



Evaluation Report

Lucy Burscough, July 2023

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ENGLAND**



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1 1 Project Summary

Human hands are remarkably sophisticated and adaptable tools, unparalleled in the natural world for the breadth of their capability. From the eloquent finesse of a sign language user in full flow, to the nimble picking of a Spanish guitar, the speedy reactions of a teenage texter, or the life-saving precision of microsurgery, our hands are truly phenomenal instruments. Whatever use we put them to, they act as our primary interface with the physical world and with each other.

We use our hands to nurture, to love, to pray, to dance, to calm, to fight, to restrain, to cling, to connect. Dab Hands celebrates the extraordinary relationship that we have with our hands and the value of the skills that can be acquired by repetition and practice, whilst acknowledging the grief and frustration that can disrupt that relationship when illness, trauma, or old age affects our dexterity.



Figure 1 That'll Need Stitching, detail.

For almost fifteen years, Lucy Burscough has designed and delivered ambitious arts for health projects collaborating with hospitals¹², museums and galleries³, educational establishments⁴, and charitable organisations⁵. Lucy creates art with medical and social themes in public and clinical spaces with the intention of boosting wellbeing and telling patients' stories. Previous projects have been given an award for 'Outstanding Contribution to the Promotion and Research of Arts for Health' from The Royal Society of Public Health, have featured in national newspapers⁶, and won a Manchester Culture Award⁷. Lucy has spoken internationally about her work with museums and galleries at the invitation of The British Council⁸. Her paintings are held by corporate collections⁹ and have been exhibited at the National Portrait Gallery and on London Underground.

Dab Hands placed Lucy as Artist in Residence at Manchester Museum. The project was funded by Arts Council England and The National Lottery in the Spring of 2020, just as the UK went into its first lockdowns due to the Covid 19 pandemic. Consequently, Lucy made artworks from home, at the Manchester Museum when lockdowns allowed, and throughout the Museum's period of

closure for renovation. Delays to the reopening extended the project by a year. These circumstances meant that the project was very different from that which was originally envisioned and couldn't be built around Lucy's model of making art in public places, including hospital and gallery settings, where 'art production is performance and conversation is key'. However, this challenge meant that new ways of working were developed resulting in 53 new artworks being produced, along with 124 engagement activities, which involved more than 1,770 participants directly engaging with the project by attending workshops, festivals, exhibition tours or collaborating to create artworks for the exhibition.

2 Exhibition Artworks: Production and Co-curation Stories

2.1 That'll Need Stitching

To engage with participants during lockdown, Lucy facilitated a community artwork embroidering the anatomical hand drawings of consultant hand surgeon and artist, Donald Sammut. This large-scale community project targeted specific groups with the intention of boosting wellbeing & community spirit at a time when they were at risk of poor mental health. 300 kits were posted out, resulting in embroidered contributions from exactly 200 medical students, healthcare workers, students out of mainstream education & older residents of Northwest region. The embroideries became the 'skin' of a large sculpture of a sewing hand, that celebrates the skills and dexterity which are developed when one spends time doing craft activities and how they are reflected, both in movement and skill acquisition, in surgical practice.



Figure 2 Posting the kits



Figure 3 The kits' contents



Figure 4 The returned embroideries

“As I was stitching, I was thinking about the complexity of the human hand, its dexterity, its muscle memory, and resilience even as it ages. I enjoyed the challenge of my piece, and being part of a larger project in these days when isolation is so prevalent.”.



Figure 5 That'll Need Stitching, working in progress 1. Ink and watercolour on paper, Caroline Johnson, 2021



Figure 6 That'll Need Stitching, working in progress 2. Ink and watercolour on paper, Caroline Johnson, 2021



Figure 7 That'll Need Stitching, working in progress 3. Ink and watercolour on paper, Caroline Johnson, 2021

"It occupied my mind and gave me a focus for the day".



Figure 8 That'll Need Stitching, multimedia, 2000-22

"It really helped me... I lost two of my grandparents within 4 days of each other and it gave me something to do where I could leave reality and just focus everything on something creative."



Figure 9 That'll Need Stitching, detail.

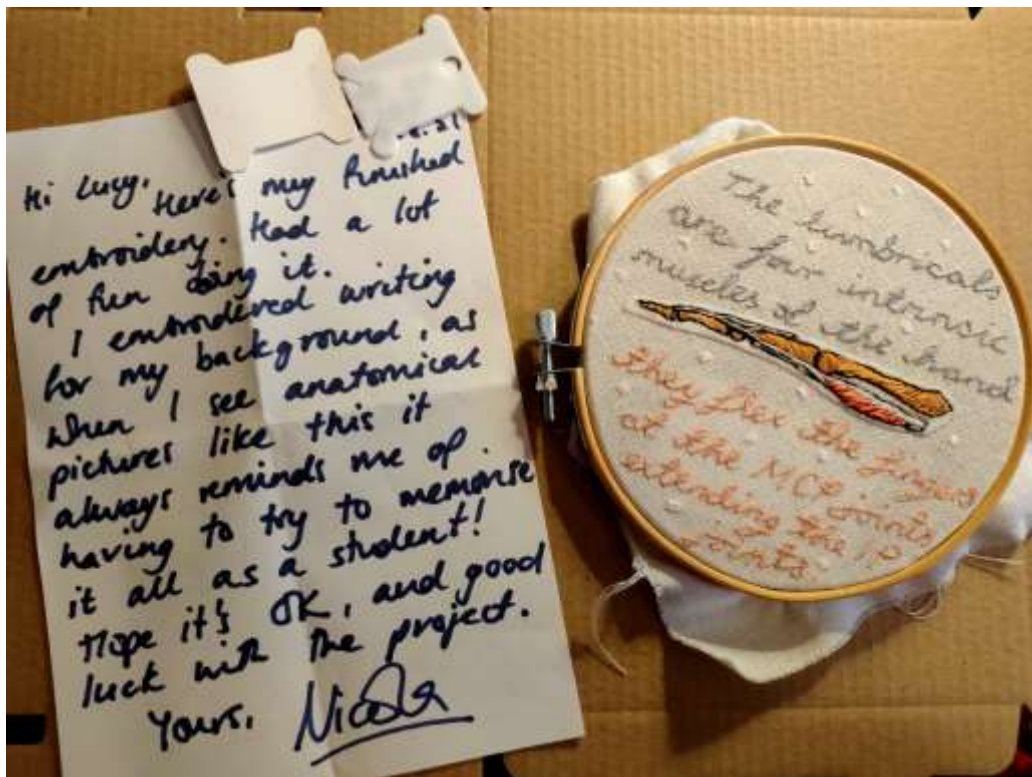


Figure 10 Embroidery returned with a letter

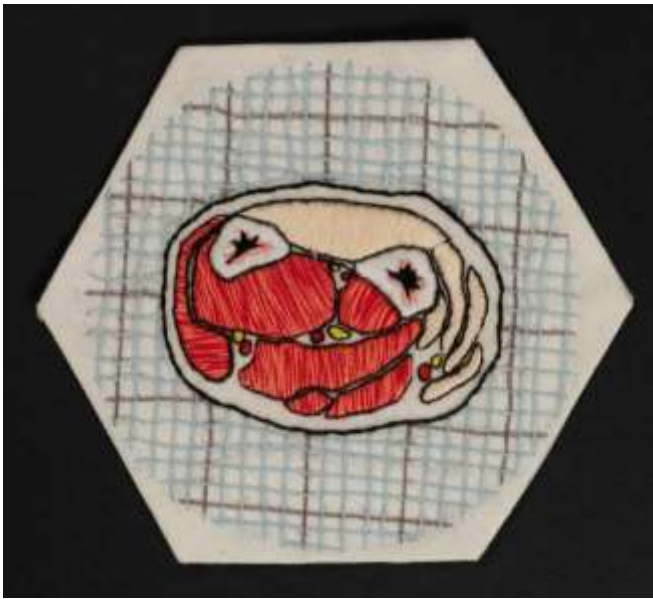


Figure 11 Embroidery of a cross section of the wrist with graph paper by Clare Boothby, epidemiologist



Figure 12 Embroidery of first dorsal interosseous muscle with suture stitches by Kath Hamlin, surgeon



Figure 14 Embroidery of the 'secret compartment' by Prof. Alice Roberts, biological anthropologist, author and broadcaster



Figure 13 Embroidery of the palmar carpal ligaments by Catherine Heap



Figure 16 Embroidery of the carpal tunnel by Pamela Headon



Figure 15 Embroidery of the metacarpophalangeal ligaments by Jo Lorain

2.1.1 That'll Need Stitching Evaluation

2.1.1.1 Methodology

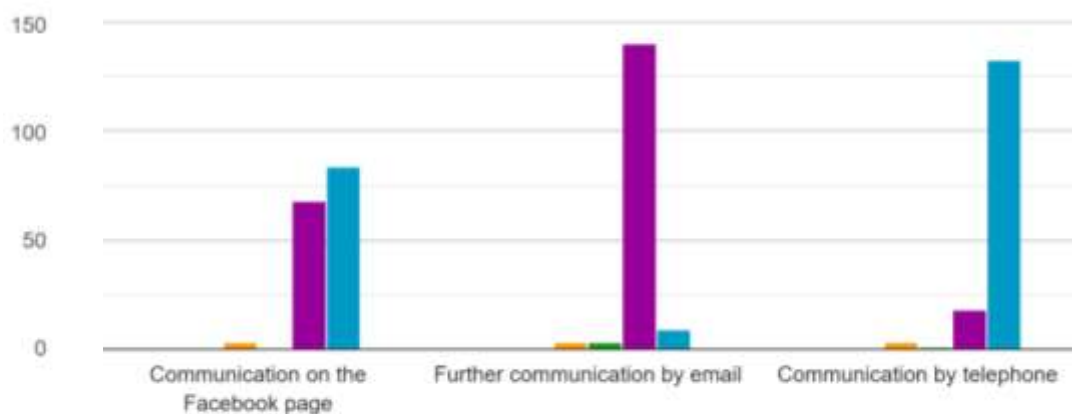
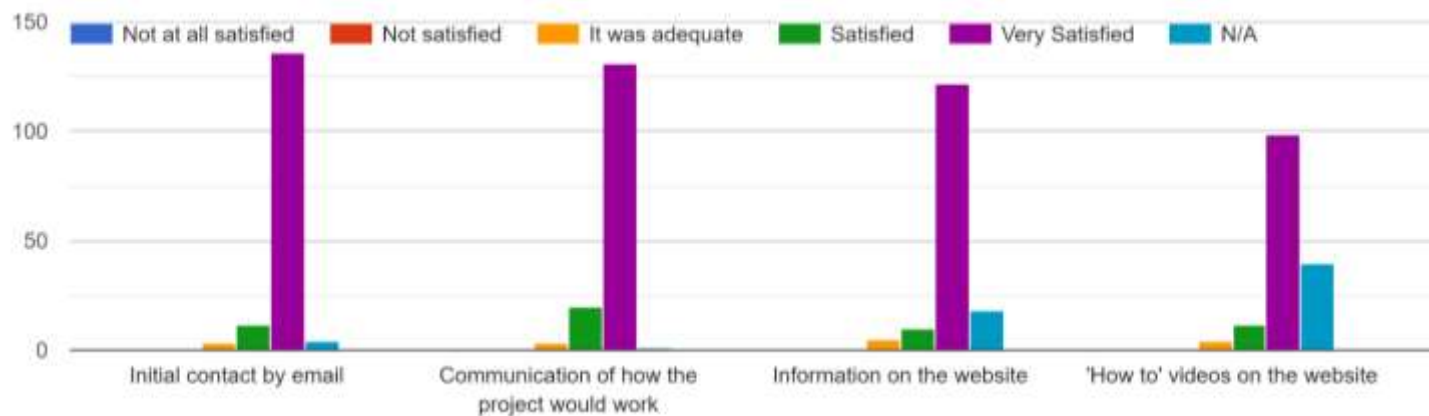
299 kits were sent out. 200 embroideries were returned: 53% NHS staff/medical students (majority from University of Manchester), 27% older people from the NW region (mostly women and former members of the Embroiderer's Guild); 5% neurodiverse students at Project Inc; 5% KS3 Broadwalk P.R.U; 10% 'others' including educators, artists & Prof Alice Roberts, biological anthropologist and broadcaster.

Most of the stitchers were from Manchester and the Northwest of England but this way of working allowed for a much wider geographical reach, with embroideries also sent out to London, York, Wales, The Isle of Man, Ireland and France.

Feedback from the embroiderers was collected via online survey¹⁰, on the return of their embroidery. The survey consisted of a mixture of multi-choice, rating scale and open-ended questions. There were 155 respondents.

2.1.1.2 Communication

Q1a. How satisfied were you with communication?



Q1b. Any further comments about communication?

Highlights:

Excellent communication, really positive. I particularly enjoyed the videos too. Really high quality and engaging. I'm sharing all the time about the project, it's brilliant!

Communication has been excellent and receiving a message to confirm receipt of the embroidery with individual feedback on my work went above and beyond.

I have been so impressed with the whole process - the communication has been timely, informative and personal. I particularly appreciated the email from Lucy once she had received my piece. I have enjoyed seeing the other pieces on the Facebook page too.

The info on the website was excellent, both on the scientific/anatomy side and the how-to videos which were very helpful. I don't really use Facebook, so I didn't remember to look there!

All the information needed without too many emails.

Lucy was super prompt with her replies and so enthusiastic about the project.

Lucy has been very hands on and obviously put a great deal of work into this project.

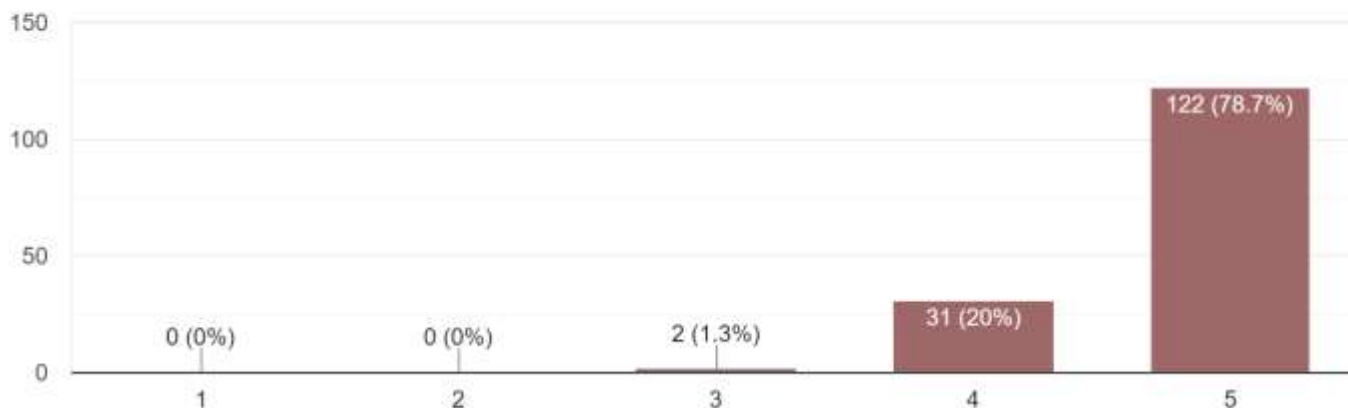
Lucy was very welcoming and enthusiastic about me joining the project which really helped to spur me on. And the how-to videos were a great starting point for figuring out how to tackle the piece.

2.1.1.3 The Postal Kits

Q2. Range 1=Poor, 5=Excellent

How did you find the contents of the kit?

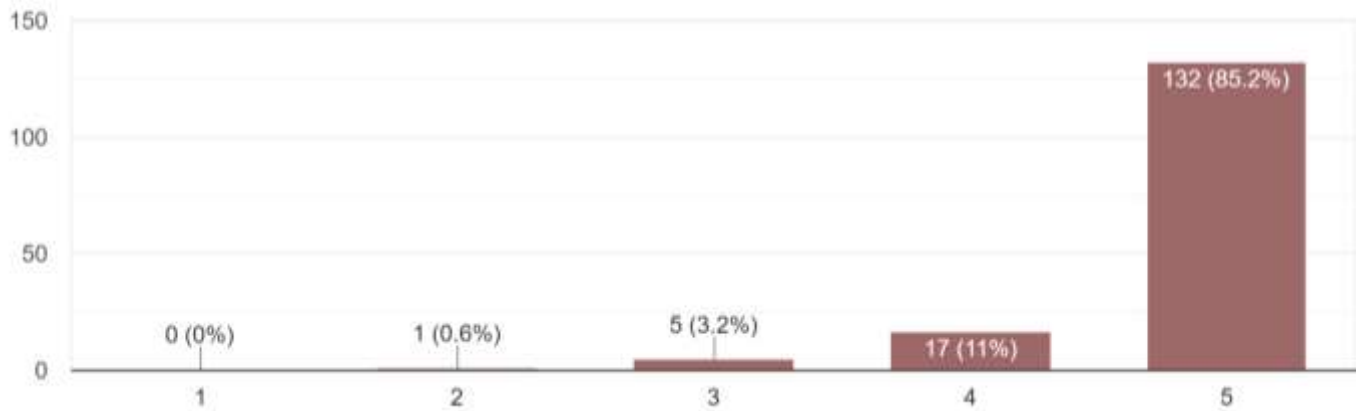
155 responses



Q3. Range 1=Disappointing, 5=Excellent

How was the embroidery image that you received?

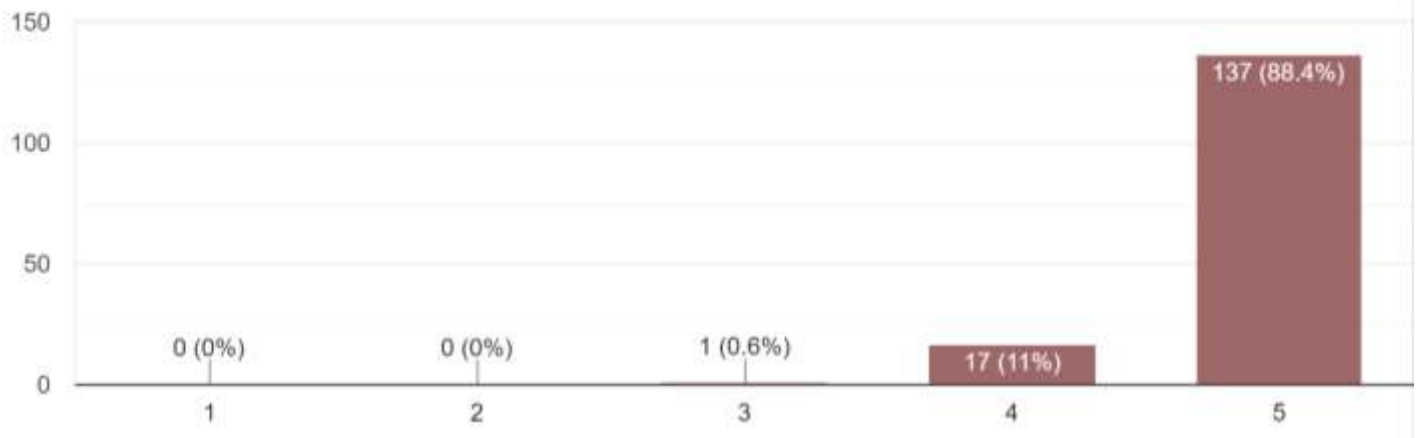
155 responses



Q3. Range 1=Poor, 5=Excellent

How was the written information about the image?

155 responses



Q5. Any further comments about the kit?

Highlights:

Great kits. Generous with needles, threader was a good inclusion, just enough thread so little wastage, and an embroidery hoop was super useful. All very neatly packaged and really liked the inclusion of the introductory card and details on the anatomy.

Couldn't have done with without the traceable image on the fabric too! Kit really over-delivered!

I asked Lucy for one with not too much detail as leave rheumatoid arthritis in my hands and the kit that was sent was perfect.

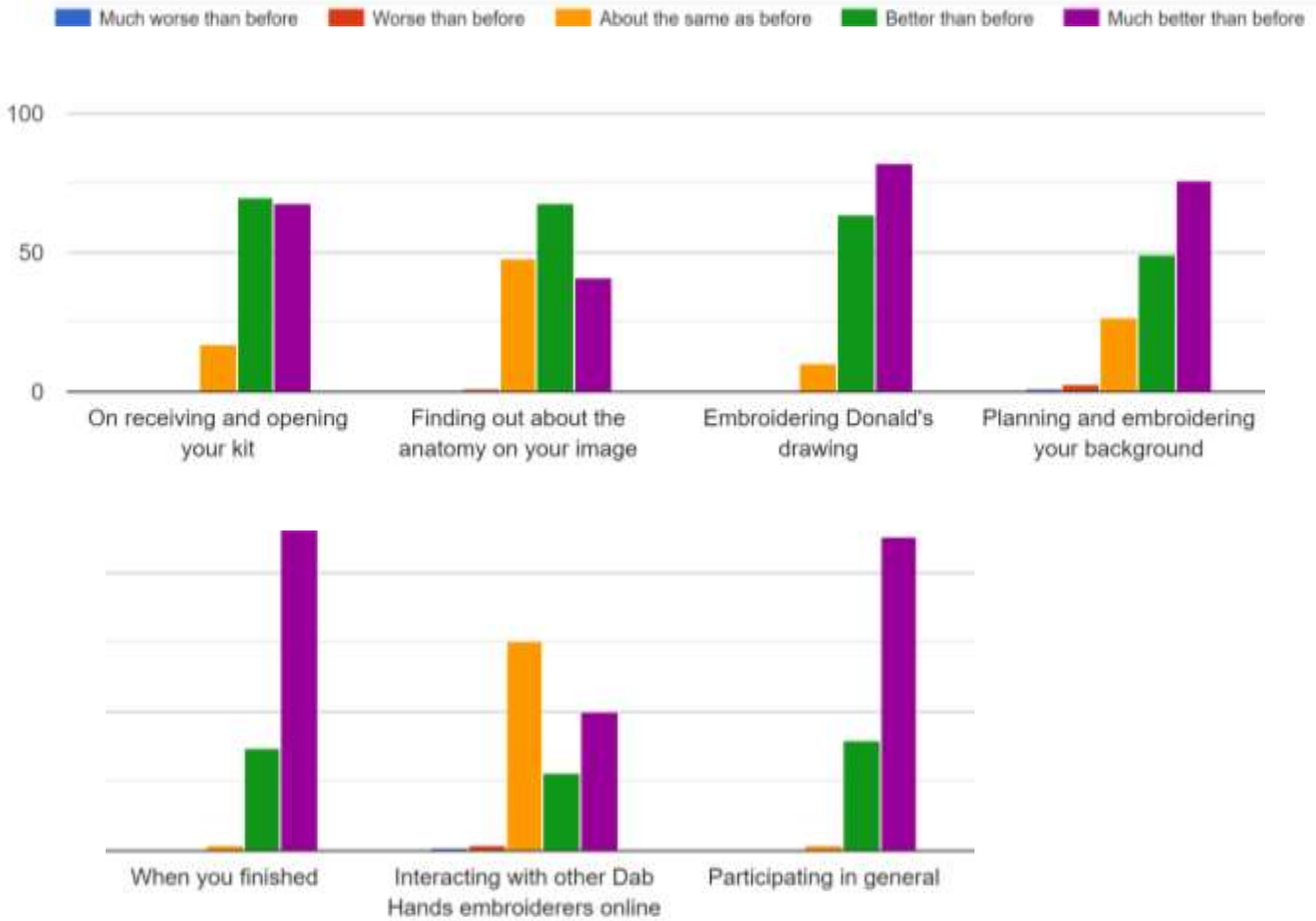
Well-constructed, comprising everything needed to begin straight away.

It was good to receive the kit complete with the frame, threads and needles and instructions. Also, the image in colour was helpful in deciding where to use the colours and which stitches to use.

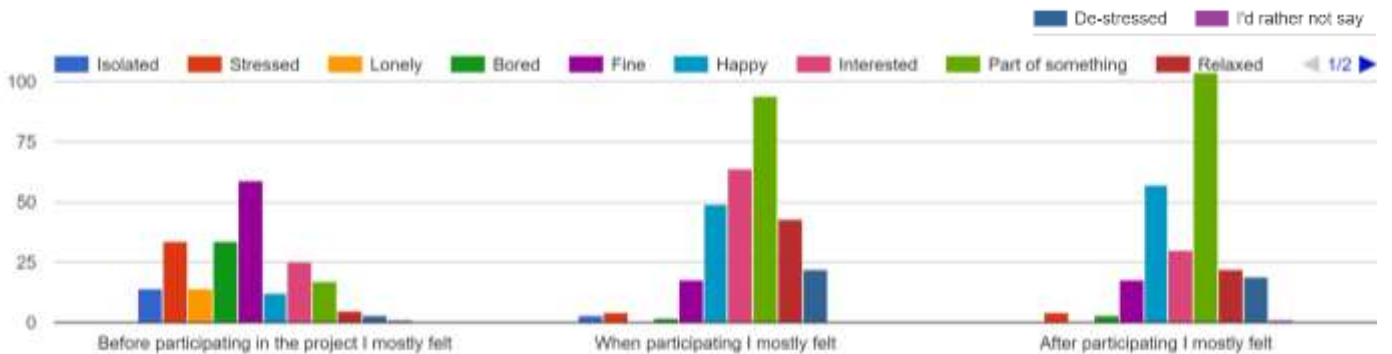
2.1.1.4 Wellbeing

- Of 154 respondents, 73% said that participating made them feel 'much better than before'.
- 25% felt 'better than before' and
- 1% felt 'the same as before'.
- No negative responses.
- 82% learnt something about anatomy with 36% feeling they learnt a lot.

Q6. How did participating make you feel?



Q.7 Many people have struggled with lockdown. Did you think that participating with Dab Hands was helpful?



Q.8 Have you anything else to say about how participating in the Dab Hands Embroidery project made you feel?

Teachers:

I am a secondary school art teacher and have not embroidered before. This has given me the confidence to include an embroidery element in my GCSE Identity project. I began by thinking I needed to learn how to become an embroiderer. However, I then began to stitch like I love to draw. I was tempted to pull out the fussy stitches I had started with but decided not to. The hand was a working process of how I have learnt to embroider and love embroidering as an artist and a drawer. I became completely absorbed and peaceful. It gave me time to think about art and the work I want to create moving on in the future. I cannot thank Lucy enough for this opportunity. It is so fortuitous that I love drawing hands and this project came along.

Artists:

I often lead projects and have been posting kits out through lockdown, so it was a great experience for me to be on the other end of a project, I loved getting the kit through the post with all the materials and clear instructions. The image was not what I was expecting, and it was interesting to find out what it was exactly! I found times to relax and stitch which I wouldn't have done had I just been stitching my own project. It was great to be part of it and I also like the insight it gave me into being a member of a distance group project.

It made me feel good to be contributing to something creative and worthwhile, especially during this difficult time. I am a textile artist but had felt unable to focus on my own work during lockdown due to stress/anxiety, so it felt great to be able to do something creative and constructive for someone else and contribute to a larger project.

Medical Students:

It was a much-needed break from revision for my medical finals - an activity to wind down. In our medical school portfolios, we are required to reflect on how we look after our well-being, using the NHS 5 areas of well-being, and I used this project to reflect on. It especially encompassed the areas of "Connect with other people", "Learn new skills" (I had never done any embroidery before), and "Pay attention to the present moment (mindfulness)". All in all, this project has helped me both personally in terms of my well-being, as well as providing me something to reflect on in my portfolio!

I found doing the embroidery really stress relieving. It took my mind off my busy and stressful schedule at medical school.

Medical Practitioners:

My clinical work was very busy, and I was finding it very hard to unwind. I don't think I would have been able to find a kit like this, and so having something that was anatomically accurate and very relevant to my work, as well as being part of a wider group, gave me back my enthusiasm for crafting when I really needed it. It has been a big help in terms of relaxing and also feeling happier in general. Thank you very much.

I've spent time working with Donald Sammut and looking at his operation notes, so it was great to embroider his artwork.

Crafters for health:

It really helped me over lockdown, especially at the end when I was finishing it. I lost two of my grandparents within 4 days of each other and it gave me something to do where I could leave reality and just focus everything on something creative.

I have postnatal depression and anxiety and participating has given me something to focus on and helped me find time to do something I enjoy.

I'm in awe of the work of Donald Sammut and his colleagues and interested in the supposition that we needleworkers have the dexterity he requires of his students. Interested in muscle memory too and the effects ageing is having on my own hands- Carpal tunnels, snapped tendons, broken fingers and arthritis! I'm really interested to see the final sculpture.

Having Dupuytren's myself I was keen to do this project. Donald's drawings made the hand look beautiful whereas my real hand is ugly. I liked the idea of embroidering to make a piece of stitching to look creative/beautiful.

New crafters:

It has been a huge discovery for me - finding something that interests me AND settles my mind has been hard but this is it. I've bought new materials to keep practicing embroidery. I'm so grateful for the project!

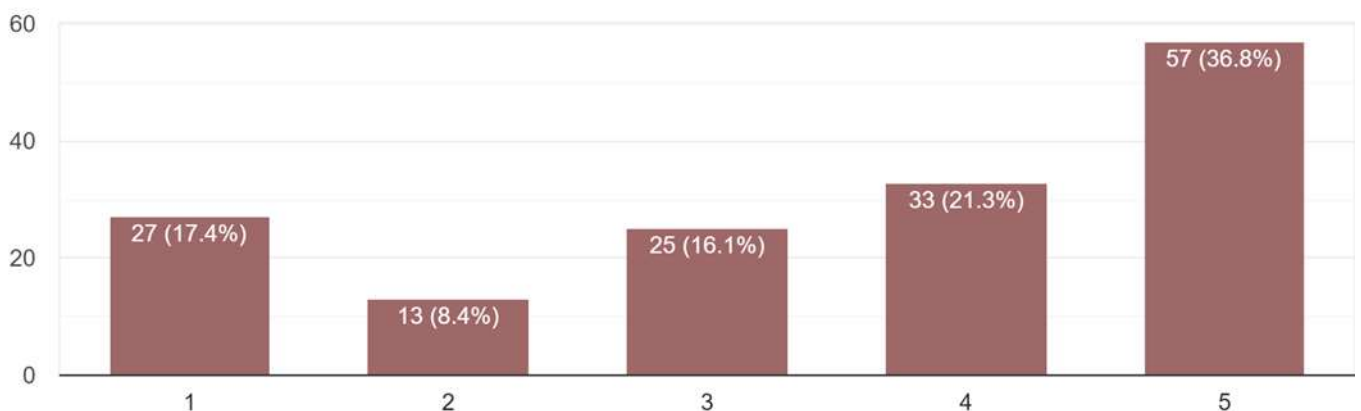
It was lovely to try something I would never have considered embroidering and to see so many different aspects of hands.

This project filled me with enthusiasm. It was such an interesting project - probably the most interesting I have taken part in. It really did make me feel part of something worthwhile.

2.1.1.5 Learning

Did you learn anything new about the anatomy of the hand?

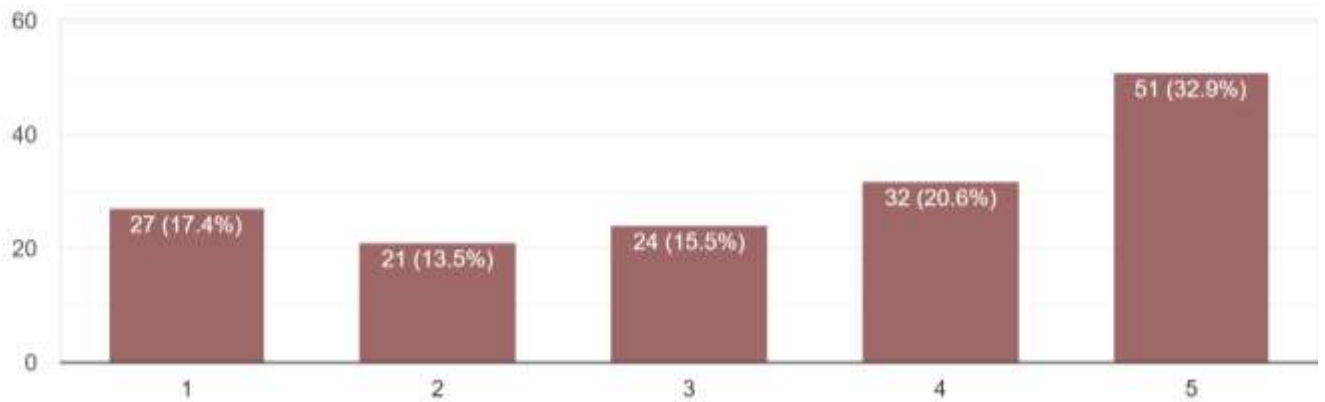
155 responses



Q9. Range: 1=Nothing, 5=Loads

Did you learn anything new about how to embroider?

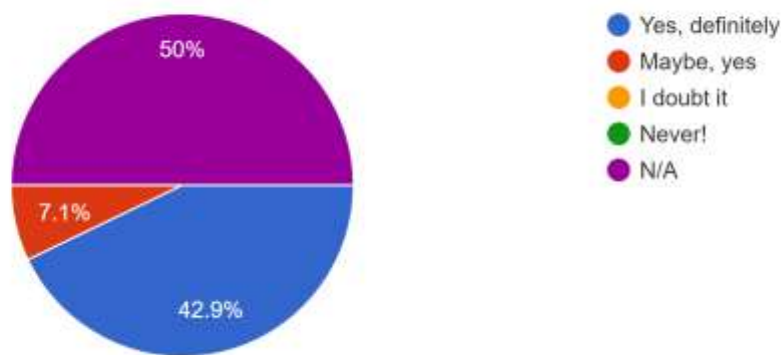
155 responses



Q.10

If you are new to embroidery do you think you will try more embroidery in the future?

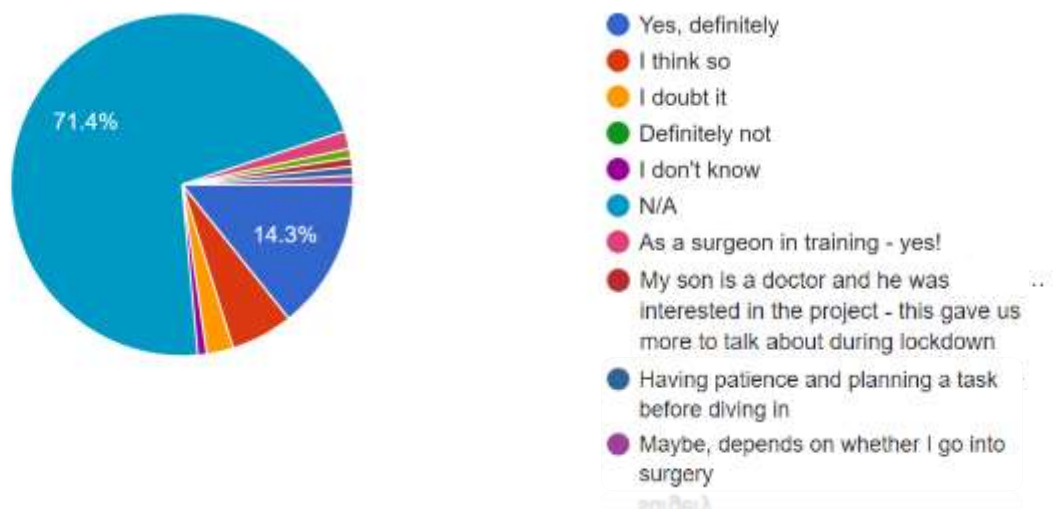
140 responses



Q.11

If you are a medical student, do you think that embroidering will help to develop skills that could help with your medical practice?

119 responses



Q.12 Have you anything else to add?

It was such a great idea and I'm sure engaged a lot of people who would not normally have communication with each other. It has brought together knowledge of anatomy of a fascinating part of the body and creativity for which you need that part! A very clever concept in so many ways. It has been a pleasure to take part.

Great inspired project, love the art/science mix. Lots of interested NHS staff from the Trust I work at. Beautiful work that everyone is creating. Lucy is open, generous, ambitious with innovative, credible ideas, fantastic opportunity to be part of a project that means you create, learn and enjoy!

A big thank you to Lucy, the Arts Council and the National Lottery! I'm looking forward to seeing the finished product / project.

It has helped with dexterity and fine finger movement (some days my hands ached!) so there have been physical benefits as well as cognitive (concentrating, thinking, problem solving, learning, etc) and mental health (mindfulness, purpose, occupation etc). Thank you so much!

A wonderfully well-co-ordinated project. Lucy made everybody feel part of it; gave good clear instructions and information. The timing given to complete the project was also very reasonable without any enforcement. This project brought people together and helped support my mental health and general well-being.

Just a very big thank you. This project has so much value to me, beyond what I can convey with words.

I really enjoyed doing it and was pleased to be taking part in an interesting project with an exhibition to look forward to.

I can't wait to see the exhibition. I felt like someone had given me a present when I received that lovely kit. I would do this again at any opportunity. Thank you.



Figure 17 The metacarpals and carpus by Ellen Lucius

I would like to congratulate the artist on her inspiration as it presents a unique association of art and science. It focuses on our relationship with embroidery and the skill that we have 'at our fingertips' whether we are using a needle for craft or for surgical purposes and the importance of protecting this and sharing it with a wider community.

It has been lovely to be part of the group, and to see the fantastic work that others have done. I'm feeling much more enthusiasm and am so happy to be back to crafting again! Thank you very, very much.

2.1.2 That'll Need Stitching 3D Model and Website

Manchester Museum is part of the University of Manchester. Computer Science students Lucy Jefford and Adelina Voynova developed a website¹¹ and 3d digital model¹² of the sculpture as their final year project. This allowed users to explore the model and read about the project. Clicking on an embroidery opened a window that showed who had embroidered the image and more information about the anatomy was accessible. All the embroideries were also searchable by embroiderer or anatomy.

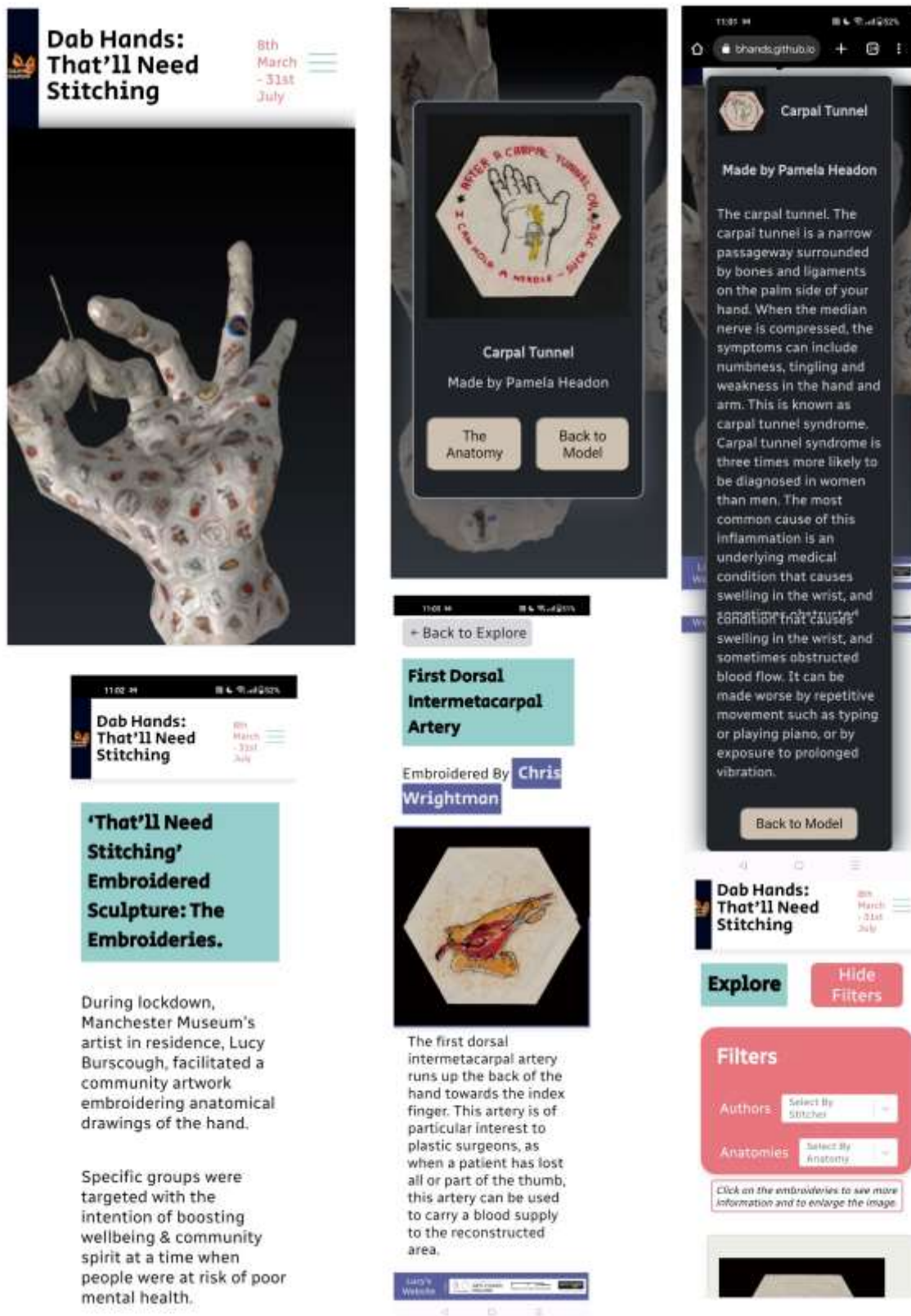


Figure 18 That'll Need Stitching 3D model and website, screenshots

2.2 'Gee with Crassula 'Morgan's Beauty'' on Succulent Planter

Lucy Burscough, Kate Egglestone-Wirtz and Manchester Museum Volunteers

English Lime and mixed media collage

The Dab Hands project was scheduled to begin in March 2020, rather inauspiciously in the first week of the first covid lockdown. The pandemic changed everyone's lifestyles in those early frightening weeks, so Lucy found her first subject close at hand, her partner Charlie 'Gee' Davies.

This was not just a collaboration of convenience, however. Gee is a devoted plant-lover whose relationship with his collection of succulents, including nearly 300 aloes, offered a satisfying occupation during his time on furlough and was deeply beneficial to his wellbeing. It is that nurturing and skilful touch; the thoughtful assessment of when to water, when to feed; the careful handling when repotting; that Lucy celebrates with this carving.

The museum is committed to operating sustainably whenever possible. This planter started life in the museum shop displaying pocket-money items for our younger visitors. During our refurbishment it was upcycled by volunteers working with assemblage and collage artist, Kate Eggleston-Wirtz using recycled museum publications and images of succulent plants chosen by Gee from the Herbarium collection.

The plants are different types of succulent and include some of Gee's own treasured aloes.



Figure 19 'Gee with Crassula 'Morgan's Beauty''



Figure 20 'Gee with Crassula 'Morgan's Beauty'' on Succulent Planter

2.3 The Barry Bate Collection

2.3.1 'Barry Bate, Spoon Carver', Oil on oak, Lucy Burscough, 2021



Figure 21 Barry Bate portrait. Oil on oak

Barry Bate became involved with Dab Hands after meeting Lucy at a craft workshop in the Maggie's Cancer Support Centre. Lucy commented on the beautifully carved wooden spoon Barry wore around his neck. It was one of his.

The conversation that followed was as wide-ranging as it was fascinating, moving from spoon-carving to the craftsmen of 15th century Scandinavia, to the treasures of the Mary Rose and the teaching of crafts in German schools. It was only when Lucy asked Barry if he would like to play a part in Dab Hands that he shared his tragic news: his doctors at The Christie had given him a terminal diagnosis and he was nearing the end of his life.

2.3.2 Barry's Sloyd Knife

Handle carved by Barry Bate to fit his hand.

Despite his diagnosis, Barry was still willing to be involved with the project. He not only shared of the techniques of spoon carving but also his experiences of undergoing debilitating treatment regimes, of facing mortality and the practical but pressing desire to redistribute his treasured tools. His ability to scratch out of scraps of humour in the darkest of these tales, was testament to his wonderfully warm character.



Figure 22 Barry's sloyd knife

2.3.3 Japanese Tea Making Set



In his final months, Barry met with Lucy, when lockdowns allowed, to record interviews and capture images. He was eventually able to visit the museum to look at the spoons held in the collection and share his thoughts on how they were made. He picked out his favourite for display: this beautiful Japanese tea making set, elegantly formed to fit in the hand and so delicate as to be almost translucent.

Figure 23 Japanese Tea Making Set

2.3.4 'Barry's Visit to the Museum I/II' by Caroline Johnson, Mixed media on paper, 2021



Figure 24 Barry's Visit I, Caroline Johnson

Barry's visit to the museum is captured beautifully in these illustrations by Caroline Johnson.

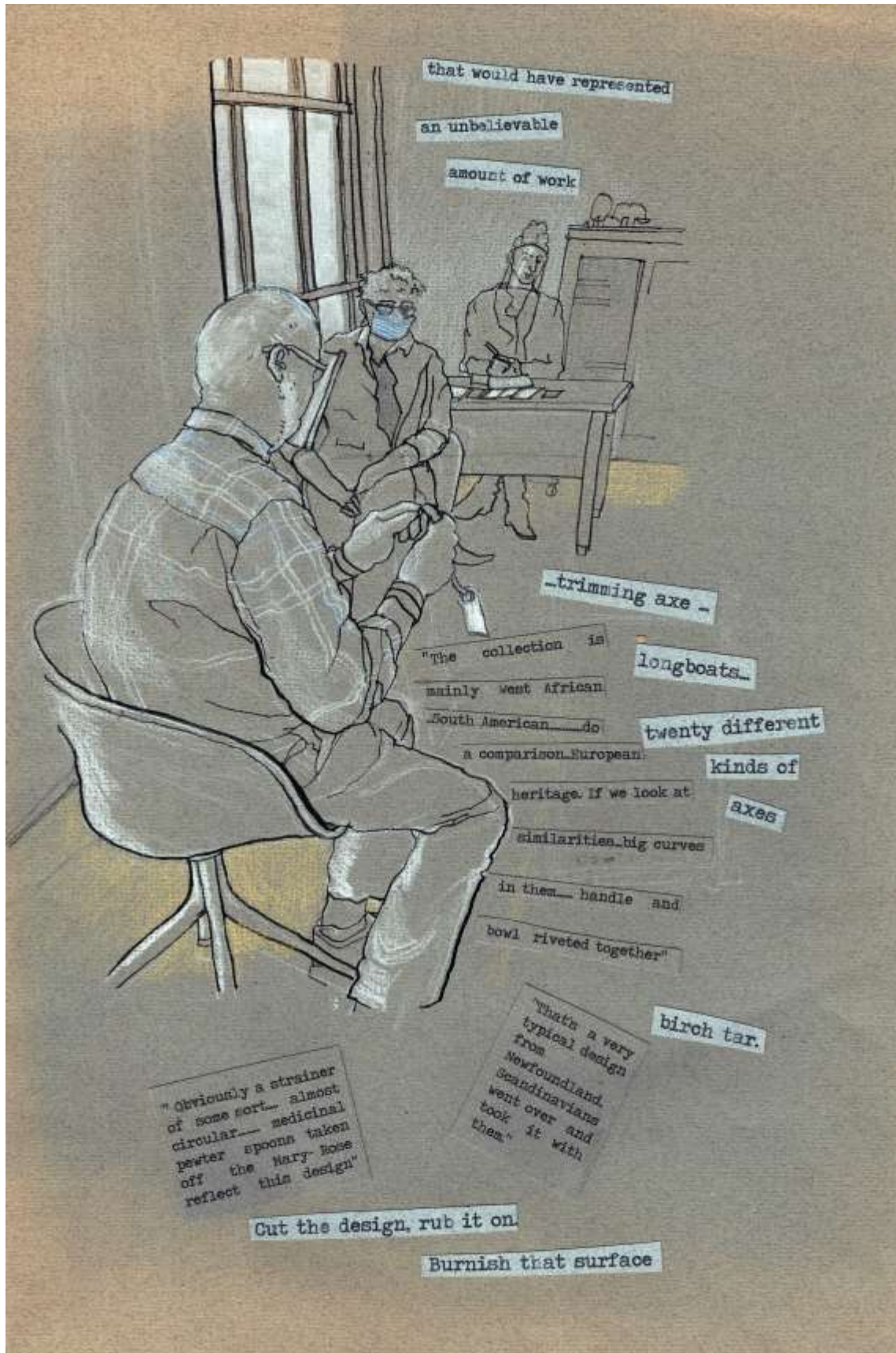


Figure 25 Barry's Visit II, Caroline Johnson

2.3.5 Japanese Woodworking Tools and Ivory Shoe-Maker

These objects highlight the extent to which exquisite craftsmanship is revered within Japanese culture, as acknowledged by Barry when choosing the Japanese tea set included here.



Figure 26 Japanese wood carving tools

Figure 27 An ivory figure of a Japanese shoe carver

2.3.6 'The Last Dream', Barry Bate, Mixed media, 2021



Figure 28 'The Last Dream' by Barry Bate

“My name is Barry Bate. I have been a ‘maker’ all my life – an artisan rather than an artist. Recently I have been working with ‘green’ (unseasoned) timber making bowls, spoons, spreaders and shrink pots using carving axes and knives.

18 months ago, I was diagnosed with terminal pancreatic cancer. I was offered treatment, and this involved chemotherapy. Eventually I had to stop taking the treatment due to the neuropathy which manifested itself in my feet, calves, forearms, and hands. The sculpture is an attempt to convey the strange experience of having continuous ‘pins and needles’ in your hands and fingers and how disconcerting this can be. Nothing now feels like it has done for the last 60 years.”

2.3.7 The Stages of Carving a Spoon by Barry Bate, 2021



Figure 29 The Stages of Carving a Spoon by Barry Bate

In the late Spring of 2021, despite losing feeling in his hands due to chemotherapy, Barry made his last carvings, the set of spoons, displayed here, that describe the stages of spoon carving. Barry revelled in sharing the joy that can be found in working with wood and seeing the bowl or spoon that was hidden within, in connecting, through making, with the craftspeople of the past and in sparking that interest in those who were lucky enough to cross paths with him. Barry died in August 2021.

2.3.8 'Barry's Hands at Work', English Lime, Lucy Burscough and Barry Bate 2021-22



This carving of Barry's hands was made before and after his death. Barry carved the spoon and the tool's handle and Lucy carved Barry's hands at work.

Figure 30 'Barry's Hands at Work'

2.4 Sue Peel's Collection

2.4.1 'Sue's Macrame', Oil on linen, Lucy Burscough 2020



Figure 31 'Sue's Macrame'

Sue Peel is a keen crafter and has been a regular at Lucy's creative workshops. Sue uses crafting to help maintain mobility in her left hand.

"I was born with Spina-Bifida which means my spinal cord didn't develop properly in the womb, Scoliosis which is an S shaped curvature of the spine, a club foot and my hands in a fist like position. The scoliosis restricted some movement in my left arm. From birth my Mum and Nan did a lot of physio on the hands to uncurl them. It was noticeable that my left hand wasn't quite right in that my thumb always sat inwards and the movement wasn't as fluid."

Sometimes Sue finds some elements of the activities challenging, but she perseveres. She has lived a life of challenges and is a wonderful woman, despite, and perhaps because of, all that she has experienced. Sue's portrait is of her making some macrame, one of the workshops that she particularly enjoyed.

In December 22, Sue came into to museum and delivered a macrame workshop so that museum staff and volunteers could help to make the pot-holders in the greenhouse at the top of the stairs.

2.4.2 'Sue's Visit to the Museum I/II/III' Caroline Johnson, Mixed media on paper, 2022

Caroline Johnson illustrates Sue's visit to the museum's Living Cultures stores. Here she was introduced to objects that were made using string and knotting techniques similar to her own macrame skills.

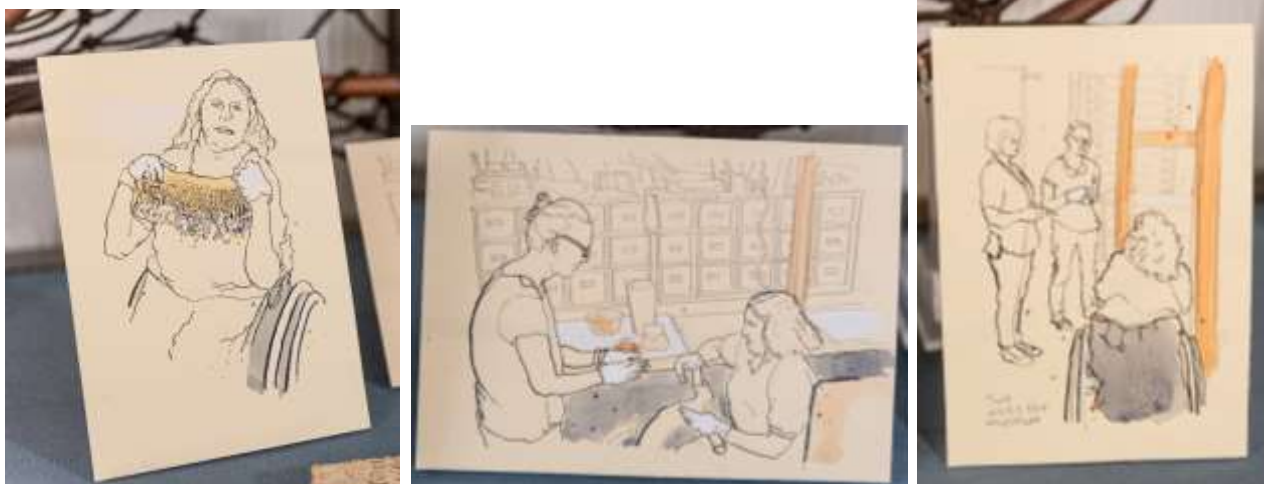


Figure 32 'Sue's Visit to the Museum I/II/III'

2.4.3 An ivory carving of a skeleton and a Carnelian amulet of a hand



Figure 33 An ivory carving of a skeleton

Sue chose these pieces in acknowledgement of her own physicality. Having been born with Spina-Bifida, which means her spinal cord didn't develop properly in the womb, and Scoliosis, which is an S shaped curvature of the spine, Sue was keen to include this meticulously carved skeleton with its intricate depiction of a spine. She also chose this tiny but beautifully crafted hand, with its elegantly curved thumb, which is similar in shape to her own.

2.4.4 Sue's choice of string objects from the collection

These objects illustrate the breadth of uses, both decorative and practical that knitting, knotting and netting string plays throughout global culture.



Figure 34 A pig catcher



Figure 35 A replica of a decorative collar with shells

2.4.5 Skeleton of a Hand – Maquette, Cotton String, Crochet, Lucy Burscough 2022

This is a maquette. A maquette is a small-scale model that an artist makes as a test piece before embarking on a larger scale sculpture. Lucy made this to work out if it was possible to accurately crochet the bones of the hand and wrist. The much larger sculpture was made with 10mm thick jute rope and a 30mm wide crochet hook. It can be seen pointing up to this space in the atrium that is at the centre of this part of the museum.

Lucy wanted to make a rope hand to celebrate the anatomy that allows humans to manipulate materials like twine in so many ways, like Sue making a macrame plant hanger or fisherfolk tying their nets.



Figure 36 Skeleton of a Hand – Maquette

2.4.6 'Lucy Crochets a Skelton Hand I/II' by Caroline Johnson, Mixed media on paper 2022

Here, Caroline draws Lucy crocheting the bones that will make up the large jute skeleton.



Figure 37 'Lucy Crochets a Skelton Hand I/II'

2.4.7 'The Dab Hand', Jute Rope, Aluminium. Lucy Burscough, 2022



This crocheted rope sculpture of the bones of the hand is part of the 'Dab Hands' exhibition which is currently on display on our top floor. Dab Hands celebrates the relationship we have with our hands as a species of makers and tool-employing craftspeople. You can see a smaller version of the artwork in the exhibition and read about why it was made and about Sue Peel, the woman who inspired its creation. Just follow where it points you.

The sculpture is crocheted in jute rope. Jute rope was used because it's colour echoes that of its neighbour, the whale, and because of its historical connections to seafaring and whaling. The industry of spinning and weaving jute began as a by-product of whaling in the eighteenth century when it was discovered that the whale oil mixed with raw jute enabled workers to spin the fibre.

Figure 38 'The Dab Hand' pointing to the Dab Hands exhibition.

2.5 The Anatomy of the Hand Collection

2.5.1 Illustrations of the Hand and Arm by John Hull Grundy 1907-1984

Kindly loaned by The Museum of Medicine and Health. These impeccable anatomical drawings were made as illustrations for Hull Grundy's book, 'Human Structure and Shape'. Prof. Hull Grundy was a respected medical entomologist where his artistic skills were employed making precise and informative drawings of the insects he studied.



Figure 39 Illustrations of the Hand and Arm by John Hull Grundy I,II,III

2.5.2 'The Principles of Anatomy as Seen in the Hand' by Frederic Wood Jones

Kindly loaned by Dr Peter Mohr of The Museum of Medicine and Health



Wood Jones (1879–1954) was one of the founding fathers of the field of modern physical anthropology ending his career as Professor of Anatomy at The University of Manchester.

He was a skilful artist. This book contains many of his illustrations of the skeletons of various creature's hands. Comparative anatomy such as this has allowed evolutionary biologists to provide evidence of common descent from shared ancestral species and has assisted in the classification of animals.

Figure 40 'The Principles of Anatomy as Seen in the Hand'

2.5.2.1 Comparative anatomy of the hand.

The Mole

Most pawed animals have ten fingers. The Mole has an extra "thumb", a bone develops in the wrist that stretches along the real thumb, giving the paw a bigger surface area for digging.



Figure 41 Skeleton of the hand of a mole

The Aardvark

Aardvarks walk on their digits. The nails are somewhere between true nail and hoof in form. They are strongly constructed, shovel-like, and obviously adapted for digging.



Figure 42 Skeleton of the hand of an Aardvark



Figure 43 The skeleton of the flipper of a common porpoise

The Common Porpoise

The bones of the porpoise's 'hands' have evolved into flippers, specialised for balance and steering.



Figure 44 A model of the skeleton of a human hand

The Human

The human opposable thumb is longer, compared to finger length, than any other primate thumb. This means the thumb can easily touch the other fingers allowing humans to grip with strength and manipulate tools with uniquely fine control.

2.6 The Gary Fulton Collection

2.6.1 'Gary's Hand, Pulling Up' Ceramic Zoetrope on potter's wheel. Gary Fulton & Lucy Burscough, 2021

Zoetropes were a forerunner to cinema, dating from Victorian times. Look through the slats on the side of the bowl and you can see an animation of Gary Fulton, 'The One Armed Potter', 'pulling up' clay, one of the trickier techniques when throwing a pot. Gary lost the use of his right arm in a motorcycle accident and has learnt to throw in the time since his accident.



Figure 45 'Gary's Hand, Pulling Up' Ceramic Zoetrope

2.6.2 'Gary Throws a Pot' by Caroline Johnson, Mixed media on paper, 2022



Figure 46 'Gary Throws a Pot' by Caroline Johnson

2.6.3 Ceramic Bowls with Fingerprints



Figure 47 Ceramic bowls with fingerprints

appreciate the materials, techniques, skill and stylistic flourishes of a fellow potter, even though there may be hundreds, if not thousands of years separating them.

Larger, Italy, 2nd half of 2nd century AD
Smaller, East Gaulish, 1st or 2nd century AD

These pieces from the museum's collection are of particular interest as the process of decorating them in slip has accidentally captured the ancient maker's fingerprints. One of the beautiful things about crafting is the connection that can be made between practitioners across the world and across time.

A potter can recognise and

2.7 The Elaine Hill Collection

2.7.1 'In Defence of Knitting' by Elaine Hill, Lucy Burscough, Mixed Media, 2021-22



Figure 49 In Defence of Knitting

Elaine wrote this poem at the Maggie's Manchester creative writing group after their tutor, Clare Stuart, visited Lucy, saw the Dab Hands work in progress, and suggested introducing the themes of the project to the group as inspiration for new poems. The collaboration was really fruitful and, in turn, inspired Lucy to meet and draw Elaine's hands and knit her poem.

The piece also represents a meeting of leading-edge technology and traditional crafting techniques: the poem was knitted in the round, using stranded Fair Isle techniques and the hands are 3D-printed colour scans of Lucy's. They were produced by University of Manchester colleagues at the Department of Mechanical, Aerospace & Civil Engineering.



Figure 48 In Defence of Knitting, detail

The poem reads,

*'I may as well take up knitting.'
A derogatory term
For giving up,
A benign activity.
Tell that to Madame Defarge
Knitting the names into her long scarves,
In readiness for revolution.
The guernsey knitters
Working in the patterns
Of their fishing villages
to identify men the sea has taken.
The craftivists knitted
Cute Christmas meals
Seen on a post-box
That closer reads,
'No-one should go hungry'.
I've knitted to stay sane,
I've knitted to keep my pride,
I've knitted
Not to give up,
But survive.*

2.7.2 'Elaine, In Defence of Knitting'. Oil pastel on paper by Lucy Burscough, 2021



Elaine Hill is a knitting designer whose life has been disrupted by living with M.E..

M.E. is a complex medical condition affecting multiple body systems, with the main symptom being largely unpredictable bouts of extreme, chronic fatigue. The cause of the illness is still being investigated. Many people with ME experience prejudice and disbelief and could feel stigmatised by people who do not understand their illness.

Elaine's relationship with knitting is deep and complex: when she was well, she made her living as a knitting designer, selling her patterns to New York fashion houses; now that she is ill and often unable to leave the house, knitting is an activity that she may feel well enough to

Figure 50 'Elaine, In Defence of Knitting'

undertake for short periods and derive satisfaction from when other, more physical activities are unavailable to her.

Lucy made this drawing in response to Elaine's poem, 'In Defence of Knitting'. Echoing its themes, Elaine makes a fist of protest while holding knitting needles, recognising the craft as a means of protest and her continued practice, an act of defiance in the face of debilitating illness.

Lucy reflects,

"The raised fist is recognisable symbol of protest, originally and chiefly associated with the Black Power movement, but also of interest here is the second, supportive hand. It speaks to me not only of Elaine's physical struggle, but of the wider emotional, social and financial toll that is taken on by people who are driven to protest to highlight inequality and defend civil liberties."

2.8 The Katie Stanton Collection

2.8.1 'Knitting Poem' by Katie Stanton. Mixed media 2022



Katie made this artwork to illustrate her own poem. She writes,

“ ‘Brambles’ came out in February 2021 as I was having surgery to remove a third of each of my lungs. I'd recently been given 12 months to live, and the operation was a last-ditch attempt to save my life following a series of failed chemo and immunotherapy treatments.

I wrote this knitting poem, my best most favourite poem, a couple of weeks later, high on painkillers.

I am still alive.”
The poem reads:

*As ribs slide
Over cartilage that clicks
My thorax knits
My bones are ivory needles
Pulling the slick yarn of me
together
I am recrafted*



2.8.2 Ancient Egyptian Canopic Jar, Limestone

A set of four canopic jars was an important element of the burial in Ancient Egypt. Canopic jars were containers in which the separately mummified organs would be placed.

As Katie's poem relates to her healing following lung surgery, she chose to display a canopic jar depicting Hapi, the baboon headed God whose jar contained the lungs and was protected by the goddess Nephthys. Nephthys was also considered a festive deity whose rites could inspire the liberal consumption of beer. She took beer offerings so the pharaoh “may have joy with no hangover”.

Katie works in a pub.

2.8.3 Katie's Co-curation



'Brambles'

Book of Poems by Katie Stanton

Katie has been a regular participant at Maggie's Manchester's creative writing group which is led by an inspiring tutor, Clare Stuart. Clare encouraged Katie to publish this book of poetry and asked Lucy to illustrate it with drawings of brambles, a theme that runs throughout Katie's poetry.

Katie's Tattoo by Henbo Henning



Katie writes,

"My cancer was first diagnosed in my knee joint. It caused a lot of vascular damage, so after I'd healed from radiotherapy and my first surgery I got this tattoo to cover up my now varicosed veins.

Like a lot of kids I grew up foraging brambles and getting covered in the purple pink stains, scratched up and bleeding but reaping a harvest of sweet tart berries. Behind these brambles is a struggle with a sweet result."



Chosen by Katie, an Illustration of Common bramble or blackberry, *Rubus fruticosus*. A hand coloured copperplate engraving after a drawing by James Sowerby for James Smith's English Botany, 1800.

2.9 Corinne Hutton

Lucy feels that one of the joys of working on Dab Hands was the opportunity to talk to fascinating people about their relationship with their hands. Two such people are Professor Simon Kay of Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, who led the team that performed the UK's first double hand transplant, and the recipient of those hands, quadruple amputee Corinne Hutton.

Those conversations led to the creation of this film in which Corinne shares her experiences of living with transplanted hands. The film offers an insight into Corinne's tenacious resilience which she has channelled not only into her recovery, but also into creating a charity, Finding Your Feet, which supports fellow amputees.

[Link to the film.](#)

2.9.1 'Corinne Hutton, Double Hand Transplantee', Lucy Burscough, 2020, Film and Painting¹³



Figure 51 Corinne Hutton Film

2.10 Dorothy Fenton

2.10.1 'The Stitcher by Dorothy Fenton'. Installation by Lucy Burscough. Mixed media, 2022

Another product of the rewarding collaboration with Maggie's Manchester's creative writing group, this installation calls to mind a 1970s sewing room, as recalled by Dorothy Fenton in her poignant poem, 'The Stitcher'. Dorothy laments the loss of feeling in her fingers caused by chemotherapy which now makes sewing, which she enjoyed so much as a young mother, impossible.

Before retiring Dorothy worked at the museum so it is a happy and very welcome coincidence to have her contribute here. Sadly, Dorothy died during the production phase so this piece became a memorial.



The Stitcher

*I used to love to stitch and sew and so
I'd make my daughters' clothes
from fabric fents for fifty pence
and braids and beads and buttons.*

*My busy hands would beaver away
on afternoons when all was quiet
One child asleep, one at nursery
Two hours peace and a sewing machine*

*The house strewn with snippets of cloth
Coloured threads, bobbins and trimmings
One piece of fabric, two pretty dresses
Patterns placed with skilled precision*



*I'd meet with friends at the fabric shop
We'd rummage in boxes and patterns swap
Denim could be made into dungarees,
The pink towelling into a tracksuit*

*Now my hands are old and gnarled
Their damaged nerves fail to feel
The slender needle, the sharpest pin
The intricate weave of the cloth.*



Figure 52 The Stitcher Installation I,II,III

2.10.2 Paintings and Prints

Dab Hands brings to the fore themes that have been present in Lucy's work throughout career. Hands, hobbies and her subjects' particular skills and passions from have featured prominently in her portraits. Dab Hands brings together some of those artworks here.



- 1 Craquelure : Self Portrait with Clay, Print from Oil on Canvas, 1998
- 2 Cheek, Print from Oil on Canvas, 1997
- 3 The Nurseryman and his Oldest Cactus, Acrylic on Canvas, 2003
- 4 That Roger Crochets, Acrylic on Canvas, 2014
- 5 Young Girl with Ring, Acrylic on Canvas, 2011
- 6 John Peel and Pig, Oil on Canvas, 2004
- 7 Jon Thorne, Print of Oil on Canvas, 2004
- 8 Carol with Her Plants, Oil on Canvas, 2019
- 9 Madeline, Print of Oil on Canvas, 2003



Figure 53 Paintings and prints I, II

2.11 Evaluation of the Exhibition

2.11.1 Number of Visitors to the Exhibition

The reopening of the museum has been a very busy time with 50,000 visitors in the first week alone. During the time that the Dab Hands exhibition has been open (18th February to 31st July 2023), 435,000 people have visited and had chance to see the exhibition.

2.11.2 Feedback from Exhibition Collaborators

Feedback from people who collaborated with Lucy to create artworks illustrating their stories was collected using open ended questions via an online form. Two participants died during the production phase of the project and so their loved ones were approached to give feedback on their behalf.

"I found it profoundly moving to see the part of the exhibition based around my partner, Barry. Eye opening to read and hear other people's view and understanding of Barry as a person and as a knowledgeable craftsman. Things I missed while being focussed on his care and terminal illness. A reminder that much is lost when someone dies and when captured by talented artists like Lucy can be very powerful."



Figure 54 Barry Bate compares his spoons with those in the museum's collection.

"I was delighted [to be asked to take part] and it was something to look forward to when my life was very tough. I felt very honoured."

"My Mum was very ill and there were a lot of difficult circumstances happening with Covid and other personal things to deal with. Lucy visited me a few times and sent photos of her work in progress. We had a great rapport and I felt we were on a similar wavelength. I see myself as a creative person above being 'disabled' despite the toll M.E. has taken on my life, it was great being recognised as such and not being patronised."

"The project has made me think about what art is for. I feel that this project and exhibition have showed me that collaborative , creative work and interaction can be of enormous benefit to mental health, even during the most stressful and daunting of times."

"I felt seen, heard and respected with this artwork."



Figure 55 'Backstage at the museum'

"[Visiting the museum to co-curate my exhibit] for me was the highlight of my participation. I felt extremely privileged, and I couldn't believe how much trouble the archivists at the museum and the artist had gone to. My passions for aloe species plants and old books were indulged in an amazing way. They assembled a huge selection of old documents, dried plant specimens, botanical illustrations, and drawings from which I selected a number. Copies of these were then used to decorate part of the artwork. I was able to look over all this material for an extended period and was then also shown around the herbology area backstage at the museum. I...genuinely appreciated being enabled to explore one of my special interests."

"[The exhibition opening] was one of the most uplifting nights of my life. I will never forget it. It was wonderful to show my friends Lucy's work and I was really impressed and moved by other artworks by her, some of them friends I knew in the writing group. I loved being part of the poetry readings too. I felt seen and heard which I usually don't at all as having M.E. Is very isolating."

"Lucy was invited by the local WI Craft group who extended the in invitation more widely. It was fascinating to see other's reactions to the Lucy's project and to the way in which Lucy had worked to bring people together to produce the exhibition. It was also wonderful to hear about how that work, those meetings, had brought different interested groups together and of the conversations that had been started. The presentation and gathering of those with particular interest also started more conversations about how working with our hands can bring people together - for enjoyment, to heal and help. People left with a greater awareness of local projects utilising our craft skills and money was raised towards one such project working with young people and families."

"The Dab Hands Project and my involvement...happened during the most difficult time of my life. I would look at the painting Lucy did every time I felt overwhelmed. The painting showed strength and courage and I knew the exhibition was something to look forward to. It helped me feel I could go on and that someone saw some strength in me. I am eternally grateful for that and I am not sure how I would have coped without it."

"When I saw the exhibition pieces including mine, I felt that Lucy had been so dedicated to making the subjects feel comfortable. I guess in some small way, I felt like part of a team showing off our imperfections without shying away... I'm proud of my imperfect hands!"

2.11.3 Feedback from Exhibition Visitors

Written feedback on postcards in response to the statement, "We'd love to hear what you think about your hands and what the exhibition made you think about":

I never realised how much I take my hands for granted. This exhibition has been very eye opening, touching and has made me more grateful for my hands, thank you <3

Been back to this to see this exhibition for the second time now- love the intense focus one part of the body and showing how they're used (hands) by different people across such varied situations.

My hand is my voice, transmitting intensions through touch of keys, to strings to soundwave.

I love this part of the museum because it is why we have hands and actually, people don't pay attention to them!

Celebration of life, Thank you.

We take for granted not just our hands but our whole body, after being made aware of how incredibly useful our hands are I'm truly grateful for everything working in perfect order so far. Thank you. thank you. thank you I never appreciate them but without them I can't live.

Its so well designed. Really surprising!

It made me feel lucky as well as grateful. Whilst admiring the work, I was also in awe of the work and amazing innovations that the human hand can use.

This exhibition is amazing! We really do take our hands, muscles... for granted until something doesn't quite work well, and it take months of rehabilitation to do simple things. Thank you!

Clearly hands are able to do so much- create or destroy... but we chose to make art.

I love my hands because I can do lots of stuff with them. Like I can horse ride with them and play instruments with them!

My hands remind me of my family ... I've never been a big fan of how they look but I more than appreciate the things they do.

I like the big hand with the needle. I think it is very artistic. And all the people that made it are super talented.

As a deaf person, sign language- a beautiful expressive language. I <3 you, thank you.

How I don't look after them! My hands are my sensory tools pick/squeeze/press/tap/hold/feel/grip/scratch/shake.

My hands remind me of my dad and Jamaican heritage.

My hands remind me of writing because I like writing.

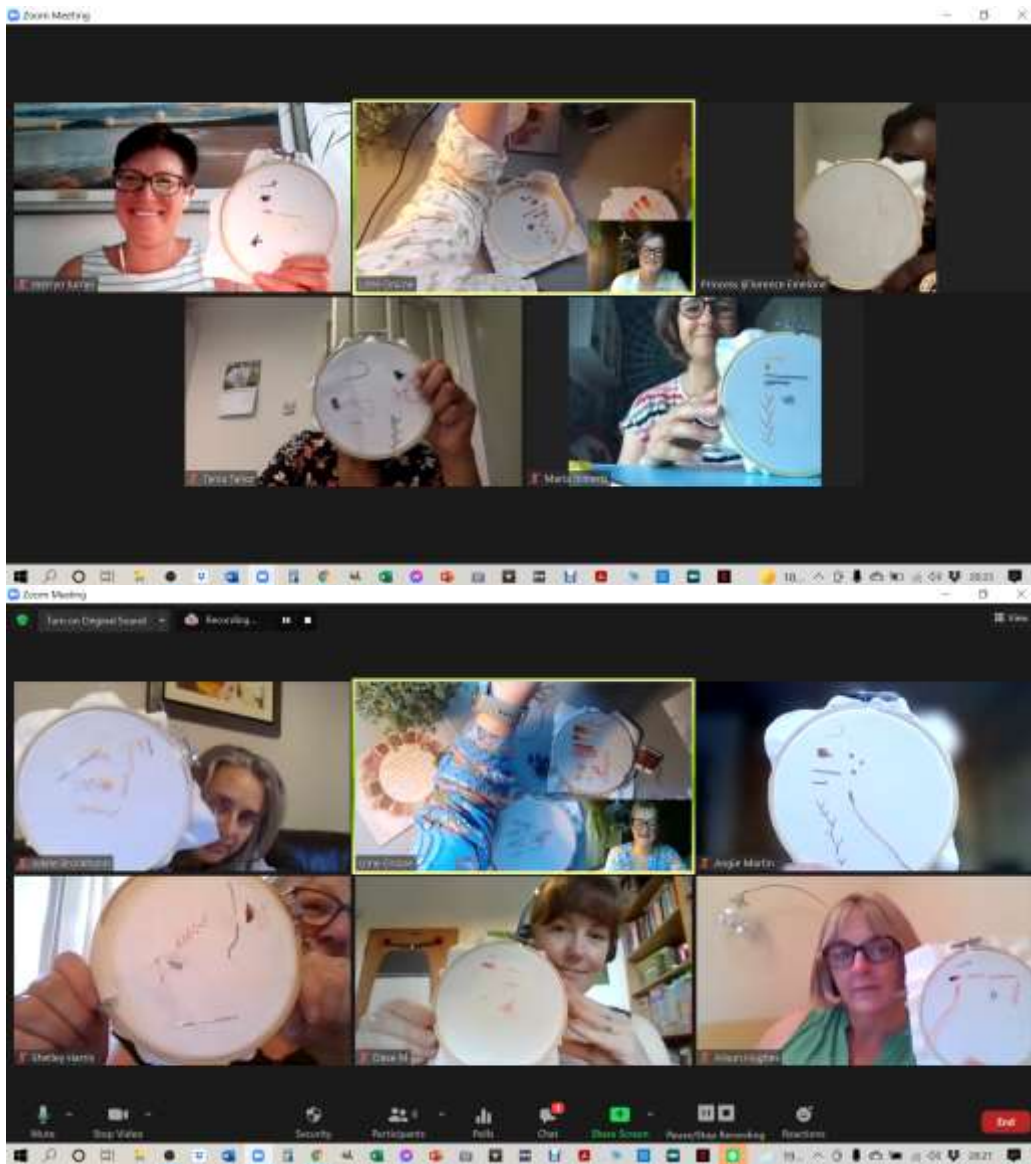
It made me think that I have my own person and that person is me. My hands are mine and that is good.

3 Further Engagement Activities

Dab Hands received its funding during the first week of the first national lockdown of the Covid 19 pandemic. It was envisioned as a project that would take place in public with work being made in hospitals and on the Manchester Museum galleries. Public engagement was at its heart. By the time the pandemic was beginning to die down, Manchester Museum, including Lucy's studio space, was closed to the public for refurbishment. Delays to reopening extended the project by a year. Although initially daunting, this adversity led to new learning and the development of different approaches to engage with the public and a hugely extended engagement programme. In place of the planned 24 engagement sessions, 124 engagement activities were delivered, which resulted in 1,770 participants directly engaging with the project by attending live and online workshops, festivals, exhibition tours or collaborating to create artworks for the exhibition.

3.1 Online Workshops

3.1.1 Lime Arts Online Workshops with NHS staff



Founded in 1973, Lime is Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust's multi award-winning arts and health organisation with global recognition for excellence in the delivery of creative projects in hospital and community healthcare settings.

As a generous and valued collaborative partner, Lime Arts arranged and funded Lucy to receive OBS software training which was invaluable as it allowed workshop participants to learn crafts online as they could see the artist's hands.

Four Dab Hands themed ceramics workshops were delivered to 80 NHS staff over Autumn/Winter 2020 and four That'll Need Stitching embroidery workshops were delivered to 48 participants in Spring of 2021.

Figure 56 Online Embroidery with Lime Arts and NHS staff

3.1.2 Whitworth Art Gallery facilitated online workshops with Broadwalk Pupil Referral Unit and Pinc College for Neurodivergent Young People

That'll Need Stitching online anatomical embroidery workshops were delivered with Whitworth Art Gallery. Kits were sent out by post and online 'How to embroider' and 'How to draw a hand' videos were also created for these young people. Their embroideries became part of the embroidered sculpture.

3.1.3 The Dab Hands Poetry Collection

A collaboration with the Maggie's Manchester cancer support centre's creative writing group and their tutor, Clare Stuart. The poems were written under lockdown at online workshops and in response to the themes of the Dab Hands project and the That'll Need Stitching embroideries. Some of the poems inspired Lucy to create artworks and their authors went on to become collaborators and co-curators in the exhibition. A wonderful creative feedback loop!

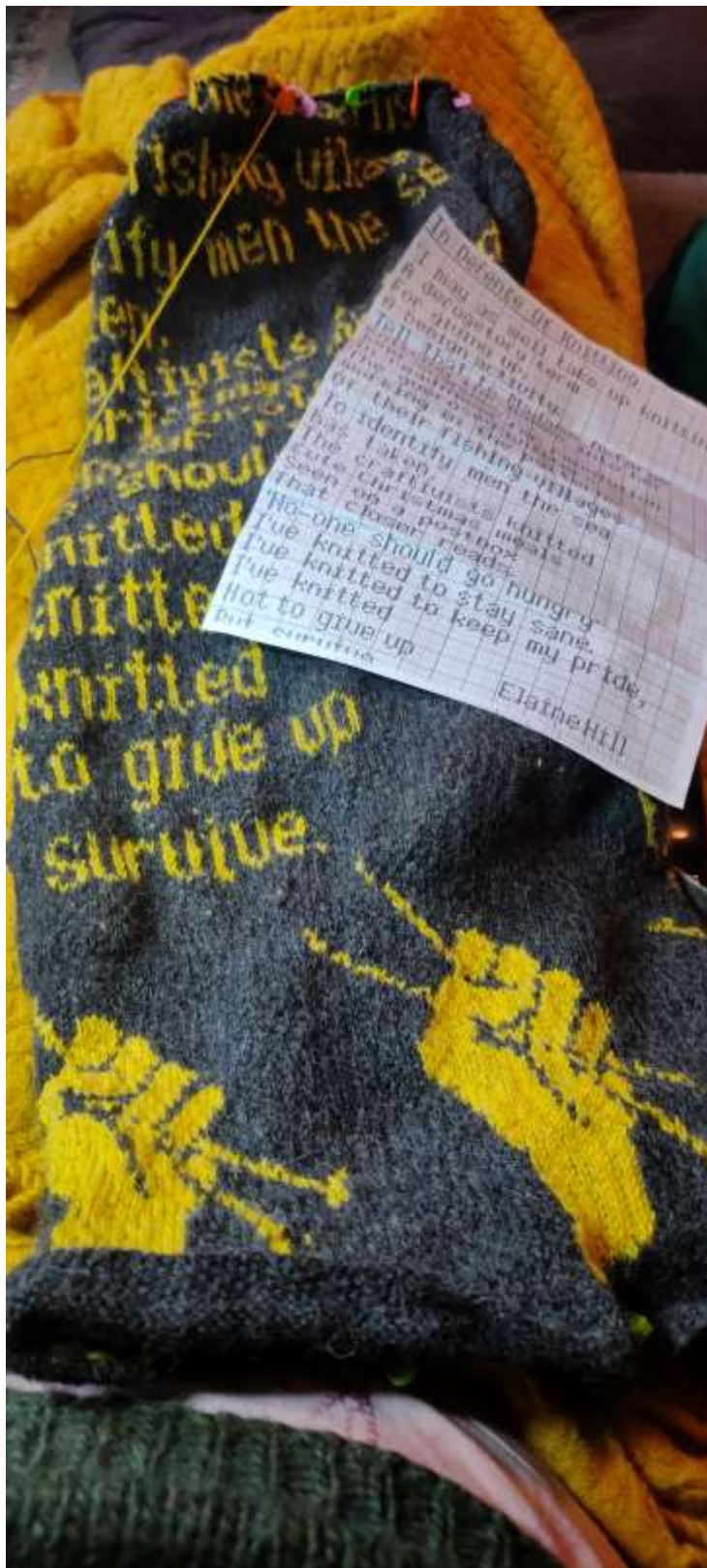


Figure 57 Knitting Elaine's poem-a wonderful creative feedback loop!

3.1.3.1 Hands by Elaine Hill

'Can I draw your hands?'
'No, they're ugly and look old.'
'There's nothing wrong with them.'
There isn't.
The hands that brushed my hair
And tied the bow
And taught me how to knit
And draw
The hands I couldn't hold
When you most needed my touch and care.
But I have the drawings
Of your hands
Quickly sketched
While you slept.
We hold hands in our minds
Our grip is strong.
My hands are becoming old,
The joints swollen,
They don't like to knit much,
I wouldn't want anyone to draw them
But they are the hands
You taught
And I hold you tight
In my heart.

3.1.3.2 The Hairdresser

Long hours, feet aching standing up all day,
Talking holidays, hearing confessions, lots of words to say.

Washing, conditioning, moving to the seat,
Combing out and finding where the partings meet.

Highlights using mesh, a cap or silver foil,
Stay very still don't let anything spoil.

Cutting, concentrating exact precision here,
It's very important not to cut someone's ear!

Metamorphosis occurring a transformation is made,
Hairdressers work miracles for the price that is paid.

3.1.3.3 Tap, tap tapetty tap by Dorothy Fenton

*I'm a super silver surfer and
it's such a lot of fun
tap, tap, tapetty tap
but I don't give a damn.*

*I play Sudoku, Scrabble too
with friends across the globe
or Wordscape crossword puzzles and
car races on the road*

*So I'll put away that knitting
I'll get round to it one day
tap, tap tapetty tap
I don't need it anyway*

*My fingers are so busy
I've no time for anything more
tap, tap tapetty tap
Wow, I've got the highest score!*

3.1.3.4 Daughter's Hands by Debi Piper

*Big blue eyes.
Small pink hands.
Something is wrong,
The upset is tangible.
Fingers wrap and twirl,
Weaving in, out and around,
The turmoil within, expressed without. How can I stop this?
My heart aches to watch.
Whatever it is, it can be fixed. Crouch down,
Blue eyes to greyer eyes,
Mother's hands over daughter's hands. "Tell me," I say.
My hands softening hers,
Smearing, smudging
The troubles away.*

3.1.3.5 Hands by Helen Vickers

*Hands are so expressive
They do everything
Bridge the gap of language
Tenderly touch
Create a meal full of love
Shush with one finger
F off with two
A universal speech
All understand*

3.1.3.6 Presentation by Brenda Elder

*She aimed to please.
With perfect ease
her eyes met mine
as she said, 'Fine.'
Brows calmly spaced,
her features graced
by furrow-free stability:
Serene reliability!
On lowering glance,
I catch, by chance,
tale-telling fists,
clench-sinewed wrists
forfending fidgets -
nervous digits:
Hands told the lie to her display.
But touched my heart, I have to say.*

3.1.3.7 Hands by Maggie Ball

*Hands to check ,hands to feel,
Hoping there is nothing to reveal.
Hands operating with dexterity and care,
Hands comforting making it easier to bear.*

3.1.3.8 HANDLE WITH CARE by Mike Stanton

*Are you ambidextrous?
I am ambisinister,
Which does not sound right.
I am
Daft not deft,
Handicapped instead of handy, Butterfingereed ,
Cack-handed,
All fingers and thumbs,
Ham fisted.
I do not know my left from my right. Yet still I manage to be gauche.*

3.1.3.9 The Hand by Julie Colville

*The hand smooths the paper
Caressing out the creases
The fingers feel the pen
That taps out the rhythm
The story then starts
To come into the world*

3.1.3.10 Letting Go by Gill Mayer

*Hands up, hands down,
Let me take you by the hand,
To have and to hold,
and then to be set free.*

3.1.3.11 Handprint by Gill Mayer

*Behold the hands
how they touch, feel, hold,
comfort, support, praise,
linger, write, ponder and
altogether make their mark
on everything we do,
as our handprint leaves behind
a part of us - a permanent portrait.*

3.1.3.12 These Hands by Catherine Burbridge

*These hands hold tight to things that matter.
Children first, hands held fast, on walks, night nights and held whenever we can.
Twitchy hands wring and clench at what's missing. That comfy, comfy hand that always mattered and felt right.
These hands crave busy. They stitch, they paint and they make. They hold the pen that brings forth words and let
emotions flow. They crawl towards respite.
These hands turn pages and hang wallpaper. These hands bake treats, novelty cakes and provide food when asked
"What's for tea?"
These hands grab treasured friends and pull them into bear hugs, then it's hard to let them go.*

3.1.3.13 Get a Grip, Butter Fingers by Dorothy Fenton

*Hold it with both hands
Get a grip
Don't let it slip
I'll give you a hand if you like
It's a second hand plate
But I like it a lot
Don't let it drop
So please get a grip, butter fingers. Hold that cup tight
With a firm steady hand
It will just make a mess
Down the front of your dress
You'll spill scalding tea
Too hot really
You could hand it to me
Oh please get a grip, butter fingers.*

3.1.3.14 My hands of many lives by Debi Piper

*As a child, painting, drawing, creating, playing.
Mum says, "Cack-hander, like me."
Came to school and threatened the teacher.
"Let her use it..."
As a teenager, learning, honing skills,
still painting, still drawing,
but better tools, dexterity increased.
Late teens, as an activist.
Carrying banners, pointing, shouting,
south-paw punch to the fascist face.
Finger on the camera shutter,
recording faces, friendly, unfriendly,
unjust events, challenging authority.
The world of work, complex skills.
Paste-up artist, expert with a*

scalpel and spray glue.
 Twenties, times changing.
 Apple Mac, mouse keyboard, ideas
 transferred to a digital world.
 Mouse in right hand, pen in left.
 Fifties now. Creaky hands,
 full of failing veins, nerves zip from
 treatment, another chemo after effect.
 Not so strong, but far wiser.

3.1.4 Continued Professional Development for Primary School Teachers

Facilitated in collaboration with Manchester Museum’s Learning and Engagement team, two ‘Embroider the Museum’ online workshops were delivered to ten primary school teachers to learn embroidery techniques and encourage the use of crafts in cross-curricular learning. The teachers received kits with information about insects in the museum’s collection and all the equipment that they needed to embroider images of those insects. A live after school workshop was also delivered for all 13 teaching staff at a primary school in Salford.

3.2 Large Events

3.2.1 Caring for the Carers Festival 2021

+ Caring For The Carers

16th-19th September, 2021

A Free Festival of Culture and Therapeutic Fun Produced Especially
 to Support the Wellbeing of NHS Staff and Their Families



A Collaboration Between Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust,
 Manchester Museum and The Whitworth

Figure 58 Caring for the Carers programme cover

Caring for the Carers was a free festival of culture and therapeutic activities designed to support the wellbeing of NHS staff, care-workers, carers and their families. It was produced as a collaboration between Manchester Museum, The Whitworth, Manchester University NHS Trust and The Dab Hands Project with Lucy Burscough programming. The festival took place over four days, running from 16th-19th of September 2021 and was made up of both live and online bookable events and a day-long ‘Big Picnic’ hosted by The Whitworth on Saturday the 18th which 400 people attended.

At this outdoor event, NHS staff, carers and care workers were invited to take part in a wide variety of cultural activities and pick up free ethically sourced picnics to enjoy with family and colleagues. Entertainment was provided by street performers and musicians. NHS staff were invited to,

‘Learn something new; try something different; hone your skills and re-connect with the city’s cultural life. From the comfort of your own home, in the beautiful surroundings of The Whitworth or out and about, the ‘Caring for the Carers’ festival is designed to make you feel better, cared about and inspired.’



Figure 59 Suturing embroideries



Figure 60 Dab Hands creative writing with Clare Stuart

Dab Hands themed activities took place:

Dab Hands 'Try Your Hand' Drop In Poetry Workshop

"These are the hands-That touch us first- Feel your head- Find the pulse- And make your bed." Michael Rosen, *These Are the Hands*, written to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the NHS Join creative writing tutor Clare Stuart to reflect on the role that our hands play in caring for others. Use Clare's simple and accessible techniques to unlock your inner poet and create your own creative writing piece that celebrates your hands and how they reflect your roles as carers and NHS staff.

Help Suture the Dab Hands Embroidered Anatomical Sculpture

'That's Going to Need Stitching', is a collaborative artwork that celebrates hands, dexterity and identity. Over lockdown 200 people, including medical students & health care professionals, have created beautiful embroideries of the anatomy of the hand based on the drawings of hand surgeon, Donald Sammut. Become part of the project by helping suture these embroideries onto a large sculpture of a hand at work.

A pdf of the programme can be found online at <https://bit.ly/CaringForTheCarersFestival2021>.

3.2.2 Being Human Festival 2020

Being Human ¹⁴is the UK's national festival of the humanities, led by the School of Advanced Study, University of London in partnership with the Arts & Humanities Research Council and the British Academy. In collaboration with About Face, a UKRI fellowship project which is exploring the cultural, social and psychological impacts of facial transplantation, the animated film of Corinne Hutton, the UK's first double hand transplantee premiered as part of this festival's programme.

3.2.3 CREATE CONNECT UNWIND FESTIVAL 2022



Figure 61 Portraits of staff hands making art were printed onto banners

Lime Arts¹⁵ kindly invited Dab Hands to be part of a 3-day festival specifically for NHS staff offering cultural and creative activities to ease stress and combat burnout. Lucy printed portraits of staff hands, captured while creating art, onto banners which acted as backdrop for the festival marquee. The festival and symposium were hosted by Manchester Royal Infirmary between 18th and 20th of May 2022. The 'That'll Need Stitching' sculpture previewed at this event and was at the heart of two day-long embroidering anatomy workshops for NHS staff.



Figure 62 The Create Connect Unwind Festival 2022 I,II,III

3.2.4 The Dab Hands Studio Seminar

Dab Hands Studio Seminar

17th July 2023
Manchester Museum



Unpicking the
relationship that we
build with our hands

Keynote Speaker: Donald Sammut, FRCS,
Consultant Hand Surgeon and Artist

Presentations by Professor James
Thompson, Author, *Care Aesthetics: For
Artful Care and Careful Art*

Lucy Burscough, Artist and Arts for Health
Practitioner, *The Dab Hands Project*

Workshops and performances

Tix: [DabHandsSeminar.eventbrite.co.uk](https://dabhandsseminar.eventbrite.co.uk)

A one-day interactive event primarily for medical practitioners and students, art educators, artists and craftspeople with an interest in exploring the areas where medical and art practice intersect.

Figure 63 The DHSS Flye

3.2.4.1 The Seminar Agenda

The final Dab Hands event brought together a cross disciplinary audience of twenty-seven, including doctors, artists, writers, dancers and academics to hear from an equally diverse group of speakers. The day was curated to include performances and practical creative workshops, all of which related to the themes and work of the wider Dab Hands project.

Welcome to



Agenda

10.00-10.30 **Registration** Hot drinks and breakfast pastries

10.30-10.40 **Welcome and Opening Remarks**
Esme Ward, Director, Manchester Museum

10.40-11.30 **Dab Hands Exhibition Tour with Lucy Burscough,**
Artist in Residence at Manchester Museum

The Dab Hands exhibition is the result of Lucy's residency at the museum which explored the relationship we have with our hands and what happens when that relationship is disrupted by the effects of illness, trauma or old age.

11.30-12.00 **The Digital Touch with Dr Sam Beath, Conservation**
& Collection Care Manager, Manchester Museum

Sam will demonstrate Digital Touch replicas (DTRs). DTRs are touch sensitive replicas of museum objects and have been developed to increase tactile access to museum objects and their stories; which is important for individuals who need additional sensory information to make sense of objects.

12-12.30 **Hand Written with Clare Stuart**

Clare runs weekly creative writing sessions at Maggie's Manchester. Maggie's is a charity providing free cancer support & information in centres across the U.K.

12.30-13.00 **Lunch** Vegetarian/vegan lunch with hot and cold drinks

13.00-13.45 **Care Aesthetics with Prof. James Thompson**

James leads a project in Drama at Manchester University called Care Aesthetics: Research Exploration (CARE). CARE asks what happens when we consider care a craft or artful practice. The project explores how sensory and embodied practices of care can improve care services and change the quality of socially engaged arts practices.

13.45- 2.00 **Kathak Dance Performance with Kajal Sharma**

Kajal is an internationally recognised Kathak dancer and teacher. Hand 'Mudras', are an integral part of this classical Indian dance form. These gestures play a crucial role in conveying emotions, moods and expressions.

2.00– 3.00 **Keynote Speech by Donald Sammut**

Donald Sammut is a Plastic Surgeon entirely specialised in Hand Surgery. He is an educator, for many years teaching and mentoring many trainees and junior Consultants both in the UK and abroad, particularly in Italy and in Nepal. He is passionate about the Hand, its language, its choreography, the way it deals with the world and how its anatomy enables it to do so.

Art is an integral part of his work from the outpatients clinic where he records his patients' hands in drawings, and operative plans, to the operating theatre – his operative records are mostly in the form of annotated drawings. He also teaches anatomy and his many online anatomical drawings and paintings have long found their way into publication and teaching.

Both Surgery and Art depend, at a very essential level, on seeing and on listening. In Donald's practice these processes merge and this presentation will show how one feeds on the other and how his art informs the many facets of his clinical practice.

Donald's collection of anatomical drawings and paintings, available in the galleries on his website, inspired the Dab Hand embroidered sculpture, That'll need Stitching. He has also illustrated entirely non-scientific works, several volumes of poetry by Louis de Bernières.

3.00-3.30 **Reflection and Discussion, Chaired by Dr Kim Wiltshire**

Kim is a playwright and fiction writer, and is a Reader and programme leader for Creative Writing at Edge Hill University, UK. During 2022-2023 she is a British Academy Innovation Fellow working with Lime Arts, an award-winning charity which aims to improve the health and wellbeing of NHS staff at Manchester Foundation Trust.

3.30-4.00 **Kathak Dance Workshop with Kajal Sharma**

Join Kajal in a workshop which introduces elements of the classical Indian Kathak dance form in which hand gestures play a major role. End the day celebrating our amazing, graceful hands!

3.2.4.2 Audio recordings of the presentations



[Prof. James Thompson, 'Care Aesthetic' talk](#)

[Donald Sammut, Keynote Speech](#)

[Discussion chaired by Dr Kim Wiltshire](#)

3.2.4.3 Images from the event

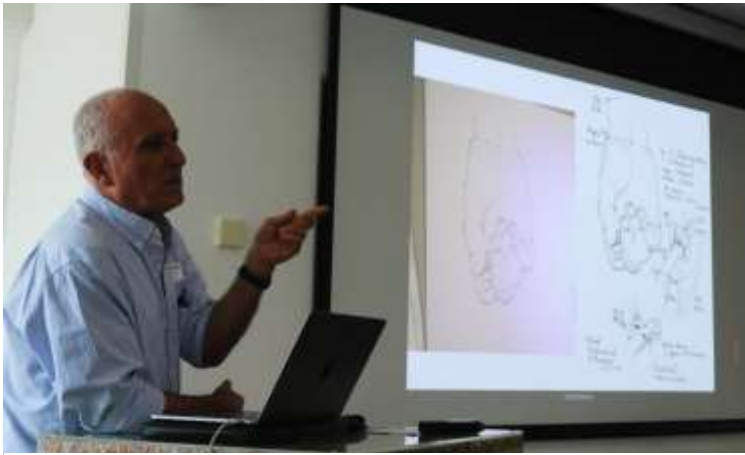


Figure 65 Donald Sammut, Keynote speech



Figure 64 Kajal Sharma, Kathak dance workshop



Figure 70 The Digital Touch with Dr Sam Beath



Figure 67 Hand Written workshop with Clare Stuart



Figure 66 Care Aesthetics with Prof. James Thompson



Figure 68 Reflection and Discussion, Chaired by Dr Kim Wiltshire



Figure 69 Participants enjoying the Kathak dance workshop

3.2.4.4 Words written by delegates in the 'Hand Written' workshop, led by Clare Stuart.

These poems were written in four minutes and were inspired by single lines from the Dab Hands poetry collection.

*Working in the patterns,
they weaved their own tapestry,
a part of their history,
a shared destiny,
choosing to weave their own way, rewinding history,
recording the day
sampling the music,
seeing the sounds
touching the softness
of the white walls
That surround.*

'Hands are so expressive'

*Hands to be loved
Hands to be worshipped
Hands to be kissed and
Hands to be joined to
Pray for hands care.
Hands are very expressive
and universal language.*

'I am re crafted'
*Everyday there's something new.
People come and go
Small shifts
Different thoughts
New experiences
Accepting the past and moving forward
Reborn.
Making the most of what is left.
Bigger marks less declined not refined
Bits glued together
Patchwork
Repaired.*

'Hands told the lie to her Display'

*They said that she had failed to say
the truth her hands revealed -
her words more false and concealed ..
- what was right and clear
the words wrong I fear*

'I may as well take up knitting'

*Everyone needs a break from
Being angry and marginalised
Use the points of the needle
to create and join the strands of life
To relax and forget and survive
The protest again.*

'Smearing, smudging the troubles away'

*She gave me the box
It once held school shoes
Her face dark with worry,
Hands reaching out an unknown offering.
Heart beating in my head
I took it from her-
The box and what was inside
Like a tissue rubbing away
The smudges of tears.*

'Get a grip butter fingers'

*Gravity, slipping smash
Buttery slosh
breakfast hits the cat
Get a grip, butterfingers
she turns on her tail
butternut cornflakes
Tony the Tiger, milky.*

'Forfending fidgets, nervous digits'

*My fingers twirl and twist,
Cast a spell like an ancient witch
My phone within them, waiting to glitch
Running over my brand new stitch
Hands hollow, holding space like a ditch
Left and right, sometimes I forget which is which
But here I am, waiting in an attempt, last ditch
As I wait to go in, hopefully with perfect pitch.*

'It's a second hand plate but I like it a lot'

*Rescued from the bottom of a box
From lingering
To finger foods
A new lease of life, a flash of pattern
Illuminating chatting
Accompanying a cuppa or a cold glass
Second hand class.*

'I am ambisinister'

*I don't confirm
to society's ideals
But I am worthy
the same as anyone else
Just a bit different
No worse, no less
The same, but different.*

'Pulling the silk yarn of me together'

*My hands are here
Small and need more moisture
A need to huddle my hair
Flyaway hair that's lots and lots
Slipping out of a plait, bunch or
in my eyes
The elastic band pulling together
the strands
or is it yarn/ wool/or silk / or(?)
Balls of wool all over the place
Tangled in a box in the charity shop
The urge to wind them back together
Untangling like my hair knots, and knotty
Is it too long or do I not spend enough
Time washing, mashing, brushing
What should my hands be doing
But pulling the slick yarn of me together.*

'Caressing out the creases'

*Smooth out my troubles
Caress out the creases
Of my tangled mind
Touch my heart
Don't let go*

'Hold tight to things that matter'

*Show your love every day
Give your love every day
Hold hands, hug, kiss, talk, be there.
Time goes, people go, love can stay
Love given, love returned.*

'Hands are so expressive'

*My hands enable me to be expressive.
They allow me to voice their ideas
Every movement, gesture, every stitch
reinforces a sense of who I am.
Hands and creativity are connected for me.
Hands are indeed...so expressive.
Touch, sensuality, materiality allow me
to access a particular space.
'One child asleep, One at nursery'*

*Evoking warm memories
of golden moments, of joy
Glittering on the shelves
of my memory.
All was at peace and
love abounded.
Moments splinter into
russet thoughts, that dwell
in our very inner beings.*

'Not so strong but far wiser'

*My hand, tiny in my Dad's enormous paw
Safely held in every way*

*Handwriting classes- another failure
last to graduate to pen -I'd still not pass*

*Caring, cleaning and creating work
Healthcare in my hands, seeping into my veins*

*Sutures, scalpels and stress
such skills acquired but at what cost?*

*IV drip in every vein, food for my body
while my soul struggles through*

*Hands holding threads, weaving and
sewing my life anew, crafting
my own now sense of safety.*

*My hands through many lives
Not so strong but becoming wiser.*

'Altogether make their mark on everything we do'

*Put a stamp on it
Put your name to it
Own it
Speak it aloud
I am proud
Look what I have done
Out there in the world.
For all to see
To speak of it
Naming it
and owning it
Dare to speak what's deep inside
Not hiding
Not masking
But making your mark
Call it a signature
A stamp of approval
A full stop or the start of a
Sentence- I'm not sure which
But it's there.
With my mark
My name
My ideas
Displayed shown
Soul-bared.
Tied to what
I've always known
A true display of what's
going on inside
Me and my mark.*

'Story then starts'

*With a full head and tired eyes
in a room full of writers
with thoughts being transferred
to the page, filtered by jumbled
mind and holding a pen that runs
smoothly...
slowed down by a cramped hand
and running out of pages.*

*Ideas transferred to a digital world
Scanning, saving, storing.
Hidden files
Hidden memories
Safely locked away where
no one can see
Where everyone can see
but which were mine?*

3.2.4.5 Feedback from seminar attendees was collected on a Post-it wall:

Wonderfully curated day- very emotional but also hugely informative.

Very rich, inspirational day, thank you.

A very moving day- learned so much. Gave me a new outlook my work & life. The speakers were totally engaging. It was truly meaningful.

I loved participating in the Dab Hands embroidery. Today's workshop was just the icing on the cake- informative, thought provoking and absolutely great.

Fantastic speakers, excellent exhibition! Lucy - amazing day TY.

I have learnt a lot! Very stimulating

Thank you. Such moving, informative, thought and emotion provoking day

Fascinating well balanced day. Well balanced how the activities ebbed and flowed. And absolutely fascinating.

Well thought out structure to the day. Informative tour.

Great Day! Something for everyone and all backgrounds

Amazing Day, incredibly valuable way to spend time.

Wonderful day- thank you! Interesting and diverse talks and attendees. Brilliant combination of my interests in art, healthcare, and improving lives.

Thank you so much for the opportunities today. There have been some wonderful insightful conversations. Supporting communities and individuals, an amazing project!

3.2.5 The Dab Hands Exhibition Launch

The exhibition was launched on the evening of the 8th of March 2023. Approximately 250 visitors attended the 2-hour event which included speeches; performances from hand-made electronic one-man band Paddy Steer, poetry readings from the Maggie's Cancer Support Centre creative writing group and a classical Indian Kathak dance performance by Kajal Sharma, who also gave a dance workshop. Kate Eggleston-Wirtz delivered a 3-D collage workshop and drinks and nibbles were served.



Figure 71 The Launch Event



Figure 72 Kate Eggleston-Wirtz's collage workshop



Figure 73 Esme Ward, Director of Manchester Museum opens the event.
Figure 74 Kajal Sharma's Kathak dance performance



Figure 75 Visitors look at the artworks



Figure 78 Paddy Steer's handmade performance



Figure 77 Maggie's Manchester Poetry readings



Figure 76 Conversations amongst the performers

3.3 Live Workshops, Talks and Tours

3.3.1 Live Workshops

Encouraging people to recognise the wonder of their hands and what they can do was at the heart of the Dab Hands project, and this was most effectively delivered during hands-on practical crafting workshops. Lucy was very keen that all age groups would be catered for, and this was achieved with participants ranging from 36 months to 86 years. In all, 41 live workshops took place, reaching 629 participants.

A range of crafts were introduced to participants including crochet, macrame, still-life drawing, paper collage, embossed printing, tessellating print block making, lino printing, embroidery, pressed flower collage, sculptural ceramics and 'from scratch' mask-making, dance and creative writing. Workshops were delivered along with Dab Hands presentations to primary, secondary, sixth form and university students, including groups of neurodivergent young people and international Science Communication summer-school students. A four-week series of workshops for older members of the community was delivered at Manchester Museum, along with a sell-out six-week programme of after-work sessions for adults entitled 'Become a Dab Hand at...'.

Workshops took place at Manchester Museum, Greater Manchester schools, Central Manchester NHS Trust hospitals, church halls, Whitworth Art Gallery and the Trafford Centre shopping mall.



Figure 80 Stencil printing at The Trafford Centre



Figure 79 Collage framed hand



Figure 81 Workshops with NHS staff, 6th formers & MM volunteers



Figure 82 Ceramics, printing and plant collage workshops



Figure 83 Embroidery, printing for embroidery, collage & still life workshops



Figure 84 Become a Dab Hand at Printmaking and Macrame



Figure 85 Ceramics workshop and Dab Hands presentation with international Science Communication students

3.3.1.1 Olympias Music Foundation/Dab Hands Collaboration

Olympias Music Foundation¹⁶ are an award-winning music education charity offering free instrumental lessons to young people, and music participation projects for diverse communities in Manchester. They are based in Manchester Museum's Top Floor Co-Working Space, where Dab Hands was also hosted. This led to organic day to day networking and the opportunity to easily develop mutually beneficial collaborations. Members of Olympias' 'Children's Voices' community children's choir and their families visited the Dab Hands exhibition and took part in a tour and craft workshop with Lucy. They then learnt a programme of songs about hands with Lucy visiting an after-school rehearsal. The choir then gave a public performance of the songs on a busy Saturday afternoon at Manchester Museum.



Figure 87 Olympias Music Foundation's Children's Voice's choir visit Dab Hands



Figure 86 Learning songs about hands



Figure 88 The Children's Voices Choir perform at Manchester Museum

3.3.2 Demonstrations, Talks and Tours

3.3.2.1 Presentations and talks

Presentation	Numbers
Theatre, Performance and Care Module, UoM Drama BA x 2	24 students and research fellows
Online presentation to UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship Workshop: Creative Perspectives on Collaboration	16 Academics
Pinc Collage for neurodivergent young people. Q and A sessions for students, to feed into Arts Mark certification work	6 Students
Dab Hands Talk to Urmston Women’s Institute with a focus on craft and identity.	80 General public
Dab Hands presentation to New Mills WI and Barry Bate’s friends with a focus on collaborative work, in particular with Barry	35 General public
Textile Explorers Group Dab Hands Talk with a focus on embroidery and craft and identity.	55 General public
Havas Healthcare PR Agency -Workshop and presentation with focus on art for wellbeing within Dab Hands	47 Corporate staff
Science Communication International summer school	27 International students



Figure 89 Textile Explorers Talk

Tours and Demonstrations	Numbers
Dab Hands Seminar	27 Artists, Medics, Academics
Pinc Collage- 2 x artists’ tours	12 Students
National Trust Learning and Engagement staff	8 Sector
MM Volunteers	18 Sector
MM Programmed events	12 General Public
All museum staff tours of the Dab Hands work in progress x 4	35 Sector
Informal tours for museum visitors x 15	47 General Public
MM Sector Open Day	24 Sector
Smash Group	10 Vulnerable adults
2 weeks of daily wood carving demos-half term (MM’s 1 st week of reopening-50k visitors)- carving Barry’s hands- conversations about the process & Barry’s exhibit. Hundreds of visitors saw the work in progress.	Approximately, 60 conversations with groups of at least 3 visitors of all ages.

4 Conclusion

'Behold the hands, how they promise, conjure, appeal, menace, pray, supplicate, refuse, beckon, interrogate, admire, confess, cringe, instruct, command, mock and what besides, with a variation and multiplication of variation which makes the tongue envious.'

Montaigne (Philosopher of the French Renaissance 1533-1592)

'Behold the multitude of dab hands, how they sew, cut, carve, print, paint, model, draw, weave, write, thread, sand, throw, sculpt, collage, plait, knot, crochet, turn, render, sketch, and all while having a good chat.'

Lucy Burscough (Arts Council England Funded Artist 2020-2023)

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- ¹ <https://www.lucysart.co.uk/curartive-project>
 - ² <https://www.lucysart.co.uk/ocular-bionica-project>
 - ³ <https://www.lucysart.co.uk/who-cares-project>
 - ⁴ <https://www.lucysart.co.uk/look200-project>
 - ⁵ <https://www.lucysart.co.uk/s/Facing-Out-Evaluation-Report.pdf>
 - ⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/society/the-northerner/gallery/2014/oct/23/how-the-world-looks-to-people-who-are-colour-blind-in-pictures>
 - ⁷ <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/whats-on/arts-culture-news/winners-manchester-culture-awards-2019-17244653>
 - ⁸ <https://www.britishcouncil.org.tw/en/2018IMA>
 - ⁹ <https://www.hiscoxcollection.com/artwork.aspx?id=657&Size=1>
 - ¹⁰ https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1_jgF79trrMN-BP3RiNA_Jsigkk-jwWZNzFOsIJViMw/edit#responses
 - ¹¹ <https://dabhands.github.io/museum-project/>

 - ¹³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jsBwSOZrfXg>
 - ¹⁴ <https://www.beinghumanfestival.org/>
 - ¹⁵ <https://www.limeart.org/what-we-do/>
 - ¹⁶ <https://www.olympiasmusicfoundation.com/>