

Press Release

Heart n Soul announced as new residents of The Hub at Wellcome Collection



Award-winning creative arts company and charity, Heart n Soul, will be the third team of residents in The Hub, Wellcome’s transdisciplinary space exploring health in its cultural and social contexts. Over the next two years, the new residents’ project will bring together artists, scientists, researchers and clinicians, with and without lived experience of learning disabilities, to uncover new insights around the lives of people with autism and learning disabilities.

Starting in October, the collaborative group aim to uncover the concepts of ‘human value’, ‘difference’ and ‘love’ from the perspective of people with learning disabilities in order to challenge perceptions and change societal attitudes. Through valuing difference, the group aims to reveal what we can learn from people with autism and learning disabilities, to further understand how everyone’s health can be improved and celebrated.

[The Hub Award](#) was launched in 2014 to provide a dynamic transdisciplinary research space where people from different backgrounds and expertise collaborate on projects exploring medicine, life and art. Research undertaken as part of The Hub aims to provide new insights, forms of engagement, methodologies or interventions around a specific topic related to health or medicine. Awardees receive up to £1 million to bring researchers and creative professionals together over a two-year collaborative residency.

The new group of residents – including people with and without learning disabilities - are led by co-founder of Heart n Soul Mark Williams, alongside Heart n Soul artists, Pino Frumiento, Catherine Long, Robyn Steward and Tilley Milburn. The team will also include designer, researcher and writer Dr Chris McGinley (Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design, Royal College of Art); Professor Mick Grierson (Goldsmiths, University of London); Clinical Psychologist and lecturer Dr Dora Whittuck (Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust); Dr Anna Remington (Director, UCL Centre for Research in Autism and Education); and cultural policy adviser and writer, John Kieffer.

It is estimated that there are 1.4 million people with learning disabilities in the UK. In addition to research finding that many people with learning disabilities experience prejudice, ignorance and loneliness, there is also evidence of poor practice in specialist hospitals for autistic people and people with learning disabilities.

Since launching in 1987, [Heart n Soul](#) have put people with learning disabilities at the centre of their work through providing opportunities to develop new artistic skills and talents to create a more open, creative and equal world for everyone. Their Hub residency will extend their vision through building an evidence base to influence wider policy

and practice, engaging professionals and the public in their work and allowing for people with learning disabilities to engage with research on their own terms.

Heart n Soul will take over from current Hub residents, [Created Out of Mind](#), who have collaborated with people living with dementias, to demonstrate how the sciences and creative arts can be used to challenge and shape perceptions of dementias. Over the last two years, the group have created toolkits to measure the impact of arts-based activities for people living with dementias, while also developing artworks, installations, compositions, sculptures, films and podcasts which communicate personal dementia experiences. In addition, the interdisciplinary team have created consistent media presence to help shape conversations, while also sharing their learnings with opinion leaders and policy makers in the field of dementia and the arts.

Simon Chaplin, Director of Culture and Society at Wellcome, says "Since launching in 2014, The Hub has served as a space to conduct original and creative transdisciplinary research, crossing the boundaries between medicine, health and the arts. We've been privileged to have worked with current residents, Created Out of Mind, who have really paved the way in demonstrating the power of the arts in communicating both the personal stories and scientific realities of dementia. We are now delighted to welcome Heart n Soul to The Hub to explore how we can work together to create a more vibrant and inclusive society."

Project Lead, Mark Williams, says: "We are delighted to be the latest recipients of The Hub Award. It is like having a massive PA system amplifying the way we work together at Heart n Soul. We will be doing and sharing our work on a more public and visible scale, with an incredible team of diverse minds and asking some fundamental big questions which, when added to rigorous research, will have the potential to show the possibility of a more open, equal and kinder world for all of us."

Heart n Soul will be starting their residency in The Hub at Wellcome Collection this Autumn. Heart n Soul will also be holding their annual event 'The Beautiful Octopus Club' at the Southbank Centre in September.

Notes to Editors

Wellcome Collection

[Wellcome Collection](#) is a free museum and library exploring health, life and our place in the world. Through exhibitions, collections, live programming, digital, broadcast and publishing, Wellcome Collection creates opportunities for people to think deeply about the connections between science, medicine, life and art. Wellcome Collection makes thought-provoking content that encourages everyone to reflect on what it means to be human.

Wellcome Collection is part of [Wellcome](#), a global charitable foundation that exists to improve health for everyone by helping great ideas to thrive. Both politically and financially independent, we support scientists and researchers, take on big problems, fuel imaginations and spark debate.

Heart n Soul

[Heart n Soul](#) is an award-winning creative arts company. We believe in the talents and power of people with learning disabilities. We provide opportunities for people to discover, develop and share this power and talent as widely as possible making a more fun, creative, open and equal world for everyone.

Our work is about art, taking part, training and sharing. We offer a range of opportunities for people to take part, train in a new skill or develop their artistic talents. People with and without learning disabilities go on a creative journey together. This has life changing and life affirming value for everyone. We also have a lot of fun.

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