

Process

Documentation & Evaluation

A community arts project for Arts by the Sea Festival, Autumn 2020



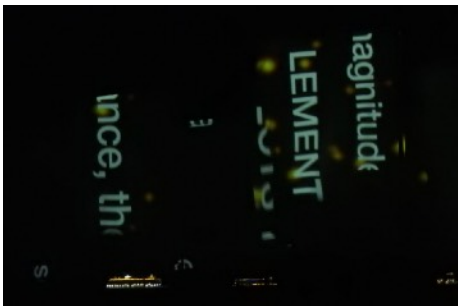
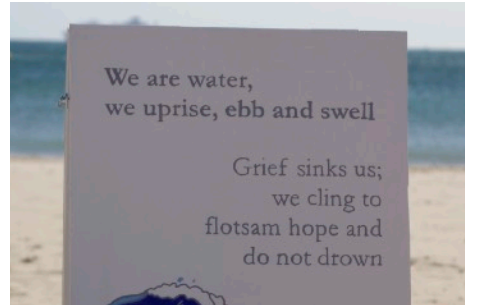
CoCreate



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

**Bournemouth
Arts by the Sea
Festival**





Inspired by the themes of *In Memoriam*, by Luke Jerram, **Process** offered a chance for local communities and individuals to explore their own feelings and experiences of lockdown and Covid 19.

The final community artwork made from pillowcases, reflecting the use of bedsheets used by *In Memoriam*, was displayed on Sandbanks beach.

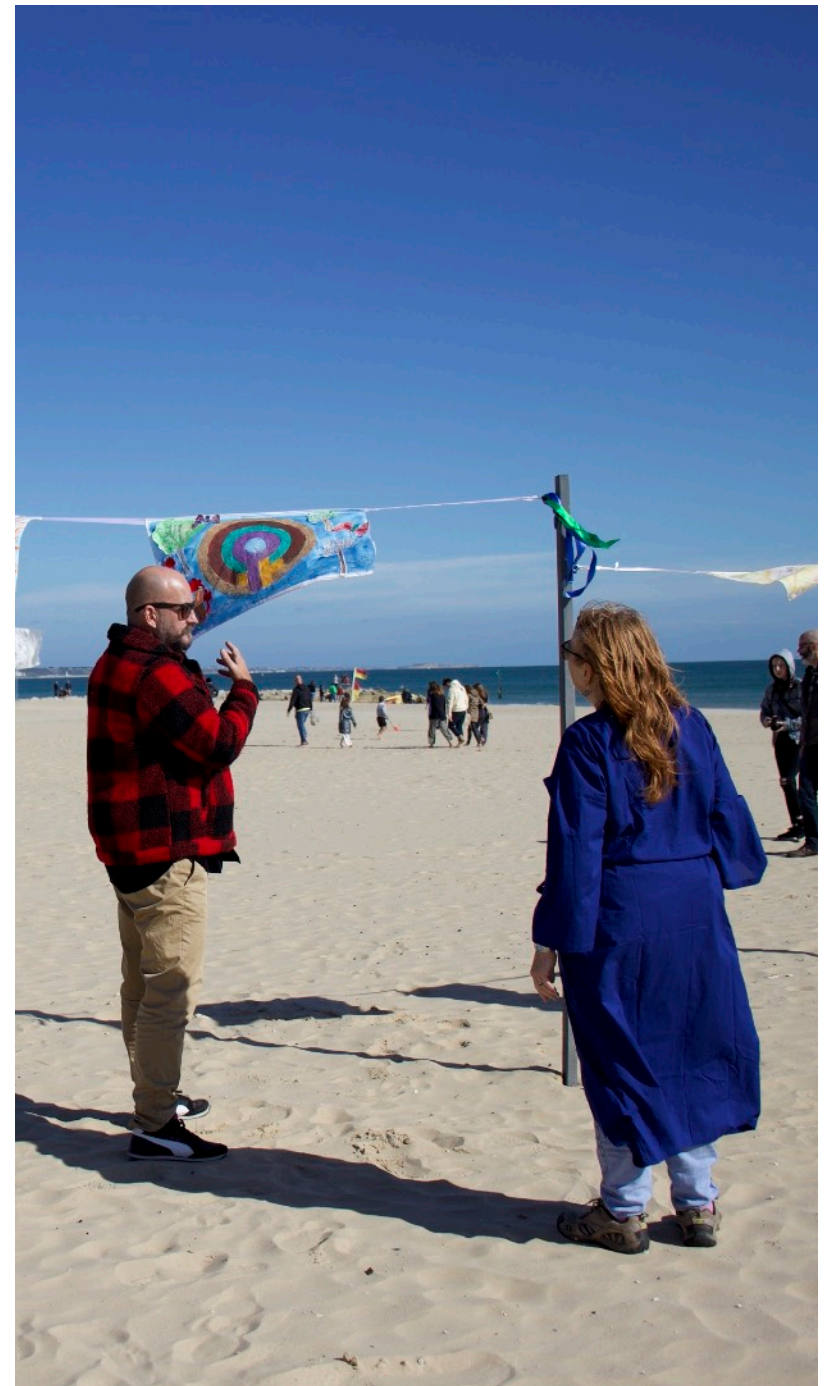
Participants were invited to come along to the opening day, and share their process and explain their work and reflect on their experiences with each other.

The workshops were delivered by CoCreate artists, Gemma Alldred, Anna Shiels, Deborah Aita, and collaborator Rosemary Edwards.

We offered 12 creative workshops to 17 participants in writing, theatre and visual art, both face to face and online, over two weeks.

Participants were delivered a package of arts materials, and were free to choose how many workshops they attended, and how they wanted to decorate their pillowcase to express their journey and experiences through the crisis.

This report is intended to both document and catalogue the work, and provide a summary of evaluation and learning.



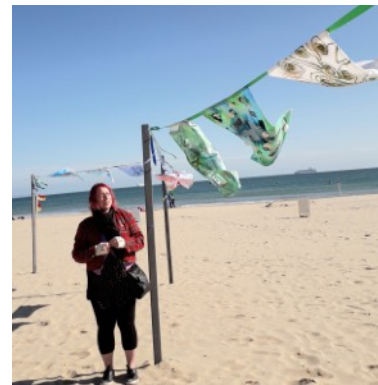
Method

4 artists worked with 17 participants to develop individual artworks on pillowcases to be installed as one collective piece of work.

The call out went out to our networks and colleagues in social services, carers networks, mental health service providers, addiction settings, and older people's services. In addition we expressly sent the call out to staff and volunteers who work in these services, as well as via the council led Covid19 helpline, Together We Can. The festival also supported marketing the opportunity to a wide audience.

We asked for people 'who felt that taking part in creative activity would help them to make sense of recent events and be beneficial to wellbeing'. Most of our participants were from the Poole area, with others from Bournemouth, and one from Exeter.

A mix of 12 workshops were offered, and participants were free to choose which they attended. 8 were delivered online through Zoom, and 4 were delivered face to face using Covid safe working methods, at Pavilion Dance South West.



Workshops were designed to be a mix of both practical skills exploring the materials we were working with, as well as opportunities to explore thoughts and feelings through writing or drama. We were keen to give space to both reflection and processing, as well as having fun, connecting and offering space for 'me' time.

Each participant was allocated one member of the creative team as their key contact, if they felt they needed more support, or had issues accessing the workshops.

Participants were given access to a password protected webpage which had the timetable, links to online workshops, descriptions of the workshops, and documents with supporting information sheets and workshop plans/presentations.

On the first day of the installation, we invited the participant-artists to talk about their artwork and share their experiences with others in the group.

"The project helped me with new ideas for my artwork and the dancing helped me feel free from my anxiety"

Haiku for Lockdown

- Remember an image, a moment, or an experience of lockdown that you remember clearly.
- What feelings does it evoke?
- What senses are involved?

"I haven't done any art work in a really long time, even though I know that it brings joy. It always gets left behind. This project taught me how quickly I can create something and that it doesn't need to be made into this long, drawn out, perfectionist process - you can just create without a plan."

From [Name] to Everyone:
Thank you Gemma for your input. Fantastic workshop, really enjoy a lot, even I joined you late. Looking forward to seeing you all again soon.

From [Name]
Thanks so much Gemma, I feel like my writing voice is emerging . It's been great :)

Meeting with Gemma - 10th September 2020

PDSW 2 - 4pm - Garden Room

Aims

- To spend time in our bodies (noticing) and enjoying moving
- To learn about devising skills, and improvisation techniques
- To be inspired creatively, and keep thinking about our collective
- To make short performances to share
- To reflect and feedback
- To take for ourselves and enjoy being creative

Body Improv
Self (characters)

Workshop Plan

Chairs - place your belongings with your chair. This is your chair.
Hand-washing, etc.

10 including support worker.

Warm up

Time	Activity
2.00	Welcomes and Structure/ Check in. Body check in. Name Game - Name and action - copy.
2.10	IMPROV imagination, images and
	Pass (through)



Haiku writing workshop

Time Table Week 1

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Deborah - visualisation		Anna - print making	
Rosie - Applique			Rosie - Embellishment	Deborah Drama workshop
		Gemma - Creative Writing		

Time Table Week 2

Aims of the session

- To explore your ideas and thoughts
- To write something without words
- To share some writing (if you want)
- To hear other people's writing
- To be inspired and take ideas
- To take for yourself, and enjoy

"I really enjoyed being at the pavilion and meeting in person - the first and last drama session felt very powerful and liberating. Making/externalising the pandemic into a character was helpful. Being able to play freely with strangers and share our experiences in the first sessions felt really important."

"The print workshop and the haiku workshop were my favourites"

The Work

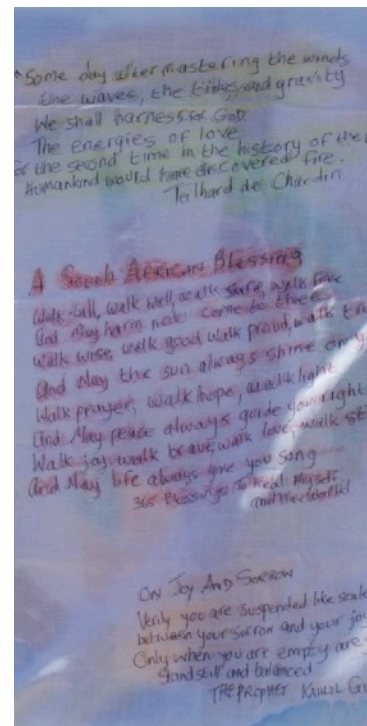
The following pages document the pillowcase artworks created by the artist-participants.

Images are accompanied by excerpts from the artist talks about their work, and from feedback and reflections on taking part in the project.

Process captures a unique moment in our collective history, as we come to terms with the impact of the Covid-19 crisis.

Artists

Rosemary Edwards - Deborah Aita - Anna Shiels
Gemma Alldred - Karen Johnson - Jannie Cherry
Anna Webb - Zoe Tinsley - Sukie Baker
Katherine Brooks Pugh - Sue McKenna
David G Taylor - Amy Murray - Rony Campbell
Lisa Matysiak - Sinti Breitenberga - Sue Dibben
Maria Esther Maristegui-Nunez - Mabyn Aita





"This was from when we did print making with Anna, it was a quick print, it was about lockdown, just locked in, grey, it was all that time. That's how I felt. And I felt throughout that really appreciating nature, nature was always coming through the cracks, and that felt really important to me, so I wanted it to be 3 dimensional, so I attempted the embroidery, and I started doing these things.

It was really hard, that feeling of not being able to touch people, and you were in the hospital and you know someone who's sick and you can't help them... it feels like its bleeding, just like it's bleeding out.

And then on one of the last sessions, the drama session, the last thing I did is to make this bird, the bird represents the freedom of being able to fly, I miss being able to fly. The freedom of being able to move around in the world, to do normal things, to touch, things I can't do."







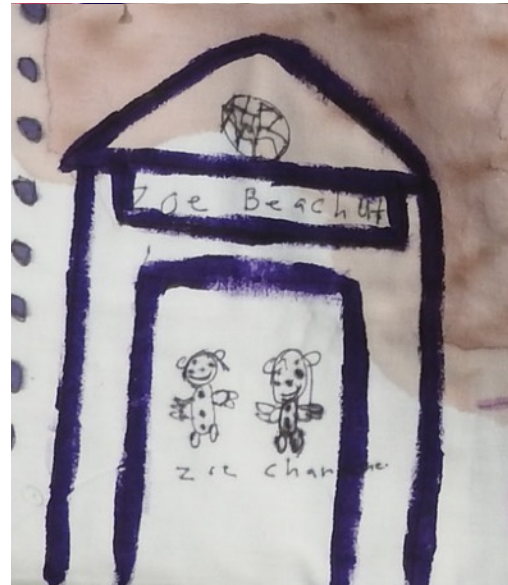
"When summer turns into winter, we grieve for it a lot, in a lot of ways, we miss the birds, the fruits, the long days, we miss our friends, the warm, just generally a lot of happier. But also the ability to find love and beauty in the fading of things, and of people and of seasons."

It was very good in helping me to connect with new people, in a safe, positive, creative, environment after a period of not being able to. It really helped my mental wellbeing in giving me the time and guidance to process what has happened in 2020 - particularly within a group and arts setting. It forced me to take time for myself to reflect on what's happened and to enjoy something again - especially with new people which I have really missed!

The project helped me with new ideas for my artwork and the dancing helped me feel free from my anxiety

I LOVED THIS PROCESS. This has given me so much and saved me from being in a really dark place mentally. I've struggled a bit since the project came to an end, feeling lost again, so it really helped me so much. Having one main person to go to made this less daunting and easier to approach... It made me feel safe, like I had someone to confide in.

You've given me such amazing gifts and I am deeply grateful to you all and the lovely people I got to connect with through this creative adventure.



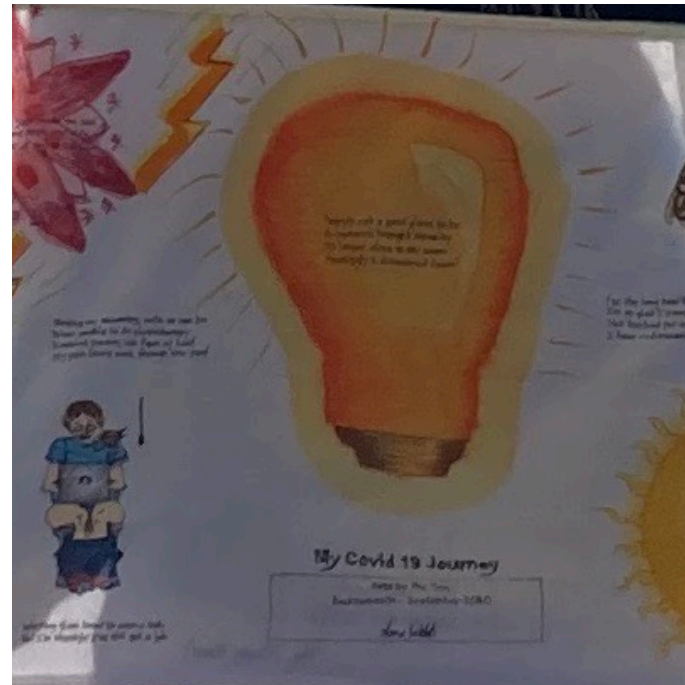
"Milo on the beach, he's the support dog, the beach makes me feel happy. I had to do all that, well done you! Well done Zoe!"



This was SO needed in my life. I was going through so much emotional turmoil during the project; having this focus pulled me out of the depths of that and gave me some structure and accountability. I felt like I was contributing to something meaningful.

Making friends - the kindness, the thought and preparation that had gone into all of this - the encouragement and support - the opportunity to talk about our work and the choices we had made (I thought I'd hate that but I loved it) - seeing all those amazing pieces of art blowing in the wind at the beach was so magical - the generosity of being given free materials to work with and keep - what this has done for my mental health and confidence and future creative pursuits has been such a gift - knowing someone cared meant a lot







*"First of all the anger, that I felt initially, it's almost like a bereavement, isn't it.
And then the lightbulb moment.... and walking back into the sun"*

I was able to try all different types of art and to connect them all which is something I loved already. Also going back to the Pavilion [Dance South West] where I used to dance and doing movement activities/sort of contact improv (even without touching) was really therapeutic and helpful. It's allowed me to grow and test out things like drama/words which I've always wanted to do but couldn't afford or have time to do. Also doing more textile work and using different/new materials helped my creativity grow. I felt I got to capture everything I was feeling inside and allow it to pour out in words and images into one piece. Seeing everybody else's work was so inspiring - particularly hearing them talk about it.

This project taught me how quickly I can create something and that it doesn't need to be made into this long, drawn out, perfectionist process...I have not been able to stop writing haiku poetry - they are flooding out and I must have written at least 80 of them this week. You have reignited something in me and given me a new outlet to express my creativity.





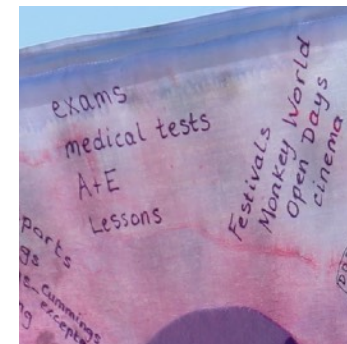
"I made myself do something that didn't have a plan, which is completely out of character for me, but it turned out I just loved committing to it, just going for it because I don't normally do that.

"In lockdown I spent the whole time completely by myself, my family don't live in the UK and I found it incredibly... it kind of... it brought a whole load of old stuff, emotional crap, and you have to sit with it everyday... so that's what the Dragon is about, Dragons are about old fear, all that stuff that needs processing.

"I live in a block of flats, and everyone around me seemed to be furloughed, and I felt trapped, because I was having to work very hard, everyone else seemed to be having this different experience where they were all chilled out and having a great time....

...And then it did feel like a fight. But the one hour we went out, I would spend just walking around my neighbourhood and I would just focus on the flowers in people's gardens. I made a point, of taking a lunch hour and spending it taking photos of the flowers that I saw.... And the flowers for me, really tapped into something I felt like all this mayhem going on, but then you look at a flower, the normal everyday stuff, grass growing, there's flowers, the sea's still there, all the normality is actually there and if you take the time just to be quiet, and look, it was very calming.

I've learnt to trust myself to be creative, I enjoyed the process, I enjoyed doing it just to get some of those thoughts out.





"I was thinking about how it was affecting me, I was trying to protect the children from what was going on outside."

"I was feeling quite creative in my head, that's what attracted me to taking part. I did the first writing workshop and I hadn't realised how angry I was til we did that workshop and I thought it's got to be a volcano! Because that is what I felt like!"

And then the palm trees, it's from the print making and I really enjoyed that, because its so clever, I had to use them!

I got a sense of belonging. Talking on-line and in person with the other artists was amazing. I feel I've made friends. Seeing everyone's different styles has given me some ideas.

Having one person supporting you and checking in on you regularly was very helpful. Feeling less pressured to create the art than I normally would, being given free materials - as an artist this is something you always have to plan and think about - so you are restricted in some ways. A different process/creation is allowed when they are gifted to you.

I really enjoyed being at the pavilion and meeting in person - the first and last drama session felt very powerful and liberating. Making/externalising the pandemic into a character was helpful. Being able to play freely with strangers and share our experiences in the first sessions felt really important. I think being able to meet everyone in person at least once would have been helpful as most sessions are online.

It made me carve out time for myself and allowed me to time to reflect and slow down.







"I had this image of walking barefoot on sharp stones, which can hurt, but it can also be a nice massage, and that's the way I felt about lockdown. Some awful times, but also some really nice times."

"Sharp Stones. Foamy Hair. Float. Drown."

"I did art at school, my strength was pencil, just something really simple, and I love hands... I work in an industry where for six months we've had to use all these items, and wear all these items, so I see them every single day, so I have hand sanitiser everywhere, and face-masks, I have them all over my house... it's all about holding all those things, but also not touching... It didn't start off blue, but then I dropped some ink on it, so it turned out blue!"

It's one of the best things I've ever done.

Stats and Data

Process was a self-referring community arts project with a wellbeing focus related to Covid-19. Our principle evaluation is within the work itself, and is evidenced in the qualitative feedback from participants around their experience and reflections on the process.

We collected some quantitative evaluation data, around attendance, audience, group make up and if the project contributed positively to people's wellbeing, and creativity. This is presented below.

Who Came?

35% identified as having a disability

88% identified as Female

Ages from 24 - 70

21 people signed up, 17 people participated and 16 people completed pillowcase artworks for display.

1 person wasn't able to complete for personal reasons, but stayed in touch with the project.

14 Sessions, including 12 Creative Workshops (8 online, 4 face to face)

100 attendances across all sessions

Exhibition Engagement & Audience

Because of Covid-19 restrictions, marketing for the festival events was minimised. We displayed the work on three days, the numbers below estimate audiences to the display and engagement with 'Speak to the Sea'.

General Audience (Estimate during stewarded times)

Sunday (6 hours)	180
Thursday (3 hours)	45
Friday (3 hours)	45

Total 270

All 17 participants attended the exhibition.

90% agreed, or strongly agreed with the statement 'Taking part in Process was good for my mental wellbeing'

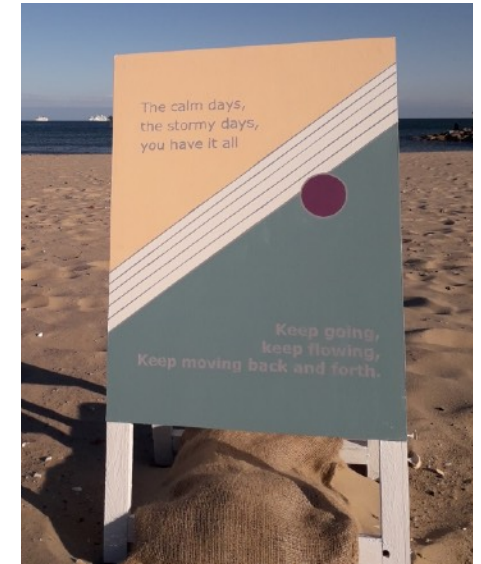
78% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, 'Taking part in Process was helpful in developing my creativity'

Evening Projection



Words and short phrases from the artist-participants were projected onto the bedsheets of Luke Jerram's piece, *In Memoriam*, as part of the festival's evening events.

Speak to the Sea



Artist-participant writing from some of the workshops was used to inspire three hand-painted sign boards.

The boards were part of *Speak to the Sea*, a audience participation element to the exhibition, intended to inspire members of the public to take a moment for themselves to reflect on recent events, supported by the facilitators and encouraged in conversation, if they chose to, they were invited to 'speak the sea', about their thoughts and feelings at this time.

CoCreate

This document was created by CoCreate Dorset CIC, 2020

www.cocreate.org.uk