

‘Second star to the right [of the universe], and straight on till morning’: Following directions and finding new ones on international journeys in creative research methods



**INTERNATIONAL
CREATIVE
RESEARCH
METHODS
CONFERENCE**

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- Thank you
- Title
- Creativity in design, data generation, dissemination
- ‘Collect less, analyse more’
- ‘Ethics are everywhere’
- Researcher wellbeing
- Creative communities

Diolch yn fawr – Thank you

- Dr Helen Kara
- Grateful
- But...
- Success of ICRMC I
- Creativity in the room
- I am feeling...
- Yet... 'people are endlessly, joyfully creative with research methods' (Kara (2024, p. 59)



Title

- Second star to the right [of the universe], and straight on till morning
- Directions given to Wendy Darling by Peter Pan to find Neverland, fictional characters in a fictional setting
- Neverland is evocative of the imagination, innovation, and inspiration that we may associate with creative research methods
- [of the universe] – Rosie Canning – creative postcards
- Ability to change, making something known now different



Creative Methods for Project Design

Mannay, D and Timperley, V. 2025.
*Sandboxing in Practice: Qualitative
Interviewing with Sand, Objects,
and Figures*. Bristol: Policy Press.
[Creative Research Methods in
Practice Policy Press series]





Creative and collaborative design

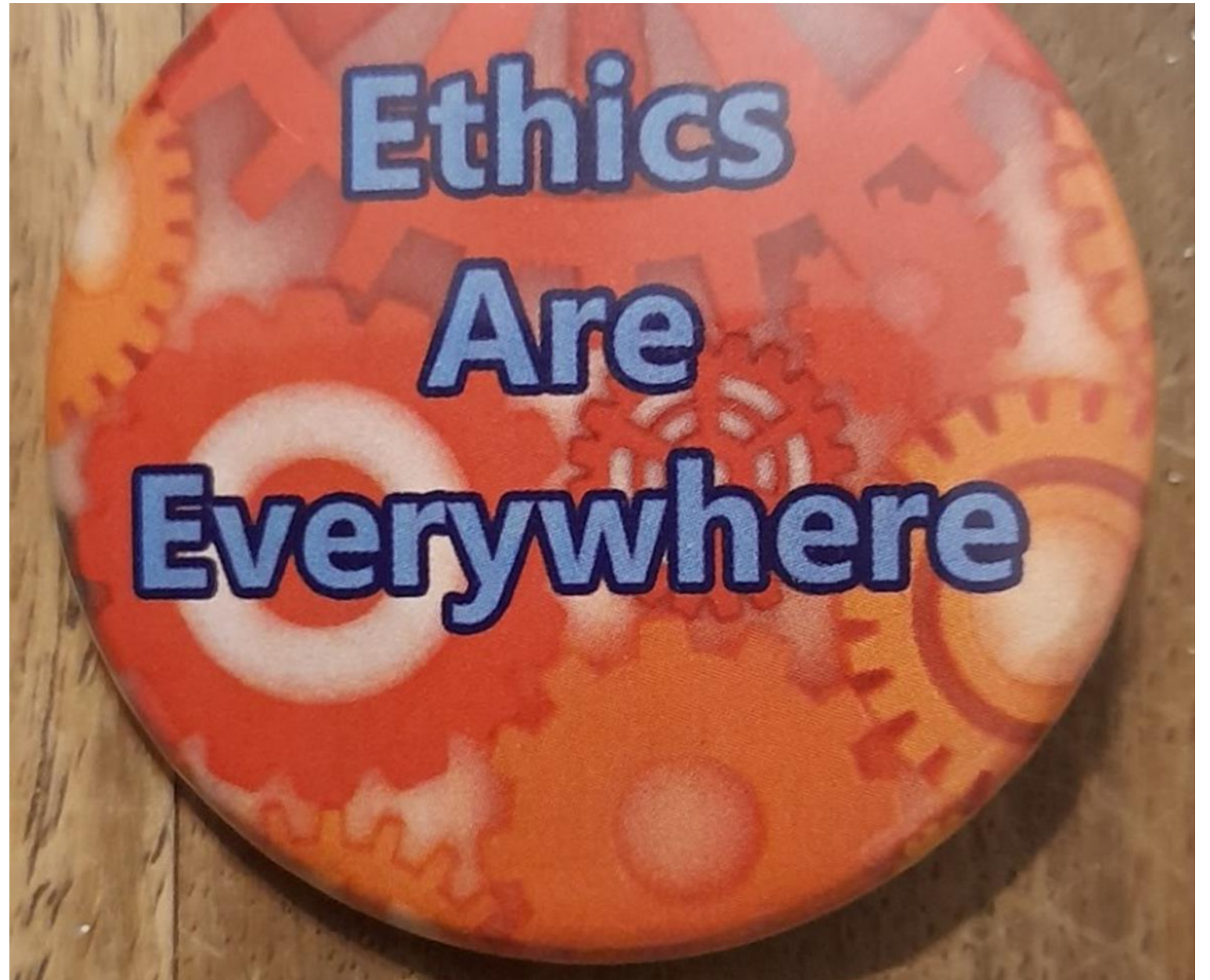
- Creative methods with communities to consider how they would like to take part in research
- *'A little bit of advice'* (Mannay et al 2024)
- Not always possible or practical

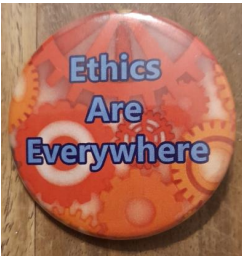
Creative ethical practice

- *‘appropriate thoughtful practice can be more ethical than an ethical code’* (Loewenthal 2023, p. 134)
- The Case of Ethics (Timperley nee Edwards 2019)
- Case developments – Jess Mannion, Lucy Robinson and Luci Gorell Barnes
- ‘Ethics are everywhere’



‘Methods concern how research is done, while ethics are concerned with consequences and relationships between researchers and the worlds they move within and between’ – Su-ming Khoo (2024, p. 9)





Knowing where our tools come from

- ‘coloniality of design’ often silences the historical legacy of creativity outside of the geo-political North (Dahal and Gautam 2024, p 25)
- Caroline Lenette - Anti-Colonial Research Library - #ICRMC 2023 - <https://www.anticolonialresearchlibrary.org/>
- ‘*Sandboxing in Practice*’ – influences of European psychoanalysis and therapeutic practice
- But... long history of sand and storytelling in Indigenous communities (Yunkaporta 2019)
- And... ethics of taking psychoanalysis outside of the clinical situation of the consulting room by importing its artefacts into the research arena



Knowing why we want to be creative

- Fighting familiarity and defamiliarization (Mannay 2010)
- Quietening the researcher voice (Mannay and Turney 2020)
- Avoiding '*prepackaged questions have little or no meaning to the person being interviewed*' (Harper 2023, p. 97)
- Understanding subjective perspectives
- Methods that match methodology and underlying philosophy
- Not creativity for the sake of creativity
- Karijin Kakebeeke warns about 'in and out' research and its 'colonial' resonances, warning that it is important not to be 'too idealistic' (in Harper 2020, p. 130)

Collect less, analyse more



- There are no *'data analysis fairies'* we can call on to organise our data into *'a coherent new structure'* that will explain everything (Thorne 2000, p 69).
- *Handbook Creative Data Analysis* (Kara et al 2024)
- Analogue journey -evidence wall (Karen Gray and Emma Lazenby)
- Collaborative creative analysis (Jess Mannion)
- Slow stitch hand-made hexagons each participant (Naomi Clarke)
- Survey data as a graphic novella (Kate Carruthers Thomas)
- A shared (shamanic) journey (Karen Hammond and Nick Fuller)

Creative sharing and impact



- What to conceal and what to reveal?
- Ethics of recognition (Sweetman 2009)
- Confidentiality and safety both in the present and for time immemorial (see Clark 2019; Brady and Brown 2013)
- Documentary tradition - Susan Meiselas 'A Room of Their Own' (conceal) and La Toya Ruby Frazier North American post-industrial steel town, black working-class family (reveal) '*bearing witness to the history that we find ourselves in*'
- 'Revisualization – but '*revisualization and revocalization can only retain traces of the participants and enable a differential, and partial, form of authentic voice*' (Mannay 2020, p.665)

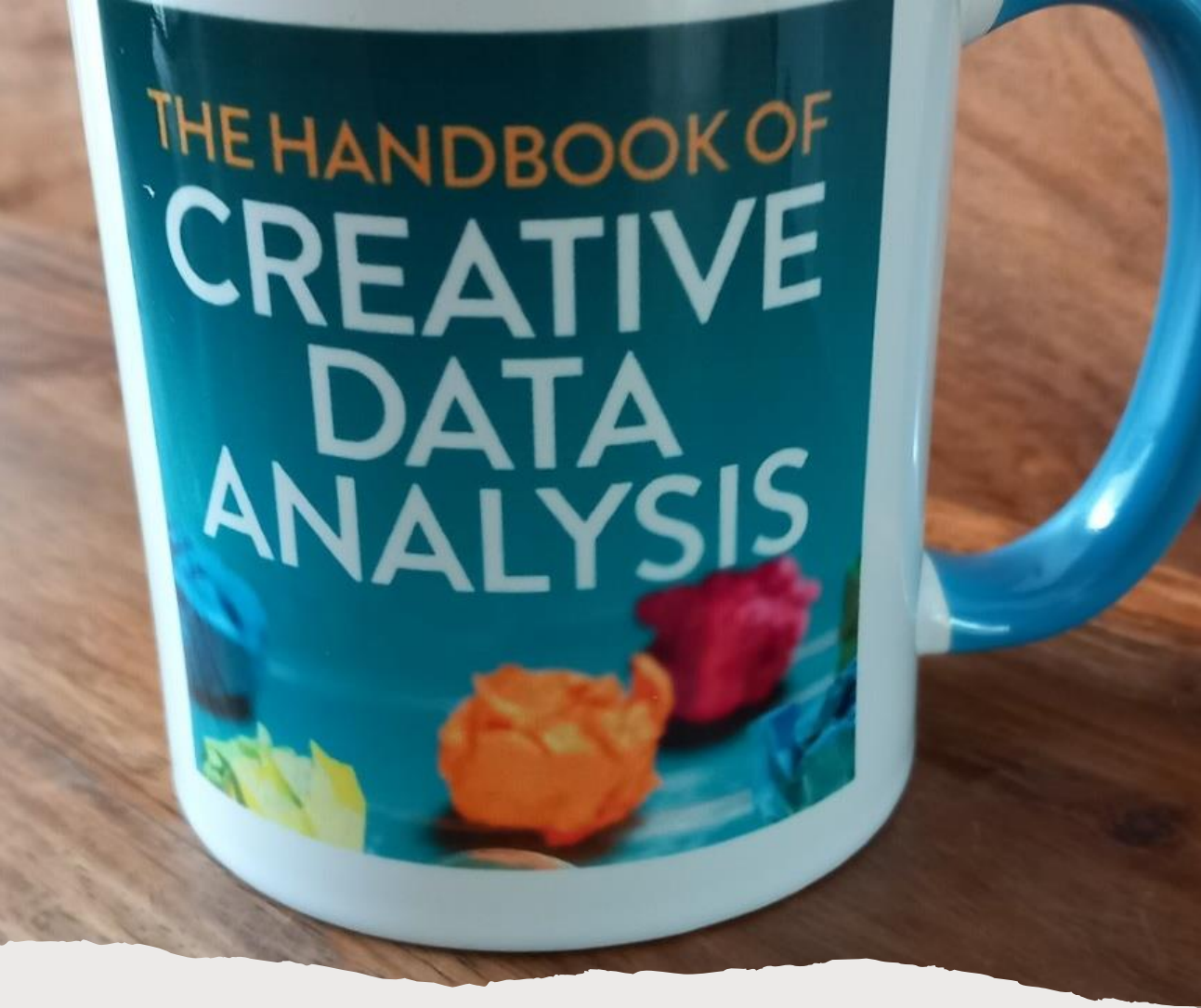
Sharp tools and impacts on the researcher

- *‘Emotion is not an intrusion into the research process, but a constitutive element of it’* (Loughran and Mannay 2018, p 2)
- *‘saturated by the pain held in the stories of people’* (Jayne et al 2024)
- Creative methods –sharp tools (Burnard 2018)
- Take participants and researchers on unexpected and unintended journeys
- Traumatic accounts - vicarious trauma (McCann and Pearlman 1990)
- Psychotherapists and social workers - clinical supervisions
- Researchers and doctoral students *‘let down’* (Bloor et al 2010)

Looking after each other

- Vulnerability of systems and institutions not of individual researchers (Mannay 2023)
- Creativity and reflexive writing (John 2024)
- ‘With a little help from my colleagues’ – ‘emotionality of social-science research and the wider emotional labour of academic work’ (Lisiak and Krzyżowski 2018, p. 33)
- Communities of practice (Leigh et al 2024)
- Creative methods community – this community – this conference
- Acts of kindness and gratitude





Thank you – Diolch

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