

STORYTELLING

BEYOND WORDS

2022

Graduate
Storytelling
Presentations



The School of
Storytelling





CONTENTS

Welcome to the Oasis	4
Storytelling Beyond Words	6
SBW Course Carriers	8
Help Brian Study with us in 2023	10
Graduation Day Timetable	12
Map of the Campus	14
Juulia Björn	16
Anaïs Van der Cam	18
Anna Moro	20
Odilia Meeks	22
Anna Atkinson	24
Ingun Roberts	26
Tirzah Baank	28
Michael Close	30
James Pretlove	32
Andrea Prazmowski	34
Simon Fardell	36
Flynn Johnson	38
Samuel Mock	40
Oliver Wallace	42
Lauren Seaman	44
Celebrating Our Sixth Year...	46
SBW Upcoming Courses	48
School of Storytelling & Emerson College	50

Welcome to the Oasis!

Your background is welcome, your accent, your skin hue, race, privilege, ignorance, and all of the complexities that make up your spiritual, cultural and gender identity are all welcome in this Oasis!

Rest here for a while, let us offer you some good nourishment.

As we witness the suffering, challenges, wars, and pain in the world, stories can take us beyond the grief of the broken heart to places where we can choose again to love life for its diverse complexity.

Storytelling can create a safe container for learning adaptability, mutability and agility. The intuitive wisdom of the Imagination can keep us soft and open to questions. It has the power to erode stubborn forms and hard structures that no longer serve our development. It is a mighty calling to the heart to ignite social warmth and coherence.

Rather than fearing life, sinking into numbness, despair or paralysis, stories encourage us to participate in the world as 'Imaginative co-creators', awakening our response-ability as we invite in new visions and possibilities.

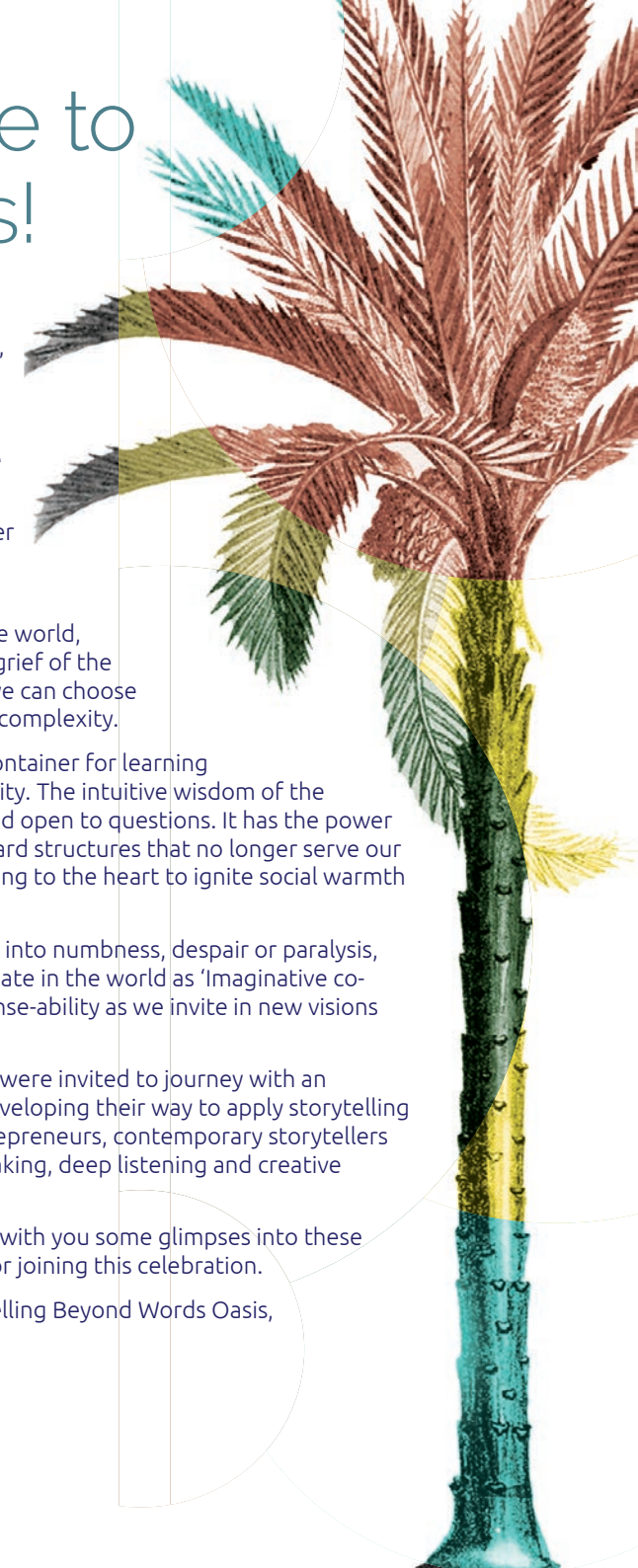
During the course, participants were invited to journey with an intentional research project, developing their way to apply storytelling as *imagineurs*: imagination entrepreneurs, contemporary storytellers who open spaces for truth-speaking, deep listening and creative reflection.

We are delighted to be sharing with you some glimpses into these projects today and thank you for joining this celebration.

We welcome you to the Storytelling Beyond Words Oasis,

With love,

Roi and Karmit



Storytelling Beyond Words

Long before television was ever imagined, storytellers and bards, prophets and poets were called upon to tell their visions and, through a live encounter, provide images that could direct, entertain, provoke, heal and reconcile the communities in which they lived and worked.

The presentations you will see today will open a window to the individual research projects, on personal, social or environmental themes on which the students chose to focus. These projects were developed alongside journeying with the following modules:

The Oral Tradition: Building a repertoire as a storyteller, working with folk tales, teaching stories, wonder tales and ancient myths. As a group, we explored the relationship between stories old and new, their relevance to our lives, and which of them are asking us to be told today.

The Skills of the Storyteller: In-depth work on story structure, voice, gesture, movement, audience awareness, spontaneity and improvisation, authenticity and presence.

Autobiographical Storytelling:

Working with meaningful experiences of our lives and shaping them into stories to inspire individuals and communities.

Visionary Activism: Imagination, activated through work with stories, ritual, performance art and games, to enhance our potential to inspire, foster hope and bring into public consciousness the new narratives and visions we wish to share.

Coaching: In a supportive atmosphere with individual tutorials, feedback and work in small groups. Developing our own unique style of telling and finding what stories we individually wish to tell.

Social Action: Learning to use story, strategy and structure to put a vision into action. Developing 'out of the box' solutions to issues and challenges we wish to address.

Deep Listening in Nature: Practices to tune in to the inter-relationships between all living systems and our evolving planet as a conscious entity full of life and stories.

Performances: Throughout the course there were plenty of opportunities for practising our stories, including the weekly opportunity to share them with a variety of audiences.

Supporting subjects included: social entrepreneurship, singing, movement, games and improvisation, connecting with nature and writing creatively.

Storytelling Beyond Words has been about so much more than learning a new set of skills. I feel like I've left the course with a new set of eyes for seeing the world, a new set of ears for hearing the world, and a whole new language for speaking, sharing, and connecting with the world. Not to mention a new set of friends, I hope, for life.

Connection seems to be at the heart of SBW. It's been as much about connecting – or reconnecting – with myself, my past experiences and heritage, my values, my intention, as with the world around me: people, nature, community, social change and transformation.

Lu Orza SBW 2021



A TWELVE WEEK TRAINING IN THE ART AND CRAFT OF STORYTELLING

aiming to prepare you to carry the spoken word and a lively imagination into your communities and places of work

TO ENTERTAIN, EDUCATE, INSPIRE OR ADVOCATE CHANGE.

When I began the course I thought I would be learning mostly how to perform. Fortunately, Karmit and Roi were much smarter than that. Instead, I learned that to tell a story is really to open a door — a door to an enchanted, half-forgotten land where we can connect with each other, with our own wild hearts, with the places we live in and with the deeper life of this wonderful, awful world. I learned that through the door of story we can laugh, weep, fall in love, tell the truth, taste justice, find redemption and take a few steps back towards life.

Susannah Gill SBW 2018



Course Carriers



Roi Gal-Or
COURSE LEADER

Roi, co-founder of the School of Storytelling, Emerson College, has been teaching over the last 20 years the art and craft of the storyteller to thousands of people around the world. His focus is on how stories can be of service to the environment, education, healing, peace and reconciliation, and on working with the imagination to inspire connection and social transformation, foster vision, possibility and personal development.

www.roigalor.com



Karmit Even-Zur
COURSE LEADER

Karmit's work history spans diverse experiences, interests and competencies from human ecology, the healing arts, and the arts and crafts world. Her unique skill-set provides a deep perspective for transformational work, and in working with soul searching questions. Her work is deeply informed and nurtured by a European shamanic tradition. She is passionate about creating new narratives that combine ancient, nature based thinking with contemporary forms and needs.

www.earth-speaks.net



Ashley Ramsden
SPEAKING POETRY/ MENTORING

Ashley established the School of Storytelling in 1994 under the umbrella of Emerson College. Ashley's unique methods of teaching voice and the skills of the storyteller have received international acclaim. He runs workshops, tours with his one-man-shows and is a speaker of sacred poetry. He has been touring recently with his wife Flora, focusing on T.S. Eliot's Four Quartets.

www.ashleyramsdens.com



Stella Kassimati
MYTHOLOGY/COACHING

Stella facilitates workshops that help people of all ages connect with the origins of modern life through Ancient Greece as the cradle of Western Civilisation, using her deep knowledge of Greek Myths, Gods and Goddesses. She is the founding Director of Friends of Amari, an international association contributing to the revival of the valley and village of Amari in Crete, through the art of storytelling.

www.friends-of-amari.org



Paul Matthews
WRITING CREATIVELY

Paul is internationally acclaimed both for his poetry readings and joyful, interactive workshops. His two books on the creative process, *Sing Me the Creation* and *Words in Place* have proved inspirational to teachers of children, adults and all who seek to develop their powers of imagination. He has travelled widely with his work and now, is expanding his activities in the UK and elsewhere.

www.paulmatthewspoetry.co.uk



Olivia Olsen
VOICE AND MOVEMENT

Olivia Olsen has worked for many years at Canada's National Voice Intensive. She helps people open and use their voice. She holds an MA in Voice from Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and a Postgraduate Degree in Voice from York University Toronto. Olivia also teaches at the Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto and performs internationally.



Naamah Pinkerfeld
SINGING

Naamah has been singing with our students and leading the Singing Forest Choir at Emerson College since 2008. She has led the Heart of the City Community Choir in London since 2010. She has taught singing to many groups and led choirs in inspiring venues including St Paul's Cathedral, the British Museum, London Zoo, and Chartres Cathedral in France.



Sarah Perceval
COACHING/MENTORING

Sarah spent 30 years as an actor in classical theatre, and as a performance storyteller specialising in stories from Bahá'í history, intercultural and interfaith themes. She has recorded a number of storytelling CDs, and toured with the UK's first ever interfaith storytelling troupe. She went on to be the 'Sage in Residence' at Eton, and currently also coaches for the Junior Lawyers Club.

www.sarahperceval.com



Hannah McDowall
SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Hannah started as a researcher, exploring how social enterprise is shaped by the marketplace. Since becoming a storyteller in 2012 she has worked to bring the potency of myth and story, growing the imaginative capacity of leaders and community members seeking to vision better futures. Her book *Performance Storytelling: How to Build Your Career and Grow the Artform* supports storytellers to grow their work.



Hannah Moore
COACHING

Hannah is an SBW graduate, storyteller, creative producer, ceilidh caller and restorative justice facilitator.



Giovanna Conforto

Giovanna was dearly missed this year, due to illness. We wish her a swift recovery and look forward to welcoming her back soon.



Help Brian Study with us in 2023

Brian Tinota

from rural Zimbabwe received a full scholarship to join us.

Sadly, it was not until the third week into the course that he was informed that his visa to enter the UK had been denied. This news was received with anger and grief by Brian, and by the group that had been waiting for him.

Brian had participated in a storytelling course with Roi in Sweden some years ago thanks to a scholarship place in The Youth Initiative Programme (www.yip.se) where he seeded his vision to support developing his community.

The hoops Brian needed to pass through to make his application and the level of



uncertainty he had to endure highlights the infuriating systemic inequalities we are perpetuating through our political systems. We at the School of Storytelling at Emerson College are committed to challenging this refusal. We are organising and amending all the paperwork so that he can reapply for the next course, starting in Spring 2023.

Please take a moment to read an excerpt of Brian's words sent to us:

Greetings all. I want to appreciate all the people who managed to support my fundraising campaign. I'm really grateful for your help. I used some of the money to buy my flight ticket to and from the UK (which will be refunded), to pay for the Visa application to UK government, I paid the agent company which processes application documents on behalf of the UK government twice. I also paid for my X-ray TB screening tests and scans as it is a prerequisite for Zimbabweans to do before handing in the application documents. Some of the money I used for my transport to and from the capital city Harare and for my staying there during the Visa application process. It came as a complete shock to me after going through all these painstaking expensive procedures to receive an email that I was declined the Visa.

The whole process has shown the inequality that exists between the countries from the global South and North. The system is set in such a way that we people from the South will not have equal access to people in the North. People in the North can just turn up at our airports and get Visa on arrival but we have to go through lots of interrogation and it costs twice or thrice for us to get a visa, compared to people from the north. It also shows how the system always views us with suspicion because they think if we get into their countries we will not want to return to our home countries as if we don't have any homes to return to.

I'm still fundraising to reach the goal I put on the fundraiser. More support is still needed and it will be highly appreciated. Here is the link: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-brian-study-in-the-uk>

*Thank you so much
Brian Tinota.*





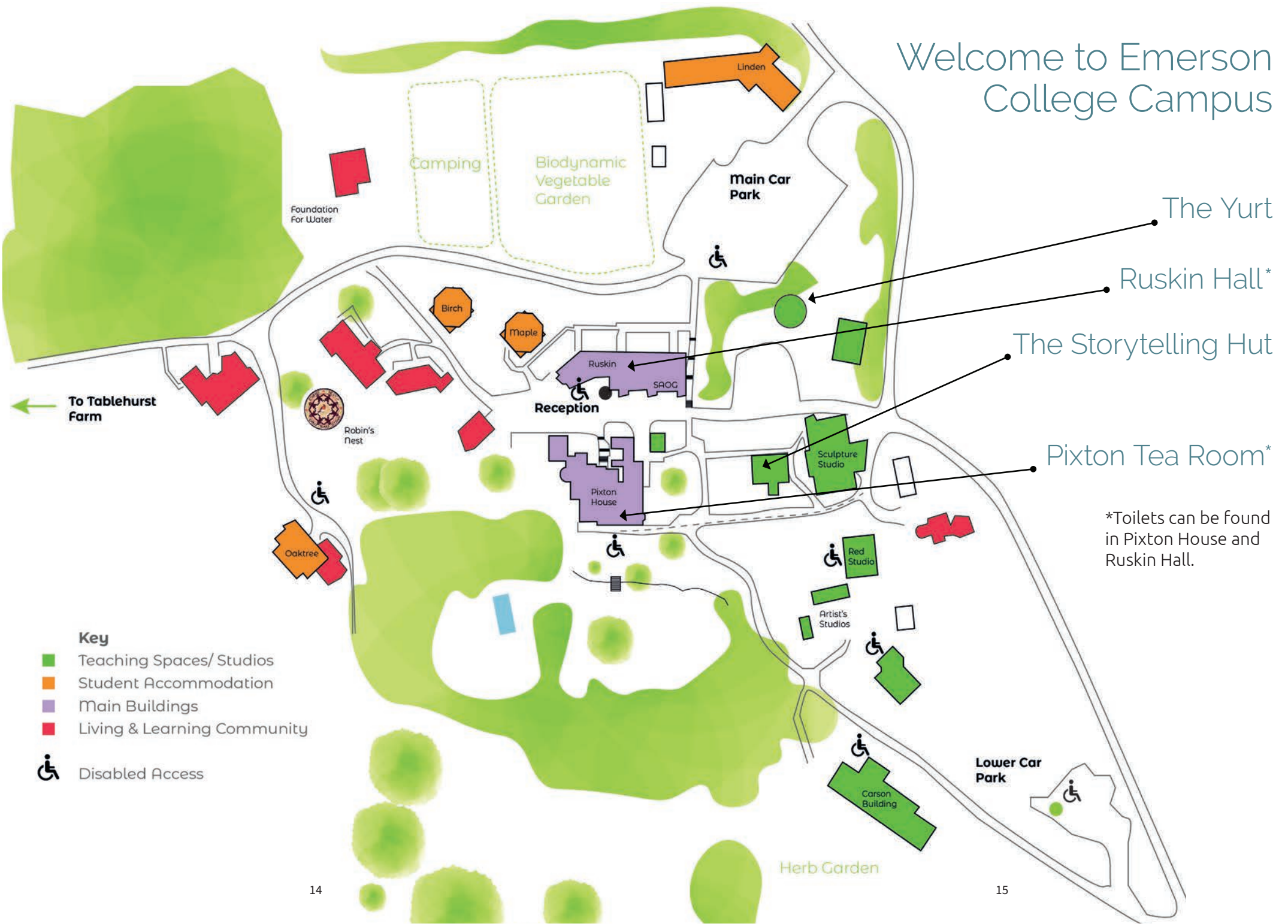
SBW 2022

Presentation Programme

SAT 11th JUNE

TIME:	VENUE:	
	RUSKIN HALL	STORYTELLING HUT*
9:00 - 9:40	Julia Björn / How to Talk to the Forest	Anais Van der Cam / Everything Is Still Possible
9:55 - 10:35	Anna Moro / The Mending Loom	Odilia Meeks / Diving Into the Dark
TEA/COFFEE BREAK 10:30-11:00 @PIXTON TEA ROOM		
11:00 - 11:40	Anna Atkinson / A Blessed Undoing	Ingun Roberts / Open the Door to a Dream of a Bard
11:55 - 12:35	Tirzah Baank / Spiced Stories	Michael Close / Picking up the Feather
LUNCH (For those who have pre-booked)		
14:00 – 14:40	James Pretlove / Seventy-Eight Thank Yous	Andrea Prazmowski / Every Day a New Arrival *Yurt
14:55 - 15:35	Simon Fardell / Into the Bright World	Flynn Johnson / For the Duration
TEA/COFFEE BREAK 15:35 – 16:00 @PIXTON TEA ROOM		
16:00 – 16:40	Samuel Mock / Red Scarf Blessings	Oliver Wallace / Bramble Brain
16:55 - 17:35	Lauren Seaman / How Do You Solve a Problem Like Maria?	
SUPPER 18:15 (For those who have pre-booked)		
Live Music at 20:00 in the Eurythmy Room		

Welcome to Emerson College Campus



The Yurt

Ruskin Hall*

The Storytelling Hut

Pixton Tea Room*

*Toilets can be found in Pixton House and Ruskin Hall.

- Key**
- Teaching Spaces/ Studios
 - Student Accommodation
 - Main Buildings
 - Living & Learning Community
 - Disabled Access



How to Talk to the Forest

By **Juulia Björn** Finland

RUSKIN HALL @ 9:00

Working as a singer and Folk musician in my home country Finland, I once saw a storytelling performance and realized: *I'm in the wrong profession!*

I didn't leave music behind, but I've found another home in storytelling. Nowadays my work is a mixture of audience engagement, folk music, teaching and storytelling.

I'm inspired by Finnish mythology, songs, spells and stories. Spending three months in England has made me even more interested in the stories from my home country. Why go hunting elsewhere, when there's so much to be found just outside your door?

I once tried being a mysterious and serious performer. Though I still like mysteries and myths, being serious isn't working for me and I'm happy with that.

Join me for a walk into the forest. Can you hear the soft lullaby of the fir trees?

The path is calling your name, but go gently. The journey isn't always what you think. Sometimes you need to see things inside out and upside down. But don't worry; I'll be your guide. I know the terrain, spells, tricks and songs we might need.

Somewhere, we might meet the King of the Forest. Can you feel his presence? Huge paws, thick brown fur, sharp teeth. In Finland, it's well known that you shouldn't call him by his real name.

So, let's just use other names; let's say *Metsä liikkuu* – the Forest is moving, or *Mesikämmen* – the Mead paw.

How to Talk to the Forest takes us to Northern forest landscapes. It is a collection of folk tales, biographical stories, music and some Finnish magic.

HOW TO TALK TO THE FOREST

JUULIA BJÖRN

JUNE 11 9:00 AM RUSKIN HALL

9:00 AM - 11 of june

EVERYTHING IS STILL POSSIBLE

An exploration of possibilities and choices
through stories, reflections and games

Anaïs Van der Cam

Everything is Still Possible

By Anaïs Van der Cam Belgium

STORYTELLING HUT @ 9:00



Welcome to the house of fun, Magimix and wonders: a place where everything is still possible.

In this exploration you might meet a big treasure, a young girl and her brother, a man with a jewel inside his head, or a little bear.

Where this journey leads us and who we will find on the way all depends on your decisions!

In our time together we will question decision making, and open our brains to possibilities we never thought of...

all of this in a seriously playfull way ;)

Will you choose to join me?

(Max 10 people)

I like having choices. I don't like choosing.

Sometimes I feel like a dandelion, when all the seeds are ready to be taken by the wind but are still in me. Which one will be dancing in the wind? Which one will become a flower? Which one will never grow?

When I feel stuck in one way of seeing things, dandelions remind me that there are always many possibilities.

Anaïs Van der Cam from Belgium



The Mending Loom Weaving Belonging

By **Anna Moro** Italy/Netherlands

RUSKIN HALL @ 9:55

I began telling stories on the metro during rush hours; as a babysitter, I needed to keep the children enchanted if I wanted to avoid a crisis. Through their questions, I went deep in the stories, and I started to see how they applied to my studies: I wanted to become a mediator.

I now work with storytelling as a "social weaver". I guide groups in weaving together different needs, in recognizing themselves in the experience of the others. And I coach individuals supporting them to bring their hidden threads to the front, rediscovering their own beauty and integrity.

I live in the Netherlands, come from Italy, and belong to somewhere in between. Or maybe... beyond.

As a child, they called me "bronza cuerta", a hidden burning coal under the ashes, that when you least expect it could start a fire. As far as I understand myself, this name still applies.

At times I find myself feeling frayed: where I live, where I come from, the loves that shape me, are all pulling me in different directions.

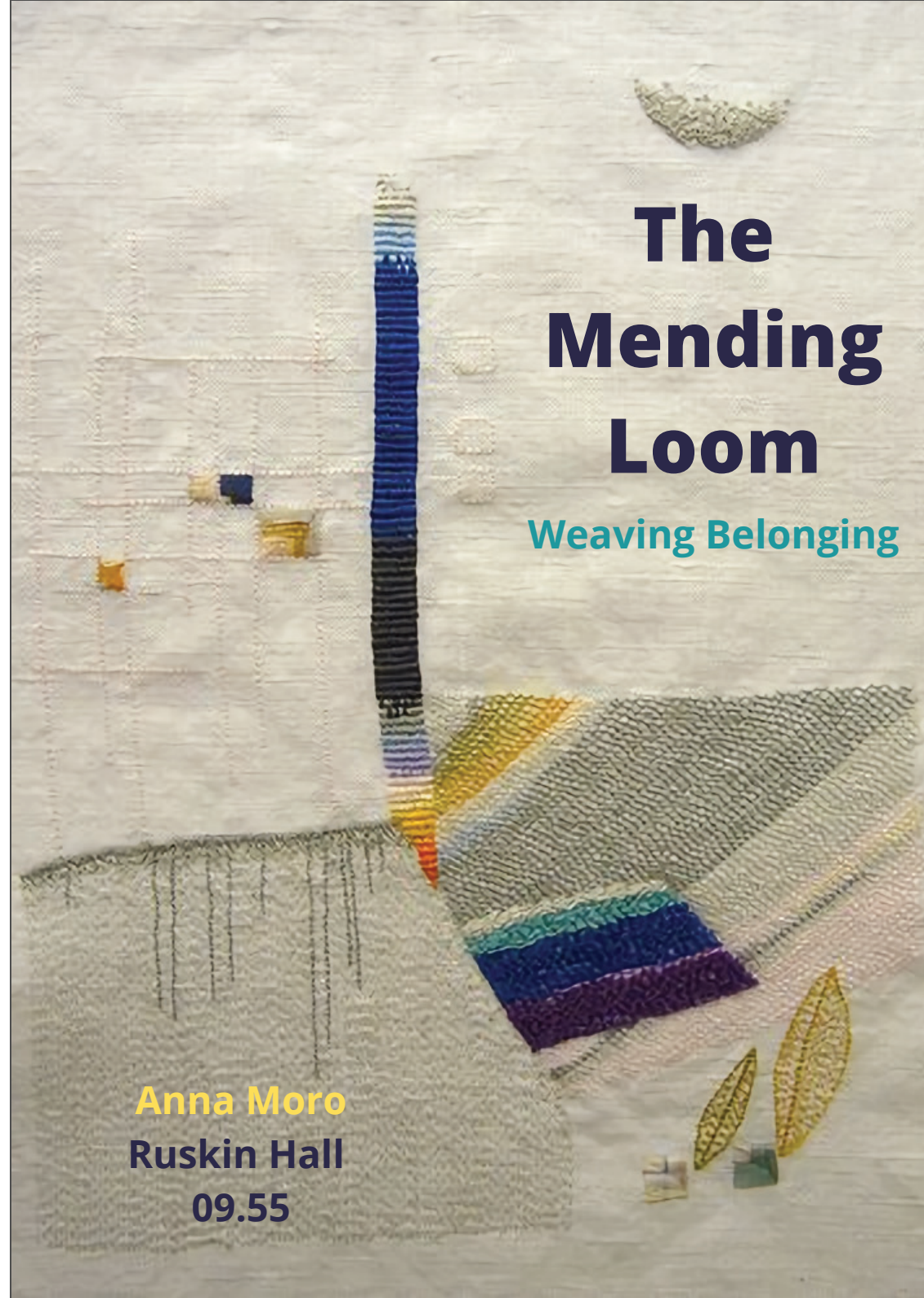
Sometimes I try to solve it in a few smart moves: finding out what is 'standard', and copy-pasting it so that I can fit in! It doesn't work. The more I make efforts to act as expected, the less I feel I belong... I get frustrated, my clothes get itchy, and I am way less fun to be around.

When I dare to ride the wind of my free spirit, I end up with people and in places where I find resonance. That's the belonging I long for.

In stories, my longings open me up to new dimensions, and I find a home for my many threads. I stretch them in my loom, searching for new patterns and designs in which to recognize myself.

In this piece my voice will be the thread. Through traditional and personal stories, I will invite you to look at the sometimes messy back of the loom, as I express voices that in the past - in attempts to fit in- I have kept silent.

**This performance is suitable for age 16 +*



The Mending Loom

Weaving Belonging

Anna Moro
Ruskin Hall
09.55

Diving Into the Dark

An All-Embracing Journey

IN THE STORYTELLING HUT AT 9:55

Diving Into the Dark

By **Odilia Meeks** Switzerland

STORYTELLING HUT @ 9:55



An All-Embracing Journey

Are you feeling adventurous? Are you ready to dive into the darkness and discover what's down there? Then I invite you to join Aurelia on her journey to discover and fully embrace life... and death.

This is a story of my invention, inspired by myths, wondertales and dreams, but most of all by darkness, to which it is dedicated. Without darkness we cannot find beauty and light. The stars need darkness to be seen, colours only appear through the marriage of the light and the dark.

As the poet, Wendell Berry, puts it:

*To go in the dark with a light is to know the light.
To know the dark, go dark. Go without sight,
and find that the dark, too, blooms and sings,
and is traveled by dark feet and dark wings.*

Stories have been part of my life for as long as I can remember. My father used to read stories to me, and I loved creating stories myself, doorways to other worlds. When I was older, my love for stories deepened, as did my explorations of the dark.

For many years I have been interested in polarities and in the idea of becoming whole through the union of the light and the dark. I am fascinated by stories featuring a battle between the two, such as Goethe's *Faust*, *Harry Potter* and *The Lord of the Rings*. In my literature studies at university I delved deeper into the question of how darkness and death are beneficial to life. My story-project is a continuation of my studies and a manifestation of my longing for wholeness.

**This performance is suitable for age 13 +*



A Blessed Undoing

By **Anna Atkinson** UK

RUSKIN HALL @ 11:00

I am a practising writer, teacher, artist and art therapist. For the last ten years I have been working with many vulnerable communities and groups. In doing the beautiful work of using writing and healing arts I have experienced and witnessed the incredible resilience of those who sometimes consider themselves outsiders.

Could our traumas hold the potential to lead us to discover our mythic superpowers? Can art heal us?

As a child I grew up in the shadows of a dark house where violence lived. Art, dance, singing and writing became my refuge.

This course has gently been guiding me to gather my existing and as yet undiscovered gifts in order to land from my moon palace and tell my story.

Here I have found beauty blossoming in that little square of darkness I hid in for so long.

What edges of darkness do we carry with us?

Through the imaginal world of story, the great inky night sky allows us to get lost, unravel and re-knit ideas.

The star realm becomes a birth canal for unconscious impulses and ideas.

Inherited hurts transform into stories, stars and stairs up to the moon palace.

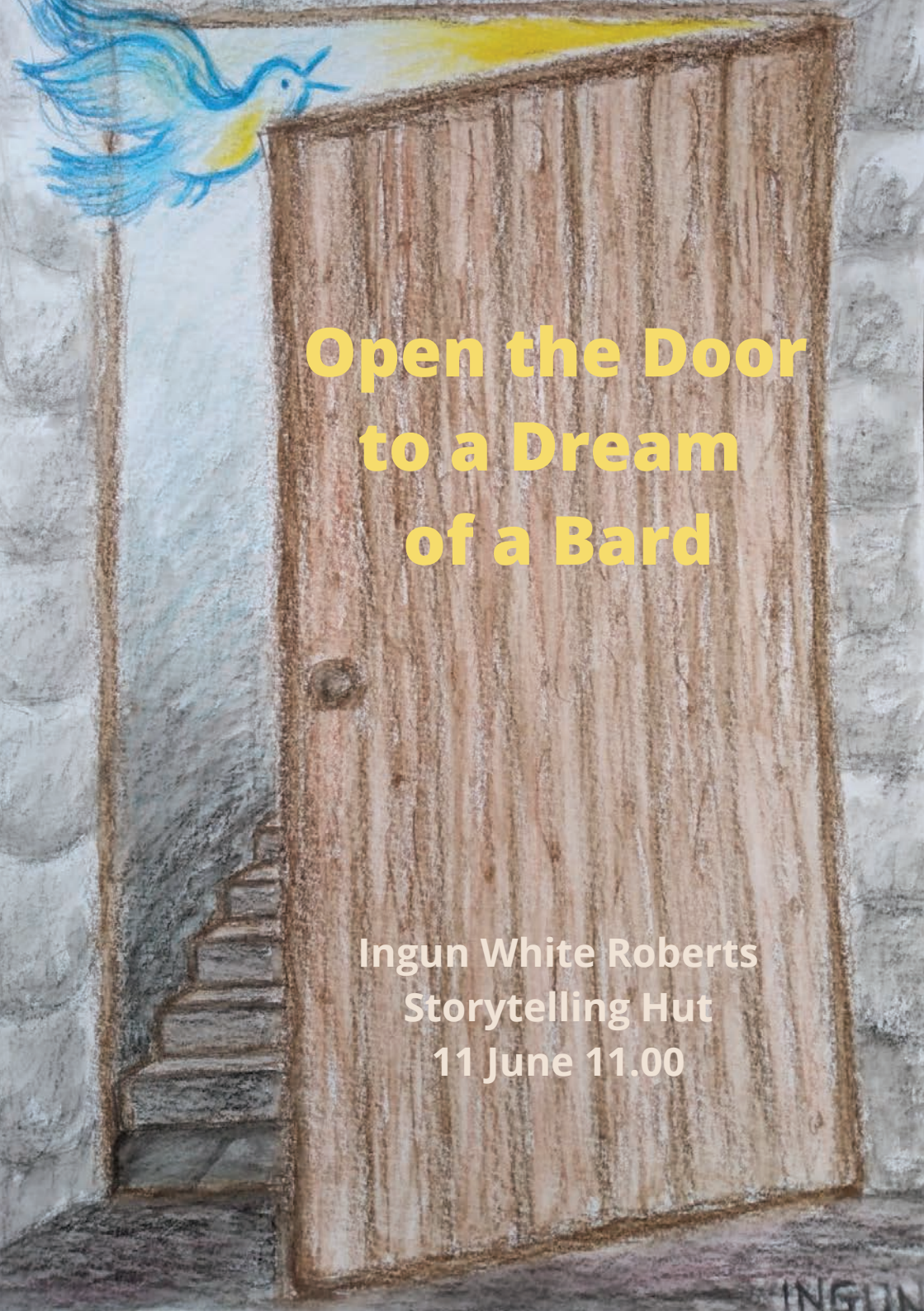
Can we find beauty and space enough to land this blessed undoing back into our wakeful lives?

**This performance is suitable for age 16 +*

A BLESSED UNDOING

Anna Atkinson 11am Ruskin Hall





Open the Door to a Dream of a Bard

Ingun White Roberts
Storytelling Hut
11 June 11.00

Open the Door to a Dream of a Bard...

By **Ingun White Roberts** Norway

STORYTELLING HUT @ 11:00

From a young age I found myself moving between two worlds.

My very first memory is of walking round and round the kitchen table in our home in England, followed by my toddling little brother, chanting "ripsbaersaft, solbaersaft; ripsbaersaft, solbaersaft". We had just returned from our first holiday in Norway, my mother's country, and had the glorious experience of picking (and eating!!!) redcurrants and blackcurrants, and witnessing their magical transformation into exquisitely tasting juices. We had also savoured the delicious taste of those words, our first Norwegian words. I was two (and three-quarters), I was just on the threshold of saying "I" about myself, and I was now joyfully walking and chanting magical words.

I was discovering being a bard!

The Sea. The Boat on the Sea, sailing backwards and forwards between Britain and Norway. The sea of creation, of story, of song, of music.

And the Door between the two worlds...

My story explores the theme of daring to open the door to your inner bard - the bard that dwells, perhaps dormant, within each of us.

Listening to stories that blend myth, history, song, music and nature experience, you will be invited to take part in a new song.

Open the Door to your Dream.



I grew up in Wales and England, feeling very Norwegian. Now I live in Norway and feel very British. One of my strongest growing-up memories is of being on the North Sea ferry, between Newcastle and Bergen, standing on deck, rejoicing in the movement and the sea.

I studied – Scandinavian Studies, followed by Education – in Newcastle, so that I could be close to the sea and that boat. I also studied music for a year in Norway.

I have spent many years working with children, playing and telling stories, with music, art, craft and Nature experience woven in. My intention has always been to foster real creativity in the children in my care, as I listen and learn from them.

I feel that these things are more important than ever now, in the digital world in which we live.



Spiced Stories

By Tirzah Baank Suriname/Netherlands

RUSKIN HALL @ 11:55

My name is Tirzah Shalome Baank. Tirzah means 'delight' Shalome means 'peace that passes all understanding' Baank means...given in 1836, origin unknown, the time of the slaves made.

I was born into a family of polarities in Suriname, a country of even bigger polarities.

It was a constant battle finding the middle as I found myself in the melting pot.

My mother was like her ancestors, a cordon bleu – trained chef, and a stickler for etiquette. I remember a quarrel about my way of making ginger beer which was different from hers. I gagged her by saying, 'I am your daughter.' With the nice taste I commanded her respect at last.

My father was a free – spirit and never stayed in an unpleasant work situation; because of this, we moved a lot. It wasn't always nice and some things I didn't really understand. Yet the outcome is a complete and contented me.

When I am invited to a party people always say, 'don't bring a present, bring yourself and your ginger beer.'

People always ask me, 'what is your secret, how do you do it?'

My answer is always a story. I love sharing stories because they may be the key to that unlocks someone else's prison.

What do you do with the ingredients of your life In search of the recipe in my life I realised the ingredients are the same for you and me It's a matter of when, where, who and what It's about when and how you add what Spiced Stories is an ode to all life's tsunamis I invite you all to gather for my six course banquet

Cooking time:

Since 1966

Oral History and finding your roots project Suriname

Storytelling workshop Rotterdam

Rumi workshops Den Haag

Ingredients:

One emotionally unreachable mother

One attentive father

One most beloved uncle

Aunties, uncles and cousins

One wise Mr. Arthur

Friendships

Heartbreaks

(Grand)motherhood

Utensils:

Open eyes to look

Open mind to receive

A sensitive and subtle tongue to taste

Ears for deep listening

Open heart to connect

Diners:

People who are facing challenges and in need of strength

SPICED STORIES

Tirzah Baank

Ruskin Hall 11.55 AM

Picking up the Feather



The Firebird & Princess Vasilisa

By Michael Close

Storytelling Hut 11.55am

Picking up the Feather

By Michael Close Ireland

STORYTELLING HUT @ 11:55



'Oh to reach the point of death and realize one has not lived at all!'

- Henry David Thoreau

From time to time we have to make big decisions in our lives. More often than not we need to choose without much clue of the possible outcomes and consequences of our actions. In the Wonder Tale I will be telling, the Archer finds himself in just such a dilemma; whether or not to pick up the feather of the Firebird.

At this moment in your life story, will you pick up the feather and risk perilous adventures into the unknown? Or leave the feather untouched and maintain the status quo? This one decision may change your world completely.

Personally I have tried to live my life in the spirit of Thoreau, living it to the full, and not a half-life. I have picked up all sorts of feathers along the path and have braided them into the fabric of my life seeking to become truly human. Often I have made the choice in an attempt to avoid something or to run away from myself. Inevitably, I have had to live with the repercussions of some of my decisions not going as planned. However I am still committed to navigate the mystery to the end!

'The hardest battle you're ever going to fight is the battle to be just you.'

- Leo Buscaglia

I am an Irish pilgrim navigating an unusual and alternative life along the road less travelled. I am on a rather relentless spiritual quest striving for wholeness, healing, transformation and to discover who I am and what my purpose is. It was whilst working as a Steiner teacher that I fell in love with bringing stories to children's imaginations. With a particular interest in therapeutic storytelling I wrote a 25,000 word Master's thesis entitled "Mythology as Medicine" though this proved merely theoretical.

However on this Storytelling Course at Emerson College I have personally had direct experience of the healing effect of stories. I have travelled the world over the last 12 years expanding my consciousness beyond the insular confines of the culture of my upbringing. In so doing, I have uncovered new interests and passions such as singing, dancing, spirituality, nature and of course storytelling.



Seventy-Eight Thank Yous

By James Pretlove

RUSKIN HALL @ 14:00

Twice finalist in the *Vogue* talent contest, during a month's work experience at Vogue House in the 1990s I realised I couldn't take the world of high fashion quite that seriously. Instead, I launched and edited the cult satirical fashion magazine *BLOW*. In 1997, aged 28, I survived a life-threatening brain haemorrhage. Shortly thereafter, I was diagnosed bi-polar and sectioned multiple times. As part of my long road to recovery I helped set up and run London's LGBT+ Scottish country dance club, The Gay Gordons. In 2010 I moved to Scotland, becoming a member of the Findhorn community. There, I cleaned toilets, talked to tomato plants and taught Scottish country dancing. While struggling to get the memoir I had written about Mum's life and death published, I received guidance from a psychic to take this work out into the world by sharing it in-person with others.

Early one September morning in 2018 my mother, Val Pretlove, ended her life by walking into the River Thames. Even in the anguish-filled first days, thoughts of gratitude began to arise in me. Gradually, the number of the thank yous grew; some were profound, some light-hearted, some poignant, yet each one helped to ease the desolation.

I kept a note of these thank yous, and soon the list numbered seventy-eight, one for each year of my mother's life. I wanted to expand each one into a short written piece and to do so, consulted the notebooks she had left behind, looked through her photograph albums, and spoke to the many people whose lives she had touched. This work became an important and sacred part of my grieving, enabling me to arrive at a place of deep acceptance for the fact of Mum's death; it also helped me to respect that she got to choose how and when to end her life.

This is the story of the Seventy-Eight Thank Yous.

**Suitable for adults only*

SEVENTY-EIGHT THANK YOUs

an ordinary life

an extraordinary death

the healing power of gratitude

EVERY DAY A NEW ARRIVAL

STORIES OF UPROOTING,
ENCOUNTER
AND POSSIBILITIES



Every Day a New Arrival

By **Andrea Prazmowski** Canada

YURT* @ 14:00



Life is constantly on the move. Humans and other beings, arriving overnight or moving through millennia. Gently carried or violently pushed. Dancing or dragging our heels.

Many of us now feel ourselves at the edge, at an in-between place where the old is crumbling and the vision of the new is uncertain and blurry. Like refugees arriving on the shores of Lesbos, Greece; like Skywoman in the Iroquois Creation myth; like my father moving to Canada after the Second World War.

Sometimes we are the new arrival, the guest in a strange land, the one seeking refuge. Or we might be the one who receives them. And sometimes, we're both. What potential and peril abound in those encounters, in our arriving and receiving of each other?

Let's pause in the sanctuary of stories, among the voices of the land, to listen for wisdom about living into the future together.

**In the event of rain this performance will take place in the Storytelling Hut instead of the Yurt (see map for directions).*

**This performance is suitable for age 13 +*

I am the daughter of Polish immigrants to Canada, living within the traditional lands of the Algonquin Anishinaabe nation.

I am inspired by the teachings indigenous peoples have shared with us, the new arrivals. In my work guiding people on slow walks in parklands and forests, I offer ways to nourish connection with all of nature. We listen in for nature's wisdom and notice how our personal stories intertwine with the stories of the land. I hope this listening and these reflections help us in becoming good ancestors to future generations.

As I learn more about the tragic legacy of colonialism, I often wonder what Canada would be now if generations of arrivals had listened more carefully.

This project has been co-created with the trees and the birds here at Emerson. Deep gratitude!



Into the Bright World

By **Simon Fardell** UK

RUSKIN HALL @ 14:55

I am a poet, a storyteller, and am training to be a psychotherapist and wilderness rites-of-passage guide. Using story to work with individuals, groups and in organisational settings, I support people in their search for a purpose which aligns more fully with their souls' calling. My hope is to contribute through this work to the creation of a more generous-spirited and sustainable world.

I draw on stories as a magical medium through which to achieve this: for me (to paraphrase Seamus Heaney) they are *...both the door and what comes through it*. Ultimately, I believe in the alchemy of words and the power of stories and poetry to revitalise and re-enchant our often wounded world.

Come with me on a deep journey, as we traverse the territory that lies between darkness and light.

It is the hour before dawn. One by one the stars are fading out as you walk a familiar path into the wood's darkness.

Accompanied by story, meditation and magic, we will explore the potential for words to fire our imaginations and awaken our wild soul's call to adventure.

Frost crackles under your boots. The first blackbird tests the day with a fragment of song.

Together we will ask questions of the words we speak and seek to discover how, spoken differently, they might reframe our lives.

The wood folds you into its stillness, watches you as you trip and stumble. Take another step into the dark now; trust it to hold you. Soon the first rays will find you...

**This performance is suitable for age 11 +*

Into The Bright World

Simon Fardell

2.55pm

Ruskin



FOR THE DURATION

14:55-15:35 STORYTELLING HUT

For the Duration

By **Flynn Johnson** USA/France

STORYTELLING HUT @ 14:55



*There is a desert
I long to be walking
a wide emptiness:*

*peace beyond any
understanding of it.*

- Rumi

What is the desert? The desert could be a vast mirror, the desert could be the future ancestor of the ocean, the desert could be the immense being you come to in order to find a clarity of soul. I invite you to join me in the desert places as I guide you through a journey of poetry, story, and music. I invite you to look into the desert as a metaphor and hold witness to your true size, in the face of all that is. I will be sharing a myth of the Goddess Inanna, poetry, and memories.

My name is Flynn, I am 20 years old and on the precipice of great changes. As I gaze out over the endless, vague landscape of my future, I ask myself, "Who am I in the face of all this?"

Doubtless you may have asked yourself the same question innumerable times. In the desert of life, many of us may have to surrender our comforts. To shed the urgency of the future and the weight of the past.

At this time, I feel a great calling from the desert despite never having lived or spent any extended amount of time there. The truth is, I've always been a little bit afraid of it; the minimalism of the vast landscape and the smallness of my human body. I am allowing myself to lean into the unknown.



Red Scarf Blessings

By **Samuel Mock** USA

RUSKIN HALL @ 16:00

My name is Samuel Mock. I am 20 years old and from the United States. As you can see from my age I haven't lived a very long life. Yet I've always known I wanted to tell stories. My mind has always been in the stars and I've been writing tales of magic. However, as far back as I remember there have been roadblocks in life. As a competitive runner in school I broke my foot and missed the rest of the season. Covid brought my final year of school to an abrupt end, I faced depression, and a stay at a psychiatric hospital. Then later when I went to university, I found out that it wasn't quite the right place to share my creativity. Nevertheless those experiences created some of my biggest blessings to this day! I am now here living the life I wanted and telling stories to you.

Are curses really curses?

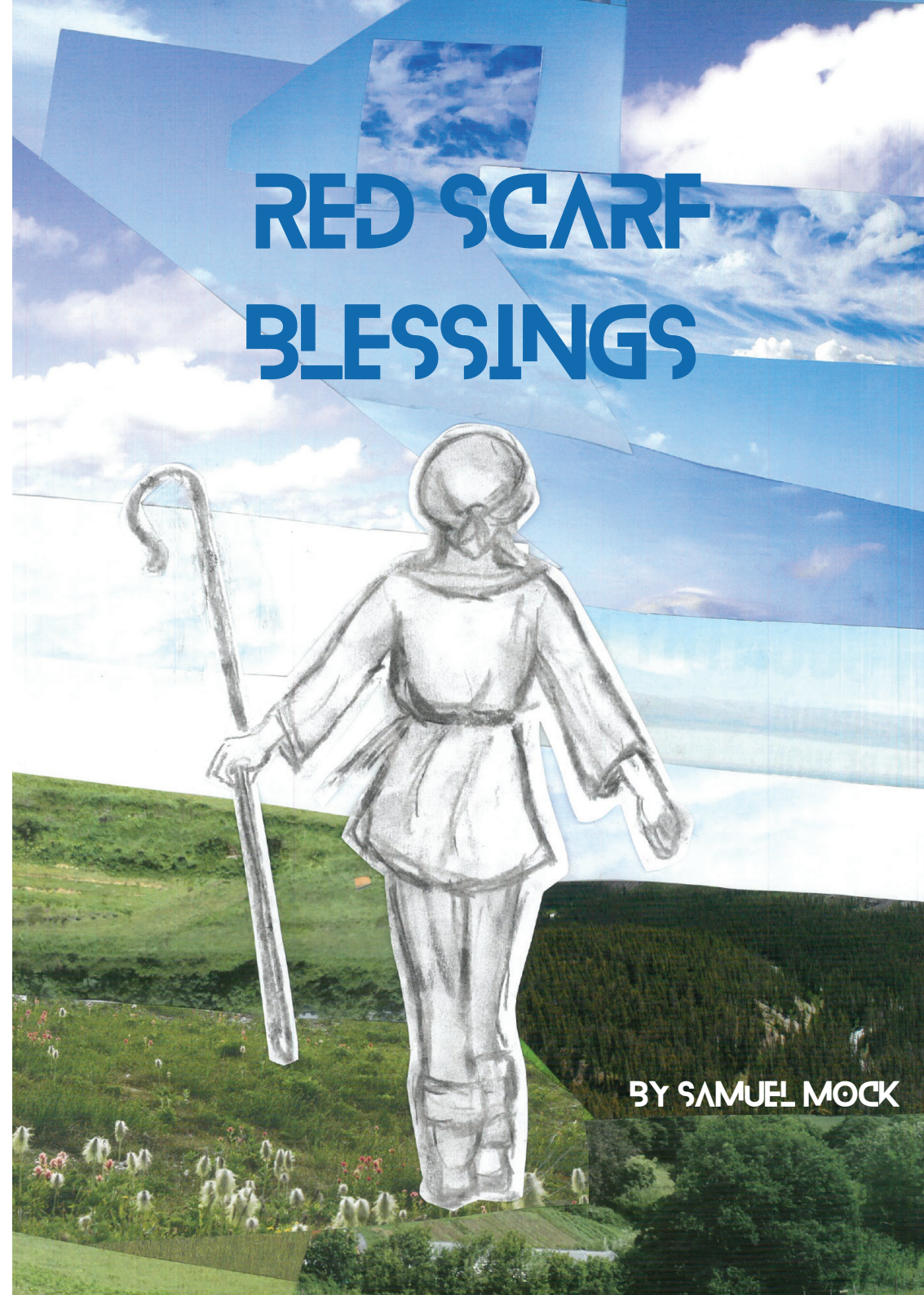
Or are they blessings in disguise?

This afternoon I'll take you on an adventure with a young shepherd who has lost all his sheep mysteriously and is determined to get them back. He is led into an unfamiliar village, where people and structures seem like they're from a different place in time.

How does the strange place make the boy feel in a time of distress?

Will he ever find his sheep?

If you're curious to know what happened to him join me as I tell this original story that I created here on the storytelling course.





Bramble Brain

By **Oliver Wallace** UK

STORYTELLING HUT @ 16:00



Quicken your step, pack your toughest gloves and join me as we wriggle our way through the thriving, thorny briar.

I warmly invite you into the ecology of my non-linear, dyslexic mind. Myth, folktales and true life stories coil around playful, quiet hollows. We could enter anywhere and leave anywhere.

We'll race through thorny thresholds to sip tea beside the seething cauldron and weave baskets full of wily companion creatures.

We might begin to feel a sense of belonging beneath the briar's myriad arches. And, just maybe, we'll discover something of our own tangled, multi-species nature along the way.

At one point I thought I wanted to be an architect but my brambling brain took charge and led me on other glorious adventures.

Instead I have been working with story in a joyful, interactive way for over 10 years, especially with children.

My work has often combined storytelling, audio-visual and 3D design, writing and illustration, all mixed with my great love of the natural world. I create immersive spaces where curiosity and imagination flourish and new empathies grow.

When I'm not doing all that you will most likely find me turning over stones to surprise scuttling centipedes or staring deeply into a particularly delightful patch of moss.

BRAMBLE BRAIN



How Do You Solve a Problem Like Maria?

By Lauren Seaman USA/Italy/UK
RUSKIN HALL @ 16:55

I'm Lauren, and I'm Maria's daughter. I'm queer and trans, so maybe I'm not her 'daughter', technically speaking. For now, I'm not fussed about language. I enjoy going slowly.

Before I ever consciously wondered 'who am I really?', I moved away from home and tried many things. Like when I lived in Singapore, I got into competitive Olympic weightlifting. I was surprisingly good at it.

These days, when I ask myself 'who am I really?', I'm gently curious about who I was as a kid. I'm rediscovering what I naturally loved but never learned. So I'm learning to sing, draw, and play the guitar. Next is skateboarding.

So who am I really? I wonder. Who are we?

To answer questions like this, I love a good story.

"Lauren, just wait until I'm dead before you start writing books about me, ok?"

"Mom, I'm not writing a book about you. I'm telling a story about us."

I don't know if Maria fully trusts what I'm doing here yet, but I can assure you it's full of love.

This story is about the joy, sorrow, and total absurdity of being a human being, who loves other human beings, even the ones we find most difficult. This story is for anyone with a hard family relationship. For children who care for complex parents. For parents who gave their kids opportunities they never had. For those mending old wounds. For our fierce teachers in life. For knowing who we are and loving ourselves. For forgiveness, acceptance, and hope.

If you've got a sense of humour and a heart, come join me. If you've got your own Maria, she's welcome too.

**This performance is suitable for age 13 +*

How Do You Solve a Problem Like Maria?



**Lauren
Seaman
Ruskin Hall
June 11th, 16:55-17:35**

Celebrating Our Sixth Year of Storytelling Beyond Words



2018



2021



2017



2020



2019

OXFORD Storytelling FESTIVAL
26th-28th August 2022
Waterperry, Oxford
OX33 1LA

Weekend Tickets
inc. camping £145
Early bird from £108

Workshops Speakers Gardens Artists Crafts Music
Jan Blake | Emily Hennessey | Ben Haggarty
Nell Phoenix | Nick Hennessey | Mobius Loop | Carrie Tree
Ashley Ramsden | Paul Jackson | Tom Hirons | Curly Imagines
School of Storytelling - Emerson College | Society for Storytelling
@oxfordstoryfest www.oxfordstorytellingfestival.co.uk

SBW at the Oxford Storytelling Festival

We have been invited to host a Storytelling Beyond Words space in the Oxford Storytelling Festival over the August bank holiday weekend. We are curating a programme of performances, workshops and dedicated spaces where graduates of the course will share their work, bringing the magic of the storytelling hut to the festival.

We hope to see you there!



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hear the
call?

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26 Feb 2023
With Roi, Karmit
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SBW: Creative Lab

For Professional Storytellers

Creative Lab is a three-week residency programme that offers storytellers and activists an ideal environment, nourishment and encouragement to work on developing their creative projects.

Open by application to storytellers who are working on a specific performance or storytelling-related project.

We will be offering creative input, mentoring, and coaching as well as guidance in developing strategy for publicity and promotion of the work.

Starting
10 Oct 2022
With Roi, Karmit
& Guest Teachers

For more information
visit: emerson.org.uk

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The School of Storytelling

The School of Storytelling, Emerson College, is the longest running international centre of its kind.

Since 1994, we have been running courses and have welcomed over the years thousands of people from all cultures, backgrounds, genders, ages and experiences.

With a huge variety of courses ranging from autobiographical storytelling, to working with story in education, health, and healing, contemporary performance, activism and environmental justice the School of Storytelling is constantly evolving and exploring. Storytelling is how we make sense of the world, who we are, where we are going and how we communicate this to others, personally or professionally.

The art of storytelling is a powerful medium, with the ability to inspire change and development. Our belief systems are stories, every algorithm tells a story. The myths, legends, folk and fairy tales that every culture has left behind are all "the distilled essence of human experience." This new paradigm, exploring the new story emerging, and working with stories for the healthy development of individuals and communities is a running theme thorough the School's teaching practices.

**A Listening
Space where
You Can Find
Your Voice**

Emerson College

Emerson College is an international centre for learning, discovery and transformation set in the heart of the beautiful Sussex countryside.

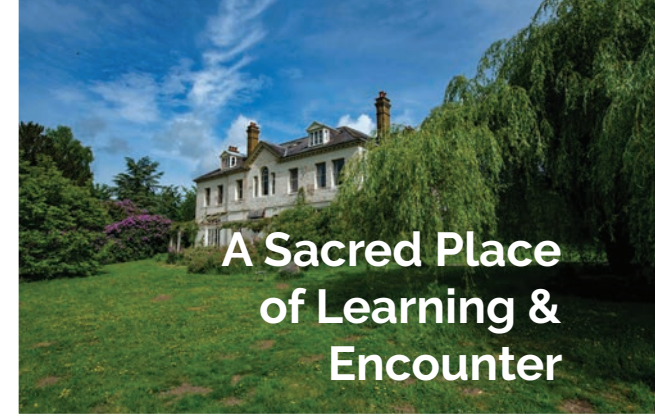
It is home to the School of Storytelling and other educational initiatives, and pioneers holistic learning, designed to nurture body, soul and spirit in a spiritual, social and ecologically conscious environment.

The way we work at Emerson is inspired by Anthroposophy. From the way we grow our vegetables to our approach to colour. From the way we conduct our meetings to the way we clean our floors. Even if people have no idea about the philosophy, they sense the special quality of the plants, the wildlife and the air that they are breathing.

Our delicious organic meals are prepared with many ingredients fresh from the soil of our biodynamic vegetable garden.

To find out more about Emerson and the courses we offer visit

www.emerson.org.uk



**A Sacred Place
of Learning &
Encounter**





STORYTELLING

BEYOND WORDS

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