



# Art D'Visions?

Friday 11 March 2016

11.00am - 3.15pm

Everyman Theatre, Hope Street, Liverpool



## DaDaFest

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@dadafest

# Welcome & Intro

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Thank you for coming to this very important event. I am delighted that you are as concerned as we are, as demonstrated by your presence here, to address the issues being presented today.

In the current arts sector, those of us deemed to be on the margins of society can be in danger of attempts to try and represent the wider community through tokenism or patronisation, through to isolation, lack of understanding or any commitment to true inclusion or supporting other cultural identities.

We have a place in the arts to always challenge and move thinking on; that is why I value and love my work with DaDaFest and being able to present issues within quality arts activities.

Through DaDaFest International, we have been able to connect with communities of disabled and Deaf people around the globe bringing many artists and cultural experiences to Liverpool. Although we do have local engagement from diverse community members, there is still something lacking. When it comes to the UK artistic presence of artists from all backgrounds, there is almost an invisibility that seems to get worse the further outside of London you become.

Today we want to hear from people themselves as to the issues, barriers and how those who have 'gate keeper positions', continue to get it wrong. We need to try and identify practical ways of removing these barriers, realistically. It won't be done overnight, but using every influence we can muster DaDaFest wishes to help change the current position. Thank you to all the speakers and chair for agreeing to be here and lead the discussions.

This will mean starting with us, so please, speak it out, say the unspoken and find ways to hold organisations and key people to account. I long for the 'us' and 'them', to be just 'us'.

**Ruth Gould** Artistic Director

# Agenda

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## **10.30am Registration, with refreshments**

11.00am Welcome and housekeeping from Everyman, Rebecca Ross-Williams

11.03am Aims of the Day, Dr Ossie Stuart

11.10am Key Note One, Deborah Williams (British Film Institute)

11.30am Key Note Two, Nazli Tabatabai-Khatambakhsh

## **11.50am Comfort break**

12 noon Issues from Practice, Karl Eversley, George Matheson & Faith Bebbington. Facilitated by Dr Ossie Stuart.

## **12.30pm Lunch**

1.15pm Feedback from morning, Dr Ossie Stuart

1.25pm Presentation from Nike Jonah

1.40pm Panel Discussion from speakers and artists, led by Dr Ossie Stuart

## **2.15pm Refreshment Break**

2.30pm Action Planning

2.50pm Feedback from Action Planning

3.00pm Round Up and What Happens Next?

## **3.15pm Drinks & invite to Unsung**

# Rationale & Aims

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Is there an issue in the UK as to the lack of representation or engagement by Black, Asian and other ethnic artists and communities within the disability arts sector?

If there are issues, why is this case?

What barriers limit or prevent more active participation?

Is this just a cultural issue for the UK?

Is there something we should do as artists and cultural leaders to bring about change and more inclusive and diverse practice?

## Explanation:

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Disability Arts should work to empower all people. Its very essence should mean that all our voices are heard, so that we actively engage with vibrant art that captures the "lived experience" of disability.

It should also mean that we continue to challenge practice and create exciting perspectives which embrace, appreciate and celebrate diversity in its fullest sense.

Yet there is a growing feeling that this is not the case.

Those of us who hold "gate-keeper" positions may not be creating programmes or activities that capture true diversity. We may work within a sector where we don't know how to find artists, or know how to create links, or even develop initiatives that capture wider representation, or we may be even guilty of indirect discrimination.

We are also concerned that austerity measures may prevent diverse communities in achieving an active and visible part within disability arts and as we all tighten our belts.

We are in danger of leaving others behind and not reflecting the range of arts that emerges through collaborations, promoting culture, acknowledging our differences within difference and providing a platform to show case the range of arts created from disability, diverse and cultural representations.

We don't want to sit around and discuss it, we want to identify active and realistic changes, and ascertain benchmarks that we can work with and measure progress against.

## **Therefore:**

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We wish to hold a half day seminar to allow a group of invited leaders, experts and artists to meet and discuss not only these issues, but also develop an action plan that:

- Identifies the barriers to participation
- Investigates what we can do to change this current position

**Friday 11 March 2016**  
**Everyman Theatre, Liverpool**

We will create a forum where people will listen, share ideas and come up with workable solutions.

Ensuring diverse voices lead (and white people listen!)

# **Influence from Across the Pond: Black Disabled Back Then, Now & Future**

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**Leroy Moore Jr.**

**Founder of Krip-Hop Nation & Journalist, USA**

**Sunday, February 28, 2016**

In the late 1980's, I was fascinated by the United Kingdom's Black Disability Movement. As a Black disabled young man at the time I kept my attention on Black disabled people in Toronto, Canada, South Africa and London, UK. About 20 years later I travelled to London and Toronto and found that the Black Disabled Movements were almost gone.

This year I'll be traveling to South Africa. However, London, England is the place that I've been the most and got to meet Black disabled activists/artists who were part of the Black Disability Movement, like Debs Williamson and many more. Although I was excited to meet them and read their books like 'Reflections: The Views Of Black Disabled People On Their Lives And Community Care' by Begum, Nasa; Hill, Mildrette and hearing poets like Semba Jallow Rutherford, and also the research that came out of The Joseph Rowntree Foundation on being Black & disabled. It is sad that I saw the tail end of this movement. Even today there has been a lack of writing about Black disabled people in London. What I read and saw back then in London has shaped my work from 1994 till today.

From this I was influenced to set up an organization for Black/Brown people with disabilities to my cultural work to my new book, 'Black Kripple Delivers Poetry & Lyrics'. I also try to come up with my own creative thinking of not falling into the same pitfalls that I've heard not only the UK Black Disability Movement fell into, but Toronto's movement did also.

We need more Black/Brown disabled activists with a strong intersectional framework that means pulling from all communities that not only share our identity, but our politics.

I think the days of have one leader, a big movement with a physical office are disappearing with technology and the reality that most of us would be working outside the field of disability. I think what we need is not to see our activism, art, education, community work less as a 9 to 5 job with the pressure of making

enough money to live. It is more like a piece of our on-going growth, relationships, and community building that goes deeper than any institution.

So! How?

Supporting Black/Brown disabled activists/artists who are doing events, writing articles, reach out and just saying hi, remembering we need to build our community, we need to help each other heal from racism we continue to experience, we need to look at our own privilege and ask how we can become better allies.

You might say Leroy what are you suggesting is not institutional power that would lead to changing our harsh situation especially under many policies that are hurting us and I would say that once you have community support than you can lean on others, the we is stronger than I. Knowing that what we are doing as Black/Brown people with disabilities is not a 9 to 5 job, but it's our lives with what is bigger than a pay check. It is friendship, laying a foundation that will and need to be recorded, written in books, newspapers, sung, and acted on stage.

# Speaker Biographies

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**Dr Ossie Stuart** is a disabled person from a black and minority ethnic background. He is an Equality and Diversity Consultant with fifteen years of experience as a trainer and specialist adviser. Prior to that, he spent twelve years as an academic at the Universities of Oxford, York and Surrey. He has written seminal works on the experience of BME

disabled people and social care.

As a trainer, Dr Stuart has run disability and E&D training courses for a number of Public Sector organisations such as the Department of Health and a number of Local Authorities, Universities and voluntary sector organisations. Since 2013, he has also run the annual Calibre Leadership and Management Programmes at Imperial College London and Nottingham University. This is a leadership programme specifically designed for disabled employees in the public sector.

For Dr Stuart, disabled people have a unique understanding of their circumstances and, therefore, should have complete control over their own lives and destinies. Just like a person's race or gender, he considers disability to be simply a fact of life and not a problem, and it should never be used to justify unfair and unequal treatment.



**Deborah Williams** has worked as Programmer at Rich Mix and as Programme Director at Shape, at Arts Council England as a relationship Manager in the London Theatre Team and Senior Officer in the Policy and Research Team.

With over thirty years' experience working as an artist, consultant and manager Deborah is an established leader in disability arts, playing a significant role in the implementation of the Disability Discrimination Act and Equality Act across the creative and cultural sector. Deborah is a writer, theatre-maker, producer, digital composer and accredited coach. She runs Reality

Productions, an independent production company based in London. In her work as an “artist provocateur” Deborah is a catalyst for challenge and change in perceptions of diversity, disability and difference.

Deborah is currently Diversity Manager at the British Film Institute (BFI).

@oneandonlydebs



**Nazli Tabatabai-Khatambakhsh** is the founder and Artistic Director of ZENDEH, an award winning touring theatre company connecting the personal with the political since 2004. ZENDEH is an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation based in Newcastle, working nationally, internationally and locally. Strategic work includes Facilitator and Founder Member of Creative Case NORTH, established in 2011.

Directing based roles in theatre buildings:

2001 - 2002 Awarded an Arts Council England Trainee Directorship at the CURVE (Leicester Haymarket Theatre)

2002 - 2003 Staff Director at Derby Theatres (Derby Playhouse)

2005 - 2007 Associate Director Theatre Workshop, Edinburgh

Academic experience lecturing and directing:

2003 - 2007 Visiting Lecturer and Visiting Director of Directing and Theatre at Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh.

Education at graduate level:

1999 BSc Hons in Media Technology from the University of the West of Scotland (University of Paisley), specialising in: digital filmmaking, online content creation and management, and developing online learning resources.

@ZENDEH\_tweets

[www.zendeh.com](http://www.zendeh.com)



**Karl Eversley** is currently a freelance visual artist and workshop leader, web and graphic designer. He gained a BA Hons Degree in Fine Art (Exeter) in 1987.

Karl has previously been a member of the Management Committee, Liverpool Anti-Racist Community Arts Alliance and the Arts Council Disability Steering Group; a tutor and Artist in Residence at Liverpool Polytechnic (now John Moores University); a teacher at Liverpool Community College; a Trustee of the Hourglass Gallery (Hebden Bridge); and a member of Black Arts Alliance.

Karl's work is an exploration on landscapes and interiors, both real and imagined. He uses myth and ideas of belonging or exclusion. They are figurative/narrative works, where the mark making is juxtaposed to formal elements, having equal importance.



**George Matheson's** mission is to be the following: a steward of the arts, so as many people who wish to participate and engage with the arts can; the promotion of access, which is not a policy, but a mission; an entitlement.

Over his 30 years or so of working in the arts, they have allowed Matheson to acquire and develop himself in many roles, including arts centre manager, arts centre development manager, arts producer, community arts marketing officer, an arts policy maker, mentor and enabler of cultural leaders, and an arts producer of diverse work: working with an array brilliant artists and many arts forms, including theatre, literature, music, visual arts and festivals. However his greatest satisfaction has been as an audience member appreciating the transforming effect of stories in theatre, music, spoken and visual arts. 'It has been a pleasure always to serve and to allow the arts to serve my needs.'

Matheson's achievements include: the first Arts Centre Manager of 21 South Street Arts in Reading; The Hudawi-LBT Creative Partnership; one of the developers of Kirklees Creative Arts Strategy; developer of a Yorkshire Local Authority run cultural leadership programme targeting BAME arts and cultural leaders; a founder member and first Executive Director of Sustained Theatre Arts, Yorkshire; and one of the

founder members of Creative Case North Consortium (CCNC). Matheson's most transformational work to date is the work he has done on CCNC and his role as mentor and enabler of cultural leaders.

'I have learnt, from many years of experience, that diversity is not just about the makeup of differing peoples. It is also about the various ways they think, interpret the world. It is about respecting and valuing differences. It is about how we engage others to provide an experience, which is unique, exciting and of benefit to each other.'

George Matheson 2016.



**Faith Bebbington** is a professional artist based in Liverpool for over twenty five years, having originally studied sculpture in Winchester. Her sculptural practice is informed by studying the process of movement in order to achieve dynamic, figurative sculptural sequences. Her public art commissions for local authorities and corporate clients include permanent works in Belfast, Derby, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Liverpool, Knowsley and London.

Her sculptures range from a life-size Bengal Tiger created using 400 plastic milk bottles for Veolia's Save the Wild Tiger campaign launched at St Pancras station, a set of acrobats for Bruntwood's office courtyard, five suspended figures swimming the butterfly along Kirkby leisure centre corridor to The Runner a sequence of seven running figures for Liverpool Discovers, public art trail around the city.

Recently Faith has moved away from working with fibreglass resin as her main medium having recovered from stage 4 lung cancer and is now exploring new materials to model with for small-scale work for exhibition and sale and larger public pieces.

Faith leads arts projects in partnership with local schools, communities and arts organisations such as National Museums Liverpool, Mencap Liverpool, National Trust, Liverpool Lantern Company. She also leads 3D art workshops and residencies with primary and secondary schools across the North West and beyond.

Faith is a member of the National Black Arts Alliance (NBAA)

<http://www.blackartists.org.uk>

Faith is a member of dot-art

<http://www.dot-art.co.uk/pages/customers/search-art.php>

[www.faithbebbington.co.uk](http://www.faithbebbington.co.uk)

[enquiries@faithbebbington.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@faithbebbington.co.uk)



**Nike Jonah** balances her time between various roles in the cultural sector; as the Director of Connecting Dots, an arts consultancy that works with a range of clients across the arts and creative sectors. Nike is currently developing the International Discussions for the Creative Case for Diversity and Pan African Interdisciplinary Performing Arts Marketing (PAIPAM) in partnership with the Vrystaat Arts Festival, Bloemfontien South Africa.

She continues to serve on the boards of the European Cultural Foundation and Birmingham Contemporary Music Group.



**Rebecca Ross-Williams** is Theatre and Community Director at Everyman and Playhouse. She developed the Theatres Education programme which works with schools, colleges and Universities in the city region.

Rebecca founded the Community Outreach programme which focuses on under-represented people and which has been nominated for awards for using arts for social change. The most recent development is Young Everyman and Playhouse (YEP) which provides participatory on the job training for young people in a variety of theatre strands. YEP aims to provide a navigable route from first engagement to professional training/employment and was voted Stage School of the Year 2015 (Stage Awards).

Rebecca is passionate about diversity and has spear headed the theatres

development work in this area, which was awarded TMA Diversity Award 2015 for progress made.

[www.everymanplayhouse.com](http://www.everymanplayhouse.com)

Facebook.com/everymanPLAYHOUSE

Twitter: @LivEveryPlay

Youtube.com/everymanPLAYHOUSE

Flickr.com/LivEveryPlay

Instagram.com/LivEveryPlay

# DaDaFest: About Us

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DaDaFest is a pioneering and unique disability and Deaf arts organisation based in the heart of Liverpool. The organisation has a national and international reputation for delivering high quality and accessible festivals, events and projects and producing opportunities for disabled and Deaf people to access the arts via training, a young peoples' programme and more. The biennial festival is one of the most impressive and innovative of its kind, featuring work and artists that are deeply rooted to its home in Liverpool and also those from across the world.

DaDaFest aims to promote and improve the social understanding of disability and promote excellent disability and Deaf arts from a wide variety of cultural perspectives.



## Useful Web Links

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### Disability and Deaf Arts Organisations

#### **Candoco**

[www.candoco.co.uk](http://www.candoco.co.uk)

A dance group that integrates able and disabled dancers.

#### **Disability Arts Cymru**

[www.disabilityartscymru.co.uk](http://www.disabilityartscymru.co.uk)

Disability arts organisation for Wales

#### **Deafinitely Theatre**

[www.deafinitelytheatre.co.uk](http://www.deafinitelytheatre.co.uk)

A Deaf-led theatre company

#### **Disability Arts Online**

[www.disabilityartsonline.org.uk](http://www.disabilityartsonline.org.uk)

Website discussing Disability Arts with blogs, news, interviews and reviews.

**Drake Music Project**[www.drakemusic.org](http://www.drakemusic.org)

Works with disabled people to create music.

**Extant**<http://extant.org.uk>

Britain's only performing arts company for visually impaired people.

**Graeae**[www.graeae.org](http://www.graeae.org)

Champions accessibility and provides a platform for new generations of Deaf and disabled talent through the creation of trail-blazing theatre

**Mind the Gap**[www.mind-the-gap.org.uk](http://www.mind-the-gap.org.uk)

Theatre group for people with learning disabilities.

**Prism Arts**[www.prismarts.org.uk](http://www.prismarts.org.uk)

Supporting excluded groups in Cumbria to realise their creative potential.

**SHAPE Arts**[www.shapearts.org.uk](http://www.shapearts.org.uk)

Works towards improving access to the arts.

**Arts in Liverpool****Liverpool Events Guide**[www.visitliverpool.com/whats-on](http://www.visitliverpool.com/whats-on)

What to see and do in Liverpool.

**Access****Access to Work**[www.gov.uk/access-to-work](http://www.gov.uk/access-to-work)

A government scheme giving help, support and advice in work.

**The Creative Case for Diversity**[www.creativecase.org.uk](http://www.creativecase.org.uk)**DisabledGo**[www.disabledgo.com](http://www.disabledgo.com)

Providing access guides on a variety of different venues.

**Stagetext**[www.stagetext.co.uk](http://www.stagetext.co.uk)

Offers news, reviews and listings of captioned plays, films and other art forms.