

**MANIFESTING CHANGE:**  
co-creating ethical approaches  
to filmmaking practices

**CHUCK BLUE LOWRY**  
action research project

## RESEARCH QUESTION

How can

**collective manifesto making**

support **students** to reflect on their  
positionality and develop more ethical,  
caring approaches to

**collaborative filmmaking?**

## BACKGROUND

This project is a direct response to an incident in 2024 during a collaborative film project with students from LCDS, when a MA Performance: Screen student made a **discriminatory comment** regarding a dancer's hair while discussing makeup and costume.

This incident highlighted an urgent need to:

- challenge implicit biases
- disrupt hegemonic aesthetics in screen-based work
- embed inclusivity in creative practices

I believe there needs to be a more **embedded culture of care and accountability** within higher education.

## POSITIONALITY

Artist, filmmaker and lecturer in MA Performance: Screen at Central Saint Martins.

- Participatory and social practice
- Lecturer at CSM for 5 years.
- Known the 1<sup>st</sup> year MA students for 3 months.

Elements of my identity which directly impact this research:

my artistic practice  
my position within the university  
being a white cis-gendered woman  
being dual heritage  
living with a chronic health condition

## KEY REFERENCES

ALL FLOURISHING IS MUTUAL  
- Robin Wall Kimmerer

"NON-INDIFFERENCE TO THE OTHER" IS  
THE FOUNDING MOMENT OF SELFHOOD  
- Michael Renov

WHAT IS THE HARDEST FOR SOME, DOES NOT EVEN  
EXIST FOR OTHERS.  
- Sara Ahmed

SEA (SOCIALLY ENGAGED ART) DEPENDS ON ACTUAL –  
NOT IMAGINED OR HYPOTHETICAL - SOCIAL ACTION  
- Pablo Helguera

I CAN 100 PERCENT PROMISE THAT YOU LEARNING  
SIGN LANGUAGE IS EASIER THAN  
A DEAF PERSON LEARNING TO HEAR.  
- Christine Sun Kim referencing Sara Nović.

# RATIONALE

- Need for a more inclusive filmmaking culture on MA Performance: Screen.
- Need for a culture of care, anti-racism, and accountability in HE.
- Embedding critical reflection and ethical practices.
- Manifesto-making as a reflective tool that confronts exclusionary norms.
- Supports critical thinking and reflexivity on social and ethical issues.



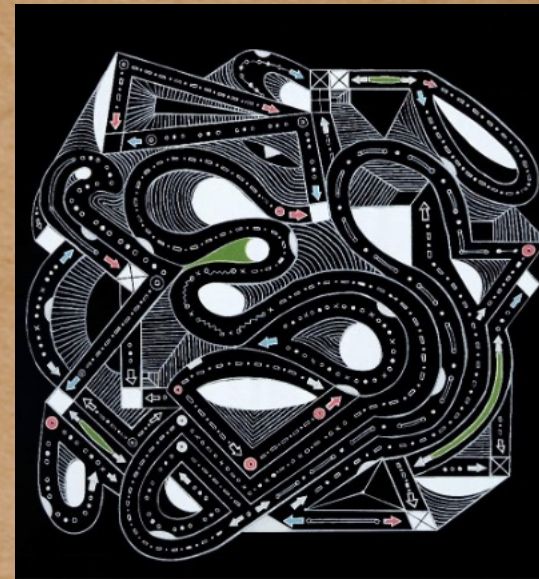
# MANIFESTO FOR ARTISTS IN A CRUMBLING ARTS ECONOMY

BY PAULA VARJACK

HUSTLE THE SYSTEM BUT NOT EACH OTHER  
BE OPEN  
BE HONEST  
DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR HELP  
KNOW YOUR WORTH  
STAND UP FOR YOURSELF  
SHARE RESOURCES  
CREATE OPPORTUNITIES  
GALVANISE

IN ORDER TO SURVIVE  
YOU NEED A PHENOMENAL AMOUNT OF SELF BELIEF  
BELIEVE IN YOURSELF  
SURROUND YOURSELF WITH THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN YOU  
SUPPORT OTHERS  
WHEN THEY HAVE DOUBT  
GIVE FEEDBACK AND CRITICISM (CONSTRUCTIVELY)  
LOOK OUT FOR ONE ANOTHER  
THERE ARE MANY SOLUTIONS FOR SURVIVAL  
SPEAK TO THOSE WHO WORK DIFFERENTLY  
KNOW WHAT WORKS FOR YOU  
PLAY THE LONG GAME  
FIND WAYS TO CREATE AND PERFORM AND DISPLAY

OUTSIDE OF ALLOCATED ART SPACES  
LIVE IN A PLACE THAT FEEDS YOU  
KNOW WHAT YOU NEED FROM THAT PLACE  
IF SOMETHING IS MISSING, BE PART OF CREATING IT  
BUT ALSO  
BE OPEN TO SETTLING ELSEWHERE  
YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE IN LONDON, OR EVEN IN THIS COUNTRY  
BUT IF YOU WANT TO YOU NEED TO FIGHT FOR IT  
AND FIND ALLIES  
FIND ALLIES  
FIGHT  
SPEAK UP  
WHEN YOU ARE SPOKEN OVER AND LEFT OUT  
SPEAK UP  
FOR THOSE SPOKEN OVER AND LEFT OUT  
MAKE THOSE WITH PRIVILEGE AWARE OF THEIR PRIVILEGE  
CHECK YOUR PRIVILEGE  
SHARE YOUR PRIVILEGE  
KNOW IT CAN BE CRUSHINGLY HARD  
KNOW IT CAN SUDDENLY CHANGE  
WE ALL HAVE DIFFERENT ACCESS  
WE ALL HAVE DIFFERENT ABILITIES  
WE ALL HAVE DIFFERENT ADVANTAGES  
DON'T JUDGE  
BUT DON'T BE AFRAID OF BEING JUDGED EITHER.



## ON BEING INCLUDED

Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life

Sara Ahmed

## GUERRILLA GIRLS MANIFESTO

For Art Museums Everywhere

- RANSACK board members who make the world a worse place. OUT with money launderers, arms dealers, climate change deniers, polluters, antiquities traffickers, addictive drug manufacturers, student loan sharks, and cronies of Jeffrey Epstein!
- HONOR your employees, never undermine their efforts to unionize, and pay them a living wage with benefits.
- CAST OUT institutional racism, sexism, classism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, and colonialism too.
- REPATRIATE pillaged, smuggled and looted artworks in your collection; apologize publicly and cough up a lot of dough.
- TELL US the percentage of white male artists in your collection.
- WRITE wall labels that tell the whole history of art works and all, including, but not limited to, slavery and the genocide of indigenous peoples.
- CONFESS that for centuries women have been depicted as lustuous objects of male aggression, desire and victims of male aggression. Artists have been sexual predators too.
- REFUSE to be part of schemes that allow billionaire art collectors to avoid paying their fair share of taxes.
- GET REAL: If a museum shows only SUPER EXPENSIVE art bought by SUPER EXPENSIVE galleries and donated by SUPER RICH collectors, it should rename itself The Museum of SUPER RICH PEOPLE'S ART.

PX\* tell your favorite

# RESEARCH METHODS

## Participatory Action Research

Qualitative and Quantitative

Arts based

Interview with course leader  
Questionnaires (Likert and Open Question)  
Participatory workshops  
Collective Manifesto Making and Editing  
Focus Groups  
Collective group selections of data



SOURCE: Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (1981). *The action research planner*. Geelong, Victoria, Australia: Deakin University. Reprinted with permission.

# RESEARCH METHODS

**PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH IS  
A VIABLE, YET MESSY, METHODOLOGY  
FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE RESEARCH**

- Caroline Lenette

## **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

1. **POWER DYNAMICS**
2. **INFORMED PARTICIPATION**
3. **PARTICIPANT WELLBEING**
4. **OWNERSHIP AND REPRESENTATION**
5. **CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY**
6. **RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY**





**Collective manifesto-making workshop**  
→ articulated shared values  
→ set a framework

**Share findings and plan next stage**  
→ Understanding developed through  
Iteration, not a single method.

**Questionnaire (Likert + Reflections)**  
→ measured impact and surfaced tensions

## RESEARCH PROCESS

**Peer Analysis and collective  
Group selections of data**  
→ mitigated researcher bias

**Live collaborative project (LCDS)**  
→ tested ethics under pressure  
→ complicated and deepened practice

**Reflective Workshop**  
→ revised manifesto/values  
→ shift from aspirational ethical positioning  
to practice-based ethical understanding

## **FINDINGS**

### **THEME 1:**

**THE MANIFESTO FUNCTIONS AS A  
RELATIONAL SCAFFOLD FOR  
COLLABORATION**

### **THEME 3:**

**CARE, SUPPORT AND  
LISTENING WERE CENTRAL TO  
THE EXPERIENCE**

### **THEME 2:**

**TIME PRESSURE EXPOSED  
ETHICAL TENSIONS AND  
STRUCTURAL LIMITATIONS**

### **THEME 4:**

**THE MANIFESTO WAS USEFUL  
BUT NEEDS TO BE MORE  
ACTIONABLE AND FLEXIBLE**

### **THEME 5:**

**PRAXIS IS KEY TO  
MEANINGFUL CHANGE**

# REVISED MANIFESTO

## **WE ARE MA PERFORMANCE: SCREEN STUDENTS**

**WE BELIEVE THAT THERE IS NO ONE PURPOSE FOR BEING AN ARTIST  
BECAUSE  
WE HAVE DIFFERENT LIVED EXPERIENCES.**

**WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS NOW  
IS NUANCED EXPLORATION OF WHAT DIVERSITY MEANS  
IN THE PRACTICE OF FILMMAKING.**

**WE BELIEVE THAT DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION  
SHOULD BE A NECESSITY  
AND NOT A GOAL.**

**WE RESPECT EACH OTHER  
WE RESPECT TIME  
WE RESPECT PERSONAL NEEDS  
WE RESPECT ACCESSIBILITY  
WE RESPECT IDEAS.**

**WE ARE ACTIVE LISTENERS.  
WE ARE SUPPORTIVE.  
WE ARE POSITIVE.  
WE ARE OPEN MINDED.  
WE RECOGNISE EVERYONE'S IDEAS.**

**COMMUNICATION IS KEY.**

**WE VALUE HEALTHY AND OPEN COMMUNICATION.  
WE CHALLENGE CONSTRUCTIVELY.  
WE COMMIT TO BEING OPEN TO HELP AND BE HELPED.**

**WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS NOW  
IS MORE ACTIVE LISTENING.**

**WE CHALLENGE TRADITIONAL FORMS OF FILMMAKING  
INCLUDING STEREOTYPES AND PRECONCEPTIONS.**

**WE REJECT PRECONCEIVED IDEAS  
OF WHAT OURSELVES AND OTHERS  
CAN DO OR BRING.**

**WE REJECT THE HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURE  
OF TRADITIONAL FILMMAKING PRACTICES  
AND BELIEVE IN THE IMPORTANCE OF TAKING INITIATIVE  
ACROSS DIFFERENT ROLES.**

**WE CAN SACRIFICE CONVENIENCE FOR SUSTAINABILITY,  
WITHIN OUR MEANS.**

**WE REFUSE TO GATEKEEP KNOWLEDGE  
WE WANT TO LEARN FROM OUR PEERS.**

**RECOGNISE YOUR PRIVILEGES AND  
CONSIDER THE WORK YOU NEED TO DO  
TO SHARE THEM WITH OTHERS.**

**WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO ENTERING COLLABORATION  
WITH AN OPEN MIND SET.**

**WHEN CHALLENGES ARISE, WE WILL RETURN TO THIS.**

## NEXT STEPS

The manifesto will remain a live document for the cohort throughout this year.

I plan to meet with the students again at various points throughout the year.

The research has led to a revision of the LCDS collaboration schedule.

I will explore the broader application of a course wide manifesto.

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