

HEALTH OF THE SUBLIME IN THE MEARNS PROJECT

MCHLN is excited about upcoming block three of our partnership with Laurencekirk-based artist Carrie Fertig for the Health of the Sublime in the Mearns project, generously supported by Creative Scotland. The project offers free tuition in five creative arts; video, audio, writing, art in nature and virtual reality all with the idea of increasing wellbeing by heightening one's experience of the natural world through creativity. Block three is starting in the week of February 13th. We thought you might like to hear from Jane Peebles, MCHLN Volunteer for the Portlethen Gardening Group who took part in the video course in block two:

This Spring, when MCHLN hosted meetings to discuss what groups and activities we older people would like to have set up, I met Carrie Fertig for the first time and heard her promote her 'Wellbeing in the Natural World Project'. Although I didn't understand quite what it would involve, her enthusiasm and energy was such that I felt inspired to 'give it a go'. I'd lost so much confidence during the long isolation of Covid, both in my physical and mental abilities, that I did not know if I would cope, but this was an excellent opportunity to find out! How glad am I that I took that chance! The sessions were inspiring.

For the first one we met at Dunnottar Woods and began with two short exercises.

Notebooks to hand, we focused, first, on all we could hear, then all we could see moving around us. Then we shared our lists. It was surprising and interesting to hear the subtle differences in our awareness. Then we moved deeper into the woods till we were above the bridge over the river at Lady Kennedy's Bath. It is a number of years since I have felt able to manage the slope down to it but with the support and encouragement of the others, I managed it. Then, Carrie gave us two key words to think about, "Duration" and "Enduring" as we absorbed our surroundings and used our phones to make short videos of what drew us most. I have always believed myself to be very aware of the natural world but now I was looking and listening in a much more intense way. After a time we gathered together again to share and discuss our results - once more, a fascinating experience. Carrie also showed us how to use Slow-mo and Timelapse on our phones - facilities I had hitherto ignored. The two hour session had flown by and I drove home feeling re-vitalized by the experience.

The subsequent sessions have found us in beautiful places - the beach, Crathes Castle Gardens, The Barn and The Falls of Feugh at Banchory. All places I used to visit but since Covid, my world had closed in and this course has reminded me that there is a beautiful world out there that I am still able to experience, enjoy and capture to share with others. Thank you Carrie and MCHLN. I'm looking forward to the next one in February!

The photo below is a still from one of Jane's videos, block 3.



Why not give it a go like Jane? All Health of the Sublime in the Mearns courses are led by interdisciplinary artist and project leader, Carrie Fertig, except for nature writing, led by award-winning author Janis Mackay. All courses are a safe supportive space to try something new or hone your skills. Carrie Fertig is an enthusiastic, encouraging teacher. All sessions focus on your personal experience of nature, and take place outdoors and indoors, unless weather is surprisingly wonderful. Numbers are limited to ensure the safe, encouraging, treasured space that these sessions hold. All courses are free of charge.

Nature Writing: Happens online on Zoom Thursdays 2:30pm - 4:30pm 16th February - 30th March. Using examples of nature writing and poetry by famous authors, we have 2 exercises in each session and respond in 10 -15 minute bursts of creative writing.

Video + Imagery: Meets in person Thursdays 10am - 12pm
16th February - 30th March, 2023, in and around
Stonehaven. Different location each week. We will make
imagery as both practice and documentation of wellbeing in
the natural world. We will shoot & edit video, make photos,
drawings, and collage with natural and tradition materials.
You will be fully supported learning these skills.

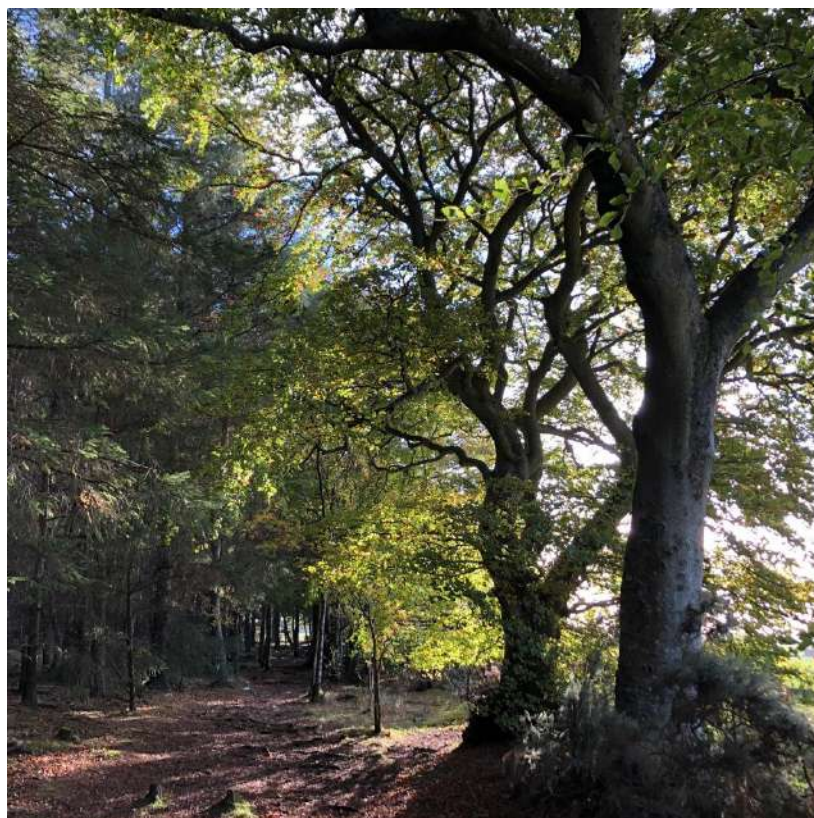
Art in Nature: Mondays 9:30am - 11:30am, 13th February -
27th March, 2023 in person, in and around Laurencekirk, a
different location each week. You'll learn interdisciplinary
skills making temporary site-specific sculptures in the
landscape using natural materials, performance, and
installation. There will be an overview introduction, then led
by areas of most interest to students.

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Audio: Mondays 12:30pm - 2:30pm, 13th February - 27th
March, 2023 Laurencekirk, a different location each week.
All things sound! We will make field recordings of the
natural world and how to make the best recording, how to
edit and layer them. Opportunity to make podcasts for three
radio stations, as well as your experience of wellbeing
expressed through sound on the map.

Virtual Reality (VR): Learn to build your own natural environments in the headset. You are largely housebound, have some dexterity in your thumb, index, and middle fingers, and don't smoke. Lots of 1-on-1 tuition scheduled at your convenience, VR is not a seven week block but ongoing into 2023 to give you the skills to make your own experience of wellbeing in the headset. We'll meet in person at yours, and in the headset.

For more information call or email Carrie on 07966 689833 or carrie@carriefertig.com. More information, sign up, and thoughts from your neighbours who took part here: <https://www.carriefertig.com/health-of-the-sublime-in-the-mearns>



Harvesting Autumn Memories, photo from video course, Block 2, Sandra Davison