



# METHOD 2022

CCRI Postgraduate Research Conference  
21st & 22nd September

Sheffield  
Hallam  
University

**CCRI** Culture  
& Creativity  
Research  
Institute

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# Welcome and Introduction

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Following on from the success of our previous research institute conferences, **METHOD 2015, 2016 and 2017 and IMPACT 2018 and 2021**, Postgraduate Research in CCRI is delighted to invite you to join us for **METHOD 2022**.

Conferences are usually platforms to articulate research findings and how they contribute to the development of knowledge in a particular field. In **METHOD**, we take the standard format of the conference but turn the focus inside out: instead of celebrating outcomes, we reflect on the complicated 'inside' of doing research.

Presenters are invited to focus on how we plan, scrutinise and articulate our research methods. Every research student must use methods of investigation to gain new insights, and must be able to articulate their process in a way that others inside and outside of their field can understand. This learning feeds directly into the preparation needed for Confirmation (RF2) and for submission and viva. At the same time, the capacity to reflect critically on method is important for all researchers, especially when planning new research and funding.

When we try to find something out using a planned method, sometimes the process isn't simple. The development of the 'problem space' - the object of inquiry - changes as we understand our research area better and the questions we want to ask change; carefully made plans may get revised due to challenges, changes of focus or new opportunities. So, research needs both excellent planning and a solid base but also the need

to respond and think on our feet: a challenging combination.

Across university disciplines there are enormous differences of research practice and culture that can be considered in several ways such as how we understand and collect data; our differing relationships to objectivity and subjectivity; the ways we use text and written voice; the way we work with participants and the ways we frame the researcher. These sit within the often unsaid and unacknowledged histories, codes, and styles of our specific disciplines. As well as supporting the development of postgraduate researchers, **METHOD** gives an insight into the rich differences and similarities within our CCRI community.

For 2022 we are retaining our fully online format so we can focus attention on the quality of our speakers and the discussion arising, as well as ensuring maximum access. This year we have no parallel panels, so this allows us all to see every presentation, with no difficult choices.

Each of the panels was developed through careful reading of all abstracts and responding to emergent categories about the fundamental areas of research process. We deliberately mixed the CCRI disciplines in each panel, so we can explore the different ways disciplines tackle similar problems, and to create the conditions for dialogue. We intend that each presenter understands their methodological position and their methods better, through hearing others.

# Programme - Wednesday 21st September

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Time	Session	Led by
<b>9.30</b>	Welcome, introductions and housekeeping	<b>Kathy Doherty</b>
<b>Panel 1 9.45-11.30</b>	<b>Interpretation: text, context &amp; positionality</b> This panel explores the significance of the researcher's position and different ways it affects (and is affected by) the area of study. The presentations explore research processes to capture, communicate or problematise the relationship between researcher, context, and the topic of study, and reflect on the complexity and value of exploring and representing others from a subjective position.	<b>Chair: Kathy Doherty</b> Sophie Hylands Julia Calver Catriona McEvoy Emma McGinn
<b>11.30-11.45</b>	<b>BREAK</b>	
<b>Panel 2 11.45-1.15</b>	<b>Archival tensions: methods to explore the relationship between past, present, and future</b> This panel explores different methodological positions and processes to explore the past from the vantage point of the present, acknowledging the ways that the present might obscure or influence the way we interpret evidence, or might allow for new understandings not possible before. Working from different disciplines, the presentations question the process of historization and the active ways that past, present, and future co-construct each other.	<b>Chair: Ana-Maria Sanchez-Arce</b> Inna Lucas Joseph Maddocks Tim Machin Vicky Hall
<b>1.15-1.45</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>	
<b>1.45</b>	<b>Researcher confessional:</b> seasoned researchers share their stories from the field.	
<b>Panel 3 2.00-3.45</b>	<b>Treading carefully: engagement, elicitation, and ethical participation</b> This panel explores different participatory research processes and reflects on the people, space, time, relationships, and technologies of the encounters. Particular attention is given to how and why participants are involved in research, how the participant is constructed, what is at risk in participation, the desire to participate and what might motivate or repel those we want to work with. The presentations will also reflect on the production and storage of data, critical and sensitive attention to consent and the ways that participants might be considered vulnerable.	<b>Chair: Becky Shaw</b> Kuang-Yi Ku Charlie Thorpe Wendy Ward Ursula Ankeny Layla Gharib
<b>4.00-4.30</b>	<b>Close of day researcher confessional:</b> seasoned researchers reflect on the ups and downs of doing research.	

# Programme - Thursday 22nd September

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Time	Session	Led by
<b>Panel 4</b> <b>9.30-11.15</b>	<b>Gathering stories of place, time and experience</b> This panel explores methods of gathering, reflecting, constructing, and sharing the untold stories of others. The presentations all explore difficult contexts: where experiences might be painful and hard to articulate and where contexts are unstable and changing. Using a range of different methods to gather accounts, the researchers pay attention to their potential to challenge and resist contemporary perspectives and the need for care and sensitivity.	<b>Chair: Kerry McSeveny</b> Helen Blejerman Danny Bacchus Saiful Hisyam Bin Md Salleh Pat Wichert
<b>11.15-11.30</b>	<b>BREAK</b>	
<b>Panel 5</b> <b>11.30-1.00</b>	<b>Defining the object of enquiry: understanding and researching the problem space</b> The presentations in this panel offer an opportunity for us to reflect on the relationship between the way we define the object of enquiry and process of its investigation. Some are grappling with the research context and how to put together a 'field', whilst taking a critical perspective on what the object of research is, could or should be. Others are exploring and defining the problem space through creative practice, generating a dynamic relationship between doing and reflecting; the object of enquiry emerging as it is investigated.	<b>Chair: Kathy Doherty</b> Mark Stott Anna Richards Marika Grasso Jackie Leaver
<b>1.00-2.00</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>	
<b>1.30</b>	<b>Researcher confessional:</b> seasoned researchers share their stories from the field.	
<b>Panel 6</b> <b>2.00-3.30</b>	<b>Assembling and utilising complex evidence</b> As part of their research process, the researchers in this panel have generated, and/or attempted to capture and record, 'tricky', complex, or rich sources or evidence ('data') in a variety of modes and locations in sometimes transient, time-based, or affective and affecting forms. They are exploring a variety of questions about the ways such evidence can be recorded, stored, handled, and used as a single source or drawn together with other materials to generate new insight as part of the enquiry.	<b>Chair: Becky Shaw</b> Aron Spall Charlene Cross Vic Lucas Max Munday
<b>3.30-3.45</b>	<b>BREAK</b>	
<b>3.45-4.15</b>	<b>CLOSING REMARKS – what have we learned about Research Method?</b>	

# Co-design in COVID: exploring ways to overcome the virtual barrier when co-designing technological tools

Ursula Ankeny

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## Abstract

Co-design uses shared making and creating as a way to bring together diverse groups of stakeholders in the design development process. The involvement and lived experience of these stakeholder groups strengthens the resulting intervention, leading to improved implementation. COVID-19 challenged this approach due to the difficulty in meeting face-to-face, resulting in online methods becoming a natural default. However, this presented significant challenges, such as, difficulty in keeping children engaged, managing dominant participants, enabling collaboration, and providing space for shared making and creating.

This study aimed to investigate alternative methods to face-to-face workshops when designing technological tools with Children and Young People (CYP). Particularly, how to incorporate 3D objects as a way to articulate difficult to visualise needs and concepts.

Participants received a posted activity pack, containing a physical activity, making materials and 3D forms of the technological tools. Two online workshops then followed, where CYP, their parent and the researcher made 'ideal' versions of the technological tools together over Zoom.

This approach was successful as it maintained CYP's engagement by making the activities fun and creative. Remaking the technological tools together enabled CYP to interact tangibly and playfully, unlocking tacit and experiential knowledge and revealing deeper insights around their condition management.

The digital default does have strengths, particularly in involving a wider variety of participants, such as those who are immunocompromised, or who live in more remote areas. However, in terms of co-design, a purely digital approach can be seen to be at odds with key principles: reducing power dynamics and enabling equal collaboration through shared making and creating. A hybrid approach can therefore be seen as a better alternative, whereby involvement is through a virtual medium, but supported by tangible 3D objects, with making and creating remaining at the heart of the process. As a result, CYP are empowered to contribute from a knowledgeable starting point, using their natural imagination and creativity as a springboard for innovation

# Negotiating presence and formulations of the experiential within co-design for virtual reality

Danny Bacchus

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## Abstract

This presentation examines the development of co-design methods employed across two virtual reality (VR) projects which critically engage with the concept of presence in VR. Here, presence is understood as the sub-representative condition that signals the emergence of a co-dependent, subject/object forming relationality between a participant and virtual space. The co-design projects explore how notions of presence relate to formulations of the experiential, using art practice and design methods to develop a new understanding of the specific affordances of VR when used as a platform to extrapolate and express the experience of another.

The first project, 'Life is Beautiful. Always.', explores the life experience of multi-disciplinary artist and vascular dementia sufferer, Marcel Schreur. Two works produced in the second project, 'I Look For Them' and 'Be That Ocean', explore the memories of ninety-six-year-old Ukrainian and survivor of the Soviet Gulag, Ivanna Masczpak.

An overview of the theoretical and methodological grounding of the first project outlines an approach to the co-design methods that

enabled the development of what Manning and Massumi call a 'platform for relation' within the research setting. These methods are challenged within the second project, which demanded different approaches to develop a platform of affective relationality between co-designers in a new context. This required a re-examination of the relationships between researchers and research participants, how 'data' from the research process is used in a co-design setting, and the appropriateness of methods used to express the experience of another within practice-based research in VR.

A reflective comparison of the works produced across both projects enables a discussion on the various ways of being in virtual space, how different manifestations of presence catalyse specific types of engagement with VR experiences, and where an affective relationality with another's experience may be possible in different research contexts.

# An exploration into the experiences of documentary production in Malaysia

Saiful Hisyam Bin Md Salleh

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## Abstract

Malaysia is one of the world's most notorious nations for its stringent film and media prohibitions. My research, "An Exploration of the Experiences of Documentary Production in Malaysia," focuses on the experiences of independent documentary filmmakers in Malaysia and the country's production conditions. Malaysia has strong filmmaking regulations, which influence the filmmaking culture and types of films that can be produced. This research aims to determine, through a series of interviews for a self-reflective documentary, how these experiences have affected a variety of documentary filmmakers. As someone who has worked in the Malaysian media industry for more than a decade, I also encounter these issues when attempting to perform my duties. When there is news or a story that is unfavourable to the government, for instance, journalists are frequently harassed by the authorities because they cover information that might be used to scrutinise the government. The same was evident for independent documentary filmmakers in Malaysia, who faced repercussions or risked the possibility of being punished if their film depicted anything that was unfavourable to the government. I want to perform creative practise research not just to simulate the

guerrilla-style production employed by the majority of independent filmmakers in Malaysia, but also to demonstrate how difficult it is to be a filmmaker in a country with cumbersome regulations and antiquated legislation. Throughout the procedure, I may or may not encounter the same challenge from the authorities. This study intends to give sufficient information and insight into the challenges linked to rules, red tape, and laws among independent filmmakers in Malaysia, as well as how documentary filmmaking can be used as a tool for social change in Malaysia. The findings of this study will be valuable to key stakeholders, including the government, film regulatory organisations, film producers, and researchers, in order to address the research gap and advance current knowledge.

# Animation in fine art—reanimating the soil above death

Helen Blejerman

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## Abstract

My research investigates how animation in Fine Art can help us understand the spiritual aspect of femicide survivors. Anima in Latin means soul, and my study explores how animation's materiality, between absence and presence, can embody a funeral when a family does not find the victim's body. I am focusing on flora and fauna growing in mass graves and Jewish-Catholic burials and beliefs in the transition to the afterlife.

In this presentation, I will reflect on some of the methodological issues that circulate my project. In particular, my short film *The Luminous Mysteries*, dedicated to Claudia Uruchurtu who was forcibly taken and disappeared for her political activism on 2021, in Oaxaca, Mexico.

I will examine the connection between animation and audience—How to draw out a discussion about the affect of this art practice when language is problematic? How to reflect on the ethical complexities of starting a conversation about contemporary unspeakable events? How can these ethical issues allow and feed the method? I will look into the ethical tension in the links between my study's audience, content, and context. How poeticising the work can allow reflection on this interconnection.

S. Brent Plate says in his book *Walter Benjamin, Religion, and Aesthetics*, that Benjamin reflects on the catastrophic not to reconstruct a mythical past, but to bring parts of the past into the present. He says as “a shock that jolts the continuum of history, making us aware of our material surroundings and thereby uncovering our collective unconscious”. I will explore how my own Jewish- Mexican heritage can produce inquiry into my animation process connected to a discussion rooted in current horrific politics and collective forms of not knowing.

Please watch my film *the Luminous Mysteries* in this link:

<https://helenblejerman.com/>

# Methods and accidence

Julia Calver

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## Abstract

My practice-based, language-focussed research investigates how experimenting with spelling and word forms in activities of simultaneous reading and listening offers resources to projects that de-centre an individually bounded subject. I ask, how can writing practices hold an anti-capitalist feminist politics? What activities of repair, collective work, and attention can enable me and others to continue practicing with writing within inimical language structures?

To describe and communicate my research methods, I focus on accidence as one descriptive and performative term I am developing. Accidence sounds like accidents. As homophones, they sound the same, but differ in meaning. While *accidents* refers to mistakes and disastrous unforeseen consequences, *accidence* describes the changes in spelling words undergo to conform to grammatical rules. Words take on, for example, tense or plurality, situating readers and writers, as they use and interpret them, within systems of structural power, defining relations between people, objects, time, gender and modes of possession.

This homophonic relation between accidence and accidents licenses my experimental practices with sentences. Experienced homophonically, accidence is an

ironic manifestation of linguistic orthodoxies of social control. In this irony, experienced through listening, a possibility of dissent or movement opens up.

My method for intervening in the reproduction of grammatically prescribed relations is the experimental inverted positioning of homophonic words. For example using accidents everywhere I intend accidence. This sets up sonic events for a reader, where what is seen and what is sounded are at odds. I investigate how this might position a reader and listener in an affective relationship to their own linguistic situatedness, leading to other inhabitations of language that involve sharing individuated sites of subjecthood with others.

I will use the presentation format, of vocal delivery supplemented by slides, to demonstrate how accidence both describes and performs my method.

# The epistemological questions surrounding the method of repeat photography to document and visually represent the pace of change in Neepsend, Sheffield

Charlene Cross

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## Abstract

To study the pace of change within a city is a task akin to chasing and describing a moving target. Cities are constantly in a state of flux, which presents challenges for the researcher conducting data collection. This research project seeks to understand the decision-making processes of property owners in Neepsend, based on an assumption that the decisions of these stakeholders will in turn have an influence upon the pace of change in Neepsend. Interviews allow access to parts of the story that are not visible at street level e.g. through discussions of 'behind the scenes' planning documents.

During the lifetime of a research project, such interview transcripts begin life as fresh accounts of current events, gradually distorting into historical records of past snapshots in time. Photographic snapshots operate in a similar way. Since May 2020 until the present day, I have walked around Neepsend taking point-and-click pictures with my phone. This approach was valuable to me as an active researcher by helping me to become more familiar with my research area. The fieldwork generated a data set of images that can be used alongside

interviews to tell the viewer a version of Neepsend's story through visual cues.

This presentation considers the challenges researchers face when managing their repeat photography data sets and deciding how best to present them to their reader. When interpreted out of context, visual cues can be both informative and misleading. In addition to the issue of selectivity, how does the researcher clearly assemble the full research narrative into a coherent jigsaw puzzle that integrate these 'street level' images alongside the interview data and other 'behind the scenes' documents? How can a researcher communicate the story that they wish to tell when visual records are open to interpretation and reinterpretation when presented to an onlooker?

**A methodological question for the audience:** The method of walking, photographing, and experiencing a place is, by its nature, deeply affected by subjectivity. My question is, if experiential recording methods are not obviously 'systematic', how can the researcher demonstrate academic 'rigour' when using these exploratory research methods?

# Workshopping new worlds

Layla Gharib

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## Abstract

This presentation will explore speculative workshopping as a world building research method and present how the approach can be used to collectively imagine alternative realities. Drawing upon a series of participatory workshops that explored decolonised futures for design education, the presentation will deconstruct the workshop process and reflect on how, as a research method, speculative workshops allow participants to deal with problematic histories and propose hopeful futures.

# The hole between material practice and writing

Marika Grasso

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## Abstract

Topics:

- The challenges of practice-led enquiry
- Dealing with 'failure' and contingency planning

*The hole between material practice and writing* refers to the shaping of the method inquiry between the researcher/practitioner and the material practice to investigate touchscreens. The research investigates the materiality of the broken touchscreens, a daily touched matter, and the human tactile relationship with it.

I have consolidated a relationship between continuous writing and the exploration of the touchscreen materiality. I have been trying to use writing as a tool for documentation, reflection, and planning to weave a structured method during the past years. The time of writing and making was organised by spending the mornings for writing, reading and reflecting, while the afternoons were spent for making. Writing and reading firstly inspired me to experiment critically with the touch screens later during the day, when making I would take notes for more experiments. The stream of ideas and processes always happened by hand writing, either if I was making or writing.

The writing was happening either in a studio space or at home, while the making was happening in a studio space. The precarity of space, not having a stable studio space, made it extremely important to be disciplined with timing, and the planning for writing and practice.

The change of space between a studio workshop space and my home was of use to create some distance between myself and the practice work. The spatial and timely distance between making and writing was bridged by handwriting notes, which allowed me to capture instant thoughts and thorough reflections. The instantaneity of taking notes meant to capture quick mental processes, it became the tool to individuate the gaps between practice and writing. The notes don't directly relate to any of the activities in process, but

they are a sparkle between all the past work, the future possibilities and unfolding of my relationship with the matter of the touchscreen.

# Collection of oral testimony in industrial fatality research

Vicky Hill

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## Abstract

My historical research into the industrial fatality in post-Robens Britain incorporated oral history interviews that were essential for a meaningful examination of the subject matter through workers' experiences and perceptions. This presentation examines the challenges and the results encountered.

Two participant categories were interviewed: Worker, and activist. The former worked in heavy industry during the period 1974-2014 and provided intimate and detailed personal descriptions of their working lives, the organisational cultures they experienced, and in some cases, the fatalities and disasters they witnessed or were caught up in. The latter were heavily involved in campaigning for worker safety, corporate accountability, and legislative reform in the form of corporate killing laws and specific legal provision for Directors' duties.

Arthur Mclvor wrote in his *Working Lives* project of 'providing a bridge of sorts between the present and the recent past'.<sup>1</sup> This research makes a similar contribution in provoking a bridge to the recent past, and to the historical and sociological understanding of work.

The process of conducting oral history interviews necessarily involved a consideration of the sensitivity of discussing potentially traumatic events and experiences. These ethical implications were considered in full in relation to the interview process itself, but the difficulties of making unsolicited contact with potential participants was an aspect of the process that was surprisingly challenging.

Oral history has some proven limitations in that memory can be unreliable, and it can be contaminated and changed by public discourse and the media. Interviewees must sift and select memories whilst also constructing a narrative. Despite these potential weaknesses, oral history formed an essential element of my research, providing uniquely rich insights into the subject matter and hugely enhancing the project's output.

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<sup>1</sup>Mclvor, A., *Working Lives: Work in Britain Since 1945*, (Basingstoke, 2013), p.4

# The researcher as reader: a personal reflection on researcher identity within literary studies

Sophie Hylands

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## Abstract

In this paper I address the topic of researcher identity within the field of literary studies, looking particularly at the idea of the researcher as reader and the often complex relationship between the acts of reading for academic purposes and of reading for pleasure. To explore this issue I draw upon my own experience as a member of a reading group with a specific focus on reading popular fiction from the first half of the twentieth century.

As my own research area of 1930s British literature falls within this period there are many close links between my academic reading and my reading as part of the group, and I will reflect how my participation in this non-academic reading community has influenced own research practice.

My analysis will engage with Susan Carter's assertion that through the act of reading and writing 'literary studies researchers *tacitly perform* a methodology' (Carter, 2013), and that, as such, their methodological practice is intimately tied to their identities as readers and writers.

My own research is strongly interdisciplinary, combining methods from both history and literary studies to explore novels as historical documents as well as literary texts and in my paper I will outline how I believe being part of a reading group in which personal responses are considered as valuable as critical analysis has reinforced this interdisciplinary approach. I will argue that consciously engaging with texts as a 'reader' as well as a researcher has helped me to more effectively consider how novels may have been received by their audience when they were first published, strengthening my analysis of novels as products of the specific social context in which they were written.

# At my table: using the dining table as a site to explore perceptions and possibilities of the future home

Jackie Leaver

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## Abstract

The dining table is a long-established site for conversation and the sharing of ideas, as well as food. From ethnography and architecture to physics, researchers and practitioners across a range of disciplines have used the dining table and acts of cooking and eating in various

environments as methods to explore theories and test phenomena. This performative space with its processes of dining and interactions between diners has been presented as a reflection of the broader connections between occupants, the home and life beyond this inhabited place. As the world changes so the domestic space and everyday practices within it reflect these, often global shifts, and in turn it is recognised that there is a need to disrupt normative practices and approaches in order to find new ways of being and doing.

This presentation will explore existing examples of how cooking and dining have been used in research. It will draw on these methods to propose how the particularities of a specific domestic space might offer an alternative research location to the traditional lab, studio or exhibition environment and how events based around the sharing of food,

exploration of the space and objects within it can be used to prompt and provoke discussion around the future home. The design of a proposed pilot study will be shared, including a potential guest list, menu and activities. It will ask how we can question and address what happens at a local, domestic or individual level in order to inform approaches to impact the broader issues we currently face.

# Bottle closures trend analysis using historical research method and the challenges and opportunities that creative data visualisation provides

Inna Lucas

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## Abstract

Historical methodology is commonly used in various disciplines to better understand the state of the art and predict future trends, however in design disciplines the location and evaluation of evidence poses its own unique challenges. Using archives of the issued patents as a source of materials I have been collecting technical drawings of bottles and bottle closures to understand what has been fuelling innovation in that area, analyse how the

bottle closures have been changing throughout the years, develop a general explanatory model for the observed changes, combine the data with our contemporary knowledge and understanding of inclusive design, all in an attempt to expose the findings through creative data visualisation. Although these kinds of data representations have their own drawbacks and limitations, they nonetheless make it possible to convey the results to audiences that are generally unfamiliar with the subject in a clear and efficient way by reducing larger volumes of information to its simplest and most elegant form without sacrificing the most crucial features of the data.

As a result, I intend to produce a series of posters or visual artefacts that combine our modern understanding of what a truly sustainable design is with the history of the caps and closures, and share how I overcame the main obstacles encountered along the way. Ultimately, a better insight into what facilitated the changes in the design in the past, how sustainable those changes have been by our contemporary measure of sustainability, and what types of closures have proven themselves to stand the test of time allows me to focus on the most important aspects of closures in my future research.

# Pixellated rocks: symbolic reclamation as method

Victoria Lucas

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## Abstract

How can the dislocation between human and non-human subjects be meaningfully reconciled, using methods developed through artistic practice? Can the destabilisation of earthly matter, using digital technology, generate new ways of thinking about how we synthesise with the natural environment in the context of capitalism and the resulting climate crisis? Can the language of extraction and reclamation, in the place of the disused quarry, reveal ways of subverting harmful practices in order to further understand female subjectivity?

This presentation will focus on photogrammetry as a technological method that works to deconstruct and reconstitute digital images of a disused quarry in to a 3D virtual model. The materiality of the rock and its inhabitants are digitally 'mined' and reconstituted using 3D modelling software, forming a process of metaphorical destabilisation in order to construct a liquid, skin-like form that can then be virtually traversed, permeated and manipulated. Playful experimentation has been central to these in-practice methods, and have involved layering imagery with spoken word as part of an intuitive, exploratory editing process.

I will argue that this aggregated cluster of pixellated rock forms what Robert Smithson terms a *nonsite* - an abstract representation of place - in which fluid post-anthropocentric subjectivities can be explored. A reclamation of the extractive process, in conjunction with my own embodied experience of this disturbed and privatised landscape, acts as a counterpoint to the systemic culture of exploitation. Through the method, natural resources and organic bodies are entangled in order to reveal subversive and reactionary positions of agency and kinship.

# Using an expanded collage method to explore the landscape at Park Hill flats

Tim Machin

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## Abstract

My research is exploring the landscape at Park Hill flats, Sheffield. An internationally famous and much studied modernist heritage building, I am using visual arts practice as a research method to see beyond existing characterisations of this place and develop new understandings of the role the production, reception and affect of images has played in the construction of this site.

This talk will explore my iterative, grounded method, which began with the conceptualisation of a body of material – a series of official ‘archives’ relating to the construction and refurbishment(s) of the landscape - as an ‘archival artwork’ (drawing on the work of artist Alan Sekula). I have used the development of a body of work to explore this material, the site and its imaginaries whilst also understanding how visual arts practice as research might inherit or be viewed through a prism of methodologies from other disciplines – and how it might stand apart from these and bring new and overlooked insights into a well-studied phenomenon.

This presentation will pull out one strand of this – the use of what might be termed ‘collage’ - the finding, reuse and juxtaposition of pre-existing images through a discussion of some of the artwork produced, including a 35mm slide show, a newspaper, a digital projection and a radio play to explore my research methods. I will discuss the challenges around the use of found images in this way, especially the ethical challenges in navigating intellectual property the parallels this may have with competing claims to ownership of the site itself.

# Researching care-relationships in the early modern textual archive

Joseph Maddocks

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## Abstract

The purpose of my research is to explore Shakespeare's representation of caregiving. Reading such relationships is benefited by an understanding of attitudes towards dependency and interpersonal support in the era in which he lived. Turning towards the textual archive is, therefore, an important means by which I seek to excavate premodern conceptions of caregiving. Yet caregiving as a concept, with its attendant terminology and ethical concerns, post-dates this time period, which poses its own challenges within my research method, especially when considering care specifically in relation to disability, itself a category that came into being with modernity. In the first part of this talk, I will address the issue of discussing care-relationships in pre-modernity. In recent decades, care ethicists and theorists have worked to define care in a variety of ways, but commonly as a shared feature of human societies and individual relationships that persist across time, space, and culture. The early modern period, however, lacks a singular concept of caregiving as a defined relationship or type of work, and compels its own terminology of care and constructions of human interdependence. I will discuss the viability of describing care-giving as an operative concept

in this period. In the second part of the talk, engagement with the early modern archive will be discussed, and how it can be used to find evidence of caregiving as a topic of concern, discussing the kinds of text that may prove fruitful for such inquiry, from conduct manuals to theological treatises, and how to access them. Through this talk, I hope to demonstrate the productive inquiry into the history of care-giving that is possible from this research method.

# Confronting “institutional whiteness” in research: privilege, space and solidarity

Catriona McAvoy

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## Abstract

My PhD research focusses on decentering narratives from the Stanley Kubrick Archive to challenge the hegemonic auteur-based history of film production. One of my aims is to collect, preserve and investigate the histories of under-represented people in the UK film industry. These under-represented people include women, LGBTQ+ people, people of colour and those with disabilities. I am currently in my first year and am carrying out a literature review. During this process I have noted that there is a promising new movement to discuss ‘below the line’ workers and move away from auteur-based narratives of the film production process, instead discussing the collaborative process of filmmaking, highlighting previously under valued contributors. Positively much of this research focusses on the stories of women, however these are predominately cis gendered, heterosexual white women. These stories should be told but space also needs to be made for other voices in order to avoid reinforcing “institutional whiteness” and further entrenching discrimination.

Drawing on studies by Jemma Desai and Clive Nwonka on representation within cultural organisations, discussion from theorists such as Stuart Hall and Sara Ahmed and my own observations of the available literature I aim to challenge this problematic trend. Considering Peter Tatchell’s recent call to return Pride to its roots of solidarity between LGBTQ+ people, “women,... black and Irish communities, working class people and trade unions” and recent criticisms of the police and the need for solidarity in the face of institutional discrimination, this issue is urgent.

Through reflection on my own research practice and awareness of the need for solidarity amongst all oppressed people I want to explore more radical ways I can approach my research to move the conversation forward. I would like to open up this discussion to others and to ask that we all reflect on our practice and ways that we can stand together.

# Mother-artist-researcher

Emma McGinn

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## Abstract

How does the mother-artist-researcher weave the self into research without crossing the boundary between personal and professional? This paper will explore the use of the research journal as a core research method within a textiles practice based research PhD.

I began a full-time PhD a few months before COVID hit, when everything got turned upside down; fieldwork plans were cancelled and home schooling took over. One year later I welcomed a new baby which led to a break in study. On returning to the PhD part-time this May, my responsibilities are now divided between caring for 2 young children, researching for my PhD, as well as personal and participatory textiles practice. The focus of my PhD is the experience of motherhood through textiles. This entanglement between my personal and professional life, being 'inside' my research as a mother researching mothers, I am forced to question how I develop a critical lens. I acknowledge that I am central to my research. There is a need for me to explore my own identity (me-search), and ask questions about my position, in relation to others. I must learn to separate that of myself from that of my participants.

I will document the principles which underly my process of reflexivity through the research journal, which includes written journaling and exploratory textiles practice. Textiles practice offers me a lens through which I explore my positionality; offering tactile, bodily involvement where the folds, rhythms, pace of making offer me language to question my encounters with others. Through using making as a way of thinking; engaging in embodied enquiry, I reflect on the relationships and multiplicities within the space of interaction.

I will reflect upon how my textiles practice, combined with a systematic approach to written journaling, triangulates to offer a critical lens on reflexivity.

# After improvised workshops: translating the expressions and interpretations in the movement of bodies

Max Munday

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## Abstract

Over 6 research workshops, my aim was for a group of Jewish adults to seek to connect with troubling pasts and possible better futures using improvisation and movement as methods of inquiry as well as expression.

Workshop activities involved multiple points of transmission of energy. Bodies moved, made sounds, marked on paper and touched surfaces and through bringing these marks, sounds, movements back as stimuli, those bodies were animated by other sets of processes and energies.

Art practice-based research requires some sort of translation into language; a condensation into words that can sit within a context of established academic discourse and be judged against notions of quality and rigour. The additional challenge in this project is that within these workshops there seemed to already be so many moments of exchange and translation: movements that created loops of different forms of expression, reception and interpretation.

These activities were inspired by Avery Gordon's hope of finding a

'vocabulary' (Gordon, 2008) or 'mode of knowledge production' (Gordon et al, 2020) to articulate a meeting point between the persistence of past antisemitism and seemingly closed possible alternative futures, demands for those pasts in the present, and our living experiences within structures of power today. But in the workshops, articulations seemed to move and morph - not to form within parameters that are perhaps a requisite for a language. So how do we follow those twists and turns? The group's expressions in the sessions felt significant at the time but, this paper will ask, how are moments of affective resonance translated to notions of knowledge in the months that follow?

## References

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# Film festival research: the challenges in a new field

Anna Richards

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## Abstract

Film festival studies is a burgeoning new area of study with de Valck and Loist (2009) suggesting that the phenomenon of film festival research was, until recently, rarely the main focus of scholarly study. My PhD researches the cultural evolution and subsequent growth of Sheffield DocFest, a major documentary film festival based in the heart of the city. Currently, as I am in the first year of my PhD, my research process is focused on building a broad and extensive literature review. The nature of my PhD is inherently interdisciplinary, with it not limited to film festival research, it also includes other areas such as cultural studies, history, urban regeneration and tourism studies.

Focusing primarily on film festival research, I would like to present a paper on the challenges I am facing currently with building a literature review in a field of study that is relatively new. It is both exciting and challenging being in a new area of scholarly study. I have found that there are positives to belonging to a new area of study. There are several useful case studies of other similar film festivals that have been published only in the past few years, thus bringing a fresh and up-to-date view.

However, there are certain drawbacks as the time-line of the literature available is limited to only the past few years. I suspect that there are cracks in the information and later on in my PhD, will have to rely on archival research more so than literature.

Most PhD students have to build up a literature review and as Method is an interdisciplinary conference, this paper would prove useful to other students who may be going through a similar situation in their line of study.

# Unstable ground: the methodological challenges of working with mixed-reality environments

Aron Spall

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## Abstract

An exhibition at S1 Artspace, *When the Space becomes the Screen*, is presented as an example of how exhibition can be used as a strategy to facilitate unruly encounters between audience and artwork, artwork and environment, artworks and 'authors'. Aims of the project were to identify methods for engaging an audience with work in progress, to initiate dialogue around what constitutes the 'photographic' within emerging digital ecologies and the implications of this for the way we interact with photography as a medium for memory. The exhibition comprised of 3D photographic scans visible in augmented reality within the exhibition space via a framed, handheld screen, combined with hanging 2D projection. Audience members were invited to explore these '3D snapshots' by physically moving around the space whilst holding the screen. The use of exhibition as a research strategy provided insight into different *ways of knowing*, for example through the body and through movement as well as through dialogue. These insights were made possible through the participatory nature of exhibition, which in this example introduced a performative element

whereby the audience becomes embodied within hybrid digital/physical space. A challenge with this approach, which foregrounds Barad's notion of intra-action, is in finding ways to meaningfully capture the encounter as research data. The discussion considers the potential of experimental multimodal methods to tackle this challenge and develop a methodological response that enables a better understanding of the role of the body within rapidly changing digital landscapes

# Linguistics and reflexivity: an integrational methodology

Mark Stott

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## Abstract

According to Roy Harris (e.g. *The Language Myth* 1981) the foundational assumptions of linguistic inquiry run as follows: language is a more or less fixed code that enables us to give physical form (e.g. inscriptions, sound waves, bodily gestures) to our thoughts. Communication involves the encoding of our own thoughts into a language commonly shared with an interlocutor, who in turn decodes what we say to them back into their own thoughts. If the speaker's original thought and resulting interlocutor's thought are sufficiently similar, successful communication can be said to have occurred. In place of this 'telementation' model of language and communication, Harris suggests we instead think of language as a means, not of conveying thoughts, but of integrating our activities with those of other people and the world around us. One of the consequences of this radically different perspective on language is that people are seen not as language *users* but language *makers*. On this approach, assuming the identity of linguistic signs across communicative episodes will not do, which in turn raises difficulties for researchers adopting an integrational approach to the study of language and communication. In particular, once we admit the temporal flow of communication into linguistic theory,

profound methodological questions are raised, not least concerning what is, or should be, the 'proper' object of study in linguistic research. This paper discusses how I have begun to grapple with some of these questions in the course of my own research. Particular attention is given to the role of reflexivity, in both the mundane communicative practices of our daily lives and the reflexivity necessarily involved in linguistic research.

# Virtual watch parties: a reflective space for the exploration of mental health representation in documentary films

Charlie Thorpe

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## Abstract

Online watch parties: how can a shared virtual viewing space prompt discussions around mental health experiences? In a study exploring the representation of mental health in documentary films, virtual watch parties offer a space for watching, reflecting, and discussing. The virtual nature of the watch parties allows for specific ethical safeguarding measures, such as participant autonomy over representation and anonymisation, in addition to researcher maintenance of mutual agreements of respect and consideration of others.

Filming participants during the research project holds inherent ethical conflicts, as consent between a documentary director and a participant looks different to typical researcher participant consent.

The watch parties offer a space to navigate this ethical question with the participants, so that they are able to shape and influence the research process as it proceeds. Much like the participants will reflect on the documentaries, they will also occupy and create a space for reflection on the research process.

# Loved clothes and how they can be used to encourage sustainable wardrobe practices

Wendy Ward

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## Abstract

Growing numbers of garments are being discarded after fewer numbers of wears and this is recognised as an unsustainable practice (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017; Wrap, 2020). Despite this trend, most of us own garments that we use frequently and feel some kind of attachment towards (Burcikova, 2019; Masuch & Hefferon, 2018; Neto & Ferreira, 2020; Wood, 2019 and Woodward, 2007). What can be learned from these 'loved' clothes to enable more sustainable relationships with the rest of our wardrobes?

Commonly used methods in the field of "Wardrobe Studies" (Klepp & Bjerck 2014) are audits and inventories (Skjold, 2014); surveys and questionnaires (Laitala & Klepp, 2020), interviews (Twigger-Holroyd 2013; Woodward 2007) and use diaries (Valle-Noronha, 2017). These capture statistical data on use and consumption, but do not capture the emotional relationships that wearers have with their clothes. To uncover the feelings that we experience about certain items of clothing I will use creative writing and art-making methods with participants in this early stage of my methodology. Drawing as a method in object-based research is used within museum collections

(Mida, 2017; Mida & Casey 2020) and creative writing is being used to imagine alternative fashion futures by Amy Twigger-Holroyd in her ongoing research project 'Fashion Fictions' (Twigger-Holroyd, 2020).

At two pilot events I asked participants to write a love letter to a favourite garment and to make a portrait of a favourite garment. From the pilots I hoped to learn: Do the participants understand what I am asking them to do? What do I need to record and how? What data is produced? Are these effective methods to establish whether participants have an emotional relationship with their garments? My presentation will be a reflection on this experience, used to refine and frame the next steps of my enquiry.

# Blocked access – evaluating re-shaped methods

Pat Wichert

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## Abstract

I propose to present on how Covid-19 stalled a project, only to gain momentum following repeatedly revised planning. I aim to present how photographic experiments and home study during lockdown resulted in reduced complexity of methods as well as more focused field work later. In narrating a journey of archive study, a subsequent conference presentation, conducted oral history interviews, an interim 'show', and related research conversations, I aim to outline how earlier plans revealed themselves as unrealistic when contexts changed unexpectedly and how invaluable it has been to be 'out there', talking to other international researchers as plans needed to be re-shaped.

I commenced my part-time, practice-led PhD studies in 2016 with the title: *'Vestiges of affect: A photographic re-calling of a forced migrant community's landscapes, real and imagined'*. Immediately after the RF2 stage, international travel plans, and key interviews with the elderly, were put on hold for close to 2 years. However, once travel and meetings were permitted and ethical again, the willingness of others to co-operate appeared stronger, more urgent. As a new devastating land war in Europe has been progressing, Poland and the Baltics (the 'terrain' of my studies)

returned into focus once more, thereby carrying new anxieties about the very concerning political outlook. Again, this had a direct impact on the methods envisaged prior.

By showing, and talking to, a set of photographs taken this summer near Gdansk, Poland, I shall summarise which methods revealed themselves as most fruitful and which proved unproductive or distracting at best. Finally, the presentation seeks to foreground the importance of qualities commonly attributed to artists when faced with the unexpected, frustrating or seemingly impossible.

# Queering anatomy - microbial migration and ambiguous body borders

Kuang-Yi Ku

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## Abstract

Anatomy in medicine defines a clear body boundary. It has the power to claim what a clean, healthy, and complete body is. However, the hierarchy of medical anatomy results in the underrepresentation of marginalized groups. The research aims to challenge the medical patriarchy and heteronormativity of anatomical education by constructing a dirty, ambiguous, uncertain, fluctuating anatomical system.

The research methods focus on how to construct a speculative anatomical textbook “Atlas of Filthy Anatomy” by the visual experiment of medical drawing. The goal is to queer the classic anatomical textbook “Atlas of Human Anatomy” drawn by Frank H. Netter (1906-1991), a white male scholar. “Atlas of Human Anatomy” was first published in 1957 and has been widely used in medical education until now. Although it is a classic textbook, it shows the lack of inclusivity in anatomical visualization. Hence, the new “Atlas of Filthy Anatomy” will be a collection of anatomical drawings which emphasize sexual diversity to criticize the limitation of “Atlas of Human Anatomy”.

In this research, Kuang-Yi Ku collaborates with dermatologist-venereologist Prof. Dr. Henry de Vries who specializes in skin infections, especially sexually transmitted infections and tropical skin diseases, to propose new speculations on queer anatomies. “Atlas of Filthy Anatomy” is planned to be a long-term ongoing program including multiple chapters with different themes of gender and sexuality. In the first stage of this research, Kuang-Yi Ku plans to envision the first chapter as a starting point of this growing program.

Chapter 1 explores the symbiosis between humans and microorganisms resulting in ambiguous body borders and experiments with how to visualize and materialize microbial migration through body contact. The purpose is also to explore new avenues for anatomical education by interpreting the meanings and experiences in these cultural-biological choreographies.