
Guildhall De-Centre for Socially-Engaged Practice and Research



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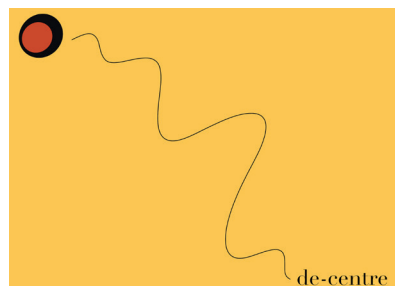
Welcome

Guildhall De-Centre for Socially Engaged Practice and Research builds on the work of Guildhall School's former Institute for Social Impact Research in the Performing Arts and other past initiatives that have explored socially engaged, equitable, sustainable and transdisciplinary practices across the School and beyond.

We have renamed and relaunched the Institute as the Guildhall De-Centre. The De-Centre focuses on the support structures, networks and collaborations that form the basis of socially engaged practices by developing a community of researchers, practitioners, producers, teachers and administrators at Guildhall School.

The De-Centre aims to support and value staff and students who are carrying out socially engaged practice and research. The lines of enquiry outlined in this booklet highlight the range of projects currently being developed in this area. These lines of enquiry will be underpinned by 'internal workings' such as curriculum development, a mobile common room and strategy workshops for staff and students. Termly public exchanges will increase interplay, sharing and visibility for the work of the De-Centre.

In this booklet you will find background to the development of the De-Centre; information on the Theory of Change that is guiding our work; a programme of activities for the year ahead; and information about current lines of enquiry connected to the work of the De-Centre that are being led by Guildhall School staff and students. We also include information about how you can get involved. We look forward to working with you!



Why 'De-Centre'

Guildhall School's De-Centre addresses several contemporary challenges and opportunities in artistic practice, research and social engagement.

In 2024/25 are asking what de-centring means within the context of Guildhall School. For example, what are the ideas, practices and implications of de-centring in terms of self, art, ownership, disciplines, power, decision-making and knowledge production? To de-centre is:

- to recognise that many arts activities are now defined by their plurality (for example in terms of contributors and collaborators, media, processes and contexts) and that this requires an approach geared around difference and complexity.
- to explore alternative models of management and organisation, for example that are lateral rather than top-down, multivalent rather than linear, collaborative rather than command-based.
- to examine nuanced interconnections between people, sectors and artforms, where flow and cross-pollination are more important than ideas of disciplinary purity or exclusionary identity.
- to celebrate diversity, transdisciplinarity as well as cross-media and cross-cultural expression.

Conceptually, the De-Centre is interested in ideas and models of dispersal, distribution and democratisation. This brings us to its focus on socially engaged practice and research. The De-Centre necessarily looks outward from its base in a research-oriented conservatoire to communities of artists, practitioners, participants and audiences in a range of settings. It explores the human and civic value of the performing arts and wider cultural activity, and specific areas of social agency. The De-Centre is a gathering ground for thinking and practice, and a vehicle for organising initiatives and partnerships. In this contradiction (the De-Centre as centre), it deliberately challenges orthodoxies and the assumed authority of the 'centre', while promoting new dynamics of connection and discovery.

Why socially engaged practice and research?

Guildhall School has a long tradition of work in this area.

The De-Centre builds on the evolution of socially engaged practice and research at the School, from the launch of the first conservatoire-based Music Therapy course in the 1970s; through the pioneering work of the Performance and Communication Skills department in the 1980s and '90s; to Guildhall Connect and Barbican Guildhall Creative Learning, underpinned by the BA (Hons) Performance and Creative Enterprise (PACE) and MMus Leadership degree and modular programmes in the 2000s and 2010s; up to the establishment of the Institute for Social Impact Research in the Performing Arts in the 2020s.

The formation of DISRUPT in 2021, which looked at community led governance structures in cultural organisations during and after the pandemic, has also been key to the evolution of the De-Centre.

Equally, the De-Centre is working closely with *undisciplined*, a pioneering extra-curricular programme at Guildhall School designed to support students to collaborate across, between and beyond disciplines and to push at the boundaries of their artistic practice.

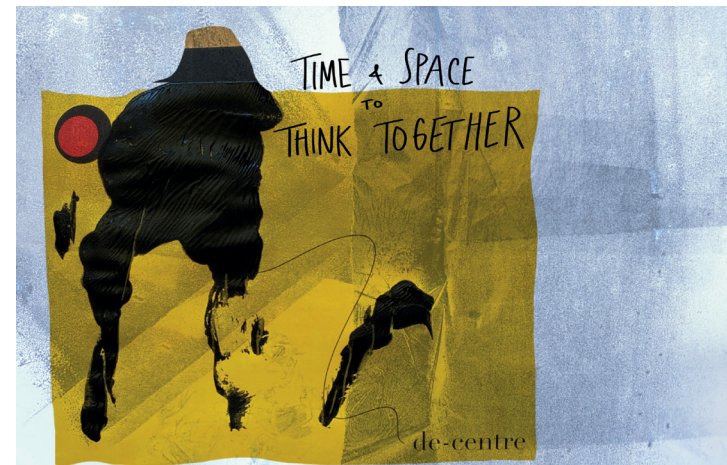


Process of development

Since September 2023 a group of staff, including a recently appointed Lecturer in Socially Engaged Practice, have been meeting regularly to consider the future of socially engaged practices and research at Guildhall School in the context of both this history to date and the School's 2023–30 strategic plan.

Further conversations and workshops with other staff members, alumni and stakeholders have led us to develop three strands of work through the De-Centre in 2024–25:

1. **Lines of enquiry** – establishing a staff/student community of researchers and practitioners interested in and/or actively engaged in this field of work.
2. **Internal workings** – curriculum development, a mobile common room for staff and students to meet, rest and reflect as well as workshops engaging with the School's strategic priorities.
3. **Public exchange** – co-hosting a series of talks, seminar events, publishing and podcasting to raise cross-sector awareness of socially engaged arts practice and research.



Theory of change

What: A home for socially engaged, equitable, sustainable and transdisciplinary practices across the conservatoire and beyond.	Who: A community of internal and external researchers, practitioners, producers, teachers, students and administrators.	Context & Need: Socially engaged work is not always visible and connected within Guildhall School, limiting awareness of career pathways and forums for sharing theoretical, practical and methodological considerations.
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Inputs	Outputs/Activities (Year 1)	Beneficiaries
Lecturer in Socially Engaged Art Post (Feb 2024–Feb 2026).	Lines of Enquiry: Support, guidance and knowledge-sharing events for current socially engaged practice & research projects.	Guildhall Staff
De-Centre steering group support, including evaluation.	Internal Workings – Curriculum Development: A space to develop socially engaged curriculum/courses. – Mobile Common Room: A space for staff & students to rest & reflect. – Strategy Workshops: A space for engagement with the school’s strategic priorities.	Guildhall Students
Confirmed budget to Sep 2025. Beyond this TBC.	Public Exchange – Events & Performances: Termly showcases and discussions. – Publishing & Podcasting: Annual reader and podcast series. – Training & Tools: Development of a Socially Engaged Practice Summer School and reader with tools, articles and resources.	Guildhall School
		Guildhall’s Partners and Publics

Theory of Change: Guildhall De-Centre for Socially Engaged Practice and Research

Assumptions we are testing through year 1: We assume there is a demand for the De-Centre’s research, activities and services amongst staff, students and partners. We assume that diverse groups of people, sectors and partners will be able to access our public programme. We assume that providing mechanisms and a network of support, staff will be enabled to develop their practice and the culture surrounding socially engaged work at Guildhall School. We assume the De-Centre will be influential in advocating Guildhall School’s existing restorative and reconciliation working practices. We assume that further internal and external funding and investment will be secured to sustain the work of the De-Centre, its partnerships and public-facing activities. We assume that by creating transparency around budgets, roles and evaluation through public documentation we will build trust with our communities and accountability for our work.

Mechanism of Change	Shorter Term Outcomes (Year 1)	Longer Term Outcomes/ Impacts
Staff at Guildhall School feel supported and valued to prioritise de-centred, transdisciplinary and socially engaged practice and research.	Staff are more confident and supported to develop specific research and practice in relation to the remit of the De-Centre. Staff feel supported through a space for restoration and collective care in order to sustain their socially engaged work.	Guildhall School is recognised nationally and internationally as an active site for socially engaged practice and research across teaching, research and its internal structures. Socially engaged work becomes more visible, strategically prioritised and embedded at Guildhall School.
Students feel that engaging with socially engaged electives and extra-curricular programmes is valued at Guildhall School.	Increased opportunities for students wanting transdisciplinary, socially engaged practice across the curriculum and School.	Guildhall School are able to attract diverse and socially engaged staff and students.
Guildhall School feels socially engaged work is valuable and strategically important.	Guildhall School can further embed this practice across the curriculum and test/develop electives and/or short courses. Guildhall School to develop a community of researchers and practitioners who can contribute to embedding de-centred, socially engaged, equitable, sustainable and transdisciplinary practices across the School.	
Partners and wider sector are enabled through equitable frameworks to engage in the public-facing activities.	Partners feel confident to collaborate and co-create alongside Guildhall School on socially engaged practice and research. Guildhall School can connect with wider community of socially engaged researchers, teachers and practitioners through public-facing De-Centre events.	Increased connections between Guildhall School and their community partners and other universities.

Programme 2024/25

Autumn Term: 16 September – 6 December 2024

Date	What?	Who is this for?
26 September 2024	Mobile Common Room in Silk Street	Staff and students
October 2024	Lines of enquiry Peer Sharing workshop	Lines of Enquiry leads
31 October 2024	Mobile Common Room in the North Wing	Staff
11 November 2024	Public Exchange – ResearchWorks	Everyone
28 November 2024	Mobile Common Room in Milton Court	Staff/Students
December 2024	Strategy Workshop	Staff and students

Spring Term: 6 January – 28 March 2025

Date	What?	Who is this for?
31 January 2025	Mobile Common Room in Silk Street	Staff and students
February 2025	Lines of enquiry Peer Sharing workshop	Lines of enquiry leads
28 February 2025	Mobile Common Room in North Wing	Staff
March 2025	Strategy Workshop	Staff and students
March 2025	Public Exchange	Everyone
28 March 2025	Mobile Common Room in Milton Court	Staff and students

Summer Term: 28 April – 4 July 2025

Date	What?	Who is this for?
28 April 2025	Mobile Common Room in Silk Street	Staff and Students
May 2025	Lines of enquiry Peer Sharing workshop	Lines of enquiry leads
31 May 2025	Mobile Common Room in North Wing	Staff
June 2025	Strategy Workshop	Staff/students
June 2025	Public Exchange	Everyone
28 June 2025	Mobile Common Room in Milton Court	Staff and students

Summer 2025

Date	What?	Who is this for?
July 2025	De-Centre Summer School	Everyone

For an up to date timetable
please check the website or
join the mailing list by scanning
the QR code.



Lines of enquiry

A key part of the work of the De-Centre is to build, develop and sustain a community of socially engaged teachers, researchers, administrators and practitioners across the School.

Lines of enquiries are current and emerging practice and research projects led by Guildhall School staff and postgraduate researchers that connect to the De-Centre's aims and ambitions around socially engaged work and infrastructure.

Staff leading lines of enquiry have the option of:

- Connecting with others who are exploring similar lines of enquiry with the potential to collaborate, develop ideas and give peer-to-peer support (e.g. visiting/reading/watching each other's projects and sharing skills and expertise with one another).
- Presenting their work in progress for feedback and development.
- Showcasing their project profile and links on the De-Centre website.
- Contributing to a Guildhall De-Centre annual publication/reader.

Here is a list of current key contributors and their lines of enquiry. We have started to cluster these enquiries around three areas, which all intersect and overlap:

- **Micro: Relational practices, collaborations and encounters** (enquiries that are focused on specific projects, methods and interactions).
- **Meso: Socially-engaged, de-centring practice in conservatoires** (enquiries that explore the past, present and future roles and responsibilities of socially engaged conservatoires).
- **Macro: Inclusive, caring, equitable and diverse structures** (enquiries that ask broader theoretical and structural questions about the issues and implications of de-centring, socially engaged practices).

You can find out more about these works in progress during the public exchanges and on our website.

If you are a member of staff or doctoral researcher at Guildhall School and have a socially engaged line of enquiry you would like to be part of the De-Centre, please do get in touch: decentre@gsmnd.ac.uk

Micro: Relational practices, collaborations and encounters

Detta Danford and Natasha Zielazinski: Music Motherhood and Me

Detta Danford and Natasha Zielazinski are musicians and composers whose work is often collaborative. They have worked together since studying at the Guildhall School in 2006. During this time they have developed a rich collaborative partnership through playing, composing, leading, thinking, writing and researching together. Their work together includes performing with ensembles such as Jetsam and Breakfast Club, as well as playing and performing as a duo. Their joint practice involves arts facilitation, co-teaching collaborative and participatory arts practice, as well as group coaching and coach training. Detta and Natasha are currently working closely with partner organisations like the LSO and the Magpie Project to develop new models of practice which explore alternative models for collaboration, facilitation and connection.

Their project Music Motherhood and Me is a collaboration with The Magpie Project, a charity that supports mums and under-fives in temporary accommodation in Newham. Music Motherhood and Me explores the intersection of coaching and arts facilitation within creative sessions.

Their Line of Enquiry is concerned with understanding how these two disciplines interact and the impact this has on well-being and creative health, and on another level, the project aims to contribute to the understanding of community partnership and co-created work between community organisations like the Magpie Project and HE institutions like the Guildhall School.

Leslie Deere: The Embodied Instrument: Immersive Experience for Creative Expression and Restorative Practice

Leslie Deere is a Postdoctoral Researcher at Guildhall School and an internationally exhibiting artist, performer and published author. Her current multidisciplinary work investigates embodied sound making, affect and immersion. She is engaged in research looking at the potentials of arts-based extended reality experiences as creative new forms of therapy. She has recently released a book chapter on VR performance from the 90s to now published by Springer and will contribute to a book in 2025 on altered states in audiovisual art. Leslie, BA Hons Sonic Art, MA RCA, PhD, is a classically trained dancer with a background in the performing arts.

Leslie's line of enquiry looks at immersive technologies for live performance and the theatre space as well as the creative possibilities of extended-reality technologies for self-expression and exploration within mind body practices.

Kate Jones: "How intense is this silence?" Is Music Therapy a potential game-changer for children and young people experiencing Selective Mutism?

Dr Kate Jones is the research group coordinator for Music Therapy at Guildhall School and Director of the charity Music Therapy Lambeth. Kate began her research journey into Selective Mutism after being referred 'quiet children' from nursery schools. These children responded quickly to Music Therapy returning to the classroom talking and often becoming quite loud. Kate's other research interests are in the neuroscience of health and wellbeing, particularly for therapeutic interventions but also in the broader systemic applications of how we use the arts for nervous system regulation and health.

Kate's line of enquiry research is investigating if and how Music Therapy practice can be best utilised to support children with Selective Mutism. Her research journey is embedded in clinical practice, employing a critical stance to examine and share the current tools in a therapeutic toolkit.

Emily Peasgood: EverSong: a lifespan in song

Emily Peasgood is an Ivor Novello Composer's Award-winning composer, sound artist and visual artist. She is a Guildhall School professor, teaching field recording, sonic art, and electronic music composition, and she leads a community choir and community samba band.

One of Emily's lines of enquiry, *EverSong*, is a sound installation that allows visitors to hear a person's lifespan in a song as they walk along a pre-defined pathway or tunnel. This work explores the fragility of life and its circularity, and invites people to celebrate the present. It also questions our legacy as humans in an increasingly digital age. She is particularly interested in transient spaces in urban and transport hubs, where we move through the world on autopilot. *EverSong* features a new lullaby Emily is composing and will sing herself. However, at the start, she will sound five years old; by the end, she will sound 95. As visitors walk forward, the singer ages. If they walk backwards, the singer de-ages.

Sigrún Sævarsdóttir-Griffiths: MetamorPhonics and Building Bridges Through Collaboration

Sigrún Sævarsdóttir-Griffiths is a musician, educator and music leader, working within higher education and various community contexts. For 12 years, Sigrún was Course Leader of the Masters in Leadership Programme at Guildhall School, where she continues to lecture and lead artistic work. Sigrún is founder and artistic director of MetamorPhonics, an award-winning Community Interest Company, establishing performing and recording musical bands, in collaboration with higher education institutions, occupation rehabilitation centres and homeless charities in the UK and in Iceland. Sigrún is passionate about enabling music making and access to the arts as an essential, unifying element of life, in every community.

Building Bridges is a collaboration between Sigrún, University of Arts Iceland, York St John University, UK and Bifröst University, Iceland. This line of enquiry aims to investigate the community music practice of MetamorPhonics and its impacts on participants. The research encompasses multiple aspects, including understanding the profiles and motivations of band members, exploring the principles, beliefs and core pedagogic approaches that guide MetamorPhonics, comparing them to other community music practices.

Meso: Socially-engaged, de-centering practice in conservatoires

Beatrice Baumgartner-Cohen: The Secret Lives of Meeting Room 1

Beatrice Baumgartner-Cohen is an artist, illustrator and graphic recorder. The emphasis of her work is on live illustration/visual minuting and graphic recording. Beatrice initially trained as a scientific and craft glassblower and also has an MA in Applied Linguistics with an emphasis on Discourse Analysis. This has been very useful for her graphic recording work, which is as much about listening as it is about drawing. In 2022 she completed a Masters in Illustration at Cambridge School of Art/Anglia Ruskin University and is currently a doctoral researcher at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama.

As the inaugural artist in residence for the Guildhall De-Centre, the De-Centre has become a case-study for Beatrice's doctoral research: *The Secret Lives of Meeting Room 1 – Doing Visual Ethnography* by drawing life/live at Guildhall School of Music & Drama. Beatrice has been documenting the steering group meetings and decision-making process of developing the De-Centre through her illustrated graphics. Some of her images are included in this booklet and on the website.

Sean Gregory: The Creative and Social Imperative of a Conservatoire: collaborative endeavours and reciprocal learning at Guildhall School, 1980–2030

Sean Gregory is Vice-Principal & Director of Innovation and Engagement at Guildhall School, responsible for a range of lifelong learning programmes across Guildhall School, and in partnership with arts and education organisations. Alongside working as a composer, performer, and creative producer, he has led collaborative arts projects for all ages and abilities in association with many British and international orchestras, opera companies, theatres, galleries, and arts education organisations.

Informed by the mapping process undertaken by Guildhall De-Centre's line of enquiry 'Echoes and the unsaid', this past-present-future perspective of artists as makers, (socially engaged practitioners who are reflexive, collaborative and facilitatory), will investigate and re-imagine models of continuing professional development, with dialogic learning at its heart, in a range of societal contexts.

Fuelled by curiosity in creativity as a critical and social process that is rooted in interaction, rather than an isolated and individual 'act of genius', this line of enquiry will explore how continuing learning can be personalised collaboratively through the shared experience of today's cultural, digital and social revolution.

Can conservatoires evolve, thrive and be celebrated as enablers of creative and human growth (including mental health and well-being) for the benefit of society, as well as maintaining their reputation as centres of excellence for more established arts and cultural industry training?

Sophie Hope and Jo Gibson: Echoes and the unsaid: Listening into past experiments in social practice at Guildhall School of Music & Drama

Dr Sophie Hope is a practice-based researcher and Lecturer in Social Engaged Practices at Guildhall School and Dr Jo Gibson is a community music practitioner-researcher from East London, Research Fellow at York St John University's Institute for Social Justice, and supervises doctoral researchers at Guildhall School.

Their line of enquiry aims to map, make visible (and audible) specific teaching initiatives to generate a better understanding of why, what, how, when and where socially engaged practices have been taught historically at Guildhall School. By listening to the echoes of past practices at Guildhall they hope to inform future directions and understandings of what innovative, socially engaged, de-centering pedagogies might look like for Guildhall School going forward. They are particularly interested in exploring socially engaged practices across artforms and disciplines to understand what 'de-centering' has meant in these diverse (and overlapping) contexts.

Gilly Roche: Re-imagining The Cross School Project

Gilly Roche specialises in creating inclusive, postdisciplinary environments for the development of new artistic ideas and practices. Their research explores the queer potentiality of the early, R&D stages of artmaking. At Guildhall, they oversee *undisciplined* – an extra-curricular programme of funding, workshops and events designed to support students to collaborate and work beyond and between departmental and disciplinary boundaries. They also lead the Self-Led Practice strand within the BA (Hons) Acting Programme, the annual Cross-School Project and they are developing new undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in contemporary and socially engaged performance practice.

Gilly's line of enquiry asks "how can we reimagine the Cross School Project for the progressive, plural, post-disciplinary conservatoire?" It positions the project as a marquee event within the School's timetable – an opportunity to instil an ethos of artistic curiosity, collectivity and mutual support within our community of students.

Jonathan Vaughan: Artistic Citizenship and Performance Excellence in Music Conservatoires

Professor Jonathan Vaughan, Principal of Guildhall School since 2022 and former orchestral musician, leverages extensive experience from roles such as Director of Music at Guildhall, Chairman of the London Symphony Orchestra, and CEO/Artistic Director of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain. Driven by concerns over music education inequities and a commitment to social justice and environmental sustainability, he is pursuing a PhD on "Artistic Citizenship and Performance Excellence in Music Conservatoires." His research investigates how conservatoires cultivate Artistic Citizens. Jonathan's study examines the integration and practical training of Artistic Citizenship within conservatoire curricula. Initially surveying 24 global institutions, his focus shifted to one selected institution, Oberlin College and Conservatory in Ohio. Through fieldwork and interviews, Jonathan aims to identify successful curriculum initiatives and challenges in fostering Artistic Citizenship, with preliminary findings highlighting effective strategies and obstacles observed at Oberlin.

Jonathan's research question is: *How do conservatoires effectively train Artistic Citizens in order to create current and future generations of artists who are equipped and willing to intelligently engage with the current dialogue around ethics, social justice and well-being in order to define their own lives as 21st Century Artists in Society?*

Macro: Inclusive, caring, equitable and diverse structures

TJ Bacon: Queer Acts of Hope

Dr T J Bacon (she/they) is a trans-femme pansexual person with hidden disabilities. Her practice as an artist-philosopher foregrounds transgender studies, queer theory, crip theory and queer phenomenology to consider visual art, performance art, theatre, activism and curation. She has exhibited internationally for over 20 years, is the founder and artistic director of Tempting Failure and a PhD Advisor for the Trans Art Institute. She joins Guildhall School as Researcher in Residence.

Her line of enquiry is titled *Queer Acts of Hope*. It is a timely and urgent response to UK-centric transgender lived experiences, arguing that trans lives occupy a position of queer phenomenological value for inclusive practices to be advocated for and through. Acknowledging the landscape of trauma but choosing not to exploit this, her line of enquiry foregrounds the celebration of transition through close phenomenological examination of the socially engaged artistic practice of transgender artists, communities and activists, noting the significance of hope and resilience when navigating UK society, political climates and healthcare.

While in residence at Guildhall, she will establish a Virtual Centre of Excellence that draws together scholars whose own research advocates for trans inclusion while building new partnerships from UK social-advocacy and healthcare organisations. She will also conduct research for her third book, a monograph tentatively entitled *Trans Phenomenology: Queer Acts of Hope* while beginning the first steps to develop an advocacy workshop to improve inclusive care for trans people in the UK through co-production with the Guildhall De-Centre for Socially Engaged Practice and Research and wider trans community.

She welcomes those interested in joining any element of this line of enquiry project to contact her.

Jane Booth: Digging Deep with Leaders On and Off Stage: Myth-Busting Leadership in the Arts

Jane Booth performed for over 30 years as principal clarinettist with Orchestras based in the UK, Europe and Canada. Her professional practice has evolved and is now rooted in Executive Coaching and Organisational Development. Jane leads Guildhall Ignite; a professional development consultancy based at Guildhall School. As an EMCC Master Coach, a coach trainer and a systems-inspired facilitator, Jane works with a broad range of high-profile national and international clients, including orchestras and leadership teams working to amplify world-class performance. For her line of enquiry, Jane asks: What does the classical music industry need of its leaders today to build a more inclusive industry for all artists tomorrow?

Recent reports from the Independent Society of Musicians, Musicians' Union and Women and Equalities Committee (House of Commons) indicate that the classical music industry is slow to respond to the cries for greater equity, diversity and inclusion within its ranks. When will artists of difference see the change they need and deserve and that will offer them equal/fair opportunities currently enjoyed by the few who fit a current idealised profile? Time and time again at industry debates, we hear leaders say how difficult change is and how it will take time.

What is needed to bring about meaningful change in this sector? Who brings solutions and who remains a part of the problem?

Nell Catchpole: Environmental Justice. Is environmental sound art activist (enough)?

Nell Catchpole co-leads 'Social Arts Practice' projects for Guildhall students. She has co-directed/convened a number of public events for Guildhall staff and students, including: *Curious* (guest artist/researchers including Claudia Molitor (City), Cathy Lane (LCC), David Toop (LCC), Brian Eno, Ansuman Biswas); *MAP/making* at Bath International Festival, Aldeburgh Festival, and Barbican; and *Unfinished* (events at Tate Exchange (2017–18) and Iklectik (2019–23)). She is a freelance ecological sound artist and researcher based in Tees Valley. She is undertaking Doctoral Research at Newcastle University. Current projects include "Gongs of Teesside": Working with an 84-year-old blacksmith to create steel gongs to be performed by local communities in a series of co-created 'sonic actions'.

Nell's line of enquiry explores participatory ecological sound art's potential for affect/effect through collective "intensities of listening" and sonic actions. Nell's practice as research explores the socio-ecology of Teesside at a time of uncertain transition from de-industrialization to the development of controversial "Net Zero" infrastructure. Listening/sounding with Teesside's human and more-than-human inhabitants, she situates her work within the emergent field of 'ecological sound art', critically examining the nexus of ecological listening/sounding, social justice, and participatory art.

Jo Chard: Sharing power: Collective Organising in Cultural Organisations

Jo Chard (they/them) is a queer neurodivergent producer and researcher who focuses on participatory and co-created approaches. Most of their practice looks at radical and democratised community-led infrastructure in cultural organisations through their work on projects like DISRUPT. They are the Senior Manager for Creative Partnerships at Guildhall School, and are currently undertaking a PhD exploring community and activist organising models, and their applications in the governance of cultural organisations to support greater democracy.

Drawing on non-hierarchical, collective, co-operative and consensus-based decision-making models, Jo's line of enquiry looks at how we can create radical new approaches to governance in cultural organisations that place communities at the centre of decision-making processes. In the next year, the project will look at different community and activist organising models to support new governance frameworks, with a particular focus on collective and participatory funding approaches.

Nazli Tabatabai-Khatambakhsh: How do you tune into collaboration?

Nazli Tabatabai-Khatambakhsh BSc., MLitt, MA, SFHEA is Professor of Dramatic Writing on the MA in Opera Making & Writing at Guildhall School and specialises in libretto, collaboration, and dramaturgy. Nazli is Associate Artist (Stage, Screen and Strategy) at The Oxford School of Drama and is an External Examiner at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama on the MA/MFA Creative Producing. Their critically acclaimed and award-winning international professional portfolio and arts-based research practice is socially informed and engaged, spanning opera, theatre, circus, literature, dance, museums and galleries, screen and digital spaces. She is an International Society for the Performing Arts (ISPA) and Arts Council England Grad Fellow and is a member of ISPA's Governance Committee with a specialism in DEI Leadership. Nazli Tabatabai-Khatambakhsh is the inaugural Postgraduate Researcher of Libretto at Guildhall School where her doctoral study engages with the opera Carmen and contemporary Iran.

Nazli's line of enquiry is about developing an Equitable Collaboration Framework and Facilitation Methods Toolkit. Through transdisciplinary research practice Nazli is engaging with multiple ways to connect, for example how we tune into each other through the sharing of aesthetics and narratives, using dramaturgy, observation and writing.

How do I get involved?

Everyone

Sign up to our mailing list.

Come along to our public exchanges.

Get in touch if you have any questions, complaints or ideas:
decentre@gsmd.ac.uk

Staff

Visit MyGuildhall to access resources and further information.

Are you doing a socially engaged project through research, teaching or practice? If so, fill in a line of enquiry form or get in touch with decentre@gsmd.ac.uk

Meet us at the Mobile Common Room 12–1pm during the last Thursday of every month during term time.

Join us for our termly practical strategy workshops to feed into School strategy development and implementation.

Students

Visit MyGuildhall to access resources and further information.

Find out about related courses and modules you can take.

Meet us at the Mobile Common Room 12–1pm during the last Thursday of every month during term time.

Join the termly practical strategy workshops to feed into School strategy development and implementation.

Partners, allies and publics

Get in touch with us, connect up.

Come along to our public exchange events.

Visit our website for more info, tools and publications.

Contact

Sophie Hope
decentre@gsmd.ac.uk
gsmd.ac.uk/de-centre

Who we are

The De-Centre is currently run by a collective of Guildhall School staff. We meet monthly to reflect together and make decisions. Sophie Hope keeps things running along with significant input and support from Sean Gregory, Rob Severyn, Maia Mackney and Jo Chard.

The current steering group have shaped and supported the development of the De-Centre. Members include: Beatrice Baumgartner-Cohen, Nell Catchpole, Jo Chard, Sean Gregory, Sig Griffiths, Sophie Hope, Maia Mackney, Emily Orley, Gilly Roche, Rob Severyn, Nazli Tabatabai-Khatambakhsh and Toby Young.

We would like to thank all the socially engaged practitioners, researchers and teachers that have paved the way for the De-Centre to develop at Guildhall School. This includes staff and students but also the myriads of partners, community groups and participants that have been involved in creating, making and reflecting together over the years. We hope the De-Centre will provide an occasion to pursue this work, with a strong sense of where we have come from in order to develop lines of enquiry that can stretch into the future.

The images in this booklet have been created by Beatrice Baumgartner-Cohen as part of her graphic illustrations of the steering group meetings and decision-making process of developing the De-Centre.

To receive updates please sign up to our mailing list by scanning the QR code.



For further information or to get involved contact decentre@gsmd.ac.uk



