

Cultural Shifts Expression of Interest: Halton Clinical Commission & Arts Development Officer.

Photographers:

Gary Bratchford - Senior Lecturer in Photography, The University of Central Lancashire (Uclan)

Robert Parkinson – Freelance Photographer, Co-founder Preston is my Paris

Combining research and practice, Gary Bratchford and Robert Parkinson seek to develop a meaningful and informed participatory photography project related to the themes of health and community. The underpinning aim of the project is to focus on communicating everyday issues associated with respiratory and cardiac conditions by supporting the participants to consider how visual modes of address, including visual storytelling can function as a way to represent a specific theme of their choice.

Our interest in Cultural Shifts stems from our own experience and interest in working with communities to identify and highlight specific themes, concerns and cultural identities that are often otherwise unnoticed or ignored. Moreover, as a call that is specifically focused on the North West, as local practitioners, we recognise the significance and responsibility to contribute to a project that is local in its scope but potentially international in its reach and impact.

Working collaboratively, Gary Bratchford and Robert Parkinson seek to develop a project that is multi-functional, both in its capacity to work as a socially engaged project and as a tool to better inform other practitioners and researchers on the techniques to help articulate issues related to health and wellbeing in communities. As such, the project will have a number of aims and possible outcomes that will be informed by developing a socially engaged practice that we hope will benefit the participants through engagement, the wider community through awareness raising via the output of the project and also as a toolkit for future practitioners and researchers.

Agenda: As a socially engaged project, to work with people without exception, in places and spaces that are often less visible, the potential for the Cultural Shifts project to allow people, with a camera, to explore what ‘outsiders’¹ might not see, brings to light broader issues that we might, externally, see as having a simple narrative. Thus, through co-creation, Bratchford and Parkinson seek to develop a space where the use of photography, film, drawing and photo-elicitation can help to articulate what is of most interest to the participants through an innovative visual output.

Possible Ideas: Working in consultation with the participants and the associated groups, including the Clinical Commission and Arts Development Officer, we will devise a project that best suits the aims of the participants. This

¹ Health workers, artists, researchers, community workers, potentially even family members.

might include focusing on the meaning of things rather than their function, or focusing on their daily lives as an awareness raising activity, highlighting the otherwise unseen challenges of their daily routine, including access to shops, transport, or participating in social activities. This may also include documenting their coping strategies, challenges and concerns as individuals or as a group. This might be gendered, based on social and economic status or informed by their cultural background, within Sefton and broadly, Liverpool shaping the backdrop. Another idea might be to use the camera to focus on access to their local health provisions, highlighting needs or promoting exceptional, but perhaps at risk services in their local health care community.

Possible Outputs: One initial output might be to produce a 'zine' of the images produced, coupled with an online data visualization of each participants 'activity'. This might include their daily route to a key location, visualising the distance, time travelled, number of stops or distance to a health provision, community space etc. The zine could be distributed along the routes taken by each participant and could be available at specific points.

Value added: The project will inform a practice-lead research seminar at Uclan based on the various methodological approaches undertaken with community, participatory research. The project may include a collaborative strand with the Arts for Health facilities at Manchester Metropolitan University, coordinated by Clive Parkinson. The aim is to help better inform health practitioners, photographers and ethnographers on the how to best work with communities in a collaborative and visually orientated way. The knowledge imparted within these seminars will, in turn be feed back into the community in 2017 as part of the Visual Ethnography MA extended project.

Bio's:

Gary Bratchford is a Senior Photography Lecturer, at the University of Central Lancashire (Uclan). His PhD, entitled 'Visual Activism in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories' deals with the politics of visibility, specifically in relation to Israel-Palestine conflict/Israeli occupation in a post 2005 context. Gary sits on the board of the International Sociological Association (ISA) Visual Sociology Working Group, co-editing their twice-yearly publication and is a member of the scientific committee for the annual, Contemphoto Conference, Istanbul, Turkey. Gary Bratchford has published his research on topics related to political visibilities and visual research methods in books and journals as well as presenting his work nationally and internationally.

Robert Parkinson is a co-founder of Preston is my Paris, a self-photo-publishing collaboration with Adam Murray. As a photographer, Parkinson's focus is socially engaged art, dealing primarily with photography, print and sound. Recent commissions include the Baltic's 2015 'Common Ground' project, which sought to consider the link between life and art and use stories shaped by personal lives, everyday experiences and a sense of place as a starting point.