

Arts-based methodologies in palliative care practice and research: Potentials, challenges, and ethical considerations

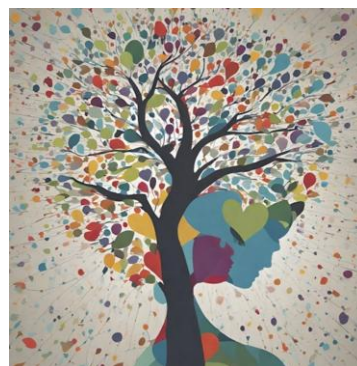
Professor Giorgos Tsiris | St Columba's Hospice Care & Queen Margaret University, UK

Professor Wolfgang Schmid | University of Bergen & Palliative Care Centre, Norway

Christiaan Rhodius MD | Lovisenberg Omsorg Oslo, Norway

Chair: Dr Naomi Richards | University of Glasgow, UK

MAIN Network Webinar, 18th November 2025



MAIN
Mental health and wellbeing in
Advanced Illness Network

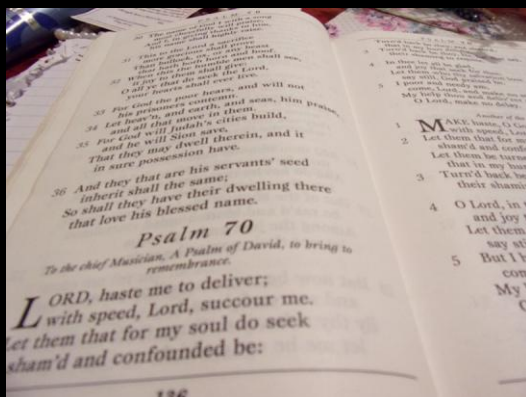


The Photovoice Method



**Economic
and Social
Research Council**

Milne EJ, Muir R. (2020). Photovoice: a critical introduction. In: Pauwels L, Mannay D (eds) *The SAGE Handbook of Visual Research Methods*. London: SAGE Publications, Inc, pp.282-297.



Photovoice by Liz



Photovoice by Marie



Photovoice by Liz



Photovoice by Stacey

18:32 Mail

Account details		Bid preference		Inbox		My current bids	
My bid preference							
	1						
Advert no.	qx2375						
Address	Burbank and Greenhill Terrace Glasgow						
Closing date	02/11/2022						
Total bids	168						
	2						
Advert no.	qx7342						
Address	Glasgow Street Glasgow						
Closing date	02/11/2022						
Total bids	177						

findmyhome.org.uk

14:27 3 Messages

Stacey O Sunday
Hi there, I'm messaging about a housin...

MSP Sarwar A 12:25
To: Stacey O >

RE: Housing

Good afternoon, Stacey

Thank you for your email to Anas Sarwar MSP.

Anas was concerned to hear about your health issues, and understands how depressing and frustrating it can be waiting for a move to a more suitable home.

If you would like to let me know your current full address, Anas would be pleased to make representations on your behalf to Glasgow West and Queen's

Photovoice by Stacey

A critical overview

Professor Giorgos Tsiris

St Columba's Hospice Care
Queen Margaret University, UK



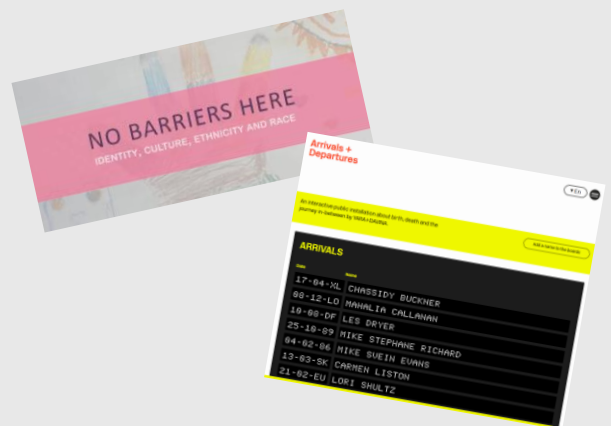
Arts-based methodologies in palliative care

Arts-based / Arts-led / Arts-informed

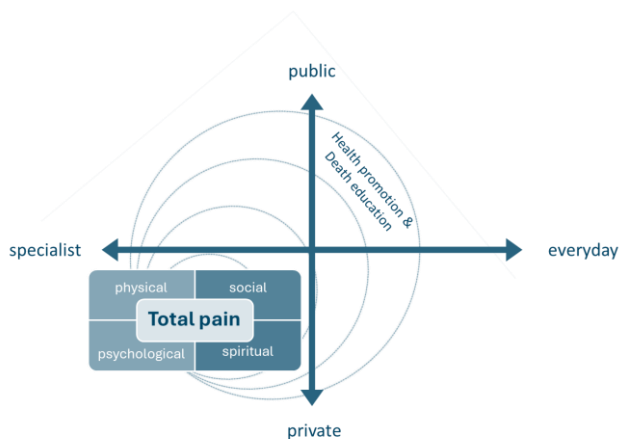
In practice and... in research

Two examples:

- <https://www.nobarriershere.org/>
- <https://arrivalsanddepartures.net/>



Total pain... total care... total arts



Tsirir et al. (2022). Musical care at the end of life: Palliative care perspectives and emerging practices. In *Collaborative insights: Interdisciplinary perspectives on musical care throughout the life course*. OUP.

Video QR code



The St Christopher's Schools Project

Creating healthier attitudes towards death and dying. A guidance and information pack.

TEDxQMU



Kloijberg, M., Ahlberg, B. M., Hilton, R., & Tishelman, C. (2020). Death, loss and community—perspectives from children, their parents and older adults on intergenerational community-based arts initiatives in Sweden. *Health & Social Care in the Community*, 28(6).

Tsirir, G. (2024). 'GRESKO Agape' – An international songwriting project for hospice patients and school children. In *Music therapy at the end of life*. Jeffrey Books.

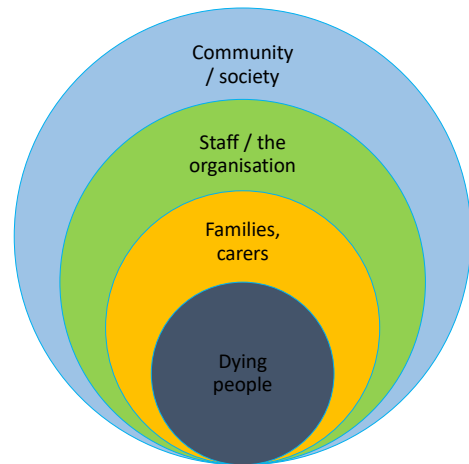
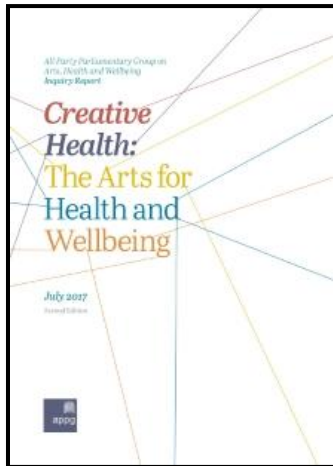
Tsirir, G., Tasker, M., Lawson, V., Prince, G., Dives, T., Sands, M., & Ridley, A. (2011). Music and arts in health promotion and death education: The St Christopher's Schools Project. *Music and Arts in Action*, 3(2).

Total pain... total care... total arts

Some implications...

- Continuity of 'clinical' and 'non-clinical' processes and outcomes
- Healthy and unhealthy uses of the arts
- Expanded notions of 'care'
- The arts in everyday life and practice
- Arts and non-arts professionals

The multifaceted contribution of the arts



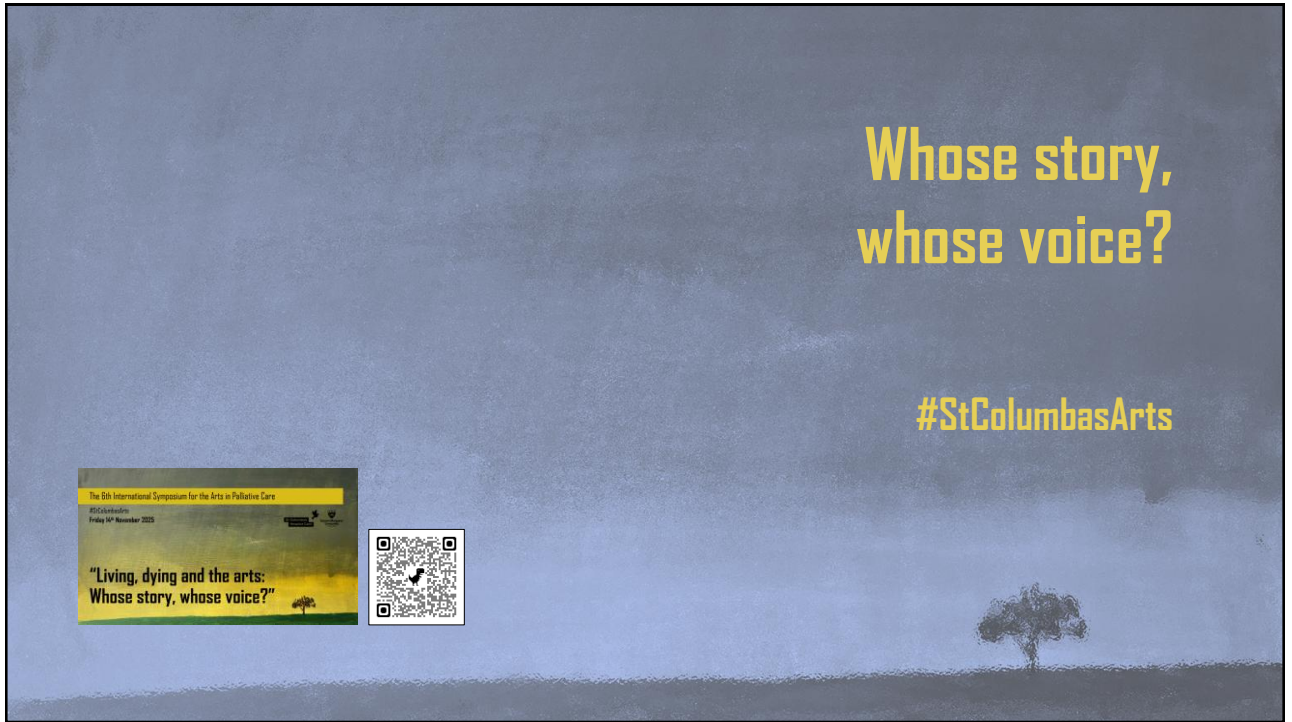
The arts in palliative care

A colourful landscape

- Curating the care environment & organisational wellbeing
- Community engagement & capacity building
- Co-production, equity & arts-based methodologies

Tsiris, G., & Lee, J. B. (2025). The arts in palliative care: Critical perspectives on evidence and practice. In *Research Handbook on End of Life Care and Society* (pp. 336-352). Edward Elgar Publishing.







care for music

an ethnography of music in later life & end of life settings

? How and why do people engage with music in late life and at the end of life?

? How can musical engagement enrich horizons of care for the elderly and dying?



gentle empiricism: material and analysis

- **material:** video recordings, fieldnotes, interviews and conversations
- **analysis:** drawings, pictures, mosaics, poems and short stories as ways of 'staying with' and 'getting closer'
- **'gentle' methods:** slow, split second, situated, artistic, participatory

why 'gentle empiricism'?

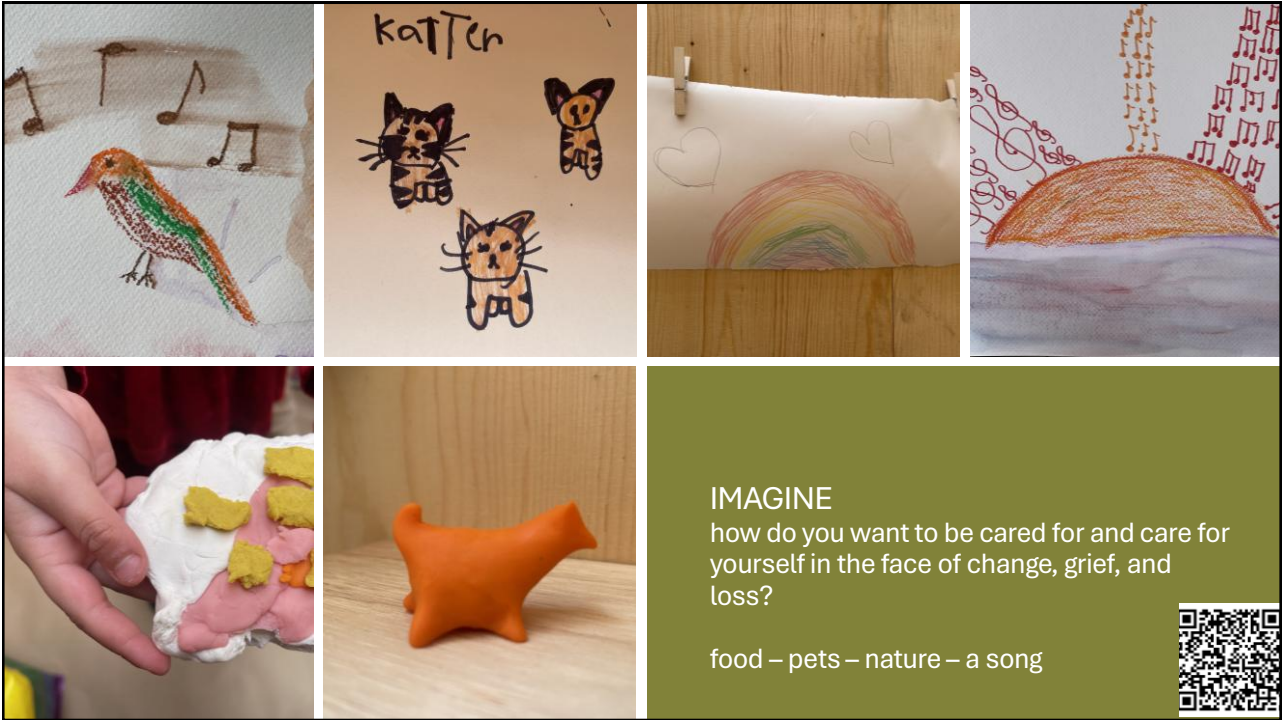
- exploring a phenomenon in detail within the context in which it manifests
- allowing the phenomena *people-in-music*, *therapy-in-music*, and *music-and-health* to emerge and reveal themselves
- committed to detail: 'listening through a micro-scope' to capture the micro-level particularities of people-in-musical-relationships
- prioritizing the emergence of theory from observed phenomena, rather than forcing phenomena to conform to pre-existing theoretical frameworks

(Ansdell & Pavlicevic, 2010)

Love, true love
Pure love
Eternal
The love that grows,
enriches
Grounded in faith and
trust
[...]



© Pat McKerrow



a room

IMAGINE workshop
with an interdisciplinary
group of students at
University of Bergen



IMAGINE with an
interdisciplinary group of
students at University of
Bergen



how would your
room/space look
like?

a realistic utopia

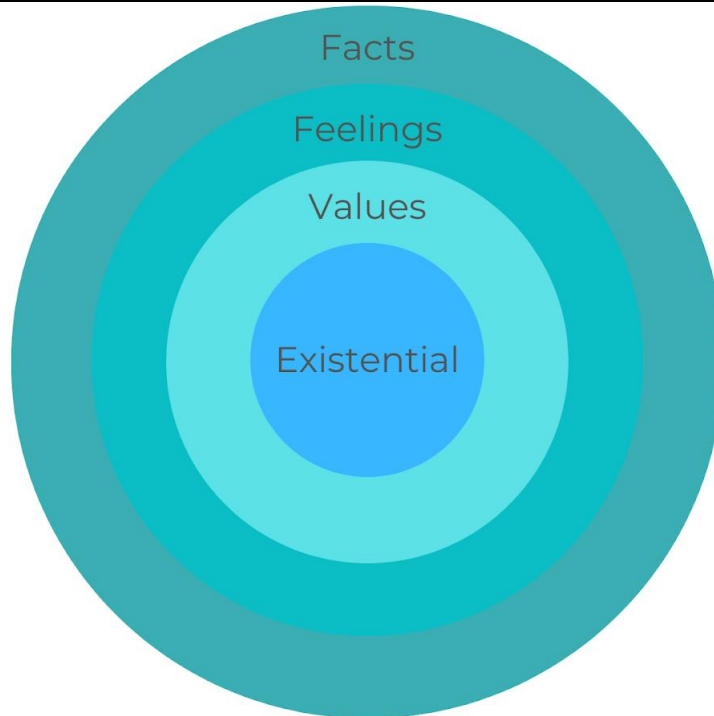
The *Lancet Commission on the Value of Death* (Sallnow et al, 2022) sets out five principles of a new vision of how death and dying could be:

- the social determinants of death, dying, and grieving are tackled
- dying is understood to be a relational and spiritual process rather than simply a physiological event
- networks of care lead support for people dying, caring, and grieving
- conversations and stories about everyday death, dying, and grief become common
- death is recognised as having value

The arts and improvisation are crucial for doctors in palliative care

Christiaan Rhodius MD

Lovisenberg Omsorg Oslo, Norway



'Coming to the
essence'
Johan Smit



The Sick Child
Edvard Munch
Munchmuseet
Oslo

How Edvard Munch helps unlock 'the secret' of death

C.A. Rhodius

<https://blogs.bmj.com/spcare/2023/03/02/how-edvard-munch-helps-unlock-the-secret-of-death/>**When I say... improvisation**

Christiaan Alexander Rhodius & Marco Antonio de Carvalho Filho

Med Educ. 2025 Feb;59(2):148-150. doi: 10.1111/medu.15480. Epub 2024 Aug 7.

Improvisation, the butterfly and the cultivation of wonder

Christiaan Alexander Rhodius & Marco Antonio de Carvalho Filho

Med Educ. 2025 Jul;59(7):677-678. doi: 10.1111/medu.15675. Epub 2025 Apr 15.

Integration, organisational strategy & policy

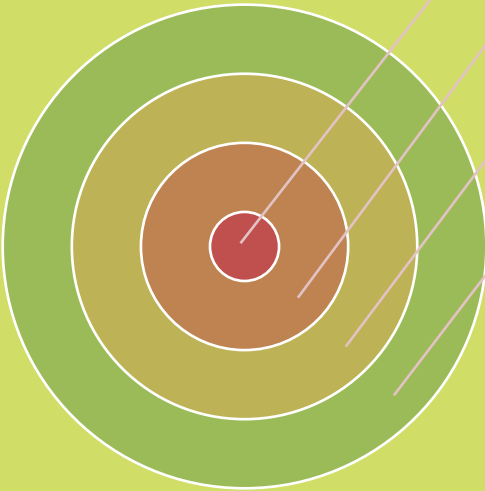
Professor Giorgos Tsiris

St Columba's Hospice Care

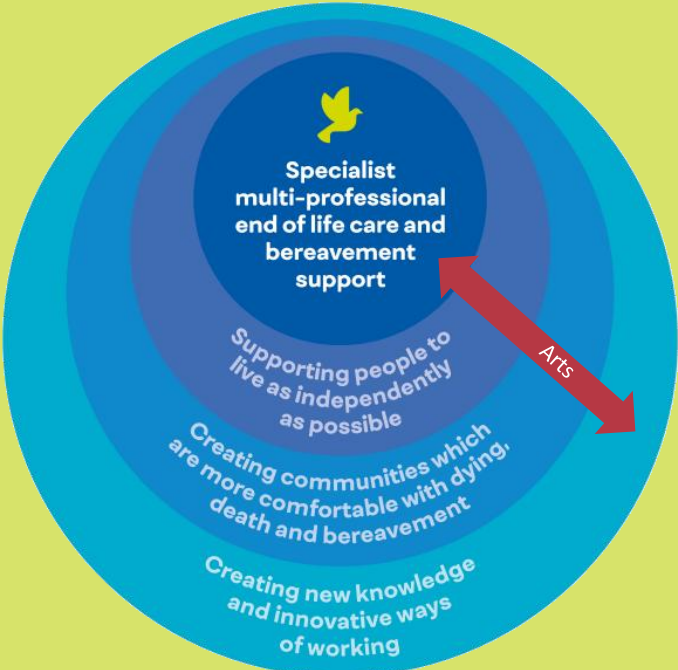
Queen Margaret University, UK



Service integration & strategic growth



- Core practice level**
Employed arts & arts therapies practitioners
- Complementary practice level**
Volunteers, non-arts specific staff with an interest in the arts, students on placement
- Practice management level**
Arts service leads, managers or coordinators
- Strategy management level**
Arts strategy groups & committees



Specialist multi-professional end of life care and bereavement support

Supporting people to live as independently as possible

Creating communities which are more comfortable with dying, death and bereavement

Creating new knowledge and innovative ways of working



The strength behind our stories
STRATEGIC PLAN 2024 - 2027

St Columba's Hospice Care



Specialist multi-professional end of life care and bereavement support

Supporting people to live as independently as possible

Creating communities which are more comfortable with dying, death and bereavement

Creating new knowledge and innovative ways of working

Arts

The emotion labyrinth

Specialist multi-professional end of life care and bereavement support

Supporting people to live as independently as possible

Creating communities which are more comfortable with dying, death and bereavement

Creating new knowledge and innovative ways of working

Arts

Photography Competition

What does belonging mean to you?

Share up to five personal photos representing belonging to you and your work would feature in our 2024 annual report released before the 2024 April

Obituaries

Landmarks for life and living

Saturday, 16 November 2024, 13:00

N°17, St Columba's Hospice Care

St Columba's Hospice Care Queen Margaret University Being Human

Palliative Arts

No.17 Talks

Friday 30th January 2026
Nigel Hartley

Friday 24th April 2026
On the art of palliative medicine
Christiaan Rhodius

Friday 31st July 2026
Bringing culture and health policies together in the European Union:
Connecting the dots in advocacy
Kornelia Kiss

Friday 30th October 2026
Ethics, empathy, and the human condition
Margaret Mitchell

arts@stcolumbashospice.org.uk
#StColumbasArts

arts@stcolumbashospice.org.uk

Palliative Care Matters for All

Palliative care strategy (2025-30)

Scottish Government
Riaghannas na h-Alba

Unmet need
Community development
Capacity building
Future care planning

What's the role of the arts?

Careful art & Artful care

(James, 2023)

Continuity of 'clinical' and 'non-clinical' processes and outcomes

National mappings and making sense of practices and the field

- Arts services in hospices across Scotland (Drury & Tsiris, 2022)
- IMAGINED project (Warren et al., ongoing)

Implications for practice, research, education and policy

Culturally sensitive palliative care (Ntuzimira et al., 2022)

Drury, R., & Tsiris, G. (2022). O-21 arts services in hospices across Scotland: Towards a national mapping. *BMJ Supportive & Palliative Care*, 12(Suppl 3), A9-A9.

Ntuzimira, C., Deo, M. S., Dunne, M., & Krakauer, E. (2022). Decolonizing end-of-life care: lessons and opportunities. *ecancermedicalscience*, 16, ed121.

Thompson, J. (2022). *Care aesthetics: for artful care and careful art*. Routledge.



Hartley, N. (2018).

When the artist becomes leader...

some thoughts.

EAPC Blog.

"Firstly, I think there are common misconceptions about artists and musicians as being undisciplined. Creativity is often viewed as being able to 'wing it', to 'play it by ear', and sometimes we are viewed as a little 'fluffy around the edges'. On the contrary, as a musician I spent hours perfecting my craft, studying music and technique in a microscopic way, much like the discipline and craft of a doctor. With such fine, detailed examination of music, I learned to be the best I could be. I also learned about order and control, about the benefits of repetition and also of assessing risk. As an improvising musician, I know about the opportunities that come with what, in other professions, might be thought of as mistakes. In music, mistakes offer opportunities for different direction, for potential and new ways forward."

Open discussion

Thank you!

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Professor Wolfgang Schmid | Wolfgang.Schmid@uib.no

Christiaan Rhodius MD | crhodius@hospicebardo.nl

Chair: Dr Naomi Richards | Naomi.Richards@glasgow.ac.uk