

## **Student Voices transcripts: Shupin**

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### **Shupin– Interview 2020**

Shupin 0:00

My name is Shupin and I'm doing MA Narrative Environments at Central St Martins. This is my last year.

Academic Support 0:10

What's happened to you since we last spoke, a year ago?

Shupin 0:14

So, I've been working on my major project and it is a year long project so I had to do all the design and making and kind of like project management work. And in March, I installed my work in a showroom. Now I'm working on the degree Show. I'm lucky because I did my physical show before the lockdown. So, after that, I only need to make some visualisations and I have those photos who helped me to explain what I did. But because we can't use the workshop anymore and we are not going to have a physical degree show anymore, I had to find a new way to communicate the design and the idea, with the audience and deliver this experience online. So, I've been trying to learn new softwares and technologies make some like videos and graphic.

Academic Support 1:25

How's that been, that experience?

Shupin 1:28

Um, it was really stressful at the beginning because everything's changed so suddenly and I was not very good at digital design and visual communication. So I struggled a lot. Also, because my design, it's all about atmosphere and the experience. So it was not a very easy way to use visual material to express the whole design, the whole installation. But then I realised maybe I can just do interactive videos so people can engage with design. Now, it seems that I can't use that interactive video for the degree show because we are using the UAL website for everything and they are not able to allow you to do it. So I just... I made on my own website and I put everything on my website and they say, yeah, you can put your link on our website...but still is not the best way but I think that's, that's all what I can do now.

Academic Support 2:42  
And how do you feel about that?

Shupin 2:44  
I felt a little bit a little bit disappointed because I put my effort in making this thing and I did a lot of thinking and I think this is the best way for me to deliver my work online. But it's not able to be shown directly on the UAL website. So, yeah, I'm a little bit disappointed.

Academic Support 3:06  
Can you do something on the UAL website that would intrigue people to go to your website? Create something that people think oh, I better click on here because that looks really exciting?

Shupin 3:12  
Uh, yeah, yeah, I can. I can still upload a video but I can make the interactive part more like, click here and during, the interactive experience.

Academic Support 3:27  
Yeah. So, one of the things you've just mentioned is about having to deal with adversity having to deal with things changing. Can you talk about that?

Shupin 3:37  
So, it was really, really, really hard at first, because everything stopped, and all my plan was not valid anymore. I was really disappointed and frustrated and upset. And I even got on depressive disorder back then... because my doctor said because like all the daily structure has been taken away all of a sudden and I lost that support on that regular life structure. So, I just got really confused and I lost my motivation. Also, I was really worried about my future because this is my last year and I was planning to deliver a really fun physical experience on the degree show so I can maybe get a nice job here but because the lockdown we are not doing the degree show anymore ...for me, it is really hard thing because I'm used to working in the workshop and I'm used to making things physically and what I'm making are quite huge, so I can't do it at home. So, it's like, I can't use my advantage anymore and I can't do what I'm good at doing anymore. So that was very frustrated.

(5:18)  
Because I got depressive disorder, I talked to doctors and do some therapy sessions and she suggest me to just postpone my schoolwork. So, I applied for the extension and focus on my mental condition and tried to give myself some small goals every day, like pull the yoga mat out and lay on it for five minutes...just a very easy job. And that gave me the sense of accomplishing the sense of success. And after, like, a few weeks, I start to learn to accept this circumstance and learn to enjoy life, in this way. So, I'm so great now... I mean, that depression comes and goes, like sometime there still got a little bit upset, but I'm getting much more better.

Academic Support 6:28

And do you think you've gained new skills or abilities to cope? Looking back on this experience?

Shupin 6:36

Yeah, definitely, I learn a lot because on the one hand, like I have to learn new skills to deliver my work in the different way. So, I sign up for some online course for like coding and send more for these those software's. So, it's a great opportunity for me to learn something new and honestly, like digital work is going to be the future. I was honestly I was avoiding that because I'm not good at it. And I was like, I can do my thing. And I don't have to do something like digital and virtual. But now it forced me to step into that area and try to be part of the future, I think. And also, I learnt to, like, enjoy the present and not just being pushed by the future plans because I really understood that plans are always..there's always things happening. Like your plans, not always solid always.

Academic Support 7:48

And so, if somebody was thinking of coming in this time of uncertainty, what would you suggest to them?

Shupin 7:52

I would say, applying for a new course now, a huge challenge is you ... because you can't be here, you can't come here for the open days and you can't talk to the students here or the tutors here, so you really need to take time to learn about this course and to make sure this course is the right thing for you. Also, a lot of international students who choose to study abroad, not just because the course or the university, they want to be there and learn the local culture and be part of the international environment.

Academic Support 8:38

As far as I know the plans are that students will be coming back, maybe not all their units on their... will be face-to-face. Assuming that there is some face to face contact, are there other advantages?

Shupin 8:51

Yeah, I think for the online learning, it can give you time to adapt to the course step-by-step. Because it could be really overwhelming if you just go abroad suddenly and meet new people start a new subject and living in a new environment, that that can be really overwhelming. And online learning can give you the opportunity to know the people first and then you can come in later. So that will be easier for you to fit in the environment. I think. Yeah.

Academic Support 9:28

So, talk a bit about how your course has managed over the last 12 weeks. What have been some of the surprises for you, and what have been some of the downsides?

Shupin 10:45

Because this is our last unit, and what we have to do was to write the critical appraisal and then preparing for the degree show. So, the first part for the critical appraisal is just writing. And we have tutorials for like what you need to write.

And, also, we have academic support for international students about writing skills. I think these are doing very well on- line actually because you don't have to travel all the way to the uni and you can access all those resources very easily online. Also, when you do the tutorial online, you will be fully prepared to make sure everything is efficient and that's actually quite good. But for the degree show part, we're not going to do the physical degree show anymore is disappointing. But, as far as I know, they are all kind of managed to do it, like to make a video to make some graphics. It's also surprising that a lot of people, like me, managed to learn some new skills because we have to. Yeah.

Academic Support 11:09

How's it been for colleagues who are in a different time zone? And have you been able to communicate as a whole group?

Shupin 11:17

Usually we have the core time on Tuesday morning. That's when all of us have a meeting and talk about what we are doing next week and what's our plan for future. And we have groups for designing for the degree show and this group of people will have regular meetings every week. But I think those meetings are all about uni work. We don't really talk about personal life. Yeah.

Academic Support 11:49

So, is there any opportunity in your course for that sort of socialising?

Shupin 11:56

Not for the course. But we can obviously just talk to each other ourselves. I sometimes will go to the park with some colleagues in London. That is really nice. And sometimes will just text each other online and check out like how are you doing? Yeah.

Academic Support 12:19

So, do you think isolation is an issue now? Certainly it was an issue at the beginning, I think when people were getting used to the new situation, What about now?

Shupin 12:30

Um, I think now, because like, things are opening step by step. And I think people are quite positive about the future. They are already used to the social distance situations. I think they are quite chill with it. Now.

Academic Support 13:49

Some students say that online, they feel more engaged and they feel they have more of a voice because everybody's in the same situation. It's been more. They've got closest tutors and each other.

Shupin 13:11

Yeah. But I think personally, I don't feel more engaged in the online meeting because usually, we do a physical meeting, you can just say something when you want to, you can just easily put your hand out and say it. You won't feel that you are taking other people's time because everyone's here and you just use that time to talk about stuff or you can just say things. Now, because we do online meeting, I will be like, I can always email them afterwards and I don't have to say it in front of everyone in the laptop, and I really am not very comfortable with me in the laptops, speaking. So, I won't say much in the online meeting. Also, I think because you can't see others really. You can't have the sense of their emotions. So I feel insecure speaking, because I don't know their reactions. Yeah, I prefer face-to-face conversation.

Academic Support 15:02

And what's...what's your next step after the degree show?

Shupin 14:06

I'm flying back home in late September. Before that, I'm working on a research proposal for my PhD application. Hopefully I will finish that before I go home. And I'll wait for the offer while spending time with my family. Because I left home when I was 17 and it has been six years now. So, I would love to spend more time with my parents at home. Yeah.

Academic Support 14:40

And where is home?

Shupin: 14:43

In Qingdao is northeast China. I grew up there, and my parents and all my families, they're still there. I couldn't believe it has been six years already there. I'm excited to move that with them and spend more time with them.

Academic Support 15:03

Well I wish you every success, and every happiness. Thank you very much for your time and for your contribution.

Shupin 15:13

Thank you. Thank you for having me.

## Shupin Interview 2019

Shupin 0:01

So, my name is Shupin Liu and I come from China. Em, before the course start, I made some friends in freshers' week. It was a great opportunity for you to know, cool people. But, em once the course starts, like, everyone's busy with their own things, so you don't really have an opportunity to collaborate together. And I think there's not much project like ...like between course and courses. So, it's a bit disappointing...I'm a bit disappointed about that obviously.

Shupin 0:44

Well, for me, I works learning more theory than practical thing. So, I always imagined I could really do something, like design something that could come true...like really make it myself. But yeah, for now, I haven't made something... like a real object, a real event. But I did some workshop with people, so it was great. And now we are really doing things and think about the design more practically. That's great. And I hope to do that more. I really wish I could learn more about like... famous artist, famous designers, that are still doing design now. Because I came from China and the people I know are different from the people they know here. So, sometimes when we have conversations it's like, eh, who are you talking about? Who's that? Who's that? Also, when we just catching up with each other about daily stuff? When they are talking about some like actors, or, you know, singers.. I might know the Chinese name but I'm not familiar with their English name, so, yeah, I wish I could learn more about that before I came here.

Shupin 2:17

Tip number two... well, it's about how do you think? Like, how do you learn things? Because here it's more like you are learning by the process for doing the project. And you have to learn by yourself, oh, what did I do? How can I do to improve that? And you really need to learn how to reflect yourself, reflect things you have done. In China, we basically led by rote. So, our professor will tell us some things and we just learned and Okay, I learned. That good. But here, it's like ...we have lectures...but if you want to really do something special and fabulous, you have to think by yourself, like to do experiments, try different possibilities. And the most, the biggest change I can think about myself is, I think this is not just about the course, or CSM, it is about living here in London, it makes me more open to different things. And every time I see something, I would not just say my first impression, I will think about why this thing happened and what what's the hidden truth behind it? So, I would catch things all the time. I think that's the thing I changed a lot. It's not about what you've been told. It's more like how you think.

Shupin 4:22

For me now, we document everything happening today about the project. And then, in the weekend, you will think about it secondly. And the next week, you'd got back to that day and think about what do you think about that today? Like... it's like you recycle. You go back again and again, again. Like one day, you will feel totally different with what you thought before. So, I think that's not the thing you can only learn or start to learn here.

Academic Support 5:05

Can you think of a way that somebody could try to learn that before coming?  
What would you recommend they did?

Shupin 5:12

Well, just write the journey. And, for example, you write it today and tomorrow, you go back to read your journey and then you write down how do you think about your journey? And then the third day, you went back today, and you read the day and the other day you think about today and then you write how to think about the last day you reflect about today?

Academic Support 5:38

Can you think of an example that might be useful?

Shupin 5:42

When we were doing the project...well, I'm working on the project about the luxury dinner experience, based on the fine artwork. And at first, I was thinking about using the exhibition as the fine art I based it on and I thought it has the story I want. And then that exhibition was destroyed by Nazis. So, I think that matches my point with...well, yeah, you know, it's related to a champagne brand. So, okay, there's two stories matches with each other. And then, like a few days later, I was struggling with this idea. So, I go back to like, when I reading my journal, I was like, Okay, why do you think the fire in the World War 2 matches the brand's reputation? And if this two-story match, then what's the future of the exhibition? And what's the future of the brand? So, I start to think about this. And I realised there's no future of the exhibition. But the brand has a future we need to address that. So, the exhibition doesn't really match with my projects anymore. Yeah.

Academic Support 7:26

Okay, what about another tip?

Shupin 7:29

I don't know if my tip is more for Asian student. But I think it's important to stress your idea when you are to a group meeting and brainstorming. You have to speak out, what are you thinking? You don't need to hesitate about yourself? Am I thinking it properly? Or did I have a strong reason for saying that, you just say it and people will discuss with it. And you'll find out if your idea is good or not. If you just thinking about, oh I want to make my idea more strong and reasonable, then I will show to others that is it... they will not waiting for you to like develop your ideas and share with others. You just throw up with an idea and we will develop it together. Because in my course all the project are group project. So, we work together. I did say my ideas but I didn't really fight for it. Because I thought others could well, when others are talking about the ideas, they seem so confident like they know what they're doing. I was like okay, okay, it seems like that's a really good idea, okay, let's do that.

But then at the end of the day, after the project, we are talking about how to how did we do it and how do you think each other's work. how do you think the collaborating together? And my classmates, one of my classmates was saying that you really had good ideas, but why didn't you insist on it? And I was like, oh, really? And, well, this term, I tried to like fight for my ideas. And I will say that I really like this ideas. I think they could work. And if you don't agree, let's say why you don't agree, and how can we do it better? So, it's really works. Even though at the end, maybe we are not using my idea but I know that, okay, we really have a great a better idea then mine. Yeah, I think I do develop a lot.

Shupin 10:06

Well, this might not be a tip, but this is the problem I want to fix that myself. So, as you said, there are lots of different facilities here to support you...your project. your design. But I am afraid me using it. I don't know what happened with me. Like, this is my right to use this studio, workshops and the knowledge of the staffs. But I'm just I'm kind of afraid to try new things. I think that's really bad thing for me. So, like I said before, just try different possibilities to try new things. But I don't know if I have the right to say that because I haven't done this yet.

Academic Support 10:57

Why are you afraid?

Shupin 11:01

I think yeah. So, for example, the workshop, I've been there before. And I tried that. It turns out very well, like they really willing to help you. Before that, I was. like I was

waiting for the opportunity to use that workshop, I was not creating the opportunity for myself. So, the reason why I went to that workshop was because we were going to create a workshop for some people living the concise ???. So, we have to build something like a shelf, but only for the workshop use. And we were thinking, why not, we just use the workshop we have, to build a shelf for ourself. And then I just did it. It was exciting. So, I guess I have to create some opportunities for myself to use it. And not just wait.

Shupin 12:14

I'm a little bit like I don't want to go to the Academic Support to show that oh, I really need help for my Academic thing. I'd rather learn by myself when nobody can see me. I went to one, I went to one academic writing, because I think I really need help with academic writing, because I haven't written any academic English at all. And I think it might be helpful for me to just go to that class, then sit in my room figure out myself. So, I went to that class and it turns out there's lots of people from European countries going to those kind of sessions. So, it's not really embarrassing thing. Like, think about it, you literally paid for that. And why not just using it?

Academic Support 13:15

Was it useful?

Shupin 13:16

Yeah, is really useful. Like he didn't only talk about the academic writing but also how do you do the research how to do right reference. So, it was really useful. Yeah.