**Participant 16 - Male, 24, Hackney**

I: Can we start by talking about what you’ve out first?

R: In the first one I’ve drawn, it’s basically a representation of a guy or a person in any sort of social situation which is more formal so like an engagement or public transport or anything which isn’t like relaxing, usual, comfortable situation. And I’ve drawn a load of staring faces around him in the sense of that, basically the metaphor is like you’re constantly surrounded by people and especially in London obviously if you commute in that you can be surrounded by all these staring faces and unfamiliar faces and what not and they can even be smart or they can be whatever they can even be the most warm, if you’re going through a time or you’re having an overemphasised amount of loneliness as a as an emotion, feeling, then it doesn’t matter. Do you know what I mean? Like you can be with all the people in the world, you can be in the busiest place in the world, it doesn’t matter because you’re alone, like, none of this is comfortable, none of it is people supporting you and that’s me personally, that’s a very, very common thing to happen in London for my experiences. People, London is very happy, like, place in central, like it does have a good communal spirit, and people help each other when we’re down but because of the high pace life, cause, I put like, if you do live in London you have a lot to deal with on a daily basis regardless of if you're having a quiet day, this couldn’t be a lot of what's happened. And so we’re all caught up in our lives enough that we that becomes difficult to become even empathetic to people and so you do get a lot of time when you look around a train and empty face looking at you not even with any judgement or anything like that, that sort of thing adds to the whole the coldness of loneliness, I guess in that sense.

I: So basically, it seems what you’re saying is, you know, you like, basically, you could in a place where it’s full of people yet you could still yet you could feel lonely.

R: Yeah in some ways I feel like you can from my personal experience I feel more lonely in those situations because for example, say, say someone who is lonely in a consistency of their environment, you can build familiar friends with your environment, the TV, characters become your friends, the portrayal of a protagonist in your book becomes your mate, the plants, your art, exedra exedra, but then when you’re in that position or adjustment or where you’re in a (basement? 03:41) you suddenly just stop in the middle of Leicester Square or wherever and you realise that you’re alone and that in a sense we are always gonna be alone but like that really does re enhance and reiterate the fact of you being an individual in that sense because you’re constantly surrounded by so many people but they’re not responsible for you and you’re not responsible for them there’s not a team within this, it’s an individual thing so you can either then I guess, you can also channel that as a motivation, as a beneficial thing to see it, the rat race of London, what we live in is the, being like (all for one on one for all? -  04:23) but I guess there’s a fine balance you need to find and I feel like it’s quite a difficult task to find especially in London especially if you’re from a different background, if you’re not from around here, there’s much more challenges in the way for you to get past that lonely (what? - 04:46) I guess.

I: How does that make you feel being in London and being in a crowd where you know they’re not responsible for you you’re not responsible for them and, and people not relating and…

R: Um, probably, at the moment, it’s when i like obviously I’m aware of it consciously but like when I fully like, consciously become aware of it like when I start acknowledging it and like stop at whatever else I was thinking about, it makes me, it gives me a feeling of I guess, a sense of like emptiness, unnerved, lots of hope in a way not for myself but for like general humanitarian actions and what not but I guess I resound in a thought more than emotion would be what if, as in what if it was the alternative version of that and that it was more seen as even more as like socially unacceptable to even not say hello to someone or actually care. But then that brings me on to this point but that’s up to you if you want to move on that yet.

I: Maybe, I wanna ask you some questions.

R: Yes, sure no worries.

I: Thank you. Um, so you mentioned like rat racing and so on, can you tell me more about that?

R: So, being someone whose always had, I’m sure I speak of the majority of people my age slash people of the UK being someone who hates the conformity of the business structure and world we live in and how the working life exedra that obviously plays a huge part of everyone and people tend to in my opinion, people tend to realise it in at two different stages either when they first come to London they’re very aware of it straight away or when they get to a certain point in their career or situation when they’re like tired of it like it gets a bit tedious. You see it when you’re walking down Oxford street or whatever, in Oxford Circus you’ll see heads down just walking, like no one even interacting and so for that person, in that moment, let’s talk about that moment of when they realise for example, they’ll be standing in a train with their head down and they’ll bring their head up and realise that they’re the only person with their head up and yet there’s thousands of people on this train. All the opportunities in the world, interacting, meeting someone amazing, share ideas and exchange art and thoughts and stuff, and yet because we’re so oppressed and depressed, no one even talks. No one stands, like, I’m not someone who constantly would like to be on my phone I like the idea, I tend to not have the facilities of a normal person would have on their phone maybe part maybe because part of that and other reasons but but a lot of the times I just clock myself catching that sort of situation on a bus or whatever. How's it that none of these people even speak to each other? like no one Is. It's very rare that you travel and and then you just have a genuine, nice conversation, meaningful conversation with a complete stranger because of the way that we, we’ve been with been put into this grace. Again, talking about the race it comes back to a doggy doggy idea of that, why am I going to share my idea with you? why am I going to speak to you you you you are a poor learner you could be my main competition. That comes down to the idea of we are being fed this idea of more and more and more, be the best, better, better, better, (if I be your corner? -  09:40) exedra, exedra when when before you know it you want to be a chef and that dude at the end is about to retire he is (suddenly? - 09:52) the right person to give a secret recipe up to, you know? You don’t know that. We don’t even give that a chance anymore. No one does, especially in London. You get them all when you’re in the country, cause people, people have more time to check themselves, you know? They sit at home and they’re like ‘hmm maybe I will speak to someone’ and then you find it when you go to the countryside or a quiet place, you go into a shop, you end up standing like the shop counter for 10 minutes having a conversation with a guy and then people behind you in the queue don’t mind. You can’t even get a Tesco shopping bag without, waiting for a Tesco shopping bag without people complaining behind you, because of the race, because of the high pace of what we’re living, so when people live this high pace all day, all day and then something gets injected out of it at the end of the day to the last couple of hours of their own personal time they they feel that loneliness because of the fact of how busy they’ve been and then put into this secluded environment they now, they feel, you feel the obligation and the incentive to do something. I do it with time. I come home from a weekend with spending the weekend away with my mates and then I come home and I’m like ‘hmm, I wonder what this person is doing’, because you feel that incentive but then realistically, you be less lonely if you were confined in the things which you can do at a personal level and it doesn’t matter what’s around you, in fact it’s better if you do it at a personal level. But because we’re so caught up in this more and more and more and more, it always keeps me going because it constantly, the nightlife, the events, the activities, exetra, exetra. Loneliness is continually going around, I feel like that’s a, in my opinion that’s one of the reasons why people are most lonely in London.

I: Thank you. So it seems like what you’re saying is being in that constant business of London, basically takes free time from people, basically contributes to their sense of loneliness.

R: Yeah. It’s not so much it takes away their free time, because it’s up to you what career you do and how many hours you work, yeah I know it’s easier said than done in some cases we all need to pay rent, whatever, but, I’m guessing, I’m saying it contributes to the feeling of constantly having to be involved or missing out, london has a huge emphasis on the fear of missing out because of how much it’s constantly going on, you always have to be involved but I guess the biggest thing I’m saying about that is that it takes away that empathetic care, it takes away that that genuine thought of spread, spreading, you know, of like being on a train and seeing that woman at the end and being like she doesn’t look like she’s having that good of the day, let’s check. I try to clock myself, I try to check myself and do that quite often and not saying you haven’t done it, I’m not saying most people do it but I think people forget of what resounding and rewarding feeling it is just for you personally and more importantly for that other person when do these things, like even as simple as like not being so busy and running upstairs to get to some meeting which you really don’t care that much about instead of helping that elderly woman, you know. Yeah, obviously people do this all the time everywhere you go but it seems to be a lot of heads down compared to eyes up in London whether it’d be on your phone, the floor, into, into your knees when you’re crying or just keeping your eyes shut because you need a moment of peace, you can’t bear to see more people, it’s all the same at the end of the day, our eyes are down, not up, we should be more aware of our around, of our surroundings.

I: Thank you. You mentioned oppressed and depressed, can you tell me more about that?

R: So, like, the depressed would be like again, depressed people being, for example, in my experience, depression of like social situations, then, for example being put in situations or walking down Oxford Street and seeing someone who is in somewhat of a familiar avenue than me and like I can see their success and at that point, compared to my demise or whatever and like, London has a lot of huge, huge impact on what you should look like, what you could be doing, this is what you could buy, what you should buy, buy this, do this, do that, and so that re enhances people’s lack of confidence and motivation and what they’re doing at the moment and so many mates of mine and stuff are just like caught up in jobs where they, because of how fast we’re living, they don’t even have time to be able to go, I’m gonna quit my job or I’m gonna do this and then they see their mate or they see someone coming to the pub who they’re working around, they serve someone whose in the exact position of where they wanna be but they don’t have the funds, they don’t have this, they don't have that and then just to quickly touch on ‘oppress’, not so much oppress but oppress should be like the people who made, almost made, in the same position but to make to feel like they’re people who actively making them feel like they’re, they belong in that position or that they’re not doing enough to get (out ? - 16:35) out of that position but not in a motivational way, like, as in like a, passively making themselves feel bad about their hierarchy exedra. Again it comes down to the idea of the rat race again because it’s like, I don’t feel like you and I are gonna be going out oppressing people or making people depressed, there’s no incentive there that we, I, are at a social/conscious level where we are empathetic to most situations and we’re not gonna, you and I can’t just walk past a homeless person or without even looking or taking into consideration that person, even if you’re busy or you’ve decided that I have to take care of my self or I don’t have time or money, exetra, or whatever the situation is, but you’re not gonna stop and (something something - 17:35) that person. You’re not immune to the thought of that person you’re still there and yes that I mean, but then you’ll see that that guy in suite almost like having a go at them and I see this, I see this more and more often I’ve seen that people are like ‘why should I give you this, why?’ like you know what I mean, like, it’s worse having a go at people who are trying to better their lives but obviously on the flip side of them, before we know they’re depressed. I feel like, what I’m basically saying is that like if you live in London, I’m sure you’ve gone through some sort of depressed stage and cause of the different social situations and circles and all the different, London is obviously, it has such a variety, all types of people that people aren’t happy with what they’re doing, (what channel their 18:45) depression as in the depression of other people as in like for example as I was saying the business man and the homeless man, you see that more than often, without getting into, touch very lightly on this bit because it’s a whole conversation itself, someone who’s a low social demographic or poverty and then they see the rich men, the rich men walk through, in a sense of passively dealing with their depression/oppression, the business man, they’re gonna press on him and they’re gonna be like ‘give us this’, ‘why do you think you can walk through here?’’ da da da da, and so you know, if we were just living in a scenario, for example, imagine that same thing, we were living in the world of where people as we said before, they have more of a eyes open, empathetic level of care and consciousness towards people, that child, that kid with more poverty wouldn’t approach the businessman in a way, like, ‘give me your money!’, da da da da. He’d be like, ‘look man, I’m not doing well’ or whatever, you now, or like, ‘hey, can I work for you?’ because of the way that's dealt with in the sense of being like ‘ you’ve got what I want’ and/or ‘’you’re rubbing  that in my face’ or ‘I’m jealous of you for the way that I’m’, na, it’s society that basically taught us to naturally deal with these emotions. I’m gonna oppress you in that sense but there’s not much I guess we can do about, not until the whole level of acceptance of people I guess, people’s genuine like self-acceptance of what they’re going through changes and that’s always gonna be a on a personal level more of a social level I guess.

I: And how do you feel about that?

R: It’s obviously disheartening. Um, it’s refreshing when you meet the unique individuals who deal with it in the opposing way, quite rewarding. Guess it’s just something which is the way it is and so it’s hard to feel (peel? - 21:38) too much emotion toward it apart from just acknowledging it and knowing that it’s unfortunate sad circumstance of society I guess.

I: Thank you. Is there anything else you want to say about that box?

R: No I feel like we covered it.

I: Sure, can we talk about what you put in this box, box 2, please?

R: So yeah, I just made it a scenario, a party scenario scene, so it’s like the expansion of this point here [referring to the drawing], it’s basically, I basically drew a dude just sat behind  or underneath a staircase whilst there’s a party going on behind and like this was put mainly based on strangers. This is based on social situation which you’re supposed to be comfortable in, so your peers, your colleagues, family, da da da da, that’s obviously the most scary one because there’s no incentive for strangers really, there’s no incentive for them to be tied in and connected to you so it’s more of a hope that but this is more realistic in a sense of like your family is supposed to, and your family and friends, they’re supposed to be your blood and bone, you know, I suppose you keep together when it doesn’t even look like you could stand up, um, and so it’s basically just highlighting the fact that it doesn’t really matter who is around you or what, the impact of loneliness on mental health is far stronger than any, anything, anyone can do but because it’s internal but like whether or not you let that control you is obviously that’s something which is only up to you, your family can’t do that, they can be there as much as they want for you, support you, give you this and give you that but loneliness is an emotion which comes from inside here like actually, these are people who are gonna reassure you you’re not lonely but if you’re depressed, it’s not necessary going to help and that’s the idea of this that the dude is just sat by himself with legs with his knees in his chest looking down again, with eyes down and for me when I’ve been in situations like that it’s very dry and very self-afflicted in a way of being like you start to blame yourself without not even being like why am I, these are my friends, they’re family, but, because of the highlight of the highlight of this is, if you’re lonely you’re lonely, it doesn’t matter, like, and like, that confusing distant emotion sort of contradictory battle with yourself in those situations is definitely like, an awakening in a sense of you being like is this my doing or is this their doing? When you’re outside, the strangers are more and people are doing that, you don’t feel so personally responsible for it because of the fact that you’re questioning the others where as in this case you’d more feel like this is your doing, this is your doing, choosing to be lonely but then if you lost a certain emotion and stimulus in your body to being your true self them it’s hard to for you to go and interact with people, these people and because number one, you care about more about how they’re feeling as well so you don’t wanna be buming them out, you don’t wanna end up doing, like, you know, you’re not your true self when you’re that lonely and so you’re distant by choice and as well by not because of you simply, again you’re in that pit where you’re stuck there, there’s that barrier around you but then you can hear the jokes and whatever you’d normally be cool with but you hear whatever like, that song which you and your mate who you know really like but because that lonely state you’re in, you can’t really do much.

I: And how does that make you feel? 26:53

R: UM… From my experience it’s basically pretty much confused and pathetic. Cause you’re like, I don't, confuse, pathetic and stubborn, like, I don't get why those and… those are like my people or whatever or like… It's not always the cases as you’d be like that. You know someone could have said something to you and then like it’s really re enhances this whole state where you've been and where you try to go and as someone said something, which could be like it  enhanced it. You can be like “I know. Okay, see I was right.” So, then you're just being stubborn about it and not giving things a chance. And then the pathetically input comes from like that depressed state of being like “get up, go out there. Just do what you doing, you're being weak. Etc.” This is those emotions which recur, I guess, that this is me speaking I guess, from more of a, I feel like this, I understand more of a whole society thing. This is more from my understanding, this one [referring to the box]. For people I've spoken to who’ve gone through similar things, but like, yes it's more at a personal level and that's more of a, it is personal as well. Same level but just I can understand as much more of a society-based situation.

I: So, with this one, it sounds like you're saying, what you've started saying is this person might have, like, friends and family, but he's feeling lonely here.

R: Yes. Right. You can have friends or family, and relate to them on so many levels but then it is certain aspects in your, in your life where you don't have a connection with someone and that can be the most lonely thing in the world. Like for example, I'm trying to think of a scenario quickly, but like, the person which comes to mind and not that I can personally relate to it, but for example, say if you were oppressed or like put into a certain specific conformity agenda but you, that wasn't you and, I, you didn't have friends or family who could really relate to you at that level, like they can talk to you about football, about that program, which was on TV last night and you could be also cool like that, because you can feel lonely over one thought or emotion and then if that feeling or thought then grows and grows, you become less sun, you become to feel less understood and so like, although they’re your friends and family, you come back to that recurring feeling of being like, I can't, I can't access that on that level and so I guess if that idea starts to manifest in your head more and more, you become more lonely even though you're surrounded by people who understand you, just not necessarily that part, a lot of people probably go through that as well.

I: When you said people not… I think earlier you mentioned that people not understanding you. Can you tell me more about that?

R: I'll use myself example, I guess that, I wouldn't say I'm your average Jo. But….For example, I’ve got an East End family.  When they see me or whatever, it’s all love, it’s all, it’s all happiness and stuff but like they'll say some stuff to my dad or my brothers or whatever: so what is, what’s Dex about or whatever like that, you know, like if they're not on that certain level of being like someone who's like flamboyant or open as me in certain ways or whatever, it won't, it won't translate as well. And so like they're my family, I love them and love them like that but I would, I do, and, I could, I do feel a sense of loneliness in the sense of like, if I was put with them in that situation, if I had to live their poor circumstance or like spend time now, I know that I would grow a sense of loneliness, because no one's connecting with me on that level of what I am about, you know? Like the weird art I'm into or the exaggerated clothing I’m into or anything which is just a bit out of box or whatever like, da da da da, but then I could on the flip side of it I could almost fake my loneliness, like fake my company by being like “Oh! Let's watch the football now.” That they’ll all be buzzing and now it would be like a great connection between them and then I could start building up on “Oh yeah, I like football.” Just for the sake of like dealing with my lonely or dealing that original loneliness but then in reality, me, personally I would get to a point where I'd be like, ‘you’re lying to yourself. This isn't you, you're just doing this because you don't want to be lonely’. I've done that so many times in the past when I grew up. I grew up in the skate park and some days I didn't even want to skate, sometimes I didn't want it but if I didn’t, I knew that I'd be at home lonely, you know? We find these mutual connections with people not because we often genuinely love these mutual connections, like we genuinely love the subject, it's because we're lonely, we don't wanna be alone. People join football teams cause they don't wanna be alone. And then it gets to a certain type of point and then like ‘I don't like football. What am I doing?’ But then you've solved, you are studying for a PhD [referring to the interviewer]. I'm sure you've met some people along your way where you've made a genuine connection about, because of the shared pure interest in your subjects. But then I'm sure you find yourself in situations before where you've been to, it's stretched out a bit of an idea which you're not allowed that into just for the sake of having some company. We all do that, but I guess an important point of life is to remind ourselves that's not necessary to do. And to be confident of ourselves and more. What you actually genuinely want to strive and not be like… ‘Yeah, I mean I’ll fake. I love making sculptures but I spend all day by myself and so, I became a receptionist’. No, no, no, no, no, find another sculpture, share a studio, you know, like there's ways around it, we just need a bit more belief in ourselves or in our things instead of just drawing ideas together and then just finding a connection with someone over that because that's not, you know you're just kind of using that being. It’s not logical. It's not right.

I: So, it sounds like, by not conforming to average or by not sort of fitting in into what the “average” is, can contribute to feeling lonely.

 R: Yeah, yeah. Yes, like not speaking up for what you truly believe in in a situation because you're worried about it. You're not worried about that person turning around and punching your face, you're worried about who will X Y and Z are gonna say or think about you. People need to have more belief in, people need to have more belief in themselves in the way of what they believe in. I guess that is my point. Yeah.

 I: And how does that make you feel?

 R: Um… Reassured in myself because I feel like that’s something I do naturally even if it's not my intention, like, I be like ‘no, that's not right’ or just walk away, someone will like ‘no, I’m okay’. That's just me naturally. But then on a whole basis, disheartened because of the fact that people are constricted in about expressing their full self in a way. The judgments, again it all comes down to just how society’s ways have been portrayed, but the way people are suppressed to a certain stigma I guess and because of the warrior being an outcast, the warrior being lonely. Why are we so afraid of being alone? In reality, because, I've met people and I'm sure you have and I noticed plenty of people out there who have built a relationship with themselves, where, it’s great for them to be by themselves, but then it's a bonus for them to be around other people. Not necessarily the way of being like ‘I need to be around people’ and then if I’m by myself, I deal with that situation then. That's the way, I guess in my opinion that’s the way society should have been played out in the sense of being like find your strength within yourself and be resilient and confident as you as an individual and then go and find the parts which connects, which match you properly, not being like “Ah, this is me.” and then, I go out, and I pretend I love bowling. Cause I was bowling one day and I met a lot of dudes who like bowling. Yeah. But then I go home and then I make these weird eccentric pieces of art but I can’t let anyone know that because people might not, people, people might think I am a weirder. Do you get me? It’s, it’s illogical in a sense of, it’s the wrong way around.

I: How does that make you feel people thinking you might be a weirdo?

R: Um, it’s something I’ve dealt with a lot in my life, I guess. It doesn’t bother me in a sense. Quite, depends on how it is, depends how it it is thrown at me but a lot of the times brings more confidence and bring more reassurance to some of my ideas. Let’s say if I’m wearing something like painted or designed and someone goes ‘what is that?’ or ‘that is weird’. That’s a better compliment to me than someone who is just wearing a grey hoody going ‘oh my God, I love that’ because it’s like in a way I would have somehow conformed to that piece I create it to see others for and the whole thing to suit others, that’s a subject in itself, dealing with things, catering your, more suited to others instead of being an expression of you and then people growing to like that. That’s where you you know, I’m sure you know, that’s where all the best artists have been you know? All the best artists have been called, you know, you can’t do that, that’s not right? Everyone, created this, created the environment, always been told ‘you can’t do that, that’s not right, you’re not supposed to do that like that, like you can’t do that like that’, and then everyone going, ‘oh, it’s genius, oh yeah it’s right, it’s perfect’, stuff like that, you know, so, in a sense, if you look at it in that way, it’s a compliment because people are comfortable by it so they feel the need to be against it instead of being accepting of it. But then obviously I do get the emotion, I’m not, I’m not made of rock, I do get obviously when it’s like a situation where there is like a few people (something something - 41:21) becomes a recurring thing, it does obviously knock you a little, I’m not, I’m not immune to that that the way I channel it as an overall feeling, overall to like to work with, it’s counterproductive in the sense of being I’m probably going down the right path for people to call my art and the things I created are weird in comparison to just being (something - 41:45?) but we all like compliments, of course, because some of it is lovely, it makes you feel good, that’s nice, then, on that level of people actually like going to level actually giving it a critique and like ‘that’s just weird’, that’s great, weird is great cause it’s not the norm.

I: Thank you. You also mentioned that sometimes you kind of cover up, you want to cover up your loneliness, so for example, even if you don’t like watching football, you might just pretend that you do, can you tell me more about that?

R: It’s easier. It's a safe bet. It's like in the family business. Because you almost see where it’s gonna go or yes, so from that staying in the family business, not necessary what you want to do but you see the strengths and connections and stability innit? You’re not alone whereas I guess, yeah I could use myself example, my family, as I spoke about earlier, football mainly, sports, stuff and growing up I genuinely thought that I was wanted to do up until the age of like 12 and then I’ve carried on doing it for like a year on that basis of being like well, my school mates, the people I grew up with, my brothers, my dad or whatever - football, football, football, football - all these people, football. And I was ‘right, I can’t, this is actually not even what I wanna be doing’ and then it took me a good minute to be like ‘not doing this anymore’ like you got to a significant point, it must have been like winning or something, sort of like a certain incentive for me to just go, I’m not doing this anymore and just started going to this skate park and the beginning that is a, like going to a skate park was some of like the worst days because skate park is not a nice environment for a stranger at first and then going back to it again saying quite eccentric, I wasn’t just wearing like a grey hoodie or something like that you, you know? So there’s all these targets for people to pick up on and like at first it was lonely but I knew it was something I really wanted to and I wanted to get into that and then it became something I couldn’t not do and then it almost not that I fully given up on it but then it’s become the growth of what football has become to me in a sense of being like now I’m more moving into an artistic industry and stuff these days and not going to this skate park but I made somewhat actually connections along the way in comparison to football where I don’t speak to anyone in that environment anymore obviously I speak to my family but it would have been much much an easier route for me to just go down the roots of where my brothers have gone down, you go football, you grow up with these people, you then go to uni with these people and stuff like that then football turns, football turns into less so much of the, the playing, it becomes more of the watching, you know, the booze inside of it, and that’s the route which my brother had gone down, if I had gone that route I know that, I wouldn’t say I’m exactly happy now, obviously dealing with depression and stuff at the same time, I know I would have been much worse now if I was in that environment now and then come into the come into the, these acknowledgements and these admittance with yourself which we spoke about today, say if I was in the middle of the pub in the East End with my brother and I just came to this son that conclude the acknowledgement, ‘what am I doing?’ That hit home much more and so I feel people just need to be a bit more confident in themselves not so much brave but like confidence, just have the confidence about what they’re gonna do. Well, what they want to do is what they want to do and not just believing ‘well, he likes football and he is similar to me, he grew up with me’ and like this, that, you know - he’s already like me, you know’. Doesn’t matter, doesn’t matter, no. we meet people who are like the toughest looking dudes in the world and then they just turn out to be ballet instructors, you know. Doesn’t matter as long as you follow the career/interest, you truly believe in, I feel like the social side of it becomes secondary. Yea, because look at the way people in the offices where, they go, ‘oh, no my career comes first’ and then this is the flipside of what I’m saying so like the careers are like putting the career almost first. It’s great if you have an actual goal, like, architecture, doctor, don’t know, etc. etc. - great, you can find people who true, genuine connections but if you work in an office and you go (something, something person - 48:05) then you pretty much giving yourself the only option that is to have, that same like negative relationship because you’re in an office environment, da, da, da, da, da. For example, I was just working at a pub job and although my, genuine, one of my genuine best mates works there, the conversations we spoke about at work, after work before work with the people I work, which is basically everyone criticising and having a go, being negative about that environment because that’s the only connection we have, do you get me? We only talk about work because I can’t turn around and go ‘ah, did you see thingy’s latest painting?’ cause it could just be a one sentence answer, ‘no’. That’s good. ‘Ah, did you see that person falling earlier when they were trying to carry food? Oh mate, that was so funny’ da, da, da, da,da, da, expansion. I don’t have a genuine connection with those people, there’s not a topic which we’re really connected on, which we truly care about that is just I was a money making scheme you know, just to pay rent, pay food. We can connect on those levels but that’s only, that’s pretty much on the (rare? - 49:34) substances, which, you find someone that you’re like, ‘oh you actually do that as well? That’s cool’. The majority of the time that’s the level of connection - you’re making money, you’re paying rent, this is just a job, it’s not gonna go much further than that. Whereas when you go to work, conversations are endless, the ideas you perhaps, practically share with, converse with somebody is endless. Obviously I’m not saying that you’re gonna connect with everyone on that level but the probability and the purity of it is much more of a higher chance of recurring.

I: Thank you. Is there anything else you want to say about that box?

R: No. I feel that box was more, more action than words but like yea, but that box.

I: Can we talk about what you put here? [Referring to the next box].

R: Yeah. Initially I was trying to draw a box of repetition and an emptiness and I was literally going to write the word ‘emptiness’ just next to the box but then I thought of a goldfish. Although a goldfish only has the apparent memory of 5-7 seconds before it recurs, surely that could be one of the most lonely things, you know, we don’t know how long that 5-7 seconds, perhaps minutes or whatever is in their time frame, that could be like 10 years for them but regardless the majority are in a box going round and round with the same thing for the rest of their lives like in a sense, you know, that’s a metaphor for society and life and the way we’ve been put in, as in, we’ve been put in a box going round and round and the sense of like there’s something you could do about that, it’s not, there’s not so much a goldfish can do about that and the reason I drew it is because like the idea of loneliness is being like a continuous bounce back, it’s like a an ongoing thing but I’d like to, in all honesty, in recollection I should have probably drawn a hole in there, in a tank or a gateway- there’s obviously a way out of it but in a sense when you, actually it’s as this, cause when you’re looking at this that’s the only thing you can think of, if you constraint yourself to be the fish and put yourself only in a box then that’s all that you are and so if you allow loneliness to do that to you you're only gonna be the fish and it’s gonna be a recurring thing but it’s just up, I guess, it takes a while, it takes, there’s something gust in a motivation and determination and will power and something, which I feel which plucks up every now and then people and then you make that move cause you know what I’m gonna go to the skate park today even though I’m terrified of it, I love skating and I wanna go meet these people you know? Guess you have to get your, you have to obtain your own net to get yourself out a lot of the times, that bounces back to these two points - it does matter who is around you at times it’s kind of down to you how you get on with it.

I: So it sounds like what you're saying is like, that fish is stuck in that space, that limited space and metaphorically that represents the society, um…

R: Hmm...But then because he’s constrained himself just being, ‘oh, I’m just a fish’, he’s just gonna be a fish. But then you know, why can’t it be a flamboyant fish with legs and just walk out of that tank or just walk about that tank in a different way? It’s kind of hard to leave the tank/society but if these could be a part of it, why can he have proper legs? Why can he express himself in the way that he or she or whoever it is wants to instead of being conformed to a fish?

I: Are you saying that, um, can the fish come out?

R: That’s up to him isn’t it? He’s alone, that’s the point, of the loneliness. It’s up to him only, only him because, the strangers - they can help, your family - they can definitely help but at the same time, it’s only down to you at the end of the day. And obviously we are gifted miraculous times when someone comes to you, your situation and gets you out of it but in a sense you probably manifested that in some sort of way yourself. It always comes down to like the way you’re thinking of doing or portraying or just even being in any area whether we go to a shop or go and stand in front of a thousand people talking, you can still be the fish in front of the thousand people talking, because you have mic [microphone] in front of you and you have that moment to express something but then you go, this company is great because they paid you to do it and then you don’t believe in this company and all the people around you who you’re working and really believing in this company and think they do and they just want the money and you can’t stand this idea so then you go back to it and just slam the door and shut yourself in your room and you’re back in the fish tank. It’s up to you what you do really. It’s a very, we live in a very fragile world in that sense of like you speak up or do something which is really you, there’s a good chance that someone is gonna try and do something to make you feel like that’s wrong even though the chances are you’re probably right in yourself.

I: And how does that make you feel?

R: Again, reassured in what I believe in and know that when people do have a go at me or when people do have a word about something or whatever in that sense that I know that them saying I’m wrong, genuinely the tubes, so it’s more of a personal attack or whatever but I don’t feel too much on that too be honest, a bit numb if people are trying to constantly say no, no, no, no, no, like, I’ve kinda become immune to it, in a way, um, to be honest, with me, personally, when people tell me I can’t do something, it’s probably more of a motivation for me to to just do it and not even just for myself but just to be like you said I couldn’t do that and just smart about it, you know? Yeah.

I: So you’re saying that this can be, basically, this space for hat fish is basically like a conform, like that fish has to be fit in with that environment.

R:Yeah, you’re fitting in, you’re putting into a restrictions of you, what the environment is built around you but then that’s been built around you, you can build your own way out that’s what I’m saying about the frog legs, maybe you just wanna put them on, put them on.

I: Thank you. Um, is there anything else you want to say about that box?

R: No.

I: Okay, can we talk about the final box please?

R: Yeah, I just put a small list of words and then a picture of a diagram of a brain in a sense. The words come from what I feel and have felt and or someone would feel in those situations of when he is there and the fish is in the tank, and the dude is under the stairs, it’s probably not looking so much, all these are looking at the internal (mod something? - 59:55) looking at the, sorry, those are looking at the external, this is looking more at the internal. The insults you almost give yourself in a sense of loneliness or the emotions you go through so I put ‘confused’ as in like obviously you don’t know if you should be feeling these emotions or not whether it’s you to blame or not. Overthinking kind of ties in that in a sense of like you start in a confusing state and then you overthink here and you start to self-blame and stuff and then you become hopeless and the environment is cold and you’re worries and it all leads down the road of paranoid and depression and stuff and you start questioning things, which don’t even need to be questioned and when you’re alone you don’t have reassurance in these answers, it’s you battling with yourself and then when you start the trick, your brain goes into thinking that, that is the real case scenario, your brain is very easy to pick and become reassured in that. Um, the way society is basically, in my opinion, the way society is basically put this in, in the scenario, is that I feel like the way it’s gone is that people are more unconsciously comfortable with a moderate level of depression and loneliness in a sense but then when you’re reassured in a sense of happiness and positivity, because of all these people judging and obviously the loneliness and all these people are lonely, we check ourselves in a sense of being like ‘oh, hang on’, and you start to think of nonsense, which could potentially worry you, am I up to date with bills? Have I, did I hand in this assignment? Or did I pay that person back? Did I miss that interview? You know, you just start doing this all this nonsense things but then when you’re at a moderate level of just just numbness depression almost, just carry on with your everyday, just carry on with, you get on the train, you go there, you have a little laugh here and there, you don’t fully acknowledge ‘I’m not happy’, you go ‘Aww, I’m not, not happy’ but when you’re happy you’re much more cautious and concerned about even being the right thing, should I be, am I allowed to be like this right now? You question yourself and stuff. And so, that’s why when you’re in these, in my opinion, that’s why when you’re in these states of being alone because of the way society constructed the mind to think in a way is very easier to make yourself like you’re internal self believe you’re confused, you’re worried, you’re depressed, you are shy rather than being I’m actually quite happy, things ain't great right now but tell you why I’m quite happy. And then but again you start questioning yourself and this is a recurring thing until you’re at that point of loneliness when it’s just you and the brain can control the emotions coming out of you into a negative state because of the training it’s had from its environment.

I: So sounds like what you’re saying is the first three boxes are more about the external factors like people and all that and your interaction with the outside world and the final box is basically your, an internal world, so like, like feeling confused and questioning yourself and kind of the internal stuff.

R: Yeah.

I: Can you tell me a little more about that?

R: Um, often we, often we’ll be in situations where you’ll know this, someone in a room happier, isn’t that weird? Why you so happy? Should we all be, we should all really be in that sort of level but because of the way the environment changes and the way that the red flags are so easy to pop up in comparison to the white, you know? That is, it’s a rarity, it’s a genuinely, a surprise, in a sense when you see ‘she’s so happy, they’re so lovely!’ whereas those of the feelings which most of us probably go through, hurts, at any given state and um again some are [have broken a record in it? - 1:05:40) but I don’t think that would have been the case if we go back to what we were saying about people going down the general routes of what they want to do and stuff. She is happy because she’s having a baby because that’s what she really wants to do. He is happy because he’s just got a promotion to a job he really wants to do. You know? Those are the reasons why they’re happy but I feel like some days when I’m just painting or designing something it doesn’t matter if I’ve had a breakthrough in any way. I can go to this shop and be happy because I just painted, you know? It doesn’t matter, I’m just doing it. If you’re doing what you love, then genuine happiness will occur on a regular basis. I still have to conform, of course I still have to earn money in ways I don’t want to, that obviously confuses me, depresses me but when I paint or draw or create, all that thing that’s irrelevant in my head so that’s probably why in my opinion is more important for people to try and do what they wanna do. You weren’t, you’re obviously not gonna be bouncing around with a huge smile on your face but your overall sense of reassurance in your happy moments will be more confirmed, secured in comparison to being like what, what, what, you shouldn’t be happy right now, you’ve gotta move out of your home next week. Do you know what I mean?  No, no, no, just be like, no I’ve gotta move out of my home next week, that’s a potential for me to paint more. You know? Like, it all ties in there it just depends when you making those moves.

I: Thanks. And you also mentioned that most people are unconsciously depressed at a minimal level, can you tell me more about that?

R: Yeah. I mean I’m not a doctor but this like my self-acknowledgement and diagnostics, I guess, tools, society but um in the sense of it being the rat race again, you know? It’s such a fast pace that you go into work, you pick your kids up, you come home, you do da, da, da, repeat, repeat, repeat. You just get to a point where you’re actually like, a lot of people just don’t take the time to acknowledge their current situation, current self and be like okay am I doing what I want to do? No. am I earning enough money doing what I’m doing right now? Probably not. Am I having time to spend doing the things I wanna do instead of doing things which suit and cater to the positions that I will be in throughout my week. For example, a mom with a kid. You should take the kid to football cause that’s what the kid wants to do and then her friends were there around the football table but she’s really into ancient hieroglyphics and wants to spend her time at the Natural History museum with me, people there, you know? We just don’t take enough, I don't feel like we take enough time to truly self-check ourselves, you know, do a mental health check-up on ourselves and be like ask yourself questions of being like, like for example, you more than anyone has probably come across one of these sheets before [referring to the questionnaire] but like when you’re dealing with diagnostics and stuff you get given a list of questions and there be like ‘rate yourself on how this would make you feel?’ Or, like, say, put yourself in this scenario, how does this make you feel? How many times a week do you have thoughts that you’d be better off somewhere else or people would be better off without you? How many times a week do you have suicidal thoughts? How many times a week da da da da da da. And I learn a while ago through going to psychiatrist and what not, that is a very important thing to do for ourselves and be like ‘am I actually?’ you know, check all the multifunctions. You deal with your car. You deal with your car, why don’t you deal with yourself. We don’t spend enough time like, and then through that, again, it’s the whole recurring thing of what we were talking about. You become more confident in your, not just there but everywhere you know, like, I’ve been saying it for a while and I wanna, I wanna start doing regular check-ups on me internally as well, not just mentally, physically because you know, those little things can bring great bits of happiness, you know? There is little perks for being like what? My blood level is at a magnificent level. I had that the other week when I did a blood test and the guy was like you have the blood levels of a woman in her early 20s and I was like is that a good thing? And he’s like that’s a really good thing. That my day, just by that point there, do you know what I mean? And we forget about these things, we try to strive happiness through consumerism, ‘oh I’m depressed, I’m just gonna go and buy some stuff’, ‘oh, I hate my job, I’ve been working all week, I’m gonna go out and buy some stuff, ah, I don’t even have the money for these bills now, I shouldn’t have bought all that stuff’. Start, I’m gonna go at yourself for doing that (from ‘start’ I’m not sure - 1:12:07). Like I read something the other day and it’s made me really think as well is that we feel bad when we call into a corporate company that we’re gonna be ill because they’re gonna be doubting the numbers when we forget really that it’s our mental and physical health on the line. We don’t, how many times do you have friends who like ‘ahhhh, I shouldn’t be calling sick but I’m gonna, I’m gonna have to, I can’t afford a sick day. My mom, my mom worked, my mom worked last week and she was ill. She didn’t take a sick day cause she thought she couldn’t afford to. We forget that we, money is not the only affordable thing, we need to be able to afford our health and our own mental and physical health otherwise you’ll end up in these situations more, more than often.

I: Thank you. Is there anything else you want to say about that box?

R: Um, I guess the reason why I also drew a brain is because it’s all taught, it’s all learned and therefore I guess it can all be forgotten. It’s easier said than done, I’m obviously saying that as if I’m some Dali Lama preacher but with that sort of approach to it just remembering that your brain is an organ, it can recover from certain things, you know? You punch your lung it can still recover. I’m basically saying to not think that you and your depression or loneliness is what it is. It isn’t what it is, it’s only a small (small what? - 1:14:11) life goes on, you know? It’s gonna heal, it’s gonna turn. You probably won’t even remember the stage at some point, you probably won’t even be in existence but the fact of just being consciously aware that it is an organ and it can be trained, your mind is in control of your brain not your brain is in control of your mind. You can be above the thoughts, not immune to them but accepting them and genuine feelings of thought which will still be there but then knowing that you’re even more, if not over entitled to the positive emotions which we don't carry on a day to day basis: happiness, love, exedra.

I: Thank you. Is there anything else?

R: Um, I guess they’re only ideas like, it’s only ideas when you think of, when you put yourself in these stupid little scenarios of when you build these and dig this house (house? - 1:15:39) and you’re like oh what happens to this person, what happens to da, da, da, da, da. It’s only ideas you know, when you’re alone and you’re like why don’t these people da, da, da, da, da. We often, we often built out by of no information, you know? You’re just predicting that that’s gonna happen? You’re just expecting that to be a truth when in reality you haven’t even probably spoken to these people or you haven't even given it a chance, it comes back to building your legs, you know? You just gotta get to that point of just being like ‘okay, you’re lonely’, I’m, I’m probably the probable cause of my loneliness and so it’s entirely up to me to stand up.

I: When you say that people are not, it’s probably, I guess what you’re saying is that these people may not be thinking what’s in your head that you might be predicting what people are thinking but actually in reality they will not be thinking like that.

R: Yeah. yeah. You’re making that assumption. You’re assuming that that’s the case and I do that a lot with myself based on past experiences and that’s something I’m disciplining to teach myself at the moment is that don’t make that presumption, you’ll probably end up happier in that situation if you give that person a chance or give that situation a chance to let in unveil and let it play out naturally and then build it from there. And that way you become more considerate and more composed and those previous experiences which somehow, which will benefit your loneliness or dampening that situation slowly or discard it out of the window and then you start to become more open and that reads well with people and there’d definitely be that balance of those thoughts are on hold, they’re in the way, just as much as the happy thoughts, you know? Instead of just being at the forefront and then the happy thoughts have just squeezed past them, they’re in the balance in that sense. It’s about balance.

I: Thank you. Is there anything else?

R: No.

I: Okay, great well thank you.

**Part 2 - Participant 16 - Male, 24, Hackney**

I: So, can we talk about what you put first?

R: I put socially connected. I put, for me on a personal level, and probably the majority of people watching like this simple, the simplicity of things as like a, obviously depends on company all of these depends on companies as well. But social events such as like a barbecue or gathering or a dinner. So something simple as that. Socially connected people obviously depends on company, I feel like a lot of time you don't really get yourselves involved in those intimate situations if you're not comfortable around those people. And so, I feel like that in itself is a good incentive for people to be open and expressive and genuine with people. Some of my favourite times, me and my friends when we're just not at the party, but after the party, we just sat there talking, you know, just comfortable. Great. Those are meaningful times I guess. And then we feeling like on that same level connectivity. You can go to something slightly bigger like a party or a concert, it’s just people you know and it's like something you can relate to people on. But like, you feel that level of social connectedness especially when you go to the heightened of it or being in a concert situation and you’re with close friends or people or family or whatever, and you're watching an artist or performance or anything which you love and then there's a mass amount of people with that same feeling. It brings a very connectedness together feeling for everyone. You can feel the energy because of it. And then I just put things which means stuff to me, like exhibitions or shows or skate parks or something like that. You know those sorts of situations I feel very connected with it, because it's something I'm educated, experienced and passionate about. And of those free things alone, that's enough for me to not be disconnected from it.

For the image, I just drew a sofa with a barbecue with four friends sat on it because I often find myself in those situations with that genuine feeling I've been like, I have this problem to deal with. I had this problem to deal with. But right now, I feel genuinely happy and I feel connected and included. Um, did you want to ask questions about that?

I: No, no. It’s okay.

R: Okay, and for the lone, most lonely place, places for me. I'm sure you probably think of me from my description are trains and the underground and buses and doctors waiting rooms and basically non-interactive social situations. Unknown social gatherings for example what I mean by that is meetings or first days on jobs, being out of touch of the concept or crowd of a situation. For me personally, that’s probably the most lonely thing. But again what we're saying about the environment of London, it's a very rare recurring issue. The image I've drawn down the bottom is a train and I draw four characters, three of which got their phones glued to their faces with unaware of what’s going on. And then the last faces, it has no faces, the emotion on his face basically, just portraying the disconnects from genuine interactiveness between each other and connection promotions rather than interactions and connecting through phones and social media etc. And I kind of tried to make this person look a bit more in a state of a situation a bit of despair and the fact that they're all completely ignorant, completely just in their own worlds about it. Whereas these are, I try to tried to draw two things very similar but very different from each end of the spectrum. Yes. Yeah.

I: So, when you say trains and places like that where you can’t connect, make you lonely?

R: Yeah. Yeah. I feel, I put..um… I mean I give them more of which I didn't really want to put. It's like your bedroom at times. I don't spend that much time in my room anyways, so that doesn't really relate to this point. But the reason why I say trains are lonely again because that idea of that theory you shouldn't be lonely at all at this point. There's plenty to talk about with anyone on this train or the situation or whatever, but we're so caught up in our own lives and we're, we’re s too proud or too stubborn or too scared to connect and share genuine thoughts and feelings and ideas with one another. Instead we scroll through the Internet and do the exact same of what we were doing but without using the genuine emotion that the true emotions, instead would put in a ‘thumbs up’ or a ‘laughing face’, you’re not even laughing when you’re putting that face, you didn’t find that funny, you put that ‘laughing face’ on that situation, on that conversation with that person because you knew you would relate and you knew you could connect and you wouldn't be lonely in that sense. You know like, people don't acknowledge that, they're even lonely these days because of technology, because they're not in a sense lonely on that platform. You hear people with kids and their kids have no real friends but they're very popular online. Look at influencers for example, and social media influencer - probably doesn't even have time to have a genuine real friend, because they have to make a facade. They have to make it seen in the same way you know? In a way that loneliness doesn't…  It's like a different, it’s like two different games now, isn't it? Like social media is like, you can be popular as hell on social media, you can be everything and have no genuine friends in real life, whereas someone like myself, for example, I've probably less than average if not average following on social media and interactive, um, activity on it. But I know that I’ve got genuine friends and in that sense I won't be lonely. I often find myself lonely in the opposite when I'm on social media, because you see so much of people making these statements of interaction with each other like following certain someone, tweeting, posting a picture of that person, shouting this person's name out or whatever. This is different, like, it's a different game of interaction now but for me I do still feel ridiculously lonely in it because of the fact that the highlighting point of it, it's not real, like that is not real, like, you can make a real friends with someone, probably like interactively, like free social media but unless you're making that connection on a physical level when you're meeting or speaking on the phone, it literally takes from coming out the phone and using your vocal cords or your physical being or your energy or whatever, until you use your physical attributes, it is not genuine and so for me, that's, I'm never, I'm, I can't really dive down that bit but I guess it comes  to a generation thing as well. But for me I can't dive down. So, for me to add to this list I would add one of the most lonely places is social media. So, literally take it from the time where you feel most socially connected, that literally is almost the title of social activities and its social connectivity. But in fact I feel like it's the opposite to that, because it's not genuine. It’s not. You will end up somewhat lonely because of that person you've met on the Internet is not gonna reassure you with those things and stuff so much like... as an impactful level as someone sat next to your bed, telling you, I'm sure it can make a difference when you're down in the dumps and someone goes ‘hey’ whatever, of course it does but if that person rings you up and says those words to you, it's much more impactful, so much more meaningful.

 I: Is there anything else you want to say?

 R: No, cool.

I: Thank you.