

Air a' Chùl Fraoin: Arts Therapies Conference
1-2 September 2023

Biographies, Presentations & Workshop Descriptions

Raymond MacDonald

'The Back of Beyond: exploring improvisation as a crucial collaborative process for maintaining "healthy" artistic identities and enhancing health and wellbeing.'

Interest in improvisation, as a post genre multidisciplinary artistic practice, has grown considerably over the past 20 years. No longer viewed as the preserve of elite jazz musicians, improvisation is studied in universities and conservatoires globally and is also a key component of festivals and artistic programming internationally. From a psychological perspective improvisation can also be considered a fundamental feature of life – we are all improvisers.

This presentation will outline, with research and practical examples drawn from community, therapeutic, educational and performance contexts, some key features of improvisation, including psychological processes that underpin improvisational practises. These examples will highlight how improvisation can facilitate new creative insights, develop collaboration, integrate experienced and non-experienced practitioners, blur boundaries between disciplines, and challenge conventional aesthetic and social hegemonies. The presentation will also highlight how improvisation can help develop new skills, often not recognised within educational and wider cultural contexts. These skills are termed "new virtuosities" and include, social, listening, cultural, collaborative, creative virtuosities.

This presentation will also emphasise the importance of "Healthy Musical identities" within improvisational contexts, showing how engaging with improvisation can help develop healthy musical identities. These types of identities help facilitate lifelong engagement with music making in numerous contexts and enhance health and wellbeing.

Raymond MacDonald is Professor of Music Psychology and Improvisation at Edinburgh University. He has published over 100 articles and book chapters, co-edited five texts, including, *Musical Identities* (2002), *Musical Communication* (2005), *Music Health and Wellbeing* (2012), *Musical Imaginations* (2012), and *The Handbook of Musical Identities* (2017). He has also co-authored *The Art of Becoming: How Group Improvisation Works* (2021) and is also a saxophonist, composer and improviser who has recorded, toured and broadcast worldwide.

Rachel-Clare Campling

M.A. (Drama and Movement Therapy), EATCert (Postgrad Certificate in Environmental Arts Therapy)

'Nature as Mirror: An Introduction to Environmental Arts Therapy'

This outdoor experiential workshop will invite you into art-making, physical movement and ritual as we explore the themes that arise in Nature and in ourselves at this season of transition to Autumn. How do the landscapes we perceive around us find a reflection in our inner landscape? Environmental Arts Therapy offers a playful and reflective approach to exploring personal experience through creative and expressive arts in natural settings, guided by the cycles and mythology of the Celtic Ogham calendar."

Rachel-Clare Campling is a Dramatherapist, Environmental Arts Therapist and trainer. After almost 20 years as a linguist, she qualified as a Dramatherapist in 2006 and has since worked extensively in primary schools managing therapy projects as well as facilitating creative training for child counsellors, among others.

In 2008 she was inspired at an Environmental Arts Therapy workshop facilitated by pioneering Dramatherapist Ian Siddons Heginworth and later completed the one-year Environmental Arts Therapy certificate, which set her on her current path. For the past 4 years she has facilitated a regular *Circle of Trees* Environmental Arts Therapy group in Edinburgh for health professionals, including arts therapists. Many who attend find it a place of nurture, playfulness and support for self-care. Rachel-Clare also offers one-off seasonal workshops and one-to-one Environmental Arts Therapy in beautiful and secluded woodland near Duddingston, Edinburgh.

Recently Rachel-Clare has been running workshops on working therapeutically in natural settings and is currently teaching on the postgraduate certificate in Environmental Arts Therapy in Devon.

Her ongoing areas of exploration include how being with the rest of Nature can support our grounded 'felt sense'; Dramatherapy myth enactment in natural settings; and the rich possibilities available in a ritual landscape. She lives near the beach and loves to swim in the ever-changing chilly North Sea.

Bridget Grant

Online Experiential workshop with art materials

This two-hour workshop is designed to offer time and space to reflect on the themes of the conference. This may include processing what has emerged or is emerging for you. Using art materials creates a change of frequency, which can work on more of a felt sense and somatic level. A simple structure, facilitation and gentle guidance will be offered, alongside the invitation to use art materials and the opportunity for verbal discussion and reflection.

You do not need to have any experience at all of using art before but please have to hand any materials you may wish to use. Don't worry if you don't have art materials – many everyday items can be used to create with, or to make something. These can be as simple as pencils, pens and paper, or paint and modelling material such as play doh or clay. Having collage and scissors to cut things out, and glue or Sellotape to stick down with may also be interesting to use.

My aim is to create a safe relational space for exploration, so you'll be invited to have your camera on and to turn on your microphone when you would like to speak with the group. For this reason, please try to join the session from a quiet, private space where you are unlikely to be interrupted.

In-Person Experiential workshop with art materials.

This two-hour workshop is designed to offer time and space to reflect on the themes of the conference. This may include processing what has emerged or is emerging for you. Using art materials creates a change of frequency, which can work on more of a felt sense and somatic level. A simple structure, facilitation and gentle guidance will be offered, alongside the invitation to use art materials and the opportunity for verbal discussion and reflection. We will be working in a studio space and a range of art materials will be provided. You do not need to have any experience of using art before. You will be welcome to explore the use of materials in whichever way you wish, and I can offer support in ways to do this, if you require.

Bridget is an HCPC registered Art Psychotherapist and listed with The British Association of Art Therapists (BAAT) as a Private Practitioner and Clinical Supervisor.

Bridget qualified as an Art Therapist in 1997 and has worked in many different contexts including the voluntary sector and the NHS. She is an experienced group and workshop facilitator and is a lecturer in Art Psychotherapy on the MSC Art Psychotherapy training at Queen Margaret University. Bridget is particularly interested in how imagination and metaphor and the irreducible and ineffable aspects of the image in art therapy create opportunities to connect more deeply. Bridget's own art making is essential to her personal and professional life alongside her interest in research and writing.

Publications:

2021: And if the bough breaks: The use of individual Art Therapy within a perinatal mental health service. In S. Hogan (ed.), *Therapeutic Arts in Pregnancy, Birth and New Parenthood*. Routledge.

2022: Reimagining Art Therapy for the Digitally-mediated World: A Hexagonal Relationship Haywood, S. and Grant, B. *International Journal of Art Therapy*, 27 (3) pp 143 – 150.

Marge Matheson

Open Art Studio

During the time of the Arts Therapy Conference, from 10.30am-8pm on Day 1, and from 10.30am-7pm on Day 2, the Open Art Studio will be available for delegates to use for individual explorative image making as they wish. It is possible to keep working on any images for the duration of the conference. Delegates can keep images in the art studio in between working times as long as they are kept tucked away underneath tables when left in the art studio. Paper folders can be made to protect 2-d images under tables and there are some boxes for 3-d pieces. Particularly when the in-person workshop is taking place at the experiential time on Day 2 the studio will need to retain space for people to work. While being mindful of the need for all delegates to access the open studio space we encourage the experiential use of the art studio as much as possible.

Marge Matheson, Art Therapist will be on hand to support you during the times marked Open Art Studio in the Conference Timetable should you need any advice on materials or ways in to making, or to discuss the meanings of an image.

Marge Matheson began working with young offenders and young people in distress over 20 years ago and after recognising that art therapy could offer exploration and containment moved into a full-time role with the Western Isles Council as an art therapist in 2009. Marge is interested in creating a safe, expressive experience within the therapeutic journey and considering the materials that clients are individually drawn to work with and how a narrative begins to unfold that is often mutually surprising. Marge continues to work on her personal artwork and enjoys using mixed media and experimental effects.

Sorcha Monk

Dandelion: what and where is art? Community interventions; a Q&A.

Sorcha will present images of community interventions to explore arts and social practice as undertaken in the Dandelion Project in Uist over 2022/23.

As freelance Creative Producer based at Taigh Chearsabhagh, North Uist, Sorcha is currently working with the local community and musician Duncan MacLeod on a sound walk project, following on from a year as Emerging Creative Producer with Dandelion, creating a harvest festival and dozens of community events, and coordinating warm hub sessions across the islands over winter.

After studying History of Art at Glasgow University, Sorcha worked in the dance sector for over a decade, most recently as Dance Development Officer for Ceòlas in South Uist. Prior to that, as Programme Manager at Dance House Glasgow, where she coordinated various dance activities and events such as classes, residencies, dance along movies, schools danceathons, festivals

and dance films, all the while participating in arts projects and performances. Highlights include performing as part of a community cast with Michael Clark Company in the iconic Barrowlands Ballroom.

Sorcha currently lives on a working croft in the Outer Hebrides with her partner and two young children. With a continued interest in art, wellbeing and dance, Sorcha recently qualified as a Movement in Practice facilitator, where she will work with movement to enhance creativity, health and wellbeing in the local community.

Catriona MacInnes

Catriona is an HCPC registered Art Psychotherapist listed with the British Association of Art Therapists as a Clinical Supervisor and Private Practitioner. Qualifying as an Art Therapist in 1997, Catriona works regularly as a Visiting Lecturer and is currently undertaking doctoral research at the Institute of Health Innovation and Research, UHI. As an Art Psychotherapist for over 25 years in statutory, voluntary and private sectors, she specialised in the field of complex trauma with adults and children.

Since 2019, Catriona has been developing an Arts Therapies Service in Uist and Barra and is currently Lead Arts Therapist at Taigh Chearsabhagh Museum and Arts Centre. Since completing an MA in Fine Art in 1988, Catriona's own visual arts practice has been an important parallel stream in her life, contributing to self-care and development with occasional public exposure. She dances Argentinian tango and has taken an active interest in Authentic Movement since 2006 when she completed a Foundation in Dance Movement Psychotherapy, elements of which she incorporates into her work. A regular participant and then staff member of the Champernowne Trust Residential Course for Jungian Psychology and the Arts, Catriona has enjoyed imaginative and fluid, psychological exploration to depth through all art forms since 1997.

Fiona Maclsaac

'Art, Dùthchas and Identity: How do we as Gaels relate to place?'

In this presentation, Fiona Maclsaac talks about her work as an artist and how her identity as a Gael has been a cornerstone of her practice whether conscious or not. Fiona will also reflect on her own journey to reaffirm her identity as a Gael and why it was important for her to do so.

Fiona Maclsaac is an artist based in North Uist. Her practice focuses on the relationships between culture, place and the uncanny and weird in the Gaelic Otherworld and the different ways human beings and their surroundings inform one another. Fiona is interested in how people relate to place, particularly the concept of Dùthchas. As an artist Fiona takes a free approach to the media she uses in her work, incorporating photography, film and drawing.

Vicky Armstrong

'Utilising art engagement, galleries and social connection to support caregivers' and babies' wellbeing'

Caregivers interviewed about their experiences with their new babies shared their feelings of isolation and shame when things were not going as they had expected and there was a lack of available support. They were also able to powerfully communicate the ways in which art therapy groups provided a safe space for these feelings to be shared, highlight the positives in their relationships to their baby and increase their feelings of connection to others. We will look at how we have tried to bring together art galleries, voluntary organisations and NHS infant mental health teams in order to support these early relationships, using a spectrum of approaches from therapy sessions with referrals from perinatal mental health teams, through to a preventative approach working with 3rd sector charities who reach families in high deprivation.

Dr Vicky Armstrong is a research fellow at University of Dundee and an art therapist at Dundee Contemporary Arts. She runs Art at the Start - a project exploring the benefits of shared art experiences for 0-3s and their caregivers. She has completed a PhD in psychology based around a large control trial of art therapy intervention for perinatal and infant mental health. She also contributed to the Scottish Government Guidance on Best Practice for Infant Voice and is particularly interested in how we capture the infant's perspective of art therapy services and subsequent changes in their relationships.

Alex Brown

'Ceilidhs and causeways: Music therapy in the spaces of the Outer Hebrides'

In this talk I will look at the process of adapting music therapy to the communities across Uist and Barra. I'll focus on my own reflective practice as an incomer to the islands, and my efforts to work with cultural sensitivity. I'll consider some of the questions that arise from a practice which moves outside of traditional psychotherapeutic frameworks, and I'll offer some examples from my clinical work.

Alex trained as a music therapist at Roehampton University, where his research project looked at rules and rule-breaking in music therapy. Alex has specialised in the field of adult mental health, spending time working in the community with the Psychosis Therapy Project, as well as in in-patient settings. Alex recently moved to the Western Isles and is using music therapy approaches ranging from the more psychoanalytic Guided Imagery & Music technique right through to public performance. Alex is committed to making the therapy space and process accessible and inclusive for people across the community.