The Art of the Meaningful

24th – 27th May 2020
Sarum College
Salisbury Cathedral Close

In association with
Godparents Anthroposophical Training Fund
Hermes Trust
Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship
Creativity is the natural condition of the human being, which can wither like an unused muscle or flourish and grow when well-exercised and nourished. Non-verbal thought processes contribute to creative insight. These are often overlooked, like the unseen part of the iceberg that lies hidden beneath the waterline. Such thought processes are the source of as-yet-unknown creative insight, leading the way to emerging futures and ethical responsibility.

In this conference, educators and international research specialists working in the field of creativity, provide an overview and experience of working with the full spectrum of creative thinking skills for innovation and insight across all domains and disciplines.

The talks will be supported and deepened by practical, hands-on workshops and group discussions, which will form part of on-going research and development. The practical workshops do not assume prior experience and have been designed to provide energising challenges for all levels of experience.

Coinciding with the Salisbury International Arts Festival and 800th anniversary of the founding of the cathedral, the conference offers an invigorating experience to nourish and inspire educators, problem-solvers, artists and innovators in all areas of endeavour.

Acknowledging Creative Thinking Skills
www.acts.cloud
Keynote Speakers

Professor Thomas Vogel
Thomas Vogel is a professor at Emerson College in Boston. His research explores the nature of creativity and creative thinking. He is the author of Breakthrough Thinking – A Guide to Creative Thinking and Idea Generation and the director and producer of YesNoMaybe, a film about how students can learn and practice creativity, creative thinking and problem solving as a skill. Thomas is also a founding partner of mediaman, a digital agency headquartered in Germany, with offices in Boston and Shanghai, and Next Mobility Lab, a startup studio located in Mainz, Germany.

YesNoMaybe follows the journey of several young adults as they experience their own creativity during a 14-week long college course in ‘Creative Thinking’. The film features students, educators and industry experts and provides a close look at how students can learn and practice creative thinking and problem solving as a skill, and how creativity can be taught. YesNoMaybe offers a fresh outlook into why creativity is considered a “21st century skill”.

Professor Oren Lieberman & Tanya Mergler
Professor Oren Lieberman was Dean of Art, Design and Architecture at the Arts University Bournemouth before moving on to spearhead the development of an innovative Architecture Department at Salford University. He is now Head of Architecture at the University of Portsmouth, and, amongst other research projects, is a member of the Advanced Research Forum headed by Professor Marcello da Veiga in Bonn, Germany. Tanja is a Craft, Design & Technology teacher at Ringwood Waldorf School. With a background in bespoke tailoring, theatre costume design, and a Masters in Architecture following years of teaching in Higher Education in Germany and Britain, she trained as a Waldorf class teacher. With pupils, she has been passionately investigating the potential of creative learning through making.

Making the World As We Go: from spatial affordances to crafting lives. Oren and Tanya will present their work and thoughts on engaging with things and processes in ways which underscore our inseparability from them, and make apparent our potential caring participation in creating the world as we go. The talk will set the scene for a hands-on workshop which will focus on attention, making and joy.

Elaine Holt
Elaine has over 25 years of experience in Steiner Education and Teacher Training. She designed and co-ordinated the ACTS project and is author of the book Acknowledging Creative Thinking Skills: Educating for a Creative Future. Most recently, she has been engaged in research into the relationship between creative thinking skills, neuroscience and mental good health.
The Art of the Meaningful: Elaine will present an overview of the Creative Thinking Skills Spectrum and their role in the development of creativity, autonomy and effective ethical action within the world. This is intended to set the stage for the more in-depth investigations and research into the individual capacities and how they have shaped human development.

The Language of the Soul: Personal Symbolic Language and the sense of self. Here Elaine will explore where creativity and innovations are born and the language in which they speak to us from the realm of the as-yet-unknown.

Peter Elsner
Peter Elsner is an established artist, sculptor, educator and author of the book: Metamorphosis in Nature and Art. He is currently Head of Sculpture at Snellman College, Helsinki.

The idea of Metamorphosis – practicing a new consciousness through art: For J.W. Goethe, the result of the process of getting knowledge was perceiving the eternal in things. When researching the world of transformation, consciousness has to engage at three different levels of reality. Through the example of Goethe’s plant metamorphosis, we will look on these three levels of awareness. Further, we will enter into the question of how the artistic practice of Metamorphosis is related to the curriculum of the Waldorf School.

Kevin Avison
Kevin Avison is recently retired: A teacher for nearly 30 years in Secondary & Middle schools before working in a Steiner residential school for children with special needs and Steiner Waldorf schools. Senior Executive Adviser for the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship, he was a member of the management team for the ACTS, Erasmus+ project. He is author and editor of a number of key texts on Waldorf education, workshop designer and facilitator, published poet.

Embracing Ambiguity - mash-ups, uncertainty & creativity: According to Albert Camus, "Fiction is a lie told to reveal the truth". Living experience abounds with ambiguity and, whenever we speak, the ambiguous hovers behind our words. We like to think of many things as definitive and certain, but certainty itself is an enigma, which is as well, or there might not be room for creativity - or jokes: when is a door not a door? The ambiguous holds open that door for other potential meanings, actions and learning because an ambiguous object is more than the sum of its parts. Thus, creative thinking and creative action always involves embracing ambiguity,
Workshops

**Metamorphosis: Basics of an organic design with Peter Elsner**

The idea of Metamorphosis gives us the possibility to create a methodical path which leads into a deeper understanding of a lively design. The exercises will show three universal form phenomena which are the tools to create a dynamic and organic design. Further, we will look at several examples of how to go forward into the next levels of creative practice.

**Immersive Creation with Tanya Mergler and Oren Lieberman**

From their broad experience with pupils and students of all ages, Oren and Tanja will share with participants some methods of joyfully and creatively engaging in making things, objects and spaces - creating the world as we go.

**Open Research Discussion Space: On the Nature of Truth with Kevin Avison**

This optional R & D workshop will offer an opportunity to continue and deepen the discussions and research incorporated into the conference talks and workshops, and to highlight potential future research and development needs.

**Colour Dynamics with Elaine Holt**

Working with ancient and modern pigments, we shall begin to practically explore non-verbal, personal symbolic language, which forms the bulk of thinking, is the source of innovation, and yet often lies hidden and forgotten, beneath the waterline of consciousness. Bring a painting shirt or apron, as it could get messy!
Geometry as a Spatial Design Language with Laurie Smith

Laurie will present an introduction to the scale of galactic geometry and its manifestation on Earth through plant growth and mineral formation; a recognition of the harmonic opposites of circularity and angularity, and the development of observed geometry as a creative spatial language for 2 dimensional pattern making and 3 dimensional construction. There will be the opportunity to study geometrical symbols, experiencing their construction and how they are developed in building design, using compass, dividers, edge and scribe. Examples will include house, barn, aisled hall and cathedral geometries.

Laurie Smith is an independent early-building design researcher, specialising in geometrical design systems. Geometry was embedded in the medieval educational curriculum, and he now uses geometrical analysis to excavate and recover the design methodologies of the past, a process he thinks of as design archaeology. He is a member of the Carpenters’ Fellowship and currently designs the Fellowship’s journal, The Mortice and Tenon. He lectures, writes and runs practical workshops on geometrical design and publishes his work through his website www.historicbuildinggeometry.uk which offers free downloads of 40 articles.

Mandala Drawing with Louise Tiley

Explore your inner and outer life through the creative and meditative process of Mandala drawing.

Louise Tiley is an Experienced Steiner Teacher working in the area of Learning Support. She has also been a participant and contributor to the ACTS project.

Singing with TBC

Pattern and resonance are qualitatively different aspects of thinking that inform and scaffold our understanding of the world. Pattern is predictable and, so, better understood. Resonance gives indications but not absolutes, allowing flexibility in thinking, and is less well understood. These workshops will develop the material for a practical exploration of pattern and resonance in terms of space and sound at Stonehenge and Salisbury Cathedral.
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Sunday</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.00-8.00 am</td>
<td>Special Access visit to Stonehenge</td>
<td>Pattern and Resonance: Singing</td>
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<td>9.00 am</td>
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<td>11.00 am</td>
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<td>11.30 am</td>
<td>Clay Modelling with Peter Elsner</td>
<td>Geometry as a Spatial Design Language with Laurie Smith</td>
<td>Mandalas with Louise Tiley</td>
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<td>1.00 pm</td>
<td>Welcome and Registration</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>2.00 pm</td>
<td>Elaine Holt: The Art of the Meaningful</td>
<td>Oren Lieberman: Making Meaning: A sense of Place Through Architecture</td>
<td>Optional Research Discussion (or) Free Time to explore Salisbury</td>
<td>Thomas Vogel: YesNoMaybe</td>
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<td>3.30 pm</td>
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<td>4.00 pm</td>
<td>Colour Dynamics Workshop with Elaine Holt</td>
<td>Immersive Creation with Tanya Mergler and Oren Lieberman</td>
<td>Optional Research 1. Discussion: ‘On the Nature of Truth’ 2. Practical Geometry 3. Exploring Salisbury and the International Arts Festival by day.</td>
<td>Plenum (Until 5.00pm)</td>
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<td>5.30 pm</td>
<td>Reflection and Synthesis</td>
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<td>6.00 pm</td>
<td>Free Time: Chance to explore Salisbury and the International Arts Festival</td>
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<td>Singing in Salisbury Cathedral (Private Access) TBC</td>
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Entertainment

The City of Salisbury  
*Daytime*

This ‘city in the countryside’ offers a wide range of entertainments: museums, historic sites, shops, restaurants, theatre, cinema and walks through the outstanding water meadows, all within easy walking distance of Sarum College. There will be the option to explore this beautiful Medieval town and extensive local Market on Tuesday Afternoon.

Salisbury International Arts Festival  
*(22nd May—7th June)*  
*Daytime and evening:*

There will be a variety of music, dance, art and theatrical events available throughout the acclaimed two-week Festival. *What’s On* information will be available. There are normally free and ticketed options available, please check the Festival programme nearer the time.

Private Access to Stonehenge Inner Circle  
*6.00—8.00 am Monday*

This free access to the inner circle at Stonehenge is offered as part of the conference. However, places are strictly limited by English Heritage, who manages the site and has kindly given us access. Therefore, these places will have to be allocated on a first come, first served basis. **To avoid disappointment, please book your place early!**
Conference Fees

The free additional early morning trip to Stonehenge will be available to the first 24 bookings. Please use booking form provided.

*Please note, the conference fee covers a 2 course lunches (Monday – Wednesday) and refreshments.*

**Conference fee:** £165.00 for bookings made by **March 16th 2020**
- Late Bookings: £180.00 after March 16th 2020

**ACTS participating Schools / GATF Students:**
- Early Bird fee: £140.00 for bookings made by **March 16th 2020**
- Late bookings: £180.00 after March 16th 2020

**Steiner Schools (as listed on SWSF website):**
- Early Bird fee: £156.00 for bookings made by **March 16th 2020**
- Late bookings: £180.00 after March 16th 2020

**Special Concessions**
A very limited number of additional concessions available.

Please contact Jane Avison for details:
Email: admin@gatf.org.uk

Photograph: Alan Walker
Accommodation

Accommodation should be booked direct with Sarum College or alternative arrangements. We recommend early booking due to the popularity of the Salisbury International Arts Festival.

Sarum College Bed and Breakfast

Sarum College is a period building thought to have been designed by Sir Christopher Wren and set within in the tranquil Cathedral Close. There is use of common areas and an attractive Dining Hall. Evening meals can be booked daily as required.

Photograph: Pete Langdown Photography

Standard single (shared bathroom)........................£44.00 per night
Single (ensuite ).........................................................£76.00 per night

Local Bed and Breakfast

There are a number of very attractive local B & Bs and Airbnbs within walking distance, offering a range of accommodation from £35 per night, but early booking is highly recommended due to the concurrent Salisbury Arts Festival drawing visitors. Prices vary.

Food

Lunches and Refreshments:
Delicious, home-cooked, locally sourced 2-course lunches, and Fairtrade refreshments will be provided as part of the Conference. Any dietary requirements can be met. Please fill out the dietary needs section on the booking form.

Optional evening meals can be ordered and paid for directly at Sarum College each morning, if desired, even if staying elsewhere. There are also a wide variety of good local places to eat.
How To Find Us

Sarum College, 19 The Close, Salisbury, SP1 2EE
(+44) 01722 424800
https://www.sarum.ac.uk

By Plane:
*Bristol, Southampton* and *Bournemouth Airports* are within 60 minutes travelling distance by car or train. National Express coaches and trains run from *Heathrow and Gatwick Airports*

By Train:
Public transport links are excellent with frequent train services to and from Salisbury. There are direct trains from *London, Southampton, Portsmouth, Bath, Bristol, Cardiff and Exeter*. Sarum College is a short walk from the station

By Coach:
National Express coaches stop in Salisbury a short walk away.

By Car:
The High Street entrance (turn at crossroad traffic lights) is the only way to drive into the cathedral Close (see picture). Some Sat Nav systems are better when “North Walk” is entered as the street name, or the *SP1 2PF* post code for the High Street Post Office, so you are directed straight to the High Street Gate.

Photograph: Derek Voller
Recommended Reading:

Metamorphosis in Nature and Art (Peter Elsner, 2012)

A Day in the Life of the Brain (Susan Greenfield, 2016)

Acknowledging Creative Thinking Skills: Educating for a Creative Future (Elaine Holt, 2018)

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ACTS Conference in association with Godparents Anthroposophical Training Fund
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Photograph: Anthony Burgess