

“We’re not social workers but...”

Professional ethics, value and virtue in cultural work

In her seminar, Kerry will discuss the ethical implications of policy narratives on the social value of arts and culture, focusing upon research undertaken as part of her mid-career Leadership Fellowship - *Instrumental Values: Professional ethics in collaborative cultural work* – funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (2017-19). The *Instrumental Values* study examined ethical dimensions of cross-sector collaborative practice with museums working in health and social care settings and prison library services, complementing Kerry’s wider work in the cultural policy field on the instrumental value of arts and culture, by drawing more nuanced attention to the lived experience of integrated cultural work in action.

Extensive ethnographic fieldwork was undertaken in six case study sites, as microcosms of situated cultural practice, both from a physical perspective and in their representation of a cross-policy function for arts and culture. Using a Communities of Practice conceptual framework, adapted from organisational learning and critical management studies, her research considered the relationship between defined Codes of Ethics and those serendipitously developed between collaborating professionals and organisations as cross-sector communities of practice mature.

Key thematic findings include collaborative complexity and resilience; work assimilation and navigation of professional boundaries; renegotiation of ethical codes; and the impact of emotional labour and the duty of care in ‘virtuous’ cultural work. In conclusion, Kerry makes the case for more explicitly ethnographic and values-based approaches to research in the cultural policy field, questioning the real-world appropriateness of technocratic measures of impact and value, and the authenticity and usefulness of claims to independence and objectivity in academic evaluation research with arts and cultural sectors.



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Please join us on Wednesday 11th May 2022 at 2.00pm, in Room 138, Redmonds Building, or online via Zoom <https://ljamu.zoom.us/j/89846962874?pwd=TGZ6eTd3cFhQeE5nNXVsZzVwMXlldz09>

Meeting ID: 898 4696 2874

Passcode: 955777

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