

Disability Arts, Outsider Art, art, artists and art lovers, organisations and venues.

issue 22



Making visible the human cost of austerity

Liz Crow's Figures



Welcome

Easter has brought with it warmer weather, and the return of Liz Porter, who ran her final Storytelling workshop for Our Tales: Unveiled at the end of last month. The session was greatly enjoyed by all who attended, and we are now looking forward to welcoming Penny Pepper, who will lead her rearranged Poetry & Performance workshop on 23 May.

Do join us and our friends at Freewheeling, who will be bringing Sue Austin's Immersed in 260° to Salisbury Arts Centre from 5-7th May. Read on for details about that, and their accompanying home-based experience project.

Finally, we'd like to invite you to submit your entries for 'Worth Fighting For' – LinkUpArts will be following the success of artificial Things last year and contributing to Salisbury Arts Centre's Homegrown exhibition this Summer.

We look forward to seeing you at an event soon! Remember to check our website and social media pages regularly – we'll be putting up information about all projects as plans come to fruition.

www.linkuparts.org.uk
facebook.com/LinkUpArts
@LUArtists

2	Welcome and Contents
3	Our Tales: Unveiled
4	Reviews
8	Homegrown: Worth Fighting For Salisbury Arts Centre Present
9	Artwork in this issue
10	Freewheeling: Immersed in 360° - The Home-based experience
11	Practice: Call for Artists
12	Reminders for your diary – Café LUA

OUR TALES: UNVEILED

TAKE TWO

Our Tales: Unveiled Project Manager and LUA administrator, Tam Gilbert gives her take on the final Storytelling workshop with Liz Porter.....

As Sunday approached, my excitement mounted. Liz's final workshop was almost here, and although our journey had been a bumpy ride with the unforeseen circumstances surrounding February, all now seemed to be going according to plan. My preparations were done, the catering had been arranged, our group were all returning and the stage was set for another creative day.

I often find that people tend to arrive fairly early for workshops, but this proved an exception. With fifteen minutes to go, none of our participants had arrived, and I was beginning to think that perhaps Sunday was a bad idea after all; why come out to story-tell, when you could spend a lazy Sunday morning indoors? But luckily, the door opened just in time and people steadily trickled in. The atmosphere suddenly became filled with greetings and conversation; and excitement about the extra element. Hayley was setting up her camera, to film the day's events for our new video.

Liz's theme for the morning session was 'Journeys' and after a few warm up exercises, we set to telling our partners about real or metaphorical journeys we had had in the past. I was struck by how the exercise made me think and reflect, and, talking to another about a negative experience helped to see things in a new, more positive light a few years on. Liz has a great knack of drawing stories from her participants, gently encouraging new ways to explore even the smallest of details.

After our buffet lunch (which was delicious and arrived as scheduled!), we set to work on our own, preparing personal and traditional stories to perform to the group in whatever way we chose.



Many of us had started telling our stories in February, and Liz guided us through different ways of bringing them to life, and drawing on certain elements to turn them from a casual narrative into an engaging performance. During the preparation time, she she went around giving individuals titbits of advice, which everyone tried to work into their story.

It was lovely to see how confident people had become since the last workshop, and how they responded to any challenges Liz gave them. Many of the gate writers and poets, but not necessarily performers, but each person had a real presence and it would be very interesting to see how the stories continue to develop.

We all had a lovely day and the group are starting to build up an eclectic portfolio of stories; some of which may appear in print, or as short videos on our website.

Liz Porter is such a talented Story-teller and her methods are inspiring. We very much look forward to planning another project with her in the near-future – possibly in Disability History Month later in the year. In the meantime, join us for Penny Pepper's Poetry & Performance workshop on 23 May!

By Tam Gilbert

REVIEWS

ASPERGERS: A MINORITY REPORT

WSUN, Salisbury Arts Centre, Friday 27 March 2015

'Here comes the blonde' a male voice boomed as I exited the lift and rolled into the White Space at Salisbury Arts Centre where the advertised event was taking place. As the blonde referred to, I was not amused. The very much all male line-up of apparent authority figures did nothing to put me at ease. A string of clichés, generalizations and unfunny jokes alienated me from this theatrical intervention and a complete disregard for the social model of disability in the ensuing Q&A session generated a sense of anxiety and disappointment that I found very hard to shake off.

Some overly loud and seemingly irrelevant music possibly marked the beginning and end of the unfortunate production. Or not. I remain unclear about where it started or stopped.

This was my personal experience of an event claiming to be informative about Aspergers; claiming to lift the lid on what people with Aspergers think about the rest of humanity.

Seven hours later I still feel stressed, distressed and distinctly uncomfortable. I'm wondering how on earth to review the occasion.

Is the fact that I am feeling some of the alienation and social exclusion of someone 'on the spectrum' an intended result of a clever piece of work or the unfortunate after effects of a process of thinking and expressing that I was not offered any means to identify with?

Is the fact that the piece generated in me no empathy, or sympathy, and left me feeling non-the-wiser about Aspergers, a triumph or tragedy of script writing and performance?

Was it so bad it was borderline brilliant? Or does the fact that, as a so called 'neurotypical' (the three men used the term exclusively for anyone not on the autism spectrum), mean I am incapable of making any meaningful critique?

I have had and have, friends 'on the spectrum' but this work by three unnamed writers/actors did nothing but alienate me to the point of agitation. And I was not alone, some other audience members were clearly unhappy, though far more reticent in their criticism of disabled people.

I hesitate to suggest that the work could be more selectively marketed. I could attempt small constructive criticisms, but in my opinion it cries out for a complete overhaul by people much better informed about diversity, equality and disability.

As a self-proclaimed 'aspy' the main agenda of the dominant male on stage appeared to be criticism and condemnation of 'neurotypicals' resulting in a presentation that had no clear purpose other than alienation.

What I expected as an audience member was a safe space in which to be audience, and failing that, a clear indication of possible breaches and boundaries.

And in my alienation, I feel I have nothing more to latch onto than one strong emotional reaction: I really, really didn't like it.

By Gini

Our thanks to Disability Arts Online for kindly allowing us to reproduce their April feature on Liz Crow's Figures. In this piece Liz Crow talks to DAO's Director, Trish Wheatley about the inspiration behind her new work which has been made possible with funding from Arts Council and Awards For All

A solitary figure, almost invisible, is on the foreshore at low tide in front of the cultural complex of the Oxo Tower Wharf on London's Southbank. Camouflaged from head to toe in wet weather gear, kneeling amongst the stones, sand, driftwood and grime of the Thames, she is at work, engaged in a ritualistic task. Some passersby stop to watch, others don't notice at all, but all of them, aside from young children, will have heard of austerity, such has been its prevalence in the news over the last term of government.

Those whose curiosity is sparked tread carefully down the steps and along the shore to find that the figure is artist/activist Liz Crow. She is working on an endurance performance piece that sees her sculpt 650 clay figures, in 3-hour shifts at each of the two low tides for 11 consecutive days. That's clearly a big undertaking, to be out in the unpredictable spring weather, with timings dictated by the tides. Liz describes:

"It's about being able to immerse myself in an experience and it's the durational aspect that means you can go much deeper into it and discover things along the way that are bigger than the question you started out with. I think when I refer to durational work it's also endurance work for me impairment-wise.

I'm not trying to do something martyr-ish, or the brave cripple thing, but there's something about being prepared to go deep into an experience and the struggle of that process, particularly if it's about themes that really matter, that give it a chance of communicating more deeply to people.



"I think if it was sunny and I just did this for a couple of hours and then it was done it wouldn't connect in the way it seems to be connecting. Through my shift into performance and durational work, I've found there's something about other peoples' knowledge of my enduring it and the process involved that seems to make them open up to the questions of the piece more deeply. We could sit in a circle and talk about the 'issues' of the piece, but the questions that it raises that people start to grapple with wouldn't be as profound doing it that way."

The statuettes each represent an individual narrative about living at the sharp end of austerity, whilst quite intentionally the group equals the number of MPs being elected next month. The work is unashamedly political, but it's definitely not party political. 'Figures' is about the human impact of austerity and aims to be a catalyst for people to think about how they express that through their vote and consider more deeply about the kind of society in which we want to live. Liz completes a figure, humanising it with two eyes and in a short alchemical moment creates its individual character. She places it with the others that have amassed either side of her during the session.

The group gazes out across the Thames to the area of London where many of the governmental departments responsible for implementing austerity are located. The figures appear to be challenging them, staring them down in a silent protest that questions the austerity approach and asks for a consideration of the human impact. Liz explains:

"Coming from an activist background I think there's lots of ways of doing activism and working for change. The more confrontational activism has a role and can be incredibly effective, but it can only do certain things, and what it often doesn't manage

to do is produce an activism that's sustainable, or change that is sustained. I think there is something about Figures and the way it invites a conversation, rather than simply

saying this is the way you should be thinking, that opens up different possibilities and addresses that idea of sustained and sustainable change. For me, performance more than any other artform that I've worked in, is a space for that."

How does the work relate to disability arts?

"It's relevant in the sense that disabled people are disproportionately affected by austerity, but I actually think maybe it's more, it's the elements that seem more peripheral that I think make it disability arts. So, getting me onto the foreshore and the way that a team has had to form and work together and work with notions of interdependence that makes it disability arts more than anything else. I hadn't initially seen getting me down the steps as part of the performance, but I realise it is, because it's a space where [particular] values have to be put into practice for it to work. Those are the same values that underpin the questions that the work is asking, beyond austerity, the really deep questions like 'what is it that makes us human?' and 'what kind of society do we want to be?'. The kind of values that we have to model as disabled people, and as allies of disabled people, are the answers to those questions, so yes it's disability arts, but it's not solely disability arts."

The session is complete and 32 small figurines are packed into boxes and carried to the exhibition space in the courtyard behind the Oxo Tower building. From the outside the space is a common garden shed, but visitors flow steadily in and out, a few at a time, often leaving a comment or a drawing and staying a while to talk to the production team volunteers about the artwork. The figures are stacked in regimented lines on black shelves, which form an amphitheatre.

What's the idea behind the exhibition?

"The exhibition is designed to underline the durational aspect of the work, and the idea is that the figures will amass so they will be moved across at the end of every making session. It started off with empty selves and is gradually building up to the 650. People who are going past on a daily basis will see that growing community of figures and, I hope, start to get a sense of scale and impact."

The occasional people do approach Liz while she is engaged in the performance of sculpting on the foreshore, and she is open to that. She describes one particular encounter that has stuck in her mind:

"A guy came down who we were a bit unsure of; had a can of ale in one hand and he was staggering a little bit. He clearly had significant health difficulties. He explained how he'd been to the DWP earlier in the day and harangued them

about when he was going to receive some money and then he took out this yoghurt and a lollipop and laid them out before me and gave them to me as a gift. I sort of

don't know what to make of it, but actually I'm also just incredibly touched by that. It's another thing that performance can do: just open a space where maybe he felt

heard and attended to by what we all [the figures production team] did. He didn't get ushered away, it was a space, and it was a safe space for me, but also it became a safe space for him, maybe? I don't want to overplay it, because I don't know what's in store for him or what he'll do with it but I just think there are some times in life that can take a little thing that starts a shift, so something could happen next that could just build on that. Who knows?"

Making an impact on an individual level and a societal level is a big challenge. Liz says 'I am putting myself through this because this really matters'. One can look at this work and simply enjoy the aesthetic qualities, but it's really understanding the socially engaged practice, the endurance and the politics and messages of the work that bring it to life with a deep passion. I would urge anyone who is able to get to the Southbank to visit, and anyone who is not to follow the social media streams that accompany the work.

More details available at www.wearefigures.co.uk. Join the conversation on Twitter [@WeAreFigures](https://twitter.com/WeAreFigures) or on [Facebook.com/WeAreFigures](https://www.facebook.com/WeAreFigures).

By Trish Wheatley

AN OBSERVATION BASED ON 'BY THE RULES'

**Guy Bigland's 'By The Rules'
Salisbury Arts Centre, March 2015**

A poetic response to the exhibition which accompanied our Café LUA; this is not a review as such...



Taste is a matter of mystery and the artist exposing work to public taste might reasonably expect mixed reactions. In my mind it helps when I can fathom a reason to pass my time with the fruiting labour. Also, when I get blown away by a skill, an innovation; reason to say yes I see you and seeing changes my perspective, if only for that instant. But when the artist asks me to spend time contemplating a personal, private struggle with some self-constructed barriers to their journey, I suspect my reaction is best left unmentioned. Except: don't give up, one day you might discover the question; you might no longer need someone to see you, to witness your

existence, admire your perseverance.

By Gini

HOMEGROWN; WORTH FIGHTING FOR

After the success of our 'Artificial Things' exhibition and performance last year, LUA will be getting involved with Salisbury Arts Centre's annual 'Homegrown' event this Summer.

The theme for Homegrown 2015 is 'Worth Fighting For.' We are starting to think about the form our contribution might take, and are inviting our members and friends to take part.

Entries can take the form of any medium; perhaps film, a piece of artwork, photography or poetry. A brief description of your piece should be sent or emailed to us by **25 May** with the finished piece being delivered to Salisbury Arts Centre by **10 July**. Alternatively, bring a poem or live performance to the live event on **Wednesday 1st July**. LUA members will be taking part too!

Do email us with any thoughts or suggestions or questions at admin@linkuparts.org.uk.

SALISBURY ARTS CENTRE PRESENT.....

Watch out for.....

Sue Austin 'Immersed in 360' exhibition - Tuesday 5, Wednesday 6, Thursday 7 May, 10am-3pm

Salisbury Arts Centre, Free

Following over 150million views of her signature underwater wheelchair performance and powerful TED talk, internationally acclaimed artist Sue Austin curates new work, inviting you to become 'Immersed in 360'.

<http://www.salisburyartscentre.co.uk/whats-on/Event.aspx?EventID=1349>

Sue Austin 'Immersed in 360' workshop - Wednesday 6 May, 10am-5pm

Salisbury Arts Centre, Free Aimed at filmmakers, artists, venue programmers and

producers, get your hands on the latest 360° filmmaking equipment to capture, edit and view a short 360° film in this one day workshop. Limited spaces, booking

essential. <http://www.salisburyartscentre.co.uk/whats-on/Event.aspx?EventID=1350>

Jo Bannon 'Exposure' - Tuesday 5 and Wednesday 6 May, various times

Salisbury Arts Centre, £5 (£3 concessions)

Bristol-based artist Jo Bannon presents a one-to-one performance that explores the way we see ourselves. "An extraordinary ten minutes..." Lyn Gardner, The

Guardian <http://www.salisburyartscentre.co.uk/whats-on/Event.aspx?EventID=1371>

Impermanence Dance Theatre 'Da-Da-Darling' work in progress sharing -
Wednesday 20 May, 3pm

Salisbury Arts Centre, £5 (£3 concessions)

Impermanence Dance Theatre invite you to see their new work in progress, based on Max Ernst's book 'A Little Girl Dreams of Taking the Veil', and offer comments and feedback, prior to the premiere at the Edinburgh Festival this summer.

<http://www.salisburyartscentre.co.uk/whats-on/Event.aspx?EventID=1382>

Shaping a Diverse Future - Friday 10 July

The Point, Eastleigh, £15 (bursary places available)

A day of provocations and performances chaired by Jo Verrent and featuring performances by Stopgap Dance Company for artists, arts managers and anyone with an interest in disability arts

<http://www.thepointeastleigh.co.uk/whats-on/summer-2015/shaping-a-diverse-future/>

Integrate - Saturday 11 July, 1-4pm

Salisbury Arts Centre, Free

An afternoon of performances by disabled and non-disabled artists, including Stopgap Dance Company

<http://www.salisburyartscentre.co.uk/whats-on/Event.aspx?EventID=1377>

Artwork in this issue:

Front cover: Liz Crow and her Figures - designed by Gini, photographs by Hayley Davies

Page 3 'Our Tales: Unveiled' Photograph by Hayley Davies. Sharing journeys - (Left to right) Edna, Josie, Ken, Gilly, Gini, Deborah

Page 5: 'Figures' – Photograph by Trish Wheatley

Page 7: Photograph by Gini – Amy Lewis-Cooper viewing 'By the Rules'
Photograph 2: Penny Pepper - 'Lost In Spaces' – Get in

Page 10: Publicity information by Freewheeling

FREEWHEELING IMMERSSED IN 360° THE HOME-BASED EXPERIENCE



Immersed in 360

Equal access to the Arts "360° Degrees – A new angle on Access"

Living Options Devon is working with an organisation called 'Freewheeling'. Freewheeling is led by disabled people and aims to provide support to and develop inclusive arts projects.

Freewheeling have received some funding to work in partnership with Plymouth University to find ways of making arts and arts venues more accessible for people who are excluded due to disabling physical, psychological and financial barriers.

They will be developing and testing new 360° technology in the form of an interactive headset. People can wear the headset and will have access to a fully 'immersive' experience of a piece of art without even leaving their homes.



Would you like to help us to test this new technology and be a part of this new development?

We would come to your home and show you the headset and give you the opportunity to watch a selection of works by either Sue Austin or Kevin Clifford. See Sue in her amazing work featuring the world's first underwater wheelchair, which flies along mid-water in a dramatic demonstration of the joy and freedom it brings. Kevin's Moment in 360 is a dance film exploring the possibilities of using the 360 cameras to produce an immersive piece of work, making the viewer choose which dancer to follow as well as exploring the ability of the camera to 'fly' between and around the dancers giving the audience a feeling of total involvement in the dance. We would then ask you a few questions to get your feedback on your experiences of viewing the art and using the headset.

www.immersedin360.com



For more information please contact:
Kelly Mavro. Telephone: 01392 459222
Email: kelly.mavro@livingoptions.org

Living Options
www.underwaterimages.co.uk

SERIO

LOTTERY FUNDED

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AFFINITY
WITH
PLYMOUTH
UNIVERSITY

The exhibition can be seen at Salisbury Arts Centre from 5-7 May, with a FREE workshop on Wednesday 6 May. Find out more at www.salisburyartscentre.co.uk.

PRACTICE: CALL FOR ARTISTS

PRACTICE

This is an open call for practitioners to test new and innovative contemporary performance and dance work in front of a live audience. Practice will consist of up to four selected extracts of work in progress by solo performers and companies, with the potential for some of the works to be further developed and performed at ICIA University of Bath and Salisbury Arts Centre.

The next Practice platform will take place at Salisbury Arts Centre on **Friday 22 July 2015**.

Practice creates a safe environment for an engaging exchange of views between artists and audiences. After the performances, there will be an informal discussion enabling you to receive feedback on the work and ask questions, opening up a genuine dialogue that will help develop the work further. This two-way communication is an integral part of the evening. So if you work with dance, if you work with theatre, if you're a live artist, if you have an idea, if you have an experiment, why not test it at Practice?

Practice aims to prioritise the work of professional and emerging professional theatre and dance practitioners and companies who are developing ideas with a view to producing full-length works that will tour regionally, nationally or internationally. Ideally this will be work that fits with Salisbury Arts Centre and/or ICIA University of Bath's programming policies, which include devised, physical theatre, mask work and puppetry, dance, live art and contemporary practice, family performance, performance by and for people with disabilities, multimedia and multi artform work and outdoor and site specific performance. We are particularly keen to encourage applicants based in Wiltshire, Bath and the South West.

There will be four Practice events each year. The event will be attended by producers from:

- BAC (Battersea Arts Centre)
- CEW (Creative Ecology Wiltshire – formerly TheatreWorks and Wiltshire Dancing)
- Theatre Bristol and/or Activate Performing Arts (Dorset)

If selected, you will:

- Present between ten and fifteen minutes of performance material
- Receive £100 performance fee plus a contribution towards expenses of £50
- Showcase your work at an exciting live event at Salisbury Arts Centre on Friday 22 July
- Have the opportunity to engage in a creative dialogue, about your work and that of the other artists, with real audiences to help inform your process and practice
- Meet other artists and companies presenting and develop potential future partnerships

For an application form or further information, please visit www.salisburyartscentre.co.uk, email info@salisburyarts.co.uk or call 01722 343020.

Application deadline is Monday 8 June

Successful applications will be invited to present at Practice by Monday 22 June

Café LUA

May..... 13th 2015

June 10th 2015

July 8th 2015

Café LUA takes place every second Wednesday of the month (except August) at Salisbury Arts Centre from 2 – 4pm. We usually meet in the café area, but specific projects can mean we are in one of the work spaces, do ask at the Box Office if you are in any doubt. Café LUA is a social get together for artists with disabilities – an informal, open space for inspiration and discussion. However you are involved with or interested in the arts, do come along and meet us, find out about us, and about Disability Arts. We'd love to meet you and hear more about your arts practice or interests. Each month, as well as open discussion and networking, we focus on a particular topic or issue.

Wednesday 13th May

Come and discuss your ideas for 'Worth Fighting For.' Informal opportunity to chat and share ideas and get creative. Bring your materials with you, to work on your piece over a cup of tea!

Wednesday 10th June

Another opportunity to discuss your ideas for 'Worth Fighting For.' Informal opportunity to chat and share ideas and get creative. Bring your materials with you, to work on your piece over a cup of tea!

Wednesday 8th July

Join us for a viewing of our new promotional video for LUA and 'Our Tales: Unveiled.' Reflect on the project and find out how to get involved with future activities. Bring your ideas for future projects with you!

At the heart of LinkUpArts:



For more information about the career artists
in LUAN: linkupartistsnetwork@gmail.com

NEWSLETTER FORMATS

You can receive this Newsletter in print form,
it is available in bigger type and an audio cassette. You can also download it from
salisburyartscentre.co.uk -> Resident Companies ->LinkUpArts



creative direction
Gini

gini@linkuparts.org.uk

Administration & Fundraising
Tam Gilbert

admin@linkuparts.org.uk

LinkUpArts, Salisbury Arts Centre,
Bedwin Street, Salisbury, SP1 3UT
Arts Centre Enquiries: 01722 343 020

LinkUpArts and Salisbury Arts Centre work together for the benefit of both organisations. LUA advises and consults with Salisbury Arts Centre on its Disability Arts programming and helps to promote the events. Salisbury Arts Centre gives LUA its home and provides marketing and administrative support. LUA is a strategic creative partner in Salisbury Arts Centre's Creative Family.

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