

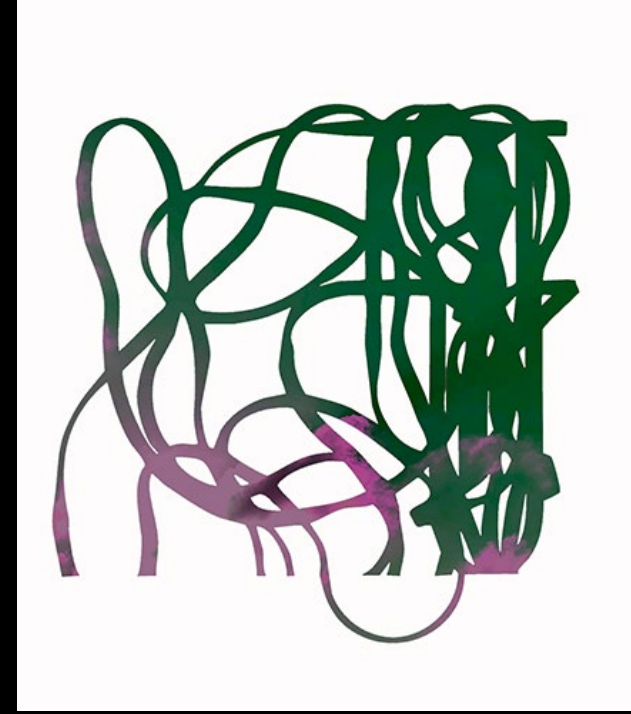
Participatory Arts Methods for Engaging Young People in Climate Research

Dr. Miranda Matthews, Bridget McKenzie and Kevin Davidson



CAL and CMUK Ecologies in Practice

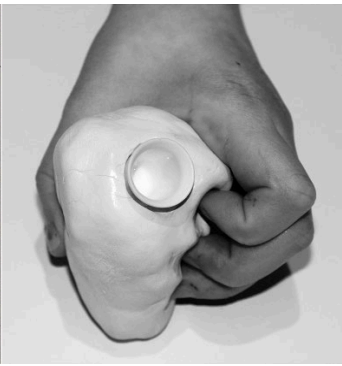
- Context
- Intentions
- Research design:- methods, approaches, practice researchers and participants
- Difficulties and Discoveries in practice research
- Key points for empowering young people in the Earth Crisis via participatory arts methods



Context CAL

- Centre for Arts and Learning Ecologies in Practice research started in 2021

A range of events, two symposiums, then CAL and CMUK started planning to include young people in practice research



Intentions to...



- Research how interventions in arts practice can enable young people to express agency around the issues involved in climate change.
- Focus young people's attention on creative responses to biodiversity loss, environmental relationships to culture, and dialogical nature-based solutions to climate change that connect with the needs of different communities.
- Develop shared knowledge of 'cultural ecologies', and investigate how culture can create restorative interventions in climate change through the arts and learning.

Intentions to...



- Resource young participants with 3 arts methods for engaging peers with climate science and Earth Crisis evidence, exploring and evaluating potential solutions in a series of events.
- Participants can take these methods forward in their own projects at school and at university.
- Make opportunities for young people to engage creatively, enabling vocal participation and a high degree of freedom, in learning environments that encourage respect for difference and an ethics of care for one another (Atkinson 2018).

Intentions to...



Explore local and global food systems and diverse cultural relationships with the Earth's resources (Jagodzinski 2018, De la Cadena and Blaser eds. 2018).

Develop adaptive pedagogies, based on strategies that we have already found to be effective in engaging young people with creative learning, to see how these approaches can build Ecologies in Practice.

Provide data that will input to the development of creative learning resources for schools, universities and Climate Museum UK, encouraging widening participation in research.

Intentions to..

Develop ongoing cultural ecologies in practice, bringing together partner organisations with different audiences, and practitioners working with different artforms.

Ecologies in Practice Conference: Education, the Arts, and the Earth Crisis

Goldsmiths
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON



Artwork Kimberley Foster

Thursday 13 and
Friday 14 July

9.30am – 5pm

RHB 137a, Richard
Hoggart Building





Research design:- methods, approaches, practice researchers and participants

- 3 workshops
- 3 arts methods
- 3 pairs of practice researchers
- 5 London schools – students aged 14-18
- Undergraduate students
- Mixed qualitative and practice research with focus groups and surveys
- Researcher reflections



Research design: methods, approaches, practice researchers and participants

- The CAL/CMUK Ecologies in Practice Website documents how our methods were explored with young people, and the adaptations of practice research during and between the workshops.

<https://www.ecoartslearning.net/>



About Creative Methods Researchers Conference Contact Resources

Ecologies in Practice

Participatory arts methods for engaging young people in climate research

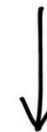


Creative Methods

On this website you will find some of the [resources](#) the Ecologies in Practice research team have created to help young people engage with ecological learning through arts practices.

These resources for arts approaches to the issues raised by the Earth Crisis focus on three methods:

- [Dialogic objects](#) created in response to the collections of Climate Museum UK.
- [Sound and movement](#) prompts.
- [Focused, expressive drawing and writing](#) around the issues involved for emotive and empathic connections.



Dialogic play with objects: engaging young people with the Earth crisis

Bridget McKenzie, Climate Museum UK



- <http://bridgetmckenzie.uk/>

What I'll talk about

- Climate Museum UK as an experiment
- Research on engaging young people with the Earth crisis
- Dialogic play with objects - how does it enable voice?



Climate Museum UK

An **experimental museum** curating and gathering responses to the Earth crisis.

A **team of creative people** distributed across the UK, we make and gather art, objects, ideas, games and books.

We use or generate these in **activations** to help people to play, make, think and talk about the crisis and to open their imaginations to possible futures.

climatemuseumuk.org



An experimental museum - we theorise that effective activations are dialogic conversations with creative stimuli and objects





Experimental cultural practice: Imagination activism

- Declaration
- Resistance
- Clarity of Voice
- Spectacle



Climate Outreach research on YP & climate, 2022

- Affected, like adults, by discourses that minimise the crisis
- Lack understanding of climate justice - or global reparative thinking

BUT, MORE THAN ADULTS

- Reject narrative of climate as future problem for young to sort out.
- Reject complacency of adults with means to make a difference.
- Expect to be told truths. Express truths in direct & blunt ways.

So, how do they respond to arts about the crisis?

CMUK research for A New Direction Listening Project

- Don't bracket out the Earth crisis: carefully design ways to explore it
- Don't pigeonhole or burden young people as eco-warriors
- Can't assume voice is natural: Knowing more about the Earth crisis brings confidence to speak
- Trauma-sensitive adult support: meaningful youth voice requires profound awareness of needs

<https://anewdirection.org.uk/research/listening-projects>



Being Possitopian as an imagination practice

Unique principle of CMUK: An approach to future thinking that expands the possible future, drawing on physical realities + imagination.



Meet the future people



<https://imaginefutures.net/>
Supported by Festival Bridge

CMUK Imagine Futures: trialling arts-led approaches for young people to imagine futures



'Once Upon a Planet': Tullie House Museum

Young artist in residence - Megan Bowyer - a CMUK associate
Played with objects & their meanings



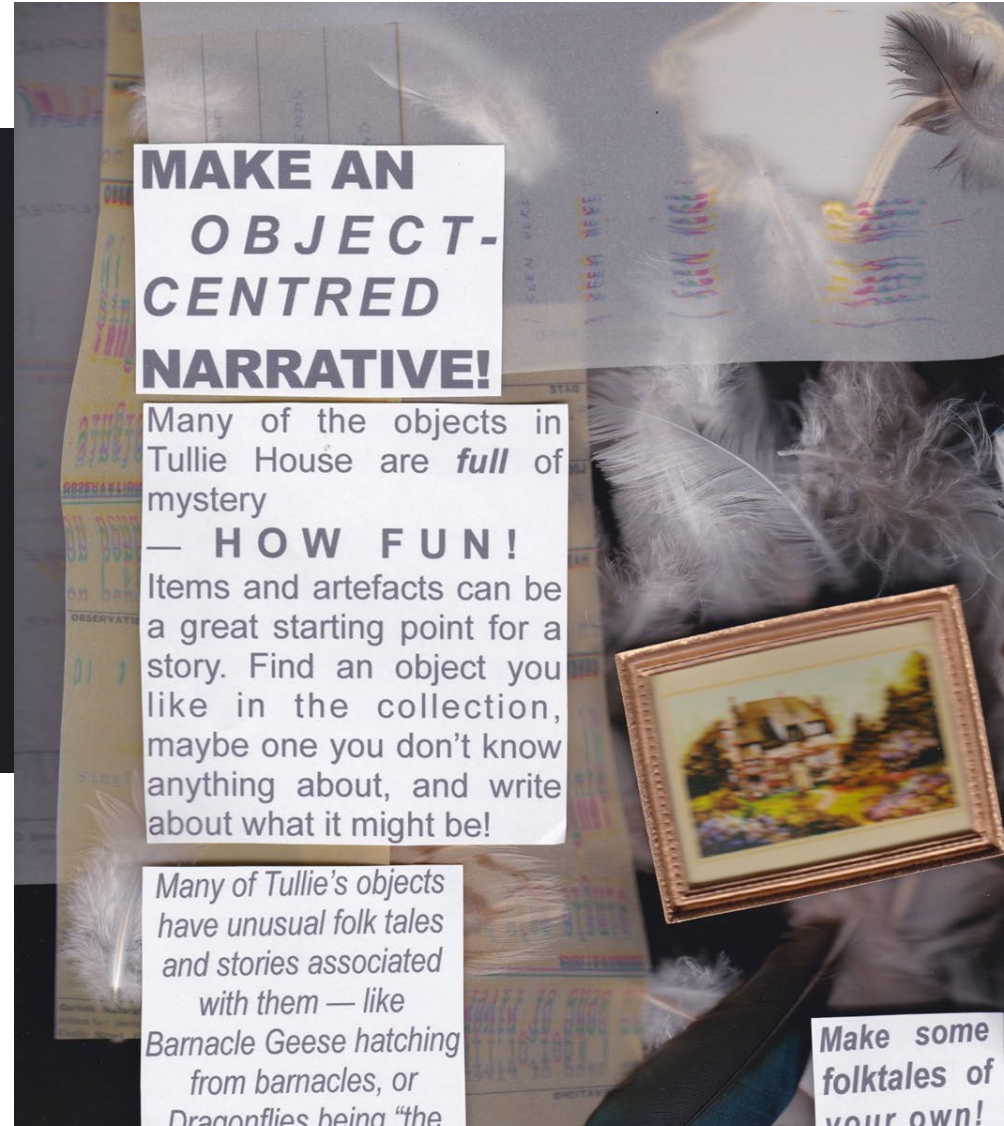
**MAKE AN
OBJECT-
CENTRED
NARRATIVE!**

Many of the objects in Tullie House are *full* of mystery

— **HOW FUN!**
Items and artefacts can be a great starting point for a story. Find an object you like in the collection, maybe one you don't know anything about, and write about what it might be!

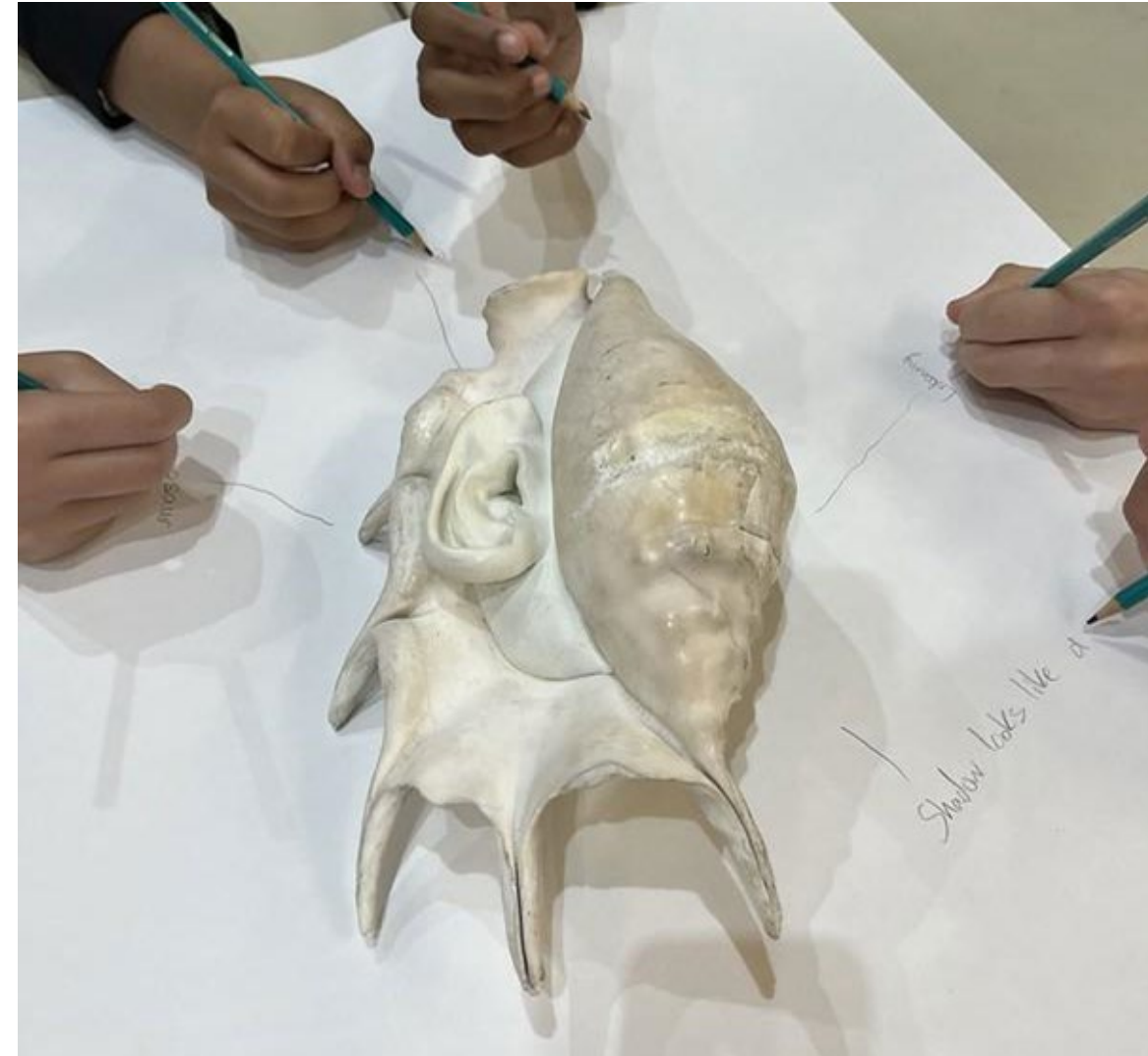
Many of Tullie's objects have unusual folk tales and stories associated with them — like Barnacle Geese hatching from barnacles, or Dragonflies being "the

Make some folktales of your own!



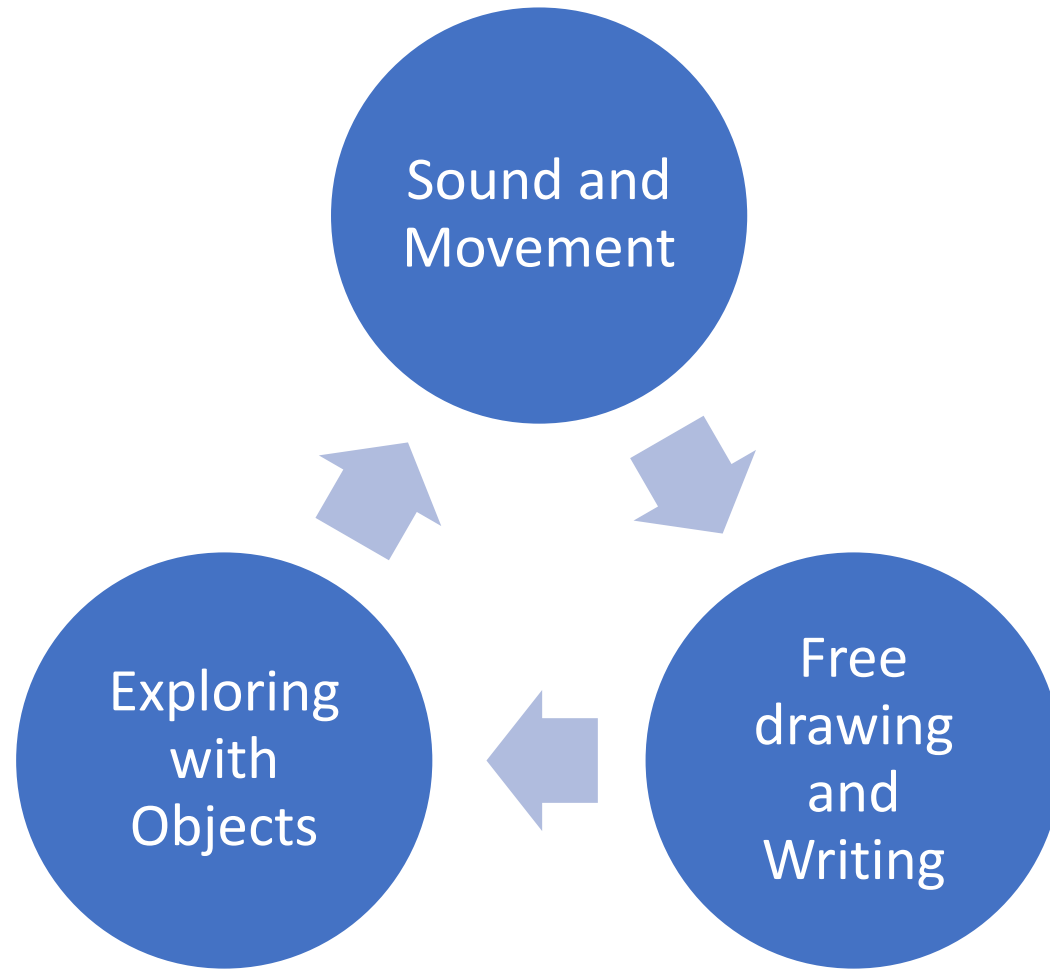
I worked with Kimberley Foster, Norwich artist

Arts-led methodologies for engaging young people in the Earth crisis. Goldsmiths.





Difficulties and Discoveries in practice research



Questions emerging

- How to adapt to the pressured time spaces available to students aged 14-18 and undergraduate students?
- How to share knowledges and happenings of pedagogy and practice for synergies and consistency?
- How to maximise opportunities for inclusive participant voice?
- How to develop corresponding bodies of information, without trying to communicate too much?
- How to validate the artworks created by young people?
- How to combine ethical research, indirect pedagogies and critical pedagogies?

Key findings

- More attention on the causes and less on the impacts of the Earth Crisis enables empowered 'artivism'.
- Arts methods that bring in sensory expression in addition to scientific knowledges are much appreciated by young people!
- We combined access to innovative new arts experiences with methods that could become accessible takeaways for young people.
- Synergies gathering among the three arts methods are cumulative, and participants bring elements on to the next method.
- Careful attention to timing, interaction, process, materials and environment for arts experiences is essential – even for experiences that feel spontaneous for young participants.

References

Atkinson, D. 2018, Art, Disobedience and Ethics: The Adventure of Pedagogy. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.

De la Cadena, M. and Blaser, M. eds. 2018, A World of Many Worlds, Durham and London, Duke University Press.

Ecoartslearning <https://www.ecoartslearning.net/>

Jagodzinski, j. 2018, Interrogating the Anthropocene: Ecology, Aesthetics, Pedagogy and the Future in Question. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Studies in Educational Futures, Palgrave Macmillan

Centre for Arts and Learning <https://www.gold.ac.uk/cal/>

Climate Museum UK climatemuseumuk.org

Imagine Futures <https://imaginefutures.net/>

Listening Projects, A New Direction <https://anewdirection.org.uk/research/listening-projects>

McKenzie, B. <http://bridgetmckenzie.uk/>