

Encountering Pain: Art as agent and mediator

Morning talk and discussion

Deborah will introduce her work visualising pain through co-creating photographic images with people living with pain and piloting a selection of these in NHS pain clinics to assess their impact on clinician-patient interaction. The findings will be briefly discussed and the images and image-making processes explored as agents and mediators within clinical interactions around pain. She will ask questions such as: in what ways can creative practice enhance medical practice and vice versa; how can visual language reinvigorate verbal language; in what ways can an art object be viewed as relational; can an image perform a mediating role within the triangle of patient, image, clinician and what are the challenges and benefits of a co-creative process to an artists practice and perhaps to clinical interaction? These ideas will be interrogated through discussion with participants and discussion of some of the images from the projects.

Afternoon creative workshop

Deborah will run a short creative workshop before lunch using objects as a starting point to make photographs exploring the experience of treating those in pain. In the afternoon, participants will be invited to continue the process on their own, if they so wish, using the natural landscape and surrounding environment as they walk to come up with images reflecting ways of reducing stress and detaching from the pain of others.

For this workshop participants are invited to bring an object/s which might act as a metaphor for their experience of treating pain and another for ways they find to reduce or dissolve/manage the resultant stress. You might want to think about texture, colour, shape or objects with particular associations that you could use to represent your experiences. You do not need to have any experience of art or photography or to own an expensive camera, you just need some sort of imaging device such as an ipad or mobile phone and a willingness to have a go.

Pain under the microscope, (Padfield and Omand, 2018) 35 mins duration

Monday 26th June 2023

Evening screening before supper?

Situated somewhere between fine art, documentary and talking heads, the film takes a series of connected microscopes as its blue-print, to examine pain from multiple perspectives including interviews with international experts from: history, linguistics, pain, medicine, neurobiology and psychology. Respectively these are Profs Joanna Bourke, Elena Semino, Joanna Zakrzewska, Maria Fitzgerald and Amanda Williams, interspersed with patient testimony from Chandrakant Khoda, a visual score by Deborah Padfield and a musical score by Lucie Treacher. The visual imagery derives largely from metaphors co-created with people living with pain, in particular, that of a shadow sandwich, where the material of the metaphor, for example mouldy bread from the sandwich, is placed under the microscope, magnified x 64 and subsequently re-integrated with more recognisable imagery to create a multi-layered and surreal backdrop to the unfolding exploration of pain. Scientific and neuronal images weave their way throughout the more abstract imagery

asking 'what is this thing called pain?' The film provides no answers but invites viewers to assemble their own meanings out of the immediacy of patient testimonies and the cutting edge science and research presented. The film grew out of the *pain: speaking the threshold* interdisciplinary project at University College London, click [here](#). Many of the interviewees have contributed to the recent *Encountering Pain: Hearing, Seeing, Speaking* edited volume published by UCL Press in 2021. A free pdf of the book is available [here](#).

After the screening Deborah Padfield will answer questions about the film to provoke discussion prior to supper!