

Museum Collections on Prescription: Health, Wellbeing and Inclusivity
A joint Subject Specialist Network online series 15, 22, 29 April 2021

'Nothing about us without us' – disability, inclusivity and engagement.
Thursday 15 April 2021, 15:00–17:00 (BST)

Convened and chaired by Tony Heaton OBE, Sculptor and Disability Activist

Convenor and contributors' biographies

Convenor and chairperson

Tony Heaton OBE is a practising Sculptor, Chair of Shape Arts and Consultant/Advisor to many major cultural organisations, including: The British Council, Tate and the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries. He is the initiator of [NDACA](#) – the National Disability Arts Collection and Archive. His sculpture, *Gold Lamé*, recently occupied The Liverpool Plinth and is currently installed at the Riverside Museum, Glasgow. His *Monument to the Unintended Performer* was installed on the Big 4 at the entrance to Channel 4 TV Centre in celebration of the 2012 Paralympics. His sculpture 'Squarinthecircle?' is situated outside the school of architecture, Portsmouth University. He was awarded an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours, 2013, for services to the arts and the disability arts movement and has an Alumni Award from Lancaster University and honorary Doctorates from both the University of Leicester and the new University Bucks. www.tonyheaton.co.uk.

Contributors

Sonia Boué is a multiform artist, a writer on autism and art, and a leading consultant for neurodiversity in the arts. She has a significant body of postmemory work and pioneers in neuro-inclusive practice-led research. Her work has been exhibited internationally and is held in digital form at Tate Britain, the BBC, and Bodleian Library in Oxford. She has performed in the UK, Ireland, and Spain. Sonia creates Arts Council England funded projects, participates in community arts projects and carries out visual research in academia. Sonia is a Board member for [a-n](#) The Artists Information Company and Artist Member for [CVAN SE](#).

Paulette Brien has been Curator at [Grundy Art Gallery](#), Blackpool since 2017, and has recently led on the organisation's contribution to Access Fylde Coast, a Coastal Communities Fund project which saw Grundy co-curating an exhibition with NDACA (National Disability Arts Collection and Archive). Prior to this, Paulette was involved in the inception and delivery of several artist-led initiatives in Manchester, and was the co-curator of the Manchester Contemporary art fair from 2010–17. Additionally, over the last 29 years, Paulette has worked part-time and as a freelancer for a number of organisations; is regularly invited to deliver presentations within academic and professional development settings and works as an artists' mentor. In 2016 she was awarded an MPhil from Manchester Metropolitan and has recently been awarded the position of Leader in Residence for University of Central Lancashire.

Alex Cowan has worked as Project archivist and collections lead on the HLF-funded National Disability Arts Collection and Archive (NDACA) since 2014. His career in the library & archive sector began in the early 1990s, primarily sourcing visual material for television and film documentaries. This work focuses on science, history, nature and political topics, and included 'Disabled Century', and 'Silenced' for the BBC. He is currently working on developing NDMAC, another HLF-funded archival project that will gather the stories and artefacts of people who have been active in the UK disability rights movement.

David Hevey is [Shape Arts](#) CEO & Artistic Director. He is a leading arts and culture producer, creative director and media professional with a track record across arts, cultural production, film, TV and photography, including multi-platform projects: his work has been seen by tens of millions. As Shape CEO, David also leads on a string of projects including NDACA, Unlimited, the Adam Reynolds Memorial Bursary, the Shape Open and much more. Delivering for Shape, he is also the NDACA Project Director: David created and leads the innovative digital models of NDACA which has helped reach five million people to date. As a cultural-creative and producer, David has been featured in and profiled on a string of media including BBC, Channel 4, the Guardian and many more. Going forward, David continues to lead Shape into exploring new models of arts, culture and heritage delivery, all based on Shape's unique position of removing barriers to creative excellence and pushing creatives to explore the creative potential in the struggle to break barriers.

Aidan Moesby. As an artist, curator and writer, Moesby's work is at the intersection of the visual arts, wellbeing and increasingly, technology. Context-specific interventions serve as a catalyst for conversations to initiate positive social change.

Moesby's ongoing investigation into the climate change and mental health crises explores the relationships between the 'physical and internal emotional weather'.

In 2015 he produced Sagacity: The Periodic Table of Emotions and most recently 'I was Naked, Smelling of Rain' a multi-format performance, film and installation exploring climate change, loneliness and connectivity.

His work is work that is at once playful, intimate, questioning and deeply human.

He has worked, exhibited and curated nationally and internationally with partners including Unlimited (UK), Institute 17 (CDMX), Pervasive Media Studio at Watershed Bristol, New Media Scotland, Dundee Contemporary Arts and Zacheta National Gallery (Poland).

Zoe Partington. Curating a life less ordinary! provoking & stating the 'bleedin' obvious, using creative & contemporary techniques to challenge the distressed edge of life. She shares a passion for equality particularly in the creative industries and understands the importance of establishing a clear framework of clients' needs and requirements. A very experienced leader and consultant in her specialist field of cultural inclusion and accessible approaches. A contemporary visual artist who uses her historical and contemporary research-led practice and art to develop installations, and viscerally powerful-audio visual and tactile representations of Disabled people's journeys and experiences through built environment. Zoe has won several awards and scholarships.

Tanya Raabe-Webber is an acclaimed disabled/visual artist challenging the notion of identity within contemporary portraiture, often creating portraits of high-profile disabled and diverse people during live sittings in high-profile public art galleries and venues. She uses a mixture of traditional and digital painting and drawing techniques, often fusing the two together in an interactive live environment, inviting physical and online audiences to join in. Raabe-Webber is also an established leader and mentor to other artists and a specialist in supporting learning disability artists and artists practice. In 2014 she presented a collaborative research into supporting learning

disabled artists with Glasgow-based Project Ability at the 'Contemporary Outsider Art: The Global Context' conference in Australia, followed by being artist-in-residence with Project Ability, as part of their 'International Summit of Learning Disabled Artists'. In 2015 she set up [ArtStudio01](#) (AS01): an inclusive artists collective in Shrewsbury now supporting 11 learning disabled artists in their creative and professional practice. In 2018 she received ACE funding to support the development of this studio as an inclusive progressive studio collective.

Christopher Samuel is a multi-disciplinary artist whose practice is rooted in identity and disability politics, often echoing the many facets of his own lived experience. Seeking to interrogate his personal understanding of identity as a disabled person impacted by inequality and marginalisation, Christopher responds with urgency, humour, and poetic subversiveness within his work. This approach makes his work accessible to a wider audience, allowing others to identify and relate to a wider spectrum of human experience.

Richard Sandell is Professor of Museum Studies and Director of the [Research Centre for Museums and Galleries](#) (RCMG) at the University of Leicester. Through RCMG, he works collaboratively with cultural institutions on projects that generate new insights and advance thinking and practice around their social roles, responsibilities and agency. Recent collaborations have shaped major new gallery developments – such as *Being Human* at the Wellcome Collection in London – and large national public programmes such as *Prejudice and Pride* with the National Trust. In 2017 he published *Museums, Moralities and Human Rights* (2017) which explores how museums, galleries and heritage sites of all kinds – through the narratives they construct and publicly present – contribute to shaping the moral and political climate within which human rights are experienced, continually sought and fought for, realised and refused. In 2019, he published a major new international edited collection, *Museum Activism*, with Robert Janes, that explores the 'activist turn' in museum thinking and practice and makes the case for the socially purposeful museum.

Aminder Virdee is a British South Asian artist, writer, activist, creative access consultant, and Trustee at UK's leading disability-led live music accessibility organisation Attitude is Everything. She is also the founder and president of Disabled Intersectional Voices in the Arts (DIVA), a disability-focused network (currently at UAL) generating sites of creative resistance against institutional and educational ableism, and co-founder of Cripjoy, a transnational, majority BIPoC, community of practice re-worlding mental health through an intersectional, anti-ableist, and anti-sanist, lens. Aminder is also co-writer, director's attachment, and access-centred consultant for short film *Crutches* (2021) partially funded by BFI, with multi award-winning director Nathan Morris, and executive producers 104 Films.

Aminder's work has been commissioned, exhibited, and performed across the UK, including the National Theatre of Scotland, Bonington Gallery, Art in Flux with National Gallery, Bow Arts, Lyric Theatre, Waterman's Art Centre, and Tate Modern's Tate Exchange. Through invitation, Aminder's recent work 'Kaleidoskeleton Ti : The Desi Cyborg' will be screened at the Alchemy Film and Moving Image Festival 2021, in April 2021. As a disabled, chronically ill, neurodivergent, Brown woman from poverty, and a multiple-survivor living with mental health conditions, Aminder's artistic practice is navigated through an intersectional auto-ethnographic lens. Her practice is often research and life-led, inherently subverting and transforming spaces, routines, rituals, and memories, into political sites of radical agency. This traverses multiple disciplines such as social justice (including race and diaspora studies), technology and physical computing, crip technoscience, physics, biology, and philosophy. Aminder also works across multiple artforms as a world remaking and dismantling tool; endlessly adapting to a world built without intersectional disability in mind. These artforms include digital and generative art, kinetic sculpture, installation, moving image, sound art, live art and performance. She often uses participatory systems to amplify unheard and unrepresented voices, and to connect lived experience to the public sphere.