

# **Doing Arts Research in a Pandemic:**

**a crowd-sourced  
document  
responding to the  
challenges arising  
from Covid-19**

A TCCE publication

Compiled by Prof. Vida L Middelw, Middlesex University with TCCE

First published in the UK, June 2020

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Cover Design by Finetuned

**The Culture Capital Exchange**

Unit 2B14

Technopark

90 London Road

London SE1 6LN

[www.tcce.co.uk](http://www.tcce.co.uk) @infoTCCE

# Foreword

This DIY collection shares reflections, research activities and methods that have emerged in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic. The collection was created using a crowd-sourcing approach between April 27<sup>th</sup> – May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020, when the UK and many other parts of the world were in full 'lockdown'. Emerging from this period of extreme and unprecedented change in the lives of most people, the contributions are often, unsurprisingly and suitably, imbued with emotional and personal experience. In this sense they mark a moment and are, in part, a record of, or testament to, a period in time. They also offer nascent insights for alternative possibilities and ways of being, thinking and doing for going forward, as we look beyond the specifics of this emergency and to an after-Covid world.

Reflecting the strengths of Arts and Humanities researchers to improvise and adapt the ways that they address cultural and social challenges, the contributors often reach out to others and use the tools at hand to make, make do, and to make things happen. They are imaginative, sensitive and inspiring. They galvanise and refigure a wide range of methods, often building on expertise working with participants and collaborators to variously document, narrate, engage and critically comment on and from this moment.

Together we ask: How do we (think about) research in a pandemic? What methods has the Covid-19 pandemic given rise to when our movement is restricted and we are limited perhaps by our more immediate circumstance – our homes, the people and things we find there, and our online worlds? And, implicitly we ask, what is important to research in a world of social distancing, when health, wellbeing and the language of protective clothing and need to shelter the vulnerable are to the fore.

As a crowd-sourced collection, it is inclusive in attitude and the collection has gone forward without selecting or editing of the contributions. I have, never-the-less, organized the materials loosely into six areas of interest. They could, of course, have been arranged in many ways and most contributions could feature across several sections. The sections do however speak of recurring topics – from the immediate need to grapple with circumstances and to document experiences, to the desire to find ways to continue working with and for others resulting in new creative practices that are significant in personal, social and cultural ways. Sharing new critical perspectives and social commentaries, alongside windows into pragmatic and creative possibilities; the ideas and practices captured here are intended to support and inspire others, and may resonate into an untold future.

The collection was inspired by Professor Deborah Lupton's Social Science based document, ['Doing fieldwork in a Pandemic'](#), and is accompanied by a sister resource 'Knowledge Sharing and Exchange in the age of a Pandemic'.

Vida L. Midgelow

Middlesex University

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# Narrating and Documenting

## 1. Writing a Coronavirus pandemic newspaper column: creating retrospective and prospective community and public histories

Andrew Jackson, Bishop Grosseteste University

Most historians, in terms of their general custom and practice, tend to turn up too late to the scene of an historical event to find themselves to be in the roles of either live witness or active participant. Indeed, those who were there will have largely moved on, in time and space. The historian is left to pick over the artefactual traces, or to tap the shoulder of those who remain or remember, and who might offer a reminiscence. The pandemic has put historians, well some at least, in an unusual position - rather a one off?

Historians have been, like everyone else, swept up in an immense moment that will justifiably take up a fair entry in the early twenty-first century record books, among other major crises; and, at the same time, there is much to be found in existing historical records for the historian to pick up and hold up, mirror like, in order to try and comprehend contemporary and collective experiences, feelings and reactions.

Most historians would probably consider responding to present circumstances by writing a regular column about local life in a provincial newspaper to rather rub against the grain. It requires some setting aside of familiar principles and comforts, in particular: allowing for the passing of time, and the gaining of personal distance and dispassionate perspective; and the careful and protracted process of gathering together and evaluating a broad range of sources to inform and balance one's interpretation and judgement.

Writing for the media requires an embrace of its collectivity of what is necessary, acceptable or desirable, typically: speed and timing, partiality and criticality, emotion and sensation, fact and fiction, hype and horror, speculation and prediction, and headline and storyline.

To write for a provincial newspaper, however, also looks back to older historical traditions, those of the antiquarian, the collector of curiosities, and the historian of things local. Newspaper columns have regularly offered up space for reports of the findings and jottings of historical, archaeological and folklore societies, and for reflective content along the lines of: 'on this day in ...', '... of yesteryear', '... then and now', '... past and present', and 'nostalgia'. Such media material represents a legacy of the long-rooted motivations in historical practice to preserve the traces of the past for the present and the future, and, equally, to consider and instruct the current and days ahead in the light of the lessons of history. It was in this spirit that I took to compiling a newspaper column through March to May 2020. I chose for my outlet *The Lincolnite*, a supportive and enthusiastic, free and online community-focused city newspaper.

Through the first four weeks of my pandemic 'diary' column, I turned to the archives, and how life all around us was to be found repeated in historical time, during the First World War and through the Spanish flu epidemic of 1918: stockpiling and rationing, restrictions and regulations, waves and peaks, and experiences and reactions. For the next three weeks, I also reached out to others to help contribute to the content, including those with whom I have collaborated in the past. In weeks five and seven, for example, I turned from the documentary to the oral record, that is, to personal memory and testimony. For week

six, I picked up on the art in the present, and, most singularly, the evocative medium of poetry in historic regional dialect. Furthermore, featuring in entries four, six and seven, was the rainbow, in all its material variants and domestic and public placings, and, now, the gentle fading away of many of its depictions.

I have played a part, then, as contemporary columnist and commentator: conveying personal perspectives, observing changed behaviours, and acknowledging strong feelings. This has interacted with the role of, in more 'modern' sub-disciplinary terminology, community/public historian, preserving and sharing the local historical record, and making connections and associations with life in the present. Across the two roles has been engagement in the live and co-fashioning of a material legacy of CoronavirusUK, for, of and by local people.

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**Andrew Jackson** is Head of Research and Knowledge Exchange at Bishop Grosseteste University in Lincoln. He is also a local and regional, and public historian. Projects in recent years have included home-front dialect poetry, women's suffrage, munitionette worker football teams, the co-operative movement, and early council houses. He also has a long-established interest in the history of local newspapers.

[andrew.jackson@bishopg.ac.uk](mailto:andrew.jackson@bishopg.ac.uk) | [www.bishopg.ac.uk](http://www.bishopg.ac.uk)

## 2. Limiting Space; Expanding Research

Jennifer Cavanagh, Postgraduate Researcher at Liverpool John Moores University

My research prior to the Covid-19 pandemic concerned the impact of a variety of writing spaces on me as a writer and, subsequently, on my writing. In these spaces, some local, some international, I wrote a short story collection. I am currently at the stage of redrafting this, reflecting on both it and the writing spaces, and should be revisiting those places to do so. Of course, it is currently impossible to continue this research as intended. The train journey from my home into Liverpool to use the Everyman Theatre's Writer's Room is, at the moment, as unthinkable as a flight to Barcelona.

Rather than the lack of access to writing spaces halting my research, I am integrating this new factor into it. The following is an outline of just a few of the ways in which my research has been diverted.

As my multiple writing spaces have been limited to one, it would appear that possible stimuli has been reduced. The space in which I write is all too known to me. Yet, the space that influences the writer is not the immediate space alone. According to affect theory, influences have already affected the writer 'un – or pre-consciously' (Figlerowicz, 2012: 5), before she enters a space. Whilst I am unlikely now to be physically outside of a writing space in order to enter it, I still experience the world outside of my writing space, albeit predominantly virtually. It is, therefore, able to impact my perception of the writing space (Brennan, 2004: 6). The next step in this strand of research will be to examine how my reaction to the writing space of my home presents itself in my work, and why it is presenting in that way.

Before the lock down, my research explored the effect of familiar versus unfamiliar spaces on my writing. My current writing space should be familiar enough so as not to impinge upon my writing. However, the circumstances that have led to me now writing in this space are completely unfamiliar, leaving me writing in a space that is somewhere between the familiar and unfamiliar; an uncanny space (Freud, 1919: 125). Previously, when writing in spaces that were uncanny (by dint of their unfamiliarity or skewed familiarity) this feeling was transferred to my writing in the form of uncanny elements. If 'intellectual uncertainty' (Jentsch, 1906: 16) is a prerequisite for the creation of uncanniness, then I would expect all of my writing from the beginning of this pandemic onwards to lean towards the uncanny. However, how long does it take for the unfamiliar, even something of this magnitude, to become familiar? Will the uncanniness be replaced by humour or fantasy, and, if and when that happens, will the switch away from uncanniness be permanent, or will there be a constant flux back and forth?

In our shared, virtual spaces, there has been a collective lean towards nostalgia. This may be our joint need for escapism, or, perhaps as the world has slowed down and there are fewer new events in our vicinity, the events of the past are able to assert their dominance. As I analyse my stories I am already reflecting on the past, and working with the past as I redraft. However, I have found myself drawing on a much more distant past, both in my redrafting and in my new writing. In a time that feels 'out of joint' with no 'possibility of gathering together' (Derrida, 1993: 263), hauntology has new relevance. The past is both to be relied on and inescapable. As such, hauntology will inform both the research that I am presently undertaking and add a new perspective to that which has already been carried out.

One final concept I will mention here which has begun resonating with my research, is that of virtual travel. For this, one dwells temporarily in a space and travels 'down into the particulars' of 'place' and 'time' (Cronin, 2000: 19.) Typically, this space would be a small, geographical area, rather than the present writing space of my house. However, it is also a term, 'free of associations with particular kinds of place' (Pettinger, 2019: 94), and, in this there is freedom. My home and writing space can be researched as a destination worth reflecting upon.

It would have been possible and perhaps acceptable, to view the temporary travel restrictions in place as an obstacle to my research. However, in forcing me to look at my research in different ways, it has opened up several new avenues of research. Some of these will inform my thesis, but others I believe, will lead to future research projects.

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**Jennifer Cavanagh** is a postgraduate researcher in Creative Writing at Liverpool John Moores University and MA graduate of Goldsmiths College. Her PhD, *How Does the Space Create the Text? An Exploration of the Impact of Physical and Geographical Space on Each Stage of the Writing Process* encompasses short story and autoethnography. She presented the paper, *A Room of One's Own. So, How Did She Get In?* at PAMLA 2019, and will chair the panel, *Short Fiction: The City Speaks. How Should We Answer?* at PAMLA 2020. Her poem, 'Next Time' was part of 'Above Us Only Stars' by Operation Lightfoot.

[J.Cavanagh@2016.ljmu.ac.uk](mailto:J.Cavanagh@2016.ljmu.ac.uk)

### 3. "You Talkin' To Me?" - Returning to Conversation

Neil Fox, Falmouth University, School of Film & Television

The current situation has resulted in conditions conducive to conversation that have been, if not entirely lacking, ignored for too long. Conversation is a vital component of my research as a filmmaking and podcast practitioner, scholar, critic and teacher. In the words of Theodore Zeldin good conversations are "meetings on the borderline of what I understand and what I don't" (1998: 88). They encourage what Les Back terms 'sociological listening', an act where the "importance of living with doubt in the service of understanding, of trying to grapple with moral complexity" (2007: 14-15) comes to the fore. It's simplistic, if not a little cliché, to lean in to the notion that conversation is a (golden) art-form that has been lost and in need of recovering but there could be little disagreement that conversation as a method for investigation, one that both formulates and responds to ideas and theses, has been sidelined in favour of the soundbite and the unerring position statement.

Talking has been on my mind a lot in the lockdown. More so than normal, even for a podcaster. I've been thinking about it in terms of purpose and dissemination and how the current situation has resulted in me having time to (re)assess the value of conversation and how it may be configured and reconfigured in and as a vital research method moving forward. It's not a new method but to quote Audre Lorde "There are no new ideas. There are only new ways of making them felt" (1977, in 2017: 11). One of the strange effects of this situation is how it has afforded me some more physical, and a lot more emotional, time than normal. Juggling work, childcare, walking the dog and contributing to the running of the house has felt differently pressured. Within this time, conversation has taken on different values as there have been challenging conversations with anxious students, difficult conversations about teaching with colleagues, profound conversations with my wife about our life and wondrous and enlightening conversations with our 3-year old about what is happening to her and our world. It feels important to capture how people are feeling and conceiving of what they do in these times. It also feels like this is research.

Hopes I have in these times (I'm an optimist) are that different voices and different ideas around what constitutes conversation as research may emerge. I've been talking with filmmakers, critics, programmers and scholars via the online tools that have become staples of the pandemic, with some being released as podcasts and some just forming a record of the time. All bear the audio (in)equalities of the formats of the conversations (glitchy connections, frozen screens, lost lines). All are full of the uncertain, the unknowing, the curious, the hopeful, the scared. It's been revelatory to talk. My research is largely in the area of film, but increasingly into podcasting as well. What has fed into my research, as much as scholarship in those fields, are words and ideas from people who have considered talking and listening as research, some of which are always foremost in my mind with extra resonance now. Zeldin says "the more we meet different forms of gentleness and conviviality, even in misfortune, the less we can boast about our victories, the less we can be satisfied with the bitterness of so much of our conversation" (1998: 93). Then there's Les Back saying "while the scale and complexity of global society may escape our total understanding [we] can still pay attention to the fragments, the voices and stories that are otherwise passed over or ignored" (2007: 01). I think of Sara Ahmed who says "each time you write or speak you are putting yourself into a world that is shared" (2017: v), knowing that Ahmed here is talking about Audre Lorde, who says "I have come to believe over and over again that what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood" (1977, in 2017: 01). In the world that follows this situation may we take more time to listen and value speaking as information and knowledge differently, more. May conversation gain new prominence as a method and output of research. Some of my conversations can be found here - <http://www.cinematologists.com/>.

*This piece was developed over a series of conversations with my colleague and wife Bethan Michael-Fox.*

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**Dr Neil Fox** is a senior lecturer in Film at Falmouth University where he leads the Research & Innovation programme *Pedagogy Futures* and convenes the Sound/Image Cinema Lab. He is an award-winning screenwriter whose short films, and feature debut 'Wilderness' (2017), have played to festival audiences around the globe. He is the co-founder and host of the leading film podcast *The Cinematologists*, the official podcast partner of the BFI national film seasons. He is the co-editor of *Podcasting: New Aural Cultures and Digital Media* (Palgrave, 2018) and writes for *Little White Lies*, *The Quietus*, *Beneficial Shock* and *Directors Notes*.

[neil.fox@falmouth.ac.uk](mailto:neil.fox@falmouth.ac.uk) | <http://drneilfox.com/>

## 4. COVID 19 in Zambia – Collaborative Online Photography Project

Kerstin Hacker, Anglia Ruskin University, in collaboration with the Zambian National Visual Arts Council

The COVID19 in Zambia – Collaborative Online Photography Project was a quick response to the unfolding worldwide crisis. Together with our partners we decided to postpone the previously planned face to face project due to travel restrictions.

In discussions with the participants, the coordinators of Zambian Photography Research Network (zPhoto), ARU and VAC we established that we want to keep the research network active throughout the crisis and propose to work with our existing network of photographers to develop a visual response to the imminent COVID-19 crisis in Zambia. We have identified ten photographers working in their homes, photographing as the pandemic reaches Zambia. We are encouraging a wide range of approaches to photography.

My role in this project will be that of an art animateur and I will foster the participants' self-learning. The aim is that the participants find a higher degree of self-realization, self expression, and awareness of belonging to the photography community during this time of crisis. The project supports them to become art influencers both within Zambia and the wider world. The emphasis of the project is to develop local imagery that will change public knowledge and understanding of how this crisis is affecting Zambia.

I will develop research that will underpin the project, create research materials like online interviews with the participants. I will explore the role of art animation and its place in a time of crisis.

The project also aims to critique visual material on how the African COVID 19 health crisis is covered in the western media. The aim of the project is to develop a local visual response and counteract the lack of local voices in the representation of everyday life on the African continent during this health crisis.

The aim is to make these locally produced images available online throughout the project. We are aiming to support art community building and envisage that the collaborative project will further strengthen the photography community in Zambia. It is envisaged that this project will also be relevant outside of Zambia. It will contribute to the

emerging visual voices from Zambia. The project aims to emphasize the personal experience with the crisis and counteract the 'African pandemic photographs', which often dehumanise the photographed.

Founded in 2018, the Zambian Photography Research Network, aims to create a critical dialogue with and amongst Zambian and international photographers. It aims to foster photographic practice and research exploring self-representation and visual self-governance in the Zambian context.

**Kerstin Hacker** is a photo documentarist and academic and her work is published and exhibited internationally. She is a recipient of the Agfa/Emma Female Photojournalist of the Year Award, is an Alexia Foundation alumna and is a Fellow of the Centre for Understanding of Sustainable Prosperity (CUSP) in the UK. Kerstin was born in Bavaria/Germany in 1968. She holds a BA and MA from Academy of Applied Arts (FAMU), Prague, Czech Republic. Since 2008 she is Head of Photography at the Cambridge School of Art, Anglia Ruskin University and leads the BA and MA courses.

[Kerstin.hacker@anglia.ac.uk](mailto:Kerstin.hacker@anglia.ac.uk) | [kerstinhacker.org](http://kerstinhacker.org)

Zambian Photography Research Network blog: <https://zphotonet.blogspot.com/>

COVID19 in Zambia – Collaborative Online Photography Project Instagram:  
[@zambiacovid19](https://www.instagram.com/zambiacovid19)

# Creative Processes And Arts Practice

## 5. Creative Articulations Process: ‘Ground Form’ audio score as a way to frame and support embodied research(ers)

Vida L Midgelow, Middlesex University

Jane M Bacon, Independent psychotherapist / Authentic movement trainer

Creative Articulations Process (CAP) is an approach that supports artists-researchers to deepen their creative research processes. Enhancing the researchers capacity for dual-awareness and access to the felt sense (Gendlin 1981), CAP enables artist-researchers to be fluent in and about their moving selves and their dance making. As such CAP brings awareness to embodied knowing that we may otherwise struggle to recognise or articulate.

CAP was first developed as a method for movement practitioners engaged in Practice-as-Research, wherein researchers might be said to pursue ‘hybrid enquiries combining creative doing with reflexive being’ (Kershaw 2011: 64). As a method for Practice-as-Research, CAP pays particular attention to how we come to awareness and language when we place our soma at the centre of inquiry. The foregrounding of embodied languaging, or what we have also described as dancing/writing, is important not only because verbal/written language is the primary mode of research exchange (which we might well want to contest), but because through languaging we come to know, and know differently, our creative selves and our research practices. To enable this CAP shifts between modalities of moving, drawing and writing, with the intention of bringing them closer together. For the researcher working in and through bodily practice this is key to integrating physical, sensate and felt experiences with reflexive and critical processes. (To read about the theoretical basis of this work see Bacon and Midgelow 2014).

Multifaceted and rhizomatic in nature, CAP incorporates **six facets** – from *Opening* to *Outwarding*, across **three intersecting forms**: *Preparations* (activities that help prepare us, developing capacities that the artist-researcher will need), a *Ground Form* (a one-hour scaffolded practice which we discuss below) and the *Expanded Form* (in which researchers apply CAP in their own contexts). Each facet - *opening, situating, delving, raising, anatomizing, and outwarding* - deepens and illuminates a different aspect of the same thing, or a different side of the same exploration, like a gem with many sides. Each facet also encourages a mode of attention and implies action. Indeed the processes might be thought of as actions akin to fishing, archaeology or any other activity that involves going more deeply into one place to reveal more than you had previously.

Both the six facets and three forms are iterative and cyclical, and any one element may be used in isolation or as a through-line of enquiry requiring a longer dwelling within the process. Throughout CAP the researchers own movement practices and research topics are implicit and can be discovered afresh in each facet and each form.

**Opening:** *giving space and time*

**Situating:** *(what I know today about) what brings me here, where I am*

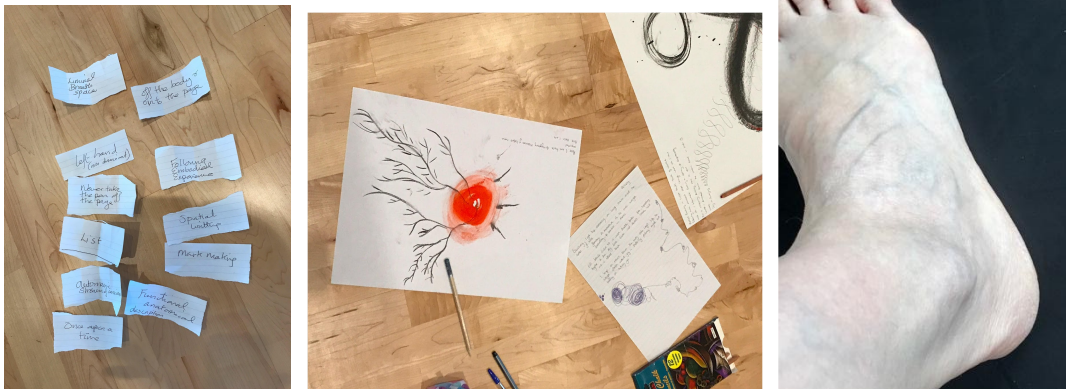
**Delving:** (I wonder) what interests me ...

**Raising:** working to enrich/ explore/render what I am interested in – to know more of what I am working with...

**Anatomizing:** working to expand/broaden/trial/clarify

my practice

**Outwarding:** bringing my findings a shape or form (perhaps) in a moment of fruition and newly noting (perhaps) future directions/spaces/times that draw me



Just as Covid-19 spread across the globe and restricted many of us to our homes, we had begun to develop a rough and ready audio version of the **Ground Form** to share with the dance artists and researchers we had been working with. It is the benefits and use of this audio recording that the rest of this entry will, in brief, reflect upon.

The Ground Form is a 60-minute practice in which works through the six facets of CAP (ten minutes in each facet), and entails alternation between moving and writing (or sometimes drawing/markings). It is a somatic research practice that is improvisational in nature and is designed to be undertaken regularly (say once a week). Through this repeated revisiting of the Ground Form we hone the skills of CAP and enhance creative capacities for articulation.

The audio recording or score, provides timing cues and verbal prompts for the listener. And, much like a spoken guide for say meditation or mindfulness, emphasizes the development of interior attention. The score takes the researcher on a journey of discovery within a repeated structure. The structure has a simple clarity and fixed duration, within which the researcher is invited to explore - such that the emerging materials and the experience of the process may (perhaps) be different each time the Ground Form is undertaken. This structure, or scaffolding, of experience and attention, supports creative thinking and awareness. Each step builds on the former steps, so that we complete the form with a sense (hopefully) of achievement, for having engaged creatively and reflectively for a space/time. The insights and materials that arise through following the Ground Form may then usefully inform our wider research endeavours (should we wish).

This audio format replaces what would otherwise be undertaken as a group, in a physically shared setting and can also be followed by using solely written instructions. Yet whilst it is possible to follow the Ground Form from a written text, the audio score is

more immersive. Removing the additional need for the researcher to worry about timing each section and releasing any concerns as to what is coming next. It therefore facilitates a fuller engagement with the process, holding the time/space and structure for the listener. Further, the audio score has afforded the users of CAP greater independence as to how and when they enter the process, enabling researchers to continue to work at home and on their own.

Research artists that have been using the audio score have noted how useful it has been to be guided through the score and how it has felt particularly timely and necessary during this period of 'sheltering'. The grounding of experience via the scaffolding of attention has helped them remain focused and open to their creative-selves - keeping them alive to the felt sense and exercising their curiosities - things which have been so difficult to achieve when Covid-19 has consumed our attention.

*The recording helps me relax and settle in the present moment. I can immediately enter the state of practicing the Ground Form and somehow removes extra unneeded thoughts during that time. Listening to your voices keeps the experience fresh every time and it gives me the sense that I am not alone in this. It works a little bit as a guided meditation and it has been a good thing to do during this time.* (Dance Artist Evangelia Kolyra, <http://evangeliakolyra.com>)

## Resources

To learn more about CAP and download the Ground Form audio score visit: <https://www.choreographiclab.co.uk/creative-articulations-process-cap/>

The *Creative Articulations Process (CAP)*, devised by Vida Midgelow and Jane Bacon, is distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution + Noncommercial + NoDerivatives 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/) license.

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**Jane Bacon.** Dance Artist/Academic, Jungian Analyst, Focusing Trainer and Teacher of the Discipline of Authentic Movement. Jane Bacon is Professor Emerita Dance and Somatics at University of Chichester and lives in Northampton, UK. She is interested in the development of unique methodological approaches developed by artist researchers through and by practice. Selected publications include: 'Informed by the goddess: Explicating a processual methodology', *Dance, Movement & Spiritualities*, 4:1, 2017; 'Authentic Movement: a field of practices', *Journal of Dance and Somatic Practices*, vol 7.2, 2015.

jane.bacon@gmail.com | www.janebacon.net

**Vida L Midgelow.** Dance Artist/Academic, Consultant, Mentor and Educator, Vida L Midgelow is Professor in Dance and Choreographic Practices at Middlesex University and lives in Derbyshire. She is editor of the *Oxford Handbook of Improvisation in Dance* and is PI of *Artistic Doctorates in Europe* [www.artisticdoctorates.com](http://www.artisticdoctorates.com) (EU funded). Her work in theory and practice focuses upon PaR, somatics, ethics, improvisation and articulating choreographic processes.

v.midgelow@mdx.ac.uk

Together Bacon and Midgelow founded the hybrid peer reviewed journal, *Choreographic Practices*, co-direct the *Choreographic Lab* [www.choreographiclab.co.uk](http://www.choreographiclab.co.uk) and are currently associate research artists at i4C4/ Dance4 (UK).

## 6. lived in site - Covid-19 Solo movement studies

Sarah Black, Liverpool Hope University

I come to my practice as a mother and a site-specific choreographer, and have been developing a solo movement practice and a family art practice with my family in our home. I develop 'personalized' and collaborative art works with them. One of my main concerns is to bring forward the challenge of mothering, curating, practically and philosophically, whilst addressing certain ethical issues which can arise when working in such a way.

Since Covid-19 and lockdown I have turned to developing my solo performance work, which explores the tensions I am experiencing in daily life between home, work and family, maternal guilt, boredom and the complete and wholesale messiness of motherhood and family life in Lockdown.

I have developed a writing practice over 64 days of isolation (18<sup>th</sup> March – 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020[1]). These mini entries are used as scores to develop solo film pieces in the home. What follows are some notes that frame my creative processes:

- At the end of each day I have written an entry which maps my emotional landscape in response to mothering, isolation and my particular ways of coping. I draw upon feminist psychoanalyst Lisa Baraitser's (2008) notion of anecdotal and auto-biographical writing. Baraitser writes through a succession of subjective positions where she encounters herself through a series of unexceptional incidents which reveal maternal subjectivity to be defined not by '[...] fluidity, hybridity or flow, but of physical viscosity, [...] and a renewed sense of oneself as a speaking subject' (Baraitser, 2009: 4).
- At the end of each week I explore the entries and re-write texts noting occurring themes or repetitions and shaped these into scores for performance making.
- I work in particular spaces through the home.



- My aim is to rehearse and film whilst the house is busy, children continuing with their daily life. This reveals the home as a place full of life complexities, saturated with personal feelings, cultural meanings, and notions of privacy. I choose to frame the home through Iris Marion Young's seminal essay, *House and Home: Feminist Variations on a Theme* (2005). Young addresses the deeply ambivalent values of house and home and offers a personal and experiential critique, whilst highlighting the complexities embedded in the notion of home, for it carries heavy ideological meaning. By exploring home (as site), a domestically inflected space, I embrace the ways these solo scores articulate uniquely human experiences, and encompasses feelings and ideals, despite the oppressions and privileges that home transmits (Young, 2005).

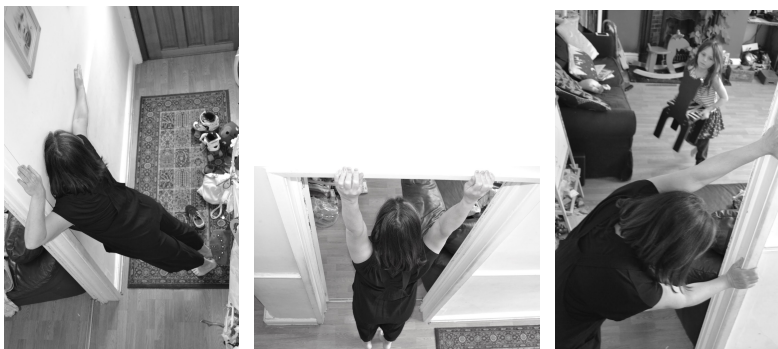
- The limitation of working in this way, through the lockdown, has defined a process where the solos are positioned within the context of the messiness of the 'lived in' site, and as such reveal the tensions and boundaries between home, work and family.

- These solo films will be part submitted as part of the Domestic Spaces – a project which will feature domestic performance during Covid-19 lockdown. By developing and presenting solo's in the home, I seek to challenge and open the private sphere of the home, reclaiming and re-figuring it to reveal care and labour, tension and uncertainty in the time of isolation, but also as a meaningful place, holding significance of and for family (Blunt & Dowling 2005, Blunt & Varley 2004).

- I work with an awareness of the ethical implications of sharing performance work in the home. As such the principles with which I work are directly connected to my role as a mother who defines her art as a form of curation. This means applying critical attention to the philosophical and ethical implications of a performance-making practice where mothering is key. I define my use of ethics as the ethics of mother and family within the parameters of a performance practice. Therefore, my role as a mother/artist/researcher doesn't (only) address what is right or wrong as hypothetical insights, rather through these roles I explicitly work with principles that include and talks to practical, the relational and the lived.

### ***lived in site, solo movement study example:***

**Day 13 – Pressure (from Week 2 - 25<sup>th</sup> March - 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020)**





*I place my hand gently on the wall, a boundary between us, I send weight traveling down through my arm into my hand, I am met with resistance, I, we cannot escape, Physical resistance of brick and mortar, Playful resistance of children.*

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**Sarah Black-Frizell.** Dance artist/scholar Sarah Black-Frizell joined Liverpool Hope University as a lecturer in dance, specialising in situated dance and installation practices, maternal and feminist ethics in performance, choreographic methodologies. She is the co-founder and director of DARE (Doctoral Arts Research Events) held at Liverpool Hope. Sarah is co-convenor of *Our Dance Democracy* with Karen Gallagher Associates. As a dance maker and performer, she works with her husband and her two children on developing a performance practice which is situated in their family home – *Mother as Curator*.

blacks@hope.ac.uk | DomesticSpacescovid19@gmail.com

[1] 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020 – 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020. The date we as a family started our isolation and up to the date I have submitted work for this document.

## 7. Colombian Art ‘under’ Covid-19

Isabel Cristina Ramírez Botero, Universidad del Atlántico, Barranquilla

Toby Miller, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana—Cuajimalpa

Pandemics are common themes in the history of art and literature. The current situation differs, because we can communicate more easily than in the past with the outside world. Due to the unexpectedness of the situation, artists are working on the go, imagining strategies to develop their creative processes. Some have adjusted their habitual methods to the new realities. Others are traversing unknown terrain.

Our goal here is to showcase and learn from responses by Colombian artists to the prevailing biopolitical conjuncture. They range across phenomenological uses of the body, audio and visual collages, diary entries, drawings, and invitations to collaborate.

### **A Diary of Experimental Creative Collaboration During Isolation**

The Colombian dancers Carolina Caballero and Ana Milena Navarro Busaid devised a creative methodology to continue dancing in domestic space. What began as a challenge became a systematic exercise, encouraging new dances, advancing reflections on the relationship between people, spaces, and objects, improvising with what is at hand in a house, and reinventing relationships with the public.

The method involves two dancers confined in one house who carry out a daily exercise of experimental creativity. Each day, furniture is removed from the chosen room. The collaboration begins with the choice of a reference for the creation to come: a fragment of a recognized dance piece, one or two objects, a place in the house, or a dance genre. After taking those decisions, a collaborative exercise begins. Movements in common are chosen as starting points for improvisation. After rehearsal and practice, decisions are made about costumes, lighting, and the arrangement of recording devices. A collaborative video editing exercise is recorded and developed. The video is circulated daily on social networks. Comments in response provide ideas for future creations.

### **Log Book of Quarantine Drawings**

Lucas Ospina has developed a diary of the pandemic. Every day he draws a picture of the quarantine experience that interacts with news coverage, fragments from books and essays, film dialog, song lyrics, and Wikipedia definitions, *inter alia*. The home of Ospina’s work, CoronaBlog, is produced by journalists, writers, artists, and bloggers, with a view to chronicling the pandemic day by day—the experience of isolation seen through distinctive first-person visions.

### **Collaborative Virtual Drawing**

Aníbal Maldonado proposes this methodology as a means of forging collective creative experiences, even in isolation: his virtual whiteboard invites artists to draw collectively, thereby bringing authorship into question. The process begins with the invitation, instructions, and a link to the board. Suggestions to “scratch, cross out, scribble, play”

value everything from elaborate drawings to spontaneous ones. Sometimes appointments are made to draw simultaneously in a group, but the space is permanently open for guests to draw. Participants must be willing to have their work transformed by others not erase such interventions, or at least to think twice before doing so. The methodology seeks to promote dialogue, via an opportunity to assume the responsibility of building collectively. The history of the project is available on [Instagram](#).

### **Collaborative Blog on the Pandemic**

This is a [developing blog](#) about Covid-19. The method is to invite a different person each day to produce an entry about their reflections, proposals, ideas, or work, stimulated by the pandemic, and written in the first person. Invitees hail from various areas and disciplines. They include artists, writers, journalists, and bloggers, *inter alios*.

### **Interactive Journey via Whatsapp**

[Radio Bestial](#) is a collective of artists created by Laura Wiesner and Sandra Martínez five years ago. They investigate the possibilities of radio for transmedia art, focusing on experiences for and with the public. In the current conjuncture, they have reactivated the interactive proposal Jurassic Parkway, a journey to the Mesozoic era of dinosaurs. The artists invite the public to join a WhatsApp group, which becomes a vessel for time travel. Groups of up to ten people at any one time are guided in this imaginary transfer through time and space via texts, sounds, images, and multimedia. The tour seeks to promote active listening. Spectators are urged to move around in their homes, and sometimes to respond by sending an image of what they are experiencing during the trip. Radio Bestial emphasizes the possibilities of sound and listening. The artists are interested in how the voice can shorten distances and stimulate the senses, allowing us to travel even while we are confined.

**Isabel Cristina Ramírez Botero** is a profesor of art history in the Facultad de Bellas Artes, Universidad del Atlántico, Barranquilla. Her research interests center on modern and contemporary art in the Colombian Caribbean. She has curated exhibitions at such venues as the Centro de Formación de la Cooperación Española in Cartagena de Indias, video art at Cartagena's Festival Internacional de Cine, and the Museo de Arte Moderno de Cartagena. She is the author of numerous books and articles on the history of Colombian art and is Vice President of the Comité Colombiano de Historiadores del Arte.

[isabelramirez@mail.uniatlantico.edu.co](mailto:isabelramirez@mail.uniatlantico.edu.co) |

<https://uniatlantico.academia.edu/IsabelCristinaRam%C3%ADrezBotero>

**Toby Miller** is Stuart Hall Professor of Cultural Studies, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana—Cuajimalpa; Research Professor of the Graduate Division, University of California, Riverside; and Sir Walter Murdoch Distinguished Collaborator, Murdoch University. He is President of the Cultural Studies Association (US).

tobym69@icloud.com | [www.tobymiller.org](http://www.tobymiller.org)

## 8. How to be an Artist-in-Residence when you can't be in residence

Joseph Young, Artist and PhD Candidate, SMARTlab University College Dublin

When your work as an artist-researcher is about a response to *place*, how do you continue to conduct that research when you can't physically be on site? This is a question that I have been forced to come up with answers to in the last few weeks. An obvious response is that there is a lot of reading and writing to be done in the context of a practice-based PhD. However, there is a limit to that work when your artistic research involves making art first and foremost and only afterwards writing about it.

For the past year, I have been traveling to Ireland to live and work as artist-in-residence at Killruddery House & Gardens<sup>1</sup>. Staying at the house has been an integral part of a project to create a series of immersive 3d audio installations using geo-location to explore the archives of an Anglo-Irish family, the Brabazons, who have lived and worked on the Killruddery estate since 1618. I have made hundreds of hours of recordings of informal conversations with the family, plus field recordings of the contemporary soundscape of the estate and many recorded walks in the landscape accompanied by my own spoken observations. The challenge now is to consider these recordings, which are by no means complete, and to produce work with them so that I may unpick and reframe the notion of being in residence *at a distance*.

Listening back to the recordings now from my studio in Brighton where I am currently based, transports me through time and physical space to an experience of immersion in the sound of the land and its people through the use of the binaural recording technique. Binaural recordings work through HRTF<sup>2</sup> to represent a sense of being there as the recordist was, when listened to on a decent pair of headphones. This form of mediated listening is a way for me of *haunting* the recorded event, a ghostly, and for first time listeners, often unnerving experience that can startle and surprise the brain with its sense of (dis)embodied presence.

Finding different ways to present these recorded sounds to a remote audience has been my primary concern, given that I cannot embed them as planned via geolocation<sup>3</sup> in the grounds of Killruddery House. My first response was to rethink a cancelled concert in The Orangery at Killruddery as a remote performance in the garden of my home at The Ceramic House<sup>4</sup> in Brighton via YouTube, taking a mix of voices and field recordings along with musical fragments as underscore and performing them 'live' with my custom-created Sonic Baton - a modified conductor's baton linked to a laptop and Ableton Live. The movement of the baton through 6 axes controls the mixing of pre-programmed sounds, producing unexpected combinations and synchronicities in the performative act. This conjuring of disembodied voices and sounds I characterise also as a *hauntological* act, intended to focus and concentrate the listening process for both performer and audience to produce a very different concert experience than the laptop performer tapping away behind an illuminated screen - a familiar trope at sound art gigs and experimental music events.



Joseph Young in performance, 4 April 2020

The second way I have approached this is to geo-locate some of the planned sound installations in the local area near my house to test out the technical aspects of 3d audio, a new functionality on the Echoes Creator platform that I have used previously for several projects, including this one at [Lewes Castle](#)<sup>5</sup>. 3d audio is a form of virtual reality for sound, offering the listener with a smartphone and a pair of head tracking headphones the ability to explore geo-located sonic environments from the inside out, with sound objects taking on a tangible ‘physicality’ in the virtual space. So, whilst it is impossible for me to judge fully the impact and resonance of sounds as they relate to place without embedding them in the site to which they refer, some aesthetic choices can be experimented with to find a suitable form and structure, ready for that time when I am able to physically return to the Killruddery estate. N.B. These soundscapes are hidden currently, but may be made public in the future.

It’s too early to tell whether any of this remote research will become part of my final thesis or if this has simply been a fascinating, but ultimately undocumented, detour in the creative journey. Time and distance will tell...

## Notes

[1] Artist-in-Residence Joseph Young - A Sonic Baton Performance.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XOnYaP8ckYM>

[2] Head-related transfer function  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Head-related\\_transfer\\_function](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Head-related_transfer_function)

[3] Empowering creatives with cutting-edge tools <https://echoes.xyz/echoes-creative-apps>

[4] Joseph Young live performance in the Ceramic Garden  
<https://ceramichouse.wordpress.com/2017/12/16/joseph-young-live-performance-in-the-ceramic-garden/>

[5] Lewes Castle <https://artofnoises.com/2016/08/12/sensing-culture-at-lewes-castle>

**Joseph Young (“Killruddery: Listening to the Archive” / Irish Research Council scholar)** is an artist living and working between Brighton, Dublin and Berlin. A specialist in binaural recording techniques, his sound diptych *The Missing Paintings* is held in the permanent collection of Towner Art Gallery (UK). An edition of *The Ballad of Skinny Lattes and Vintage Clothing* was acquired by the Estorick Collection (London), where a 10-year retrospective of his Neo Futurist Collective, *Make Futurism Great Again* was held

in 2018. Recent commissions include *A field in England*, Leicester De Montfort University (2018), *Handmade/Automation*, British Ceramics Biennial (2017), *Singing the Castle to life*, Lewes Castle (2017).

[artofnoises@gmail.com](mailto:artofnoises@gmail.com) | [www.artofnoises.com](http://www.artofnoises.com)

## 9. Non-place, Non-Live, (Non)Performance – Researching performance practice within the constraints of the pandemic

Rea Dennis, School of Communication and Creative Arts, Deakin University Australia

March 2020, Australia - I am working with novice researchers who are beginning to explore the way in which performing and making open spaces within which they can investigate... questions, concerns, provocations. They populate the black box studios – sleeves up and on their starting blocks. They share one thing in common, their inquiry is led by performance making. We casually throw around terms such as collaboration, work-in-progress showing, and live performance outcome, naïve to changes that hover out of sight into next week. An anecdote frames a shared understanding of how researcher curiosity will help shape a question, how frequency and repetition offer useful temporal constraints, and how specific elements of practice/s cohere to form a methodology.

The first cases of coronavirus in Australia saw university campuses closed and these novice researchers are thrown into a precarious, remote, isolated unknown. Isolation became our shared commonality. The practice-as-research projects teetered on the verge of disappearing. How might we maintain our belief in the inquiry and sustain our momentum. Living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we are already familiar with being alone together (Turkle 2011). We are cognisant of the way in which the perennial reinvention of communication technology and the way it affects human relations has cultural currency. The ambiguous sensation of feeling connected through technology while being physically alone. There are unspoken agreements about half-shared attentions, about unreturned hellos, and about the screen-based semi-consciousness of binge-watching or simultaneously playing in two gaming rooms. Perhaps it is this that makes us sceptical of how telematic space could be trusted as a threshold of encounter for lovingly crafted, politically subtle, live performance.

Over about twenty-five days, we amass shared questions about the way forward as we work to discover flexibility in old methods or some fluency in new methods.

1. How will I make work if I can't access the studio?
2. What do I do with my expectations about working with others?
3. Is my bedroom/bathroom now my stage?
4. Am I now a solo practitioner?

5. Is my practice live if I am recording it to show others?
6. Am I documenting my practice or performing my work?
7. Is the camera now my audience?
8. Is there now only 2D space?
9. My inquiry is premised on the ephemerality of performance – is that still a thing?
10. What devices can I draw on to affect others – what do I do with my yearning to be affected by others?
11. How do the tropes of screen studies and visual art that I have absorbed inform how I am working?
12. How can I engage with the emerging practices as design strategies?

We also make work.

Lots of work.

Work that made us feel strange to ourselves as creatives.

Work that rendered us learners about forms we might otherwise have once shunned.

Work that surprised;

Embarrassed;

Confused, and;

Delighted us.

The following four practices emerged and cohered to form an ecology of collaboration, experimentation, indifference to time and failure, reflexivity and work-in-progress showings.

### **As soon as you do it, I will do it too and hopefully better**

The change came as if there was a flick of the switch. No one had more time to prepare. We were all simultaneously alienated from our ways of working. It was like the world was made equal for us. Of course there are degrees of excellences in the devices we had and the potential for different bandwidths but these differences were slight in comparison to how different things seemed from just weeks ago. We were in Marc Augé's (1995) non-place space. Technology was now cutting through the tangibility of national borders and vast distances offering us an alternative location; a new tangible (other) place. With this, each time we met and witnessed each other we hungrily picked over each other's experiments within the medium and like Gollum, as if the new insights were a ring, scuttled back to our cell to try them out.

### **Spatial Design, Interloper Perches and Private Spaces**



We established a shared contract of weekly sessions of four hours in which we shared what we had been doing. Initially this felt forced and vapid. Over time we fell through a kind of looking glass in which space became time and our bodies scaffolded capacity to, in Elizabeth Grosz (1995) words, 'interface with the computer' (110). Grosz reports on the way in which 'collapsing of the workspace into the home computer system' has a big impact on our body, disrupting it from our connection to others and objects through a spatio-temporal layout. Rather than obscure our bedrooms and bathrooms from interlopers peering in through zoom connections we began to foreground our private spaces, leveraging the objects, walls and our distance from the camera to draw in or alienate the gaze of the onlooker.

### **Playing at looking: Looking at you, looking at me and looking at me looking at me**

Alone, we each performed for ourselves. Home studio, video capturing me as I half watch. Take and retake. Together, we performed for each other. Online. I perform – livestream. In zoom – I share edited footage. I watch you watching me. We discuss. I watch myself. The screen is a window; a mirror; a framer of content. Bolter and Gromala (2005) write about this as a transparency – reflectivity continuum and give attention to the way it troubles our perceptual experience as a looker: what is tangible, what is virtual, what is imagined. As we witnessed each other's work-in-progress showings we felt a far greater agency to interpret, to interact, to interfere than we had when we met previously within the studio-based work-in-progress showings. We asked each other to do it again. 'Replay it!' We interacted and made suggestions. We teleported ourselves into the work and felt what the work was like for the maker, the performer. We wanted the maker to know what it felt like to witness the work.

### **Retraining ourselves as performance practitioners**

In the four weeks that followed the first twenty-five days, we engaged with a series of methods that were emerging from the research. Projects shifted. One began to exploit the camera-as-audience and is investigating live performance for the purposes of creating video art. A second project has narrowed its focus to the mediated voice, vocal performance, and the use of verbatim strategies to inform spoken work texts. While a third project is focusing on time and simultaneous temporalities to explore what Levinas (cited in Dixon 2007, 90) terms the perfect present – when a present is 'so saturated by different temporalities that it becomes a 'perfect present', where time does not move, but merely dilates' using analogue strategies in an improvised live-streamed performance.

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**Rea Dennis**, is a theatre maker and performance studies scholar from Melbourne Australia. A Senior Lecturer at Deakin University Australia, her research interests span embodied creative practices, inclusive theatre, actor training, and kinaesthetic and sensory dramaturgy. She writes critical papers addressing practice-led research, theatre making, and embodied performance. Her performance work has toured to UK, New York, Taiwan, Germany, Brazil and Japan.

[rea.dennis@deakin.edu.au](mailto:rea.dennis@deakin.edu.au)

# Social Engagement And Activism

## 10. The Renewed Violence Of Life Under The Pandemic And The Resistive Potential Of Photovoice

Nancy Regina Gómez Arrieta, Universidad del Norte

Toby Miller, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana—Cuajimalpa

The world is convulsed by an unusual pandemic; at least, unusual in the last century, because it initially wrought more devastation in the Global North than the Global South, though as we write, confirmed cases in the Americas overtook Europe.

Despite that difference, typical antinomies are in play when it comes to crises in the wealthy world. On one side is a predicted return to a supposedly latent savagery lurking within us all, initially indexed in overly-vigorous supermarket contests for sanitary masks, toilet paper, and packaged food. Survivalists await the second coming of *The Lord of the Flies* (Golding, 1954), with guns, ammunition, and ideology at the ready in well-stocked shelters. When US politicians attempt to censor scientists fighting both the climate crisis and this virus, many of us picture billionaires equipping their bunkers with materials “liberated” from public storage.

On the other side lies a Panglossian celebration, a supposed renewal of civil society. This is allegedly evident from Mediterranean and Manhattan terrace- and stoop-dwellers serenading health professionals and their derring-do, citizens collecting food for those in need, and folks finding innovative ways to make love not war, teach their children well, and take exercise. It’s the putative equivalent of 1940s liberators or the spirit of the Blitz. But the Blitz was also a noteworthy moment in British criminal history, characterized by high levels of murder, sexual assault, and theft.

Unsurprisingly, there are surges in crime across the globe. In the countries where we live, Colombia has seen a longstanding wave of violence against indigenous environmental defenders intensify. They are slaughtered week after week by right-wing criminals working for shady, shadowy mining corporations. And Mexico experiences murders by the dozen as narco cartels battle for hegemony in towns and cities—the state absent, corrupt, or impotent—while social-media groups merrily organize to sack supermarkets and incite others to do the same. Police armed with automatic weapons patrol small suburban stores night and day. March 2020 became the deadliest month on record in Mexico—over two and half thousand homicides.

As local and national governments urge people to stay at home and maintain social distance to combat the spread of the virus, many women are confined with perpetrators of domestic violence, increasing their vulnerability to assault. Reports proliferate of abusive men luxuriating in the additional power over their female partners provided by lockdowns, insisting they not leave the house for fear of infection, and sometimes torturing and murdering them.

How do we define, count, interrogate, and study these human-rights violations? As scholars working in the prevailing conjuncture, we face the challenge of conducting relevant research *contra* domestic, environmental, and anti-indigenous violence.

We aim to contribute to that goal with a case study of five Colombian women who are living with perpetrators of intimate partner violence during this imposed social isolation.

We approached them in the hope of learning how they are coping during the quarantine. The idea is to understand women's experiences of violence and resistance in private spaces, from their own perspectives.

Our research is based on photovoice techniques. Photovoice is a participatory, community-based blend of a pictorial archive and grassroots activism that records even as it intervenes (Wang and Burris, 1997; Nykiforuk et al., 2011; Moletsane et al., 2015). Photovoice enables participants to express themselves spontaneously by producing images, creating new opportunities to reflect and represent community issues from creative and personal perspectives.

The photographs provide an instant preliminary approach to designing strategies against this latest normalization of domestic violence, inadvertently enabled by policies based in sound epidemiological advice. We hope to share them in the near future.

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**Nancy Regina Gómez Arrieta** is Professor and Chair of the Programa de Comunicación Social at the Universidad del Norte. Her work has appeared in the *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, *Gender and Education*, *Investigación y Desarrollo*, *Revista Lasallista de Investigación*, *Gender, Place & Culture*, and *Kepes*.

ngomez@uninorte.edu.co

**Toby Miller** is Stuart Hall Professor of Cultural Studies, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana—Cuajimalpa; Research Professor of the Graduate Division, University of California, Riverside; and Sir Walter Murdoch Distinguished Collaborator, Murdoch University. He is President of the Cultural Studies Association (US).

tobym69@icloud.com | [www.tobymiller.org](http://www.tobymiller.org)

# 11. Volunteers without Tears – applying the Social Response Cycle in a pandemic

Beverley Costa, Birkbeck, University of London

On 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020, the government sent out its call for a volunteer army. When over 650,000 people signed up on the GoodSAM app, I was filled with optimism and dread in equal measures. Optimism – that so many people wanted to help, and dread - that sometimes, unguided help can turn into hindrance. This is not a glamorous message.

All the same, my training and experience as a psychotherapist have shown me that helping is not always straightforward. Sometimes less is more. It seemed that new volunteers, who would be delivering medicine and food, were not going to receive training to think about helping dilemmas. Food delivery is not really the area of expertise of a counsellor or a therapist but thinking about helping relationships is. And thinking about gaps in service and how to respond to them is what I am calling the Social Response Cycle[1].

The Social Response Cycle is an action research methodology. It consists of the following cycle:

1. Observation 2. Response 3. Evaluation 4. Response 1. Observation .... and it is inspired by the founder of Psychodrama - Jacob Moreno's (1934) definition of spontaneity: an adequate response to a novel situation or a novel response to an old situation.

The Social Response Cycle has much in common with Kolb's Learning Cycle (1984) and with Lewin's Cycle of Action Research (1946). In Kolb's Learning Cycle, the starting point is the individual's new experience and the following stages show how the new experience is processed, integrated by the individual and learned from. The Social Response Cycle is located within the social rather than the individual experience. It includes the stage of Response (rather than Kolb's Active Experimentation), occurring twice within the cycle. The Response Phase is relational and reciprocal, ensuring that some kind of solution to a problem is provided. Simultaneously, evidence is gathered and evaluated, which tests out whether the first, pilot response is, in fact, effective. A core principle underpinning the Social Response Cycle is that an active, creative response to what is observed should be rapid, small and often untried.

It is the Social Response Cycle that I applied when I began to observe the need for a rapid training intervention for new volunteers in the time of the pandemic. My first response was to spend an entire weekend trying to work out what to do. The evaluation of my efforts, in the form of honest feedback from a team of friends and colleagues, was that it was too big a task for me to complete on my own. Also, apparently, my efforts, though worthy, were rather unfocused and dull! One member of the "team" of evaluators was a scriptwriter and together we agreed to trial an alternative, second response.

So, in 10 days, a small group including a scriptwriter, a film editor, a musician, a designer and an actor, as well as friends and family members, each working remotely out of our homes in Plymouth, Reading, London, Winchester, Oxford and San Francisco, conceived, wrote, filmed and edited a six-minute training film for this pandemic: *Volunteers without Tears*. To this team, some people brought years of experience in the professional creative industries, some were young and emerging performers. Others brought over 20 years' experience of working with and training volunteers.

The process of creating a training resource remotely was a new challenge for all of us. The script was written with three criteria in mind: to be entertaining; to convey the message (without preaching) of *less is sometimes more*; and to create a joint endeavour between people who were working in isolation.

Once the script was written and the roles cast, the film editor and producer instructed the team on their different tasks including: how to film different perspectives from a camera and laptop; the graphic design requirements – e.g. illustration of a house entrance from varying viewpoints; and the music required from the composer.

The finished product can be seen here. Please share it with anyone/any organisation you know, who is working with new volunteers in the community:

<https://www.pasaloproject.org/volunteers.html>

The film has been promoted through a selection of networks and the evaluation phase is now in progress.

Sharon, a project worker, in Cardiff told us: *“I found the film really helpful to back up some of the things I have been trying to get through to Management over the last few weeks....policies & procedures !”*

Eileen from the Dudley Volunteer Centre says of the film: *“It’s a brilliant way of getting over the importance of good practice systems when involving volunteers or volunteering, in a lovely light-hearted way.”*

A volunteer from Devon commented: *“I think it just needs something at the beginning to introduce what the reason for the video is...”*

In response to this evaluation we have submitted a bid for a small grant from the Big Lottery to create a brief e-learning resource wrapped around the film.

[1] Forthcoming online resource BACP

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**Beverley Costa**, a psychotherapist, set up Mothertongue multi-ethnic counselling service (2000-2018) a culturally and linguistically sensitive psychotherapeutic service in response to the lack of psychological therapy services for people who did not speak English as their first language. She founded The Pasalo Project to disseminate learning from Mothertongue. Beverley is a Senior Practitioner Fellow at Birkbeck, University of London. Together with Professor Jean Marc Dewaele, they won the 2013 British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), Equality and Diversity Research Award. Beverley created an e-learning resource for the BACP on setting up therapeutically framed social justice projects using the Social Response Cycle. Her book *Other Tongues - psychological therapies in a multilingual world* will be published in 2020 by PCCS Books.

## 12. Pre-Texts, using literature as raw material for art-making

Greg Labrosse, PhD candidate, Concordia University, Montreal.

“Pre-Texts” is a pedagogical and research method inspired by popular Latin American artistic practices that aims to foster creativity, collaboration and social transformation. It was developed by Doris Sommer, Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures and of African and African American Studies at Harvard University.

Groups of approximately 20 participants read a passage of a complex text (literary or scientific), and are then asked to interpret and expand on the ideas that the chosen text puts forward. This expansion of the text is accomplished through art-making, first with the guidance of a facilitator, and then by allowing participants to explore the text in their own creative ways. Some of the tools used by the facilitator include: reading out loud while participants carry out a manual art-making activity (as was done in Cuban tobacco factories), the production of clothesline literature (*literatura de cordel*), performing Forum theatre (see Augusto Boal), and cartonera bookmaking (that originated in Argentina).

Since 2007, professor Sommer and other Pre-Texts facilitators have used and taught this methodology in under-resourced areas throughout Latin America, the United States, Zimbabwe, and China. The approach has been especially helpful with survivors of societal violence. For example in Colombia, some of the workshops have served as a catalyst, allowing participants to indirectly process their feelings of fear and pain in a non-judgmental environment. Through art-making, they are able to work through these emotions and decide how they want to share them, giving them a sense of control in the process.

Since the pandemic, facilitators have carried out virtual workshops successfully with slightly smaller groups. Training in the methodology is required.

<http://www.pre-texts.org/>

<https://vimeo.com/412864048>

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**Greg Labrosse** is an educator and researcher who has been living in Cartagena, Colombia, since 2006. He has worked on projects with the Laboratory for Research and Innovation in Development and Culture at the Technological University of Bolivar, where he also held the position of director of Foreign Languages in the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences. His research focuses on issues of cultural agency and the production of urban spaces in the Global South. He is currently pursuing a PhD in Humanities at Concordia University in Montreal.

[greglabrosse@gmail.com](mailto:greglabrosse@gmail.com)

## 13. A manifesto for methodologies at the end of a world (and grieving the world we once knew)

Dr. Laine Zisman Newman, Brock University

Making manifest: This is a manifesto in so far as it makes plausible new methodological considerations by acknowledging, expanding, and disrupting research processes in the times of corona. Sara Ahmed notes that “manifestos often enact what they call for in surprising and shocking ways given how they expose the violence of an order [...] A manifesto not only causes a disturbance, it aims to cause this disturbance” (251).

Disturbing expectations:

*Look around you.* The room you are in is full: an assemblage of histories and stories, presences and erasures, privileges and oppressions. These are present as an oft-unheard undertone, so steadily iterated its magic dissipates, unnoticed and unremarked. This room cannot be emptied. How do your surroundings in isolation shape your research? How do the walls, the images, the presence of others, inform the words you read and write? Our situation has situated each of us in different spaces. Dissolving divides between public and private. Give yourself space to be reoriented and to reorient your work within these walls.

This manifesto is a breathing document, pulsing with possibilities, grounded in grief and loss. Take what you need, leave the rest.

Redefine “The Work” (and stop telling people to slow down):\_Work in a pandemic involves loss. We must allow ourselves time to grieve. But, this is easier said than done. An instruction to “slow down” is not a neutral one. Neo-liberal capitalist temporality produces a rush that latches on to the promise of productivity. Who is awarded time and seen as worthy of taking time directly correlates to who is valued. Sandra D’Urso notes, “A lack of time, resources, ‘rights’, public services, and/or space appears to be the guiding logic of austerity thinking” (40). This is gendered, as much as it is informed by race, class, and other identity markers. In times of pandemic (and those that follow), we must redefine work. This is not a methodology for research, but one of survival. On days where “the work” can’t get done, acknowledge the work you are doing (caring, grieving, crying, this is necessary work as well).

Give yourself permission to do less today.

Complicate the narrative: While some mainstream messaging suggests that we are “all in this together,” we are not all experiencing the same pandemic. Resources, time, and



access shape our daily lives differently. Our task as researchers might be to complicate a narrative that erases the precarity of the other (or our own). Holly Lewis explains, the adoption of phrasing like “we are all in this together” is used to conceal social relations (1). She writes, “the term everybody is a political euphemism used by capitalists (and those who believe them) to deflect responsibility for system processes onto consumers who cannot control them” (3). We are not in this together. But, we can make space for new forms of collaboration that refute a neo-liberal individualist logic. Disrupt the notion that we are each responsible for our own success and productivity. Supporting a research team can extend beyond field work, writing, and analysis. Hobart and Kneese explain, care can be “theorized as an affective connective tissue between an inner self and an outer world, care constitutes a feeling with, rather than a feeling for, others” (2). Take a moment to consider how to create a care-full research practice.

If you have the time and energy, create a distraction for a colleague’s children, send them videos, activities, or offer to teach their kids something online. Provide parenting-colleagues with a moment to conduct research or to rest. This might not feel like a methodology for research, but what if we redefine care as a mode of scholarly collaboration?

Find the conjunctions beyond opposition. Following Lisa Duggan and José Esteban Muñoz, indulge and engage hope and hopelessness, as modalities of existence that enrage, sadden, grieve, inspire, and make possible new ways of existing in the world. Duggan and Muñoz take hope and hopelessness together rather than in opposition. Hopelessness can be a refusal to submit to the expectations ascribed to us by our current academic structures, refusing the promises that hard work will lead to success. Such a refusal can exist alongside hopefulness, founded in a “revolutionary feeling.” As Muñoz explains, educated hope “is not about announcing the way things ought to be, but, instead, imagining what things could be” (278).

Our lives and work are disrupted. We mourn what’s out of grasp: Cancelled conferences, courses, fieldwork, performances. These are worth mourning. But, these shifts can also infuse our work with care-fullness and response-ability that might have been previously absent. We can embrace disruption to create a counter-hegemonic methodology for existing in the world.

Fail. Create a Radical “Otherwise”: Caring allows us to make space for an alternative: “mobilizations of care allow us to envision what Elizabeth Povinelli describes as an otherwise” (Hobart and Kneese 3). While I wish this virus had not interrupted our world, I also think our world needed (and still very much needs) an interruption. Think radical thoughts. In the face of grief and loss, changing modes and pace, attending to care-full methodologies can feel like not accomplishing goals, falling behind, or even quitting altogether. What would it take for those perceived “failures” to be ok?

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**Dr. Laine Zisman Newman** is a postdoctoral fellow at Brock University in the Department of Geography and Tourism. Her postdoctoral research considers the spatial experiences of those who oppose sexual and gendered rights and equalities. She is also currently researching Yiddish writing-as-resistance, as it relates to intergenerational trauma and narratives of resilience. Zisman Newman is editor of the upcoming volume, *Women and Popular Culture in Canada* and co-editor of the second edition of *Queerly Canadian* (forthcoming 2020).

## 14. Dança & Parkinson

**Dr Aline Nogueira Haas**, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), Brazil

I would like to contribute by sharing my experience in Brazil doing research in the area of Dance for Parkinson's. I have been leading a research and community Project "Dança e Parkinson" for 6 years at Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), Brazil.

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, we cancelled the pre-sessional classes and we decided to work with the group sending online videos to support them during this period. Since the beginning of April, we have been sending videos to the group by WhatsApp, as we think this is the best way to achieve them during the self-isolation period.

The online dance classes start sitting on chairs, moving different parts of the body (arms, legs, head, shoulders, ...) on the space (up and down, side to side, ...) changing rhythm, using the touch to awake the body and emphasizing the internal perception and experience. In the second part of the class, in a standing position, the participants performed coordination and balance activities, using the back of the chair support. The class finished with rhythmic and playful activities, motor coordination, and creativity through improvisation.

Elderly people in Brazil don't have so much information and access to technology, social media and the internet. Even so, 12 participants are doing the online dance classes twice a week. Considering this new situation, we decided to start a research about the impact of online dance classes videos in Parkinson's quality of life. We are planning to interview the participants by phone during the last two weeks of May, after 60 days of self-isolation. We are going to ask them about feelings (anxiety, fear, depression) during the self-isolation period, and the impact of the online dance classes in their daily live activities and in their symptoms.

Also, we have been asking participants to register the classes, sending photographs and videos by WhatsApp. Seeing the videos and the photographs we can give them feedback about their performance during the activities.

## Links

Youtube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCILPKVSA-7LygQ-zAh5wR3A>

Instagram and facebook: @dancaeparkinson

**Dr Aline Haas** is Associate Professor in Dance Science at Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, in the Department of Physical Education, Physiotherapy and Dance. She was a Postdoctoral Research Assistant in Dance Science at University of Wolverhampton, UK. She is currently a dance and Pilates practitioner/researcher and educator. She is Member of International Association for Dance Medicine and Science (IADMS) Research Committee; and Leader of the “Research Group in Arts, Body and Education”. Aline’s research focuses on Dance Science and Health. Her current research projects are related to the effects of dance on Parkinson’s quality of life.

[alinehaas02@hotmail.com](mailto:alinehaas02@hotmail.com) | <https://www.ufrgs.br/esefid/site/> | <http://www.ufrgs.br/ppgcmh/site/corpo-docente/48/Aline-Nogueira-Haas/>

## 15. Las en Stop Stories

Dr Katharine Low, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama

Erica Lüttich, Artist

Like many, our planned research practice has completely shifted. We began the year planning to run a socially engaged performance and textile project in situ in the rural villages of De Doorns and Loxton (in the Western Cape) and the Karoo (in the Northern Cape) in South Africa. We have now started the project virtually (for Kat) and appropriately socially distanced for Erica, Katrina in De Doorns and Lenda (Laslappies cooperative) and our other co-collaborators. The focus of our practice is to create spaces in which women’s knowledges, griefs and joys can be heard and recorded, part of the wider picture is the lack of space for acknowledgement of the maternal experience and of acknowledge maternal grief and labour, all the more heightened in the current COVID-19 lockdown. The project is a creative journey to take a material account of women’s individual stories, to record and document their hopes, dreams and experiences and creating a material artefact to for them to keep and share as they wish to do.

With the move to the virtual and socially distanced interaction, important questions around consent, ethics and access to materials have been our main concerns, ensuring the work is contextualised and translated appropriately as we are working across Sotho, Xhosa, Afrikaans and English, abiding by South Africa’s strict socially distancing rules and shifting lockdown levels, sharing materials and artefacts virtually, and exploring how to create spaces where participants can meet at a distance and maintaining an affective atmosphere. Our main focus has been in re-shifting the ways in which we had planned to work in order to ensure that we are still creating a material or virtual space in which all the participants can come together to share and pass on knowledge and share

experiential learning and understanding, giving space to hear and value this learning. To find a time to connect.

Methodologically speaking, our arts-based research is fluidly shifting, adapting to data needs and access, considering how to navigate limited cellphone ownership and exploring how to record the experiential and affective atmosphere of the creative space from a distance. The material artefacts created are the account of our process and will be displayed as part of a celebration on National Women's Day (August 9<sup>th</sup>) where we hope that some of the co-collaborators will be able to gather in person. We have delivered materials, cellphone data, masks and diaries to our participants and at present we are running workshops in situ but via whatsapp – sharing tutorials and offers to the participants and inviting their responses. We are developing a website in which to display the stories, performative and creative artefacts. Part of the research drive of creatively recording the experiences and stories of these women is to diversify the narratives of women living in rural South Africa and extending a space for a discussion of these experiences whereby the women can talk directly to academic research. The use of arts-based approaches (the crafting, textile artefact creations and performative responses) means the stories may be experienced in more felt and complex manners and also allows for a sharing of skills between all the co-collaborators.

**Katharine Low** is Senior Lecturer in Applied Theatre and Community Performance at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London. She is a practitioner and researcher in socially engaged performance and health and has developed applied theatre practices as ways of engaging young adults and women living with HIV in discussions around sexual health in South Africa, Tanzania and the UK. Katharine has co-edited *Applied Theatre: Performing Health and Wellbeing* and has completed a monograph examining sexual health and applied theatre practice in South Africa for Palgrave Macmillan. Katharine is currently developing performance practices with women living with HIV and researching the impact of motherhood on academic life. Katharine tweets about arts & health practice at [@katlow17](https://twitter.com/katlow17).

[Katharine.Low@cassd.ac.uk](mailto:Katharine.Low@cassd.ac.uk) | [www.katharinelow.com](http://www.katharinelow.com)

**Erica Lüttich** studied at Ruth Prowse College of Art in 1981-1983 before becoming a film editor. During 1992 she enrolled at Unisa (BA Fine Arts). This led to a parallel career as Creative Facilitator-Director within the field of Arts and Craft and Social Development in Hillbrow, Soweto, Sharpeville, Diepsloot, Bitou Municipality, Northern Cape and Karoo. Collaborating with Boitumelo (Hillbrow) she and the project participated as artists, facilitating and teaching craft development with crafters in South Africa. Through the creative process of making, the artwork becomes defined and the working together of many hands and hearts creates a clear path that can be refined by each individual and the intentions can then be communicated to the public collectively. In 2019 she decided to practice creatively independently with various projects globally. In addition to her interest in the above arenas, she continually produces art in various media including Photography, Video Installations, Sculpture, Land Art and Textile & Embroidery Art.

[ericaluttich@gmail.com](mailto:ericaluttich@gmail.com)

## 16. Lockdown Labyrinths

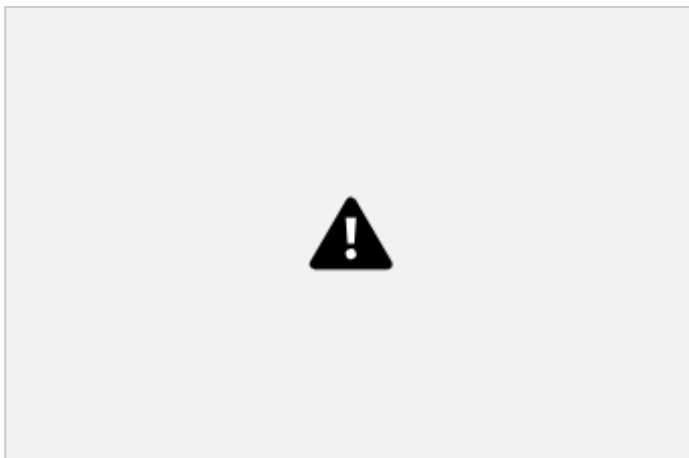
Elaine McNeill, Liverpool John Moores University, PhD Researcher

### The Study

The Lockdown Labyrinth study aims to investigate the usefulness and significance of using labyrinth Art-Based Research (ABR) to reflect on experiences of social isolation during epidemics. ABR offers ways to describe, explore, discover and problem-solve and use arts practice to develop new insights and raise awareness. (Leavy, 2018) Art has the ability to capture the unfolding nature of social life and can often be employed in problem-centred or issue centred projects.

### Labyrinths

Creating and walking labyrinths can help us contemplate our thoughts. A labyrinth is a unicursal path outlined on the floor that twists and turns, leading into the centre and out again. Ancient labyrinths were winding circular paths that incorporated a spiral. Walking them can provide a potentially powerful and deeply peaceful experience. Many have found, the narrow, meditative path can offer the opportunity for fresh insights, time within and contemplation.



Lockdown Rainbow Labyrinth - Liverpool April 2020

### Review of Arts Base Health Research

A review of 129 Arts Based Health Research (ABHR) articles between 1985 and 2019, indicates that the majority of the ABH research tends to focus on one artform, several combine focus group methods with the arts activity thus small group sizes are more effective and the participants usually represent one patient type. For example in 2006 Baker and Wang used photovoice methods with 13 senior citizens to explore chronic pain (Baker and Wang 2006), and in 2019 Spagnol employed dance and aerial acrobatics with 15 adults to promote awareness of epilepsy (Spagnol et al 2018). Over 290 years ago, in 1996 Power used drawings as an alternative approach to measure knowledge around the HIV pandemic, involving a record number of over 500 adolescents (Power, 1996). This current global health crisis presents the opportunity to investigate

the impact of labyrinth ABR with a large group of diverse participants who are all experiencing the Covid-19 pandemic.

The study will examine the societal impact of the pandemic and effectiveness of arts-based methods to explore experiences of lockdown. Whilst life in the UK continues, because of the pandemic it looks and feels very different. The arts sector has devised a host of imaginative ways to help reduce social isolation and improve the mental health of communities. This arts-based health PhD research has been adapted to engage participants during social isolation.

### **Association of Arte Utile**

The Lockdown Labyrinth is one of many Labyrinth Exchange projects. The Labyrinth Exchange is rooted in the principles of Freire, Boal and participatory action research and features in the Association of Arte Utile archive. The Association of Arte Utile is an expansive international project and online archive that forms part of the Uses of Art programmes with the L'internationale confederation. The Labyrinth Exchange evolved during a participatory action research project involving people living with dementia to explore how the arts can improve quality of life. Ethical approval was granted by Liverpool John Moores University and NHS National and Regional ethic committees for the participatory research with people living with dementia Ref: (LJMU REF: 16/LSA/009) (IRAS ref: 209896)



Lost and Found Labyrinth (co-design with people living with dementia) Liverpool May 2019

The Lockdown Labyrinth will invite our socially isolated nation to produce artwork and install labyrinths on Saturday 20th June – Summer Solstice. Schools and home schooling families will be invited to submit artwork to be included in a collective lockdown labyrinth curated by the labyrinth team in November 2020 as part of the Being Human Festival.

### **Tangled Tales Information Video**

This Tangled Tales project video describes the participatory research project with people living with dementia including the Lost and Found (Dementia) Labyrinth and the On Cloud 79 ethno-comedy play.

<https://vimeo.com/353588981>

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The Labyrinth Exchange archive entry on Arte Útile

[Archive / The Labyrinth Exchange](#)

**Elaine McNeill** is a creative artist and researcher. Her doctoral research investigates the impact of participatory arts-based health research on public and patient engagement to develop and improve health services. Taking a multidisciplinary approach Elaine's artistic practice and research encompasses the fields of health, visual art, theatre, comedy, narrative analysis, grounded theory and participatory action research methods.

[E.McNeill@jmu.ac.uk](mailto:E.McNeill@jmu.ac.uk)

# Collaborations

## 17. Via the screen: Moving with the technology rather than against it

**Dr Claire Loussouarn, Goldsmiths University and SOAS**

As a dancer and filmmaker, I have a fascination for moving bodies and images and where they meet. During the lockdown, I carried out an experiment in the format of a movement class online which proposed to see opportunities in the restrictions we were experiencing. Every Monday at 5pm I invited fellow movers to join me and rethink our movement practices with the screen rather than against it. The idea was that rather than use zoom as a way to replace our previous experiences of moving together in a common physical space, I proposed to re-think what it meant to move together via the screen. This meant that we had to acknowledge what were the affordances of this new situation, that is to say the new ways of moving and working together it allowed:

### 1) Multiple intimate spaces

We were still moving in physical space but each space has its own character (light effects, crowded with personal objects/furniture or not, constricted/spacious, etc) and was clearly distinctive. Compared to the neutral space of the dance studio, all these individual spaces were intimate and unique which created as one participant described it a feeling of 'distant intimacy'. Some people even expressed feeling more comfortable to move in a somatic manner in their own space than in the studio.

### 2) Framing and agency

Unlike screendance films where the dancer is filmed by the filmmaker, in this configuration the mover has agency in the way s/he is being framed and seen. Framing, especially when carrying out moving and witnessing sessions with each other, becomes an integral part of the movement although it is up to the movers how much they interact with it. Framing offers a restricted field of vision within which they can choose what to include, that is to say, which elements of the room to include or not and what that offers in terms of movement (for example, a wide shot offered to move away in the distance while still being in frame and a close up offered to move more specifically with a body part) and what not to include and let the viewer(s) imagine what is happening outside the screen. Moving out of the frame as a whole or in part becomes an integral part of our movements.

### 3) Self-view

Very early on, the question that we are not only movers but directors and choreographers of our movements creates an inevitable tension as the self-view screen in zoom becomes an immediate mirror feedback of how we move and how others are witnessing us moving. One can turn the self-view off but in the spirit of exploring what this new way of being in movement together offers we decided to work with it despite the discomfort it created to start with (although this discomfort varied from person to person and even developed into reassuring comfort for one person as the sessions developed). Moving with it made us more aware of how moving in our 3D spaces affected what was on the 2D screen and therefore created a direct connection, and even at times play between the two.



This was also reinforced by witnessing others moving on screen. We also worked with the self-view off at times and compared the two modes of movement.

#### 4) Multiple devices

One can login into zoom with a desktop, a laptop, a tablet and a mobile phone. The type of device you use can significantly alter your experience of moving with the screen as some are more mobile than others and will allow more flexibility in terms of how you might frame your movement or experience witnessing the other moving. Smaller devices are easier to manipulate in space but they offer a narrower screen space to watch another or others on screen (when several will move together in their unique space/screen while being witnessed). You can also login to zoom with as many devices as you have which means you can move with multiple screens/perspectives. Something that I experimented with in the class: I moved with three screens (desktop, laptop and mobile phone) experimenting in my movement with the differences and I asked participants to respond in movement to what they witnessed.

#### 5) Moving with the screen

The mobility of certain devices means that moving with the screen can also become part of your movement. Moving the camera offers more framing options and reinforces the agency of the mover in how s/he is being seen (although more choices can be overwhelming at first). By holding and moving the device in your hands, you are not just moving with the screen but also with the viewer. You are holding him/her/them, you are dancing with them.

**Dr Claire Loussouarn** is a social anthropologist, filmmaker and movement artist. She is Associate Lecturer at Goldsmiths and Senior Teaching Fellow at SOAS. Claire co-directed and filmed the documentary *Inside the Dance* which explores the crossing of partner dancing, improvisation and transience. Claire is also the co-founder of Kinesthesia a moving image festival which is the first to focus uniquely on the sensory and bodily experiences of making and watching moving images. Her main research interest is embodied filmmaking, a theme that she explores in the audio somatic practice *Dancing with the camera*.

I'll be delighted to hear from anyone who is interested in and/or exploring similar questions.

[c.loussouarn@gold.ac.uk](mailto:c.loussouarn@gold.ac.uk)

## 18. CORPORATE MARBLE – an internet duet for movement and voice

Gemma Collard-Stokes, University of Derby

Scott Thurston, University of Salford

We have been independently building hybrid movement-writing practices over the last decade, and have been collaborating for about a year to share our practices, develop

new performance material and to offer our techniques in workshop form. Having recently completed a work-in-progress showing (at Amy Voris' studio in Manchester: <https://www.accumulationsproject.com/studio-307/>) the lockdown has found us at an interesting juncture in attempting to draw out the learning from our recent showing whilst also finding trajectories forward.

The methodology we have developed for continuing to work in a pandemic has been to evolve ways of generating and sharing verbal and choreographic material in online meetings. We initially began by rehearsing performance scores from North American language poet Bruce Andrews' *Love Songs* (1982) which contains 151 texts, many of which have specific performance instructions. The edgy and disruptive use of language throughout this work suited our aesthetic well and does not require a microsecond precision of timing that is inevitably compromised by internet communication.

From this starting point we have developed a way of making and rehearsing utilising the key elements of movement and language, following these stages:

1. We drew on an improvised verbalisation from our work-in-progress showing to generate a new written text which, following our work with *Love Songs*, we divided into two parts – one for each voice.
2. Inspired by Jonathan Burrows' dance 'Hands' (1995), and his collaborations with Matteo Fargion, Gemma devised a short movement phrase to be executed within the space visible and available to us in front of our computer cameras as sitting or standing in front of them.
3. We then began to integrate our textual material with our movement material and rehearsing in unison, making documentation via the internet comms platform or other means and editing the results together.
4. The constraint of working within the newly-narrowed parameters of such a space have nevertheless enabled us to refine our movement and text exploration to a new level of detail and integration.
5. Having made material specifically to suit this we therefore also now have the option of offering it as a work in progress showing/performance via the internet platform.



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<http://motionbank.org/en/content/jonathan-burrows-matteo-fargion.html>

**Gemma Collard-Stokes** is an independent dance artist making work of an interdisciplinary nature. Her artistic enquiry explores social interaction and the social history of places through a combination of environmentally responsive movement practice, creative writing and physical theatre. This extends from her PhD, 'Dissolving Borders: the integration of writing into a movement practice' (2017), an exploration of how movement improvisation principles can be applied to acts of writing in order to reveal the suchness of our lived experience of dance. In her academic role as Research Fellow at the University of Derby. She works within the field of Health and Social Care in the context of Arts in Health and Creative Expressive Arts for Wellbeing with a specific specialist focus on therapeutic applications of dance and somatic movement.

[g.collard-stokes@derby.ac.uk](mailto:g.collard-stokes@derby.ac.uk) | [gemmacollardstokes.com](http://gemmacollardstokes.com)

**Scott Thurston** is a poet, mover and Reader in English and Creative Writing at the University of Salford. He has published fifteen books and chapbooks of poetry, and some recent titles include: *Poems for the Dance* (Aquifer, 2017), *Draft Vicinity* (Knives Forks and Spoons, 2018) and *We Must Betray Our Potential* (The Red Ceilings, 2018). *Phrases towards a Kinopoetics* due out from Contraband in 2020. Scott is founding co-editor of open access *Journal of British and Irish Innovative Poetry* and co-organized the long-running poetry reading series *The Other Room* in Manchester (2008-2018). Since 2004, he has been developing a poetics integrating dance and poetry which has seen him collaborating with dancers Sarie Mairs Slee, Julia Griffin and Gemma Collard-Stokes.

[S.Thurston@salford.ac.uk](mailto:S.Thurston@salford.ac.uk)

## 19. What are theatres doing online?

Christina Papagiannouli, University of South Wales

With half of the world's population being under lockdown, theatre makers, educators and researchers have turned towards the internet to communicate with their audiences. Although the main norm seems to be streaming pre-recorded performances via the Internet, individual artists, activists and researchers have started staging live performances and online readings of plays in response to COVID-19 (see [Centre for Media and Culture in Small Nations](#), 2020). The pandemic has given rise to online theatre (or cybperformance) as a useful tool for making (physical and) social-distancing theatre.

Cyberformance is an umbrella term that defines 'the genre of digital performance that uses the Internet as a performance space' (Papagiannouli, 2016, p.x).

### **What is online theatre?**

Online theatre is a real-time live theatrical event that allows the 'social meeting between performer and spectator in the live presence of the here and now' (Kattenbelt, 2006, p.33); a 'here and now' that in cyberformance takes place in a virtual space. Online theatre is not about streaming pre-recorded or even live theatre performances. This could be termed as 'theatre online' - that is theatre which is available online - or as 'theatrofilm'. Rather, it is about building a sense of co-presence and co-existence in real time for remote online audiences. Although here the performers and the audience do not share the same geographical space, the 'co-presence' derives from the interactive participation of the audience in real time:

the notion of liveness in cyberformance is directly connected to the interactive and participative character of the Internet, as without real-time engagement the notion of co-presence is weak and, thus, liveness is meaningless. (Papagiannouli, 2016, p.10)

However, most of the COVID-19 crisis online productions fail to engage audiences in an interactive and participative way. Making online theatre is often more fun than watching it and audiences can easily feel left out and isolated.

### **How can we make interactive online theatre?**

Online platforms allow a new form of remote cyber-collaboration to take place, between the audience and the performance and between the performers themselves. By allowing the audience to interact, communicate, challenge and creatively disturb the performance, we can embrace the audience in the making and staging of online theatre. Participants can manifest themselves and choose whether or not they want to participate, stay silent or take active part in the happenings:

Although it is fascinating to experience the internet as a space that rejects 'physical, [geographical] and biological limitations' (Kunst, PR 4(2) 1999: 51) and connects distant people, it is even more fascinating to experience moments of pure interaction and communication between the audience and the performance itself. (Papagiannouli, 2018, p.430)

There are four types of online platforms that allow remote, real-time online collaboration and audience engagement, which can serve as both a tool and a space for theatre and performance making:

- (1) Virtual Worlds (i.e. Second Life and Palace) with avatars performing for audience avatars
- (2) Streaming Media (i.e. Skype, Zoom and Chatroulette) that allow both performers and audience to connect in the same virtual space using webcams, audio, chat and other features.
- (3) Social Media (i.e. Twitter, Facebook and Instagram) accounts of characters performing for their followers and 'friends'. Now most social media platforms allow web-cam and streaming communications with audiences.

- (4) Purpose-build platforms (i.e. UpStage - an open source web-based venue for online performance) where the audience can communicate with performers via a chat-box.

I have been using the UpStage platform since 2011 to stage online theatre performances for geographically-distributed audiences as part of my practice-based PhD Research titled *The Etheatre Project: Directing Political Cyberperformance* (2010-2014). The Etheatre Project is a series of experimental cyberperformances that use internet platforms as theatrical, rehearsal and performance spaces to explore the interactive and political potentials of online theatre.

Although COVID-19 hasn't changed my research methodologies which are based on remote cyber-collaboration with international artists and researchers, it has contextually challenged and informed my work. I am currently collaborating with international artists and researchers on a cyber-adaptation of Ionesco's *Jeux de massacre*, which started as a creative escape from the lockdown. With some collaborators based in countries easing or exiting lockdown, the main challenge is not anymore how to facilitate communication and collaboration across different time zones, but rather across different COVID-19 zones and pandemic experiences and changes of rules across different countries and nations.

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**Dr Christina Papagiannouli** is Research Fellow in Performance and Interactive & Immersive Technology at the University of South Wales. Her research interests focus on the political character of cyberperformance and the use of interactive and immersive technologies in theatre and performance. Her most recent publications include 'InstaStan – FaceBrook – Brecht+: a performer training methodology for the age of the internet', a co-authored article with Sarah Crews in *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training* (2019,10:2) and 'On Line: A response from a transmedial, postdigital and post-internet future', a short provocation in *Performance Research* (2018, 23:4-5). Her monograph *Political Cyberperformance: The Etheatre Project* was published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2016. She is co-convener of TaPRA's Performance and New Technologies working group.

[christina.papagiannouli@southwales.ac.uk](mailto:christina.papagiannouli@southwales.ac.uk) | <https://etheatreblog.wordpress.com/>

## 20. Creative Collaboration in the Pandemic

Alison Rapsey, Deputy Head of the Institute of Jewellery, Fashion and Textiles, Birmingham City University

Meera Curam, Course Director, BA (Hons) Textile Design, Birmingham City University

This paper investigates and reflects on the teaching and learning with Level 5 students in the school of Fashion and Textiles, Birmingham Institute of Jewellery, Fashion, and Textiles.

As the face to face teaching was stopped in early May, due to COVID-19 the students were left with no option but to be part of the Collaborative Practice module quite reluctantly. The work placements were cancelled, and the students moved back home. This came as a big surprise to the students as well as the tutors. Overnight a team was set up and the Module leader started to design the plan to work “Collaboratively” online. Historically the Collaborative Practice was initiated to bring interdisciplinary learning platforms to involve students from different creative disciplines to collaborate to come with a unique creative expression. It was successful with the Art and media students and was never tried with the Fashion and Textile students. This module was to be delivered to 235 students with a team of 10 tutors for 5 weeks and initially, it was actioned over 10 weeks by other schools.

Initially, there was resistance from the participants as the ownership of learning and decision making were on the students and the tutors were the facilitators who helped them with thinking and ideating tools. It was also a baptism of fire into online learning when they hadn't had any experience of this with their course and cohorts, therefore, working in teams with students from other courses was additional pressure. The students developed empathy, ownership, trust, and extended support to each other, were successful using online materials and with whatever skills and resources and material that was at their disposal in home environments.

Working in different cities and some in different zones, the openness to accommodate each other evolved within two weeks. Virtual brainstorming using online platforms, setting up meetings, sharing responsibility, and accountability. The students used Google slides, Padlet, Canva, Word cloud, and mind-mapping tools to build successful online collaboration. Technology and working remotely with the support of technology created a dynamic creative community of practitioners across miles.

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**Alison Rapsey** studied BA in Surface Pattern and Textiles Design at University before moving into a career in retail management within the fashion industry working for Arcadia group stores and Ladieswear Manager Emporio Armani. She has over 14 years of teaching experience joining Birmingham City University as a lecturer in Fashion Retail Management in 2006. Following her years of dedication to the department, in 2012 she became Course Director for BA(Hons) Fashion Business and Promotion and now is the Deputy Head of the Institute of Jewellery Fashion and Textiles.

[Alison.Rapsey@bcu.ac.uk](mailto:Alison.Rapsey@bcu.ac.uk)

**Meera Curam** is an artist, sculptor and textile artist whose seamless explorations with nature emerge as fabric, memory, pattern and joyous celebration. Some of her projects include Song of Kalamkari, A coffee table book and Music of the blocks and dance of the dyes, resource book documenting a design studio involved in natural dyeing and printing methods.

[Meera.Curam@bcu.ac.uk](mailto:Meera.Curam@bcu.ac.uk) | <https://www.bcu.ac.uk/fashion-and-textiles>



# Live To Digital

## 21. Being live - developing digital stage

Martin Burr, Fachwerk Allschwil

These days hackathons have become a survival kit in “home-office”. During lockdown, calling a transformed home this way is a funny word creation just after Great Britain left the EU: popping up british offices all over europe.

Inspired by the #WirVsVirus Hackathon (15,000 participants in Germany, several Swiss organizations brought Switzerland together for the Swiss-wide virtual hackathon #VersusVirus on 3-5 April to develop fresh ideas and solutions in dealing with and against the coronavirus. During the 48h hackathon, 4'500 registered hackers from all over the world with a variety of backgrounds formed 600 teams and collaborated to find solutions for the selected 190 hackathon challenges in 14 topic areas, among them Art & Culture.

They were supported by 500 mentors and frequent “how to” sessions that were streamed live via Zoom and Youtube. Besides the actual hackathon, a broad offer of inspiring panel discussions, live-concerts, yoga sessions – all streamed on Youtube – enabled the participants to get some new energy and inspiration. One of the highlights of #VersusVirus was a live-interview with the Federal Council Alain Berset, who highlighted the importance of innovation and collaboration in current times and encouraged the participants in their hackathon activities.

The hackathon ran under the patronage of the Federal Department of Home Affairs (FDHA) and the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER). Among the organizers of #VersusVirus are Impact Hub Switzerland, Panter, Powercoders, Opendata.ch, Gebert Rűf Stiftung, digitalswitzerland, Staatslabor, GEN Switzerland, Swisscom, ETH Entrepreneur Club, foraus, and many others.

Digital Stage comes out of this collection of voices, an experience everyone celebrating birthday with teleconferencing tools knows: as soon as there are more than four voices to sing along, the sound gets mixed up by several latencies. No way to be live during this pandemics together. Concerts, theatre and other performances are currently offered mainly in the form of recordings.

Only co-creation is happening necessarily by sharing time. And if there's no live, there's hardly any life: Many artistic productions seek to rehearse together from different locations and perform in front of a live audience. The existing possibilities are video conferencing systems with voice optimization. These often only allow for 2-3 people to be heard at the same time, with a long transmission delay, making it difficult, if not impossible, to perform together. And this is how doing arts research in a Pandemic has become system-relevant to be together in this: by lowering latencies and broadcasting bundles of different voices from different locations to be present just now.

Key numbers:

5'043 members on the hackathon's slack channel

4'610 registered hackers

26 members of the Swiss parliament participated the hackathon

611 teams were formed

500 mentors supported the teams in finding solutions

192 challenges in 14 topic areas were worked on

## Links

[Digital Stage](#)

[Home Office](#)

[versusvirus](#)

[wirvsvirus](#)

[EUvsVirus](#)

[Martin.burr.ch](#)

[fachwerk.site](#)

**Martin Burr** (\*1973 Basel), Réalisateur, is interested in virtual virtuosity. He studied at the academies of music, arts, theater and dance in the Netherlands, founded ateliers for arts and sciences and curates a Fachwerk of building, staging, projecting and biennale.

[martin@burr.ch](mailto:martin@burr.ch) | Digital Stage

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## 22. The Opportunities of Reduced Distance

Bernadette Cochrane, University of Queensland

As someone who works on the screening of live theatre in cinemas, the COVID-19 pandemic created a research paradox. Spatio-temporally, the very object of my research focus became simultaneously remote and accessible.

The live-to-digital paradigm is both a cultural and economic force with which to be reckoned. From David Bowie's 2003 album release party for *Reality*<sup>1</sup> to the Metropolitan Opera's 2006 transmission of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* to the National Theatre of Great Britain's 2009 live screening of Racine's *Phèdre*, the live screening phenomenon has transformed the digital and performance landscapes. Live-to-Digital, as a collective noun, now encompasses what is called Event Cinema; having live or on-demand content available online, and live or on-demand television broadcasting. Some of this content is free; some comes at a cost. Streaming, downloading, narrowcasting, and broadcasting, Live-to-Digital offers audiences unparalleled access to cultural events, regardless of how remote in time and place they may be from the originating event. The ubiquity of the phenomenon has shifted theatre from being *live local* to *live global*.

David Hancock, Head of Cinema Analysis of IHS Technology, quipped: “Theatre has become the new hot genre in Anglophone countries”. Reception may well be global in the Anglosphere, but even in a pre-COVID world, accessing the primary materials often problematic for researchers working at one remove. Pre-COVID, and for example, if one wanted to examine the use of intermediality in *All About Eve* produced by the National Theatre of Great Britain and Sonia Freedman Productions, physical access to the archives of the National was needed. The single, or sometimes double screening, of an NT Live offering doesn’t offer the opportunity for sustained viewing. The same holds true for screenings of live-capture ballet and opera.

The post-COVID world presents a different model. Firstly, with the closure of performance venues around the world, companies have rushed to release their back-catalogues across a variety of platforms, be this YouTube, Vimeo, Digital Theatre Plus, and the suchlike. Many of these screenings while time delimited allow for multiple viewings usually at little, or more often at no cost to the viewer. Companies such as the National Theatre (GB) are reconfiguring not just their distribution methods but also how they present themselves to their audiences. The National Theatre (GB) has repurposed the “NT Live” brand to create the “National Theatre [at] Home”. The Sydney Opera House now promotes “From our House to Yours”. And, the Australian Ballet has “At home With Ballet TV”. The theatrical offerings, moreover, are no longer just from the Anglophone world and particularly from the UK.

Now that we are five, six, eight weeks into the pandemic at varying levels of lockdown, new modalities are emerging. Pre-COVID, theatrical screening content was dominated by the National Theatre (GB) as the first mover. Post-COVID, smaller, less seminal companies from around the world are gaining visibility. Eight weeks on, newspapers and magazines such *The Guardian* or *Limelight*, regularly list what is being screened. Cultural hierarchies are blurred. Black Swan Theatre Company of Western Australia gets equal billing with the National Theatre of Great Britain. These new listings also suggest cultural imperatives are in play. Australia, for example, has been noticeably laggard in contributing to the theatrical live-to-digital paradigm. COVID-19, through this form of listing, provides a new way to measure how companies perform and present themselves to their public.

The codification of live stream or live-captured streaming is only one way these changes can be measured. In the initial phase of performance cancellation, and in an entirely appropriate parallel manoeuvre to this project, the Dramaturgs’ Network (UK) began a crowd-sourced catalogue of screened arts events.<sup>\*[1]</sup> The record is idiosyncratic, representing the interests and time-available of the contributors but running alongside the first movers, other non-English contributions to the phenomenon became apparent. The catalogue suggests new avenues of research.

COVID-19 is creating new performance models, modified distribution networks, and new tools for performance research.

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<sup>[1]</sup> It should be noted that the thread is currently only available to members of the Dramaturgs' Network.

**Bernadette Cochrane** is a Lecturer in Drama at the University of Queensland. She works in the field of new dramaturgies. Publications include: "Screening from the Met, the NT, or the House: what changes with the live relay". *Theatre to Screen*. Spec. issue of *Adaptation* (2014 with Frances Bonner), "Blurring the Lines: adaptation, transmediality, intermediality, and screened performance" for the *Routledge Companion to Adaptation* (2018), and "Screened Live: Technologically Reconfiguring Notions of the Author" *Body, Space Technology* (2020). Bernadette is a contributor to the *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Stage Directors and Directing* (2020). She is a board member for the Migrant Dramaturgies Network, <https://migrantdramaturgies.tumblr.com>.

## 23. Performance in a Pandemic

Dr Laura Bissell, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

My most recent article opens with the line "Performance as an art form is live, ephemeral, and of the moment" (*Cultural Geographies*, 2020). Are these words still relevant in the context of this global pandemic?

As a performance-researcher I am keen to examine the way in which contemporary performance-making responds to social, political, ecological and cultural events. I have previously written about the flurry of creative activity which was provoked by the Scottish Referendum in 2014 (Bissell and Overend, 2015) and the way in which performance became a site for debate and dialogue alongside various political events including the EU referendum and a General Election (Bissell, 2019).

The article I cited from initially uses case studies of live performances which happen on tidal spaces to explore ideas of memorialising. Since the government guidelines for quarantine started on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March, I haven't been to a coastline or seen a live performance. What I have started to see is performance-makers responding to the challenge of how to make art in a pandemic, both practically, since the "art of assembly" discussed by Nicholas Berger is no longer possible, and also conceptually, as themes of isolation, connection, communication and community permeate the work.

I may not have travelled beyond my own home and certainly not to a coastline, but the site-responsive nature of my enquiries is not completely redundant. I have become to know my own home very intimately and in different guises. It is now my workplace, my daughter's nursery, my bar, my restaurant, my social space, sleeping space and performance space. It is a place where I am audience now.

If performance is “live, ephemeral, and of the moment” as I confidently claimed a few months ago, how do each of those defining terms stand up to scrutiny in this current context? Firstly, there is no “live”, or certainly not as we understood it previously. What there is instead is the mediated live, a performer, in their space, while I watch them remotely in my space in real time. The invitation to watch their live action remains the same, however, physical proximity and a sense of shared physical space is impossible. With this, the complex transaction of audience and performer must be reconfigured, the subtle shifts in body language and the lingering eye-contact which has been so vital to nurturing connection, intimacy and trust, has been disrupted by the screen.

When I called performance ephemeral, I was thinking of Peggy Phelan and Philip Auslander’s debate about whether live performance is a fleeting, once-in-a-moment experience, “its only life is in the present” or if mediation can also be considered a part of the live; and, as Auslander claimed “live forms have become mediatized.”

I said that performance was “of the moment”. This concept moves away from having temporal significance and can be considered literally. The performances being developed over digital platforms just now are of the moment –in fact, they are distinctively and uniquely of *this* moment. The context of quarantine and self-isolation is demanding that performance changes, in some ways quite radically, in order to exist. It is of the moment because unlike previous social or political situations that might shape content of work, the global pandemic has completely shifted the context, forms and mediums in which we can work.

Seminal companies such as Forced Entertainment, largely theatre-based, have moved to the digital platform of choice, Zoom, to critique and question how we connect in this new online forum in their three part series *End Meeting for All*. Artistic Director of Gateshead International Festival of Theatre (GIFT), Kate Craddock, took the bold decision to move the entire festival online (1-3<sup>rd</sup> May). One of the stand-out performances of the festival was Icelandic artist Gudrun Soley Sigurdardottir’s live performance *Elision*, amended for a digital platform. Its themes of isolation and division originally responding to her experience of living in the UK during Brexit taking on an added resonance in this time of isolation.

I argued in my doctoral thesis, that, as artistic director of Belgian company CREW Eric Joris claimed, technology can be a way to regress rather than progress. He uses the term regression without negative connotations, instead implying that technology’s greatest gift might be its capacity to remind us of a more embodied way of being, a means of heightening the senses so we can return to a recognition and an awareness of our corporeal being. My research is changing in this moment as the performance landscape shape-shifts and reconfigures itself to a world where we cannot share physical space. The definition of “contemporary” is “existing or happening now”, and in my capacity as a scholar of contemporary performance I will interrogate the impossibility of the live, the differently live, the new demands of audiences and performers as we navigate this moment. What will performance be after this?

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**Dr Laura Bissell** is a Lecturer in Contemporary Performance and Lecturer in Research at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. She has taught on the MRes in Creative Practices programme at Glasgow School of Art and the Transart Institute MFA in Berlin. Laura's research interests include: contemporary performance practices; technology and performance; feminist performance; ecology and performance; and performance and journeys. Laura has presented her research at conferences nationally and internationally and has had work published in the *International Journal of Performance Art and Digital Media*, *The Body, Space and Technology Journal*, *Studies in Theatre and Performance*, *The Scottish Journal of Performance* and *Contemporary Theatre Review*.

[l.bissell@rcs.ac.uk](mailto:l.bissell@rcs.ac.uk) | <https://www.rcs.ac.uk/staff/drlaurabissell/>

## 24. Precarious academics studying precarity within the cultural industry: interviewing dancers and comedians during Covid.

Dr Claire Sedgwick, University of Nottingham

Dr Lito Tsitsou, University of Glasgow

Dr Giuliana Tiripelli, De Montfort University

In recent years, precarity has been increasingly discussed, both in academia (Lopes and Dewan, 2014) and in the creative industries (Butler and Stoyanova Russell, 2018; Umney and Krestos, 2015). At the same time, precarious research staff have been the object of political debate within and outside HE environments, and some researchers have pointed to current extraordinary pressure that these workers live through, especially in the early career stage of their professional life (Ivancheva 2015, Courtois and O'Keefe 2015). However, there has been little discussion of those who sit at the intersection: precarious academics studying precarity within the cultural industry. While this was already challenging research, the Covid19 pandemic suddenly amplifies these researchers' precarity, and it constrains their work about an area whose examination is traditionally very physical and inter-relational. This context allows us to reflect on two innovative

approaches to online interviewing by precarious researchers who study precarity within the creative industries. Of the three authors of this piece, two are in contingent positions within the academy, whilst also studying cultural industries that are themselves heavily contingent: dance and comedy.

### **Studying Comedy: An Industry on Hold** (Claire Sedgwick)

I am currently shaping a research project exploring precarity in the East Midlands. Since my primary research method is interviews, the pandemic has meant that I am also thinking carefully about how to change my approach to take into account that face to face interviews are not going to be possible for the foreseeable future. Here I consider how I am moving toward digital methods at the same time as my participants are moving towards new ways of performing online. I will utilise video conferencing, recruiting my participants via social media.

There are two main aspects that I am considering in conducting research online:

- I will be able to utilise video interviewing to provide more flexibility for my interviewees, since they can be done at home, this will also reduce the need for travel and other practicalities that may have made face to face interviews difficult for some of my interviewees such as those with caring responsibilities and those with mobility issues. In that respect, the move to video interviews may increase participation as barriers to participation will have been reduced. Furthermore, since comedy itself has moved online, using Zoom and live-streaming sites such as Twitch, I will be able to ask participants to reflect on how they are using these sites, and reflect on how both of our ways of engaging with our audiences has changed as a result of the pandemic. This will help me develop a rapport with interviewees. It will also help me reflect on our shared experiences of precarity and will allow for more reflexive research that reflects both our precarious labour.
- Whilst the ethical implications of videoconferencing have been highlighted (O’Flaherty, 2020), I am more concerned about the ethical implication of interviewing participants at a time when they are under great financial pressure. When budgeting in the project, I ensured that funding was available for people’s time. This is important, since, since it would be fundamentally unjust to expect precarious workers to contribute to the outcomes of the project without any kind of recompense for their time.

### **Studying Dance: Digital Methodologies and Artistic Precarity** (Lito Tsitsou)

My research focuses on how precarious contemporary dancers respond to the new conditions posed by the pandemic. My participant is a marginalised, female migrant freelance dance practitioner. I will explore their experience through an online interview (Salmons 2015) which becomes an exchange between two migrant women living through precarity, inhabiting their precarious private spaces (creative spaces at home). This is not a regular face-to-face semi-structured interview; it is an egalitarian conversation which nevertheless, remains ethically challenging. Digital being and researching may become the new normal, but this is a more invasive process than an offline interview (O’ Flaherty, 2020). I plan to utilise this new digital context in two ways, which innovate my methods for investigating dance and marginality:

- A dance through the digital: My intention is to collaboratively transform the interview into a visit to the creative space of the dancer (whether this is at their home or elsewhere). My participant will organise and control the specifics of the interview. Online interviews afford the possibility of adjusting the surroundings in order to protect aspects of one's life that are usually observed directly by the researcher offline. I will, therefore, ask my participant to walk me through their selected spaces and move in them as we discuss their experience of working during the pandemic. Narrative and observational data will be co-generated and combined, namely how my participant moves around, how they use their body in, what they decide to show me and talk to me about (decisions and status), and how they keep the camera in their hands (their relation between body and interview tools).
- Mirroring: I also plan to use my space as a tool to stimulate this exchange between us. I will conduct the interview in different locations of my flat, asking each question in a corresponding part to those shown by my dancer. This involves an embodied aspect, as I kinaesthetically and spatially empathise with my participant, and try to physically experience the (confined) space through my body. We can reflect together on the restrictions posed on us, our concerns about the future, how we practice our respective disciplines, how we converge and how we depart; namely how we understand and experience our precarity.

Online interviews allow us, as precarious academics, to engage with a performative dimension, and reflection on our performance, which was previously exclusive ownership of the comedian and the dancer. At the same time, our online analysis of dance and comedy allows precarious interviewees to engage in a more egalitarian relation with the research, and explore their own performance from the lens of intersectoral precarity, as well as those of their profession. Digital methods come with many constraints for precarious workers, but they also reshape relations between researcher and researched, helping academics to contribute with human substance to rebuilding our frayed society.

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<<https://www.forbes.com/sites/kateoflahertyuk/2020/03/25/zooms-a-lifeline-during-covid-19-this-is-why-its-also-a-privacy-risk/#7fbd205c28ba>>

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**Dr. Lito Tsitsou** teaches Sociology, Social Theory and Research Methods. Her research interests revolve around the sociology of the body, sociology of culture, art and dance, social theory and epistemology. She also has an interest in innovative pedagogy and currently leads the Q-step internship scheme and is responsible for part of the Q-Step outreach and widening participation programs at the University of Glasgow.

[lito.tsitsou@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:lito.tsitsou@glasgow.ac.uk)

**Dr Claire Sedgwick** teaches Media and Communication. Her research interests include feminism, precarity and the cultural industries. She was recently awarded a BA Leverhulme Small Research Grant for a project titled 'The Cultural Economy of Comedy in the East Midlands', looking at comedian's experiences of precarity in the region.

[claire.sedgwick@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:claire.sedgwick@nottingham.ac.uk) | [claire\\_louise\\_sedgwick@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:claire_louise_sedgwick@hotmail.co.uk)

**Dr. Giuliana Tiripelli** is Senior Lecturer in Digital Journalism and Media Discourse at De Montfort University. Between 2015-2018, Giuliana worked at the University of Sheffield as lecturer in Digital Society (Department of Sociological Studies) and as Research Associate on digital communication in crisis situations (Information School). Giuliana taught Sociology and Media at the University of Glasgow from 2009 to 2014. PhD in Media Studies (Glasgow University Media Group, 2013).

[giulianatiripelli@gmail.com](mailto:giulianatiripelli@gmail.com)

## 25. Looking to the future through lookback (a remote audience research tool): utilising technology in audience research.

Dr Helen Davies, University of South Wales

As the UK plunged into lockdown in March 2020, people working in higher education were forced, like many other industries, to drastically alter how they work. For many academic researchers the new social distancing rules has meant that face-to-face research was no longer viable. As a research team working on a collaborative project between industry and academia our original research plans came to a grinding halt

when the new measures were announced. This piece aims to provide an overview of how the research design evolved in response to lockdown, looking specifically at the use of the software Lookback as a means to conduct meaningful remote audience research.

In late August 2019 I began working as a Research Fellow on the Audience of the Future project funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) between the University of South Wales (USW) and a consortium of creative commercial practitioners (known collectively as Fictioneers). Working alongside Aardman on a new immersive, multi-layered storytelling experience, the project brings to life the popular characters of Wallace and Gromit and utilises ground-breaking mobile technology and multi-user augmented reality. Initially designed to include location-based technologies, due to the current public health crisis the project has now shifted to an at-home experience. This ambitious project not only seeks to develop a new platform for storytelling, it also aims to strengthen the relationship between industry and academia through collaborative and innovative audience research and development support.

While traditionally academic and industry focused research often navigate different research priorities (cf. Griffiths, 2014:158), the research team, made up of both academics and industry practitioners, devised a methodology that combined traditional academic qualitative research methodologies and creative task-based techniques with industry UX (user experience) and user testing. Between October 2019 and February 2020, a number of focus group sessions were held with schools, university students and family groups to gain a better understanding of audience engagement with augmented reality and test elements of the app. Much of this approach required face-to-face testing to ensure the experience promoted inclusive design for a varied audience. In light of recent events the team have now had to re-evaluate their approach and explore new technologies that can incorporate remote testing while utilising existing research networks.

Drawing on industry experience of remote testing the team decided to explore the possibility of utilising software that would allow us to continue our audience research in a way that was safe for our participants. Lookback is a recording tool designed for industry focused usability testing that captures audience engagement and screen interactions with the developing app. The software allows for sessions to be either mediated by a researcher or conducted independently by the participants. Sessions can be recorded and also observed by multiple researchers in real time.

From an academic perspective it was paramount that the software was compliant with our ethical framework and also had the capacity to incorporate the multi-layered research approach we had devised. To date we have conducted two different types of research sessions, the first: researcher/moderator led, and the second: observation only. Moderator sessions conclude with a semi-structured interview once the participant has completed the task while the observation sessions conclude with a short questionnaire. In both instances we have embedded traditional research methodologies to enhance our research.

Through using Lookback, the research team has been able to access participants remotely, meaning that the valuable research has been able to continue. As mentioned, due to the global pandemic the project has shifted away from a location-based experience to an at-home experience. Subsequently, the research design has also followed suit. Utilising the Lookback software has enabled us to respond, not only to the constraints placed upon us by the pandemic but also to the directional change of the project. With the focus now being placed on the 'at-home' experience conducting research with participants in their homes adds significant value to the research. Having piloted the scheme with students we aim to continue our remote testing over the coming

months. From an academic perspective I am keen to explore the scope of this software as a viable tool for future projects that involve digital elements and screen sharing.

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**Helen Davies** is an experienced researcher and has worked on a number of collaborative projects between industry and academia in television, film and digital design. Her research interests include minority language media, youth audiences, creative methods in audience research and language activism. She has a PhD from Aberystwyth University in Film and Television Studies that looked at media engagement by young audiences from a sociolinguistic and cultural perspective. In addition to her academic work Helen has worked for many years as a freelance producer/director in animation.

[helen.davies1@decymru.ac.uk](mailto:helen.davies1@decymru.ac.uk)

# Tools And Processes

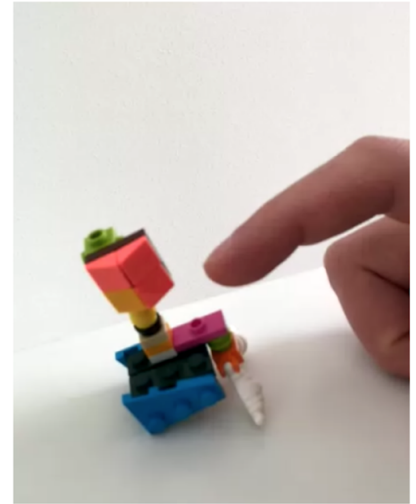
## 26. Building from a distance: using LEGO for qualitative audience and consumer research online

Dennis Olsen, University of West London

The benefits of using LEGO as a tool for exploring identities and audiences have been established, among others, in the works of David Gauntlett (2007; 2015). LEGO SERIOUS PLAY (LSP) is the Danish company's dedicated brand that promotes the use of their colourful bricks as part of research. At the same time, LSP is the name of the method framing the tool and "aim[ing] to connect minds and hands [of participants] to create a deeper understanding of the world and its surroundings via the use of LEGO bricks as metaphors" (Pan, 2019, p.4). Over the past few years, I have found that data from qualitative audience and consumer research can be noticeably enriched by applying this creative reflective method to, for example, my focus groups. However, during the current COVID-19 outbreak, traditional human-based qualitative research has proven somewhat difficult, with social distancing measures impeding face-to-face encounters for interviews and focus groups; consequently, driving research online. Synchronous qualitative online investigation methods, however, come with distinct challenges (e.g., Abraham and Gaiser, 2016; O'Connor and Madge, 2016) and sometimes lack the level of richness in terms of data compared to their offline counterparts. This short article summarises my experimental use of LEGO and the LSP method for creative problem-solving and audience exploration in online research environments, and presents some guiding thoughts for fellow researchers who may wish to follow suit.

### **Overcoming challenges: remote access to LEGO and the facilitation process**

The first challenge that comes to mind when planning the remote use of research instruments requiring specialist material is the lack of accessibility for participants to said material. LEGO currently offers four products in their LSP range—with prices spanning from £24 for a starter pack to £510 for the *Identity and Landscape Kit*. Whilst interested researchers might own dedicated SERIOUS PLAY kits for offline facilitation, looking for potential participants who call these their own, reduces the sampling pool for online-based research to close to zero. This, however, should not exclude the use of LEGO in online research all together—here is why: in an interesting post on his website, Gauntlett (2014) establishes that there is no real need for a dedicated SERIOUS PLAY kit to conduct LSP research. Any LEGO set, and in my experience even as few as a couple of dozen random pieces, will suffice to facilitate a level of creation and reflection. With this in mind—in addition to the increasing popularity of LEGO amongst adults (The Guardian, 2020) and its status as a staple toy in households with (young) children—the pool of potential participants is surprisingly sizeable for all kinds of audience and consumer research. I have had good experiences in terms of remote access to generic LEGO pieces with a variety of age ranges, spanning from participants in their early-20s up to their 60s—with the latter owning LEGO for when their grandchildren come to visit.



Screenshots of consumer research on brand association facilitated online in April 2020. The 29-year-old participant had access to only a few random pieces of LEGO that were left behind by his 7-year-old niece during her last visit. Left to right: unassembled pieces; finished builds 'holiday/palm tree' and 'sailboat with anchor'.

Another area of concern for researchers who want to use LSP as part of their online research might be the suitability of established facilitation protocols. Based on my experience conducting several trial online interviews and focus groups over the past few weeks, the generic LSP workshop structure—as, e.g., described by Pan (2019, p.4)—is easy to transfer to an online environment:

- (1) Introduction and warm-up activities;
- (2) Posing question(s) for discussion, featuring building challenge(s);
- (3) Building process within set time frame;
- (4) Sharing stories and finding connections amongst builds;
- (5) Reflecting on explorations and constructions.

Although group building challenges, which are common in LSP, are more difficult to facilitate online, they are not impossible. I found that providing instructions which specifically ask for distinct individual components as part of the group build works well and bridges a team's physical distance.

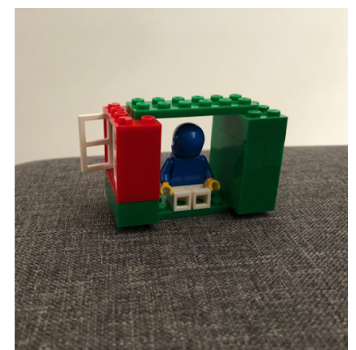
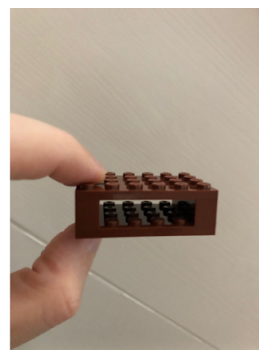
**LEGO activity**

In teams of two, build a shared model (made up of two parts):

- (1) showing the strengths of the product, and
- (2) describing how you would like to see the product improve in the future.

Use the dedicated virtual team rooms to work together during the build.

I will check in with each team and **we will all meet again here in 7 minutes.**



Group building challenge instruction for an online team build and presentation of finished team build—left (strengths) ‘versatility & ease of use’; right (improvement) ‘user protection/anonymity’.

Lastly, with LSP often embracing building as an ongoing process during the workshop, it is advisable to ask participants, if possible, to use a separate recording device (e.g., mobile phone) to also tape their physical ‘building space’, which otherwise might be off-camera. Following the workshop, participants share these videos with the researcher, which makes for additional material for analysis.

### Final Guiding Thoughts

Having experimented with the implementation of LSP into an online research environment over the past few weeks, I draw four key conclusions:

- (1) It is possible to implement LSP as part of online research. Even very limited access to LEGO generates a degree of creativity and reflection that enriches the overall data set—although, admittedly, probably not to the same degree as a LSP-kit-run session would.
- (2) Whilst participants still need access to at least some LEGO pieces, as little as 30-ish generic pieces seem sufficient for short investigations—provided some level of variety in the pieces. Adding this as a sampling criteria still allows for access to a sizable population.
- (3) Question(s) and building challenge(s) need to be adapted to accommodate both individual and team builds online.
- (4) Separate recording of the building space can enrich data and should be encouraged.

Now, go online, conduct research and get playing—seriously.

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<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jan/17/the-guardian-view-on-lego-for-adults-play-is-a-serious-business> (Accessed: 7 May 2020).

**Dr Dennis A. Olsen** is a Senior Lecturer for Advertising and Branding at the London School of Film, Media and Design at the University of West London. Before joining UWL in 2014, Dennis worked for several years as Strategist and Planner in a multinational creative agency and as a lecturer in advertising psychology at universities in Germany and Austria. His work in market communications is informed by an anthropological point of view, including sociological, cultural and psychological stances. He sees this triangulation as an excellent fit for advertising and branding specialists, who are facing increasing challenges in all three of these areas within a fast-paced globalised world that requires interaction with a variety of stakeholders.

[dennis.olsen@uwl.ac.uk](mailto:dennis.olsen@uwl.ac.uk) | [uwl.ac.uk/users/dennis-olsen](http://uwl.ac.uk/users/dennis-olsen) | @DennisCMRS

## 27. Storytelling in the times of Covid-19

Mark Dunford, Goldsmiths, University of London, [DigiTales](#) and [Culture in Flux](#)

Digital Storytelling is a workshop based process established just over 20 years ago in which participants gain the skills and knowledge needed to tell a short personal story of two-three minutes using their own words and imagery. A workshop lasts for three to five days. Storytellers are typically drawn from societal groups that are economically, socially or digitally marginalised and this is a very particular media practice with roots in community activism, theatre and storytelling. The primary emphasis is on the “story” rather than the “digital” and the workshop process uses a range of activities and writing stimuli to build trust and develop storytelling expertise. It is used widely by academics and practitioners with an interest in exploring of questions around media representation, democratic cultural practice and the empowerment of underrepresented groups. Voice and community go hand in hand. There is now a worldwide movement of Digital Storytelling experts with a biennial international conference – the one scheduled for March 2020 was shelved because of the crisis - and a series of respected publications by academics and practitioners.

The “storycircle” lies at the heart of Digital Storytelling. It is the place where people come together to gain the confidence needed to speak publicly in their own voice. It can be a challenging space or an intimate one, but success depends on face-to-face contact where people can write, listen, tell and share stories. Covid 19 provides particular challenges. Established methods are simply no longer viable when it isn't possible to run a “storycircle” with ten strangers in a room over three days.

Just before the lockdown started, I received an email for Joe Lambert, Executive Director of [StoryCenter](#) and the author of “Seven Stages- Story and the Human Experience”, inviting me to join an online workshop exploring how the “storycircle” could be adapted for an online environment. Joe had written to people from the Digital Storytelling community explaining that he wanted to road test an online workshop and on 24<sup>th</sup> March – the day after the UK declared lockdown - 36 of us gathered together for the first of seven weekly, two hour sessions on Zoom. Participants came from New Zealand,

Australia, USA and across Europe where those in Italy and Spain were living through a different point in the pandemic and a far more severe lockdown.

There was an understandable nervousness. Most of us knew each other in different ways and had done so for many years. We'd collaborated on research projects, shared conference platforms or even worked in the same organisation. We also knew the ins and outs of the Digital Storytelling game and understood the way storytelling activities could tease out nuances in difficult subjects; something to be very wary of at a time of heightened sensitivity when everyone in lockdown is part of a vulnerable population.

The two hour sessions started at 10am West Coast Time and followed a consistent structure. Joe started by talking through one of the storytelling themes in his book for half an hour. Each participant was then moved into a breakout room with four others and we wrote to one prompt for seven minutes before being given a second with the option to write to that, or refine the work on the earlier one. We then read our writing to our fellow group members and discussed the work. After an hour the larger group came back together and those that wanted could share their work more widely. We tended to overrun and the sessions acquired a more social, discursive element.

An online workshop is clearly a radically different experience and we explored different ways to hold the space in an online environment by talking about how to establish and maintain perspective, while also making people comfortable in a virtual space. Much of this requires taking advantage of the simple aspects of the technology by, for example, using mute constructively to avoid intrusions from outside noise. Facilitators also need to think carefully about the proximity of, and use of, the camera. Some participants may want their cameras turned on while others won't. Some people hate the sound of their own speaking voice while some may want to stand rather than sit as they read their own contribution. The facilitator has to manage all these possibilities.

The technical side should be simplified as far as possible with participants encouraged to use what is readily available. Smart phones can record voice and their inbuilt cameras provide good quality images.

Understanding online creative parameters and orientating participants to them is more complex. Storytelling requires exploring what is being foregrounded and the primary work is always on the story rather than the person telling it. Digital stories are short and to the point. Within an online environment, there is less scope to coax a story and this means a different kind of writing process. Prompts are less pliable and more didactical; this requires care and attention so participants are carefully positioned in a shared, creative environment. A key part of this is understanding when to step back to make the space a participant may need; reading cues is clearly harder online than in person. The facilitator is the central, organising figure in any workshop and a key part of working in this way is to direct activity without overtly controlling it. This changed process requires self-moderating by watching and listening to all participants as they work on screen. There is a need to pick up technical issues as well as those that engage directly with difficult autobiographical material.

Emotional safety is always paramount and facilitators need to establish what stories can be told and how to calibrate their telling. Some subjects may be harder to deal with online when the scope for everyday one-to-one conversations is diminished. Working online necessitates finding and using different stepping back mechanisms to allow these creative spaces to open up. Stretching out the workshop process means there is scope to balance asynchronous and online support. In this respect, time is the facilitators' friend and there is scope to make space for everyone.

As a group of practitioner-researchers we were effectively our own research subjects interrogating how the creative process at the heart of our practice changes when the



work is forced online. We were also accidental authors in the production of collaborative memoir chronologizing the early days of Covid 19. Was our experiment a success? Well, this guinea pig thrived and the online course is now available on the StoryCenter site.

**Dr Mark Dunford** is an academic and researcher who has worked at [Goldsmiths](#), University of London, as well as [University of Brighton](#) and [University of East London](#). Mark's track record across the creative industries includes significant periods of employment at the [BBC](#), [British Film Institute \(BFI\)](#), [Arts Council England \(ACE\)](#) and as CEO of Hi8us Projects, where he established and led Inclusion Through Media. Since 2008, he has been a Director of [DigiTales](#), a research and production company using digital storytelling with communities that is hosted by Goldsmiths. He set up [Culture in Flux](#), an arts and education consultancy in 2019 whose clients include UCL and the British Council.

[mark@Digi-Tales.org.uk](mailto:mark@Digi-Tales.org.uk) | [www.digi-tales.org.uk](http://www.digi-tales.org.uk) | <https://www.cultureinflux.com>

## 28. Screened Interiors: Researching Homes in Lockdown

Dr Cat Rossi, Modern Interiors Research Centre, Kingston School of Art

The Modern Interiors Research Centre (MIRC) has long been interested in how the home, and other interiors, are key to our identities.

#Covid-19 has prompted MIRC to launch #screenedinteriors, a new research project that examines the impact of the global lockdown on our interiors. We have all been forced into our homes, where we rely on video conferencing platforms to work, maintain relationships, and remain connected with the outside world. These technologies also gain us entry into each other's homes, which we inhabit through screened snapshots that show interiors of every shape and size. As researchers we are interested in what we can learn from these framed glimpses of the domestic interior. What are the implications of this further invasion of technology into our homes in terms of privacy, the blurred boundary between private and public spaces, identity formation, and domesticity more generally? These are just some of the questions we seek to ask in a project that will look at this rapidly evolving present and consider how the history of the interior can provide lessons for, and insights into, our current situation.

It is notable how Covid-19 has stimulated a huge public discussion about the interior, and associated questions of its boundaries, private-ness and publicness, and domesticity, which we are interested in following, sharing, documenting and participating in as a research centre.

Covid-19 has not just prompted us to launch a new research project but has also informed our research methodology. As a group we have historically operated through organising conferences and symposia on key themes, often in collaboration with other institutions, and then developed these into edited publications. Given the speed and social distancing that Covid 19 research requires, we have initiated a much more open, and open-ended, research project.

We have opened an Instagram account ([@mirc\\_ksa](#)) to launch #screenedinteriors project, and MIRC researchers have been posting images of interiors past and present to reflect

on the situation. This has enabled us to reflect with immediacy on the present, while drawing on our historical interests and expertise. It is also allowing us to build up an image collection for our research and future outputs.

We have also launched an internal reading group for researchers and research students associated with the Centre and are planning on developing this into a public facing format. For the reading group we are generating a reading list and associated images, which we again share through social media. Lockdown has made sharing research – with each other but also externally – key to our emergent research methodology.

This is just the start for MIRC - we are keen to test out the different research possibilities that lockdown and its aftermath brings up. We are all experiencing our homes like never before, and it is this diverse, collective and yet highly individual story of the lockdown interior that we want to capture.

**The Modern Interiors Research Centre** is the world's leading research centre in its field. Directed by Professor Penny Sparke, its researchers work both individually and collaboratively on research in the history of interiors and their contents past and present. Dr Catharine Rossi is an Associate Professor at Kingston School of Art, and a member of MIRC.

[c.rossi@kingston.ac.uk](mailto:c.rossi@kingston.ac.uk) |

<https://www.kingston.ac.uk/faculties/kingston-school-of-art/research-and-innovation/modern-interiors/>

<https://www.kingston.ac.uk/staff/profile/dr-catharine-rossi-267/>

## 29. Digital humanities tools as resources for arts research and scholarship

Mark Gray, Middlesex University

### 1. Context

'Digital humanities' has been long in the making. There's been work going on in computing and the humanities since the 1960s and networks of scholars working at the interface of computing, scholarship and practice have long been in being (the HUMBUL network in the UK in the 1980s/90s is one example) but it was only at the beginning of this century that we moved from thinking of this field as being about how computers enabled humanities research to conceiving of a field of practice and research in which 'digital humanities' constituted a distinctive field of scholarly endeavour, and one in which practice and research might co-exist in the same space.

Edmond, J. ed. (2020) Digital Technology and the Practices of Humanities Research. Cambridge: Open Book Publishers. (available as PDF at <https://www.openbookpublishers.com/product?xProd=1108&currency=6>) - particularly

strong on publishing and provides a good summary of the variety of forms of practice in 'dighums').

Warwick, C., Terras, M., and Nyhan, J., eds. (2012) *Digital humanities in practice*. London: Facet Publishing. A nice collection of examples of practice across several areas.

Gardiner, E., and Musto, R.G., (2015) *The Digital Humanities: A primer for students and scholars*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pretty much does what its title suggests. For those new to digital humanities it provides an accessible introduction.

Siemens, R., and Schreibman, S., eds. (2008), *A Companion to Digital Literary Studies*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2008. Available at <http://www.digitalhumanities.org/companionDLS/> (older but still very good and a fund of ideas).

## 2. Networks

<https://www.dariah.eu/> [Viewed 27 April 2020]- main hub for EU/European research on digitally enabled research and teaching

<https://openmethods.dariah.eu/> / [Viewed 27 April 2020]- DARIAH curated platform for methods and tools in dighums and related areas of practice

<https://weltliteratur.net/dh-tools-used-in-research/> [Viewed 27 April 2020] - survey of tools widely used in dighums and related research

<https://guides.nyu.edu/dighum/> [Viewed 27 April 2020] - good rapid summary of dighums tools of wide use in the arts and humanities

<https://tools.hackastory.com/> / [Viewed 27 April 2020] - curated links to tools, software and APIs. This is a nice intuitive collation and mapping of tools/techniques. There is little here to define the practice of the digital humanities 'craftsperson', but as an indication of what might be inside her 'toolbox' it's very helpful for beginners to the field.

## 3. Examples of Tools

Tools themselves are proto-artefacts. They are mysterious without knowledge of their purpose, even their function possibly being divorced from that purpose on first encounter. However, picking up and playing with tools (safely!) can be a creative way to appreciate – if not fully comprehend – their potential. These tools are all approachable, are widely used (if not the specific tool then its generic type) and 'play' with them can be suggestive for practitioners. This is a random sprinkling, not a comprehensive, toolkit.

3.1. Gephi - enables analysis of networks and connections between images, artefacts, data

Using Gephi - [Viewed 27 April 2020] <https://gephi.org/users/>

<https://gephi.wordpress.com/tag/research/> [Viewed 27 April 2020] - how Gephi is used in arts research

Kienle, M., (2017) *Between Nodes and Edges: Possibilities and Limits of Network Analysis in Art History*, at

<https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1152&context=artlas> [Viewed 27 April 2020] - good discussion of use of tools including Gephi in arts research

Schich, M., (2015), Figuring Out Art History [not peer reviewed], at <https://arxiv.org/abs/1512.03301> [Viewed 27 April 2020] - on network analysis for created art and artefacts

### 3.2 Palladio - visualizations for complex, multi-dimensional data

Palladio tool - [Viewed 27 April 2020] <http://hdlab.stanford.edu/projects/palladio/>

Introduction - [Viewed 27 April 2020]

<https://hestia.open.ac.uk/palladio-humanities-thinking-about-data-visualization/>

3.3 Omeka - for curation and exhibition, which may include scholarly research and analysis (for static site development for curation purposes Jekyll may be an easier option).

Introduction to Omeka - [Viewed 27 April 2020]

<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/81625858.pdf> - a simple, step through introduction to Omeka

Flanders, C.T., (2018) *The Digital Research Skills Cookbook: An Introduction to the Research Bazaar Community*. Research Platforms Services, pp.17-194.

Examples of Omeka in use – [Viewed 27 April 2020]

<https://ds-omeka.haverford.edu/atlasofthedeath/omeka-examples>

Further examples - [Viewed 27 April 2020] <https://omeka.org/classic/showcase/>

Omeka forum - [Viewed 27 April 2020] <https://forum.omeka.org/>, for technical aspects of use

### 3.4 NLTK for text analysis and sentiment analysis

Introduction - [Viewed 27 April 2020] <https://www.nltk.org/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sentiment\\_analysis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sentiment_analysis) - [Viewed 27 April 2020] a remarkably good account of sentiment analysis using NLTK and other tools

<https://github.com/laugustyniak/awesome-sentiment-analysis> - [Viewed 27 April 2020] sentiment analysis tools etc. (Python based) including NLTK.

### 3.5 GATE for text mining and analysis

GATE introduction - [Viewed 27 April 2020] <https://gate.ac.uk/>

GATE examples of use in projects in the arts, humanities and elsewhere - [Viewed 27 April 2020] <https://gate.ac.uk/projects.html>

### 3.6 MALLET for topic modelling

MALLET - [Viewed 27 April 2020] <http://mallet.cs.umass.edu/index.php>

Introduction to Mallet - [Viewed 27 April 2020]

<https://programminghistorian.org/en/lessons/topic-modeling-and-mallet#examples-of-to>

[pic-models-employed-by-historians](#) - has some good simple illustrations of Mallet's strengths

### 3.7. Music Encoding Initiative

Crawford, T., and Lewis, R., (2016) 'Music Encoding Initiative (Digital and Multimedia Scholarship).' *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 69.1 pp. 273-285, available at [https://research.gold.ac.uk/22464/1/JAMS6901\\_06\\_Digital\\_and\\_Multimedia.pdf](https://research.gold.ac.uk/22464/1/JAMS6901_06_Digital_and_Multimedia.pdf) [Viewed 27 April 2020]

MEI tool - [Viewed 27 April 2020] <https://music-encoding.org/#>

MEI tutorial - [Viewed 27 April 2020] <https://dlfteach.pubpub.org/pub/intro-mei>

Example projects - [Viewed 27 April 2020]  
<https://music-encoding.org/community/projects-users.html>

### 3.8 Live improvisation musical environments

IXI-audio: [Viewed 27 April 2020]  
[http://www.ixi-audio.net/content/body\\_software\\_ixiquarks.html](http://www.ixi-audio.net/content/body_software_ixiquarks.html)

Magnusson, T., (2018) *Sound and music in networked media*. In: Bull, Michael (ed.) *Routledge Companion to Sound Studies*. London Routledge Media and Cultural Studies Companions. – on practice.

Vear, C., (2019) *The Digital Score: Musicianship, Creativity and Innovation*. London: Routledge.

**Mark Gray.** A senior manager in HE since 1997, I have led the development of knowledge transfer/knowledge exchange (from CPD and consulting to spin-out/licensing) in a variety of universities for many years. I have extensive experience of educational project and programme leadership, business development and management in commercialisation, university reach out, vocational professional education and strategy consulting in higher education in the UK and overseas (Africa, Asia, Europe, FSU, Latin America, Middle East/GCC).

I also have wide experience as non-executive director or trustee of several companies and trusts, commercial and n-f-p organisations in a variety of sectors. Public economics and industrial microeconomics specialism (PhD, university lecturer, research director etc.), along with government and private sector roles, featured in an earlier part of my career.

[m.gray@mdx.ac.uk](mailto:m.gray@mdx.ac.uk) | [www.mdx.ac.uk](http://www.mdx.ac.uk) | <https://www.linkedin.com/in/markfromengland>

## 30. The LSE Digital Ethnography Collective Resources

Co-Founders Zoë Glatt and Branwen Spector, PhD Researchers, LSE Departments of Media & Communications and Anthropology

Founded In October 2019, the *LSE Digital Ethnography Collective* is an interdisciplinary group exploring the intersections of digital culture and ethnographic methods. We invite scholars at all levels to join us for regular public lectures, events and workshops. We welcome those interested in online culture (Internet/platforms/social media), and the ethnographic study of digital technologies. The aim of the group is to establish a global community of scholars of digital ethnography and to work through challenges in this growing subdiscipline. Whilst we have put events on hold during COVID-19, we have accumulated a number of resources that will be of use to established digital ethnographers and those pivoting to this methodology during social distancing, including an extensive reading list, livestreams of previous workshops and lectures, and an active Twitter.

Past workshops available to view include '[Ethics in Qualitative Digital Research](#)' with Dr Sarah Quinton and '[Using Nvivo for Digital Ethnographic Data Analysis](#)' with Zoë Glatt, which should be particularly useful to researcher embarking on digital ethnography (and ethnography in general) for the first time.

- Collaboratively produced [Digital Ethnography READING LIST](#) (includes empirical, ethics, methods resources)
- Twitter [@DigEthnogLSE](#)
- [Livestreams](#) of previous workshops and lectures
- [Website](#) with info about past events
- Join our [Mailing List](#) for updates on future events

For general enquiries email: [Media.DigEthnog@lse.ac.uk](mailto:Media.DigEthnog@lse.ac.uk)

### **Zoë Glatt**

[z.a.glatt@lse.ac.uk](mailto:z.a.glatt@lse.ac.uk) | [@ZoeGlatt](https://twitter.com/ZoeGlatt) | [www.zoeglatt.com](http://www.zoeglatt.com)

### **Branwen Spector** (also Co-Founder of The New Ethnographer)

[@newethnographer](https://twitter.com/newethnographer) | [www.thenewethnographer.org](http://www.thenewethnographer.org)

## 31. Finding a way for dancing in the mess of a pandemic: Being a reflective practitioner who is good at getting things done

Zhibo Zhao, Middlesex University (PhD Candidate)

Through the pandemic we realized that many previously planned tasks could not be completed, with all face-to-face activities, including giving and attending dance classes, interviews and so on being out of the questions. For myself, I originally expected to return to Beijing, China, to undertake fieldwork and teach dance classes through May. Faced with the realities of limited and outrageously priced air tickets, I was forced to cancel these plans.

*Getting things done* (GTD) (Allen, 2001), is a time management method by popular author and life coach David Allen ([gettingthingsdone.com](http://gettingthingsdone.com)). It can, with some modification, provide support to artists or researchers like me who are attempting to continue their research during this pandemic period with the limited time/space. Allen has built his reputation by offering to improve work efficiency and time usage. He emphasises that only with a clear and a well-organized mind can we achieve effective productivity and unleash our creative potential. He also believes that the schedule should be regarded as a “sacred territory”, and once the work is marked, it needs to be done (Allen 2001, p. 45). However, in a creative (less productivity driven) model, working in the face of the present situation, how can we address thorny problems and untold pressure in a period of such uncertainty? As a dancer who has been doing research in this pandemic, I believe I need to make every effort to move my research forward, because the research cannot be knocked down as we are locked down.

In *The reflective practitioner* (1983) Donald Schon proposes a reflection-in-action model in and notes how the reflective practitioner needs to be ‘thinking in action’, such that they make decisions within the process of their practice. This opens another way through which I can accomplish the goals of GTD. In this sense, when I realized that it was obviously impossible to execute my original research plan, I needed to stay in London and adjust my way of thinking in the limited place/home, re-manage my schedule and try to practice/dance within the scope of what is possible and with what is available, in order to find solutions and get things done.

In *Getting things done* Allen proposes a ‘workflow’ that is divided into a five-step strategy, which are capture, clarify, organize, reflect, and engage (Allen, 2001). Combining these with Schon’s insights, I have found that a three-step process is possible, as I move through selection, action and reflection. In this special period, this adapted ‘workflow’ offers a multi-faceted cooperation process, which guides researchers ‘thinking in action’ through selection, evaluation, and discovery of what types of practice/dance can be done within the limited time/space that is open to us. The combination of the two methods aims to reasonably re-arrange our time and enable GTD, instead being drawn in to delays or falling in a sense of ‘wasted’ time. In perhaps being able to relieve some of the pressure and anxiety that have been produced due to the pandemic, this combined – selection, action, reflection – process can be tried to help artists and researchers to continue to research/dance in the mess of a pandemic. Especially for me, this combination is a good way to use it periodically to supervise the effectiveness of my daily physical exercise and reasonable use of time to move my research forward.

I would like to share the link with you: <https://zhibojart.org/video/>

## References

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Allen, D. (2001). *Getting things done: the art of stress-free productivity*. New York: Penguin Putnam.

**Zhibo Zhao**, PhD Candidate at Middlesex University, a Chinese national First-Rank artist, and an Associate Professor at Beijing Dance Academy in China. Focus on dance improvisation and its development in Mainland China.

[ZZ174@live.mdx.ac.uk](mailto:ZZ174@live.mdx.ac.uk)



# Reflections And Commentaries

## 32. How do we approach arts research in a pandemic?

Dr John Hillman, Birmingham City University

Inevitably, I suggest we will approach arts research in a pandemic as we have approached the pandemic itself. What this means is the methods we use will be contextualised by the five stages we experience during any state of personal misfortune (Kübler-Ross, 1969), these being: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance.

How does research continue within each of these stages? In the first instance, we deny how our research can possibly be affected. To us, our project is mysteriously insulated from what has happened. In the second stage, we may become angry that our research is impacted in this way, that our project has been disrupted by circumstances we have no control over. We take an indignant position toward what has happened and its impact on our research. Thirdly, we try to think of ways to negotiate a better outcome. Perhaps, if we can compromise aspects of the research then perhaps most of it can be salvaged. At the fourth stage, all purpose is lost, there seems no point in carrying on. We conclude the project is destined to fail and will not to succeed. In the final stage, we accept the circumstances as they are and we continue to do what we had originally planned, even though everything has fundamentally changed.

What this signals is the difficulty we have in acknowledging how things, including arts research, will not return to normal because normal as we once understood it has completely altered. The language of control and surveillance, so readily deployed during a pandemic, work in opposition to the aims of objective research. How can we make use of research methods if they are circumscribed by the pandemic conditions setting their context? Of course, what unifies any pandemic is the sense of solidarity that emerges in us, once we accept that a virus does not recognise social boundaries such as class, gender or race: we are all pitched in a battle against the virus regardless (Žižek, 2020).

Across the globe, the incoherent strategies of different nations and their governments, indicated by the range of statistics showing the spread and effect of the virus, is a clear sign that even those who are supposed to know what they are doing simply don't have any clear the answers. This is familiar territory for most people engaged in research and specifically those involved in arts research. We are consistently operating at the limits of what we know and necessarily have to respond to ever-changing circumstances. While the common ground we occupy is one of uncertainty and ambiguity, the aim of research to refine these conditions with clarity and precision, is reasonably consistent and clear. Governments, however, appear to be encumbered with a much more complex problem relating to the priority of health over the economic wealth of a nation.

Research is always about advancing a question beyond the realms of one's interests. Arts research is no different, it cannot be, as is so often the case, confined to a process that addresses a single form of practice. As with the global pandemic, where the problem extends to each and every one of us to contribute part of the solution. In the present historical moment, arts research should look beyond its conditions of production and distribution to a wider cause, wherein its purpose is ruthlessly interrogated. From this standpoint, arts research may well be undertaken by an individual but it should always be, categorically, carried out in the interests of everyone. Since we cannot live the same life we lived before, we must all play a part in how it is reconfigured in the future.

This involves how we confront what it is we do on a daily, even moment by moment basis.

Returning to the five-stages or states we experience when we undergo some form of trauma, it is important to remember they are not necessarily experienced in any particular order and we do not always experience them all equally. This begs the question as to whether, as we embark on arts research during a pandemic, we are quite simply stuck in a permanent state of denial.

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<http://thephilosophicalsalon.com/monitor-and-punish-yes-please/?fbclid=IwAR1tBVPAAyZbAbjf1VrPDxQ-rqFxDxmyanH4di8X-JEqsyDJode51ghL>>

**John Hillman** is an educator, image-maker, researcher and writer engaged in the interdisciplinary areas of photography, image and visual culture. He is Associate Professor and Course Director of Photography at Birmingham City University. His interests lie in philosophical approaches to contemporary culture and understanding how images and media technologies shape our experience. What unifies all his interests is the exploration of how theory can enrich and offer new insights to creative practice and lived experience.

[john.hillman@bcu.ac.uk](mailto:john.hillman@bcu.ac.uk) | [www.johnhillman.co.uk](http://www.johnhillman.co.uk)

## 33. The Centrality of Improvisation in Arts Research at the time of COVID19

Duška Radosavljević, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama

Tuesday, 17th March - the day after the lockdown was announced - was going to be the first day of the R&D process commissioned through my AHRC-funded project *Aural/Oral Dramaturgies* <https://www.cssd.ac.uk/content/aural-oral-dramaturgies>. My research associate, myself and a student assistant were going to go into a rehearsal room with a chosen artist for a week to document how they make work using speech and sound as their compositional starting point (rather than performance text or a devising methodology). I speculated that improvisation itself might be the object of our research, but, as it happens, it had to become part of the research methodology itself.

Improvisation, as is often noted, draws an aspect of its meaning from its Latin etymology *improvidere* ('not to foresee'). Despite its pervading presence in music, dance and theatre and performance, it has taken a very long time for improvisation to be accorded relevant critical focus (Lewis and Piekut, 2016 and Midgelow 2019). In theatre and performance studies improvisation has long been sidelined due to its associations with the ludic (games in education) or the outdated (Stanislawskian acting method) or its generally

auxiliary status. Additionally, improvisation is by definition often embroiled in a dialectical relationship between rules and freedom (as noted by Santi and Illetterati 2010). As such, it implies risk, especially when it comes to contemplating an articulation of a research methodology based on improvisation.

Let's be clear, all research, under normal circumstances, must entail improvisation in the sense of openness to the unknown, the unanticipated, the undesirable. Our questions must be open, and our investigations must anticipate all possibilities. We must account for and contend with the evidence whether or not it serves to support our thesis. But what happens when research methodology itself has to change fundamentally at short notice, given that research methodology by its own definition requires a structured, objective, repeatable pursuit of new knowledge and insights that can be verified, and can hold up to scrutiny?

My experience points to the possibility that in Arts Research the most crucial adjustments are required at the level of personal values, disposition and ethos. While holding on to their research questions and hypotheses, an arts researcher is required first and foremost to deploy listening, patience, willingness to let go, care-taking, trust-building, flexibility, and last but not least, creativity itself. An arts researcher is required to grow faith in the possibility that the answers will emerge from a place where they are not expected and they may be answers to crucial questions that are present but have not been voiced yet. The limitations that COVID19 has placed on the arts sector and arts research are potential research parameters in themselves that can be productive.

My main problem is that, instead of getting into the rehearsal room with my chosen artists as planned, as a researcher I must now find a way to be granted access into their life.

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Santi, Marina ed (2010) *Improvisation: Between Technique and Spontaneity*, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press.

**Duška Radosavljević** is a dramaturg and academic currently employed as Reader in Contemporary Theatre and Performance and Course Leader in Performance Arts at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. Her books include *Theatre Criticism: Changing Landscapes* (2016), *The Contemporary Ensemble* (2013) and the award-winning *Theater-Making: Interplay Between Text and Performance in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. She also writes for *The Theatre Times*, *Exeunt* and *The Stage Newspaper*.

[duska.radosavljevic@cssd.ac.uk](mailto:duska.radosavljevic@cssd.ac.uk)

## 34. Being Home – Having Space; Getting Bored – Making Space

Kevin Skelton, Middlesex University (PhD candidate)

Several years ago I discovered a little village in the L'Aquila region of Italy which has since become my home. This home is a house, but more importantly it is connected to a community and natural surroundings which both support and inspire me personally and professionally. As the lockdown began I was working in Belgium, and subsequently stranded there for 5 weeks. Despite the COVID-19 situation in Italy being much more severe, and the lockdown measurements much stricter than Belgium, I longed to return. Some of the reasons were practical and professional: at my house I had access to a piano and studio. But the reasons were simultaneously personal: at my house I could do things at/for my house (prepare the garden, finish up renovation works) and I would be back in my community (even if restrictions wouldn't permit us to meet right away). Many people tried to dissuade me from returning too soon, but I was determined. The day after I returned I initiated an intensive period of creative activity for 2 weeks (while I waited out my imposed quarantine for returning from abroad).

In my daily living I am continually trying to integrate a healthy lifestyle with my professional and academic work. My work is often physical, so consistent stretching, strength, and cardiovascular training are important, as is eating and drinking healthfully. During many of these activities ideas and thoughts arrive that stimulate new directions and insights into my academic and creative work. A coffee on the terrace as the sun rises can do wonders for seeing something in a new light. A bike ride in the mountains can literally cultivate an embodied understanding of a practice that I can then succinctly express in writing. I am researching transdisciplinary practices in the performing arts, and my underlying belief as a performer, researcher, and teacher is that 'integrative performing' must derive from 'integrative living'. Obviously one's home is important in realizing that, and the COVID-19 pandemic is allowing most of us to assess whether our homes are helping or hindering us in our work ... and in our lives.

Another situation that home has helped me to realize is the necessity for boredom. A positive boredom (in a positive home!) permits the possibility to empty one's self, to let go of thoughts that are destructive, or just crowding your brain unnecessarily. My experience is that when I accept, or even allow and encourage such boredom to arise, new ideas suddenly emerge and good old ideas find greater clarity and depth. Certainly, my boredom is always replaced by a heightened awareness of not only what I really want and need, but also how to better achieve that. For the many who are still experiencing the boredom since the lockdown started, I expect this may be precisely what they needed to support them through the transition to the new way of living to which we are heading.

**Kevin Skelton** has a multifaceted career as a performer, director, choreographer, teacher, and scholar. Equally at home on the concert and operatic stage, Kevin specializes in seventeenth-century music, the Bach Evangelist roles, and experimental music theatre. Kevin has performed with some of the world's finest early music ensembles including Collegium Vocale Gent, L'Arpeggiata, and Concerto Palatino and in numerous theatres and festivals throughout the world including Teatro La Fenice, La Monnaie,

Aix-en-Provence, Opéra Royal de Versailles, and the early music festivals in Boston and Utrecht.

info@kevinskelton.com | www.kevinskelton.com

## 35. Dis-traction... or suddenly it's Thursday

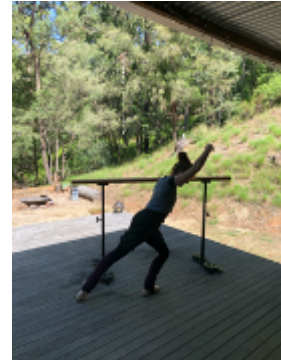
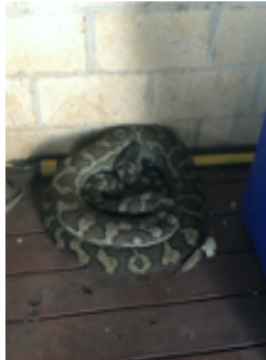
Sonia York-Pryce, Queensland College of Art, Griffith University, Australia  
(Doctoral Candidate)

As a rheumatoid arthritis sufferer, this pandemic has literally stopped me in my tracks, forcing an essential stoppage of travel in any form. Housebound since March 11<sup>th</sup> and now entering my 10th week of isolation, COVID-19 has made its unwelcome way into my world. I had been expecting to fly to London in June for the Elixir Festival, to conduct face to face interviews, attend performances, and discuss the research at conferences, now all is postponed, perhaps cancelled indefinitely.

Confined to “barracks” in the hinterland of the Gold Coast in Queensland, has meant spending many hours watching dance in all forms streamed online, the internet providing a virtual lifeline to watch performances, dance films, to share work, converse and be inspired. With social media platforms providing “limitless connectivity” how much is too much? (Dobell, J 2016) All this sharing of work through these mediums has great importance, and relevance, but with this global upheaval ever present, I wondered, “does any of this matter anymore?”

In the past I had experienced isolation through choice, via camping trips to the outback in Australia and the Empty Quarter of Oman, dwarfed by the landscape, but inspired by the experience of space, quiet and timelessness. Quite contrary to how I felt now, unprepared for the ‘aloneness’ and lack of inspiration that the pandemic has produced. The state of solitary confinement is part and parcel of being a researcher - tethered to a laptop, the floor strewn with dance reference books, an office in a state of chaos, that is usually productive for me. Add to the mix being isolated with my family, I had experienced unexpected parental feelings of panic and anxiety, sometimes hard to keep ‘up-beat’ for my children’s sake. This complete stoppage meant that the research seemed unimportant in the worldly context, but that somehow, I had to remain positive, hopeful, but appreciate things would be different, with a degree of uncertainty. The social isolation at first caused the writing to dry up, the flow stopped, inspiration ceased. Was it ok to suddenly do nothing? The physical also paused, unable to attend ballet classes or the gym, I was immobile. By the 4<sup>th</sup> week, my dancer’s discipline kicked back in and the necessity to keep mentally and physically balanced had returned, and this meant tackling ballet classes via zoom, streamed online, a new unknown. My deck became the ballet studio with my Gumtree purchased barre finally brought out of a dark cupboard for use. This ‘taking class’ or ballet *en plein air*, cleared my mind, allowing me to be in the moment, to forget about the world, to return to the physical, to concentrate on the now. That embodied knowledge of dance, the muscle memory, the comfort of knowing the strategy of the ballet class, it all became a place of calm and positivity. In spite of the glitches with transmission delays, and intermittent internet interruptions, the return to dancing/moving has demonstrated to me that this is the catalyst for creating, which for me encompasses producing/editing dance films and importantly, the writing. These elements, “combining dance, a kinaesthetic form, and the writing, a cognitive form, can

forge relationships between the body and the mind.” (Cancienne M.B. Snowber C. 2009). This bonding, one assisting the other literally dragged me out of the mental ‘mud of confusion’ during these unprecedented times.



I also noticed a heightened sensitivity to nature, to my surroundings, acknowledging the beauty of the countryside we were immersed in, pausing to observe the birds, to listen to their songs and generally absorb the colours of the flowers, plants and trees. A new informed way of seeing and hearing began, easing the healing and giving me acceptance of what I could not control. An allowing of permission to be, to read books or not, to create or not, to think, or not, or to simply do nothing at all. Rituals began too, taking coffee on the deck as the sun rose at dawn, watching the parrots feeding, seeing the occasional python or gazing at the cirrus clouds as they floated by like chiffon in the seemingly clear blue skies - no aeroplanes! Making an effort to get dressed, even though I was going nowhere, put on some lipstick, make the bed, eat dinner each night at the dining table, together as a family... talk. Having a purpose had returned, and with it the writing. Suddenly with this unlimited precious time on my hands it has allowed openings to revisit archive film footage, the timing seemed appropriate, necessary, liberating, a conduit to play, think and experiment. Editing is like choreographing, repositioning segments of film to create something new, liberating. “If mind and body are occupied with notions of existence that are out of sync with what is seen as normal and acceptable, it is a good idea to test the alternative expression offered by art.” (Lilja 2016). My methodology to return to the ballet class released my body and cleared my mind to reconnect with the research. This ‘doing’ as Lilja suggests gave me the pathway to re-start experimenting, a lifeline to get back on board and recognise that the research must go on, and on, and on.

Isolement filmed in 2017 edited during the pandemic: <https://vimeo.com/411295468>

### **Example of tools**

[www.vimeo.com](http://www.vimeo.com)

q21 Artists-In-Isolation

<https://www.mqw.at/en/institutions/q21/artists-in-residence/artists-in-isolation/>

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**Sonia York-Pryce** is a dancer, videographer, researcher, at the Queensland College of Art, Griffith University, Australia. Her research “ageism and the mature dancer” documents older professional dancers aged over 40 who are still performing, and how ageism impacts their practice. Her dance films *(In)appropriate Behaviour*, *utterly (in)appropriate* and *āj* feature older dancers, with the accent on artistry and ageing. She has presented her research and dance films at conferences nationally and internationally. She has benefited from artist residencies with Red Gate Gallery in Beijing China, and Hospitalfield House in Scotland and has photographed Beijing Dance/LDTX, Images Ballet London Studio Centre, Anne-Lise Hearn Dance Company, Charlotta Öfverholm’s students of Ballettakademien, Stockholm, Cloud Dance Festival and Ella Mesma Company.

[sonia.york-pryce@griffithuni.edu.au](mailto:sonia.york-pryce@griffithuni.edu.au) | [www.soniayork-pryce.com](http://www.soniayork-pryce.com)

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/sonia-york-pryce-93888234/>

<https://vimeo.com/user5257143>

[https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Sonia\\_York-Pryce](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Sonia_York-Pryce)

<https://www.delvingintodance.com/dwords/widening-the-boundaries>

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## 36. Instructions For Disinfecting The Washing Machine: a narrative for navigating panic during a pandemic.

Dr Charlotte Nichol, Former Lecturer and Academic, Freelance Researcher/Arts Practitioner. Working Currently For the NHS.



Prior to Lockdown announced on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March, as an NHS employee I worked intensely with many colleagues to prepare our hospital for the 'unprecedented' to arise. Daily briefings then local, rapidly incorporated national directives. NHS workers were heralded as 'heros' and nationally they became responsible for confronting and treating Covid 19 with the resources available to them and they (we) are still doing so. This sudden sense of cultural panic filtered through the veins of our workforce. It evoked my own personal political call, to design creative practices that might allow me to inhabit the crisis without being overwhelmed by it.

This articulation of practice is autoethnographic, based;

*on the lived experiences that relate to the specific experience under investigation. The researcher self can also be seen as an outsider looking in on the researched self looking at him//herself through a specific lens observing discovering and reporting aspects of the researched self that s/he finds interesting*

(Choi 2017: p30)



Name: Donna Doff  
Status: Single mum of two  
Likes: A cheeky aromatic gin and gardening.  
Up for a challenge always embraces change.  
Profession: hospital worker who has the patience of a saint. She didn't sign up for hero but she'll have a go and she got the cape!

As an aspect of practice, I wished to weave an auto-ethnographic narrative of my own, drawing on Goffman's (1956) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Here he proposes life as a performance, enacted through the interactions between characters / personas of individuals and carried out in order to project ourselves as we would wish to be seen by others. In slight contrast, the pandemic has magnified the activity of NHS workers and the 'others' in lockdown have projected the 'hero' onto them.

In response to this I want to create a brief dialogue between my 'hero' self Donna Doff (after the practice of donning and doffing PPE) and myself attempting to comprehend what the phenomena of pandemic means on a personal level. This approach addresses the researched hero self in dialogue with the personal self, within what

Goffman terms front and back concepts (p.13, p.69) framed as front stage/backstage. Here, I will navigate the 'everyday' of pandemic across the domestic, clinical (physical) and social (non



physical) spaces that exist in my lived virtual and actual encounters. The following sample exemplifies these diverse perspectives:

**The Front:** *performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance.* Goffman, E (p.13: 1956)

I wish to begin by introducing NHS hero Donna Doff whose passion for embracing change is exemplary. Her ability to traverse the domestic and clinical settings between home and hospital involve intricate costume changes between civilian clothes to uniform, goggles/visor, mask, gloves and apron with exacting precision to avoid cross-infection. She moves between patients at lightning speed dynamically avoiding droplet spread but managing to evoke human empathy from beneath her polyvinyl armour. Gesture becomes key to expression and even a hand held by gloved hand reassures. She is invincible with her no nonsense Covid approach whilst shielded by her visor that amplifies the sound of her own breathing. Domestic Donna will shop like a goddess protecting her charges, managing to locate even the rarest of products on her shopping list, whilst wrapping her face in a scarf and keeping a healthy 2 mtr distance. Her daily virtual encounters include her superhero walk to work with her daily playlist (*The Cereal Optimist - Spotify*), where she imagines nerves of steel and a Ready Break forcefield, to the likes of *Fix You* by *Cold Play* and *Defying Gravity* by the *Glee Cast*. Her family Facetimes to the elderly care setting involve convoluted explanations on setting up comms for a relative, whose fine motor skills face the challenge of navigating a virtual keyboard with tiny TV controls. She is always patient, compassionate and caring.

**The Back:** *Here the performer can relax; he can drop his front, forgo speaking his lines and step out of character.* Goffman, E (p.69: 1956)

I have just been advised how to clean my washing machine weekly with a bleach solution and have also become confused about how often or long I should be showering after work. I am disconcerted with how the clinical is invading my domestic space. At work the mask, goggles and handwashing are drying out my skin and the visor makes my breathing more audible than the patient. The deaf patient cannot lipread through my mask or read my expression through my goggles. From deaf to death this virus wreaks havoc and I can be honest here and say I have never felt so afraid of going to work. So here I am and I have had to make myself a list of do's and don'ts at home. My panic score is as follows:

Learn to do nothing for 5 mins

Learn to do the smallest thing to its fullest extent.

Learn to go wild in the garden for 30 mins..

Clean the house from top to bottom.

Collect moments of return ie return to this, return to that

Find irritating things you do and be with them, then work out what you can do differently.

Play small world games like a child

Imagine condiments are people you know arguing and advise them on how to improve dynamics.

Attribute an object to each person in the house and say what qualities they possess and rationale for this.

Don't be nice for the sake of it, be genuinely kind then try being kind for the sake of it and notice the difference.

Be still for 30 mins.

Plant something and encourage it to grow.

Don't under any circumstances watch the news.

Restrict communication to bookable slots.

Notice how running out of things affects you and how buying things does.

Argue with an object, photo or TV personality.

Invent a dish no one has heard of.

Notice time pass and mark it with a ritual.

Mourn the loss of people or things.

Help once a day.

Leave something behind for someone to find.

Do something abstract.

Find a completely new way to perform process, like hot wiring a car but don't endanger yourself or others or break the law.

Stop

Begin again until there is no need to.

This project will be presented online.

Please message for details via *Linkedin*:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/charlotte-nichol-84596776/>

## References

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