**ITYARN Conference ABSTRACTS**

Kristiansand, Norway, September 2,3,4,5 2:00-4:00 pm

Grønt Senter (Odderøyveien 5)

**September 2**

***Collaboration with Youth in TYA***

Ragnhild Tronstad, Kulturtanken – Arts for Young Audiences Norway (Norway)

 *Artistic Quality and Audience Participation in Theatre for Young Audiences*

ABSTRACT

The Cultural Schoolbag (TCS) is an arrangement that provides all school pupils in Norway aged 6-19 several encounters each year with professional art of all kinds. The state agency Kulturtanken - Arts for Young Audiences Norway (AYAN) holds national responsibility for TCS, and for ensuring that TCS as a national arrangement upholds high artistic quality. To attend to this part of its mandate, the R&D department of AYAN has launched a three-year strategic project addressing “quality in TCS” with different methods and from a variety of perspectives. In this paper, I will focus specifically on how the concept of “artistic quality” is challenged by contemporary practices of audience participation in theatre for young audiences.

Quality is a difficult and indeed contested concept to use in relation to art and aesthetic experience. It is fundamentally ambiguous: Without further specification, it can refer to an objective as well as a subjective reality. It is normative when used as part of a value judgement, and descriptive when used as a value-neutral characteristic of specific features of a performance.

The concept of “artistic quality” may seem to be less ambiguous and a way of specifying what kind of quality we are addressing. However, this is not necessarily true. “Artistic quality” can well be an objective reality unrealised by the experiencing audience subject. “Artistic quality” rests on norms for artistic practice that depend upon and vary between different historical traditions and art forms. To recognise and appreciate artistic quality often demands familiarity with the type of artistic expression in question.

To articulate the specific “artistic qualities” of a theatre performance, a skilled reading of the work is required, where the work is related to other works and evaluated according to a set of standards relevant to its genre or tradition. The “artistic qualities” of a theatre performance inscribing itself into one tradition cannot be adequately evaluated according to standards and criteria belonging to a different tradition.

Contemporary practices of audience participation in theatre for young audiences challenge the concept of “artistic quality” by undermining the standards and criteria for “good art” established by mainstream theatre. To adequately judge and relate qualities characteristic of participatory and interactive art, we may need an alternative set of tools and criteria that enable us to recognise these artistic practices on their own terms, and to acknowledge and recognise their most essential artistic qualities.

In this paper, I will seek to articulate some of the qualities characteristic of participatory theatre that involve young audiences today. My aim is to approach a better understanding of how a concept of artistic quality can be identified, articulated and relevantly applied to performances of this kind.

Ha Young Hwang, Korea National University of Arts (South Korea)

*Artist-Adolescent Collaboration as a Reciprocal Process: through Artists’ Perspectives*

ABSTRACT

Professional artists’ collaborations with young people, particularly with adolescents, have recently gained artistic attention in the field of Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA below) in Korea. Adolescent-Artist Exploration (‘Cheongsonyeon Yesulga Tamsaekjeon’ in Korean), an ongoing series of practice by TYA Research Centre at National Theatre Company of Korea, and, also, ‘Youths, Creating Our/Their Seeing (Cheongsonyeon, Bomeul Jitda in Korean), an ongoing New TYA Play Development project run by Korea National University of Arts, are some of the examples. These examples show a glimpse of increasing interest in this area within different institutional and cultural contexts in Korea.

While artist-adolescent collaborations have varied aims and objectives depending on the context, they currently seem to be framed and analysed through certain lenses. Some are framed as a practice of arts education with aims such as developing adolescents’ potential through the medium of theatre. Some are seen to be an artists’ encounter with young people, which generates sources and motivations for their new works for young audiences. Some appear to be an attempt to explore the world of ‘one another’, which grounds a foundation for mutual understanding and, also, personal, aesthetic and artistic growth of both parties. Also, these lenses do not rule out one another since they often co-exist within the multiple layers of the collaborations. While these have entailed interesting experiments on dynamic relationship between artists and adolescents, both of whom are simultaneously creators and receivers, different directions embedded in one project have also provoked debates, especially when those directions contradict one another.

Situated within my ongoing queries on artist-adolescent collaborations in the context of TYA, this paper is to explore whether and, if so, how different directions embedded in the artist-adolescent collaborations can be pursued and developed beyond contradiction towards a reciprocal process. This can lead to envisaging a possibility of re-locating artist-adolescent collaboration in TYA within a larger context of contemporary theatre practice and discourse. Diverse ways of interaction between theatre-makers and audience and, also, the implication of the sensibility of young audiences to contemporary theatre-making will be reviewed.

As a way of examining it, I attempt to bring artists’ perspectives in. This is to illustrate how artists reflect on their experience of working with young people, how they articulate the challenges and the dilemmas that they have confronted in the process and, furthermore, how they envision a way forward in relation to the seemingly contrasting directions ingrained in the project. It will also shed light on the artistic inspirations that they have found themselves through a very human encounter with adolescents.

Fiona McDonagh and Dorothy Morrissey Mary Immaculate College, University of

Limerick (Ireland)

 *Using theatre to trouble gender with young children*

ABSTRACT

This paper stems from a theatre making project designed to trouble gender with young children. The project was underpinned by post-structural readings on gender identity by Butler (1999; 2004) and Davies (2003). The aim was to ‘enable the participants to grapple with limiting positions and categories provided in the dominant discourses and to re-imagine their futures’ (Cahill 2010, p.155). In the project, two theatre artists/researchers, one research assistant and an infant teacher/researcher set out to trouble the taken-for-granted gender narratives of a class of five and six year old children in their first or second year of primary school (junior and senior infants) in Ireland.

The theatre making was generated from a series of photographs featuring two ‘genderless’ characters in a variety of everyday situations. The photographs were used by the teacher as a starting point towards troubling the children’s positioning of themselves within dominant narratives of gender.

Throughout the project, images, language and other embodied processes were used to make meaning, represent meaning and generate various perspectives. In this way, the practice of making theatre itself was used as a research methodology and the research/data collection techniques were integral to the theatre development process.

In this paper, we explore how we used the children’s responses to the photographs to develop a short interim theatrical performance composed of simple episodes involving both characters. A key aspect of this was the role played by the infant teacher/researcher in opening spaces for children to imagine, question and discover for themselves.

We explore too how we used the children’s responses (immediate and in the weeks following) to that interim performance to develop a final theatrical performance, also composed of episodes. Therefore, the children became ‘co-creators’ as well as ‘receivers’ of the work. In addition, we interrogate the responses of the children to that final performance. At all stages of the project, we aimed to draw out multiple perspectives and confront contradictions and so create an uncertain space that would allow the children to shift positions and re-story the narratives within which they were living their lives. The focus on just two characters may have served, however, to reinforce rather than challenge the binary system in which gender is enmeshed. In our presentation, we chart the shifts and re-storying that occurred throughout the various stages the project.

**September 3**

***TYA and Trauma***

Eunice Uwadinma-Idemudia, Redeemer’s University (Nigeria)

*Confronting the Present (Re) Presenting Childhood”: A Reading of Trauma in Ahmed Yerima’s* Pari

ABSTRACT

The spate of terrorism currently plaguing the global village is not without its traumatic manifestations on children and young people. In Nigeria for instance, the attack from the Boko Haram insurgency has left hundreds of children and innocent people (children and young adults) traumatized. Families affected have suffered one psychological problem or the other while in exile. The 2014 attack and subsequent adoption of over two hundred young innocent and unwilling girls from a Chibok school in Northern Nigeria have raised a lot of questions. These questions bother on horror and despair regarding the fate of these children forcefully taken away almost from their cradle. Ahmed Yerima’s *Pari,* an insurgent inspired play about a girl named Pari,takes us through the tortuous journey of a family who waits and hopes against hope for the return of their girl child. When she finally returns, we find a traumatized Pari, hardly recognizable and torn apart from self and from family. She is unable to fit into the norm of an ideal society. This paper therefore, examines the psychosocial effect of terror on both the families of Pari and her immediate society. The study will also probethrough this play, the realities and effects of terrorism in the lives of young adult and children in the face of insurgencies. This paper will then deploy the Social Learning Theory, to discuss how the collective experience of Pari, her immediate family and the society at large have learnt to adapt and cope with terror, and confront the realities of the present unending terror that is replete in today’s society. Finally, the paper will attempt to ascertain how the experience of Pari has (re) presented and reshaped the ideology of childhood in the minds of the watchful eyes of parents in Nigeria and consequently, around the world.

Kristin Hunt, Arizona State University USA)

Antigone in Ferguson: *Representing Childhood Precarity Through/In/As Embodiment*

ABSTRACT

In response to the conference’s aim to confront the present, this paper attends to the significance of the literal presence of young bodies onstage and in audiences, juxtaposing the bodies of performers and audience members in theatrical spaces with the bodies politic created and imagined in these creative acts of assembly. Taking inspiration from Judith Butler’s exploration of the body’s political significance in performative assembly, this paper asks how operations of precarity, assembly, protest, and performativity function in the particular case of young bodies as both performers of and audiences for public instances of protest and response to trauma. Using Bryan Doerries’s 2016 *Antigone in Ferguson* as a case study, this paper extends ongoing work on tragic performance for young audiences, asking what happens when young bodies become both the medium for performances of precarity and grief as well as the means of representing contemporary problems of precarity to a larger public made up of youth and adult audiences. Doerries’s translation and adaptation of Sophocles’s tragedy, first performed in Ferguson, Missouri and then in New York, centers on two instances of childhood presence and absence: the unlivable life and unmournable death of a fictional young woman, Antigone, and former police officer Darren Wilson’s actual killing of 18-year-old Michael Brown in 2014. After a one hour reading of Doerries’s spare translation, accompanied by youth and adult choirs, *Antigone in Ferguson* ’s second act involves a discussion of the text in which much of the cast, particularly the chorus, are revealed to have personal connections to Ferguson or to Brown, from local police officers to Brown’s former teacher to his childhood friends. In the face of these intersecting features of youth bodily presence and absence, including the invocation of both real and fictional youth deaths, I ask under what conditions young people achieve what Butler refers to as “the right to appear.” How does Brown’s absent, dead body interact with the live body of the adult performer playing Antigone? How does the presence of young people who knew Brown in the audience complicate or undercut this bodily absence? Finally, in response to Butler’s call to discover the means of “living a good life in a bad world,” how might theatrical practices of embodiment and presence provide space for imagining and crafting livable lives for children and youth despite the contemporary reality of precarity, uncertainty, and cooptation of their bodies in service of agendas which may directly interfere with their safety or well-being?

Ava Hunt, Derby University and Danny Braverman, Goldsmiths University of London (UK)

*Towards Community Resilience: Theatre for Young Audiences and the Mental Health Crisis*

ABSTRACT

Danny Braverman and Ava Hunt are both theatre makers and scholars; their praxis allowing for a unique insight, applicable to a global context.

 In this paper, the authors will explore the assertion – borne out by research – that TYA in schools can play a significant role in addressing the mental health crisis affecting young people in the UK., with implications globally.

Unsurprisingly, there is a growing consensus that the current mental health crisis has an impact on attainment. However, despite recent governmental initiatives that show a reluctant recognition of the value of arts education, schools in the U.K. are still driven by narrow instrumentalism to feed the ‘exam factory’. This paper proposes not just a reinvigoration of professional TYA in schools, but also a framework to evaluate ‘quality’. *Dialogue Across Difference* has been developed by Braverman and is inspired by the work of Jill Dolan (2008) and Victor Turner (2011).

Braverman and Hunt focus specifically on the example of the U.K. company Theatre Centre, particularly its practice under the leadership of Artistic Director David Johnston (1977-1986) and how Theatre Centre’s practice is an exemplar from which contemporary practitioners can learn. Recent research by Hunt into Theatre Centre’s archives, including unearthing a previously unseen documentary, reveals that in the 1970s and 1980s, Theatre Centre would regularly perform to a quarter of a million young people each year, touring high quality productions with inclusive ensembles of actors from all backgrounds. This paper asks if that scale of provision and celebration of diversity is possible in the 21st Century.

The authors further explore Johnston’s legacy and the *Dialogue Across Difference* framework under the lens of Hunt’s most recent practice-as-research project *Journeys of Destiny.* This story of a young Syrian refugee toured as a participatory community musical to primary schools in Derbyshire, working with the oldest pupils in primary schools as they face the difficult transition to secondary schools.

Finally, Braverman and Hunt problematise the notion of ‘resilience’ and seek to re-frame an idea that has been grounded in an individualistic-medical model as a community-social paradigm that can underpin future TYA work in schools.

September 4

***Latin and LatinX and the post dramatic in TYA***

Luvel Garcia Leyva Universidad de São Paulo, Brasil. (Cuba/Brasil)

*Theater and childhood facing the representational crisis.*

ABSTRACT

Las diversas y complejas relaciones que se establecen hoy en día en el contexto latinoamericano entre la escena y los universos infantiles están siendo pautadas por los grandes desafíos impuestos por la llamada crisis de la representación. Ese es un fenómeno que manifiesta la tensión presente en el modelo de representación de la Primera Modernidad que instauró las equivalencias entre el representante y el representado, trayendo para las culturas infantiles una alteración radical de lo simbólico, situando muchas veces a los niños en un *entrelugar.* Muchos de esos desafíos están siendo encarados por diferentes colectivos latinoamericanos alineados a la perspectiva de teatro de grupo, a partir de la concepción de núcleos creativos y de formación teatral infantil en su interior y del desarrollo de procesos asociados a diferentes modalidades de acción cultural, configurando así, una significativa ruptura entre los ámbitos de la creación artística, los procesos de formación escénica y las taxonomías habitualmente usadas en el ámbito del llamado teatro infantil. En ese sentido, este trabajo pretende analizar prácticas escénicas con niños de medios sociales desfavorecidos desarrolladas por dos grupos latinoamericanos (la Compañía Paideia de Teatro, de Brasil, y Teatro Trono, de Bolivia), con el interés de develar las implicaciones de esos procesos en la subjetividad infantil, como vertiente posible de reflexión teorica para este ámbito del teatro.

Lorenzo Garcia, University of North Texas (USA)

# *Matters of Otherness and Unlearning with Latinx TYA*

ABSTRACT

Patricia Limerick, a historian of the American West, notes in *The Legacy of Conquest*:

The cast of characters who inhabit the [American] West’s complex past is as diverse as ever. As Western dilemmas recur, we wish we knew more not only about the place but also about each other. It is a disturbing element of continuity in [American] Western history that we have not ceased to be strangers. (349)

What I resonate with in Limerick’s observation is the urgent need for an alternative poetics of place that offers the possibility of ceasing to be strangers. In Texas, my place of residence, media spectacles trade on ethnocentricities multiply entangled in the prickly thickets of race, class, gender, and nation. Projected in these spectacles is a specific cultural image of the US-Mexico border as the symbolic line between *us*—those who belong (i.e., citizens)—and *them*—the strangers/others (i.e., illegal aliens). No doubt, contradictions and tensions abound when taking on the challenge of ceasing to be strangers, which implies a commitment to assuage what legal scholar Patricia Williams calls “the trauma of gratuitous generalizations” (82).

In this essay, I turn to *The Highest Heaven,* written by the prolific José Cruz González, on the belief that it does serious work as a cultural intervention examining what it means for a Latinx child to live as the stigmatized stranger/other, to exist way beyond the border of belonging in places of concealment and hiding. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, the young protagonist Huracán, though a US citizen, is deported to Mexico. Huracán must then embark on a special journey, albeit the well-known migration from north to south. It is nearly impossible to discuss the thematic content in *Highest Heaven* without raising the discourses and practices that position Huracán, however uncomfortably, within the locus of otherness. But if the often misunderstood term interventionis to be applied to plays like *Highest Heaven* that extend virtue and heroism to Latinx youth, they must first be prized not so much because of an elaboration of the intrinsic qualities of strangers/others, but due to the injunction to unlearningthe biases against the position strangers/others occupy. With an understanding of unlearning as a displacement of learning, the discussion of Highest Heaven here draws attention to the willingness to deconstruct depictions of menace, incoherenceand deformation, while simultaneously constructing the possibility of transcendence elsewhere, always immanent.

Nina Helene Jakobia Skogli University of Agder (Norway)

Against all odds *by Fix & Foxy: Confronting the present through post-performance methods*

ABSTRACT

In January and February 2019 twenty children performed their own future according to statistical prognoses at the Betty Nansen Theatre in Copenhagen. The performance *Mod alle odds[[1]](#footnote-1)* by Fix&Foxy addresses a central Scandinavian idea, that we all have equal opportunities, despite being born in different socio-economic environments. But statistics tells us otherwise. Where we grow up, our parents occupations etc., do matter. The performance is exemplifying statistics and shows us optimism, pessimism, and injustice. It is a performance that echoes the theme for this ITYARN event and AAG, when it comes to confronting the present and presenting childhood (and adulthood). *Mod alle odds* shows actual children on stage, performing for an audience consisting of adults and teenagers.

For this paper I want to focus on how the performance is experienced by the audience. By *experienced*, I mean what the spectators experience “here-and-now” during the performance, but also the affective, cognitive and emotional processes that might continue after the so-called fall of the curtain. In February 2019 I brought theatre students from the University of Agder to see *Mod alle odds,* as a part of my current Ph.D. project. During the spring we explored different “post-performance methods” to answer the questions: What processes are at work in the performance and what do they mean for those who experience and participate in it? How does this performance affect us? *Mod alle odds* is complex event since it addresses our present, our imagined future and our statistical future. The agenda for this research is to provide a pluralism of methodology when it comes to figuring out what a complex performance actually mean for those who partake in the audience. And to explore how different post-performance events not only give audience members a space to figure out their own experience, but how these events also contribute in the *making* of the experience itself. As a creative and interpretive activity, both in a social and individual context.

A key concept that I would like to discuss in continuation of this is “post-performance”.

This is a term that does not seem to be widely used, but we find it mentioned in the iconic *Theatre Audiences* (1997) by Susan Bennett. She explains that conventions such as applause make up a significant part of post-performance, as well as reading reviews and talking with fellow spectators after the performance. She does not go into detail about how these processes of reception and interpretation are at work after the event, neither their significance for the overall experience of the performance – something we might call the accumulated experience. It might seem that research on post-performance events and their significance are underrepresented in theatre theory. In this paper I want to advocate for a wider use of the term post-performance, and show different ways of facilitating post-performance events. I want to use the concept of post-performance to shed some light on how we can understand and articulate the value and impacts ofa performance like *Mod alle odds*

**September 5**

***Representations in TYA***

Heather Fitzsimmons Frey, MacEwan University (Canada)

*Young People are the Future: Youth Representing Settler and Indigenous Pasts*

ABSTRACT

Canadian children and young people are regularly informed that they are the future – humanity’s own mortality demands that as people age, they pass on knowledge hoping that children will make the world better than their elders could. So what happens when children simultaneously represent the future and the past, connecting people of all ages across historical times and space? What happens when they confront a particularly difficult history, with a legacy that influences the present?

This paper draws on my current research (interviews began in July and are on-going) examining ways child and youth volunteer performer/interpreters engage in the complex labour, performances, learning, and teaching child and youth volunteer performer/interpreters at the Fort Edmonton Park living history museum. Young people have told us in interviews that they cannot “time travel” – and by that they mean move between the historical eras presented by the Fort – but in fact, they are in a perpetual state of navigating the present and the past, even as their bodies and the way they choose to interpret the past launches into a hopeful future.

The youth volunteers come to the Fort in three possible ways: as volunteers with their families, as junior volunteers who participate in a module learning and mentorship program, or through the Junior Indigenous Peoples Interpreter volunteer program, which includes learning modules, mentorship, and connection with the young people’s own community and elders. In each of these programs, young people wear heritage outfits, act as interpreters for visitors, and present historically located skills, such as moccasin making or spinning. Volunteers may engage with “fluid role playing” in which they perform a heritage character, but can step out of character into the 21st century to comment on the past. Focused on the voices of young participants and the Fort Edmonton Park volunteer program decisions, this project aims to articulate how young people understand their work as interpreters and its links to their daily lives, and how they see their own presence as bridges between past and future.

Earlier scholarship in Canadian history failed to acknowledge the effects of settler colonialism on all young people, but more recent studies demonstrate that the history of children and childhood matters, often in very high stakes ways (Alexander). lshiguro describes youth as an essential aspect of " settler futurity" (asserting an inevitable settler future) in the British colonial project in Canada. Indigenous performance scholar Carter argues that for Indigenous peoples, performances have the potential to act as "survivance-interventions" (artistic assertions of an inevitable Indigenous future). In the scholarship of reenactment, Rebecca Schneider argues that as the presence and absence of performed gestures ricochet between the past and present, and those very acts of corporeal repetition suggests that the past may have yet another future. These foundational ideas position history, performance, and aspirational futures as present and relevant to the shaping of cultural consciousness and to the ethical management and programming of living history museums. Furthermore, they have far-reaching implications for how young settler-descendent and Indigenous Canadians are represented in Theatre for Young Audiences, both in historical and contemporary contexts.

Carla Ribeiro-Cunha & Carla Pires Antunes, Research Centre on Child Studies, Institute of

Education, University of Minho (Portugal)

*“Eu brinco” [I play]: Report on a theatre performance for and with babies in Portugal*

ABSTRACT

This paper will present data drawn from research[[2]](#footnote-2) carried out in collaboration with the Teatro do Biombo, a theatre company that creates performances for early childhood, based in Lisbon, Portugal. The main goal of the PhD research is to develop and analyse interactive theatre performances for babies and children under three. In Portugal, theatre for early years is relatively new, situated in a political, social, cultural and educational context where children under the age of three remain underserve. This work will include a brief overview of the place for children aged zero to three in early childhood education and in theatre for young audiences in Portugal. Although theatre for early years is relatively new in our country, it appears that more and more theatre companies are beginning to venture in this field. “Eu brinco” is an interactive theatre performance created during the research and intended to be played in nurseries, *for* and *with* babies and children under three, accompanied by their caregivers. This performance allows free and spontaneous participation from babies and children throughout. The research has been developed through cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection, according to action-research methodology. The first phase (2017) focused on the collaborative creative process of “Eu brinco”. Actors, researcher, caregivers, and babies and children up to the age of three all took part in this process. The second phase of the research (2018‑2019) focused on performances of “Eu brinco” in different nurseries. During these performances, we observed how babies, children, caregivers, and actors would engage, communicate, express themselves and participate. Our work will present the collaborative creative process of “Eu brinco” as well as preliminary data on how babies and children up to the age of three participate in the performance. We will also address the study’s impact on the work of the Teatro do Biombo’s director and actors and their main considerations for creating theatre *for* and *with* babies. We will also present some considerations on the potential contributions of the research not only to the work of this theatre company in particular, but also, more broadly, to a Portuguese theatrical practice both *for* and *with* babies and young children, which successfully takes into account their *voice* and participation.

Margot Wood, Cape Peninsula University of Technology (South Africa)

*Performing Arts for Participants with Neurological/ Physical/Cognitive Challenges*

ABSTRACT

The Arts have the potential to break through the barriers and limitations which participants with neurological, physical and cognitive challenges face. It can offer support and assist in the expression of feelings and ideas. A sense of sharing and community can be fostered through participation in group arts projects. Participation in the arts promotes a sense of well-being and self-worth. Participants with these specific challenges are prone to Learned Helplessness because they have so little control over their environment. This results in a feeling of apathy, withdrawal and depression. Participation in the arts can counteract this.

Exploration in the arts is often based on sensory exploration which can wire the neural connections between the brain and the sensory organs. Sensory exploration can lead to connection and specialization as new experiences form neural pathways. Brains develop through experience as sense receptors over the body turn experience into knowledge. The brain combines information from proprioceptive and vestibular systems to understand the world. Repeated and mindful activities focus the experience of the sensory world to mindful engagement.

Theatre for audiences with complex needs attempts to create immersive experiences to promote a sense of well-being and flow, as a form of meditative state. `The meditative state of creative immanence is important for everyone regardless of age or ability.` (Else,P. and Sturrock, G. 1998). Immersive experiences consist of the creation of sensory spaces where sensory stimulations `wire` our sensory receptors, developing the neural connections between sense organs and brain thereby ` enabling us to perceive the world` (Grace 2018: 22). As our sensory systems discover new experiences, new wiring is produced in the brain. It connects points of knowledge and promotes intellectual understanding (Grace 2018:22).

The importance of sensory exploration is often well-understood and regarded as necessary in the care of children with severe and multiple disabilities but caregivers very often, through feelings of anxiety, low self-esteem and lack of training, resort to ‘parking’ children in their care. Children are placed in sensory stimulating environments but with no active engagement and interaction or attention paid to truly engaging with their charges. Caregivers are often exhausted, unsure and anxious. Children who rely on the sensory and non-linguistic means of communication are often very aware of this and pick up on their anxiety or disinterest. One on one interaction is required to truly engage in meaningful experiences and this is often lacking. The physical journeys between activities should also be meaningful as they create the environment for engagement and learning.

This study documents the creation of a sensory space for children with severe and multiple disabilities to encourage mindful personal and group glow experiences as they engage in a sensory journey and exploration of the space. Through the use of repetition and a sense of ritual, children are invited into a world encouraging mindful engagement. The project attempts to not only focus on the experience of the participants but also to invite caregivers into engagement and provide them with skills to continue similar experiences.

1. Meaning *Against all odds* in English [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This work is funded by national funds from the FCT (Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia) *[Foundation for Science and Technology]* – reference SFRH/BD/129738/2017. It is being carried out as part of the PhD in Child Studies – Specialty in Drama Education, supervised by Professor Carla Antunes and co-supervised by Professor Natália Fernandes – CIEC/Institute of Education, University of Minho, Braga, Portugal. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)