Visualising inclusivity in the workplace:

Managing diverse methods to promote inclusion and impact of participatory photography.

Tom Ingate - Institute of Photography
Falmouth University

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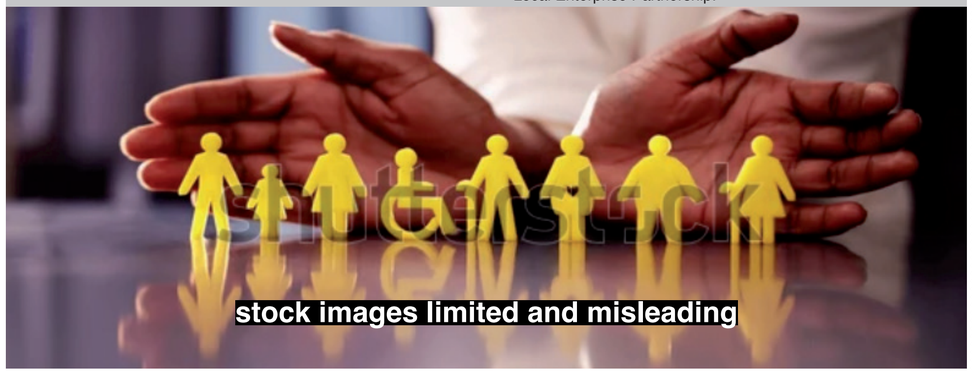
Project partners - University of Exeter, Age UK Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, Disability Cornwall, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership.



Background and Context

This study was part of a wider investigation by faculty staff, charities and support groups investigating the experience of employees, business owners and self-employed workers.

The aim was to find out about their experiences of disability, chronic conditions, ageing and neurodiversity in the workplace with particular focus on the feasibility of reasonable adjustments, support from local government, and identifying self-developed coping strategies.

Questions

- How to accurately visualise disability in the workplace?
- How to find new ways to visualise disability?
- How to show hidden disability?

Pre Covid Initial Plan

- Participants given DSLR cameras
- Series of group sessions to support development of photo-stories.
- Posts to social media
- Conference exhibition

Institutions + Local Government

Developing diverse methods

The project started in the first few weeks of the first lock-down. Participants and researchers were adjusting to working from home or managing key worker status.

Being flexible in approach became essential to the success of the project. Greater flexibility encouraged diverse responses from participants beyond remit of the project.

1:1 Zoom coaching

Varying deadlines

Shoots plans ranging from days to months

Image gathering - DSLR, smartphone, family albums, archive, screen grabs, socialmedia.

Varied visual language - narrative, documentary, representational, abstract, conceptual, illustrative

Audience - personal, private, public, professional

tension between tree and rhizome

DELEUZE, Gilles and Felix GUATTARI. 1987. A Thousand Plateaus : Capitalism and Schizophrenia. London: Continuum.

Outcomes

Working from home blurred the lines between private and public spaces.

Extra care had to be taken when deciding what should be published to make sure participants were informed of employment and publishing laws.

The outcomes provided insight into inequalities in working from home, access to health care and implications for key workers with hidden condition.

Participants were not always aware of the micro strategies they had developed to succeed in the workplace until seeing these strategies in their own photographs.

The image became the site of reflection and self-awareness, which evolved into recognition of the intersection between self-developed strategies and formal reasonable adjustments.

Key outcomes for the participants was that people living with disabilities and chronic conditions should not be defined by their coping strategies. For example hyper focus and organisation systems for ADHD were not “superpowers”.

Insights from the project have positive implications for all employers and employees with or without chronic conditions or disabilities.

Engaging multiple audiences encouraging networks

Social Media - Institutional websites

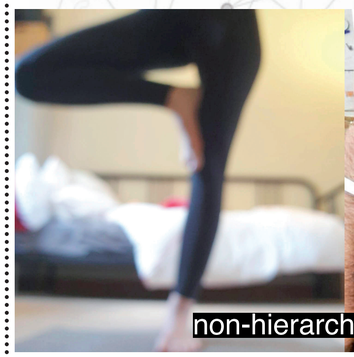
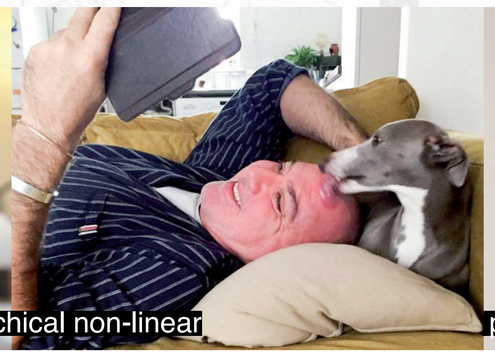
Digital and Print publishing - Conference exhibition

Royal Photographic Society website

Understanding Impact

Thinking about the connections between participant photographers, supporting organisations, local government and the general public in terms of **Deleuzian Assemblage**

Emergent knowledge in a temporary flow has evolved my thinking of power relationships and how this emergent knowledge intersects with local government and connected organisations.

For Future Projects

- Promote assemblages earlier with participants and institutions.
- Use unstructured interview and storytelling to encourage unconventional visual approaches.
- Remind myself that Institutions are receptive to unconventional outcomes when part of a flow.