

University College London Institute of Advanced Studies Talking Points

Order/Disorder: The artist-researcher as connector-disrupter-running messenger?

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#MagicCarpet www.kaisyngtan.com/magiccarpet RUN! RUN! RUN! www.kaisyngtan.com

RUN! RUN! RUN! Biennale www.kaisyngtan.com/r3fest



The Mind Excessively Wandering (red herring) scale. Kai Syng Tan 2017 (Ipad, marker pen, pen)

PROGRAMME

- 5 December 2017
- 19:00-20:00hrs.
- Institute of Advanced Studies Common Ground, South Wing. University College London, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT
- Free tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/ias-talking-points-orderdisorder-the-artist-researcher-as-connector-disrupter-running-messenger-tickets-39722975489>

KEYWORDS

Interdisciplinary productive antagonisms, art-practice related research, practice-led research, health, illness, wellbeing, psychiatry, ADHD, restlessness, border-crossing, order, disorder



RUNDOWN

The Chinese word 'dao', meaning road, path, philosophy or discourse, consists of the radicals of the motion verb for feet and footprints, with that denoting the human head. Specifically, the motion could refer to running, since the word 'discourse' comes from the medieval Latin 'discursus', which refers to 'a running from one place to another', and the historical running-ambassador or messenger was known not only for their athleticism and agility, but their ability to cross physical and social borders and transfer knowledge. Set against the backdrop of the recent Westminster Hall debate on [cultural intervention in health](#) and [cross-council focus spotlight on mental health](#) amidst a disordered world that is in motion and commotion, and through her [commissioned project that investigates the boundaries between 'order' and 'disorder'](#) (in the psychiatric, artistic, geopolitical and metaphorical senses of the terms), artist-curator Dr Kai Syng Tan sketches out the potential role of the artist-researcher as a connector-disrupter-running messenger [generating spaces of 'productive antagonisms'](#) in the discussion of the role of the arts in mainstream discourse on wellbeing and health.

ABOUT THE COMMISSION

Drawing on emerging research on mind wandering and how it relates to visual art and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and through a series of residencies, talks, workshops and the creation of a new participatory tapestry art installation, *We sat on a mat and had a chat and made maps!* #MagicCarpet is a 1.5 year fine art practice-led research project by Kai in collaboration with Professor of Molecular Psychiatry and world-leading expert on adult ADHD, [Professor Philip Asherson](#) at the [Social, Genetic and Developmental Psychiatry Centre \(SGDP\), King's College London](#). As Artist-in-Residence at SGDP, Kai gatecrashes the world of psychiatry to participate in seminars, as well as volunteer for scientific experiments. Her questions and interpretations are mapped out in a large drawing, which is weaved into a tapestry. The work 'takes off' when people sit on the tapestry, get paired up with Kai, Philip and/or other artists and scientists, to chat about their mind wandering. As words may be inadequate or challenging, they capture their discussions

/ disagreements / discoveries in the form of maps that they will co-create. Selected maps, as well as commissioned texts and developmental sketches, will be documented in a limited-edition publication. The ‘magic’ that #MagicCarpet aims for is not to provide answers but for us to raise questions, learn from and challenge one another and irritate existing assumptions about our understanding of wellbeing and the boundaries between ‘normal’ and ‘abnormal’ behaviours. *We sat on a mat and had a chat and made maps!* #MagicCarpet is a 2017 Unlimited commission. Unlimited is an arts commissioning programme that celebrates ambitious work by disabled artists. Unlimited is funded by Arts Council England. The project is part of King's artist in residence programme supported by Cultural Programming and the Department of Social, Genetic & Developmental Psychiatry Centre at King's College London.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

[Dr Kai Syng Tan FRSA SFHEA](#) is an interdisciplinary artist, curator, researcher, shapeshifter and sightseer. Known for her ‘eclectic style and cheeky attitude’ (Sydney Morning Herald), ‘radical interdisciplinarity’ (Dr Alan Latham, UCL), she has been described as ‘not only a talented artist but also a great scholar’ (Cinema South Festival) with a ‘sardonic humour but also a sharp intelligence which makes her a self-reflexive, incisive artist of South East Asia’ (Singapore International Festival of Arts Director Keng Sen Ong). Kai's installation, film, text and performances have appeared at Documenta, Royal Geographical Society, Biennale of Sydney, MOMA, ZKM, ICA and LADA Study Guide. Recognition includes San Francisco International Film Festival Golden Gate Award, and Artangle Open 100, and collections include the Museum of London and Fukuoka Art Museum. Of her RUN! RUN! RUN! Biennale, the Guardian urges academics to ‘take a leaf out of its book’ (2014), and she was heard on BBC Radio 3 on running as an artistic discourse (Free Thinking January 2017). Co-created with disabled colleagues, the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the 8th ASEAN Para Games (for which Kai was Visual Director) was applauded by the Singapore Prime Minister as ‘spectacular’. She completed her PhD at the Slade School of Fine Art as a UCL scholar, and has taught in the practice, history and theory of fine art, media art, film and art education in higher institutions in Australia, Singapore, Tokyo and London. She is Artist in Residence and Visiting Researcher at SGDP, Centre for Mobilities Research Fellow at Lancaster University, Visiting Fellow at UCL IAS, Director of RUN! RUN! RUN! International Body for Research and RUN! RUN! RUN! Biennale, and Arts and Humanities Research Council Peer Review College member.

ABOUT UCL IAS TALKING POINTS

Talking Points is a discussion forum and lecture platform that aims to bring IAS residents and Visiting Research Fellows into conversation with researchers across UCL. The format is either a lecture with nominated respondents from various UCL departments or a staged conversation followed by Q&A. The emphasis is on interdisciplinary exchange so discussants and interlocutors are drawn from a range of disciplines and fields. There is always space for audience participation/discussion. Talking Points is open to all researchers at UCL, both senior and early career, as well as postgraduate students. Please do come along and share in the debate.

LINKS

- Blog post by Dr Kai Syng Tan and Professor Philip Asherson, 12 May on MiND the Gap, a joint scientific blog of several multicenter projects on developmental psychiatry, funded by the European Union <https://mind-the-gap.live/2017/05/12/come-sit-on-a-mat-with-an-artist-and-a-psychiatrist-to-have-a-chat-about-mind-wandering-gingerbread-men-shark-baits-and-the-interface-of-normalabnormal-behaviour/>
- ‘Productive Antagonisms’ <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1474474017702511?journalCode=cgjb>
- Professor Philip Asherson: <https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/philip.asherson.html>
- King’s Artists scheme <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/Cultural/newsandviews/newsrecords/170713-new-artists-at-kings.aspx>
- Unlimited: <http://weareunlimited.org.uk/>
- The All Party Parliamentary group: <http://www.artshealthandwellbeing.org.uk/APPG>
- Cross-Council focus on mental health: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/media/news/1708171/>
- UCL IAS: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/institute-of-advanced-studies>; <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/institute-of-advanced-studies/ias-events/ias-talking-points-order-disorder-the-artist-researcher-as-connector-disrupter-running-messenger>