

Perspectives on inclusion: Close encounters of the creative kind

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Abstract

This paper considers what might be learnt about inclusion as a concept and practice from sharing visual research data within a public art exhibition and associated workshops. The catalyst for the exhibition and workshops stemmed from a project that involved children and young people creating visual images that they felt represented inclusion or exclusion. The project was designed to explore, and rethink, concepts around educational and social inclusion. The images the children created were 'artified' to anonymise them and formed the central material for an exhibition held at Tate Liverpool in June 2018. The exhibition was designed to facilitate active engagement from individuals of all ages within the community so that their 'voices', perspectives and experiences might be acknowledged and shared in respectful ways (Holt, 2014). The underpinning idea behind this was to display research data as art and generate further data by undertaking "research through art" (Coessens et al. 2009:46).

The article will detail how a range of multimodal methods were utilised to invite a more tactile and emotional engagement from visitors to enhance their experience and encourage them to move beyond passive viewing and participate in a more visceral and embodied engagement (Merleau-Ponty, 1968). The approaches utilised within the exhibition are explored to illuminate how a more active multimodal engagement within educational and public spaces might be encouraged. The article concludes with a discussion around how using public spaces can lead to reinterpreting the ways in which we understand inclusion and marginalisation within society.

Key Words

Inclusion, embodiment, multimodal methodologies, community engagement

Introduction

This paper offers an analysis of empirical data created for and within ‘Spaces’ which was a week-long public exhibition and associated workshops held at the Tate Art Gallery, Liverpool, in June 2018. This exhibition was part of a wider research project within which five academics are undertaking research to reconsider the concept and practice of educational and social inclusion. The aim of using an art gallery to exhibit some of the material generated within the ‘Visualising Opportunities: Inclusion for Children, Education and Society’ (VOICES_Ed) project¹ was to find a more inclusive way to engage members of the public in thinking about the topic of inclusion via engagement with images and comments produced by children.

In the first phase of the VOICES_Ed project, children and young people from four schools in North West England took photographs during their everyday school activities that they felt represented inclusion or exclusion. These photographs were then processed through software to apply art styles such as cubism and pointilism to anonymise them for ethical reasons (see Woolhouse, 2019 for a more detailed discussion of this). The images were then shared with other children and young people, with academics and teacher trainees, and with education practitioners such as teachers and teaching assistants to garner their comments and thoughts. The intention of this was to “make room for multiple voices, perspectives and stories, while simultaneously shaping knowledge that can be shared with a variety of communities” (Ropers-Huilman & Winters, 2011:680), and specifically to access diverse opinions about what constitutes educational inclusion for those who experience it (children and young people) or those who enact it (practitioners).

Building on this work, the focus for this article is an analysis of the ‘Spaces’ exhibition and facilitated workshops. ‘Spaces’ was a week-long interactive exhibition held within the Tate

¹ Visit our weblink to find out more: https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/education/research/voices_ed/. Or see our publications list for this project: Dunne, Hallett, Kay, and Woolhouse, 2017, 2018; Woolhouse, Dunne, Hallett and Kay, 2017; Woolhouse, Kay, Hastings, Hallett and Dunne, 2019.

Exchange Gallery and associated workshops held within the Clore Studio, both of which are on the top floor of the Tate Liverpool art gallery, which is in the Docks area of Liverpool close to the city centre. Via the Exchange programme, Tate Liverpool offer an innovative, possibly unique opportunity for community groups and grass roots organisations, artists, colleges and universities, to take up a short residency within an established art gallery. The aim is to engage with the art collection currently on display and to creatively develop lectures, performances, drop-in sessions, debates, and interactive events for the public to participate in, to encourage new perspectives through, and of, art².

During a week in June 2018, the artfied photographs and associated comments created through VOICES-Ed research project were shared within the ‘Exchange’ public gallery (see Figure 1) alongside a range of interactive activities. The researchers felt that the photographs deserved a wider audience in a gallery with an international presence. Tate was the right choice because of the creative approach to engaging the public in viewing and interacting with art which could “provide a variety of learning experiences to accommodate the multidimensionality and diversity of visitors” (Briggs-Kemeza, 2019:147). Thus a wide community could be engaged and children visiting the exhibition could ‘take away’ learning about their experiences of educational and social inclusion, because as Payne (2018:571) comments “memories stay with the pupils long after the event and colour how they compare school and gallery learning opportunities”. Furthermore, we echo Wewiora’s (2019:755) view that the role of a collaboration between art galleries and education can be to “support students to feel empowered through photography (and to emphasise) that what they have to say matters”.

² Information on the current plans for Tate-Exchange can be viewed on the website: : <https://www.tate.org.uk/visit/tate-liverpool/tate-exchange>, there is also information on the range of events that have taken place since the start of the Exchange programme in 2016: https://www.tate.org.uk/search?daterange=past&sort=finish_time&type=event&venue=462993&page=6

Figure 1: Main display in the ‘Exchange public gallery’ at Tate Liverpool



In the rest of this article we offer a review of our theoretical approach to educational inclusion and research and the application of this within public spaces, before detailing the pedagogical specifics of the ‘Spaces’ exhibition. The later sections present an analysis of the exhibition in relation to 1) how art, education and experience can be merged, and 2) how invitations for embodied engagement can underpin transformative art pedagogies.

Approaches to educational inclusion

The central premise of the VOICES_Ed project has been to challenge the idea that knowledge about inclusion is fixed, uniform or neutral (Dunne et al. 2018). It is the term used within education settings to describe how individuals should be treated fairly and with equity so that everyone has access to opportunities. This view had led to a drive in education to become a site for altering discriminatory practices, changing attitudes, making use of relevant legislation and revisiting curriculum choices (i.e. McCusker, 2017; Nyachae, 2016; Rix, 2020). However, there is a need to constantly rethink whether and how different forms of education and sites of

learning can be considered inclusive and to revisit how we constitute inclusion as a concept and practice.

Inclusion is an important aspect of thinking about education as it has been suggested 20% of school children are likely to experience some form of learning need that could hinder their access to education (Bartlett & Burton, 2016:157). However, a clear definition of inclusion or a description of how to enact inclusive educational practice has been difficult to reach (Dunne et al, 2018), which is a driving factor for the VOICES_Ed project which seeks to explore multiple viewpoints regarding this ‘slippery concept’ (Hodkinson, 2020). Much has been written about educational inclusion over the past fifty years; indeed, it has long been argued that how inclusion is expressed in policy and enacted in practice says much about societal values and priorities. At the international level, policy initiatives such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) form a political backdrop for the development of educational practices based on principles of social justice. Yet, questions continue to be raised around the degree to which egalitarian ambitions are realized, with authors such as Julie Allan tackling the continued conceptual confusions surrounding inclusive education (Allan, 2015). Aligned to this, hooks has argued that there can be no intervention that challenges the status quo if we are not willing to interrogate the norm (hooks, 2003). As such, whatever we mean by inclusion, exclusion and inclusive practice in education remains open to debate. However, although the impact of educational inclusion is experienced in the everyday practices of schooling, the need to take this debate beyond the Academy is crucial, and is allied to the need to do so in accessible and social just ways, hence the desire to disseminate research within public spaces.

Gallery education and engaged learning

The idea of bringing education into public spaces such as art galleries is not new, in 1971 Illich argued that children and young people should be encouraged to access a range of learning

opportunities within alternative sites to schools where diverse methods and pedagogies can be applied. A call taken up over the past few years by a range of education researchers working with different age groups (Briggs Kemeza, 2019; McInnes and Elpidoforou, 2016; McKeown, et al., 2016; Wewiora, 2019) because of the benefits for learning:

“Art museum educators and teachers who participate in art museum/gallery visiting experiences with young children all play important roles in ensuring successful encounters with art and the multiple learning opportunities that can take place for children before, during, and after a visit” (Terreni, 2015:730).

To contribute to this growing area of gallery education, our week-long ‘Spaces’ exhibition formed part of the wider Tate Exchange scheme that is now in its fourth year. The scheme invites contributions explicitly designed to invite active engagement from the wide range of visitors they receive. The emphasis on this participative nature encourages involvement without a requirement for an arts-based background and reflects the Tate philosophy of challenging public understandings of art and disrupting traditional art spaces. For example, involving community learning initiatives and seeking to include often ignored groups (i.e. mental health service users (McKeown et al, 2016), young people outside of education (Briggs Kemeza, A. 2019) and very young children and their families (McLeod et al. 2017).

The VOICES_Ed team viewed the chance to exhibit at Tate Liverpool as a space of ‘pedagogic possibility’ (Clover, Sandford, Taber & Williamson, 2018), whereby innovative and unexpected attitudes to, and views of, inclusion could be expressed and shared, prompted via the sharing of photographs taken by children and young people that had not been shown outside of educational settings before. We followed Pollock here, (2003:216) grounding the exhibition in the idea that there is a need for “a radical questioning, a way of thinking and not just a short-lived partisan advocacy”. Thus, through the sharing of children’s photographs and the elicitation of visitor’s responses we hoped to access diverse insights that could offer a “renunciation of universalism and concomitant lack of finality” essential to our project (Hein, 2007:32).

Pedagogy: Utilising a community space to explore inclusion

The central aspect of the exhibition at Tate Liverpool involved the display of twelve images. Each of these images was accompanied by a comment offered by the original child photographer and often a second comment offered by another child or young person involved in the VOICES_Ed project. Alongside these were questions designed by the research team to prompt responses from visitors to the gallery, as in the example below in Figure 2. The ‘Spaces’ exhibition was actively curated everyday by two or three members of the research team, so that there was always at least one of us on hand in the Exchange Gallery to respond to queries and discuss and make notes regarding the views and experiences offered.

Figure 2: ‘painting trees’ image and information card

NB: Figure 2 has been cropped to remove the faces of children to ensure anonymity.



Painting a tree

This photograph was provided by 10 year-old Agnes who self-identified as having moderate learning and medical needs. Agnes said she enjoyed this activity and that “Everyone painted pictures of the rainforest together and we all had fun”.

Questions

What activities do you enjoy?

How can you encourage other people to share the fun?

The exhibition was designed with a multimodal approach; it adopted several different modes of activity inviting visitors to use all their senses and engage actively with the materials displayed in a number of different ways. Visitors were invited to reflect upon and respond to the posed questions and their feedback could be made on coloured cards and posted into closed ‘letter’ boxes which were on the floor by each image. This approach meant that individuals could write down their thoughts and share them anonymously. The idea was to invite the audience to go beyond passive viewing and invite them to think about what they were seeing in depth, explicitly responding to it, internally, verbally, in writing. Viewers could also respond via their own artistic expression, since the exhibition was accompanied by a range of interactive activities which could be undertaken individually within the gallery space or developed within the daily workshops run by the team in the ‘Clare’ studio space (see Figure 3 and 4). These activities included:

- creating origami paper cranes to add to the shelves in the gallery and making a wish relating to becoming a more inclusive society. This was an activity particularly favoured by teenage and young adult visitors which was supported by the research team members if visitors found it tricky;
- creating a self-portrait to demonstrate commitment to belonging to a ‘community of inclusion’ which was engaged with most frequently by younger children;
- explicitly reflecting on alternative ways of thinking about inclusion related to viewing the images and writing a comment or drawing a picture on the card.

Figure 3: Crane shelf, crane building workshop



Figure 4: Self portrait community wall



The idea of offering this range of multimodal ways of engaging with the images presented follows the suggestions of bell hooks (2003) who advocates disruption of traditional expectations of art spaces to enable different individuals to interact with materials in the ways

they choose and find most appropriate (Holt, 2014; Messiou, 2006). We chose this range of pedagogies because we did not wish to dictate or restrict interaction with the displayed images and wanted to find appropriate ways to share the insights of children, young people and adults about their experiences of inclusion. This seemed to work since Tate Liverpool informed us that we had over 3,300 visitors during the week and over 1,000 engagements on twitter. In terms of direct material added by visitors, 113 self portraits were added to the community wall, 84 paper origami cranes were added to the 'wish' shelves in the gallery alongside 29 other forms: 1 dog, 1 plane, 1 hat, 2 boats, 1 cat, 5 English language and 1 German language counting games, 2 flowers and 15 random sculptures. We also had nearly 200 comment cards posted into the 'feedback letter boxes'.

By inviting people to contribute their thoughts, experiences and creations this exhibition resulted in an innovative data resource, which forms the basis for developing a resource toolkit for schools which is being utilised with a number of schools and local authorities in the UK during 2020/21. As such, the temporary exhibit provided a key point for continuing to explore concepts of inclusion and social justice with the general public.

Merging art, education and experience

As ethical research processes are central to this work, we wanted to place inclusion as a concept and practice at the centre of the art gallery exhibition. This required the use of innovative approaches to invite discussion and reflection. Through sharing the images and associated materials, members of the public were invited to reflect upon their own experiences and contribute their interpretations (Burnham & Kai-Kee, 2011). This approach aligns with developments within educational research over the past ten years and involves an informed, ethical approach to using visual images as data and engaging communities so that their

‘voices’ and experiences can be shared in a respectful way (see: Holt, 2014; Messiou, 2006; Moss, 2011; Nind et al, 2012; Rose 2016).

The ‘Spaces’ exhibition offered visitors the chance to engage with the newly created research-exhibits, countering traditional expectations about how art can and ‘should’ be exhibited. In one sense this was via an absence of biographical detail and time periods for the images exhibited, in another, the aim was to challenge the concept of who is an ‘artist’ via the use of children’s work (rather than adults working professionally to create artwork). Alongside this was a stress upon the value of the visitors’ own interpretation, by directly asking how the children’s images resonated with their own experiences and understandings of social inclusion. Gallery educators and curators are no doubt aware of the move away from the visitor as a passive receiver of conveyed meaning. However, whilst exhibitions should invite challenge from gallery staff and visitors there is limited tangible evidence of this taking place (Callihan & Feldman, 2018). Accordingly, the VOICES_Ed team who attended each day sought to model participation for visitors, demonstrating how individuals could offer different interpretations of inclusion when reflecting upon the same image. This was accomplished by sharing divergent comments about the images in the signage, a tactic which offers a shift away from the traditional ‘factual’ curator led text within galleries. Following such discussions we asked visitors to note their thoughts on cards or we made our own research notes about the conversations.

The exhibition was intentionally designed to invite a less traditional or rigid form of engagement whereby individuals could go beyond the visual and utilise multiple senses; engaging orally / aurally by joining conversations about the materials displayed; having tactile encounters by writing comments on cards, creating self-portraits or paper cranes. Kress (2011:237) advocates the use of multiple senses in terms of creating writing or art, noting:

“multimodality focuses on the material means for representation, on the process of sign making; on the resources for making texts (and thus meaning) ... that go beyond (verbal) language”. Thus, adopting a multimodal approach interpellates a more complex and agentic engagement via the embodied act of putting pen to paper that can reroute “artistic experience into the grounds of material processes” (Douglas et al., 2014:121). This creates a space for individuals to engage in a humane form of research within which the interior self - our inner histories, knowledge and experiences - are merged with the actions of the physical body. This merging can be felt more deeply, particularly when emotional responses are elicited and the self as subject becomes entwined with the body as object (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:248-250).

Such a call to entwine the inner and outer self was made to visitors to the ‘Spaces’ exhibition. By specifically choosing to present images and text created by children within an art gallery and invite active engagement we sought to create a unique type of “pedagogic contact zone”, which McRobbie (2009) argues can challenge differences of power by transgressing how knowledge is (re)created. As noted earlier, although art galleries have in the past appropriated materials and prioritised particular historically, geographically and culturally situated narratives, McRobbie points out that contact zones should be “spaces of critique, possibility and potential for mutual learning, co-creating knowledge and meaning” (2009:165). Thus, by using the exhibition space as we did, we sought to rework how it could be used to (re)interpret understandings of inclusion. The following discussion considers in more depth how engagement with visual materials can be interpreted as an embodied experience that invites transgressive and individualised encounters and we consider how a more active multimodal engagement within public spaces might be encouraged.

Encounters with inclusion: Embodied engagement in transformative art practice

Drawing together the fields of innovative gallery pedagogy, art and education offers a way to reconsider the importance of aesthetic, creative and artistic practices (Carter, 2004; Coessens et al. 2009; Douglas et al, 2014) and different multimodal frameworks of analysis (Kress, 2011; Pink, 2011) that can encourage reflexivity in terms of making meaning through engagement with materials. Providing comments (and drawings in some cases) on the feedback cards, creating the self-portraits and the making of the cranes involved an aesthetic and creative joint activity. Such processes can change with each iteration and indeed, each engagement, since the approach we adopted “provides tools for the recognition of all the modes through which meaning is made” (Kress, 2011:237). Through their engagements, each individual was able to “imagine and recognise (their) sensory embodied responses to other people and objects” (Pink, 2011:266). Through the various moments of engagement, the visitors created anchors for their own views and experiences. These moments provided a space for them to offer new insights and make connections between other people’s experiences and their own. One visitor commented: *“This (image) struck me immediate[ly], look at the girl on the left – is she disengaged? I used to work with children like her and I can’t take my eyes off her. Where is she now?”*, while another poignantly commented in response to an image of a young girl using a mobility walker in the snow: *“This is me when I was a girl. I didn’t know what the world was like and how I would be treated as I got older. I don’t know whether it’s better to go to a special school until you build your confidence or go to a regular school so that you know what the world is like from the outset. I just don’t know”*.

This importance of using an art space to connect an adult’s life experiences with the meaning evoked by ‘artified’ images created by children was also evidenced by two parents of a child with an Autistic Spectrum Condition label, the mother said: *“It’s great that he’s settled in school and he has a group of friends – one with dyslexia, one is deaf and one has another*

condition”. The father reflected at this point that his son is included with these friends because of (wider) exclusion. This level of engagement with the images was repeated by the children and young people who visited the gallery; one teenage girl noted: *“I’m going to tell grandma about this. She says things were bad in the past, but they’re not that (much) better today.”* We found that some of the most profound comments arose as individuals were actively engaged in creating materials, either folding paper cranes or adding self-portraits to the community wall. As one teenage girl noted: *“Were these photographs taken in schools? (Points to wall). Then my self-portrait will be an eye – you’re always being watched at school”*.

In adopting a multimodal approach, we knew we would be asking visitors to go beyond traditional visual interpretations to engage in multimodal forms of communication that might include emotional, visceral responses. Indeed, individual visitors inscribed their own stories in reaction to those presented via the exhibition, and in sharing these stories they sought to have them understood by others. Such embodied ‘authoring of the self’ is complex, but is a way for individuals to reimagine themselves and invite others to understand them, because the comments and visual representations they offer “frame meanings that allow complex events, feelings and experiences to be captured, recounted, authored and re-authored” (Gaudilli & Ousley, 2009:933).

The underpinning idea behind the active aspects of the ‘Spaces’ exhibition was to display research data as art and generate further data by undertaking “research through art” (Coessens et al. 2009:46). This is possible from the perspective of the field of art practice, because the tactile act of engagement through writing or drawing is an embodied practice of re-thinking and emotional reflection, an active moment of reworking meaning that can “loosen positions that have been fixed” (Carter, 2004:179). This approach to embodiment challenges the cartesian dualistic notion that the physical body and the conscious self are distinct, and reframes humans *as* their bodies (Merleau Ponty, 1962, 1968). Bodies mediate how we engage

with and perceive the artwork we see and the spaces we move within, and they guide our physical engagement with objects and others. How we react to such embodied engagements are “modalities and variations” of an individual’s total being and understanding (Merleau Ponty, 1962:108). By taking seriously Merleau Ponty’s insistence that our bodies (rather than our consciousness) are the means by which we directly engage with the world and others, then identity aspects such as gender, race or physical attributes (for example) can differentially influence the meanings of our (inter)actions within a situation. Thus, visiting an exhibition, engaging with others within the space and the act of folding paper into a recognisable shape or putting pen to paper to mark out images or reflections, provides space for revisiting past experiences, rethinking and reimagining our existence, in the case of the ‘Spaces’ exhibition in relation to our understandings about inclusion.

Such ideas chime with the work of Barad (2010) who indicates that materials, such as artwork, exist in a time and space, have their own agency, produce sensations and affect us. In the ‘Spaces’ exhibition the images are developed and interpreted through a body/individual’s interactions with them, and their encounters with others in the same space.

Furthermore, there were opportunities for active engagement to create new materials that became absorbed into the materials on display (see Figure 3) which many of the visitors found innovative and refreshing, noting: *“It’s great that there is so much to do. Galleries can be intimidating for young people or people not used to coming to galleries”* and *“This is the best gallery I’ve ever been to. I didn’t know we would get to do stuff.”* While these comments are instantaneous reactions to the experience of embodied engagement within an art space, they speak to how the exhibition “inspire(d) new forms of meaning making and consciousness raising” (Spring, Smith & DaSilva, 2018:56) by inviting individuals to rework what they understand and believe through “participat(ing) in a performance of spacetime (re)configurings” (Barad, 2010:240). That is to say, that the visitors were invited to engage

with materials presented at a particular moment in space and time, yet bring together their past experiences and perhaps their thoughts for the future, thus temporally and temporarily merging, past, present and future in ways that matter to them. This was then expressed through discussion with each other and the VOICES_Ed team at the exhibition and via written reflective feedback or through artwork and origami. In doing so, visitors were invited to be transgressive and innovative, to (re)interpret their understandings of inclusion and their re-thinking of them in an 'art space'. Thus, creative and transformative potential was made possible as visitors imaginatively explored the experiences of others in dialogue with their own knowledge, "thinking of-and-by-the-body" (Coessens et al. 2009:127) as they undertook embodied engagements. Through the act of creation, a range of thoughts and questions were communicated to us as the curators of the exhibition. For example, a member of Tate staff referenced other art works on display in other areas of the gallery to offer insight into why this questioning of meaning is so important, noting:

"Mondrian was revered for being different. He found green (nature) chaotic. Nowadays we would have said he is on the (autistic) spectrum and we won't see what he sees. It's the same with Matisse. Can we see the world through his eyes? If we allow ourselves to step back what would we see? Someone strange or a genius".

While another visitor contributed the following:

"I was watching your screens and looking at your images and just had to come over, it's so important to have these exhibitions next to Matisse or other famous artists. Lichtenstein was autistic, they are literal representations in art. So good to use artwork as form of communication. We need difference to have creativity".

We would argue that in setting up the event that enabled this process of embodied engagements, we have a social responsibility because such action can impact upon the feelings and experiences of individuals, transforming how they think and feel about their lives. Barad notes this and argues for an "ethics of entanglement (that) entails possibilities and obligations for reworking the material effects of the past and the future" (2010:266). Being mindful of

Barad's point, adopting an ethically informed pedagogy to utilising space within an art gallery required a sensitive approach, where meanings were unfixed, and visitors were released from taken for granted assumptions. The intention was to offer thought-provoking images and comments alongside enjoyable activities to challenge the traditional use of gallery space so that creative transgressions and refigurings of slippery concepts such as inclusion and belonging could be explored. The aim was to facilitate an equitable process where no one's opinions were given precedence and where individual narratives could be aligned to other's experiences and broader social issues.

Conclusion: Beyond the gallery

We have explored the approaches we adopted for the 'Spaces' exhibition held within Tate Liverpool. The exhibition was framed by a pedagogy that deliberately drew upon the experiential and relational nature of individual engagements with images and other materials and aligned to socially engaged arts-practice as research methodology (Pahl & Evans, 2018:394, 403). The aim was to involve individuals in a discussion around the topic of inclusion and to invite multimodal engagements with the presented materials in a range of forms, both tactile and emotional, to invite "personal meaning making and encourage multiple rational and emotional perspectives" (Spring, Smith & DaSilva, 2018:60). As described, we feel that the exhibition encouraged alternative ways of thinking through the body, drew together past and present, and facilitated the (re)interpretation of experience. The importance of this should not be underestimated due to the potential resonance visual materials have with peoples' reflections on their own past experiences and their current thoughts, feelings and lives. We conclude by exploring how the materials in the exhibition can continue to offer routes for transforming understanding around the topics of children's rights, social justice and wider community engagement.

In this paper we have detailed a short-term exhibition; restrictions of time and space are common to exhibitors, but as Machin (2008) and Pollock (2003) note, impact can continue beyond the boundaries of the gallery. The materials shared within the ‘Spaces’ exhibition is unrestrained by the need for a gallery space. Since the end of the exhibition we have been using the images and collated comments to work with children and young people in school-based workshops to design resources for schools to use so that we can collaboratively explore experiences of ‘in(ex)clusion’ within educational practice (Dunne et al, 2018). We are also involved in delivering professional development for teachers and teaching assistants, community, social and child support workers designed around the materials from the ‘Spaces’ exhibition to invite reflections on practice. Within all these events there is a core theme of problematising how we attend to children’s rights and social justice. The intention of continuing to engage in this way is to stimulate discussion around three aspects:

1. The ways in which inclusive practices can be, and are, enacted in specific locales when working with children and young people;
2. The development of bespoke multimodal activities and strategies that suit particular settings, which can be utilised to initiate honest conversations between children, young people and the adults that work with them;
3. How the first two points can enable a greater understanding of differing experiences and thus be the groundwork for creating stronger and more trusting relationships.

This continuing work furthers our reflections on a heritage of engaging with art in unconventional settings in creative ways. We continue to invite a rethinking of what is known and to draw links between individual experience and wider social challenges for the purposes of enhancing greater equality of opportunity within education and the wider community. It is

intended that this process will continue to create and refigure meaning making through active embodied engagements with topics that matter to children and young people because:

“This is where the beauty lies: truthfulness occupying the same space as the deeply emotional affect of seeing people from highly diverse backgrounds coming together in creative communal activity” (Pahl & Evans, 2018:404).

Furthermore, we argue that utilising a creative arts-based pedagogy in diverse contexts can open up alternative spaces for different types of conversation and different kinds of ‘knowing’ to be expressed - of knowing ourselves and knowing others.

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