## The Creative and Cultural Skills podcast: Build Back Fairer
## Episode four: What's stopping the sector from being more diverse?

Despite being a dynamic and responsive sector in many ways, the creative and cultural industries still rate poorly for both ethnic and social diversity, even at entry-level.

What is stopping the sector from better representing the wider working population and its own audiences?

During this episode we hear from Tajpal Rathore, Artistic Director & Executive Producer at Tribe Arts and Leila d'Aronville, Managing Director of Northern Roots. Throughout the episode, we also hear from Toby, Daisy and Izzie, three apprentices from the Scottish Crannog Centre, on their experiences of diversity and inclusion.

The podcast is hosted by Robert West, Director of Partnerships and Delivery at Creative & Cultural Skills.

## Transcript

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| **Tajpal Rathore** | The audiences that are coming through the door are potentially people who could be working in the industry. But if they don't feel welcomed when they're watching that show, you're never going to get those audiences that are going to turn into freelancers, or turn into potential future employees in the sector. |
| **Leila D'Aronville** | There was a group of African women in the audience. There were up on their feet and they were shouting and singing along, and the rest of the audience couldn't cope with it. People were starting at them. (LAUGHS) |
| **Tajpal Rathore** | There needs to be an understanding of a net benefit to why diversity matters - like why diversity would make an organisation better - because people are just doing it because of the fact that it's a legal requirement now, and they're just trying to hit the numbers so that they can say that "we are diverse". |
| **Leila D'Aronville** | And there's loads of unconscious bias training, but it's so passive. If we've got a senior management team who were all white middle class, it's more likely that they're going to be employing people within their own image, whether they recognise that or not. And it's really pushing against that. |

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| **Posy Jowett** | This is the creative and cultural skills podcast conversations and key questions about the future and the cultural sector. He is our host, Rob West. |
| **Rob West** | Findings from the Resolution Foundation think-tank have revealed that the covid crisis has further widened existing employment gaps between ethnic groups. At the time of recording, the U.K. jobless rate for young Black people has risen to 35%, with 24% for young people of Asian descent, and 13% for young white people. So what's stopping the sector from being more diverse? Joining me to discuss this is Tajpal Rathore, Artistic Director and Executive Producer of Tribe Arts. Tribe Arts' vision is to amplify the stories and voices of the current Black and Asian generation, and exists to eradicate racism within the power and potential of art. Welcome, Taj. |
| **Tajpal Rathore** | Thank you so much. How are you guys doing? |
| **Rob West** | Very well, thanks, very well. And Leila D'Aronville describes herself as a Facilitator and Professional Network Developer. in addition to her role as Managing Director of music charity Northern Roots, she's also Vice Chair of the Newcastle Cultural Compact, a framework for the relationship between Newcastle's social sector and a range of public services. Welcome, Leila. |
| **Leila D'Aronville** | Hi. |
| **Rob West** | Now, this feels like one of those discussions that we've been having for many, many years. So let's start with that question; what's stopping the sector from being more diverse? |
| **Leila D'Aronville** | Oh (LAUGHS), the list is immense. But to put it simply, I just feel like the structure that we work within a sector is quite old fashioned. It's stuck within quite a white supremacist view. It very much compounds issues. So, whether it comes to recruitment, through to audiences, through to engagement, through to creating safe spaces for artists and other creatives, I just feel like the whole system to a point is broken. (LAUGHS) And I think we're moving in the right direction; there's lots of work that's happened over the last 30 to 40 years, but has really sped up through the pandemic, particularly with the Black Lives Matter movement. But there is still so much more to do to break down a lot of those really restrictive and disabling structures that we have as a sector. |
| **Rob West** | Thank you. Taj, would you like to add anything to that? |
| **Tajpal Rathore** | What is stopping the sector from being more diverse is the fact that there's no specificity. And I think that's the key, key issue, because these conversations are so cyclical, as you mentioned, but also really generic - because there's no specificity. Like, in that question - obviously, I know that's the provocative question of this podcast - but in that question what kind of diversity are you looking for? What's stopping the sector from having more Black and Asian people? What's stopping the sector from having more women? What's stopping the sector from having more trans people, for instance? So, I think there needs to be specificity in the question, and for too long there hasn't been. And I think there's just a general fear around being specific. Certain marginalisations are easier to talk about by leaders than others. I mean, I've been in boardroom meetings where people can't even say 'Black people'. They can't even be specific about who it is that they're trying to attract in a theatre space or to a show. So yeah, I think that is the major thing that's stopping the sector from having a broad perspective on how to deal with this, and I think it also leads into confidence. There's a real lack of confidence around really confronting these issues. |
| **Rob West** | Hmm. So what are the ways in which that confidence can be overcome? |
| **Tajpal Rathore** | I think there has to be a multi-pronged approach. The work that's going on at the moment, which has been going on for decades, needs to continue - and by that, I mean the pressure needs to be put on. Anti-racism is now a buzz word, which has a very, very |

different meaning to 'diversity', or 'diversifying' an organisation, for instance. These are all interconnected issues. For me, the biggest eye opener when I entered the industry about six, seven years ago - and I was working at the BBC before I became an actor, and set up Tribe Arts - so I've heard about this conversation from various different areas and different disciplines, but it always seems to be the same thing. And I think the biggest problem in all of this has been the fact that a lot of leaders in the arts sector don't even know the definition of what 'racism' is, for instance, or the definition of what 'decolonising' is. I've had artistic directors email me and ask me the question, "what is decolonising?" And I think that is a massive problem because there's a huge gap in knowledge. So how are you supposed to address a problem when you have no idea what the problem is? But then I also don't want to let them off the hook, because I do feel like there's a lot of people out there who know exactly what the problem is, but there's just a lack of will. So there isn't a one-size-fits-all answer here. I think the first thing white leaders - and I'm specifically saying white leaders because I think that is where the pressure needs to be applied - there needs to be proper actual commitment to the cause. And if you look at it historically, this conversation has started from how to get more Black and Asian people, how to get more people of colour, into the arts. And it has opened up to a whole range of marginalisations, which has obviously been supported by the Equalities Act and the Protected Characteristics. This was a conversation initially about the 'moral' thing, the 'right' thing to do. I think it's no longer about that anymore, it's more about aligning with the law because it's a legal thing now. People are dealing with it in different ways, and they will fudge numbers. I've seen the data myself, they will do all sorts of stuff to try and look like they are diverse or they are making strides, when in reality that's not the case. People don't see it as a moral and ethical problem anymore, it is more of a legal framework.

**Rob West**

It's interesting, isn't it? That, as you say, the Equality Act of 2010 forces the hand in some ways. But you've both talked about the decades of pressure that's been put upon making those changes. And Leila, you said that it's "moving in the right direction". Give us some examples of how it is - what's changed to help things move in that direction?

**Leila D'Aronville**

There's been a lot of talk at a national level, which is a really positive thing. So you've got the way that Inc Arts have been doing; initially around the #BAMEOver statement, and then the more recent report. Equally as important, there's been a lot more pressure at a regional level. So, in the North East we've got the Culture Against Racism work that's happening across cultural organisations in the North East of England. It really is that sort of local pressure of beginning to explore what we mean by anti-racism - because I think Taj made a really good point there about the fact that people don't even fully understand what they're talking about when they're talking about racism, and they don't understand anti-racism, and they don't understand the work that has happened with anti-racism. It sits across society, not necessarily just within the cultural sector. But I think at a regional level, there's some really amazing work happening. And sometimes it feels a little bit slow. Whenever I'm involved in those conversations where people talk about the slowness of it, it's like "there's a lot of work happening here". There's a lot of work where we're actually trying to dismantle certain structures that have been here for centuries. Black and Asian artists and minoritised artists are able to come together and actually have conversations in safe spaces, and are actually gathering power and energy together to actually be able to push back. And then with the - I'm not sure I really particularly like the word 'allyship', because it sometimes feels a bit passive - but also with other people across the sector who are being part of that fight. That is really really important. The accountability, I think, is an issue. I think accountability, when it comes to diversifying the sector becomes a problem because people do fudge statistics. Then also, when someone doesn't actually step up, or when someone doesn't create the change that we're really fighting for, what do we do about that? Who is the person who's accountable, and who can come back to those organisations and individuals and go "actually, do you know what, what you're doing here isn't okay". There are legal structures in place, but actually from a sectoral point of view there's funding structure, there's all sorts of other things, where

accountability could lie before it gets to that legal point. So where does that accountability sit, and how can we continue to really push for that as well?

**Tajpal Rathore**  You ask any person of colour, and even white people, and just generally anybody across the sector, they will acknowledge that it has been really, really slow. And I think that does reveal the point I made about the lack of will - that's what that reveals. There is no lack of will, people are dragging their heels about it. There is an axiom; "to the privileged, equality feels like oppression." That is very, very true, in quite a few areas. And really, essentially what this conversation is about is actually about rebalancing power. In history, it's shown us that it's never come easy. You know, it's like what Malcolm X once said; "no one is going to go out and give you freedom, no one is going to go out and give you equality. You have to take it yourself." And I think that's what many people in the industry - people of colour, but also allies that are doing great work in trying to keep that on the agenda, and move away from performativity. And I think that's the other point that Leila was talking about; there's been really intricate systems, really grandiose systems that have been invented to try and look like things are happening. It's just really, really sad, actually, that it hasn't moved along further in all the years that it's been talked about.

**Rob West**  It's an interesting point you make about rebalancing power and lack of will. Leila, you referred to Inc Arts and the 'A Year of Anti-Racist Action' report that they made. One of the things that's said in that report is how young people from diverse backgrounds simply don't feel the arts are relevant to them - but is that true? Because it seems to me a young person's life is full of creativity and art, but it's our cultural institutions that are just out of step with many people, aren't they?

**Leila D'Aronville**  I think that's a fair thing to say, and I think that's been an issue for a very long time. When we talk about the cultural institutions, when we talk about the sector, it's really important that we talk about the broader sector. So, often we talk about the sector as being the funded organisations, whether they're regularly funded through National Lottery funding, or directly through government, but actually lots of creativity happens in communities up and down the country. It's really frustrating when you hear people from "the sector" talk about "this particular group of people doesn't engage in culture". Well, actually they do engage in culture. They absolutely 100% do engage in culture. To say that particular groups of people aren't engaging is just really very narrow minded, and it's all part of the structural problem, it's all part of structural issue. In the North East, the gurdwara up in the west end of Newcastle have some brilliant, amazing top quality musicians and dancers come and perform on a regular basis. Now, the cultural organisations don't necessarily know that, because it sits within a religious space - but it doesn't make it any less cultural than something that might happen at the Theatre Royal, at the Northern Stage, at Sage Gateshead... It's just that it sits outside of the structure that we are so used to calling "the cultural sector".

**Tajpal Rathore**  I would like to echo that point as well. I was delivering some consultancy around anti-racism to an organisation recently, to a theatre up here in the north, and they were comparing the fact that one of the members on the board had been to community centres. They didn't realise it was actually a gurdwara, but they referred to it as a "community centre", and how it was really packed, you know, it was packed to the rafters when they were giving community events and talks and stuff. As they were telling us - I'm Sikh myself - so I could recognise exactly what she was saying. And I said, "oh, you mean it was a gurdwara?" He absolutely had no idea that, actually, it was seen as a community centre. It's a religious space, and obviously that's a different motivation for people being there, but the point still stands that, actually, you're not reaching out to the people in the relevant areas because you don't feel like it's a space that you can be. I've even heard about theatres coming with radical ideas like hiring Black and Asian people to go and do outreach in Black and Asian areas, and I find that hugely offensive because it's like, "why can't you do it yourself?" I think this is a huge problem. You mentioned the whole work that Inc Arts is doing, and the report on anti-racism work that organisations are doing. And actually, one of the key points in that report is the lack of a progression that's

happened. That's one of the reasons why these conversations are cyclical, because there's no record keeping going on in terms of what we have done - so all these organisations will come out with new initiatives as if it's really groundbreaking, but it's been done like 40 years ago. And it was was very successful, and now it's been forgotten about, and it's a whole new generation of rehashing the same thing. And I think that's what Inc Arts is really trying to do - join up some of that work that has happened previously on a national scale. There was a report that Naseem Khan did in 1976 called 'The Arts that Britain Ignores' - a very famous report that everyone keeps referring to, and it always pops up every single diversity conversation, because that is still the blueprint that we are trying to achieve, and that was published in 1976. It's a huge problem. I just echo everything that Leila was saying, that there needs to be progression, and I think organisations like Inc Arts are doing crucial, crucial work in trying to raise the consciousness of the full gambit of diversity that is required.

**Leila D'Aronville**    One of the things from that Inc Arts report that was so frustrating - and it goes back to that 'accountability' - was that the organisations, the national portfolio organisations sat on the Case, for Culture - the grade that they had was still really high, despite the fact that they hadn't moved anything forward. If anything, some of them had gone backwards. It comes back to that point of accountability, like, why is that happening? And how is that happening? Where's the transparency when that sort of thing goes on?

**Rob West**    What do you think about things like the Case for Cultural Diversity and measuring organisations in that? Why isn't there a danger that what that can do is lead people towards this tokenism that Taj was talking about, about merely fulfilling the number rather than actually embracing the change?

**Tajpal Rathore**    Every problem as a starting point to try and deal with. The Creative Case for Diversity was quite a seminal, important step forward. We're actually speaking to one of the authors of that policy Hassan Mahamdalli, who used to be at the Arts Council. He's very disillusioned with some of the progress that's been made since the publishing of that policy. I think that there are still ideals in there that we haven't reached. But I think it was a starting point - I don't think it's particularly the best way to go now, because things have changed so much. I also think as well, this question that you just asked as well, it's kind of going into 'decolonising', and looking at things in a decolonised way. Because, actually, one of the big points of how a sort of non-white centred conversation around this is moving away from things like categorisations and hierarchies and stuff, because that is what seems to be the British obsession with how things are dealt with and measured. There does need to be a way of tracking this, because there needs to be some sight of how we are progressing. We're on a double edge sword where, while we're trying to fix the problem, we are also acutely aware that the measuring of it actually is where a lot of the problem occurs - either by fudging the numbers, or the numbers not being accurate because of the fact that there's so many other different priorities that are being prioritised. So, yeah, I think it was a good place to start. I think it needs constant adaptation. There isn't something that someone can do to an organisation or to a person where you can go into a session, have some type of consultancy or training or whatever, and suddenly you come out and you're an antiracist and you suddenly know the whole history of the world. That is just not going to happen. But we've had conversations with organisations where they truly do believe it's that type of learning - and it's not. It's ongoing work that needs to continue. And it's actually quite shameful that we have these conversations in a siloed way, because we are living within a British society which professes to be a multicultural society. This should not come as a chore to us. If we're really multicultural, this shouldn't be hard for us. It should really be a natural characteristic of being British.

**Rob West**    We've been talking to some current young apprentices, Daisy, Izzy and Toby, about their experiences connected to this episode's theme.

**Daisy**    Well, we just raised between 16 and 19, we've all come from different backgrounds. Before we arrived, they'd already employed a diverse range of people - so obviously this

included gay, autistic, people with disabilities. And we've added to the diversity by bringing a younger vibe. (LAUGHS) So yeah, we've got a Freedom Flag outside. Some local businesses questioned us about it, but we still have up.

**Izzy**    Yeah. Because we've actually had people come in just because they've seen the Freedom Flag, and they've known that it's a safe place for everyone to come in. Recently, it's all become very important and relevant at the moment, because you've got all the protests and all the marches and stuff like that. And people are only just recently being educated within the sector, for a long time (they) don't know the changes that have happened. So they're not really living up to the expectations of maybe other people, because they don't know how to.

**Rob West**    What do you hear young people saying about careers in the creative industries?

**Tajpal Rathore**    You were saying of one of the reports that young people of diverse backgrounds do not engage with the arts. I mean, that is an absolute fallacy. There's one in this podcast right now. We do engage in the arts, and actually a lot of the mainstream arts is Black culture. That is what a lot of people are consuming, and is what is driving and what is changing the way that we're consuming art - because it's these young people that are really paving the way, and how that's happening. So I totally reject that about the report. But in terms of pathways, I think that's another topic. It's unfortunate that people from a diverse background have always been "emerging" and never fully "emerged". They've been "emerging" for 30 years. In fact, I was speaking to a couple of artists (CHUCKLE) who have now been in the industry for 34 years and have got so old, to the point where they are now referring to themselves as being "submerged". So (LAUGS) so, yeah, it's a conversation where I think, again, there's no progression happening, and I think pathways need to be much more innovative in their thinking. I think there needs to be a lot more opportunity - real opportunity - I think there needs to be access to power. But I also think that there needs to be access to decision making, and it's not just about doing a time-specific initiative, and then moving on to the next one. I think this is such a longevity type of conversation, it just requires so much more long-term thinking. And I think that a lot of the organisations, actually, don't do that because they are only funded every three or four years (if you're a National Portfolio Organisation for instance, by the Arts Council), and then you have boards that have a cyclical recruitment process. And I think that's one of the problems - it's not really on the agenda in that sense, because it's not something that you can really achieve in one tenure.

**Leila D'Aronville**    Yeah, I would echo all of that. I would say that some of the things that we sometimes find is that within an education setting - and I think this is something that's been a particular problem with our current government... One of particular problems with our current government... Within education, the weight put behind arts and creative subjects has been stripped away, and the funding's been stripped away. Therefore, the perceived value maybe from some people's families - and I'm not talking about necessarily diversity within this conversation, but just the perceived value of arts and culture with young people within their family structures - has been decimated by the work that this government has done with the EBacc (English Baccalaureate), and then with stripping up their funding from schools and now stripping out the funding from higher education as well... And I think that does cause an issue with young people thinking about arts and culture as a career pathway, and also a lack of understanding of the sector overall from within educational institutions, and within any sort of careers advice as well.

**Izzy**    I was in my first year of sixth form down in Yorkshire, but I didn't want to continue because I wasn't really doing very well at school.

**Daisy**    (LAUGHS).

**Izzy**    It just wasn't for me. And then my mum saw on Facebook, actually, and then I applied straight away. Then a month later, had a Zoom call with the director of the museum, and

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| | then a few hours later he called me up and I got the job. So then I moved up a few weeks later. |
| **Daisy** | I left in fourth year, so that was like the start of lockdown, because I just really don't like school at all. And then my mom was on Facebook and saw it advertised, and I was like "all right". But I wasn't too keen it at the start, because I was going to go to college in Aberdeen to do Practical Cookery, and then go to uni and do the same, but I ended up coming here because I get paid to cook here, so I wasn't going to turn it down! |
| **Izzy** | (LAUGHS). |
| **Daisy** | So yeah, I emailed them, and here I am. |
| **Toby** | I was actually in my senior year of school, so S6, and it was the start of the first lockdown. Yeah, I wasn't quite sure what to do, it was kind of an early finish. My careers adviser suggested it to me, and I took the opportunity and I'm quite, quite glad I did. |
| **Izzy** | Awwww. I didn't really know what an apprenticeship was a few years ago because we'd always been told "you need to learn all this stuff for when you go to uni. You need to know exactly what you want to do." And I didn't really know there was really an option of apprenticeships, apart from in engineering and stuff like that. But we're doing in customer service, which is basically good for everything, I like to think. |
| **Daisy** | I've made some good friends. |
| **Izzy** | Awww. |
| **Daisy** | Awww. I wasn't talking about you, I was talking about... (LAUGHS) |
| **Leila D'Aronville** | The fact that you don't have to be an artist to work in the arts, I think is one thing that people don't necessarily realise. There's lots of other ways that you can work within creative industries. And also the value of the skills that you learn within a creative subject, whether that be within formal education or outside of formal education, those skills are very, very transferable into other places. Now, I'm very much talking about employability there, and I appreciate that the arts have so many more things. But when you talk about employability, those skills are transferable into any single sector and are incredibly valuable, as we well know. Whether you're a doctor, whether you're an engineer, whether you're working in a shop, or whatever your job is, actually, the skills that you can gain from having experience withinn arts and culture are really quite huge. |
| **Rob West** | This point you make about young people being unaware of careers opportunities, made in a number of different reports and anecdotally too... We've been behind the development of Discover Creative Careers, which is a website that attempts to bring together careers information opportunities in one explorable directory. But what do you feel can be done to make young people from differing, diverse backgrounds more aware of those careers in our sector? |
| **Leila D'Aronville** | Part of it is about just making various different campaigns, about people sharing the kind of works that they do - and I know some of that's happened a bit, and I know CCSkills have done some stuff like the website, and stuff through the Creative Careers Week, and that kind of thing. I think one of the biggest things for me - I mean, I founded a network for freelancers just over two years ago - and I think one of the biggest things for me is that the majority of our sectoral workforce are freelance. And at some point, if you're working in some sort of creative job within the creative industries, you'll probably be freelance for a bit of time, even if you are employed for a significant amount of it. I don't think that that's something that is ever explored with young people; that you can be freelance, or that you can have quite a creative outlook on your career itself, that it doesn't have to be linear, that you can jump around. |

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| **Daisy** | When we all first arrived here, we couldn't even say our names, and now we can't stop talking. (LAUGHS) I'm definitely glad I came here instead of going to... It doesn't really feel like we're doing an apprenticeship, it just kind of feels like we're working. |
| **Izzy** | I haven't worked in any other places in the cultural sector, so I don't really know how it is to work in other places, but here it's definitely the best. Because we all get along so well, and talk to each other, and help each other, and we learn from each other a lot. Like, the only reason we know how to talk to customers about what we're doing is through all the other staff. We didn't learn from a book or a piece of paper, we just listen to eachothers talks, and learned from it. And we made it our own. |
| **Leila D'Aronville** | Personally, my career has been absolutely all over the place. I've gone from working in PR, to running youth theatres, to running networks, to managing national singing campaigns, to working front of house in venues... It doesn't have to be that you do this, and then you do this, and then you do this, and then you run an organisation. Because actually, that's not how it works in arts and culture, and it doesn't work like that in the creative industries. So I think part of it is just about myth busting some of that, and helping everybody - not just young people, but the adults within their lives as well - understand that creative careers are valuable. They don't have to be linear. You can be really creative. That you don't have to work in a creative career your entire life. And also, as a sector, we need to not be too disingenuous, because there isn't loads of work. (LAUGHS) So we need to be honest about it as well. We need to be honest that it's really hard work, and that actually some periods of time you might have to do something else. |
| **Rob West** | This point you make about the careers not being linear also points to something you said earlier about "the problem is with the structure and with the system." Because, of course, careers advisers are trained to give advice about linear career progression. You do this, you do that, then you become one of those. And, as you say, that just doesn't fit our particular sector as well. So, that also makes me think there's some work to be done with those gateways to young people as well - people like careers professionals, and people working in those particular areas. But there's a particular issue at the moment; to go back to something Taj was talking about, about always seems to be emerging, never quite emerged... We've known for a while that the creative industries have been failing to represent people from all backgrounds at a senior level, but it's appearing that that's happening at entry level, too. Now, more recently. Do you feel that situation for people coming into the industry is getting worse, Taj? |
| **Tajpal Rathore** | Yeah, I'm not surprised about the entry level, because that's exactly where emerging artists have always been. We've spoken to some really senior artists who've been working in the industry for like 20, 30 years, and they're still in the small spaces, and they're still on some development initiatives, which is absolutely crazy. But then, we've also seen colleagues who are not of colour, and who have entered the industry within a couple of years, and are already in big productions. There's that massive disparity with that. And I think we need to be honest about the reality of it, as well. It is one of those difficult conversations, and it is a very uncomfortable conversation for many people. And I think that's the thing that we need to get over. I also think the one point you mentioned about the sort of entry-level situation... Whilst I'm not surprised with that statistic, and 100% it is probably getting worse, because it's a big issue, and it always has been.... I think that's not where the focus is right now in trying to address. At the moment, the conversation very much is around nurturing power bases. And so, some of the great work that Artistic Directors of the Future (ADF) are doing, where they are trying to recruit specifically members into boards and senior management levels... Because we've tried it, haven't we? We've been trying to sort the entry level situation out, so that it can help a pipeline of progression. It hasn't done. That hasn't worked. So, we're trying to sort out from the other direction now, and see whether we can work from a top-down basis. Because if you can get the management and the senior management team right, maybe some of those leaders will be able to change infrastructure across the organisation that they're leading |

and create some real change. The point about infrastructure as well I think is a really important point. There's a massive lack of infrastructure for all types of minorities and marginalisations within the sector. I can only speak from a race orientated way, but, you know, where other theatres that are producing Black and Asian work, for instance? There are no spaces of brick and mortar that are doing that. This is closely tied into, again, the Equality Act, but those kind of aspirations were there about 20 years ago. The conversation's now changed, and there isn't any conversation around having any bricks and mortar buildings where you can actually have Black and Asian artists making work. Because let's be honest, it's like the point that Leila made - there wasn't enough work around. But there would be if there was more infrastructure. You know, for instance, if there was more Black and Asian theatres, of if there was more theatre specifically putting on women's work, or whatever else the focus would be. Why do we always need to keep having these big, cumbersome buildings that are supposed to be for everyone? That strategy is just not working. I think there is room for specificity in this conversation, again. I would love to go to theatre where all that programme is work from people of colour; that would be amazing to me, you know, because you consume white stories wherever else you go. It's the norm. So it'd be very refreshing, actually, if I saw a place where there was a whole programme of Black and Asian work going on from January to December. That should be common in a multicultural society. I shouldn't be waiting a whole year for one production of colour to come through onto the programme, and for it to only last for a week, whereas you have a musical, commercial musical, lasting for three or four months. It's that type of programming issue, and that type of lack of infrastructure, that is absolutely killing this conversation. One of the things that we did at Tribe Arts when the pandemic hit was: As actors, we weren't too keen on the idea of recording ourselves, and putting performances on YouTube, or doing anything digital. So we had this really crazy idea of setting up Off/Stage Zine, which is Black and Asian theatre and culture. We turned into a publishing house overnight. And we realised there isn't a publication like it in the country, which absolutely bowled us, because it's like, "how can that be possible?" There isn't a focus for it. Having a magazine, for instance, that focuses on Black and Asian work will mean that it exposes what's not there. One of the problems that we're having is that there isn't enough Black and Asian shows that we can review in our magazine. There's one every couple of months, or whatever, and there's a lot more going on in London - but certainly not in the north. And so having an infrastructure like that has exposed that. We're just not busy enough, because we haven't got enough shows going on. And then that also exposes recruitment issues; new people coming into the sector, because there isn't any producers out there of a certain calibre. There isn't any writers out there, in the north especially. There isn't any project managers, or stage managers... A whole lack of infrastructure. And while we keep having these white-dominated organisations, you won't see the problem. It'll be veneered over, and there'll be some kind of marketing coampaign to say they did a great job. And that is not the reality.

**Rob West**    It's even more than that, isn't it? Because this backs up Leila's point about the need for infrastructure, and long term investment as well, over a period of time. Because you can put on your Black show, and what will happen is that people will say "we can't because of economic reasons". But actually, you're still not addressing how is that theatre and venue welcoming to people from a whole range of backgrounds as well? And that isn't going to be addressed fully by putting on more shows. There is, do you think Leila, a whole range of things that need to be done beyond the one step of actually addressing your current programming?

**Leila D'Aronville**    Hugely. I mean, we can talk about workforce and we can talk about progression, we can talk about all of those things, but we have to talk about audience within that as well. We have to talk about the fact that these organisations haven't been providing platform for Black and Asian and minoritised artists. When they have been, they've been doing it in such a way. They haven't necessarily got the audiences because they don't even know what those people are. They don't know how to market to people. Like, if you put on a show with Black and Asian artists, isn't it brilliant? And it's from a Black or Asian led company, but your entire audience is white. It's not really doing anything when it comes

to anti-racism, when it comes to diversify and programme and audience and workforce, and all of those things as well. It's just putting a show on. I've worked in music for years, and it's happened with world music for absolutely years. I've seen the most amazing artists come over from around the world, and the majority of the audience are middle class white people. And they're having a great time, and isn't it wonderful? I've seen Hugh Masekela. It was absolutely fantastic. There was a group of African women in the audience, South African women, and they were up and they were shouting, and people were tutting at them. (LAUGHS) Because they were getting into it! They were getting involved. They were up on their feet, and they were shouting and singing along. And the rest of the audience couldn't cope with it. And it's like, hand on a minute, come on. Of course, it should be for everyone. But you can't sit and tut at somebody because they are embracing and enjoying a performance. It's just, yeah. (LAUGHS).

**Rob West**  Yeah.

**Tajpal Rathore**  I think that's a really key point, actually. One of the major reasons why a lot of people of colour, especially Black and Asian people, do not engage with initiatives in the way that white people might want them to do... Because there are droves of us, but we won't engage with those kind of organisations and those productions, because those spaces are just not welcoming. There's a whole conversation going on around the civic nature of spaces at the moment. We're involved in a couple of projects that are looking at that. I think there's a whole thing about etiquette. But this is also now going into a conversation about class. This is why these conversations are so interrelated. People of colour feel there is an expectability of how they should behave: It's what's referred to as the white gaze within conversations of race. And there is this whole idea of how to be. People of colour might have a different way of speaking in front of white people, and then when they're not there, they will relax and speak naturally. That is the lived experience, that is the dual lived experience, of a lot of people in this country - that there is a way of being around predominantly white spaces, and there is a way of being around in people of colour spaces. And it's the fact that some of these dominant white organisations that are not engaging with these communities on that level, where they get people to do the outreach work for them and then there's no joined-up conversation there, so their leadership has absolutely no idea what that outreach work was because they've never been involved in it... They've never gone to a community that's literally down the road, that's 68% Black, for instance, they've never done that. They might invite them into the theatre once a year for the carnival. But that's about it. That's the disingenuousness of the reality of the situation. And I think having one or two Black shows is not enough, the etiquette that needs to change, and there's a completely different way that shows are enjoyed by Black and Asian people. I mean, there's a wonderful vehicle company called Blue Mountain Theatre that puts on Caribbean plays up and down the country - is so lively, and it is so energetic, and it is absolutely relaxed. Absolutely completely different to any audiences that the National Theatre or Leeds Playhouse or wherever might get. But that is the way that those productions are being enjoyed, and I think that if organisations can't see how to create that type of situation and that circumstance, then there's never going to be true engagement. Because it's a cyclical conversation, that matters; because the audiences that are coming through the door are potentially people who could be working in the industry. But if they don't feel welcomed when they're watching that show, you're never going to get those audiences that are going to turn into freelancers, or turn into potential future employees in the sector. Because they'll go and see that show, and they'll feel not welcomed, and feel that the representation wasn't right, and then that will be the last show that they'll ever probably see, and they'll never be engage with theatre again. And I think this is one of the problems; that we're losing great swathes of people, our audiences, who are potential workers within our sector, because of the fact that we're not giving justice to how they want to enjoy the space.

**Rob West**  It's interesting, we were talking about recruitment. Because inclusivity within recruitment practises is obviously a big thing within Creative and Cultural Skills. And we've worked with Applied, that's a platform for debiased recruitment, which is an anonymised and

skills-based system for looking at various applicants. And that's a known challenge, because Nuffield College's Centre for Social Investigation found that British citizens from ethnic minority backgrounds had to spend on average 60% more applicants to get a positive response from employers, compared to their white counterparts. And then if you're Pakistani heritage it was 70%, 80% Nigerian, 90% Middle Eastern. Something we've realised, even using this system, is there's a challenge anyway in getting people from ethnic minority backgrounds and specifically working class backgrounds (as you say, Taj, it covers all those areas), people to apply in the first place. Because you can have the most inclusive recruitment practises, but if you don't get people applying in that first place, you're never going to truly address that issue. So how do you get that kind of message out to a broader range of people that goes beyond token outreach stuff that you've been talking about, Taj?

**Tajpal Rathore**    We're the creative sector, for crying out loud. You know? We should not be struggling to think creatively about how to get people or how to engage people. I think we just need more ways of entry. Weirdly enough, if you go back 30 years, the creative sector actually was one of those really diverse places where there wasn't an entry route as such. There was various different ways that you could get in. Yes, it was to do with you knew, the industry has always been about who you know. But there is increasingly becoming a system of recruitment which is quite similar to other corporations, where you submit a C.V., it's rigorously looked at, you have a points based system, and all of that kind of stuff. If you really want to attract people from diverse backgrounds, you need to understand that that might not be the way that you're going to get it. Yes, I'm not saying that those kind of ways are not effective to get skills-based or senior leadership kind of roles, or whatever. It's no one size fits all; you might need to have a different type of approach to entry level, for instance, and a different type of approach to more senior senior teams. I think also there's a real lack of risk-taking going on now. We are in oversubscribed industry, we always have been. That's not really an excuse as far as I'm concerned. I think that we need to create more opportunity. Because, let's face it, it's not really up to those big institutions to always be creating the work. There's a lot of work out there that can be created by individuals. That's really what freelance is all about. Myself, for instance, I've never relied or worked for an institution within the arts sector, ever. I've set my own theatre company up, and then created my own opportunities. And I think a lot of people need to realise that, actually, that is something that is very achievable. It's very hard work, and you've got to make sure that you have a therapist on hand. But apart from that (CHUCKLE), it's very achievable, and I think it's needed, and I think there needs to be more confidence around that. Because if you're not going to get the opportunity, and people are not going to take risks to employ people, or give people opportunities that might not necessarily have the skillsets that they are looking for on paper... There's a huge difference between how someone is on paper, and how they actually are practically, vocationally. It can be very surprising, and really liberating and really empowering as well, actually, for the person who makes the decision to hire them, and for the person doing the work.

**Rob West**    Hmm. And you both talked about the role that economics plays in all of this, as well. And of course, unpaid and often unadvertised internships, or informal work arrangements, are still prevalent. And that obviously excludes anyone who can't afford to work for free. And isn't that barrier always going to be the one that's going to prevent our sector from being truly diverse? Does it all come down to economics?

**Leila D'Aronville**    I think it's one of the issues. And, like you say, that stops anybody who can't afford to be in those spaces from accessing them. Going back to the previous point around those recruitment strategies, it was almost like the other side of the coin of what we were talking about earlier on, about that engagement with community, that opening up: Of the fact that recruitment can only go so far as you make it. So, if you're engaging with communities, and they're going to be more aware of your recruitment, so therefore there's more likely to be more opportunities and people will come through. So there's something about the short term solutions with regards to recruitment, as well as the long

term solutions with regards to recruitment. There's something about unconscious bias, and we've mentioned that before. I don't think there's something. There's definitely something about unconscious bias. (CHUCKLE) If we've got a senior management team who are all white, middle class, whatever gender and sexuality, then it's more likely that they're going to be employing people within their own image, whether they recognise that or not. And it's really pushing against that. And there's a lot of unconscious bias training, but it's so passive. Just that awareness of the structure that we're surviving within, and how we've benefited from that, and how that then affects our decision making when it comes to other people around us, is really, really, really important. And I don't necessarily want to say "white privilege", because it's getting away from that idea. And, you know, we're talking about the structure, and if you've benefited from that structure, then you have that privilege within that structure. So part of it's around that; looking at how you've benefited, where your privilege does lie, and trying to get away from that unconscious bias, and trying to understand that, actually, wouldn't it be better if you were always striving to bring somebody into your organisation or your team that was as far away from you as possible? Because actually, that's the place where we become more diverse. And you are looking at "what skills can that person bring into your organisation?" You know, talking about that idea of freelancers and creating work and creating spaces, it's just the anger starting to swell in me that we've got all of these organisations that have so much money pumped into them and they're not safe spaces. They're not safe spaces for people of colour. They're not safe spaces for neurodiverse people. They're not safe spaces for people with disabilities, for LGBTQI people. You know, why are they not safe spaces for all of these marginalised groups of people? They absolutely should be. A lot of people step away from organisations because of the micro and macro aggressions that they receive within those institutions. And those things are quite often pushed under the carpet, and they're quite often trivialised. And whether that goes down to having a nickname because someone can't pronounce your name, through to making comments on the clothes that you wear, right the way through to outright racism that is completely brushed under the carpet. And, "oh, it's just so and so, you know? It doesn't really mean it." Those things still exist within the institutions that we are supporting - whether you play the lottery or through taxes. It's absolutely supported within those institutions. It hasn't been wiped away, it is absolutely brushed under the carpet. Sorry about my little angry. (LAUGHS)

**Tajpal Rathore**       One of the things, especially in terms of recruitment, we were talking about pathways... There's been a huge change in the way that people of colour, or people from diverse backgrounds, are targeted now. If you go back 20, 30 years, there was loads of initiatives and programmes specifically targeting Black and Asian people, for instance. Or more women, or whatever. Now, you will not see any type of opportunity, or any type of job, or any type of post being advertised in that way. There's been a massive shift in the way that those people are being asked to come to the industry. And it's not even just specific to the arts sector, it is across the board. Now, it's "this opportunity is available for everyone. However, we would like Black and Asian people, or people from ethnic minorities, to apply for this position." And I think that has really changed the conversation a little bit, because there is a fear of not favouring one type of community over another when it comes to opportunities. And that, I think, is something that needs to be talked about. By not having those initiatives anymore that target specific communities, you are essentially not addressing the problem of diversity. What we're saying is that we're a diverse society as standard, and anybody can apply, and everyone's got the same opportunity, and everyone's got the same resource, and everyone's coming at it from the same lived experience, and everyone's on the same platform. That is absolutely fallacy. People are not applying in the same way. The applications are not being looked at in the same way. That is why you do sometimes need anonymisation and things like that, because unconscious bias is huge. And there's a great book actually by Pragya Agarwal, if anyone is interested around unconscious bias. I think it's a very complicated subject, and I think it's also a subject that needs a lot more knowledge building around.

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| **Leila D'Aronville** | My dad, when he was coming into the workplace, he had a really Asian name. So it was Aziz, his name is Salim Aziz. And he changed its D'Aronvile, because he could get away with being European, heou could get away with being from, like, the sort of south Mediterranean border of France. So he changed it to D'Aronville so he would get jobs. And it did, it made a difference. And it's really... Isn't it shite? (LAUGHS) That was in the 70s! And currently in 2021, and, basically, the same problem. And I keep the name. People sometimes ask me why I don't change it back to Aziz, and I'm like "well, that's never been my name, my name's always been D'Aronville. And also, it's a bit of a talking point, nd I can say to people, "actually, this is why, and isn't that shit?" (CHUCKLE) |
| **Tajpal Rathore** | This is such a huge conversation, isn't it? And I think we're only ever going to touch the tip of the iceberg here. But I think this whole thing about micro and macro aggressions that Leila's been mentioning I think really gets to the heart of some of the reasons why it might be off-putting to a new generation of people to enter the sector. Going to see a show, and then experiencing that, for instance, or overhearing that, or even having an inkling that that might be happening... It's enough to really turn anybody off. This is a conversation that I would like to have without sounding too fragile, because I think these kind of conversations can make people of colour sound like we're fragile creatures, and that we need specific treatment. We don't. We just need acknowledgement. We need proper acknowledgement, just like how white people get. I also think that this really goes to the heart of white privilege. It's a very touchy subject. It's understood more in the arts sector, but it's not something that's really understood in wider society. A lot of white people do feel like white privilege doesn't apply to them, because it somehow is referring to money. "I'm a working class person, I've my great grandfather and my grandfather before me, my greatest great grandfather all worked in the mills, and I'm definitely not... I don't have any privilege." That is not what we refer to when we talk about white privilege. What we refer to is the examples that Leila gave where there's micro and macro aggressions of name calling, or little jokes that might get made... A white person would not suffer that. So you have a privilege in the fact that you are not suffering certain things that other people of colour are. And I think this really talks about the whole gambit of really understanding the charge and the responsibility, actually, that white people have to get this right. Because to be honest, when we talk about racism, or we talk about anti-racist work. This is a white people thing. This is not a person of colour thing. The dominant culture has more responsibility to sort it out. That's why we're referred to as "ethnic minorities", because we're a minority within a majority, and therefore we will not have power. And it's also not our job to do anything to try and change it-- I mean, it is our job to a certain extent, because we have to fight for it. But if we're living in a truly multicultural society, that shouldn't be an "us and them" type of conversation. People of sound mind should understand that this is a normal ask. |
| **Rob West** | It's interesting what you say, and notwithstanding any point you've made there Taj, but I can imagine Travellers' communities might push back on whether white people get called names, or there may be other groups from disadvantaged backgrounds in white communities that would push back a bit on that. The Policy Review Series Class in the Creative Industries that was published last year by the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre showed that people with privileged backgrounds qualified to degree level above were five and a half times more likely to secure a creative role than those from working class backgrounds. Is this about class fundamentally? |
| **Tajpal Rathore** | We live in Britain, we can't get away from the class conversation. It's absolutely inherent, it has been for centuries. Class is a really interesting conversation. I was speaking to Professor David O'Brien, who works in this area. In fact, he was doing a project around working class and how that is perceived. One of the things that his research found, which was really intriguing to me, was how people in the arts sector are putting down on forms that they are from a working class background, but they themselves might not be working class. It might be an oral tradition that happened in their family somewhere, and they're kind of clinging onto that characteristic. And also, his research found that there was a motivation to say that you were working class more and more with the arts sector, |

because it makes people who are in leadership positions feel like they're part of the common people, and we're all in this together. So there's all sorts of motivations why people might refer to themselves as working class. I mean, my particular view is the idea of working class now means so many other different things.

**Rob West**  David O'Brien was behind the paper that I was talking about from the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre. The same paper revealed that 16% of those in creative occupations are from working class backgrounds, compared to 21% in any professional occupation, and 29% across all occupations. So there is, by whatever definition we're giving in terms of working class, a disadvantage. But Leila, in terms of the North East, is this a particular debate where you are? To do with class and diversity?

**Leila D'Aronville**  Yes, like Taj said, it's that kind of idea of class, is a little bit old fashioned? And is it socioeconomic? And class is a social relationship. If you look at work by people like Akala and so many other people who are talking about race within their work, it's sort of going "well, you know, if you're Black, Asian or minoritised, you're not excluded from those challenges." The socioeconomic makeup of a place and of communities is absolutely a barrier to arts and culture, and it goes back to all of the things we've talked about before. You can as a big, fancy, flashy organisation, bricks and mortar organisation, you can go, "well, we'll make everything free. We'll put on buses, it'll be great, we'll have people from the community." Those communities aren't coming through your door, because it's not about that. It's often not the only barrier. So, yes, of course, class or where communities sit with regards to socioeconomic challenges that they have is a real barrier. And that then compounds a lot of the challenges of Black, Asian and minoritised people because some of those communities are made up of Black, Asian and minoritised people. There's also then that awful divide that happens in this country that is fuelled by the media and by politics, where it's "ooh, don't blame us, blame them over there." You know? "It's not our fault, fight between yourselves." Which is a real issue. We have a lot of issues with white supremacist action happening in the North East; people are literally bused in to protest under Grey's Monument. It seems a little bit ironic, really, that people are bused in from elsewhere in the country to actually come and protest against equality! Which I always find really bizarre. (LAUGHS) I know I'm not necessarily answering your question. But yes, it's absolutely a conversation, and I think it is one of those things, you know, we do need to look at working class communities. We need to look at diversity in all its forms within our cultural institutions. And part of that will also look at levelling up, which is another buzz phrase, isn't it? If there was a lot of effort, time and energy put into that levelling up, then our organisations, our workforces, would be more diverse. But going back to Taj's point of specificity, we do need to focus down and being very specific about some of that. And it absolutely is a race thing. I think there's also something around women within the cultural sector that really needs looking at as well, particularly after the pandemic. We know that women have taken on the majority of the caring responsibilities throughout this last year and a half. I know lots and lots of female creatives who have absolutely stepped away from the industry because they just haven't had the time or energy to be able to do it. Personally, I have struggled through, and it been really, really difficult. And I think there's a huge amount of work to do there as well.

**Tajpal Rathore**  I think this conversation about class is really interesting. We refer to it as 'intersectionality' within race conversations, because you never really hear about Black and Asian people, or people of colour, being referred to in a class sense. I think also there needs to be a really simple question that's asked by leaders in organisations at recruitment level, but also, you know, when they're producing their shows, or whatever is that they're doing. It's the simple question of "why do we want diversity?" I think we talk about it, but really, do we want it? Like, why do we want it? I've asked this simple question when I'm delivering training to boards and stuff, and you can hear a pin drop when I ask that question. No one actually has an answer to that. And I think it's going back to that earlier conversation I had about the fact that it's now become a legal thing, and not a moral or an ethical thing, because people are just doing it because of the fact that it's a legal requirement now, and they're just trying to hit the numbers so that they

can say that "we are diverse". There needs to be an understanding of a net benefit to why diversity matters, like why diversity would make an organisation better. There needs to be that understanding, you know, why a diversity of creation and why diversity of leaders... I mean, I've been on boards where, literally, they've all said the same thing. They're all on the same page. And it's like, "are you a board?" The whole point of a board is you're supposed to have a diversity of opinion, or the subjects, and have different ideas, and people are having different approaches. That's how you truly make the best decisions. Not that everyone says, "oh, well, shall we do this?" And everyone looks at each other and says, "oh, yeah." That's not how decision making should be done. But if you go to the majority of white-led institutions in this country, all the boards will be like that because no one wants to step on anyone's toe, and everyone's on the same page. That's one of the reasons why we're failing; because there isn't a diversity of opinion. There isn't diversity of people that have those opinions coming in. And it's just all the same. It's also about fostering relationships as leaders in the organisation, institutions and the organisation... We have to foster relationships that are long term. This will help recruitment and pathways as well, because you'll have a greater network of people that you know as a leader, and you can advertise that in a different way through different types of networking. And I think relationship building has really down within the sector. I think people work with people who they know - that's happened since forever - but get more people in your network who you know, (CHUCKLE) and that would really, really help. And I think it's those kind of informal things, little informal things that we can do, that can then really make net big differences... Someone's started mowing in the garden next door. (CHUCKLES) I'm going to close the window. Sorry about that. And I think those are the sort of little things that, you know, those informal things that need to be done, which will then produce a difference and a net benefit in the formal structures of recruitment that might take place. Just nudging someone informally to an opportunity because you know them really well, or you think that one person might be particularly good at this - but they've never thought about applying, but you know that they would be good at this. And so because you've got a relationship with them, you can have a conversation with them. And they trust you, and so they'll apply. We're humans at the end of the day, we really are not using our human faculties to try and sort this problem out. We're using digitisation all the time, and it's all about whether people are applying and clicking the button to submit. And I just think we need to think more outside of the box, maybe go back to basics a little bit.

**Rob West**         One thing that we've been aware of, and I think we all agreed on, is that diversity shouldn't be a tick box exercise. It should be about nurturing an approach that embraces and values difference in all its guises. But one final question then: What is it that's stopping a seemingly dynamic and responsive sector from better representing the wider population and its own audiences? What's the barrier that's in the way that if we remove that one, at least that would help us move forward in a positive way? Leila?

**Leila D'Aronville**   When Taj was talking about relationship building, it made me think about that kind of practising. And something that Taj said earlier on about "equality feels like oppression to people who are in power." One of the things that we can do as a sector; it's about acknowledging where you are, acknowledging the power that you hold and the influence that you have, and also acknowledging the space that you take up. And can you give space? Can you move to one side? If we look across the boards of the organisations, they'll be at least a handful of people who will be either on the same board if they've got time to be, or if they're not on the same board then they would have moved around different boards across different organisations, and it's the same person. And actually, it's that question to those people of like, "OK, you've taken that space, and you've given loads and loads of amazing time and energy, and how can you give that space to somebody else? So how can you raise voices? We talk a lot about amplifying voices, and I think that is really important, but how can we support people to practise their leadership as well so that actually we are giving opportunities for people to take on that role of leadership? To be in front of audiences speaking, to pay people to write blogs about various different experiences that they have within the sector as well. How can we do one of these things

that are those informal things of like nudging, or giving a little bit of budget here, and creating those opportunities, or stepping out of the way and making space for other people? And I think that's all of us, and I am really aware when I take up space about whether actually it would be more appropriate for me to give that space to somebody else. Because, yes, I'm a mixed heritage woman who doesn't have loads of money and all of those things, but I also have benefited greatly from the system as well. So there might be opportunities where I need to take a step to one side and bring somebody else through and go "actually, do you know what? This isn't my turn anymore. It's someone else's turn." And I think that it really is a problem that people don't see that, and they see it being risky for them. They see it as being a problem for them if they step to one side, that means that they're not going to have that power, or have that work, or have that influence. When actually, it's just creating a better industry for all of us.

**Rob West**
Hmm. Thank you. So, Taj; one barrier you can lift off, you can remove it to one side, that will make us better represent the wider population and the audiences. What would you do?

**Tajpal Rathore**
I just think it's people's will and ego. I just think people don't want to do it. They address that, and I think everything else will fall into place. I mean, we're going to be going to Mars soon.

**Rob West**
(CHUCKLE).

**Tajpal Rathore**
You're telling me that we can't make organisations diverse, it's just silly. I don't buy it at all. I take this point that Leila mentioned about stepping aside; I think there is the place for that conversation, I think it's important. Because there are people in the industry who, quite frankly, are hoarding power, and have been there for generations. I also think that it might not be the only way of... If you have an organisation that obviously only has a couple of leadership positions, and you've been there for ages, then yeah, maybe you should think about that. But I think also, if you are a leader in those positions, there's nothing stopping you from creating more positions. I'm the A.D. of my organisation, there's nothing stopping me from creating five other Associate Directors. There's nothing stopping me from doing that. I haven't stepped aside, and I've created five more opportunities of leadership. Yeah, I think this conversation is always limited by our own imagination. I think you just need to be a bit more creative. And yeah, when we go to Mars, and we're still not diverse, that will be very sorry day. (CHUCKLE)

**Rob West**
Great stuff. Well, let's think outside the tick box then, to help move this forward. Thank you very much, Tajpal Rathore, and thank you very much, Leila D'Aronville, for joining us.

**Tajpal Rathore**
Thank you, guys. Yeah, it's been really good to you.

**Leila D'Aronville**
Thank you.

**Rob West**
Thanks also to Daisy, Izzy, and Toby, for their contributions. And thank you for listening. We'll see you next time.

**Posy Jowett**
The Creative and Cultural Skills Podcast was hosted by Rob West, and produced by Jay Sykes. I'm Posy Jowett. To join in our discussion and share your thoughts with us, please get in touch. On Facebook and Twitter, you can find us at CCSkills.

**Rob West**
And there we go.

**Tajpal Rathore**
I'm so sorry about my technical problems, and all my little interruptions, and my neighbours. (CHUCKLES)

**Rob West**
It adds to it all, it adds to it all. We've had builders, dogs, mowers... Shows it's real. (CHUCKLES)

**Leila D'Aronville**    I'm surprised my child didn't come in and ask for something. Actually, she did at one point, I was like that.

**Rob West**    Oh really?

**Leila D'Aronville**    (LAUGHS) Just off screen.

**Rob West**    Don't think we've had a child in yet. They're the excluded groups in all of this.

**Leila D'Aronville**    (LAUGHS)