



Cambridge
University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Together
Safe
Kind
Excellent

Arts and Culture in Oncology Environments

Hannah Jane Walker



Image Credits

p.5, Alexandra Cameron

pp. 8-17, Mia Sylvia. Artworks from an exhibition titled

‘A Big Natural Colour Chart’ by Mia Sylvia

p.18, CUH

pp. 19-20, CUH Arts

p.21, Ruth Clarke

p.22, Hannah Jane Walker

p.24, CUH Arts

p. 25, Hannah Jane Walker

CUH Arts is generously funded by
Addenbrooke’s Charitable Trust.

To find out more about our work
please visit cuh.nhs.uk/arts



CONTENTS

Foreword	4
Introduction	5
Key findings	6
Art in the building should...	6
Art in the building should not...	7
Themes	8
Tone and language	8
Collaboration	8
Senses	9
The Natural World	10
Rootedness	12
Adaptation	13
Beauty	14
Imperfection	14
Time and self	15
Strength and softness	15
Authority	16
Wayfinding	17
Ideas and concepts that arose at each place	18
Nine Wells Nature Reserve	18
Cambridge University Botanic Garden	18
Cambridge University Herbarium	19
Dye Workshop at Mia Sylvia’s Studio	20
The Fitzwilliam Museum	21
Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology	22
Museum of Zoology	23
Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences	25
A note to the reader on tensions	26

FOREWORD

The built environment is part of the medical care... even if you can't have the wind blowing into your room [art can give you] the feeling that you're part of that... It creates hopefulness, and that's part of the healing and easing pain.

Patient Representative, Cambridge Cancer Research Hospital Environment Design Working Group

CUH Arts is Cambridge University Hospital's arts-in-health programme, dedicated to shaping care through creativity. We believe the arts can lift hospital spaces from acceptable to exceptional. Our goal is to create welcoming, positive and inspiring environments that surpass expectations and play a genuine role in patient care.

We are excited to present this document, written by artist Hannah Jane Walker, which provides a valuable insight into what cancer patients and NHS staff want from arts and culture while in hospital. The findings are important for our cancer care services both now and in the future.

During this project, Hannah facilitated eight workshops in partnership with the University of Cambridge Museums, and listened to hours of conversations between patients, clinical and research staff, and museum professionals. She carefully took notes, asked questions, and led creative activities designed to help participants explore and express their thoughts in more depth.

Through this work we saw the value of the role that museums can play in humanising hospital environments. The museum collections that we explored spoke to themes of rootedness, time, self, beauty, imperfection, strength, authority, and more – all of which have profound relevance in the context of cancer care.

We hope that this document will inspire hospital arts and environment teams, commissioners, artists, architects, designers, museum professionals, funders, and everyone with a passion for the role that arts and culture can play in creating healing environments.

With grateful thanks to the University of Cambridge Museums, our funder Addenbrooke's Charitable Trust, and to all the staff and patients who generously shared their experiences through these workshops.

CUH Arts

INTRODUCTION

A new specialist cancer research hospital for the East of England is being built in Cambridge. The arts team believe that truly innovative hospitals integrate art into the building and patient experience. That art is fundamental to wellbeing. To better understand what is needed from art in this new space, an active consultation, funded by Addenbrooke's Charitable Trust, was undertaken.

We heard through previous consultation work that spending a lot of time in hospital can leave people feeling disconnected from the natural world, so this was a theme we wanted to explore further. We developed two series of four workshops and advertised them to cancer patients, clinical and research staff, and to the wider hospital community.

For the first series we worked with local artist Mia Sylvia, a botanical dye specialist who works with foraged flowers and foliage to create unique, beautiful textiles. We took participants on a foraging walk around the Nine Wells Nature

Reserve, explored the science and beauty of local flora and fauna with the Cambridge University Herbarium and Cambridge University Botanic Garden, and used everything we'd found along the way to dye pieces of material at Mia's studio. Mia then created a co-produced exhibition of this work titled 'A Big Natural Colour Chart', which you can see throughout this document.

For the second series, we visited The Fitzwilliam Museum, the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, The Museum of Zoology, and the Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences in Cambridge. At each site, a member of the team generously shared their time and expertise to guide us through their collections. I then led a creative activity and facilitated discussions designed to help the group think about the collections through the lens of cancer care.

These are my findings.

Hannah Jane Walker



Artist Hannah Jane Walker

KEY FINDINGS

Art in the building should...

- instil confidence in treatment (innovative, professional, successful).
- make room for diversity of mood and experience, and consider how it would make a variety of people in different situations feel.
- give permission for what you are feeling.
- have the option to engage but not the instruction
- work on multiple different levels – art for beauty's sake, and art with expansion and depth of meaning.
- consider sensory experience – nervous system needs grounding. Patients may be feeling sick, etc..
- consider agency of patients. Control. Patients often feel very passive in treatment.
- consider personhood. More than a patient.
- connect the spirit to the body.
- offer a solid sense of place and location; connection to the actual surrounding environment.
- connect to nature, the resilience of nature. Not its perfection, its ability to adapt and survive.
- connect an individual to time, cultures and locations beyond themselves.
- respond very specifically to the space it is in and the unique experience of the patient and staff member using that space. Eg diagnosis spaces. Hallways. Waiting rooms. Each requires very different things from the art.
- science in the space needs to consider why relevant to these specific patients. "It is innovative" is not enough. It needs to contain story, precise connection to place.

Art in the building should not...

- NAFB – not another f**king bluebell! Please, please, please don't give us pretty, abstract, patronising, non-meaningful art.
- pity, instruct, or speak to a single presumed experience.
- have aspirational images such as mountains or 'the great outdoors'.
- have the tone or use the language of cheerleading. No referring to beating or battling cancer, winning or losing, victor or vanquished.
- use the word 'journey.'
- exclude.
- have patient names, faces and identities on walls. Leads to doom googling for survival outcome.
- science presented in these spaces must not be declaring that it can save us all.
- shame or blame.

THEMES

The following are key themes which arose from the different workshops. Here, quotes from the participants are shown in italics, and next to each quote is a note of where we were when they said it.

Tone and language

Tone is so important for everything that communicates with patients in this new hospital. We don't want cheerleading. We don't want life affirmations. We don't want aspirational imagery. We don't want pity.

At Cambridge University Botanic Garden

Please don't use the words "cancer journey" and "we are all in this together". No chippy cheerleading. Give us room for whatever it is we are feeling. Don't tell us what to feel. It is intensely infuriating and inconsiderate. We are individuals, we are people, there will be times we are furious, there will be times where we are determined, there will be times when we are joyful. But that is not for you to decide.

At Nine Wells Nature Reserve

It is important that nothing is instructive and demanding. Except for the medical procedures etc. You get made so passive as a patient, we need anything that can make us feel like we have some choice and agency.

At The Fitzwilliam Museum

Artworks from an exhibition titled 'A Big Natural Colour Chart' by Mia Sylvia



It is so important not to mention words like "battle" and "fight cancer". Or "victor" and "vanquished". You don't lose a battle to cancer. You do all you can to manage it. You do not die because you lost. Be careful with the language of winners. It's insulting.

At Nine Wells Nature Reserve

Collaboration

(Science and nature. Patients and staff. Medicine and people.)

This is about things coming together to make change happen isn't it. Invisible moving parts, teams of people, threads of research, new parts of people they didn't know they had. It is about things coming together.

At Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology

Chalk – the site of this new hospital is built on chalk land. The foundations of this land, are made of lots of little organisms, all holding together to hold the whole thing up. That is how we are making this hospital happen, all of the people. The abundance of the millions that make up the whole is extraordinary and moving.

At Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences



Senses

Senses are incredibly important when going through treatment. Things like birdsong playing in the garden would be hugely soothing. Tactile planting. Things to smell. Things to touch. Sunlight and shade.

At Cambridge University Botanic Garden

Holding clay in your hands and working with it, brings you back to the present.

It occupies your senses. It is a task to complete. Clay has always been there.

Patients are going through such a period of rapid change that they did not choose. They are so 'done to.'

To make with your hands, to be in the present, as a practitioner whose

job it is to help patients, I cannot tell you how valuable that is.

At The Fitzwilliam Museum

Young girl who I know had cancer. She told me nature and its images saved her life. She sought out books, images, anything she could find, to look at and be near nature, to feel natural, to know it is out there. Saved her life.

At Cambridge University Herbarium

Science and nature together. Science has saved my life. But nature has saved my soul. I needed a lot of calm. The first step on grass. The first breath of air. There will be a moment when you step out into the world again. I hope. Science and nature relay. We are nature, could be a tree, could be a flower. Not alone, part of this huge plan. That is very comforting, because cancer is a very lonely journey.

At Cambridge University Herbarium

I am impressed and feel comforted by the securing of knowledge. The exchange of knowledge. People working together for a common cause, trying to create something bigger than their own solo knowledge.

That is how research communities work. That is how change happens, advancements and discoveries are made.

At Cambridge University Herbarium



The Natural World

When I had cancer, I couldn't strive anymore. I couldn't try to advance in my job, or travel to here or there. I had to just be, in the present, day to day, hour to hour. When I got my diagnosis, I couldn't struggle anymore. I had to just learn to be in the now, I had to learn to live with that.

At Mia Sylvia's Studio

What you smell, what you touch – what you hear – affects how you feel, affects how you respond to treatment. These things are so easily forgotten in a medical environment.

At Mia Sylvia's Studio

Colours around you really affect how you feel and what messages you are given. Bold primary colours – school children. Natural soothing colours – think more about how they make you really feel.

At Mia Sylvia's Studio

I have insomnia, and natural sounds help me sleep. Maybe there could be a nature sounds radio channel.

At Museum of Zoology

Nature is an ever changing environment. Everything, always, comes back. In some form. Things bud sometimes that shouldn't be at this time of year. Rhythms are slightly out because of climate change. Just like things are out of sync with us because of cancer. We are all watching to see what happens. The uncertainty. It is not comforting, but it is reality.

At Nine Wells Nature Reserve

The way things deal with winter is profound, a profound metaphor. Tuck in. Go in. Conserve. And wait for the right time to re-emerge. You hope.

At Nine Wells Nature Reserve

There are species here, that have been brought back from the brink of extinction. Plants that have been brought back from the brink of death.

At Cambridge University Botanic Garden

There is such hope in the idea of building up knowledge of things on Earth such as plants. Taking that information forwards. We should hold on strongly to that information.

At Cambridge University Herbarium

The power of plants is humbling. We forget that.

At Cambridge University Botanic Garden



It is pretty incredible that even with science expanding as it is, with all its technology, there are plants out there that can help us just as much. Plants that have always been there.

At Cambridge University Botanic Garden

To know these things ties us to our past. It telescopes time. I find it deeply comforting to think that something treating me has come from something natural. Even if it is being used in combination with something artificial.

At Cambridge University Botanic Garden

I am interested in the idea that some plants are poisonous, some are healing. And that it requires knowledge of which, and knowledge of what are the right amounts, to be able to use them well. We need to be in admiration of measures, amounts, precision. Natural does not mean safe. And nor does synthetic. It is the knowledge of how to successfully utilise the material that is comforting, that is the skill.

At Cambridge University Botanic Garden

In February everything looks dead. But you have to know that come April, everything will have resurrected itself. We hope. But not always. Some of us won't make it.

At Cambridge University Botanic Garden

Encountering nature is appropriate if you are in a rest or recovery state. But if you are getting your diagnosis or coming in for a check-up you are so anxious that you just want nature to bug off.

At Cambridge University Herbarium



Looking at the samples today I have felt a huge sense of gratitude. The fact that something so humble, a plant, a flower, moss – things that sometimes grow in non-special places, beside roads, on the side of quarries, in jungles – can dye our clothes, mend our bodies and minds. I feel grateful to plants. Humbled by them.

At Cambridge University Herbarium

Learning about nature like this puts me into a receptive place, a positive frame of mind.

At Cambridge University Herbarium

Not everyone is well enough to walk to The Green & The Gardens, so bringing information about the nature around the hospital in closer, really helps you feel part of nature, makes you feel more natural. You feel so unnatural when you have cancer. It is important to try to reconnect.

At Cambridge University Herbarium

Watching things go on outside the window is reassuring because it means life is continuing.

At Museum of Zoology



Rootedness

We need to really carefully consider the spaces where people receive bad news. In those spaces your life has shifted forever. You will always be in that room, in your mind. Having something to ground you. Soothe you. Root you, I cannot find the words to explain what that means, how vital. How human. Your cancer experience will be what it will be. But how you are held in that, that is the important thing.

At Cambridge University Botanic Garden

There is something deeply soothing about connecting to the land that you are on and knowing about it. Can we literally ground the building?

At Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences

Facing my diagnosis, the idea of geological time is quite grounding somehow. It is good to know time and land and life have been here and will go on beyond me. It makes me feel part of something big, instead of something forgotten and small.

At Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences

Can we use big hunks of rocks from the surrounding landscape in the courtyard of the new building?

At Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences

Chalk is the main compositional material that the hospital is built on. Chalk is healing and cleansing and has been used in medicine in the past to alleviate pain. Chalk is a metaphor for being more porous, open and less closed to others.

At Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences

It is so important to bring what is out there, into the building. The cycles, the way nature adapts. The colours. So good for resetting the nervous system.

At Nine Wells Nature Reserve

*Nature, it's in constant motion
Connection to the ancient world
Bramble thickets, white light through trees,
chalk glints in the river
Old trackways, old farm land
Bright green fields hemmed by dark hedgerows
The view over these flat fields.*

At Nine Wells Nature Reserve



Adaptation

The landscape has been adapting for millions of years. That gives me willpower. It makes me think I can adapt too. Nature changes. We have to change too.

At Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences

What is amazing about pots, is that in theory they are fragile. The irony being that we find a lot of them in archaeological digs. They are surprisingly strong. Like people facing or going through cancer.

At The Fitzwilliam Museum

The wind is in my hair. My cheeks are cool. The twigs are dancing in the breeze. The sky is blue and the landscape is green and brown. The sounds of the hospital are abstract. The trees are silhouettes against the sky. The grasses are dancing. The birds are singing in the wind. The water is clear and pure. The iris stubbornly has kept its green leaves through the frost and snow. The beech leaves underfoot are chestnut brown with memories of Christmas and my grandson's hair. They are lovely to walk on. The winter stems are gnarled and textured.

At Nine Wells Nature Reserve

Some pots are glazed with ash from human cremation. Some pots contain pieces of human bone. A different sense of what we do with someone we love. A different sense of ancestors. Where we place them. How close we keep them.

At The Fitzwilliam Museum

Earth and water. It is life. A pot celebrates what we can make as people. It is life. Making something we need out of resources around us. Pots commemorate life. We use pots in life. They are the stuff of life.

At The Fitzwilliam Museum

I love the idea of the hospital containing clays from around the world. It says to me, if my clay is here, I am welcomed here. And if you are not from here – how welcoming, how encompassing.

At The Fitzwilliam Museum



Beauty

We want beauty for the sake of beauty. The wonderful thing about pots is that you can read them as metaphor, you can learn about the science of the clay etc, the history of them. But also they are just beautiful, classical, comforting. Your eye can rest on them and think hmmm nice. But you can also find out more if you want or need. They work on many levels.

At The Fitzwilliam Museum

We need beauty, real beauty. What we are living is ugly and hard. Beauty please. I need to feel my own humanity. I need to see my own beauty.

At Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology

People have to be able to choose how they engage. Something has to just be nice to look at. If that is all you feel well enough or up to that day. But you might feel different on a different day. Pieces should work on many levels. Extra information there if you want to find it out. But not in your face. This is a place of sick and worried people. The art needs to understand that people need to be able to respond to the art based on how they are feeling. Not how the artist intends for their work to be read. It is not about the artist. It is about how the people here feel and what they need and how that changes day to day.

At Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology

Imperfection

You lose faith in your body when you have cancer. In many ways you lose faith in yourself. You think, but I am broken now, and even if I survive, I will always be broken. How will I ever mend? Is my choice to be broken forever or die. And do I even have a choice. You have so few choices as a cancer patient. Your rights feel taken from you. Your identity. Your faith in yourself. That is why metaphors such as kintsugi are so powerful. The idea that the broken parts are gold that fuses you back together differently. I wonder if there is a piece of artwork – a wall maybe which is riveted with gold paint. Something that is tactile to touch. So you can feel the scar of the wall. Just as you feel it all the time in yourself.

At Cambridge University Botanic Garden

Pots that are hand built, are imperfect in the way that the human form is imperfect. But perfect in its imperfection. Comforting for cancer patients.

At The Fitzwilliam Museum

Time and self

Pots contain our cultural identity. It is how we know about our past and identity. They also mirror the human form. The language of the human form in the curve of a pot. The form is ancient and modern. It collapses time.

At The Fitzwilliam Museum

Primordial mud – the bubble shape, there is the idea that the bubble shape found often in pot form, mirrors a connection to primordial mud. The idea that original life is sourced from bubbling mud, from clay.

At The Fitzwilliam Museum

They say that clay has a memory. It can remember every form it has ever taken. How beautiful is that.

At The Fitzwilliam Museum

We are looking at the ways we have creatively problem solved in the past. Everything we look at, we here are looking at the people and the ideas behind the objects.

At Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology

What a privilege to be part of geological time. Time is long. Our lives are rather short.

At Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences

Strength and softness

The hardness of building stone, it needs to be tough. Geological material has formed its strength through being compressed. We are compressed through cancer. We maybe are each made of different stone – some people flint, some people chalk – each strong in different ways.

At Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences

Even if you are a hard stone, if you are hit at the right angle, you will crack.

At Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences

We need to be both soft and strong at different points. It's important to remember not to get stuck in one mode. But to move to what is needed now. But how to know?

At Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences



Authority

(of science, medicine, nature, museums)

The medical environment needs to be professionally reassuring – you need to know this is a place of medicine. But it is also a place of innovation and of healing.

At Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology

What you encounter as you enter the building and cross the threshold is really important. Where am I, what can I expect here?

At Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology

Please don't do wall panels telling us that your new science can save us all. It will save some. But not all. Think about how that makes us feel.

At Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology

What I would be interested in seeing in the new hospital is a picture of the plant, picture of its molecule, accessible clear text about how it is used in cancer treatment, and then for that plant to be outside in the courtyard. These images should be by the doors as you step outside and act as a link between inside and out, the abstract and the real.

At Cambridge University Herbarium

That we preserve, can be careful, deliberate – and that someone has done that with this collection, means we can find a way to do that for the future.

At Cambridge University Herbarium

Acquiring, accruing for the sake of knowledge. In a very lucky space as a civilisation if we have a society doing that.

At Cambridge University Herbarium

This is impressive, this sense of history within plants. There is so much wisdom in there, in a plant.

At Cambridge University Herbarium



Wayfinding

A piece of art in the foyer space, that is a map, tells the story of art in the building. What art is where, and why. E.g. – this space is designed to bring together clinical excellence, research and patient care. This is a place of collaboration, of coming together to make change happen.

At Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences

Really interested in the large (person sized) clay owl in the pot collection. Can we with wayfinding for the building, even if not a complex building, create landmarks? Ways around that are not just signage? How great it is to be able to say to someone, meet you by the owl. A known landmark. A talisman. That is what you remember – the place with the talismans in the hall.

At The Fitzwilliam Museum

Could there be sculptures in the building for navigation – different birds of the surrounding area?

At Museum of Zoology



IDEAS AND CONCEPTS THAT AROSE AT EACH PLACE

Nine Wells Nature Reserve

- How we could bring the outside landscape into the hospital.
- How the landscape and place feels.
- Chalk, clay, the purity of the water.
- The significance of the history of the site.
- The impact of nature and colour on how you feel. Ourselves as part of nature.
- How to direct people to the nature site which is so close to the hospital. Map making.

Cambridge University Botanic Garden

- Resilience. Nature's role in medicine.
- Rare mineral called vaterite discovered here on the leaves of the alpine plant Saxifraga. Vaterite has special properties that make it a superior carrier for medicines – vaterite nanoparticles loaded with anti-cancer drugs offload the drug slowly at sites of cancers, limiting the negative side effects of the drug. Discovery made through a collaboration between Cambridge University Botanic Garden and Sainsbury Laboratory – otherwise only found in some crustaceans, birds' eggs, the inner ears of salmon and meteorites.
- We also focussed on periwinkle. Used to treat leukaemia and lymphoma. Massively increased survival rates.
- Nature as a wise resource.
- Nature as healing. Nature as resilient. Nature as a metaphor for us. Us as nature.



A participant dyes material using the art of tataki zome (pounding flowers) at the University of Cambridge University Botanic Garden

Cambridge University Herbarium

- Lichen – a combination of things. Fungi, bacteria. A destructive thing that in the long run becomes healing.
- Care, preservation, collection of information, climate change, care for nature.
- The combination of human knowledge and treatment through nature.

A participant creates an artwork inspired by specimens at the University of Cambridge Herbarium



Dye Workshop at Mia Sylvia's Studio

- Different materials to use as a natural dyes – red cabbage, hibiscus, black turtle beans, white and red onion skins, avocado stones and skins, eucalyptus, Brazil wood, madder, turmeric, chlorophyll, log wood.
- Soothing of the nervous system through doing.
- Soothing of the nervous system through natural colour
- Being present.

Participants use natural materials, including plants foraged at Nine Wells Nature Reserve, to dye pieces of material.



The Fitzwilliam Museum

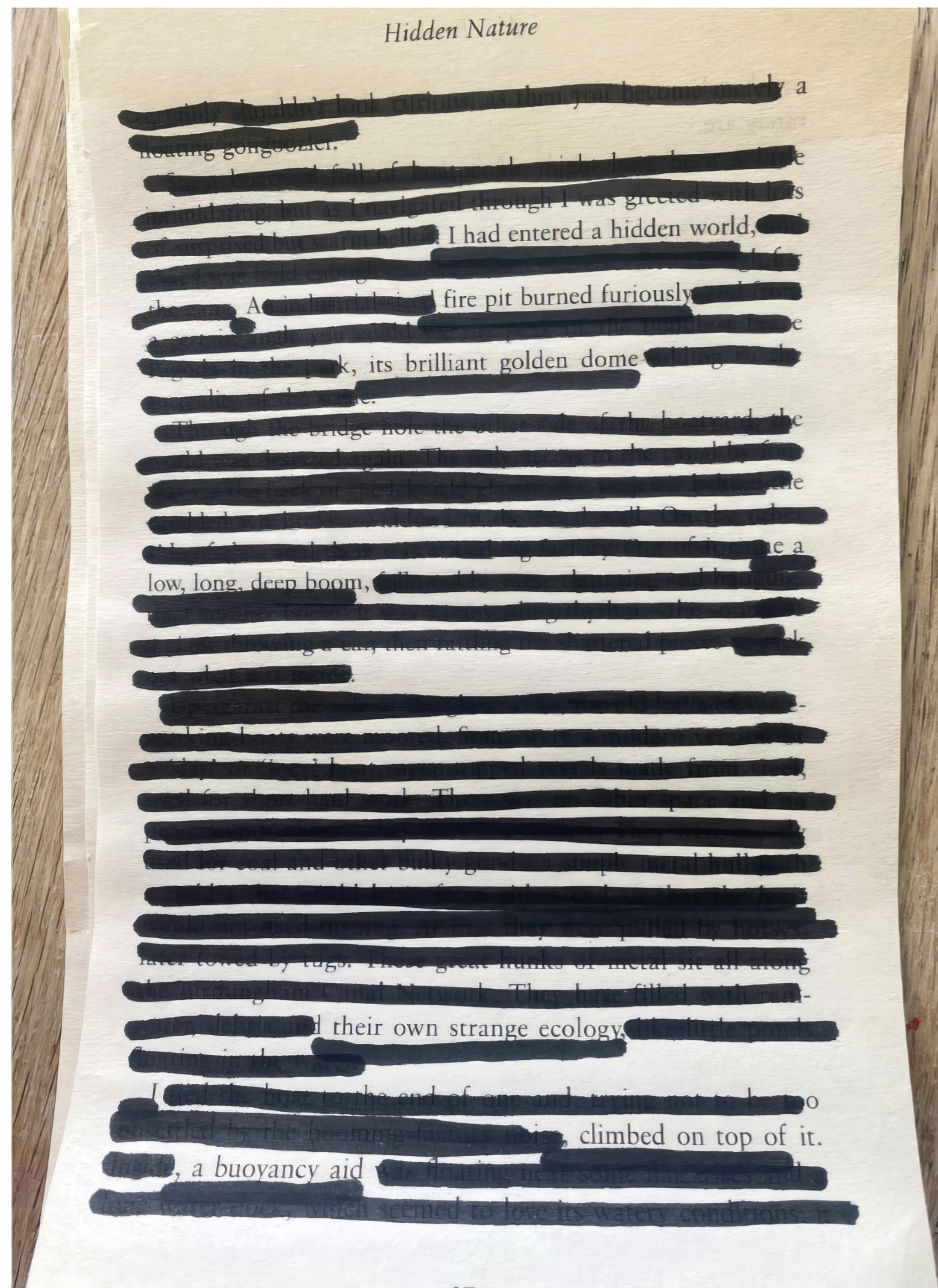
- Clay and its symbolism, pots and their connection to human form. Time. Making. Cultural identity.
- Imperfection. Vulnerability and strength.
- Clay as primal.
- Making with hands as soothing and making present.
- Clay as something that connects across cultures.
- Clay holding the memory of every form it has ever been. Comforting to participants.



An artwork created by a participant at The Fitzwilliam Museum

Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology

- The human instinct to make beautiful useful things – across all times and cultures.
- Marking the body with tattoos – sites of significance.
- Participants really interested in collaborating with curators to co-create display cabinets for hospital – loan scheme. Possibly on theme of fragility and strength.
- Creative problem solving throughout time.
- How some very fragile things have survived – the glass luminous vessels.

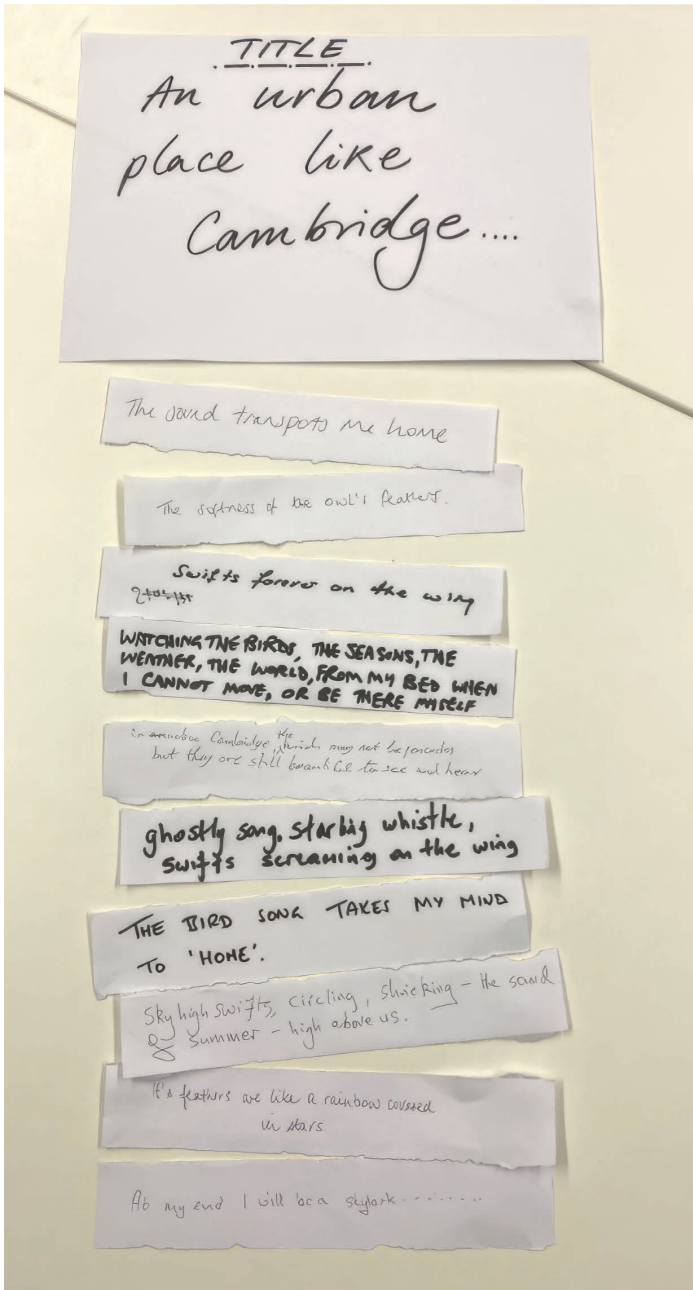


A participant creating a blackout poem at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology

A blackout poem created by a participant at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology

Museum of Zoology

- What nature is in the surrounding environment? What is interesting about that and how can we bring it closer to our hospitals?
- Natural rhythms, birds.
- Birds as a gateway to broader natural history.
- Migratory birds – small animals travel so far.
- The rhythm of things.
- Is there a way to connect people from around the world to the hospital, by offering something such as birdsong that reminds us of home? Where do you go when you hear this?
- People have a very emotional connection to birdsong, often connected to home and place-making.
- Blackbirds – melodic, fruity, earthy song.
- Curlew – sounds ghostly, tremulous sound.
- Bird bones are hollow – adapted to be incredibly light for flying. Singing and birds – their bodies are built to hold song. Bird life around the hospital site is pretty good.
- There is always a cloud of starlings around here in the summer.
 - Owl feathers like the softest velvet. Bird skulls like mother of pearl. Flight feathers are asymmetric.
 - In the winter the UK becomes a bit of a bird haven, hence big clouds of birds arriving. The colder countries empty out to here.
 - Starlings: look like ordinary grey birds but up close they are iridescent. Iridescence, as we discovered in the colour exhibition, signifies moving between worlds and belief systems.
 - The reason they are called starlings is the white spots on their feathers are star shaped.
 - Starlings – entertaining, they have conversational style behaviour between them.
 - Swifts – small birds that fly on the wing for sometimes 10 months at a time. They arrive late April early May. Here for about three months. To feed and breed. In the height of the sky catching insects. Fantastic acrobats. They are the sound of summer – the swifts arriving.
 - Ducks – some ducks in Cambridge are such regulars that the college porters have a schedule to open the gates for them.
 - Goldfinches – have increased in numbers. Twittering song, as if you are cleaning glass very quickly.



A collaborative poem created by participants at the Museum of Zoology

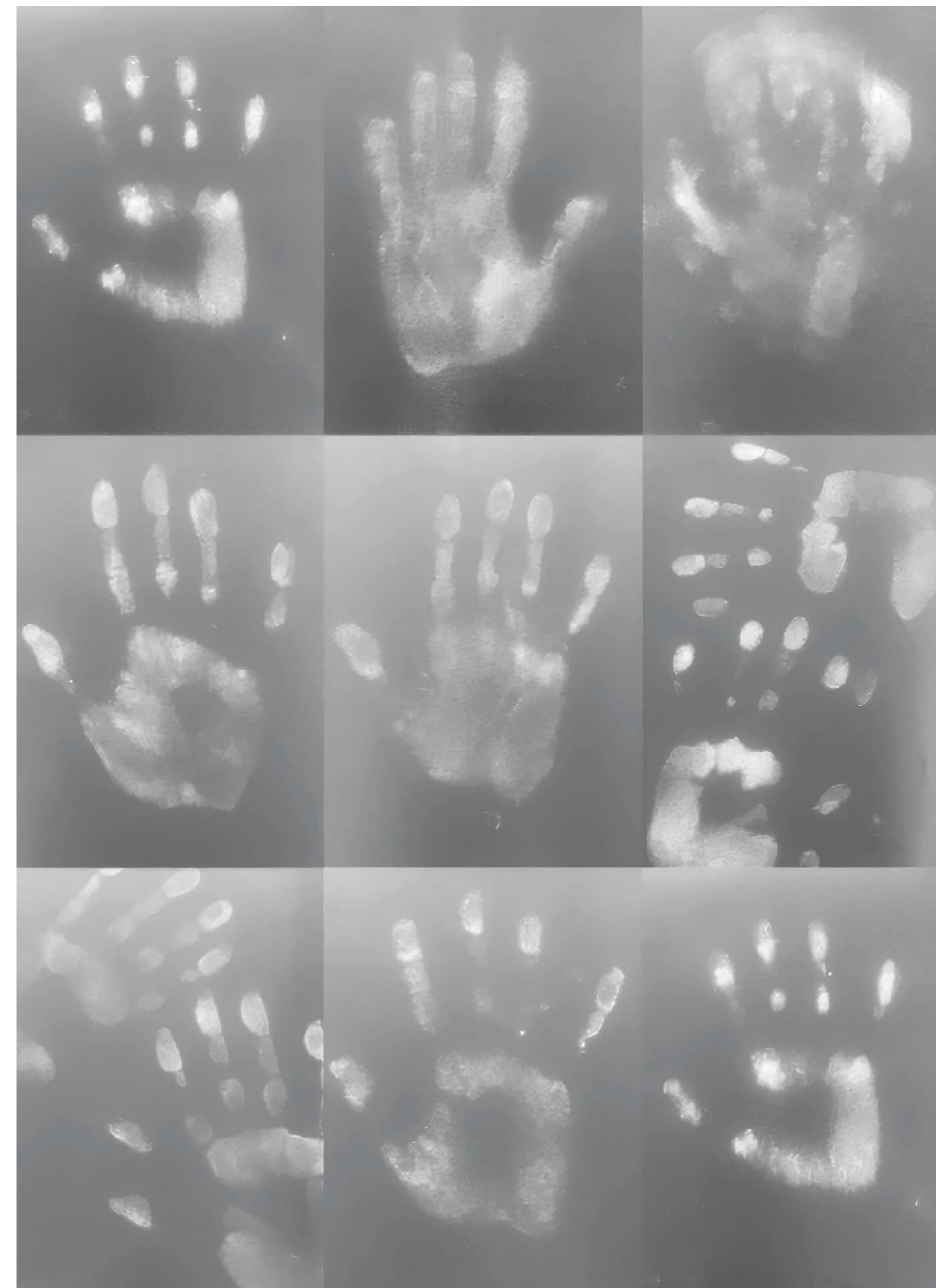
- Wren – machine gun sound.
- Greenfinches – struggling currently.
- Chaffinch – hardly hear them anymore compared with in the past.

Commissions hoped for that emphasise:

- The science of birds. The poetry of birds.
- Bat boxes. Snail shells for solitary bees. The idea of encouraging nature to come closer to the building, so that the patients and staff feel part of things.
- Bee bricks. Swift and bat boxes.
- House Marten cups. Video system to watch nesting around the building.
- Green roof experts, seed mixes that mimic what would have been in the area before.

Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences

- Deep time, longevity, chalk, building blocks of land, buildings and people.
- Small moments in time, shifting outside of yourself.
- Story of the land hospital is built on – exceptionally flat landscape, but the hospital is by a hill, a significant one. Chalk landscape.
- Chalk is made of calcium carbonate, fossilised plankton, formed in a warm sunlit shallow ocean.
- Chalk up close through a microscope looks like lace.
- Longevity. What does a landscape look like 1,000 years back in time and 1,000 in the future. How does that feel – comforting.
- Toughness and softness of stone and foundations.



Artworks created by participants using local chalk at the Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences

A NOTE TO THE READER ON TENSIONS

I hope that you will find inspiration in this document, and that it will help you to navigate the world of arts and culture in oncology environments.

After our workshop at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, the group had a discussion about the balance to be achieved in hospitals of comfort and softening hard edges, but also the reassurance of coming into a state-of-the-art facility and it having an entrance that announces that status confidently. Neither corporate nor homely.

Through this work I have noticed the need to find a balance between...

order		homeliness
privacy		observation
uncertainty		certainty
instruction		choice

Arts and culture in oncology environments need to land somewhere in the middle – to be something else.

Hannah Jane Walker

Hannah Jane Walker is an award-winning writer, performer and poet with a socially engaged practice, often collaborating with visual arts organisations and artists. She makes innovative cross-art-form work, so far in the following formats: theatre, poetry, non-fiction, radio, public art. Her work deals with emotion, vulnerability and being a person. It has been praised for its humour, sincerity and poetry. Walker was Associate Artist for the National Centre for Writing in 2019, Artist in Residence at Cambridge Biomedical Campus in 2021, and in 2023 is an Associate Artist Facilitator for Kettle's Yard, Cambridge, and the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich. Walker is a regular visiting artist working with patients and staff at Cambridge University Hospitals.

www.hannahjanewalker.co.uk | [@hanwalker](https://twitter.com/hanwalker)

CUH Arts Shaping care through creativity

CUH Arts is Cambridge University Hospitals' arts-in-health programme, dedicated to shaping care through creativity.

We strive to humanise health, inspire hope and promote wellbeing by providing excellent creative and cultural opportunities for our patients, staff, visitors and wider community. Embedded within one of the world's leading hospital trusts our diverse, person-centred, multi-disciplinary programme of live, participatory and visual arts is facilitated and managed by an expert team of arts professionals in collaboration with artists and cultural partners.

cuh.arts@nhs.net | www.cuh.nhs.uk/arts | [@CUHArtsNHS](https://twitter.com/CUHArtsNHS)

It feels amazing to be useful for something. After a process like cancer, where you have been made to feel redundant, passive, and irrelevant, to be asked for my opinion on something that can make it a better experience for others. I feel very emotional talking about that now. I don't know if this will go on to become anything useful, whether it will inform anything the artists actually do, but I am trying to send something forwards. I am trying to help someone else, over there. And I really appreciate being asked to share my experience. It gives it value, other than just how hard it has been.

Participant quote
