

Curating the Medical Humanities

A one-day symposium at Birkbeck, University of London

Thursday 13th September 2018, 9.30 – 6pm

Curating the Medical Humanities considers some of the key ethical, intellectual and practical challenges involved in curating medical humanities exhibitions, particularly in relation to questions of audience, accessibility, participation and public engagement.

The workshop developed out of the organisers' experiences curating the exhibition *Mr A Moves in Mysterious Ways: Selected Artists from the Adamson Collection*, which was shown at the Peltz Gallery in summer 2017. Curating the exhibition raised significant ethical questions about exhibiting materials produced in art therapeutic contexts, particularly in relation to issues of ownership, creative control, the naming of previously anonymous artists/makers, and the categorisation of such works as either art or medical record.

The workshop brings together academics, artists and curators who are engaged in developing and delivering exhibitions relating to experiences of health and the body. Its aim is to share knowledge of these projects and reflect on best practice across the field, through addressing a number of inter-related questions:

- How do we conceptualise and define the 'audience/s' for the work being done in the medical humanities?
- What constitutes a successful medical humanities exhibition?
- How can exhibitions utilise notions of co-production, for example by working with constituent communities?
- How can exhibitions inform or improve experience of health, as opposed to historicizing or critiquing them?
- What are the reciprocal relationships between curatorial practice and the medical humanities (i.e. how might each challenge conceived ideas or practices)?
- How useful is the term 'medical humanities' to those working outside the academy?

Venue: Keynes Library, Birkbeck School of Arts, 43 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PD. The Keynes Library is on the first floor, and is accessible via lift or stairs. Please let us know in advance (h.tilley@bbk.co.uk or fjohnstone@hotmail.com) if you have any additional access requirements.

This workshop has been organised by Heather Tilley and Fiona Johnstone in association with Birkbeck's Centre for Medical Humanities (<http://www.bcmh.bbk.ac.uk>). It is supported by a Wellcome Trust / Birkbeck Conference and Symposia Support Award.

We will be using the Twitter hashtag **#CuratingMedHums2018** – please join in!

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Programme

- 09.00 to 09.30 Registration
- 09.30 Introduction to the aims of the workshop:
Heather Tilley and Fiona Johnstone
- 09.50 to 11.30 **Panel One: Curating Disability**
- Sue Austin (artist) [pre-recorded]
 - Jocelyn Dodd (University of Leicester)
 - Tony Heaton (Shape Arts)
 - Katherine Ott (National Museum of American History)
- Respondent / Chair: Trish Wheatley
- 11.30 to 12.00 *Coffee break*
- 12.00 to 1.30 **Panel Two: Curating Mental Health**
- Sam Curtis (Bethlem Gallery)
 - Jane Fradgley (artist)
 - Victoria Tischler (University of West London)
- Respondent / Chair: Solomon Szekir-Papasavva
- 1.30 to 2.30 *Lunch (provided)*
- 2.30 to 4pm **Panel Three: Curating Medicine**
- Sophie Goggins (National Museums Scotland)
 - Natasha McEnroe and Katy Barrett (Science Museum)
 - Lucy Zacaria (Head of Arts, Imperial College Healthcare Trust)
- Respondent / Chair: Martha Fleming
- 4 to 4.30 *Coffee break*
- 4.30 to 5.30 Group discussion: reflections and futures
- 5.30 to 6pm *Wine reception*

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