Creativity: it’s good for you session

A ‘deconstructed’ panel of creatives from different sectors including science, the arts and education will actively share experiences and involve participants in aspects of their work helping us to explore and unlock creativity during the session. Contributions will come in a range of curious ways, and we invite participants to join in to share their ideas and creative responses during the session.

**Contributors**:

* **Becky Jackson**, Cragside Primary School & [NE Creativity Collaborative](https://www.creativitycultureeducation.org/north-east-creativity-collaborative)
* **Claire Irving**, East Leeds Project;
* **Eliza Hunt,** Queen Mary University;
* **Ellie MacDonald**, Kielder Observatory
* **Erin McNeill**, Leeds University Astronomy;
* **Fionagh Thompson,** Department of Physics, Durham University
* **Ged Matthews**, Cultural Engagement, Durham University;
* **Helen Cramman**, School of Education, Durham University;
* **Katy Milne,** [Northern Heartlands](https://www.northernheartlands.org/about-us);
* **Katy Vanden,** [Cap-a-Pie](https://www.cap-a-pie.co.uk/); (Katy may be able to attend on the day – tbc)
* **Lorraine Coghill,** Science Engagement, Durham University;
* **Lucy Helton,** UCL Department of Space and Climate Physics;
* **Martin Wilson** MBE, [TIN Arts](https://www.tinarts.co.uk/);
* **Shanti Pise**, Hertfordshire University;
* **Simon James**, Professor of English Literature, Durham University.

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**Simon James**, Professor of English Literature, Durham University. Principal Investigator for the Durham Commission on Creativity and Education: a partnership between Arts Council England and Durham University, the Durham Commission investigated the benefits of teaching young people to be creative and to think creatively. The report can be read here: [**https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Durham\_Commission\_on\_Creativity\_151019\_0.pdf**](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Durham_Commission_on_Creativity_151019_0.pdf)

The Moon Palace team (**Kerry Harker & Claire Irving**, East Leeds Project; **Erin McNeill**, Leeds University Astronomy; with **Eliza Hunt,** Queen Mary; **Lorraine Coghill and Ged Matthews**, Durham; and **Shanti Pise**, Hertfordshire Universities), funded by The Ogden Trust. Moon Palace is a mobile observatory and artwork created by Heather Peak and Ivan Morison. Designed to merge art and science, the project aims to engage underserved communities by bringing astronomy and culture directly to their neighbourhoods through researchers and artists collaboration, using interdisciplinary skills and fostering connections between their institutions and local communities. The program also aims to evaluate how the arts-science collaboration impacts astronomers’ creativity, confidence, and engagement.

**Katy Vanden** is the producer at [Cap-a-Pie](https://www.cap-a-pie.co.uk), a theatre company that inspires thinking and learning. She regularly works to bring people together to take part in a shared creative process including researchers and young people. Since joining the company in 2012, Katy has led the company to produce community and education projects and professional productions. Recent projects and productions include [Climate Change Catastrophe!](https://www.cap-a-pie.co.uk/shows/climate-change-catastrophe/), [The Arcadian Civil War](https://www.cap-a-pie.co.uk/projects/the-arcadian-civil-war/), and [Credit](https://www.cap-a-pie.co.uk/shows/credit/).

**Martin Wilson** MBE is the Executive Director of [TIN Arts](https://www.tinarts.co.uk), a charity whose mission is to remove barriers and increase access to high quality dance for all. TIN Arts have won numerous cultural and business awards in recognition for their innovative work around access, inclusion and equity in the arts. Martin was Chair of the County Durham Cultural Education Partnership and is a member of the ‘National Working Group’, a collection of dance organisations across England who are working together to increase and sustain the presence and representation by disabled people in the dance workforce and its leadership. Recent work includes the Space science linked [PULSE](https://www.tinarts.co.uk/current-projects/pulse/), produced in collaboration with Durham University Astronomy.

Winner of the The Educators' Trust 'Inspirational Educator Award' 2025, **Becky Jackson** is Headteacher of Cragside Primary School, Newcastle, and a Fellow of both the Chartered College of Teaching and the Royal Society of Arts, as well as an associate member of the Association of Education Advisers. Under Becky’s leadership, Cragside Primary School was the lead school for the Arts Council-funded *Creativity Collaboratives*, a national initiative exploring the role of creativity in education. The school now leads *North East Primary Innovators*, a newly established network of six schools dedicated to driving educational improvement and excellence. This initiative champions collaborative leadership and innovation in teaching and learning, fostering a culture of continuous development across the region.

**Katy Milne** is Senior Manager at Northern Heartlands, a charity based in County Durham bringing the creativity of artists together with individuals, community groups, schools and partner organisations. Together, creating performances, activities and events that change how people feel about themselves, the places where they live, and what happens there. Katy is passionate about arts, culture, creativity and enquiry’s capacity to encourage people to explore ideas, express themselves and make informed choices. Bringing 23 years of experience in community arts and creative development roles for charities and local authorities, Katy has enabled and led creative programmes locally, nationally and worldwide.

**Helen Cramman** is an Associate Professor in the School of Education at Durham University and Lead for Education Researcher Development in the Durham Centre for Academic Development (DCAD). Her research interests are in skills development in STEM education, with a particular focus on the impact of education environments on learners and educators. She is an expert in the evaluation of education and skills development programmes. Alongside her research, Helen also provides specialist facilitation for individuals to support their development of education research and scholarship. Helen is Head of the Evaluation and Innovation in STEM Education (EISE) national research group ([**https://eise.webspace.durham.ac.uk/**](https://eise.webspace.durham.ac.uk/)).

**Lucy Helton** is a visual artist. She’s currently a funded PhD practice-led researcher at the Slade School of Fine Art focusing on human environmental impact in outer space. Rising from a necessity to express her personal anxieties and concerns about the environment, her first photo book Actions of Consequence was nominated for the MACK First Book Award 2014, shortlisted for the Kassel Dummy Award 2015, and The Anamorphosis Prize 2015. Her book Transmission (Silas Finch, 2015) – a message from our future to our recent past – printed on antiquated fax machines, was shortlisted for the Paris Photo-Aperture First Book Award 2015. <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/mssl/lucy-helton>

**Ellie MacDonald** is a Science Communicator at [Kielder Observatory](https://kielderobservatory.org/the-observatory/the-team/126-ellie-macdonald). Her background is in Mathematics and Physics, and she is most interested in nuclear fusion, and cosmology. She loves talking to people about Maths and Physics, which is what brought her to Kielder Observatory.