

## *Making Presence Felt Symposium, 2019*

A celebration of ISMETA's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and the extraordinary work coming from UK and Ireland ISMETA approved and affiliated programmes.

### Where, When & Who

The Symposium took place from **5-7<sup>th</sup> June 2019, at the University of Central Lancashire, in Preston, UK**, and was hosted by UCLanDance, a faculty of tutors and Reader from the Undergraduate and Postgraduate dance programmes, also Laura Broome the Outreach Programme Manager, and Hannah Tongue, Programme Assistant. Over the last few years UCLanDance have embedded five core areas of activity in the dance department:

### ***UCLanDance* in Residence, Research, Outreach, Courses, Performance**

We have a strong commitment towards providing continuous professional development for our alumni and somatic movement community, this includes an ongoing series called Embodying Health which focuses on the application of somatically-informed dance in healthcare and wellbeing contexts. Please see our website for more about UCLanDance <https://www.uclanfcci.co.uk/uclandance.html>

There were 61 participants during the 3 days, 70% female, 30% male; ages ranged between early twenties and mid-seventies; Nationalities included American, British, German, Irish, Spanish, Polish, and Portuguese.

### Making Presence Felt

In celebrating ISMETA there was huge appreciation for the diverse training programmes which have been approved in the UK and Ireland since 2006, and we participated in workshops, presentations and provocations by practitioners coming from these courses.



Those represented at the Symposium included,

- BMC® UK, Embody-move (an affiliated programme)
- Institute for Integrative Bodywork & Movement Therapy
- MA Dance & Somatic Wellbeing: Connections to the Living Body
- Origins, Co-Wicklow, Eire
- Tamalpa UK

The specifics of each programme, their lineage, aims and approaches, were shared through **keynote addresses** by their faculty members. Furthermore, the impact of training upon personal life trajectories, professional practice and research inquiries (in areas such as health, wellbeing, Social-Prescribing, education, social care/other community contexts) were shared through **presentations, workshops and provocations** by graduates and tutors. The schedule is attached and reveals the diverse line-up.

Jane Okondo, an international board member of ISMETA based in the UK, spoke on the first day about ISMETA – what the organisation does, how it has grown and the international dimensions it is engaged in on local and governmental levels.

**We are hugely grateful to ISMETA for kindly funding Mary Abrams’ travel costs to attend the symposium.** Mary is a former president of ISMETA and has been a tutor on UCLan’s MA programme since its beginning in 2007. In her keynote speech Mary spoke eloquently of her professional journey in dance and somatic movement practice, the work of ISMETA, and her relationship with UCLan over many years of contribution to the course. This included her directorship of the MA programme when it was based in New York City (2009-17).

#### Testimonial by Mary Abrams

‘Receiving airfare funding for the Making Presence Felt Symposium at UCLan was very helpful support. I was honored to give the first keynote address reflecting upon my nine years of board service to ISMETA, my ongoing work as government relations consultant, and the significance of ISMETA’s support in how my professional development as an RSME has grown in the last 25 years. This conference was a true celebration of many people in the UK, Ireland, and Europe who have cultivated Somatic Movement work in many different disciplines. The range of presentations, workshops, keynotes, and provocations was awesome. And the generous time for connecting, networking, sharing, and moving, left us all deeply satisfied, excited for more, and proud to be celebrating ISMETA, UCLanDance, the MA course, and all the Somatic Movement professionals and practitioners in our world. The airfare funding made my presence possible as I volunteered the rest of my time, energy, and expenses for the week of the symposium.’



Amongst many areas of debate and inquiry, ISMETA's future support for somatic practitioners in the UK in the Social-Prescribing network was on the agenda (it is a government-initiated service which aims to get GP's and healthcare professionals to 'prescribe' arts to patients). Lian Wilson (Tamalpa UK) and Laura Broome (UCLan) gave an informed seminar about this and we will work with ISMETA's support to create a larger and louder voice in educating and substantiating the training undertaken by somatic movement practices, to policy holders at regional and national levels.

It was a great honour and pleasure to have two 'grandmothers' of somatic movement practice from the UK and Ireland with us, Joan Davis (Origins, Eire) and Helen Poynor (Walk of Life, Tamalpa UK). This 45-minute 'In Conversation' was full of gems in which they spoke candidly about their pasts and futures.

#### Dedication

We dedicated the symposium to two of our community who have recently passed away – **Karen Adcock-Doyle (RSME, UCLan Graduate), and Ania Witkowska (RSMT/E, Faculty of IBMT)**. Both women were in their early fifties and doing exceptional work in areas, such as, Early Years and with vulnerable children. With many close friends and peers still in shock over their sudden deaths we honoured their lives and work each morning in my introduction, alongside wild flowers present in each room, and chocolates and cakes.

You can read more about Ania and Karen at the end of the report.

#### Concluding thoughts

Our 3 days together nourished us all. It was a time to rest, move, listen, chat whilst being present to our own bodily needs and energies. Reuniting with peers and tutors and making new connections and possible future work buddies was a wish for this time, as we actively sought to grow our community of somatic practitioners.

Report written by Penny Collinson on behalf of UCLanDance. Penny is senior lecturer and course director of MA Dance & Somatic Wellbeing: Connections to the Living Body; Contact: [PSCollinson@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:PSCollinson@uclan.ac.uk)

Gallery of presenters and participants. Photographs by Colleen Bartley

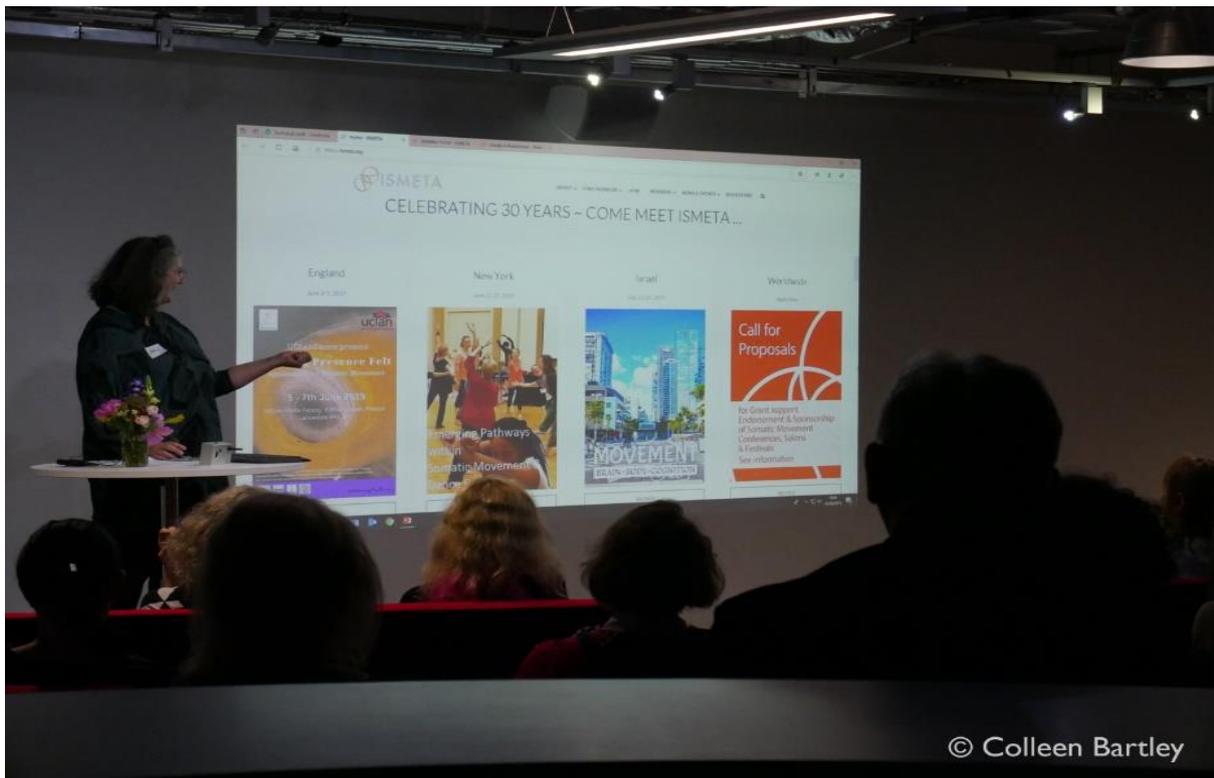


Nicola Herd, RSME, Stafford University, UCLan graduate



Above Penny Collinson RSME, Course Leader, UCLan

Below Jane Okondo, RSME/T, Faculty of IBMT. Keynote Presenter representing ISMETA



Above Paul Beaumont, RSME/T and Faculty member of IBMT. Keynote Presenter

Below Mary Abrams, RSME, Guest Tutor and Adviser for MA Dance & Somatic Wellbeing: Connections to the Living Body. Keynote presenter.



Above Aki Omori keynote speech on the work of Embody Move, BMC® UK, Embody-move

Below Audicia Morley RSME/T, Co-Director & Faculty for Tamalpa UK



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## Dedications

**Ania Witkowska** – trained at the Institute for IBMT, and later became a faculty member. She also trained at the School for Body-Mind Centering and was an infant movement development educator. Based in Berlin she ran a programme of workshops, consultancy and client sessions called *Understanding Babies*, at the time of her death she had a book by the same name ready for publication. Those that knew Ania and her work speak of her deeply insightful and compassionate approach to understanding a baby’s developmental needs and supporting parents in this process. She was humorous, empathetic and kind, knowing when to offer support advice or input. Ania worked with many families in Berlin and had just secured a consultancy role for a US based education centre specialising in autism spectrum education.

**Karen Adcock-Doyle** - Karen had infectious humour, and endless enthusiasm and commitment to her family and her work with others. Her extensive background as a learning disability nurse brought an important perspective to her studies on the MA here, she inspired our awareness towards the application of somatic practices in health, educational and social settings. Karen’s



MA studies were part funded by the children's charity Barnardo's who supported her in attaining skills and insights in movement and wellbeing so as to develop somatic work with children affected by trauma and sexual abuse.

Up until her death she worked in a state academy with children at risk of being excluded due to their behavioral needs. Karen supported the social, emotional and mental health needs of both the child and their families. She did an enormous amount of one-on-one work with movement to help develop the child's sensate language and personal agency. I have treasured memories of her presentation at the Embodying Health Symposium, at UCLan, in 2016 and, another she gave with Jasmine Pasch in London, which shared their research into their development of the pedagogy of somatic practice in early years. It's hoped too that Karen's writing will come to publication in the future.