



# ‘Something happened’

A practical resource to support the documentation of arts and creativity in education projects

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## Something Happened–TAP Resource

A practical resource to support the documentation of arts and creativity in education projects

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# Introduction

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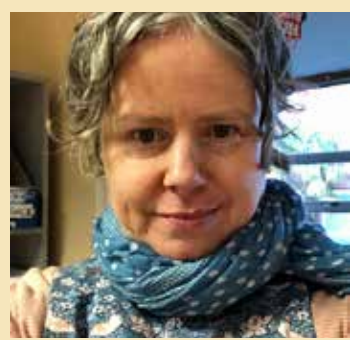
In 2020, Kids’ Own was commissioned by the Teacher Artist Partnership Programme to deliver a special initiative through which we would support teacher–artist pairs participating on the programme to document their projects and to take part in masterclasses and mentoring, with a view to enriching their creative processes and providing a strong framework for reflection and documentation.

Five artists with long-standing connections to Kids’ Own—experts in collaborative practice with children and young people, with particularly strong approaches to documentation, were invited to deliver a series of masterclasses to the initiative’s participants. The focus ranged from philosophical questions about who documentation is for and why bother at all, to very practical techniques and

approaches: how to embed documentation within the practice; finding the time; deciding whose role it is; considering what tools to use; what to save and what to let go of, editing and curating, etc.

Each artist brought their own expertise and unique approach, but there is plenty of overlap among their top tips, which is reassuring for participants, as well. This document aims to provide a simple but valuable resource for anyone else who seeks key tips on documenting their practice. Since documentation is raised as a point of contention again and again within collaborative practice, this resource is a really practical legacy from the initiative and we hope that it can be a useful tool for the wider arts in education community.

## Julie Forrester



### Biography

Julie Forrester is an artist whose practice prioritises process-based approaches, often working collaboratively and ‘in context’. Forrester’s work is characterised by an enquiry into narrative forms, often arising from place and shared experience.

She is an art panellist with numerous arts organisations, including The Crawford Art Gallery, where she delivers projects in response to artworks and exhibitions. With a long career as artist in education contexts, Julie is a panellist of The Design and Crafts Council of Ireland, with Cork County Council’s Frameworks Programme and with Creative Ireland’s TAP and BLAST programmes in schools. She is Associate Artist with Kids’ Own Publishing Partnership, collaborating with children and teachers on residencies across Ireland.

In a past life JF was Artistic Director of ArtTrail Cork, an Internationally acclaimed site-specific Festival involving 80 artists, exhibitions, live events and artworks across multiple venues in Cork City. She was co-Curator and Production Manager of Cork’s Soundworks Festival.

All images courtesy of the artist.

# Documentation as Practice Practice as Documentation

My Practice could be nut-shelled as ‘documenting experience’. So, from raw contact and germination of idea through process to the end of the project, I am recording observations. Initial documentation might be a doodle on an envelope, which allows the imagination to roam, then prompts reflection, or a more focused drawing in a sketchbook which probes a particular enquiry, or it could be a snippet of music that moved me and I am drawn to recall somehow on tape, in image, or in word – these are seedings, they are held as volatile and latent elements that have their own energy fields. In the process of making, I trust the shuffling of these gatherings that will lead a path through an idea and create the form. I need to have a place where these elements can be moved about and so I create a map, a blank canvas which is a ground for interactions. The Map is big enough to attach and detach the fragments, to stand back and look, to live with. This is a living document.

### TAP workshop

I begin the workshop with “Monument”. We all have a collection of monuments that we have seen or imagined, and monument is useful because it has an original intention but usually the monument has its own ‘life’ – a history, and particular relationship with the viewer. Monuments are easy to conjure and imagine and even to draw, as they are symbolic things. They have stories to tell. This workshop was created for Zoom and is informed by my experience on a remote residency, “Virtually There” with Kids’ Own Publishing Partnership at Killard House Special School (2016–2020).

### Precursor

Participants are invited to think about a monument in advance, so they are tuned in and primed. The invitation for the session is to make a book, that will be a document of a process.

### Page 1–tapping in

We share our names and the names of our monuments. We don’t give too much detail, allowing space for curiosity to conjure responses in individual imaginations. I ask participants to



doodle while we share. Without really thinking about it these doodles will become the first documents and the first page of the book we are making during the session.

### Page 2 – Focus on memory

I ask participants to draw from memory the monument they have brought to the session. This is page 2 of the book. Meanwhile, I am assembling in my studio the names of the monuments on to the shared map. We now have a collection of names on a white ground. The monuments’ names are High Cross, The Empty Pillar, Helping Hands, The Rock of Dunamaise, Praça de Espanha, the Little Mermaid, Somerset View, St. Patrick’s Cross, Men at Sea, The Treaty Stone, Kelpies, The Children of Lir.

### Page 3 – Map – a playful plotting of shared and new co-ordinates

I invite volunteers to help me shuffle the names around. Together we select 3 of the most appealing names. The invitation is for each participant to develop a context for their monument using just the three names as a starting point. What kind of an image or story does this constellation of names conjure? This drawing will be page 3 of the book.



### Page 4 – Responding to children’s work

I show an example of a book made with students and teacher from the Virtually There residency at Killard House Special School. I talk about the experience of remote engagement, the importance of ‘real’ visits for shared experiences and the role of memory and place as our collaboration ensued. The book arose from artwork students made in response to an exhibition we had visited together. We came to use the motif of ‘monument’ to anchor our explorations in virtual space. In the session, participants are invited to make notes and to

continue to doodle in response to the children’s work in the presentation. There are questions about the process and observations about the residency, the artwork and writing.



### Princess Swirly Town

Once upon a time there lived a beautiful princess called princess 'Swirly' and she had a pet dog called Princess. They were BFFS forever and they lived in a pretty pink castle in LA. Every day they went shopping at the big shopping mall and then they went home into the pretty pink castle to play fashion shows. They played fashion shows with their new clothes and then went to sleep. They lived happily ever after

Kaylee

### Page 5 – Sharing and exploring

I have brought to the session a selection of some famous world monuments. As we look together, we pool our ideas, expanding our vocabulary and knowledge about monuments, far flung places and other cultures; a variety of themes arise, opening a wider discussion about monuments and what they can be and what they can mean. Participants are invited to draw a new monument from our discussions, their own thoughts and

ideas, these can incorporate impressions from the slideshow, remembered facts, new inventions, memories, and random responses.

### Page 6 – Drawing and listening to oneself

Participants are invited to write a few lines about what they have drawn. The words will form a narrative about their monument as it arises and evolves in their imagination. They can move between text and drawing, embellishing, honing, altering. They are instructed to name their monument.



### Activity – Book Binding all six pages together

I demonstrate how to bind these loose leaf A4 pages together. These are personal documents, belonging to the maker. Individual pages may be photographed and printed and combined into a class document, like the example I showed from Killard House.

### Another Archive

#### An unfolding collective and collaborative classroom MAP

In my studio, there is the Map where our shared document exists. It is a record of our time together. It has only the names of monuments on it and I am conscious of what is not included!

#### The living document in practice

Over a period of time, in the classroom, as the project progresses, other drawings, texts, scraps and souvenirs can be added to The Map. Additions can be big or small and of any material depending on what is being discussed. Subtractions and alterations can also occur. Contributors can be invited to move parts around to create new meanings within the piece as the life of the project unfolds. At the end of each session, one of the contributors should be invited to take a picture of the map, this can be a part or whole; it is the photographer’s choice. This new photo document will be the record of the day – so choose wisely and say why you chose to capture it in this way. The photograph will be added to the archive of shared documents. The Map and its photos (which can also be bound into a book) will become a document of the ground the group has covered at the end of the project and may even be a work of art.

# Ann Donnelly



## Biography

Ann Donnelly is a Northern Irish artist, balancing solo and engaged practice through a range of projects, publications and residencies, including Kids' Own's Further Afield, Virtually There and Really Here residency projects.

Her practice often involves elements of photography and video, and her work has been exhibited internationally. Kids' Own has always championed the value of peer support and conversation between artists, and Ann has been lucky to participate in creative exchange via the Kids' Own network over the years.

Sharing her practice at seminars and symposia has helped to extend that conversation across the cultural sector.

# Creative Documentation

## Overview

In May 2021, I led an online session for Kids' Own that encouraged TAP participants to consider their current thinking about documenting, collating, editing and presentation of work. The emphasis was on creative documentation and how it might be incorporated into their practice. Some of our ideas and responses are shared in this document. Artists and teachers are encouraged to reflect on the questions for themselves.

### Q: What does documentation mean to you?

Documentation meant different things to different participants. Some noted that it was very visual, that it formed a record of the process. Others felt that it was linked to reflection, providing '...away of seeing where the project is going...what's working and what's not' [Fiona].

'A big part of documentation is about sharing' [Jacintha]. Jacintha recognised how important that could be, especially for non-verbal children. For her it formed part of a daily routine, giving an opportunity to share with parents and the wider school community.

Documentation could be shared during and after the process. It can be 'a way of disseminating the work that has happened' [Helga], giving someone who hasn't been involved the ability to see how the process evolved.

Documentation 'can be a celebration of the whole thing' [Caroline] and also a source of pride for the children [Mary].

### Q: What form/s does documentation take in creative projects?

It's worth considering what is specific to your practice, recognising the everyday tools and tasks that can be photographed easily: not taking them for granted. Recording layers of experimentation, trial and error, is important. 'It depends on the discipline -for visual artists more photos and videos -also podcasts, testimonies and sound' [Anna]

You need sensitivity to know what is appropriate to you, and your group. For example, if recording reflections, different children will have varying ability to verbalise their experience.

Journalling can be helpful for ephemeral art forms [Brid] and there is a useful focus on the children's reflections but participants also recognised the potential value of artist and teacher recording their own and each other's thoughts and ideas during planning, sessions and post-session reflections, making the behind-the-scenes work more visible.

**Look.** Notice the magical moments. Make them visible.

**Listen.** Value the child's voice -write down their words.



Image: Photogram with child's reflection from Virtually There class journal, Donaghey P.S.

**Q: When does documentation need to happen?**

You never realise the significance of the moment until it is past'. [Denise]

Reflection can happen along the way -during, after sessions and between sessions. It can be cumulative and summative and all of this can form part of the documentation. There is an acknowledged 'pressure to chase the moment' [Jacintha] and the drive to capture everything risks desensitising children to the value of an experience.

Robert Macfarlane, in his book *Underland* (1998) tells of how, when coming out from an underground adventure he reaches the surface again and disturbs a skylark, which flies up into the air. He has no camera to photograph the moment but writes about putting his hand in the hollow where the bird has been and feeling the warmth that it left behind. This is a powerful idea: witnessing an event and describing the traces that something leaves in its wake. Discovering how to record these traces in a meaningful way takes time, clarity and imagination.

While there are things that need to be recorded in the moment, all is not lost if they aren't recorded, as long as you can find another way to articulate the experience.

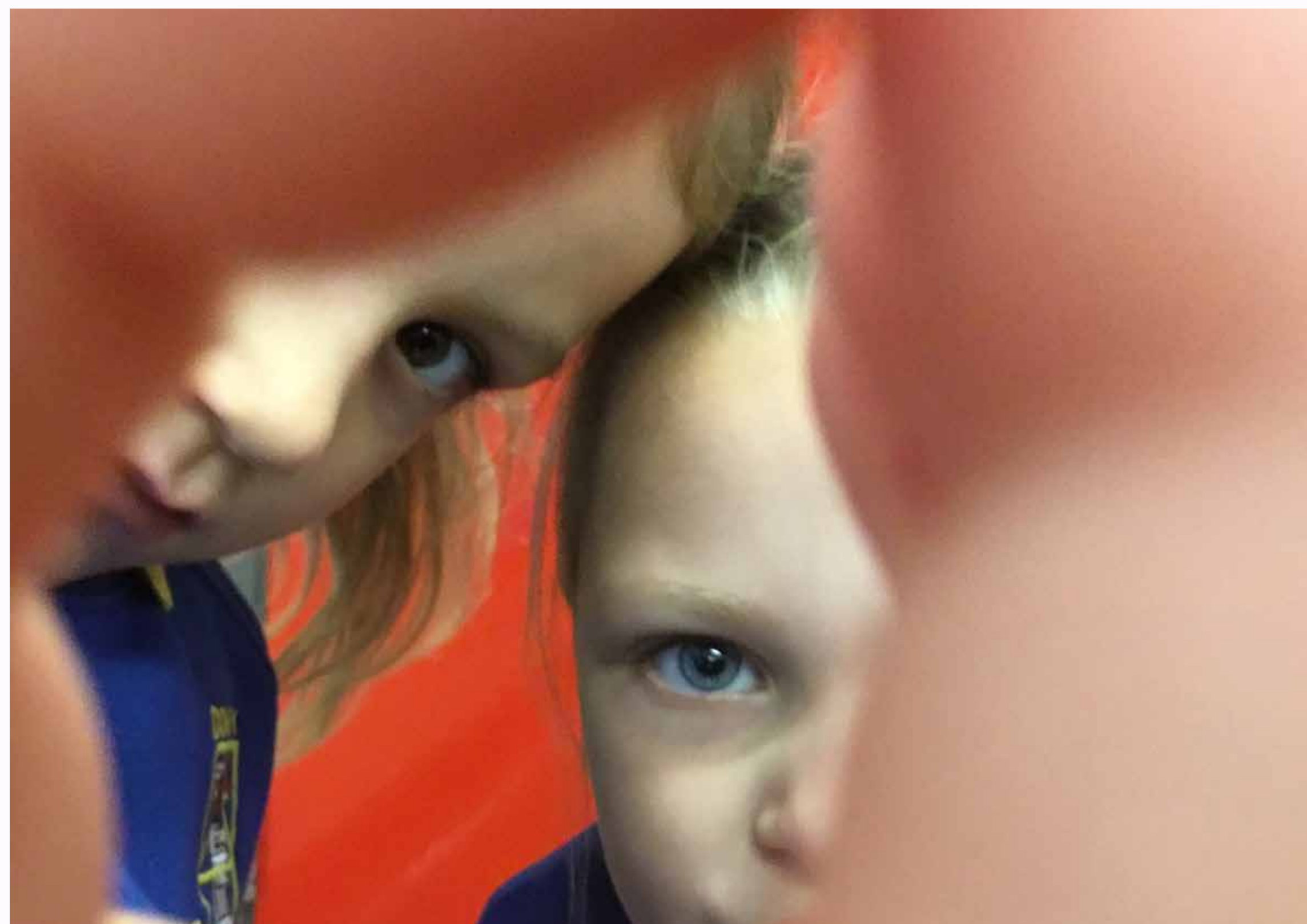


Image: Focus, P1 Photo, Virtually There, Donaghey P.S., 2018–19

**Q: Who documents?**

It's great to involve children in documentation, as long as they are given some time to practice the required skills and to develop focus. For example, this could be about understanding basic photography skills, taking time to recognise light sources within a room, knowing how to increase stability before taking a photo. Use resources within the classroom -personal whiteboards or

pads. Art-form-specific skills, like graphic scores, or the use of sound-recording apps can also create a body of tangible work.

**Q: What is the purpose of documentation?**

Children need to see and understand what they have done -sometimes we get caught up in the doing but how do we know what everyone is getting out of it unless we take time to look. What

do you see in this, where do we go from here, what did you learn. Let them see what they have created. Let them hear what they have told you. This creates a foundation that you can build on. Think about the specific project and what it might require.

Our purpose is to grow, which means to develop an understanding of ourselves through creative practice [Jenny]. Documentation can support this by mapping the landscape as the journey moves onwards.

**‘What do you keep when you are in love with all of it?’  
Jacintha [Teacher]**

**What do you value within the creative process?**

Reflecting on this question individually, with your partner and with project participants will help with selection and editing of documentary material. After a creative session choose 3-5 images that say something about what has happened, or take a few minutes to make a record of the significant moments. Documentation is not always beautiful or in sharp focus but it has to tell a story.

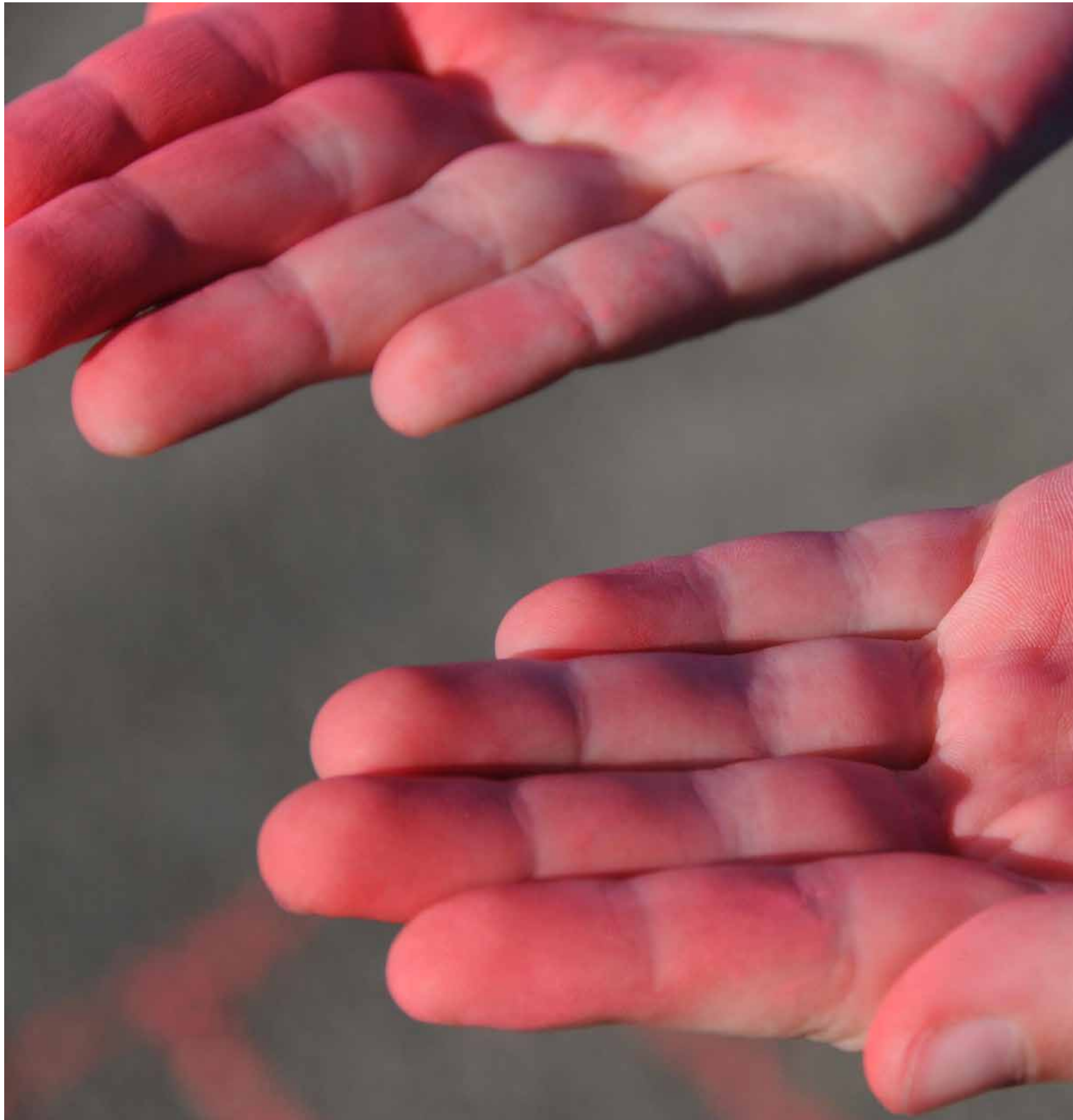


Image: Red-handed, what happened here?

to digest and more likely to make an impact. Choose images and moments that are engaging, that offer insights and inspiration. Labelling, dating and naming images and other material are part of the alchemy that transforms random material into meaningful documentation. Let the children be part of this sifting process and they will develop a deeper understanding of the work.

**TOP TIP – Save as function**

Use the 'save as' function and preserve original images/ recordings at the highest resolution.

**TOP TIP – Text for context**

Provide some text to provide context for your selected documentation.



Image: Giving children time to see, sift and share their work, Informal showcase Virtually There, Donaghey P.S.

**Documentation is about:**

**Learning** - teacher/ artist/ children

**Relationship** - teacher/ artist/ children

**Developing creative practice** - teacher/ artist/ children

**Celebrating the moments** when 'something happened' [Anna]

**Telling the story within school**, inspiring other teachers and artists, involving parents and wider school community, communicating with funders and support organisations and sharing with the wider world.

**'For teachers, documentation can mean stress, paperwork, accountability... valuing the experience was at the bottom of the pile' [Jenny]**

'It's not about quantity: it's about insight' [Jo]

**Inspiration:**

Richard Long *All Ireland Walk* and *Ireland Windline*

Flockomania <https://flockomania.com/2014/08/10/the-space-lanchester-gallery/>

## John D'Arcy



### Biography

Dr John D'Arcy is an artist-researcher based at the Sonic Arts Research Centre at Queen's University Belfast.

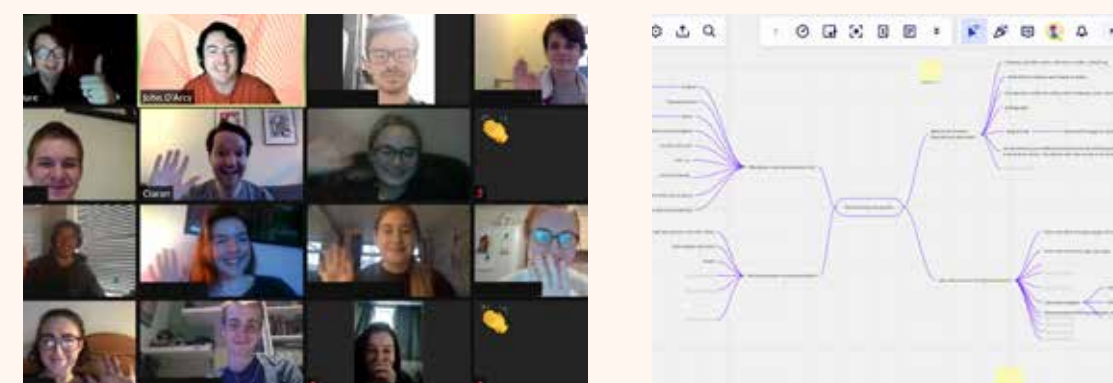
John delivers graduate courses in interactive media, radio and audio production.

He previously worked on Virtually There, a long-term online art programme delivering remote arts workshops with SEN classrooms. John directs and composes music for the experimental vocal ensemble HIVE Choir. He co-founded sound art collective Umbrella and curates sound art events and exhibitions at Sonorities Festival Belfast.

John is a board member of the Irish Sound Science and Technology Association and was a member of the Steering Group for Belfast's successful bid for UNESCO City of Music status.

# Creative Collaboration and Documentation workshop

This session looked at two key aspects of arts facilitation relevant to the participants on the Teacher Artist Partnership special initiative: Online Collaboration and Documentation.



### Collaborating online

During the session, we shared a lot of online tools for collaboration. John presented some software options such as Slack, Google Workspace (Docs, Jamboard), Slido, Padlet, Miro and Draawchat; as well as some interesting projects and resources including 'r/place' and Google Arts & Culture. Some participants shared their experiences with some of these softwares, including both tips and warnings about particular functionalities!

We put some of the software options to the test during our online workshop, and explored how they might be put to use in large group activities to help foster communication, productivity, and creativity, as well as confusion and frustration.

### Things to think about:

Which kinds of collaboration should happen in real-time, and which can be asynchronous? (e.g. planning, discussion threads, conversations, knowledge sharing, production of artwork)

How might different softwares and systems affect your collaboration and workflow? (Try a range of options to find the best technology for your project)

What expectations and boundaries should you set for your online collaboration activity? Whether you are carrying out some planning within a small group of facilitators, or delivering an activity to a large group of participants, set clear guidelines to inform how the group should effectively interact and create together.



### Documenting work

The second half of the session focused on documenting arts projects. Here, we looked at some key aspects of photographic documentation using examples from John's recent projects on Virtually There and The Lullaby Project. These aspects included: framing and angles, colour and lighting, capturing moments, narrative, close-ups, wide views, process vs output.



### Think about:

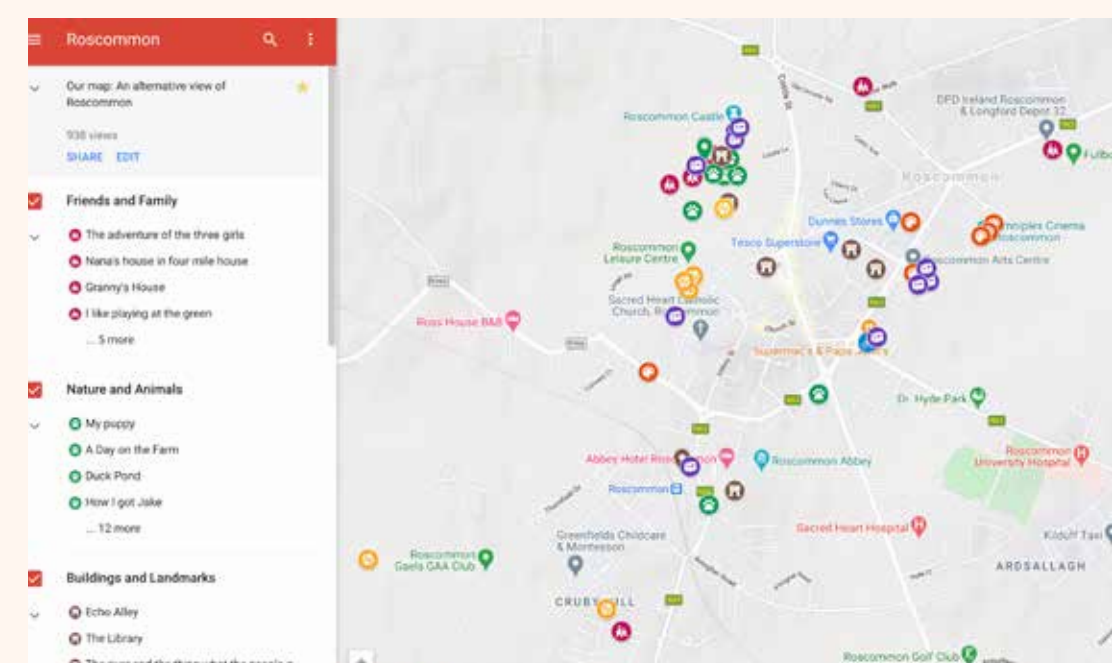
Who and what is the documentation for? Where will it end up being shown/shared? Will the participants be able to give informed consent around this? These questions should help define which modes/materials of documentation should be gathered, what kind of actions/activities and captured, and what quantity.

How might you embed documentation into the activity itself? Are there ways of documenting the activity that echo the process? Create moments for reflection and feedback (journaling, photo capture).

Who creates the documentation? Can some facilitators and/or participants be given responsibility to capture certain kinds of documentation? How will your documentation be stored? Who has access? How long will edited files and footage be preserved and will raw files be destroyed?

We also discussed alternative modes of documentation: video, audio, journaling, interviews; and ways of presenting the documentation: gallery exhibition, virtual exhibition, blog, website, etc.

Participants shared their concerns around capturing quality documentation in the flow of session – finding the time, having the right equipment, etc.



# Yvonne Cullivan



# Presenting yourself and your work

## Biography

Yvonne Cullivan is a visual artist and educator based in the west of Ireland. She has extensive experience in fine art practice, art education, public art, curation, arts management, and consultancy. Yvonne’s creative practice is underpinned by a strong process-led, collaborative approach.

She works with a diverse range of communities, rooting the engagement in context-specific research, interdisciplinary knowledge, and participation. Yvonne utilises a broad range of media including sound, video, photography, mapping, interview, writing and drawing.

Her methodology involves active listening, observation, documentation and collaboration, followed by collating, editing, and refining of gathered material. The outcomes, rarely pre-determined, are reflective of and shaped by the particular communities and places involved.

All images courtesy of the artist.

## Key Point 1 – The Basics

When presenting yourself and your work think about the following:

*Who am I? What is it that I do? How do I do it?*

Try to really get to the core points and give examples via visuals, audio-visuals, text, links etc



## Key Point 2 – The Details

When attempting to communicate a project or programme of work, it is good to think about the underlying narrative. To do this you might reflect on:

The **context** in which you are/were working – participants, environment, team etc.

The kinds of artforms/creative **media** and processes involved.

How the project is/was being delivered – what approach and **methods** are/were involved? Were there particular **milestones** along the way? If so, these might provide good visual elements to your presentation or a structure to help to shape your narrative around.

Reflect on the **outcomes**, whatever format they took, and include examples if possible.

Participant Reflection:

*“Summary of the documentation pieces [of a project] into 5 words: context, media, method, milestones, outcomes, is a very useful structure which I’ll definitely use.”*



## Key Point 3 – The Context/Audience

When planning a presentation, think about who you will be presenting to. Consider the language that you want to use and the message that you want to communicate. Do certain audiences need particular approaches to delivery – fun, serious, interactive etc.? Do the visuals you have speak to the particular audience you are presenting to?



## Quote from participant:

*“Time to reflect is so important... We realised we’d done a lot more than we thought”*

### Key Point 4 – The Value

Ask yourself *why is it that I do what I do?* This gets to the heart of the matter. It is the passion within the answer that you want to communicate with those you are presenting to. Asking yourself this question will renew your confidence in yourself and your belief in your work. Then use quotes, paraphrases, observations and reflections to prove the value of your work. Gather feedback in whatever way you can; through noted conversation, recorded audio or written feedback/reflection.



#### Quote from facilitator:

*“Don’t be afraid to use your own observation and your own insight into what has happened in a workshop or over a longer period of working with children. You can be the one who witnesses [creative thinking in action] and provides testimony to that.”*

#### Quote from participant:

*“I work creatively because it is empowering and has the potential to transform lives!”*



#### Quote from participant:

*“Probably the most important things can’t be documented ... like how the children felt, the impact of the project, confidence building ... visually it’s hard to epitomise it ... unless you do interviews or surveys or things like that.”*

#### Quote from participant:

*“To really strongly argue for the work being enough, and for that work not necessarily having to be evidenced ... The best CPD is stuff that gets you in your heart ... that’s actually what makes people do creative or arts-based initiatives or wellbeing initiatives. It’s really difficult to turn that into something that is easily shared.”*

#### TOP TIP – Think Visuals

Images are a great way to communicate a process or a moment. They may also help you to remember what you wanted to talk about! Visuals can be photographs, diagrams, drawings, graphics etc.

### Key Point 5 – Owning it!

To feel confident in the act of presenting to others, consider the following:

Make sure that the content that you are presenting is close to your heart and reflects the truth of what you do or have done in a particular project. This will make it easier to communicate.



When preparing your presentation, consider the time you have to present. Make a note of everything you would like to cover. Break those elements down and put a realistic time on the delivery of each chunk. Edit down to the essence of what you need and want to communicate. Practice the presentation with a timer! As often as you need!

Make sure you are comfortable with the technology and any software that you are going to use, that you are confident with the content you will deliver, and that you are also physically comfortable.

Use prompts in whatever way works for you – post-its on the wall behind your computer, actual typed and printed words on a sheet beside you, specifically chosen visuals to plant into your presentation as reminders, and/or single words or phrases that will prompt you to talk about what you want to cover.

#### TOP TIP – Mind-Map

Make a mind-map before you start. Get a big sheet of paper and lots of different colors to work with and write and draw out a plan with everything you want to cover. Then consider it, combine parts, delete parts and refine it, etc.



Documentation of studio process, Yvonne Cullivan, 2014

# Vanya Lambrecht Ward



## Biography

Vanya Lambrecht Ward is a visual artist based in the Northwest of Ireland.

Vanya works with a variety of mediums, and in her practice combines art, architecture, science and many other strands in order to investigate and explore how we experience, perceive, create and understand our environments (with a particular focus on soil and fungi).

Often using the book-form as a key expression in her practice Vanya is currently working on a (long-term) series of book-works that bring together on-going findings, collaborations, citizen science, fungal activism as visual and written explorations that emerge from her research both in the studio and out in the field.

She holds BA's in both Fine Art and Architecture and a MA (Art in the Contemporary World) from NCAD and since 2018 she has been a lecturer at YAADA, ATU Sligo.

All images courtesy of the artist.

# Editing and Curating

This initial workshop/presentation was focused on the editing and curating of documentation. The specific elements discussed were: the selection of work, editing process and curation or collation of image and text.

These suggestions, tips and starting points are very broad as the types of files and documentation also come in many forms. The advice here therefore is focused mostly on visual output and the relationship between image and text. This will hopefully help those who feel untrained in these matters as well as give new ideas and tips to those who are already familiar with these processes and ways of working. The other workshops/ presentations will be covering the more content and gathering element of your process but this element of the PDF hopefully will give a methodology or a starting point for selection, editing and the laying out a project document or an application or any other document that you might want to put together.

## 1 – Questions to ask yourself:

What story do we want to share/ tell?

What are the key moments and key points we want to get across?

Have you considered what other visual elements you might have available for use?

How much needs to be done to the images to make them useable?

What is the best software or tool for me to use to edit and refine the images?

What is the overall mood/energy of the project that we want to capture?

Hopefully the following content will help you answer some of the questions posed and set you up to fulfil the tasks at hand.

## 2 – Top tips

- Make the undertaking of creating a doc (of any kind) doable by breaking it into smaller tasks. And approach it as an overall visual as well as a content related assignment, and step back regularly to check the whole picture. This will help to create an overall visual experience that hopefully compliments or expresses the character of the project. (*Matching the energy, if you like.*)

- Take time to assess what you have to work with and shortlist those images/material you want to use. This will help you identify gaps and alternatives as well as a possible narrative.
- Top basic tools: Undo/Crop/ Rotate+Flip/Select/ Magic wand/Cut-out/Erase/ Adjust (colour/ brightness/saturation, etc.)/ Blur.
- Some keyboard shortcuts: (these can become very useful for quick use) Cut (ctrl C) / Paste (ctrl V) / Undo (ctrl Z) / Redo (ctrl Y) / Zoom in + out (ctrl+ +/-) / Group (ctrl G) / Select All (ctrl A) / Deselect (ctrl D) / Invert (ctrl I) (note: when working on a MAC use cmd key + letter instead of ctrl)
- Image files:
  - JPEG** – universally used as a general image file type.
  - PNG** – Particularly if the background needs to stay transparent for instance (and high/ print quality) not all programs read these.
  - PDF** – Best for finished documents rather than individual image – universally accessible

- Don't dismiss images off-hand – Less than perfect images are material that can also be worked with, a crop, cut-out or tweak can make all the difference. Scanned drawings, video stills, handwritten words/ text, details or even blurred and abstract images can be a useable source as they might help portray a colour, line, a detail or mood energy that illustrates the project well.
- Cutting elements or objects out of a video still or photograph can be a great way to highlight something or create a collection of objects. Which can become very busy if presented as lots of images and, therefore, cutting out/ collaging can be a very useful practice. (Remember to save and use the image as a .PNG after cutting away the elements if you want to keep the background transparent.)



- Balance image and text and consider their relationship. In other words, try not to make it too busy or too boring – too chaotic or too still depending on the 'temperament' of the work you are presenting.
- When working on the layout remember to leave margins and space to breathe and a focus and balance on each page will really help the reader engage more as well.
- Tools/software/apps worth looking at or revisiting for layout and presenting (and some editing): Microsoft PowerPoint, Canva (<https://www.canva.com/>) InDesign (adobe – advanced) for photo editing: Pixlr (<https://pixlr.com/e/>) Photoshop + Paintshop Pro + Lightbox (advanced and licensed). For scanning there are many free apps available for your phone now as well, they differ from phone to phone but are worth investigating.

### 3 – Consider this:

- When telling a story or creating a narrative, it is not necessary to approach this in a chronological or linear fashion. Let the process you used in the projects determine what the best storyline is. For instance, a line that brings the reader from the general to the specific or from the community to the individual. This can be just as clear a narrative as one based on the chronological unfolding.

- Sometimes you have images that might look alike (because they are from the same viewpoint or in the same style) but that in actual fact might show something quite different. Cropping or cutting out and selecting those parts, which show that best will help you to highlight this and create more variation in the overall visual experience. Even showing the image as a whole and then cropped to the detail can help you illustrate a point or tell the story.



- A lot of software you might already use on a daily basis will have a lot of simple/basic editing tools already built in (like Microsoft suite, but keep in mind that they can differ in terms of editing tools etc depending on whether you use the web or desktop versions). Some are more suitable for editing and others for laying out a presentation or a document and some have a broader editing range and a more

intuitive interface than others. Pick one that suits your own ability at that moment; although it is great to learn new skills as you go it can really hamper your overall work when you get frustrated or distracted by the editing techniques and trying to get to grips with new technology.

- Using other visual elements like shapes, arrows or text/ letters and graphic elements can also help you with creating a visually interesting, directing the reader and producing a well-composed document.
- Although it might at first seem like an extra task, setting up a way of filing, (naming and saving your images and other elements) is essential! In other words starting in an orderly manner, can greatly assist in making the task at hand much smoother and less frustrating and even enjoyable. Organisation pays off!
- The placement of the images on document is obviously also important – considering the background and the organisation of the images and text against it takes a bit of time. You do not have to use one way of laying them out but creating a consistent language or style throughout is key. If you are not sure try using the rule of 3 for the layout of images/ key elements/ columns etc.

### Example layout

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- When you include a link for a video, blog, sound recording or other elements, consider adding an image with the hyperlink to give the reader a preview or taste of sorts (and make sure the link works).
- When creating your presentation, document or application (to name but a few) please take some time to really consider the font you want to work with. They have personalities... and are also a very important aesthetic element as part of the overall work that often get overlooked or

left till last, so perhaps you want to start with it when you are considering the overall feel and aesthetic.

#### 4 – Perhaps avoid

- Overthinking the editing and the dismissing an image off hand because it might not be perfect...
- Worrying about having enough material. Remember: even if it turns out you only have a very small amount to work with (for whatever

reason) there are many ways to make them work twice as hard for you by using for instance details, stills cut out elements etc.

- Templates... Most software, websites or apps offer them but they can end up making your doc look generic and dull. They have their place and can be useful when starting off, but use with caution as they can lead you in a direction that does not necessarily serve you or the project.
- We can often add too much or feel the need to put everything in “just in case”, but there is no need... clarity and consistency can be much more valuable.
- Avoid using Microsoft Word for adding and laying out image and text together, you will not have the control over the layout nor the range of options that you can find in other programs (and most likely end up frustrated...).

#### 5 – Reflections (most important take-aways)

- Create a document that reflects an energy and aesthetic that suits the project/work you are presenting.
- Take stock, select, edit and arrange, stand back and review, tweak and breathe!
- Editing tools can be a bit like a new language. Learning one (software or tool) at a time can be

really worth the time spent – but remember to keep it simple at first!

- Keep the editing simple, there is no need for elaborate changes really, but straightening the horizon, cropping out a distracting object or blurring out a face can make all the difference!
- Above all, learn to troubleshoot, never mind the fancy tools and tricks, this will get you out of just about anything and will make you feel more confident.



# ‘Something happened’

A practical resource to support the documentation of arts and creativity in education projects

