Arts-based methods – Interactive workshop

Professor Pat Thomson

The arts offer a rich repertoire of genres, materials, media, platforms, spaces and traditions of making meaning. Researchers have become increasingly interested in arts-based practices - to generate information, insights, analysis and artefacts and to communicate sensually, emotionally, aesthetically and bodily, as well as intellectually. I will offer a survey of this ‘field’ and its various terminologies, approaches and practices. I will discuss some of the debates that sit within and around the now large and diverse body of arts-based research. I will argue that a focus on methods, rather than on thinking and working like an artist, can reduce the arts to questions of technique rather than unleash their potential to know and un-know, learn and un-learn, make and un-make knowledges. And yes, we will also do and make.

Pat Thomson PhD PSM FRSA FAcSS is Professor of Education in the School of Education, The University of Nottingham. She is a former headteacher with an arts background, having trained and also worked in theatre, film and radio. With her colleague Chris Hall, she has been researching the arts and education for the last seventeen years, She has an ongoing collaboration with Tate Schools and Teachers team (see researchtale.net) and has had recent major research partnerships with the RSC, Serpentine, Popup, and Culture, Creativity and Education. She always uses visual research modes, and increasingly those related to senses and bodies.