



Arts and Culture Annual Report

2020 - 2021

A review of the work of Arts and Culture August 2020 - July 2021



Image: Detail from *Catalyst*, an online exhibition showcasing a selection of works from Creative Exchange, which is an ongoing programme of collaborations between artists and researchers at the Environment and Sustainability Institute, Penryn Campus, Cornwall.



2020 - 2021 snapshot

1,036,463

Social media
reach and
impressions

73

Number of
events



46,731

Views of our
website
pages

3,702

Number of
attendees at
events



56

Number of
artists we
worked with

16

Number of
teaching sessions
we contributed to

22

Number of
external
partners we
worked with

Introduction

‘Necessity is the mother of invention’ perhaps best captures the spirit of 2020-21. Without knowing when the next lockdown might occur or for how long, forward planning entered the realms of speculative fiction as each project had not only Plans A and B, but C through F as well.

To navigate these unknowns, we had to take our own advice and get creative. Events were postponed, rethought, and presented in digital formats. Geographical barriers were removed and we worked remotely with artists in Europe and North America. Across the cultural and education sectors, new ways of working were being trialled and we collaborated with many of our peers, championing their creativity and resourcefulness too.

It is wonderful to share so many positive stories about creativity, and it is also vital to acknowledge the many hardships that our communities have faced during this period – the arts have provided crucial social and emotional connections throughout the pandemic, a time when many artists saw their incomes evaporate overnight. When we speak about the importance of mental health and well-being, that applies to cultural producers and consumers alike.

This report aims to capture the breadth and variety of projects that we have either led or supported over the past year. We have grouped activity under our strategic objectives and provided bite-sized summaries. In most instances, further details are on our website.



Image: detail of an illustration for the Exchange Symposium by Laura Miles-Boardman. Find out more on page 26.

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Image: a still from *Happy Endings*, part of the *Sex and Nature Salon* programme devised by Siân Docksey and Dr Ina Linge as part of their Creative Fellowship. See page 8 for more

Creative Development

Working with artists and researchers.

The programmes summarised in this section address the following Arts and Culture objectives:

- Foster creative approaches to interdisciplinarity in research
- Enhance training, development and networks with the cultural sector
- Champion public engagement with creativity at the University

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Image: *Towards Field Station (Catalyst Remix)* by Bram Thomas Arnold - part of the ESI Creative Echange online exhibition *Catalyst*.

Image © Bram Thomas Arnold

Creative Fellowships

Short-term placements that bring creative practitioners into research settings and encourage new conversations across disciplines.

There are three Creative Fellowships each year, selected following an open call. They are hosted by an interdisciplinary research group, and spend 4-5 weeks in research and development before delivering dissemination events for a range of audiences.

Due to Covid-19, most aspects of this year's Creative Fellowships took place online, including recruitment, building of relationships between creative practitioners and their academic hosts, networking and the majority of artistic outputs.

<https://www.artsandcultureexeter.co.uk/creative-fellowship>

gut.place.belief.interact (Thought experiment for Creative Fellowship in the form of a Venn diagram, using a portait of John Venn).

©Simon Ryder/artNucleus.



The Politics of Sexual Nature

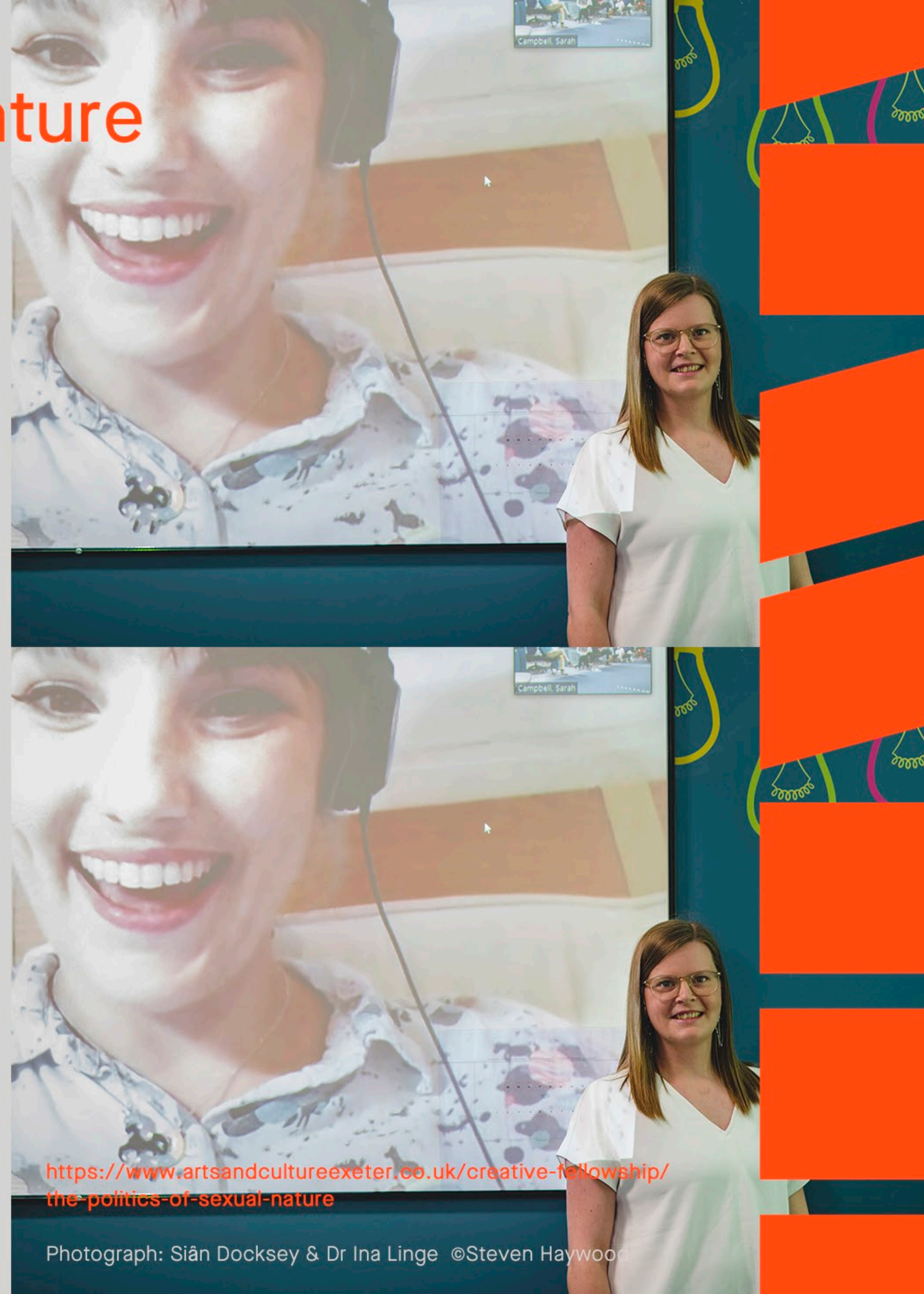
Creative Fellow: **Siân Docksey, Comedian and Writer**

Hosts: **Dr Ina Linge, Modern Languages and Cultures (German), Co-Director, Sexual Knowledge Unit, with researchers at the Sexual Knowledge Unit**

This productive collaboration centred on Dr Linge's research, exploring the way in which concepts of nature are used to inform, shape, ground and justify forms of sexual knowledge.

Siân and Ina devised three online Sex and Nature Salons, with a clear format and LGBTQIA+-supportive ethos, in which academics and comedians came together to explore an aspect of sex and nature with a public audience.

Siân and Ina have since created a Sex and Nature Salon website to share the format with other academics, with some seed-funding from Arts and Culture.



<https://www.artsandcultureexeter.co.uk/creative-fellowship/the-politics-of-sexual-nature>

Photograph: Siân Docksey & Dr Ina Linge ©Steven Haywood

“The creative fellowship set the foundation for a long-term collaboration and a new online delivery format. I am so grateful for all that Siân has taught me about the importance of comedy. Exploring the role of comedy as criticism and a form of wellbeing is now a firm part of my future academic research.”

Dr Ina Linge, Modern Languages and Cultures (German),
Co-Director, Sexual Knowledge Unit

The Playful University

Creative Fellow: **Andy Field, Artist, Writer and Curator**

Hosts: **Dr Maarten Koeners, College of Medicine and Health**

Dr Steph Comley, Technology Enhanced Learning

The Playful University, an Education Incubator project led by Dr Maarten Koeners, aims to share and develop playful academic practice.

During his Creative Fellowship Andy created rogue slides, to be randomly inserted into lectures. He and Maarten recorded a podcast *Lectures for Nobody*, exploring the complexity of delivering and receiving online teaching during Covid.

This podcast led to three performances of the pre-recorded *Lecture for Nobody*, written by Andy, for an audience of just one student, whose notes are the sole documentation of the event.



<https://www.artsandcultureexeter.co.uk/creative-fellowship/the-playful-university>

Photograph: Andy Field ©Steven Haywood

“The encounters with Andy were always very enjoyable and meaningful and always created new ideas, many of which I could implement straight away in my academic practice.”

Dr Maarten Koeners, College of Medicine and Health

Antimicrobial Resistance Network

Creative Fellow: Simon Ryder, Investigative Artist

Hosts: Dr Kelly Thornber, Wellcome Centre for Cultures and Environments of Health and Department of Biosciences, with University of Exeter Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Network

Simon interviewed many AMR researchers and became fascinated with the nature of the academic network itself. How do these individuals, holding expertise across a range of disciplines, work together on the common purpose of addressing anti-microbial resistance?

His project, titled *Babel Mind*, is about different forms of digital mapping and visualising of a network of people.

His time was spent developing this concept, and he was successfully awarded an Arts Council England Developing Your Creative Practice grant to take *Babel Mind* further.



<https://www.artsandcultureexeter.co.uk/creative-fellowship/antimicrobial-resistance-network>

Photograph: Simon Ryder ©Steven Haywood

“I enjoyed hearing about Simon's work, and seeing the enthusiasm of the network for engaging with him.”

Dr Kelly Thornber,
Wellcome Centre for Cultures and Environments of Health
and Department of Biosciences

‘Here’s to Thee’ Arts Commission

Here’s to Thee, by artist Simon Pope, is co-commissioned with the Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art Gallery (RAMM). Simon is exploring the microbiopolitics of cider-making to discover more about the fascinating world of microbiomes and how we are all connected with the environment.

Simon has been working remotely from Toronto, creating a website, posters and videos to document ideas in development. In 2021-22, we will run a series of regional-based programmes at RAMM, Gray’s Cider Farm and CAST, when Simon returns to the UK (Covid-19 restrictions willing).

Simon is working with a number of collaborators, including: musician Jim Causley, ceramicist Abigail North, photographer Robert Darch, film-maker Bevis Bowden as well as University of Exeter academic, Dr Harry West, from the Centre for Rural Policy Research, and Prof Dan Bebber, Department of Biosciences.



<https://www.artsandcultureexeter.co.uk/arts-commission/heres-to-thee>

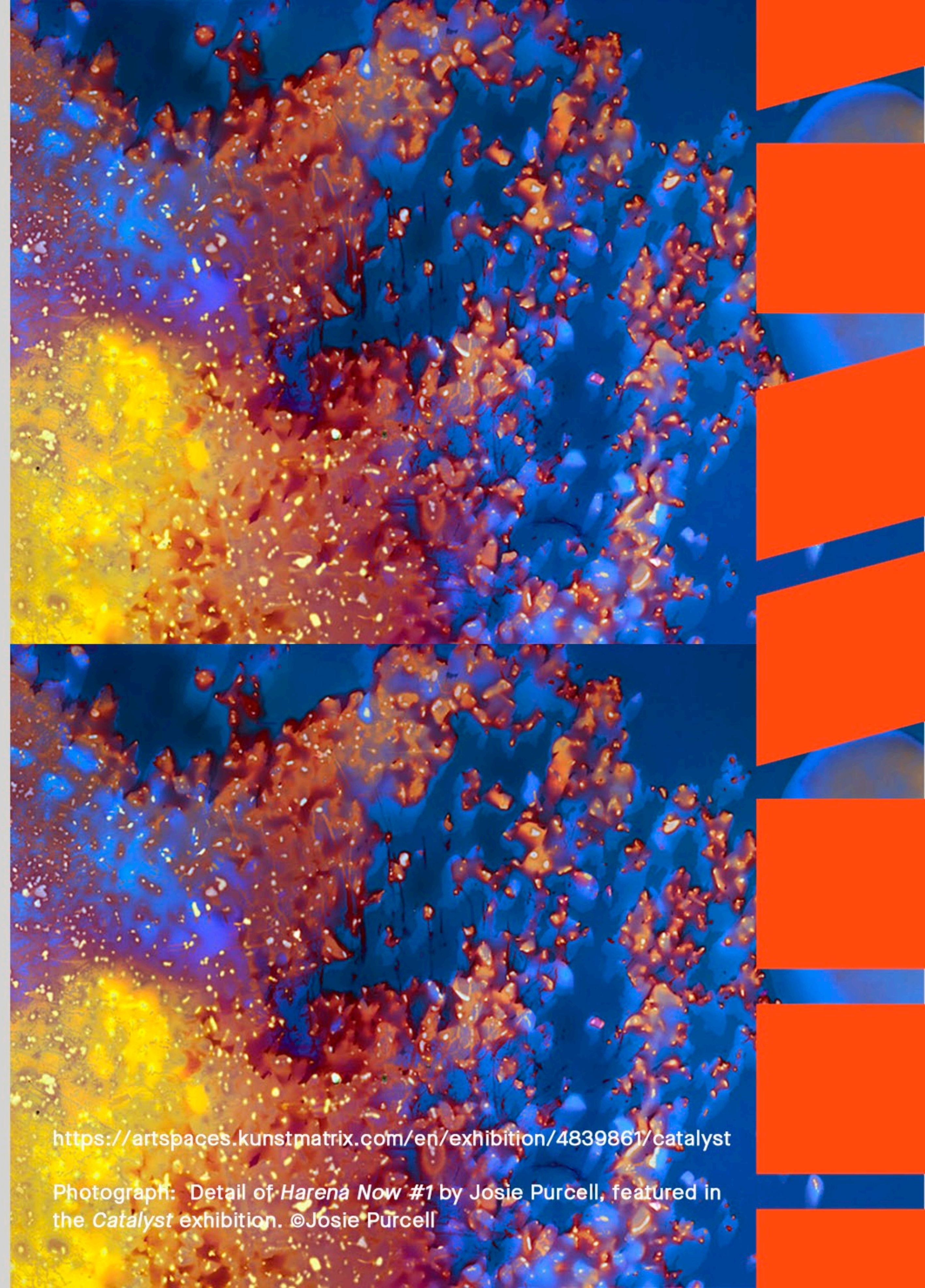
Photo ©Robert Darch

ESI Creative Exchange

The ESI Creative Exchange is a programme that brings researchers from the Environment and Sustainability Institute (ESI) in Penryn and artists together to explore questions related to climate change, ecology and the environment, generating opportunities for collaborative learning and public engagement.

Whilst the physical gallery was closed due to the pandemic, Arts and Culture teamed up with the ESI and curator Claire English to create a stunning virtual exhibition called *Catalyst*, featuring artwork from twelve ESI Creative Exchange collaborations going back to the programme's inception in 2012.

In the first twelve weeks of the exhibition, blog posts were published on the Arts and Culture website, exploring the work of the twelve participating artists and revisiting the collaborations they forged with researchers.



<https://artspaces.kunstmatrix.com/en/exhibition/4839861/catalyst>

Photograph: Detail of *Harena Now #1* by Josie Purcell, featured in the *Catalyst* exhibition. ©Josie Purcell

Creative Dialogues

This year Creative Dialogues moved online, which had the advantage of attracting an international audience for this series of in-conversation events, hosted by the College of Humanities.

We were delighted to welcome two esteemed guests - actor, comedian, writer and polymath Stephen Fry, in January 2021, and filmmaker, screenwriter, and former actress Amma Assante in May 2021.

Stephen Fry provided many entertaining anecdotes and thoughtful reflections, as he took the online audience through his varied career.

Amma Asante described her journey from child actor to screenwriter and director in rich detail and talked about her love of telling stories and challenging audiences through film-making work.

Arts and Culture supported the planning and publicising of both events. Recordings from both talks can be viewed on the Arts and Culture website.



<https://www.artsandcultureexeter.co.uk/creative-dialogue>

Critical Friends Network

In 2019, the Critical Friends Network for Arts and Culture was established as a means of connecting staff across colleges and disciplines, bringing together anyone interested in the creative process and interdisciplinary practice. This serves a dual purpose – building a community of common interest, and providing insights and feedback to improve the Arts and Culture offer.

In 2020, we moved this group online and brought the Devon and Cornwall networks together. We ran termly sessions, where 2-3 speakers shared brief summaries of their creative work, we updated everyone on recent Arts and Culture activity, and then provided relevant discussion prompts for breakout rooms.

With almost 100 members and attendance at 30-40 per session, the network continues to grow and is open to all staff. It is a friendly and informal space where creativity is celebrated and the phrase “I had no idea this was happening” is often heard.

Partnerships & Collaborations

Responding to climate, social justice and well-being challenges.

The programmes summarised in this section address the following Arts and Culture objectives:

- Enhance training, development and networks with the cultural sector
- Champion public engagement with creativity at the University

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Image: Beautiful Leaved Plants, E. J. Lowe, (1872). Illustration by Alexander F Lydon, Benjamin Fawcett.

Reproduced with permission from the Devon & Exeter Institution.

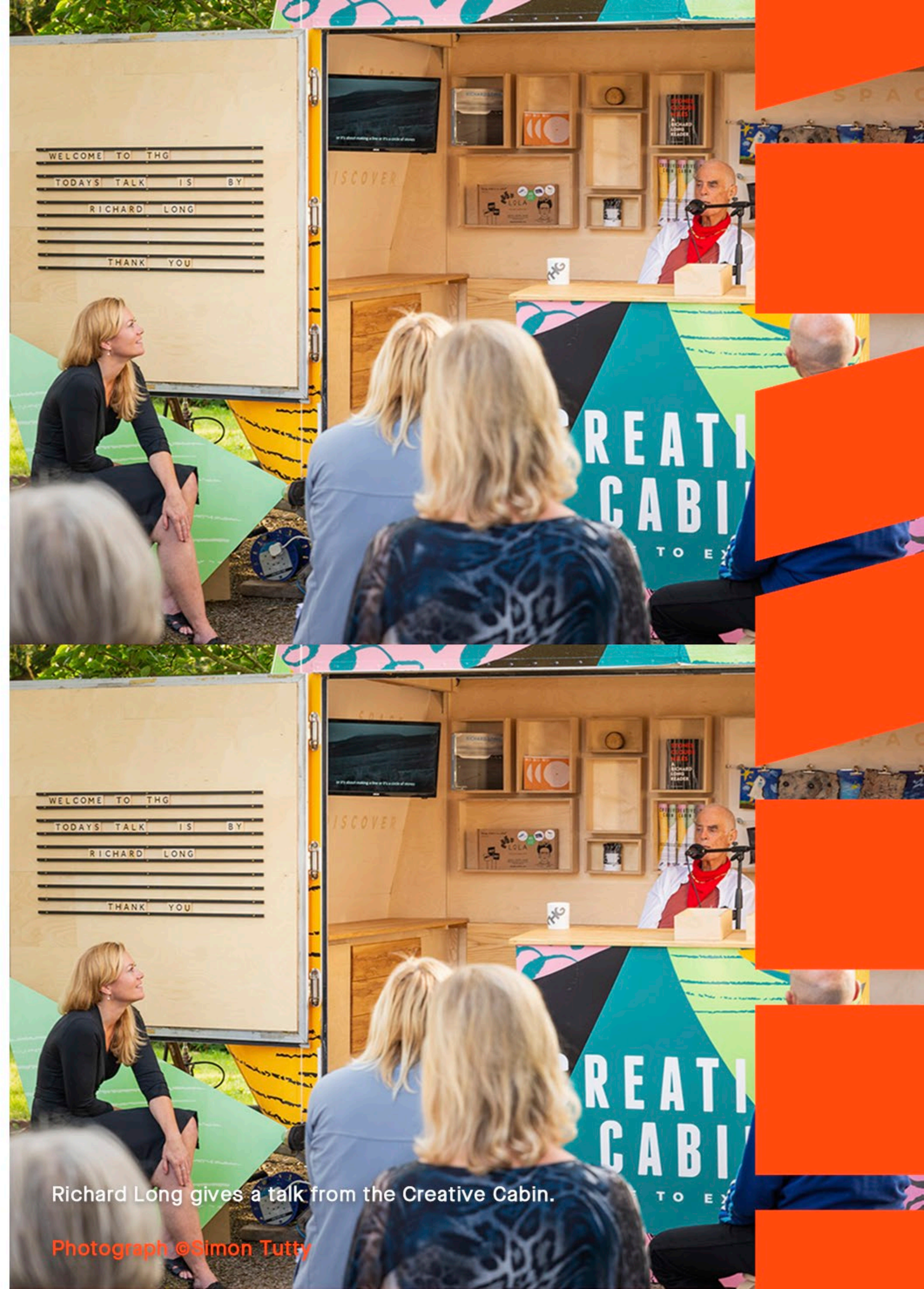
Creative Cabin, Thelma Hulbert Gallery

In August 2020, Honiton's Thelma Hulbert Gallery (THG) launched *Creative Cabin*, a mobile art studio that travels across East Devon, promoting climate awareness and hosting workshops for both the public and community partners.

Arts and Culture partnered with THG to create *Climate + Culture 2020*. The programme format was reshaped due to Covid-19 using *Creative Cabin*.

Over the Summer, 12 events were run for 232 people, including a talk by Turner-prize winning artist, Richard Long, linked to the gallery's ARTIST ROOMS Richard Long exhibition, for which Arts and Culture was a partner.

ARTIST ROOMS touring programme is delivered by the National Galleries of Scotland and Tate in partnership with Ferens Art Gallery through 2020 supported by the National Lottery through Arts Council England, by Art Fund, and by the National Lottery through Creative Scotland.



Richard Long gives a talk from the Creative Cabin.

Photograph ©Simon Tutty

Black History Month

In October 2020, Arts and Culture contributed to the university's Black History Month campaign by arranging a blog and social media series celebrating Black writers, publishers, journalists and theatre practitioners – the resulting collection offers something new and engaging for all audiences.

We would like to thank the blog authors for their fantastic contributions – Lecturer in Drama Alix Harris, Imagining Futures's Project Manager Tina Verhaeghe, Lecturer in Global and World Literatures Dr Kate Wallis, and PhD candidates Zakiya McKenzie and Idris Hamza Yana.

The series is available on the Arts and Culture website, and has been added to the University of Exeter's Teacher Resources webpages that support outreach to secondary schools.

To date, the blog series has been viewed 1772 times.

<https://www.artsandcultureexeter.co.uk/news/black-history-month-blog-series>

Image reproduced by kind permission of London Borough of Lambeth, Archives Department



The Hexagon Video Series

In January 2021, The Hexagon was launched. This video series was devised and created by Dr Ellen Wiles, Lecturer in Creative Writing. In each of the 12 films, Ellen interviewed a colleague from the university and/or the creative industries, who share five arts and culture lockdown tips. Ellen provided a sixth suggestion, forming the 'hexagon' of the title.

With a variety of voices and interests in the mix, this collection offered respite from the pandemic and a chance to discover a new book, a new author, or a new simple pleasure (such as jigsaws).

The whole series can be viewed on the Arts and Culture website. To date, it has been viewed 2,975 times.

<https://www.artsandcultureexeter.co.uk/news/the-hexagon-video-series>

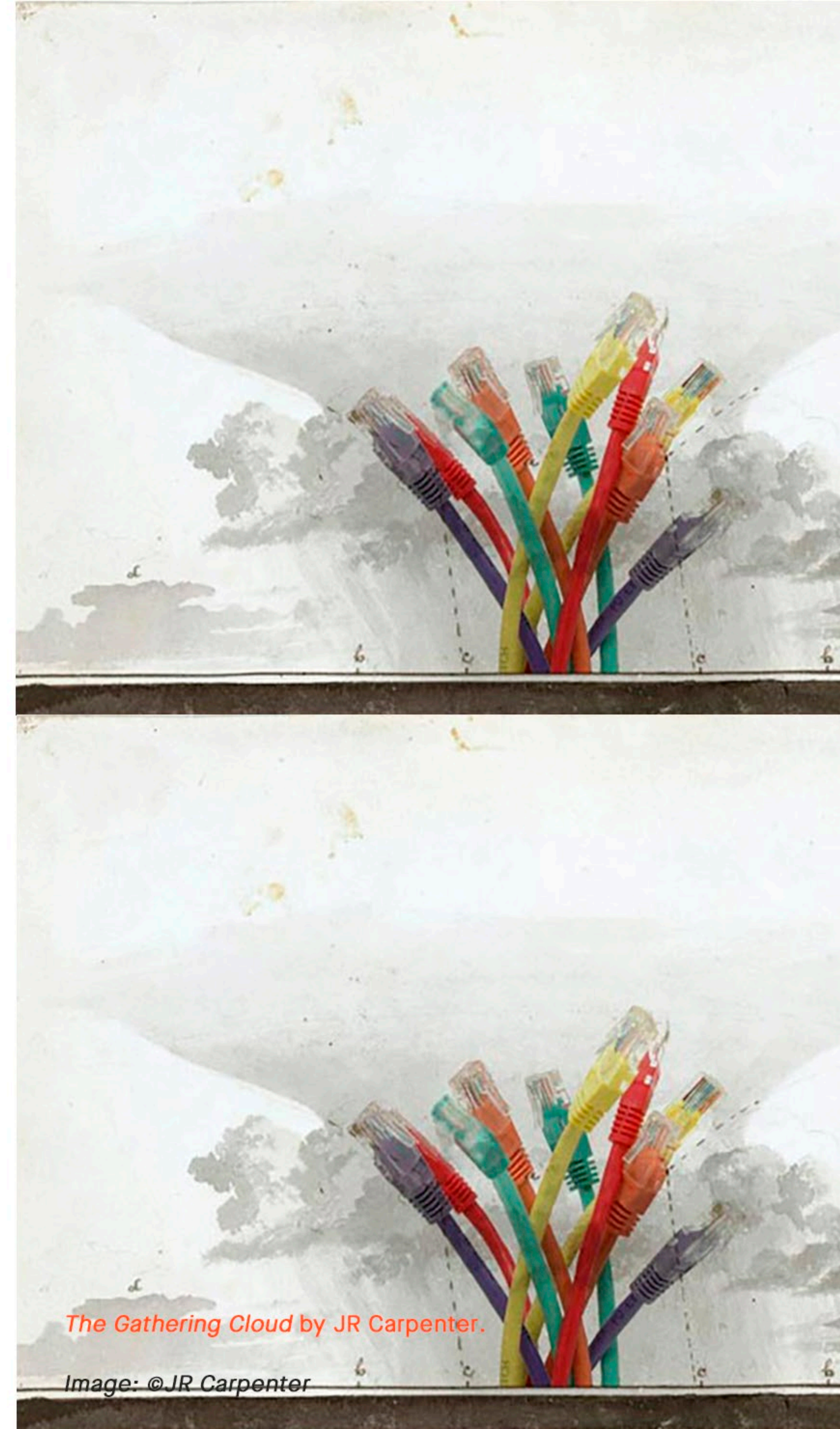


Diasporic Poetry Readings in Cornwall

In February 2021, internationally renowned artist, writer, performer and researcher, J.R. Carpenter, gave an online reading and Q&A, offering insights into her practice - a seamless melding of performance, poetry and digital media that addresses colonialism and environmental crisis.

Carpenter has been experimenting with digital technologies for over a decade, creating a form of poetry that was shown to its strengths with the online format.

The event was part of an annual series devised by Dr Natalie Pollard, Senior Lecturer in Modernist and Contemporary Literature, and Academic Director for Arts and Culture, Cornwall. It was hosted in collaboration with Falmouth Art Gallery and supported by Arts and Culture.



The Gathering Cloud by JR Carpenter.

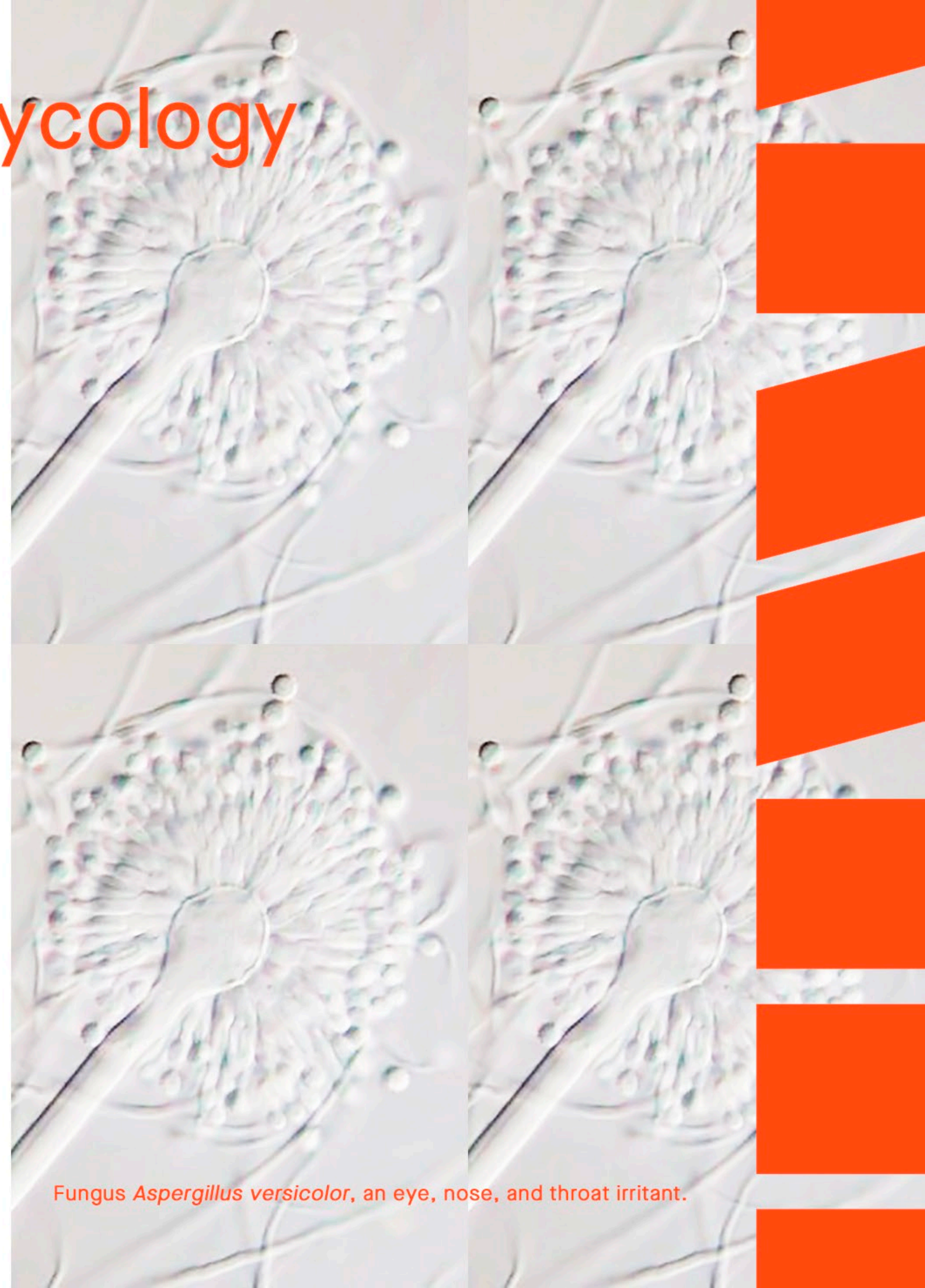
Image: ©JR Carpenter

Centre for Medical Mycology

Throughout the year, we were fortunate to work closely with the Medical Research Council Centre for Medical Mycology (MRC CMM), sharing a common interest in interdisciplinary creative practices. Mycology is an area of urgent medical need, with more than 1.5 million deaths worldwide each year from fungal infections. Find out more about their research at www.thefungalthreat.com

In March 2021, the MRC CMM launched an Embedded Residency, *Hidden Kingdom*, inspired by our Creative Fellowships. Selected artist Léonie Hampton collaborated with researchers to create a film about the microbiome, the community of microbes including fungi that live in and on us.

In June 2021, MRC CMM launched a new *fungicast* series on their website. The first interview, *What do dinosaurs, Alexander the Great, and Napoleon have in common?* was hosted by Sarah Campbell, Associate Director for Arts and Culture, with Professor Neil Gow, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Impact and Professor of Microbiology, and Merlin Sheldrake, biologist and author of *Entangled Life*.



Fungus *Aspergillus versicolor*, an eye, nose, and throat irritant.

Trade & Exchange – International Women's Day Talk

In March 2021, for International Women's Day we hosted an online talk between two Devon-based artists and two University of Exeter academics.

Naomi Hart and Emma Molony were selected for the Arts Commission, *Trade and Exchange*, to create temporary, site-specific artworks in empty retail units in Exeter, part of the Covid-19 Recovery Plan, *Building Exeter Back Better*. Emma focused on introduced plant species and the Exeter Veitch Nursery; Naomi explored shells and bivalves, the river Exe and trade links.

The artists were joined by Dr Ceri Lewis, Associate Professor, Marine Biology, and Dr Rebecca Lovell, Research Fellow, European Centre for Environment and Human Health, who spoke about their relevant research in the natural and social sciences.

The lead partner for Trade and Exchange is Exeter Culture and is generously funded by the *Liveable Exeter* Programme, managed by Exeter City Council, and the *Next Chapter* project at the Devon and Exeter Institution, funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund. Arts and Culture co-devised *Trade and Exchange*, and supported its delivery as part of the project team.

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Image: Illustration by Elizabeth D'Orville, in *Testacea Britannica: a Natural History of British Shells, Marine, Land, and Fresh-water*, George Montagu (1803).

Reproduced with permission of the Devon and Exeter Institution.

G7 and Green Futures - Nurturing Hope through Poetry

In June 2021, Cornwall hosted the international summit G7. In parallel, the University of Exeter ran Green Futures, a two-day conference sharing contemporary climate research. Arts and Culture collaborated with the College of Medicine and Health, Riptide Journal, the Met Office, and Exeter Culture, on an accompanying poetry resource for the conference, where a collection of poems by new and established voices was screened before each presentation.

The poems highlighted links between the climate crisis and human health, and testified to our shared mission – to forge exciting collaborations using poetry to announce key environmental change and health messages.

The slides, Nurturing Hope through Poetry, can be viewed here: <https://greenfutures.exeter.ac.uk/article/nurturing-hope-through-poetry/>



Exchange Symposium

In July 2021, Arts and Culture co-hosted our second Exchange Symposium in partnership with Public Engagement with Research, and devised with staff from the MRC Centre for Medical Mycology, Event Exeter and Agile Rabbit.

The purpose of this three-day online event was to celebrate, question and discuss the mutual benefits that come from communities and researchers working together. Researchers inside universities are working on large and complex real-world challenges across all aspects of life. Communities outside universities have lived experience of these challenges, as well as expertise, skills and insights that can shine new light on thorny problems. Combined, amazing work can happen.

Each day was themed – we launched with Climate and Environment on day one, then Health and Wellbeing on day two, and Process (or How We Do It) on day three. A total of 13 sessions were delivered, with an attendance of 281.



Illustration by Laura Miles-Boardman

©Laura Miles-Boardman

Unhoming Pedagogies: Precarity

In July 2021, the second issue of *Unhoming Pedagogies*, a digital magazine created by the Humanities department at the University of Exeter's Penryn campus and supported by Arts and Culture, was published. Under the banner of Precarity, it brings together students' and teachers' stories about transformational, uncertain and vulnerable experiences of contemporary Higher Education.

Unhoming Pedagogies editor, Natalie Pollard, states: *"Whilst precariousness is bound up with a sense of general human vulnerability, precarity speaks to the uneven distribution of this vulnerability in relation to privilege. Precarity – a 'politically induced condition' of material and psychological insecurity – is often particularly mapped by hierarchies of gender, race, class and sexuality, nationality and regionality, caring responsibilities, ability and age."*



<https://www.unhomingpedagogies.co.uk/>

Arts, Culture and Environment in Cornwall

In July 2021, a panel of four University of Exeter staff and fellows explored projects and research areas relating to arts, culture, creativity, wellbeing, science, technology, climate and environment. The event showcased the nature of interdisciplinary working at the University's Cornwall campuses in a way that provokes playful, dynamic and ongoing interactions.

Many thanks to the speakers: Victoria Tischler, Associate Professor in Public Health, Sustainability and Environment, European Centre for Environment and Human Health, Dr Aimée Lê, writer, director, performer and Associate Lecturer in Creative Writing, Claire English, Cornwall based arts consultant, and Dr Elze Hesse, Research Fellow, ESI.

This event was hosted by the Environment and Sustainability Institute, Humanities Penryn and Arts and Culture.

Ceramics created by Fleur Winter as part of an interdisciplinary project in Cornwall with Dr Elze Hesse, Research Fellow, ESI.

Image: ©Stephen Hodge

Student Experience

Supporting and promoting student creativity.

The activities summarised in this section address the following A&C objectives:

- Promote creativity as vital to holistic student experience
- Support creativity in teaching

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Student-led Programming 31

Student-led Research 32

Festival of Discovery 33

Creativity in Teaching 34



Image: *The Mew Stone*. Drawn by J.M.W Turner, engraved by William Cooke 1816.

University of Exeter Fine Art Collection

Student Placement

– Gemma Lucas

In April 2021, Gemma Lucas joined us for a six-month South West Doctoral Training Partnership (SWDTP) student placement.

She is an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funded Human Geography PhD student, based in the University's Wellcome Centre for Cultures and Environments of Health. Her research explores how yoga impacts on people's gendered understandings of, and relationships with, their bodies.

Gemma worked as part of our team, supporting programme planning, delivery and evaluation. She initiated a new Arts Commission, bringing together artists Cinna Solar and Bee Watson, and wrote regular blogs for the Arts and Culture website.

In July 2021, Gemma co-devised a session at the Standon Calling Festival, part of a broader programme by *Agile Rabbit*. Gemma presented her research into shame and yoga alongside yoga teacher Nikkie Huddart.



<https://www.artsandcultureexeter.co.uk/news/introducing-gemma-lucas>

Photograph: ©Gemma Lucas

Student-led Programming

The Students' Union (Cornwall) and Students' Guild (Devon) at the University of Exeter support hundreds of societies, providing creative opportunities across a range of artforms such as drama, music, photography, and dance.

For Freshers' Week 2020, we ran a series of 'Meet the Society' blogposts, and continued to promote student-led productions and projects throughout the year on our website, social media, and e-newsletter.

We also shared the work of other student groups, such as the Student Media Team, who provide real-world design briefs in the creative industries and Creative Switch, who showcase the creative talents and experiences of BIPOC students at the University.

To help orientate and welcome new students, we led on the creation of a new 'arts, culture and creativity' page on the main University of Exeter website:

www.exeter.ac.uk/study/life/culture/



Image: Still from Theatre with Teeth's online production of *Hair*, written and directed by Leila Lockley.

<https://www.artsandcultureexeter.co.uk/news/hair-by-leila-lockley>

Student-led Research

Arts and Culture manages the university's Fine Art Collection and we are keen to raise its profile for research and teaching. The Collection holds over 2,000 treasures, including a series of early 19th century engravings after JMW Turner's scenes of Devon and Cornwall.

These engravings were the prompt for first-year Art History and Visual Culture (AHVC) students, who researched, wrote and curated content for an online exhibition. The students had advice and guidance from the Arts and Culture team, and they also received a lecture by Turner expert Professor Sam Smiles. The exhibition was launched on the Arts and Culture website in May 2021 and received 625 views up to the end of July. This pilot has led to plans for a similar collaboration in 2021 -22.

<https://www.artsandcultureexeter.co.uk/news/online-exhibition-turners-travels>



Image: Section of Combe Martin, Devonshire.
Engraving after JMW Turner, 1825

University of Exeter Fine Art Collection

Festival of Discovery

Over two weeks in May and June 2021, the University ran an inaugural Festival of Discovery for students. This was an opportunity to explore the campuses and try out something new, with literally hundreds of events to choose from.

Arts and Culture collaborated with the Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM) to create three half-day, drop-in workshops. Artist Fliss Shillingford, inspired by RAMM's exhibitions and collections, created a botanical-themed session, where students could decorate a plant pot to take away (plant included). The University's Grounds Team kindly provided an array of live plants to provide extra inspiration.

The purpose of these sessions was enjoyment, offering a chance to make something as a small respite from the pressures of study. We also wanted to let more students know about RAMM, an incredible cultural resource on their doorstep. 65 students took part.



Photo: Felicity Shillingford

Creativity in Teaching

Where do ideas come from? How can I find better solutions to design challenges? What will help me tap into my creativity more effectively?

These queries have relevance for staff and students alike. Over the past year, we've led ideas generation and design thinking sessions, both live and pre-recorded, for modules in Nursing, Business, Cultural Geography and Medical Humanities as well as providing an ideas generation workshop for new teaching staff as part of their Academic Professional Programme. We also support students' career development, running a session on working in galleries for the 'Pathways to Arts, Culture and Heritage' training programme.

In June 2021, we supported the Graduate School of Education's 'Creativity in 21st Century Education: where, how and what next?' event, hosted by the British Educational Research Association (BERA).



Photo: Felicity Springford

Fine Art Collection

Caring for our cultural assets.

In February 2021 a new Collection Development Policy was published for the fine art collection. This will enable a more focused approach to acquisitions and management of the collection.

We have shone a spotlight on individual works in the collection through a series of monthly blog posts on the Arts and Culture website. Spanning oil paintings, illustrations and sculptures, each article encourages a closer look and consideration of the original.

Despite the restrictions caused by the pandemic, we have continued to focus on care of the fine art collection, with the organisation of a clean and wax of the Barbara Hepworth sculpture Figure for Landscape.

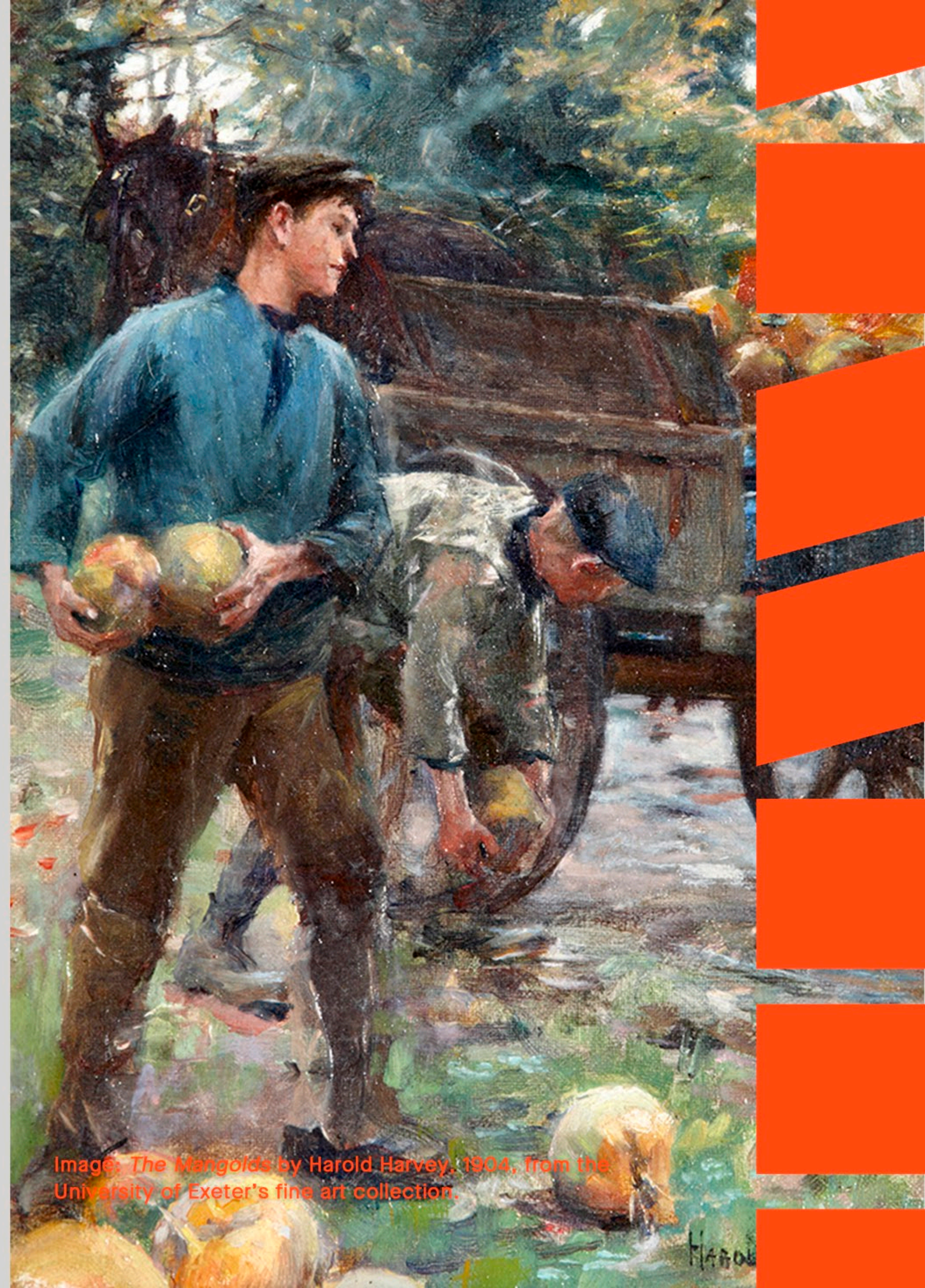


Image: *The Mangolds* by Harold Harvey, 1904, from the University of Exeter's fine art collection.

Thank You

We would like to thank the reporting, funding and advisory groups that continue to offer fantastic support and guidance: Arts and Culture Steering Group; Arts and Culture Assurance Group; Arts Commissions Advisory Group; Capital Investment Group; and the Senior Management Team of the College of Humanities.

Many thanks also to the academic and professional services staff, students, and project partners who have continued to say 'yes' to working together and finding ways to keep collaborating through the flux of an ongoing pandemic.

The Directors would especially like to thank the wonderful Arts and Culture team for their inspiration, initiative and graft. This report is testament to their great work.



The Team

Sarah Campbell

Associate Director for Arts and Culture

Naome Glanville

Arts and Culture Co-ordinator

Anna Bunt

Communications and Marketing Officer

Gemma Lucas

Arts and Culture PhD Student Placement

Stephen Hodge

Academic Director for Arts and Culture

Caitlin DeSilvey

Deputy Academic Director for Arts and Culture
(Cornwall)

Natalie Pollard

Acting Deputy Academic Director for Arts and
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Arts and Culture

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