

**LEEDS
ARTS RESEARCH
CENTRE**

A PATTERN FOR PROGRESS DR HAROLD OFFER

OUTPUT INFORMATION

Title:
A Pattern for Progress

Output Type:
T – Other

Location:
Cambridge Stem Cell Institute

Brief description of type:
Workshop, digital film, installation and exhibition

Year:
2019

Month:
January

Research Groups:
Curating
Participatory Practice



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION STATEMENT

Traditionally, medicine espouses a one-way principle of treatment, with the practitioner seen as an active 'giver' and the patient a passive 'receiver'. Commissioned by The University of Cambridge's Wellcome-MRC Cambridge Stem Cell Institute and Kettle's Yard Gallery, *A Pattern for Progress* examines the shared experience of patient and practitioner, bringing together people living with Multiple Sclerosis and their carers with scientists researching MS at Cambridge's new Jeffrey Cheah Biomedical Centre (JCBC), a world-class research facility comprising several biomedical institutes. Through artist-led workshops, MS patients designed and produced ceramic tiles reflecting their individual experiences. These were then scanned and used as a backdrop for a video documenting the production process and the discussions it engendered. *A Pattern for Progress* was installed for one year at JCBC. The video, screened by the MS Society, is still available to view on the University of Cambridge's website. By enabling research scientists to meet MS patients for the first time, the project 'initiated a new wave of art collaborations with the MS Society across Cambridgeshire and East Anglia' (according to the Stem Cell institute). Its context for sharing thus represents a zone of 'mutual treatment', with art being used to mediate between medical and social realms in a meta-vocational capacity. MS patient Aiden Tevlin's view that 'it was useful for researchers to see that we are real people with real lives' is borne out by medical verdicts on the practical value of social engagement. As one researcher-participant put it, *A Pattern for Progress* enabled scientists to 'learn about so many different symptoms and experiences, which aren't really touched on in the research arena'. Research scientists aren't clinicians, not encountering the full range of MS symptoms. In making the patient an active participant, Offeh created a space for greater dialogue between medical research and clinical treatment.

A Pattern for Progress, was initiated as a part of the artwork commission for the Jeffrey Cheah Biomedical Centre, University of Cambridge, to bring new audiences on campus into contact with research. Conceived by artist Harold Offeh. The public engagement team facilitated the partnership between, the local MS Society and stem cell researchers to explore their common interests and ensure that patient perspectives were a visible and valued part of the fabric of our new building.

Led by Offeh, a series of four workshops took place between February and March 2019, bringing together 20 Multiple Sclerosis (MS) patients, one Parkinson's patient, three carers, and six MS stem cell researchers for facilitated ceramic sessions to explore experiences of living with and researching MS. The two-hour workshops were held in Littleport Leisure Centre, Cambridgeshire, over 20 miles from the Institute, to ensure the project engaged patients in their local community, and supported their access needs.

Together, the group produced a series of individually designed and glazed tiles representing their understanding of the disease, with support from ceramist Kate Welton. These tiles were curated by Harold into a collective 'wallpaper' pattern of experiences with an accompanying film capturing the powerful reflections of participants, in their own voice.

You can view the film here:

<https://www.stemcells.cam.ac.uk/about-us/jcbc/public-art-at-jcbc/art-commissions/harold-offeh>

OUTCOMES

- 90% of participants at the art launch wanted to take part in a future workshop, with Bob Bragger (MS Society) reporting frequent queries from other patient groups who want to get involved and start their own collaborative arts projects with the Institute.
- At the launch 70% attendees mentioned talking to a researcher, with 40% saying this was the first time they'd been given the opportunity to speak with a scientist, highlighting the difficulty for members of patient communities in accessing research.
- For those who met a researcher for the first time, they were impressed to be listened to and that researchers were interested in the way that they coped with the disease.
- Participants felt that bringing the people involved in the workshops together to see the unveiling of the final art piece made them feel valued.
- All participants mentioned that it was easy to come to the launch event, because of arranged transportation.
- Overall, patients wanted to see and get involved in more art-based projects. They wanted to know how the research will have progressed in a year's time. They also valued having continued access to research in future.



“The workshops created a ‘safe space’ for participants to build relationships and mutual understanding through a collective endeavour – art-making. Traditional hierarchies between researcher and patient were broken down, and personal exchanges allowed patients lived experiences to give depth and colour to scientific questions, as well as current research to be shared. The hands-on nature of the activities also highlighted the limitations that MS patients face in their daily lives.”

Dr Rebecca Jones, Public Engagement Manager

Wellcome – MRC Cambridge Stem Cell Institute, University of Cambridge



A Pattern for Progress, Video Installation (2019) [Image courtesy of the artist]



A Pattern for Progress, Video Installation (2019)

[Image courtesy of the artist]



Detail of A Pattern for Progress (2019)

[Image courtesy of the artist]



A Pattern for Progress, ceramics workshop (2019)

Photographs by Bob Bragger

A Pattern for Progress, ceramics workshop (2019)

Photographs by Jack Scott





A Pattern for Progress, ceramics workshop (2019)

Photograph by Jack Scott



A Pattern for Progress, Exhibition launch at the Jeffrey Cheah Biomedical Centre, Cambridge (2019) Photograph by Jack Scott



A Pattern for Progress, Exhibition launch at the Jeffrey Cheah Biomedical Centre, Cambridge (2019) Photograph by Jack Scott



A Pattern for Progress, Detail of a tile (2019) [Image courtesy of the artist]

A Pattern for Progress, Exhibition launch at the Jeffrey Cheah Biomedical Centre, Cambridge (2019) Photograph by Jack Scott





“Through the workshops, I have met so many different people, and learnt about so many different symptoms and experiences, which aren’t really touched on or focused on in the research arena. I thought it was outstanding, I was very enlightened and met some wonderful people who have jobs and families, and at the same time they are struggling with the disease, but they’re still staying happy with and optimistic and hopeful. For me that’s the ultimate inspiration to go to the lab, and continue the work that we do to hopefully help these people one day”

Workshop participant and researcher, University of Cambridge



“I hope that the art installation not only decorates the new neurosciences building but inspires a meaningful goal - in life one never knows what will happen for good or ill. We are all human and it is only by working together that achievement is richly attained.”

Workshop participant Aiden Tevlin, MS Patient



“We now understand more of how research is carried out and that we are not just a case file.”

Bob Bragger from the MS Society



‘It was really great seeing people with MS who are very determined and courageous. I learned so much about MS and also how we can help them, and how we can bring them into our research to motivate us, and also to give them more information. I really enjoyed seeing how enthusiastic they were, and how we communicated very openly and very genuinely. I enjoyed very much being 1-2-1 or being all together, chatting and telling our feelings and expectations.’

Workshop participant and researcher, University of Cambridge

A celebration of artworks commissioned for Jeffrey Cheah Biomedical Centre

6 - 8pm, Thursday 12 December

Speeches at 7pm

Dalziel + Scullion, Victoria Morton, Harold Offeh, Phil Cornett, Lucy Steggals and Kelly Briggs

Join us for a celebration of permanent and temporary artworks exploring the role of art, research and communities in defining health futures.

Jeffrey Cheah Biomedical Centre, Puddicombe Way, Cambridge, CB2 0AW

RSVP to scipe@stemcells.cam.ac.uk by Monday 2 December

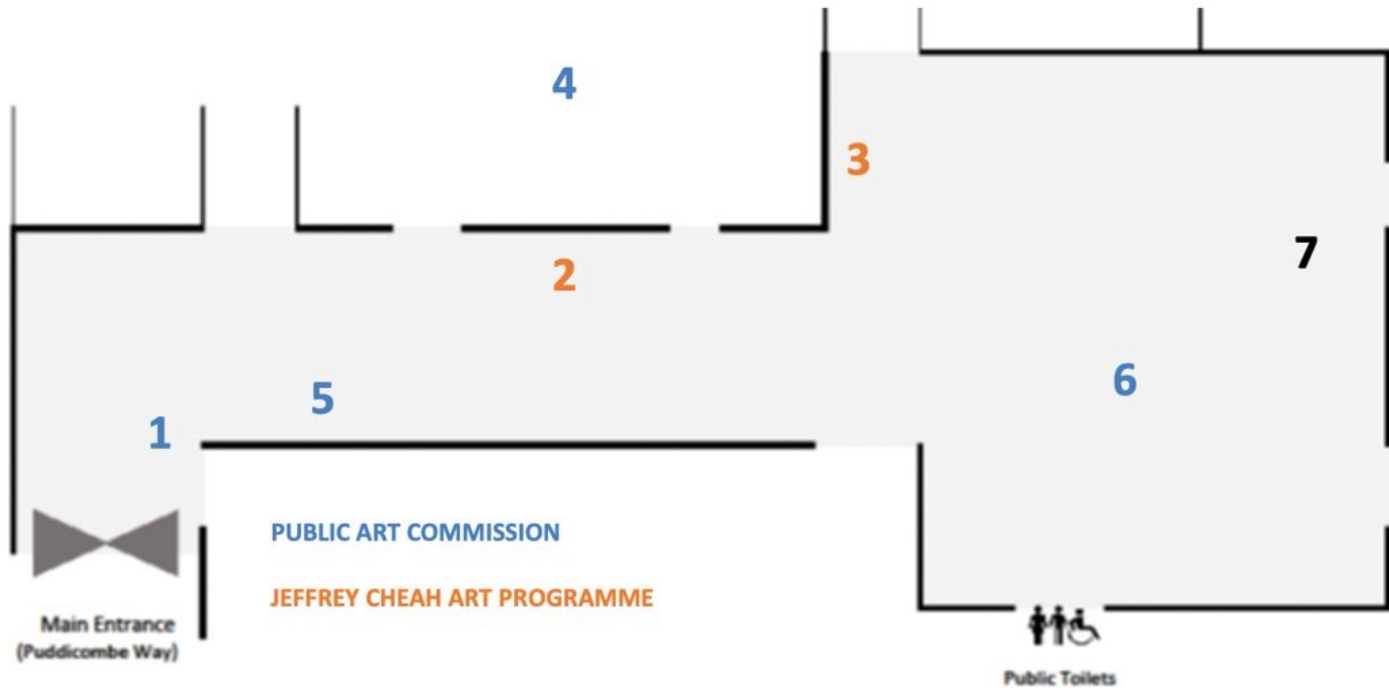
Exclusive tours of our research facilities available from 6pm – 7pm. Places limited [book a place](#).

Further details on the event and how to find us [here](#).



Victoria Morton *Let The Eye Be Substituted For The Sun* [detail], 2019,
Oil on canvas
Credit: Patrick Jameson

1*



Welcome to our new building – The Jeffrey Cheah Biomedical Centre

Our ground floor public and cafe’ is now open to the public during normal opening hours all year round. This art programme is part of a series of engagement initiatives to bring new audiences into contact with our research.

We would like to thank our funders and collaborating Institutes (CITIID and Milner) for their support in developing these permanent and temporary artworks, as well as Maeve Polkinhorn for her curatorial support.



KETTLE'S YARD

Corpus, 2018

1

Dalziel + Scullion

Recalling the stone circles erected by our ancestors, the seven sculptures of *Corpus* appear as a series of scattered bones. Drawing on the structure of spinal vertebrae, the work symbolises inner strength, persistence and determination and refers to the complex structural connections of the body and the site.

People are encouraged to interact with the stones – to sit, recline or lie on their cool stony surfaces experiencing the forms and offering an opportunity to ‘recalibrate and renew’.

As part of the public art commission five Cambridge based artists/artist groups worked with Dalziel + Scullion on a city-wide programme of activity that introduced the art being produced on site to a wide audience (see 5. and 6.)

Find out more and stay up-to-date with our research, news and events:

-  [@scicambridge](https://twitter.com/scicambridge)
-  www.stemcells.cam.ac.uk
-  enquiries@stemcells.cam.ac.uk

Exhibition leaflet produced for the opening of The Jeffrey Cheah Biomedical Centre art commissions, Cambridge 2019

Let The Eye Be Substituted For The Sun, 2019 **2**

Victoria Morton

Morton created this work following a visit to Cambridge in September 2018 where she spent time with researchers, talking with them about their work and visiting their laboratories to gain an insight into their research and working environment.

Morton's paintings maintain a deliberate balance between controlled experiments with paint and careful manipulation that could be said to echo the working methods of many scientists.

The title of the work derives from a quote from Goethe's Theory of Colours (1810).

A Pattern for Progress, 2019 **3**

Harold Offeh

A Pattern for Progress brought together people living with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and their carers, with scientists researching this neurological disease. Through a series of ceramic workshops, participants shared their experiences of MS to produce the tiles in the background 'wallpaper'. The accompanying film captures their stories.

Cambridge Betterment Society, 2018 **4**

Harold Offeh

Fibroblast by Harold Offeh features live re-enactments of microscopic images of the fibroblast cells. *Agora Blend* by Jack Scott and Louis-Jack Horton Stephens examines the positive effects of 'cross-pollination' that occur when scientists and clinicians gather, together, *Reprogramming the Human Heart* by Frederica Agbah explores the discovery of the science behind the creation of Pluripotent stem cells through the dance, and *Connect, Accelerate, Engage*, by Harold Offeh focuses on the mission of the Milner Therapeutics Institute.

Exhibition leaflet produced for the opening of The Jeffrey Cheah Biomedical Centre art commissions, Cambridge 2019

SOCIAL MEDIA

 **Cambridge Stem Cell Institute** @SCICambridge · Dec 19, 2019

Last Thursday our public space in the Jeffrey Cheah Biomedical Centre was opened with a celebration of the artworks commissioned as part of the building and our public space. Thanks again to all of the artists for sharing their work and to everyone who joined us to celebrate!



You and 7 others

1 3 14

Cambridge Stem Cell Institute Retweeted

 **Bob B** @StopMsChampion · Dec 18, 2019

The Cambridge & District Group together with the Cambridge Betterment Society and the Stem Cell Institute collaborated on a project for people with MS and Parkinsons to create ceramic tiles - now on display at the Jeffrey Cheah building in Cambridge



6 6

SOCIAL MEDIA

 **Maev Polkinhorn** @maevpolkinhorn · Dec 17, 2019

It was wonderful to launch Victoria Morton and Harold Offeh 's commissions this week at the Jeffrey Cheah Biomedical Centre. Thanks to all involved @SCICambridge @andrewnairne @mssocietyuk Go visit the artworks at stemcells.cam.ac.uk/about-us/jcbc



You and Victoria Morton

  3  4 

 Cambridge Stem Cell Institute Retweeted

 **Sandra Freshney** @SedgArchivist · Dec 13, 2019

Art, science and collaboration (all my fave things) @SCICambridge last night with @mssocietyuk @haroldoffeh. And my husband on his scooter 'Percy' talking data and drugs with the fab Sarah Foerster. #art #science #collaboration #MultipleSclerosis



  4  8 

SOCIAL MEDIA



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December 19, 2019 · 🌐

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Cambridge Stem Cell Institute

December 18, 2019 · 🌐

Last Thursday we held the launch of Pattern for Progress, a collaborative project with the Cambridgeshire MS Society UK group, artist Harold Offeh and institute researchers. We look forward to continuing these conversations and collaborations next year!



Keywords:

Exhibition

Stem Cell Research

Multiple Sclerosis

Ceramics

Print

Installation

Collaboration

Key Dates:

February and March 2019 [Workshops]

19 December 2019 - 19 December 2020 [Exhibition]

Funding:

University of Cambridge

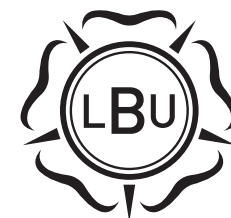
Wellcome Trust

Links:

<https://www.haroldoffeh.com/projects/a-pattern-for-progress>

WWW.LEEDSBECKETT.AC.UK/LARC

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