Towards Everyday Activism(s) – making the 'eco' move

How reflexive video-making is helping us connect to an ecologically orientated practice.

Margaret Gearty and Steve Marshall





Introduction

Recurring questions

Is the work that I am doing worthwhile?

Am I making a helpful contribution to the world?

How do I see the future and my role within it?

No doubt we have all been visited by questions like these from time to time. Nowadays such questions seem deeper and ever more present. As we write, the Covid pandemic rumbles on ominously, forest fires burn across the world as preparations for COP 26 are underway, and thousands seek emergency evacuation from Afghanistan. Disruptive global events increasingly mean that our taken-for-granted norms, customs, established tropes and seemingly immutable truths are being interrogated or, in the case of the pandemic, effortlessly knocked aside. Perhaps it is little surprise that so many of us are reconsidering issues of personal consequence in our home and work lives, even though the wider implications of our actions can feel insignificant within the global context. What we describe in this paper was born from a wish to find an ecological orientation or a stance – that might guide our everyday actions in a meaningful way. We will describe an action research project we've been engaged in over the past two years in which we were moving towards understanding what everyday activism(s) within the context of our lives might look like. We'll

describe how we began to explore visual/video inquiry methods to bring focus to an elusive starting idea of activism – 'poetic activism' – in a way to help us make eco-moves in our everyday lives and start to address the deep, troubling, recurring questions that we each held.

Who we are

Since 2012 we've worked together on the action-research based doctorate in organisational change at Ashridge/Hult and we each run independent research and consultancy practices. We had arrived into the field of action research mid-career from very different hinterlands: Steve was formerly a military aviator and Margaret had been a silicon chip designer. From this provenance, both of us – in our different ways – had interests in the aesthetic qualities of complex (and sometimes very) technical systems.

In our conversations with doctoral students, we constantly ask questions relating to stance as we describe it above. Things like: what matters to you, what do you stand for, and how do you participate in change? Naturally we have become entangled ourselves with such questions. Back in 2019 we both had separate writing and creative projects on the go alongside our educational work. We were both blogging and engaging with social media.

Steve was pursuing an interest in phenomenology, aesthetics, and the idea of an 'ecosophic, artistic practice'[i]. He was experimenting with visual representation. One example of this was his #1000Steps project where every day he shared on social media a photo taken from within 1000 steps of his home and dialogued with those who responded. The conversations in turn catalysed a variety of spin-off ideas including a 'visual inquiry' syllabus for parents with children in lockdown and a #100Steps project designed for elderly relatives to share imagery on-line with their families.

Margaret meanwhile had been researching responses to climate crisis at a personal and organisational level for many years and at that time was beginning to write about and inquire with others into the idea of 'poetic activism', a phrase coined by social constructionist Ken Gergen.

We saw our respective efforts as more than creative expression; these were attempts to influence discourse, a form of 'action' in the broadest sense. There seemed then to be common intent in our experiments and a similar thrust in our questioning. Steve attended the first poetic activist gathering Margaret had co-convened (of which more below) and this planted the first seeds for us to combine our visual and activist inquiries in an action research project.

Poetic activism

Ken Gergen's writing has long recognised that practices of language are bound within relationships and patterns of practices[ii]. Put simply his suggestion is that how we talk and the way we interact has the potential to reinforce the 'rules of the game' or to 'make new worlds'. It's a liberating thought, and in recent years Gergen has become more activist in his writing, increasingly pressing the relevance of his thinking and connecting his ideas to social change:

> "Constructionism invites us to become poetic activists. …. The strong invitation is for the emergence of new forms of language and ways of interpreting the world."[iii]

He goes on:

> "Invited are generative discourses, that is ways of talking and writing or representing (as in photography, film, art, theatre and the like) that simultaneously challenge existing traditions of understanding, and offer new possibilities for action."[iv]

Gergen's strong invitation had immediately resonated with Margaret when she read it. The phrase 'poetic activism' juxtaposed poetic sensibility with activism in her own search for a 'stance' and offered a way to create possibilities for action. She started to blog about what poetic activism could mean in her life and have inquiring conversations and with two co-conspirators started convening poetic activist gatherings of artists, researchers and organisational practitioners to explore and experiment further.

After some months she commissioned a graphic[v] to convey an interpretation of poetic activism and to do this she drew on some of Donna Haraway's post-humanist thinking and languaging[vi], creating a manifesto for everyday activism that included: making kin, with each other and the more than human world, and reaching out to form tentacular connections[vii].

This attempt to visualise differently and Steve's experiments in visual representation seemed to fit precisely with Gergen's idea of a 'generative discourse'. As we write, it seems congruent that Gergen's words influenced and incited action in us – guiding us to seek new forms of language in the form of this research.



Figure 1: A first visual image of 'poetic activism' (shown here as part of the video film we created).

Poetic activism – a slippery term

We want to emphasise that the term 'poetic activism' was not something we sought to pin down. It was (and in many ways still is) a nascent idea, a muse rather than a goal in our inquiries: a yet to be known everyday practice we wanted to explore in practical rather than theoretical terms. From the start it was proving to be a slippery term, constantly luring us towards firmer definitions and the expectation that one day it could be explained. These extracts from Margaret's blog illustrate the issue:

> "The thing is," my sister C said to me, when we were face-timing last week: she in Dublin, me in the UK. "I don't really get this poetic activism thing. Am I being dumb, but what actually is it?"[viii]
>
> "I'm not into poetry much," says one friend P from time to time. He's participated fully in many of the workshops and conversations we've had on this topic, and is a thoughtful practitioner interested in social change, but in the end, he cycles back to a puzzled place saying: "This poetic activism – whatever it is – it's just not me."[ix]

Like the doctoral students we work with, who frequently struggle to see or name their research topic, our capacity to define our emergent sense of 'poetic activism' left us feeling like it was hiding at the edge of our peripheral vision. As we attempted to face 'it' more squarely it would fade from our gaze. In the poetic activist inquiry groups, things would relax when we moved away from definitions and shared stories that seemed to chime or agreed simply: "we'll know it when we see it."

Research agenda and approach

Emergent research question

As we increasingly brought our agendas together, we started to question if video, film or photography could represent the delicate complexity of a more nuanced form of activism in our everyday lives. Following one of the early Poetic Activism gatherings, we reflected on-line in our duo about how we could use photography and video to support future events. We considered using video or photography as a means to document parts of the workshops, or working closely with our co-inquirers, recording them as they reflected on their activism, or even filming alongside them in their lives as they brought that activism to life. Yet each of these interventions seemed to prematurely define an idea that we were still struggling to 'see', and Steve's independent work suggested video-making could have the potential to help us into a more expansive field of inquiry.

We could not have crisply stated our emerging research question at that time though, in retrospect, we now see it as:

> "How might reflexive videomaking help us know our own eco-practice of poetic activism more deeply?"

In practice, our question was refined and sharpened within a braided series of related activities and inquiries; our videomaking inquiry ran alongside, but was independent from, the series of poetic activism inquiries that

Margaret was co-convening. These included face-to-face gatherings, community zoom calls and a deep-dive co-operative inquiry towards the end of 2020. Though these strands are separate from the visual inquiry we are describing here, they inevitably became significant sites of inquiry and exchange. Many other co-inquirers and co-conspirators were involved in this wider work and we acknowledge them as we write.

Adopting visual approaches

Our visual experimentations were therefore not so deliberately methodological at the start, and our choices were, in part, simply pragmatic. The video facilities on our phones and computers were ready-to hand and, borrowing a mantra from our doctoral program, we decided to 'start close in'[x] and record our reflections as they arose immediately after and between each Poetic Activism gathering.

It is natural to associate poetry with words – written and recited. So, it may seem curious that we moved away from written text or journaling but, from the start, we were clear that we leaned towards the 'poetic' as a form and sensibility rather than poetry per se. Similarly, rather than use smartphone imagery and video as artefacts to illustrate, alarm or encourage engagement with environmental themes, we were using digital image-making as a method to open and support us in a dialogical inquiry into the question of how we could come to know "our own eco-practice of poetic activism."

Research cycles – ad-hoc and rigorous

As action researchers, we intuitively fell into an emergent process of inquiry held in place by the rhythms of multiple cycles of action and reflection. These were ad-hoc at first and then started to take a more rigorous shape as a series of experiments with visual media that ran from December 2019 through to April 2021. Our process was relatively straightforward at first. We started by sharing 'talking head' videos that drew attention to events in our lives, and from there we began to exchange moments of video as we attempted to 'show' our thoughts and experiences. This led to the creation of a film that we showed to an audience and then to further video exchange as well as reflective writing. After each cycle we met and reflected, sharing reactions to each other's work. We always recorded these meetings and sometimes transcribed the themes that were emerging. Only then would we decide on the next experiment.

Over time our reflective conversations as a pair became something of a touch-point. They were animated and wide-ranging in their scope with an excited and vulnerable aspect. Though we had worked together for a long time, our Zoom meetings and exchanges of video opened a distinct perspective to our conversations even though they remained enmeshed within other activities. We continued to blog and make social media contributions independently and to tutor on the doctoral programme at Ashridge. We both participated too in the wider Poetic Activism gatherings. Through all this we were dutiful in recording our conversations, maintaining a catalogue of events which has helped to take a retrospective view.

Experimental inquiry

Video Diaries

For our first cycle of experimentation we agreed an exploratory exchange of short video film via WhatsApp in December 2019. We were not clear at that stage value, if any, we might find in 'video diaries' and what the method might hold for us. Yet we quickly noticed how talking into our phones allowed us to speak in ways that offered flexibility; we could wander off track and find ourselves again, while the pauses and 'erms' offered us nuance and an appropriate uncertainty compared to our written reflections.



Margaret's first video was recorded in her house on Election Day (12 Dec 2019) and she spoke tentatively, nursing a cold, about her reflections on the previous Poetic Activism gathering, describing how she felt there was a yearning among those attending to be together.

> "It seems to me … […] … that the tension between the poetic and the activist seems to be a good enough 'container' to get people together."

(MG, 12 Dec 2019)

She went on to wonder how we might poetically 'shape ourselves towards the future.' She noted that our efforts, as we tried to give birth to a new consciousness, would be nothing more than a 'speck in this... but not a lonely speck...!' She then paused to let her dog in before returning to reflect on Poetic Activism as something that might sit within the contours of our own lives and jobs, and to speculate that it might embolden her activist blogging.

Steve's response, filmed from his office two weeks later after a period of intense workload on the run-up to Xmas, began with his reflections on how to make space for the work within the busyness of professional life. He went on to consider how the personal nature of the exchanges invited an accountability to each other and pondered the potential personal cost of holding a radical stance – even from the peripheries of an organisation. Yet, given the critical nature of the activist challenge, he searched for a worthwhile place to focus his attention before wandering towards the immediacy of the imagery and voice in Margaret's video.



> "The bigger question that emerges for me is when we try to get involved in …[..]… climate and social collapse, how do we make sense of our day-today activities and how do we not get distracted by the demands of getting by...?"

(SM, 26 Dec 2019)

In the New Year we then reflected on our video exchange via Zoom; we were surprised by the qualities revealed in the short pieces. Steve likened it to a form of 'confessional,' feeling that it began to validate the poetic activism inquiry for him; he noted how it was helping him to become more attentive to opportunities to take a more activist stance as they arose in his work. As a photographer, he was also surprised by his choice not to manipulate lighting and composition:

"There was an 'unmaskedness' about it – am I prepared to stand in this space as I am – and not to pull the wool over anyone's eyes – and say what I think...?"[xi]

Margaret noted the depth of presence and vulnerability in the films. She found the interpersonal quality connected for her to the idea of 'making kin' – the Donna Haraway idea that she'd been exploring as a key element of poetic activism practice.

> "As we're changing genre of the form – with the filming... […] ...something quite different starts to emerge. Which is an exploration for me in kinship and relational connection... […] …"[xii]

Our conversations continued over coming weeks within the context of other entangled work-based exchanges, including conversations about our doctoral supervision work and co-authoring a conference paper. Meanwhile we continued to share shorter inquiry videos as opportunities arose and momentum started to build towards another Poetic Activism gathering in February 2020 where about a dozen people had agreed to come.

A Film Showing

With the February gathering approaching, the design began to take shape and we pondered how our visual inquiry might be make a useful contribution. Might we invite our collaborators perhaps to record a reflective piece to camera as we had done? Or perhaps we could film them throughout the gathering and then show them on a screen in the room at the end of the day? However, our decision-making was guided too by the practicalities of there being a larger group and mundane considerations about the technology we would need. We were also cautious – having noticed that our process was, in some way, still nurturing the fragility and vulnerability required to bring a new idea to life.

Finally, we settled on offering a more produced film; it would be an edited compilation of our video exchanges and our other pieces of experimental video. Although work pressure meant that time was short and risked any sense of participative collaboration in the production and editing, Steve produced a 10-minute film drawing on the shared videos, and using digital photographs and text headlines that briefly outlined the inquiry themes and process. As the video was completed only a few days before the Poetic Activism gathering, Margaret was effectively offered only a 'veto' of the final video; there would be no time to make further edits.

Perhaps we were both caught up in the rush of the video production but, nonetheless, we decided to go ahead and show the video at the gathering. Showing our work publicly on a darkened, rainy afternoon suddenly seemed to induce a sense of deep reflection and exposure. The slow cuts and fades, gentle dissolves through a black screen, the melancholy soundtrack, images that Steve had made while recovering from a period of severe burnout, Margaret's sincere, circumspect considerations, heard as a 'voiceover'

describing the seriousness and vulnerability of the work, alongside images that she had photographed around her home on walks with her family.

As the video played, Margaret felt the touch of one of our co-inquirers on her shoulder; a simple gesture which felt laden with significance as a deeper sense of meaning, and again kinship, that started to emerge in the showing. Steve noticed how he had felt rather disconnected from the film following an editorial process which had focused on the mechanical, technical aspects of video production and then found himself shocked by the act of publicly showing the work; *"The first 2 minutes were OK and then I thought, "What have we done?""*, he reported in a later Zoom call. When the film finished, there was a pause and then a follow up conversation. In it our co-inquirers were appreciative and puzzled. They wrestled with the notion of the video process as a way of coming to know and could comment more easily on the film as a presentational artefact – remarking on the soundtrack and its overall effect. Yet in her later reflections, Margaret noted,

> "If it was an experiment in coming to know... […] … we discovered the melancholy - there is a deep sadness at the root of what we do."

Later cycles of inquiry

After the video showing, our inquiry continued to unfurl in accordance with its own momentum and in tandem with the pandemic which, within a few weeks, led to national lockdowns and huge adjustments in our ways of living. Throughout this time, we continued to exchange visual material, and to write and meet in our duo via Zoom. We also met virtually with others who had attended the gatherings to continue the conversation about poetic activism. Our inquiries at this time were no doubt fully coloured by the pandemic and contextualized by it. Questions of activism(s) from our everyday lives did not fade; instead, they took on a different hue. We were closer to home and, as our habits and attentions shifted, things were slowing down and opportunities narrowing. Staying local, within #1000Steps, for example, was no longer an artistic choice but a matter of legal obligation.

Discussion

Where did this take us?

Like all good action researchers, we not only seek insight from our research, but are primed to ask pragmatic questions like: Where is the action element in all this? What is useful here for other practitioners? What difference are we making to the global challenge? As we stood back to ask such questions of ourselves, challenging ourselves to find a 'difference' we might be making in the face of a huge global challenge, our resolve was tempered by the possibility of futility. The poetic activism inquiry had started out with big ambitions: to engage and build momentum within ourselves and in others in towards adopting everyday eco-activism(s). As we consider the visual inquiry that accompanied the more public strand of the work and reflect on the difference it made or might make – we found a different kind of action - something altogether more

humble and yet potentially profound. To catch this quality, we move now to a more poetic rendering to reflect on a couple of chosen themes. In so doing, we set out to catch some of the subtle effects of this work on us personally before considering how it might form the basis of practical insight for others.

Learnings for us

Authorization

> Quiet friend who has come so far,
> feel how your breathing makes more space around you[xiii].
>
> Rainer Marie Rilke

After our video diary exchange, we noticed how visual experimentation authorized a way of sharing experience and feeling that had hitherto been submerged. Video invited us to voice and live into each other's worlds differently. Given the subject matter, this included a license to practice being 'poetic' in our daily lives. We noticed the poetic in the mundane everyday (like birds flying past – featured in our video showing) household spaces and materials around (seen in our video diaries) and, by sharing the videos and conversing, we were taking time to dwell on and repeat that noticing. Like the lines of Rilke's poem, the inquiry created more breathing space around and between us. We felt licensed to move slightly differently through our respective worlds.

By authorizing ourselves to talk and share what we were noticing, we found we were creating a different kind of inquiry space in which imagination and half-memory seemed more figural than before. For example, we spoke at length about a film Margaret made of waiting for a falling leaf. When we searched for the 'data' we found in fact there was only ever a film of waiting – no leaf had fallen. This was a space then in which concrete fact receded – and ephemeral patterns and possibilities were given more time to unfold. We found the inquiry was giving us a means to express a half-submerged knowing about our 'practice' into the world that, normally, was not voiced.

We might call the resulting inquiry space poetic indeed, in its broadest sense. Video caused us to stop and look, and look again. Certain moments became frozen and developed into 'reference experiences.' We became accustomed to the discomfort of witnessing ourselves on film too – able to bear watching our frozen moments as detached from fixed identities and emblematic of something to inquire into. In summary, these visual methods allowed us to share an embodied and different sense of our lives.

Working with grief and melancholy

And this approach sometimes surfaced a surprise. The sharing of the edited video, and others' reactions to it, highlighted the melancholy that each of us brought to the work from our wider lives. In response to the audience, Steve noted that his editing reflected a period of personal recuperation for him after a long recovery from a period of burnout. Whereas the audience remarks and subsequent explorations led Margaret to inquire more deeply into the nature of her sadness about the environmental crisis.

> "I understand my melancholy better now; how my concerns for the environment were connected to an overall sad tone in my life, and how in a way I was attached to that"
>
> Margaret, Reflecting in Sept 2021

There is grief in this work. Perhaps our activism was, in part at least, about exploring ways to hold grief and understand it. Each day brings news that is difficult to stay with and digest. This morning, a minor news report talked of guillemots dying in unprecedented numbers off the UK coast[xiv]. The cause is unknown, said the scientist – it could be hunger or more likely is down to ingesting toxins from algal blooms that have grown large off the Scottish coast.

The news moved on, and so often, do we. How to be with such news? Joanna Macy, in a recent video[xv], says, *"What we most need to do is hear the earth crying"* before going on to give a beautiful rendering of Rilke's poem which started above and continues thus:

> Let this darkness be a bell tower
> and you the bell. As you ring,
>
> what batters you becomes your strength.
> Move back and forth into the change.

Were we tolling a bell with our video on that dark February day? Perhaps. But if so, it certainly sounded different to a presentation that might represent the dire effects of climate crisis directly. The unintentional rendering of our melancholy to an audience had a softness that helped us look obliquely rather than directly at the underpinning sadness of this topic. Perhaps our audience were testing their own responses. How much could they take? Might a more uplifting soundtrack make it go away? We laughed. The surprise brought lightness, and clarity. As Rilke suggests, we found this strengthening – bringing mobility and further light onto our layered sadness.

Changes out in the world

Recognizing entanglement

What difference was this making out in the world? All the while we were engaging via social media and in inquiry groups with participants drawn to our form of poetic, ecosophic questions and practice. Steve notes how the whole tone of his work changed throughout this time and is now underpinned by creative disciplines that he views as foundational in support of the more day-to-day, prosaic elements of his work. Unknown others have responded to us (and continue to respond) – writing their own pieces and connecting their practices to ours[xvi]. Given that we worked together too we could snatch moments, during our frequent conversation within the doctoral program, to notice and speculate together how subtle shifts in our working and daily lives were being impacted. We know this is not a causal space – where the visual inquiry can be isolated from all else that was happening. However, the sense of entanglement does not prevent us from recognizing how it became a touchstone and anchored us in various interactions 'out in the world'. We see how it suffused and stabilized an approach to life, from which issued some signals in the everyday theatres of our lives.

Changes in us - subtle shifts in practice

At the time of writing, Steve reported how, almost constantly, he had become more mindful and aware of the decisions he was making, in his home life and at work, and the implication of them in ecological and social terms. He was contracting differently with the world as a result, conserving and focusing energy, speaking less – with more economy and precision. Margaret reported, by contrast, how one of the biggest impacts on her was that she was much more likely to speak up. The work on poetic activism, the constant holding and working with that frame, and the anchoring of that in this visual inquiry, supported her to be bold and more precise in her decision-making and when to say something (or not) – in all areas of her life.

Learnings for others

Visual approaches to slippery concepts

The visual work gave us a way into exploring the term 'Poetic Activism' as a lived phenomenon of practice rather than as a concept to be pinned down. The use of visual media supported us to inquire with the conceptual slipperiness of the term 'Poetic Activism.' The need to explain the term recurred throughout this work, but the pressure to culminate in a definition receded naturally as we stepped back and forth between conversational and visual mode. The visual orientation meant our cycles of exchange focused attention on ontological realities out of which normative positions could be distilled. As a result, rather than a construct, Poetic Activism became more of a practice to connect with and recognize. The finding leads us further towards exploring storytelling and ongoing visual modes of inquiry to continue to 'show' what poetic activism might look like for practitioners and leaders in their own lives. We see our visual approach as potentially valuable for researchers or organizational practitioners who wish to explore any such 'slippery' concept and make a move towards understanding it in the fullness of lived experience and practice.

Visual practice tips for others

And now for something completely different! Everyone loves a set of clear bullets and outcomes and we are no exception. In this short section we draw out a list of tips and insights for those readers, whether they are consultants, leaders, managers, researchers or activists, anyone who might be interested in experimenting with video methods to explore a term or practice that eludes conceptual definition.

Generic learnings: dos and don'ts about video inquiry

Do experiment – don't fix on form or methodological purity. Experimenting with different kinds of video in each cycle kept the inquiry alive and animated. We felt free to try different things: like voice to camera; short movies in outdoor settings; combining still image with voice and so on.

Don't think you need to be technically competent or 'artistic' to engage in this work. Finished, polished films may be part of it, but are not necessary. Unfinished, rough and ready work leaves the door more open for inquiry.

Do be a bricoleur – use what tools you feel comfortable with and that are ready to hand. We used whatever was at hand: iMovie, WhatsApp, Adobe etc., alongside phone video, digital SLRs and video cameras as well as graphic design. 'Simple and easy' is best: don't buy loads of new kit!

Do detach yourself from your visual creations. See each one as an artefact, or an exhibit in itself – something to be curious about. You don't need to feel it's yours or that, in some way, it's you.

Do create spaces to reflect, view and inquire. Having a chance to share what comes up while creating or viewing visual material is as vital as the material itself. Challenge yourself to show your material to others. This can feel exposing, but responses of trusted others can be vital to open new perspectives.

Do conduct multiple experiments. It can take time to relax into the different world that visual media and film creates. We needed multiple cycles to become versed with a less instrumental interpretation of our visual material. Conducting multiple cycles allows your subject matter to unfold through visual method.

Closing reflections

As we close, the question returns: what difference does any of this make? As Steve said ruefully in one of our reflective calls: "well, better we spend time doing this, than something destructive to the environment." If you multiply our experience and imagine thousands of others creating a poetic practice in their lives, it is not necessarily as defeatist as it sounds; in the video mentioned earlier, Joanna Macy says:

> "I've come to think the first step to awakening is simply being glad you are alive Just to stop for a minute - that in itself is a politically subversive act[17]."

Perhaps then that is activism enough. Ours is necessarily a humble and interior work, but one we hope offers a potential in the invitation it offers others – the legitimization to seek the poetic in our lives and trust that from their 'good action' will follow.

The Eco-move

The call to this special issue asks plainly, 'How shall we change our habits?' In the light of the stark realization that, 'we must make major changes to the ways we live to avoid destroying our planet along with every living thing,' the editors offer us the idea of post-humanism – as another slippery term that nonetheless points towards a different way of seeing our place as humans in the world. The ego- to eco- perspective is sometimes characterized with an image that removes the human from the top of the tree to a more embedded place. Our visual explorations led us into a different kind of conversation with each other and with the more-than-human and material world around us. Exchanging visual media helped us to sense from behind another's eyes into those worlds. We filmed birds, sprinklers and the root systems of trees. Sometimes, though not always, it was birds and leaves that became the main protagonists in our film. Perhaps, for a moment or two, our experimental moves helped us experience a sense of place among living and non-living things and catch glimpses of a world where we know our place.

As Rilke concludes:

> In this uncontainable night,
> be the mystery at the crossroads of your senses,
> the meaning discovered there.
>
> And if the world has ceased to hear you,
> say to the silent earth: I flow.
> To the rushing water, speak: I am.

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Steve has been trying for a while now to work with organisational and social change using written words, spoken dialogue, photography, film and (social) media. He is a member of faculty at Hult Ashridge working almost exclusively with participants on the Executive Doctorate in Organisational Change who are trying to make their own personal and public 'dint in the world.' In his Executive Education work, he includes an action research approach in interventions that typically focus on 'organisational transformation'. His research and private practice is primarily concerned with the nature of creativity and how visual/digital media might radically extend our epistemological and pedagogical repertoire. His regular blogs, experiments and ongoing digital action research can be found at DrSteveMarshall.com. Away from work, he tries to spend as much time as possible hanging out with family, dogs and horses and, at every opportunity, cycling around the countryside.

Notes

[i] A rephrasing of Nicholas Bourriaud's writing in consideration of Guattari's work on an 'aesthetic paradigm.

[ii] Gergen, K (1999), Traditions in trouble. In Gergen, K, An invitation to social construction pp 1-32, London:

Sage

[iii] Gergen, K. J. (2009). Social construction: Revolution in the making. In K. J. Gergen (Ed.), An invitation to social construction (pp. 1-30). London: Sage. p12.

[iv] Gergen, K. J. (2009). Social construction: Revolution in the making. In K. J. Gergen (Ed.), An invitation to social construction (pp. 1-30). London: Sage. p12.

[v] The graphic was launched on the blog in Feb 2020: https://www.newhistories.co.uk/poetic-activism/

[vi] For an introduction to anthropologist Donna Haraway see Haraway, D. (2016). Making Oddkin in the Chthulucene https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fWQ2JYFwJWU. The Evergreen Consortium Series: Evergreen State College Productions.

[vii] Haraway, D. J. (2016). Staying with the trouble. Duke University Press.

[viii] Margaret's blog "Poetic activism – explanations or stories" published in June 2021 https://www.newhistories.co.uk/poetic-activism-explanations-or-stories/

[ix] Margaret's blog "Poetic activism – explanations or stories" published in June 2021 https://www.newhistories.co.uk/poetic-activism-explanations-or-stories/

[x] "Start close in" is a poem by David Whyte. See Whyte, D (2012) River Flow. Many Rivers Pres. Langley.

[xi] Direct quote from the recording of the Zoom call in Jan 2020

[xii] Direct quote from the recording of the Zoom call in Jan 2020

[xiii] "Let This Darkness Be a Bell Tower", by Rainer Maria Rilke from Sonnets to Orpheus II, 29. Translation by Joanna Macy and Anita Barrows

[xiv] See https://www.nhm.ac.uk/discover/news/2021/september/guillemots-dying-in-unprecedentednumbers-off-UK-coast.html(2)

[xv] View the Joanna Macy film on https://vimeo.com/588455489

[xvi] See a recent blog from Joanna Maberly for an example of a ripple: https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/meaningful-action-face-big-issues-joanna maberly/?trackingId=iIhSowcBRi6iloGnI6r6ww%3D%3D

A note about AMED

Sadly, so far, nobody has expressed a willingness to take over from the outgoing AMED Council. So in the circumstances, the EGM on 26 May is likely to confirm that AMED will finally cease to operate as an educational charity by the end of 2022 at the latest.

AMED stands for the Association for Management Education and Development, www.amed.org.uk. We are a long-established membership organisation and educational charity devoted to developing people and organisations.

Our purpose is to serve as a forum for people who want to share, learn and experiment, and find support, encouragement, and innovative ways of communicating. Our conversations are open, constructive, and facilitated.

Through AMED, we strive to benefit our members and the wider society. Exclusive Member benefits include excellent professional indemnity cover at a significant discount, free copies of the quarterly journal *e-O&P*, and discounted fees for participation in a range of face-to-face events, special interest groups, and our interactive website. We aim to build on our three cornerstones of ***knowledge***, ***innovation*** and ***networking*** in the digital age. Wherever we can, AMED Members, Networkers and Guests seek to work with likeminded individuals and organisations to generate synergy and critical mass for change. www.amed.org.uk, or contact **Linda Williams**, our Membership Administrator, E: amedoffice@amed.org.uk, T: 0300 365 1247