

BEYOND THE TOOLKIT: SPEAKER WORKSHOP DETAILS

Keynote Speaker: Clive Parkinson, Director of Arts for Health at Manchester Metropolitan University

[Blasting and Bombardiering: Arts, Health and Wellbeing](#)

Clive is a passionate advocate for culture and the arts and, under the banner of MANIFESTO, has developed proactive advocacy tools that have fed into the development of a National Charter for Arts, Health and Wellbeing. A regular speaker at regional, national and international conferences, Clive sits on a number of advisory groups and chairs the National Alliance for Arts, Health and Wellbeing. His research explores the impact of the arts on dementia and he is currently working on an interdisciplinary AHRC-funded Connected Communities research project exploring how visual arts can build dementia friendly communities. (www.artdes.mmu.ac.uk)

Keynote Speaker: Monika Auch, Visual Artist based in the Netherlands

[The Intelligent Hand](#)

Monika Auch studied medicine and practised as an M.D. before studying textile design and silkscreen printing at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam. Combining digital and traditional methods, her work reflects a unique hybrid creativity that draws on science and intuition to explore the value of tactility, dexterity and material-based making. Her presentation focuses on the 'Stitch_Your_Brain' project, developed in collaboration with the Netherlands Institute of Neuroscience in Amsterdam, which invites participants to reimagine their brain through creative stitching. Monika has exhibited widely, gained scholarships and international awards. She is a contributing editor to the Dutch 'kM journal' and lectures and teaches internationally. (www.monikaauch.nl)

Jayne Howard Director Arts for Health Cornwall & **Sarah Desmarais** AHRC-Collaborative Doctoral Award Research Student Falmouth University

[Researching arts for health: what are we doing?](#)

This talk posed a question that is rarely asked: what are we doing when we research arts for health? Increasing emphasis on evidence-based policy making has led to a research culture preoccupied with evaluating the social impacts of participatory arts programmes. Such research addresses the question: 'what does x do?' Meanwhile questions concerned with what this x is and how we might conceptualise it are neglected in the literature. Speaking from their respective positions as an arts for health researcher and the director of an innovative arts for health organisation Sarah and Jayne argue for greater acknowledgment of the complexity of arts for health work and a more nuanced understanding of the meaning of success. They propose:

- 1) The importance of developing rich and fine-grained descriptions of arts for health practice that inform new conceptual tools for describing its modes of action, and
- 2) the need to articulate arts for health work in ways that remain true to the values that underpin it.

Jayne Howard became director of Arts for Health Cornwall in 2004 after 18 years in the NHS in a variety of senior management roles, including director of Public Health and lead for children's services. Whilst in the NHS she led Cornwall's Health Action Zone programme, which supported the establishment of Arts for Health Cornwall as an independent organisation harnessing the creative talents within the county to help address health inequalities. Her job roles have been characterised by an emphasis on partnership working and collaborations to improve the experiences of individuals and communities and to tackle social injustice and inequalities. Under her leadership Arts for Health Cornwall has won several national awards for its work and most recently was awarded a significant grant from Arts Council England and the Baring Foundation to develop arts and cultural opportunities for older people in residential care. The organisation is partnering Falmouth University in the AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award and as part of the Connected Communities programme.

(www.artsforhealthcornwall.org.uk)

Sarah Desmarais is a fine art printmaker and designer-maker working with artists' books and upcycled textiles. As an artist, her interests have gradually shifted away from pictorial/conceptual content and towards process, specifically the bodily, emotional and cognitive effects of immersion in the activity of making. As a facilitator, she works with a variety of small groups teaching drawing, design, printmaking and textiles. She is also a psychotherapist with a particular interest in mindfulness-based approaches as well as therapeutic writing and making. These interests are combined in her current work with crafts-for-health groups and her related Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded doctoral research with Arts For Health Cornwall and Falmouth University, which explores the intrinsic benefits of manual creativity, and how these can be harnessed by crafting groups to support wellbeing, particularly when life circumstances undermine health or happiness.

Speaker: **Alison Gilchrist**, Community development Consultant & Researcher
[Crafting Connections; Creating Community](#)

An exploration of how processes of meeting, making, listening and learning contribute to shared well-being and collective identity. Alison Gilchrist has worked in community development for many years, as a practitioner, trainer, researcher, manager and independent consultant. She has a particular interest in how informal networking and inter-personal relationships support community efficacy, empowerment and collective resilience. Alison is currently working directly with three communities in the north-west and is involved in a number of research projects investigating community-university co-design arrangements.

(www.alisongilchrist.co.uk)

Workshop 1: **Sarah Corbett**, Crafter & Director Craftivist Collective
[Craftivism Footprint Workshop](#)

Craft helps us slow down and reflect. A piece of craft can also be a useful physical symbol to keep motivated to be a changemaker. Run by the Founder & Director of Craftivist Collective, Sarah Corbett, this workshop asked participants to create a stitched fabric footprint to help them leave a positive mark on this world using their passions, talents and everyday actions. Sarah Corbett has worked for Christian Aid, DFID and most recently Oxfam to engage people in global injustice. She started doing craftivism (craft + activism) in 2008 as a hobby and reaction to traditional forms of activism. She set up the Craftivist Collective in 2009, which now has thousands of supporters across the world. This hobby has turned her into one of the leading spokespeople in the craftivism movement (The Times featured her as the leader of one of their 5 'New Tribes' of 2012). Sarah has worked with Tate, Hayward, cult jewellers Tatty Devine,

TOMS Shoes, British Library, Secret Cinema, Unicef and Save the Children amongst others. As well as collaborating with charities and art institutions, she also sells products, delivers workshops and talks, and exhibits her own craftivism work around the world, and is a craftivism columnist for 'Crafty Magazine'. She is the author of A Little Book of Craftivism published in October 2013 through Thames & Hudson with 50% crowdfunding. (www.craftivist-collective.com)

Workshop 2: **Mah Rana**: Senior Lecturer & Research Fellow Cass School of Art, Architecture and Design. '

[The Joy of Stitch](#)

Mah Rana is the founder of It's Nice to Make, a practice-based research project currently running at Headway East London. It's Nice to Make explores how 'making' can promote well-being for community groups and individuals and asks "is there a place for craft practice in the neuroplasticity revolution?" Mah trained as an art jeweller at the Royal College of Art and more recently in psychology in 2010. Part of her practice includes 'Meanings and Attachments' www.meaningsandattachments.tumblr.com/, an ongoing public participation project, which has been held at various international venues since 2001. Mah ran the 'Beyond the Toolkit' sewing circle, which encouraged participants to embrace the joy of stitch. After a short demo of a couple of easy-to-learn embroidery techniques, each person started their own simple sewing project in the workshop; an online tutorial supported participants to complete their project in their own time. (www.itsnicetomake.com/the-joy-of-stitch-project.html & www.tsnicetomake.tumblr.com).

Workshop 3: **Shane Waltener**: Crafts Practitioner.

[Say it with sweets: food is not just for eating](#)

Trained as a sculptor, Shane Waltener's work draws inspiration from craft traditions and processes. Objects and installations reference craft work, from needle and sugarcraft to weaving and basketry. Waltener shifts the focus away from the symbolic meaning of objects to the activity to which they relate, focusing on everyday creative processes, materials, and the histories of folk craft. Recent projects have become increasingly interactive, facilitating a collaborative process in which participants own memories, stories and cultural histories are evoked, materialised, shared and collectively explored in a space made safe through fun processes of creative making. (www.shanewaltener.com)

Betsan Corkhill: Psychotherapist & Director Stitchlinks

[Getting the left hand to work with the right: Researching knitting to facilitate change and improve wellbeing](#)

Betsan Corkhill will share her ongoing work with clinicians and academics to develop therapeutic knitting as a way of enhancing general wellbeing, and as a long-term, cost effective, self-management and support for such medical conditions as long-term pain, depression, anxiety, stress, addiction and dementia. Betsan Corkhill is a former senior physiotherapist who began investigating the therapeutic benefits of knitting in 2005. Working as a wellness coach and knitting therapist she treats patients at the Pain Clinic of The Royal United Hospital in Bath. She is regularly asked to present her work to doctors and other healthcare workers with the aim of introducing therapeutic knitting into mainstream NHS and global health systems. She is founder of Stitchlinks, a hub for research into the therapeutic benefits of craft and a resource for clinicians, teachers and others wishing to harness the wellbeing potential of knitting. (www.stitchlinks.com)

Dr Anni Raw: Post-doctoral Research Associate, Durham University

[The 'Workshop Ecology': proposing a new framework for evaluating quality in participatory arts and creative making](#)

Dr Anni Raw has worked in community and participatory arts for almost 25 years. An academic researcher as well as participatory arts evaluator, she is currently associate fellow with Bradford University's International Centre for Participation Studies (ICPS), and post-doctoral research associate with Durham University's Centre for Medical Humanities (CMH), where she completed her PhD. Her doctoral project, exploring community-based participatory arts practice, involved intensive ethnographic study with over 40 expert practitioners across the spectrum of arts and creative making disciplines, including practitioners in the UK and in Mexico. Arguing that most current, collective refocussing activity arrives at shared values and principles and statements of intent rather than firm concepts and theories based in actual practice, this presentation proposes a practice-based framework for evaluation, emerging from evidence of a shared, transnational articulation of the key elements of participatory arts and creative making practice. Raw takes a 'Workshop Ecology' approach (Raw, 2013) to understanding practice, suggesting how we can use this framework to reflect on, capture and evaluate the quality of creative making processes, and understand the multiple layers of impacts, or 'domains of change' (Wright et al, 2013) that can result from the experience. (www.dur.ac.uk).

Workshop 4: **Katy Bevan:** Curator, writer, educator

[Hands On](#)

K.L. Bevan is a freelance consultant with a specialism in craft and a passion for knitting, participation and passing on skills. Publications include articles for Selvedge, Crafts, Rowan, Knitting Magazine, Surface Design Journal and numerous craft books. She previously worked at the Crafts Council as Participation & Learning Manager where she initiated the Firing Up project, the Craft Action Network and the Craft Club project, in partnership with the NFWI and The UK Handknitting Association. Craft Club resulted in over 850 individual Craft Clubs running around the UK, but what is the qualitative legacy? This session will be run as a model that could be replicated with any group. Participants will be asked to engage in self-evaluation while finger-knitting, to consider how the experiential aspects of craft might be foregrounded for funders. Katie is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. (www.klbevan.com; www.thecrafter.me)

Workshop 5: **Sarah Desmarais:** AHRC CDA Research Student Falmouth University

[Research with touchy-feely data: too woolly, or helpfully close-at-hand?](#)

Evaluating the arts in the context of health often takes the form of assessing impacts 'down the line'; meanwhile, experiential, in-the-moment dimensions of arts participation are disregarded. In this workshop participants explored tactile textile crafts rughooking and sashiko. They collectively used some simple mindfulness techniques to bring their attention to what's going on in the present moment, and think about what such experiences have to contribute in evaluating the psychic and bodily impacts of creative making.

Workshop 6: **Deirdre Buckley:** Craft in Mind

[Capturing Transformation: Creative approaches to evaluation with vulnerable young people](#)

Deirdre Buckley is Learning and Engagement Manager at Craftspace, (www.craftspace.co.uk), a Birmingham-based craft development agency initiating and leading on a range of projects. As

part of her role she undertakes consultancy for Craftspace and is currently the evaluator for a Happy Museums project at Bilston Craft Gallery, is providing developmental support to staff at Ironbridge Gorge Museum, and works with Arts Connect to enable regional library services to develop relationships with arts organisations. She has previously worked as education and outreach manager for Compton Verney and has contributed to 'Engage', a journal of visual art and gallery education. (www.craftspace.com & www.craftinmind.wordpress.com). This workshop explored how to evidence and evaluate wellbeing with vulnerable groups, focusing on 'Craft in Mind', a project that brought together young people aged 14 to 22 from Birmingham (some of whom had experience of poor mental health) to develop their understanding of mental health issues through guerrilla craft and craftivist activities. Young people did this through an actively creative approach which included visits to exhibitions and events, making and drawing sessions and guerrilla craft missions. Integral to the success of Craft in Mind was the appointment of a comic artist (Maeve Clancy) to the project team and the session will reflect on the use of drawing as an evaluation tool. Questions to stimulate thought/discussion: How do you engage vulnerable groups as active participants framing the project/evaluation process? What contribution can creative making, especially craftivism, processes make to evaluation?