00:15:18.180 --> 00:15:25.380

Louise Sidey: Yeah because I think that it's kind of like a theme of this time and what kind of been speaking about in these interviews is that, like the pandemic has made it kind of impossible to kind of create that line between like your work and life balance and I think like it's almost like you bring your work home with you there's some ways I think people are doing even more work than they were before. And I guess how have you been finding the that transition in a sense, how have you kind of manage to create that work life balance in this time?

00:16:01.110 --> 00:16:07.830

Caroline Gausden: Mm I don’t know [laughs] I don’t know, I think I just tried to keep a routine routine of like you know, taking some holidays, but just retain and keeping record keeping up my hours. I think probably my hours in the beginning, went down a bit, so I hadn't got it was like oh I’m in my home space and I just wasn't working. And it meant maybe was that things were paused as well, and people are trying to recalibrate so. I thought I’m not I’m owing the library hours all over the place, but then somehow an adjustment was made, and then we went back to the library owning the hours, which is me this is the more common [inaudible] makes the library so, it's it's just me, overworking myself. So, yeah I don't know I think probably there was a period of adjustment. And then eh working out how to work in a new space. Eh and then there is some excess in terms of yeah it takes more to arrange a zoom call to work out logistics of things than it does to speak over a desk, so I think yeah. The excesses, or if you're making a if you make a film about an exhibition in some in some ways, you hang an exhibition and it's like yeah, it is a lot two to three days work doing that, but then it's sort of done, whereas if you're doing kind of online outputs there are other things, to make accessible as well, so eh yeah, [laughs] I don’t know if, I don't think I answered the question. Did I answer the question?

00:17:39.630 --> 00:17:44.760

Louise Sidey: Yeah I think you did answer the question yeah, I feel like you answered the question, I feel like you captured it and it kind of shows I think everyone kind of has been their work life has been thrown off in there, in many ways it's kind of just finding that new kind of stillness and how to kind of create order in the day. I definitely agree, in that sense, and I guess so what do you think has been, this another question that might throw you, but what is another big challenge that you've had during this time, or the biggest challenge that you've had?

00:18:11.760 --> 00:18:28.110

Caroline Gausden: Em I just think, new, developing new communication systems so that you know where everyone is, and then I think another I think you know people have different levels of being risk of adverse anyway and I think the problem is that people are going through a lot. You know. Lots of whatever personal things they're going through and you know they've been thrown up so so basically we're not all in the same headspace and I think just basic. [dog barking] Not having, not having that kind of shared. [dog barking]

00:18:52.170 --> 00:18:53.370

Caroline Gausden: Oh just sorry, I really.

00:18:54.180 --> 00:18:54.930

Louise Sidey: No don’t worry.

[Caroline has to answer the door]

00:19:07.230 --> 00:19:12.180

Caroline Gausden: Yes, I think that what I want to say yeah I guess the library creates a sort of shared space like a physical space, but also shared emotional space and we're very supportive of each other and what we go through everything open and honest and I think basically just from not being in that space and then not having that same necessarily having the same, emotions having different feelings of risk and uncertainty makes it very difficult but yes, I have tried to counter that a little bit by still having those moments in the team meeting, we have had some weepy team meetings. So yeah but then I think you can't really. So that's a difficulty that's just knowing where people are basically.

00:19:56.610 --> 00:19:57.120

Louise Sidey: Yeah and I think it's like what you were saying about like the kettle chats and stuff like when you're actually in a space and you're able to kind of give that emotional support kind of daily and kind of drip it into people's days by speaking to them, and knowing what's going on, and I think definitely at the moment we're all just on zoom it's so much harder to kind of know how someone's feeling a lot of the time em yeah.

00:20:19.740 --> 00:20:25.140

Caroline Gausden: I've been aware that people get fatigued from zoom so you don't want to take up a whole lot of time. Whereas, you would have. To give time to just chat yeah seems to be weird. That’s yeah.

00:20:36.570 --> 00:20:44.250

Louise Sidey: Now I think that's lovely sentiment and and I guess it kind of like segue-ways quite nicely into what you, what do you miss most about the library?

00:20:48.390 --> 00:20:52.560

Caroline Gausden: Everything! I really miss the library, but I really think that's sort of like, entering that kind of space of kindness and just the way the lovely way all the colleagues do small things for each other in that space em, so I think I missed that I really desperately starting. I don't know if this whether I miss, I think, working with artists and now feeling artists are like that you know being on hold, like in making work and their project, so I guess like just hanging artworks properly, it would be really good to put some up again. But yeah, but I have ah you know I’m still working with the artists, so that's good, so I still have that and I’m still sometimes in that. Discovering quite a bit about the collection from going in so that's. But yeah, just that sort of companionship from colleagues working with colleagues in that in that space and, em and also just also that you learn you meet you meet people in the space like might be volunteers, or that aren't scheduled meetings and then you learn about their life, you know, like their perspectives and things so, yeah and random people visiting the library and being very joyful about it. Is a lot is a lovely thing that we got for that wee window, when we were open again and people did kind of make journeys to visit library still like much less quantities, but still. So that, I miss all those things, yeah.

00:22:24.690 --> 00:22:33.480

Louise Sidey: Yeah I know it kind of does come through I guess like people aren't really the lifeblood of the library, in the sense the staff and also the visitors and the volunteers like. I feel like I really get a sense of that with the women's library which kind of makes it unique and, unlike other libraries, I think.

00:22:42.660 --> 00:22:44.520

Caroline Gausden: Yeah, it's definitely a social space. You know so it's not really a it can we have days that we've programmed to be quiet days and for people have got different needs and rather than just the general kind of ‘shhh’ it’s a library kind of thing, but I think it's other days it's like a bustling and noisy and social space and, yeah, it’s all those good kind of social things that you get from people so yeah you know

00:23:14.970 --> 00:23:25.110

Louise Sidey: Yeah it’s good. And I guess, do you have so do you have kind of projects in the pipeline at the moment, so you've got the Shetland space one coming up, if you got anything else and that's kind of you're developing at the moment?

00:23:26.940 --> 00:23:31.830

Caroline Gausden: So we have the delayed in Ingrid Pollard show. And that should have been last year June, July so that's to open, hopefully, when we open and, the end of May so we're getting ready for that and still some of the words need to be made, so we need to go into the space a wee bit and try and figure out how to put things together and, and I working on a big project called life support at the moment, which will be coming in the summer. So that's like a research team working with so meet them once a week and got maybe four or five different artists that are making new works for that so at the moment is kind of meeting and figuring out and they'll be working with activists groups as well, so it's talking to the activist groups will be working with like Living Rent for example, to figure out how they, can support how artists can support activists essentially so yeah. Those are the big ones, and then. Some talks the talk about green and a webinar about Greenham common they are green teams doing quite a bit around thinking about sustainability.

00:24:44.370 --> 00:24:53.430

Louise Sidey: Yeah exciting thinking about like projects are actually going to be in the library, again I guess it kind of feels like a return to normality.

00:24:53.790 --> 00:25:02.490

Caroline Gausden: Yeah, yeah [laughs] let’s hope but there's you know there's a lot of ifs and buts somehow it being so that takes quite a lot of logistical meetings to figure that out.

00:25:05.460 --> 00:25:16.080

Louise Sidey: Definitely, well, thank you so much for speaking to me Caroline I’m aware of the time, and if we both got a segue way into new meetings at three and yeah thank you so much it's been great.

00:25:17.430 --> 00:25:21.300

Caroline Gausden: If you want to ask me anything or is I missed something, you can always get back in touch.

00:25:22.260 --> 00:25:32.250

Louise Sidey: Yeah, no don't worry well we I feel like I’ve covered a lot of this stuff and all at once, so transcribes it I can send it over and if there's any kind of like gaping holes, I’ll message you.

00:25:34.560 --> 00:25:37.230

Louise Sidey: Thank you so much for making it happen still.

00:25:38.820 --> 00:25:39.570

Caroline Gausden: Yeah, that was good. Okay.

00:25:42.960 --> 00:25:43.830

Louise Sidey: Have a good day, see you soon.

**-End of Interview-**