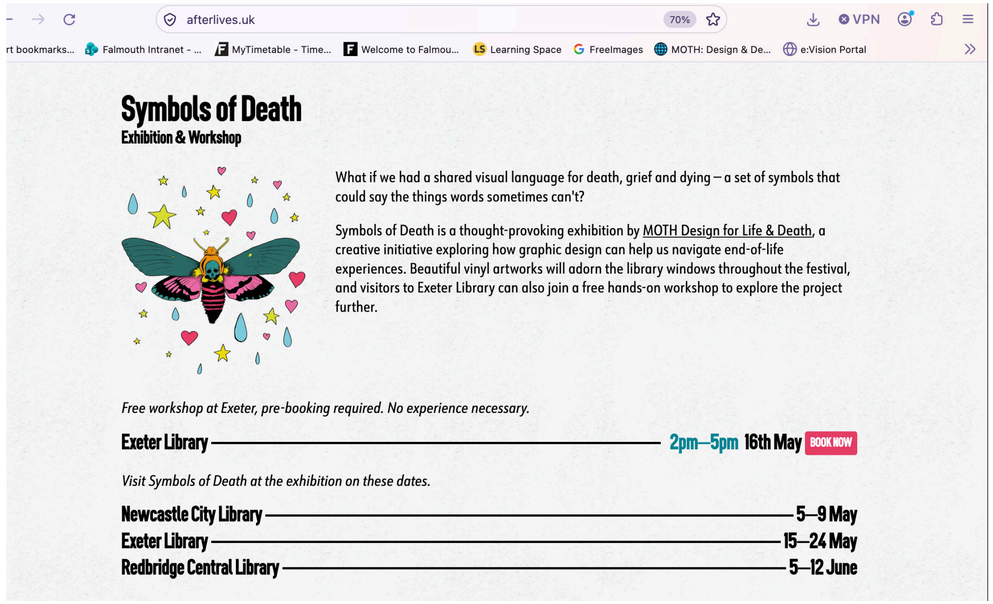


Afterlives Festival 2026. May - June 2026
Newcastle City Library, Exeter Library and Redbridge Central Library
May and June 2026, supported by Arts Council England. *https://afterlives.uk/*
Festival Director Stacey Pitsillides Northumbria University

Moth Design for Life & Death.
Public Lecture, Workshop,Exhibition + Publication
Moth: Nicola Salkeld Senior Lecturer, Department of Graphic Design
Moth: Ashley Rudolph Senior Lecturer, Department of Graphic Design

FALMOUTH
UNIVERSITY

Project overview

Moth was invited to collaborate with the Afterlives Arts Festival 2026, at Newcastle City Library, Exeter Library and Redbridge Central Library, May - June 2026, it was supported by Arts Council England.

The Afterlives Arts Festival was a free, family-friendly arts festival. Brought to life by a nationwide collaboration of libraries, artists, academics and community partners. Afterlives transformed local libraries into a vibrant creative hub, a place where art, storytelling and community come together to make conversations about death feel natural, joyful and deeply human.

Across 36 events and six festival days, people had the chance to explore life's biggest questions through hands-on workshops, stunning installations, live performance, film, virtual reality and community art — all free or low cost, and open to absolutely everyone.

Moth: Lecture, Workshop and Exhibition.:
What if we had a shared visual language for death, grief and dying — a set of symbols that could say the things words sometimes can't?

Symbols of Death a thought-provoking exhibition by MOTH Design for Life & Death, a creative initiative exploring how graphic design can help us navigate end-of-life experiences. Vinyl artworks adorned the library windows throughout the festival, and visitors to Exeter Library were able to join a free hands-on workshop to explore the project further.

Public Lecture & Workshop:
Exeter Library: *Momento Mori*

Exhibition + Publication
Newcastle City Library, Exeter Library and Redbridge Central Library
The Emotionalisation of Graphic Symbols.



Aims and objectives

Research aims:

To explore the possibilities of finding a shared visual language for death, grief and dying — finding personal and/or universal visual language (a set of symbols) that could say the things words sometimes can't?

To stimulate discussion on how personalized rites of passage can be reconciled with the collective needs of the bereaved, connecting the living and the dead through bereavement rituals and memorialisation.

The project forms part of Moth, an initiative exploring the roles graphic designers can play in shaping end-of-life experiences. Predicated on the idea that confidently expressing "negative" emotions helps us navigate grief and sadness and communicate empathy and loss.

Research objectives:

1. To create a social space within which material-based learning can take place to bridge the divide between making and thinking. The making or outcome is not the primary goal, it is an opportunity to escape the pressure of producing something final or instantaneously useful. An opportunity to confront, to disrupt, and challenge assumptions.

2. Connecting with partners and build network.

3. Exhibit and disseminate Information on Moths ongoing project: Symbols of Death

Research design

Research methodology:
The work advocates design as an activity and a way of thinking that can be used to explore ideas, conduct critical research and catalyse new social situations.

Combining visual and material culture, phenomenology, semiotics, and iterative testing through curated events, designed artifacts, and audience feedback. It examines how creative practice can expand the cultural and emotional language around dying, grief, and remembrance, and how design methods might open space for conversations typically avoided in public life.

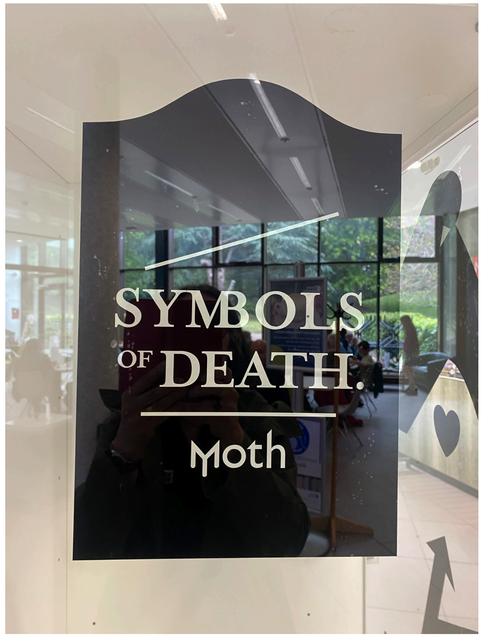
(Creating a physical environment to facilitate dialogue where unknowing and uncertainty are welcome ingredients to speculative research enquiry).

Project Elements



Exhibition Poster: Newcastle City Library, Exeter Library and Redbridge Central Library.





Exhibition Vinyls Newcastle City Library, Exeter Library and Redbridge Central Library.

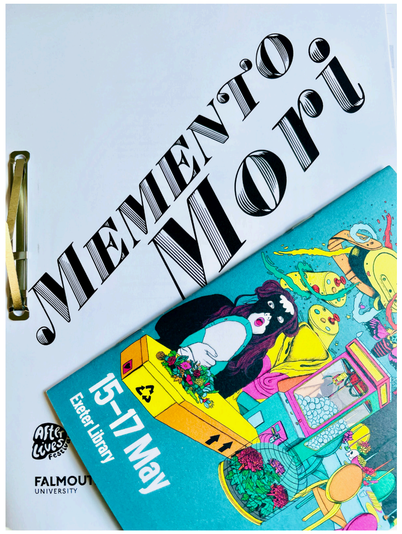


Exhibition Booklet Newcastle City Library, Exeter Library and Redbridge Central Library.

Project Elements



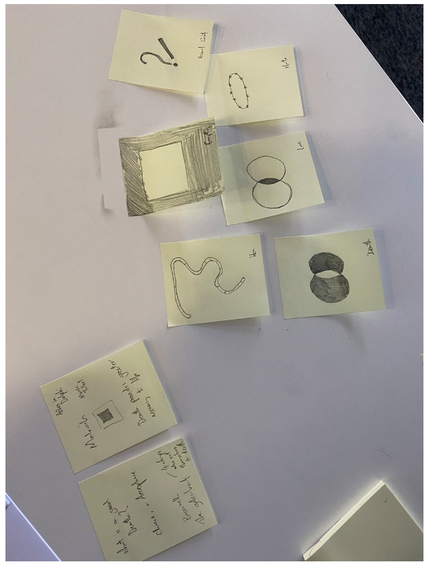
Exeter Library: Lecture & Public Workshop. Project Pack / Workshop



Exeter Library: Lecture & Public Workshop



Exeter Library: Lecture & Public Workshop



Exeter Library: Lecture & Public Workshop

Afterlifes Contributors / Credits

AfterLives Director: stacey.pitsillides@northumbria.ac.uk

Project Coordinator. Kim Dryden. Service Delivery Specialist: Information and Digital
Community Hubs and Libraries. City Operations, Transport and Neighbourhoods
Newcastle City Council kim.dryden@newcastle.gov.uk

Other contributors to Afterlive Festival:
Moving Parts Arts: Chloe Rodham / Judith Hope / Sarah Vigars: https://www.movingpartsarts.com/

Resting Reef: https://www.restingreef.co.uk/

Naomi Westerman

The Dead Good Film Club

Soul Paint Sarah Ticho & Niki Smith: https://www.soulpaint.co/

Co-op Funeralcare

Luna Arts

DEAD GOOD Katy and Lindsey Vigurs. https://www.deadgood.org/

Black Cat Miniature Theatre Performance

The Death Positive Libraries: https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/projects/death-positive-libraries

Research context

1. Symbols Graphic design, words, imagery and communication	Design of symbolic and visual communications.
2. Artifacts Poster, project packs, booklets.	Design of material objects.
3. Experience Public lecture and Workshop audience interaction & participation.	Design of activities and organised events. [Pedagogic | External audience]
4. Critical design practice.	Cultural systems/values/environments for living, working, playing and learning.