Poetry Emergency ii Report - Arts Methods

Poetry Emergency ii, which took place on 22nd and 23rd November 2020, gave PGR students from across the country the opportunity to engage with and learn from a wide range of poets, artists and performers.

The event began with a workshop run by designer and illustrator Will Berry and poet Joey Frances, both from the Generic Greeting Collective. Participants in this workshop learnt to use letterpress printing techniques, and had the chance to experiment with ideas and technique in making poster-poems, visual poems and various modes of concrete poetry. This opportunity for a close material engagement with poetry was, according to several participants, both enjoyable and rewarding.

The second workshop, run by Scott Thurston and Gemma Collard-Stokes, focused on the intersections between improvisation and writing. This workshop asked participants to pay close attention to movement and enabled them to find new ways of approaching performance. Participants engaged deeply with this workshop, and one participant described it as ‘totally transformative’.

The final workshop, ‘Factory of the Future’ was run by Lucy Wray. By temporarily dismissing our pessimistic and even sometimes apocalyptic responses to the impending climate emergency, this workshop invited participants to imagine and build a vision of an alternative and sustainable future. It offered new methodological tools for social, political and artistic responses to the current environmental crisis.

This workshop was followed by the keynote performance. Alice Notley performed, for the first time, her ‘Play for 26 Voices (in which the author as a community of voices of the dead discusses Everything.).

The evening session was comprised of three performances, by Luna Montenegro & Adrian Fisher, Scott Thurston & Gemma Collard-Stokes, and Jazmine Linklater, as well as a screening of two short films by Fatema Adboolcarim.

The second day of the festival opened with a poetry reading by local writer Roma Havers. Unfortunately Safaa Fathy, who was scheduled to perform, was unable to attend at short notice. Luckily Roma was available to fill in, and gave a compelling reading. Tom Jenks then gave an incredibly entertaining performance, before Meg Boulton, Jason Edwards & Maddie Boden performed reiteration of ‘Pandas in Trees’ by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. After the lunch break, Azad Ashim Sharma, Ashwani Sharma and Kashif Sharma-Patel gave a collaborative reading which responded to (amongst other things) the London suburb of Morden and the Grenfell fire.

Gloria Dawson then presented the findings of a survey she had carried out, which focused on the questions of Poetry and Pay, before facilitating and interactive discussion on the topic. This discussion was recorded and a transcript will be available soon.

The final session of poetry readings featured Geraldine Monk and Alan Halsey, Callie Gardner, and Lotte LS, who was able to fill in for Ghazal Mosadeq, as well as a final performance by Alice Notley.

The Saturday evening of ‘poet’s theatre’ involved two performances, by Edmund Hardy and Lisa Jeschke & Lucy Benyon.

Outputs

An important output of the festival was the networks and connections that were formed between the organisers, performers, and attendees. One example of the tangible and productive impact of these networks is that students at Manchester Metropolitan University who attended the festival have set up a poetry society and are planning to feature one of the performers from Poetry Emergency ii (Roma Havers) at their first event.

All performances, except for the screening of Fatema Abdoolcarim’s films and the two ‘poet’s theatre’ performances on the Saturday evening, were filmed and edited by A Thousand Pictures. These recordings are all publically available on youtube, with the exception of one poetry reading, which the poet asked not to be made public.

These recordings can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UClB4onK0k8rH9P1Qhyhm3Rw>

The festival was also featured in *Salford Now*: ‘Poetry Emergency ii brings a day of radical poetry to Salford’

<http://www.salfordnow.co.uk/2019/11/26/poetry-emergency-ii-brings-a-day-of-radical-poetry-to-salford/>

Legacy

After the success of this second event, we are keen to continue the legacy of Poetry Emergency. We are having discussions with a first year PhD student at Salford who may be interested in joining the organising committee and would welcome interest from any other PhD students who may want to get involved.

Budget

Arts Methods Awarded £700, which was spent as follows:

Catering for performers and organising committee on Saturday night =

Papa Johns - £109.60

1 gluten free pizza from Pizza Express - £13.59

Ibis Hotels for performers - £477.70

Flights from Paris for Keynote speaker - £127.62

Total - **£728.51**

All other expenses were covered by NWCDTP Collaborative Skills Development Fund.