CULTURES OF HEALTH AND WELLBEING:
PROVOCATION ABSTRACTS

PROVOCATIONS DAY 1, THURSDAY 21 MARCH 11:30-12:45

Group 1: Inclusive Practice

Chair: June Stevenson, Artis

Provocations:

Sarah Derbyshire MBE, Orchestras Live
‘From Bingo to Bartok’: creative and innovative approaches to involving older people with orchestras. A new online resource commissioned by the Baring Foundation, co-produced by Orchestras Live and City of London Sinfonia

Evidence of the profound impact that active engagement in music can have on the health and wellbeing of older people is now driving a radical shift in the perception of its value in society and where it sits within the ambitions of cultural organisations.

In the orchestral sector, work with older people has begun to address audience development, as well as activity within dedicated health or social care settings. Do some cultural organisations value older audiences in conventional concert settings differently from those accessing creative and development work through their local community, support group, social or healthcare setting?

Case studies in this new online resource demonstrate how innovative practice puts creative ownership in the hands of older people, combating isolation and promoting social cohesion. We argue that the best practice also serves the interests of orchestras to benefit their wider artistic and business case, linking social and cultural wellbeing in sustainable practice.

Dr Katerina Mavromichali, MOMus/Museum of Modern Art-Costakis Collection, Thessaloniki, Greece
Museums Health and Wellbeing: Towards a new ethos for sustainable social practice

The Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance has functioned as a springboard since its establishment, at National, European and International level, for people-powered life-changing approaches fulfilling the social value of the arts. Arts in the public health milieu are a powerful tool and an innovative field of research gaining ground over the last years. Museums, galleries, arts therapies, art on prescription work towards social inclusion, strong synergies, bringing a remarkable change in quality of life and overall social and emotional wellbeing. This was the inspirational context for a new model recently applied to the social outreach programme of the MOMUs in Greece based on a creative concoction, drawing on aesthetic third principles and addressed to children at risk of exclusion and marginalization. The Museum functions as a connecting link between the school, the family and the clinical
setting and can evolve into a ‘secure base’ with the therapeutic potential of its collections, its inspiring qualities in combination with art therapy, neuroscience, emotional processing and creative expression. The programme follows the ‘Working Together’ values, embraces interdisciplinarity, inclusive, holistic, evidence-based practice and RTI approaches in the best interest of children. At the same time the key challenge for the people working in museums today is changing the culture and advocating the increased role of museums in the social-political agenda for providing stewardship of the highest order.

**Cat Powell & Jade Richardson, Arftelt, The Children’s Hospital Charity (Sheffield)**

**Patient Led Digital Innovation in a Paediatric Setting**

In times of rising digital literacy amongst young people, our work increasingly recognises technology’s strength in providing distraction for patients at Sheffield Children’s Hospital. We are moving our work off the walls – literally – and will discuss the decision to increase our number of digital commissions and the hurdles we have overcome to complete them.

To aid conversation, we will present one of our latest projects, transforming the clinical Treatment Rooms on our brand new wards into an immersive experience where the patient enters arctic and woodland environments. Collaborating with Mega Verse, Pitstop and The University of Sheffield Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre, the project combines wall art, 3D Sound and augmented reality to immerse patients in an all-round experience and distract from pain and anxiety. Working collaboratively and flexibly, we extensively user tested the project and allowed it to evolve directly from our work with stakeholders, resulting in a bespoke and unique commission.

**Rafaela Neiva Ganga, Institute of Cultural Capital, Liverpool John Moores University**

**House of Memories: The impacts of museum-led dementia awareness programmes on informal caregivers’ subjective wellbeing**

Our provocation will draw on the results of an empirical understanding of the impact of House of Memories Family Caregivers’ Awareness Day across four museums in England on the subjective well-being of 66 participating dementia caregivers. House of Memories is an award-winning dementia awareness programme led by National Museums Liverpool (NML) that uses museums’ collections to support caregivers to develop reminiscence activities with people with dementia.

We developed a mixed-method pre-post approach, combining quantitative profiling of participants’ care responsibilities and museum engagement to understand the impact of House of Memories. Standardized measures of subjective well-being, and delegates’ comments on the session were analysed.

Profiling of care responsibilities and perceived burden shows that the research sample can mostly be defined as ‘care managers’. Concerning the wellbeing of participating carers, data show positive outcomes concerning strategies to reduce the stigma associated with dementia; from a strategic perspective, social value data validates the personal outcomes of the programme relating to carers’ subjective wellbeing, dementia knowledge and awareness and person-centred care practices.
Findings are suggestive of the potential of the *House of Memories* programme to improve the lives of informal caregivers, particularly concerning three areas: dementia awareness, carers’ self-recognition, and subjective well-being.

**Group 2: Creativity & identity**

**Chair: Alice Thwaite, Equal Arts**

**Provocations:**

**Alice Malpass & Elizabeth Penny, Bristol Medical School & 2BU Productions**

*Cultures of breathlessness: using creative letters to the breath to navigate narrative wreckage*

Breathlessness disrupts the narratives of normal life. It slows you down. Isolates you. But if we compare the cultures of medicine and the lived worlds of patients, we see disparities in the terms used to describe, measure and diagnose breathlessness.

In this provocation we explore a collaboration between an anthropologist based in Bristol Medical school who is part of the Life of Breath project ([www.lifeofbreath.org](http://www.lifeofbreath.org)) and an arts health practitioner who is an expert in the therapeutic use of creative letter writing.

Over the last two years Penny and Malpass have collected over 80 letters written to the breath. The letters help patients explore their relationship to their breath and express their experience of breathlessness to themselves.

We will employ various methods—combining short didactic presentations with participatory elements including exercises from physical theatre. We introduce ‘cultures of breathing’ by sharing audio and visual narratives, then present some examples of how cultures of breathlessness are lost in translation across ethnicities. We propose that reducing the experience of breathlessness to a unidimensional clinical sign like ‘Peak Expiratory flow’ is problematic and that creative letter writing is one approach to counteract biomedical cultures of respiratory function measurement—which ignores the narrative wreckage left behind by breathlessness.

**Gilly Angell, LENs**

*What does Culture Mean to Us in the Context of Spirituality?*

1) Individual culture allows us to understand our place in the external world. Spiritual culture allows us to understand our inner world where only metaphor has meaning and language is redundant.

2) One cannot teach spirituality, therefore one cannot measure spirituality, yet that is exactly what we are now being asked to do to access funding to help support people in times of most need.
3) One cannot measure spirituality but what one can do is see the benefits of engaging with spiritual culture—lowering of blood pressure, of breathing, of sense of santosa / contentment, moving from Beta brain wave to Alpha brain waves.

4) So practitioners in creative health invite people into a liminal space where the individual will move the charcoal across the paper or move their body in a dance sequence or feel the warm earth as they plant a seed as they inhale, pause, exhale, pause becoming at one in their creative health, no more, no less and thus beginning their own spiritual journey which like each death is unique to each of us.

Is this measurable? I believe it is.

**Julia Bennett & Mah Rana, Crafts Council**

*How does craft, as an expression of cultural histories and identities, intersect with health and wellbeing?*

Exploring what we understand by craft and the diversity of people engaged with making on a professional and/or everyday level, I will describe examples of Crafts Council programmes and describe the nature of current evidence in terms of the impact perceived by participants on their health and wellbeing.

I will go on to outline examples of how they have led us to participate in research programmes and proposals to increase our specific understand of haptic engagement (relating to the sense of touch). Research in other disciplines reveals a growing appreciation of increased engagement and achievement arising from haptic learning. Haptics now involves research from engineering, robotics, developmental and experimental psychology, cognitive science, computer science, and educational technology. Work is also being undertaken in application areas such as surgical simulation, medical training, scientific visualisation, assistive technology for people with disabilities and gaming.

Drawing on this evidence base and our programme experience I will make the case for further research to understand the implications of haptic engagement for health and wellbeing.

The following film shown in the 2017 Crafts Council’s Real to Reel Craft Film Festival will be part of the session: *One Day When We Were Young*, Mah Rana, 2016. This film aims to capture the shifting dynamic between a person with dementia and an informal carer, exploring the therapeutic effects of making together. The making process, perhaps more than the artefacts made, is a distinctive way of communicating, memorialising and self-making with others.

**Dave Camlin & Mouthful**

*The Fellowship of Hill and Wind and Sunshine*

In summer 2018, the Fellowship of Hill and Wind and Sunshine was a partnership ‘leave no trace’ performance project on the Lake District fells, inspired by the ‘Great Gift’ of land by a group of Cumbrian mountaineers following the Great War 1914-18. The project galvanised a
‘scratch’ choir of over 100 amateur singers in a spiritual quest to perform a mountain-top ‘song cycle’ as cultural tribute to commemorate the centenary of the armistice. The resulting performances were captured in VR, and showcased at museums, festivals and care homes. Sensemaker® - an innovative ‘distributed ethnography’ methodology - was used to research the experiences of participants, which highlighted how:

• Group singing can support the formation and development of a ‘healthy public’, emphasising the utility of natural cultural heritage for social bonding;
• Spiritual and emotional dimensions of group singing are more prominent in participant experience than the perceived benefits to physical health;
• Musical quality and accessibility converge in producing the conditions for health-promoting cultural participation through music;
• Group singing affords opportunities for ‘mutual recovery’;
• The wellbeing mechanism underscoring group singing is a complex cocktail of neurohormonal activation, interpersonal neurobiological attunement and musical entrainment.

A short (6-min) film documents the project and its impact.

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<th>Group 3: Affect and research</th>
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Chair: Kate Parkin, Equal Arts

Provocations:

Professor Nicky Lambert & Dr Helen Gleeson, Middlesex University
Supporting student nurses to become thoughtful, compassionate professionals using art and culture

This provocation looks at the role of art and culture in supporting student nurses to become thoughtful, compassionate professionals. Nurses must be self-aware and able to think critically in order to understand information, prioritise actions and exercise professional judgement. They also need to demonstrate compassion and cultural competence. A new module is being designed with support from stakeholders including museums and galleries (British Museum, V&A, and the National Gallery) to provide an opportunity for student nurses to develop applied skills through active enquiry and reflection on their personal and professional identities. We hope to use art and culture to support student nurses to explore the human condition and develop the knowledge and skills to be active citizens.

The student nurses engaging with this programme are Londoners (73.8%) and from black and minority ethnic groups (66%). Most attended state schools or colleges (98.3%) and are mature students (48%) with comparatively low / nontariff entry qualifications, when they qualify most will go onto work locally as Adult, Child or Mental Health Nurses.

Questions:

• Is this a waste of everyone’s time? (Nurses need practice-based skills ... they don’t need to think!)
• Is this social engineering? (making a working class occupation into a middle class profession?)
• Is this cultural imperialism? (what can pillaged artefacts or the western canon of art tell BME students about anything?)

Nicola Naismith, Grays School of Art, Robert Gordon University
Affective support for creative practitioners working in participatory arts for health and wellbeing

What affective support is being offered to the creative arts practitioner delivering participatory arts in health and wellbeing contexts?

To promote the positive outcomes of participating in the arts for participants whilst overlooking, ignoring or making assumptions about the support needs of the delivering practitioners is problematic at best and potentially damaging at worst. In exploring this research subject, my methodology consists of a literature review, online questionnaire for practitioners and a series of semi-structured interviews with culture, policy and local authority leaders. The literature review includes an analysis of existing toolkits and best practice guides to working in the health and wellbeing contexts to evaluate the extent to which practitioner support is being considered and in what ways.

The questionnaire sought to collect the affective support experiences of creative practitioners to measure what support they are offered and how often, what activities they undertake to support themselves and what they would like in the future. Conversations and interviews with academics, policy makers, local authorities, specialist and non specialist organisations focused on exploring what the challenges may be going forward, and what they consider creative practitioners need in order to do their best work. The research will suggest how affective support could be imbedded in existing models of practice or suggest new ways of working.

Sylvie Fourcin, Artlink West Yorkshire
How do we achieve depth in practice? Reflections on a 6-year project using ethnography as evaluation

Over the past five years we have developed our practice to another level. We have worked closely with Dr Anni Raw using methods of ethnographic observation and reflective practice to dig more deeply into the participatory arts practice that we have refined and developed over the past fifteen years. We have held a number of artists training events to explore issues surrounding this and have looked at such areas as; How do we ensure inclusivity in our practice? What constitutes depth in an activity? How do we know when it’s OK to expect more of participants? In this way we are deepening and challenging the ways in which we work.

This provocation will discuss the work we are doing and give examples of good practice and the challenges we encounter. This will be in particular reference to a six-year project we are undertaking working across settings with adults with learning and physical disabilities, mental health issues and people living with dementia.
Group 4: Democratising practice

Chair: Sue Mackay, Thackray Medical Museum

Provocations:

Simon Proctor, Nordoff Robbins
“Culture” – making life better or replicating inequalities?

For many, culture is a means of acting out and reinforcing social inequalities: since social inequalities negatively impact health outcomes, does culture do more harm than good?

As an example, even as the UK government proclaims the value of music within social prescribing, its austerity policies within education restrict access to music to the already privileged. Competence in (and/or consumption of) “high” culture is celebrated as a marker of distinction and a justification of “meritocratic” privilege, which in turn can be seen as explaining health inequalities.

Working culturally for health and wellbeing is therefore radical. Even though there are reasons why we might seek to avoid making this overly explicit (such as reassuring funders) and ways in which we might seek to cloak our aspirations behind medical, aesthetic or charitable rhetorics, we should not be entirely blind to it ourselves.

Nor is political conviction enough: in working for health and wellbeing, we have a responsibility to demonstrate practical skill and craft in our cultural endeavours, enabling access to meaningful and changeful cultural activities and experiences for those who are generally most excluded from them and thus from impactful, healthy participation in society.

Rachel Adam & Lisa Blaney, Museums Northumberland
Shifting Power – how long does it really take?

We will briefly describe the context of Creative People and Places and then share a project example, breaking down the steps involved in shifting power and drawing out the fast and slow shifts in power that are often happening simultaneously. We will share successes and challenges and pose some questions for delegates:

- What shifts in power have been successful in your practice?
- How long has it taken?
- What further shifts in power would help address social inequalities and create sustainable social practice?
- What will enable this to happen?
Tom Bailey, Arts & Minds Leeds
Cart before the horse

As artists and creative people we know that being involved in an artistic process can be transformative. But by focusing on how the arts can affect social and health outcomes, aren't we putting the cart before the horse? By obsessing on results instead of trusting the creative process are we in danger of losing the very thing that makes artistic engagement so special? In this short presentation, Tom Bailey from Arts & Minds will explain how the arts has changed the lives of people he has worked with in Leeds but will question the trend for the arts being used as a sticking plaster for all kinds of social ills.

Michael McHugh, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums (TWAM)
‘They say nothing to me about my life’ - How museums trap themselves in narrow definitions of art, history, heritage and engagement

Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums’ mission is about helping people determine their place in the world and define their identities. It’s an admirable mission. But what do you do if their place in the world has been determined for them already? What if their life choices are severely limited by mental health problems, trauma and incarceration. What if the museum, by trying to do good, has made things worse and made them realise that they have no place in the world?

What if someone is unable to define their identity due to personality disorders or a serious mental health problem? What if they are locked up in a medium secure forensic unit (MSU)?

Can we develop creative engagements that give agency to people who live and work in such complex and problematic environments without resorting to the passive or tokenistic activity? What role can museums and art galleries play in all this and why is having an adaptive process far more important than product?

Michael McHugh from TWAM will provoke questions and debate with a brief summary of a live project currently being delivered with Bamburgh MSU in Newcastle upon Tyne.