**Kamila Slocinska and Georgina Godwin discuss**

**Kamila Slocinska:**

Hello I am Kamila Slocinska and I am an illustrator from Aarhus Denmark and I’ve been the British Council’s illustrator in residence at the Hay Festival.

**Georgina Godwin:**

So tell us about Aarhus because there’s been an amazing whole project going on there this year to celebrate the fact that it is European City of Culture for 2017

**Kamila Slocinska:**

In Aarhus we are really fortunate that we are going to have the Hay Festival, Aarhus 39 it is called, International Children’s Festival of Literature in the Autumn and we are really looking forward to having it there.

**Georgina Godwin:**

So Aarhus 39 has identified 3 writers for young people from Europe, all under 40 years old, and collected a short story from each of them and I think there are two volumes of the book- one is called Quest and one is called Odyssey and in fact you have illustrated one of those books

**Kamila Slocinska:**

Yes I have illustrated a story called the Travel Agent in Quest.

**Georgina Godwin:**

And if you look at the picture it is actually a little self portrait?

**Kamila Slocinska:**

Oh you think? No it really isn’t but maybe I think people always draw themselves even without knowing so yeah… but it is actually a little girl that wants to travel to another dimension- so!

**Georgina Godwin:**

And then you were invited here, to Hay, and this is exactly where we are having this conversation on the edge of the Brecon Beacons at this wonderful festival that is in full swing around us. You can probably hear the buzz of some of the excited people going to and from different events and of course lots of events pertaining to Aarhus 39 going on and you came here to draw. That’s quite daunting isn’t it? Sit down and draw!

**Kamila Slocinska:**

Yeah it was kind of- my first day here it was really overwhelming- there was so much inspiration, so much happening, so many people, so many talks and just the little town of Hay is so amazing itself. So my first day here basically I didn’t draw. So my first day here was me sitting at home thinking about what to draw.

**Georgina Godwin:**

So what did you decide?

**Kamila Slocinksa:**

I decided to draw myself! But then I figured out a lot of stuff was happening and a lot of interesting things and I figured out a different way to approach it.

**Georgina Godwin:**

So what was the approach that you took as I know that you were mostly based in a tent called the Make and Take Tent that was particularly for people that were creating work?

**Kamila Slocinska:**

Yeah I have been in the Make and Take Tent where I met a lot of young readers and it has been really fun to see them react to my work and also to include them as I have been drawing together with them. So it has been a lot of fun. And also to see their reaction because sometimes people say that the Danish style is very different from the British and I had been a little bit afraid that maybe they didn’t like my drawings but they were really excited about it and they thought it was different from what they were used to.

**Georgina Godwin:**

Do you think there is a big difference between the Danish and the Welsh or UK style?

**Kamila Slocinska:**

Yes I think there is. The Danish style I think is more minimalized and more graphical and in a way I think we are more free- a little bit more free- I think we are allowed to say more in Danishg picture books. I am not sure if that’s quite right but also I think our approach is more free and without any rules so I try to do whatever I like to do.

**Georgina Godwin:**

And I know there was a fantastic masterclass in drawing from Oliver Jeffers here in Hay?

**Kamila Slocinska:**

Yes and I was really looking forward to that masterclass as I think he is fantastic and has really original ideas in his books and I love his work.

**Georgina Godwin:**

Tell us about his work

**Kamila Slocinksa:**

Yes I think he is originally from Ireland but he is based now in the States and he is making a lot of quirky books for children some that he writes himself and also he illustrates other people’s work.

**Georgina Godwin:**

So what happened at the masterclass, apart from you drawing it of course.

**Kamila Slocinska:**

So he basically told us about how he started drawing and how he approaches drawing and picture books.

**Georgina Godwin:**

And was it aimed at people like you?

**Kamila Slocinska:**

Well that’s the good thing about being the illustrator in residence is that I can see everything. So I got the tickets for both the session for students and young artists- even though I am not that young anymore- and also the session for children. And it was really interesting to see how he was talking to the artists and the illustrators and how he was talking to the children.

**Georgina Godwin:**

And as you said you actually drew a picture about this and it is a great picture- full of a lot of details and a lot of writing.

**Kamila Slocinska:**

Yeah basically it is a sketch about the things I thought were most interesting about his class. I spoke to some people at home and they were really jealous of me for going to this so I thought I better make a sketch for them - a super ultra compact Oliver Jeffers masterclass in a sketch.

**Georgina Godwin:**

And I love one of the quotes you have written down: never let the truth come in the way of a good story.

**Kamila Slocinska:**

Yes unfortunately it is not mine, it is his, but I thought it was really great as well.

**Georgina Godwin:**

So you are lucky enough then to walk into just about any session that you wanted to and one of the ones you went to was Meg Rosoff and Shappi Khorsandi.

**Kamila Slocinska:**

Yes it was a really fun session and they found out that Meg was writing about a dog in her book and Shappi was writing about a cat. And during the talk they came to understand that they were actually a cat and a dog.

**Georgina Godwin:**

So that’s exactly how you have drawn them in your picture as a cat and a dog on stage having a conversation and with a whole number of beautiful birds.

**Kamila Slocinska:**

Yes Hereford College of art have been decorating the whole festival and there were so many birds all behind them which I thought was perfect for the cat and the dog.

**Georgina Godwin:**

Now as you get ready to fly back to Denmark what is it that you will take with you to Denmark from Hay? What have you learned.

**Kamila Slocinska:**

I learned a lot. The talks have been really inspiring. But also it has been really fun to be behind the scenes as an artists and to see what is going on behind the viewers but also the staff area and to see how such a huge festival is working.

And also to meet the children that actually read in the UK.

**Georgina Godwin:**

What will happen to the work you produced here?

**Kamila Slocinska:**

They will be on my instagram and also on the British Council blog.