

# heartofglass



## Lending Library Learning Resource

Produced by Natalie Horsham and Dr. Emma Curd

# Heart of Glass Lending Library

A guide, by Natalie Horsham and Dr. Emma Curd

As part of a placement with University of Manchester, Natalie joined the Heart of Glass team from January to May 2024. Within this placement, Natalie supported the development of Heart of Glass' burgeoning Lending Library, undertook editorial work through reading and analysing essays written by Heart of Glass collaborators and created a series of learning resources (i.e. an inventory, a staff guide and a critical review of archival articles).

This guide, the first in a series for HoG's Lending Library, is intended to guide readers (staff at HoG) through the growing library. It is informed by Natalie's work to create an inventory for the collection of texts and books owned by Heart of Glass, and features her journey working with us.

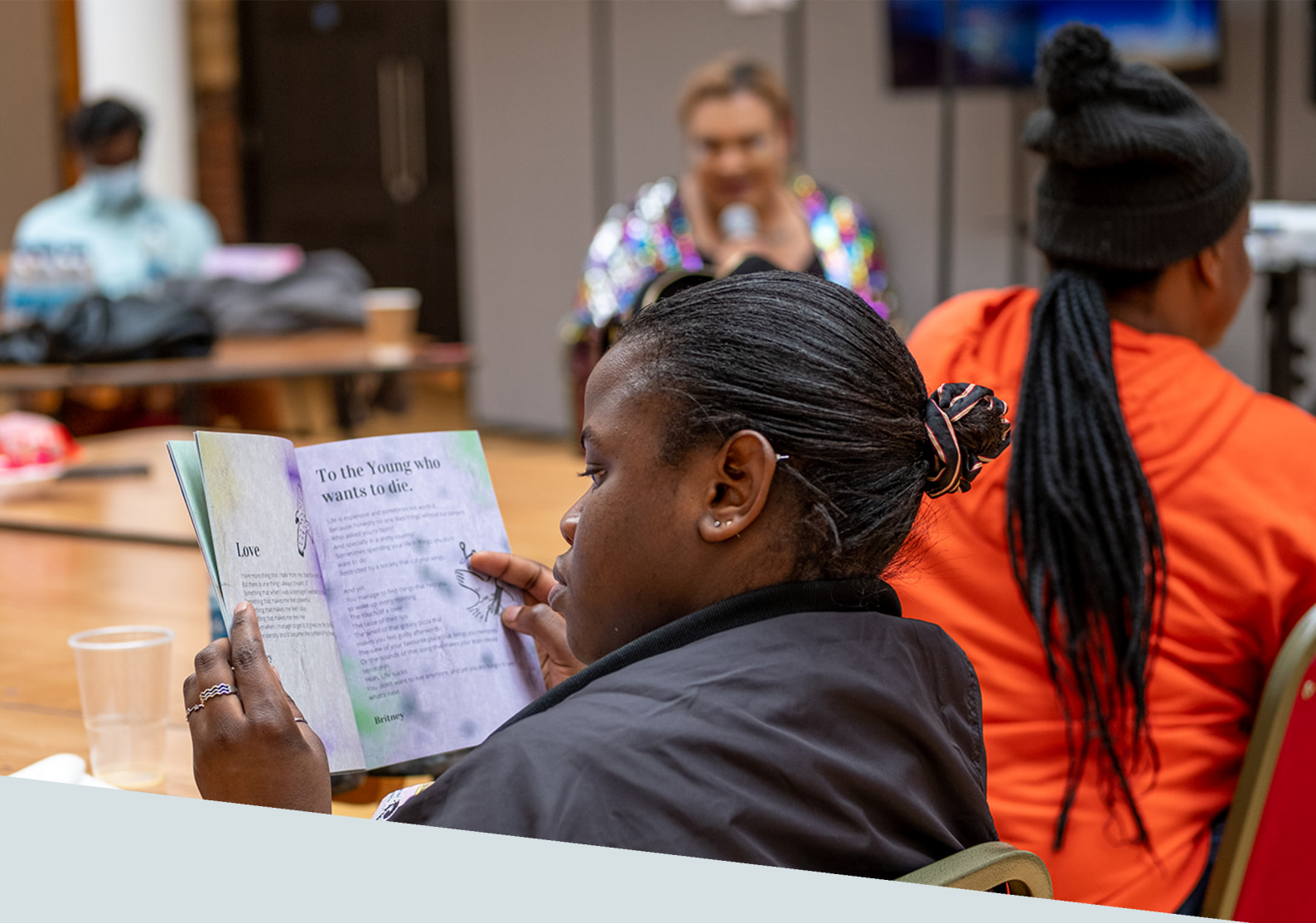
Natalie invites you to lend yourself to thoughts, themes and ideas already entwined within our Lending Library.



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## Introduction

To welcome and celebrate the move of Heart of Glass offices - and associated library - from Haydock Street in St Helens to Derby Road in Huyton, we have compiled a learning resource. This learning resource provides a snapshot of some of the key themes of the library at Heart of Glass, whilst also helping us to identify some gaps in our archives that we are keen to explore.

The library is an invitation to artists, workers and practitioners invested in collaborative ways of working to use and draw from the texts we have collated over the last 10 years of the organisation. Our library will be useful to people who work in community arts, live arts or socially engaged practice, but is open to anyone and everyone.

In the years to come, we will ask questions of the library:

1. Who is this library for? What can we offer to artists, workers and practitioners that they don't get elsewhere? Can we partner with other organisations doing similar things?
2. What does it mean to build a library against the backdrop of a failing state to support public libraries?
3. How can we provide access to the library both locally and nationally? What could this look like offline and online?

The library is an ongoing, collaborative project and invites HoG staff to contribute to and provide their own readings of the enclosed texts. We hope that like our library, further learning resources like these will emerge and editions be added over time, to be useful for many more artists, workers and people working in and with the collaborative arts.





## Alternative Learning

The learning programme at Heart of Glass invites artists, workers, practitioners and communities to come together in shared learning spaces to generate and discuss knowledge production in alternative, reciprocal ways.

The word 'alternative' lends itself to different understandings of traditional and institutionalised learning spaces such as schools, colleges and higher education, which often prioritise transactional and linear learning processes from teacher to student, or require knowledge to be 'tested' through coursework or examination.

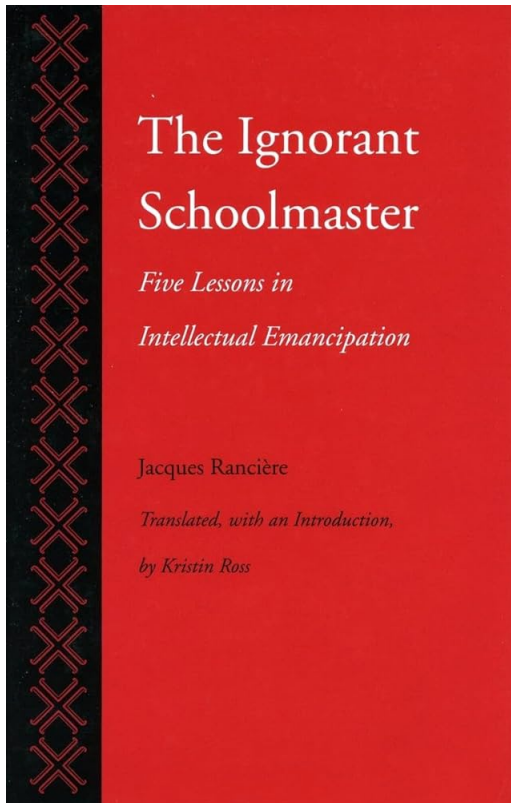
At Heart of Glass, learning takes place across our programmes in porous, cross-disciplinary ways. Within our projects, knowledge production and exchange is relational, slow, careful and generous, considering the experience of collaborators, communities and publics as the highest priority. Within this context, all collaborators are co-researchers with the intention to shift established hierarchies and power dynamics between learners, teachers and researchers. Collaboration is at the heart of alternative learning as a way to challenge inaccessible, commercialised forms of knowledge and research creation and distribution, prioritised by governments and states to validate knowledge.

The texts selected for this part of the learning resource were chosen for their intervention within traditional forms, environments and hierarchies of learning. Some of them are key texts for, or written by artists and collaborators who we currently work with, including practitioners like Sarah Bailey and Susanne Bosch.

# The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation

Jacques Rancière, 1991

California: Stanford University Press

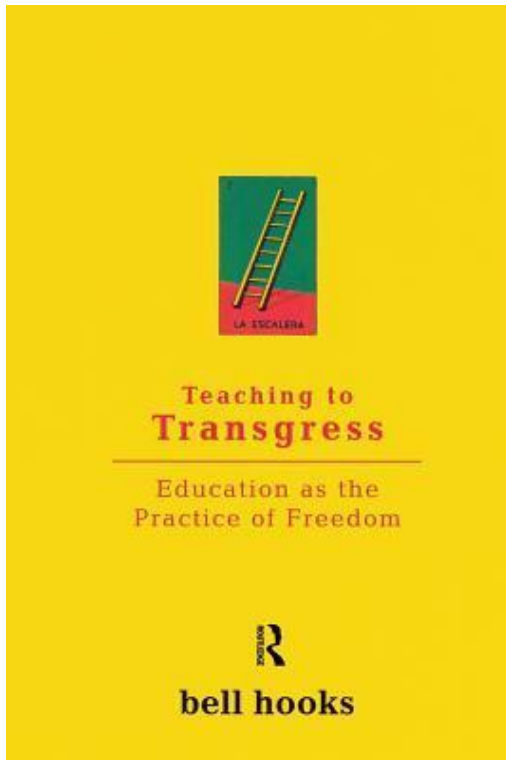


The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation follows the story of Joseph Jacotot, an exiled French school teacher who is used as an example by author Rancière to reject the traditional student-teacher relationship. Instead, he argues for 'intellectual emancipation.' This book discusses the core ideas and methods of the philosophy of intellectual emancipation, as well as its premises and implications.

Ross, the translator of this book argues within her introduction the profound implication for the debate on education and class in France that has been ongoing. The philosophy of intellectual emancipation reflects on the challenges and historical relevance of French educational reform. This is a thought-provoking read that asks you to reproach and reevaluate ideas of learning and education. Alternative approaches to learning and teaching such as this book are an excellent starting point for those wanting to think differently against the traditional ideas of education.



Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom  
bell hooks, 1994  
Oxon: Routledge

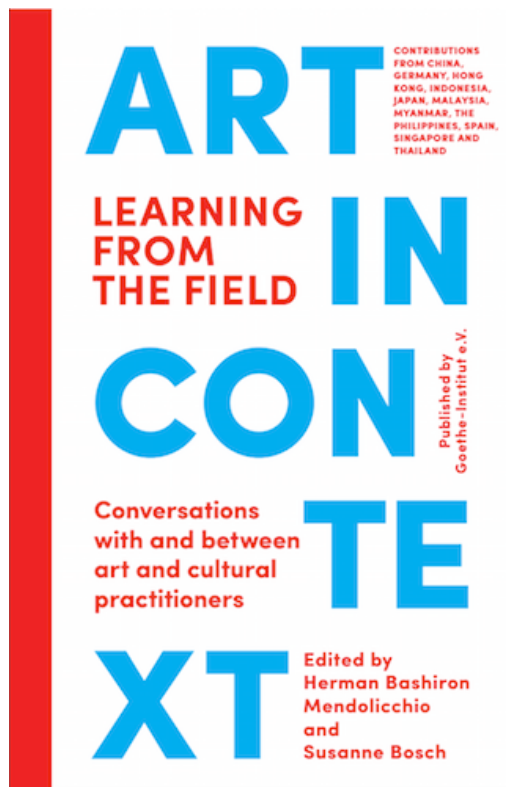


Writing from an intersectional feminist perspective, bell hooks' seminal work emphasises the idea of teaching as a 'performative act' that can provide a space for change. By asking readers to question the effects of multiculturalism, racism and sexism within the classroom, hooks offers the notion that students need to 'transgress abasing forms of discrimination in order to achieve the gift of freedom'.

By offering practical knowledge and strategy that is intertwined with emotion, this book provides a provoking read that looks into both the past and future of teaching. This critique of traditional educational practices allows for the reader to question the possibilities within learning, education and the spaces in which these occur.

# Art in Context Learning From the Field: Conversations with and Between Art and Cultural Practitioners

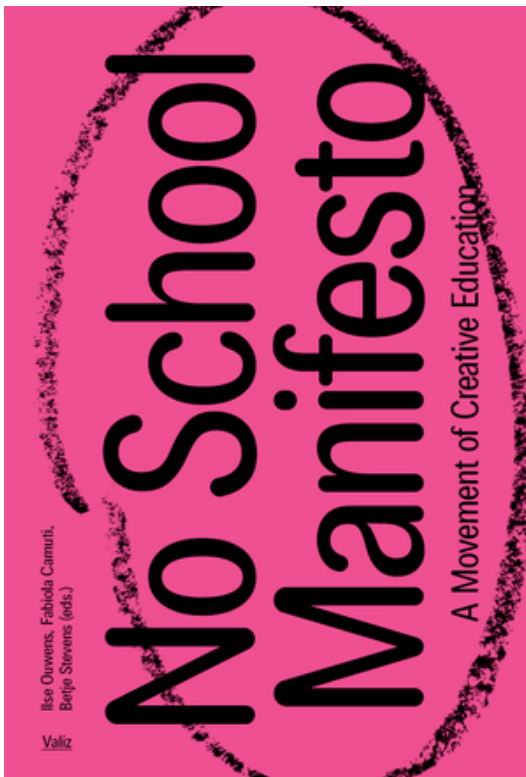
Herman Bashiron Mendolicchio and Susanne Bosch (eds), 2017  
Munich: Goethe-Institut



Perspectives from 21 artists, curators and thinkers from across Asia provide a dialogue concerning aspects of giving, receiving and reciprocating in art-making. The publication captures and discusses the 'diversity of messiness' faced by those working in participatory art contexts through peer-to-peer conversations. It serves as a valuable resource to other practitioners in being able to help individuals reflect on their own methodologies, visions and perspectives in order to ease the navigation of social practice.

The experiences of others showcased in this book offers an insight into the constant evolving artistic paradigm that resides in Asia. The critical reflections found within provide a basis for improving and better understanding the ways of exchanging within a community context.

**No School Manifesto: A Movement of Creative Education**  
Ilse Ouwens, Fabiola Camuti and Betje Stevens, 2020  
Amsterdam: Valiz

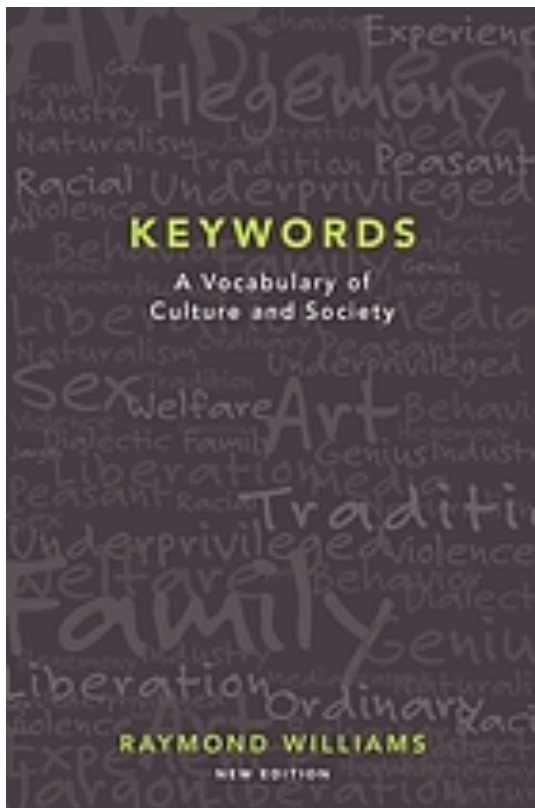


A growing movement revolving around the intention of opening up the meaning of learning is stated within this manifesto. No School Manifesto: A Movement of Creative Education outlines key concepts, values and attitudes relating to ideas of creative and alternative learning. To provide context and an initial starting point for readers to these alternative ideas, an introductory essay focuses on the fundamental value of creativity

Through the use of an A to Z lexicon, ideas of creativity within education are shared as examples. By exploring this topic and providing visual and textual examples, readers enter into a space for 'wild thinking,' the idea of collaboration and a vision for a more flexible and creativity driven approach. As this 'No School' approach is constantly evolving, this piece offers a starting point for those interested in creatively-driven education.



**Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society**  
**Raymond Williams, 1976**  
**New York: Oxford University Press**



This exploration of the historical evolution of language is formatted through a series of connecting essays. These essays outline just how keywords are affecting our understanding of society, as they seem to evolve; chaining and taking on new meanings.

Taking a more cultural than etymological approach, Williams traces words back, discussing how their meaning has changed and the impact of this change. This discussion provides an insight into the social, economic and political conditions that affect culture. By taking an alternative approach to the sociology of the English language, *Keywords* presents a different understanding of culture's role in shaping the human experience and worldviews.

**Research: The Itemisation of creative knowledge**  
**Clive Gillam (ed), 2006**  
**Liverpool: FACT and Liverpool University Press**

Research: The Itemisation of Creative Knowledge by Clive Gilman, explores the intersection of research, creativity and knowledge production. This exploration is conducted through a series of conference papers which feature voices from the creative sector ranging from artists to academics to practitioners relating to ITEM. ITEM is FACT's research and development programme; this publication features documentation and reports from ten research projects between 2003 and 2005. These research projects were used to facilitate collaboration between artists and engineers. This partnership between art and technology is examined by looking at the process of these creative collaborations.

This type of multidisciplinary approach discussed in this collection of works, falls into the category of alternative learning due to the different approaches that were taken during this project. Alternative methods of practice and collaboration can foster elements of creativity that would not be able to flourish without different skills, insights and thoughts merging together.



## Land and Worlds

Our broad programme theme of Speculative Futures (2024-) acknowledges the potential role artists and communities can play interfacing with our lands and imagining different worlds. The use of the term 'speculative futures' at Heart of Glass implies an action to challenge the current status quo through etching out opportunities for communication, sharing ideas and creating space for change. As an organisation, one of our values is to challenge dominant discourse or modes of practice (i.e., understandings of the natural world and colonialism). Similarly, in the context of arts and culture, we seek to create space for listening, rather than trying to fill a quota or assign measurements of enjoyment or wellbeing as is the norm.

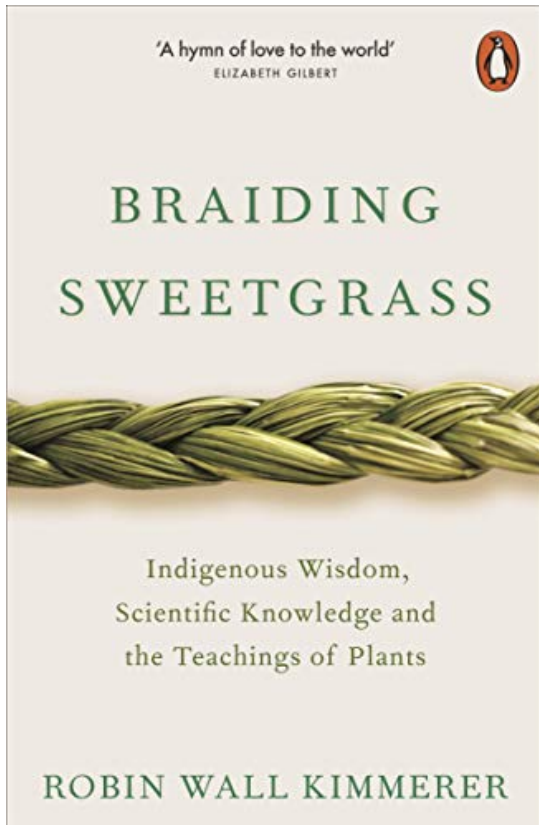
These are some texts and interventions that currently offer a different way to think about the lands and worlds we currently inhabit, occupy, and make work within.



## Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants

Robin Wall Kimmerer, 2013

UK: Penguin Books



Braiding Sweetgrass was cited by many of the artists we worked with in 2023 on our conference With For About: Care and the Commons, and our autumn programme A Sense of Green, including: Sean Roy Parker, Taey Iohe, Youngsook Choi and Harun Morisson. This book is fundamental for artists and practitioners looking to plants, animals and the earth more broadly as our oldest teachers.

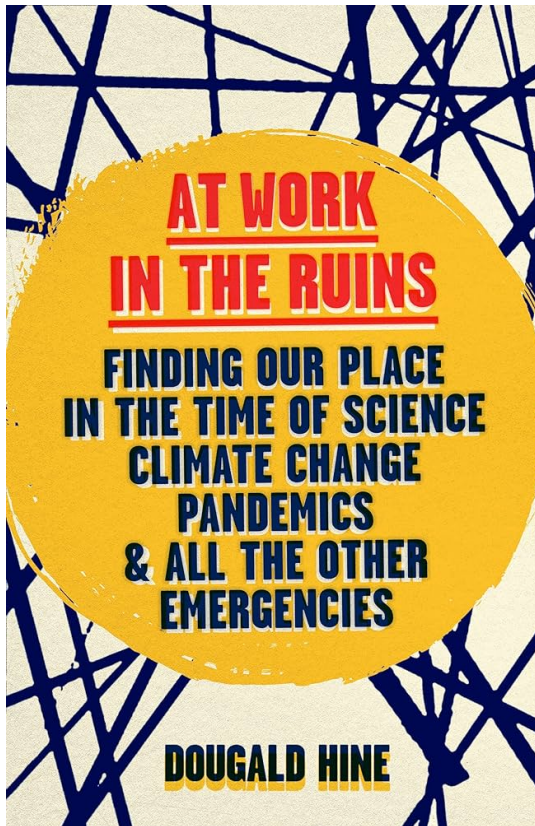
This book was chosen to form part of this learning resource due to its proximity to permaculture ethics and principles, referenced in Building Blocks 2023) and underpinning our current work. Discussed as part of Heart of Glass' quarterly all staff reading group in 2023, Children and Young People's Producer Kate Houlton chose Chapter 13, The Three Sisters, to catalyse conversation about our programming.

Themes of the book include listening; language and reciprocity are relevant for socially engaged practice and thus our team and communities of practice. This is particularly applicable to our work with young people or people whose voices aren't audible in our society. For example; 'what if we were a teacher but had no voice to speak your knowledge. What if you had no language at all and yet there was something you needed to say?' (p128). This book does not suggest how we might 'give voices to the unheard' - a popular trope of socially engaged practice - but encourages humanity to explore how we might listen more clearly or meaningfully to a plurality of voices, however they are expressed.

# At Work in the Ruins: Finding Our Place in the Time of Science Climate Change Pandemics & All Other Emergencies

Douglas Hine, 2023

London: Chelsea Green Publishing

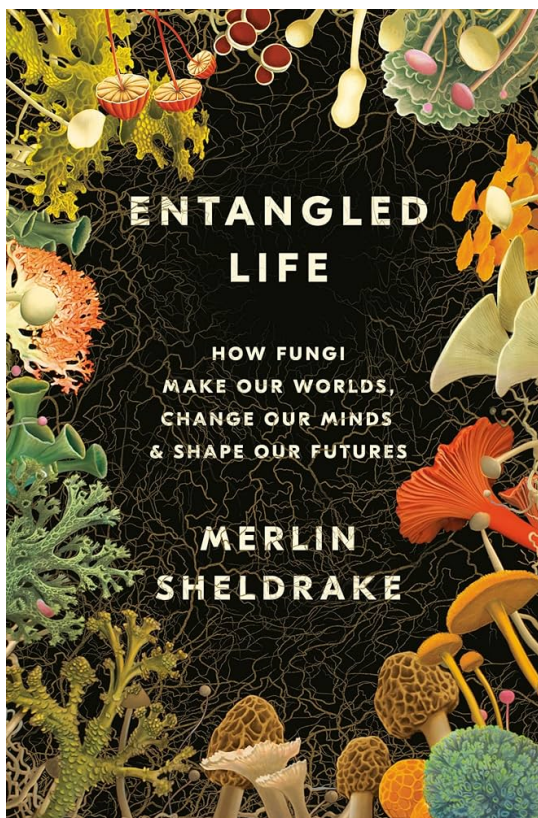


Initiating dialogic projects such as Dark Mountain Manifesto (2009) to discuss the overwhelming realities of climate change, Douglas Hine discusses the early activism of Extinction Rebellion, exactly what kind of 'trouble we're in' and what kinds of conversations we should have next.

Relevant for Heart of Glass, this book situates the struggle of practitioners within a context of working within 'the ruins'. The book is about how we - practitioners, artists, citizens - find our bearings within this context, and what kind of tasks are worthy of giving our lives to, given all we know about the trouble the world is in.

Programmes influenced by this book include A Sense of Green and With For About: Care and the Commons, both 2023.

**Entangled Life: How Fungi Make Our Worlds, Change Our Minds  
and Shape Our Futures**  
Merlin Sheldrake, 2021  
Dublin: Vintage



Winding through questions of philosophy, science, and meaning-making, Merlin Sheldrake shares what it means to live an embodied life in an entangled world. As Sheldrake shares, ‘an account of life that doesn't include fungi is an account of a living world that doesn't exist’. Our relationship with fungi is non-negotiable.

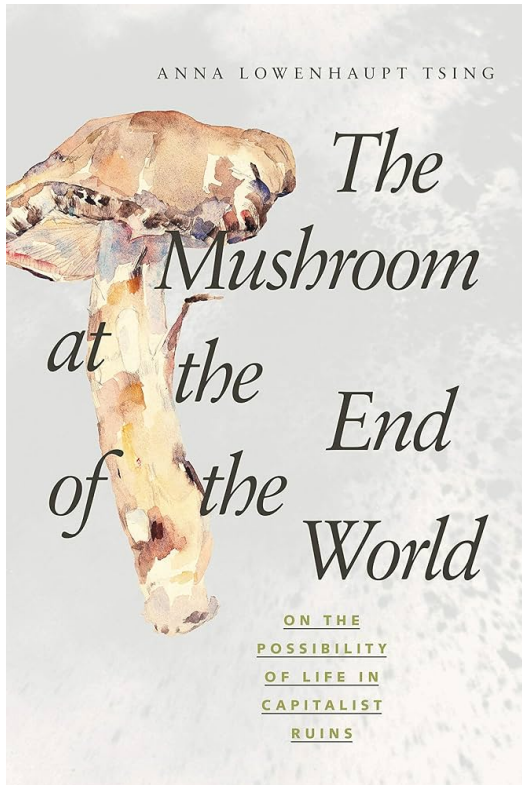
In this book, Sheldrake invites readers to pay attention to our relationship with mycelium, and how it shapes not only our lives, but the entanglement of life across the world. With this, he also shares the ways fungal life offers a diversity of expressions and possibilities – offering up the perspective that the diversity and complexity of relationship and expression is what makes life fertile.

Meditations include the history and meaning of science, and coming to see life as a relational process. The meaning we make does not come out of a vacuum, but rather out of relationships and our care for those relationships. Life itself, in its many forms, is improvisational. Understanding this, we are left with the provocation: How might we speak to the world, rather than about it?

# The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins

Anna Tsing, 2017

New Jersey: Princeton University



The Mushroom at the End of the World is an academic, yet engaging exploration of the relationship between capitalist destruction and collaborative survival within a multispecies landscape. The continuing and longlasting enquiry around the prerequisite for continuing life on earth.

By investigating one of the world's most sought-after fungi - the Matsutake - The Mushroom at the End of the World leads us to examine fungal ecologies and forest histories, to better understand the promise of cohabitation in a time of massive human destruction.



## Environmental Justice Questions (Playing Cards) Harun Morisson (ed), 2023-ongoing



As part of A Sense of Green, Harun Morrison facilitated a workshop digging deeper into questions of environmental justice for artists. Organised and edited by Harun, Environmental Justice Questions are an evolving compilation of questions developed in discussion with activists, writers, artworkers, theorists, architects, chefs, natural historians, and horticulturalists that are designed to stimulate new ways of thinking about environmental justice.

During the session at Incredible Edible Knowsley in September 2023, Harun guided us through a selection of questions from the deck, taking the form of group discussions and leading to a wider closing circle bringing together the collective thoughts of the group.



## Place and Local Contexts

Place and local context means more to us than information that can be collected about a place or group of people. Our approach to place and local context is embodied and embedded and so when we consider place, we also consider 'the commons'. These are spaces that we all occupy and share together as part of a civic world - or land or resources that belong to or affect a whole community.

Working in the commons requires a type of mediation and support that work within institutional settings do not. Beginning with how we consider access, environmental factors, and the communities we are working with, we are constantly considering different types of risk assessments, different usages of space, and different ways to be in a shared space together. This means we also need to think about whose space we might occupy or move into, and who the stakeholders are in that space. All of these complex factors need to be considered and it's different every time, for every different project.

We have gathered a series of texts that describe or at least try to disseminate a number of the contexts we work within, as part of our work in non-traditional arts spaces and contexts.



## Sunday Best: Pendle's clothing history from the 1950s to the 1980s An exhibition curated and catalogued Cerise Ward

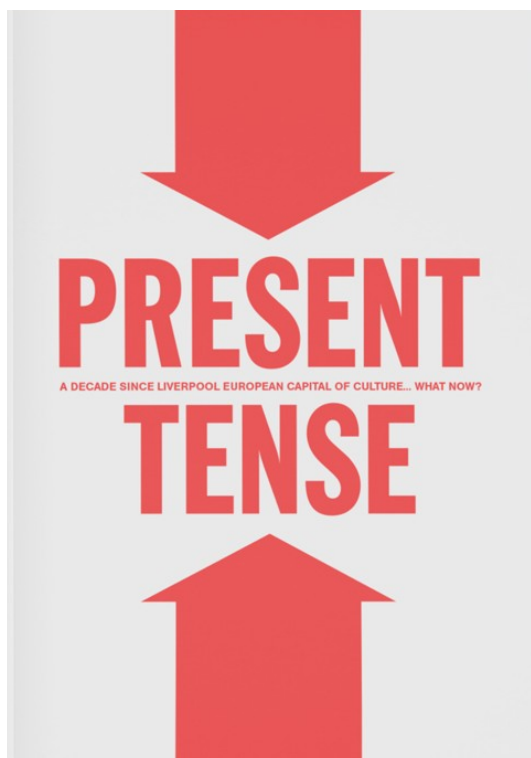
This champion catalogue is one of the resources from the previous Sunday Best project and exhibition (2017). This project goes on a journey through the clothing history of Pendle from the 1950s to the 1980s, curated and catalogued by Fine Art Lecturer and Creative Practitioner Cerise Ward. This peek into the past aims to preserve Pendle's rich textile history whilst also including more personal content deriving from the local community including clothing, interviews, mono-prints, photographs and magazine images.

The preservation of local history and heritage is an important aspect of community memory. This catalogue showcases visuals, poems and other artwork relating to the project that reflects the fascinating relationship between clothing and culture, and how an understanding of your surroundings within a historical context is an important part of existing within that landscape.



## PRESENT TENSE

### A Decade Since Liverpool European Capital of Culture...What Now?



Originally commissioned as part of The Double Negative fellowship (2018-2019), this series of essays was written by individuals mentored during the programme; the daring new voices of the North of England. Each writer received critical advice from those at the top of their field, and the essays range in content from discussing artists and collectives to venues.

Charting the time since the title of European Capital of Culture was awarded to Liverpool (in 2008), positive and negative outcomes and experiences of that status are explored through honest voices.

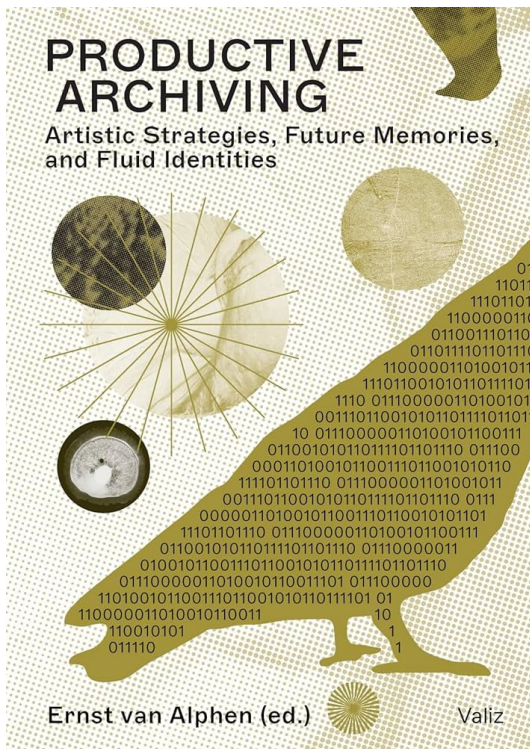
This book is great for anyone involved in the arts, especially in the North West, as it provides a vital insight into what has changed in Liverpool over the past 16 years, and what is still changing.



## Methods of Collaborative Arts Practice

Focussing on methods can be useful when understanding collaborative arts practices. This section of the learning resource identifies and clarifies some of the methods used to facilitate our work including texts on speculation, archiving, writing and reflection.

## Productive Archiving: Artistic Strategies Future Memories and Fluid Identities Ernst van Alphen (ed)

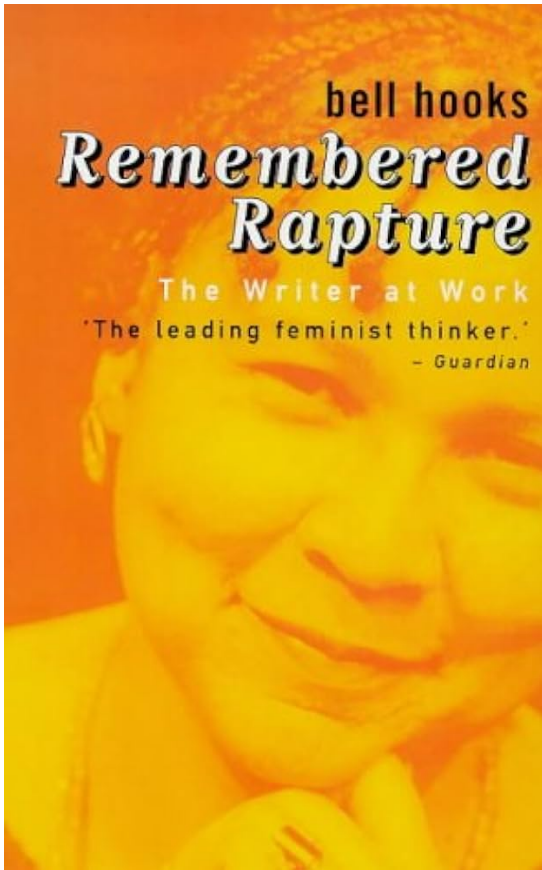


This book discusses and attempts to tackle three crucial issues that are often overlooked when archiving, and to constructively and creatively solve these issues. Through a series of essays interspersed by visual contributions by artists, an in-depth examination of the intersection between art, archiving and the construction of memory and identity is discussed.

By offering an approach that explores the past, the present and the future, a series of creative and constructive solutions can be suggested. Offering new artistic approaches to archival problems, the power of an interdisciplinary perspective is highlighted. With contributions from prominent figures including William Kentridge, Santu Mofokeng and Walid Raad, as well as insights from emerging artists.



Remembered Rapture: The Writer at Work  
bell hooks, 1999  
London: The Women's Press Ltd.



Untangling the complex personae of a women writer, this collection of 22 essays celebrates those who run counter to the norm.

Remembered Rapture: The Writer at Work, serves as a testament to the value of creative expression within the context of the publishing industry, especially for African American women authors. Being one herself, bell hooks describes her own personal journey within this industry and what it took to become a celebrated writer and academic.

The contents of these essays are wide-ranging in terms of intellectual scope, in the hopes of reaching a universal audience, with a wider feeling of accessibility. The joys of reading, writing and literacy are celebrated in this anthology which highlights the spiritual and personal power that this type of practice can yield.



## Speculative Futures, Design Approaches to Navigate Change Foster Resilience, and Co-create the Cities We Need

Johanna Hoffman, 2022

Berkeley: North Atlantic Books



Hoffman's work explores the emerging field of 'speculative futures', a design feature that helps visualise new and potential worlds in order to move us beyond the world we are living in now. Study and research in this book addresses the standing issues within urban development and the resilience of cities that this century demands. By focussing on ideas of what could be, readers are asked to reimagine the present and the future of how we exist.

The tools found within this guide are inspired by art, film, fiction and industrial design and are reflective of the interdisciplinary background of the author. This blend of study, research and professional memoir helps us to look beyond what currently exists, towards what could exist. If you are interested in a creative path to urban resilience this book is written for you.

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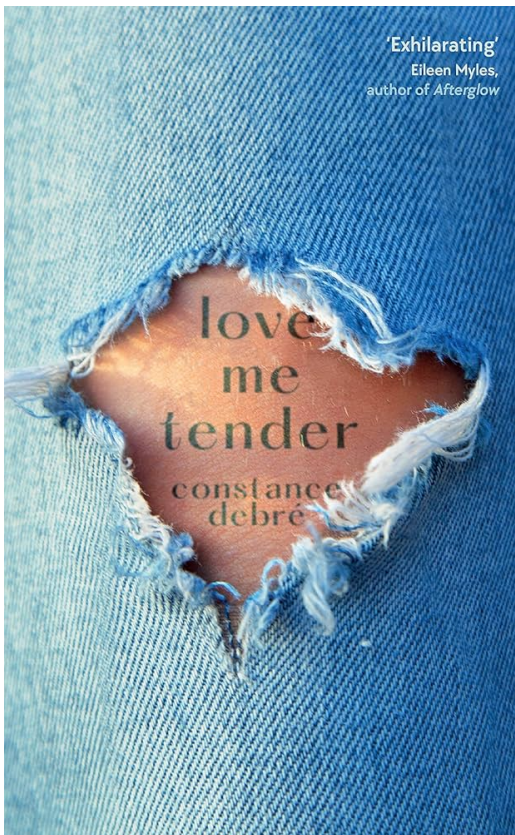


## Highlights from Queer Book Club

Queer Book Club is an inclusive reading group open to anyone from St Helens to come together to read and discuss LGBTQIA+ literature. Founded in Autumn 2023 by a group of local queer artists, producers and book-lovers, Queer Book Club is a space to share a love of queer novels, memoirs and writing.

Queer Book Club allows us to continue growing our library to include more queer novels, memoirs and essays. We asked Queer Book Club members and staff at Heart of Glass, Britney (Public Programme Coordinator) and Sinéad (Marketing and Audience Development Manager) to write about their favourite book we've read since the reading group began.

Love Me Tender  
Constance Debré, 2023  
Semiotext(e)



Review by Sinéad:

Love Me Tender is a raw and urgent work of autofiction. The novel follows Constance, a writer who, after coming out to her ex-husband, loses custody of their child. And so begins a journey of self-discovery, sex and shedding old skins.

In a previous life, Constance was a wife, a mother and a lawyer; fulfilling roles that conformed to a number of gender stereotypes as well as to a world that values productivity, money and responsibility over self expression and simple pleasures.

When we meet Constance on page one, she is deep in the process of rejecting those roles and labels - swapping duty for acts of self care, heteronormative love for lesbian sex and financial stability for minimal living and couch surfing. As Constance shapeshifts into her new queer identity, she finds stability in habitual swimming, smoking and commitment-free dating.

This freewheeling existence lies in sharp contrast to the belligerent legal system she must contend with: fortnightly supervised visitations with her son and a custody battle manipulated by hateful prejudice. Constance's ex-husband uses excerpts from the classics on her bookshelf to convince the lawyers of a lesbian's unsuitability to mother their child, ultimately hurting her most deeply with the very literature she loves most, and causing her to question her own relationship with her son.

A unique exploration of the sometimes conditional nature of love and motherhood.

**In the Dreamhouse**  
**Carmen Maria Machado, 2020**  
**London: Serpent's Tail**



Review by Britney:

In the Dream House is a memoir based on experiences of abuse within the context of a same-sex relationship. I chose to write about this book because it was a breath of fresh air to me. I do not classify myself as a reader, in fact it is very difficult for me to concentrate on literature. Each chapter within the book is written in a different genre to help the reader to understand (or imagine) the different phases of the relationship. I enjoyed imagining the different situations and experiences described or recounted on each page.

Written with short chapters, the book supports the reader to explore the world of the author from multiple perspectives. With each chapter and genre, we are shown different worlds of the main character and experience their struggle within the relationship. This way of writing helped me to see the story – or stories - from many different perspectives, whilst also holding my interest and allowing me to read at my own rhythm.

It was chosen for the first book club as we felt it would hold people's attention, as well as to create a less pressured environment for beginner readers. I would highly recommend this book for people that want to create a habit of reading, as well as those that enjoy reading as one of their main recreational activities. It has something to offer for everyone.