



PCI Impact and Engagement Report, 2024-2025

Welcome from the Head of School

As Head of School, I'm delighted to introduce our fourth Performance and Cultural Industries¹ Impact and Engagement Report. It has now become an essential part of our annual calendar and with the external challenges Higher Education is facing across the whole sector, it is more important than ever for us to reach out to our collaborative partners, show solidarity, co-create projects and push forward together on the production of new ideas and new approaches.

What is unique about this Report, since the first we produced which looked back to 2015, is the inclusive definition we take of Impact. While the national research assessment exercise (REF) has done lots to instrumentalise impact and to determine a clear (if narrow) definition, in PCI we have always considered impact and engagement to be a much broader activity – an ethos in fact – and once again there are multiple examples of this inclusiveness in this inspiring Report.

As a significant player in the region, with resources to draw on, we have a heightened responsibility to play our part in preserving the health and vitality of the cultural industries

¹<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance>

in the City and more widely in the North of England. We take this responsibility very seriously and play an active part in the University's refreshed approach to Civic Engagement, under our new Vice Chancellor, Professor Shearer West. The evidence of this is threaded throughout this Report – from the rebirth of our uplifting Drama Teachers' Conference, offering much needed CPD and collective visibility, to the Courageous Programming project; from the radical meeting point of Scenography and Aerialism with its emphasis on touch, tactility and materiality, to the brand new partnership forged between AGORA Space (in India), A Quiet Word (UK) and PCI.

Impact, here, is so much more than something to be submitted to a national research exercise every few years. It's happening in our teaching, in our programme design and CPD offer. It's visible in under-the-radar activities such as the School's Youth Theatre and artist development scheme. It's in short, *ad hoc* ventures, and in long, funded research projects with UKRI². It's an essential part of what we do and that spirit shines through in these examples.

Professor Jonathan Pitches



1 - Professor Jonathan Pitches

Through our teaching and research, we collaborate meaningfully with partners across the globe to drive cultural and creative impact.

²<https://www.ukri.org/>

From Vancouver to South Africa, Bologna to Beijing, and Athens to Accra, PCI staff are leading diverse projects on five continents, alongside dynamic partnerships throughout the UK.



2 - Global locations of PCI partnerships

Impactful Research



At the core of PCI's research impact lies an ethically engaged approach—one that prioritises meaningful collaboration and tangible benefit for, and with, our partners.

From community-led initiatives to international collaborations, the following projects showcase how our researchers are working with partners to make a real-world impact.

Otley Youth Theatre: Creating Opportunities for Young People



In 2024, Lecturer in Applied Performance and Global Challenges, Dr Matthew Elliott³ led on the development of the only free youth theatre in Otley, north Leeds. This project drew on Elliott's research interest in applied theatre as a vehicle for social and political change by creating opportunities for youth voice in relation to the climate crisis and is a collaboration with Otley 2030⁴, a small organisation based in Otley working on numerous community initiatives.

The group presented a short performance to the local community in December 2024. There were 40 audience members in attendance from across the area including local councillors.

³<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/4091/dr-matthew-elliott>

⁴<https://www.otley2030.com/youth>

Following the performance, Otley Youth Theatre participants led post-show debates on discussion tables with the adults present.

Elliott stated that the Otley Youth Theatre has provided an opportunity to ***‘increase dialogue between young people and local decision makers as Otley 2030 had several unsuccessful attempts at engaging young people in Otley. The project enabled a process to happen for Otley 2030 which opened up new pathways into youth participation and recruitment.’***



Otley Youth Theatre continued from January-July 2025 with a performance held at the University of Leeds which was directed by current MA Applied Theatre and Social Change Student Phoebe Sanders and PCI Alumni Matthew Dangerfield. Otley Youth Theatre is now seeking funding to run a year-long programme that will utilise performance and youth parliament structures to enable young people to discuss local political matters.

Aerial Arts & Scenography: Creating Interdisciplinary Play & Performance Networks



Lecturer in arts-based pedagogical practices, Dr Katie Gardner⁵, and teaching fellow in arts management and stage production in technical theatre, Dr Kelli Zezulka⁶, have co-founded the Aerial Arts, Scenography and Pedagogy Research Network. This one-of-a-kind network brings together practice-based researchers and pedagogues from across aerial arts, physical theatre, choreography and scenography to explore the pivotal role of touch, tactility and materiality in aerial arts.

The network is currently in its scoping phase and as part of this early stage of work, Gardner and Zezulka have run five public seminars involving aerial arts professionals which are available online and now serve as a resource for students and scholars of aerial arts and scenography. The project was funded through the University of Leeds' Enhancing Research Culture fund⁷, alongside funding from University of Chichester⁸ and University of Salford⁹.

⁵<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/music/staff/4381/dr-katie-gardner>

⁶<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/2364/dr-kelli-zezulka>

⁷<https://researchculture.leeds.ac.uk/enhancing-research-culture-projects/>

⁸<https://www.chi.ac.uk/>

⁹<https://www.salford.ac.uk/>



In June, they also led a symposium on the topic of aerial arts and scenography at the University of Chichester, as well as a series of workshops at the University of Salford and the University of Leeds. An element of these workshops was incorporating motion capture technology into aerial performance. This method helped professional and hobbyist aerial practitioners to explore different styles of movement and also enabled the motion capture technicians at University of Salford to explore how the technology could be used more experimentally in different performance contexts.

Overall, Gardner and Zezulka's aim for the Network is to create an interdisciplinary space where aerial artists and students can embrace more experimental styles of performance and play. You can find out more about the Network [here](#).¹⁰

Co-producing the Legacy of *My Leeds 2023*



Building on his previous research into the '33 Neighbourhood Hosts' project as part of Leeds 2023¹¹, Lecturer in Creative Practice and Performance, Dr Alex de Little¹², has continued to work with eight cultural practitioners who participated in the original scheme to plan and create their own community-based creative projects.

Co-founder of Chapel FM and UNION Northern School for Arts and Activism, Adrian Sinclair¹³, helped facilitate bi-weekly meetings with participants between April and July. Participants considered how arts-based and participatory research can be engaged to support community development and create more opportunities for local decision-making.

¹⁰<https://aerialartsscenography.wordpress.com/>

¹¹<https://leeds2023.co.uk/>

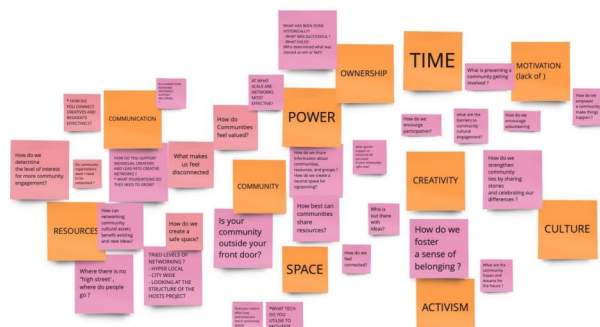
¹²<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/arts-humanities-cultures/staff/2773/dr-alex-de-little>

¹³<https://www.linkedin.com/in/adrian-sinclair/?originalSubdomain=uk>



3 - A mock-up of Joanne Michael's project to install a consolation 'living room' space on her village green in Cookridge

After delivering their own projects, the group collectively created their own manifesto about how to develop community engagement and empowerment. De Little hopes that the project can be used as a positive model for how arts-based practices can aid communities in other parts of the UK.



4 - The collective manifesto co-produced by the project participants.

Prisoner of War Memoirs: Adapting Memoir for the Stage



An exciting collaboration between Professor of Theatre Directing, George Rodosthenous¹⁴ and Professor in Stylistics, Christiana Gregoriou¹⁵ (School of English), led to a toured lecture performance across different heritage venues in Yorkshire throughout May 2025, as well as the development of historical resources for secondary school teachers across the UK.

The lecture performance used archival materials including the 237-page Prisoner of War memoir of Gregoriou's grandfather, Cypriot sergeant Phylactis Aristokleous (British Army). Drawing on his dramaturgical experience, Rodosthenous adapted this memoir into a theatrical monologue and directed the performance with a professional actor. Playing at three heritage venues across Yorkshire, the Royal Armouries¹⁶, Eden Modern History Museum¹⁷ and York Army Museum¹⁸, the performances attracted over 570 audience members in total. Following the success of these performances, the Cultural Attaché of the Cyprus High Commission in London and the Teatro Technis¹⁹, London invited Rodosthenous

¹⁴<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/436/professor-george-rodosthenous>

¹⁵<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/english/staff/57/professor-christiana-gregoriou>

¹⁶<https://royalarmouries.org/>

¹⁷<https://edencamp.co.uk/>

¹⁸<https://yorkarmymuseum.co.uk/>

¹⁹<https://www.theatrotechnis.com/>

and Gregoriou to present alongside five additional stories in July 2025 as part of Cyprus Week, a performance which was attended by a further 90 audience members.



Audience members described the influence the performance had on them:

'I was given a new perspective on what it meant to be a soldier and the power of memory'

'I feel encouraged to engage with my grandad, who was recently diagnosed with dementia and learn what I can about his experience, post-war, living in a Britain I have never experienced. There is so much we can learn, and legacy that can be left by sharing these experiences.'

A selection of associated stories²⁰ have been added to the MyLearning²¹ platform, an Arts Council England-funded arts and culture free resource library run by Leeds Museums and Galleries for primary and secondary school students across the UK. This educational content is available for drama and history teachers to use and fulfils part of Rodosthenous and Gregoriou's aim of decolonising historical accounts of WW2 by foregrounding the war experiences of previously colonised nations.

²⁰<https://www.mylearning.org/stories/memoirs-of-a-pow>

²¹<https://www.mylearning.org/>

Courageous Programming for Cultural Leaders, Producers and Programmers



Between March and June 2025, Lecturer in Contemporary Applied Performance, Dr Dani Abulhawa²² and independent researcher/playwright, James Harker, conducted a series of interviews with writers, directors and producers as part of Abulhawa's research into the challenges of platforming work related to Palestine. Abulhawa subsequently designed and facilitated a workshop supporting participants to surface challenges and strengths within their own organisations, and to develop practical, resilient approaches to courageous cultural programming.

Delivered through a series of engaging and thought-provoking scenarios, the session equips participants to respond to real-world dilemmas around censorship, complaints, and institutional risk-aversion.

²²<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/3356/dr-dani-abulhawa->



5 - Image by Yasmeen Soudani

Participants stated that the workshop had the following benefits for them:

'It was incredibly useful in outlining the considerations needed when planning, delivering, and evaluating events of this nature.'

'I felt inspired by the structure of the event; the way your research was informing (and catalysing) the carefully structured conversations, and it was clear how engaged everyone was in the room.'

This work was supported by the Cultural Institute²³ at the University of Leeds and Abulhawa plans to tour the workshop to other venues.

²³<https://www.leeds.ac.uk/cultural-institute>

Improving Youth Safeguarding in the Entertainment Industries across the UK and Japan



Lecturer in Creative Industries, Dr Dorothy Finan²⁴, is co-leading a project with Professor Kaori Suetomi²⁵ (Nihon University, Japan) on safeguarding young people in the entertainment industries in the UK and Japan. Finan and Suetomi hope to eventually develop an urgently-needed set of internationally applicable policy proposals to improve child safeguarding in the entertainment industries, as well as to establish a permanent network for exchange of best practice and ideas.

During their trip to Tokyo in 2024, the policymakers and survivors they spoke to expressed a strong interest in comparing and sharing initiatives for preventing the abuse of children and young people in the entertainment industries.



6 - Dr. Dorothy Finan and Professor Kaori Suetomi meeting with Japanese politician and campaigner Ayaka Shiomura in Japan's House of Councillors

Finan and Suetomi subsequently conducted a round of interviews with industry professionals with knowledge of and/or interest in child performer licensing in London, Leeds, and Sheffield in June 2025. Finan has now submitted evidence to the Culture, Media and Sport committee inquiry into children's TV and video content based on these interviews. Finan and Suetomi have also received interest from CIISA, the new standards body for the UK creative industries, in using their research to inform international exchange in child performer safeguarding policy.

The UK interviews were funded by a Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation²⁶ Small Grant worth £2000, and the Tokyo interviews were funded by an International Academic Mobility Funding grant from the University of Leeds Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures.

²⁴<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/5395/dr-dorothy-finan>

²⁵<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Kaori-Suetomi>

²⁶<https://dajf.org.uk/>

Engaged Research



PCI proudly supports research that deepens connections between our staff and local communities.

Many of our current projects explore the natural environment in innovative ways. From listening to the quiet transformation of newly planted woodlands in north Leeds, to rethinking how we relate to urban nature in Shipley, Bradford, and exploring what rivers in Yorkshire and Assam can teach one another—these initiatives reflect our commitment to place-based, environmentally conscious research.

Broadening Access to the Arts for Care-Experienced Children



In October 2024, Associate Professor in Contemporary Theatre and Performance, Dr Anna Fenemore²⁷, began working with Z/Arts²⁸ (one of the few theatre companies in the UK dedicated to children and their families) and the adoption agency, Adoption Counts²⁹. Fenemore has developed and facilitated workshops with the long-term aim of using these workshops to broaden access to the arts for care-experienced children and to produce a toolkit that can be used by professionals so that applied theatre can be used in social work.

From March to July 2025, Fenemore ran four life-storytelling workshops with children between 6 and 9 years old who do not live with their birth families. The workshops used storytelling and other arts-based methods such as building cardboard villages to help adopted children further embed themselves into their families and communities and to use the arts as a way of actively telling stories about belonging. The workshops have also given social workers more time to spend with the children and to cultivate more connectivity between them through self-reflexive and artistic methods.

²⁷<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/264/dr-anna-fenemore>

²⁸<https://www.z-arts.org/>

²⁹<https://www.adoptioncounts.org.uk/>



7 - A village model made by workshop participants for a story called 'Four Bears and a Clown'.

Anna hopes to secure further funding to continue working with care work professionals and form new partnerships with artists such as choreographers and applied theatre makers.

Reimagining Relationships with Urban Nature



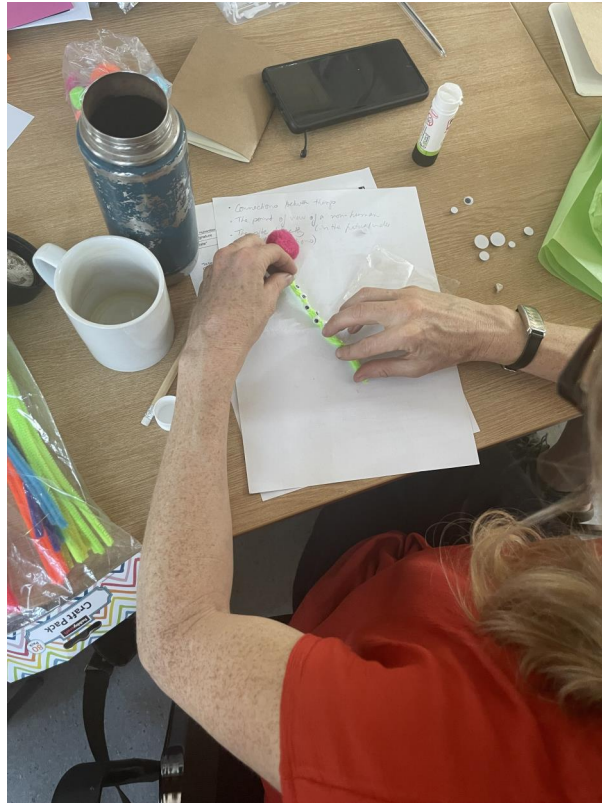
Since October 2024, Professor of Scenography, Joslin McKinney³⁰, has been working in partnership with Natural England³¹, the University of Bradford³², and local artists on the ‘Re-Imagining Relationships with Urban Nature’ project. The project team ran four free creative workshops in May 2025 at the Kirkgate Centre, Shipley followed by sharing event in June where participants considered their own unique sensory perspective on the human and non-human world around them.

With each workshop focusing on an ordinary but overlooked part of Bradford, sensory and creative methods were used to explore the ways in which people experience the sites as a place of multiple habitats and how this has a bearing on their own sense of place. Participants made their own creative works, individually and collaboratively with the guidance of workshop leaders.

³⁰<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/361/professor-joslin-mckinney>

³¹<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england>

³²<https://www.bradford.ac.uk/external/>



The sharing event in June showcased the workshop outcomes for local people and for invited guests, including Bradford Council³³ and local and national groups interested in urban nature, with a view to developing a larger scale project. The project team were subsequently invited to speak to Shipley Town Council about extending the project and also met with Bradford Public Health Street Space and JAB consulting.

The project was funded by the Horizons Institute ³⁴at the University of Leeds.

³³<https://www.bradford.gov.uk/>

³⁴<https://www.leeds.ac.uk/horizons-institute>

Encouraging Urban Play through Skateboarding and Community Art



In June and July of 2025, Lecturer in Contemporary Applied Performance, Dr Dani Abulhawa³⁵ toured her skateable sculptures, titled 'Drift Tricks', to The Children's Art School³⁶ in Huddersfield. They were developed as part of an innovative collaboration between Abulhawa and artist/structural engineer, Bedir Bekar³⁷ with the intention of introducing one-of-a-kind playable sculptures into urban spaces.

The sculptures were designed as part of the PRIMEdesign skateboarding, art, and community project commissioned by Take-a-Part³⁸ and Karst Gallery³⁹ as part of Plymouth City of Culture and were initially made for and in the city of Plymouth. Themed around the climate crisis, the sculptures were imagined as being refashioned bits of broken roof pieces from the Civic Centre in Plymouth, along with the trunk of a fallen tree, into objects for play in the aftermath of a climate disaster. The process for creating these playable/skateable sculptures was participatory, involving the PRIMEdesign youth committee⁴⁰.

³⁵<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/3356/dr-dani-abulhawa->

³⁶<https://thechildrensartschool.co.uk/>

³⁷<https://www.instagram.com/bedir.bekar/>

³⁸<https://takeapart.org.uk/>

³⁹<https://karst.org.uk/about/>

⁴⁰<https://karst.org.uk/primedesign-announcement/>



8 - Photo by Reece Leung



9 - Photo by Lauren Mudge

Abulhawa always envisaged that the sculptures would have other lives beyond Plymouth, and since their initial conception in Plymouth they have been presented in Leeds, Huddersfield and Richmond, London. As part of their residence in Huddersfield, Abulhawa ran a series of workshops which were designed to help youth participants interact and play with the sculptures. She anticipates that the workshops will also encourage thinking around how play can be used to creatively explore social issues such as the current climate crisis.

Engaging New Audiences at Hyde Park Picture House



To celebrate the paperback publication of Full Throttle Franchise: The Culture, Business and Politics of Fast & Furious⁴¹, Dr Sarah Feinstein⁴² and her co-editors Joshua Gulam (Liverpool Hope University) and Fraser Elliott (University of Edinburgh) collaborated with Hyde Park Picture House for a season of films in Autumn 2024: “Burning Rubber, Crossing Borders”.

Highlights of the programme included a screening of ‘Stuntwomen: An Untold Hollywood Story’ followed by a panel chaired by PCI’s Student Committee for Gender Equity in the Global Cultural Industries and featuring professional stunt performer, Georgia Munroe, as well as movement artist and choreographer, Louisanne Wong. The programme also included the Hyde Park Fast & Furious Film School (23 November) and a screening of Fast & Furious with a special introduction by Mohammad Ali Yunis, founder of the Bradford Modified Club⁴³.

⁴¹<https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.bloomsbury.com%2Fuk%2Ffullthrottle-franchise-9781501378904%2F&data=05|02|S.A.Walker1%40leeds.ac.uk|45f4a96bf9e345630c8508ddd32c2117|bdeaeda8c81d45ce863e5232a535b7cb|0|0|638898908873443754|Unknown|TWfPbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUslYiOilwLjAuMDAwMCIslAIiOiJXaW4zMilslkFOljoiTWFpbClslldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D|0||&sdata=L5FtA7No%2BFY4ZvhO%2B29qPH%2Fw5%2FNT17tNXIQzk2kgTHs%3D&reserved=0>

⁴²<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/2361/dr-sarah-feinstein>

⁴³https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.instagram.com%2Fbradford_modified_club%2F&data=05|02|S.A.Walker1%40leeds.ac.uk|45f4a96bf9e345630c8508ddd32c2117|bdeaeda8c81d45ce863e5232a535b7cb|0|0|638898908873631630|Unknown|TWfPbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWU

The programme was successful in its aim of bringing new audiences to the cinema as screenings attracted a wide range of people with an interest in car culture. It also gave student members of the PCI Gender Equity Committee a valuable opportunity to connect with industry professionals and facilitate public discussion.



The event was supported by Art of Action, a UK-wide BFI film season funded by The National Lottery⁴⁴, BFI Film Audience Network ⁴⁵and the University of Leeds.

[UsIIYiOilwLjAuMDAwMCIsIIAiOiJXaW4zMilslkFOljoITWFpbClslldUljoyfQ%3D%3D|0||&sdata=Pi0uChUO1yCHsWbJHoA%2BQUsaOEOH1nIJmevdt0UI1P0%3D&reserved=0](https://www.national-lottery.co.uk/UsIIYiOilwLjAuMDAwMCIsIIAiOiJXaW4zMilslkFOljoITWFpbClslldUljoyfQ%3D%3D|0||&sdata=Pi0uChUO1yCHsWbJHoA%2BQUsaOEOH1nIJmevdt0UI1P0%3D&reserved=0)

⁴⁴<https://www.national-lottery.co.uk/>

⁴⁵<https://www.bfi.org.uk/get-funding-support/bring-film-wider-audience/bfi-film-audience-network>

Gair Wood Sounds: Connecting with Ecology through Sound



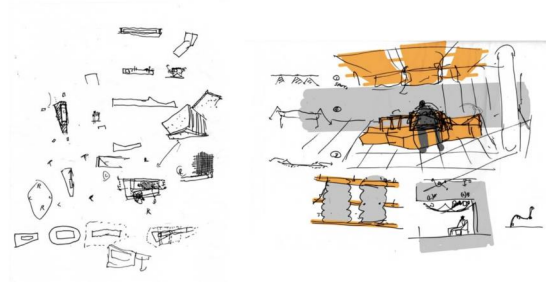
Commissioned by the University of Leeds, and developed by lecturer in Creative Practice and Performance Dr Alex de Little⁴⁶ in partnership with Soundcamp⁴⁷ and Studio Polpo⁴⁸, *Gair Wood Sounds* invites listeners to connect with slow ecological processes of change at Gair Wood⁴⁹, a newly planted woodland in North Leeds, by building a sound pavilion. Through audio streaming infrastructure installed on site, a ten year-long sound feed will be established, accessible both online and through a dedicated listening space to be housed on the University of Leeds campus.

⁴⁶<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/arts-humanities-cultures/staff/2773/dr-alex-de-little>

47 <https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.soundtent.org%2F&data=05|02|S.A.Walker1%40leeds.ac.uk|c0f42569149244d567c908dc94538e7d|bdeaeda8c81d45ce863e5232a535b7cb|0|0|638548334356406373|Unknown|TWfPbGZsb3d8eyJWljoimC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiv2luMzliLCJTl6Ik1haWwILCJXVCi6Mn0%3D|0||&sdata=LxE892RwdQE2WLa1UiPbMKJz%2Ffx%2FgljUj6ZYSnS7WB8o%3D&reserved=0>

48] <https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.studiopolpo.com%2F&data=05|02|S.A.Walker1%40leeds.ac.uk|c0f42569149244d567c908dc94538e7d|bdeaeda8c81d45ce863e5232a535b7cb|0|0|638548334356420908|Unknown|TWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWl|oiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQI|oiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6Ik1hZWw|LCJXVC|6Mn0%3D|0||&sdata=QhrlY038eaF%2FbhvpOm1b3stMryH56GBkuXN6OayeCbU%3D&reserved=0>

⁴⁹[https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fleaf.leeds.ac.uk%2Fgairwood%2F&data=05|02|S.A.Walker1%40leeds.ac.uk|c0f42569149244d567c908dc94538e7d|bdeaeda8c81d45ce863e5232a535b7cb|0|0|638548334356428729|Unknown|TWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljo iMC4wLjAwMDAiLCQl joiV2luMzliLCJB T iI6lk1haWwiLCJXVC I6Mn0%3D |0||&sdata=DSdMMn7plbhJ9ZTlcB02XXji6h%2F6GOKPg6YoP%2FP2mEE%3D&reserved=0](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fleaf.leeds.ac.uk%2Fgairwood%2F&dat a=05|02|S.A.Walker1%40leeds.ac.uk|c0f42569149244d567c908dc94538e7d|bdeaeda8c81d45ce863e5232a5 35b7cb|0|0|638548334356428729|Unknown|TWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljo iMC4wLjAwMDAiLCQl joiV2luMzliLCJB T iI6lk1haWwiLCJXVC I6Mn0%3D |0||&sdata=DSdMMn7plbhJ9ZTlcB02XXji6h%2F6GOKPg6YoP%2FP2mEE%3D&r eserved=0)



10 - Listening Pavilion development sketches by Studio Polpo.

De Little brings his research expertise in listening as a way of relating to ecologies to the project, and expects that the long-term benefits of the project will include understanding how the woodland ecology changes over time. The listening pavilion will also provide a new community space on campus and pedagogical opportunities for students who will be able to engage with the site.

The space will be located next to the University's Poetry Centre⁵⁰ with the hope that the audio stream will encourage different types of creative expression for writers at the Centre.

⁵⁰<https://poetry.leeds.ac.uk/>

Cross-Cultural Theatre in Sheffield



Lecturer in New Writing and Intercultural Performance, Dr Olalekan Balogun⁵¹, stood as the Research Consultant on Utopia Theatre⁵²'s production of *Death and the King's Horseman*. Written by the Nobel Prize winning dramatist, Wole Soyinka, and directed by Mojisola Kareem⁵³, the sold-out show was performed at The Crucible, Sheffield from 3-8 February 2025 .

The play, based on a real-life incident, draws attention to the impact of Britain's colonial legacy, represented through the meddling in long-standing Yoruba traditions by a self-important British colonial officer in 1940's Nigeria. In his contextual notes for the production programme, Balogun made connections between Yoruba customs and a contemporary UK audience exposed to war in Ukraine, Gaza and Iran. Extracts from the notes were featured in the Nigerian newspaper, The Guardian⁵⁴. The UK Guardian newspaper selected the production as a 'Best Theatre Production Coming in 2025'.

⁵¹<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/staff/6141/lekan-balogun>

⁵²<https://www.utopiatheatre.co.uk/>

⁵³<https://www.linkedin.com/in/mojisola-kareem-637b785b/?originalSubdomain=uk>

⁵⁴<https://guardian.ng/art/soyinkas-death-and-the-kings-horseman-lights-up-sheffield-theatres/>

The impact of Balogun's contribution led to him being invited again as Research Consultant for Utopia Theatre's Yoruba adaptation of *Macbeth*, entitled *The Crown of Blood*. The National Theatre of Great Britain supported Research and Development for the production, which will be performed at The Crucible, Sheffield⁵⁵ in February 2026.



11 - Copyright of Sheffield Theatre and Utopia Theatre.

Understanding the Value of Popular Waterways through Intercultural Exchange



As part of their involvement in PCI's PLACE research group, Lecturer in Cultural and Creative Industries, Dr John Wright⁵⁶, and Teaching Fellow in Contemporary Performance

⁵⁵<https://www.sheffieldtheatres.co.uk/>

⁵⁶<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/3836/dr-john-wright>

Practices, Dr Alison Andrews⁵⁷ have developed an exciting new partnership with AGORA Space⁵⁸ (India) and A Quiet Word⁵⁹(UK). The project considers the interlinks between the Leeds-Liverpool Canal and the Brahmaputra in Assam, India and explores the effects of industrialisation and colonial legacies on these waterways.

To launch the partnership, their partners from India visited Leeds in July 2025 to contribute to the ‘Waterways: values and practices symposium’. During their visit they also actively engaged broader stakeholder groups and networks (including includes water@leeds⁶⁰, Armley Mills⁶¹ and the Canal & River Trust⁶²) to explore the different value systems of waterways across varying geographic and social contexts.



Their visit was made possible by the University’s International Academic Mobility fund and they are now in the process of seeking additional funds to support a reciprocal visit to India.

⁵⁷<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/171/alison-andrews>

⁵⁸<https://agorathespace.com/about>

⁵⁹<https://www.aquietword.co.uk/lander>

⁶⁰<https://water.leeds.ac.uk/>

⁶¹<https://museumsandgalleries.leeds.gov.uk/leeds-industrial-museum-trhc>

⁶²<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/>

Training European Theatre Directors and Performers



In June 2025, Professor of Theatre Directing, George Rodosthenous⁶³, delivered a 5-day workshop on directing musical theatre for theatre directors at the Greek National Opera⁶⁴ which involved 5 musical theatre performers, 10 theatre directors and 22 observers. The workshop equipped directors with a diverse range of advanced techniques for directing musical theatre, emphasising music-text integration, ‘acting the song’, physical staging, ensemble work, and innovative rehearsal strategies.

The workshop concluded with a public staging of nine fully-performed songs with costumes, scenography and lighting, demonstrating how the directors had implemented their learning. The performance was attended by 65 audience members.

⁶³<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/436/professor-george-rodosthenous>

⁶⁴<https://n-t.gr/>



12 - Rodosthenous delivering a workshop at the Greek National Opera.

Rodosthenous also delivered an earlier workshop at the Cyprus Theatre Organisation in Nicosia as part of the Roots&Routes: A mosaic of rising artists Festival⁶⁵ in April 2025. His contribution focused on networking and resilience in the arts and was attended by theatre artists from across Europe. He used resources from the Centre for Cultural Value⁶⁶ to inform his workshop and highlighted the utility of the Centre’s research for international artists.

Festival organisers from the State Theatre of Cyprus (TH.O.C) thanked Rodosthenous for bringing ‘depth and perspective to the event, bridging practice and reflection in a way that resonated with audiences and participants alike’. The workshops are a strong example of Rodosthenous's long-standing and ongoing engagement with dramatic communities across Europe and particularly within Cyprus and Greece.

⁶⁵https://www.thoc.org.cy/en/theatredevelopment/internationalpartnerships/theatre_in_Palm/Roots_Routes

⁶⁶<https://www.culturalvalue.org.uk/>

Engaged Teaching



In PCI, we believe that student education thrives through collaboration and creativity.

Our staff lead projects that empower students and foster meaningful exchange—whether through industry partnerships that build career readiness, inclusive education initiatives co-created with neurodivergent students, or innovative use of social media to connect with our global student community.

Fostering Experiential Learning through Industry Experience



Lecturer in Performance and Cultural Industries, Dr Hughie Brown⁶⁷ has led a six-month experiential learning capstone project. The project aimed to expand the scope of a traditional dissertation by offering an industry-focused opportunity to students, boosting their employability skills and prospects. The first Seedcorn- funded⁶⁸ project worked with Leeds Lord Mayor Abigail Marshall Katung's⁶⁹ office to create a fundraising event for Leeds Community Foundation⁷⁰ while the second collaborated with Opera North⁷¹ to re-launch the DARE More⁷² programme for University of Leeds staff.

⁶⁷<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/4783/dr-hughie-brown>

⁶⁸<https://leeds365.sharepoint.com/:u:/r/sites/Curriculum-Redefined/SitePages/Seedcorn-Fund.aspx?csf=1&web=1&e=CygMan>

⁶⁹<https://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/mgUserInfo.aspx?UID=7368>

⁷⁰<https://www.leedscf.org.uk/>

⁷¹<https://www.operanorth.co.uk/>

⁷²<https://leeds365.sharepoint.com/:u:/r/sites/CulturalEngagementStrategy/SitePages/Opera-North-and-University-of-Leeds-partnership--DARE.aspx?csf=1&web=1&e=wiYEuC>



Under the guidance of both teaching staff and their industry partners, students were given a budget and control over how they designed their responses to briefs set by the Lord Mayor's office and Opera North. Students on the Lord Mayor's team raised over £1000 at an event held at Headrow House in February, whilst those on the Opera North team exceeded their goal of gathering 50 new DARE More registrations by securing 81 sign-ups during their event at Clothworkers Centenary Concert Hall in March.

'I have found that giving the students the freedom to set their own goals, parameters, and methods has a profound impact on their personal development. It makes them more resilient, more reflective, more confident, and better able to work with others. To me, that's the greatest benefit.' Dr Hughie Brown.

Following the success of the project, Brown hopes to continue offering capstone projects to students and is keen to explore how experiential learning can be linked to the concept of the 'civic university'.

Knowledge Exchange and Collaborative Performance



In 2024/25, the Undergraduate module 'Collaborative Performance Project' (PEC12111) continued to offer students the exciting opportunity of working with professional partners in Leeds. Partnerships from this year's module included a collaboration with the Brotherton's Library's Cultural Collections & Galleries⁷³ as well as a collaboration with Climate Action Leeds⁷⁴ and Leeds City Council⁷⁵.

Students on the module were supported by Dr Tony Gardner⁷⁶ to respond to a brief from the Brotherton Library's Cultural Collections & Galleries which invited them to create three films promoting the Library's Roman coin collection. In October 2025, the films were circulated as part of the Collection's Welcome Week strategy for improving student engagement with the archives. The project enabled students to develop their digital skills and think more strategically about how to communicate effectively with project partners.

'The students absolutely blew me away at the screenings with their creativity and the huge amount of work they've put in. They were a wonderful group to work with, and their final outputs will definitely feature on our channels.' Lauren Hollowday, Digital Communications Coordinator, Cultural Collections & Galleries

⁷³https://library.leeds.ac.uk/info/1500/special_collections

⁷⁴<https://www.climateactionleeds.org.uk/>

⁷⁵<https://www.leeds.gov.uk/>

⁷⁶<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/275/dr-tony-gardner>



Another student-led project, supported by module convenor Dr Maria Kapsali⁷⁷, led to the creation of three digital artefacts about public green space in Leeds. Supported by Climate Action Leeds (CAL) and Leeds City Council, students researched Bedford Fields, St George's Fields, and Hanover Square and subsequently created audio and audio-visual digital content designed to be experienced by members of the public visiting these sites.

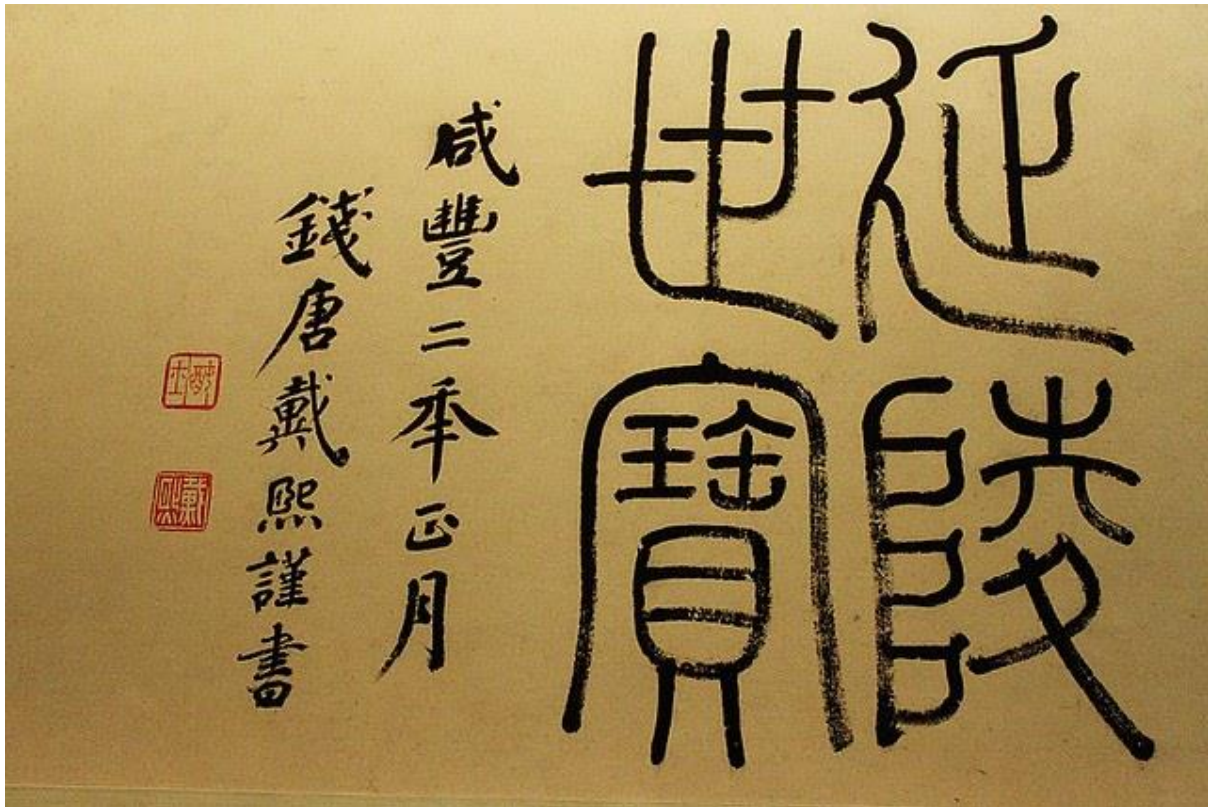


<https://youtu.be/oLfn9u71T0>

This module provides invaluable opportunities for knowledge exchange between students and industry partners and increases student confidence in being able to design and negotiate a brief to meet the needs of particular audiences and partner organisations.

⁷⁷<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/316/maria-kapsali>

Entrepreneurship and the Cultural Industries



As part of the MA module, 'Entrepreneurship and Cultural Industries' (PECI5706M), module convenor and lecturer in Performance and Creative Industries, Dr Alex Timewell⁷⁸ supported a group of international students to deliver four workshops on Chinese calligraphy and art with Older Wiser Local Seniors⁷⁹ who run an arts and craft group at Left Bank Leeds⁸⁰.

They named their community enterprise *Chara-Creator* and submitted a 32-page business report which described their business idea and the market research they had conducted. In this report, the project team (Yixuan He, Shuyuan Kang, Ziya Huang and Mengting Cai) described the aims of the workshops as a way of using 'traditional Chinese calligraphy and painting as vehicles for creativity and healing'.

⁷⁸<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/6150/dr-alex-timewell>

⁷⁹<https://www.owlsleeds.org/>

⁸⁰<https://www.leftbankleeds.org.uk/>



13 - The front page of the project team's business report.

The project is a positive example of Timewell's commitment to integrating inclusive education into the MA module. Students from diverse cultural backgrounds are supported to develop knowledge and skills of enterprise and entrepreneurship within the context of the UK cultural industries.

Inclusive by Design: Co-curating Resources with Neurodivergent Students



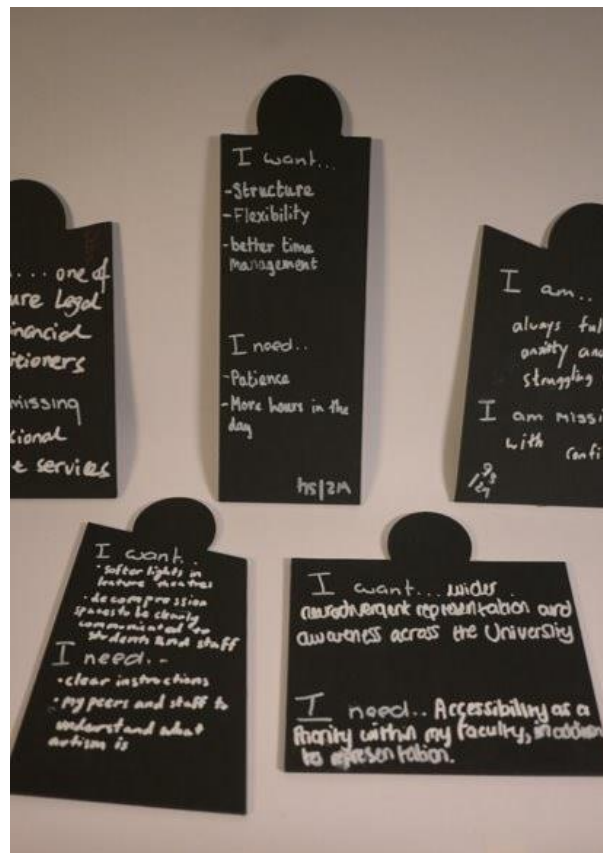
PCI Lecturer in Digital Creativity, Dr Amelia Knowlson⁸¹ and Dr Chris Ostrowdun⁸² (School of Education) collaborated with neurodivergent students at the University of Leeds to co-curate resources on inclusive education. After successfully completing the first phase of the project, Knowlson is now producing a co-created toolkit that will be tested in student-staff pairs next academic year.

Knowlson initially set up an informal student space/cafe for neurodivergent students and in 2024 won the AHC Equality and Inclusion Partnership Award for this initiative. She used this experience alongside her teaching background to secure two years of LITE Accelerator Funding. In phase one, Knowlson and Ostrowdun ran a series of workshops seeking to understand more about inclusion, using creative methods such as Cultural Probes to explore what inclusivity looked and felt like to neurodivergent students.

⁸¹<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/2362/dr-amelia-knowlson>

⁸²<https://essl.leeds.ac.uk/education/staff/2110/dr-chris-ostrowdun>

Findings from the workshops will inform the development of an inclusive education toolkit which may be used by the University. Overall, the project highlights how student-led advocacy for inclusive educational practices can work in practice.



14 - Personal identity manifesto exploring needs and wishes of Neurodivergent students



15 - Modelling Inclusion: visually representing inclusion with Neurodivergent students

Rednote: Using Social Media to Enhance International Student Engagement



In March 2025, Lecturer in Performance and Creative Industries, Dr Alex Timewell⁸³, joined a University-wide delegation of 30 people visiting China to strengthen the University's and PCI's existing international relationships, and to explore building new ones. During the visit, Timewell attracted an impressive social media following as he posted on China's most popular social media platform, Xiaohongshu (Rednote).

His very first post on arrival in China acquired 24,000 views and 3,500 likes and his total post views to date have exceeded 250,000. Posting on Rednote has given Timewell new insights into this specific aspect of Chinese social media culture, demonstrating how Rednote can be used as a resource for international applicants and offer-holders to reach out to staff to find out more about the modules on offer at PCI.

⁸³<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/6150/dr-alex-timewell>

16:51

4G+ 93



Team AHC

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS



and welcome to have
chat at
来谈谈这件事的

Say "hello" to Xiaohongshu!



Dr Alex Timewell

关于我中国之行的官方汇报 I had a g... More

chinatravel 4.5M posts



906



69



19



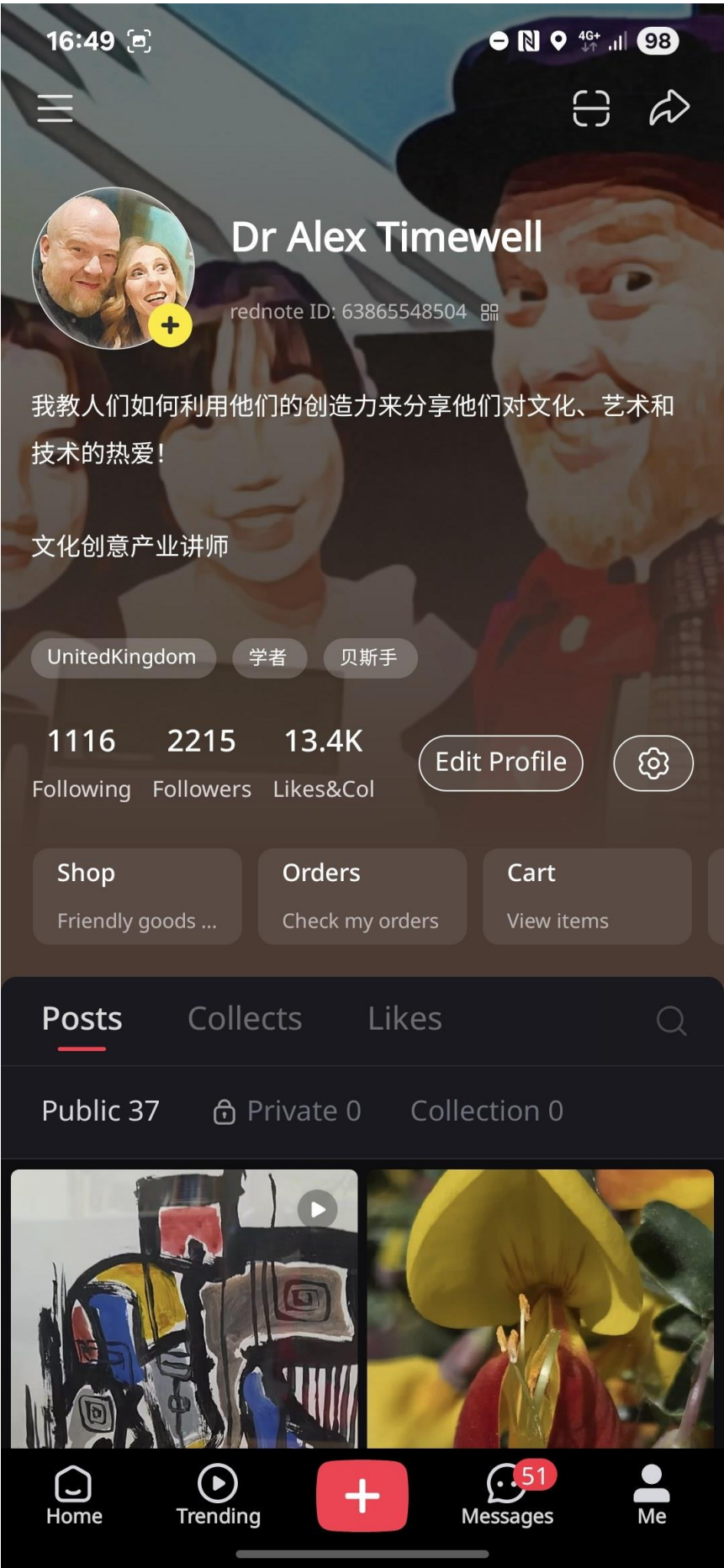
31



9

Comment





Timewell intends to further develop the account by sharing material relevant to students on the MA Culture, Creativity and Entrepreneurship programme, including content made by/with them. He also hopes to run an extracurricular project where a small group of students can help manage the account, providing an opportunity for them to learn more about how digital marketing can be used to reach international audiences.

Annual Drama Teacher's Conference



In July 2025, the School welcomed 24 drama teachers from across Leeds and West Yorkshire for the relaunch of PCI's annual Drama Teacher's Conference. The conference brings together GCSE and A Level Drama teachers to network, exchange ideas and gain new perspectives about drama, theatre and performance.

This year's programme was planned and coordinated by Lecturer in Experimental Performance Practices, Dr Alison Andrews⁸⁴, in consultation with Leeds Artform Development and Heads of Drama in secondary schools. It offered a diverse range of practical workshops on topics identified by teachers as areas for inspiration in their drama curriculum delivery. Sessions were led by PCI academic staff including: stage management by Dr Kelli Zezulka⁸⁵, light by Professor Scott Palmer⁸⁶, Meyerhold and physical theatre by

⁸⁴<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/171/alison-andrews>

⁸⁵<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/2364/dr-kelli-zezulka>

⁸⁶<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/391/professor-scott-palmer>

Professor Jonathan Pitches⁸⁷, and directing by Professor George Rodesthenous⁸⁸, as well as a workshop on rehearsal techniques from Leeds Playhouse theatre director Amy Leach⁸⁹. An 'Open Space' session enabled participants to focus on issues they wanted to discuss with peers.

The annual conference continues to successfully demonstrate the relevance and impact of PCI's research and expertise on industry professionals:

'We loved the day, which you had constructed to match our teachers' requests so well.'

'I know we would all love the day to be repeated and hope you and your team agree!'



⁸⁷<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/406/professor-jonathan-pitches>

⁸⁸<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/436/professor-george-rodosthenous>

⁸⁹<http://www.amyleach.co.uk/about.html>

stage@leeds: Socially Engaged Theatre



As part of stage@leeds' ongoing commitment to creating socially conscious and community-oriented performance, the theatre has been involved in several projects which have care and interconnectedness as its core values.

One of these projects included the Youth Theatre's⁹⁰ performance at the 2025 Migration Matters festival⁹¹ in Sheffield. This was part of a collaboration with academics in the School of Law and School of Medicine who had conducted research into the negative impact that the change in covid regulations had on migrating medical professionals. The stage@leeds Youth Theatre adapted this research into a piece of documentary theatre for the festival. As a result of this collaboration stage@leeds will collaborate with the project partners on a creative toolkit for schools and youth groups that highlights the issues raised through the performance.

⁹⁰<https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fstage.leeds.ac.uk%2Fget-involved%2Fyouth-theatre%2F&data=05%20%2FS.A.Walker1%40leeds.ac.uk%20bfff6f2eb3c5a43f7400708ddfb69f7dd%20bdeaeda8c81d45ce863e5232a535b7cb%20%20638943154725448116%20Unknown%20TWfpgZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOilwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMilslkFOljoiTWFpbClslldUljoyfQ%3D%3D%20%20%20&sdata=qeSWnusBTpU7ICmu8vYl6xvv2naWOBFlee8aVPf3xk8%3D&reserved=0>

⁹¹<https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.migrationmattersfestival.co.uk%2F&data=05%20%2FS.A.Walker1%40leeds.ac.uk%20bfff6f2eb3c5a43f7400708ddfb69f7dd%20bdeaeda8c81d45ce863e5232a535b7cb%20%20638943154725470877%20Unknown%20TWfpgZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOilwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMilslkFOljoiTWFpbClslldUljoyfQ%3D%3D%20%20%20&sdata=vqiNLDtiNDxrrYiqTVFe5DCTbsXmYnjCjeUh3yL9uIA%3D&reserved=0>

An audience member at the festival remarked that *‘As a healthcare professional myself it’s sad to see the amount of bias and discrimination still facing IMG’s [International Medical Graduates] in 2025 [...] There must be a whole cohort of skilled professionals we are missing out on.’*



stage@leeds has also delivered on its commitment to sustainability by delivering environmentally-themed performances and implementing more sustainable working practices. These include an open-air performance in August 2024 of a new commissioned play 'We Are Such Things As Dreams Are Made'⁹² as well as a collaboration with Light Night Leeds⁹³ where some of PCI's MA students exhibited sculptures they had made out of waste materials.

For both events, stage@leeds used a version of the Theatre Green Book carbon calculator that they have developed specifically for Higher Education and Further Education users to ensure that events are sustainably produced and areas for improvement are measured. stage@leeds is now a member of the National Green Book Education Committee.



⁹²<https://stage.leeds.ac.uk/events/we-are-such-things/>

<https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.lightnightleeds.co.uk%2F&data=05|02|S.A.Walker1%40leeds.ac.uk|bff6f2eb3c5a43f7400708ddf69f7dd|bdeaeda8c81d45ce863e5232a535b7cb|0|0|638943154725519330|Unknown|TWFPbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiwlLjAuMDAwMCIsImlAiOiXaW4zMlIkFOlpoiTWFpbClslldUljoyfQ%3D%3D|0||&sdata=Lv3vN6CIL1bdRxelThaxX4aF9Jy32o0VTiqpRDfQI9c%3D&reserved=0>



The Centre for Cultural Value



The Centre has moved into an exciting new phase since August 2024 as Dr Stephen Dobson⁹⁴, Associate Professor of Creativity and Enterprise at the University of Leeds, became Centre Director. With interim support from Paul Hamlyn Foundation⁹⁵, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation⁹⁶ and the University of Leeds, Dobson is excited to lead the Centre in continuing to explore cultural value and what this means for the sector.

⁹⁴<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/2079/dr-stephen-dobson>

⁹⁵<https://www.phf.org.uk/>

⁹⁶<https://esmeefairbairn.org.uk/>

Since the summer of 2024, the Centre has worked as a core partner in the evaluation of Bradford 2025⁹⁷ and the 2025 Edinburgh International Festival⁹⁸. It has also been awarded funding for a number of different projects. One of these includes Dobson's successful funding bid for a 'National scoping exercise for developing a cultural indicator suite (CIS)' as part of the Research England⁹⁹ Policy Support Funding and Participatory Research Funding (2024/25). The project has involved a collaboration with The Audience Agency¹⁰⁰ and proposes a suite of indicators to help policymakers and community leaders capture how cultural vitality connects to place, wellbeing and overall quality of life for UK residents. This project continues with support from Research England's Participatory Research Fund and in 2025/26 is piloting Cultural Vitality Labs at three locations in the UK to explore this work in a community setting.

The Centre's Associate Director for Policy, Professor Ben Walmsley¹⁰¹, is also leading an ESRC-funded scoping project with The Audience Agency, MyCake¹⁰² and Cultural Commons¹⁰³ to develop a blueprint for a national cultural data observatory for the UK. Walmsley expects that the project will give the arts, heritage and cultural sectors 'access to better data and sector analysis, helping them to make a stronger case for funding and evidence and articulate their impact in a more robust and credible way'. You can read more about the project here¹⁰⁴.

The Centre's work to ensure cultural policy and practice are underpinned by rigorous research feeds into the School's commitment to generating knowledge and insight into the cultural industries which is of use and value to the world beyond academia.



<https://youtu.be/paYj0pWZH34>

⁹⁷<https://bradford2025.co.uk/>

⁹⁸<https://www.eif.co.uk/>

⁹⁹<https://www.ukri.org/councils/research-england/>

¹⁰⁰<https://theaudienceagency.org/en>

¹⁰¹<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/503/professor-ben-walmsley>

¹⁰²<https://mycake.org/>

¹⁰³<https://www.culturecommons.uk/>

¹⁰⁴<https://www.culturalvalue.org.uk/transforming-cultural-sector-data/>

Eight PGRs from the School of Performance and Cultural Industries have also been working on the evaluation of the National Theatre's Speak Up programme¹⁰⁵. The ethos driving this evaluation has been influenced by the research from the Centre for Cultural Value, particularly the Evaluation Principles¹⁰⁶.

In Wakefield, Greater Manchester and Wolverhampton, several researchers have been embedded in schools, visiting Speak Up sessions regularly and this sustained ethnographic engagement is rooted in the principles of 'deep hanging out' (Professor Ben Walmsley). Speak Up blends the national with the local, as the programme saw the devolution of decision-making shared with partner venues across nine areas of England. In evaluating the whole programme, researchers have sought to address with nuance the challenges of a nationally envisaged programme delivered and adapted at a local level. Research visits to North Devon and Sunderland have aimed to capture some of the distinct features of localities (Professor Leila Jancovich¹⁰⁷).



16 - Wolverhampton summer 2024 event

In conducting this work and being involved in a project with a range of external partners – including schools, freelance artists, regional venues and the National Theatre – the PGRs have also developed their professional networks and explored new approaches to research that complement and contrast their own research practices.

¹⁰⁵ <https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/about-us/theatre-nation-partnerships/speak-up/>

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.culturalvalue.org.uk/our-work/evaluation/evaluation-principles/>

¹⁰⁷ <https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/310/professor-leila-jancovich>



17 - Havering summer 2024 event



18 - Speak Up Symposium

Impact Case Studies in Development



In preparation for REF2029, the School is supporting the development of Impact Case Studies which have the potential to be included as part of our overall submission. These are:

Professor Alice O'Grady¹⁰⁸, *Transforming Experiences of Adolescent and Young Adult Cancer Care Through Immersive Performance*: Working as part of a research collaboration with the Anew Research Collaborative¹⁰⁹, O'Grady uses arts-based research methods (storytelling, immersive performance, improvisation) to help Adolescents and Young Adults (AYAs) with cancer to communicate their experiences and needs to care-givers and allies, and to change the way in which healthcare professionals approach treating AYAs with cancer in Canada and the UK.

Professor Leila Jancovich¹¹⁰, *Failspace: towards honest critical reflection of arts and culture in the UK*. Research conducted by Jancovich and Professor David Stevenson¹¹¹ (Queen Margaret's University, Edinburgh) challenged existing approaches to arts and cultural evaluation whereby the focus on accountability not improvement leads to celebratory narratives of success. They have thus developed: a framework designed to assist the cultural sector to identify, acknowledge and learn from failure; an online 'toolkit'; and an associated

¹⁰⁸<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/386/professor-alice-o-grady>

¹⁰⁹<https://anewresearch.ca/>

¹¹⁰<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/310/professor-leila-jancovich>

¹¹¹<https://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-our-staff/senior-leadership-team/professor-david-stevenson/>

network of 'champions' to train artists, arts organisations, arts consultants and practitioners. So far the framework has been adopted by organisations such as Art Fund ¹¹² and Arts Council Wales ¹¹³ as they have begun embedding recognition of failure in their evaluation practices, methodologies, and policies.

Dr Jacki Wilson¹¹⁴, *Fabulous Femininities: increasing diversity and recognition within and beyond the burlesque subculture*. Fabulous Femininities focused initially on the transformative role of costume in the UK burlesque industry. It centres marginalized voices, bringing to the fore burlesque's good practice around safety and inclusivity. Wilson's research revealed that burlesque's grassroots approaches to safety could make spaces safer for all by improving night-time safety initiatives by broadening cultural participation and by improving confidence, support and a sense of belonging for other marginalized groups. Wilson's work was awarded a Special Mention at the University of Leeds' Research Impact and Engagement Awards in 2024 ¹¹⁵.

Dr Maria Kapsali,¹¹⁶ *Echome: developing kinesonic artists and improving the wellbeing of older adults and people with disabilities*. Kapsali partnered with Kingsley Ash ¹¹⁷, Nikos Stavropoulos ¹¹⁸ and professional dance artists to create Echome, wearable technology that produces sound through movement in a way that is accessible to anybody, whatever their physical capability. Echome has been used by diverse groups to encourage physical movement, widen access and participation within the arts, reduce social isolation and improve physical wellbeing. Partners include Unbound Dance Theatre ¹¹⁹, Purple Patch Arts ¹²⁰ and the Northern Ballet ¹²¹. Overall, Echome is successfully improving wellbeing for end-users as well as changing dancer training experience and practice.

Dr Matthew Elliott¹²², *Building skills and capacity for social change by expanding youth arts activism in the Global South*. Over a period of five years, Elliott has worked with 200 participants from the marginalised communities of the Luo peoples in western Kenya and Soga peoples in Eastern Uganda. Over this period, they have continually engaged in arts-based research to support individual and collective development to overcome substantial barriers to good communication and enhance human development. The impact of projects include improved health and wellbeing with a focus on mental health, reduced inter-family and inter-community conflicts, and increased access to multi-arts provision.

¹¹² <https://www.artfund.org/>

¹¹³ <https://arts.wales/>

¹¹⁴ <https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/521/dr-jacki-willson>

¹¹⁵ <https://ris.leeds.ac.uk/impact/research-impact-and-engagement-awards/>

¹¹⁶ <https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/316/maria-kapsali>

¹¹⁷ <https://www.kingsleyash.com/>

¹¹⁸ <https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/staff/professor-nikos-stavropoulos/>

¹¹⁹ <https://www.unbounddancetheatre.com/>

¹²⁰ <https://purplepatcharts.org/>

¹²¹ <https://northernballet.com/>

¹²² <https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/4091/dr-matthew-elliott>

Professor Aylwyn Walsh¹²³, *Building skills and capacity for social change by expanding youth arts activism in South Africa (and the UK)*. Walsh draws on arts-based methods, including performance and film making, to better understand and address social and political inequalities. She has worked with international partners such as Well Worn Theatre Company¹²⁴ and BottomUp¹²⁵ and her work in youth arts activism and arts-based political education primarily in South Africa has focused on a diverse range of co-created projects and outputs relating to environmental activism, indigenous knowledge, and combating social inequalities.

Professor Ben Walmsley¹²⁶, *Rethinking Cultural Value: a research-driven intervention to transform how the UK arts, cultural and heritage sector evaluates its impact*. Walmsley has developed a set of 'evaluation principles' with the Centre for Cultural Value¹²⁷ which reconceptualises cultural evaluation as a reflexive and creative practice that supports professional, organisational and sector learning. The principles have been adopted by freelance evaluators as well as cultural organisations such as Leeds 2023 and Bradford 2025¹²⁸ and are changing how individuals and organisations implement their learning from evaluation.

¹²³ <https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/504/prof-aylwyn-walsh>

¹²⁴ <https://wellworn.org.za/>

¹²⁵ <https://bottomup.org.za/about-us/>

¹²⁶ <https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/503/professor-ben-walmsley>

¹²⁷ <https://www.culturalvalue.org.uk/>

¹²⁸ <https://bradford2025.co.uk/>

Enabling Impact in PCI



During the year PCI's Director of Impact, Dr Ceri Pitches¹²⁹, and Research Impact Development Officer, Dr Shauna Walker¹³⁰, planned and delivered a number of training and sharing events to develop impact literacy within the School and to celebrate the impactful and engaged work PCI academics have undertaken.

In January 2025 we launched the PCI 'Im-packed Lunch' where staff were invited to bring their lunch for an informal sharing event and hear about colleagues' impactful work across a range of projects, gathering useful tips to help inform their own practice. This first event was followed by a second in July 2025.

Im-packed Lunch speakers for 2025:

Dr Jacki Willson: *Fabulous Femininities: Impact trials and tribulations*

Dr Dorothy Finan: *Safeguarding young people in the creative industries in the UK and Japan*

Dr Katie Gardner and Dr Kelli Zezulka: *Aerial Arts Scenography and Pedagogy Network*

Dr Alex de Little: *Listening in A+E: a sonic ethnography for a more care-ful hospital*

Dr Maria Kapsali: *Echome in Mature Company*

Dr Ameila Knowlson: *Co-creating Inclusive Resources with Neurodivergent Students: Network and Relationship Building*

¹²⁹<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/staff/4696/dr-ceri-pitches>

¹³⁰<https://lahri.leeds.ac.uk/profiles/shauna-walker/>



19 - Dr Jackie Wilson presenting her work on Fabulous Femininities.

Turnout for both events was high, and staff expressed their appreciation for an opportunity to gather in an informal and yet intellectually engaging and rigorous space. 'Im-packed Lunch' will now feature as a biannual event in the School helping to further support PCI staff develop impactful and engaged work.

In July 2025, PCI's impact team also delivered professional development training on 'Developing Impact Goals and Identifying Non-Academic Partnerships'. Using a workshop approach, they supported PCI academics to consider the possible impacts of their research and also explored ways of identifying specific non-academic groups who may be interested in their research.

We are grateful to everyone who participated in these events and we look forward to providing more opportunities for learning and sharing in the upcoming year!

Thank you!



This report was coordinated and co-written by PCI's Research Impact Development Officer, Dr Shauna Walker, and researchers in PCI. Interviews were also conducted by PCI Postgraduate Researcher, Tirna Sengupta.

Thank you to all PCI colleagues for their time, contributions, photographs and videos. Image of Tokyo at night by Erik Eastman on Unsplash; image of audience applauding by A Friend on Unsplash.

To find out more, please contact Shauna s.a.walker1@leeds.ac.uk¹³¹ or Dr Ceri Pitches, Director of Impact for PCI: c.l.pitches@leeds.ac.uk

¹³¹ <mailto:s.a.walker1@leeds.ac.uk>