



CREATIVE SKILLS
ONLINE

The Creative Skills Podcast

Creative Skills Podcast S5, E2:

**Why listening to communities and embracing accessibility
opens up creative possibilities**

**Featuring Artist Roz McAndrew and Early Years Development
Manager, Amy Hall-Gibson**

Transcript

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Community engagement, Starcatchers, Fife Gingerbread, creative play, accessibility, neurodiversity, early intervention, photography exhibition, film cameras, parent accreditation, creative training, storytelling, failure, inclusivity, artistic practice.

SPEAKERS

Roz McAndrew, Amy Hall Gibson

Amy Hall Gibson 00:25

Hello and welcome to the Starcatchers podcast. I'm Amy Hall Gibson. In this episode, I'm chatting with performer and community engagement artist Roz McAndrew. Roz shares her journey from training as an actor and returning to Scotland, to discovering a passion for community engaged art through her work with Starcatchers. We talk about the partnership with Fife Gingerbread, where Roz works alongside young parents and their babies to create playful, creative experiences that are shaped by the families themselves. We also hear about a wonderful photography and storytelling exhibition that's been co-created with the parent and babies. Throughout our conversation, Roz reflects on the importance of accessibility, listening to communities, embracing creativity in all its forms, and why giving ourselves permission to try something new, even if it doesn't go to plan, can open up exciting new possibilities, and why listening to families is at the heart of everything Roz does. And just a wee reminder that you can find all of our Starcatchers podcast episodes on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, or wherever you like to listen to your podcast. I hope you enjoy listening. I wondered if it would be a good place to start, just to kind of share a little bit about your practice and what you do.

Roz McAndrew 01:58

Yeah, sure. So I am trained as an actor, and I was living in London for quite a few years. And during you probably get this a lot, like when you're talking to artists about kind of the impact of lockdown, COVID and everything.

Roz McAndrew 02:16

But I kind of was like, what am I doing here in London? What am I? What do I really want to do? And an opportunity came up to be a trainee with Starcatchers, so I applied and was very lucky to get the role and moved back home. And it was from then I kind of started dipping my toe into what it would, what it is to be an artist in the community engagement setting, and it was part of a project with Starcatchers that was called Where We Are, and we were working in local areas in Fife, and it kind of for me just opened up this work that I was like, oh, I'm I'm actually really excited and really passionate about this, and for a while it took me a long time to realise that I had a practice, and what was that practice? Because for me, I just felt like I'm a performer. I'm not a musician. I'm not a visual artist. I'm not like a photographer. My my instrument, as you will, was myself, and I didn't feel like that was a bit without it really being carefully thought about. So I really love working with families and people who don't traditionally engage in arts. So this might be the first experience they've ever had, and just kind of creating something that they go, "Oh, one, I've really enjoyed myself too. I didn't think that that was

possible-that I could achieve that, or I could create something, or feel part of something that was creative. And I think with access as well, embedding that from the very beginning, I think, is like one of the most important things. And I think with me and my own journey of learning about my own neurodiversity, it's been really, really interesting to go. Okay, how are we going to approach this in a way that we're trying to remove barriers for others? And it's really interesting how the this the world and systems aren't built to include everyone, which is incredibly frustrating. But it's something that I will continue to do. Yeah.

Amy Hall Gibson 04:35

Do you know what's what's really resonating there is this not being put in a box, and and you talked a bit about it's like evolving.

Roz McAndrew 04:47

Yes.

Amy Hall Gibson 04:47

so it's kind of like you feel like I must just be this one way, so therefore this is the practice, whatever it is. But actually, what you've just shared there is that you had a kind of a moment. You were like actually want to try something else, and it's really nice that you looked for that opportunity and that it was there. But then, hopefully, people listening to the podcast will feel empowered by your journey and be like, actually, do you know what? Yeah, we'll try something different and push myself a little bit out of maybe a comfort zone. But that's okay because you learn that way, don't you?

Roz McAndrew 05:24

That's the thing, yeah. And it's it's that thing where you go, okay, I'm I'm going to stay here because it feels safe, and safety is really great, and it can be really helpful to build routine and structure. But you need you need to keep pushing yourself to do things that make you uncomfortable because that's where the growth really happens, and that's where inspiration comes and ideas come from and like connectedness with other artists. And you meet people and you go, oh, I never knew that. And I feel like as artists, we're just constantly learning. That's one of the exciting things-is you don't reach a point where you go, okay, I've learned everything, I've I've learned enough.

Amy Hall Gibson 06:08

Yeah.

Roz McAndrew 06:08

I mean, some people some people might, and that's totally fine. But for me, I I really want to experience everything and as much as I can, because I think it doesn't just reflect in your professional life, but also your personal life, and I think that's really beautiful thing to to keep learning about yourself as well.

Amy Hall Gibson 06:28

Yeah, and it sounds like that's almost at the core of the work that you're doing with families and anyone really that you're working with, because you're bringing you know the inclusivity, the accessibility, but it's not tokenistic. It's not an afterthought. It's actually the first thought, and you're aware that exactly

what you just said. You know, this is potentially the first time they've experienced this, and you know, as humans, if we if our experience the very first time is negative, chances are we're not going to engage again, or if we are, we're going to be very sceptical, and it's just you know, it's going to put that kind of judgement ahead of something before it's even begun. Do you think you can maybe share a little bit more about that that kind of side of work that you're doing with families within the community?

Roz McAndrew 07:16

So yeah, my work in Fife is in partnership with Fife Gingerbread, and we it's an early intervention programme for parents under 25 and their babies um birth to two, and we we have this we have three strands of the programme so they have one to one support with a Fife Gingerbread support worker. We have our Play and explore creative play sessions, and then there's Mellow for young people. And what's really beautiful about this programme is the artist and support worker model, so that it really feels like we're able to combine creativity with like the holistic relationship-based support. support, which really helps families build confidence and resilience, and reduces isolation and all of those really important things. By having that support from Fife Gingerbread, we are able to be artists in the space and really curate these sessions that are informed and responsive to the families and what they're interested in. And I think that's the important thing. Is especially what I've learned anyway is saying I could come up with this great idea, and I'm like, okay, I want to create a session that's about I don't know flowers, and then the families go. I don't have a garden. I don't. I don't like flowers. I don't like. I find going outside really difficult. Okay, what do you enjoy? Oh, we love spinning the wheels on the cars. Okay, great. So in in that way, you've got kind of got change your perception of what you think will be successful and and really bring it back to the purpose of what you're doing, and that's to engage these families creatively in a way that's accessible to them. And I think it just, I think as artists, you need that kind of that part of the flexibility and going, okay, I'm going to put my, I'm going to put my ego aside, and I'm going to really just focus on what's important here. But yeah, it's been really wonderful working with families and their babies, and really getting to know what makes them tick and what they're excited about. And sometimes we try to dip a little bit into our schemas and our engagement signals, and allowing families to see that their baby is engaging. It just might not look like what you think it is, and it's been really interesting, almost in a way upskilling them as well to be like, oh yeah. I can I can notice that my baby's attuned. They may not be physically engaging with something, but they are totally absorbed in what is happening, and I think that's a really beautiful moment when you see that happen like happen.

Amy Hall Gibson 09:59

Yeah. And what's um? I'm just thinking about like, so what's your like approach? Because there's there is a uniqueness, like you're talking about there, about there being a support worker from Fife Gingerbread, and you as an artist, and we've, you know, there's lots of family sessions kind of happen all over across the country, but you're bringing a kind of unique perspective. So what's your what's your approach to that then? How are you balancing that sort of drive and ambition where you're like, oh, but I want to I want to try something really artistic here, but I also want to ensure that I'm engaging with things that are interesting them and up and balancing that. Yeah, that's quite a balancing act.

Roz McAndrew 10:59

Yeah, yeah, totally. I think it's it's one of those things. It is all about the balance, and it's maybe occasionally if we have a session that's maybe more, or created a session that's more. If something's a bit more abstract to the families, it's it's potentially then okay. We're going to model what the possibilities could be.

Amy Hall Gibson 11:25

Oh, lovely! Okay.

Roz McAndrew 11:26

It allows you as an artist to also say yes and play. Yeah, and people might look at you like, "What on earth are you doing? You've lost it. But it gives the babies permission as well to go. Oh yeah, she's she's really getting involved in that. That looks quite cool. I want to see what happens, and then from there, it's it allows them to explore, and then maybe the parents will relax, and then they might come out. So I think for me, I'm very much a person. I'll just get stuck in. Yeah, but I know that's not for everyone.

Amy Hall Gibson 12:02

Yeah.

Amy Hall Gibson 12:41

Yeah, that's lovely. When you said it gives you permission to say yes and play, which is really nice. And and the underlying thread that I'm hearing is it comes back to that accessibility. You're thinking about what what am I comfortable with? What's my access points? And yeah, by you sort of feeling comfortable and having that genuine authenticity, where you're like, you know what, I'm happy to be trying something that might on the outside appear just that little bit different, but modelling that is that impact on parents and the other adults in the room. You know, you mentioned there about relaxation, but also, you know, fascinated to know like what other impact. If you if you even know what other impact that's had, if they've come to you and sort of said, "Oh my goodness, Roz, you did this thing, and then I did it at home, or we can see in the moment that the little ones, the impact there, if that can actually be quite huge from such a short interaction, the the ripple effect could could actually be quite wide. And are you equally impacted, sort of, when you see the other adults in the room? If they, you know, someone that you know, you've built this relationship up, and you're kind of aware that they're maybe quite conservative, if you like. And then, are there pockets or moments where you where you notice them sort of branching out?

Roz McAndrew 14:05

Again, 100% And I I always get quite emotional sometimes when you see that it could be the tiniest little breakthrough, and it might be so tiny for everyone in that room, but you've noticed it, and you go, they would. This would never have happened four weeks ago.

Amy Hall Gibson 14:23

Wow.

Roz McAndrew 14:23

This would never have happened, and it could be something simple as touching a texture that they were so, you know, or or parent or caterer was so reserved, and then you just see a little glimpse of them, like a little bit of laughter, or so, and it makes me really quite go. Oh, art really does have the impact to to change people's perceptions, to change their their mood, their well being, their life. Like it's just there's so much value in it, and I I think not everyone can see that because of again the. The barriers that they'll face, they think art is just for people who are maybe in more privileged positions who have money to access lovely paint brushes and really good watercolour paints or whatever the the medium might be. But it's those little moments where you go, they've engaged naturally, and because they want to, and you're like, "Oh, this is so exciting! So I'm always making mental notes, and I go, "Oh, okay, maybe can we expand on this? Can we make this bigger? Can we give them more opportunities to say yes?

Amy Hall Gibson 15:35

That that leads me beautifully onto Roz, me asking about the exhibition that is coming up with Fife, where you play an explore group, because it feels like this is an opportunity for those families, little ones, to to share publicly maybe a little bit of what they've been doing. Can you tell us a bit about that? This exhibition, like where did it like, where did the inspiration come from? And

Roz McAndrew 16:02

so I, I've always been into kind of cameras, and I don't know. There was, I think it was maybe about eight years ago. I started collecting like old kind of cameras from like market stalls that were like 10 pounds that didn't work. But I just loved the look of them, and I, I loved looking at old pictures and old film, and like pictures where it's in more sepia tones, and like things that it's something that you can hold that feels tangible. And I love taking pictures on film cameras as well, and just capturing little moments. And it came from my excitement about me using film cameras, and I thought, oh, maybe when I go on holiday with my nephews, I'd love to give them a camera and see what life's like from their perspective, because they're all different ages as well. I thought one of them at the time was three that looked very different to the 10-year-old. Do you know, and and how they experience their world and what they find interesting, and then I kind of went on this journey where I was thinking about the families that we work with, and a lot of people now have smartphones. But with smartphones, means you can very easily curate and change and edit and Photoshop all these all these wonderful photos, or there's filters, or there's there's base. It it felt like still a way to hide.

Amy Hall Gibson 17:27

Yeah.

Amy Hall Gibson 17:27

Or curate a an image of what you want to show to the world. And I thought I was like a lot of these little ones that maybe in the future they say, oh, can I see a picture of us when we're younger, and it'll be with filters and and bunny ears and and not that there's a problem with that, I think it's important to to also note that smartphones are the most accessible thing for people to take photos on.

Amy Hall Gibson 17:53

Yeah.

Roz McAndrew 17:54

But it just got me thinking about. I wonder if there's something we could explore here with the families with these film cameras. So we, I got Brian Hartley, wonderful Brian, to come along to a few sessions. He's a photographer and kind of start playing around with perspective and and kind of create images of what we've what's in front of us. How do we engage with our? So we started off with smartphones to make it more engaging, and that had everyone had access to one, and so for a couple of weeks we played around, and I was like, "Oh, it'd be really great to maybe could we exhibit this in some way. So it's been quite a journey from last year, because due to my own brain as well, I was like, "Oh, this is great. We'll take some photos and we'll exhibit them, and it'll be great. No, it's been a lot of. It's been a lengthier process than that, and we started working with point and shoot cameras.

Amy Hall Gibson 18:56

Oh!

Roz McAndrew 18:56

So, working with the fantastic Kirsten Abraham as well, who's another artist in Fife. She is a visual artist, and she has a background in photography as well. So we started giving parents and babies these cameras to take home. Well, first of all, we explored them during sessions.

Amy Hall Gibson 19:15

Yeah.

Roz McAndrew 19:15

And there's one moment I'll never forget: is a wee one took a photo and looked at the camera and was like, "It's broken, because they couldn't. There was no screen, and I just thought that was so fascinating. But then you've got this really beautiful moment where Brian took a picture of mum taking a picture of baby, and baby's got a picture of mum like from the same from the same angle, and it's just really it's a really beautiful moment to capture that in in those seconds that happened. So we started kind of consulting with families and we handed out point and shoot cameras in black and white film, and we said we would love. You to document what parenthood, what being a mum is for you. Yeah, whether that's plates on the side of the table because you're so tired, whether that's a washing machine full of clothes that's just constantly on the cycle, whether that's you and your wee one outside, or you're at a party, or if it's your wee one with the camera, the families were really, really open and willing to share these parts of their lives with us, and it's been really amazing to see how it's developed over time. And so now we're working towards our exhibition, which is on the 19th of May, and working with Kirsten, Kirsten's been such a powerhouse on this to really ask families how they would want to experience it, because we've been to a couple of galleries before, and it just doesn't feel very accessible for the little ones or for the families because it's maybe a space they haven't been in before, so we were like, we want to create something that's that's curated by you for you. So we've got lots of really fun stuff coming up. The families have been so important in the in the process as well, and then Kirsten and I will go away and have a discussion, and how can we make it exciting, but also include their ideas. And it's just been a really wonderful experience, but also just reminded me how important it is to have that consultation with families because they're the ones that are, this is for, and they're the

ones that are going to experience it, and we want them to feel proud and part of it. That is something that they've achieved together. We are merely just there to help facilitate that, but this has all been them, and it's been really beautiful to see them receive their photos back and go through and select the ones that they want to have as the part of the exhibition, but allowing them to sit down and just have a moment where they go through a memory. They're like, "Oh yeah, I didn't even take that. That was must have been my wee one. Oh, that's so great!"

Amy Hall Gibson 22:17

Awww!

Roz McAndrew 22:17

Or seeing a picture of them that their wee ones taken, and I'm like, look, this is how they see you. Do you know?

Amy Hall Gibson 22:24

Yeah.

Roz McAndrew 22:25

Oh, it's been really, it's been really great. It's been really, really lovely, and we're very excited to see how it goes.

Amy Hall Gibson 22:32

Yeah. Do you know what? It's coming back to what you said earlier in the podcast about you being a storyteller. That that is a perfect example of where you were like, right? How can I take the families through it? And that's you're helping tell their story, and you're helping them realise that they're storytellers themselves. Yeah. Um, as well, it's so amazing to hear. Um, yeah, and I yeah, just going back to that idea of like, yeah, we do live in a world of filters and technology, and it's really invigorating to hear that you're that you weren't afraid to shy away from that technology to begin with. It's kind of like this is what this is our norm. This is what we have to you know at our fingertips. Let's explore that, and then we'll bring in something that's maybe a little bit different, and then yeah, hearing that little one sort of say it's broken, like it's just highlights maybe to people like myself who was around when there was cameras that you know didn't show you. It's like oh gosh, yeah, really that that is that's the experience.

Roz McAndrew 23:41

The thing is, as well, like film cameras are so expensive these days.

Amy Hall Gibson 23:46

Aaah!

Roz McAndrew 23:46

Because you have to buy the camera, but then you have to buy the processing, the the the development, and it's been really lovely because I think it's allowed. Because I think as well, we've kind of we're not shying away from technology because technology is such a massive part. And for a parent or a carer who is doing their best and things are just really tricky and really busy and full on, sometimes

giving your child a phone that so that you can get through making the dinner that is also so valid, and I think people sometimes think, oh, they're just given their kids YouTube, and I'm like, but that's that's also an access thing. Do you know? It's like I need to be able to one regulate myself so I can then take care of my child. If that can help for 10 minutes while I do that, I will be in a better position to care for my little one, and so I think that's why we were like, let's not just say we're not using it. We're going to use something that's very we're very comfortable with, and then we've also been working with creating their own. Acrostic poems about themselves and their babies, and we've worked with musician Claire Docherty, and she has created the most beautiful songs from these poems that the parents have created. Oh wow! So each kind of baby at the exhibition has their own song, but what we've done is we consulted on how do you want to experience these? And interestingly, some came back and were like, "Oh, we want CDs because we have CD players in our car. And then a lot of them have opted for QR codes, so we've got QR codes, which again links to technology. But we've excuse me put them on. We've got them made onto these little wooden discs, so they can hang on trees in your room and wherever you want that they can take home with them. That so it's their their little piece of magic. So it's that kind of balance again between something different and something comfortable.

Amy Hall Gibson 25:55

What would be really nice to kind of hear about is kind of moving on from the exhibition, thinking about your involvement in performances. So you were part of Falling Star, which was a Starcatchers, I think it was a co-production.

Roz McAndrew 26:16

Yep. So we, I worked with Kirsty Pennycook, who at the time was lead artist for Creative Kin, which was one of the Starcatchers programmes in Ayrshire, and she worked a lot with kinship families and providing creative sessions for them, and it kind of came out of some of the sessions where she started chatting, like started discussing, like what kind of show they'd want and how they would engage with it. And as a performer, Kirsty was like, "Love you to be on board. I was like, "Absolutely, this is this would be amazing. And it was so wonderful to be part of a project that you're kind of there from the initial idea, and you're getting to meet these families and see what they're into, and then go back to the rehearsal room and devise around them and kind of ideas that have come up from that and inspiration. And we created this really lovely piece about the star that had fallen from the sky and was trying to find its way home, and there was these two siblings-you could call them-were trying to get the star back home, and not realising that the star actually felt safe enough to stay with them. And it was just this really beautiful kind of moment where you go, oh, this is this is what it's like to create work in co-creation with a community because that's something I hadn't ever done before, and Kirsty was so great at kind of facilitating that and directing and making sure that the families' voices were were really embedded into the the creative process, and what's really exciting is that Kirsty's then gone on to she is now working as artistic director of Interplay Theatre in Leeds, and they've kind of really taken this idea and really expanded it and grown it, and it's now this beautiful show. I think it's called Out of Orbit, and it's for families with complex additional needs and learning disabilities. And yeah, it just looks so beautiful, and it was just amazing to be part of that. And going, okay, this is something that now I've had that experience, I could potentially continue to to develop in my own practice and say, okay, what do I, what did I gain from that? What did I learn, and how can I take that into my life?

Amy Hall Gibson 28:50

Yeah.

Roz McAndrew 28:51

Maybe things I want to create.

Amy Hall Gibson 28:53

I think that's a really important thing: is to not forget the community, whether it's you know parents, carers, little ones. You know, it's the community you're in, whether it's you know the staff in your nursery. It's about how you can try and bring that all together, and and I wondered actually around your work with Fife Gingerbread. I know that they're bringing in kind of like a peat side of things, and I wondered how does that sit alongside your artistic sort of approach? Because that's very different to kind of a yeah.

Roz McAndrew 29:28

So for anyone who's kind of listening that doesn't know what PEEP is, it's it is now just called PEEP, but it was called Parents Early Education Partnership, and they do it a lot, kind of playgroups and nurseries, and we were trying to find in the cashback programme a way to allow parents to achieve an accreditation of some kind if they wanted to. So it's very much you opt in if you want to, and. PEEP was so is so wonderful because Katie Kinnaird, our support worker at Fife Gingerbread, who we partner with, is now PEEP accredited, so she can like assess and run the the sessions. It it's been about babies learn so much from their parents or their primary caregivers anyway, and we were trying to think of ways where we could incorporate that into our sessions. So there's a lot of things like when they talk about music and saying like singing hello, a lot about communication and language, personal and social emotional development, even stuff like early literacy about reading books, loads of things that parents and families and caregivers already do, but we have been trying to put a bit of a creative spin on it. So it's it's ways that they're engaging through the creative sessions that will also add and be part of their accreditation. So we have been families have been using the method of creating a scrapbook. So it kind of look it's it means they can look back on it as like a memory book as well, but it also gives them working towards this accreditation, and it's been really great, and hopefully we're working towards some progression pathways, which will offer recognition of like the parents' learning, and if they want to go into maybe further education, and how that could be linked linked together. And it's just been really great. So we're we're still learning about how we can really embed it in and make it almost like seamless. So it's not like you're coming in and there's people over there and there's a creative session there. We want to really enmesh it together so that it feels as one. Yeah, because I think a lot of learning is through play as well, and I think it's just really important that there's no like stigma or expectation of oh you're going to get an accreditation. It's more you're doing all the things anyway.

Amy Hall Gibson 32:15

Yeah.

Roz McAndrew 32:15

Let's just add a little bit more to your scrapbook to your your pictures and and these parents are are really it's been really great the the um the amount of parents that have taken it up um so it's been it's been really really brilliant.

Amy Hall Gibson 32:33

What are the I guess what are the challenges you've found with taking that? It's almost like child development, isn't it? Baby development approach? What challenges have you found with the baby development approach to your artistic creative spin to it?

Roz McAndrew 32:50

I think somewhat has been quite tricky is maybe it feeling more structured.

Amy Hall Gibson 32:58

Yeah.

Roz McAndrew 32:59

So there's more of a a structure where you maybe come in and you sit down and you sing sing hello or do something, whereas we're very much open ended play. You come in and the wee ones just know this is my time to get stuck in.

Amy Hall Gibson 33:13

Yeah.

Roz McAndrew 33:13

So it's very different, but we really try to kind of weave it throughout the activities that we're kind of offering, so Katie will maybe say, "Oh, we need to focus on this particular maybe emotional development this week. So Kirsten and I will think, "Okay, how can what we've got planned? How can we really weave that throughout the the activities without it being very obvious and very prominent? Because it's things that they'll naturally do anyway.

Amy Hall Gibson 33:42

Yeah.

Roz McAndrew 33:42

Picking up cues of what their baby needs and what their babies are telling them, and and all of that.

Amy Hall Gibson 33:48

Yeah, that's yeah. Just as soon as you said structure, I thought, oh yeah, of course, because yeah, we want to create create this free flow, very baby led. You know, we don't want to be too prescriptive because we want curiosity. You know that's what star catcher sessions, you know, are really about kind of allowing that explore discovery. But on the other side of it, there's that structured element theory, almost, isn't it? Yes.

Roz McAndrew 34:20

Yeah.

Amy Hall Gibson 34:21

That act is just as important.

Roz McAndrew 34:25

100% Yeah.

Amy Hall Gibson 34:26

So you were talking a bit about their kind of like supporting the families, them getting accreditation and things like that. But Roz, you don't just do all that community engagement work. You also deliver training for star catchers. You work with early years practitioners, cowminders, everyone, and you deliver creative training. Can you share a little bit about about kind of the training that your approach that you take to that and what you feels really like? What are your kind of top five tips, if you like, type thing of where you you know if you're in a room with people who work with babies from birth to five. What's your kind of? What's your go-to? What would you be like? Oh, they, you know, this is what I'd really like them to know. This is what I want to share with them. What would it be?

Roz McAndrew 35:09

I think the first thing would probably be understanding and recognising that everyone has a very different experience of the arts, and not everyone is going to be comfortable if you ask them to roll around on the floor.

Amy Hall Gibson 35:25

Yep!

Roz McAndrew 35:26

And some people will absolutely love it. And I think for me, what I when I've delivered training in the past, I'm specifically thinking of the the schemas training is taking in some materials that are that I can kind of set up in a way that lends itself to various different schemas, and then acknowledging that you might know some of this, you might not. If you've got any questions, ask me, and if I don't know them, I will come back to you. Just being very honest about, I think honesty is the best the best way, because not everyone knows everything, and you can't know everything. And I think just opening the dialogue that way is just really beneficial, because I think some people will be scared to ask questions, but there's probably five other people in the room thinking the same thing. By me bringing in potentially a couple of offers, it allows me to kind of set the the tone almost of we're not just going to sit and listen, and I think that comes from a place of where I learn best is by listening and doing and trying things and then coming back and reflecting and talking about that. So, I'd maybe offer I'd say I talk through the scheme. I say, and I say, right. I'm going to allow you 15 minutes to go have a look at these materials I've brought in, play around with them in different ways, and try and just encourage them to get in touch with that playful side, because I think as well, when delivering and training, whether it's to kind of people in earlier settings or practitioners, I think it's really hard because they've got so much going on and so many things that they need to to get done that they maybe just allows them a little bit time to play in a way that's not structured in a way that's not kind of meeting outcomes or targets, and then you

see them going, oh, I really enjoy. I really enjoyed that. I quite. Or, or you'll see them start linking it to wee ones that they work with, and they're going. Oh, this this child does this, and this child does that. They don't like that, and then we'll come back, kind of have a discussion, and then encourage them to go away and look at what they've got in their set, and and could you create a a little play offer out of what you've got, what resources you have? Because I think that's important. It's been like it's coming back to what is available to them.

Amy Hall Gibson 37:52

Yeah.

Roz McAndrew 37:53

And how can we? And I think a lot of the time people go, "I'm not creative, and it's it created creativity so broad that you you might have some blocks and a ball, but just by doing a little bit of this training, you go, oh, I could change this into that, and that's creativity. Is that? But not a lot of people recognise that as being creative, but it totally is. So that would be my kind of way of doing some training,

Amy Hall Gibson 38:24

Yeah. No, absolutely, and I think as well, like what you were saying there is around. It's almost touching on staff well-being, isn't it? Because you were saying about you know you want to create a space where people can be playful, feel comfortable, but really enjoy themselves, and then from that they can be then inspired or reminded, you know, about something they maybe forgot about before, or something that they they've always wanted to maybe explore, but never really had the opportunity to even think about it, to sort of ask questions about it, like you said, you know, and about having that open communication, and and yeah, and sometimes someone else in the room has the answer. You know, is there anything else you would like to share that we've not chatted about?

Roz McAndrew 39:15

We've covered a lot. I I guess one thing that I've kind of been thinking a lot over the past couple of weeks is I I've been really lucky. I've been working as part of a residency with Star Catchers and Biog, which is graffiti theatre company in Cork. Their early years programme of work, and been working with three other brilliant artists to kind of explore our own practice, things we might want to create together, and one thing that I found so beneficial was time because it's just time is the big thing: thinking time, playing time, processing time-all of these things you need time to do. And I was like, "Wow, this is." Really interesting how just by stopping and allowing myself, more things were coming up that I was excited about again, and I thought, oh, kind of getting a bit of my creative spark back. And another thing that's really come up though is this idea of failing at something, and how failure is this thing to be feared? If you fail, it means you're bad. You're bad at it. But no one ever picked up a guitar and was able to play it straight away. I mean, some people might be able to, and they are kudos to them. That's incredible talent. But majority of people won't. And I think for me, over the last few years, I've had that kind of reservation of, oh, I'm I'm scared to do it because it's it won't turn out right. But I think embracing the failure is where you probably find more inspiration and more excitement and more freedom to just try new things, and I think there's nothing wrong with it not going right the first time. It's how you then. It's I think a lot of the times how we internalise it.

Amy Hall Gibson 41:13

Yeah.

Roz McAndrew 41:13

And I think just by being open and having that conversation and saying this might not work at all, and if it doesn't, we'll probably learn something, and that just feels a bit more. It feels a lot nicer to start thinking that way for me, anyway. So I don't know if that'll help anyone, just to do the thing anyway, regardless, you know, of what the outcome might be.

Amy Hall Gibson 41:41

I think that is so powerful, Roz, because you are a very creative person. So I'm sure you know people that you've come across before will be like, ah, no way, Roz has not got fear or failure. She's absolutely all about, oh, let's just track creativity. But actually, just because you're seen as a creative person or you're put into that box doesn't mean that you always are, you know, overly confident or you know, and and little reminders to be like, you know, what freedom to fail, have the time, and know that you've got the support around you that it's okay to try. And I think that goes for little ones too, right? If they, they, you know, we all we always talk about the fact that we all learn to walk, and if we gave up at the first moment of falling over, none of us would be walking. But I think again, it's it's it goes further than that, and that creating a nurturing environment for little ones to make those mistakes, um, you know, to try things. They'll do that if they feel comfortable and safe, just like us adults. And I think sometimes we forget that little ones are similar to us. I mean, they are little people, and we don't always view them that way, right? So I think that's really nice that you had that moment of being like, ah, actually, it is okay to fail. You know, it's like a little reminder, which I think we all need.

Roz McAndrew 43:10

Yeah, and I think we're also kind of focused on things like outcomes and achieving those outcomes and hitting targets, and that it it becomes about you think you're like oh no I I need to do this and it has to be right and it has to be perfect otherwise I can't apply for funding or we need to do X Y and Z to to show that it's we're making an impact yeah but when it comes back to it it's about well, okay, we this didn't work, but here's the learning we got from it.

Amy Hall Gibson 43:45

Absolutely, yeah, and I think that for me is my key takeaway with you, Roz, is that everything you can learn from, and not to be, not to let your fear kind of hinder you, and just to tell your story. Thank you so much, Roz, for joining me in this podcast. It's been it's been brilliant. Well, thanks for having me.

Roz McAndrew 44:10

It's been so nice.

Amy Hall Gibson 44:12

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