International Creative Research Methods Conference
07-08 September 2026

Day 1: Monday 07 September 2026

- **Keynote:** **If Global Health is Broken, Anti-Colonial Creative Justice Might Be the Only Cure** by **Dr Ranjita Dhital**



- **The Trauma-informed Creative Researcher** by **Catherine Cartwright**



12.15–1.15 pm SHINE

This presentation draws on my doctoral research as artist-researcher where through collage workshops with survivors of gender-based violence and interviews with artists working in settings including prisons and hospitals, I examined what it means to be a trauma-informed creative researcher.

Trauma-informed approaches emerged in the early 2000s via public health research, alongside growing awareness of how trauma shapes behaviour, emotion, and decision-making as well as the potential for compounding existing trauma through oppressive relational dynamics. Trauma-informed environments are underpinned by a culture of thoughtfulness and reflection, and grounded in empathy, non-judgment, and awareness of power dynamics, however these conditions are challenged by neoliberal drivers.

Understanding the causes and impacts of trauma is an ethical responsibility for researchers working with individuals and communities impacted by traumatic life experiences to ensure that no further harm is suffered. Trauma-informed research aims for a safe environment where all members of the research team are protected from the potential of compounded or vicarious trauma. This means including strategies for the researchers themselves whose own lived experiences can make them vulnerable to harm in the research space. Given trauma's ubiquity, trauma-informed approaches are relevant across academia, though there is an argument that they are particularly pertinent for those using creative research methods because they can be effective in fore-fronting emotions through embodied, sensory experiences that make one vulnerable. Ultimately, trauma-informed research is about epistemic justice, for if we can't ensure that our research spaces are free from potential harm we limit both which issues can be researched and who can be involved.

- **<u>Measuring the miracle: Creativity in co-creation of research aims, an application of Appreciative Inquiry to research proposal development</u>** by **Meghan Bruce Khumar**



12.15–1.15 pm **RISE**

In this paper, we will describe the work of convening and co-creating the vision for a potential new research collaboration, which is as yet unfunded. Many times, these collaborations rely on an individual with 'a vision' (which may or may not align with that of the research co-leads, let alone with values of society), who shepherds 'a project' through a nominally consultative process with co-leads and public representatives before funding is acquired, at which point the resources allow for more extensive collaborative work. In this presentation, we describe the role of creative research methods in convening, mindsetting, and collective visioning before the funding is acquired to ensure the buy-in of all participants in the research ethos. We focus on the practical steps involved in this case example, as well as the 'feelings as evidence' of group members and immediate tangible outputs, and the value this foundation provides for work on the proposal by a smaller working group that is entrusted with taking the collective vision forward. We showcase an application of appreciative inquiry methodology to the co-creation of research aims for applied health and social care (in the UK) by a group of researchers representing a mix of disciplines and lived experiences related to the health area of interest and to creativity / arts.

- **<u>Beyond Research Projects: Using Creative Methods for Building Research Ecosystems</u>** by **Maggie Grant**



12.15–1.15 pm **RISE**

The term 'research ecosystem' is generally used to describe national or organisational structures, involving funders, governments, universities and other institutes. Instead, my interest here is in the individual ecosystems we create as researchers – particularly the participants, gatekeepers and research users we develop relationships with as we move through and beyond individual studies. I argue that attending to research ecosystems can lead to more ethical and less risk-averse approaches to participation, with reciprocal benefits for all involved through sharing ideas, knowledge and solidarity.

I carry out research with separated children and young people who have sought sanctuary in the UK without their parents, often working with social workers, guardians, teachers and others along the way. The political scapegoating of people seeking asylum and concomitant rise in racist attacks mean we are undoubtably in 'dark times' (Khosravi, 2025), but also underscore why researchers need on-going relationships with others who may be better placed to theorise, hone questions or design research tools

for meaningful research.

Drawing on learning from how communities of practice support effective education for separated children (Grant, Burns and Lucas, 2024), I highlight examples of how actively cultivating a varied research ecosystem can help us think through knotty problems, offer young people genuine choices and ultimately enhance research quality. I discuss a recent study in which young people, support workers, artists and researchers developed creative workshops to explore pandemic life (Mattar and Grant, 2022) and our current work creating a website, with young people advising researchers on content and layout, and researchers helping young people find out about university options.

The presentation is based primarily on images generated during and between projects to help convey what building research ecosystems can *look like* (usually more chaotic than our written outputs suggest), *sound like* (loud, quiet, musical) and even *smell like* (food or fresh air, for example). Heeding Khosravi's (2025) call for migration scholarship to reflect on how people who have been displaced aren't just 'researched subjects' but also 'theorising subjects', I also consider potential avenues for young people and other participants to further their own research and impact agendas.

- **"What Lies Beneath? - Using Participant-Led Photo Elicitation to Explore Relational Safety in Psychotherapeutic Relationships** by **Aoife Ryan**

  12.15–1.15 pm **GROW**

Participant-led photo elicitation is not widely used in Irish psychotherapeutic research. I used it to help access feelings and experiences that may not be accessible through traditional verbal methods of communication.

- **What Can a Creative Writing Project Tell Us About Mental Health in First Generation Students at UK Universities?** by **Donna Smith**

  12.15–1.15 pm **GROW**

To demonstrate how creative writing can be used as a research method to enhance and amplify findings from more typical psychological studies.

- **Remaking for research** by **Tetyana Solovey**

  12.15–1.15 pm **GROW**

My PhD explores the upcycling of worn clothes through the material and affective turns in social sciences. I conceptualise upcycling as a form of making, drawing on Ingold's (2010, 2012) "textility of making." Upcycling follows the materiality of garments - working with holes, stains, and wornness – and exemplifies "thinking from materials" (Ingold, 2012: 437). During my fieldwork, I find myself practicing remaking - the very activity I am researching. Therefore, I extend my research methodology to include autoethnography of remaking alongside participant observation and interviews.

- **Creating an experienced based mentorship model using co-design** by **Charlotte Wake**

12.15–1.15 pm **GROW**

The use of focus groups that include mentors and mentees to collaboratively work together to help create a new mentorship model for dentistry.

- **A New Materialist Exploration of International Students' Being and Belonging in Higher Education through Arts-Based Methods** by **Afsana Chowdhury**

12.15–1.15 pm **BUZZ**

- **Exploring and capturing creativity through creative methods: from research to creative dissemination** by **Saoirse Reynolds Conlon**



12.15–1.15 pm **BUZZ**

This presentation explores creative approaches to researching and sharing creativity, drawing on recent doctoral research examining how youth work fosters creativity in young people. A mixed-methods design was used, with surveys and story circles as distinct approaches to capture both broad insights and lived experiences. Whilst a 'Four dimensions of creativity' framework was used to analyse the findings.

This session will reflect on the use of creative methods not only in data collection and analysis but also in dissemination. To make the research more accessible, an interactive virtual exhibition was developed using Artsteps, alongside other visual approaches, to present the research journey in an engaging format for audiences beyond academia.

Using this approach as a starting point, the presentation invites discussion on how researchers and practitioners can creatively capture and share their work. Practical insights will be offered on implementing creative methods and using research to extend impact, including engaging broader audiences and contributing to policy and practice.
A space will also be provided for participants to share their own experiences of creative dissemination.

- **<u>Lessons from an early career researcher – why our choice of methods really do matter</u>** by **Rebekah Gear**



12.15–1.15 pm **WORK**

My contribution will provide a recent research study I conducted in Early Years which used interviews with young children. The research area was exploring how children experience agency within their outdoors environment. The project has brought a lot of attention and excitement with colleague in the sector, based on the findings, however on second reflections I was not convinced or comfortable that our chosen methods enabled 'agency' from the children in their responses and contributions to the projects outcomes. The project was repeated again this time adopting a more creative approach, providing images for the children to sort and then discuss. The outcomes were very interesting and created an internal debate around the impact our chosen methods can have on the insights we enable our participants to give- without influence. This is about me sharing an open and honest internal debate around stepping off that treadmill of simply using traditional methods to conduct research and think more creative. It's almost a presentation around researching into my research- looking into and critiquing that process as an early careers researcher.

- **<u>"Burn me down": The piths and perils of activist practice research</u>** by **Nicole Brown & Stephen Brown**

12.15–1.15 pm **WORK**

The social sciences research landscape continues to evolve with more researchers incorporating participatory and arts-based methods to empower participants, to make research accessible and to enable activist work. As a result, social sciences projects increasingly resemble practice research where participants and researchers collaborate in workshop-type activities that encompass the data generation, analysis, and dissemination phases of research.

For this interactive presentation, Nicole and Stephen Brown will work together to explore the piths and perils of practice research. We will begin with considering the researcher's sense of belonging and identity, especially when faced with the challenges of transcending disciplinary conventions and pushing methodological boundaries. We will invite participants to consider "When have you felt like an outsider in your research context?, In what way have felt like an outsider in your discipline?, What risks or rewards came with that boundary crossing? How did it affect your sense of belonging?".

We will then explore activist practice research by considering Nicole's research projects "Bodies and buildings", "Disclosure dances in doctoral education", "COVID19 and the career progression of disabled researchers", "Identity and belonging among doctoral researchers", and "The I in fibromyalgia". After the presentation of Stephen's song "burn me down" from the project "The I in fibromyalgia", we will highlight benefits as well as the risks and challenges researchers and artists face when working in these boundary-crossing spaces of activist practice research. Benefits include the empowerment of participants, and the opportunities afforded in dissemination activities, while the challenges and risks include the lack of recognition in academic and disciplinary groups as well as in the creative, artistic industries. We will offer delegates an opportunity to locate themselves on the

spectrum of research from Traditional Academic Practice to Activist Practice Research and to further explore what their positioning reveals about belonging, identity, and precarity. We will conclude our presentation with joint reflections of how activist practice researchers can navigate this treacherous space.

- **Cut-up poetry as a bridge: Strengthening collaboration and inclusivity in research** by **Ruth Ustead-Joss, Gemma Moore & Briony Fleming**

  2.00–3.30 pm **SHINE**

This workshop will explore how creative approaches can act as bridges between universities and communities, making complex ideas more accessible and building connections for future collaboration.

At UCL, we have trialled creative methods such as collage and cut-up poetry to spark dialogue and build new networks between researchers and local communities. Through the Canvas project, these approaches were used to strengthen research exploring the connection between climate change and health equity. This workshop will share those learnings and demonstrate how creative tools can support inclusive research engagement.

Delegates will experiment with the creative tool of *cut-up poetry*, remixing words and phrases from academic texts, toolkits, and creative writing into poems. This exercise will show how playful practices can open spaces for dialogue. It will also consider the suitability of such an approach in different contexts.

Delegates will work in small groups, with opportunities to share their poems through a short-reflection circle to spark conversation about inclusive engagement practices and the creative process. Delegates will gain insight into how creative approaches can connect research with communities and leave with a tested creative method they can adapt in their own practice.

- **Queerying poetry and the knowledge of the post-idealist body** by **Antu Sorainen**

  2.00–3.30 pm **SHINE**

  The paper will open questions on how to learn about the knowledge that our corporeal presence carries. What do we know about the relationships past and present, of the joys and wounds, of the histories of our minds and bodies, of the consistency of our egos or ways to connect with our emotions? How do we sparkle or repress ourselves in social or lone situations?

  The talk will study how to create poetry to research corporeal knowledge, and how to do this by relying on the spiral form. Spirality never starts or ends, and the force comes afar and leaves in waves we do not control but could be a more happily conscious participant of. Poetry is seen as an open idea rather than a text form. The talk is based on a body and mind that has a queer and idealist history and asks its questions from that specific place and space. The spiral form could be, for example, about a party, vengefulness, loneliness, esoteric knowing, climate, wisdom, ghosts, movement and other cross-cultural energy and information unfolding and connecting to everything else. Queerying is about finding joy and vulnerability in the unexpected or barely supported but willful and persistent. Idealism is about judgment and ethical decisions in a certain historical space and context but also beyond the individual experience.

The talk draws on a video clip of a performance exploring the spiral form connecting the space, the text, the body, and its ability to express poetry. In this way, we could experiment on which passions or core emotions drive us and whose stories or narratives do we carry with us, and how the study of these via poetry and spirality helps us to re-imagine, redescribe and recreate our connectedness.

- **Co-creating School Space: Participatory Methods With Young People** by **Harriet MacLachlainn**



2.00–3.30 pm **RISE**

This creative presentation explores how young people aged 16–18 co-designed and led a multimodal inquiry into their school environments, using visual, sensory and participatory methods not only to generate knowledge but also to reshape the conditions under which school-space knowledge is produced, shared, and valued. Through filmmaking, photography, visual elicitation and collaboratively led school tours, co-researchers created artefacts that offered deeply relational and embodied accounts of wellbeing, belonging and the politics of everyday school life.

A distinctive element of this work is its evolving ethical approach to co-authorship and representation. From the outset, co-researchers were informed that they could, if they wished, follow the research through to publication and dissemination, with options for anonymity, pseudonymity or named authorship. This stance recognises co-authorship as a negotiated site of power and agency rather than a procedural detail. The presentation reflects on the ethical, relational and practical dimensions of supporting this decision-making process.

The session will share creative artefacts produced by co-researchers and reflect on moments where creativity moved 'beyond data gathering' into the transformation of academic and public spaces, including a conference presentation where the researcher physically reconfigured the stage to create space for all co-presenters.

By centring youth-led creativity, this session demonstrates how participatory visual methods can challenge dominant narratives, democratise research relationships and expand the possibilities of creative inquiry in education, wellbeing and social research.

- **How can research be as inclusive as possible? 'homeplace' as a methodological way of being** by **Sara McHaffie & Lucy Pickering**





2.00–3.30 pm **RISE**

How can power be addressed through methodological and ethical innovation? This workshop explores the concept of 'homeplace' as a site of methodological innovation focused on creativity, group dynamics and how power is enacted in data generation and analysis. It invites participants to reflect on their own research via a project that sought to enact 'homeplace': a space where a researcher worked to build trust within a group to generate not only novel insights but simultaneously produce community and enable and foster activism in diverse forms.

Central to McHaffie's doctoral research, on which this workshop is based, was co-creating a space where participants felt able to express themselves fully, drawing on and extending hooks' concept of 'homeplace' (1989). Attention to environmental, communication needs and the affective qualities of the research space as a set of relations was facilitated by using drawing from the outset, and later embroidery and creative writing.

While we draw on McHaffie's work with autistic women, this workshop will allow participants to explore the environmental, communication and affective dimensions of a research 'space' in detail: to explore how 'homeplace' is about producing a 'place' that feels like a 'home' that feels secure but also empowering, that feels safe but also brave, that feels comfortable but also connected and courageous though attention to inclusion as access, inclusion as affect and inclusion as homeplace.

- **Working on health in fragile settings: What can creative methods offer?** by **Kate Hawkins et al.**

2.00–3.30 pm **GROW**

An introduction to the session will provide a timetable and explain to participants about the collage materials on their tables. Using these materials, they will be asked to take their own visual notes of the session (10 minutes). We will begin with reflections on photo essays and how they were used in India at the start of research to explore researcher positionality and foster relationship-building (10 minutes). We will move into a session on disability highlighting photovoice in Bangladesh and animation and colouring book development in Myanmar (20 mins). These processes created a shift in how knowledge was generated and communicated that stressed safeguarding and ethical practices. We will break for questions (10 minutes). Finally, we will show the film 'Health Workers' (a film about Syrian refugee women in Lebanon) to demonstrate how emotion and data interplay (30 minutes), and end with comments and reflections from the audience (returning to the earlier collage activity) (10 minutes).

- **<u>Using Creative methods in reflexivity: finding holistic self-awareness and meaning</u>** by **Jenny Hall**



2.00–3.30 pm **BUZZ**

In recent years there has been increasing attention and expectation for researchers to explore self-awareness during studies. Personal reflexivity is particularly expected for qualitative researchers. The purpose of this workshop is to encourage exploration of personal creative methods as tools for holistic reflexivity. There will be opportunity to play and discuss experiences using different methods to explore.

To the session if you can please bring a printed copy of a 200-500 word section from an interview or study text and a research diary entry!

- **<u>Shapes that fit: Creative Responses to Research Ethics Committees and their suggestions</u>** by **Charlotte Marshall**

2.00–3.30 pm **WORK**

Research Ethics Committees (RECs) have a reputation of being bureaucratic, uncaring, and hypocritical (Dingwall, 2016). Their approaches, paperwork and forms often do not recognise the complexity of research nor the need to be responsive and flexible during the course of creative research (Kara, 2018). This can create a sense of frustration for the Early Career Researcher (ECR) as they also navigate other demands and tensions as part of the academic project.

This workshop will draw upon the personal experiences of a doctoral researcher who applied for ethical approval on four occasions. Each application was prefixed with a warning that ethics applications are tremendously difficult and it is unlikely to receive a favourable outcome upon first try. The warnings turned out to be prophetic; each application required a revision and at least chair's actions. For three out of four applications the amendments were conventional and did not provoke anything other than angst in relation to timings. The fourth ethics application cause much more frustration as it declared the information sheet 'too creative'. A statement that challenged the whole nature of the research, and to an extent the researcher.

Barad (2007) claims we are intimately connected to the work that we do, the creative approach within the information sheet was my way of reaching out to potential participants to let them know what type of person sat behind the research. This workshop will share the creative response I had to the ethics committee outcome and invite delegates to tap into their emotions connected to RECs and use the energy to be creative.

- **Structurally embracing cultural and participative research methods: lessons from a Dutch cultural fund** by **Nicole McNeilly**



2.00–3.30 pm **WORK**

Het Fonds voor Cultuurparticipatie (FCP) is a Dutch state cultural fund, like an arts council, that distributes approximately 50 million euros a year to support and stimulate active cultural participation in amateur arts, cultural education and co-creation (partnership working between cultural and societal organisations).

Despite our cultural and social remit, the application of creative research methods has been an exception rather than the norm. We are not unique in this situation. This is despite our broader cultural policy allowing the cultural sector to focus on its societal impact. It is thus time to embrace creative methods that allow us to go deep into the *story* of change that we create and/or contribute to. We have recently commissioned research using methods like Photovoice, sustainable storytelling and peer interviews. By summer 2026, we will have expanded this methods list and can share learnings from case studies including preliminary results from a programme of trust-based financing.
We will share what we are learning as an institution as we proactively embed creative and participative methods.

We will set out how we do this structurally. For example, through partnership working with other (cultural) funds and experts in institutions like the Utrecht University of Applied Sciences (HKU). Furthermore, in calls for research proposals, we ask providers to propose creative methods that respond to the needs of the groups we are trying to reach. There is more to do to encourage research providers to become more creative and participative, and secondly, for individual experts in creative methods to feel more comfortable working with a fund (a 'bureaucracy') such as ours. In this session, we want to hear from researchers about how we can strengthen a community that is expert in creative methods; and to consider limitations and opportunities as we strive to improve and be a good case study for other (cultural) funders.

- **When Comics Talk Back: Analysing Co-Produced Comics to Transform Inclusive Research** by **Jess Mannion**



4.00–6.00 pm **SHINE**

This presentation shares new creative methodological work developed by the Disabilities Without Borders research team, a co-produced collaboration of disabled and neurodivergent researchers, interdisciplinary academics, practitioners, and artists based in Ireland and the USA. As part of our commitment to accessibility, shared power, and meaningful co-production, we began by creating short comics that explore our identities as researchers on the team and the reasons each of us joined the project.

To analyse these comics in an equitable and accessible way, the disabled researchers on the team developed a new method called Collaborative Listeners Data Analysis, or CLDA. CLDA is a structured, iterative, listening-based approach designed to attend to tone, pacing, silence, emotion, accessibility needs, and relational nuance, aspects that are often overlooked in traditional analysis. In this process, each researcher reads their comic aloud and shares their interpretation. The group then listens back to the recording together, each person reflects, and the team engages in a collective discussion. This discussion is also audio recorded, enabling a second round of re-listening and response. Recording and listening to both the readings and the discussions creates multiple layers of meaning and supports more equal and accessible participation in analysis.

By bringing our co-produced comics into the CLDA process, we aim to explore how listening to each other's creative work and interpretations may surface assumptions, reveal different experiences of belonging and accessibility within the team, identify communication and power-related challenges, and highlight shared or divergent understandings of what it means to participate in this collaboration. We use the idea that the comics can 'talk back' to guide our inquiry, treating them as openings for noticing what becomes visible only when we listen collectively, relationally, and accessibly.

In this session, we will share the comics we created and demonstrate how we analysed them using the CLDA process. Together, the comics and the listening-centred analysis allow us to notice, question, and reimagine aspects of how our co-produced team works. We ask how creating and listening to co-produced comics, combined with an accessible, collaborative analytic method, can open possibilities for more equitable power-sharing, more effective communication, and more meaningful collaborative research practice. We also consider how these creative approaches might reshape both our research processes and our relationships.

- **What insight can collaborative songwriting bring into women's lived experience of gambling?** by **Sharon Martin**

4.00–6.00 pm SHINE

Methodology
The methodology is participatory, Interpretivist and qualitative. Interviews with experts by practice, individual songwriting sessions, and a group songwriting workshop with experts by practice including sharing and reflecting on the research process.

Value of songwriting
Songwriting gives insight into lived experience, and recovery journeys. Narratives are a social force (Presser and Sandberg 2019). Songwriting enables listening and hearing women's voices. It is creative, inclusive and enjoyable for participants, developing their skills. Songwriting develops strong research relationships (Fairchild and McFerran 2019, McCaffrey 2021) breaking down traditional barriers and hierarchies within research (McCaffrey et al 2021, Crockett Thomas et al 2019). Songwriting enables agency within narratives for those with lived experience of gambling (Presser and Sandberg 2019). Lyrics are shaped by experiences and intersections of power and selected and created by the narrator and the writer(s) of the song (Høybye 2024). Songs have a kind of agency as social actors in research (Crockett Thomas et al 2021). Songwriting is collaborative, creative and can be used in co-production. Songwriting is participatory as are recording and performance, facilitating public engagement. The Distant Voices Project shared songs through recordings and performance with the aim of creating dialogue (Crockett Thomas et al 2020). In this project songs will potentially be housed on the Aila website.

Preliminary findings
Songwriting research can counter the under-representation of women in gambling

harms research. Highlighting narratives and lived experience journeys, including recovery, challenging dominant narratives of vulnerability revealing resilience, skills, and strength.
Songwriting can contribute to the sharing of stories and amplifying of voices, raising awareness and destigmatising lived experience of gambling. Songwriting research can inform practice around embedding lived experience.
Songwriting as a method leads to high levels of engagement and enjoyment of the research process for participants and researcher.

- **Weaving narratives of Creative Cities in Portugal's Centro Region through autoethnotheatre** by **Vanessa Santos**

4.00–6.00 pm **RISE**

This contribution presents a research-based autoethnodrama developed from fieldwork across UNESCO-linked Creative Cities in the Centro Region of Portugal, exploring the lived experiences of artists, creative producers, consumers, and culture-tourism municipal officers. The dramatic script layers personal narrative with multiple participant voices to reveal which stories are amplified, and which are concealed in creative-city branding, particularly those involving colonial past, precarity, informal creative labour, and contested cultural identity. By staging tensions, such as policy discourse against local everyday realities, and the lived experiences of places, the performance invites audiences to reflect on the role of narrative and storytelling in creative urban planning and policy-making.

The autoethnotheatre performance was developed for the researcher's viva and intentionally blurred the boundaries between research and performance to discuss institutional distance. This approach embodied the idea that creative practitioners, and research participants are entangled within creative economies, and highlighted the researcher's role as a facilitator of knowledge exchange. By inviting the audience into dialogue after the staged segment, the session created a shared space for re-imagining discussions of urban issues and the framing of potential solutions grounded in collaborative narrative practices. Participants will leave with a deeper understanding of how autoethnotheatre can be used for ethically gathering, synthesizing and sharing multiple (potentially conflicting) stories about a particular region.

- **Collective Storytelling and Ritual as Art-Research** by **Rita Júlia Sebestyén**



4.00–6.00 pm **RISE**

This workshop-presentation introduces and enacts interconnected methods of storytelling and ritualistic community-building. Participants explore individual and collective narratives via embodied expression and transform personal stories into shared creative acts. The method has been developed through international projects supported by Forsøgsstationen and the Badteatret (Denmark), Creative Europe, and

Anglia Ruskin University (UK), and has been endorsed by the Danish Ministry of Culture.
The methodology integrates and reinterprets the interdisciplinary and community-based nature of Ancient Greek Theatre, the empowerment and critical pedagogy of Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal, 1979), and the research-art approaches of Ethnotheatre (Saldana, 2005). It combines trauma-informed, participatory, and relational practices that merge artistic and scholarly inquiry.

During the session, participants respond to a common prompt**,** creating short personal stories within safe boundaries. These individual stories then inform the creation of a shared temporary community ritual around the thematic focus of the prompt. The workshop involves light movement and concludes with a reflective discussion that connects practice to theory, drawing on concepts such as situated knowledges (Haraway, 1988), relational witnessing (Das, 2006; Campt, 2017), and embodied repertoire (Pollock, 2005; Taylor, 2003).

The workshop and presentation offer an insight into a non-invasive**,** relational exercise that enhances self-compassion, empathy, and connection through verbal and performative methods. This session is designed to empower and equip marginalised communities, healthcare and social workers, educators, policy-makers and researchers with artistic tools, enabling them to explore how art-making can function as a rigorous and ethical form of research while actively seeking a balance between the 'art for research' and 'research for art' dilemma.

- **The PhD Quilt as Method: Crafting a Thirdspace for 'Unflattened' Research** by **Susie Bass**



4.00–6.00 pm **GROW**

This session explores a creative, material-led methodology designed to research complex, 'unflattened' neurodivergent identities without losing their depth. My doctoral project, "Crafting Resistance in a Burnout Society," responds to the 'one-dimensional' demands of contemporary life (Marcuse, 1964; Han, 2015) by asking how we can research lived experience in a way that honours its texture and complexity.

The session introduces the PhD Quilt as a central methodological tool and how it functions active, evolving site for data gathering, co-production with participants, autoethnographic analysis, and dissemination. I will argue that this practice of making creates a 'Thirdspace' (Soja, 1996): a lived, political, and therapeutic realm where resistance to societal 'flattening' is crafted stitch by stitch. Through a visual tour of key autoethnographic and collaborative quilt blocks, I will demonstrate how the quilt functions as: political critique, personal resilience and as a material metaphor for craft as a survival tool.

The session will then move from presentation to practice. Attendees will be invited to participate in a micro-workshop, engaging directly with two of the collaborative blocks from the PhD Quilt. This interactive element provides a tangible experience of the research method itself:

Pinpointing Truth: Participants will be given pins to add their own anonymous "truth" to "The Truth" quilt block, a piece that explores epistemic injustice.

A Message to the Tower: Participants will be invited to write a short, anonymous message on a scrap of fabric to be added to "The Ivory Tower" block, engaging in a collective, micro-act of craftivism.

This session offers a tangible example of a creative method that extends beyond data gathering into the realms of analysis, ethics, and dissemination. It invites attendees to consider how their own research might be 'unflattened,' and concludes by reflecting on how relational, co-creative practices can move us toward more equitable ways of making knowledge together.

- **Stitching Stories of Poverty and Power: Co-Creating a Digital Quilt with the Poverty Truth Community** by **Emma Davidson, Helen Berry and Jean McEwan**





4.00–6.00 pm **GROW**

This interactive session will share insights from a collaboration between the Poverty Truth Community (PTC), the Binks Hub, and the University of Edinburgh Library Service to co-create a digital quilt that captures the PTC's legacy and reimagines its future. The project gathered and crafted images, artefacts, texts, soundscapes, collage, and recorded conversations. This assemblage of materials has been curated into two outputs: a digital archive and a (textile) community quilt. These celebrate PTC's unique way of working: sharing truths about poverty and influencing change through relationships, community building, and collective voice.

In the session, we will showcase elements of the PTC quilt project. The audience will be invited to interact with the materials. Together, we will discuss how method became both process and product, a creative and ethical framework for holding multiple, layered stories – bridging individual and collective. We reflect on the ethics of care and ownership in participatory art–research-community collaborations, and on the role of the Library as an ally in supporting the community archive using Omeka, an open-source digital platform. The presentation will explore the tensions and opportunities of making research public in ways that remain grounded in community values, trust, and consent. Participants will be invited to consider how creative archiving and slow, co-created methods can reframe knowledge production and what it might mean to 'quilt' research as a living, relational practice.

- **Playing Seriously, Seriously Playing: Creative Methods for Researching Playful and Interactive Cultural Experiences** by **Stefanie Steinbeck**

4.00–6.00 pm **BUZZ**

Cultural institutions such as museums are increasingly experimenting with playful and interactive approaches to visitor engagement. (Olesen & Holdgaard, 2024). These practices challenge traditional notions of museums as purely serious spaces of preservation and education, and instead highlight creativity, participation, and embodied experience as central to cultural learning.

As part of the Lego Foundation–funded programme *Moving Museums Through Play*, my research investigates how play can be understood and evaluated as both a subject of study and a methodological lens. This perspective offers insights into how playful practices transform visitor engagement, democratize

knowledge, and inspire institutional change.

This workshop is designed as an interactive sharing session. It invites researchers and practitioners working with creative methods in the cultural sector to exchange approaches, reflect on challenges, and explore possibilities. While I bring a perspective on play and interactive museum experiences, the session aims to open dialogue across a wider range of cultural experiences and methodological innovations.

- **Escape games as creative research method: Immersive inquiry into family digital practices**
  by **Nayra Vacaflor**



4.00–6.00 pm **BUZZ**

This session presents a multi-year research programme developing escape-game-based inquiry as an emerging creative method in communication and information sciences to analyse digital practices, emotional regulation and media literacy within diverse families. Building on earlier participatory visual methods, this project extends into immersive, in-situ and multimodal investigation.

The exploratory phase, **Quest Your Digital** (3 years), consisted of 45 interviews with international researchers and practitioners (CRI-Paris, UCLouvain, NYU Game Center, MIT Game Lab, etc.). A large content analysis examined how escape games can serve as research tools and identified the methodological and ethical principles. Participation, embodiment, sensory engagement—that would underpin the next phase.

The experimental phase, **OPUS** (Observatoire Pour Usage Scientique), deploys personalised escape games inside family homes. Pre-game questionnaires transform digital habits and concerns into tailored puzzles, turning each home into a temporary research laboratory. The sessions generate multimodal traces (speech, gestures, movements, artefacts, emotional cues) and end with a co-created sensory map that synthesises the experience. To date, 15 families have participated, producing insights into attention dynamics, rule negotiation, privacy boundaries and perceptions of digital agency. This contribution aligns with recent developments in creative methods in communication, particularly the European trends identified in a quantitative study I presented at Leipzig (Germany) (2020–2025 corpus, Academia & ResearchGate).

The session will show how escape-game-based inquiry functions as an immersive research laboratory, enables multimodal and sensorial data collection and advances the broader movement of creative communication methods.

A short interactive demonstration will invite participants to experience the method from within (transforming the session into a brief moment of collective play, inquiry and critical reflection).

- **<u>Researching with artist illustrations</u>** by **Helen Berry**



4.00–6.00 pm **WORK**

This contribution shares insights on a unique series of illustrations generated between the researcher and a visual artist. The context is a relational, multi-method, qualitative doctoral study exploring experiences of research co-production, and funded by the Binks Hub at the University of Edinburgh.

Research co-production is a practice fraught with interrelated issues of power, language, and translation. Responding to these specific challenges, the creative contribution of this presentation/workshop is to reflect on how metaphorical and visual thinking can help translate research questions and ideas, inspire conversation, and facilitate connection while respecting the uniqueness and diversity of people's experiences. As well as supporting the outer dimensions of research, I consider how the illustrations assisted with inner work, including reflexive practices. With an insider positioning, thinking with the illustrations became a way of unsettling the familiar and being more open to critical inquiry (Mannay, 2010). As thinking tools, the illustrations provided a heuristic device tacking between theory and practice.

The presentation/workshop will share insights on using bespoke images as a through-line in research, tailoring reflections to each stage of the research process. The audience will be invited to look at, discuss, and play with sample images. They will reflect on considerations and limitations of working in this way, and if/where their own work could benefit. I hope to invite shared thinking regarding current doubts, wonderings, and challenges at this stage of the research, such as how to meaningfully integrate visual elements into traditional forms of academic writing.

- **<u>Exploration through zine making: contributing to a sense of belonging for young people</u>** by **Julie Kane**

4.00–6.00 pm **WORK**

Zines (zeens) are small scale, self-made publications that provide a versatile medium for expression and engagement. They are significant as an art form in that they offer the opportunity to express oneself without barriers, to share personal experiences, to develop community and to connect with others.

Zines allow makers to explore a variety of text and image-based art methods without any rules about what is included. As such, they are a particularly appropriate tool for exploring the development of social identity and sense of belonging in the context of youth mental health. Strong social identity can lead to a strengthened sense of belonging, which is known to be beneficial for young people, not only promoting, but maintaining good mental health.

As zines are rooted in a do-it-yourself culture, they are a relatively cheap, scalable tool that can be created with minimal cost and training for staff, making them particularly accessible for young people and a useful contribution to mental health prevention in schools.

In the current work, interview and illustrative feedback was collected from a selection of year 7 – year 11 pupils as well as teachers who participated / observed a voluntary, school-based zine club. The findings from this work will be presented, including the suggested ingredients for running a 'successful zine club'. The audience will then have time to explore their own identity, sense of belonging and to reflect on whether they would have participated in zine club in school, and the impact it may have had for them.

- **The Game of Teaching Creative Methods** by **Janet Salmons**



6.30-7.45 pm ONLINE

The Game of Teaching Creative Methods will be an online workshop for those who teach in university settings or offer informal researcher training. Educational philosophers from Dewey (Dewey, 1934, 1938) to Kolb (Kolb et al., 2014; Kolb, 1984; Stock & Kolb, 2021) have advocated experiential learning. Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle describes learning as an interactive process that encourages students to experience new ways of thinking and doing, and to internalize them through reflection, then put them into action.

In the cycle of learning learners receive information through experiencing and transform it by reflecting and thinking and then transform it again by acting to change the world.(Stock & Kolb, 2021, p. 5)

Activities across this cycle can be carried out collaboratively so learners gain skills they can use to build trust and cooperation with gatekeepers, co-researchers, and participants (Lemon & Salmons, 2020; Salmons, 2019).

Emerging researchers benefit from learning-by-doing, first practicing within the safe confines of the classroom before interacting with human participants. In this workshop, after an overview about creativity and active learning, we will play an original research design game. We will close with a discussion of the activity and ways attendees can adapt it for their settings. Attendees will receive a set of game materials and instructions.

International Creative Research Methods Conference
07-08 September 2026

Day 2: Tuesday 8 September 2026

- **Keynote: Creativity in Collaborative Research with Children and Young People: From Metaphor, through Method(ology) and onto Meaning Making** by **Alistair Roy**



9.30–10.30 am **SHINE**

Plenary Poem by **Kate Fox, *Stand-up Poet***



10.30–10.35 am **SHINE**

- **Harnessing an ethic of care to amplify participatory and creative endeavors in disability research: Reflections on a Photovoice project with a group of six Parents with Learning Disabilities (LD)** by **Léa Brinon**



11.00 am–1.00 pm **SHINE**

Drawing from a ten months-long Photovoice project with six Parents with LD, this presentation posits the espousal of an ethic of care framework to bolster participatory and creative pursuits in research. Nested under the Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodological umbrella, Photovoice equips research participants -more likely to experience social exclusion- with cameras to document their surroundings, engage in collective discussions around barriers to social participation and display images to targeted audiences. Born out of feminist philosophical discourse, an ethic of care lays bare the inextricable interconnectedness framing that of human relations.

Following the premise that research sites are imbued with mutual and responsive synergies, the ethos of

an ethic of care closely mirrors PAR's values contending participants as reliable knowers; placing their lived experiences at the epicentre to defy social inequalities. Developing an understanding of how caring practices can be implemented on research sites is particularly salient in the light of Photovoice's critiques questioning un-substantiated claims of participant empowerment. Photovoice projects with Parents with LD seldom consider the exhibition stage, in effect limiting opportunities to understand the interplay between the politics of representation and avenues for the betterment of participants' lives.

This presentation illuminates the ways in which weaving cross-overs between care ethics and PAR' theoretical underpinnings prompted the need to respond to epistemic limits of Photovoice with Parents with LD. True to the nature of caring to be thought of as existing on a continuum, reflective journal excerpts and a portfolio of images will provide tangible examples of the cascade of care instilled within a participatory and creative research framework which led to the re-evaluation, reflection and negotiation of local research practices alongside the team of Parents.

- **Illuminating meaning and enriching reflexivity: Using the arts as metaphors to make sense of parents' stories when their child has cancer** by **Liz Jestico**



11.00 am–1.00 pm **SHINE**

My PhD study explored how parents may be supported by family and friends with decision-making when their child has cancer. During interviews, 6 parents of children with cancer told me their heartbreaking stories about their child's diagnosis and the decisions that they subsequently faced. As I later worked with the data, trying to make sense of it, I often spent time listening to music and found that this was helping me to understand their stories which prompted me to engage with the arts more broadly.

As I wrote my thesis, words alone felt insufficient to represent the emotional depth of the parents' stories and so throughout I embedded music and paintings as a series of metaphors. This enabled a powerful and evocative representation of participants' voices and provided additional dimensions for the audience to process their own understanding. Drawing on the arts also enabled me to present a reflexive lens into my own world as I explained why each musical or visual composition resonated for me with the parents' stories. Reflexivity is a core component of many qualitative research approach, but it can be challenging to present this within research findings. Working with the arts offers potential to capture researchers' reflexive positioning as well as powerfully evoke the richness and depth of participant stories.

During the workshop I will present my journey through my research and how the arts illuminated understanding and enriched my reflexive approach. A creative activity will then allow attendees to work with participants' stories and find their own pieces of art to express their reflexive understanding and connections between art and meaning.

- **Negotiating consent – Ethical challenges of photo-elicitation in research with young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)** by **Kim Collett**



11.00 am–1.00 pm **SHINE**

Photo elicitation interviews are a qualitative research method that uses photos to prompt discussions. This approach can work well with teenagers as it offers the familiarity of an everyday pastime most young people undertake. It can also support research with young people with SEND, or who are neurodiverse, as it reduces the pressures of traditional interviews, offers a 'neutral third eye' easing discomfort with things like direct eye contact, and offers a creative way to express experiences. However, the method does present its own unique set of ethical considerations around consent.

This session will begin by exploring the method and its benefits as well as the different types of photo elicitation there are. The core of the presentation will focus on the ethical challenges photos pose regarding consent such as anonymity and copyright. Each type of photo elicitation experiences different issues in relation to consent and these will be explored too.

To illustrate the impact of these ethical considerations, the session will draw on an example of photo elicitation research where the type employed was heavily directed by consent. The implications of this, such as data richness and participant empowerment, will be debated. There will also be discussion on some of the practical strategies researchers use to address the issues discussed.

To bring the issues to life, participants will be encouraged to take a photo representing their experiences today, near the start of the talk. Near the end, they will be invited to revisit these images to identify potential consent issues and retake their photo addressing these. This exercise will spark further discussion on whether ethical adjustments affect how easy it is to use this method, the quality of the data, and the interpretation of the meanings behind photos.

- **'Game On: Tabletop Games as Method in Critical Policy Analysis** by **Hanna Andersen**



11.00 am–1.00 pm **RISE**

Tabletop games have a long history in social life, but their potential as research tools has received limited attention. Existing focus has been on games which are specifically designed for educational or research purposes (Neag 2019; Gröppel-Wegener 2022; Monteiro-Krebs et al. 2024). These 'serious games' have also been employed in policy development, offering a metaphor for the 'rules' of policy and providing

insights for critical policy analysis (Lean 2023). The creation of serious games is challenging, as researchers must be cognisant of the fundamental design elements required to make a game enjoyable (Mitgutsch and Alvarado 2012)

This session therefore focuses on the opportunities presented by utilising existing commercial tabletop games, which are familiar, culturally embedded, and have social topics built into their fabric. It builds on existing knowledge and critically engages with the methodological potential of games like *The Game of Life* and *Happy Families* for studying the effects of social policies on queer families in the UK. These games provide an outlet for participants to discuss their lived experiences, using metaphors within the game to share their stories. Through an analysis of employing games as a stimulus in traditional interview and focus groups settings, this session explores the ways in which gameplay may enrich data and reveal important policy considerations. Attendees will have an opportunity to engage in a 'participatory experiment' (Reed and Stella 2024), playing a short game to explore the methodological possibilities offered by tabletop gameplay.

- **Exploring Pathways to Tiny Housing through Board Game Design: Game creation as a way of Analysing and Communicating data** by **Ella Harris, Mel Nowicki and Tim White**



11.00 am–1.00 pm **RISE**

This workshop will be split into three sections: a presentation, a game play session and a game design session. The presentation section will explore how designing a board game helped us to analyse and disseminate the results of a project about the rise of Tiny Housing in Austin, Texas. In particular, we examine gamification as a tool for understanding our participants' housing pathways and illuminating the interplay between personal decisions and structural conditions. We will also discuss how the game became a unique aspect of our book on the subject, enhancing impact. In the game play session, we invite participants to play our board game (we will bring several sets with us) to see first hand how it articulates nuanced research data. In the final game design session we support participants to design their own research-based games, working in small groups. The session will close with a discussion of how game design opened up particular vantage points or questions.

- **Why are things this way? A coproduced artwork as social policy research** by **Chesney McOmber, Katharine McNamara and Camilla Audia**

11.00 am–1.00 pm **GROW**

What we know: *arts-based methods invite participation, imagination, and new understandings of social phenomena in unique ways.* What is less understood is how we can translate these creative- sometimes abstract- interpretations of these creative data into something useful or actionable for applied policy or program interventions. One way that we can achieve this is by incorporating the steps of policy planning into the creative process with communities through diverse mediums of art.

For our ICRCM presentation, we propose to present this process through the *Community Concept*

Drawing (CCD) method- a participatory, arts-based methodology that elicits community understandings of problems, conceptual pathways of addressing the problem, and actionable responses to resolving it. We will present an overview of the method, and anecdotes of how we have found this method to be useful in applied research. In this beginning part of the presentation, we will share findings from our work on planning for climate resilience in coastal communities in the United States (Connecticut and Florida). Finally, after presenting how this method is useful, we propose to provide a workshop demonstrating an abbreviated version of the method.

Some of the key questions we will explore through our presentation and discussion after the activity is about whether and how and should we be scaling creative methods? Are creative methods so inherently authentic to context and individuals that it is antithetical to the method to scale the methods or their findings? Or, is there some utility in finding a pathway towards balancing the value of arts based methods with the need for community responsive policy that is broad reaching and scalable? How do we, as researchers and community practitioners handle these questions?

- **TBC**

  11.00 am–1.00 pm **GROW**

- **Three Matchsticks and a Strand of Mop: sharing how person centred creativity infused joy, agency and wellbeing into a research project with men living in prison** by **Andrea Hadley-Johnson**



  11.00 am–1.00 pm **BUZZ**

This activity will unfurl the story of my research, an exploration into self-led creativity and its potential to enhance the wellbeing of people living behind closed prison cell doors. The study is practice informed and powered by a blend of Participatory Arts Based Research (PABR) and Autoethnographic reflexivity. Prisons in England are under resourced and overcrowded, with people confined to their cells for up to 23 hours a day. The poverty of creative stimuli and boredom of this experience contributes to poor mental health and rising levels of self-harm. I will demonstrate how my data gathering methods facilitated compassionate engagement with 70 men in four prison settings, ensuring access, equity, agency, and enjoyment for participants, while subverting the inherent imbalance of power between 'researcher' and 'researched'. I will introduce the creative tools I designed to build rapport, and evidence the impact this creative approach had on the participants.

- **'Stories with Substance: Co-creating a lived experience comic on alcohol and drug dependence, and recovery** by **Nic Dickson and Lynsay Crawford**

  11.00 am–1.00 pm **BUZZ**

This workshop introduces comic-making as a creative research method for amplifying marginalised voices. Led by Nic Dickson, a visual artist and researcher, and Dr Lynsay Crawford, Principal Investigator and Senior

Academic GP. It draws on Pathways of Hope - a Public Information Comic co-created with people in recovery, healthcare professionals, and researchers. Participants will explore how visual storytelling can challenge stigma, democratise knowledge, empower contributors, and influence policy and education. The session combines a short presentation on the ethics and process of co-creation with an interactive activity using comic panels to spark dialogue. Attendees will leave with practical ideas for integrating arts-based methods into research and dissemination. Read more about the project here: https://bjgplife.com/pathwaysofhope/

- **Journey mapping as an inclusive research tool: Capturing the learning journeys of health professions educators with dyslexia** by **Sarah McLaughlin**



11.00 am–1.00 pm **WORK**

The field of health professions education has seen growing emphasis on inclusive pedagogies and learner diversity. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) offers a framework for designing educational experiences that accommodate diverse learning needs. Applying this principle to research, we must consider not only *what* we research but also *how* we research. Dyslexia is one example where traditional research practices may unintentionally marginalise participant voices. Conventional research interviews—especially those relying heavily on verbal recall and heavy question–answer formats—may not be the most accessible or inclusive method for gathering rich data with participants who are dyslexic. However, recent research reports that those with dyslexia excel at visualisation, creative thinking, identifying patterns and oral communication. In response to these characteristics and challenges, we adopted journey mapping to create a more inclusive research experience.

This presentation draws from my research project exploring the learning journeys of health professions educators with dyslexia, undertaking post-graduate teacher training at a UK university. While the learning journeys of undergraduate students with dyslexia have gained some attention, there is a notable absence of research on health professions educators, particularly those undertaking postgraduate teacher training. We conducted six semi-structured online interviews utilising participant-created journey maps as a creative and inclusive method for data construction. The maps were used as a visual prompt and a reflection tool before and during the interviews. Adapting research methods to ensure a more inclusive approach has the potential to create more authentic, rich data and a fun and engaging experience for participants.

- **An invitation to be creative: Offering and incorporating creative methods into a longitudinal qualitative study about Autistic reproductive health** by **Rebecca Ellis**



11.00 am–1.00 pm **WORK**

Historically, Autistic voices have been less represented in research literature. More recently, efforts have been made to accommodate participants, increasing meaningful Autistic involvement, as co-productive research practices have become more popular. Some research suggests that flexibility in methods can benefit neurodivergent and disabled participants, increasing the likelihood of their engagement.

Our project, Autism from Menstruation to Menopause (AM2M), seeks to interview 100 Autistic people, up to 10 times each, over a five-year period. This project acts to maximise the comfort of participants by offering them the opportunity, and resources, to prepare for interviews. Participants are offered "participant packs" prior to each interview. These include purpose-made templates (including mind maps, timelines, tables), which are updated for each wave of interviews, and co-developed with a lay community council of Autistic people. Participant packs also include stickers, notepads, pens and other materials. Participants can use these for preparation if they'd like. They are then free to share whatever they may have created with their researcher or keep them for personal reference only.

So far, there are differences in participant pack uptake by age, with younger participants less likely to request templates, or questions in advance. Of participants who have asked for a participant pack (M=69%), over half of these have then used them to prepare for the interviews (M=60%). Other participants have requested questions ahead of time or digital copies of the templates. This talk would further detail how participants have engaged with packs and other forms of preparation, and would explore what they have chosen, what they have found useful, differences in their choices over time, and notable examples of creation. We also draw on researcher fieldnotes, to reflect on how creative methods, and building a co-productive space, have contributed to participant retention.

- **<u>The creation of an accessible Prof-Doc thesis: moving beyond black and white text</u>** by **Jo Strang**



11.00 am–1.00 pm **WORK**

The nature of this contribution is to explain my learning journey in creating my thesis for my EdD Professional Doctorate, *'Exploring Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) for social work students - an accessible and reflexive case study'.* I have experienced a parallel personal journey whilst being a student again, realising I was neurodivergent and finally admitting just how hard I found it to study online. Although this was a subsidiary learning journey it began to inform all of my work as a research student and researcher. Colour makes a difference, change in font makes a difference, background colour makes a difference to maintaining my focus and interest when required to read long documents online.

My mind connects with pictures and images help to break up different sections for me. In a world that is multi-media and full-colour I challenged the unwritten expectation of black and white typeset when creating my thesis. I applied the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) particularly guideline 5 (CAST 2024) which stresses the importance of multiple means of engagement. I used QRcodes to link to short summary videos at the beginning of each chapter, such that anyone who, like me, is a visual/audio learner could watch a short video and hear me explaining my research, rather than need to read and make sense of it from the text. I found research that said research methods or dissemination could be

considered creatively, but there was limited literature about the creation of the thesis. I was much encouraged by the work of Helen Kara and this helped support my early conversations with my supervisors who, once they understand my rationale and were reassured that the focus of my research would not get lost by a different approach, were supportive and encouraging. I am biased of course, but I would delight in seeing more theses that resemble mine! I would find them so much more accessible and really be able to engage with the content and process of research studies, if presented in a more accessible way.

- **When are creative methods transformative? Following co-produced knowledge across practice and decision making** by **Katharine McNamara and Ishwari Bhattarai**

  1.45–3.45 pm **SHINE**

Creative research methods are often valued for their capacity to generate participation, connection, and new forms of expression. Yet their transformative potential depends not only on what happens during the creative encounter, but also on how the resulting stories, images, performances, and films are carried into wider research, public, and decision-making spaces. The Equitable Climate Mobilities (PATH) Project examines how co-produced, arts-based research with precariously housed communities across South Africa, Nepal, the United Kingdom, and northern Canada can generate cross-cutting learning about climate-related mobility, belonging, precarity, and adaptation, while also creating opportunities to test the possibilities and limits of creative methods in climate adaptation research and policy.

Highlighting our Nepal case, this presentation explores how narrative and storytelling methods are being used to document experiences of environmental change, (im)mobility, displacement, and uncertainty, and different strategies the team is experimenting with to weave this information together. The case offers a grounded way to examine how community stories move from research encounters into wider representational and institutional spaces and the politics and ethics of translating knowledge generated through art and artistic practice. Through this process, we examine whose experiences become visible, how stories are interpreted and edited, and how participants can retain meaningful influence over how their lives and communities are represented.

By connecting these reflections to learning across other PATH sites, we consider the conditions under which creative outputs can open dialogue, challenge dominant framings, and shape adaptation research and practice, and when they risk being depoliticised, instrumentalised, or reduced to symbolic evidence of participation. Rather than assuming creative methods are inherently transformative, the presentation asks how they can be designed, represented, and circulated in ways that enable communities to shape how climate mobility is understood and addressed.

- **“Dark Knowledge”: Or, sharing what we learned from making a space-exploration themed comic out of research transcripts** by **Ella Harris and Hannah Mumby**



1.45–3.45 pm **SHINE**

This session abstract should be the longest section. In this session we present work we made while working as artists in residence on the project “Data Stories”, at Maynooth University, throughout 2025. The project applies a ‘research creation’ approach to develop new understandings of property and land data in Ireland. As part of the project, we were asked to creatively facilitate two workshops with more than 50 leading housing professionals, policy makers and data experts in Ireland and, through artistic practice, to help make sense of this data. The result was Dark Knowledge, an illustrated, experimental story written almost entirely by extracting and collaging fragments of AI transcribed audio recordings of the workshops. We cut and pasted fragments of the transcribed dialogue from these workshops to assemble a new narrative that points to some of the questions raised about how we approach data gaps and silences: what is out there that we don’t know or can’t recognise with our current data systems? What are the different incentives, desires and fears at play in our searches for ‘clean’ and synthesised data? Is the ambition to synthesise all data a futile one? In this conference session we explain the process of creating the story and explore what it added to the research. We then invite participants to experiment with the same ‘cut up’ technique we used, with real text from journal articles, and reflect on how it could be generative in their own research projects.

- **Creativity as a Pathway to Belonging: Co-Creating Inclusive Heritage Engagement in Historic Housing** by **Lisa Rea Currie**

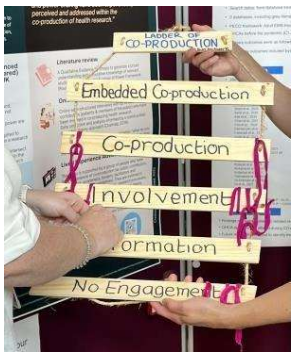
1.45–3.45 pm **RISE**

Historic houses often symbolize privilege and exclusivity, raising critical questions about who feels welcome within their walls. This paper explores how creative methodologies can foster a sense of belonging between underserved communities and the heritage of historic houses. Using the BeHere project as a case study, we examine whether participatory arts and Participatory Action Research can overcome barriers of access, ownership, and class. Community-based co-researchers engage in podcast creation, photovoice workshops, and arts and crafts inspired by Mount Stewart, a National Trust property in Northern Ireland. Through these processes, participants investigate and negotiate their relationship with “Big House” heritage while collaboratively designing activities that promote familiarity, safety, and community—elements they identified as central to belonging. Creativity here is not only a method but a purpose: to reimagine historic houses as inclusive spaces. This work contributes to debates on engaged research in social history and demonstrates the potential of co-created arts-based approaches to transform heritage engagement.

- **Playing with Power: A creative and playful session to explore how we experience power dynamics in participatory and co-produced research** by **Emily Ahmed**

1.45–3.45 pm **RISE**





Playing with Power, an immersive session blending a short presentation with hands-on interaction using large creative props. Inviting participants to explore how creative methods can surface and challenge power within the research process, especially in co-production. I will share insights from my PhD on public contributors' experiences of power in UK health research, showing how creative methods have shaped my data collection, analysis, reflection and dissemination. Participants will interact with a set of large creative props I will bring to the conference. These include small wooden instruments, a model 'ladder of co-production' with ribbon tagging, and a 1.6 metre weighing scale with 100 labelled beanbags. The instruments explore voice, silence and control through a sound-based activity. The ladder invites reflection on people's place in co-production practice. The weighing scale lets participants select and place quotes/themes to explore how power is felt and shared. These tools turn research findings into something tangible, sparking emotional connection, dialogue and deeper engagement with ideas about power and inclusion.

Power is central to co-production but often hard to talk about. My PhD (submission due in late 2026) explores how people with lived experience encounter power and power-sharing in UK health research, including how they navigate silence, discomfort and influence. This session reflects on my use creative approaches used throughout data collection, analysis, reflective practice and dissemination.



I have over 25 years' experience in community engagement, including 15 years in co-production and public involvement in health and social care. As a visual artist and neurodiverse researcher, I use creative, tactile methods to support reflection and emotional engagement. I believe research should not only generate knowledge but also provoke change and feeling.

- **<u>Helping People Imagine New Possibilities: Using a Knowledge Kit to Explore Generative AI</u>**
  by **Charlotte Hardacre, Sue Caton and Stephen Blake**

  1.45–3.45 pm **GROW**

This session shares findings from an NIHR funded project exploring how people with learning disabilities might use Generative AI in their daily lives. Research consistently shows that people with learning disabilities face barriers to digital participation, which means they are often excluded from new technologies. We therefore expected limited prior exposure to GenAI and needed a way to introduce the topic in an accessible and engaging form. This led us to develop a multisensory knowledge kit that makes the subject more tangible and provides varied entry points into the discussion. Creative research suggests that playful and low-pressure environments can support imaginative thinking, so the kit is also designed to encourage curiosity and divergent ideas.

The kit brings together easy read cards, pictures, video, wearable technology and tactile objects. These materials help people learn about the topic gradually with sensory elements creating pathways that don't rely only on talking or writing. The shared artefacts create a common ground for discussion and are especially helpful for people who learn better when they can touch, move, or see things when encountering abstract ideas.

The session will outline how participants moved from early engagement with GenAI to generating ideas

for tools that could support their daily routines, communication, social contact and feelings of safety. These ideas will be developed further in the next stage of the project, where computer scientists will work with the co-researchers to create GenAI prototypes. The session will be co-presented with adults with learning disabilities and will include an interactive demonstration of the kit. This will illustrate how creative methods help people move from encounter towards co-creation by providing shared materials and accessible ways to explore abstract concepts. Delegates will be invited to consider how similar approaches might support imaginative thinking and co design in their own research and practice.

- **Finding the voice: Exploring AI in charity communications** by **Petra Buresova**



1.45–3.45 pm **GROW**

Communication in charities links them with donors, volunteers, and beneficiaries. It also expresses organisational identity and values (Yang at al., 2024). Increasingly, these communications may be drafted or edited using artificial intelligence (AI) tools. While studies have examined donor responses to AI-generated content, focusing on factors such as anthropomorphism, disclosure, and personalisation (Baek et al., 2022; Park et al., 2023; Lv and Huang, 2024), less attention has been given to how such texts are perceived in practice and if they are recognised as authentic. This workshop will use real examples of charity communications collected from public sources such as posters, newsletters, and websites. Participants will work in small groups to analyse and discuss the texts, asking: Does this communication appear AI-generated? Does it still represent the voice of the organisation? How does the possibility of AI form our perception of authenticity and trust? Groups will capture their reflections through short notes, sketches, or annotated examples, and then come together for a plenary discussion. The session brings a creative, practice-based approach to exploring the role of AI in nonprofit communication. By treating everyday artefacts as data, it allows participants to experience the interpretive work usually done by communication staff. It also allows them to reflect critically on issues of identity, ethics, and transparency (Koshy, 2024). The contribution demonstrates how participatory analysis of artefacts can contribute to research on technology and the third sector.

- **The artist experience in creative methods research: How can we prepare, support and co-manage artist collaboration?** by **Julia Puebla Fortier**

1.45–3.45 pm **BUZZ**

Artists can be critical partners in research using creative methods. This presentation, with time for audience contributions and discussion, will explore how to work safely and productively with artists in research collaborations, especially when challenging topics are involved. We'll start with research on how artists can be affected by their work when leading creative activities with participants with health or psychosocial conditions. We'll examine some preliminary findings from a series of workshops involving researchers, artists and community-co-researchers, looking at the importance of clarity about aims and roles and how tension can sometimes arise between creative/therapeutic goals and data collection. Drawing from the literature and audience experiences, we'll discuss what strategies can be used to support artists, including training, co-production approaches, and psychosocial support.

- **<u>Doing care-full creative research: An ethical practice</u>** by **Sarah Campbell, Robyn Dowlen, Rebecka Fleetwood-Smith and Helen Manchester**



1.45–3.45 pm **BUZZ**

Creative approaches offer powerful ways of involving people whose voices are often marginalised in health and social care decision-making, including people living with dementia, older people, and young people experiencing mental or physical health challenges. Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) is increasingly recognised as a core expectation of major funders, who now require meaningful contribution across the entire research cycle, from idea generation and bid involvement to project delivery, dissemination and impact. However, guidance on how to achieve this meaningfully, particularly with people who may communicate in ways other than through spoken language, remains limited.

This presentation shares creative approaches that enable participation in ways that are accessible, relational and engaging. Through co-produced work with people with dementia and young people, we illustrate how methods involving movement, imagery, sound, story, and shared meaning making allowed participants to set priorities, shape direction, and influence decisions form the outset. These approaches supported the co-production of outputs such as short films, artworks, and a digital platform, communicating lived experiences directly and meaningfully to professional and public audiences.

At the same time, this work has highlighted the practical realities of doing creative PPIE well, including accessibility, resources, practitioner support, and the ongoing challenges of avoiding tokenistic involvement while meeting growing expectations for authentic lived experiences to be represented across the research cycle. By sharing what worked, what was difficult, and what changed as a result, we offer a grounded and practical account of how creative PPIE can expand participation, centre lived experience authentically and support meaningful influence across the entire research process.

- **<u>Networking!</u>**

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