

Mobilise running as metaphor/method/motif to re-imagine the world

Co-create running-related artistic interventions that are bold and bonkers

INTERNATIONAL BODILY FOR RESEARCH

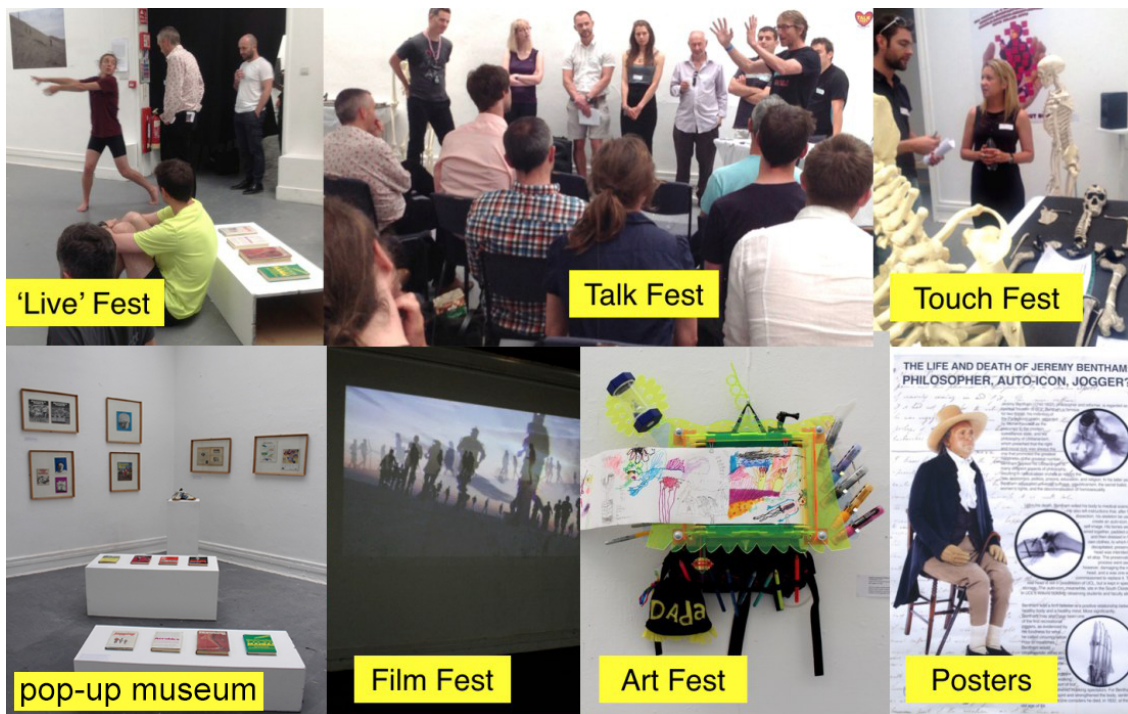
Activate body-mind in motion as a site/sight of autonomy

Solo and collaborative interdisciplinary art practice-led research exploring running as an arts and humanities discourse by Dr Kai Syng Tan with friends including Dr Alan Latham (UCL Geography), Dr Andrew Filmer (Aberystwyth Theatre), Dr Carali McCall (London), Annie Grove-White (Cardiff), Yow Siew Kah (Singapore), Michael Larsson (Sweden), Richard Wright (Manchester) and Philip Tan (Singapore), and:

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Do you run? Are you a researcher? Are you a researcher who use running in your research and wish to meet other like-minded (and like-bodied), fit and clever people? Or are you an anti-running sceptic but enjoy a cracking not-run-of-the-(tread)mill conference? Then you should have attended the *RUN! RUN! RUN! An International Festival of Running 1.0 #r3fest* – and make plans to come to the next leg of this biannual Festival, which should take place around Summer 2016 in London and Leeds.

The first run of the Festival (which was also RUN! RUN! RUN!'s inaugural event) took place at the Slade Research Centre on 26 June 2014. It was a [runaway success that was reported in the Guardian](#). Funded by grants from UCL and AHRC, the Festival was organized and curated by Kai and Dr Alan Latham. [Around 50 people from 30 institutions \(including Harvard University, Glasgow University and UBC; running store Run and Become; social enterprises and charities Streetscape and Goodgym; running club Highgate Harriers; creative studio PhilBeat from Singapore\)](#) and 25 cities (including Melbourne, Milan, Vancouver and Grenoble) congregated at the Slade Research Centre to examine running, not just within its traditional contexts of sport or medicine, but as an arts and humanities subject.

The innovative programming set out to provoke debates and create unexpected meeting points. People from diverse disciplines (including biomechanics, paleoanthropology and fine art) presented keynotes, shared 'live' performances, tours and workshops; senior academics intermingled with up-and-coming performance artists, established filmmakers and community leaders. Parallel activities included a meditation session by ultra-runner Devashishu Torpy (Sri Chimnoid Centre) and a talk by London Olympics medic Dr Courtney Kipps (UCL) on injuries, thereby presenting participants with the dilemma of science versus spirituality.

Praises came forward not just because of it was a pioneering event to scrutinise running, but also for its bold approach. The *Guardian* reported that 'other conferences could take a leaf out of #r3fest's book'. Dr Derek McCormack (Oxford, Geography) called it a 'really fun experience', while Mr Torpy concluded that he has 'come away very inspired.' Sarah Petts (SOAS) even ventured that this was '[p]ossibly the best conference ever.'

And what an endorphin-filled day it was. Highlights included:

- *Not one but two keynote speakers: Professor Hayden Lorimer (University of Glasgow) and Professor Gregg Whelan/Lone Twin (Falmouth University)!*
- *'Show & Touch' by paleoanthropologist Dr Matthew Skinner and Ms Gemma Price: of a fossil cast of a 2-million year old early human runner which can serve to remind us, amidst the 'Nike-fiction'/ commodification of running today, of how it all began.*
- *8-minute 'Talk Fests' by expert sports medic Dr Courtney Kipps (London Marathon, Team GB 2012 Olympics & Paralympics et al), artist Ms Jo Volley (who likes to pick up oak apples when she runs and then magically transforms them into ink that she uses in her paintings) and Streetscape (an award-winning landscaping social enterprise for young people that has arisen from founder Guy Watts' passion for long distance running).*

- 'Film Fest' by Mr Ivo Gormley: Screening of hit film *The Runners* (Sheffield Doc Fest; Open City Docs Fest et al) and chat about Goodgym (a group of runners who 'get fit by doing good').
- 'Running London Tours' by Dr Kris Grint/Bentham Project (through the thrilling West End on the 'pre-prandial circumgyrations' of philosopher Jeremy Bentham back in the 1820's) and Mr Richard Wright (community involvement specialist on social transformation in Bloomsbury).
- Hands-on or rather 'Feet-On Workshops' run by Collectif Totem, a group of researchers in the fields of Geography, Sociology, Planning and Architecture who have come all the way from Grenoble, Milan and Oum El Bouaghi, and Dr Andrew Filmer, who hails from Aberystwyth (and Sydney).
- 'Live' performance of *Run To Draw* by Amelia Johnstone and Peter Hathaway, which demonstrates how running can allow us to re-claim fun and be creative.
- A 'Museum Of Running' by the Walking or rather Running Encyclopaedia of Running and Curator of *Run Run Run!* itself, Dr Alan Latham, which showcases vintage Nike running shoes and classic Runners' World magazines from the 1970's.

→ Just how festive was it? [Click here for images & reviews.](#)

→ [Read Guardian review here.](#)

→ [Read Running the Line review here.](#)

→ [Read Highgate Harriers Newsletter review here.](#)

→ [Read UCL Department of Geography report here.](#)

→ Read [Time Out](#) and [Slade School](#) listing.

→ [Join Running Cultures Research Network on JISMAIL.](#)

→ [Why run a Festival? Read Curatorial Statement.](#)

→ [Read abstracts of papers presented.](#)

→ Where were you? [See which forerunners attended the Festival.](#)

→ What does running look like? [See images submitted.](#)

→ What does running look like *in motion*? [See moving images submitted.](#)

→ What passages inspire runners? [Read quotes submitted.](#)

→ What is the sound of two feet moving? [Listen to 'running music' nominated.](#)

Above: Images from the Festival. Below: screenshot of Guardian review, written by Dr Alex Lockwood.

Running
The running blog

Running and academia: the intellectual aspect of pounding the pavements


At the first International Festival of Running, academics gathered to explore the scientific, spiritual, cultural and political sides of running

Alex Lockwood

Monday 30 June 2014 12:41 BST

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What was clear from the footwear is that we're runners first and foremost.* Photograph: Juice Images/Getty Images/Cultura RF

"Running has become socio-cosmic," anthropologist Allen Abramson announces to his attentive audience, a group of artists, academics, writers and, collectively, runners, gathered at the Slade School of Fine Art in London. What he means by this, I think, is that running is now everywhere. Even - as the first International Festival of Running (Run Run Run, or #r3fest) hosted by University College London last week attests - in the hallowed halls of the academic department, where such highfalutin claims are not, as they might be on the track, out of place.

But outside sports science, what interest does running have for the academic? And is running safe in our hands (or should that be shoes)?

About 50 of us have come for this inaugural conference, which is also the beginnings of a new Running Research Network, exploring the intersections of the scientific with the spiritual, cultural and political sides of the thing we all love to do - and now also to study. What is clear, however, from the footwear as much as the debate, is that we're runners first and foremost.

*We were worried it was just going to be about shoes. See Alex Latham's...

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