

artists practising well

Press Release

Artists Practising Well Research Report

April 2019

Artists Practising Well Report is available to read and download from Open Air, the Robert Gordon University Research Repository	https://openair.rgu.ac.uk/handle/10059/3371
Artists Practising Well synopsis is available to read and download from Nicola Naismith's LinkedIn profile	https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6529328114701475840
Artists Practising Well key information slide show is available to read and download from Nicola Naismith's LinkedIn profile.	https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6529328861237248000

Artists Practising Well is a new research report by Nicola Naismith, which focuses on the topic of affective support for creative practitioners working in participatory arts in health and wellbeing.

The research was supported by a grant from the the Arts and Humanities Research Council via the Clore Leadership Programme.

The report has been prepared with a wide readership in mind: creative practitioners, arts commissioners, organisational leaders, funders and policy makers.

The research is informed by the experiences of creative practitioners working in arts for health and wellbeing, collected via an online survey. The survey asked for current support experiences, what practitioners do for themselves and what they would like in the future. The report details how the landscape of affective support for creative practitioners is mixed, with some receiving good support, while others aren't getting enough or any.

The Literature Review maps the territories adjacent to this work, the current context of arts in health and wellbeing and the prominence of this work both in current academic research and practitioner guidance. It also looks at other influential factors including work management, practitioner wellbeing and how this is affected by the gig economy. Reflective practice is explored in the context of self supporting activities which practitioners could undertake. Finally it gathers relevant texts related to practising in non arts contexts, and the artist in public life.

The report makes 7 recommendations under the headings of Conversation, Co-Production, Funding, Leadership, Peer to Peer Learning, Recognition, Support Menu and Vocabulary. Details of each recommendation can be found on page 39 of the full report.

Nicola Naismith, Visual Artist and Visual Artist Fellow on the Clore Leadership Programme in 2017/18 explains why she undertook the research:

“It is an important time to have undertaken this research, gathering experiences from practitioners and cultural leaders, to inform recommendations for the future. Much of the content is applicable to practitioners and arts organisations working in other potentially challenging contexts where needs and circumstances are complex. Support can be used to both protect the wellbeing of creative practitioners and contribute to the best quality provision for participants”.

“It is essential that the health and wellbeing of artists is properly supported, which in turn will help them to deliver the best quality work in the participatory arts for health and wellbeing sector.”

Victoria Hume, Director of the Culture, Health & Wellbeing Alliance said:

“At the Culture, Health & Wellbeing Alliance we're delighted to have access to this incredibly timely report. It will give us a base of real knowledge about the needs of creative practitioners and will help us support commissioners to better understand how to make this work sustainable, professionally and personally. We need this kind of research to help us make it more possible for people to do this incredibly valuable work and keep doing it”.

Phillipa Reive, Director, Creative Campus at Snape Maltings said in the foreword of the report:

“As commissioners, cultural leaders, funders and policy makers we need to step up and enable artists to do their best work. This research report is such an important marker. I look forward to what comes next, and playing a role in helping shape that”.

Chris Fremantle, the research supervisor stated:

"Nicola Naismith's research highlights the challenges for artists working in a range of contexts such as hospitals and hospices, as well as community mental health and social prescribing. Very often freelance, artists engaged in this area of social and participatory practice need to understand what commissioning organisations can and should do by way of affective support, as well as what they can do for themselves."

"Even the language of different forms of 'support' is not particularly clear - survey respondents used 'counselling,' 'supervision' and 'coaching' fairly interchangeably. One of the most important parts of the Report may prove to be the Glossary Nicola Naismith has developed."

Ends

Notes to editors

Nicola Naismith is a visual artist and lives in Norwich. In 2017/18 she was the Visual Artist Fellow on the Clore Leadership Programme, where she focused on how people can develop their learning and reflective practice through coaching and action learning sets, researched wellbeing at work through employee engagement, explored arts for health and wellbeing and developed a greater understanding of the working conditions of contemporary artists.

Her practice is socially engaged, working on residencies and research with specialists and professionals from other sectors to identify and communicate common ground across a range of industries including engineering, architecture, museums, archives and ergonomics.

Working in a process-orientated way, Nicola creates visual artworks for exhibition, gives talks, contributes to panel discussions and writes in addition to coaching, mentoring and lecturing. Her work has been exhibited internationally, including Australia and Russia, and closer to home in Scotland, London and Cambridge.

Information about her work can be found at:

www.nicolanaismith.co.uk

twitter.com/nicolanaismith1

www.instagram.com/nicolanaismith1/

Chris Fremantle, research supervisor is a Senior Research Fellow at Gray's School of Art and is a producer, writer and artist. <https://www3.rgu.ac.uk/dmstaff/fremantle-chris>

The **Arts and Humanities Research Council** was established in April 2005 as successor to the Arts and Humanities Research Board and is a British research council, non-departmental public body that provides approximately £102 million from the government to support research and postgraduate study in the arts and humanities; from languages and law, archaeology and English literature to design and creative and performing arts. In any one year, the AHRC makes approximately 700 research awards and around 1,350 postgraduate awards. Awards are made after a rigorous peer review process, to ensure that only applications of the highest quality are funded.

Clore Leadership is a dynamic and inclusive resource for leaders and aspiring leaders in the arts, culture and creative sectors. It was initiated in 2003 by the Clore Duffield Foundation, and is sustained by a partnership between private philanthropy and public funding. It has succeeded in creating a sought-after cadre of creative and cultural leaders and inspired investment in leadership on the part of governments, agencies, foundations and charities both nationally and internationally.

Gray's School of Art is the Robert Gordon University's art school, located in Aberdeen, Scotland. It is one of the oldest established fine art institutions in Scotland. Robert Gordon University provides industry led undergraduate and postgraduate courses leading to highly relevant awards and degrees.