

# International Creative Research Methods Conference

08-09 September 2025

**Day 1: Monday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2025**

- **Keynote: Teaching and Learning Creative Research Methods: Mainstreaming the Subversive** by Jacqueline Priego Hernández, University of Portsmouth



**10.45–11.45 am SHINE**

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- **Embodied knowing: Foregrounding the multi-sensoriality of the body as epistemological site** by Elsa Urmston PhD MSc PGCAP FHEA, University of Exeter and London Contemporary Dance School

**12.15–1.15 pm SHINE: LIVED EXPERIENCE**

Embodiment is a complex construct with varied meanings in different fields. What unifies research on embodiment is its emphasis on the body, where embodied knowledge production challenges Cartesian privileging of mind over body as the locus of knowledge. Drawing on phenomenological understandings of embodiment where the body is proposed as an epistemological site, and movement, alone and with others is the “originating ground of our sense-makings”<sup>1</sup>, this presentation is grounded in research exploring students’ and teachers’ embodied pedagogical experiences in vocational dance education.

In this session, conference delegates will be invited to consider filmic data gathering and analysis approaches which move beyond documentation and (re)presentation, to instead evoke complex, multi-sensorial, subjective positions and experiences. To do this, we will explore the visual, sonic and sensory affordances of data gathered from body-mounted cameras as a means to get close to research participants’ embodied experiences. There will also be time to reflect on whether such data can be analysed without an over-reliance on reductive written and linguistic documentation, to question whether embodied knowledge can ever adequately capture and reflect its ontological position when it is disseminated.

Conference participants will be invited to move in this session. However, they are welcome to come as they are; moving (whether big or small), and non-moving will all be embraced.

- **Stitches of Self: Restorative textile-based approaches to define the lived experience** by Dr Suzy Tutchell, University of Reading



## 12.15–1.15 pm SHINE: LIVED EXPERIENCE

stitches of Self was an inclusive textile-based research project aimed at understanding the restorative benefits of textile-work in relation to stories of resilience and strength that can define displacement experiences. The research was interested in whether sensory and somatic approaches could encourage inclusivity and the amplification of every voice. This year-long project worked with university-based teacher education students, children, young people and their families who have experienced forced migration to facilitate participant stories of self in the past and present through textile activities. We were particularly interested in how art-engaged, non-verbal activity could provoke the unsaid and hidden understandings of self. The project considered how these potentially vital moments of self-hood could be shared in safe and listening-friendly spaces to manage the trauma of the past and understand how to support the present. The Stitches of Self research project was developed in acknowledgement of Refugee Education UK's work which believes that each person should be treated with kindness and dignity in the potential for hopeful futures. This initiative is a testament to the transformative potential of art-based research in reshaping how we understand and support displaced individuals, showing that non-verbal creative activities can unlock profound personal and collective stories of strength and hope.

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- **How to engage with protoqueer lives by combining cross-art research on queer history: The diaries and death of Nike Sandelin (1903-1940, Finland) by Antu Sorainen, PhD, Docent, PI / Uni of Helsinki and Misa Lommi, MA Dance and Theatre/ Helsinki**



## 12.15–1.15 pm RISE: WORKING WITH PARTICIPANTS

The presentation is (or is about) a research-based live cross-art performances and museum exhibition on the teenage diaries and death in the war of the protolesbian Finnish teacher Nike Sandelin (1903-1940). Nike kept a teenage diary around the civil war (1918) in Finland, in the swiftly industrializing and revolutionizing city of Pori. The contemporary dancer makes the teenage Nike's inner and external turbulent feelings alive after or during the talk. We will follow how young Nike considers committing suicide because of her 'disgusting' desire. Young Nike had great queer fun in an all-girl masquerade party only to become harshly disappointed in a school party where also boys were invited, and she got excluded from the heterosexual organizing of dancing. Luckily, Nike found her life mission after listening a public talk by another protolesbian woman, who established the girl scout movement in Finland. Nike became a teacher and a girl scout leader, had a woman partner and died in the air volunteering tasks during the 2WW Russian bombings. In the cross-art way, the spirality and Aether of protoqueer lives could be engaged with through different languages, those of art and research. The presentation engages Nike also with suffragette history as the unpolitical but queerly attuned Nike dances on Manchester's historical Northern Quarter streets.

This spatial-historical-political engagement brings alive, in our time contemporary means (contemporary impro dance and queer theory) that (proto)queer lives during the past crises have a great significance in

the public presentation of history as many queer people are facing a fear of war or direct consequences of political aggression and even war in more direct ways than perhaps before. The presentation suggests that new and innovative forms and formats of public displays of queer lives in public locations such as museums and cultural centers not only engage with the queer culture of remembrance but become active agents in producing queer history and novel energies. This often requires risk-taking and deep commitment from precarious researchers and artists.

- **Passing the microphone: The (im)possibilities of 'gendabicods' and arts-material analysis within a decolonial praxis** by Mónica Sánchez Hernández, University of Bristol



**12.15–1.15 pm** **RISE: WORKING WITH PARTICIPANTS**

Researching “Indigenous” peoples is often filled with ideas that perpetuate a colonially-minded look of blaming many of the “Indigenous” contemporary issues due to their “savagery” (CITE) - that is at least the case for Violence Against Women and Girls. On the other hand, cultural relativism can make addressing issues such as those VAWG an even more slippery pavement for research.

Trying to find ethical paths that would challenge “academic extractivism” in a context of “Indigenosity”, I employed arts-based methods to research the notions of manhood of males who had been accused of Intimate Partner Violence in Oaxaca, Mexico. In the effort to resituate Indigenous knowledge prior to the arrival of Europeans to the Americas, I coined the term Gendabicod to name an attempt of research methods embedded in a decolonising and feminist praxis. And while the “data-collection” of the study was smoothly aligned with decolonial values, the analysis of the artistic artefacts proved challenging. This workshop will be presenting some of the challenges and considerations taken into account to present “findings” about what it means to be a man for those accused of perpetrating Intimate Violence against Women in Oaxaca, Mexico.

- **The People’s Museum: Exploring a Participatory Action Research Approach** by Emily Bradfield, The Fitzwilliam Museum (University of Cambridge)



**12.15–1.15 pm** **RISE: WORKING WITH PARTICIPANTS**

This research project focuses on understanding the multi-sensory experiences of individuals affected by non-visible disabilities—including physical and mental health conditions—within the context of a museum setting. By exploring what it feels like to be ‘in’ the museum, the research aims to uncover valuable insights that will inform the creation of a more inclusive and accessible

environment. The goal is to ensure that all visitors, regardless of their abilities or challenges, feel welcomed and supported, enhancing their health and wellbeing while engaging with the museum.

Phase One: Take a Walk in My Shoes (January - October 2024)

In the first phase, titled Take a Walk in My Shoes, the project employed a multi-method approach that included sensory ethnography, walking interviews, and focus groups. These methods allowed participants to share their experiences in a nuanced and meaningful way, highlighting sensory and emotional responses to the museum environment. The participatory action research approach ensures that the voices of those affected by non-visible disabilities directly influence the project's direction and outcomes. Insights are being used to develop actionable recommendations for creating a more inclusive and supportive museum environment.

Phase Two: The People's Museum (January - July 2025)

Phase two will focus on implementing the insights and recommendations from phase one and explore key questions, such as: What would an accessible exhibition look like? What could a space to relax look like? How can I orientate myself?

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- **Using creative arts-based methodology to build solidarity between LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ refugees** by Sonia Quintero, Newnham Poetry Group



**12.15–1.15 pm GROW**

What makes this study unique is its combination of creative methodologies and Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR), which brings together two often-separated communities: LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ refugees. By using arts-based approaches, it fosters solidarity through collective artmaking—such as poems, posters, and storytelling—creating spaces for shared reflection and dialogue.

The research also investigates how systems of oppression impact the migration processes, daily lives, and personal relationships of LGBTQ+ refugees, compared to non-LGBTQ+ refugees. Despite both groups facing biases within asylum systems, there is little comparative data on how these biases affect each community. This study addresses that gap, offering a deeper understanding of the unique and shared experiences of these refugee groups while promoting healing, empathy, and community-building.

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- **Making shapes with data: rethinking how we do data analysis** by Sophie Woodward, Andy Balmer, James Hodgson, Jess Mancuso, (all from the University of Manchester) and James Fletcher (University of Bath)



**12.15–1.15 pm BUZZ**

This session will be delivered by five co-authors of the forthcoming book “Everyday Qualitative Analysis”, which explores new ways of creatively working with data, aiming to move away from conventional and formulaic methods of analysis to embrace the liveliness of qualitative data. In this session, we will explore how analysing data can be understood as a way of making shapes with data and consider how shapes might emerge in our analyses when we are attentive to this liveliness. To do so, we will explore and introduce different shapes, such as lines, constellations, blobs and misshapes. We will help participants reflect on whether they have already been making these shapes or others in their data, as well as explore what it would mean to make new ones. We will therefore provide a language that speaks to participants’ existing practices to allow them to have greater confidence when exploring the creative ways they already are working with data, as well as how they could work with it. The workshop will ultimately aim to inspire participants to question the presumed ways of working with data (such as conventional coding approaches) that have been naturalised, encouraging them to explore what is at stake in the making of different shapes and what insights this can facilitate.

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- **Key learning points from the Handbook of Creative Data Analysis by Dr Helen Kara**



**12.15–1.15 pm** **WORK: CREATIVE ANALYSIS**

- **Exploring the potential for integrating generative AI into the analysis of collages by Charlotte Albrechtsen, University of Southern Denmark**



**12.15–1.15 pm** **WORK: CREATIVE ANALYSIS**

Arts-based and visual research methods are recognised for their capacity to capture human experiences and emotions that are difficult to articulate through language (Kara, 2020; Pain, 2012; Gauntlett, 2004). Among these methods, collage is valued for its ability to convey ambiguity and multiple perspectives (Powell, 2010) and is regarded as less intimidating for research participants compared to creating entirely original images (Nomakhwezi Mayaba & Wood, 2015). However, the reliance of qualitative data analysis methods on language often necessitates the transformation of non-linguistic data, such as collages, into verbal formats, such as descriptions or codes, during the initial stages of analysis (Kara, 2020: 137). This process can be demanding and time-intensive, as collages typically feature intricate compositions and multiple elements, including depictions, text, and colours.

This reliance on linguistic representation may contribute to the dominance of written art forms in creative analytic practice, as noted by Kara (2020: 140), and may result in researchers missing valuable insights offered by non-linguistic forms of expression. Generative AI (GAI) offers potential to support researchers in transforming visual data into verbal descriptions. While there have been multiple experiments with using

GAI for the analysis of textual data (e.g. Morgan, 2023; Ashwin et al., 2023; Hoy et al., 2023; De Paoli, 2024; Prescott et al., 2024), its application to visual material remains less explored. The capacity of some GAI tools to “read” and describe images suggests a role for GAI in assisting with the management of complex visual datasets, particularly in contexts where resources are limited. The goal is not to automate analysis but to complement researchers’ efforts in handling visual data.

This presentation adopts a reflective experimental approach to the use of GAI in research, as outlined by Friese (2023). It reports on an experiment in which GAI was used to assist with the description and analysis of collages produced by members of a Danish local community. The presentation also discusses the role of the researcher in conjunction with GAI, addressing issues of voice, reliability, and bias in this context.

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- **The Women of Community Music presents from roots to wind: where we are and how we move** by Nicola McAteer, York St John University

**2.00–3.30 pm SHINE: REFLECTION**

Creativity is at the heart of the collective's work of who we are and what we do in our own day to day music lives. We draw on creative methods within our collective to enrich how we understand our different lived experiences and geographies of our collective and to experiment with different ways to engage with audiences. This contribution will be a film that we feel gives us a place to be together as the intercultural participatory action research group takes place online due to our different global locations.

- **Dreams in late adulthood as shared opportunities for development (for participants and research)** by Dr Szymon Chrzastowski, University of Warsaw



**2.00–3.30 pm SHINE: REFLECTION**

Twenty interviews were conducted with individuals in late adulthood regarding their dreams (14 women and 6 men, ranging from 65 to 91 years old). This material was analysed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021). In this way, seven main themes were identified. Individuals in late adulthood dream about: 1) health and the possibilities it provides, 2) family prosperity (contact with family, well-being of loved ones, intergenerational transmission), 3) being in relationships (being in friendly relationships with others, being in supportive relationships, having a close person), 4) experiencing pleasure (travelling, enjoying everyday pleasures), 5) being active (maintaining one's post-retirement lifestyle, being engaged), 6) improving social conditions (peace), 7) having one's own place (living in a dream location, returning from a care facility to one's own home). If we look at these results from the perspective of the developmental opportunities that dreams provide, the findings become particularly interesting.

Inspired by presentations at ICRMC 2024, we began to consider how we could invite the study participants themselves, as well as other people of different ages, to reflect on the results. We were guided by the fact that the interview participants themselves believed it was worth talking about dreams. We began to consider how to discuss the research findings so that they would become developmental opportunities, not only for research participants but also for ourselves, both as researchers and in our private lives. The

analysis of dreams can become a developmental opportunity if conducted in dialogue with others, leading to a thick description (White, 1997) of the aging process.

We want to pose two questions to the workshop participants: 1) How can we study dreams (as talking about dreams can evoke a sense of shame [“at my age, one doesn’t dream anymore”])? and 2) How can we discuss research findings in a way that turns them into developmental opportunities? Creative research methods seem particularly useful in this context.

- **What matters? Entanglements with materials towards doing, being, and becoming otherwise through and beyond the research encounter** by Dr Mindy Ptolomey and Dr Lisa Bradley, University of Glasgow



**2.00–3.30 pm SHINE: REFLECTION**

Through a dialogue, supported by entanglements with a range of materials including images, tools, fabrics, and zines, we explore ‘what matters we use to think other matters with’ (Haraway 2016) in our approaches to inquiry. By asking and answering questions of one another we reflect on the role of materials in our individual and shared research projects that have facilitated creative modes of knowledge generation with marginalised communities, including zine-making, quilting, and visible mending.

Our dialogue will wayfind roads less travelled in conversations about creative research by foregrounding the role of materials in our preparing for and facilitation of creative research encounters, and in particular what tools, objects, and embodied realities we are thinking with and through. In doing so, we reveal the personal and political affordances of the act of making (see Sennett 2009), and the ways that the endeavour of research shapes, and is shaped by, embodied and tactile encounters that permit doing, being, and becoming otherwise.

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- **Creating bunting to tell the story of co-producing an art and wellbeing programme for schools** by Dr Naomi Warne and Dr Liz Jestico, University of Bristol



**2.00–3.30 pm RISE: CRAFTING**

As part of the [Create for Confidence](#) project, we are co-developing an art and wellbeing programme for schools aimed at preventing anxiety and depression in teenagers. We are co-developing this programme in

workshops with a group of young people, and a group of adults with personal and/or professional expertise (e.g. adults who are parents and/or have a job background in mental health, the arts, or schools).

We will present the process of our co-production workshops and explain the creative activities we are using to help facilitate discussions and work together with our co-production groups towards our shared goal. We will present an activity we use at the end of each workshop where we invite each group to create a piece of bunting/flag (using fabric, pens and range of craft materials) that summarises the workshop as well as their feelings and reflections from the session. Following each workshop, we use each piece of bunting to share thoughts and experiences between our adult and young people groups, and string them together to detail the journey we have taken over time to design the art and wellbeing programme. We will share our own reflections on the workshops and using bunting as a longitudinal creative method. We will also share video insights from our young people researchers (aged 14-18) who we work alongside to facilitate this activity.

Attendees will be invited to create pieces of bunting that summarise aspects of the conference and their own personal reflections. We will discuss and decide as a group how to weave these pieces of bunting together to combine the journeys and experiences we have made as individuals. We will discuss the process and value of creating bunting to facilitate conversations with adults and young people and invite attendees to share their thoughts.

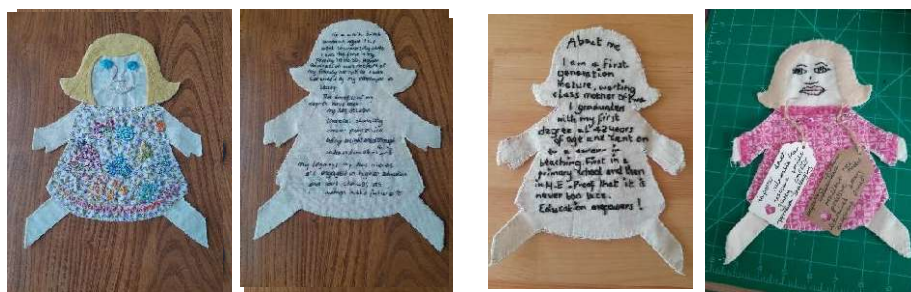
- **Stitching women's stories using craftivism as a creative research method (craftivism is a portmanteau of craft and activism)** by Deborah Littley, University of Wolverhampton

**2.00–3.30 pm** RISE: CRAFTING

My contribution set off as a creative way to gather data for my doctoral thesis using a fabric doll template similar to paper chain dolls. I invited mature first-generation women in HE to workshops with a view to them creating a stitched narrative artefact of their experiences. Whilst they began stitching, they shared their personal stories with one another although many of them had never met. There was a wide range of abilities in the groups from complete novices to experienced sewers and all were able to complete a stitched doll (although many were completed at home after the workshops). There has been research into the neuroscience of working alongside others to thoughtfully engage and create an artefact that may result in social change. Also, the process of stitching and not having to make eye contact with others has been found to promote openness and sharing of personal stories in a supportive environment.

Initially, it was meant to be a data gathering exercise, and it will indeed be used for that purpose. However, the stories that were shared and the untold stories that were stitched onto the dolls have proved to be so much more. My plan to share the dolls with other mature, first-generation women who are considering embarking on a degree remains, but since beginning this project I have been encouraged to invite any women to create a stitched doll to promote education for all women and girls across the world given that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century education is not accessible to everyone.

Some examples:



One side is stitched to represent the women. On the other side, they are encouraged to stitch their autobiography. Although some women have been creative

with that suggestion and added a simpler (but often more powerful) story. They are also invited to create positive and negative labels using abstract nouns but not everyone has done that.

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- **Playing with clay: Creating 'tools for food movements' with activist food organisations Fiction** by Rebecca Donaldson, Newcastle University



**2.00–3.30 pm GROW: OBJECTS**

My PhD fieldwork 'Caring spaces: An Ethnographic Account of Food Movements in the North-East of England' consisted of a 12-month ethnography with activist community organisations where members' food-work aims to subvert the typical 'top-down' power dynamics of food charities, instead aiming to use food to build collective power.

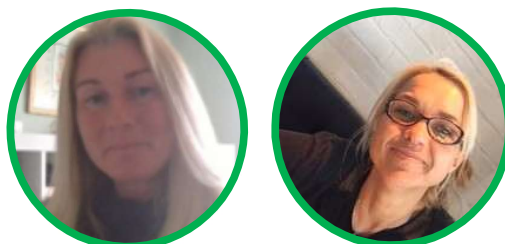
This period of fieldwork ended with a series of creative workshops with food project members, during which I asked participants to visually respond to prompts which were derived from early thematic analysis, using a variety of 3D and 2D arts materials. These outcomes were then used as a jumping-off point for further group discussions.

In this presentation I will outline the challenges of conducting an ethnography within small, volunteer-led organisations, and explain how and why I chose to engage in creative workshops to communicate findings within groups and generate new, reflective discourses.

One key research output was that a consistent challenge for groups is messaging: The collectivist ethos integral to their work was often difficult to effectively communicate, particularly whilst foodbanks remain the standard approach of UK food aid. These workshops aimed therefore to be an opportunity to both play with developing visual representations of collectivism and mutuality and identifying explicit values and expectations of the members in a relaxed, creative environment.

In this session I will offer some insights into how the workshops were conducted, how the prompts and activities were conceived of, display some of the visual outcomes that were produced at the workshops and describe how the workshop outcomes have generated reflections on organisational practices and have contributed to my overall thesis.

- **Sandboxing: Qualitative interviewing with sand, objects, and figures** by Dawn Mannay and Vicky Timperley, Cardiff University



**2.00–3.30 pm GROW: OBJECTS**

The sandboxing method was developed from the tradition of play therapy, specifically the World Technique, where children create three dimensional scenes, pictures, or abstract designs with a range of miniature, realistic and fantasy, figures and everyday objects in a tray filled with sand. Sandboxing adapts this therapeutic practice as a distinctive tool of qualitative data generation with children, young people, and adults who create sand scenes and discuss their metaphorical meanings in elicitation interviews. This session explains the development of the sandboxing technique, and reflects on the affordances, limitations and ethical considerations of sandboxing. It also discusses the alternative method of engagement with fuzzy felts, which has some resonances with sandboxing.

The workshop element of this session offers an opportunity for attendees to engage with sandboxing materials and also offers an additional opportunity to work with fuzzy felts. In reflecting on these activities, participants will be able to think through these creative methods and to consider if they could adopt sandboxing or fuzzy felt activities in their own research and practice

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- **Zining stories: an exploration into the possibilities of different zine formats for research dissemination by Gisela Oliveira, De Montfort University**



**2.00–3.30 pm BUZZ**

Zines – do it yourself, small booklets with text, drawings, poems and more – are unique forms of expression for their “diversity and unpredictability” (Duncombe, 2001, p.10). As a method of data creation and collection, they put to paper their authors’ unique experiences of the world. They are individual, stylised representations of thoughts, feelings, experiences and identities. Often described as artifacts of storytelling (Grushka and Goodlad, 2013), zines tell the stories of their makers through the narration – often visual or figurative – of selected moments. Yet, through research, these individual stories are meant to be analysed and interpreted to offer a kaleidoscope of experiences. At this stage, zines can once again be used, not to bring storytelling into the research, but to turn research into storytelling (Lewis, 2011) that can be disseminated. Through their “deconstructed and deconstructing nature” (Brown, et al., 2021, p. 1), zines provide the opportunity for remixing research findings to suit a point of view or a specific audience. They can be used in multiple formats, explore linear and non-linear narratives, use 8 pages, more pages or less pages. They can layer content, hide content and explore a multitude of creative folds. In essence, there is a zine for each story that needs to be told. In the workshop, participants will be able to explore zines of different formats and will be invited to consider the affordances of each type to disseminate research findings. The session will also focus on the mediums and platforms that can be used to share zines and finally, participants will be able to create some of the different types of zines presented in the session, and take with them models to use later, to disseminate their own research.

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- **Sketching Potential: the bloom space** by Ilga Leimanis



**2.00–3.30 pm WORK: Thinking Differently with Creative Research**

In this moment against an increasingly turbulent set of contexts, what if there was a way to generate ideas, navigate uncertainty and complexity, while doing something simple like putting pen to paper? Join this speculative space for thinking through a question, using sketching and diagramming as tools to decipher, explore, and engage with the idea of emergence.

My contribution will take both the form of a practical workshop as well as sharing practice following a pilot year facilitating Sketching Potential at University of the Arts London. This is a creative research method I started facilitating over a decade ago. Since those tentative starts, it has grown in importance in my life, and I have worked with hundreds of students at University of the Arts London and beyond, working with educators, researchers, civil servants, business and leadership practitioners, etc bringing this simple method to a broad range of needs. We can examine at all aspects of the research process, from refining the research question, to understanding readings, to data collection and analysis. I will share my journey over the last decade, case studies and themes including hope as action (Solnit, 2004, Gwinn & Hellman, 2018), drawing to see (Causey 2016), *notatio* as a refuge (Barthes, 1979), but also affect theory and the bloom-space (Seigworth and Gregg, 2011) which serves to describe what happens in these workshops.

UAL-wide Academic Support team "creating multidisciplinary spaces that encourage self- enquiry and cross-University, interdependent study. The workshop programme, resources and learning forum are open to all students at all levels of study. Informed by a range of pedagogic approaches including practice- based learning, these are spaces of curiosity, enquiry and practice development. In turn, students enhance their awareness of subjectivity and agency, leading to increases in confidence, motivation, and attainment." Ours are inclusive, collaborative spaces of discovery, "event spaces, or experiences for emergent outcomes rather than expected outcomes." (Barton, 2021).

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- **(re)performing the data: improvisatory art practice to embody and (re)tell the lived experiences of a mental health hospital** by Dr Nicola Simpson, Holly Sandiford, Norwich University of the Arts, and Dr Sophie Bagge, Lived Experience Lead



**4.00–6.00 pm SHINE: MENTAL HEALTH**

The spatial and sensory experience of being an inpatient in seclusion, on a secure ward, in a mental health hospital is not only unspoken but it is even unspeakable. Described by one expert by experience as an encounter between “worlds of interiors”, how can the felt inter-relationship of the human body to ligature safe light switches and handles, to windows that cannot open and doors that remain locked, to electric light that denies the diurnal rhythm be communicated and understood?

The project has been informed by a research collaboration with the Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust NHS, the mental health arts charity Hospital Rooms, Norwich University of the Arts, and a Lived Experience Team of co-researchers who are evaluating a large-scale multi-site Arts Intervention project at Hellesdon Hospital. In a series of monthly workshops using creative, arts-based and material research methods, the lived experience co-researchers have engaged with the retelling of lived experience: the hours of living, eating, sleeping and occupying institutional hospital spaces; the human entanglement with each other, with the furniture, fixtures, fittings, with the cornices, the painted walls, with the patina of the floors. A creative and critical interrogation of the old and new hospital spaces by those who have and will live there. This paper will (re)perform this unspeakable knowledge with a multi-media and immersive performance that renegotiates the territory of what is the creative data from this project. Work made in these creative workshops: photographs, films and object assemblage will be presented and (re)performed through improvisatory art practices including, live drawing, painting, and a live improvisatory sound piece that takes as its graphic score the visual mark-making captured in these inpatient clinical spaces, and that utilizes field-sound recordings from the old Victorian hospital site and the new purpose-built Rivers Centre. This retelling of lived experience in a mental health hospital will enact a transmission of embodied and polyphonic selves in interrelationship with the material and social worlds of this clinical space and narratives of detainment, illness and recovery.

These project outcomes have recently been performed at the Architectural Humanities Research Association International Conference in November 2024 and we have confirmed performances in 2025 at the Fitzrovia Chapel, London and St Peter Hungate Church, Norwich.

- **Village-led research on mental health and well-being** by Rituu B. Nanda, Global Fund for Children and Anuradha Bhosle



**4.00–6.00 pm SHINE: MENTAL HEALTH**

[Avani](#), a grassroots level nonprofit organization in Maharashtra, India with support from [The Global Fund for Children](#) and [The Taos Institute](#) facilitated a village-led Participatory Action Research (PAR) project on well being and mental health. Through Avani’s facilitation of a strength-based [SALT](#) (Support/Stimulate, Appreciate, Listen/Learn/Link, Team/Transfer) approach, the community members developed confidence to take action on their issues. They identified a major concern in their village and wanted to work towards a happy and blissful village (Anandmayi gaon).

With support from Avani and the GFC team, a village group was formed to lead the research process, including design, data collection, and analysis. While the Avani staff compiled the final report, the findings were disseminated with the village team who decided to do this through a drama performance. The presentation will showcase the research process, challenges encountered, the principles behind this research and the critical role of researchers in facilitating community-led research. We learned that when

families and neighbours take lead and take action they can identify root causes and develop action plans to address them. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CszWjgVW8uk>



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- **How to build a research strategy... creatively – a workshop for doctoral and early career researchers** by Rowena Senior, University of Hertfordshire



**4.00–6.00 pm** **RISE: RESEARCH IN HE**

Rarely do we have the time to sit back, think and plan what we want to do with our future research endeavours, the direction we would like to take them, the questions we are truly interested in and the community of research users we wish to contribute to. This workshop is designed to provide delegates with a space for contemplation and planned action in relation to these areas. Attendees will be taken through a staged process that explores our value-base as researchers, our research ambitions and how these might be achieved. The workshop will explore these areas using creative coaching methods, for example, through story writing or non-stick collage (specific methods TBC). Delegates will work hard in the workshop but should leave with a refreshed sense of direction and purpose in relation to their research strategy.

- **Snakes and ladders: 'Gaming' female career progression in HE** by Dr Kate Carruthers Thomas



**4.00–6.00 pm** **RISE: RESEARCH IN HE**

In this workshop I share findings of recent research into outcomes of a career development initiative for female staff in a UK university, through the medium of a board game. The project (2023-2024) investigated participants' motivations for, experiences and outcomes of, a four-day *Career Accelerator* programme commissioned by a large, modern UK university from an external partner. Following programme completion, 20 self-selecting participants from two programme cohorts were each surveyed and interviewed three times over nine months.

I use the format of a traditional board game *Snakes and Ladders* to facilitate an embodied exploration of project findings, leading on to a plenary discussion of their implications. *Snakes and Ladders* originated in

India as *Moksha Patam*, a game rooted in morality, in which a player's progression up the board represented a life journey complicated by virtues (ladders) and vices (snakes). British colonial families returning from India brought it to the UK in the 1890s where it was adapted to reflect Victorian doctrines of morality (Topsfield, 2006). Now I have adapted the game - and the board - for a contemporary research context.

In the first part of the workshop, attendees literally play the game of career progression in groups of four. Players are randomly allocated a Participant Card each reflecting composite (anonymised) characteristics of project participants. The aim is then to move from the lowest square of the board to the topmost by rolling the dice. The bespoke board features examples drawn from project participants' accounts of career opportunities (ladders) and constraints (snakes). In a second phase of the workshop, we will discuss in plenary what takes and what it means to 'win' or 'lose' in the context of higher education careers, and the extent to which individualised career programmes aimed at women correspond with Berlant's (2011) theory of 'cruel optimism' in a gender unequal sector.

In presenting the findings as an interactive board game I am playing with three dimensions of the research. Firstly, the board itself symbolises higher education/academia as a bounded site where a competitive game is played but the field is not level (Thomson, 2008). Secondly, the snakes and ladders are mechanisms through which to present participant data relating to constraints and opportunities impacting how individual actors operate in the space of the university. Thirdly, as players, workshop participants embody the roles of those actors, navigating structural, social and individual factors in the pursuit of career progression in HE. In the final phase of the workshop, attendees will be invited to consider the strengths and limitations of this mode of embodied research dissemination.

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- **Emoji-citation, a novel tool to explore emotions in controversial topics** by Maria Velo Higuera



**4.00–6.00 pm GROW: DIGITAL AND VISUAL**

Controversial topics can unearth deep-seated values about what is right or wrong. In the context of maternity care in high-income countries, freebirth—the deliberate decision to birth without professional attendance—has become one recent controversial topic that has drawn the attention of both lay and academic debates, evoking strong emotions in all involved. However, emotions may not always be easy to articulate, requiring the use of imaginative research methods to explore this hidden terrain.

**Aim:** The presentation will describe methodological considerations on the use of emoji in qualitative research and will present a novel framework for analysis of emoji data.

**Methods:** This mixed-methods study employed a sequential qualitative-quantitative exploratory design, aiming to explore UK registered midwives' perspectives on freebirth. Emojis were used in the qualitative phase of this study with 14 clinical midwives. Upon enrolment in the study, participants were invited to answer a single open-text question on freebirth using only emoji. This emoji expression was used during the interview to elicit discussion on the topic of the study.

**Findings:** Emoji in this study acted as emotional touchpoints, helping participants to access their feelings and describe them to others. Emoji brought an element of playfulness to research, maintaining and enhancing social relationships between researcher and participants, and fostering participants' power in the co-construction of meaning.

**Conclusion:** The use of emoji as elicitation tool in this study generated rich emotional data. The proposed

analytical framework used in this study provides a robust and flexible method for analysis of emoji-textual data.

- **Creative inclusion: practical guidance for accessible research** by **Melissa L Kirby, Amy M Russell, University of Leeds, and The Purple Research Group (Purple Patch Arts)**

**4.00–6.00 pm** **GROW: DIGITAL AND VISUAL**

Participatory approaches to research, which recruit individuals from underrepresented communities as co-researchers, can provide opportunities for the meaningful involvement communities in the research process (Johnson & Walmsley, 2003). However, despite the increasing popularity and benefits of participatory approaches, some communities, in particular people with a learning disability, remain underrepresented in research, both as participants and researchers. This may be due to the lack of guidance available for researchers in how to undertake meaningful and accessible participatory research.

This interactive workshop shares creative activities developed through a participatory research project, which aims to co-develop creative resources for academics undertaking research with underrepresented groups. The project is a partnership between the University of Leeds, Purple Patch Arts (a Leeds-based charity who provide inclusive and creative learning opportunities for people with a learning disability) and the Purple Research Group (a team of researchers with learning disabilities established in 2020; Kirby, 2023). We will begin by introducing the Purple Research Group's 'River of Research'; an infographic that shares the findings of the group's research exploring how we can make research more accessible. We will also introduce our collaborative process and share the resources developed through this research, including arts-based activities designed to aid explanation and reflection on research terms and concepts. Attendees will then have the opportunity to try out these activities for themselves and to consider how they may be used to enhance the accessibility of their own research practice. To conclude, we will reflect on the role of creative methods in enhancing the accessibility of research.

While this project collaborates with people with learning disabilities, this workshop will be relevant to anyone interested in the use of creative methods to facilitate inclusive and accessible research.

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- **Workshop: Writing social fiction to analyse data** by **Nicole Brown and Hakan Ergül, UCL Institute of Education**



**4.00–6.00 pm** **BUZZ: WRITING AND DRAWING**

Researchers from the social sciences, life sciences, and humanities, draw more often on creative and arts-based approaches for data collection, but often shy away from using creative forms for and of analysis. Drawing on these changes in the research landscape and the history of Practice As Research in the creative disciplines, we would like to present the writing of Social Fiction as an innovative way of “thinking-doing-being” with data in the research process. In this workshop, delegates will have the opportunity to experiment with writing flash fiction (approx. 300 words) based on research data. In doing so, they will explore how Social Fiction can reveal new insights, humanize data, and foster reflective engagement during data analysis. We will begin by introducing some practicalities and features of storytelling before

diving into the hands-on experience. In the subsequent plenary, we will outline the parameters and framework of what constitutes Social Fiction and how it may offer a radical opportunity to generate new forms of knowledge and ways of knowing in research settings.

- **Mindful Drawing with @EmilyWoodArtist** by Emily Wood



**4.00–6.00 pm BUZZ: WRITING AND DRAWING**

Step away from the busyness of the conference and join a gentle, guided drawing session. This is a chance to turn down the volume, draw, breathe, and reconnect. You'll explore mindful drawing techniques using pencil, charcoal, and ink, with space to experiment and enjoy the process. Mindful drawing can help focus the mind, reduce stress and anxiety, and open up creative flow.

Emily Wood Ahmed is a visual artist and qualitative researcher who specialises in participatory health research, co-production, and public engagement. She often uses creative methods in her research and facilitation, while also recognising the importance of making time for our own individual creative practice. This session brings you back to your own creativity.

Find out about Emily's research work on LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/in/emilyahmed/> and take a look at her arts practice on Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/emilywoodartist>

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- **Illuminating complex meanings and untold, tacit relational practice experiences: applying visual and poetic creative methods to develop understanding of empathy in social work** by Amy Lynch, University of Warwick



**4.00–6.00 pm WORK: COMPLEXITY AND CONNECTION**

I would like to share how adapted and applied creative methods in a research study in England (2021-2023). The study aimed to develop understanding of the complex construct and often invisible relational practice of empathy in the context of child protection social work. In the presentation, I will:

- Outline how I integrated these creative methods within a relational (Gergen, 2018) research design
- Introduce the 12 social worker participants
- Articulate how I adapted and applied the visual 'draw-write' method (Kara, 2017) and the creative arts narrative I-Poem method (Gilligan et al., 2005; Koelsh, 2015) within interviewing, analytical and knowledge exchange practices
- Share the 'empathy gallery' and 'empathy poems' created in the study

- Consider how creative methods enhanced the core methods of relational interviewing (Fujii, 2018) and reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2021) to enable complex meanings and untold, tacit relational practice experiences of empathy to be illuminated, represented and communicated
- Highlight ethical and practical considerations, including the need to innovate within the constraints from the virtual research context due to COVID-19
- Invite reflection on how these methods could be applied to develop understanding of other complex concepts and relational practice experiences in social work and other professions/disciplines

- **Mischief in the Making: Research as a Creative and Collaborative Practice by Katt Grover, University of Portsmouth & Portsmouth Natural History Museum**

**4.00–6.00 pm** WORK: COMPLEXITY AND CONNECTION

This session explores **mischief as a lens for creative research**, integrating play and disruption to reimagine how we approach design, interpretation, and collaboration. Drawing on the speaker’s artistic and academic practice, the talk introduces ‘mischief’ as a methodology used in their PhD and creative work.

Key topics include:

- A case study from an artist residency at King John’s House, where mischief inspired a participatory medieval graffiti project, challenging historical engagement through playful disruption.
- The development of archetype cards as a co-design method, inspired by Joseph Campbell’s archetypes but reimaged to include more-than-human perspectives (e.g., plants, fungi, and animals). These cards provide prompts, behaviours, and roles for participants in co-design workshops, encouraging diverse viewpoints and breaking down human-centric narratives.

Participants will engage in a hands-on activity, using the archetype cards to design a playful intervention or interaction for a hypothetical museum exhibition. This activity demonstrates the power of mischief and more-than-human perspectives in enabling collaboration, inspiring creativity, and disrupting traditional methods of research and design.

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- **Creative Thinking about Creative Research by Janet Salmons**



**6.30-7.30 pm** ONLINE

Current headlines focus on the wonders of Generative AI to “create” text and images. While based on human inputs from artwork used to “train” these tools, their outputs lack a connection to human experience. However, as qualitative researchers we want to understand the *human* experience, so how do we think about the meaning of creativity and explain its importance in the research process?

The dilemmas of our time -separating art from the human experience - are not unique. In 1914 Kandinsky (Kandinsky, 2020) discussed the difference between art that simply echoes and repeats present influences and creative expressions that transcend time to take us to more meaningful dimensions of life:

This art, which has no power for the future, which is only a child of the age and cannot become a mother of the future, is a barren art. She is transitory and to all intent dies the moment the atmosphere alters which nourished her. The other art, that which is capable of educating further, springs equally from contemporary feeling, but is at the same time not only echo and mirror of it, but also has a deep and powerful prophetic strength. (p. 19)

In the 1930s John Dewey explored ways what he called “industrial conditions” and mechanization pushed the arts aside from their traditional place within everyday life (Dewey, 1934). He points to “development of common human activities into matters of artistic value” (p. 11). In a more modern example, the feminist poet Marge Piercy made a similar point in her poem [“To be of Use.”](#) She observed that while “Greek amphoras for wine or oil, Hopi vases that held corn, are put in museums” they were originally useful parts of domestic life (Piercy, 1982).

These questions of art-in-life seem relevant to consider when thinking about the place of creativity in our research designs. In this presentation and discussion, we will explore how these and other theories and observations can help us think about our intentions as researchers who want to tap into creative experiences and expressions when we conduct studies and share findings.

# International Creative Research Methods Conference

## 08-09 September 2025

### Day 2: Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2025

- **Keynote: Postdigital Creative Research: Working Through The Prenup!** by Amanda Taylor-Beswick, University of Cumbria



9.30–10.30 am **SHINE**

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- **Voices of Insight: Using Podcast-Based Research to Explore Social Media Influence on Online Purchasing Behaviour** by Megan Fellows, University of Plymouth

11.00 am–1.00 pm **SHINE: VOICES**

Qualitative research methods allow researchers to understand the meanings of the world around us through the lived experiences of individuals, involving the use of feelings, thoughts, behaviours and beliefs as valuable forms of data. Qualitative data allows researchers to go deeper than initial quantitative data and get to the depths of further understanding by answering the ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions, as well as the ‘what’. Focus groups and interviews (both in-depth and semi-structured) have been able to provide researchers with high quality data and are common methods in qualitative research (Gill et al., 2008). Whilst these traditional methods have served their purpose in understanding behaviours to an extent, there is a challenge that with the more clinical nature of the question/answer dynamic, there’s a need to also consider what variables influence honest responses and therefore higher quality data. Podcasting-based research is a relatively new concept, with little to no current literature existing on how it can be used within a sociological or business data collection context. The use of podcasting allows the researcher to build rapport with participants and shape the process around the research aims and objectives, whilst not being constricted by them. Rather, the informal structure and rapport-building nature allows participants to feel comfortable within their surroundings and trust within the researcher, eliciting open and honest responses on their narratives and experiences, bringing the value in their perspectives to the data being collected. This is a paramount consideration when investigating social media use and online behaviours. This is because in a real-world context, social media algorithms use our interests and interactions as data to push the right content onto our screens, therefore making our own individual behaviours, beliefs and perspectives even more relevant in the data. The UCP of podcasting is the ability to allow researchers to prioritise rapport-building with participants, followed by the data itself, meaning that participants feel more valued in the responses that their sharing. This method, along with the use of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) furthers the inductive nature of podcasting and takes the perspectives, experiences and the contexts of participants into greater consideration and value towards the quality of data collected, whilst not being tethered to proving or disproving a previous hypothesis.

- **‘Under-exposure: Creative PhotoVoice counter-stories from minoritized ethnic prospective teacher candidates in Ireland.’** by Dr Aoife Titley, Maynooth University



**11.00 am–1.00 pm SHINE: VOICES**

Using the tool of counter-storytelling (Delgado, 1989; 1995), within a critical race theory (CRT) framework, this presentation will reveal findings from a PhotoVoice research project with minoritized ethnic young people interested in pursuing a career in primary teaching in Ireland. Through image-narratives, counter stories will be shared relating to identity and belonging, the centrality of racism and exclusion in the educational experience of the young people, and their emotional responses to the persistent inequalities and injustices they have faced in pursuit of their teaching dream.

The primary data collection instrument was that of PhotoVoice - a method by which people can identify, represent and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique (Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang, Cash & Powers, 2000). PhotoVoice is an approach to data collection which marries self-directed photography with participatory action as a way for marginalised groups to enact social change. PhotoVoice allows respondents to provide a visual testimony to research questions by taking multiple photographs of things in their life.

PhotoVoice can support the exploration of complex topics and support participant-generated visual data as a form of 'cultural self-portrayal' (Pauwels, 1996). PhotoVoice is a non-didactic research method which privileges democratic practices and pursuits (Sánchez, 2015). As such, Luttrell (2020) describes it as 'collaborative seeing', given that images can be regarded as 'windows' or 'mirrors' for us to reflect back and understand social reality.

- **Creative Voices, Activist Voices: The significance of sensory object elicitation-driven storytelling in capturing activist or 'activating' moments in community-led culture** by Dr Katy Pilcher (Aston University, UK), Amie Taylor (Fun Palaces), Julia Hines (Citizen Researcher, Grange Big Local), Kerris Casey-St.Pierre (Citizen Researcher, The Bureau Centre for the Arts CIC).



**11.00 am–1.00 pm SHINE: VOICES**

Drawing upon our project process and exhibition 'Creative Voices, Activist Voices: Sensory Stories of Creative Communities' (Collaborate Fund), this paper argues that sensory-object elicitation can facilitate particular ways of unlocking stories of activism or 'activating' moments. Our research questioned whether finding your creative voice, through taking part in a Fun Palace, can unlock your civic activist voice. Fun Palaces is a nationwide-campaign for cultural democracy. Each year, on the first weekend of October, hundreds of communities across the UK make Fun Palaces - a free event celebrating the skills, talents and interests unique to that community. We conducted interviews and two group storytelling workshops with Fun Palace Makers, incorporating sensory object elicitation. Participants shared photographs, cardboard boxes, slime, paintings, a cookbook, a necklace, bubble recipes, a wig, a (mock!) stick of dynamite, and much more.

This paper explores: 1) the embodied, 'lived and felt', process of talking with objects; 2) the salience of objects within people's narratives, including how objects were returned to with meanings made and remade; 3) absent objects – those that did not get 'picked' for the research but were discussed. We found that there is a radical potential in the process of sensory-object elicitation itself, particularly within group workshops, which acted as a potential moment to generate civic activism. Participants shared stories about local needs and ideas for making their communities better places, and through humour and interest in the objects, reflected on what they valued about each others' work/activism. These interactions could be read as productive, potentially 'activating', moments.

- **From little mouse to finding my voice: Honouring participant stories and embracing authenticity through creative research** by Fleur Farish-Edwards, University of Central Lancashire



**11.00 am–1.00 pm** SHINE: VOICES

*What happens when research becomes a journey of self-discovery as much as a means of amplifying participant voices?* This session delves into my five-year doctoral research on adult adoptees in the UK, highlighting how I used narrative inquiry, unstructured object interviews and Gilligan's Listening Guide, while resisting reductive coding practices to authentically honour participants' experiences. I will also reflect on the deeply personal parallel process I experienced as a researcher, moving from a sense of voicelessness—like a "little mouse"—to finding confidence, courage, and authenticity in my voice. Drawing on visual metaphors, including the "mouse" I created at ICRMC 2024, I will explore the interplay of magic, playfulness, and self-realization that defined my research journey.

This session explores creative methods that honour participant narratives, challenge academic norms, and embrace authenticity. By intertwining my research with my personal journey, it highlights how creativity deepens connections and amplifies unheard voices. Reflecting on the courage required in academia to stay true to participants and personal instincts, I hope to inspire researchers and practitioners to listen deeply—to their participants and themselves—and to embrace methods that foster authenticity whilst disrupting conventions.

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- **Creative Participatory Research with Children: Spaces of Collaboration, Problematic Partaking and Agentic Avoidance** by Dawn Mannay, Cardiff University



**11.00 am–1.00 pm** RISE: RESEARCH WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

This presentation reflects on three studies with children to question the potential of participatory creative approaches in different spaces. The first study took place during the Covid pandemic, materials were posted out to participants, they engaged with them in their own homes and shared their thoughts remotely through online platforms. Children and their foster carers collaborated, evaluated and advised on how children involved in research might like to share their experiences and ideas creatively. In this study children were agentic and engaged in their own ways and were critical advisors, strengthening ideas around the relationship between creative and participatory methods as a 'space of collaboration'. The second study worked with children in school settings to discuss their recollections of the restrictions of the Covid pandemic, creative methods that featured in the first study were adapted and they supported children to share their experiences. However, there were instances of 'problematic partaking' as although consent had been gained from parents and teachers, and children had said they were happy to engage this was not necessarily the case. The schooled subject is one that is expected to join in, and it was important to look further than verbal assent and monitor the body language and facial expressions of children, as a study cannot be participatory when children are uncertain about participating. The third study worked with children on the edge of care in a setting where children had been attending sessions with fun activities based on play, as part of a wider program with children and parents that aimed to keep families together. The children had ownership of these sessions, whilst researchers were guests, and children engaged with creative activities on their own terms, mainly as conduits for their own imaginary games rather than a focus for the intended research conversations. This 'agentic avoidance' is important as in a participatory framework that proposes to centralise the preferences of children, the generation of data becomes deprioritised. Children did engage in other ways, talking about the objects they had crafted that were on display alongside an emoji poster and photographs of activities that they had enjoyed in their previous sessions, which provided important insights into their views. However, this was through the serendipity of these artefacts rather than the planned creative research activities, which were limited beyond their play value. In combination, these studies offer an opportunity to think through creative participatory research with children, and the ways in which creativity can foster communication. The agency of the children, whether or not they take part as planned, is a central element in assessing the extent to which research can claim to adopt participatory principles.

- **Working with young people in a creative and meaningful way within the research process: fostering young people's creativity through youth work by Saoirse Reynolds Conlon, Maynooth University**

**11.00 am–1.00 pm RISE: RESEARCH WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

Building on last year's contribution (Story Circles: Unlocking Creativity and Community Engagement in Youth Work and Research), this session presents findings from my PhD study, 'Fostering Young People's Creativity through Youth Work: A Mixed Method Study'. This research, funded by the Irish Research Council's employment-based scholarship in partnership with Maynooth University and the National Youth Council of Ireland, investigates how youth work supports creativity and its implications for policy and practice. The session will highlight how core youth work features—such as non-formal education, voluntary participation, group work and relational approaches—can inspire innovative research methodologies. Through examples (from this research and National Youth Council of Ireland), participants will explore best practices for designing research that is inclusive, participatory, meaningful and impactful. The session will also showcase practical approaches and tools, including Story Circles, to foster creativity and engagement in research with young people.

Attendees will gain:

- Insights into how youth work principles can enhance research design and execution.
- Examples of inclusive and participatory research methodologies.
- Practical tools and approaches for working creatively with young people in research.

This session will appeal to researchers, practitioners, and educators seeking to integrate creative and meaningful engagement strategies into their work.

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- **Reclaiming pleasure after cancer: embodied creativity and feminist ethics of care**  
by Carmel Cardona, King's College London



**11.00 am–1.00 pm GROW: CREATIVE CANCER RESEARCH**

In this session I will share my research methods and their impact for my research results and participants. My research investigates how people remake their sense of self after a cancer diagnosis and treatment, with a specific focus on pleasure, sexuality, embodiment and creativity. As I am dealing with sensitive topics, I take a trauma-informed approach, supported by a feminist ethics of care; care which underpins every stage of my research. I co-facilitated full-day workshops with small groups of cancer survivors alongside a somatic sexologist and a collage artist. We carried out a series of exercises centred on pleasure, and I led my participants in creating life-sized body-collages. These formed the basis for subsequent research conversations, and shaped the themes of my research, which I have continued to explore in further group workshops. My creative data analysis has included reading the body-collages as visual poems, creating gallery texts for the pieces and creating poems from interview transcripts. In addition to giving my participants the opportunity to explore their relationship with their bodies, pleasure and pain, silencing and shame, it has also been a transformative experience for many of them, empowering them and giving them confidence to boldly take up space and rewrite their post-cancer stories. After the presentation, I will lead participants in an exercise of body-collage, to give hands-on experience of the technique and its potential. The workshop component will open up a dialogue with Francesca Vale's session, giving attendees the opportunity to create pieces which are then used to consider curation and exhibition-making as method.

- **Empowered journeys: A co-curated exploration of breast cancer surgery** by Francesca Vale, University of Glasgow

**11.00 am–1.00 pm GROW: CREATIVE CANCER RESEARCH**

My PhD project, "Refiguring Disfigurement: A Cultural Analysis of Breast Cancer Surgery using a Curatorial Approach", is designed to achieve more visibility for post-breast cancer surgery bodies in culture. Breast cancer has a marked presence in society and culture, due to the way in which the breast is perceived in relation to ideas about femininity and women. However, this presence is rarely representative of how people who have had breast cancer surgery would like themselves and their bodies to be represented. My research combines scholarly and practice-based approaches to consider visibility for the post-surgery body. The practice-based component of the project, *Empowered Journeys: A Co-Curated Exploration of Breast Cancer Surgery*, is a project in which members of the breast cancer community and I co-designed a programme of creative workshops to explore breast cancer surgery experience through multiple different creative mediums, including bodycasting, writing, painting, textiles, and collage. The artworks produced in these sessions were then co-curated by the same group into an exhibition, which provided an opportunity both for data analysis, and the generation of new ideas. The findings from this project will provide the basis for a framework in which I signpost new forms of representation developed with people who have had breast cancer surgery. *Empowered Journeys* is a resource for future researchers and wider cancer support networks, as a new way to engage and commune with their members. The curatorial workshop component will open up a dialogue with Carmel Cardona's session, giving attendees a chance to consider curation and exhibition-making as a method for creating new conversations between objects, people, and spaces.

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- **Putting a light in the window: using a creative writing process to analyse ABR generated data** by Luci Gorrell Barnes, University of the West of England

**11.00 am–1.00 pm BUZZ: WRITING FOR ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION**

I am a socially engaged artist and doctoral researcher at UWE, and my study is about developing arts-based research methods to support minoritised children to express, reflect on, and amplify their lived experiences and perceptions. In this session I will present a creative writing method that I have developed as part of my PhD analysis, in which I produced ‘portraits’ of individual children. Arundhati Roy (2009, p.134) reminds us to ‘never simplify what is complicated’ and this creative analysis process came out of my desire to deepen my understanding of what I had learned from each child rather than homogenising my data into broad themes. I will discuss how being immersed in my data informed my writing as I considered the issues the children had explored, drew on metaphors and images they used, and remembered how they had interacted with me and each other. I saw each portrait as a ‘light in the window’, guiding me through ‘the woods’ of my analysis and findings, and supporting me to write embodied interpretive accounts that kept the participants’ experiences and perspectives at their heart. Couceiro (2024, p. 304) challenges the idea that being creative is ‘antithetical to being systematic or structured’ and I found that engaging with my data in this highly subjective and ‘interruptive’ way (Clark, 2024, p. 3) meant I brought a level of accuracy and relationality to my analysis that I might not have otherwise found. After presenting my process, I will lead a participatory version of the creative activity so that delegates can experience the process for themselves.

- **Pictures and prose: using visual and infographics to communicate meaning in academic writing** by Lucy Robinson

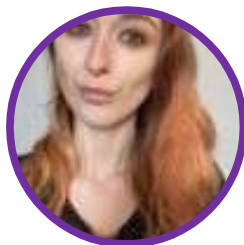


**11.00 am–1.00 pm BUZZ: WRITING FOR ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION**

Writing, academic or otherwise, is a form of communication. Thus, to write effectively is to communicate effectively. In academia, there is a perception that writing must follow certain criteria, resulting in a common misconception that there is only ‘one right way’. However, academic writing is simply another form of communication and therefore principles and tools from other writing genres can often be used in academic writing to improve clarity, enrich writing and ultimately better communicate meaning.

In this session, we will explore how one such tool - visuals and infographics - can be used alongside written prose to effectively communicate meaning in academic writing. The session will begin with me sharing my experiences of the ‘what, why and how’ of my own use of visuals and infographics within my doctoral thesis. To widen the relevance, I shall also draw on other innovative uses of visuals and infographics within academic writing from other disciplines and subject areas. Attendees will then have a go at using visuals and infographics, on [Canva](#) or using pens and paper, to communicate an aspect of their academic writing, with encouragement and modelling from myself. The session will end with an opportunity for attendees to reflect on and share what they have learnt and how they intend to use visuals and infographics in current and future academic writing.

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- **Disabled Women's Experiences of Becoming & Being Mothers: A Qualitative Study** by Kelsey Tredgett, University of Leeds: Centre for Disability Studies



**11.00 am–1.00 pm** **WORK: DISABILITY RESEARCH AND ETHICS**

This research aims to explore the joys and setbacks of mothering for disabled women. Previous research with disabled mothers highlights a higher likelihood of being labelled a “risky parent” by social services, disjointed adult/child social care provision and stigmatising responses from others. However, much of this literature has been sampled from clinical settings (like Cystic Fibrosis teams) or from crisis services like those who assist disabled parents in child protection proceedings. Most research has therefore focused on troubled situations and has been impairment specific, leading to discussions of areas where individuals “lacked parenting skills”, especially women with mental health problems and learning disabilities. This research aims to provide a more balanced, comprehensive account of mothering as a disabled woman including the support that works well and what could be improved. Six to ten disabled mothers with varied impairments will be recruited via disability and mother-and-baby organisations. Participants will complete a novel creative task creating a Motherhood Journey Box by considering a list of topics covering their motherhood journeys and collecting related items that are valuable, important or otherwise memorable. These may be literal items, like a fidget spinner, or symbolic, for example a heart drawn on a piece of paper to represent a partner’s support. This task was developed to aid the exploration of embodied experiences in a way that does not rely on words alone. Participants will then attend two interviews to explain their choices and provide more detailed accounts of their experiences. The strengths, challenges and lessons learnt utilising a novel creative method with a hard-to-reach population will be discussed as well as preliminary findings. Results will focus on common themes amongst participants’ experiences of mothering, the utilisation of support and shared challenges.

- **Refracting Legal Reasoning: Diffractive Analysis of Disability Discrimination Judgements in Employment Law** by Becca Jiggins



**11.00 am–1.00 pm** **WORK: DISABILITY RESEARCH AND ETHICS**

This presentation explores how diffractive analysis—a methodological approach drawn from new materialist epistemologies—can be applied to legal judgments on disability discrimination in employment. By treating judicial reasoning as an agential cut that materialises ableist norms, the session examines the interpretative practices that underpin judgments and their impact on disabled claimants.

The discussion is grounded in my unique positionality as a disabled lawyer representing disabled people in Employment Tribunals, an employer of disabled staff, and co-founder of a business providing in-work

support to disabled professionals. These perspectives are integrated with activist and life writing literature by disabled people, which is read alongside judicial texts to illuminate epistemic, hermeneutical, and inferential injustices in legal reasoning.

Using select judgments under the Equality Act 2010 as case studies, the session re-examines key issues, such as reasonable adjustments and disability-related harassment, to demonstrate how diffractive analysis reveals the entangled relationships between law, experience, and activism. This approach challenges the conventional detachment of legal texts from their social and material contexts, showing how judgments can be creatively rewritten to advance disability justice.

The session concludes by reflecting on the broader implications of diffractive analysis for socio-legal research and creative methodologies, arguing that the integration of lived experience and activist narratives reconfigures the boundaries of legal knowledge and offers transformative potential for reimagining judicial decision-making.

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- **Who can we be? Multiple creative processes across a research journey** by Cynthia Kinnunen, Wilfrid Laurier University



**1.45–3.45 pm SHINE: PROCESS/JOURNEY**

**Creativity as reflexive research practice.** Bringing creative aspects to my doctoral research journey has without question been a meaningful and integral part of this process. As an educator and community musician, music-making and creativity is at the heart of what I do. When embarking on this PhD journey, I began to document my experience of being a doctoral student in midlife with the use of a reflexive, a/r/tographic project, using multiple modalities of crochet, journaling, music composition and poetry. I quickly saw the potential of creativity in tandem with traditional qualitative research methods as an opportunity to generate thinking and re-thinking in the process that also supported an iterative communication between my research and professional practice.

**Creativity as data co-creation.** For the main study, I make use of creative aspects in my data gathering with co-creation through narrative inquiry (Clandinin) and music composition with my study participants. By introducing thinking around systems and complexity along the way, and sparked by the idea of ‘warm data’ (N. Bateson), I attempt to bring to the surface some of the active aspects of contexts, relationality, and social identity when exploring community music ensembles and the women in midlife and beyond who participate. These complex stories and experiences aren’t as easily captured by traditional research methods, and creative approaches afford a different set of perspectives and entry points to explore these interdependencies and coalescences.

**Creativity as knowledge dissemination.** Finally, I will use creative outputs in the presentation of results, using a multi-modal installation alongside a manuscript-based dissertation. This ongoing use of creativity alongside the research process allows me to explore, interrogate and co-story the experiences of all participants, myself included, and to disseminate the results in non-traditional ways, with a recognition to alternate ways of knowing and mobilizing knowledge to a variety of audiences. In this conference presentation, I will share my journey to-date, following the data gathering and preliminary analysis of these complex and nuanced stories.

- Three quarters academic and one quarter professional services by Victoria Wright, Loughborough University



**1.45–3.45 pm SHINE: PROCESS/JOURNEY**

This session will share at least two visual representations that map both the academic domain and the professional services domain. Having made a recent (2022) transition to a professional services role from a longstanding career as an academic, I am interested in a number of aspects such as increased/ privileged access to information, central influence on colleagues practice, powerfulness with little direct power (in my role), transactional and dialogic models of professional learning. There is a conversation to be had about perception (i.e. of the two domains), about discourse (what can be said), knowledge (what is known), and spaces (of transition, of regulation, of innovation).

- From Inspiration to Implementation: Transforming Conference Talks into Interactive Workshop for Researcher Development by Stephanie Zihms, Glasgow Caledonian University



**1.45–3.45 pm SHINE: PROCESS/JOURNEY**

This session combines reflection and hands-on practice to showcase the creative potential in transforming conference talks into interactive workshops, with a specific focus on supporting Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs) and early-career researchers. Drawing from experiences at ICRMC 2023 and subsequent implementation at Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU), the workshop will guide participants through the process of adapting inspiring presentations into engaging learning experiences that enhance researcher development.

The session is structured in two parts:

1. Reflection (20 minutes): Overview of selected ICRMC 2023 talks and the facilitator's journey of transforming them into workshops and their integration into GCU's researcher development support program
2. Interactive Workshop (40 minutes): Participants will work in groups to transform a memorable talk they've attended into a workshop outline, considering the specific needs of PGRs and early-career researchers

Key areas explored will include:

- Identifying core concepts for interactive exploration
- Designing engaging activities to reinforce learning
- Adapting content for various audience types and research contexts

Participants will leave with a practical framework for workshop development, ideas for application in their own contexts, and an enhanced appreciation for creative research method dissemination.

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- **Who can we be? Multiple creative processes across a research journey** by Christina Buxton, University of Chester



**1.45–3.45 pm RISE: EXPRESSION**

This workshop aims to introduce attendees to practical ways to create poetic form as a way to represent research participant experiences.

This workshop will:

- Show the unique benefits of using poetic forms of data representation
- Introduce different methods by which poetic form can be created from textual data
- Offer the opportunity to create poetic form from existing testimonies
- Explore the differences in output that these varied forms produce

The workshop will demonstrate how poetic form can offer a way of 'going beyond' other forms of data representation, offering a more fluid and methodologically unique way of showcasing narrative research output. Poetry allows the flow and context of the narrator's words to be retained in a compressed form (Furman, 2006) whilst retaining the textual placement as intended by the of the narrator. This can provide a more phenomenologically holistic and authentic representation of narrator accounts than other forms of data representation that separate context from text, and where meaning is more researcher, rather than narrator, driven (Prendergast, 2009). The creation of poetry from data therefore offers a powerful tool through which reciprocal understandings and insights can be created and shared between reader and narrator in ways that more traditional methods of textual data representation do not allow.

This workshop will demonstrate the different ways that poetry can be 'found' in textual data. It will evidence, how, through the creation of poetry, the narrated experience of others can be transformed into a dynamic, relationally based form that pulls the reader into it in a powerful emotionally embodied intrapersonal journey. Although there are many ways to create poetry from testimony, for the newly introduced, and perhaps less creative or confident, poems created, or found, in existing content offer a more concrete and practical way to start. The workshop will introduce the ways in which poetic techniques draw out the essence of testimony. Giving examples of work previously created in a variety of ways, it will then introduce specific ways of creating poetic form including 'I' poems, interpretative poems, and more structured poetic approaches. Attendees will have the opportunity to experiment with the differing methods, creating poems using existing consented data and testimonies from mental health service users drawn from sources. These poems will be compared to examine preferences and differences and identify suitable uses for attendees own potential needs.

- **Researching Dance and Dance as Research** by Dr Jen Hall, Marie Frazer, University of Bradford and Mez Galaria, Salt Eaters – Theatre In The Mill



**1.45–3.45 pm** **RISE: EXPRESSION**

This interactive workshop is divided into two segments: **Project Summary and Evaluation:** We will share insights from an ongoing project evaluating the Royal Ballet and Opera's Create and Dance program. This evaluation focuses on the program's impact on children's well-being, with a spotlight on a creative focus group activity involving participating children. Attendees will learn how such methods can enrich evaluations of creative initiatives, emphasizing their role in fostering emotional and social well-being. This session will also emphasise some of the positive outcomes of taking part in dance. The second part will be a **Participatory Demonstration** led by practitioner Mez. We will draw on and share experiences of utilising dance to communicate findings from longitudinal citizen science with teenage girls. (Frazer 2023) Participants will explore through taking part how dance can be utilized as a creative research method to convey information about specific places or experiences. This segment emphasizes inclusivity, illustrating how dance empowers individuals who may struggle with traditional communication methods. Attendees will finally be guided in exploring the potential of dance to address their current or future research questions.

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- **Using Theatre of the Oppressed to Capture Felt Experience of Place** by Olivia Maurer, University of Glasgow

**1.45–3.45 pm** **GROW: HERITAGE**



This workshop would showcase Theatre of the Oppressed's ability to capture felt experience of place and highlight how it as a creative research method can work to support marginalised or unheard perspectives and experiences of place that have been unable to be fully captured by traditional research methods. Broadly this workshop speaks to how lived and felt experiences beyond those that are the dominant ones have been excluded from both placemaking and policymaking and that in order to create space for alternative perspectives, alternative forms of data, ways of thinking about data, and methods are needed to rectify this. Theatre of the Oppressed, developed by Augusto Boal, Brazilian activist and dramaturg, consists of participatory and interactive activities that create space for both critical discourse and to promote community activism for political and social change. As an arts-based research method it has enormous potential for exploring and capturing felt experience of place and bringing embodied data into the policy decision-making sphere. By emphasising not only the value of embodied data expressed through artistic practice, but the need for it, I hope to contribute to an overall broader appreciation of the embodied lived experience as an important source of knowledge and a recognition of the key role it has in influencing individuals' experiences of place. The presentation will set up the theoretical background of my adaptation of Theatre of the Oppressed, primarily Image Theatre techniques. The workshop will allow participants the opportunity to explore for themselves the creative data generation process of the theatre

techniques, with the workshop prompting an exploration of the collective shared 'place' experience of the conference itself.

- **'Altar/ Burning Place'- Heritage Craft and the Hearth in the City** by **Emilie Taylor, Sheffield Hallam University**



**1.45–3.45 pm GROW: HERITAGE**

Emilie will use the project 'Altar/ Burning Place' to demonstrate her method, rooted in the person-centred approach of Carl Rogers- particularly the encounter group- and using clay as a medium potent with alchemical metaphor, boundaries and slow time. She will explain how co creating outcomes with participants and large dynamic arts organisations can deliver meaningful 'real world' experiences of expression for participants and how collaborative creative outcomes such as radio programmes and exhibitions have ultimately changed the commissioning landscape in the projects' locality.

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- **Towards Preferable Futures: how creative methods and place-based approaches can enable public understanding of what matters most to communities in shaping their future** by **Professor Alec Shepley and Dr Tristian Evans, Wrexham University**



**1.45–3.45 pm BUZZ: REFLECTING TOGETHER**

Humanity faces serious challenges in the coming decades: climate change, biodiversity loss, growing inequality, and more. We have a collection of rules and norms that reward some behaviours and punish others. In their current form, our systems seem to incentivise overconsumption, degrade communal bonds, and destroy natural wealth.

Creative methods and place-based approaches are increasingly recognized as essential tools for understanding what matters most to communities about their environment and for supporting meaningful climate adaptation planning. This paper will describe the AHRC-funded project on Ynys Môn, called the Public Map Platform or PMP for short and in particular the work around the development of a cultural data layer in the final open-access digital model.

The role of creative method and place-based approaches will be discussed, in this case the deployment of three Welsh Bards onto the island to help local communities have a more informed and inclusive approach to planning and decision making in their area.

The variously rich and diverse bardic encounters, micro-engagements and creative approaches will be discussed in relation to encouraging children and young people on the Isle of Anglesey, to access their imaginations and co-create shared narratives about people and place in relation to climate change.

The paper will suggest how working with individuals and communities, using creative methodologies (e.g., art, sculpture, poetry, photography, printing), to support them telling their story of their place – more appropriately enables them to describe what it looks and feels like to live/work there and what their hopes are for the future of their community.

People-centred approaches to helping stakeholders, children, and young people, to make transitional choices, mitigate against negative consequences and empower local agency, in different localities will be discussed.

- **Practicing what we preach: Co-producing ethics with non-academic stakeholders**  
**QualNotes** by Emmaleena Käkälä, University of Strathclyde



#### **1.45–3.45 pm BUZZ: REFLECTING TOGETHER**

With the increased emphasis on creating impact, partnering with non-academic stakeholders and wider communities has become ever more popular (Fransman, 2017; Numans et al., 2019). Co-production with non-academic stakeholders is by its nature iterative, utilising creative means to meaningfully destabilise conventional research hierarchies and practices of decision-making, knowledge creation and authorship. However, the very nature of institutional ethics procedures, which are often exclusionary, jargony and overly bureaucratic, challenges these ambitions. More often than not, institutional ethics are experienced as a hurdle to clear and a box to tick, ways in which can hinder creativity and innovation in social research (Hammett, Jackson & Bramley, 2022). With the increased recognition of the power of co-production, there is a need for the structures and processes which scaffold research to evolve. The first half of this contribution presents a talk, drawing from a scoping project conducted in 2024 which mapped the impact of institutional ethics procedures on co-produced research. In the second part, the participants will be invited to engage in “utopian thinking” in small groups to imagine long-term visions for developing more inclusive and agile institutional ethics procedures. We will begin the activity by imagining a situation where the barriers presented by institutional bureaucracy would disappear overnight. The groups will then utilise Ketso, a creative engagement toolkit, to map the possibilities this would open up to a) furthering meaningful discussions over ethics with non-academic stakeholders b) embedding good practice on ethics from other sectors c) enabling further co-production and creative practices over knowledge creation and authorship.

- **Learning Preference seen through portraits and mandalas** by Nina Kledal



### **1.45–3.45 pm BUZZ: REFLECTING TOGETHER**

The large number of students who finish ground school with low grades and unsatisfactory school experiences is a challenge for the educational system. Despite continual research in the teaching field, the number of students leaving the school system with low grades is still alarmingly high. Equally students' grades correlate to their social and academic well-being. The purpose of this research is to examine how portraits and mandalas, based on Carl Gustav Jung's theory of the collective unconscious, archetypes, individuation, and active imagination, can give a better understanding of student's learning preferences and challenges, and if this new knowledge can give the teacher a clearer understanding of the students learning path and learning experience. Through organic inquiry, by way of portraits and mandalas based on Jung's four archetypes: Mother, Trickster, Rebirth and Spirit, six research subjects were interviewed and this created the groundwork for the Learning Preference and Life Differences tool (LPLD-tool). One of the six research subjects was studied for two years, testing different teaching approaches, and retested with the developed LPLD-tool. It has subsequently been tested on 75 persons from five different countries, from the age of 5 to the age of 76, with interviews about the LPLD-profile result. The initial results of the portraits and mandalas showed students experiencing a greater feeling of understanding when learning new curriculum, based on the LPLD-profile, as well as the feeling of being understood. The latter results from the LPLD-profiles with 75 people being tested, also showed the same correlation between the profile, students learning challenges and the most optimal learning environment and didactical structure, no matter whether the student was from a Western or Asian country. Further studies are needed to develop teaching material that can support teachers in incorporating these new learning approaches to support students learning preferences.

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- **AI-MULTIPLY Forum Theatre Project: Enhancing Public Involvement in AI and Big Data Research by Claire Hill (Creative Director, Lawnmowers Theatre Group), Victoria Bartle, Fiona Cammack, Olivia Grant, Alex Thompson, AI-MULTIPLY PPIE Team (Newcastle University)**

### **1.45–3.45 pm WORK: VISUAL METHODS AND BEYOND**

This session will showcase an innovative partnership between the AI-MULTIPLY PPIE team and the Lawnmowers Theatre Group, co-creating a forum theatre performance to explore the barriers to effective public involvement in AI and big data research. The project incorporates workshops with public contributors, researchers (clinicians, AI modellers, data engineers, social science researchers, qualitative and epidemiology and project management) to unpack complex topics, including AI, data ethics, and the specific challenges faced by people with lived experience of MLTCs. There is also the potential to involve additional members of the AIM consortium and researchers from the MLTC CNC work streams.

Key themes include:

Barriers to meaningful involvement, such as from researchers include concerns about overburdening contributors, reluctance to engage them in the research process, assumptions that contributors may not fully understand complex topics, fear or hesitation in consulting with public contributors, and a general lack of knowledge, skills, and experience in effective PPIE practices. Emphasising the importance of PPIE in AI-MULTIPLY and advocate for why researchers should adopt our approach. This includes integrating evaluation conclusions, having strong PPIE leadership and ensuring contributors are actively involved from the initial research questions through to decisions about what to include or exclude. We prioritise capacity building for early-career researchers (ECRs) to enhance their PPIE skills. Contributors focus on periods of wellness and quality of life, shaping the research direction by inviting researchers to our meetings so we can guide them on where efforts should be directed, rather than simply reviewing their work. The session will highlight the transformative potential of embedding PPIE at every research stage, moving beyond traditional involvement to empower contributors as co-creators. The Lawnmowers' performance will serve as a dissemination tool and catalyst for change, complemented by outputs such as blogs,

videos, and a PPIE toolkit for AI research.

- How can we expand creative research methods beyond the conference? by Emily Bradfield



**1.45–3.45 pm** **WORK: VISUAL METHODS AND BEYOND**