

A shared event between Cultural Negotiation of Science (CNoS) researchers from Northumbria University and DJCAD researchers, held at DJCAD.

The CNoS research group brings together artists, academics and research students whose practices engage with expert cultures across a broad spectrum of science and technology. Based at Northumbria University, Newcastle, the group seeks to reach across publics and research communities to develop a performative approach to the production of knowledge that actively challenges the use of art as an instrumental or illustrative device to interpret science. CNoS are committed to supporting innovative, practice-based methods which re-vision the relationships between scientific and artistic research, leading to artistic outcomes which can enable community engagement as well as generate wider socio-political impact.

Shared session: Wednesday 8th March 2023

Scar Tissue

A gathering between CNoS members and staff/researchers from Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Edinburgh University to share our cross-disciplinary research through conversation, presentation and direct engagements. Adopting the working title *Scar Tissue* - as seen in the context of post-surgical adhesions (an abnormal adhering of surfaces) or scar tissue itself (a mark left at the point of separation) – we will focus on dialogues and examples that consider the residues of interdisciplinary practice.

Positioning critical and performative interdisciplinary practice at the centre, this research day will seek to identify means and methods to both unsettle and connect the poles of data and language between specialist disciplinary fields, while asserting the value of arts practice in leading cross-disciplinary research.

Programme.

Lunch, 12 – 1pm in Mathews Room 5001

Session 1: 1pm – 2.30pm (Mathew 5013)

- CNoS Introduction and welcome: Christine Borland, Fiona Crisp, Jacqueline Donachie
- Presentation Dr. Jacqueline Donachie: *Scar Tissue Theory.; ‘it is necessary to confront the interdisciplinary conundrum in academia that sees creative practice (fine art, film, installation) as unequal to scientific/medical methods of illustration and explanation’* (10 mins)
- **Guest Speaker 1: Dr Jennie Jordan, Creative Informatics, Edinburgh University/ Loughborough University.** Presentation on Creative Horizon five project ‘Data Data Everywhere’ (20 mins)
<https://creativeinformatics.org/research/horizon-5-data-data-everywhere/>

Creative Informatics is an ambitious research and development programme based at Edinburgh University.

Detecting Dark Matter Data: data gaps for innovation and R&D activity in the creative industries:

How can we collect data about the creative industries for processing and analysis in a way which is more useful for data consumers (such as policymakers and funders) and for data producers (such as businesses and individual creatives)? Although a wide variety of quantitative and qualitative data sources on the creative industries are available, policymakers and creative practitioners alike still struggle to use data effectively as a decision support tool in their strategic thinking and planning. In particular, there is tacit knowledge that sector activity occurs which is not well-captured through traditional economic analysis mechanisms. One research participant referred to this data gap as the ‘dark matter’ of the sector. Our research focused especially on data gaps for innovation and R&D activity in the creative industries. To support better decision-making for innovation in the creative industries, we need to shine a light on this ‘dark matter’

- **Guest Speaker 2: [Prof Mel Woods](#) Centre for Ecology Futures, University of Dundee** (20 mins)
‘An important aspect of CEF's work includes futures thinking, informed by the near and distant past, as well as possible alternative futures and scenarios. Through our transdisciplinary tools and methodologies, we highlight the

importance of critical thinking informed by social customs and folklore, indigenous knowledge, and multicultural theories.' A past project of Prof Woods was the delivery of [the first European-wide Citizen Observatory \(CO\) knowledge platform](#).

- 15 mins questions/discussion
- Break. 15 mins

Session 2: 2.45 – 4.45pm (**Mathew 5013**) to include chaired group discussion

1. **Prof. Natasha Lushetich** (DJCAD) is Professor of Contemporary Art, Media & Theory at the University of Dundee and AHRC Research Leadership Fellow. Her research is interdisciplinary and focuses on intermedia and critical mediality; global art; the status of sensory experience in cultural knowledge; biopolitics; performativity; and, more recently, datafication and complexity. Her books include [Fluxus: The Practice of Non-Duality](#) (2014); [Interdisciplinary Performance](#) (2016); [The Aesthetics of Necropolitics](#) (2018), [Beyond Mind](#); a special issue of *Symbolism* (2019); [Big Data: A New Medium?](#) (2020), and [Distributed Perception: Resonances and Axiologies](#), co-edited with Iain Campbell (2021).

What is Data Art?

'Data art' is often used to refer to artistic practices that utilise data as material, such as Aaron Koblin or Refik Anadol's. This talk suggests that the expression should instead be used for critical practices that problematise data ontologies through a focus on: 1) primary data, which includes data collection and classification; 2) metadata – the construction of data about data; and 3) transposition – the use of data for purposes other than what they were initially collected for. The focus on these three areas also enables a reflection on today's knowledge economy, usually (unproblematically) seen as a data (raw givens) – information (meaningfully organised givens) – knowledge (instrumentalised information) triad.

2. **Dr. Paul Goodfellow** (CNoS) is an artist with an interest in the application of ecological and systems thinking and computational and procedural methods to the understanding of nature and art. With a background in environmental science and systems thinking, he is interested in information's aesthetic and affective experience and the liminal spaces between the subject and its simulation in data. He has recently moved from Northumbria University to a new post as Senior Lecturer *Digital Art Theory and Practice* at the School of Design and Informatics at Abertay University.

Art Practice at the point of separation:

Paul Goodfellow will discuss his move from a science-based research practice concerned with visualising and modelling systems within environmental prediction and planning to an art-based practice concerned with the underlying ontological and epistemological characteristics of systems and their informational content and the role translation and interpretation plays at the scale of the object and the algorithms and systems which describe them. There was an unacknowledged aesthetic and affective dimension to the emergent information-based objects generated by this early research relocating his interests into a liminal space between science, systems thinking and art. His research expresses an underlying saudade motivated by the psychological scarring or 'mark left at the point of separation' from the certainties of science and a loss of agency due to the accelerating complexity of systems which shape our lifeworld.

3. **Calum Eccleston** (DJCAD) Calum is a performance artist whose studies contribute to the field of performative engagement with archival histories. He is currently conducting the first practice-led doctoral thesis about The Alastair MacLennan Performance Art Archive at DJCAD, University of Dundee.

At the Point of Separation

The challenge of working with the ephemeral heritage of performance art is an area of focus for archivists and curators but is less addressed by performance artists. When addressing the intangible gaps of cultural memory, how can performance art practice reveal unseen absences in archives which otherwise evade institutional preservation strategies? Contributing to my PhD research, *Performing the Unseen*, this presentation investigates intangible cultural memory through a practice-led dialogue with The Alastair MacLennan Performance Art Archive at DJCAD, University of Dundee. This particular archive has been an educational resource since 2019 and elements of how it was kept by the artist for so long are beginning to fade, becoming unseen. As the last witness of this disappearance, I explore performance as 'embodied recollection' and its capacity to materialise points of separation within the archive which leave no discernible trace, that which is lost between a historical event and the archival residue.

4. **Dr. Louise Mackenzie** (CNoS) is an artist, curator and lecturer in Contemporary Art Practice at DJCAD. Her practice explores human relationships with the non-human world using methodologies based in process, chance, appropriation and translation. With an interest in experimental and experiential practices, sound and new/found media play an important role in her work. She is currently a Research Associate at Newcastle University's Hub for Biotechnology in the Built Environment and will soon take up post as a Lecturer in Contemporary Art Practice at DJCAD.

Interdisciplinary Research - Who Benefits?

Working Together and BioDwelling - case studies in participatory art research.

This short paper discusses two participatory arts projects and their respective audiences, their selection and engagement with the research. Working Together was a pilot collaboration between the Cultural Negotiation of Science research group and the Department of Applied Sciences at Northumbria University, where the participants were scientists and the intended outcome was the development of a creative methodology to bring artistic and scientific research into dialogue. The second, BioDwelling, a research project funded by Newcastle University's Hub for Biotechnology in the Built Environment sought to bring knowledge from public audiences into dialogue with interdisciplinary research at the intersection of architecture and microbiology. The participants in this case were self-selecting members of the local community who attended workshops and events held at two local galleries: Newcastle Contemporary Art, The NewBridge Project and the Great North Museum. Through these examples, the paper considers where the art 'work' sits in participatory practice, the distinction between participants and audience, who benefits and why.

5pm- 6pm

Drinks in Cooper Gallery, Duncan of Jordanstone College of art (Harun Faroki show)