**[SHORT CLIPS]**

**Jade Anderson: “***And you see all the time and novels and in plays, like they'll do that. They'll tackle big things in beautiful ways and it just encourages people to talk. So I think storytelling is always going to be really important going forward.”*

**Felipe Bustos Sierra***: “I hope that in the future, maybe having less focus on the outcome and more on the process is something that could generate quite new creative work* **.”**

**Lesley Anne Rose:** *“It's about sharing stories, so younger generations that come in, maybe to understand the kind of history and heritage of the community, but equally older generations might not completely understand the sort of the hopes and the fears and the wishes for the future that younger generations do.”*

**Ink Asher Hemp:** *“I wonder about the phrase “next generation” sometimes, because, because, because, because, because, because I wonder to what extent that builds a culture where it's assumed that this is a crisis for young people to work on solely together without, without, without the support of everyone else.”*

**[END OF SHORT CLIPS]**

**Movern**: This is the Future Culture podcast. In 2021, the Culture Collective programme was created and established a network of 26 participatory arts projects, shaped by local communities alongside artists and creative organisations, funded by Creative Scotland. Since then, they have embarked upon an event series entitled Starting Points, that explored pertinent themes to community-based art projects within the network. This podcast will explore what comes next! What does the future hold for creatives and their importance for communities across Scotland as we go forward?

In each episode, we will consider different themes which mirror those of our initial Starting Points events. In this episode, Act, we focus on the subject of environment and climate.

On this episode:

* How will creative projects be approached in the future?
* Thinking of the past informing the future, what role does storytelling play in this?
* The resilience of communities
* The importance of hope

**Part 1: How will creative projects be approached in the future?**

**Morvern:** We begin in Glasgow and with theOccupy! project which began in the summer of 2021. Five artists started a 12-month residency with Govanhill Baths Community Trust - working with the community of Govanhill, Glasgow, as part of the national Culture Collective programme.

Three of the artists who are part of the residency are Mark Bleakley, a dance artist, choreographer and visual artist, Felipe Bustos Sierra, a BAFTA-winning Chilean-Belgian filmmaker and Mina Heydari-Waite, a British-Iranian artist and facilitator. Here are some of their thoughts on how creative projects could perhaps be approached in the future:

[CLIP] **Mark Bleakley:** *“Well, it was like leading up to COP when we kind of started this, these roles. So we were asked to kind of make a response to that, so that was really nice, and we used that to kind of have really informal conversations. Some of the first sessions I led with with the group and we just ask questions, we just kind of ask questions around, like, what do they see in terms of the climate and stuff like that? It's a hard question to ask people, but we had some great moments of just kind of reflection and thinking about what's lost? How people use space? I think that's what I'm always really interested in, like use of space and how that changes and how that transforms and maybe what stays in those places as well.*

*And so it kind of like, think about how that space can hold multiple communities, not just one, there's a power that which I find really interesting. I think in terms of like how that reflects into the work that I make and very much thinking about how dance creates social spaces or if it creates social architectures and the way we can use that to kind of redefine spaces or think about what is a public space and how public space is used.   
  
I think it's really important, especially from the pandemic we've seen how, like we've been denied so much public space, how beyond valuable is for us. There's something there I'm really trying to get to grips with. There's a real want for big radical projects, but I think what's really exciting from talking to all my colleagues is how we’re taking these ideas of Occupy! and actually going to like the small P political and I think that's where you can, like, you can do big gestural work that are statements, but if you start working on the smaller, small P political and work with communities on a small scale, regular working, those methods are really important to get what your changing culture and changing approach is.”*

[CLIP] **Felipe Bustos Sierra:** *“So to be able to have more time to get to know I suppose the people you are working with and that allows to shape the project. And I think my project already has had kind of, you know, it's only been three months with three different kinds of incarnations of it. As I get to know, uh, I suppose the community, I want to work with, but also sometimes the, you know, finding out boundaries or finding out possibilities, it's been lovely to have this sort of time, but, as much as we have more time than usual, it's still one year to go and I think there's trying to think about the outcomes now has been quite tricky, but there's been a few kinds of lovely moments that have happened as part of it because everything feels a bit elastic. And so I hope that in the future, maybe having less focus on the outcome and more on the process is something that could generate quite new creative work.’*

[CLIP] **Mina Heydari-Waite**: *“Yeah, I agree with that. I don't actually think a year is that long, especially when, for example, this idea about how perhaps my art projects improve the future of the area we're working in. That idea is really common amongst Culture Collective and across community arts. Like how can community arts improve areas improve the quality of life for different marginalised communities. And I find that way of working a little bit troubling to be honest, because I think after so many years of austerity, we'd like, do you fundamentally need long-term serious investments and communities like the ones that we're working in that span a really broad range of public provision that is far more like basic than arts. If the people we are working with and if the marginalised communities we’re working with were supported to meet their basic needs and to survive, they would be empowered to engage more meaningfully in artistic projects like the ones that we do.*

*Sometimes feel we forget to come back to that when we're talking about the impact of our projects. And I think, you know, we need to be aware of like the landscape that we're working in when we talk about legacy for projects like this. But that being said, I do think that one effective way outside of policy like that we can enact social change is supporting, I guess, equitable access to skills and expertise and knowledge, which is something that this project is trying to do. And it isn't always at the heart of community arts projects or socially engaged arts projects, and that's something I'd like to see a lot more moving forward.”*

**Morvern:** As part of the Occupy project each artist will work closely with a common-interest group and, as their work develops, they will follow changing relationships to co-create with other people and groups - individually or as a team. The overall project marks the 20th anniversary of the building’s occupation by local activists. From being threatened with closure in 2001 to opening as a Wellbeing Centre in 2022, the *Occupy!* artists are working in the spirit of The Baths’ original grassroots action.

Mark’s comments about redefining public space, and how valuable they are, has been one of the common themes in conversations across the Culture Collective project. Community halls, hubs and other local spaces can be vital for communities to re-engage, re-energise, evolve and connect. Perhaps this is something that should be considered further when it comes to future investment.

There are however, so many other things to consider and Mina’s observations on equitable access to skills and knowledge is fundamental to how we can progress culturally within communities. Fair access is something that comes up in conversation regularly, not only within the cultural landscape. But it’s Felipe’s important point about outcome that is perhaps one of the most important provocations. The process of bringing communities together and working on cultural projects collectively could be argued as far outweighing the outcome. Surely, that’s where we learn the most?

Another of Occupy’s resident artists is Linus Rowe. Linus took part in the first of Culture Collective’s live Starting Points event series called ‘Act’ and their practice intersects several overlapping disciplines, including academic folklore studies, folk music, foraging, botany, environmental restoration, queer theory, history and experimental archaeology. This is what Linus had to say about their creative approach in the future:

[CLIP] **Linus Rowe:** *“The main thing that I want to talk about with all of this, with this fantastic project and Culture Collective and everything like that, the thing that I'm really interested in is re-imagining the artist’s social role. You know, when we're talking about what does climate change mean for small communities or for local communities?*

*Uh, things like that. I am interested in the artist as a social being. And I think one of the things we've seen from across communities, whether that's indigenous people have travelled into Glasgow, whether that's local people here, we are incredibly disarticulated from the natural world and from our local environments.*

*What, I don't know, a lot of people tend not to realise this, but the UK is actually one of those nature deprived countries on earth. In terms of the lack of biodiversity, the creatures that have already been hunted to extinction to remove even compared to France or Spain. We are actually the fastest deforesting country on earth. We're losing our forests at a rate that’s faster than the Amazon and nothing has been done about that. It's still getting stripped away now, as we speak. What I'm really interested in as an artist is working in communities, at the heart of all of that, what I'm doing in Govahill, me specifically, I'm working as a group of now five artists, but my area is as well as the artists with an environmental focus, I'm working with the queer community, so that's kind of across a few different groups. There's a queer reading group I'm operating now with GAMIS that I'm getting in touch with soon, and there's a fantastic gardening group run by Martha with the help of Govanhill Baths and that's been working with the Seed Library. So the things I'm kind of really interested in are ecological activism, saving seeds, getting people engaged with foraging, wild plant medicine, as well as doing this I'm currently studying for diploma in Western herbal medicine. I want all this to be distributable as much as possible amongst communities. One of the things that I want to imagine is, there's a tremendous group of people who are removed from our social, historical and cultural imagination. Um, there are the people who are called Peasant Rebels, which is, you know, leaders in the folklore imagination, people who were at The Battle of Cable Street, that kind of thing. All of these people have been removed from communities because they are effective in organising them against what has happened to all of us and left us in this situation where we're on the brink of multi-species including human extinction and my work, and what I'm trying to do is segway, bring people into that. I believe wholeheartedly in that kind of does this kind of cliche. Everyone can be an artist, but I think that everyone should have the tools available to become artists, activists, and my invision of what an artist is, um, is someone who is embedded within communities that they live in and can help be a positive agent of social change.”*

**Morvern:** Linus’s point about everyone being able to be an artist is something that needs to be remembered. You don’t need to have the skills or be good by definition to create art and it’s something that could be crucial in bringing more communities together, especially if this could lead to positive climate activism. If more artists were to be embedded in communities and be social agents for change then could that lead to art being a fundamental positive for communities?

**Part 2: Thinking of the past informing the future, what role does storytelling play in this?**

**Morvern:** We now travel to the Tay region and visit the CULTIVATE project. A regional leadership programme which engages local communities with climate justice through creativity and peer-education, that will create and produce locally relevant work across the area. Led by Creative Dundee, this pilot project brings together creative practitioners, community partners and a community steering group to explore climate justice in a practical and meaningful way.

Two of the creative practitioners who are taking part in the first round are Jade Anderson and Zoë Swann.

Jade is a Queer, Working Class, Mother, Actor, Theatre Maker and Facilitator and is part of the Gate Church’s Community Wardrobe in Dundee. The Community Wardrobe is a climate action project to lower the collective carbon footprint of the community through waste-reducing, whilst also helping those experiencing poverty, and to inspire people to make more sustainable choices to help us transition to a greener, and fairer future.

Zoë is a multi-disciplinary creator who works in illustration, video and music and is part of Tayport’s community garden which brings people together to grow, learn and socialise, while reducing carbon emissions and enhancing Tayport’s natural environment.

Thinking about the past informing the future, we asked them what role does storytelling play in this:

[CLIP] **Jade Anderson:** *“So I found this is a really lovely way, not just to explore well, looking at clothing in a different way, but exploring recycling and also just community and reconnecting and storytelling. Especially in Scotland, I think we're, we're all just inherently storytellers. It's kind of built into us I think. We learn a lot through stories and especially hard-hitting things, things that are difficult to hear or to process or challenging to raise in the conversation. It becomes a lot easier to put in a story, whether that's a comic book or a novel or a TV series or a play. It's like an access point for people to then start having those discussions if it's done in a more informal story and people love storytelling, even if they say they don't, you'll still be workshop with them and then you can't shut them up.*

*And I know it's slightly off topic, but the first thing I ever wrote was a play about my mental health and it was kind of almost like a derogatory comedy, but it was brilliant because people were able to laugh about it and then that laughter kind of brought down these guards that people put up when it comes to talking about something so difficult and because they were allowed to laugh with me my experiences, then it allowed more serious conversations to come out of that and people didn't feel so bad talking about it. And you see all the time in novels and in place like they'll do that. They'll tackle big things and beautiful ways, and it just encourages people to talk, so I think storytelling is always going to be really important going forward.”*

[CLIP] **Zoë Swann**: *“So, I guess storytelling is an important part of this project because we're asking people to imagine the future and sometimes it can be tricky just to on the spot, think of that. But if you think of stories and you know, beyond just an idea, how might your*

*daily life look for example, you know, you could picture yourself taking a walk. What do you do everyday? And what would you see in the future? So that's kind of storytelling when you're imagining just beyond a place or an object, but thinking how that works into your everyday life or the lives of everyone in the town or specific events, thinking about the wider narrative. So I guess that's how storytelling weaves into that. And obviously everyone's going to have their own stories as well of how they've been affected by the climate crisis and their personal thoughts and their personal dreams of what they would like to see in the future. So, yeah, it's all weaved together.*

*I'd like it to show that you can bring creativity and imagination into the climate discussion. I feel sometimes it can be quite a scary discussion, obviously, you know, it's our planet, it's our only planet and it makes sense for that to be quite intimidating sometimes, but I’d like for people to see this project and think, you know, this isn't some big intimidating thing for someone else, but actually this is something that we can all get involved in and we can all have a say and we can all have a voice. And also that it doesn't always have to be doom and gloom and fear. I don't think that's always the most helpful way to share ideas. And for, for creative practitioners like myself, for working on projects like this, I’d like it to show them that they can work across different mediums. You know, I'm doing a lot of different things and working in film, I work in an illustration and I think sometimes when we do creative projects, we feel like we need to do one thing or be defined by one thing that we do, but I hope that this shows people that you can do lots of different things. And that's been fun for me as well, to put myself out of a box and be able to do different things that I enjoy as part of the project.”*

**Morvern:** We’re all writing new chapters as we speak and the awareness we can bring, not only about the impact of life, but also about the environment through storytelling is really important. Clues can reveal the future and may be hiding in the conversations we’re having today. Tackling big things in beautiful ways as Jade wonderfully puts, is one of the biggest ways to create access for so many people, especially within communities. And, imagining the future positively to make things less intimidating as Zoe touches on is what can be key in these stories.

Not all our views are the same, but can storytelling make sense of the ever-changing world we are in? If so, what will storytelling look like culturally in the future, especially in Scotland? It’s something to ponder.

Another of Cultivate’s creative practitioners, is Nicky Bolland who is based in Alyth. Nicky is a visual artist, maker, and community worker and is part of the Cateran Eco-museum and Alyth Development Trust who have joined forces to launch Scotland’s first *Museum of Rapid Transition,* aimed at harnessing people’s experience of natural and cultural heritage to mobilise rapid climate action and transition to more sustainable ways of living, and to show local people and visitors how the story of our past can help guide the story of our future. At the first Culture Collective event, Nicky spoke on the panel alongside Creative Climate Producer Claire Dufour, and they have their own thoughts on storytelling…

[CLIP] **Nicky Bolland:** *“A lot resonates in speaking to the local, the local context we are working in. So I'm working in Alyth, which is a small community in Perthshire, and it's a community that's very impacted by flooding and so five years ago there was a really big flood that was, um, and yeah, so I think that's a really important story in, in the history of that community, um, and how that's created a narrative, but what, and ironically, uh, tragically, there was another flood.*

*So a piece of artwork around climate change was opened at the weekend. Uh, and then the village flooded. Um, so you know, all that, bringing that back, but I think what’s really interesting is it's being in community and hearing those stories about the flood and how the community pulled together and the responses that have come from that and the resilience, um, and really, really strong foundations.*

*But when, when questions are asked about climate change or about these things, often the community say we're not doing what, you know, we don't, we haven't got a response to that. I don't feel I'm doing anything, I'm still driving and actually I feel like some of my role as an artist is, is to hold the mirror up. Actually, you you've got it. You know, there's, there's, there's so much here to work with and that is that already exists. Um, and it's yeah, I think sometimes it is about, um, sharing that story as a chef, as a story of power and, and community.”*

[CLIP] **Claire Dufour:** *“​​In the storytelling bit I really like how science fiction can influence peoples’ minds and, and how we explore the future as well because the science fiction that we read when we were a kid, so it was all about going to the moon and flying cars and all of those things. And they're kind of happening because of that. So what if we were doing a hopeful caring community-led kind of science-fiction that can inspire the next generation as well and creating new leaders.”*

**Morvern:** Nicky highlights an important thing here, and it’s the role that creative practitioners can play in bringing stories to the fore. Could this be something to focus more upon not only when it comes to addressing climate change, but also a way to bring communities closer?

As Claire says, Science Fiction can be translated or be viewed in a certain way for many, something that we are potentially quite detached from, but it’s the meaning that we place on it, so another big question is if storytelling can help imagine the future, how can Science Fiction play a role in this culturally and with who?

**Part 3: The resilience of communities**

**Morvern:** Our next stop off is Fittie in Aberdeen. Safe Harbour: Open Sea is a collaboration between Open Road and the Fittie Community Development Trust and aims to initiate creative projects that celebrate the rich history and heritage of Fittie – a unique sea-facing community nestled against a global oil port. The project will bring the community back together in creative ways post-lockdown as well as casting an eye to the future of Fittie as a coastal community, and exploring ways to be ‘Good Ancestors’ as Aberdeen, Scotland and the world prepare for a net-zero carbon emissions future.

Lesley Anne Rose is co-founder of Open Road and a Fittie resident and is part of the team alongside a number of others including Victoria Fifield, primarily a visual artist and originally from Glen Tanar in Aberdeenshire. Victoria is a Creative Community Worker focussing on visitors and migration and has an extremely diverse background. She has also spent time living in London, Israel and Palestine. Creative producer Marie Driver is a Glasgow University music graduate and is focussed on building strong relationships and sense of community.

Resilience is an extremely important subject when it comes to communities, whether city centre or rural. We asked these three team members about their thoughts on the resilience of communities…

[CLIP] **Lesley Anne Rose:** *“Community resilience is a really fragile thing and communities, our, or the community we working with and others have changed drastically, especially with older generations passing away. But within that, we've had lots of young, young people and younger families moving in. So there's been a complete change to the dynamics of the community. So we’re really conscious that that sort of previous community connection can come apart within all of that, especially as we can't get out of the homes in the same way. So we're working very much with the community owned hall to make this a space where people can come together so they can come and meet people that they maybe wouldn't normally kind of do on a day to day basis.*

*Also for us, it's about sharing stories. So younger generations that come in, maybe don't understand the kind of history and heritage of the community, but equally older generations might not completely understand the sort of the hopes and the fears and the wishes for the future that younger generations do. So we're making space to bring those two stories together, um, both within a kind of practical storytelling, creative writing space. Um, but also by creating visitor trails, we get a huge amount of visitors to Fittie where we work and it's,it could be quite oppressive to the community. So we're bringing the generations together to create, uh, an audio, uh, visitors trail.*

*So those stories of past, present and future come together, not just for the community, but for anyone that kind of comes here, walks their dog, looks at the sea, wild swims surfs here, they get a different picture. The residents that are here as well, but you need infrastructure. I think that's something that I've really realised to create that resilience, there has to be infrastructure in space in place, whether that's a cultural space, a community space, some kind of community group that can be that voice to bring the people together, um, have that social media platform. There has to be some kind of infrastructure behind that driving force and wanting those community connections.”*

[CLIP] **Victoria Fifield:** *“Certainly like through my role in the project, I think people, um, who who've got themselves involved, um, have had a chance to sort of pause and reflect about their area, their community, and the kind of point that we're at at the moment. Obviously there's a lot of change happening. Um, so I think people have definitely had a chance to think a little bit deeper and maybe see their community through new eyes almost. Um, so I hope that that will give people, um, just a sort of deeper sense of the importance of their community and their points of their areas. And yeah, I hope that will kind of strengthen the ties within the community as well, and give people sort of a deeper understanding of who lives there and everybody's sort of connection to the area.*

*So I think that's quite important for sort of maintaining that resilience and not kind of, you know, sort of being in it for the long haul and kind of committing to the people who are around you in the area and really sort of feeling that connection with the, with the place and the people.”*

[CLIP] **Marie Driver:***“It is interesting. There's sort of a balance to be struck because on the one hand, it is a very resilient community and, and you want to really draw on that. But on the other hand, you think actually we need to be quite gentle with this and because everyone's just finding their feet again. Tthey're in a very, uh, strong position, but only on the back of so much work that's been done by members of that community.*

*I think they did a community asset transfer. So the hall that they have is not owned by the community. Something that this project has been particularly focused on is using that hall as a focal point as getting everyone together again there. And so it's quite nice because they've both been feeding into each other, but in terms of the community resilience, it's only because this community have had that resilience and grit to keep on going and to get the hall that they're in such a strong position now.*

**Morvern:** Similar to all the projects that are part of the Culture Collective network, you can feel the passion that comes through and no less from the Safe Harbour: Open Sea team. There are several themes that are prominent here. Firstly, the importance of infrastructure when it comes to cultural development, and the further importance of respecting long-term residents and areas of history within communities. There is also the subject of dynamics changing with new generations moving into areas and the spaces that are created for them. Finally, the consideration of how communities have the ability to take control and drive the future. And, this prompts our next provocation, how can the next generation help build resilience in communities through culture?

**Part 4: The importance of hope**

**Morvern:** We travel next to Skye and Lochalsh and meet the Aiseirigh project. A collaboration between SEALL, ATLAS Arts and Fèisean nan Gàidheal to work together with individuals, communities, businesses and organisations across Skye, Raasay and Lochalsh, developing a range of ways to use culture as a powerful tool for creating strong and healthy communities for the future.

This community led programme involves six creative practitioners all heading up a project. Three of these practitioners are Daniel Cullen, Hannah Myers and Malcolm MacKenzie.

Daniel Cullen is an actor and director based in Portree and in partnership with young community group Iomairt an Eilein will develop and deliver creative projects exploring the issues faced by young people on Skye, Raasay and Lochalsh.

Ratagan-based artist Hannah Myers heads up the We Are Nature project which is currently working with schoolchildren in natural spaces. And, Malcolm MacKenzie who was born, raised and is based in Plockton will be working closely with ATLAS Arts to build two coastal rowing skiffs: one in Plockton and the other in Portree. He hopes the boat building project, which was inspired by the former Portree to Plockton rowing race, will create a space for people of all generations to come together and learn while using their hands.

Hope is one of the core themes when it comes to our future. The current climate has proved extremely difficult for many whether that be through politics, the pandemic and of course the climate crisis. But, hope can provide drive for the future.

Daniel, Hannah and Malcolm shared some further thoughts on this…

[CLIP] **Daniel Cullen:** *“A life without hope or a project without hope or anything is, it's a sort of despondent place to be. So I think it's important and you know, maybe sometimes just wish I would remember that a little bit more because particularly, you know, when you're looking at things I was passionate about before the project, that the areas that the problems that face, with your area and the world, you know, I sometimes do feel despondent, but if I didn't think tha the change was possible in some small way then I guess I wouldn't do anything, we wouldn't do anything. So hope is, it’s difficult question to answer that, but I think hope is, without hope there's, there's sort of nothing. And I do have hope. I was actually discussing this again, anecdotally with a friend the other day, and I went to meeting a little while ago with this and group from another part of the world, they were an indigenous group to this place and they'd been pretty brutally oppressed. In fact, severely the most brutal oppression you could have. And it was, they were the second generations. It was, their parents had the kind of, worst of it when they were children with what was happening in the advantage to fight back and take control of the lands and get some recognition for things. And it was, it was really inspiring it's harrowing, but it was inspiring. And you think that's a, that's a clear cut situation where people are being horribly oppressed and they fight back to stop it.*

*We all sat in this room and there was people from the Highlands and this group from different parts of the world or whatever. And basically all of us were wearing jeans and basically all of us are reading a fleece and probably, basically all of us went home and watched Netflix later on. When I was having this discussion, I thought, I was saying to my friend, this is the demise we choose ourselves to have this homogenous Western culture. I do it all the time, I'll drink a can of coke and play Nintendo sometimes or whatever. So I was thinking, how do we stop that? Or do we want. My friend I was speaking to said his opinion was the river current was too strong. I think Tony Blair said something about that. Once you can stop globalisation, you've got to join it. It's sort of given up the hope that you could have thriving individual cultures and communities within a bigger context, and that this thing would wash them all the way. And I guess I still have some hope even if maybe I'm wrong and it shouldn't be that and be glad if it was all one thing, but my instinct is, and my hope is that there is a way to have thriving culture within the communities that co-exist with each other in a meaningful way, there’s something about hope in there.”*

[CLIP] **Hannah Myers:** *“Just as far as the theme of nature and connecting with nature and observing and almost harnessing the knowledge, the wisdom, the power of nature, which in itself to me is hope in a sort of physical manifestation, like to see plants growing little shoots coming up every, like every year spring comes around the seasons turn on the, even like the tides come in and out just consistently and nature is just that feeling of hope and that there's always going to be something right in the corner. There's always going to be a sort of cycle of thriving and surviving, um, to simplify what I've said, just the fact that yeah nature is hope so by focusing on nature and being in nature and sort of reusing materials to create stuff to, in order to respect nature that is already creating a sense of hope and just hopefully inspiring people that there is a way to move forward slowly and mindfully using what we have to build a sustainable mindset from the soil up.”*

**[**CLIP] **Malcolm MacKenzie:** *“The hope for me, is that maybe it's hoping that we recognise that our community is still there and it's still worth fighting for, and it is still important. You know, I think summer times things are so busy. People are working two or three jobs trying to make ends meet for the winter coming and yet you often forget that community is already all around us and it just maybe harder to find. And so I hope, I hope this project will bring people out of the woodwork, finding a way of coming together and perhaps in ways that we've forgotten, perhaps ways, uh, we don't, we don't get it together the way we used to*

*I think perhaps it's one of the things I'm trying to say, and that feels especially relevant after COVID. Using the village hall in the same way or, or there's, you know, health and safety issues or whatever. And I hope with the project, the young people especially find z sense of adventure and they're able to go out on the water, see home from a different perspective, and also that, you know, being home from a different perspective or from outside the school. That's what makes you fall in love with people, makes you want to fight for it. And, um, you know, I think that's something from spending my childhood outdoors when I was young is a deep rooted love with not just the people but the place and the landscape and all that goes with it and it's kind of intertwined. I hope we can all hope.”*

**Morvern:** All 3 of these creatives shine a different meaning and perspective on the term hope. From looking at ways to have thriving culture in communities that co-exists meaningfully, to looking to nature as hope and through cycles and the growth of life being a focus, and finally, regaining a love through our communities by looking at them in different ways and from different angles.

And, this prompts our last provocation: How can we connect Scotland through culture to create greater hope for change/improvement?

**Part 5: Host Round-Up: Morvern & Ink**

**Morvern:** Where best to round up this podcast than by reconnecting with our first Starting Points Act event host Ink Asher Hemp. Ink is a white queer, trans, disabled campaigner, storyteller, acitivist and self-taught theatre-maker. They are also Artist for Change: Climate Crisis at Eden Court in Inverness

Here I catch up in conversation with Ink about the provocations in this episode and to look at the future.

[CLIP] **Morvern in conversation with Ink Asher Hemp:**

***MC:*** *“Hi, Ink. I'm so pleased that you're here today. Just thinking back to ACT and the follow on from that, there was a lot of conversation around the grassroots and the difference between process and product. I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about maybe how the grassroots could help show that processes in some ways more desirable than the product.”*

***INK:*** *“Th the, the, the, the focus, the idea of focusing on a result often, often, often comes when we, when we understand the climate crisis is a crisis of science. When, when we think of it as a crisis of numbers and targets and graphs, but that, that, that, that, that, that we've been thinking about it as a crisis of numbers and targets and graphs.*

*Long time scientists have been doing this since, since, since the 1800s. Um, and, and, and, and, and, and, and while it's got, as, as far as it's got, as it's not got as far enough. And, and, and when we start to see the climate crisis as a crisis of imagination, connection of the, of, of the way we relate to each other and the way we interact with, with the stories from history, then, then, then, then, then, then it can become more about the process. Because, because, because, because, because, because there will never be a time when this is over. Not in our lifetimes, maybe that's terrifying, but how can we use art to make that enough OK? And, and, and, and, and, and maybe that okayness can come from when we shift to this understanding that it's, that it's a crisis of, of, of, of connection and imagination. And then, then, then every time we change that connection and imagination, it's, it's, it's, it's, it's a result of every type of that process of changing. The way we relate to the world is, is, is, is, is a result of an ongoing result f that makes any sense.”*

***MC:*** *“Totally. I personally really liked the references to science fiction that that came up on a number of different moments in that event. And I suppose science fiction, which can be off-putting for some people as a description, because it feels like I don't know, a bit clunkier, 1950s flying saucers. But if we think about it as kind of just storytelling and different ways of storytelling for the future, thinking about that, who do you think this kind of storytelling could play a role culturally?”*

***INK:*** *There's there's, there's, there's different ways to, to, to, to, to, to, to come at this from Adam, I'm really interested in how science fiction or the other forms of as like, um, storytelling in general, the reason science fiction was, was, was present so much in that space was because it was because it was because it was a passion of some peoples, but like everybody's got their science fiction. Everybody's got their stories that they love. And how can those stories bridge the gap between imagination and like prefigurative politics, where, where, where that being instead of waiting for the revolution to happen or whatever it is that you're seeking. I use the word revolution, very simplistically that. Instead of waiting for that change in society to happen. And then, and then, and then, and then changing the way you're living, getting up each day and living as if that has already happened as much as possible in, in the understanding that, that, that, that, that will have help to create the conditions in which that is possible.*

*I'm primarily a theatre maker and, and, and, and the idea of live performance spaces where, where, where, where, where, where, where people can experience this bridge between these stories and lives physically is, is, is, is, is really exciting. And then the other side that, that th th th that, that I think sometimes gets left out of the equation is, is, is, is when we talk about activism, we often think of something very specific in terms of like placards or petitions, but there's, but there's, but there's, but there's, but there's many, many people for whom that isn't accessible and will never be accessible for various reasons. And if we, if we, if we, if we, if we open up the, the, the, the, the, the range of what is activism and inverted comments, then the, the, the, the, the, the possibilities become so much broader. Because, because, because, because, because, because everyone has that science-fiction, and, and, and, and, and, and for me, that was theatre.*

*I couldn't often get involved in the way that the way that campaigns were being run when I wanted to, but then I began to understand that I could use street theatre in place to run the same campaigns that brought different results. They weren't better or worse. They were just different. And then you added those along to the other results that were being created through the more like regular forms of campaigning and, and, and, and, and, and the people that were being engaged with were suddenly so many more different people.”*

***MC:*** *I completely agree. I mean, and with that in mind, like thinking about how we go forward, how we go on from here, how we go have we progressed from COP26 and how can the next generation help build resilience into, into communities in this kind of post pandemic climate emergency, present? How we can do that through culture. Do you have thoughts on that*

***INK****: I think in part it's about listening to what's already happening. Like, like, like using culture to do these kinds of things. Isn't new and has been done for a very, very long time, but often by often like communities that aren't allowed to be particularly visible. Uh, so, so, so, so, so, so, so, so, so I work within Eden Court in Inverness as the artist of change: climate crisis and not here at Eden Court, like thinking about things like in general, uh, when I'm trying to work out what I'm doing here, things can feel a bit stuck and I'm like, okay, how, how are we using this, this, this theatre thing, this spec speculative fiction thing, this, this, this, this imagination thing. How are we using it to, to shift it forward? And, um, I don't go. Um, try and look for something new, I always ended up going to look at things that are, that are happening already happening. There’s a theatre in Leeds called called called Slung Low um, Alan a guy that works there writes this blog, and one of the, one of the things that jumped out to me once was he was, he, they, they, during the pandemic, they, they, they picked up their running of, of, of, of the local food bank. It was this massive operation, but he was very clear that they were doing it as a, as a theatre. And, and, and, and, and, and, and one of the things that he wrote back was was, was it's not just about the stories that we tell on the stage, it's the stories that we're making true. Um, and everything we do is making stories true. Um, and for them they wanted to make, make true this story that, that, that, that, that, that, that, that the a child not go hungry in, in, in, in the area of Holbeck and Beeston. I think the phrase you used the next generation to, to, to, to, to, to do this it's I don't think it's creating something new, but, but listening to what's already happening and, and, and carrying it forward.*

*I wonder about the phrase next generation sometimes. Um, because, because, because, because, because, because I wonder to what extent. Builds a culture where it's assumed that this is a crisis for young people to work on solely together without, without, without the support of everyone. I started getting involved in activism and climate activism in between 2006 and 2008. And, and, and I'm 21 now, so I was quite a small person then. And, and, and, and at that point it was. It was, it was quite difficult to get involved in existing networks though. There was a lot of, of, of, of, pushback at the idea of small people or young people existing in those spaces. And, and, and, and, and, and it's very interesting just over the course of a few years, everything shifted dramatically. And now it's like, oh, it's the young people's problem. But that maybe next generation can refer to the next generation of, of, of protectors or activists or, or, or, or just people that love the world. Right. Cause, cause, cause, cause that's, that's, that's that I do this because it's the way I say, I love you to the people around me not because I want to be a killjoy or because, oh, because of some numbers on the graph.”*

***MC****: “That’s a really nice way of putting it. There was something in the event around as well, about what story of ourselves do we want to tell? And again, that's, that's related to everything that we're talking about, but maybe that story is changing, but thinking of hope and the importance of hope. So the question is around how we can connect people through culture to create greater hope for positive change?”*

***INK:*** *“I don't understand how a feeling can be hopeful, right. Because if it's purely it, I understand the feeling, but if it's purely a feeling, then you're sitting there having this feeling of hope from, from, from, from, from nothing I don't get it. And I think that might be an autistic thing. I don't know.”*

***MC****: “Maybe people trying to replace or transplant hope for kind of belief, like kind of just like blind belief that everything will be okay but maybe your definition of hope requires a little bit more activity on the person?”*

***INK****: “I think, I think part of it came from being being a youngest person within activism and people not understanding why I would want to do that.And then being like, it would make me sad. And I'm like, this is the happiest, this is, this is the thing that makes me the most.”*

***MC****: “How do you envisage yourself enacting as an action?”*

***INK****: “I, I, I, I as much as I would like sometimes when, when, when part of my, part of my job is to look at science stuff, to look at climate science stuff, and then to turn it, turn it into art stuff or, or funding stuff that people don't get sad at when they look at it. It's like my job as a translator between science and between between, between people who don't do science. For me, it's everyone finding that, that, that that's that way of storytelling that they love. And I mean, that very broadly in like, in like in like that could be, that could be cooking or, or, or football or, or however people connect and relate to each other. And then using that to, to, to, to, to, to, to begin to tell the story of the world they want to live in and just starting to live that world, if that makes any sense.”*

***MC****: “And that is kind of community arts, I mean, and community-based participatory art practice. Um, maybe that's where hope, hope lies in these intangible non-hierarchical places, um, that you can't quite pin down.”*

**Morvern:** We have reached the end of the first episode but not the end of this conversation. In our next episode we will be looking at the subject of Health & Wellbeing through culture with the theme of Nourish. Until then, we leave with a provocation to take forward. And, that is, thinking of Ink’s definition of hope as an action and not a feeling, what story of the world we want to live in do we make true?

In our next episode, Nourish, we focus on the subject of health and wellbeing and its intersection with creative projects. In the meantime, why not head to our Miro board, an online space that’s been created to invite you to join the conversation. Add your thoughts, insights, experiences and questions here, and we'll include your perspectives in our future conversations. You can find the link in the show notes to accompany this podcast or on the Culture Collective website. You can view videos of the original Starting Points events there too.

**Credits:**

**MC:** The Future Culture podcast is presented by me, Morvern Cunningham, produced and edited by Halina Rifai, with music by Hen Hoose. Culture Collective is funded by Scottish Government emergency COVID-19 funds through Creative Scotland.