



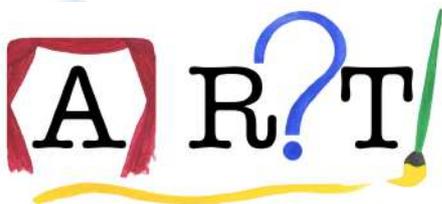
All Young
Stories!

Symposium

Access and inclusion in children's research and art

26th of June at Keele University

Programme



LEVERHULME
TRUST _____

Welcome!

Thank you for joining the 'All Young Stories' Symposium. The main question of today is: how we can make sure all young stories are being heard and taken seriously as well as being represented in literature and performance? We will talk about research and art for – and with – children who may have, for example, alternative ways of communicating, processing sensory input and responding to social situations. The aim of the day is for everyone to share their knowledge and to encourage this event to be as accessible as possible we have tried to make some changes to the standard symposium format with the hope that this will help everyone to take part.



We invite all our participants:

- To make as much art as possible. Please use all art materials you can find and share your creations with us and via Twitter #AllYoungStories / @Together_art
- To make use of the Sneyd Room which is made available throughout the day. This room is set aside for people that need some time away from the event. Feel free to use what is in this room in terms of art materials, ear defenders and sensory objects.
- To use the questions in this programme to contribute to the discussions throughout the day. Please feel free to speak out and share your thoughts and experiences (if you prefer to listen today then this is also completely fine)
- To participate in critical discussion and challenge mainstream thinking. However, do not criticise, attack or confront participants and/or their experiences personally (just saying- we do not think anyone would).
- Give feedback on the day and share ideas of improvement by posting your comments in 'the box'
- Check the ART! website (www.artresearchtogether.com) where we will be sharing the outcomes of this day, including the poems created by Kate Fox
- Come to us with any questions you may have. We are happy to help:



Karian Schuitema is an interdisciplinary researcher. Her project 'Art Research Together (ART!)' invites children from special schools to co-create knowledge using community arts. Her research is based on her background of working with children and young people as well as her own experience of being neurodivergent and having a difficult time in education.

Abi Pearson recently completed her PhD in Law and Disability Equality, with a particular focus on the development of consciousness of the legal rights of people with disabilities, both by people with disabilities and within society generally, through legal education. She studied some Art History as part of her undergraduate degree and is passionate about inclusion in art and other cultural fields including fashion.



Symposium: All Young Stories

Programme

10.00 *Registration and Coffee*

10.30 *Welcome*

10.40 Ellie Griffiths (Oily Cart):
'Performances for Neurodiverse Young Audiences'

11.30 Presentations: Puppetry and Music
Caroline Astell-Burt: 'We All Sleep and Dream'
Joe Wright: 'The Development of Inclusive Sonic Play
Instruments as an Accidental Knowledge-Exchange Platform'

12.20 Introduction to Poetry (Kate Fox) and Art Exhibition

12.30 *Lunch*

13.15 Nicola Shaughnessy (University of Kent)
'More than words: Storying and learning through
participatory arts with autistic children '

14.05 Film by Oscar Kraft: 'Come Full Circle'

14.20 Presentations: Theatre, Art and Assistive Technology
Jennifer Essex: 'Interactive Dance Theatre for Diverse Young
Audiences'
Leonie Elliott-Graves and Chas Mollet: 'Arts for Advocacy
or Advocacy for the Arts'

15.10 *Coffee*

15.30 Panel Discussion: Storytelling
With Gill Brigg, Eva Galova, Sally Markwells, Nikkie Hallam
Boo Sujiwaro, Susannah Kraft Levene and Oscar Kraft

16.15 Ben Fletcher-Watson (University of Edinburgh)
'The Future of Relaxed Performances'

17.00 *Wine Reception (Until 18.30)*

Ellie Griffiths (Oily Cart): 'Performances for Neurodiverse Young Audiences'

This presentation explores different approaches to making sensory performances for young people labelled as having complex needs. It also reflects on some ethics and considerations around creatively collaborating with young people who do not communicate in the same way as you.

To highlight these themes, Ellie will use examples from her work as a theatre artist including:



- 'Frame': An art film made in collaboration with young people labelled as having profound autism
- 'Sinnerligt': an inclusive, sensory exhibition made in collaboration with young eye gaze artist Greta McMillan
- 'Jamboree': Her current sensory-gig project with Oily Cart, which focuses on co-composing with and amplifying the voices of young people who have radically different ways of communicating.



Ellie is a theatre artist who specialises in making sensory performances for and with young people labelled as having complex needs. She recently became the Director of Oily Cart, who have been making accessible, multi-sensory shows for over 40 years. In 2017, Ellie completed a Winston Churchill Research Fellowship, where she travelled internationally to explore new approaches to making sensory shows. She also runs the Upfront Performance Network, which

connects and shares knowledge and ideas in the sensory performance sector:
www.upfrontperformancenetwork.wordpress.com

@Upfrontnetwork / www.oilycart.org.uk /
ellie@oilycart.org.uk

Question for the symposium:

What can we each do in our work and practices to enable the opinions and creativity of young people who communicate differently to effect change?





Presentations: Puppetry and Music

Caroline Astell-Burt (London School of Puppetry): 'We all Sleep and Dream'

This presentation is through and with puppets. I will show you how puppetry can provoke all of us into storymaking. In my title I say we all may sleep and dream. But the emphasis should be on **all**. **Discovering inclusiveness was a journey I travelled.**

I was once Yorkshire's Punch and Judy Lady, the first female performer in modern times. I built my show while working as a residential social worker at Bernardo's where my audiences and artistic collaborators were all children with different types of physical disability. Inclusiveness or lack of it slapped me in the face when on Radio 4 I discovered that for Punch I was the wrong gender and from the wrong family, I was neither a son nor a brother of a Punch man. So I was the same as everyone else in my Barnardo's school -an outsider. To locate myself inside what was normal, in other words, my inclusive world I abandoned tradition and we made different puppets first of all at a school of visually impaired children who wanted to perform to their parents. Reading and writing and lecturing I started to discover the attitudes which were obstacles to inclusion both in myself and others - I had to persuade the publisher to add the word "people" to the title of my book on puppetry and **people** with learning disabilities. A young man with learning disabilities **gave** me the title for my second book. I have seen attitudes change and humanity has sometimes replaced ignorance. At a lecture in a hospital postgraduate centre a young doctor made an incredulous observation, "So from what you are saying these children are capable of both giving and receiving love." What I was talking about, in fact, was technical, the adaptation of puppets and modes of performance -about hospitality, extending what I do to include myself **with** others. Therefore my presentation is practical in which I demonstrate the puppetry by which we all may dream.

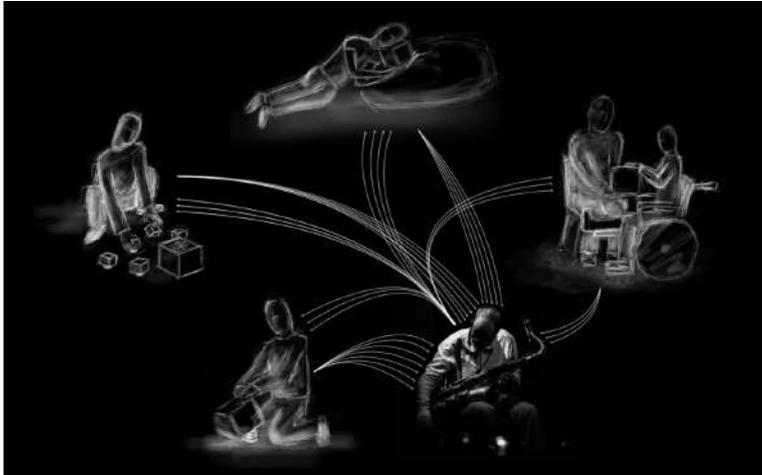
Dr Caroline Astell-Burt is an experienced puppeteer, writer and teacher of puppetry and Director of Studies at the London School of Puppetry.



Joe Wright (Royal Birmingham Conservatoire): 'Accidental Skill-Sharing in the Design of Accessible Musical Instruments'

Joe Wright explores how his research on the design of sound-play instruments for non-verbal young people on the autistic spectrum also became an opportunity for all participants in the project (himself included) to exchange musical skills, perspectives and opportunities.

His research project explored how an instrument can be designed for child-led sonic-play, with input from a group of young autistic collaborators. The aim in making such instruments was to support and offer new choices for different types of sound, and for the styles of interaction that can be had with them. But the project was not just an opportunity to learn about accessible instrument design; both Joe and the young people



he worked with can be seen to have developed as musicians and collaborators in the process. Musical techniques and preferences spread between the people involved in the research. With the benefit of hindsight, Joe is able to reflect on his own practice in particular, observing that both his openness as a researcher and professional musician have improved as a result of the project.

Taking this personal journey as an example, the presentation will end with a discussion on how these emergent themes of the research might be taken further and presented. By framing this kind of work as an opportunity for mutual gain, it is possible that we might provide an exciting incentive for new music and new collaborations that are built on a diversity of sonic practices, preferences, and ways of being.

Joe Wright's work is inspired by his experiences as a performer and sound designer in jazz, experimental music and inclusive performance. He is currently working as a researcher and teacher at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, as well as performing across the UK in various musical ensembles.



Poetry and Art Exhibition

Kate Fox

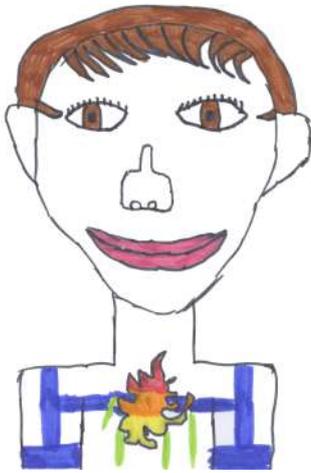
Stand up poet, Radio 4 regular and autistic activist Kate Fox will create a poem/s based on her and participants observations/experiences during the day.

for more info find her on Twitter @katefoxwriter or via her website www.katefox.co.uk



Our exhibiting artists from Springfield School, Crewe:

Lewis



Xavier



Russell



Sonnie



Nicola Shaughnessy (University of Kent) More than words: storytelling and learning through participatory arts with autistic children

This paper tells the story of a drama project, 'Imagining Autism' in which creative methods were part of a journey towards perceiving differently for researchers and participants.

I will document the experiences of a selection of children who participated in the practical workshops imaginatively engaging with a multi-sensory "pod" and its themed scenic environments. Each of the children featured (auteurs) found different ways of exploring and articulating their sense of being in the world. The stories featured involve the participants communicating through various media reflecting their sensory preferences (including photography, sound, costume and puppetry). By following their cues and interests, the researchers journeyed in new directions, towards a re-imagining of autistic cognition.



Nicola Shaughnessy is Professor of Theatre and Performance at the University of Kent. Her research and teaching areas include contemporary practices, applied theatre and autobiographical performance. She was Principal Investigator for the AHRC project 'Imagining Autism.' Her publications include *Applying Performance: Live Art, Socially Engaged Theatre and Affective Practice* (Palgrave, 2012) and the edited collection *Affective Performance and Cognitive Science: Body, Brain and Being* (Methuen, 2013). Her

latest volume for the Methuen Performance and Science series (co-edited with Philip Barnard) is *Performing Psychologies: Imagination, Creativity and Dramas of the Mind*. She currently leads the AHRC project *Playing A/Part* (2018-2021) investigating autistic girls' experiences through participatory arts.

Website link: <https://imaginingautism.org/>

[Question for the symposium:](#)

[What does good education look like for autistic children?](#)

Oscar Kraft: 'Come Full Circle'



Oscar is a film maker and editor who has filmed about his own life as well as working on a diverse range of projects and with performing arts and corporate companies alike. He has worked as creative and editor for Pascal Theatre Theatre, DotDotDot Dance, the Buxton Festival for opera singer Tom Randle and N'da Dance. His corporate videos include work for Good Growth. His most recent filmwork is The Extraordinary Lives of Stephanie and Joe for Norwood which he made with Susannah Kraft Levene

which followed the lives of Stephanie and Joe and how they navigate their way through their lives using Assistive Technology.

Oscar himself has NVLD (Non Verbal Learning Disability) and has made two films on the subject. In September 2018 his short film Non-Verbal Learning Disability was selected for The Film Bunch, London and his new film, Come Full Circle, which concerns his diagnosis and an interview with the psychiatrist who diagnosed him when he was 8 years old.

Oscar volunteers with Resources for Autism, working with Primary School children aged 8-12 who are on the Autism Spectrum.

Presentations: Theatre, Art and Assisted Technology

Jennifer Essex (Teesside University): Interactive Dance Theatre for Diverse Young Audiences

This paper draws on my experience as Artistic Director of Fully Booked Theatre, a company which creates interactive dance theatre for children to investigate how we can begin to create the conditions for profound participation and playful co-operation in the creation and performance of interactive works. For our latest piece, *Once Upon a Wall*, we are working with Priory Woods, a school that provides an inclusive education for pupils with severe learning difficulties and those with profound and multiple needs.

In her paper, *Culture for or by the Child*, Katya Johanson says children have sometimes been seen as a social threat, in need of discipline and constraint, or as vulnerable people in need of our protection. Diverse audiences in particular can be seen as vulnerable. This description contextualizes children in terms of the behaviour they require from us as adults rather than putting the focus on the children themselves. With our work at Priory Woods, we explored ways in which it might be possible to create interactive theatre that puts the children at the centre of the process, creating a performance that is made for their culture and aesthetic values and that treats them as beings – the present tense of themselves - rather than the adults they may someday become.



Jennifer Essex is a Senior Lecturer in Dance at Teesside University. She is the Artistic Director of Fully Booked Theatre, a company that creates interactive dance theatre productions for children and families. In 2019 she received an Arts Council England grant to develop *Once Upon A Wall* with creative input from children at Priory Woods School, with further commissioning support from Middlesbrough Council and Stockton International Riverside Festival. An inclusive, interactive work for children and families it is

touring to festivals across the UK this summer.

Further information on Fully Booked Theatre: www.fullybookedtheatre.com

Further information on Jennifer's research:

<https://research.tees.ac.uk/en/persons/jennifer-essex>

[Question for the symposium:](#)

[What is the best experience you've ever had at/in/with a performance?](#)

Leonie Elliott-Graves (Goldsmiths, University of London and Wac Arts) and Chas Mollet (Wac Arts): Arts for Advocacy or Advocacy for the Arts: Presenting and evaluating the arts as a tool for empowerment, youth voice and advocacy for looked after children with disabilities

We will present how Wac Arts uses arts and technology to make inclusive work that helps young people of all abilities speak up and share their ideas. The arts and creative technology are great at supporting self-advocacy, especially for young people who are ignored or silenced.

Wac Arts works with young people from 5 to 30 years old and we know that art and technology are great at helping young people share their ideas. We run a specialist advocacy service for children with disabilities who do not live with their birth families (Looked After Children). We use art and technology a lot with these young people so that they are not ignored and silenced even if they find it difficult to communicate or take part. However, the arts are not being funded enough and many young people still cannot access the arts. We ask, can the arts help young people or do we need to help the arts?

Leonie Elliott-Graves is doing a PhD in Drama and teaches at Goldsmiths University in London. She is the joint Head of Youth Inclusion at Wac Arts where she manages arts and technology projects for young people with disabilities. Leonie has worked for 10 years doing art, performance, advocacy and education with people with disabilities. She was also awarded funding for her research in using touch safely with people with disabilities.

Chas Mollet is the Assistive Creative Technology Officer at Wac Arts. He has worked with young people with disabilities since 2006 doing inclusive arts, technology and media projects. He develops innovative technology activities to help young people have fun, socialise and explore their creativity. He also works as an advocate and helps young people develop their communication skills.

[Questions for the symposium:](#)

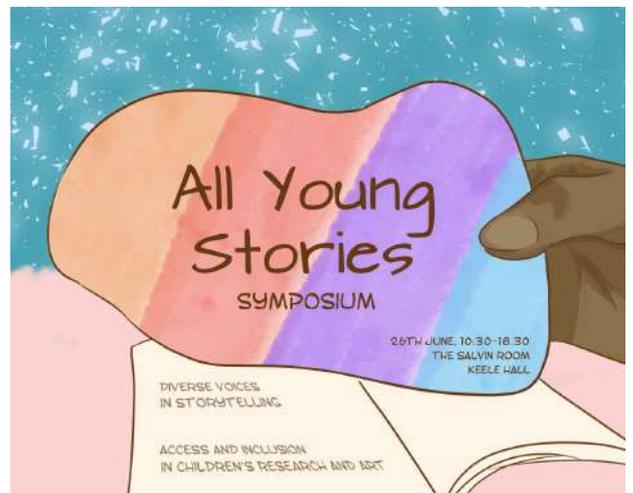
[What seems most difficult about using technology with young people?](#)
[Do we need to speak up more for the arts?](#)



Panel Discussion

How do we enable diverse voices to be present in creating, sharing and recording our stories?

- How do you share stories?
- How do you find inspiration for your stories?
- How can story-tellers be supported to tell their stories?



Dr **Gill Brigg** is a theatre-maker, writer and drama teacher with a specific interest in audiences labelled as having profound and multiple learning disabilities. She is fascinated by stories and how we learn that they are separate to, but linked with, our real lives and has worked for over thirty-five years jumping in and out of fiction! Her recent work has taken her abroad to work with neurodiverse students and their teachers to explore how to make the classroom a place of unlimited imagination where we can share deep emotional learning whilst knowing that we're only pretending. If you would like to have a look at some of Gill's theatre work visit:

- www.ahrc.ac.uk/research/readwatchlisten/.../whitepeacock/
- <http://www.telltalehearts.co.uk/shows/wave/>
- <https://vimeo.com/166329540>
- If you have an interest in her PhD research you can find it at: <http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/14384/1/601145.pdf>



Boo Sujiwaro is a writer and illustrator, represented by DHH Literary Agency. She was born in Bangkok, Thailand where she grew up ghost-hunting and learning the English alphabet. She studied Fashion Design at the Accademia Italiana before going on to read English with Creative Writing at Keele.

Boo is the creator and author of several projects, including *THE SECOND LIFE OF RUELLE MORE*, a children's fantasy novel, and the webcomic, *GRAVEDIGGER*, which features the same cast in a parallel storyline. Her fantasy anthology *RATTLE TATTLETALES* is available on Tapas.

For creative enquiries, please contact her agent Hannah Sheppard at DHH Literary Agency.

Website: www.omou.me / Twitter: @pacemori



Oscar Kraft is a film maker and editor who has filmed about his own life as well as working on a diverse range of projects and with performing arts and corporate companies alike. Oscar himself has NVLD (Non Verbal Learning Disability) and has made two films on the subject. In September 2018 his short film Non-Verbal Learning Disability was selected for The Film Bunch, London and his new film, Come Full Circle, which concerns his diagnosis and an interview with the psychiatrist who diagnosed him when he was 8 years old.



Following an English Degree at the University of Manchester, **Susannah Kraft Levene** acted and stage managed for companies and venues in London and nationally. Susannah then spent five years as a residential Social Worker working with young people before returning to the theatre on the management side. She has run venues including the Lyceum Theatre, Crewe, the Studio Theatre at the Theatre Museum as well as founding and producing shows in the UK and abroad. She has worked as General Manager and Executive Producer for many new writing companies that include Clean Break, Sphinx, Yellow Earth, Pascal Theatre Company, Mama

Quilla and Giant's Theatre Company.

Susannah has been mentor for One Dance UK and looked after several new and emerging dance companies that include work with N'Da Dance and Sean Phillips.

Susannah has been a regular Guest Lecturer at E15 Acting School running 'How to Set up and Run a Performing Arts Company' which she has also taught at the Drama Centre, London. She is a Trustee of SAUK (Scoliosis Association UK), Sphinx Theatre Company and is on the committee of Breast Cancer Care Fashion Show (London).

Susannah is Philanthropy Lead at the charity Norwood (www.norwood.org.uk) where she has recently made a film with her son Oscar, The Extraordinary Lives of Stephanie and Joe, that has had a private screening and been entered for festivals. The film is about Stephanie and Joe, two twenty somethings who use Assistive Technology in order to live their lives to the full. The film shows them using Eye Gaze to paint, grid pads to move independently around their homes and a range of technological support to support independence.



Eva Galova has been working with adults and children with special needs for over twenty years and has worked as a special needs teacher for the past 11 years. She originally trained as a special needs teacher at the Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia. She is currently working as a class teacher in a semi-formal class in the primary department at Linden Bridge School. This school is Special School for children and young people with complex social communication needs. Next to teaching Eva is interested in the arts, particularly in photography and cinema. She loves arts and crafts and enjoys creating props and decorative objects. Since her early years

she has loved poetry, stories and performance and finds great joy in creating sensory stories for and with the children.



Sally Markwell (BA honours QTS NPQML) has been a teacher for 22 years. She worked in Mainstream Primary for 16 years in Central London class teaching in Early Years Foundation Stage and KS1. Her roles included EALCo and Head of Department.

Sally is part of the Leadership team at Linden Bridge School for children with ASD/Complex Social Communication Needs. Since joining Linden Bridge she has completed her NPQML on Leading Change.

Sally has created and implemented a Semi-Formal Curriculum to address the learning needs of their changing cohort. 'Hard to Reach' learners are invited to learn through initiatives such as 'Sensory Story Performances' 'Active Reading', and a 'Carousel' based approach to teaching.

Sally takes popular stories, creates experiences and props to help the pupils understand the concepts within the story. She reduces the text to the essence whilst keeping the beauty of the language within the performance. Her aim is that children with complex needs will be able to enjoy and understand common stories whilst using them as a framework to learn about life, the universe and everything.



Nikkie Hallam has worked at Springfield Special School for 15 years. She initially worked in the Speech and Language Therapy Department, specialising in augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) but went on to gain a first-class honours degree in Education from Manchester Metropolitan University in 2014. This allowed her to combine her passion for communication and education, and she now teaches a class of key stage 3, autistic students with severe learning disabilities, all of whom use a variety of AAC devices and communication strategies. Nikkie is an avid story teller and finds sensory stories a fantastic way to engage students, as well as giving them an opportunity to learn and contribute.

Ben Fletcher-Watson (Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, University of Edinburgh): The Future of Relaxed Performances

To finish the day, Dr Ben Fletcher-Watson from the University of Edinburgh explores the future of relaxed performance... in 25 tweets. From new technologies to performances taking place in our own homes, he asks us to expand our horizons and maybe rethink our ideas about theatre. Relaxed performances were first created in 2009 for autistic people, and they're now enjoyed by many more groups, including people with dementia or complex needs, parents and their babies, and even neurotypical people like Ben! Thanks to artists and campaigners like Jess Thom aka Touretteshero, entire venues are becoming relaxed, and the movement is growing. But they still don't appeal to everyone. Ben will highlight some current best practices and emerging technologies that might suggest where relaxed performance could go next.



Dr Ben Fletcher-Watson manages the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities at the University of Edinburgh. He is a drama researcher and occasionally makes theatre too. His research is focused on audiences that are sometimes overlooked: parents and babies, people with dementia or autistic people, for example. You can find out more about his work at theatreforbabies.tumblr.com and relaxedperformance.wordpress.com, or follow him on Twitter at [@bfletcherwatson](https://twitter.com/bfletcherwatson).

[Question for the symposium:](#)

[In 20 years' time, what sort of new art do you think we will be making and watching?](#)