

The Centre for Arts and Wellbeing at the University of Brighton presents:

# Everyday Creativity Conference: Towards an International Research Network



**University of Brighton**

Centre for Arts and  
Wellbeing

**Monday 13 June 2022**  
**9:30 to 16:00**

University of Brighton's Falmer  
Campus, Brighton, UK

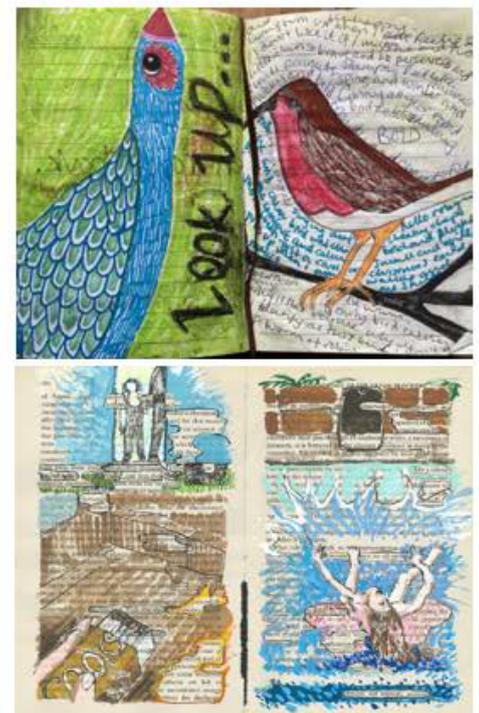
**NEA**  
NHS NUTRITION ASSOCIATES



Public Health

A one-day, face-to-face conference to share ideas, understandings, and ways of working with regard to Everyday Creativity. Offering informative talks, lively debate and a wealth of hands-on learning, the day is a first step in building an international research network to discuss and explore many aspects of this exciting emerging field.

Everyday Creativity encompasses the diverse range of immersive creative activities that millions of people engage in every day. Often removed from established hierarchies and economic models, these activities enable people to explore their creative potential, maintain their health and wellbeing, and connect to other people and the world around us.



*Top: Alex McEwan, Creative Journaling*

*Above: Julia Lockheart and  
Mark Blagrove, DreamsID*

See our blog for further conference and network updates:  
<https://blogs.brighton.ac.uk/everydaycreativity/>

## Programme

09:30-15:30 Registrations (Checkland C155)

10:00-10:50 Session One (Checkland C122)

1. Welcome to the conference (Norma Daykin, University of the West of England)
2. Introduction (Lord Steve Bassam)
3. I dream in metre: A research journey through five poems (Helen Johnson, University of Brighton)
4. Creative inquiry into the everyday: Noisemaking with household objects (Tom Roberts, University of Brighton)

10:50-11:20 Break (C155)

11:20-12:20 Session Two

*Checkland D510: Creative Methods (Chair – Helen Johnson, University of Brighton)*

1. Muna Al-Jawad, Gaurish Chawla and Neil Singh, Brighton and Sussex Medical School 'Collaborative auto-ethnography around decolonising the curriculum: COMICS! SONGS! POEMS!'
2. Vanessa Marr, University of Brighton 'Women and domesticity – What's your perspective?'
3. Afrodita Nikolova, University of Cambridge 'Grieving Aromanian heritage: Counter-poetry of wit(h)ness'

*Checkland D511: Home and placemaking (Chair – Owen Evans, Edge Hill)*

Jess Plant and Jennifer Vernon-Edwards, Creative Lives 'Creative Lives on air: An innovative partnership with BBC local radio, inspiring creativity through the power of the air waves'

*Checkland E425: Health and wellbeing (Chairs – Norma Daykin, University of the West of England and Louise Mansfield, Brunel University)*

1. Rose Condo, independent 'How to starve an artist: A spoken word show exploring creative nourishment'
2. Alex McEwan, Queen Margaret University 'Creative journaling: An essential dyslexic safe space' (workshop)

*Checkland E513: Arts, science and technology (Chair – Sonia Antoranz Contera, University of Oxford)*

Julia Lockheart, Swansea College of Art, University of Wales Trinity Saint David and Goldsmiths University of London and Mark Blagrove, Swansea University 'DreamsID (workshop)

12:20-13:10 Lunch (Checkland C155)

## Everyday Creativity Conference: Towards an International Research Network

13:10-14:20 Session Three

*Checkland D510: Creative Methods (Chair – Helen Johnson, University of Brighton)*

1. Ran Xiang, University of British Columbia 'Encounter ancient tea objects: A fictionalizing approach' (pre-recorded)
2. Chantal Spencer, University of Brighton 'Making a mind up' (workshop)

*Checkland D511: Home and placemaking (Chair – Owen Evans, Edge Hill)*

1. Amy Mallet, independent and Nicola Wydenbach, Royal College of Music 'HerStory: Ev'ry stitch in the quilt' (pre-recorded)
2. Frances Turnbull, Think Cre8tive Group CIC 'Singing for Life: Accidentally Taking Singing from Sheltered Accommodation to the Manchester Midlands Hotel'
3. Antonina Anisimovich, University of Liverpool 'The ongoing importance of engaging in arts in culture throughout the pandemic in the Liverpool city region'

*Checkland E425: Health and wellbeing (Chairs – Norma Daykin, University of the West of England and Louise Mansfield, Brunel University)*

1. Chloe Asker, University of Exeter, Victoria Tischler, University of Exeter, Hannah Zeilig, University of the Arts London 'Everyday creativity in Culture Box: Using remote and digital creative activities to promote social inclusion during the pandemic' (pre-recorded)
2. Julia Roberts and Catherine Orbach, Culture Shift 'Everyday Creativity: How lockdown brought Public Health and Arts practitioners together in East Sussex'
3. Emily Joy Rickard, Nottingham Trent University 'Knitwell: The role of creativity when recording emotions in knitting'

*Checkland E513: Arts, science and technology (Chair – Sonia Antoranz Contera, University of Oxford)*

1. Pip McDonald, Royal Agricultural University 'Do techno-poets dream of electric sheep? Exploring the potential of techno-auto-ethnographic performance poetry as a creative approach to research methodology' (pre-recorded)
2. Lewis Hou 'Everyday creative STEM?'
3. Melanie Cossins, Think Cre8tive Group CIC 'Minecraft: Connection through creativity during the pandemic and beyond'

14:20-15:00 Break (Checkland C155)

15:00-16:00 Session Four (Checkland C122)

1. Crafting response to the conference (Sarah Elwick, University of Brighton)
2. Panel discussion: Towards an international research network (Chair - Nick Ewbank; Panellists: Helen Johnson, Owen Evans, Norma Daykin, Louise Mansfield and Sonia Antoranz Contera)
3. Closing remarks (Alexandra Coulter, Director National Centre for Creative Health; Robin Simpson, Chief Executive Creative Lives)

## Abstracts

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### *Opening Session*

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#### **Creative inquiry into the everyday: Noisemaking with household objects**

**Tom Roberts, University of Brighton**

The aim of this session is to explore the inconspicuous, taken-for-granted yet omnipresent objects that permeate our daily lives in terms of their sonic properties, and so bring them to life, transforming their 'everyday-ness'. The session deploys a collaborative and embodied approach to creative inquiry in the form of collective improvisation, offering the chance for shared insights to develop through spontaneous, abstract modes of communication. Collective noisemaking is explored as a way to defamiliarise household objects by highlighting their role as social 'mediators' and foregrounding their materiality, with group improvisation offering a way to radically re-experience our everyday lives and the things that populate it through praxis. Above all, the session is a chance to make a glorious racket to introduce the conference.

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### *The Role of Everyday Creativity in Enriching Creative Research Methods*

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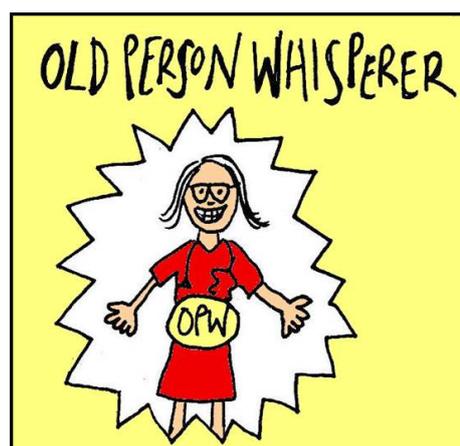
#### **Collaborative auto-ethnography around decolonising the curriculum: COMICS! SONGS! POEMS!**

**Muna Al-Jawad, Brighton and Sussex Medical School**

**Gaurish Chawla, Brighton and Sussex Medical School**

**Neil Singh, Brighton and Sussex Medical School**

Abstract: We are 3 members of faculty from BSMS, researching our way through decolonising the medical curriculum via collaborative auto-ethnography (after Chang, Ngunjiri and Hernandez). We use creative methods including walking, comic-making, prose poetry and song-writing as our ways of understanding ourselves, our practice and each other. In this session we will show comics (as per the example below), perform a song and read prose poetry as part of our work in progress. We will discuss some analysis of this work, linking to relevant theory. If we have time in the session, we will invite audience participation around the use of creative methods and the experience of collaborative auto-ethnography.



#### **Women and domesticity – What's our perspective?**

**Vanessa Marr, University of Brighton**

Abstract: Over the past ten years I have transformed the duster, a humble yellow cleaning cloth, into an object that embodies every day, domestic experience through the crafting of

embroidered statements, stitch-drawings, and manipulations that research life in the home. Inspired by craftivist practices (Greer, 2014) and autoethnography as a method that uses 'research, writing, story and method that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social, and political' (Ellis, 2004), this research with the duster is part of my long-standing collaborative arts project 'Women and domesticity – What's our Perspective?' (fig.1), the focus of several publications (Marr, 2021), personal artworks (fig.2), numerous exhibitions, and the context of my current PhD. Underpinned by Barthes seminal work *Mythologies* (1957) as a theoretical code by which we read the social meaning of things and act out accordingly, the duster provides a lens for the investigation of everyday domesticity through our innate knowledge of its purpose. Both myself and my project participants interact with it phenomenologically; consciously and unconsciously knowing it as both a cleaning cloth and as a narrative device. As evident within Bennet's idea of vital materiality and 'thing power' (2004) within which our humanness and their innateness can appear to overlap, it has become an extension of my domestic experience and an ever-present conduit to my creative research in this area.

### **Grieving Aromanian Heritage: Counter-poetry of wit(h)ness**

**Afrodita Nikolova, University of Cambridge**

Abstract: In this session, I will present the creative research potential of cross-cultural and mundane creative encounters. I draw on my Aromanian heritage to exemplify how everyday poetic encounters act as a form of bearing witness to cultural loss and being together with others as a form of creative method I term 'counter-poetry of wit(h)ness'. As a researcher, poet, and educator from Aromanian ethnic minority, a Latinised ethnic group in the Balkans, creative encounters have opened avenues to make sense of my experience of social stigma compounded by a lack of meaningful cultural and linguistic representation in Aromanian language, an endangered language spoken by less than 300 000 people worldwide. I argue that movement across borders and cross-cultural poetic circles have forged a relational togetherness as a critical sphere to re-examine and grieve cultural loss. I will show how creative encounters support grieving heritage with power and practicing cross-cultural solidarity through a series of counter-poems. To do this, I bridge poet Carolyn Forché's influential concept *poetry of witness* from literary studies and peace activism to the creative research turn such as Apol's notion of *wit(h)ness*, a kind of ethical connectedness. The creative inquiry centres on a poem produced as part of the Thresholds project, at the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. The poem departed from the community's engagement with museum artefacts and presents my response to a skeleton of a Roman woman that inspired Sylvia Plath's poem "All the Dead Dears". In my inquiry, I weave fragments of Aromanian language to imagine healing possibilities and evoke its oral and aural power as non-hegemonic celebration of Aromanian heritage outside of master-narratives. Poetry therefore weaves a web around the absence of ancestral witness and withness of Aromanian culture. I conclude that the cross-cultural social practice of poetry as testimony can tap into the pre-personal ontology of heritage as a precursor of a critical creativity indispensable to be at peace with loss in the here and now.

**Chantal Spencer, University of Brighton**

**Making a mind up**

Abstract: This activity is intended as a space for academic researchers to discuss and create their own miniature “actors” or physical rendering of their own perception of a topic. The session will focus on the tensions between our preconceptions and empathy. Understanding what we know or think we know about a subject before we embark on the journey to researching it and/or as a reflective tool of previous work. This sculptural making exercise allows us to slow down time, to give features to the abstract thoughts that we have, and clarity to the fleeting preconceptions that exist in us all. The activity parameters can be interpreted as loosely or as tightly as needed, I acknowledge and encourage a diverse reaction from the group, in that some people might thrive in the open space to create without instruction and others would like a more structured approach.



Sculpture of the strength formed organically by a supportive network of people



Actor in a project around the wicked problem of designing FOR the disabled community

**Encounter Ancient Tea Objects: A Fictionalizing Approach**

**Ran Xiang, University of British Columbia**

Abstract: This paper presents an experimental writeup of the author’s autoethnography of visiting three yohen tenmoku tea bowl exhibitions in Japan. In spring 2019, the national treasure of the yohen tenmoku tea bowls were being exhibited in three different cities in Japan. A large crowd went to view these objects, as that was the first time that all three tea objects were exhibited roughly around the same time. I had strong yet different affective responses to each of the yohen tenmoku tea bowls in my transient encounters with them. Each possesses a personality of its own. It seems that they, as Kathleen Stewart suggests in

her book *Ordinary Affect* (2007), exert a pull, an impact on me. The non-human-human-affective-assemblage is “not the kind of analytic object that can be laid out on a single, static plane of analysis... (p. 4). Their significance lies in the intensities they build and in what thoughts and feelings they make possible. The question they beg... [lies in] where they might go and what potential modes of knowing, relating, and attending to things are already somehow present in them in a state of potentiality and resonance (p. 3).” I find the style of academic writing insufficient in capturing the nuance, the intensity and the abundance of my encounters. In this paper, I attempt to emulate Stewart’s style by employing fiction writing techniques in the scene writeup, animating objects and incorporating internal monologues. My intentions are first to convey feelings and atmosphere to the readers; second, to (re)present autoethnography using fiction writing techniques, thereby contributing to creative research methods.

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*Everyday Creativity, the Home and Placemaking, Including Pandemic Responses*

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## **The ongoing importance of engaging in arts in culture throughout the pandemic in the Liverpool City Region**

**Antonina Anisimovich, University of Liverpool**

**Abstract:** As documented in numerous studies worldwide, the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on mental health and wellbeing (Yamamoto et. al, 2020; Niedzwiedz et al, 2021; Daly, Sutin & Robinson, 2020). Both during and immediately after the lockdowns, people reported feelings of isolation, anxiety, COVID-19-related sleeplessness, as well as work and study difficulties as the factors that had the most adverse effect on their mental health and wellbeing (Yamamoto et. al, 2020). In the UK, the pre-existing regional inequalities between the North and the rest of the country have been exacerbated by the pandemic, resulting in a significant decrease in mental and financial wellbeing in the North West (NHSA, 2021).

In this context, it is important to identify factors that could support mental health and wellbeing in the Liverpool City Region (LCR), particularly following the conclusion of lockdown. During the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person arts and culture engagement was significantly affected by the national lockdowns that introduced a number of restrictions. The pandemic had a serious impact on the arts and culture industry since many organisations had to suspend their in-person provision and move their activities online. During these challenging times, the arts and cultural organisations in the LCR proved to be a ‘lifeline’ for many people, offering a much-needed way to battle isolation and stress during the pandemic (Worsley, 2021).

COVID-19 CARE is an AHRC-funded study that aims to provide both the evidence for, and the tools to assess, the cost to public mental health of the loss of arts and cultural goods as well as the risks of exclusion from new patterns of provision. This presentation focuses on the specific changes in arts and cultural engagement occurring after the lifting of restrictions in the UK in July 2021, focusing on the audiences’ experiences of returning to in-person events in the LCR, as well as their engagement with the continued hybrid and online arts and cultural provision.

## HerStory: Ev'ry Stitch in the Quilt

Amy Mallet, independent

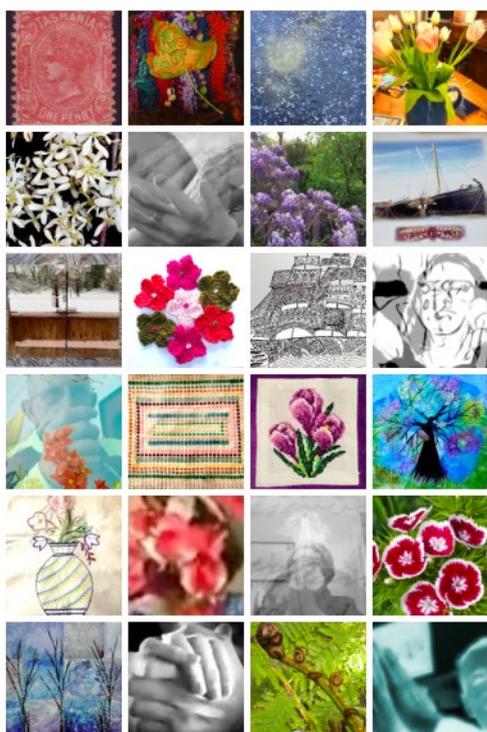
Nicola Wydenbach, Royal College of Music

Abstract: Abstract: *HerStory* is an opera co-created by Cohere Arts with performers living with Parkinson's. In 2020, the development of the opera as a live performance was interrupted due to the pandemic, inspiring a series of spin-off projects that were delivered online to participants from across the UK. Each project encouraged group members to complete creative tasks ranging from creative writing, textile and visual arts to prop-making, singing and music composition.



Workshop performance of *HerStory* at Snape Maltings, Aug 2019

In this short film, we show document the journey of *HerStory* through its digital diversions; including the creation of film artworks and an online exhibition showcasing the diverse talents of the Parkinson's community. Alongside creative outputs we explore participant testimony as evidence of transformative empowerment and shifts in identity, arguing that everyday creativity has the potential to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities.



Interactive 'digital quilt' created as part of the *HerStory: Ev'ry Stitch in the Quilt* online project in 2021. [More about the project here.](#)

## **Creative Lives on air: An innovative partnership with BBC local radio, inspiring creativity through the power of the air waves**

**Jess Plant and Jennifer Vernon-Edwards, Creative Lives**

Abstract: This Creative Lives On Air session will include a diverse range of audio content highlighting creative voices from across the country, demonstrating the unique power of radio to connect with its local audience and bring communities together. It will feature creative audio content that supported isolated communities during the pandemic. It will also highlight independent research conducted by Nick Ewbank Associates, which explores models of practice in radio collaboration via place-based case studies.

“BBC Local Radio has always valued creativity as a way to bring communities together. Our partnership with Creative Lives has helped showcase the work of hard-to-reach groups and communities on programmes at BBC Radio Leeds – it’s a relationship that has gone from strength to strength. During these uncertain times, expression through art and creativity has never been more important. - Shahid Hussain, Assistant Editor, BBC Radio Leeds

This interactive workshop will discuss a range of local projects that push the boundaries of promoting active creativity at home and in local communities, via the radio. It will include highlights from the weekly ‘Up for Arts’ sessions led by presenter Gayle Lofthouse on BBC Radio Leeds, which began in pandemic and have continued up until now engaging listeners with features such as the ‘Art Doctors’. This output focuses on getting people to ‘have a go’ at home, from den making to sea shanty singing. The workshop will also explore content from the 2021 Coventry City of Culture community radio festival, which was co-produced with BBC Radio Coventry & Warwickshire, eight community radio stations and Creative Lives in August 2021.



## **Singing for Life: Accidentally Taking Singing from Sheltered Accommodation to the Manchester Midlands Hotel**

**Frances Turnbull, Think Cre8tive Group CIC**

Abstract: This group singing project used familiar songs (vanWeelden & Cevasco, 2007) over 10 weeks funded through a local Bolton/Manchester community initiative for older people, Ambition for Ageing. Activities were loosely based on the “care home choir” initiative started by the Sidney de Haan research centre (Canterbury Christchurch University) (Moss et al., 2021). Participants were self-selected with varying degrees of experience in singing and/or performing. Repertoire was chosen by participants. This project identified a number of factors that led to the success of this project including supportive management with a vested interest in singing specifically, supportive funders that allowed the project to develop, accessible environment, non-judgemental participants, and Baileys and ice-cream! This presentation also includes a follow-up post-covid/lockdown, which included the effects of lockdown, a change in participants and a change in management. A few interesting results indicated that everyday creativity, specifically singing, had increased individually, group

interactions between former-strangers had improved to the point of forming a committee to manage events for the building, and bonding over these creative endeavours had endured.

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*Everyday Creativity, Health and Wellbeing*

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**Everyday creativity in Culture Box: Using remote and digital creative activities to promote social inclusion during the pandemic.**

**Chloe Asker, University of Exeter**

**Victoria Tischler, University of Exeter**

**Hannah Zeilig, University of the Arts London**

**Abstract:** Background - People living with dementia in care homes were severely negatively impacted during the pandemic. As well as high rates of mortality, social isolation, loneliness and responsive behaviours increased as visits from family and loved ones were stopped due to social distancing measures. Visits from artists and creative practitioners also ceased. Culture Box responded to this by providing regular postal and digital deliveries for 12 months. The Culture Boxes included a diverse range of creative activities for use in dyads (a resident with dementia and a member of care staff).

**Method -** Participatory Action Research (PAR) was used to assess the impact of the project. Survey data was collected at baseline on social isolation, responsive behaviours and personal preferences regarding creative activities. Dialogic interviews plus reflections, photos and videos were also collected.

**Findings -** 68 people with dementia and 28 staff members across 28 care homes participated in the study. Culture Boxes were received positively with materials eliciting social interaction, relationship and community building within the care home and amongst staff and residents. Relationship building was supported through the experiences of everyday creativity found through the project. For the staff, Culture Boxes have provided much needed ideas and materials at a time of unprecedented stress during the pandemic.

**How to Starve an Artist: A spoken word show exploring creative nourishment**

**Rose Condo**

**Abstract:** 'How to Starve an Artist' responds to the theme of health and wellbeing in Everyday Creativity by exploring ideas around feeding our inner artists with compassionate creativity. The show is a series of poems that include a funny yet dystopian plan for a world without artists, an imagined origin story of water on earth, a look at how bodies are a collection of ingredients to cook with, and a call to connect with those in our midst who may be in need of nourishment. As a literal act of nourishment, I prepare and serve sandwiches whilst I perform. Additionally, each person receives a 'Starving Artist Kit' to inspire individual creative activity at different moments in the show. For example, during one poem I encourage audience members to grab the pot of bubbles from their kits and share in the collective calming joy of blowing bubbles into the space.

As an award-winning Canadian poet (and food lover!) living in Salford, I created the show to address how easily and insidiously creativity can get starved out of day to day activities. Described as 'an awakening, soul-resuscitating experience' by Kent Suss from Canada's Manitoba Theatre for Young People, it was Runner Up Best Spoken Word Show at the 2017 Saboteur Awards. An audience review called it 'without doubt the most accessible, life affirming and heart-warming poetry show I have seen in many years.' As I explored in 'I

thought I was just coming to watch: Audience Participation in Spoken Word Performance' (Spoken Word in the UK, eds. Lucy English and Jack McGowan), 'How to Starve an Artist' offers fun and tactile activities for everyone while encouraging responsive engagement throughout the show. It further challenges me as a performer to keep attuned to the audience through our shared moments of creativity and connection.

### **Creative Journaling: An essential dyslexic safe space**

**Alex McEwan, Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh**

Abstract: As a dyslexic creative, social entrepreneur and researcher the use of creative journaling is a way to distil information, percolate ideas and be my true self. Mixing up images (drawn or found) and text allows for a healthy brain dump into a safe space, often with surprising outcomes and insights. Journaling creates a space in which to connect seemingly disparate thoughts and opinions both, conscious and subconscious and uncover connections allowing calm, clarity to flow. It is messy, and unchecked. It is perfect in its imperfection and it is always unplanned. It is how i make sense of a visually overwhelming society and when my words cannot come out quick enough I find release in allowing the line to find a less prescriptive path. Alex McEwan Creative journaling aids relaxation, is a space in which to play without fear, mess around, mix up ideas and make meaning of a visually



complex world. I use mark making as a form of meditation, to slow the breath, be present in the moment and connect with my environment. 'Drawings are like raw information to be messed with and understood,' Stephen Farthing. I propose a 60 minute mini introduction to creative journaling and its many benefits in both personal and in processing research ideas. Participants will be invited to take a repurposed book in which to use as their own creative journal and log moments of resonance from the conference / their own research through 3 simple prompt activities in a range of media including collage, drawing and poetry.

### **KnitWell: The role of creativity when recording emotions in knitting**

**Emily Joy Rickard, Nottingham Trent University**

Abstract: KnitWell, a practice-based project, uses a 'free knitting' approach – exploring choices of yarn, colour, gauge and stitch in an open-ended and creative way – to capture the knitter's emotional state as a form of daily journaling. This doctoral research investigates the KnitWell methodology with ten participants who undertake three month-long phases of activity, creating a daily knitted journal in each phase. The research is further complemented by autoethnographic enquiry by the researcher.

This paper investigates the role of creativity within a KnitWell journal, and the importance creativity holds in the practice of recording emotions. It draws on qualitative visual analysis of data generated within three autoethnographic activities: 'knitted journal' artefacts, photographs of the knitted journals and excerpts from the researcher's reflective journal. Initial findings indicate that being flexible with creativity is important. For example, yarn choice may be the creative output one day but the next may be stitch choice and another may be both.

There are multiple facets to creativity within a Daily Knit Journal and one of the roles of creativity here is to give the knitter time and opportunity to privately focus on their emotions.

Join this 'free knitting' session which focusses on working without a pattern to create a freeform piece and discover how you can utilise 'free knitting' to express your emotions. Come along with a pair of knitting needles, some yarn and an open mind! You don't have to be an expert knitter. However, you should be able to cast on and off, knit and purl.



Phase 1, Daily Knit Journal, 28 days, May 2021. The Daily Knit Journal features: German short rows to change direction in the knitting, marled yarns and several I-cords protruding from the edge of the knitting and travelling over the top of previous days' sections.

Phase 2, Daily Knit Journal, 28 days, Jul. - Aug. 2021. The Daily Knit Journal features: German short rows to change direction in the knitting (which creates areas of negative space), slip stitches and bobbles which distort the natural linear course of knitting.



## **Everyday Creativity: How lockdown brought Public Health and Arts practitioners together in East Sussex**

**Julia Roberts, Culture Shift**

**Catherine Orbach, Culture Shift**

**Abstract:** This session will share the findings of a major activity programme, commissioned by the East Sussex Public Health team in January 2021. The Everyday Creativity aimed to explore the impact of creative activity on people's health and wellbeing. This programme was the first systematic attempt within the Public Health team at East Sussex County Council to explore the potential health benefits of creativity. Arts charity Culture Shift led a team of creative organisations and individuals in the community, delivering activity in 2021. The activity streams were co-designed and developed with 5 distinct groups of people who were determined by the Public Health team to be at high risk of adverse outcomes either before or during the pandemic; Personal Assistants, furloughed and unemployed people, former rough sleepers, care home residents and young people (aged 14-19). This session will seek to outline the nature of the ambition and challenge inherent in this programme and share the learning gained from the multi-levels of collaboration. It will also offer a platform to explore co-design process in reality - what does authenticity look like? how can we evaluate impact robustly and meaningfully? how do we engage with participants who benefit most?

### **Minecraft: Connection through creativity during the pandemic and beyond**

**Melanie Cossins, Think Cre8tive**

Abstract: This presentation will focus on creative play in Minecraft and how this has helped neurodiverse young people increase their wellbeing, resilience and lagging skills (Dr. Ross Greene) through the pandemic. Drawing from my own personal experience with depression and having neurodivergent children, as well as sharing outcomes for the young people on our Minecraft server.

Together with my teenage daughter we devised activities that young people could play individually, in pairs, teams and groups. Examples of these are Build Battle, Pumpkin Smash and a Fish and Chips game. We invited a few children to join through neurodivergent and home educating Facebook groups. Over time we have added more games and events, which take place every day during an hour of moderated play. In a safe and supportive environment, young people are able to create their own games and builds, individually or together.

The presentation will include how online connection can work better for neurodivergent young people; how creativity develops from connecting with others; how Minecraft encompasses a variety of creative activities; my own personal journey of creativity through Minecraft; sharing the outcomes of increased confidence, making new long-lasting friends and growing self-esteem and resilience.

### **Everyday creative STEM?**

**Lewis Hou, Science Ceilidh**

Abstract: What's the role and benefits of supporting everyday STEM which embeds creativity? Can this be distinguished from other expressions of everyday creativity, and does it have any unique attributes? This session with Lewis Hou (Science Ceilidh) will start with a few case-studies including his involvement with the action research programme on cultural democracy with Fun Palaces as well as the three-year Curiosity programme exploring the role of creative STEM to support wider youth work outcomes from young people's wellbeing to resilience. This will lead to a facilitated wider discussion on the learning and provocations drawn with the session participants.

### **Everyday / Everynight creativity**

**Julia Lockheart, Swansea College of Art, University of Wales Trinity Saint David and Goldsmiths, University of London**

**Mark Blagrove, Swansea University**

Abstract:

*Recently I've had the weirdest dreams, as if I must tell myself something I won't listen to when I am awake.*

*Professor Isak Borg, in Ingmar Bergman's Wild Strawberries (1957)*

We wake up every day with a story that we have created during our sleep. We hold it on the precipice of our waking mind. Sometimes we can move that collection of colours, sensations, sounds, smells, relationships and digressive narrative plot to our memory before the day

## Everyday Creativity Conference: Towards an International Research Network

begins. This workshop aims to help a dreamer to connect the dream to their recent waking life. We ask them to tell the dream to the workshop members so as to socialise it, and unpick relationships with waking life, such as metaphors and puzzles, that the dream may hold.

In the session the dream sharer will be asked to discuss with us a recent or important or intriguing dream they have had. We will ask participants to come along with a dream written down. We request that it is not too long, as we need to be able to hear the dream spoken out loud by the dreamer at least three times. Doing this can take 10-15 minutes. The dreamer, my collaborator Mark Blagrove, and the audience, then discuss the dream over the next 60 minutes.

During the hour that the dream is discussed, Julia Lockheart depicts the dream narrative in a work of art drawn and painted onto pages taken from the first English translation of Freud's book *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Julia chooses the page or pages having regard to the shapes of the typed text on the page. Particular relevant words on the page can then be incorporated into the artwork, often serendipitously. After the event the dreamer will receive a high quality mounted Giclée print of the artwork to display at home and discuss with family and friends.



Julia Lockheart at the Paris Institute for Advanced Study in 2019. Image show the set up for the performances. Dream teller and Mark Blagrove sit in front of the screen facing the audience. The dream teller does not look at the painting being made.

A completed giclée print reproduced as enlargement of the book pages and mounted with the dream narrative below. From UCLA DreamsID event in 2018.





## Presenter Biographies

### Muna Al-Jawad, Brighton and Sussex Medical School



Muna Al-Jawad is a consultant geriatrician and senior lecturer in medical education at Brighton and Sussex medical School. In 2010 she started drawing comics as part of a masters in clinical education, and her superhero alter-ego "Old Person Whisperer" was born. She uses comics in her practice as a medical teacher and in her research. She does and supervises comics-based research into various areas of practitioner and student experience. You can find some of her work here: <https://oldpersonwhisperer.wordpress.com/>

Email: [muna.aljawad@nhs.net](mailto:muna.aljawad@nhs.net)

### Lord Steve Bassam

Steve Bassam is a Labour peer in the House of Lords. He is currently Labour's Shadow Minister for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. He also works for Business in the Community (Bitc) as a Co-Director of Place and Levelling Up with Baroness Jo Valentine. He recently produced a report for Bitc on the role of businesses in levelling up programmes and Chaired a Lords Select Committee which produced a Report on the 'Future of Seaside Towns'. Steve's early career was mainly in public service. He was the Labour Leader of Brighton and then Brighton and Hove City Council for 13 years until Tony Blair made him a minister in the Home Office. He covered a number of ministerial briefs in the Lords and was appointed Labour's Chief Whip in 2008, a post he held until 2018. He has worked as a consultant and advisor for Capita and KPMG. He is Vice Chair of the People's History Museum and a member of Brighton Royal Pavilion and Museum Trust.



### Rose Condo



Rose is an award-winning Canadian poet and educator. Based in the UK, she performs her work nationally and internationally. Her show *The Empathy Experiment* won Best Spoken Word Show at the 2019 Greater Manchester Fringe and earned critical acclaim at the Edinburgh Fringe. Her show *How to Starve an Artist* was Runner Up Best Spoken Word Show at the 2017 Saboteur Awards. She has won slams across the UK, and has supported prominent spoken word artists Shane Koyczan and Hollie McNish. Her debut collection 'After the Storm' was published by Flapjack Press. She was a contributing writer to the ground-breaking anthology *Spoken word in the UK* (eds. Lucy English and Jack McGowan). Her online 2021 World Poetry Day event gathered 21 writers from seven countries across five time zones to raise money for local food banks. She runs workshops for people of all ages, exploring wellbeing through creative writing.

### Melanie Cossins, Think Cre8tive



Mel is an Early Years music specialist (CPP Early Childhood Music-BKA & Roehampton University), vocal tutor (trained in singing for lung health), author and creative practitioner who has been teaching music to children for over twenty years. During that time, she has built up a wealth of experience working with adults, parents and young children, nurseries, schools and local communities. She has produced and delivered various projects including singing for mums and babies (to prevent PND); intergenerational music making; singing games with vulnerable teenagers; creating a vegetable orchestra and running various singing for wellbeing groups. Mel

is passionate about singing and firmly believes it helps her own mental health and wellbeing, she has also seen the positive effects when working with others. Mum to two neurodivergent children, she now splits her time home educating, learning more about neurodivergence and working on health and wellbeing projects as a co-director of Think Cre8tive Group.

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### Alexandra Coulter, National Centre for Creative Health

Alexandra Coulter is Director of the UK [National Centre for Creative Health](#) (NCCH) which launched in March 2021. It was established in response to Recommendation 1 in the [Creative Health](#) report, which was published in 2017 following a two-year inquiry by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing (APPG). Alex has provided the secretariat for the APPG since 2015 and project managed the inquiry. She is also the part-time Director of [Arts & Health South West](#) (AHSW), a regional learning, advocacy, networking and development organisation. AHSW delivered the [Culture, Health and Wellbeing International Conference](#) (online) in June 2021 which was attended by over 500 people from 30 countries.



### Norma Daykin, University of the West of England



Norma Daykin is Professor Emerita at UWE, Bristol. A social scientist, she is a leading international researcher in the field of arts, health and wellbeing. Her book, 'Arts, Health and Wellbeing: A Critical Perspective,' was published by Routledge in 2019. Recently she has served as co-researcher on the AHRC-funded 'Community Covid' study and the ESRC-funded 'What Works for Wellbeing Culture and Sport Evidence Review Programme.' She led the 'Creative and Credible' research programme investigating evaluation practice in the arts and health sector, served as

an advisor the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry on Arts, Health and Wellbeing and is the lead author of Public Health England's 'Arts, Health and Wellbeing Evaluation Framework.'

### **Sarah Elwick, University of Brighton**



Sarah Elwick is an experienced and creative textile designer specialising in knitwear, upcycling, embroidery and visible mending. She currently works as a Senior Lecturer in Textiles and Business studies at the University of Brighton. Sarah has in-depth experience in leading workshops across a number of subjects including her specialism in knitwear design and visible mending. With a passion for sustainability, Sarah's work now focusses on using waste materials, mending, and upcycling garments.

### **Lewis Hou, Science Ceilidh**

Lewis advocates for a Scotland where everyone's creativity, curiosity and wellbeing are fundamentally valued. He directs the Science Ceilidh, an organisation linking communities, education, research and culture across Scotland, and supports the Culture and Wellbeing Community Network Scotland. Lewis has been involved in an action research programme on Cultural Democracy with the Fun Palaces campaign as one of the Scottish Ambassadors with Voluntary Arts Scotland and Scottish Libraries and Information Council. He is also an organising member of the Anti-Racist Educator collective and a UK Creative Community Fellow.



### **Helen Johnson, University of Brighton**



Helen is a Principal Psychology Lecturer at the University of Brighton, UK, and Co-Director for the University's Centre for Arts and Wellbeing. She is a leading voice in spoken word/poetry slam scholarship and an expert in creative research methods. Helen is particularly interested in the intersections between arts-based research, participatory research and social justice, and has developed the 'collaborative poetics' method framed by these concerns. She is also an established spoken word poet/educator, and has been Stage Manager for the Poetry&Words stage at Glastonbury Festival, the world's largest greenfield music and performing arts festival, since 2008.

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### **Pip McDonald, Royal Agricultural University**



Pip McDonald is Senior Learning Technology Project Officer at the Royal Agricultural University. Her research explores the possibilities of techno-auto-ethnography and techno-poetics. She is also an experimental performance poet and a DJ for The Thursday Night Show. She has performed as a guest poet at the Layers of Language event organised by the British Bilingual Poetry Collective at Rich Mix in London, as an invited act at POW! Play on Words event at The Bridge House Theatre in London, at the Earth Requiem event exploring climate change at Washington Arts Centre and at the Newcastle Poetry Festival open mic event at Northern Stage in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne. She will be performing at the Wandsworth Fringe Festival in London in June with the Lost Souls Poetry Group and at High Tide festival in Twickenham in July. She has published original poetry in the Cooch Behar poetry anthology available on Amazon, Spilling Cocoa, the #creativeHE annual 2021 and the #JoyFE magazine. She recently co-hosted the #creativeHE open mic event on World Creativity Day in April 2022. You can follow Pip on Twitter: @PipMac6

### **Amy Mallett, independent**

Amy Mallett is a composer and theatre-maker creating work inspired by contemporary and historical stories. As a researcher, Amy's interests have included artist-researcher practice and the interdisciplinary nature of musical theatre collaboration. She was awarded a PhD from Bath Spa University in 2018.

After spending 15 years as an arts educator, Amy has enjoyed a rich cross-sector career as a creative health professional working for UK organisations including English National Ballet, Clod Ensemble's Performing Medicine, Britten Pears Arts, Singing for Health Network and the NHS. This work has led to new research interests examining creativity as a catalyst for change and growth, and in particular how performative experiences can positively impact health and wellbeing. She is founder and Artistic Director of Cohere Arts, a performing arts company delivering performance and participatory programmes designed to connect communities through engagement with arts and heritage.



### **Louise Mansfield, Brunel University**



Louise Mansfield is Professor of Sport, Health and Social Sciences, Vice Dean for Research and Co-Director of the Centre for Health and Wellbeing across the Lifecourse in the College of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences at Brunel University London, UK. Her research focuses on the relationship between communities, sport, physical activity and public health. She has extensive expertise in partnership and community approaches to physical activity and issues of health, wellbeing, inequality and diversity. Louise has over 15 years' experience of leading research projects for sport and public health organisations and has published widely. Louise is known for developing evidence to inform policy and practice.

### **Vanessa Marr, University of Brighton**

Vanessa Marr is Principal Lecturer at University of Brighton, also Course Leader for BA Design for Digital Media and the School Lead for Employability. She is a practicing artist and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. Her practice-based research uses embroidery, which she describes as drawing with thread, to weave together practices of autoethnography, drawing, creative writing and craftivism as collaborative arts projects, personal artwork, academic publications, and exhibitions. She is particularly interested in the role of hand-stitch to invoke female narratives on the topic of domesticity and women's lived experience of academia.



### **Catherine Orbach, Culture Shift**



Catherine is a co-director of Culture Shift, an organisation she helped set up in 2011, with the team of people that had run Creative Partnerships in Sussex and Surrey. This was a national creative learning programme partnering schools with artists to embed creativity in all areas of the curriculum. Trained as a visual artist, Catherine worked at Tate Liverpool for 10 years before moving to the south coast to work at the De La Warr Pavilion, and then Creative Partnerships. Catherine's work currently focuses on children and young people and wellbeing. It ranges from hyper local neighbourhood-projects alongside support for Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust to develop

Discovery College in Sussex. Catherine makes work herself with her niece Martha as part of a print based collaborative – Printwalks.

### **Jess Plant, Creative Lives**

Jess Plant joined the Creative Lives team in 2020 as Media Partnerships Director, leading on the [Creative Lives On Air](#) programme, promoting creativity in partnership with BBC local radio stations. She previously worked at Clinks as the Director of the National Alliance for Arts in Criminal Justice. During her time there she significantly raised the profile of arts in criminal justice settings by successfully securing Arts Council England, National Portfolio Status and developing a pioneering research project in partnership with the Institute of Criminology at the University of Cambridge funded by the ESRC and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. Jess is a Trustee of the charity Streetwise Opera and supported the development of the newly established charity Arts and Homeless International. Jess has continuously worked to enhance creative opportunities for socially excluded adults and young people. Jess has written numerous good practice guides for the arts and voluntary sector and has significant fundraising and management experience.



### **Emily Rickard, Nottingham Trent University**

Emily is a PhD researcher at Nottingham Trent University. Her research aims to investigate how aspects of a knitted fabric such as stitch, colour, texture, gauge and shape can be used as a tangible, tactile vocabulary to record an individual's emotional state. Her MA research, which she is treating as a pilot study, entitled 'KnitWell,' aimed to support wellbeing using a daily journal format. The research asked participants to use seven shades of merino yarn to document their emotions in a 'knitted journal' every day for three weeks. It demonstrated the potential for knitting to work as a medium for daily recording of an individual's emotional state. Her doctoral research is investigating this potential in much greater depth and from a critical perspective, considering the opportunities and limitations of knitting as a means of recording an emotional state and the effect this activity may have, when undertaken on a daily basis, on mental well-being.



### **Julia Roberts, Culture Shift**



Julia is a co-director of Culture Shift with a specialism in theatre-based practice and work with disabled artists and audiences. Her portfolio of experience includes working as a Performing Arts consultant for the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, a Creative Agent for Creative Partnerships and Live Arts Creative Producer for Brighton disability arts organisation, Carousel. She works internationally for The International Schools Theatre Association, is a Theatre Quality Assessor for Arts Council England and founding Director of Uninterrupted Theatre Collective. Within Culture Shift Julia's work includes managing the band Delta 7, leading the development and delivery of our Being Our Best Selves creative wellbeing programme and consultation projects in

partnership with East Sussex County Council and University of Brighton, including the development of Grangemead community garden.

### **Tom Roberts, University of Brighton**

Tom Roberts is a PhD student in the School of Humanities and Social Science at the University of Brighton, funded by the SCDTP. His current research focuses on the concept of co-production in mental health services, exploring the value and meaning of participation and involvement in the way social policy is enacted. Informed by emancipatory approaches to research itself, Tom is currently exploring the potential for participatory comics-making as an innovative and empowering way to provide insights into the experience of distress. Beyond this, Tom is interested in co-operative approaches to care, and is working with a group of local people, including both carers and people seeking care, to establish a multi-stakeholder care co-operative in Brighton & Hove. He has also spent many years making a noise in various experimental and improvisatory performance contexts, most recently with Brighton's Safehouse collective and at the Fort Process festival in Newhaven.





**Neil Singh, Brighton and Sussex Medical School**

Neil Singh is a primary care physician and Senior Teaching Fellow at Brighton and Sussex Medical School. In his spare time he writes long form non-fiction and songs (with his band, Hospital Rodeo).

**Chantal Spencer, University of Brighton**

Chantal is a researcher and activist in the field of mobility justice. She is a mature student completing an MA in Sustainable Design at Brighton University, alongside which she is an associate Lecturer at London College of Communication, University of the Arts London. Chantal is also engaged in consultancy work on issues relating to community and borough/ neighbourhood gentrification. She is disabled, with significant mobility issues and long-term health conditions that create unique challenges and perspectives to her work. Her current academic focus is on the centring research and design methodologies on minimising the burden of change on the oppressed as an inspiration point to create a new perspective on ethical research practices.



**Frances Turnbull, Think Cre8tive Group**



Frances Turnbull is a musician, researcher and author. She has delivered early years music sessions to baby groups, nurseries and schools, and taught ukulele, acoustic and electric guitar since 2006 through her personal business, Musicaliti. Frances directed community choir, the Bolton Warblers, for almost 10 years until Covid, and has delivered Singing Clubs in care and residential homes since 2018. She records monthly golden-oldies sing-a-long sessions for You Tube, and posts daily songs on TikTok through her community interest company, Think Cre8tive Group. Frances has represented the early years music community at the House of Commons, advocating for early years music educators, and writes articles for various publications on early years and older years music. Frances is passionate about creating musical opportunities

for all. Frances is also the author of "[Learning with Music: Games and activities for the early years](#)", published by Routledge, August 2017.

**Jennifer Vernon-Edwards, Creative Lives**

Jennifer Vernon-Edwards is a naturalised Northerner and has been a Broadcast Journalist at BBC Radio Sheffield for somewhere in the region of 20 years. Since last summer she has been working within the BBC for Creative Lives; as local reporter, for Creative Lives on Air, promoting everyday creativity through the retelling of incredible stories about creativity found in Sheffield; anything from knitting helping a refugee woman find a new sense of home to passionate volunteer chefs and their Glut Club; challenging isolation and tackling food waste; all the way to dance (and associated hilarity) being a way into learning English for newly arrived Muslim women. She is fascinated by the power of human stories, and their ability to connect and inspire us, and extra thrilled when she can join the dots to where the global intersects with the local; a welcome ever-increasing feature of modern living.

**Nicola Wydenbach, Royal College of Music**

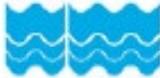


Nicola Wydenbach is a classical soprano and musical director. She trained at Royal College of Music where she was supported by a scholarship from Diva Opera. As well as enjoying a rich performance career she has specialised in using music as an intervention for health and wellbeing, leading workshops for Streetwise Opera, ROH, Garsington, ENO and Snappy Operas. In 2014, Nicola was awarded a Scholarship from the Finzi Trust to travel to America to pursue research into Singing and Parkinson's, after which she established the organisation Sing to Beat Parkinson's with Prof Grenville Hancox. She is currently Director of Training for Sing to Beat, also running several Parkinson's singing groups in London and surrounding areas, including for Trinity Laban. She also co-leads The Mind and Soul Choir at Maudsley Hospital, and is a facilitator for ENO's Breathe programme.

This conference is supported by the University of Brighton's Centre for Arts and Wellbeing, Nick Ewbank Associates and East Sussex County Council Public Health.

  
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