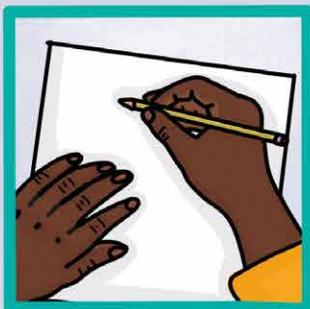




# ReAct

GET CREATIVE  
2020



# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	02
<b><i>Creative Mindfulness</i></b> by Hebe Reilly	03
<b><i>Feeling Moved</i></b> by Olivia Peers	05
<b><i>Writing Power</i></b> by Mandla Rae	07
<b><i>A Litany for Survival</i></b> by Sue	08
<b><i>We are here for you</i></b> by Jill	08
<b><i>What I tell myself living through COVID</i></b> by Sarah	09
<b><i>Something that has made a difference to my life</i></b> by Mosie	10
<b>Theatre Club</b>	11
Review: <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> by Madeleine	
Review: <i>The Mountaintop</i> by Mosie	
Review: <i>Key Change</i> by Maria	
<b>About the Artists</b>	15

The front cover for this booklet was created by artist Rose Sergent.

# Introduction

Hello! You've received this booklet as a gift from ReAct at the Octagon Theatre, Bolton.

It contains some activities for you to do from the comfort of your own home. The activities are designed to be suitable for everyone, regardless of your level of experience or expertise. This booklet also contains some of the work created in our online *Get Creative Summer* sessions.

We hope you enjoy it, and that it keeps you creative in socially distanced times!

## Thank you

Thank you to all the amazing people who took part in our online sessions, especially those who have contributed to the booklet. Thank you as well to the brilliant artists who led the sessions.

*Creative Mindfulness* was led by artist Hebe Reilly

*Feeling Moved* was hosted by dance artist Olivia Peers

*Writing Power* was run by writer Mandla Rae

*Theatre Club* was led by Creative Engagement Coordinator Alex Joynes

*Placing Ourselves* was hosted by Participation Practitioner Amy Hailwood

## ReAct

ReAct is a programme for over 50s in Bolton that aims to improve wellbeing through creativity. At this time of social distancing, staying connected with each other is more important than ever, particularly for those who are over 50. We are aiming to increase opportunities for those who may not ordinarily visit the Octagon or take part in arts activities, and offer a programme that is accessible and appealing to a diverse range of people.

If you would like to know more about ReAct, please get in touch with Caitlin at [caitlin.gleeson@octagonbolton.co.uk](mailto:caitlin.gleeson@octagonbolton.co.uk) or via **07930 689292**.

For up to date information about what's on, you can also join our Facebook group: [facebook.com/OctagonReAct](https://facebook.com/OctagonReAct) or check our website: [octagonbolton.co.uk](http://octagonbolton.co.uk)

ReAct is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.



# Creative Mindfulness

In this session with artist Hebe Reilly, we used mindful drawing to let go of expectation and create what we feel. Mindfulness is a tool for focusing your mind on the present moment, and through regular practice, mindfulness can reduce stress and anxiety.

## You will need:

A pen or pencil

Paper

Some small objects  
(see 'Gathering Objects' for more)

## Gathering objects

Take a walk in an environment where you feel comfortable, like your garden, a local park, or even a room in your home. Before you begin, pause and notice your surroundings. If it's safe, close your eyes for a moment and take notice of all the sounds you can hear.

Take your time to explore this space. Pick up any small objects that you feel drawn to and notice the sensation of holding these items in your hand. Notice any physical or emotional reaction that you have to the objects.

Outside objects that work well include: pebbles, twigs, leaves, stones, flowers, petals

Indoor objects that work well include: keys, small pieces of fruit, small ornaments, crumpled up newspaper.

Any other objects that you feel drawn to, that can be held in one hand and feel interesting to touch are perfect.

## Mindfulness

Find a comfortable seated position. Notice the areas where your body comes into contact with the floor, chair or other surface.

Bring your awareness to your breath. Notice the breath as it flows into the body through the nose.

Notice any subtle changes to your body.

Does your chest or belly expand on the inhale?

Do these areas become smaller on the exhale?

Spend a few moments with eyes closed, watching your breath. If any thoughts come into your mind, do not be discouraged. This is natural.

Sometimes it is useful to imagine the thought is a cloud passing along a blue sky – that for a short while crosses your consciousness and then moves out of sight.

Practice this for a few minutes – you could set a timer if you like.

When you want to finish, move gently and slowly, taking your time before moving on to the next task.

## Before drawing

Set yourself up in a quiet and comfortable space. Have your pen & paper handy, on a surface where you find it easy to draw. Have your objects close by.

## Mark making (eyes closed)

**Top Tip:** Before you begin, you might want to make sure the paper you are using covers the table, or you can put some newspaper down underneath.

- Pick up your pen or pencil, close the eyes, and start to make marks on the paper. These can be anything you like – lines, circles, zig-zags, have some fun!
- The aim is to free your hand and wrist to draw without judgement.

## Mark making to music (eyes closed)

- Another fun exercise is to play some music while you make marks with your eyes closed.
- When the song starts, take a moment to notice and listen to the music. Notice the way it makes you feel and the impact it has on your body, breath and energy.
- Then, begin to make marks on the paper – expressing how the music makes you feel.

## Drawing an object (eyes closed)

- Choose an object and place it in your non-drawing hand
- Close your eyes. Notice the sensation of the object against the hands. How does it make you feel? What are the textures of the object?
- Draw the object with eyes closed.

## Continuous line drawing (eyes open)

- Choose one object to study with the eyes open.
- When you're ready, place your pen or pencil on the paper, and do not lift it off until your drawing is complete.
- Your goal is to draw the object with one, singular line.
- The line can become thicker and thinner, but you should never 'break' the line or lift the pencil off.
- Try to move your hand at a similar speed.
- Do not rub out your work – leave it all in – it's all part of your creative expression!

## Continuous line drawing & the breath (eyes open or closed)

A lovely, mindful drawing exercise is to have a go at making shapes and patterns in connection to your breath.

- Repeat the mindfulness practice to reconnect with your breath.
- When you are ready, pick up a pen or pencil and place it on the page.
- You can practise this with eyes open, or eyes closed.
- Move the pen or pencil in connection to your breath. Creating a continuous line drawing that matches and moves in time to the rhythm of your breath.

## Drawing an object (eyes open)

Choose another object (you can repeat an object you have used before). Spend some time familiarising yourself with the object.

How does the object feel to touch?

Notice the physical impact on the body.

How is your breathing?

Prepare for a 'long draw' and to spend more time drawing this object than on previous exercises.

You can draw the object in response to:

1. Touch – holding the object, drawing what you feel, trying to express the texture of the object on the page.
2. Sight – draw what you see. You can use continuous line drawing or do a detailed study and try to replicate the object.
3. Feel – can you draw how this object makes you feel? This can be a more abstract interpretation – the final drawing might not look anything like it!

Once you have finished, take a moment to appreciate the marks you have made on the paper.

You can repeat any of the above exercises as often as you want, or feel free to invent your own creative, mindful drawing exercise!

# Feeling Moved

Over three workshops with dance artist Olivia Peers, we steadily developed our skills in audio described dance. We begun by following audio described instructions in order to perform a routine, and built up to creating our own dance moves and describing them to one another in order to create a full dance sequence we could perform together.

## Warming Up and Cooling Down

If you're trying out dance on your own at home, it's a good idea to warm up and cool down.

A good way to warm up is to put some music on and slowly circle different body parts starting with your head, neck and shoulders and working your way down to your ankles and toes.

Your cool down can be exactly the same to slow and relaxing music. .

## Combinations

In our first workshop we thought about words for movements that we already know. Words that as soon as you hear them, you automatically know how to move. We made a list of these words, and another list of words to describe the quality of movement.

To play the game, pick two numbers and create a move. For example, 5 and 3 gives you the combination of 'spin smoothly', while 1 and 6 gives you 'jump softly'. In one of our workshop we linked together three combinations and it gave us a very sultry dance that we performed to belly dance music - it worked brilliantly! Why not give this a try at home?

Movement Word	Quality Word
1. Jump	1. Fast
2. Shimmy	2. Slowly
3. Twist	3. Smoothly
4. Shake	4. Jerky
5. Spin	5. Heavy
6. Wiggle	6. Softly
7. Hawaiian Hula	7. Seductively
8. Mashed Potato	8. Happily
9. Grapevine	9. Angrily
10. Cha Cha Cha	10. Powerfully

Our final routine was inspired by and performed to ABBA's 'Dancing Queen'. We thought about the types of moves that this song made us want to do and found that we all wanted to move in quite a similar way.

Here are our dance moves written down for you to figure out and perform at home in your own way – turn up the music and have fun!

Once you've decided on how you are going to perform each person's moves you can link them all together to make a super sequence and really test your memory!

### **Mirdza's Move**

Sway and bump your hips from side to side – two to the right, two to the left, two to the right and two to the left.

Then sway your hands (bent from the elbow) two to the right and two to the left. Then take your hands above your head and repeat. Two sways to the right and two sways to the left.

Spin all the way round to the right, then to the left.

Roll your arms forward and lean forward, roll your arms back and lean back. (Wind the bobbin up!)

### **Carole's Move**

Step back on your right foot, right foot forward and left foot forward, like a step ball change.

Turn all the way round and then step back on your right foot again.

### **Sarah's Move**

Walk forward 1, 2, 3, 4 and backwards 1, 2, 3, 4.

Sway side 2, 3, 4 and sway to the other side 2, 3, 4.

Spin one way 2, 3, 4 and the other way 2, 3, 4.

Roll your arms forward and lean forward (1, 2, 3, 4) roll your arms back and lean back. (1, 2, 3, 4)

# Writing Power

Writer Mandla Rae led Writing Power, two workshops that asked questions, held space to reflect, and led us to write creatively about our world and what we would like to see there. We used poetry to speak truth to power and to respond to what is in our minds, using queer and Black poets such as Audre Lorde, Yrsa Daley-Ward and Alice Walker as inspiration.

## Free writing

This is a useful warm up to get ready for writing. Set a timer for 1, 5 or 10 minutes and empty your mind onto the page. It doesn't have to be legible, just focus on keeping the pen on the page.

## Prompts to get you thinking and writing

Take ten minutes for each prompt to start with, but feel free to come back to them if you wish and give yourself as much time as you want. Responses can be poetry, reflective non-fiction or short stories. Start off by writing as much as you can and think about form later.

- Remember something that someone you love has said to you. It could be a friend, a partner, a grandchild. It could be a throwaway comment, it could be a lesson they taught you, or a compliment they paid you. Maybe it was something they did for you instead of what they said. Write for ten minutes and tell the story of why they said what they did or did what they did. How did you feel? What were they wearing? Where were you?
- 'If they ask you how you are...' Finish this sentence. Take a few minutes to think about it.
- Our surroundings shape us, mould us, inspire us and our human senses help us understand, connect and create. Think of a colour and pair it with a smell and a taste. These could be familiar to you or maybe they're something you've never tasted. Maybe it's something you've been curious about or longing for.
- What do you *need* to say? List as many things as necessary. Who are you saying each thing on the list to? Why haven't you said these things out loud?
- How are you *feeling* today? What do you see where you are right now? How many colours?
- Where do you get your strength from? What have you overcome and how did you do so?
- What do you remember about how the world has changed? How has your world changed? Past six months, year, five years, ten years, more!
- What is love? What isn't love?
- Write about a secret you had to keep. Did you keep it? Did you tell? Why is/was it a secret?
- Do you have a message for the world? What is it? Why?
- Write about your rituals – or the tasks we perform repeatedly, not for what they accomplish but for what they mean to us.

## Recommended Reading:

*The World has Changed* by Alice Walker

*Your Silence Will Not Protect You*, a collection of essays by Audre Lorde

*The Terrible* by Yrsa Daley-Ward

*It's Not About the Burqa*, a collection of essays by Muslim women, edited by Miriam Khan

*As Consciousness is Harnessed to Flesh*, journals of Susan Sontag

*For coloured girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf* by Ntozake Shange

*These Bones Will Rise Again* by Panashe Chigumadzi

# We Are Here For You

By Jill

For those who have lost their loved ones.  
For those who watch and wait.  
For those whose labour is no longer relevant.  
For those who are alone.

We are here for you.

We will stand on the pavement and mourn your loved ones.

We will watch and wait with you.

We will support you in your struggle for work

We will befriend you in your loneliness.

Who are we?

We are the bereaved.

We are the ones who watch and wait.

We are the ones who are unemployed.

We are the ones who are alone.

We are here for each other,

Whoever we are,

Whatever we have suffered.

We are here to offer each other

Our grief, our support and our friendship.

We stand together.

Together we can move forward.

# A litany for survival

By Sue

All life is fear.

To survive the crashing waves that threaten us continually,  
we must adapt and conquer.

The armour plate is added to us daily,  
often as a microdot, with the softest touch.

But it shocks with heavy steel sheets when least expected,  
our protection becoming a dead weight to carry forever.

Soon the burden becomes too much to carry,  
so we offload and construct the steel in to a cave.

Always building our shelter,  
never noticing that it imprisons us.

All life is fear – keep the prison door open to see the light.

# What I tell myself living through COVID

By Sarah

Live and travel this incredible journey,  
Gifted and paid for by your parents, grandparents and great-grandparents –  
With every fibre of your body,  
With every inhaled and exhaled breath.  
We are all players on a stage,  
And even though the houselights are dimmed,  
And the audience is absent,  
Use this time wisely to plan your future -  
The grand reopening of your life!  
You'll never have this opportunity again,  
Steal, take and make the time for yourself  
To reflect, reassess and re-evaluate.  
They tell me cats have nine lives;  
I've already had three –  
First as a child, second as a teenager  
Third as a younger adult,  
I've reached another crossroads.  
Remind me, what was so wonderful  
About my pre-COVID life?  
Now is my real chance for  
The life I'd really choose to live.  
Do things for myself –  
Do unto others as I would have them do unto me,  
Use my strength, courage, bravery and style  
To carve out a path I wish to follow,  
Resist with all my might going back to 'normal',  
Whatever that might be,  
Embrace this 'new normal' – modernise and innovate,  
We're all travelling this COVID journey together,  
Whether we've bought a ticket or not.  
COVID-19 saved my life –  
A life that was spiralling out of control;  
Lockdown has taught me a better way to live my life –  
Before it's too late!

# Something that has made a difference to my life

By Mosie

I'm thinking of something that someone has said to me  
Something that has made a difference to my life  
I don't have grandchildren  
And I don't have a loved one  
But what I do have are friends  
And I think the most important thing someone ever said to me  
Is how positive I am because  
I need that reassurance all the time from people  
I need to know that I appear to be strong  
When I lost my sight I lost six months of my life as I travelled through  
a very dark place  
But what got me out of that  
Was what people said to me  
Was my friends  
And the reassurance that I was strong enough to cope  
So saying to me you can get through this you're strong enough helped  
me a lot I think also to have some reassurance from a counsellor I used  
to go to  
Who said to me what you're going through, it's normal  
It's not because you're blind it's because you're normal  
And everyone goes through dark places  
Everybody has a dark side  
And it's how you cope with it  
So now I know I'm strong enough to cope with anything that's thrown  
my way  
I'm reminded at times of some of the difficult things when I've travelled  
around the world and I've always managed to cope so now  
With the reassurance from my friends I can cope with whatever life  
throws at me okay

# Theatre Club

Theatre Club is an online opportunity to watch and read theatre, then take part in fun, informal discussions about it. We meet over Zoom and discussions are led by Alex Joynes, the Octagon's Creative Engagement Coordinator.

## **Shows we have watched together:**

### ***Flowers for Mrs Harris* by Rachel Wagstaff and Richard Taylor, from Chichester Festival Theatre**

Ada Harris spends her days dusting, darning, polishing and scrubbing. But her first glimpse of a ravishing Christian Dior dress sets her off on a journey that will change her life forever. This new musical, directed by Daniel Evans, won three UK Theatre Awards.

### ***Frankenstein* by Nick Dear and Danny Boyle, from National Theatre at Home**

This production of Frankenstein sees Benedict Cumberbatch and Jonny Lee Miller alternating between the roles of Victor Frankenstein and his creation. Frankenstein's bewildered creature is cast out into a hostile universe by his horror-struck maker.

### ***Wise Children* by Emma Rice, from Wise Children, York Theatre Royal and the BBC**

Expect show girls and Shakespeare, sex and scandal, music, mischief and mistaken identity – and butterflies by the thousand. Emma Rice brings her unique, exuberantly impish vision to Angela Carter's great last novel, *Wise Children*.

### ***Barbershop Chronicles* by Inua Ellams from Fuel, Leeds Playhouse and National Theatre at Home**

Newsroom, political platform, local hotspot, confession box, preacher-pulpit and football stadium. For generations, African men have gathered in barber shops to discuss the world. Directed by Olivier award-winning Bijan Sheibani, *Barber Shop Chronicles* is a heart-warming, hilarious and insightful new play.

### ***A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams, from National Theatre at Home**

Gillian Anderson plays Blanche DuBois with Ben Foster as Stanley and Vanessa Kirby as Stella. As Blanche's fragile world crumbles, she turns to her sister Stella for solace – but her downward spiral brings her face to face with the brutal, unforgiving Stanley Kowalski.

### ***What the Butler Saw* by Joe Orton, from Leicester Curve**

*What the Butler Saw* was Orton's final play, completed just a month before his untimely death. This production, directed by Nikolai Foster, contains riotous comedy, where every word becomes a lie and madness soon becomes the norm.

### ***Key Change* by Catrina McHugh, from Open Clasp Theatre Company and The Space**

Devised with women in HMP Low Newton to tour to male prisons, critically-acclaimed *Key Change* carries their voices over the razor wire in a raw, illuminating and very funny portrayal of women in prison.

### ***The Madness of George III* by Alan Bennett, from National Theatre at Home**

The cast of this new production includes Mark Gatiss and Adrian Scarborough. It's 1786 and King George III is the most powerful man in the world. But his behaviour is becoming increasingly erratic as he succumbs to fits of lunacy. With the King's mind unravelling at a dramatic pace, ambitious politicians and the scheming Prince of Wales threaten to undermine the power of the Crown, and expose the fine line between a King and a man.

***The Mountaintop* by Katori Hall, from the Royal Exchange Theatre**

Set during the height of America's Civil Rights Movement, this Olivier Award-Winning play is an intimate fictional look at the eve of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Because BlackLivesMatter, Roy Alexander Weise, in partnership with Desara Productions and the Royal Exchange Theatre, reunites Gbolahan Obisesan and Ronke Adékoluḗjo for a new digital reading to raise funds to support the legal costs incurred by those incarcerated whilst protesting.

***Made in India* by Satinder Chohan, from Tamasha Theatre**

In a surrogacy clinic in Gujarat, three women meet. It's Londoner Eva's last chance for motherhood. For village girl Aditi, surrogacy is a lifeline out of poverty. For clinic owner and businesswoman Dr Gupta, it's all just another transaction. But with the backdrop of profound global forces, can it possibly remain that simple?

***Amadeus* by Peter Shaffer, from National Theatre at Home**

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, a rowdy young prodigy, arrives determined to make a splash. Awestruck by his genius, court composer Antonio Salieri has the power to promote his talent or destroy it. Seized by obsessive jealousy he begins a war with Mozart, with music and, ultimately, with God. Directed by Michael Longhurst, Lucian Msamati plays Salieri – with live orchestral accompaniment by Southbank Sinfonia.

***Carousel* by Rodgers and Hammerstein, from the Lincoln Center**

Based on the play *Liliom* by Hungarian playwright Ferenc Molnar, this iconic musical explores love, crime and redemption. *Carousel* stars Kelli O'Hara and Nathan Gunn, and is accompanied by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra.

***The Effect* by Lucy Prebble, from BBC Radio 3**

Connie and Tristan are taking part in a clinical trial for a new psychoactive drug. So when they start to feel attracted to each other, can they really trust how they feel? Starring Jessie Buckley and Damien Molony, this profound, and funny, play about love, depression and selfhood won the Critics' Circle Award for Best New Play in 2012.

***The Likes of Us* by Roy Williams, from BBC Radio 3**

Gloria Wilkins arrives in London from Jamaica in 1957, settling with her husband in Notting Dale, a poor area in the rich London borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Starting with the fire at Grenfell Tower, *The Likes of Us* moves back and forth in time through the lives of Gloria, her children and her grandchild over the course of sixty years, painting a moving and profound portrait of a family and a neighbourhood. *The Likes of Us* is based on playwright Roy Williams's experiences of growing up in Notting Dale.

## Below are reviews of some of the shows we've watched, written by three of the members of Theatre Club.

**A Streetcar Named Desire by Tennessee Williams was performed at the National Theatre, and was broadcast as part of the NT at Home programme.**

### **Review by Madeleine**

My particular favourite was A Streetcar Named Desire. I was also able to see this production when it was first broadcast live in cinemas and it was a pleasure to see it again and take part in a discussion, and review and listen to other people's responses to the play. This was the best aspect of Theatre Club because discussing a production is not something one can always do when you visit the theatre to see something live or when broadcast via NT Live productions.

I love Tennessee Williams anyway; his characters are full of passions, hidden secrets and are often psychologically damaged which describes the main character, Blanche Dubois very well. Gillian Anderson gave a terrific performance. Like with all the exchanges of views we took part in, there was lively debate and different points of view were shared which made you pay attention and step up your responses each week.

I really enjoyed Theatre Club. It has been a stimulating and involving experience. Watching each production and taking part in the decision on what we watch each week and comment on focused the mind. We were not just passive observers because we needed to think about our responses to each production and what we particularly liked, or we didn't like, as the case may be!

Food for the brain during lockdown!!

**A rehearsed reading of *The Mountain Top* by Katori Hall was broadcast by the Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester.**

### **Review by Mosie**

There are several reasons why I particularly like this production by Manchester Royal Exchange.

Firstly, the fact that there was audio description. The difference it makes is amazing. When you are visually impaired or blind it's hard to imagine what is happening on the set; with audio description it comes alive and suddenly I can see. I can see how the characters are performing on the stage, it's wonderful.

Secondly, the fact that there were only two characters in the production makes such a difference because when you're blind, you're concentrating on the voices of the performers not the actual set, or not what they are wearing or what they look like. So actually, only two main characters makes it better because you're only listening for two different voices.

And of course, the subject of the production was of interest to me because Black power is important and it's a part of my history and the politics of my life. It's a subject I'm particularly interested in and I think it came across very well that Martin Luther King was a very sincere man dedicated to improving the lives of Black people in the US.

It's a pity though that we are still fighting for the same things that he was fighting for all that time, and again that comes through in the production, that it's a struggle that is still going on today.

All in all, I thought it was a wonderful performance and really enjoyed it.

**Key Change by Open Clasp Theatre Company was filmed in partnership with The Space, a digital commissioning agency supported by the BBC and Arts Council**

**Review by Maria**

*"Changing the world one play at a time."*

This was the ambitious aim of Open Clasp, a small women's theatre group from Newcastle which works with women on the margins of society. The group worked with women in Durham's Low Newton Prison, to write and produce a play, perform it to male prisoners, and do one public show. But the production soon "grew wings, took flight and soared high above the razor wire". It went on a tour of men's prisons followed by a sell out national tour and finally to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe where it won the prestigious Carol Tambor Award. It was then performed on Broadway and at the Houses of Parliament.

This is why I think it was so successful: The play drew from the real life stories of the women at Newton so covered difficult topics such as getting thrown out of home at 16, getting pregnant, losing children, having post-natal depression, experiencing domestic violence, and also childhood sexual abuse. Although these are hard subjects it was written with such sensitivity and humour it couldn't fail to create empathy. I found it fascinating, moving, beautiful and funny.

The set was sparse and simple with two chairs and the actors used rolls of masking tape on the empty stage floor to delineate their cells and the other fixtures of the prison. The choreography was exceptional especially the fight scene and the piece where the actors used letters from home to depict flying birds.

It was superbly acted by four women who moved between directly addressing the audience, describing their histories and the grim details of their lives in prison and interacting with each other, fighting over time at the phone or exchanging stories.

There was also a fifth actor cleverly sat apart who was a mix of stage manager and inmate who unexpectedly occasionally chipped into the dialogue. The details of the crimes were not covered in great detail but you could see a similarity in the women's stories, for example the mistakes made at impossibly young ages, the disastrous romantic relationships, the efforts to break free, the slides into drugs.

At no time were the women portrayed as victims however they were funny and tragic. The details about life in prison were especially thought provoking - the process of induction, the anxiety and fear of the first nights, the adjustment to the noises. Especially powerful was the "I miss" section which detailed the many things they missed such as families, food, shopping, clothes, being treated with respect and simple things like scenery. It was touching that the ladies remained hopeful despite their difficult situation and expressed "it might be better tomorrow" whilst acknowledging that the prison had a "revolving door" and some of them would inevitably return. The play ended with the moving "I wish" scene where they outlined their hopes and dreams for the future and asked, "will this be my time to be free?"

I thought that the play was driven by truth and was an honest portrayal of life in a women's prison. It gave you a unique insight into the reasons why some women end up in prison and erased any stereotypes and preconceptions and challenged you to think differently. It was a play I was thinking about long after it had finished.

# About the artists

**Hebe Reilly** is a freelance community arts practitioner and a yoga teacher. She is an Arts for Health practitioner who works with DIY Theatre Company (Youth Arts Coordinator), Manchester Metropolitan University (Associate Lecturer) & Live Well Make Art (Project Manager). Hebe also teaches a range of Community & Chair Yoga classes with organisations such as Greater Manchester Rape Crisis, Women's Footprints & Manchester Cares.

**Olivia Peers** is a community dance artist, based here in the North West. She is the Artistic Director of Born and Bred Dance Theatre, a community dance organisation specialising in dance and heritage projects. Olivia has over ten years experience of delivering dance in many different settings, making dance as accessible and enjoyable to as many people as possible. Her life is a mission to explore the myriad of ways dance can be used to explore and understand the world that we live in. Olivia has danced in libraries, museums, theatres, reservoirs, church halls, and along the streets of Manchester working with dancers from 3 to 92 years old.

**Mandla Rae** is a queer Zimbabwean writer and performer. They often write as an attempt to understand their intersectional existence and how they walk through the world. Mandla is a performance poet who recently started making theatre. They have performed across the UK, sharing their work on stages such as HOME, the Royal Exchange Studio and Leeds Playhouse.

**Alex Joynes** is Creative Engagement Coordinator at the Octagon. He enjoys reading and writing and misses live theatre.

**Amy Hailwood** is a Participation Practitioner at the Octagon Theatre where she regularly facilitates and directs participatory theatre productions, including with ArtBeat, the Octagon's theatre group for over 50s. Amy also makes theatre for social change as a freelance director and is Artistic Director of Ordinary Glory Theatre Company. She is inspired by documenting ordinary people's lived experiences and testimonies as the foundation for live performance. She has worked on oral history projects with working class women in Merseyside and older women in the Caribbean, and is trained in oral history methods by the Oral History Society.

**Rose Sergent** is a project producer and visual artist living with chronic health conditions and creating work in Manchester. She produces the Drawn Poorly project which focuses on art exploring the reality of living with health conditions and disability. The project has featured 68 different ill/disabled creatives through zines, performance nights and social media take overs. Drawn Poorly was one of the supported projects at Contact in 2018/19 through the Future Fires programme and was featured as part of the Edinburgh Festival central programme in 2019. Rose also works at Contact as Leadership Projects Coordinator. As an artist she has worked with Oldham Coliseum, Contact and GMCA, and creates individual commissions. Her art often focuses on highlighting societal disparities for ill/disabled people through bright and bold digital art.