



# Making Meaning Live Gathering Programme

Day 1: Wednesday 13th July. 6.00-8.30pm

## 6.00pm Welcome

### Session 1: 6.10-6.40pm

#### Ruth Singer, *Hidden Histories*

Research is fundamental to all of my work, whatever themes I am exploring. With my background working in museums, I do a lot of historical research and responding to heritage locations and museum collections. In this session I'll take you through my process of research with objects and how I interpret their stories into my own textile stories and invite you to explore stories of your own.

### Session 2: 6.40-7.10pm

#### Michaela McMillan, *The Naming Ceremony*

My entire making process starts with notes and stories. These have been shared with me at shows, found in books I've read, are from issues happening in the world around me and from events that have shaped my life. This session will be an introduction to the beginning stage of putting a collection together. Tying materials to names and stories, thinking about how to tell a visual story through collected recycled objects - naming pieces and giving them a brief history. Everyone attending will be invited to offer their own associations with materials I present, or show their own piece of treasure and share their own connections and names with it.

### Session 3: 7.10-7.40pm

#### Wendy Ward, *People's Wardrobe*

The People's Wardrobe invites you to wear (or have to hand) a well-used, well-loved garment for this participatory event. As a group we will share the stories of our garments by writing love letters to them and describing them in just three words. This is an activity I am running with lots of different groups of people and from these collected responses I want to start building a library of the public's best-loved garments which might help to answer these questions: Why do we keep and use some garments for much longer than others? What can we learn from these garments to help us better appreciate the rest of our clothes and keep them for longer? 'Big Fashion' has made us believe that we are simply consumers of clothes, but more importantly we are users and wearers and we all need to find new creative ways to build more enduring relationships with the clothes we already own.

#### **Session 4: 7.40-8.10pm**

##### **Kathryn Parsons, *The Naming of Moths***

Moths are utterly fascinating creatures, and last year I started learning fly-tying so I could create miniature moth sculptures! In this session I'll talk about my work and show you some fly-tying. There will also be an opportunity to join in a mini creative workshop, and make an ephemeral moth collage from natural treasures! It'll be a gentle amble through stories of materials, techniques, local history and wildlife conservation, while we sit and make together.

#### ***Gathering Spaces 8.10-8.25pm***

Breakout rooms for you to meet others and continue discussions from the speaker sessions.

#### ***Reflection and Closing 8.25-8.30pm***

At the end of each session, come back together to hear Ruth's reflections on the day. Ruth will also answer any questions that have come up during the session and offer you a question to reflect on by yourself about your own work.

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### *Day 2: Friday 15th July 10.00am-12.45pm*

#### **10.00am Welcome**

##### **Session 1: 10.10-10.40am**

##### **Amy Twigger-Holroyd, *Fashion Fictions***

This session will focus on a particular Fashion Fiction: World 54. In this world, production of new textiles has been severely restricted, leading to the development of a resourceful yet opulent fashion culture in which sheets of cloth, ingenious straps and random objects are used inventively to dress the body in different ways. Amy will present a short film showing a participatory enactment of World 54 and host a panel discussion involving three Fashion Fictions participants: Wendy Ward, Ruhee Das Chowdhury and Kate Harper. Together, they will discuss the ways in which making and embodied material exploration have been intertwined with storytelling in the development of World 54, and consider how such activities can help us to bring alternative fashion systems to life.

##### **Session 2: 10.40-11.10am**

##### **Ruth Singer, *Co-Creation***

I love working with others to create artworks and projects, either with individual artists or with groups and individuals contributing to the stories I share. Over the last 10 years I've co-created over 20 different projects and pieces with others in a large or small scale. In this session I will share some of the projects and invite you to co-create with me during the session.

##### **Session 3: 11.10-11.40am**

##### ***Common Threads: Lokesh Ghai and Claire Wellesley-Smith in conversation***

Claire and Lokesh will discuss commonalities in their textile practices through examples of projects delivered alongside communities in the UK and India. Stories told through cloth, memory and making will be illustrated with images from their working lives.

#### **Session 4: 11.40am-12.10pm**

##### **Charlie Birtles: *Thinking Spaces***

With a view to open out a discussion, during this session Charlie will share her own personal reflections on thinking spaces, inevitably told through objects and stories, and will invite the wider group to share their own strategies around integrating space for thinking and questioning into their own lives and practices. Please note this session will **not** be recorded.

#### ***Gathering Spaces 12.10-12.40pm***

Breakout rooms for you to meet others and continue discussions from the speaker sessions.

#### ***Reflection and Closing 12.40-12.45pm***

At the end of each session, come back together to hear Ruth's reflections on the day. Ruth will also answer any questions that have come up during the session and offer you a question to reflect on by yourself about your own work.

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### *Day 3: Saturday 16th July 2.00pm - 5.00pm*

#### **2.00pm Welcome**

#### **Session 1: 2.05-2.35pm**

##### **Sharon Adams, *Land Marks***

Join Sharon Adams on the route of her daily walk and share (or watch) a short exercise of gestural drawing. Use intuitive mark making to create your own responses to the sweep of hills and hedges and the man-made elements that inhabit them. Hear how this process informs Sharon's 3D drawings in different materials and scales. Please bring plenty of paper and 3-5 drawing materials such as: pencils in different grades; charcoal; ink; tea or coffee; a fine brush and/or dip pen and/or pointy stick; chalk; anything you already like using. Any paper is fine, but ideally something with a bit of a surface for your lines to catch on.

#### **Session 2: 2.35-3.05pm**

##### **Lucille Junkere, *Stories from the Caribbean Front Room***

Presentation exploring Lucille's recent installation and residency work called *Stories from the Caribbean Front Room*. The project explored narratives inspired by the material culture – objects, textiles, foods – that travelled with and retranslated to a British context by the Windrush generation. These everyday object stories are vital cultural vectors of personal and collective memory, trauma and loss. Please note this session will **not** be recorded.

#### **Session 3: 3.05-3.50pm**

##### ***Maker Membership : Research and Reflection***

Maker Membership is Ruth Singer's group for creative people who want to build more research and meaning into their making. Members will join Ruth in a discussion and share their work, focussing on the research they do and the reflection work guided by Ruth that has helped them develop their own creative practices.

#### **Session 4: 3.50-4.20pm**

##### **Ruth Singer & Charlotte Bilby, *Labelling Ourselves***

Charlotte will give an illustrated talk about two creative projects; 'Free but not free' in a community probation setting, and her current work, 'Keeping in touch'. This project asks women in prison and women outside the prison community to make small mixed-media objects. One of these is a label that explores aspects of their identity. She will explain the processes and reasons for working with criminalised women, show some examples of the outputs and discuss the impact of the work on participants. Charlotte and Ruth will consider the differences and similarities in the work that they have done in exploring the stories of criminalised women over a century apart. While they are chatting, you will be encouraged to think about what you would include on your own label.

##### ***Gathering Spaces 4.20-4.50pm***

Breakout rooms for you to meet others and continue discussions from the speaker sessions.

##### ***Reflection and Closing 4.50-5.00pm***

At the end of each session, come back together to hear Ruth's reflections on the day. Ruth will also answer any questions that have come up during the session and offer you a question to reflect on by yourself about your own work.

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### *More about the speakers*

#### **Ruth Singer**

##### ***Hidden Histories***

##### ***Co-Creation***

##### ***Labelling Ourselves (with Charlotte Bilby)***

Ruth Singer is a professional artist, mentor and creative producer of arts and heritage projects. Ruth's textile practice draws heavily on her first career in museums, she is fascinated by material culture, history and the power of objects in human lives. She aims to explore and illuminate human experience, our understanding of material heritage and the traces and stories we leave behind. Ruth often works in collaboration with other artists, with heritage collections and spaces and with communities to create exhibitions, commissions projects and publications. She works mainly in old cloth, full of complex histories and stories, along with slow stitch techniques to create one-off textile works which have a sense of history with subtle but powerful stories to tell. Alongside her own practice, Ruth often works in collaboration with other artists, with heritage collections and spaces and with communities to create exhibitions, commissions projects and publications.

#### **Michaela McMillan**

##### ***The Naming Ceremony***

Michaela creates individual handmade sculptures that are thoughtful and vibrant objects for interiors. Her work is playfully serious, and made from recycled and found objects with decoupage, assemblage and stitch. The pieces are visions of her imagination mixed with historical and contemporary realities, depicting scenarios of animals, people and nature.

## **Wendy Ward**

### ***People's Wardrobe***

Wendy Ward is a PhD researcher at Sheffield Hallam University investigating product attachment, craft and broken-ness in fashion. Prior to her PhD she taught sewing to adults and wrote five best-selling sewing books. Wendy has long had an interest in sustainability within fashion, she worked at both extremes of the fashion industry: as a designer in fast fashion and for a small sustainable brand, then went on to explore novel ways to recycle textiles for her MA. Wendy got her love of making from her dad and a pair of his leather gloves helped to inspire her research.

## **Kathryn Parsons**

### ***The Naming of Moths***

I create artworks that weave together tales of place and people, history and nature. My work is research-based and multi-faceted. The materials I use depend on the story to be told - from miniature moths made of feathers found on nature reserves, to tiny porcelain lichens planted in a poet's garden! I have created site-specific artworks for Derby Museum, Langdyke Countryside Trust and the University of Leicester, and exhibitions for the National Centre for Craft & Design. I also love to run creative workshops, nurturing people and their creativity while inspiring deeper connections with the natural world.

## **Amy Twigger-Holroyd**

### ***Fashion Fictions***

Dr Amy Twigger Holroyd is a designer, maker, writer and researcher. As Associate Professor of Fashion and Sustainability at Nottingham School of Art & Design, she leads an international participatory project, Fashion Fictions. Launched in 2020, the project brings people together to generate, experience and reflect on engaging fictional visions of alternative fashion cultures and systems. Participants can get involved in writing outlines of fictional worlds, creating visual and material prototypes, and enacting practices from the imagined worlds.

## **Common Threads: Lokesh Ghai and Claire Wellesley-Smith in conversation**

Lokesh Ghai is a textile artist and researcher working with traditional craft practice. He is interested in cultural-making of craft and clothing. He has showcased his textile art at V&A Museum of Childhood, London. As a designer and associate curator, he presented 'India Street' exhibition in Scotland. Lokesh is currently a design faculty at UPES, Dehradun. Claire Wellesley-Smith is an artist, author and researcher based in Bradford. She works on long term community-based arts, health and heritage projects which often explore textile stories. Her most recent book is *Resilient Stitch: Wellbeing and Connection in Textile Art* (Batsford, 2021). Claire and Lokesh met in 2016 at a community textile garden in Bradford and are currently developing ideas for future work together.

**Charlie Birtles**  
***Thinking Spaces***

Charlie's practice is about bringing people together, learning from each other and creating an environment for others to explore their own creative thinking. Whether through making artwork, facilitating spaces, or sharing skills, what is important to Charlie is the wider conversations and impact that is generated when we make way for creativity; process is just as important as a finished article. Increasingly, Charlie values the importance of reflective thinking within her own creative practice. The reflective process shows up for her in a variety of ways: reading, writing, talking, walking, making, collecting, questioning, or sometimes just sitting and embracing silence.

**Sharon Adams**  
***Land Marks***

Sharon Adams uses wood, metal and textiles to respond to the landscape surrounding her rural home in Northern Ireland. The work is informed by her experience of having grown up here on a family farm, living and working in London for over 20 years, then returning in 2012 as a freshly minted art graduate. Sharon's practice started with an interest in hand tools and simple farm machinery, which lead to her 'functionless tools'. Her work is now focused on the creation of 3D drawings informed by her daily experience of the countryside within her horizon.

**Lucille Junkere**  
***Stories from the Caribbean Front Room***

Lucille Junkere is a textile artist with a research-based practice exploring various themes, including the impact of British colonialism and the Transatlantic Slave Trade on African Caribbean textile history.

**Maker Membership : Research and Reflection**

Maker Membership is Ruth Singer's group for all creative people who want to build more research, meaning and reflection into their work. It is open to anyone who makes and we are a sociable community from around the world. You don't have to be a professional maker (though you are welcome if you are) and you don't have to work in textiles, there is a wide range of other practices involved in the group. Ruth produces resources, workbooks and blog posts to inspire you to think about your making practice and we meet monthly on Zoom for group mentoring and sharing our work.

**Charlotte Bilby**  
***Labelling Ourselves (with Ruth Singer)***

Charlotte researches creativity and making in criminal justice systems. She used to work in university criminology departments, where she taught about punishment and rehabilitation and did policy evaluations for the government. She became interested in how creative activities could change prisoners' behaviour and identities, and incorporated making activities into her research. She is now based in Northumbria University's School of Design, where she is running a mixed-media making project with women in and outside prison. The pieces explore (changing) identities, relationships with emotionally important people and whether our environments have an impact on the things we make.