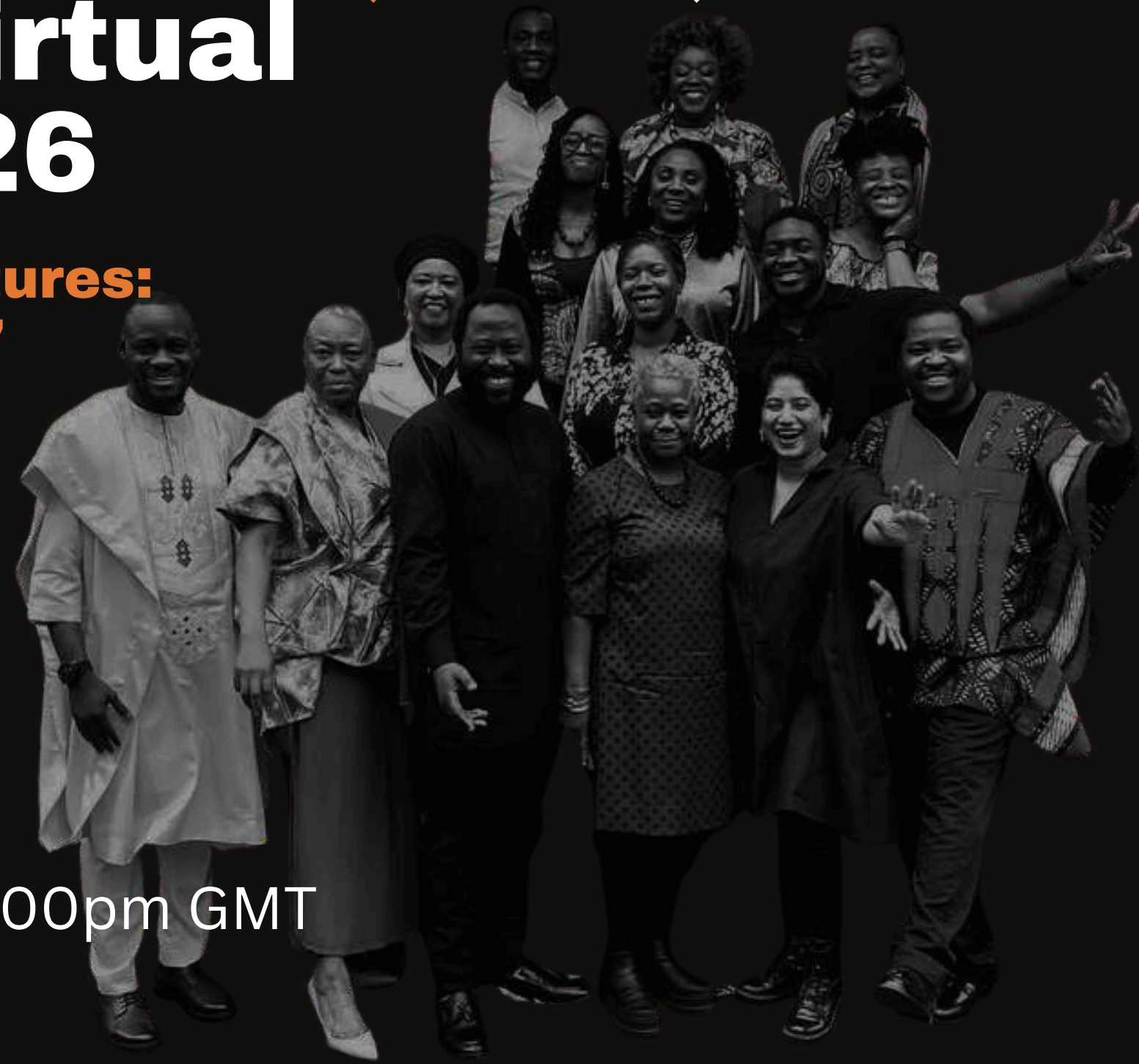


The background features three vertical bars on the left: a wide orange one, a medium red one, and a thin green one. In the top right, four diamond shapes are arranged in a row, colored red, orange, green, and white from left to right.

Black History Month UK + Global Virtual Convening 2026

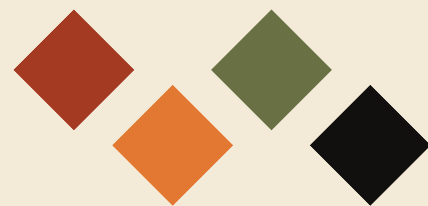
**“Creative Care for Black Futures:
Building Equitable Systems”**

29 October 2026 · 6:00pm–7:00pm GMT



Honouring Our Communities

Join us to explore how culture, creativity, and community power shape equitable Black futures.



Join a panel of distinguished guest speakers to explore how culture, creativity and community power can shape equitable Black futures.

As part of Black History Month UK 2026, this international online convening chaired by arts and health global leader Dr Kunle Adewale examines how cultural identity, creative practice, and community resilience form essential infrastructure for Black flourishing.

The event unfolds in two interdisciplinary discussions. The first panel, Culture and Community as Infrastructure for Black Futures, offers a visionary perspective on how cultural identity, shared memory, and creative ecosystems act as foundational structures for wellbeing, belonging, and long-term community resilience.

The second panel, Creative Care for Black Futures: Building Equitable Systems, brings together leaders in creative health, community development, and cultural innovation to examine how arts-based wellbeing models and culturally grounded care can transform systems.

Together, these conversations honour everyday leadership within Black communities and illuminate how creativity and collective action can drive meaningful, people-centred change.

Co-produced by the Arts Play Health Community, Public Health, Arts, Theory and Social Science (PATHS) Research Group, University of Edinburgh, Global South Arts and Health Initiative, and Global Arts in Medicine Fellowship.





Chair:



Dr Kunle Adewale

Chair and Global Development Lead
Global South Arts and Health Initiative

Dr. Kunle Adewale is a Nigerian-born, UK-based multimedia artist and globally recognised pioneer in arts and health. He is the Founder of Arts in Medicine Projects, the Global Arts in Medicine Fellowship, and Young Leaders for Arts and Health, and currently serves as Chair and Global Development Lead of the Global South Arts and Health Initiative, a movement that has reached more than 500,000 people across 45 cities worldwide since 2023. Dr. Adewale leads one of the world's largest arts and health networks.

He has spearheaded transformative arts-in-health programmes across the Global South and internationally, collaborating with cultural institutions, government agencies, universities, diplomatic missions, and global health bodies. A Global Atlantic Fellow for Equity in Brain Health at the University of California, San Francisco, his humanitarian work spans children, youth, people with chronic illnesses and disabilities, individuals living with dementia, refugees, and communities affected by conflict.

His contributions have earned global recognition, including a dedicated “Kunle Adewale Day” in the United States. He consults on the AFRICA-FINGERS Project and partners with University College London on the GRACE-Epi Project, advancing global research on arts, culture, and health. Dr. Adewale has served as a guest lecturer and speaker at University College London, King's College London, the University of Edinburgh, and Edge Hill University, contributing to international arts and health initiatives, global convenings, festivals, and research.

Dr. Adewale has led and pioneered Black History Month initiatives in the United Kingdom and the United States. He is the Curator of Diaspora for Arts and Health, an initiative that mobilises Black leaders and professionals to connect, collaborate, and invest in Black futures, the African continent, communities of African descent and black race worldwide.



Expert Panel Chair:



Courtney Joseph

Researcher and Museum Education
Practitioner, Global Arts in Medicine Fellow

Courtney Joseph is a South African qualitative researcher, museum practitioner and creative facilitator working at the intersection of psychology, cultural heritage and arts in health. Her work explores how art, objects and cultural spaces can create opportunities for connection, belonging, wellbeing and the sharing of lived experience. Courtney is currently a Project Officer at the Powell-Cotton Museum, where she leads community and artist engagement as part of its centenary programme.

She is also part of the African & Caribbean Community Research Hub at the Horniman Museum and Gardens, where she has co-curated exhibitions, contributed to community-led research and delivered talks exploring cultural heritage, identity and decolonial museum practice.

A Global Arts in Medicine Fellow, Courtney is particularly interested in creating spaces where African and diasporic histories, creativity and lived experiences can be shared across generations and communities.

As a panel chair, she is passionate about creating space for honest, generative conversations about Black histories, culture, identity and the futures we want to build together



Expert Panel Chair:



Jennifer Leslie

Creative Health Practitioner,
Researcher and Consultant

Jennifer Leslie is a Creative Health Practitioner, researcher, consultant, and podcast host dedicated to advancing equitable, community-centred approaches to health and wellbeing through creativity. With a strong background in community engagement and public health, she works at the intersection of arts, culture, and health, championing the power of creative practice to foster connection, resilience, inclusion, and positive social change.

As the founder and host of The Voices of Creative Health podcast, Jennifer creates platforms for practitioners, artists, community leaders, researchers, and people with lived experience to share insights, stories, and innovative approaches that strengthen the creative health movement. Her work places particular emphasis on ensuring that underrepresented voices are heard, valued, and actively shape conversations about health, wellbeing, and cultural participation.

Currently undertaking postgraduate study in Creative Health at University College London (UCL), Jennifer combines academic inquiry with practical experience to explore how creativity can address health inequalities, support mental wellbeing, and strengthen communities. Through research, advocacy, collaboration, and storytelling, she is helping to build a more inclusive and accessible future for creative health.



SPEAKERS

EXPERT PANEL FOCUS

Creative Care for Black Futures: Building Equitable Systems





Joke Amusan

Award Winning
Multidisciplinary Artist

Joke Amusan is a German-Nigerian artist based in London. Her art practice illuminates the multifaceted experiences of Black womanhood. Through her exploration of identity, heritage, and migration, she creates installations and sculptures. Her art serves as a conversational bridge: inspiring women to come together, share their stories, and unapologetically embrace their authentic selves.

At the heart of Joke's practice is an interest in how culture and community can foster connection, knowledge-sharing, and care. Her work considers how storytelling and creative expression can create opportunities for people to preserve histories. She reflects on the ways communities can become forms of infrastructure, striving to bring people together and create shared spaces through her creative workshops that encourage connection, collective exchange, and empowerment.

Joke has exhibited internationally, in renowned galleries such as Tate Modern, The ICA, and The African Diaspora Art Museum of Atlanta. In recognition of her practice, she received the Thameslink Art Award in 2025, was a finalist in The Ingram Prize in 2023, and was nominated for the "Female Founder" award in The Independent Awards in 2022. Joke studied Art & English Literature at The University of Reading with a term in Zürich, Switzerland at F+F Schule für Kunst und Design.



Romantha Botha

Documentary Filmmaker,
Digital Cultural Archivist

Romantha Botha is a South African documentary filmmaker, former journalist, and digital cultural archivist who works between Johannesburg and London. Through her company, Watchman Productions, she creates work that explores history, identity, language, and power, and asks who gets to tell the story.

She began as a field reporter and producer on national Afrikaans current affairs and investigative journalism programmes before moving behind the camera. She wrote and hosted the Showmax documentary series Sex & Pleasure, which earned a SAFTA nomination, as well as Jou Mase Taal, an Afrikaans docuseries about the lived experiences of Black native speakers. She has also co-produced podcasts, including Dope Black Dads and The Marvyn Harrison Podcast.

For an audience of more than 200k across social media, Romantha turns academic research, archives, and books into short video essays that make colonial history and cultural memory accessible, especially for Africans. Her collaborators include Greenpeace International, Greenpeace Africa, KykNET, and 54 Magazine.

Her TEDxGeorge Women talk in August, The Truth Is..., questioned the promise of the Rainbow Nation and challenged South Africans to recognise the inherited truths about one another that keep them divided and to take responsibility for unlearning them. She was also named in the prestigious Mail & Guardian 200 Young South Africans 2026 (Arts, Culture and Entertainment) and is a longlist judge for the British Podcast Awards 2026. Her work is driven by one value: the courage to tell it like it is.



**Dr Sharifa
Abdulla**

Lecturer, University of Glasgow, Researcher,
Facilitator, and Practitioner working at the
intersection of Arts, Culture, Play, and Health

Dr. Sharifa Abdulla is a Lecturer in Global Majority Theatre and Performance at the University of Glasgow, and a researcher, facilitator, and practitioner working at the intersection of arts, culture, play, and health. Her work draws on decolonising, participatory, and dialogical methodologies, with a particular focus on Indigenous Knowledge Systems, folk media, and arts-based approaches to research and community engagement.

Working primarily in Malawi and across international collaborations, Sharifa explores how communities generate knowledge through locally owned cultural practices, communication structures, and performance traditions. Her research examines the role of culture, play, and participatory arts in promoting health, wellbeing, and social change, while repositioning community members as experts and active partners in the research process.

With over 18 years of experience designing and leading participatory health programmes, she is co-founder of the Art & Global Health Centre Africa. She is currently leading Workstream 1 of the international GRACE-Epi project, which investigates the relationship between arts and cultural engagement and healthy ageing across diverse global contexts. Her work contributes to growing conversations on equitable, culturally responsive, and community-led approaches to health research and practice.



SPEAKERS

EXPERT PANEL FOCUS

Culture and Community as Infrastructure for Black Futures





Gay Palmer

Social Prescriber Link Worker
and Health and Wellbeing
Coach Team Lead at South
Southwark Primary Care Network

Gay Palmer is a respected leader in social prescribing, creative health and community wellbeing, bringing more than 25 years of experience across healthcare, nursing and community-based support. She serves as Social Prescriber Link Worker and Health and Wellbeing Coach Team Lead at South Southwark Primary Care Network and is also the Enablers Clinical Care Professional Lead for South East London's Integrated Care System.

A passionate advocate for the role of creativity in health, Gay has participated in choirs for many years and has led community choirs, combining her love of music with a commitment to improving wellbeing and social connection. She is a recognised Creative Health Champion in Southwark, supporting statutory health services to strengthen understanding and adoption of creative health approaches across the sector.

Gay serves as a Trustee of the National Academy for Social Prescribing and a Trustee of Outside Edge Theatre Company, a pioneering participatory theatre organisation supporting people living with addictions. She is also a member of ARCH, Advocates for Representation in Creative Health, promoting equity and inclusion across the field. Additionally, she has contributed to the development of the MSc in Creative Health at UCL and regularly delivers guest lectures to emerging practitioners and leaders.



Anthony Kalume

Visiting Lecturer,
University of Brighton
Museum Curator

Anthony Sirya Kalume is a curator, author, educator, and community leader whose work bridges heritage, decolonisation, cultural restitution, and social justice. He serves as a Visiting Lecturer at the University of Brighton, where he teaches collaborative humanities and creative writing programmes, and is an Associate Curator at Ditchling Museum of Art + Craft. With a Master's degree in Curating Collections and Heritage, his practice centres on Indigenous Knowledge Systems, identity, community engagement, and the ethical stewardship of cultural heritage.

Anthony is Director of the Culture Connect Project and has chaired Diversity Lewes since 2010, championing inclusion, intercultural dialogue, and community empowerment across Sussex and beyond. His international work spans Ghana, Kenya, and South Africa, and includes leadership in heritage restitution initiatives, notably serving as Chief Negotiator for the return of Vigango sacred memorials to the Mijikenda community in Kenya.

A Fellow of MuseumLab 2022, a Fellow of the Museum Association, and a member of the UK Creative Community Fellowship 2025, Anthony contributes to national and international conversations on decolonisation, museum practice, and equitable cultural futures. He also contributed to the development of a decolonisation workbook for Russian collections commissioned through Ukrainian cultural initiatives. As a published author and public speaker, he continues to advocate for community-centred heritage, restorative justice, and inclusive cultural leadership.



Korantema Anyimadu

London-based curator,
Cultural Producer
Senior Curator, Horniman Museum
and Gardens

Korantema Anyimadu is a London-based curator, cultural producer, storyteller, and community heritage advocate whose work explores identity, home, memory, and belonging through the power of storytelling. Drawing on oral history, archives, creative participation, and cultural research, she is committed to uncovering and amplifying stories that are often overlooked, particularly within African and Caribbean diasporic communities.

As a Senior Curator at the Horniman Museum and Gardens, Korantema works across collections, exhibitions, and community engagement initiatives that connect cultural heritage with contemporary conversations about identity, representation, and social change.

She is the founder of **Black Hair Stories**, an award-winning creative and cultural project exploring the significance of Afro hair through exhibitions, zines, workshops, oral histories, and public programmes. The project has received the Mayor of London's Making History Award and has been featured by media outlets including *VICE*, *gal-dem*, and ITV News.

Alongside her curatorial practice, Korantema is a zine maker, jazz dancer, creative facilitator, and advocate for inclusive cultural participation. Through her multidisciplinary work, she creates spaces where communities can share experiences, celebrate heritage, and reimagine the stories that shape collective identity, belonging, and cultural futures.



PERFORMING ARTISTES





Toluwani John Ajayi

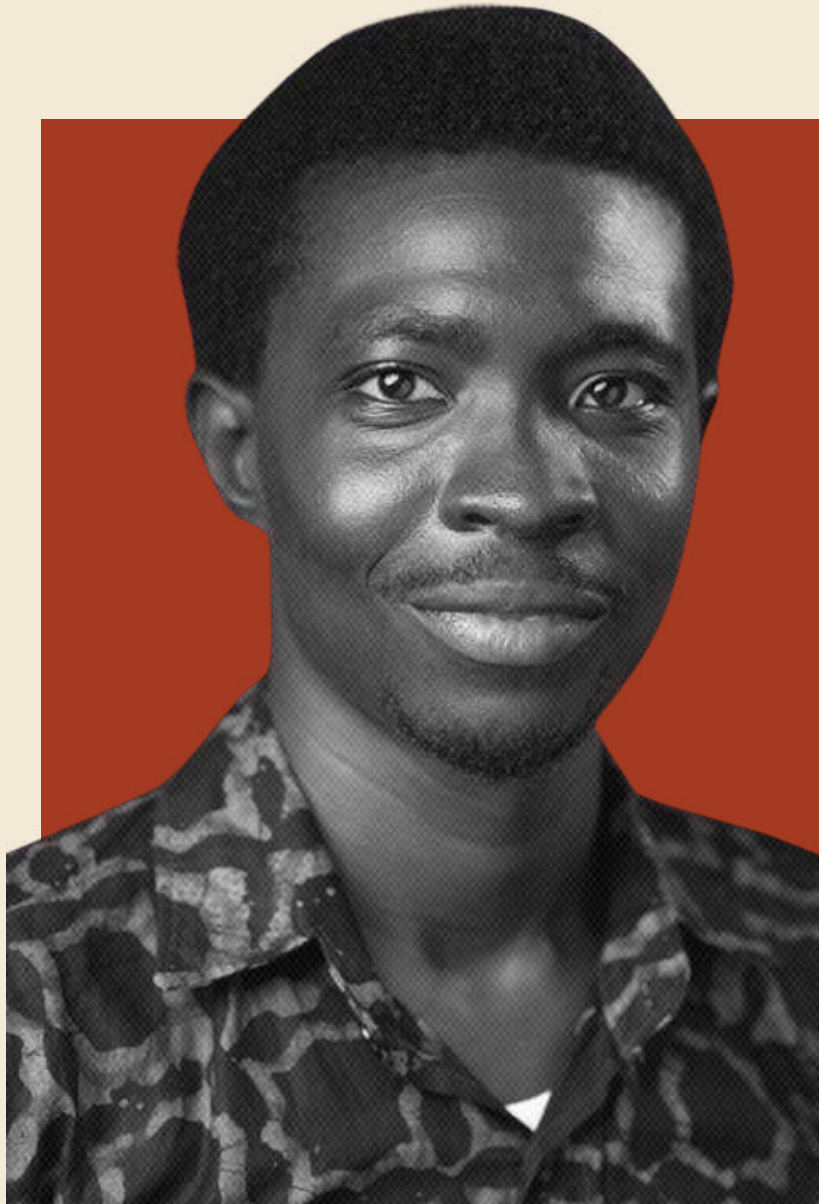
Musician, Double Bassist Composer
Global Arts in Medicine Fellow

Ajayi Toluwani John is a distinguished Nigerian-born, UK-based musician, acclaimed as a double bassist, composer, arranger, and performer. Classically trained and highly versatile, he is regarded as one of the most sought-after double bassists of his generation.

Originally trained as a Mechanical Engineer, Ajayi followed his lifelong passion for music, earning certifications in Music Theory and Double Bass Performance from the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM), United Kingdom. He has further refined his artistry through masterclasses with internationally renowned musicians, including British double bassist Chi-chi Nwanoku and German cellist and conductor Walter-Michael Vollhardt.

Since 2020, Ajayi has served as a standing double bassist with the Àkójọpọ̀ Music Foundation, delivering acclaimed performances, including a landmark concert in 2023. Beyond the stage, he champions the transformative power of music through arts and health initiatives. As a member of the Global Arts in Medicine Fellowship since 2017, he has performed in hospitals, correctional facilities, and community settings across Nigeria.

Ajayi has collaborated with organisations including the World Health Organization and the United States Consulate in Lagos. He currently teaches at the East London School of Classical Music and performs with the HACS Philharmonic Orchestra UK.



Gabriel Adédèjì

Composer , Pianistshaping West African
classical Music by blending Yorùbá
folklore with contemporary styles.
Global Arts in Medicine Fellow

Gabriel Adédèjì, a renowned Nigerian composer and pianist, is shaping West African classical Music by blending Yorùbá folklore with contemporary styles. Trained at the Muson School of Music and other institutions, Gabriel now teaches, composes, and performs.

In 2024, Gabriel's unwavering dedication to his work led him to London, where he continues to make significant contributions. He works with the Wigmore Hall as a pianist on the learning and participation programme, a pianist with the Amalgam, and an arranger for the Loveworld Orchestra.

Gabriel has co-produced and led Music for children in Pediatrics, children and adults living with sickle cell disease, youth and adults with mental illnesses and seniors living with dementia in Nigeria.

Gabriel also co-produced Music with the Frontliners (Health workers and Medical Professionals) at the forefront of the fight against COVID-19, during the Pandemic. This was an art in medicine project supported by the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. US Mission in Nigeria.

Gabriel's influence extends globally as a Global Arts in Medicine. His music contributions to Arts in Medicine Projects in Nigeria have been featured on Aljazeera and BBC Africa, connecting his work to audiences around the world.



Emmanuel Jaiyeola

UK-based
International gospel and Afrobeats Artist,
Vocalist, Keyboardist, Music Director,

Emmanuel Jaiyeola (Emmakeyzz) is a UK-based international gospel and Afrobeats artist, vocalist, keyboardist, choir director, and music director whose work sits at the intersection of music, faith, culture, and community impact. A dynamic performer and creative leader, he has built a distinguished career spanning Afrobeats, gospel, contemporary worship, Afrogospel fusion, highlife, and classical hymnal traditions, engaging audiences across Africa, Europe, and the Caribbean.

Endorsed under the UK Global Talent Visa (Exceptional Promise) in Music and Gospel Arts by Arts Council England, Emmanuel is recognised for his artistic excellence, leadership, and contribution to contemporary gospel music. Based in Manchester, he serves in key music leadership roles while supporting worship, performance, and community-based initiatives across the United Kingdom.

A recording artist with multiple albums and internationally distributed singles, Emmanuel has received award recognition and nominations for his contributions to gospel music and indigenous praise traditions.

Beyond the stage, he is passionate about the role of music in wellbeing, healing, resilience, and social connection. Through performance, mentorship, and artistic leadership, he continues to inspire diverse audiences while contributing to global conversations on culture, faith, youth development, and community transformation.



Co-Hosts





Dr Katey Warran

Head of the PATHS (Public Health, Arts, Theory, Social Science) Research Group

Dr. Katey Warran is an internationally recognised arts and health researcher. She is Head of the PATHS (Public Health, Arts, Theory, Social Science) Research Group and Director of the Edinburgh Centre for Research on the Experience of Dementia (ECRED), both based at the University of Edinburgh.

She is also a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow. Alongside her work at Edinburgh, Katey is Honorary Fellow in the Social Biobehavioural Research Group at University College London, where she was previously Deputy Director of the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre on Arts and Health. Alongside her academic work, Katey stays close to arts practice as a community musician.



Geraldine Montgomery

Creative Health Leader, Researcher,
and Strategic Partnership Specialist

Geraldine Montgomery is a respected creative health leader, researcher, and strategic partnership specialist whose work has helped strengthen connections between the arts, public health, social care, and community wellbeing sectors across the United Kingdom. With a career spanning health, care, wellbeing, and cultural development, she is recognised for her ability to build meaningful collaborations that translate innovative ideas into impactful practice.

A passionate advocate for the role of creativity in improving health and wellbeing, Geraldine has played a significant role in fostering networks that bring together artists, researchers, healthcare professionals, charities, community organisations, and policy stakeholders. Through her leadership, she has supported knowledge exchange, research development, capacity building, and cross-sector partnerships that advance the growing field of creative health.

Her work is grounded in a commitment to equity, participation, and evidence-informed practice, ensuring that creative approaches contribute to healthier, more connected communities. Through research, advocacy, partnership development, and systems leadership, Geraldine continues to champion the transformative potential of arts and culture in shaping more inclusive and responsive health futures.

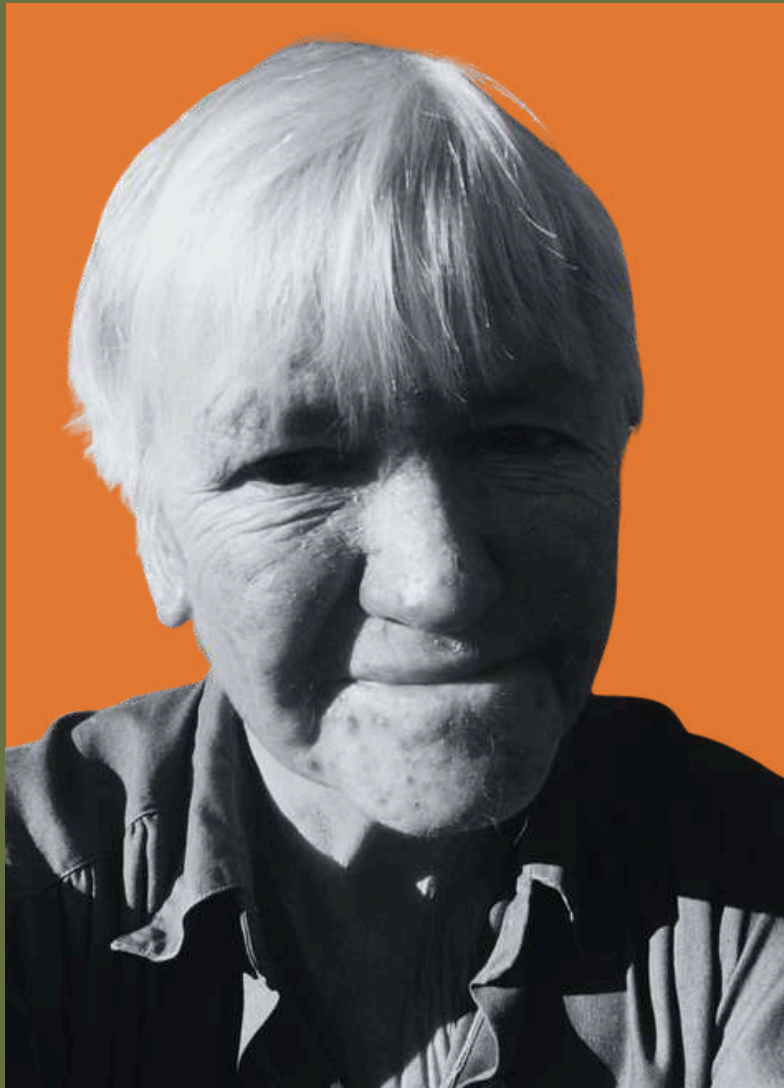


Dr Laura Wright

Research Associate at the Connections Lab,
Department of Occupational Science and
Occupational Therapy (OSOT),
Faculty of Medicine, University of British Columbia

Laura Wright, PhD, is a Research Associate at the Connections Lab, Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy (OSOT), Faculty of Medicine, University of British Columbia focused on youth mental health. She uses qualitative play and arts-based research methods working in partnership with children, youth, and communities to explore and strengthen mental health and wellbeing, arts, play, children's rights, and social justice.

Over the last two decades she's had the honour of working alongside children, youth, and communities using participatory, experiential, and equity-driven qualitative approaches across Canada, Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and East, West, and South Africa. Her work experience has moved across sectors and community-based organizations, non-profit research institutions, and academic settings. She is an active collaborator and founder across several global networks and boards to disrupt silos and strengthen systems for children and youth to thrive. Laura is Co-Founder and a Co-Director of the Arts Play Health Community.



Pat Scrutton

Coordinator of the Intergenerational National
Network (INN) in Scotland
Researcher and Creative Aging Advocate

Over recent years, Pat has become involved in research projects with Heriot-Watt University and the Universities of Dundee, Stirling, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and St Andrews. Last year, she collaborated with The Glass-House Community Led Design in London to co-curate a series of think pieces on Multigenerational Places.

She is a member of the British Society of Gerontology and a number of its Special Interest Groups, including Older Researchers in Ageing. She is also a member of the U3A Climate Matters Group. In addition, she is a board member of Support Choices, which is based in Dunkeld.

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6:00pm–7:00pm GMT

A Global Virtual Convening
Co-produced by



Arts Play Health Community

PATHS Research Group

University of Edinburgh

Global South Arts and Health Initiative

Global Arts in Medicine Fellowship



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
School of Health in
Social Science



**Be part of building equitable
Black futures through culture,
creativity, and community
power.**



Virtual convening · Access details shared with registered guests

Thank you. We look forward to gathering with you.

