

## The Higgins Art Gallery & Museum, Bedford

**Transcript**

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**Name:** Denisa Nusica

**Gender:** Female

**Date of Birth:**

**Place of Birth:** Romania

**Occupation:** Student

**Date of Interview:** Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2017

**Interviewed by:** Rosie Newbigging

**Length of interview:** 12:32

**Transcribed by:** Antaya Lendore

**0 mins**

*So, hello Denisa. Thank you very much for agreeing to be a part of this project.*

No worries. It's been a pleasure.

*And also for being such a great work experience student. So tell me a little bit about yourself, Denisa. What do you do?*

My name is Denisa. I'm 18 years old. I'm Romanian. I am a travel and tourism student. I like culture. I like travelling but I've never been to loads of places. That's something I wanna do in the future. I like music, fashion and I like to play sports but I'm not very active. I'm not a very active person.

*Okay. Tell me a little bit about how long you've been living in Bedford.*

It's been, I think, 8 or 7 years because I came here when I was 10 years old. I still remember it now. It was a day before my brother's birthday. I think it was in August. I didn't know what to expect. I was still little.

*What did you think when you got here?*

It's different. I just saw the buildings and I felt so small. And I didn't know my way around like I kept having to hold my mums hand and stuff like that.

*So you came from Romania. You came with your family?*

Yea, we came with our family. I'm assuming the plane tickets were like expensive so we came with our dad's cousin in a van. I still remember it now. We was following

the GPS and we somehow got into someone's garden and we couldn't stop laughing but it wasn't our fault it was just, we just followed the route from the GPS.

*So you drove all the way from Romania?*

Yea

*Okay. How long did that take you?*

Three days. Yea, I think you could do it in one day but he was just being very careful about it so nothing happens to us on the way and stuff like that.

*So you stopped off in hotels overnight.*

Yea.

*Okay. And what was the reason for moving to this country?*

Romania is beautiful but it's just very expensive to live in and plus even if you have a good job like a doctor could earn less than somebody here being a cleaner and that's not very fair. That's not something my parents would want me to do because I did want to become a doctor but I've changed my mind. I think it's just the government from Romania that doesn't want us to live to the standards of the European nation maybe. I don't know.

*Okay. And how do you- Did you come straight to Bedford?*

Yea. We came here because, as I said, my cousin was here and because she was in similar class, similar age as my brother, we thought she may be able to help him so the main reason was the education.

*And how did you feel as you left Romania?*

I didn't know what to feel because I loved the school in Romania. Like I loved waking up in the morning, getting ready for school and stuff like that but when I came here I could understand a bit of English because from year- when you're seven years old in Romania you're in year one and they give you an option to either learn French or English and I chose English because I couldn't- I didn't like French. So I was able to understand but not speak as fluently as I wanted to.

*And how do you feel about Bedford? How do you feel about your new home?*

I feel safe. I don't think I could live in Romania. I would only wanna visit it. I don't see my life there. Like here I feel calm and at peace. I feel like- It's not like I belong here but I fit in if that makes sense.

*And how do you feel- Have you been welcomed by people? Have people been kind?*

At school, primary school- not primary school, middle school you do get some racist people or like children because they don't know and maybe they're afraid of the unknown. But you do get some other people that are really welcoming, really helpful

as well. I still remember a teacher, Mrs Lal. She was the one that gave us like English lessons so I would be able to write and speak fluently.

### **5 mins**

I think I did that for a couple of months. And she helps loads of nationalities. Like there were Polish people in my class, Latvian and other nationalities and I still remember her. Like if I see her on the road now, I still say hello and stuff like that because I respect her. She's the one that helped us.

*And what are your- what do you want to do? What's your plan for the future? Or have you got one?*

I've applied at Uni and I hopefully get in because I already get distinctions in my lessons and hopefully - I'm not sure about the coursework because it's long. It's easy but it's long and if I don't go to Uni I'll just get a job at the airport. I do have a job now and I'm happy where I work but it's just, on the long run I would like something to do with the airport with the travel and tourism industry.

*So, did you bring anything from Romania? Like an object, book, piece of clothing, photographs?*

We did bring like loads of clothes because we didn't know what to expect here like what the weather would be like and stuff like that. I still have my clothes I don't feel like I should throw them away because I look- I like to look back at how I used to dress even though I didn't like it because my mum used to dress me up. We do have objects but we don't tend to show them as much because we want to keep them in a good and safe place.

*So is there one particular object that makes you think of home that you feel particularly attached to?*

It's a certain rug that whenever I look at it, I was like 'Wow, that's so simple yet so beautiful' and that's how I wanna be. I don't wanna have- I don't wanna be stuck up or think I'm better than everyone else I just wanna be like that rug, beautiful but simple.

*Okay, so tell me a little bit more about the rug. What colour is it?*

It's got all of different colours. You can tell it's been done separately and just put together. You get like red lines that have been sewed together by I don't know who but it's been human made- man made. It's- I don't know if it's one metre long and it's got like white stuff at the bottom. It looks- it doesn't look like a normal rug but it's just, it's a bit different I don't know how to explain.

*Okay. So the memories, does it- do you think of Romania? Does it remind you of home?*

Yes it does because when I used to go to my Grandmas house she used to have them on the floor or you could either put it onto the walls and that's how I remember it.

They do not recycle stuff but they use certain objects in different ways and the more creative you are the more you could put it into your home and stuff.

*Anything else you'd like to share about being in Bedford, being in this country, your home?*

I think it's been a great opportunity for me to be able to live this life. I don't know if I would have been able to have been that lucky in Romania because I think school in Romania is hard. It's really difficult to get good grades and if you don't pass the year you get put onto the same year until you pass. So basically if I didn't do that well in the lessons, I would have to do them again next year but I was really good at maths and English and everything else and I used to get first place. You get like not the boss but it's like the first in charge in the class and I was that for four years.

I like- I miss drinking from a fountain. Like the water was so cold and so refreshing and that's the only thing I miss and maybe some foods but my mum still cooks some Romanian foods from time to time.

*What does she cook?*

It's called Sarmale which is basically like meat. It could either be mincemeat and I don't know, I don't know what else she puts into there but it's like rice with some tomato juice and then you'd roll them in cabbage leaves. Turkish people have them as well and we serve it with polenta. I'm not sure how you say it in English but you get like the sour cream on the side. Some people choose to eat the leaves but I don't like the leaves. I feel like I'm suffocating. I think Romanian food is really nice. It's a bit greasy to my liking but it's something you should try at least once because it's very different. Like, you've got Indian food and all the others it got a specific taste to it.

**10 mins**

*And do you go back to Romania to see your family? To see your grandma?*

From when I was here in 2010 or 2009, we only went in 2012. Since then we haven't been back but my grandparents, I've spoken to them recently and they really miss me so much and they want me to visit them. I think we might go but I'm not sure when. Like I want to visit but not for long because I wouldn't know what to do there. I wouldn't know how to behave myself because I think- I was speaking to my cousin and when I left, we were still playing catch and like playing games and now she's 18. She live on her own and stuff and I don't know it's just different. I wouldn't know. Because I still think I'm a child when I go there. It's just different.

*And tell me a little bit about what you've been doing for the last week or so at the Higgins, Bedford?*

I've really enjoyed being here. Everyone's so welcoming. I think because I like fashion and I like art I've liked and enjoyed seeing all the stuff they were using back then. I've learnt the history of how they didn't have any kids of their own like the children of the Higgins parents. You've got a lot of history and you keep it in such good condition. You respect it. The volunteers her are very welcoming as well, very helpful and to be honest I was a bit sceptical about coming to here before but I really

enjoyed it because I think at some point in my life I will like to be in a visitor attraction work whether either if its volunteering work or having like a proper job here.

*And what's your favourite part of the museum?*

The old house and the Picasso exhibition which I helped to take down. It was a bit hard for me but I still did it because I thought I had trust that something better would come up and the next exhibition, I really look forward to see it and coming back as a visitor.

*Okay. Thank you very much.*

Thanks.

*Anything else you want to add.*

It's just thank you for having me here and being so welcoming.

*You're very welcome.*

I didn't know I was gonna become so emotional about it.

**End of interview 12:32**