

# I'm me Festival

Exploring identity, representation  
and voice with learning disabled  
and autistic artists.



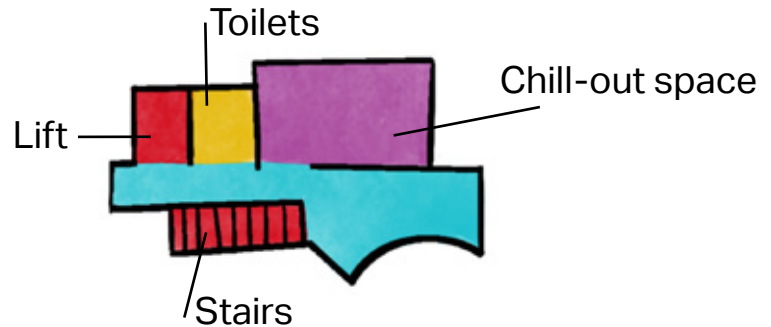
Thursday 19 and Friday 20 June 2025

York St John University

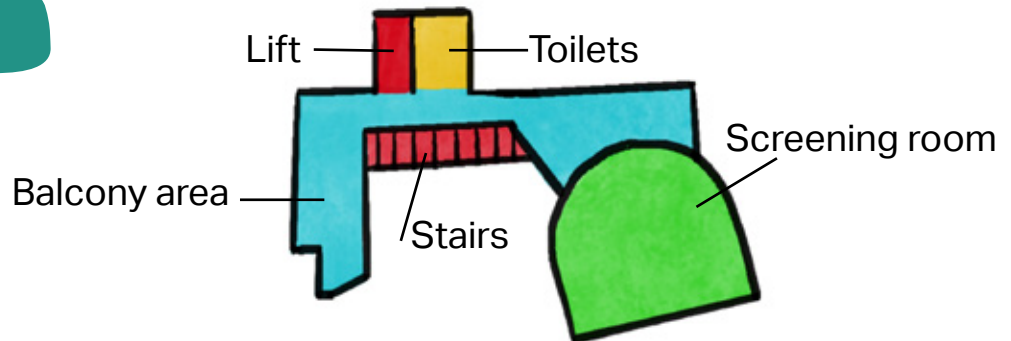
# York St John University Creative Centre

The spaces we are using are:

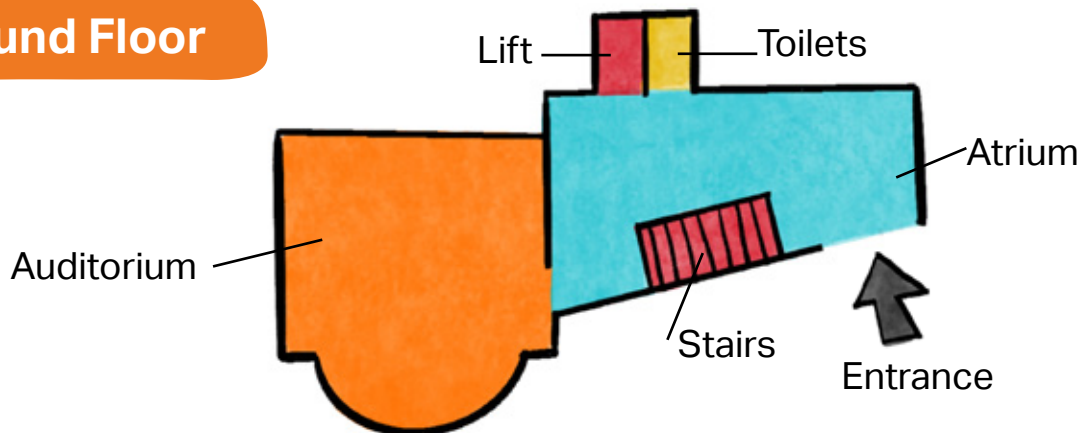
## Second Floor



## First Floor



## Ground Floor



# Welcome to the I'm Me Festival

For the past two years artists with learning disabilities and autism from across the UK have been exploring identity, representation and voice.

The I'm Me Festival showcases the work they've created, using theatre, dance and film to take control of their stories, change the world and have fun doing it.



Scan here for an audio  
recording of this programme.



# Thursday 19 June 2025

**5.00pm** - Doors open

Throughout the evening you can explore the following:

- **I'm Me Exhibition** – insights from the research
- Photographs by Hijinx
- **Small Worlds**, About Face
- Film screenings

**Ground floor**

**First floor**

**First floor**

**First floor**

**6.00pm** - Performance

- **Silent Glimpses, Loud Truths**, Hijinx,

**First floor balcony**

**6.05pm** - Auditorium opens

- **Sistarz**, Under the Stars
- **Give me Space**, ConfiCo
- **Me First**, Lung Ha Theatre Company
- **Safe as Houses**, Open Theatre
- **HELD**, Mind the Gap

**Auditorium**

**8.00pm** - End time

# Friday 20 June 2025

**2.15pm** - Doors open

Throughout the afternoon you can explore the following:

- **I'm Me Exhibition** – insights from the research
- Photographs by Hijinx
- **Small Worlds**, About Face
- Film screenings

**Ground floor**

**First floor**

**First floor**

**First floor**

**3.00pm** - Performance

- **Silent Glimpses, Loud Truths**, Hijinx

**First floor balcony**

**3.05pm** - Auditorium opens

- **Sistarz**, Under the Stars
- **Give me Space**, ConfiCo
- **Me First**, Lung Ha
- **Safe as Houses**, Open Theatre
- **HELD**, Mind the Gap

**Auditorium**

**5.00pm** - End time



# I'm Me and Your Experience

## This is a relaxed festival

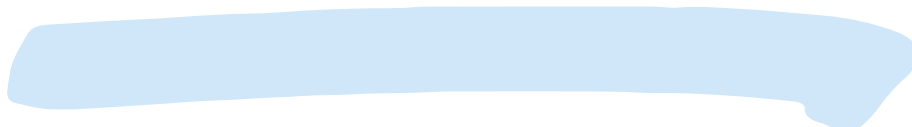
This means we take a relaxed approach to movement and noise from the audience.

- You can move and make noise.
- You can come and go.
- You can use the chill out space on the second floor.

With the aim of being inclusive and accessible to more audiences:

- House lights will not be fully darkened.
- There will be no flashing lights.
- There will not be any sudden loud noises or longer sections of very loud music or noise.
- Live captioning will be available on Friday 20 June.
- All text in the exhibition is available in audio form.

If at any point you need support or have a question, please ask a member of the event staff.



# I'm Me and Your Response

Doodle Books were key to I'm Me. They had creative and playful tasks to explore the themes of identity, representation and voice. They were the starting point for the performances, films and art in this festival.

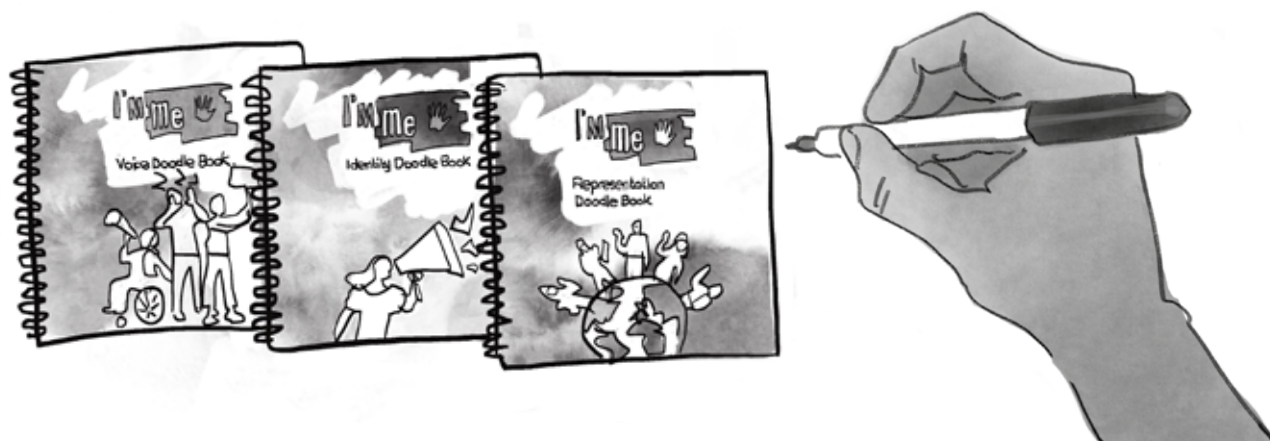
You will find lots of text and drawings from these Doodle Books in our exhibition.

In this programme, the information about each performance or artwork is followed by a Doodle Book page. This space for you to respond. Feel free to complete these.

If you would like to share these with us, we would love to see your responses.

You can take a photograph and share either:

(email ) **ISJ@yorksj.ac.uk** or (WhatsApp) **07564 939642**



## About Face

**Small Worlds** are models by About Face artists. The small worlds are based on safe places where we can be ourselves. Each model is accompanied by a description of the story it's based on – from being fed cake in Gran's sitting room, to holidays with someone special.



## Creative Team

**My Celium**

**Gran looks down on me**

**Big Mountains, Small World**

**Ruby's Love. The Year 2020**

**My World, My Stage**

**My Special Place**

**My Gran's House**

**La Gelateria di Tommaso**

Laahn Saunders

Jack Butler

Tim Dowse

Laura Walne

Tracy Crum

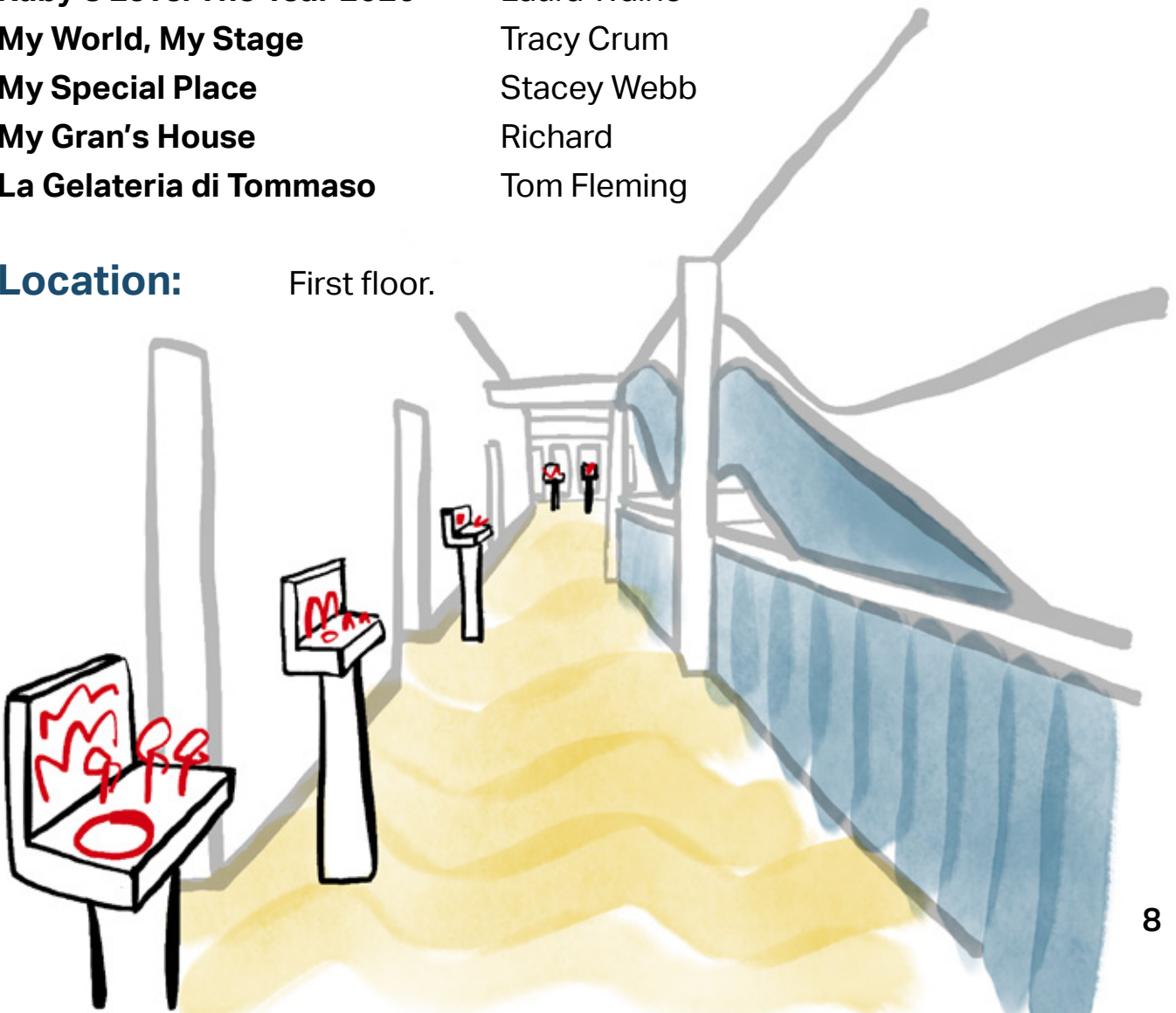
Stacey Webb

Richard

Tom Fleming

## Location:

First floor.



# Your Small World

Your small world is a place where you feel safe and at home.

List three places this might be for you:

1.

2.

3.



**Pick one place that is special to you.**  
**Draw your small world here.**



# Silent Glimpses, Loud Truths

Hijinx

**Silent Glimpses, Loud Truths** is performed by Victoria Walters. Walter's movement is inspired by recordings of her friends and co-workers talking about representation. They talk about how they present themselves to the world and in photos. Walters moves with what they say. She explores how we make decisions about what makes us, us and what the world thinks of us.



## Creative Team

Victoria Walters	Lead artist and creator
Amy Griggs	Academy director, lead facilitator and co-creator
Jorge Lizalde	Photography instructor and editor
Tom Elstob	Music and composition
Angharad James	Choreography advisor

Hijinx West Academy members and contributors:

Iwan Jones, Christopher Miller, Ashford Richards, Ffion Martin, Ffion Gwyther, Matthew Davison, Ben Hobden, Jo England, Gareth Hopkins, Zach Beasley, Sean Allchin, Ted Lishman

**Duration:** 5 minutes.

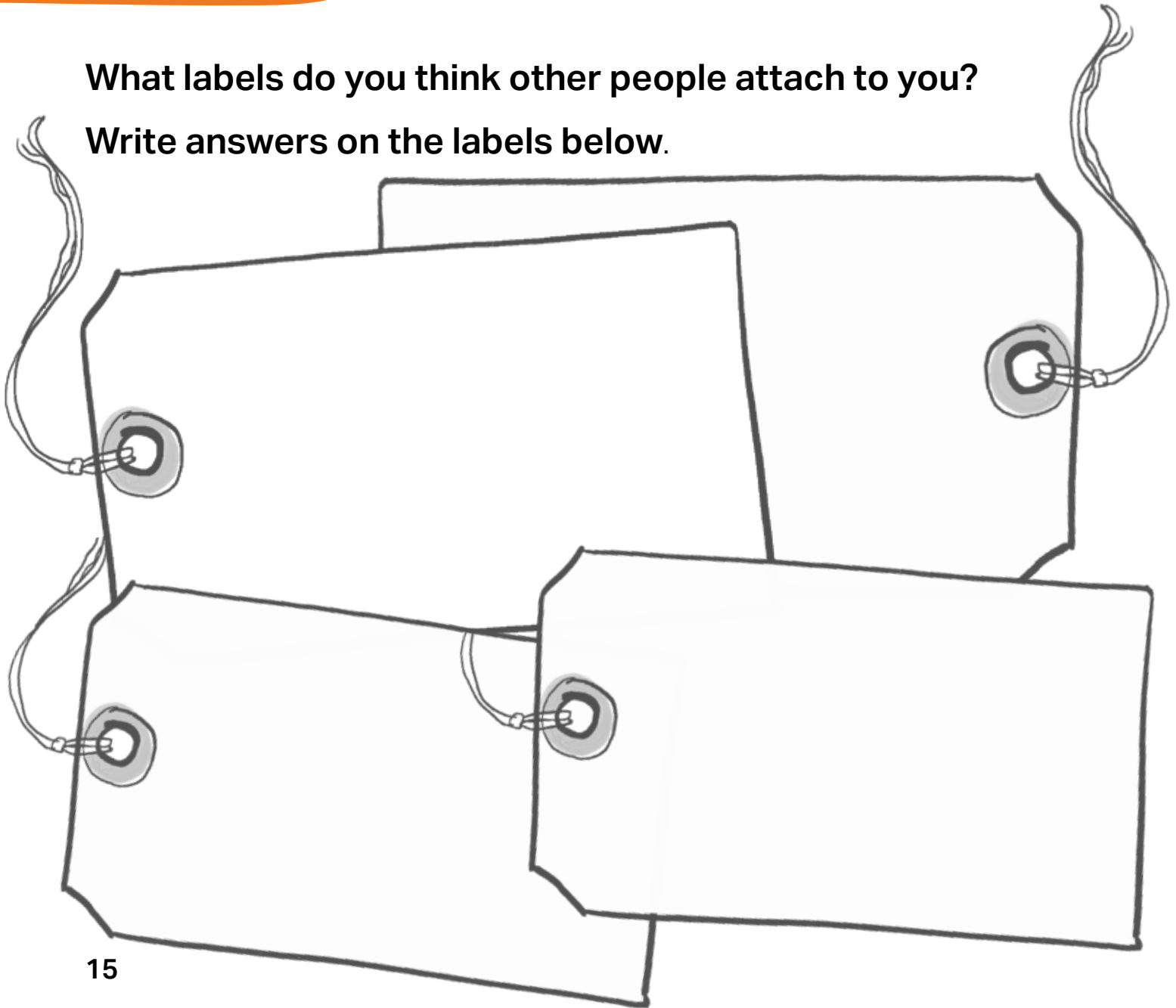
**Location:** First floor balcony.



# Labels

**What labels do you think other people attach to you?**

**Write answers on the labels below.**



**What does it mean to be yourself in a world that often expects us to all be the same?**

**Use this page to draw or describe a world where everyone is different and everyone is accepted.**

## Under the Stars



**Sistarz** is a girl band. In this performance you will see them perform three of their songs from their future musical. They sing about their experiences of people making assumptions about them, facing unfair opinions and not being listened to.

**Sista-Hood** is their breakout hit, introducing the world to their band personas. **Love Letters and Hate Mail** is about what the fans and media think of the band. **Snap, Flash, Click, Pose** is about some of the stress and pressures they face.

This performance is a way for us to talk about our own experiences, but through a set of characters.

## Creative Team

Cast:

Tanatswa Chamisa, Sophia Connor, Lucy Hall, Hayden Holding, Daniel Holmes, Lauren Lucas, Jack Mather, Victoria McCann, Bethan Morgan, Natalie Spurr, Alice Walker.

**Duration:** 15 minutes.

**Location:** Auditorium.



# Times you've felt ignored

List times or places when you've felt you've not been listened to.

1.

2.

3.



**If you could go back in time to a moment in your life where you didn't feel heard and express yourself fully, what would you say?**

**Draw yourself saying it here.**

# Give Me Space

## ConfiCo

**Give Me Space** opens with dancers entering one by one. They move to their own beat. We see and hear statements about lived experiences of disability. The dancers show pieces of paper that might be benefits forms and other paperwork. The work to fill out the pieces of paper never ends. The dancers movements get more and more frustrated. They are together in a rigid ballet they did not choose to dance. Will they ever break free?



## Creative Team

ConfiCo dance artists:

Caitlin Butler, Thomas Eastwell, Brooke Hilton, Kaylee Henry.

Hannah Westerman

I'm Me lead artist

Jo Frater

Artistic director

Ruby Gadsby

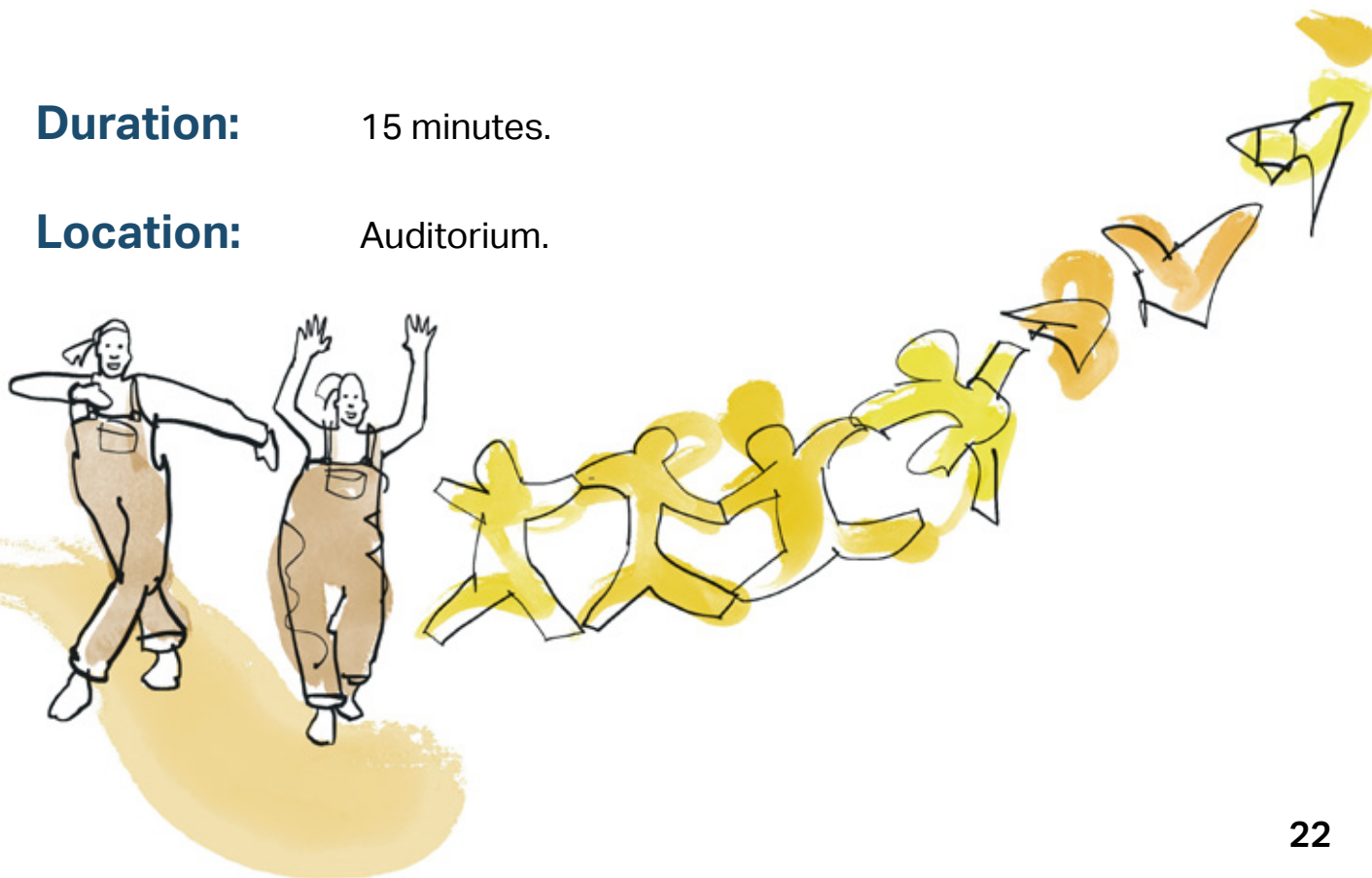
Creative enabler

Grace Wranosky-Mills

Rehearsal director

**Duration:** 15 minutes.

**Location:** Auditorium.



# Slow Down

What would happen if the pace of society slowed down  
and gave everybody more space.

Who would benefit?



**What might you do personally to support people  
you know be their best selves.**

**List three ideas.**

**1.**

**2.**

**3.**

## Lung Ha Theatre Company



Gavin is a performer who has a lot to say and knows how to use his voice. But Gavin often has to overcome barriers to do so. Ryan is one of those barriers.

Ryan and Gavin both try to be heard. This piece explores the theme of voice and how to use it. It shows the barriers to being heard that people with disabilities and autism face.

## Creative Team

Performed and created by Gavin Yule and Ryan Duncan.

**Duration:** 10 minutes.

**Location:** Auditorium.



# Barriers to using your voice

Is there a time you have felt like you couldn't share your thoughts, feelings or opinions.



**What is it that stops you? These could be things that come from yourself or other people.**



# Safe as Houses

## Open Theatre

**Safe as Houses** was made using Open Theatre's non-verbal physical theatre practice. Non-verbal physical theatre means there was no talking when the artists made this. The group will work together to explore the places they feel safe. They will share how this project has revealed connections between themselves that they had not realised were there before.



## Creative Team

Luke Greenwood    Lead artist  
Melissa Daly        Lead practitioner  
Adelina Motrescul   Practitioner

### Open Theatre Artists:

James Davis, Rashaan Herbert-Robbins, Millie Parker, Daniel Parker,  
Callum Marriott, Milan Masani, Lukan Smith, Vicki Shuttleworth, John Stokes  
Charlie Stonham.

**Duration:**            10 minutes.

**Location:**           Auditorium.



# Safe

**When do you feel safe?**

**List 3 places or times.**



**Pick 1**

**What can you see?**



**What can you hear?**

**How do you feel?**

## Mind the Gap

**HELD** is a physical theatre performance which explores different ways in which we can be held.

We can be held back by others, or our own anxieties and worries.

We can be 'held up' and supported in our lives.

We can be held together by our relationships and connections.

The performance includes people moving alone, in pairs and with everyone else. There are people's voices with music. The voices help explain what is happening on stage and how the characters are feeling. The performance is more about ideas and emotions rather than telling a specific story.



## Creative Team

Live performers:

Cara Bussey, JoAnne Haines, Charlotte Jones, Jake Thow, Alan Clay.

Devising and support team:

Karen Bartholomew, Cara Bussey, Alan Clay, JoAnne Haines, Charlotte Jones, Jake Thow, Becca Johnson, Melissa Conyers, Charli Ward, Matt Evens, Caroline Sheard, Emily Blackwell.

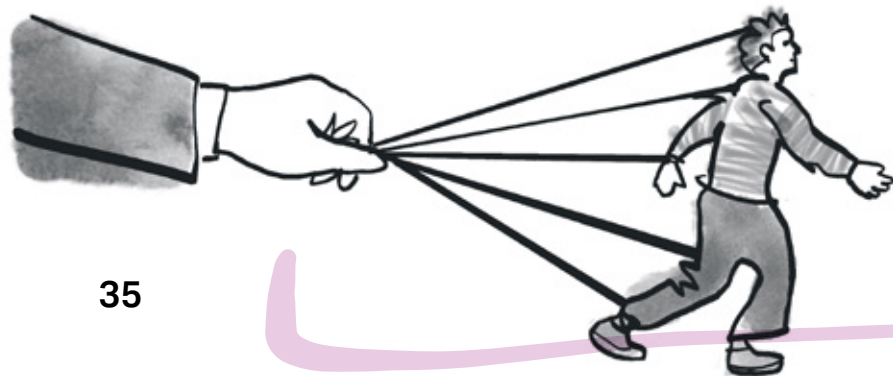
**Duration:** 15 minutes.

**Location:** Auditorium.



# Helped or Hindered

Can you think of a time you felt held back by somebody or something?



**Who or what makes you feel supported in your life?**  
**Draw their picture here.**

During the Festival there will be an opportunity to watch films produced as part of I'm Me. You can also watch these films at **[www.yorksj.ac.uk/Im-Me](http://www.yorksj.ac.uk/Im-Me)**

## **Knowing Disability Through Dance** **ConfiCo.**

This film features the ConfiCo dance artists exploring their lived experience of learning disability through choreography. **(9 mins)**

## **Hear They're Everywhere** **Under the Stars**

This piece combines photography and music to express the feelings of being invisible and becoming visible. It features the all-female band, The Sparkle Sistaz. **(4 mins)**

## **Everybody's Different** **Under the Stars**

The film is a glimpse into the creative process behind the writing of the song **Everybody's Different** by The Clubland Detectives. **(6mins)**



## Listen Hear

### Lung Ha Theatre Company

A short documentary showing Lung Ha's exploration of the I'm Me Voice Doodle Book. It looks specifically at the impact that this has had on the participants and how it has changed the way they will use their voice. **(10 min)**

## Ghost Train

### About Face

This is about facing your fears. It starts with "Jack" going for a walk in the sunshine, he comes across a ghost train ride and decides to buy a ticket. Once on the ride he can't get off. **(4 mins)**

## Oh, Dear Society

### Open Theatre

**Oh, Dear Society** is a collective letter from Open Theatre artists filmed on location in Birmingham. Each artist has created their individual letter to society, weaved together to present one letter in this film. **(8 mins)**

# I'm Me and Research

The I'm Me Festival is the end point of a two-year research project. I'm Me has used creative and inclusive approaches to work with learning disabled and autistic artists. Together we have explored experiences of identity, representation and voice.

One central theme of our research has been the importance of creating spaces to talk about disability. When people share their experiences they are able to know themselves better. They can also help each other and challenge unfairness in the wider world. With their creativity and unique perspectives, learning disabled and autistic artists should be recognised as people worth listening to.

This Festival is about sharing their knowledge, wisdom and stories.

If you would like to find out more about I'm Me visit:

**[www.yorks.ac.uk/im-me](http://www.yorks.ac.uk/im-me)**



# I'm Me Festival Credits

Kelsie Acton	I'm Me Researcher, YSJ
Jess Boyes	Producer, MTG
Alison Colborne	Research Assistant, MTG
Daniel Foulds	Research Assistant, MTG
Abi Gough	I'm Me Student Intern
Theo Griffiths	Exhibition Audio Recordings, MTG
Brian Hartley	Exhibition and Programme Design
Rebecca Lowe	Events, YSJ
Louisa McDaid	Live Captioning
Matthew Reason	I'm Me Principal Investigator, YSJ
Toby Ross	Exhibition Audio Recordings, MTG
Caroline Sheard	Production Manager, MTG
Aimee Shepherd	Comics
Bee Skivington	Associate Practitioner, MTG
Shannon Whitworth	Exhibition Audio Recordings, MTG



Can you,  
see you?

What  
makes  
you,  
you?

Can they  
hear you?



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