

## **Appendix**

**Participant Information Sheet p2**

**Consent form p.3**

**Pre-dinner Questionnaire p.4**

**Post-dinner Questionnaire p.5**

**Performance and Death Symposium, co-produced by the New Adelphi theatre and Sick! Festival:  
Schedule p.6**

**Performance and Death Symposium, co-produced by the New Adelphi theatre and Sick! Festival:  
Images (documentation from the post dinner group work) p.7-12**

**The Death, Dinner and Performance Project**  
**University of Salford**  
**Dr Sheila McCormick: s.mccormick@salford.ac.uk**

### **Information Sheet**

This research project looks at act of sharing a meal together and the possibility for performance practice and commensality to engage dinner guests in the subject of death and dying. You have received this invitation to attend one of the Death Dinners along with a number of other individuals because of one of the following:

- Your interest in the subject
- Your expertise in the area of death and dying
- Your understanding of theatre and performance practice

The research will develop through active participation on the part of the dinner guests in discussions around death and dying. By participating, you are agreeing to attend a death dinner event where death and dying will be discussed openly among all participants. These events will be recorded and the material gathered potentially used at a later date to develop a performance to further discussions on death and dying in a public forum. During the death dinner, three moments of solo performance will be used between courses as stimuli to engage participants in conversation. You will only be required to watch these performances and converse within your comfort zone as you might at a normal dinner. The difference here is that the conversations will mainly be about death and dying. These will be recorded and may be used at a later date as stimulus for a larger performance.

By agreeing to take part in the project you agree to the following:

- To attend a death dinner University of Salford. This will last no more than two hours and will be a private event, only attended by seven invited guests and myself.
- To complete four questionnaires around the topic of death and dying and your experience of the project, one before the dinner and three at intervals after the dinner (next day, one week, one month). These should take no more than ten minutes to self-complete.
- To your words potentially being used for research or a further performance at a later date.

You will have the right to withdraw from the project at any time without prejudice and without providing a reason. In such a case, any material relating to you will be destroyed.

As mentioned above, the material from the death dinners may be used in a performance at a later date. This material along with a number of questionnaires filled at intervals after the project may be disseminated through one or more research papers. While the project is ongoing material will be stored on a password secure computer (of which only I will have access). After the project this material will be destroyed.

While it may not be possible to ensure complete anonymity, all material used will also be show to you prior to it entering the public domain. If at this point you wish to remove any material you may do so.

**The Death, Dinner and Performance Project**  
**University of Salford**  
**Dr Sheila McCormick: s.mccormick@salford.ac.uk**

Consent Form

I (print name) \_\_\_\_\_ wish to be involved in The Death, Dinner and Performance project. By giving my consent, I am agreeing to attend a Death Dinner where what I say and my image maybe recorded and used at a later date for performance and/or research purposes. I agree to engage with a series of questionnaires (four) which will be self-complete and which will be filled in at intervals both before and after the Death Dinner. I agree material from these questionnaires may be used for a future performance and/or research purposes. I am aware that I may withdraw from project at any time and that the material from my questionnaires will be destroyed. I am also aware however, that, as the dinners will be filmed, it may not be possible to delete my spoken material and image.

Should I wish to make a complaint, I am aware that I may contact the Chair of Research Ethics for the School of Arts and Media at the University of Salford. Research Ethics Panel Chair: Dr Samantha Newbery A&M-ResearchEthics@salford.ac.uk Tel: 0161 295 2711

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

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**University of Salford**  
**Dr Sheila McCormick: s.mccormick@salford.ac.uk**

Questionnaire: Pre-Death Dinner

Name: .....

1: Death is

.....

.....

.....

2: I think about death (circle as appropriate)?

Often

Occasionally

Rarely

Never

3: I discuss death with others (circle as appropriate)?

Often

Occasionally

Rarely

Never

4: The reason for this is

.....

.....

.....

5: When I think about death I feel

.....

.....

.....

6: I have considered how I would like my death to be (circle as appropriate).

Yes

No

7: For me a good death would be

.....

.....

.....

8: Before I die I would like

.....

.....

.....

Thank you

**The Death, Dinner and Performance Project**  
**University of Salford**  
**Dr Sheila McCormick: s.mccormick@salford.ac.uk**

Questionnaire: Post Death Dinner

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1: Since the Death Dinner I have thought about death?

More

Less

The same

2: Since the Death Dinner I have discussed death with others?

More

Less

The same

3: The reason for this is

.....  
 .....

4: Since the dinner I have reflected on how I would like my death to be

Yes

No

5: If yes, what would that be

.....  
 .....

6: I have considered what I would need to put in place for this to happen

Yes

No

7: If yes, that is

.....  
 .....

8: If no, that is because

.....  
 .....

9: Please comment on the experience of the death dinner and whether the structure/ style of the event made you more or less likely to engage with the subject matter.

.....  
 .....

Thank you

## **Performance and Death Symposium, co-produced by the New Adelphi theatre and Sick! Festival,**

### **Schedule**

9.30am- 10am: Registration

10.00-11.30: Death & Birth in Our Lives

- Mats Staub, Interdisciplinary digital artist (Switzerland)
- Prof. Mahesh Nirmalan Manchester Royal Infirmary's Critical Care Unit
- Steven Eastwood, Documentary Film Maker
- 

11.30-11.45: Break

11.45-1.15: Staging Death and Grief

- Video provocation from Lotte Van Den Berg, theatre-maker (Netherlands)
- Ridiculusmus,
- Quarantine, Manchester-based creators of theatre, performance and other public events
- Dr Richard Talbot, Academic (University of Salford) and theatre-maker

1.15-2.00: Lunch

2.00-3.30: Conversations about Death and Grief, the Elephants in the Room

- Video: Fevered Sleep, Creators of performances, installations, films, books and digital art, for adults and for children
- Dr. Sheila McCormick, Academic (University of Salford) and performance-maker
- Leo Burtin, socially engaged writer, theatre-maker and producer

3.30-3.45: Break

3.45-4.45: Roundtable, thematic discussion

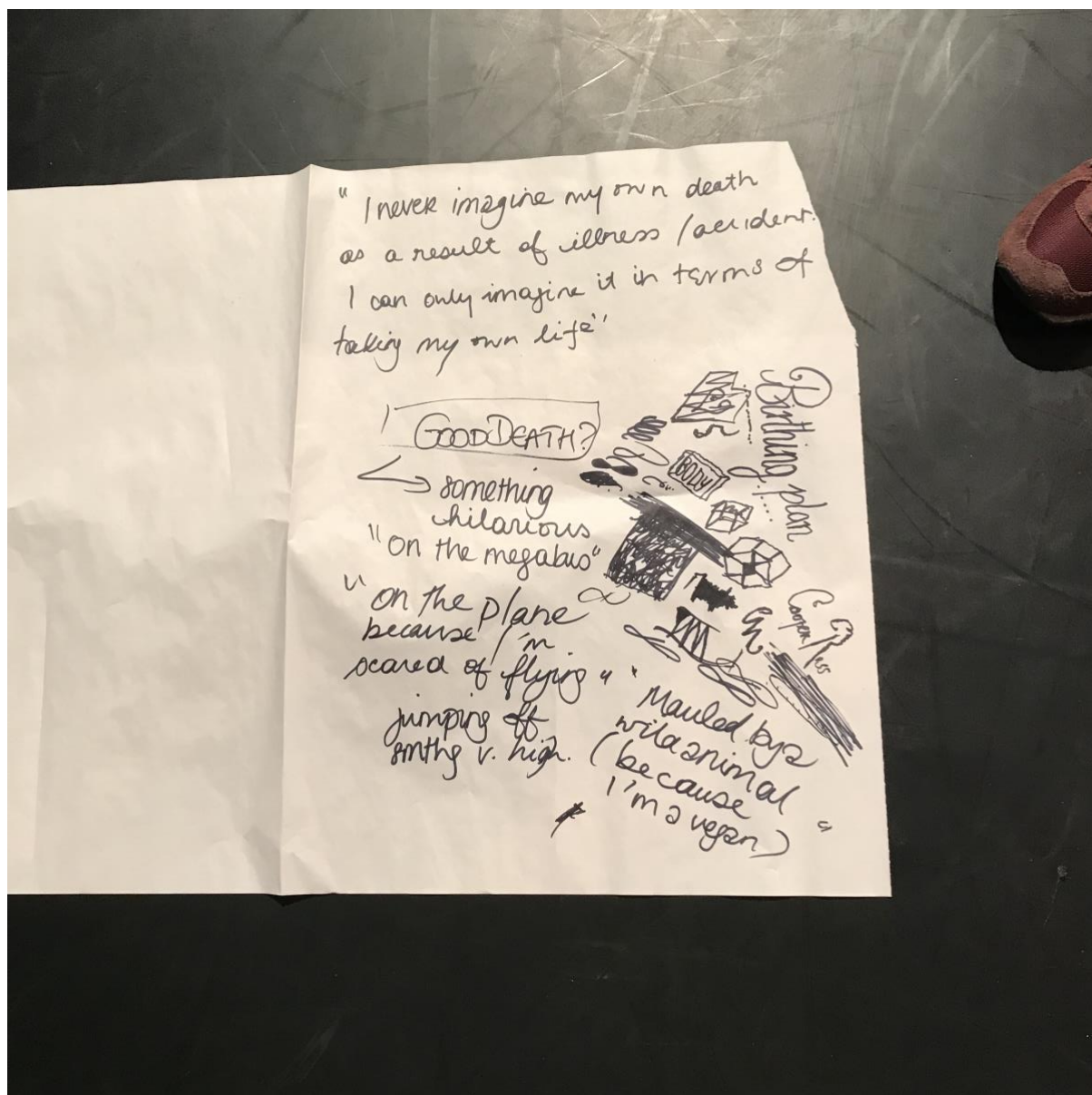
Contributors to the panel discussions will come together with the audience in an open discussion of ideas and threads emerging from the symposium.

4.45-5.45: Break

5.45- 7pm: Death Dinner, Sheila McCormick

Performance and Death Symposium, co-produced by the New Adelphi theatre and Sick! Festival,

Images from the post dinner discussions



horror fiction  
if I die, it's like everything ends.

first experience of death  
connected to music

or pet insects / pets

"grandma has gone on a  
long holiday"

but death isn't necessarily  
the first realisation

driven by church in going  
first sense of death  
through religion

in childhood, led  
to think afterlife  
is better anyway.

If heaven is better; why are we bothering  
to be alive?

Q: What

WHAT DOES DEATH  
MEAN TO YOU?

- it depends what I've done that day.
- it's worse at night. - <sup>living</sup> with purpose makes the idea of death more bearable.
- I might take David Bowie's place

quality of  
life  
more important  
than length  
though life  
doesn't always have to  
be good

death  
of the  
sense of  
"fighting"  
it



- to know I was loved  
 & that I made  
 some sort of  
 impact  
 - that we had given  
 as full selves &  
 made a contribution  
 - chat about it informally,  
 with wine & friends  
 - not wanting to leave  
 a burden for those left  
 behind

#3  
 - remembering  
 me with  
 humor  
 - sharing stories  
 - to know I was loved  
 & that I made  
 some sort of  
 impact  
 - that we had given  
 as full selves &  
 made a contribution  
 - chat about it informally,  
 with wine & friends  
 - not wanting to leave  
 a burden for those left  
 behind

- to know I was loved  
 & that I made  
 some sort of  
 impact  
 - that we had given  
 as full selves &  
 made a contribution  
 - chat about it informally,  
 with wine & friends  
 - not wanting to leave  
 a burden for those left  
 behind

- when someone is gone, it's final  
 - assuming, at a young age, that cause of an accident is death is the way everyone sees it  
 - all my loved ones will die  
 - reading @ 17 yrs old  
 - a year - death  
 - you realize that you make things to go to you/loppers  
 - how we value grief  
 - low mourning  
 - how we value grief

#1  
 - no exact moment  
 - watching a duck die  
 - imagining I was in my bed  
 - bed & thinking about who would be there & all the regrets they might have  
 - might love  
 - a year - death  
 - you realize that you make things to go to you/loppers  
 - how we value grief  
 - low mourning  
 - how we value grief

#2  
 - the concept of actualization of death is not over/equal  
 - (an everlasting digital life)  
 - research into this  
 - death is uneventful  
 - wanting to live for other people / for kids, grandkids  
 - impact of being a parent  
 - impact of how our parents refer to death i.e. 'falling asleep'  
 - leaving, maybe with pain  
 - premature unfinished  
 - legacy, what do we leave the world with?  
 - do other people want us to live forever?  
 - a responsibility to live?  
 - (not being responsible for anyone)  
 - if it is inevitable, why does it matter?

the concept of a death is not when you die

↓

impact of being a parent  
 ↑  
 impact of how our parents react to death  
 i.e. 'falling asleep'

↓

impact of being a parent  
 ↑  
 - wanting to live for other people / for kids, grandkids  
 - do other people want us to live forever?  
 - a responsibility to live?  
 - (not being responsible for anyone)  
 - if it is inevitable, why does it matter?

↓

- death is uncertain  
 ↓  
 research into this  
 ↓  
 - (an interesting digested life)

↓

- leaving maybe with pain  
 - premature untimely  
 - legacy, what do we leave the world with?

#1

- no exact moment

- watching a duck die

- imagining I was on my death bed & thinking about who would be there & all the regrets they might have

- realizing @ 7/8 yrs old that all my loved ones will die

- assuming, at a young age, that cause of one person's death is the way everyone will die

- when someone is gone, it's final

- how we value grief  
 ↓  
 how more people understand grief

- a near-death experience making you realize that death can come close to you/happen to you

- life may be a dream, but death is real  
 - to not be afraid of death  
 - to not be afraid of dying  
 - to not be afraid of the unknown  
 - to not be afraid of the afterlife  
 - to not be afraid of the pain  
 - to not be afraid of the loss  
 - to not be afraid of the end

