

# Arts and Culture Annual Report 2019 – 2020

# A review of the work of Arts and Culture

August 2019 - July 2020



Image: *Moth Writes* workshop for In the Company of Insects, October 2019. Moths were trapped by an experienced entomologist and released at the end of the workshop.

# 2019 – 2020 Snapshot

100	Artists we worked with.
700	New Instagram followers.
2,592	Followers on Twitter at year end.
8,000	Views of our Hyperlocal Arts Commissions on our website.
10,000	Views of our 2019 and 2020 <i>Urgency</i> Arts Commission on our website.
13,000	Members of the public engaged with our work through displays and exhibitions.
543,724	Social media reach and impressions.

# Introduction

This report summarises our work with University of Exeter staff and students, partnering with creative practitioners across a range of disciplines to create inspiring and engaging projects. It includes responses to major global events, spanning Black Lives Matter, the climate crisis and the global pandemic and how in each case we have aimed to support artists, connect with audiences and promote educational programming. We have outlined our partnership work with stakeholders, both inside and outside the University, and shared some of our work behind the scenes.

This was our second full year of delivery, following the Arts and Culture Strategy launch in October 2018. While we couldn't have anticipated the disruption of Covid-19, a number of positive factors allowed us to successfully continue our activities: the launch of a new brand and website provided the ideal platform for broad-reaching engagement; agile and responsive working practices enabled us to pivot quickly; and the fantastic support of creative communities across both the University and South West allowed us to join forces and collaborate.

Our mission is to 'activate creativity' and we like to do this by joining things up – we hope the scope of this report illustrates the many ways we have supported our creative colleagues and communities over the year.



Image: promotion for *Hyperlocal*, see page 20 for detail

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Image from *Brave New World* exhibition by Catherine Cartwright,

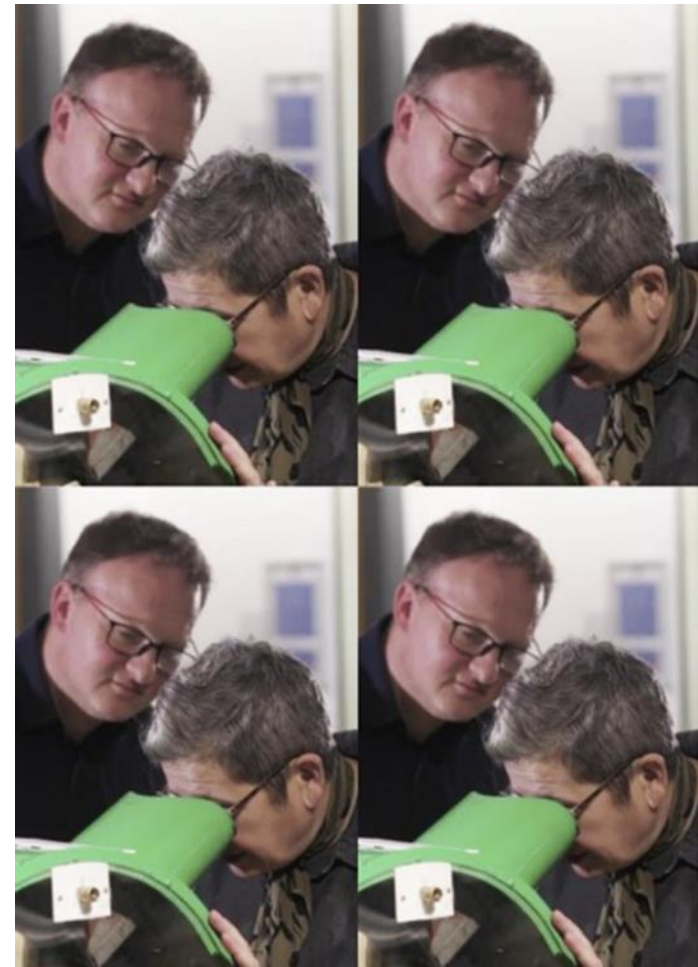
Photograph: Rob Darch

# Creative Fellowships

Short-term placements that bring creative practitioners into research settings and encourage new conversations across disciplines.

There are three Creative Fellowships each year, selected following an open callout. They are hosted by an interdisciplinary research group, and spend 4-5 weeks in research and development before delivering dissemination events for a range of audiences.

Due to Covid-19, some of our planned activities couldn't go ahead. Instead, we presented projects and artworks in alternative formats online.



<https://www.artsandcultureexeter.co.uk/creative-fellowship>

Photograph: ©Steven Haywood

# Human Structure and Movement

Creative Fellow: Dr Domenico Vicinanza,  
Musical Composer and Sonification Artist

Hosts: Dr Genevieve Williams,  
Lecturer in Biomechanics

Julie Lewis-Thompson,  
Commercial Manager VSimulators

Domenico worked directly with the VSimulators, transforming data from this unique human-structure interaction into musical notation. He created a series of engaging new compositions, as well as sheet music for amateur musicians, and a short film of a socially-distanced recorded performance.

VSimulators researchers explore the mechanisms required to create balance and stability for people exposed to different types of floor motion (roll, pitch, heave and sway) at varying levels and frequencies, representing real life situations in transport and on structures.



<https://www.artsandcultureexeter.co.uk/creative-fellowship/human-and-structure-movement>

Photograph: @Steven Haywood

*“I think that one really nice thing that’s come out of this project is the ability to communicate what VSimulators has done and can do through the music, and in a really engaging way. It shows that it’s not just a big scary metal vibrating building; it can actually be quite beautiful.”*

Dr Genevieve Williams, Lecturer in Biomechanics



# Embodied Viewing

Creative Fellow: Lea Anderson, Choreographer

Hosts: John Plunkett,  
Associate Professor of English  
  
Dr Phil Wickham, Curator,  
The Bill Douglas Cinema Museum

Using the rich collection at the Bill Douglas Cinema Museum on the University of Exeter Streatham Campus, Lea explored ways in which the ephemeral world of visual exhibitions and picture-going in the nineteenth century could be brought back to life.

Lea's interest goes beyond the optical devices used in popular entertainment, she is also interested in the verbal commentary or lecture, and the full audience experience – visual, tactile and kinaesthetic.



<https://www.artsandcultureexeter.co.uk/creative-fellowship/embodied-viewing>

Photograph: ©Steven Haywood

*“What was really great about having a Creative Fellow was someone who could bring to the [Bill Douglas] museum material their experience of different types of performance spaces, different types of almost irregular exhibition.”*

*“I think both Lea and I found it really enjoyable as much as anything; it was fun.”*

Prof John Plunkett, Associate Professor of English

# A Conversation Piece

Creative Fellow: Alex Julyan, Visual Artist

Hosts: Dr Kath Maguire,  
National Institute for Health Research  
Knowledge Mobilisation Research Fellow  
with members of the Health and  
Environment Public Engagement group in  
Cornwall (HEPE)

At the University of Exeter's Truro campus Alex Julyan worked with Dr Kath Maguire at the European Centre for Environment and Human Health and members from HEPE who created My Blue Health, part of a pan-European research initiative investigating how water-based environments can affect health and wellbeing.

Alex explored emotional attachments and personal meanings that connect people to outdoor places with water. She created a series of Conversation Cards to prompt interdisciplinary discussions around water.



<https://www.artsandcultureexeter.co.uk/creative-fellowship/a-conversation-piece>

Photograph: ©Steven Haywood

*“It’s about getting out of the main lanes of communication that we get stuck in and being able to cross over some of those barriers and see things from different perspectives.”*

Dr Kath Maguire, National Institute for Health Research  
Knowledge Mobilisation Research Fellow

# Creative Fellowship Alumni

We continued to collaborate with our Creative Fellows from 2018-19.

**September:** Poet Judy Brown and mathematician Peter Challenor gave a joint reading and presentation at Q-festival.

**September:** Illustrator, Leo Jamelli presented *Invisible Carer*, his personal response to the subject of adult care in the family context, working with Drs Siobhan O'Dwyer and Catriona McKenzie.

**November:** Artist Bram Thomas Arnold's new work *A Transect for Trelowarren*, created during his time with Professor Caitlin DeSilvey and researchers at the Environment and Sustainability Institute in Penryn, was included in a temporary exhibition at the Eden Project Unbounded: Contemporary Art Practices in Cornwall.



*Invisible Carer* by Leo Jamelli



# Urgency Arts Commission

*In the Company of Insects* was an 18-month commission on the theme of Urgency which saw award-winning poet Fiona Benson collaborating with sound artists Mair Bosworth and Eliza Lomas. Uncovering the fascinating world of insects, the project culminated in an 'audio pamphlet' – three stunning collections of spoken poetry and narratives.

Over 60 poems were created by Fiona and participants from her poetry workshops. These poems were recorded, edited and formatted by a team of creatives, all working from home.

The final collection was launched during National Insect Week in June 2020 and can be heard on the Arts and Culture website.



<https://www.artsandcultureexeter.co.uk/arts-commission/fiona-benson-2020-arts-commission>

*“We are doing something quite new with this audio pamphlet ... the idea of having these collections of poetry online is a really nice way of presenting poetry and I’d like to see more of that, more experimentation with the way we present poetry and the way we experience it”*

Fiona Benson, poet

# Arts Commission Alumni

In 2018-19, we delivered three intensive commissions, knowing we would develop one project further the following year.

Alongside Fiona Benson's commission, we also worked with print-maker Catherine Cartwright and choreographer Joumana Mourad. In Term 1 of 2019-20, we supported public presentations of work from all three commissions.

In November, Fiona and Mair gave a sold-out live performance of a selection of new poems at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum; Catherine presented her prints and related photography by Robert Darch in a four-week exhibition at MakeTank on Paris Street, Exeter; and Joumana led four days of immersive VR dance experiences, combining workshops and performances, on the Streatham Campus, Exeter, and at Minack Theatre, Porthcurno, Cornwall.



*Future Proof Your Body 01* by Joumana Mourad

Photograph: ©Steven Haywood

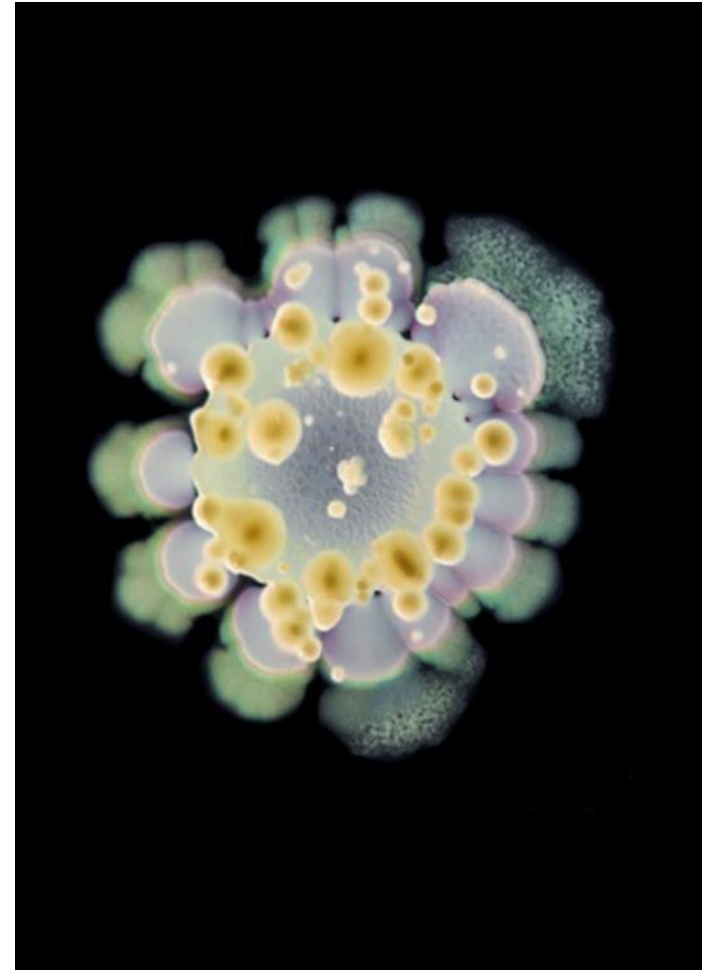


# ESI Creative Exchange

The ESI Creative Exchange facilitates collaboration between creative practitioners, the University of Exeter's Environment and Sustainability Institute and researchers on our Cornwall Campuses who share an interest in issues of environment and sustainability.

With support from Arts and Culture, the ESI Creative Exchange planned a programme of art-science collaborations for 2019-20, with resulting exhibitions shown in the ESI Creative Space at the Penryn Campus.

During lockdown, one of the exhibitions, *Should I Stay or Should I Go?* which features striking images of bacteria, was hosted on the Arts and Culture website instead, where subsequent ESI exhibitions have also been displayed.



<https://www.artsandcultureexeter.co.uk/creative-exchange/creative-exchange>

Photograph ©Tim Cockerill

# ESI Creative Exchange

**5 September – 24 October 2019**

*Pretty Useful Solar Panel Artwork*

<https://www.exeter.ac.uk/esi/community/creativeexchange/solarpanelartwork/>

**28 October – 1 November 2019**

*Food for Change*

<https://www.exeter.ac.uk/esi/community/creativeexchange/foodforchange/>

**8 November 2019 – 10 January 2020**

*A Stitched Survey of the Dyer's Garden*

<https://www.exeter.ac.uk/esi/community/creativeexchange/surveydyersgarden/>

**17 January 2020 - 21 February 2020**

*Hidden in Plain Sight*

<https://www.exeter.ac.uk/esi/community/creativeexchange/>

**Published online from 9 July 2020**

*Painting a Parish Future*

<https://www.artsandcultureexeter.co.uk/news/painting-a-parish-future>



Gorran workshop community painting created as part of the *Painting a Parish Future* project

Photograph: ©Pete Ward

# Creative Dialogues

Recordings from this College of Humanities series are available on the Arts and Culture website.

In November 2019, journalist, author and presenter, Sathnam Sanghera was interviewed by TV producer Narinder Minhas. This event was complemented by a screening of *The Massacre that Shook the Empire*, a documentary on the Amritsar massacre that Sathnam presented and Narinder produced.

In March 2020, musician and composer, Nitin Sawhney was interviewed by film director and producer, Don Boyd, where he shared insights into his creative process and brilliant collaborations with leading music, film and dance practitioners.

Our Creative Dialogue with artist Richard Long was cancelled due to Covid-19. This talk was planned in partnership with the Thelma Hulbert Gallery, as part of their ARTIST ROOMS exhibition, *Richard Long: Being in the Moment*.

ARTIST ROOMS is a collection of modern and contemporary art jointly owned by the National Galleries of Scotland and Tate.



<https://www.artsandcultureexeter.co.uk/creative-dialogue>

# Hyperlocal

In Spring 2020, as the country went into lockdown, Arts and Culture held a call-out to artists working in any discipline living in Devon or Cornwall, inviting them to explore the hyperlocal of their immediate domestic environment.

This rapid-response programme was designed to provide immediate financial and creative support to freelance artists in those first few daunting weeks of the pandemic.

The resulting micro-commissions, exhibited on the Arts and Culture website, gave ten different perspectives on a world that had suddenly become very confined - from poetry exploring constraint, to a film about a hand-made dinner guest; from a curated photography exhibition of sculptures made from household fixtures, to a sonic recipe for lockdown.

Project partners with Arts and Culture were Exeter Northcott Theatre, Exeter Phoenix, and Kaleider.



<https://www.artsandcultureexeter.co.uk/hyperlocal>

Photograph ©Laura Porter



# Black Lives Matter

The renewed momentum of the Black Lives Matter movement, tragically sparked by the murder of George Floyd by a police officer in Minneapolis, has resulted in individuals and organisations across the world working more actively to address racism.

As stated by the Vice Chancellor in August 2020, the University has yet to root out the systemic racism that has negatively affected so many staff and students of colour. Arts and Culture are contributing to the University's committed work to resolve this, and are scrutinising and improving our activity regarding anti-racism on an ongoing basis.

We provided financial and other support for the 2019 Black History Month campaign lecture series. We participate in the Decolonising the Curriculum Network and the The Provost's Commission Race Equality Charter Mark Working Group and contributed to the College of Humanities Anti-Racism Action Plan.

In our June newsletter we issued a statement of support and promoted anti-racist resources collated by the Race Ethnicity and Education Network at the Graduate School of Education.



# Environment and Climate Emergency

In May 2019, the University of Exeter declared an environment and climate emergency. We have supported this by commissioning and promoting arts and culture activities which explore environmental issues.

In June we partnered with the Eden Project, Culture Declares Emergency (CDE) and the Environment and Sustainability Institute, Penryn, to deliver two virtual events, titled *Art, Ecology, Emergency: Sustaining Practice*. We reached an international audience of 186, which is the highest CDE achieved for their lockdown series.

<https://www.artsandcultureexeter.co.uk/news/art-ecology-emergency-recorded-online-event>

With support of a Covid-response Arts and Culture commission, artist Bram Thomas Arnold created three podcasts, *Towards Field Station*, exploring art and ecology in Cornwall as part of his project, *Transecting the Lizard: Field Station*. Broadcast on Resonance FM, the podcasts can be heard on the Arts and Culture website:

<https://www.artsandcultureexeter.co.uk/news/towards-field-station>



Photograph: *Ant Farm Trail Mix(ED)* by Bram Thomas Arnold, taken as part of *Towards Field Station*.

©Bram Thomas Arnold, 2020

# Student Experience

As part of a holistic student experience, engagement with arts and culture offers a range of benefits, including skills development, personal expression, community building, and career insights.

We employed a full-time student intern as a Graduate Business Partner, and Student Ambassadors to support programme delivery. We created volunteering opportunities for two students to learn about collections care and project management.

We promoted Arts and Culture at both the Post-Graduate Researchers' Induction Day (Sept) and Refreshers' Week (Jan).

We led a College of Humanities initiative to have a new student-focussed culture page added to the main University website, and we work regularly with the Student Guild VP Activities to cross-promote our programmes.

We also contributed to curriculum delivery, leading sessions on ideas generation and design thinking for both undergraduate and postgraduate students.



# Partnerships and Networks - Internal

Our Strategy aims to strengthen networks of creative practice. We put this into action by participating in existing structures and setting up new ones.

We established a Critical Friends Network in July 2019, running termly workshops for Exeter-based staff interested in creative process and interdisciplinary practice. In December we set up a parallel Penryn network, and in July 2020 ran an online session across both. The network of 86 members spans the four campuses, academic and professional services staff and all Colleges.

We are part of several strategic development groups: Creative Industries Strategy; Regional Strategy; Public Engagement with Research; Project North Park; Cultural Infrastructure Working Group and Innovation in Education. We led a design thinking workshop for the Academic Professional Programme for new lecturers and contributed to the Education Incubator Digital Playground.





# Partnerships and Networks – External

Collaboration with partners outside the University is fundamental to our ethos.

Our Academic Directors are residents at Kaleider in Exeter and CAST in Helston, plugging directly into local creative communities and we are members of the national University Centres for the Arts Network (UCAN). We work closely with Exeter Culture and cross-promote activities, such as Exeter's new UNESCO City of Literature status.

Our plans for a Culture + Climate 2020 season of exhibitions and events with Thelma Hulbert Gallery, Honiton, were scuppered by Covid. Despite this, we have built strong links and will be collaborating on further projects in 2020-21.

We were shortlisted in two categories for a 2020 Exeter Living Award – Art and Education. We held events at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Make Tank, St Catherine's Almshouse and the Minack Theatre and partnered with Kaleider, Exeter Northcott Theatre and Exeter Phoenix on Covid-response programming.



# Fine Art Collection

The Fine Art collection enriches the cultural environment of the University; it is a resource that supports teaching, research and student experience and provides inspiration for creative projects.

Individual artworks also provide a physical legacy of the history of the University.

A monthly online series of articles entitled A Closer Look, shines the spotlight on some of the collection's treasures, including works by Barbara Hepworth, JMW Turner, Alan Cotton and FJ Widgery.

The fine art collection was used to support teaching. In Autumn 2019, a group of undergraduate students were invited to engage with a selection of portraits from the collection. The portraits were used for a discussion as part of the Art History and Visual Culture module The Face.



*Portrait of Florence Salter by Jean Ballantyne*

# Communications

In September, we recruited a dedicated, part-time Communications and Marketing Officer, enabling us to increase the profile of creative activity between the University and partners, as well as foster community-building through our regular e-newsletter and the input of invited blog contributors.

Our social media following and e-newsletter subscriptions have gone from strength to strength, as we have been able to provide regular, relevant and engaging content across all of our digital streams.

Over the year we have also built a strong relationship with the University of Exeter press team, leading to our projects and programmes receiving regular coverage on regional media such as BBC Radio as well as national industry-facing publications such as *Poetry News*.



# Branding and Website

Building on market research from the previous year, Arts and Culture committed to developing a new brand identity and website, working with design studio Triple Double and with the support of the University of Exeter Design Studio.

We developed our ideas around our core mission, 'activating creativity', and our target audiences: staff at the University; current and prospective students; creative practitioners and cultural organisations; and members of the public with an interest in the arts.

We now have a suite of branded templates to ensure consistent messaging, for both print and digital communications. The website allows us to promote events, share news stories, showcase our programmes, and champion creative projects and resources across the University and its campuses. The site launched in March 2020, and in the first five months achieved 42,027 page visits. The previous website achieved 46,219 over the 12 months prior.



# Numbers

53 Events, 2132 instances of engagement

57% of events attended by staff

55% of events attended by students

43% of events attended by the general public

34% of events attended by creative professionals

Urgency Arts Commissions

Four lead commissioned artists collaborated with a further 77 creative professionals to realise their projects. All freelance contributors were paid.

Our digital reach in 2019-20

Social media reach and impressions totalled 543,724.

Overall social media following increased by 31%.

Instagram following alone has increased by 176% in just over a year.

33% increase in subscription to the Arts and Culture mailing list.

Average monthly page views on our website have increased by 130% from 2,893 to 6,672 (March–July 2020 inclusive, against the same period 2019).





# Thank You

Many thanks to the following groups for their support, guidance and advocacy over this challenging year: Arts and Culture Steering Group; Arts and Culture Assurance Group; Arts Commissions Advisory Group; Capital Investment Group; and the Senior Management Team of the College of Humanities.

We would also like to thank our academic and professional services colleagues, as well as the many creative practitioners, who have brought so much imagination and inspiration to our shared endeavours. A special thanks to Flock, the producers who so skilfully supported both the Creative Fellowships and Arts Commissions.

And finally, the Directors would like to thank the small-but-perfectly-formed Arts and Culture team, without whom this amazing creative activity would not have been possible. Thank you for your expertise, enthusiasm and passion.

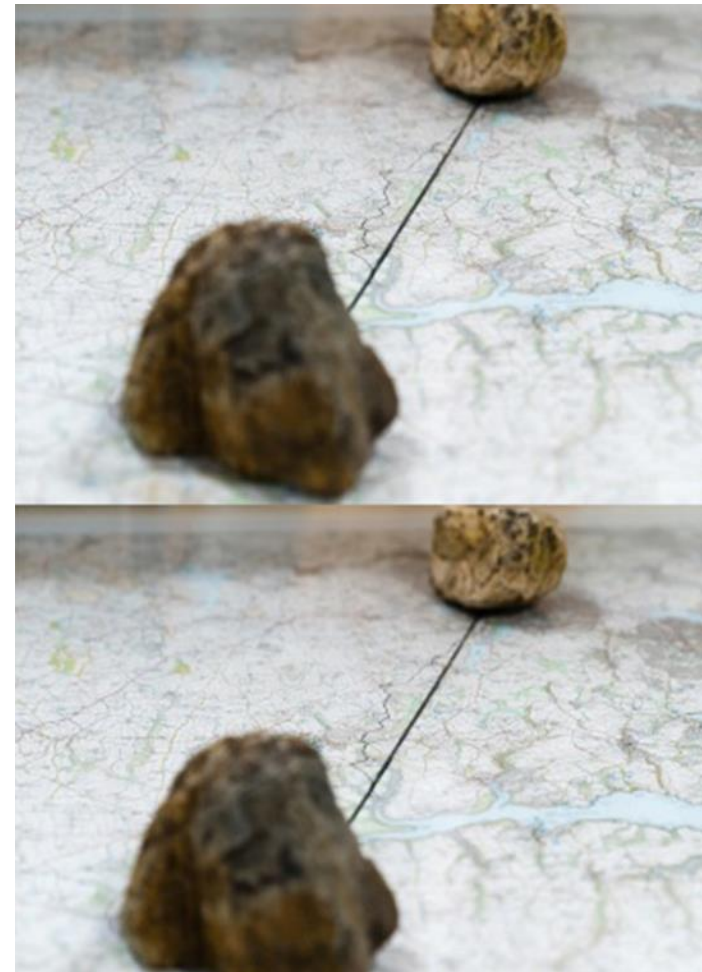


Image by Bram Thomas Arnold, created during his Creative Fellowship *A Transect for Trelowarren*, and later exhibited as part of the Unbounded: Contemporary Art Practices in Cornwall exhibition at the Eden Project in November 2019.

Photograph: ©Bram Thomas Arnold

# The Team

Sarah Campbell  
Associate Director for Arts and Culture

Naome Glanville  
Arts and Culture Co-ordinator

Anna Bunt  
Communications and Marketing Officer

Rosemary Day  
Arts and Culture Administrator (Graduate Business Partner)

Stephen Hodge  
Academic Director for Arts and Culture

Caitlin DeSilvey  
Deputy Academic Director for Arts and Culture (Cornwall)



Photograph: ©Steven Haywood

# Arts and Culture

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