

Death, Dinner and Performance Project: A Study of the Efficacy of Performance to Enhance Conversations Around Death and Dying

300 Word Statement

The Death, Dinner and Performance Practice as Research project took place in the Autumn of 2018 at the University of Salford. The performances on the 31st of October and 7th and 14th of November brought together commensal practices and autobiographical performance to explore a performance/ participation method developed to encouraged reflection and dialogue around the difficult and somewhat taboo subjects of death and dying. The project sits within the context of palliative care, commensurate practice and autobiographical performance. It developed from earlier research on ageing and creative applied practice that culminated in the publication of my 2017 monologue *Applied Theatre: Creative Ageing* (Bloomsbury, 2017). The Death, Dinner and Performance project was also informed by my previous professional experience as a Registered General Nurse working in palliative and end of life care.

The project allowed commensurate practice and autobiographical performance practice to be interrogated as collaborative strategies used to stimulate personal reflective conversations around the subjects of death, dying and grief. Within this context, the PaR research examined the potential for commensal practice and performance to work together in such a way as to enhance communal engagement with the subjects of death and dying. It also explored the efficacy of autobiographical performance strategies to act as stimuli for such engagement.

The material in portfolio (particularly the Complementary Writing document) evidences the research processes and practices undertaken and provides insights and new knowledge discovered through the practice as research found via the dinners (performance interactions) themselves and through the post dinner feedback from the participants.