

Inclusive Arts Practice and Research

A Critical Manifesto



Alice Fox and Hannah Macpherson

Inclusive Arts Practice and Research

Inclusive Arts Practice and Research interrogates an exciting and newly emergent field: the creative collaborations between learning-disabled and non-learning-disabled artists that are increasingly taking place in performance and the visual arts.

Alice Fox and Hannah Macpherson interview artists, curators and key practitioners in the UK and USA. The authors introduce and articulate this new practice, and situate it in relation to associated approaches. Fox and Macpherson candidly describe the tensions and difficulties involved, and explore how the work sits within contemporary art and critical theory.

This publication inhabits the philosophy of *Inclusive Arts Practice*, with Jo Offer, Alice Fox and Kelvin Burke making up the design team behind the striking look of the book, which contains over 250 full-colour images, plus essays and illustrated statements. *Inclusive Arts Practice and Research* is a landmark publication in an emerging field of creative practice across all the arts. It presents a radical call for collaboration on equal terms, and will be an invaluable resource for anyone studying, researching or working within this dynamic new territory.

'Inclusive Arts Practice and Research uses text, photos and graphics to chart the challenges, processes and rewards of ethical collaborative practice of people with and without learning differences. We find out about ways of working together that are respectful, fun and fruitful, and illuminate the richness of shared life. This book is an important new entry in the emerging field of work with and by people with intellectual differences and their allies.'

Professor Petra Koppers, Professor of English, Art and Design, Theatre and Women's Studies, University of Michigan

'This is an illuminating and humane book, grounded in rigorous research and providing a significant contribution to the discourses of inclusive arts practice. Carefully structured and highly accessible in its design and textual presentation, it presents a series of chapters that engage seriously and intelligently with themes that run through the complex field of Inclusive Arts. Chapters cover issues of terminology, audience encounters, guiding examples of "how to practice", and deal with the thorny questions of "quality" and "labels" in relation to Inclusive Arts. A major strength is the way the authors weave together a rich collection of vivid illustrations and imagery, with conversations with learning-disabled artists, artistic directors and curators, sensitively presented to underpin the core argument that the work of learning-disabled artists should be taken seriously.'

Professor Sarah Whatley, Professor of Dance and Director of the Centre for Dance Research (C-DaRE), Coventry School of Art and Design, Coventry University



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Alice Fox and Hannah Macpherson

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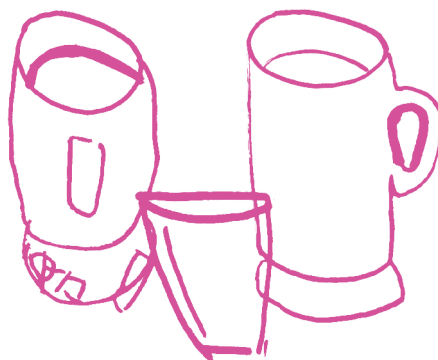
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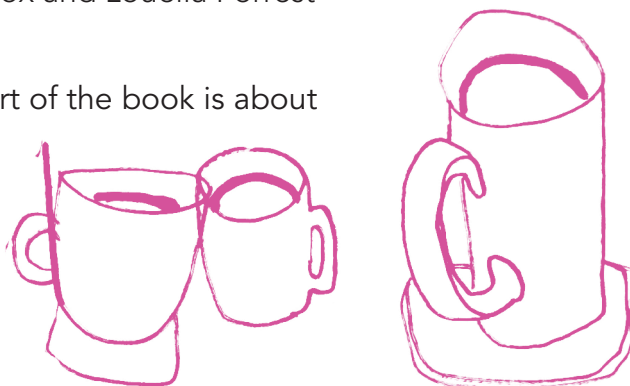


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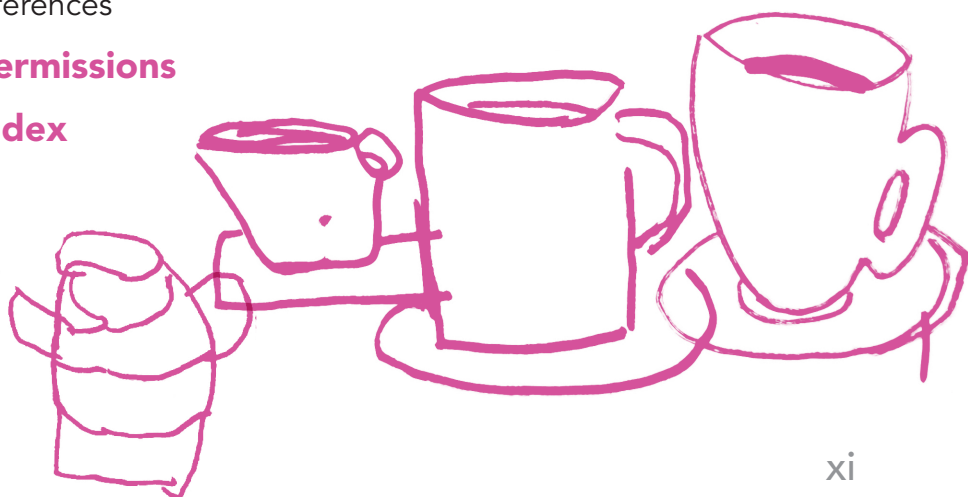
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Foreword

by Anna Cutler, Tate Modern

New technologies, expanded connectivity, global networks and instant access to information are having an enormous influence on social and cultural attitudes and behaviours around the world. Such new global geographies present us with growing opportunities to challenge mainstream forms of production, participation, ownership and construction of meaning; pushing at the boundaries of what we understand arts practice to be now, and what we imagine it might become in the future.

This is a potentially exciting opportunity that invites us to rethink the contribution of those who have been excluded from the 'art' conversation (some more so than others). Enter *Inclusive Arts Practice and Research*, which arrives as a welcome intervention in working out what all this change means and helps us un-learn and un-know what we thought was familiar terrain. In their own words, Alice Fox and Hannah Macpherson explain that Inclusive Arts '... is used here to describe creative collaborations between learning-disabled and non-learning-disabled artists'. This definition expresses a particular form of artistic production and participation; it questions ownership and the construction of meaning and sets these centre-stage as the very articulation of the Inclusive Arts agenda. The edge just moved centre.

This book makes two key contributions to contemporary arts practice. First, it sets out what one might expect to encounter today in the (under-represented) field of Inclusive Arts. This includes philosophical and ethical issues, practical needs in real situations, how to approach research through practice, as well as drawing out ideological and political frames inherent in such work. In doing so, it shares a wide range of experiences and knowledge from across the sector and from representatives within the sector who have had limited exposure to date. Second, it invites a wider debate beyond its specialist focus by offering ways of thinking that challenge hierarchies of knowledge and constructs of normativity. For the authors, these also resonate with certain feminist approaches and practices that invite us to think differently and from a perspective of difference in and about art and who it 'belongs' to.

Inclusive Arts Practice and Research offers clarity and examples in practice, and provides personal stories by participants who articulate and represent their own sense of value in their artistic experiences. The book makes visible the tensions and complexities involved in doing this work, the taboos and difficulties, but it also expresses the possibility of things being different through the practice itself; what Alice Fox and Hannah Macpherson describe as 'creative exchange', the inspiration that sits at the heart of their work. *Inclusive Arts Practice and Research* is an open and generous call for co-constructed hope based on the potential for creative exchange. When do we get started?

Anna Cutler, Director of Learning, Tate Modern, London

Foreword

by Kelvin Burke, Rocket Artist

PHOTOS
ART
WRITING
PHOTOS
WRITING
PHOTOS
WRITING
PHOTOS
PHOTOS

Kelvin Burke, Rocket Artists

Author biographies



Alice Fox is a Principal Lecturer and Associate Head in the College of Arts and Humanities, University of Brighton, researching Inclusive Arts Practice and education. Alice is also Course Leader and founder of the pioneering MA Inclusive Arts Practice, and Artistic Director of the Arts Council England-funded learning-disabled Rocket Artists. This group has been awarded significant funds from Arts Council England to deliver their programme of high-quality exhibitions and performances. During 2013, the Rockets worked in partnership with the Southbank Centre to deliver the Side by Side project – an international exhibition and symposium of Inclusive Arts that this book builds upon. In 2008, Alice collaboratively directed and performed *Smudged*, an inclusive performance with the Rocket Artists at Tate Modern, and in 2010 performed and exhibited *Measures of Bodies* at the Brussels Medical Museum. Alice has published in *The New Museum Community*, *10 Must Reads: Inclusion*, and co-authored *Community–University Partnerships*, *Access to Art: From Day Centre to Tate Modern*, and *Art in the Woods: An Exploration of a Community–University Environmental Arts Project* published by NIACE (National Institute of Adult Continuing Education).

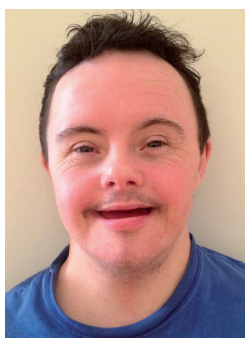


Dr Hannah Macpherson is a Senior Lecturer in Human Geography at the University of Brighton. Her interests include feminist, post-structural and new-materialist theories with a research focus on the physical and imaginative spaces of disability, landscape and arts practice. She enjoys creative, collaborative research and writing projects that intend to make a positive difference in the world. Her work has appeared in a range of peer-reviewed academic journals including *Environment and Planning*, *Cultural Geographies* and *The Senses & Society*, and she has published numerous book chapters. She coordinates the disability ethics and aesthetics research group at the University of Brighton, and has just completed an Arts & Humanities Research Council-funded research project on visual arts practice for resilience.

Design team biographies



Jo Offer is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Art, Design and Media, University of Brighton, and teaches on the MA Inclusive Arts Practice. She coordinated the Rocket Artists group for the Side by Side exhibition, symposium and publication. She facilitates collaborative workshops between Rocket Artists and MA Inclusive Arts Practice students, and has been developing ground-breaking explorations into Inclusive Art and Design processes with undergraduate art students and the Rocket Artists. As a practising designer, she has frequently collaborated with Kelvin Burke since 2011, researching new, inclusive possibilities for design and art practice.



Kelvin Burke has been a member of the Arts Council England-funded learning-disabled Rocket Artists since 2008, and was a member of the steering committee, curation team and performance group for the Side by Side exhibition at London's Southbank Centre. As a visual artist, he has exhibited at the Spirit Level gallery, Southbank Centre, London; Outside In: The Art of Inclusion, Crawford Galley, Cork; Measures of Bodies, Brussels; Creative Mix, Outsider Art Gallery and Kunstwerkplaats studios, Amsterdam; and the Tight Modern and the Creative Minds Conference, Brighton. Since 2011 he has frequently collaborated with Jo Offer on

art and design projects, including this book, and has co-developed and co-delivered MA and undergraduate projects at the University of Brighton.

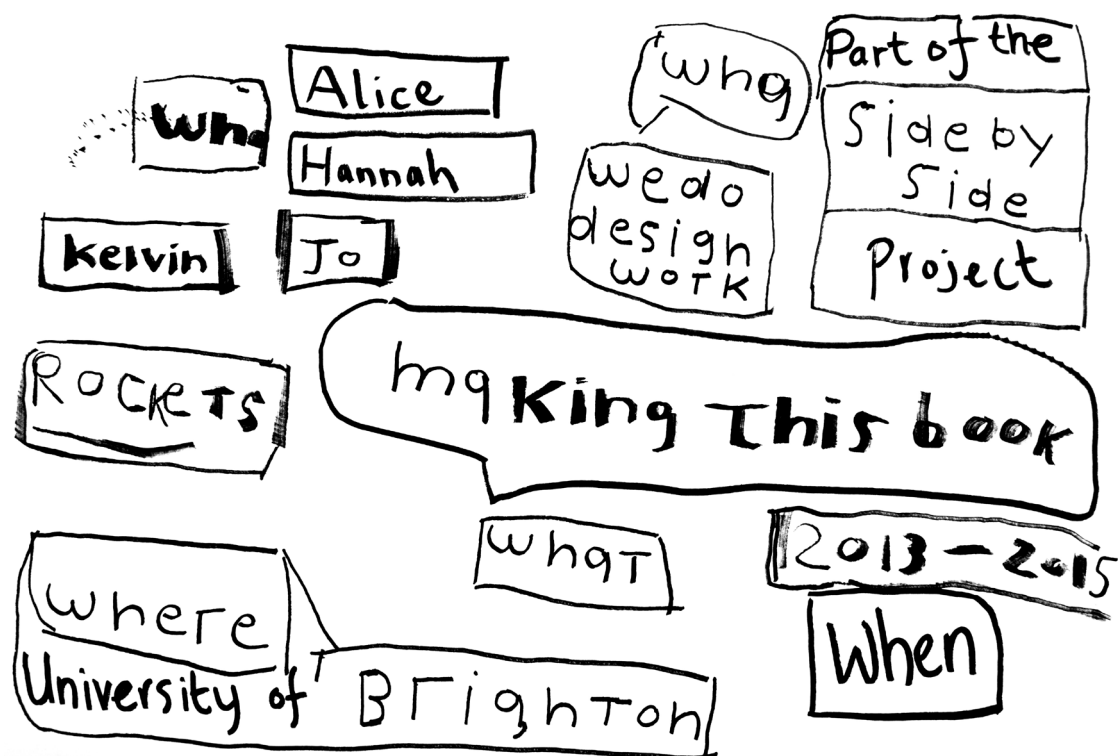
Kelvin on being a Rocket Artist: 'Art pictures, frames, jars, boxes. Jane, Jo, my dance partner Alice – on train, drawings, meetings, London, Holland'

Kelvin on being in the University: 'Perfect. Do more pictures and words with art partner Jo, Rockets, students'

Acknowledgements

In many ways this book is about love (and its absence) and is a product of love. Love in all its complex and various forms. This book couldn't have been produced without the web of relations and attunements that have held us together, held our children and held our heads when we'd had enough. So our thanks go to the family, friends and colleagues that have been there for us, especially Jane Fox and Rik Appleby; to the Rockets for their inspirational creativity; to Kelvin Burke and Jo Offer for their fantastic design input and unrelenting support; to Alice's sons Felix and Jago for their brave, enquiring and generous approach to the world; to the ladies at Sunshine Day Nursery for their loving care of baby Niamh; and to the editorial team at Routledge for their enthusiasm and patience. Of course this project also required time and money – something that has been kindly given to us by Arts Council England and the University of Brighton.





The process of the book coming into being was an inclusive project that integrated the insights and images of learning-disabled artists, their non-disabled collaborators and academics.





Situating Inclusive Arts

aesthetics, politics,
encounters

◀ Rocket Artists and Corali
Smudged
Collaborative performance
Tate Modern
London
2008

Situating Inclusive Arts

Introduction

In this chapter we discuss the field of Inclusive Arts and situate it in relationship to associated approaches – including explaining how this work relates to, yet is distinct from, Outsider Art, Socially Engaged Practice, Disability Art, Art Therapy and other associated forms of Contemporary Art. We also reflect on the socially transformative potential of this work for collaborators and audiences. The ideas in this book have been developed from conversations with key practitioners, artists and commissioners in the field of Inclusive Arts, and from Alice's twelve years of experience working alongside the learning-disabled Rocket Artists.

What is Inclusive Arts?

Inclusive Arts is used here to describe creative collaborations between learning-disabled and non-learning-disabled artists. Inclusive Arts seeks to support the development of competence, knowledge and skills, such that collaborations can result in high-quality artwork or creative experiences. The collaborative processes of Inclusive Arts thus intend to support a mutually beneficial two-way creative exchange that enables all the artists involved to learn (and unlearn) from each other. In essence, it is an 'aesthetic of exchange' that places the non-disabled artist in the more radical role of collaborator and proposes a shift away from the traditional notion of 'worthy helper'. Through redefining this role, and shedding the notion of the formally trained 'expert' artist, we try to explore the valuable and skilful contribution that learning-disabled artists can bring to the arts. Of course, collaborative forms of Inclusive Art are just one of a number of ways in which learning-disabled artists practice, but we think when collaboration happens between learning-disabled artists and their non-disabled collaborators it should be recognized and celebrated, not downplayed.

Inclusive Arts is an important field of creative practice because it can help realize the creative potential of people with learning disabilities and facilitate modes of communication and self-advocacy. The processes involved in producing Inclusive Art may promote new visions of how society might be. This does not mean that Inclusive Arts pursues a singular aesthetic effect or social goal. As the conversations and illustrations of practice begin to emerge in this book, Inclusive Art productions (just like other forms of Contemporary Art) can be beautiful, life-affirming, funny, disorientating, upsetting, ironic, sexual, pleasurable, disturbing, distancing, loving, legible, illegible, or all of the above.

Not all Inclusive Art is considered good art or good socio-political practice. Rather, Inclusive Artwork must negotiate a difficult set of relations with disablism, stereotype, cliché, essentialism, exclusion and voyeurism. As in all artistic experimentation, there can be failures. However, this book illustrates some key successes and reflects on the ingredients that have helped the Rocket Artists get their work to the Tate and the Southbank, and reveals how other collaborative partnerships produce the high-quality, high-profile work that is illustrated here. Of course, the paradox we inhabit is that the term Inclusive Arts presupposes exclusion. In a bet-

ter world, Inclusive Arts would be such an everyday form of practice that it would not need to be given this name; rather, it would be considered an art form that engages with the productivity of difference and the challenges of communication (in its most expanded sense).

► Chris Pavia,
Lucy Bennett
Stopgap Dance
Company
UK
Trespass
2011/2012



Why use the term 'Inclusive Arts'?

We agonized over whether to use the term Inclusive Arts in this book. There are problems with the term and its association with certain oppressive or tokenistic inclusion agendas. In fact, social inclusion policies and an associated politics of diversity have had both negative and positive consequences for those people regarded as 'needing including'. For example, Ahmed (2012) identifies how discursive commitments to inclusion and diversity in certain institutional contexts are



▲ Glad Theatre
Glad Foundation
Denmark

The Shadows
2012

Glad Theatre challenges actors and audiences by creating raw and courageous productions.

‘non-performatives’ which do not bring about what they name. And in the United Kingdom, instrumental arts and social inclusion projects have come under heavy criticism from a range of quarters for being neither good art, nor good social work (Belfiore 2002; Bishop 2006).

In contrast to these rather bleak accounts of arts and inclusion agendas that have circulated in Britain in recent years, illustrated here are examples of highly successful, genuinely collaborative projects that use the ‘aesthetics of exchange’ to explore the world views of collaborators, foster genuinely meaningful dialogue, show what inclusion can look like ‘in the doing’, and question the nature of social reality. We think such projects are a success because they are underpinned by highly skilled and attuned facilitators who have a long-term commitment to this field (discussed in more detail in Chapter Three). We considered other terms to describe this practice, such as ‘interaction’, ‘the aesthetics of encounter’, or ‘side-by-side collaboration’. However, we chose to continue to use the term Inclusive Arts because it is simple and many existing groups that practice collaboratively identify with it.

Of course, we recognize that in the practice of Inclusive Arts there will always be moments of separation, integration, inequality, inclusion and exclusion – these occur through the space, with other people and with the materials that are being used. There is no perfectly inclusive project – if it was that easy we wouldn’t have had to write a whole book about it. Therefore, in this book, Inclusive Arts describes something of the operating principles, practices and ideals that people who work successfully alongside people with learning disabilities share: the practices and their effects are what matter, where one aim is to minimize exclusion and find a plane of equality (Ranciere 2009) through the practice of art.



▲ Station 17, Germany

► Evelyn Morrissey KCAT Ireland
Emma Textiles 180 x 68 x 12cm
 2012
 With shipping care note

▼ Bethan Kendrick with
Emma, Side by Side
 performance, Southbank
 Centre, London, 2013



PLEASE
 be careful with
 Emma
 she is very sensitive
 by the way! ~~we~~ want to
 be played
 Thank you
 EVELYN

(She doesn't like
 to be pulled
 and will let Emma
 or she will be upset
 and she loves peanut
 butter on crackers)

What sorts of inclusions occur through Inclusive Arts Practice?

For the learning-disabled Rockets Artists and their collaborators, the sorts of inclusions that are operating in the studio or other art space are two-way – at times the Rockets are generously including other artists into their own creative worlds, at other points the Rockets and the art students are sharing their knowledge of particular practices and techniques. Such collaboration doesn't necessarily mean 50:50; rather, it can mean each person bringing complementary skills to a project. This can include choreography, company management and curation.

Interestingly, what we have also witnessed through the Rockets, and through our experiences of other Inclusive Art groups, is that the inclusions that occur in the practice of art making are not limited to the relationships between people. Rather, they also encompass the relationships held with the art materials, processes, technologies and spaces that are being used – certain materials, technologies and studio spaces can literally be more accommodating and thus more inclusive than others. In this way, there is a materiality to the interactions and forms of 'inclusion' (broadly conceived) that are occurring. In Chapter Three we explore this point in more depth and reflect on how certain materials and practices aid the process of Inclusive Art making.

Learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, learning-disabled or learning difficulty? Some notes on terminology

In this book the terms 'people with learning disabilities' and 'learning-disabled artists' are used. The term 'people with learning disabilities' reflects current policy discourse in the United Kingdom, and is the term most often used to describe people who have a cognitive condition that significantly affects the way they learn new things. Using 'people with' helps to emphasize that this diverse group are people first and foremost. These learning disabilities are often defined on a spectrum, from mild to moderate or severe. Some people with so-called mild learning disability can talk easily and look after themselves. However, people with profound and multiple learning disability may find it extremely challenging to communicate or may have more than one disability. In England, the Department of Health estimated that 65,000 children and 145,000 English adults had severe or profound learning disabilities, and 1.2 million had mild or moderate learning disabilities (Department of Health 2009).

The term 'learning-disabled artists' is used in this text to indicate that people with learning disabilities are disabled by society, including the structures and institutions of learning that exist in society. This reflects the insights of the social model of disability (although for a fuller discussion see Goodey 2011). What is most important to note is that learning disability is a socially constructed, histori-

cally contingent and contested category of being human. Language is dynamic, and even new terminology for disability that aims to dignify difference tends to be quickly appropriated and used negatively due to fear of difference (Sinason 2010). In the United States, the term 'intellectual disability' tends to be used, the term learning disability referring only to those people with relatively mild learning difficulties such as dyslexia. While in the United Kingdom, despite alternatives such as 'intellectual disabilities' or 'learning difficulties' being proffered by advocacy movements and used elsewhere in English-speaking countries, 'learning disability' continues to be the predominant term in policy, medical and psychological discourse (Emerson and Hatton 2008).

Thus our decision to use the term 'people with learning disabilities' in this book is pragmatic – it is widely recognized by those who work in the field in the United Kingdom, and we hope that using the term helps to ensure ongoing interdisciplinary conversations and attracts professionals in the field who can then see the fantastic collaborative work that is shown here. It replaces problematic historical terminology such as 'mental retardation', 'fools', 'mental handicap' and 'idiotcy'. Although we understand that some people will also reject the term learning disability and its difficult roots in individualizing medical and psychological discourse, using any term is difficult because it risks setting up a binary of 'us' and 'them' which we hope to, at least partially, overcome through arts practice.

What contribution does Inclusive Art make to Contemporary Art?

Inclusive Art is participating in the continuing redefinition of what art is or can be. It is redefining what art making is, and where quality artistic output can come from. Inclusive Art can be understood to be related to a range of collaborative and socially engaged practices. These include community arts, relational aesthetics, dialogic art, littoral art, experimental communities, participatory, interventionist or research-based art. Such practices stem in part from the work of Allan Kaprow in the late 1960s; the integration of feminist education theory into art practice; and the productions and writing of Suzanne Lacy.

Unlike some social and participatory practice, Inclusive Artists do not tend to conceptualize participants as primarily 'in need of help or representation' (although they may feel pressure to do so in order to pursue certain funding streams). Rather, they consider and value the creative contribution that each participant can make. Thus Inclusive Art is not justified by a deficit logic; instead, there is a creative case for collaborating with learning-disabled artists based on the unique contributions they can bring to a work. So while socially engaged art that falls under the term 'relational aesthetics' (Bourriaud 2002) has tended to be the result of a single artist's vision (a strategy that risks treating people as materials), Inclusive Arts places a greater emphasis on collaboration, communication, exchange, relationships and the creative talent of collaborators.

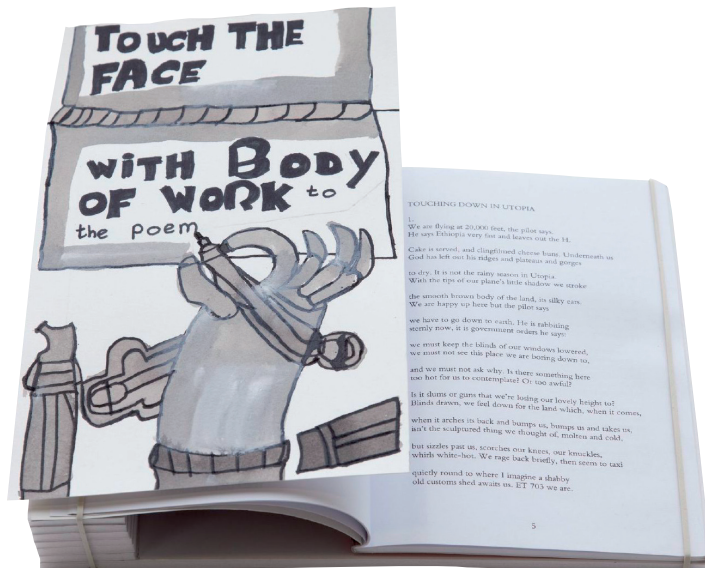


Thus Inclusive Arts Practice has similarities to forms of dialogic and social practice that place an emphasis on process (Kester 2004; Lacy 2010; Helguera 2011). This emphasis on process has been referred to elsewhere as involving 'the de-materialization of art' (Lippard 1997). In fact, for Lippard the move from art objects to public performances and installations represented an anti-capitalist move away from the commodity status of art. We share an affection for performance and its somewhat irreducible nature; however, in Chapter Three we also discuss the importance of another form of 'material thinking' which is very aware of the properties of particular art materials and their relative merits in helping people to express themselves. This may involve a visual Inclusive Arts practitioner carefully selecting 'materials that listen' and spaces that are 'conducive to listening' rather than focusing solely on the human relations in a work (see also Macpherson and Fox, forthcoming).

In this way, the relational component of Inclusive Arts can be understood as existing both between people, and between people, materials and the spaces within which they practice, exhibit and perform. Some critics suggest that this sort of collaborative, socially engaged work might be an invalid form of Contemporary Art because of 'a prioritization of social effect over artistic quality' (Bishop 2006, p. 181). However, we believe artistic quality and social engagement are not necessarily in opposition. Rather, Inclusive Art raises questions over where the aesthetic for which the work is being appreciated exists – the art might sit primarily in the final products; in the process (and the capacity to convey that to a wider audience); in the encounters and exchanges between different artists and how they are negotiated; or in the construction of frameworks or conceptual ideas within which high-quality work can be made. Some of these answers to the question 'Where is the art in all of this?' are explored in more detail in Chapters Two and Three.

◀ Tina Jenner
Rocket Artists
Untitled
Important Things
project
Indian Ink on paper
2007

▶ Ntiense Eno
Amooquaye Intoart
UK
**Bookmark for
'Touching Down In
Utopia' by Hubert
Moore**
Indian Ink on card
2014



Situating Inclusive Arts

What are the potential aesthetic effects of Inclusive Arts?

There is no single, overarching aesthetic effect to Inclusive Arts Practice. Communication (through and with a variety of media and movements) tends to be central. However, Inclusive Arts does not have to rely on simplistic forms of positive identification or communication in order to be judged a success. Rather, absurdity, shock, eccentricity, doubt, confusion, disgust, antagonism or sheer pleasure might also be aesthetic effects that Inclusive Arts Practice achieves. This is partly illustrated here in the work of Kelvin Burke and Jo Offer, the inclusive design team behind this book, who were also commissioned to produce a CD cover for Heavy Load. This commission involved making and rendering some packing cases that looked as if they had



▲ Kelvin Burke, Jo Offer, Rocket Artists
Going Places
Mixed media installation
2012

"We took boxes, with Jane – police station, stuck in my mums garden, beach, tunnel, in a tree." – Kelvin

"We started off working on a design brief and ended up with a happening." – Jo

► Boxes appearing on the Wild Things CD cover



been taken on extensive travels. The pictures here trace the process of this work, revealing where Kelvin suggested they travel with these boxes – including the police station, his mother's grave, and stopping by the side of the road where someone was unloading a van in order to look like they were also being unloaded.

Such outputs reveal some of the ways in which people with learning disabilities' culture, logics and modes of existence disrupt certain taken-for-granted elements of society and ideas of what art is and can be (a point we explore in more detail in Chapter Three). They also touch on a range of aesthetic markers of existence and indicate that Inclusive Arts can elucidate a complex constellation of concerns – including the roles of love, death and pleasure in the lives of people with learning disabilities. The potential for learning-disabled artists to engage with topics such as sex and death, and with practices such as life drawing, remain taboos in the context of their everyday lives – a point we address in more depth in the final chapter.

Is this Outsider Art?

Outsider Art – art produced by people with no formal training who exist on the margins of society – is a definition given to work that is constructed outside of the critical Contemporary Art world (MacLagan 2009). The idea of Outsider Art (a phrase coined by Roger Cardinal in 1972) is a synonym for Jean Dubuffet's term Art Brut (where 'brut' means literally raw or unsweetened). Inclusive Art is also produced by people who might be considered outsiders, who sometimes have limited formal training. However, while Outsider Art is often thought to be contaminated by too conscious a relationship with the art world, and is often associated with myths of 'authenticity', 'purity' or a 'lone genius' artist, the emphasis in Inclusive Arts is on the entire humanity of the producers of work (not just their differences), and on the potential of collaboration and creative exchange with people from diverse backgrounds as well as with the critical Contemporary Art world.

There have been some attempts to describe the aesthetic qualities of Outsider Artists' work. For example, James Brett, founder of The Museum of Everything, suggests that there is very little appraisal of time, a limited notion of the market, and limited self-conscious intention. However, when claims are made that there is a specific aesthetic to learning-disabled artists' work, we risk claiming that their work is 'all the same', solely emphasizing difference, essentializing their outputs, and ultimately devaluing their work and their roles as individual artists and as collaborators. As Massimiliano Gioni, in a conversation with Brett about the exhibition *The Appendix of Everything*, puts it:

I'm suspicious when people identify the disabled in the myth of the primal artist: I think that's just a myth of origins. Art is as much about control as it is about expression ... Even in the work of the most disturbed person, there is a logic and control that makes those objects interesting.

(Massimiliano Gioni, Artistic Director of the Trussardi Foundation in Milan, in Brett 2011, p. xii)

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Some facilitators and collectors interested in promoting the supposed qualities of Outsider Art are concerned with simply unlocking the desire to create. For example, James Brett states of Outsider Art that 'In the best situations, there is no input, or not substantially so; and for me, the results reflect the creative language all of us have from birth' (Brett 2011, p. xix). However, we prefer to draw attention to the collaborative process and the necessity for high-quality materials, foundations and starting points (see Chapter Three). We are also interested in how learning-disabled artists might find routes for training, and how to help learning-disabled artists place their work in dialogue with other existing forms of Contemporary Art. This is not for the purpose of supporting people to be 'the same as' any so-called 'mainstream', but rather to place their talents and senses of creativity within a wider context and alongside other practising artists from different backgrounds.

For example, Alice Fox's work with the Rockets started with setting up courses at the University of Brighton where the Rockets could work alongside undergraduate and postgraduate students. She would also support the Rockets to look through existing books of artwork and say what they did and didn't like, and why. For people who have experienced very limited opportunities to express their preferences for anything, let alone for art, this was a radical move. We address some of these issues in more depth in our final chapter, where we contemplate the possible futures of Inclusive Arts, training in the field, and the provision of professional training opportunities for learning-disabled artists.

How should work be labelled? If at all...

The issue of biography and the labelling of work produced by, or in conjunction with, learning-disabled artists has been a topic of significant debate in recent years, including in the United Kingdom through a series of Arts Council-funded conferences entitled 'Creative Minds'. Some artists and their organizations would prefer that the work speaks for itself and that the biographies of the artists and their diagnostic labels are not drawn attention to at all. Inclusive Artists must decide, in conjunction with their collaborators or their representatives, what work they want the artwork to do, and what role giving it a label has in that process.

In a gallery context we think that if the biographies of the makers, including their learning disabilities, are ignored entirely, the risk is that we miss the political work their art might do if it is labelled. That is not to say that all Inclusive Artwork should be labelled – labelling something can affect how a piece is 'read' by a viewer, can reinstate labels that the maker might be seeking to overcome, and can burden them with somehow being representative of learning disability. Rather, how a work is labelled is an issue that should be carefully reflected on. Such work, like the whole of this book, is '... forced to walk a tightrope between complicity and critique' (Auslander 1994, p. 31). It is worth heeding Derrida's (1982) warning that 'by using against the edifice the instruments or stones available in the house ... one risks ceaselessly confirming, consolidating ... that which one allegedly deconstructs' (p. 223).



► Desmond Lake
Rocket Artists
Untitled
Ink on paper
2006

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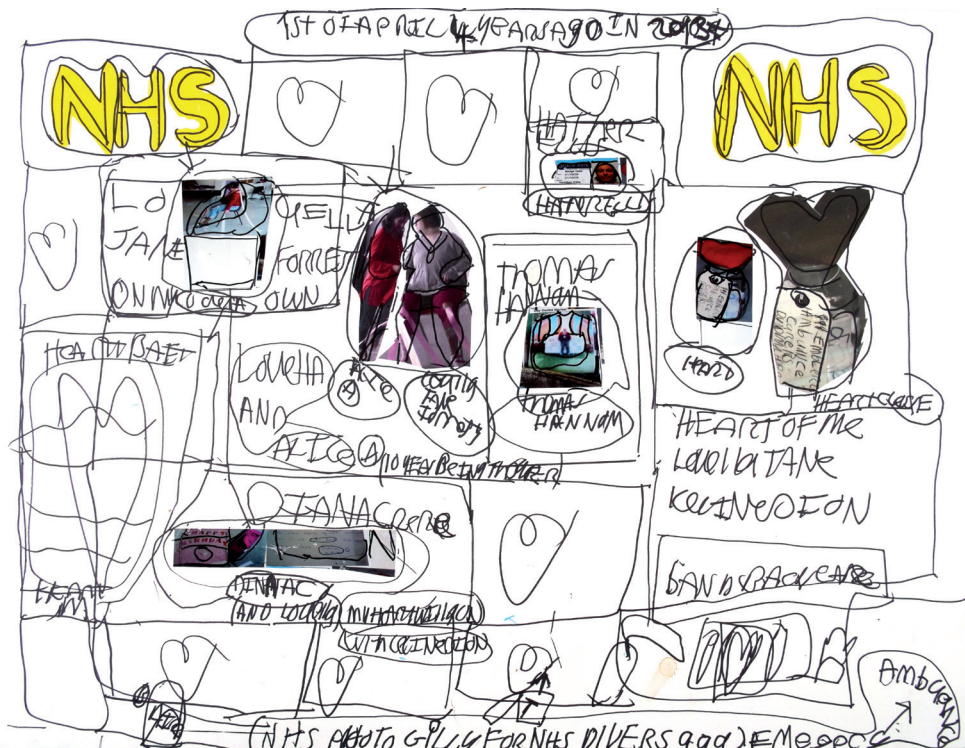
▲ Restless Dance Theatre
Australia

The issue is not only whether medical diagnostic labels should be used when describing work, but also when artwork should be placed within the wider socio-political context of people with learning disabilities' everyday lives. If people view work solely as aesthetic 'entertainment' and ignore the wider context of the everyday lives of people with learning disabilities, the risk is an over-romanticized understanding of their lives. At worst, the art could serve as a band-aid for wider social ills and obscure the harsher realities of learning disability – provoking an 'isn't it all lovely for them, doing their art' response. This is a mistake of some commentaries on Outsider Art, which see characteristics such as 'isolation', 'repetition' and 'crude mark-making' as solely positive, rather than as potentially symptomatic of the socio-historical position of the makers (see Macpherson 2015).

How does this work relate to the everyday lives of people with learning disabilities?

People with learning disabilities tend to be undervalued members of society, are much more likely to live in poverty, and are much more likely to suffer hate crime than their non-disabled counterparts. It is estimated that around 1.5 million people in the UK have a learning disability and over 3,000 of these people have spent over a year in an 'assessment centre', often a long way from family, and which is not designed to be a permanent residence. Many people with learning disabilities do not have access to any regular creative leisure activity outside their residential environment, despite the proven benefits of such activities for health, well-being and resilience (Reynolds 2002; Staricoff 2004; Macpherson et al. 2015).

Taking the United Kingdom as an example, many people with learning disabilities find themselves in abusive situations that violate their human rights (JCHR 2008), and just eight per cent of the estimated total population of adults of working age with a learning disability are thought to be in paid employment (Emerson and Hatton 2008). The majority live in residential care homes or attend daycare,



▲ Louella Forrest
Rocket Artists
NHS
Ink and collage on paper
2012

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and are currently facing benefit cuts and reductions in services. Their lives tend to be characterized by a high degree of compliance with the goals and agendas of others, and for some their basic human rights are not being met. Many of these challenges and forms of abuse faced by people with learning disabilities in the United Kingdom are held in common with people with learning disabilities globally.

In this context, talking about the role of art in their lives and the role of their lives in the art world may seem irrelevant, unrealistic or simply naïve, but to take this view risks perpetuating the social position that people with learning disabilities often find themselves in, and ignores the role of culture as a producer of personal and social change. At times we think it is important that Inclusive Artists directly address the social context of the lives of people with learning disabilities and practically enable advocacy where appropriate.

That is not to suggest that all work should be explicitly political, limited to social commentary or advocacy. However, we believe Inclusive Art can be just one piece of a socio-political-cultural jigsaw that needs to be put together in order to enhance the lives of people both with and without a learning disability. Social service and health professionals who encounter the artwork can be helped to see the humanity and communication capacities of people they work alongside. Public audience encounters with Inclusive Art can help challenge stigma and oppression, and raise awareness of the creative contributions that people with learning disabilities can make to society. Of course, the outcomes of audience encounters are somewhat uncertain and might, at worst, reinforce stigma (an issue we discuss in Chapter Three). We can only encourage artists to keep producing challenging, risky work that is contextually well informed and that they believe in.

What are the transformative potentials of Inclusive Arts?

Inclusive Arts can be a transformative force in individual people's lives, in researchers' understanding of the category 'learning disability', in forms of creative practice, and a force for societal good. By highlighting the transformative features of Inclusive Art we do not wish to detract from the creative value of the artwork (cf. Holden 2004), we simply wish to highlight that this sort of art making has additional benefits for participants and audiences which extend beyond the art output itself. It is work that, at best, can help us to re-vision how we see the world, how we value people and what we understand as intelligence. Of course, some 'art for art's sake' critics will be sighing at the suggestion of 'transformative potential' or 'social good', as if the mere suggestion of this devalues the work as a Contemporary Art form. As Holden (2004) suggests in his report *Capturing Cultural Value*:

The arguments seem to have got stuck in the old intellectual tramlines very quickly: instrumental vs. intrinsic value, floppy bow ties vs. hard-headed 'realists', excellence vs. access. Worse still, the instrumental/intrinsic debate has tended to polarize on class lines: aesthetic values for the middle classes, instrumental outcomes for the poor and disadvantaged.

(Holden 2004, p. 25)

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However, collaborative work with marginalized groups does not have to be a purely instrumental form of social work. It can also achieve excellence on a range of measures of artistic quality, and can even challenge those measures. For inclusion and diversity are not the enemies of excellence (Knell and Taylor 2011); rather, there is a creative case for diversity that is gaining increasing recognition (Mahamdallie 2011). For example, prior research has shown that collaboration with people with complex communication needs can help enhance creativity by forcing all practitioners to think about new tempos of work, new spaces of practice, new creative ways of facilitating non-verbal dialogue, and new media through which to enhance creative expression (Macpherson and Bleasdale 2012). Thus in the studio the transformative potential of Inclusive Arts is two-way – everybody can derive creative benefits and new insights into ‘self’ from collaborative work.

Furthermore, within the studio space or other creative arts environment, there is also often a much needed antidote to the reductionism, stigma and oppression that people with learning disabilities face in their everyday lives. Arts activities also provide a release from the controlled environments encountered in residential, supported living and daycare facilities. For example, research has shown how art activities help in reducing the pressure to be socially normative and enhance a sense of personal freedom (Reynolds 2002).

► Kelvin Burke
Rocket Artists
Life Drawing
2012
Festival of the World,
Southbank Centre, London



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While this book is a hopeful text, we should not overstate the achievements and reach of Inclusive Art activities. There are continuing problems for people with learning disabilities in even accessing mainstream or community creative leisure activities outside residential environments (Reynolds 2002), while poorly facilitated activities may do more harm than good (Springham 2008). Goodley and Moore (2002), in their research on disabled people's performing arts, show that gains made can be quickly neutralized through negative service connections, environments and relationships. Certainly, research in this area needs to acknowledge that the temporary sense of belonging and sense of psychological empowerment that arts projects can achieve does not necessarily relate directly to broader forms of social inclusion or empowerment (White 2009; Hall 2013). Time, commitment, ongoing funding and links not only with services but with mainstream arts organizations and funders are needed for work to achieve the highest standards, including longevity of impact in people's lives (Macpherson et al. 2014). Otherwise we risk this work being inappropriately utilized as a short-term intervention. Issues regarding how we research and document the 'impact' of Inclusive Arts are addressed in Chapter Five on research, while the need for time to forge successful collaborative partnerships, such as Alice's work with the Rockets over the past twelve years, is discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.



Rocket Artists with University
of Brighton's MA Inclusive Arts
Practice students and staff

▼ Jane Diakonicolas, Martyn Lake
Drawing Conversations
2013

▲ Alice Fox, Kelvin Burke
Studio work
2010

◀ Jane Fox, Tina Jenner
2012

So what is the difference between an Inclusive Artist and a community worker?

The emergence of new forms of socially engaged art practice, including Inclusive Arts, has raised questions regarding how this work might differ from other sorts of community work (Bishop 2006). While clearly there are overlaps, Inclusive Arts primarily pursues good quality art rather than a clearly defined social or political goal (although socio-political issues may emerge as relevant in the process). This requires the artist to have a knowledge of the role and effect of materials or practices during a workshop, and requires an artist who is prepared to take risks rather than practising from a (traditionally conceived) evidence base or ethical standpoint. In this way, the artist-facilitator can push at the boundaries of meaning making and exist as a collaborator in a creative exchange – opening up questions. The demands of funders and those in positions of power can risk limiting artists who work alongside people with learning disabilities to a closed, predetermined approach. Therefore the challenge is to help those people re-envision what an open Inclusive Arts process can achieve.

Audience encounters 1: What can be achieved when audiences experience this work?

Arts activities alone cannot achieve a better world for people with learning disabilities. However, audience encounters with this work provide promising glimpses of a better world – thus artwork potentially can be a harbinger for a socio-political situation yet to come (cf. Ranciere 2009). It seems, then, that Inclusive Arts, like other forms of art making, inhabits a productive yet contradictory relationship to social change. This relationship is characterized by a tension between a faith in art's autonomy and belief in art as bound to the promise of a better world. As an Inclusive Artist, it is necessary to come to terms with this tension and be aware that the other parts of the socio-political jigsaw also need to be in place, including finances, support assistance and service buy-in, in order to improve the lives of people with learning disabilities.

Audience encounters 2: How does this work change how people with learning disabilities are viewed?

Work by people with visible impairments can be extremely important for addressing how disabled people are looked at and how they see themselves. For many people with visible disabilities (which includes many of those with visible manifestations of learning disability), visual dynamics such as staring, glancing and avoiding can become a mode of oppression and a marker of difference, establishing and maintaining the position of people with unconventional bodies as 'other'. As Garland-Thomson writes:

At the most immediate level, disability is constructed through complex rituals of staring and avoidance that occur when people confront a person with an empty sleeve, a prosthetic limb, a scarred face, a stutter.

(Garland-Thomson 2007, pp. 18–19)

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▲ Joseph Gregory
Rocket Artists
Suspected of what?
photographic series
2015

The Rockets' performances, like other performances by people with learning disabilities, play with these issues of disabled visibility at both a symbolic and a corporeal level. Their performance work elevates and draws attention to the sort of body and mind that has tended to be avoided and not highly valued in society. They invite people to look, see and hear; sometimes even to see the involuntary movements that are the antithesis of an idealized controlled and ordered (often masculine) subject of modernity. At best they are seen in ways that unselfconsciously depart from previously established modes of disabling looking, interrupting what Garland-Thomson (2009) refers to as 'conventional regimes' of disabled visibility. In such performances, the Rockets are not passive in their encounters with the audience. Rather (to some extent) they manage the gaze of the live audience by asking them to look and then looking right back at them, even laughing at them (see front cover). This attempt to play with conventional regimes of disabled visibility is just one potential element of the transformative potential of Inclusive Art making through performance, photography and film.



▲ Heavy Load
UK
No Limits Festival, Berlin
2009

Audience encounters 3: What can audiences take away from this work?

Learning disability tends to be a field dominated by policy discourse which follows a 'deficit logic' and modern biomedicine whose medicalization of learning disability can leave the context and humanity of those people with learning disabilities ignored. Yet audience encounters with Inclusive Art productions can help parents, carers, health workers, policy-makers and other members of the public see the talent of the artists and re-evaluate the worth and capacities of individual lives. For example, in Chapter Two we discuss how the Rockets' performance at a conference on childhood disability in Brussels helped conference attendees (who were largely from medical and psychological backgrounds) re-envision who they were talking about.

Such encounters can help to challenge scientists' understanding of people with learning disabilities as 'recipients' of research, and re-view them as agents of change. Of course, we cannot entirely predict the effect this work will have on

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any audience. As Holden (2004) rightly states, 'Cultural experience is the sum of the interaction between an individual and an artifact or an experience, and that interaction is unpredictable and must be open' (p. 9). Therefore it seems the best that Inclusive Arts practitioners and their collaborators can do is make work they believe to be of a good quality, rather than necessarily second-guess the audience reception of this work. The audience might bring and reinforce prejudice and negative assumptions about people with learning disabilities through the work, but also they may not. Work that seeks to directly tackle stigma and oppression rather than focusing on talent may inadvertently reinforce stigma and oppression through re-stating it. A quality and talent 'can do' approach to Inclusive Art avoids this pitfall and keeps the focus forward – on producing good art/music/performance.



◀ Rocket Artists
**Measures of
Bodies**
performance at
the Musée de la
Médecine,
Brussels
2010

How does Inclusive Arts differ from Disability Art?

This book is written amid ongoing tensions amongst arts practitioners, commissioners, umbrella organizations and academics surrounding what constitutes Disability Art, the aims and remit of this work, who has the right to practice as a D/disabled artist, and whether such a separate category needs to exist within an arts funding context. Some practitioners and commissioners define Disability Art as any work produced by an artist who identifies as D/disabled. However, for others Disability Art must communicate something of the experience of being D/disabled, and remain with a capital 'D' to emphasize the importance of Disabled identity and politics (Sutherland 2005). Both these definitions have left integrated companies and collaborative companies excluded from certain funding streams. Elsewhere in the arts and humanities, these debates about what classifies as D/disability art and what sort of work should be funded have been explored in some depth (see for example Crutchfield and Epstein 2000; Koppers 2001; Darke 2003). Some Inclusive Artists would see themselves as facilitating the work of their collaborators as Disabled artists, others would distance themselves from the more inward-looking strands of the Disability Arts movement and share instead an affinity with all those artists who have historically been placed at the margins.

How does Inclusive Arts differ from Art Therapy and occupational therapy?

All arts practice can be therapeutic; however, different approaches to arts facilitation have different underlying motivations and expectations. In Inclusive Arts, the main motivation is to come together to make art or to experience creative exchanges, whereas in Art Therapy and occupational therapy, art is used primarily as a tool to address a problem. Inclusive Arts can be understood to be therapeutic because they provide a supportive environment and encourages communication and creative expression of ideas, experiences and/or ambitions. However, in Inclusive Art the focus is primarily on the artistic product, whereas in Art Therapy the emphasis tends to be on using the art making process for healing and emotional release through work that is not necessarily intended for public display (that is not to say that this won't result in high-quality work, but this is not the primary intention). In occupational therapy, art tends to be used as a tool for empowering the client to fulfil their roles in a variety of environments (Sumsion 2000, p. 308). This tends to involve the use of art as a tool for aiding communication, self-expression, diversion, assessment or treatment planning (Lloyd and Papas 1999).

Inclusive Arts practitioners, occupational therapists and art therapists may have overlapping forms of practice that encourage meaningful content. They may also have a shared appreciation of the importance of non-verbal modes of expression. However, Inclusive Artists may also equip participants with the skills to express themselves adequately to a wider audience than the individual facilitator. Furthermore, Inclusive Arts activities are focused on creative collaborative exchanges, rather than the support of 'function performance' for

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occupational roles. As Mark Williams (director and founder of Heart n Soul) put it in a recent interview with The Guardian newspaper:

If you present yourself as a therapist, that's what you'll always be. There are clearly beneficial and therapeutic aspects to our work, but that's not why we do it. It's always about the art. One of the reasons we're able to attract such great collaborations is that we create an environment where anything is possible. Our singers aren't stuck in genres. They're not over analytical – they're just doing it. There is something about that purity that seems to be the essence of creativity.

(Mark Williams, in Groves 2012)



◀ Rocket Artists
'No' Apron
Fabric, transfers and
ink
2014

Rocket Artists
performed response
to the question "Why
do you think that your
work is more than
therapy?" Creative
Minds Conference,
Brighton

What are the characteristics of good quality Inclusive Arts?

Historically, quality in the arts has been associated with the refinement and perfection of particular classical techniques and the notion of individual masters and masterpieces. However, in the past century these understandings of quality in the arts have been challenged. In fact, some believe promoting the principle of quality is itself problematic, hierarchical and masculinist, likely to erase rather than promote what it seeks out. Certainly, the term quality can obscure as much as it reveals (Matarasso 2013, p. 4).

We think that while it is difficult to set out hard and fast criteria for quality in Inclusive Arts, it is possible to make distinctions between better and worse practice. For today the debate on participatory art has moved well beyond simplistic advocacy of socially engaged arts as 'inherently good' (Belfiore and Bennett 2008). Best practice matters, and we believe art made with people with learning disabilities can achieve a whole array of markers of quality. The work does not have to be solely about connection, empathy or recognition – in fact, to place learning-disabled artists solely in this category would be to devalue the diversity of their work and burden them with the limiting notion of authenticity. Instead, their work and their collaborative productions are part of a growing Disability Arts culture which is valued both for its quality and for the unique dispositions, experiences, capacities and aesthetic effects that individuals bring to a work.

Such work is achieving existing standards of quality in the arts 'in the wider context of what is considered to be good in the arts today', a principle of quality that Matarasso (2013, p. 9) advocates in his paper. It is also pushing at the boundaries of those existing standards through placing trust in the creative impulses, production skills and curatorial ideas of people with learning disabilities. In Chapter Three we discuss these standards in more depth and call for a greater focus on 'the ethics of encounter' when evaluating quality in Inclusive Arts practice with people with learning disabilities.

We also hope that quality practice will enable a greater recognition of the capacity of learning-disabled artists to challenge who a choreographer, a director, a curator and an artist is. This book's illustrations are dedicated to redefining those parameters and illustrating the diversity and quality of practice stemming from Inclusive Art collaborations. In so doing, we hope to help Inclusive Artists and commentators develop a sensitivity to all the possible aesthetic effects, temporalities, liminalities and tensions that run through their work and the potentials of these in a gallery setting or audience encounter. We also hope to challenge a certain public imaginary of the Contemporary Artist which tends to remain stuck in the idea of an individual personality who is able to validate their work by personally articulating it within a complex conceptual basis.

Work made with people with complex communication needs that is unresolved or provokes discomfort is as important to see as work that is solely uplifting. At the Side by Side symposium at the Royal Festival Hall, some key features of quality Inclusive Arts were identified by participants through a range of formats (music,

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gestural, performative, verbal and visual). These features included unpredictability, shared inspiration, being together, taking risks, a freedom to experiment, the potential to shock, and an openness to each other and the diversity of languages (visual, verbal, gestural, sonic) in which we communicate. Everyone seemed to agree that the creative exchanges and development work of Inclusive Arts resulted in productions that could not have been achieved in isolation.

In order to enable and recognize some of these diverse attributes of high-quality Inclusive Art, the collaborator needs to develop a diverse skill set. This is discussed in more depth in Chapter Three, where we explore how effective Inclusive Artists enable choice and freedom, allow time, establish trust, embrace risk and chaos, are open to all forms of communication, and reflect on their practice. An openness to possibility and potential seem to be crucial here if genuine forms of dialogue or encounter are to be opened up. While some people believe such features of arts practitioners are innate personality traits, we believe they are modes of attunement that can be learnt and that, over time, can become habitual. For this to occur, there needs to be a willingness for 'relinquishing power in situations where you are defined as the professional' (Goodley and Moore 2002, p. 64).



In some contexts, the relationship that is established is the artwork and the challenge might be to communicate that to a wider audience. In other contexts, the facilitator may need to be prepared to 'dissolve' into the artwork and think of themselves as developing new 'inter-corporeal' or 'inter-subjective' forms of collective understanding that would not have been possible without the group (Macpherson 2009). In this way the term 'Inclusive Art' might be a little misleading, for it implies a coherent individual stretching out to 'include' another – however, what the practice of Inclusive Art requires is collaborative dialogue: an acceptance of our incompleteness as practitioners and a capacity to unlearn as well as learn from each other. The artist-facilitator is not the expert in this relationship. Rather, they are an artist who is coming into being collaboratively. These capacities of the artist relate to a feminist aesthetic not dissimilar to that advocated by the performances and writing of Peggy Phelan (1993).

What's in the rest of the book?

This book is divided into six illustrated chapters. Chapter Two explores issues of co-curation and audience encounters with work. It includes conversations with Jude Kelly (Artistic Director of the Southbank Centre), Anna Cutler (Director of Learning at the Tate) and Alice herself about the process of inclusively curating the Side by Side exhibition. Chapter Three identifies and illustrates some common features of successful practice and there are conversations with members of the Rockets. Chapter Four presents a series of conversations in more depth with other key practitioners in the field, including Dean Rodney and Mark Williams from Heart n Soul; Declan Kennedy and Andrew Pike from KCAT; Kate Adams (MBE), co-founder of Hastings-based Project Art Works; Charlotte Hollinshead from Action Space; Bethan Kendrick and Jacobus Flynn. These people haven't been on a course or had specific training in this emergent field of practice, they have learnt 'on the job' and share a common ethos – an understanding that there are creative and potentially transformative benefits for everyone through being involved in an Inclusive Arts process. They also understand that inclusion involves a form of two-way exchange and transformation, rather than a process of incorporation.

Chapter Five addresses what Inclusive Arts Research could look like – for, while there has been significant work on how to research the 'social impact' of the arts, there has been less on how research agendas, ambitions and modes of validating knowledge might be shaped by an Inclusive Arts agenda. Chapter Six reflects on the future of Inclusive Arts, with contributions from a host of international Inclusive Arts organizations, and consideration given to defining the field, funding, taboo topics, professionalization, education and training.

◀ Project Art Works
UK
Fabrica, Brighton
Installation – boxes,
cardboard,
video projection
2014

▶ Martyn Lake,
Jane Diakonikolas
**Drawing
Conversations**
Site-specific
performative
installation
2013



A note from the authors

We hope that academics, critics, students and curators who read this book come away with a greater understanding of the significance, tensions and challenges in this field of arts practice and how these forms of creative collaboration differ from what has traditionally been understood as Outsider Art. We hope artist practitioners who read this book are also inspired to acknowledge their role as collaborators rather than facilitators and to co-produce high-quality, cutting edge work.

We have enjoyed the collaborative process of writing this book together; in fact the act of writing and talking about writing has involved its own forms of artistry and skill akin to those of an Inclusive Artist. Before logical sentences were strung together for the purposes of this book, a much messier interaction occurred. As Worth and Poyner write:

Speaking about creative practice as a precursor to writing allows for the reflection to emerge from the voice and the body, with breath and energy and rhythm, with dips and pauses, voices overtake each other, with ideas that flip back and forth, reaching for something which has yet to find its form in language, which formulates itself in the creative exchange between two people. This is the pleasurable struggle of attempting to 'draw' the processes of creative practice with words.

(Worth and Poyner 2011, p. 149)

In pinning complex thoughts together in words, there is inevitably a loss of nuance and ambiguity, qualities that are very important for decent conversation about arts practice. We hope that these qualities can be re-introduced in the conversations and creative dialogues which will inevitably follow.

Paradox

We understand that by writing this text we inhabit a paradox. Spoken and written forms of communication have disabling affects that the arts can, at least partially, overcome. Given our positions as university lecturers, we must inhabit this paradox and shuttle between different subject positions and modes of working (see Macpherson 2011), walking the tightrope between complicity and critique – at times challenging and at times working within existing understandings of art, learning disability and scholarship.

A note on editing the conversations in Chapters Three and Four

In editing the transcripts presented here, we have had to confront the tension between conventions of textual representation and retaining the unique voice and speech patterns of learning-disabled artists. Sometimes people with learning disabilities' speech patterns and explanations can challenge what is conventionally

understood to constitute a narrative. This raises questions over how voices are received and the extent to which the onus should be on the listener (or reader) to attune themselves to the voices on the page. We chose to edit extracts for clarity of message and 'sense'. There are other more creative and performative texts that could have been written from the same material that is presented here, but this would have conflicted with our goal of sharing the learning of artists and their organizations in an accessible format. At times, the artwork illustrated here says more with less.



▲ John Cull
Rocket Artists
Where is Frida Kahlo?
Taking Off exhibition
Acrylic on canvas
lifesize portraits 3m x 3m
2005

What this part of the book is about

- Inclusive Art and why it is important
- Inclusive Arts is not Outsider Art or Art Therapy
- Inclusive Arts sits well beside other sorts of art made today
- Inclusive Art does not have to be just fun or pretty – it can be full of lots of different ideas and stories, it might be difficult
- Inclusive Art is important and everybody should have access to it
- Good quality Inclusive Artwork is important for audiences to see and can help change people's attitudes



inclusive art

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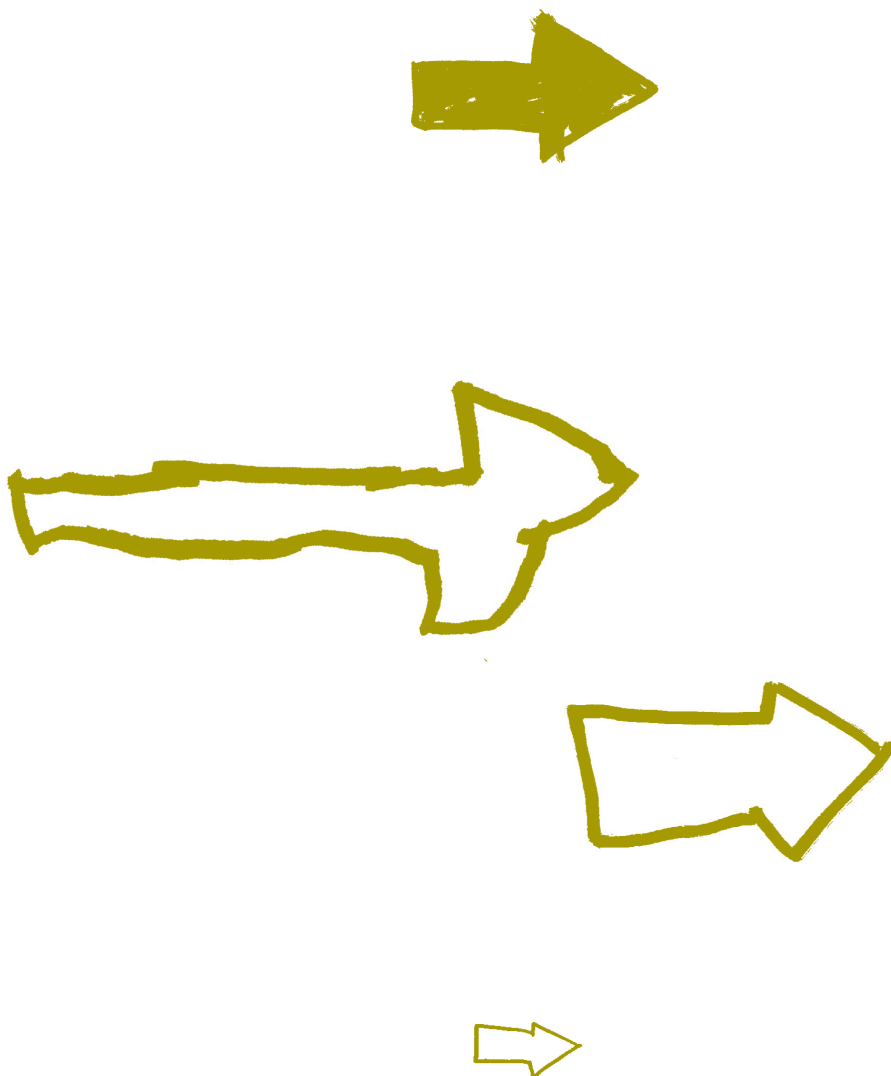
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Inclusive Arts Practice and Research

A Critical Manifesto

Inclusive Arts Practice and Research interrogates an exciting and newly emergent field: the creative collaborations between learning-disabled and non-learning-disabled artists that are increasingly taking place in performance and the visual arts.

Alice Fox and Hannah Macpherson interview artists, curators and key practitioners in the UK and USA. The authors introduce and articulate this new practice, and situate it in relation to associated approaches. Fox and Macpherson candidly describe the tensions and difficulties involved, and explore how the work sits within contemporary art and critical theory.

This publication inhabits the philosophy of Inclusive Arts Practice, with Jo Offer, Alice Fox and Kelvin Burke making up the design team behind the striking look of the book, which contains over 250 full-colour images, plus essays and illustrated statements. *Inclusive Arts Practice and Research* is a landmark publication in an emerging field of creative practice across all the arts. It presents a radical call for collaboration on equal terms, and will be an invaluable resource for anyone studying, researching or working within this dynamic new territory.

Alice Fox is a Principal Lecturer and Associate Head in the College of Arts and Humanities, University of Brighton.

Dr Hannah Macpherson is a Senior Lecturer in Human Geography at the University of Brighton.

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