

# Methods, Tools, Practices, Experiences

A Sharing Workshop  
on Taking Artist  
Development Online

**7-8 December 2020**

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# Introduction

**Rosie Hermon, Artist Development Coordinator,  
Chisenhale Studios**

Chisenhale Studios and Into the Wild invited fellow Artist Development and Alternative Art Education programmes to join us in a hive mind exercise. We aimed to pool our learning and experiences of shifting programmes partially or totally online as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, through a really practically oriented, fun and reflexive two-day online workshop. This was framed by the question, 'How can we strengthen our artist development practice by learning from each other as we move into a socially distanced 2021?'

We proposed an online seminar of sorts with the Artist Development community – organisers, participants, contributors (recognising that these are often very blurry distinctions), in which different programmes led short, practical workshops to share methods, tools and practices that have been adopted or adapted over the last year.

We invited each programme/cohort/artist to propose an activity to share with the other attendees, as a practical exercise and a way of learning by doing. This could last from a few minutes up to an hour.

We posed the following questions to the programmes we contacted, as jumping off points when thinking about the activities that they might propose:

- How can we maintain energies and vibes when everyone has different levels of attention/connectivity, both practically with wifi and conceptually with the group dynamic?
- How can we keep the experimental nature of peer programmes when we can't be physically present for each other?
- In what ways can we share practice digitally beyond the usual Instagram networks?

Here, in this document, we bring together their responding written reflections, instructions and other information, which serve as a prompt to remind those that participated of the variety of work and approaches that the workshop encompassed, and hopefully as a tool to inform future online working.

We would like to thank all those who participated and attended, including the Into the Wild 2020 artists who were the creative note takers across both days.

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## Background

Established in the early 1980s **Chisenhale Studios** provides secure affordable workspace to both established and emerging visual artists who are exhibiting, performing and teaching nationally and internationally. The activity of the Studios reflects the diversity of contemporary art practice and we promote a wider understanding of artistic process through our public programmes, which have a strong focus on artist development and community engagement.

**Into the Wild** is at the core of our artist development programmes as an ambitious, artist-led initiative which has run successfully for six years. It is a year-long, free programme that aims to offer support and inspiration to artists in the early stages of their career and in need of practical advice on how to survive and thrive in the world beyond art school and to develop their practice.

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# Let's not think we have to reinvent the wheel!

**Sophie Chapman (Into the Wild)**

In times of crisis and speculation on the future - let's not think we ourselves alone must come up with completely new strategies for survival. They may appear new to some of us, but they won't be new to all of us. And it's short sighted to think that we are the only ones to come up against our issues or that we are the only ones to solve them.

In thinking about how to keep doing my job with Into The Wild I've tried, when I have had a clearer moment, turning to the resources and knowledges that have resonated and meant the most to me as I've developed my practice of organising / facilitating / collaborating with people already.

In doing so I've turned in particular to the works of black / brown feminist writers that have parallel practices in education / activism / poetry / racial justice / organising / queer liberation / science fiction / disability justice work.

I know that I want to do better to learn from those that have been thinking up these strategies of remote, complicated, accessible, FUN! digital connectivity, community making and sharing of knowledge and resources - that for me these development programmes are all about, right?

So I wanted to draw upon some of their words, almost like you would a sermon. Not because I want to be the preacher of this event but because they hold that space for me, their words are incredibly beautiful, powerful, mind blowing, expansive, and feel like they relate to and give strength to EVERYTHING. Hopefully they will give us the strength to think together too.

First off: bell hooks, from 'Teaching to Transgress'. Which for me is a reminder that these spaces of learning that we create together aren't about some finite set of tools that you need to be let in on by those in the know in order to be an artist, or whatever you want to be. But really about creating space for us all to extend ourselves further, to try out new ways of being - free.

The very simple and eloquent "education is the practice of freedom".

Secondly: from Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha's book 'Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice' which Kyla Harris introduced me to at the start of this years Into The Wild programme. It is all about the ways sick and disabled people, especially black and brown and queer disabled people, have been creating the most incredible, interconnected, caring support structures, doing it themselves, in networks all around the world. This part chimed in relation to all the talk of 'returning to normal' at the moment. 'Normal' is not an uncontested word, space, or place. Just by being 'alternate', as many of our programmes believe ourselves to be, we aren't exempt from making the same assumptions that keep things fucked up and 'normal' either. What can we learn from disability justice in thinking about our ways of working differently?

*"Mainstream ideas of "healing" deeply believe in ableist ideas that you're either sick or well, fixed or broken, and that nobody would want to be in a disabled or sick or mad bodymind. Unsurprisingly and unfortunately, these ableist ideas often carry over into healing spaces that call themselves "alternative" or "liberatory." The healing may be acupuncture and herbs, not pills and surgery, but assumptions in both places abound that disabled and sick folks are sad people longing to be "normal," that cure is always the goal, and that disabled people are objects who have no knowledge of our bodies. And deep in both the medical-industrial complex and "alternative" forms of healing that have not confronted their ableism is the idea that disabled people can't be healers."*

Finally: from 'Emergent Strategies' by adrienne maree brown, which originated in a way of thinking through the lineage created by black science fiction writer Octavia Butler's 'adaptive and relational leadership models'. These core principles listed by adrienne feel especially pertinent for us:

*"I gather them here with the expectation that they will grow. Small is good, small is all. (The large is a reflection of the small.)*

*Change is constant. (Be like water.)*

*There is always enough time for the right work.*

*There is a conversation in the room that only these people at this moment can have. Find it.*

*Never a failure, always a lesson."*

# enter, pursued by a bear

## Lady Kitt (The NewBridge Project/ Constellations), Sarah Li and Edwin Li

What is “Zoom Fear” and how might this help?

“Zoom Fear” (“enter, pursued by a bear”\*) describes negative feelings which can crop up before/ during video conferencing. It’s a feeling Kitt describes as being chased onto the screen followed by a cloud of doubt, confusion and anxiety, then having to do what is meant to come across as a carefully choreographed dance with the bear, but actually feels like barely disguised brawl. These are instructions / ideas for a short-5-10 mins, (mildly) interactive exercise, which aims to help groups to collectively acknowledge and, (ideally) make a pal of, the bear.

\* From the infamous Shakespeare stage direction, ‘Exit, pursued by a bear’, Act III, *The Winter’s Tale*

### Resources- what you need for the exercise

a blanket or large piece of fabric, a scrap piece of paper (A4ish), a pen / pencil, ink to music by Sarah Li and Edwin Li <https://soundcloud.com/user-774962179/teddy-bears-picnic-silly-abstract-version>

- Invite participants to wrap themselves in their blankets then draw their blanket up over the back of their shoulders and heads moving closer to their webcams. They should then pull a portion of the blanket over the screen past the camera to create a blanket “den” in which both they and their camera/ screen are enclosed. Everyone then becomes inhabitants of the “Web of Dens” a caring, intimate and playful space created by Youngsook Choi (for more details see: <https://www.ladykitt.com/together-ness-tools> and <https://youngsookchoi.com>)
- Introduce the idea of “Zoom Fear”: feeling of being chased onto the screen followed by a massive, scary bear of anxiety/ confusion/ terror
- Talk about how generating a sense of intimacy and playfulness can help dispel this feeling
- Introduce the idea of collectively making a pal of “the bear” / other representations of what a physical manifestation of that fear might be (this could be anything- dragons, clowns, a really big button with a menacing face)
- Invite everyone to imagine that their “bear” is waiting outside the Web of Den- it can’t get in- we’re completely safe here
- Ask everyone to think of a kind, encouraging, friendly thing they could say to the other people on the zoom meeting /



video conferencing event. I like to give an example of what I’m going to say, which is often something along the lines of “I feel so grateful to be here with you all and I’m dead excited to share the next couple of hours/ days together”

- I like to give everyone a minute or so to think about what they might say and maybe play some calming music while they do this.

Explain the next 3 stages of the exercise before asking anyone to do any of them. It might also be useful to post the three stages in the chat box so people can remind themselves of what they are being invited to do

### The next three stages are:

1. Invite everyone to draw a picture of their bear (or what ever else zoom fear / online facilitation anxiety) looks like to them. Explain that you will give them 2 minutes to do this, and whilst they do it you will play some appropriately themed music as accompaniment. (The specially composed work by Edwin Li and Sarah Li). Encourage people to draw quickly and not to be concerned about technical skill or beautiful draughtspersonship
2. Once the 2 minutes are up (and the music is finished) everyone is invited to put their drawings up in front of their faces, a bit like a makeshift mask, so the zoom/ video conferencing call becomes a gallery of Bears/ Zoom Fears
3. The facilitator will count to three. After the count of three everyone is invited to simultaneously say the kind, encouraging, friendly thing they thought up earlier. Hopefully this will fill the digital space with words of kindness, and encouragement spoken by our collective, assorted bears.

Everyone is then invited to remove their bear “masks” and come out of the Web of Dens, into their usual environment, where there won’t be any bears.

# **DODO\*Solitaire (or how I learned to love Cryptpad)**

**a workshop by artist and hacker Larisa Blazic exploring 2 non-extractive and end-to-end-encrypted digital tools for collaboration.**

The workshop followed a brief presentation by Flat Time House Director Gareth Bell-Jones & UP Projects Curator (Learning & Live Research) Elisabeth Del Prete about [Constellations](#). Constellations is a free artist development programme that supports nine UK-based artists to explore socio-political issues, community-oriented practice, and public contexts. The programme, currently in its third iteration, has been conceived by [UP Projects](#) and is delivered in partnership with [Flat Time House](#).

Please note that due to unforeseen circumstances Larisa Blazic was unable to lead the workshop. On behalf of the artist Gareth and Elisabeth explored the themes and experimented with the tools and activities together with the workshop participants.

## **What does data extraction mean?**

Data extraction is the act or process of retrieving data out of (usually unstructured or poorly structured) data sources for further data processing or data storage (data migration). The import into the intermediate extracting system is thus usually followed by data transformation and possibly the addition of metadata prior to export to another stage in the data workflow.

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Data\\_extraction](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Data_extraction)

## **What does encryption mean?**

In cryptography, encryption is the process of encoding information. This process converts the original representation of the information, known as plaintext, into an alternative form known as ciphertext. Ideally, only authorized parties can decipher a ciphertext back to plaintext and access the original information. Encryption does not itself prevent interference but denies the intelligible content to a would-be interceptor.

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Encryption>

## **Excalidraw and Framemo: Digital tools for collaboration explored during the workshop**

Excalidraw is a virtual collaborative whiteboard tool that lets you easily sketch diagrams that have a hand-drawn feel to them. [Click on the link](#) to view the page accessed and edited by the participants during the workshop:

Framemo is an online whiteboard especially create for brainstorming sessions. It works by adding your ideas in the form of sticky notes. It works exactly like an authentic whiteboard, except that far more collaboration is possible. [Click on the link](#) to view the page accessed and edited by the participants during the workshop:

Additional digital tools for collaboration include [CryptPad](#), a secure, shareable note-taking app and document editor that allows for secure, collaborative editing.

For additional online resources please follow these links:  
<https://etherdump.vvvvvaria.org/publish/digital-solidarity-networks.raw.html>  
<https://www.systemli.org/en/2020/03/15/solidarity-as-infrastructure.html>  
<https://framasoftware.org/en/>  
<https://degooglisons-internet.org/en/>

## **About Larisa Blazic**

Larisa Blazic is a London based digital artisan, educator and feminist hacker with practice ranging from net.art to Free/Libre/Open Source Software art and design. Over the last 20 years she explored a range of emerging technologies and their impact on online publishing, moving image in public space, collective creativity and participation. She recently completed Data Union Fork: tools for data strike, as part of prestigious S+T+ARTS Residency programme. Larisa's work has been shown nationally at venues such as Phoenix Theatre, Leicester (2008), Novas Gallery, London (2008), VINEspace, London (2007), Dana Library and Research Centre, London (2004) and ICA (2002).

# Rabbits Road Seasonal School

**Rosalie Schweiker & Lisa Rahman**

This one week alternative art school is designed to support people at any stage in their creative journey. For Winter School we asked participants to focus on completing a piece of artwork that they had been putting off. Each attendee was advised to dedicate a minimum of 2 hours each day to completing their work (keeping a realistic goal of something that can be finished in 10 hours) and on Friday everyone will share what they have done (amongst the class only).

The school is run by artists and educators Sofia Niazi, Rosalie Schweiker and Lisa Rahman.

To create an encouraging environment, there is an optional schedule that participants can use to help them create a routine including:

- A selected piece of audio will be uploaded/shared daily at 8am
- Facilitated coffee + stretch club on Zoom from 10-11am
- 1:1 tutorial with Art Director Lisa Rahman
- Class review on Friday (in Google Docs) from 6-9pm where the group can see what people have done and add comments
- Ongoing telegram chats, stickers and check-ins

Some words from the team before Winter School started:

*"If you are based in the UK and the description above sounds like something that would benefit you then this is for you. If you have never been to art school then this is especially for you. You should be self-motivated and have completed at least one thing in your life since you will need to manage your own time. We aim to create a space for us to remain connected, creative and supported."*

To find out more about the school, process and see some of the work produced head to the Rabbits Road Press blog of the School ran in April 2020:

<https://tinyurl.com/RRP-springschool>

# DIY Dissertation Cut Up Session

Emma Edmondson & Lu Williams (The Other MA)

DIY dissertation > > > some ways to disrupt academic writing & the systems it upholds (start with you + itch from inside) > > > it's not about dumbing things down, we can talk about complex ideas with everyday words doing the washing up at the kitchen sink or the dog park.

One of the hidden hierarchies surrounding accessing higher education is not having the art specific language needed to enter the contemporary art world\*\*. This practical exercise borrows + steals from those before us, use it to disrupt academic texts that frustrate you + give them new meaning.

## LET'S DISORDER THE OLD ORDER

1. Take your dissertation (or academic text) choose any particular words that annoy you e.g. evaluation, employability, curatorial, pedagogy, and place dots on these specific words.
2. Then connect the dots with straight, curved or zig zag lines. This way of drawing will reveal hidden patterns in negative space - here you will follow rules to give birth to randomness.
3. Perhaps colour in some of the erupted forms, eradicate those words to create new meaning!

\*\*This can be put down to, perhaps, the over-academisation of art, the university-ing of studying art as a route to being more employable (LoLLL) aka the neoliberalisation of art education, sigh. But don't blame artists, we are just trying to survive through getting educated!



# Syllabus V Sound Piece

Hwa Young Jung, Sarai Kirshner, Juliet Davis,  
Duncan Pulton

Turn off your camera,  
Move away from your laptop and desk  
Turn the lights off, close your blinds or stare out of the window  
Take the time to find a comfortable position that's not on the  
chair you were just sat on, lie down if you can  
Breathe deeply

Self care extends to care for others.

This is Syllabus's response to how we helped and learned  
from each other.

We wanted to give you space to listen and be with your  
thoughts,

Because one of the aspects of this group, is the idea of care  
that we've given to each other, that goes beyond the work.

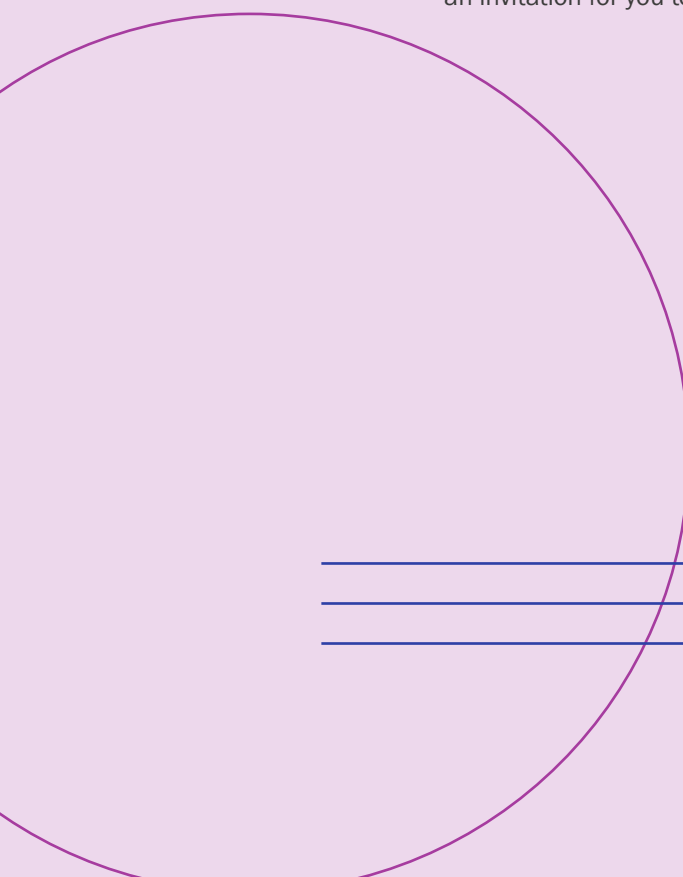
And this idea of looking out for each other, to see yourself in  
the other has been set throughout the whole programme by  
Barby Asante and Louise Shelley and I think that's what has  
tied us together because we're moving around all the time.

**The commonality between us was us.**

There was a concerted effort to look out for each other's  
wellbeing and not to be so productive all the time. Although a  
few members have struggled to not be productive. So this is  
an invitation for you to also take time and be kind to yourself.

Our invitation now is to just be in the space and try not  
to think of anything outside this space.

If an exterior thought comes to your mind, acknowledge  
it, then let it go and come back to this room.



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# Mesh Wiki Walkthrough

## Matilda Glen & Niklas Gustafson (Into the Wild)

**MESH: A wiki for everything you wish you learned at art school**

We, (the cohort from Into The Wild artist development program), have created MESH: a wiki site by and for artists. Wikis are websites that allow readers to be contributors, just like Wikipedia. MESH is not a finished website, but a tool. It's a place to find, add and link all the knowledge, tips and tricks that help you and other artists survive and thrive in the art world. It's got inspiration, resources and a UK wide networks directory. It's meant to be messy. No one owns it. The main thing here is to access and share resources.

Here's some questions we've been asking ourselves while developing MESH:

- How can we make info accessible and document what's out there in a format that isn't authoritative or prescriptive?
- How can we utilise our own knowledge and existing resources there without reinventing the wheel? Who has that knowledge? What kind of knowledge is valued?
- How much can we control what's added or how MESH develops? Who controls it? Why?

### **TASK: Help us populate MESH!**

1. **Think of something that's been helpful to you as an artist, a sort of survival tool.** This could be something very specific or broad: a piece of advice, a resource page, a tax tip, budgeting advice, a life-hack, a man with a van number, a good essay, a facebook group - you name it! Your contribution will be useful to someone else, however simple or small.
2. **Create a "wiki-media" username and password** to add you survival tool: [https://mesh.miraheze.org/wiki/How\\_to\\_get\\_started](https://mesh.miraheze.org/wiki/How_to_get_started)
3. **Find a suitable category and add your resource.** If you can't find a fitting place for it, either create a new category or add it to the sorting pile. Please shoot an email to [mesh.caretaker@gmail.com](mailto:mesh.caretaker@gmail.com) if you have any questions, suggestions or are struggling with any of the above! If you want to join the MESH community and help make our art-world a bit more accessible and friendly, [sign up here](#) to get notified when we organise our next skillshare and meetup events.

# Partial Social Reintegration

## Version 3.5

Dan Russell (The Collective Studio)

### What Is This?

A gentle, phased ice-breaker. Re-learning how to communicate in Zoom times.

### Phase One *Silence*

Please (if possible) place your Zoom into Gallery View and enter Full Screen.

Close your eyes and think about the chair under your bum, your feet on the floor, your breathing and the weight of your clothes on your skin. Stretch or get comfortable if you are not. Hold it.

Open your eyes.

Now, starting at the top left, stare at the person in their little tile on your screen.

Obviously they won't see you looking at them as you won't be staring into your camera but a bit of inert screen. Look at the name and pronouns under their image. Scrutinise their face. Wonder if you'll remember their name in future. Move on to the next new face. Continue until you have looked at everyone in turn.

### Phase Two *Small Talk in Pairs*

First, you will be put in random breakout room pairs.

In our pairs we will go through some conversational instructions (some are cribbed from various cue cards):

1. "Don't feel a constant pressure to talk. Take 80 seconds to be together in silence. It can feel awkward at first, then unexpectedly close and warm. You can look at each other or gaze around, as though being just yourselves is now completely enough."
2. Please allow me to introduce myself.  
Tell your partner who you are, where you are (zoom in from country, to region, to city/town, to neighbourhood, to building, to room).
3. "Rather than your thoughts, share your senses. Both switch off your cameras and, with only the sound still on, close your eyes and take it in turns to describe what you can currently hear, smell, touch, and feel. The listener should try to inhabit your mind by imagining the same."

### Phase Three *Parlour Games in Fours*

Your pairs will be merged to form groups of 4. The small talk becomes bigger.

Two truth one lie.

In your fours take it in turns (3 mins thinking time at the start, 3 mins per person subsequently) to tell two truths and one lie. Your three new friends must guess the lie amongst the truths. Don't dwell on it too much. Remember the most plausible lie is a truth with one innocent detail changed. For example, changing the name of your childhood tortoise or swapping tortoise for pony.

### Phase Four. *Whole group*

Now we will complete our social reintegration into the big group by in turn, very concisely (approx. 15 seconds per person), saying: Name; Pronoun; Mood (or another simple statement relevant to your other activity). Everyone turn off your camera. First person turns on their camera. When you have spoken, keep your camera on and nominate the next person. That way we know who's been.

Then we will be socially reintegrated and the day can continue.

# What makes an artist (In Covid times)?

**Jack Thurgar, Jenny Pengilly, Sylvia Morgado, Sadie Edginton (AltMFA)**

This activity has been designed to share people's different ways of working and practice through an object hunt and show and tell.

## Warm Up

The facilitator holds up an object and asks everyone to find one that relates to it in some way. Everyone holds up their object to the screen for all to see and discusses the reasons for choosing it.

**Activity:** Ask everyone to find their version of the following. Once everyone has brought their object back after each category you can discuss their reasons for choosing it.

- Magic Wand- A tool that you find invaluable and helps you work your magic.
- Cauldron- an object that helps you concoct plans for making artwork, experimenting and cooking up ideas.
- Secret Friend- something that brings you reassurance, comfort or has a positive influence when you're working.
- Cloak - perhaps an item you wear, an object or space that helps you get into the right headspace for making artwork e.g admin/ thinking hat, ear plugs, music, comfort cardigan, down-and-dirty overall, DIY den, duvet etc.

What other categories can you think of?

## Part 2) Sharing practice, Swap and borrow: Tool, material, colour, like-word, approach, people. With Sadie Edginton

*Borrow practice elements from other artists to see through their eyes! Where will it take you? Maybe you can start a completely different artwork or project?*

When we finish we'll have six words each. Next to each item below, write down one word onto a piece of paper in front of you, write it quickly and don't think for too long! Have fun with it!

1. **A Tool you use.** It can be literal or metaphorical
2. **A Material** you're excited by, or use
3. **A Colour**
4. **A Word** you like
5. **An Approach** (to making/ practicing your art)
6. **The People** you create for or work with... your audience

Now you should have 6 words in front of you, pool the words into the sections with the other people involved in the workshop. Swap around your words by choosing someone else's 'Tool, material, colour, like-word, approach, audience' so that you have a new collection of 6 words. Invent the a completely new artwork with your new words e.g. 'riding buses words warm saffron meditative users'! Rename yourself that name on zoom and think about those words for a week and attempt to realise the artwork.

### **Part 3) 'Calling yourself an artist' with Sylvia Morgado**

For this 10 minute interactive activity I asked participants to use materials from the home as art materials to explore how we value ourselves as artists.

I started by asking people the below questions:

1. Do you need a studio for your practice?
2. Did you keep working during lockdown?

I invited everyone to grab whatever materials they had at home to make a quick sculpture. From boxes to envelopes, objects, paper, pencil... It was ok to use scissors and tape, but no need to. As an alternative, ripping off the paper. The important thing was to be free and let the imagination flow. I gave 5 minutes and asked people to share the results. I was impressed with everyone's creativity!

Then I shared with the group my inspirations to do this workshop and showed everyone a mini-sculpture in clay that I made a while ago inspired by small sculptures by Swiss artist Alberto Giacometti made during the war when he didn't have a studio, but never stopped producing. I also showed works by Brazilian artist Jac Leirner and talked about how she was repurposing cardboard to make artworks during the lockdown earlier this year.

I then asked another couple of questions:

1. Did your practice changed with the lockdown (as many people were not having access to a studio)
2. What's the value of working on a large or small scale and of materials if we repurpose them?

No answers required. The idea was to have food for thought, questioning our own practices and how we value ourselves as artists.

### **Part 4) Local hiding places. If you were a kid, where would you bunk school? With Jack Thurgar**

A workshop focusing on hiding places, spaces away from authority and the public eye.

This is a quick exercise in imaginative thinking. The workshop aims to create a small five minute window out of our studio practice to focus-in and meditate on a specific place.

Participants are encouraged to think like a child, reinterpreting the local area to find their own hiding place. Think about how it stimulates all senses. Describe its location and geography.

Why did you choose this place for bunking?

As a group we will spend 5 minutes drawing a quick sketch and/or write a few sentences about the place from memory/imagination.

Participants then spend the last few minutes sharing back to the group.

# Somatic Movement Exercise

Joseph Morgan Schofield (MycoLective)

an invitation  
to move  
or not move

softly, gently, kindly  
in time

“though it may not transform the material conditions of this moment, this offering, an invitation to move or not move, softly, gently, kindly in time, may lead you on a journey, through the physical space of your room, or the physical space of your body. We will turn our cameras off and connect, through sound and music, through breath, intention and this shared moment. This offering is a riposte to the flattening two dimensionality of our online time, a way to remember the body, to live in it and then to return, renewing our ability to speak from it.”



# Porch Sitting Exercise

Sonia Barrett (MycoLective)



I would like to offer virtual-porch-sitting as a way of teasing out the thoughtful responses beyond thought. Porch sitting and sharing is a West Indian tradition and before that, a broadly African one of sitting in a non-confrontational way gazing into the middle distance, something that facilitates sensing and sharing.

As a child on the porch with my great grandmother, I was often able to contribute to the conversation in a way which would have been harder to do at her table.

Performing furniture has led me to the power of unfurnishing.

Black buildings across the Caribbean and from New Orleans to the Brownstones in New York are dwelled in, in such a way so as to enable porch sitting spaces. Porch sitting is in the power of the road trip when people are sitting together for long distances facing forward and share.

This online version has been developed to move beyond the stultifying gazing at our boxed zoom selves and others we share a common vista on the screen. The vista should have a little movement and capacity for change but not be so busy as to be distracting. It should be local to the group and not

present what could be understood as an “exotic” location within the geographical makeup of the group. This facilitates mind drift and enables the non-thinking less censored sensing part of ourselves to voice. In larger groups not knowing always exactly who said what assists this too and removes ego to a certain extent.

To virtual porch sit everyone’s cameras are turned off and everyone is off “mute”. No one is in a box that flashes yellow when they talk visually highlighting speaking and not listening. The inbuilt power dynamics of Zoom are short-circuited for a while. Zoom is not a neutral medium but loaded with the cultural biases and assumptions shared by many Californian cooperate tech companies run by US-educated shareholders.

A practice which facilitates participants dropping into the body will if shared beforehand massively facilitate virtual porch sitting.

My Father and Great grandmother standing for a photo on my Great Grandmother’s Porch in Jamaica. *Photo credit Ursula Barrett- Myers.*

# Syllabus VI Discussion Groups

As a reformulation of the concerns/questions that emerged around group learning and working during Syllabus VI's first weekend together, Syllabus VI hosted a series of discussions around the themes of **care, power, consensus and purpose** in four breakout rooms. Here are notes from the discussions, focused primarily on the relationship between artists and art organisations, potentially informing a future 'manifesto' by Syllabus VI.

## **Power (Olga Grotova) the group discussed:**

- The way hierarchy of education (art CV's) influences organisations (the difficulty for artists outside formal education to get shows).
- The idea of breaking up the authority of organisations by co-organising the programme with artists.
- Artists to agree on transparency when working with smaller organisations (especially artist-run), as this would then influence larger institutions to follow their example.
- Labour exchange vs paying for something.
- A manifesto to allow for general flexibility in programming.

## **Care (Lauren Craig) the group discussed:**

- breaking down hierarchies and they drew a portrait of Lauren as a way to do this (reshuffling the power order by bringing Lauren into the group).
- The idea of the artists as host (hosting online adds pressure to artists as opposed to organisations)
- Feeling like there are other ways to learn (MA vs AltMA)
- Breaking down white supremacy as a form of caring for each other and the land.
- The zoom self vs real self and demands of people to show up and perform.
- A manifesto as a working document, not fixed but flexible/ growing.

## **Consensus (Bettina Furnée) notes on the group's discussion:**

- A set of provocations helped the group to think about 'consensus' in a wider context (*Working conditions for artists are fine as they are/ Working conditions for art organisations are fine as they are/ Consensus is a condition for working collaboratively/ We can disagree, and still collaborate/ Direct Invitation is a better idea than an Open Call/ A Lottery would be a fairer way of allocating funding/ Do not fear hardship/ Those who vote decide nothing*).
- Group decisions: make sure loudest voice is not heard only (i.e. follow up/challenge)

- A paid facilitator/administrator is useful for the effective running of a group.
- The majority is never right- what if voting does not provide 'the best answer'?
- Setting clear intentions/agenda before each meeting helps.
- Give roles and delegate tasks.

## **Purpose (Freya Johnson Ross), notes on the group's discussion around the aim of alternative arts programmes:**

- The arts offer a critical, discursive terrain that is exciting; the opportunity to foreground this as opposed to studio practice, which is the aim in a traditional arts education.
- Exploring what it means to be an artist and person. How do we understand this beyond just being a networked self in a neoliberal sense? Aiming to come out with a more nuanced idea of being networked – what is the praxis of this in the world?
- The importance of pastoral care and personal development for individuals, including confidence. This has always underpinned alt programmes, but is more important than ever now – arguably the most important element.
- Some groups decide that the group itself more the aim than anything external/others not.
- People within a group also need to have the freedom/ permission to take care of own needs, and how they participate (within limits of course).
- How do you form bonds via the internet? Need to work to bring commitment between group members rather than it being so easy to be noncommittal. E.g. doing things in small groups, doing informal things, doing things in different formats, crits.
- Online working - try not to fit too much in, and practice things in advance.
- Some groups are able to be more flexible than others – e.g. changing timeline or pace of the project/working. Depends on set up and funding among other things.

# Introduction to Care Riders

Harriet Rose Morley (GRADJOB)

'To assume is to  
make an ass out of  
you and me'

A introduction into the use of Care Riders as common  
practice.

What, Why, When, How?



## When can I use a Care Rider?

-A care rider can work as a counter contract for you to give to the other.

They are helpful for everyone involved: the person can say what they need in order to do their thing, and the venue/institution knows exactly how to provide support for them to do their thing.

-A care rider can also be a personal tool to allow us to check in with ourselves when we are facing confusing and hard scenarios. It can prevent 'artistic gaslighting\*' and can provide the space and encouragement to say NO.

- A care rider can be passed on to the 'institution' as early as possible in a new working relationship, it can then be clearly seen, and sometimes negotiated (to your own limits). It can also be something as simple as a email signature.

\*Artistic gaslighting: When you are manipulated by the other (institution/curator/organisers) that you are 'making a fuss out of nothing' or they plant seeds doubt about your working standards or morals as an artist.

## What is a Care Rider?

-A care rider is a document we can use to navigate the precarious situations which will arise in our careers and artists.

- Put simply a care rider states clearly your personal needs when entering an agreement. These statements can cover different topics such as travel, install, events, money and assistance.

- A good example of the use of Riders is Mariah Carey's, who often demand lavish and outlandish requests.... But hey, it works!



## Why is is important?

-A care rider can be used be used for so many different occasions in our working lives, to convey our own personal situations without having to continuously justify or explain ourselves.

-A care rider makes space for quieter or marginalised voices; it makes spaces more accessible for neurodivergent folk, and is a framework to begin articulating needs and encourage the sensitivity and institutional, financial support vital for working environments and relationships in our sector to be caring and inclusive.

-It is used often to express access needs of disabled artists, and can express unseen disability, chronic illness, fatigue, anxiety, neurodivergency.

- It is a tool that should be normalised, within the entire artist community, no matter you personal situation.

## How do I make one?

- To start, think about past situations. When and where you might have found it hard to communicate your personal situation. Write a few of these down.

What things would have helped you in these situations.

-It often helps to create categories.  
General, Travel, Events, Money, Access, Install

For example: things from Harriet's Care Rider

-Writing

If you would like me to write anything that will be on public display, I will need at least 2 weeks notice. I also require all writing to be proof read.

-Public Speaking

I get anxious before public speaking, but find it in the end really rewarding. I need to feel well prepared and have a complete understanding of the situation I am going into. Therefore please give me ample (minimum 1 week) notice and a full and clear description of what you would like me to do.  
eg how many people am I presenting to, how long ect.

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# Jumping into the Mozilla Void

## School of the Damned

Extracts from a WhatsApp conversation, that illustrates how School of the Damned got to our not-workshop:

**James McColl:** Hi Grace :) just re-read that message from the Foundation Leader and doing workshop, have you had any replies from the school / is there any more deets about it?

**Grace Collins:** hey love, no one's suggested anything! do you have any ideas? ...I wonder about some sort of workshop thing about imagining the possible? Like, instead of focusing on the negative, actualising the positive through art/organising/etc.

**James McColl:** Oh OK, yeah that makes sense. It would be great to do something, along those lines of imagining the possible...

Do you think it would (whatever it ends up being) need to be on a zoom type platform? The White Pube did this really great interview recently with some game developers and interviewed them in the game - was just thinking it would be SO good to use a different platform for something like this rather than the zoom set up but also this is very pie in the sky  
Grace Collins: Omg I love this, my friend did a gig in second life the other month god knows how that worked...

**James McColl:** ...I wonder how hard it is to create something - you know how John made that Sketchup design of the exhibition space - is that something where you could also make avatars or something simple like that - that might be asking a lot, I don't know

**Grace Collins:** ooh or john/tom screenshares and the kids design via zoom - like design the space?

**James McColl:** That would be sick, if it's doable! I think that's really exciting and far more engaging than being talked at \*not to say doing something else is boring, I think people particularly students are starting to rebel against zoom meetings

**Grace Collins:** omg yes I want to rebel against zoom meetings hahaha

So we don't *hate* zoom but we went on the hunt for something more open, that could engage 'young people' in a more interactive way because we are all young people at heart.

### What are we doing?

We're using Mozilla Hubs (which is owned by Amazon, sorry about that, we chose it because you don't need to download anything and it was easy for us to learn how to use) - When you click on the link below (which we'll put in the chat BUT DON'T CLICK IT YET!) then Mozilla Hubs will open in another window, there's a chat function in the website, so we can use that to communicate, as well as the audio. A bit like zoom, you can speak into your microphone and people will be able to hear you, UNLIKE ZOOM this audio is directional, so people close to you will hear you better than people further away, which we found very exciting and fun.

The problem with moving over to Mozilla Hubs, is that most people's computers can't run Zoom and Mozilla Hubs at the same time, so you'll need to exit Zoom to load this, we also recommend you use a laptop or computer if possible (not a mobile) and having a mouse will make it easier too. We have found that Hubs often gets on with Google Chrome more than any other browser.

Once you arrive in the Mozilla Hubs world, you'll be able to see from the first-person perspective of your own avatar (so you won't be able to see your little guy, but we will see you as a little guy), we've put instructions in the world that will help you navigate around.

As someone from the School of the Damned said: "this isn't a world, it's the world we want to build" often we've found that we try to alleviate the stress of making a ~ Final Piece ~ by providing sketches, notes etc so this is a bit more of that as a kind of 'workshop' without a speaker, facilitator or centre. Hop into the world, try it out, let us know what works and what doesn't.

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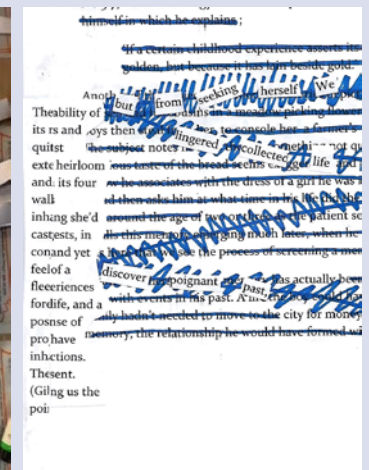
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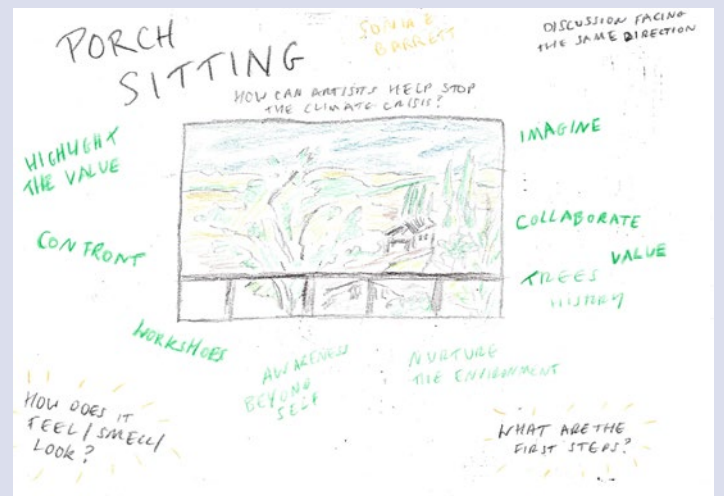
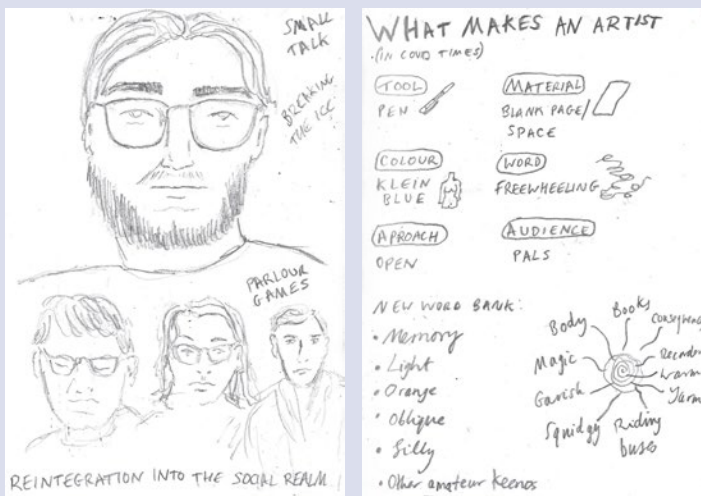
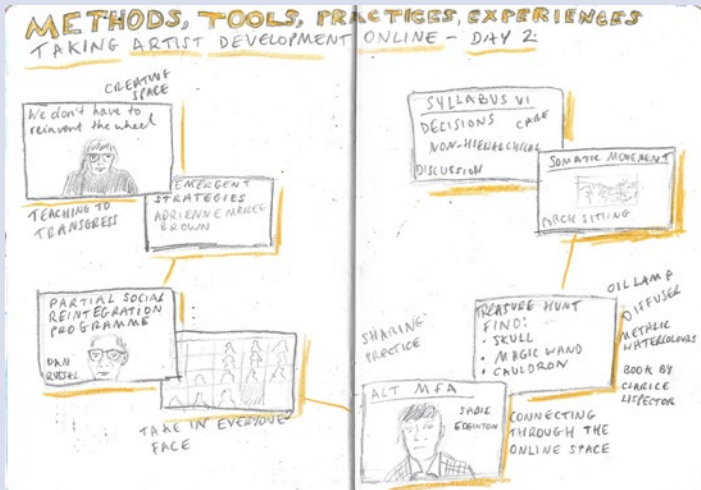
## Visual documentation of the workshops: Day 1

Drawings by Rebekka Yallop

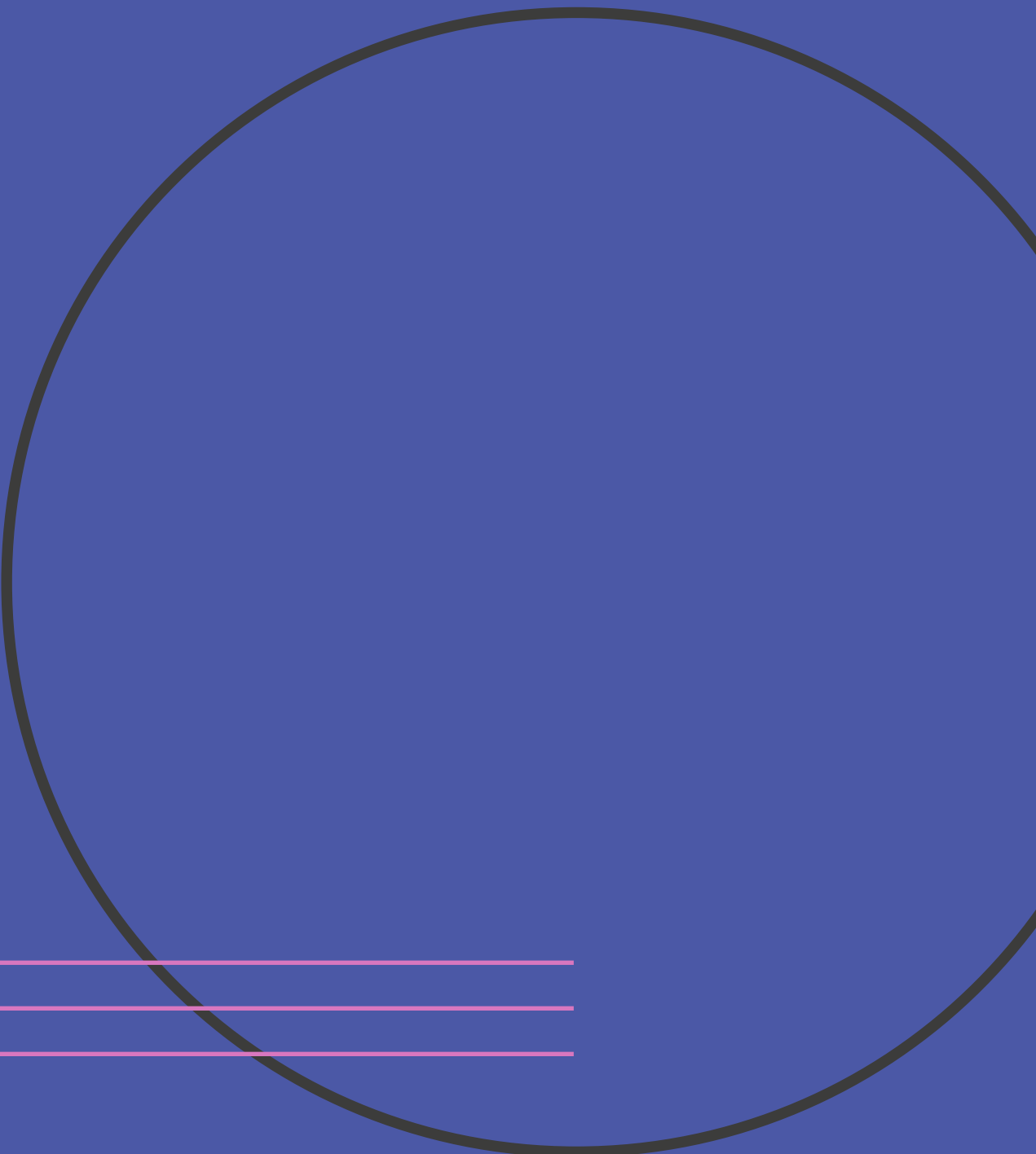


# Visual documentation of the workshops: Day 2

Drawings by Rebekka Yallop



Screenshot of the School of the Damned environment on Mozilla Hubs



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