

CREATIVE METHODOLOGIES  
CAN BE PARTICULARLY  
HELPFUL TO NURTURE GENUINE  
EXPRESSION, SUBVERT POWER  
AND CATALYSE DISCUSSION.

Community Engagement Under the  
Microscope, WT INTERNATIONAL  
ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOP 2012

# Art in Global Health

Sian Aggett  
The Art of Health  
Mumbai, February 2016



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# The Story of Art in Global Health



# Art in Global Health

‘...a collaborative investigation of local forms of knowledge production, both scientific and cultural....’

**Danielle Olson, Curator**



‘To find out about the research being undertaken, to interact with scientists and team members from other disciplines (anthropologists, ethicists, economists, educators and so on) and to produce work in response to the processes of research and discovery they have observed.’

Film :

[https://www.youtube.com/  
watch?v=TlgXeYG286Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TlgXeYG286Q)



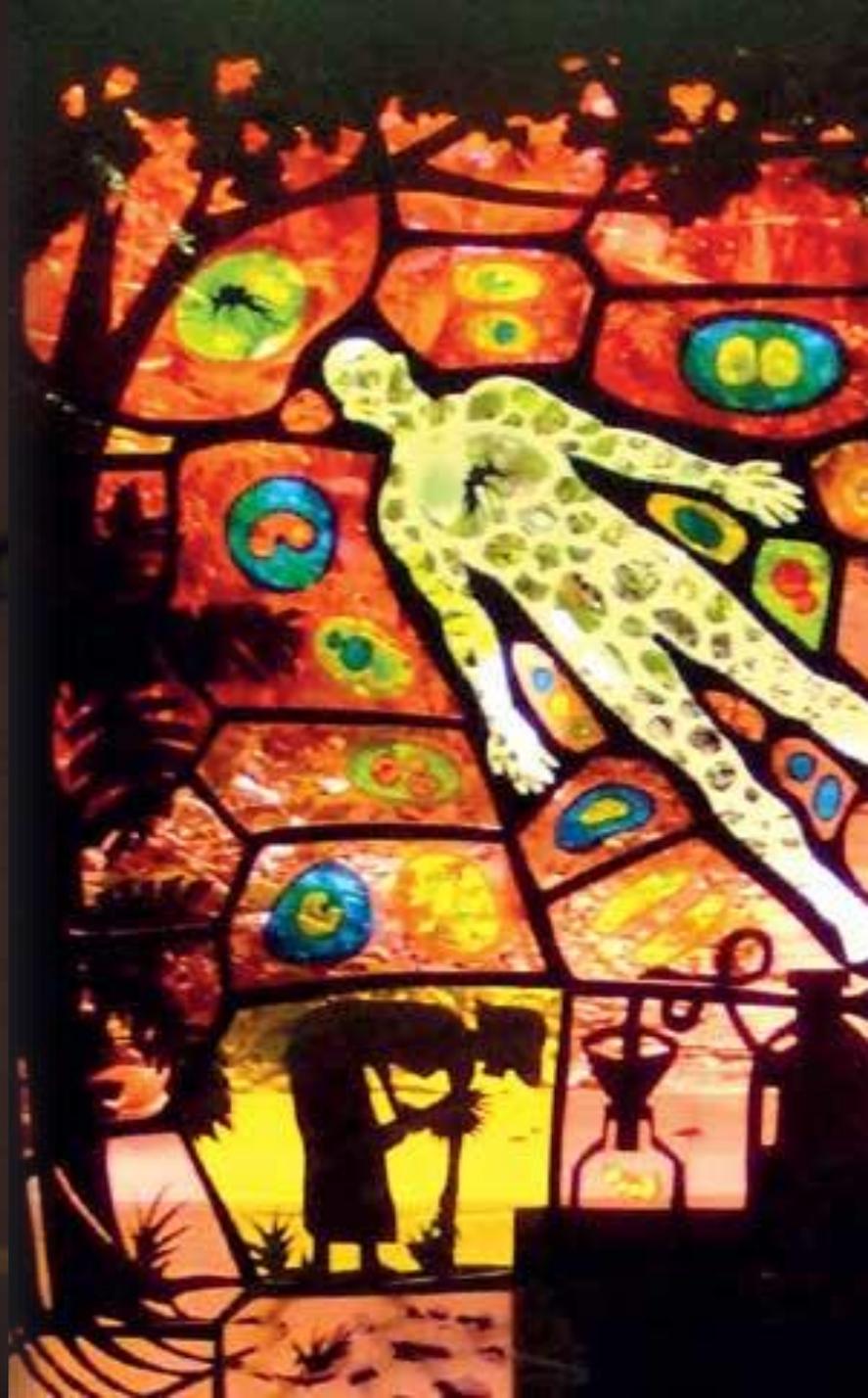
# Generic Challenges for Engagement in Global Health Research

- **TALK OF EMPOWERMENT BUT POWER MAY NOT REALLY BE CHALLENGED**
- 'Community' treated as homogenous and group dynamics unnoticed- consensus/group think/risky shift
- **SEMBLANCE OF DIALOGUE** but little real interaction on issues of concern or capacity to listen and respond.
- There is **LITTLE ROOM FOR FREE EXPLORATION**
- **SCIENTISTS MAY NOT BE INVOLVED**
- **LANGUAGE AND CONCEPTS FRAMED BY SCIENCE** rather than other knowledge framing.
- Miscommunications and misunderstandings across **TRANSCULTURAL SETTING.**
- **MISMATCH IN PROBLEM FOCUS, FRAMING AND SOLUTION** (social and political dimensions of a problem)
- **EFFECTING LOCAL CHANGE** by fostering relationships with local civil society and policy influencers at appropriate times.
- Understanding within institution and with health care workers and other staff of **WHAT ENGAGEMENT IS/IS NOT.**
- Lack of incentivisation for the non-instrumentalised reasons for doing engagement of Respect and Trust



'You are not asked to act but you are asked to interpret. We ask the audience to do some work on their own and make connections. Then the creative process happens in each audience member.'

**Nana Dakin, Co-director, B-Floor**





*“The social scientists said that people were opening up to us in a way that they found difficult. It had something to do with the approach we took. We were there asking questions to learn...”*

**Nana Dakin, Co-director, B-Floor Theatre, January 2014**

*‘The residency was useful for the researchers in that they found a way to explain to the artists what they were researching and more importantly why their work was important...,*

*it helped researchers think about other ways of engagement, who to engage with....’*

**Prof Nick Day, Director, Tropical Medicine Research Programme, Thailand, 2013**





*“As a scientist it’s quite complicated to implement a study since you have a lot of institutional procedures, codes of ethics and regulations. As an artist it was much easier for me to just go and ask questions, and people are also more willing to talk.”*

**Lena Bui, Artist**



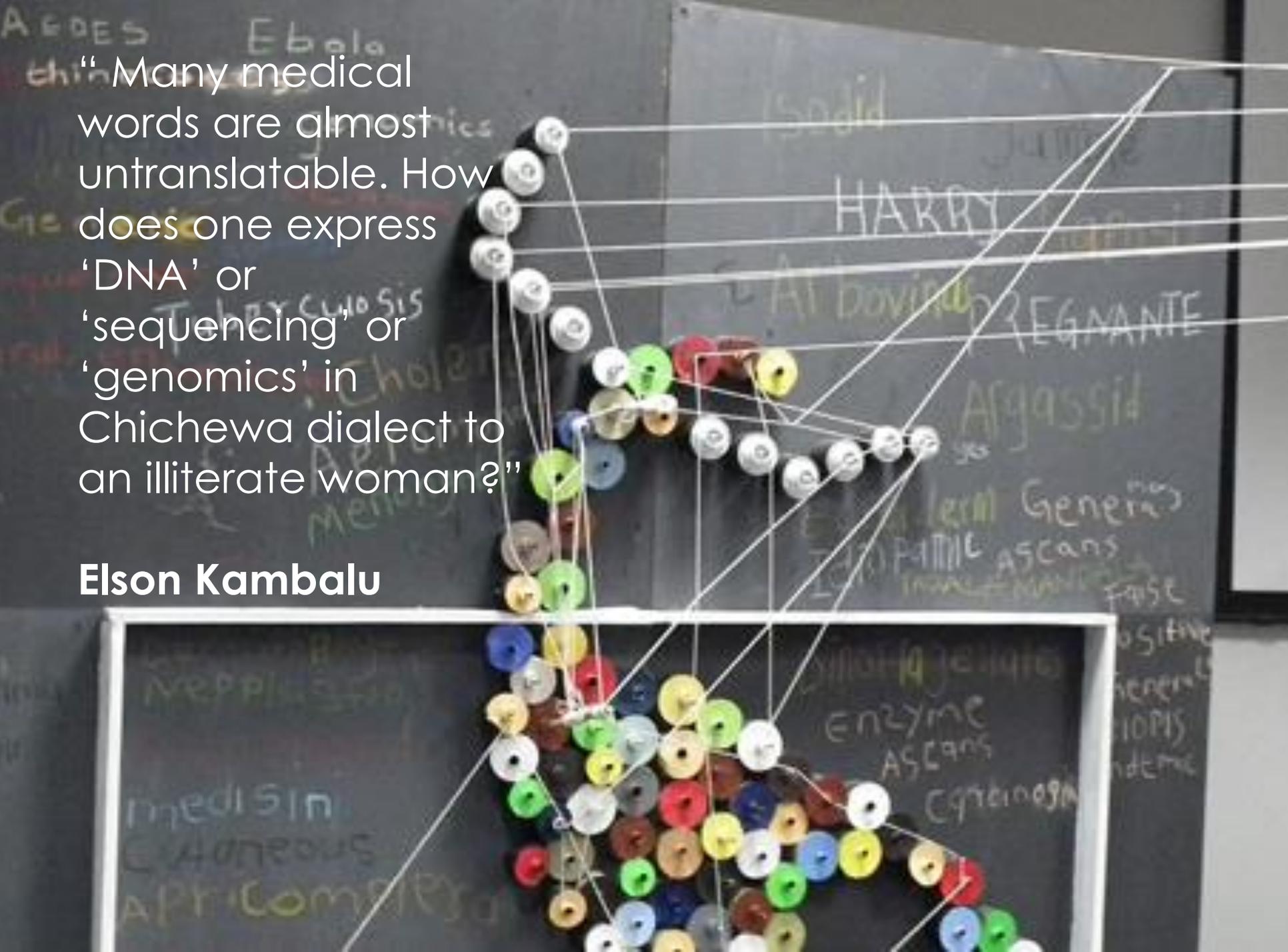
*“Scientists went into the exhibition thinking ‘**Where is the science, where is my science in it?**’. They expected Lena to be an illustrator for their science whereas from a public point of view there were comments about seeing science portrayed through different eyes...”*

**Mary Chamber, Oxford University Clinical Research Unit,  
November 2013**



“Many medical words are almost untranslatable. How does one express ‘DNA’ or ‘sequencing’ or ‘genomics’ in Chichewa dialect to an illiterate woman?”

**Elsou Kambalu**



“ Being behind the camera gives one control, the same as writing and other forms of art, one feels empowered. I got a chance to tell my story and my community’s story. I wanted to show the world what I feel is beautiful in my community.”

**Lungani Ndwandwe,  
Mtubatuba Workshop  
Participant**



"With the proposed photographic project, Zwelethu Mthethwa intends to visually define the Mtubatuba community that Africa Centre is working with, subverting the dehumanisation inherent in statistics, and instead emphasising the human faces attached to the data."

**Wellcome Collection 2013**

A person is holding a rectangular sign made of light-colored cardboard. The sign has the text "I PRACTISE YOGA" written on it in purple marker. The person is standing outdoors in a rural area. In the background, there is a white building with a green water tank, a stone wall, and some trees under a clear blue sky.

I PRACTISE  
YOGA

“The accountants were quite strict; they wanted to know what the outputs were going to look like and how the money would be spent before I knew . In the end they were understanding and realised that they couldn't make me work within their processes”

**Elson Kambalu,  
Artist, Malawi**

Normally it would be me communicating particular messages but in this case it was just the community expressing random different issues about health and for me, the public engagement person, it was like, can we communicate particular messages and information?

**Tamara Chipasula,  
Public Engagement Officer**



'Often we don't play enough,  
we plan far too much, and it  
becomes quite static..'

**Syowia Kyambi**



“Also belief and trust, context, money and power, and explorations/experimentation. But one thing the scientists said was that science cannot give absolute answers. We've been tinkering with the idea of what is absolute. We feel that these five areas are within the absolute.”

### **James Muriuki**

“It was always interesting and enlightening talking to them, because they always had another way of looking at things, quite different from my usual way (and would always bring a new perspective to my understanding).”

**Community Liaison Team  
Member, KEMRI-Wellcome  
Trust Research Programme**



# Interactions and Positions



- Different **POSITIONS INSIDE/OUTSIDE** research and research communities
- Different participant **GROUPS AND AUDIENCES**
- Different ways of challenging to the status quo- Bringing attention to **HISTORY, DIFFERENCE, QUESTIONS OR REPRESENTATION, REFRAMING WAYS OF SEEING, HEARING OTHER PERSPECTIVES**
- **RESEARCHERS AND RESEARCH PROCESSES ENGAGED** to differing degrees:
  - Inspiring art works through conversations
  - inviting people into constructed spaces to bring their own meaning to an art work,
  - involving people in the process of creating and making.
- Exhibitions and public conversations **LOCALLY AND ELSEWHERE** (Exhibition in London)
- Understanding of what constitutes art works- **RELATIONAL/POINTS OF ENCOUNTER, VISUAL, CONCEPTUAL**
- Were able to allow for **DIFFERENT DEGREES OF OPENNESS AND UNPREDICTABILITY DEPENDING ON HOW COMFORTABLE OTHERS WERE WITH THIS (PARTICIPANTS AND RESEARCH PROGRAMMES)**

# Projects can...

- Introduce **OPENNESS AND PLAY**
- **CONFRONT NON CONFRONTATIONALLY:**  
Work from difference and tension
- Can **BUILD EMPATHY** (promoting seeing from 'other's' perspectives and creating spaces for interactions/'spaces of encounter')
- Creates **SITUATION OF ENCOUNTER** (Bourriaud 2000)- Shine light on state of relationships (hierarchy and power)
- Make the **UNSEEN SEEABLE** – including the emotional, embodied, historical and political (Ranciere 2009) and some of the unsaid or unsayable sayable.
- Work with **THE SOCIAL AND RELATIONAL KINDS OF KNOWLEDGE.**
- Reframes, combines, recombines, reassemble fragments- **SEE NEW MEANINGS** and framings from the ordinary (Mannay 2014)
- Raises **DIFFERENT KINDS OF 'VOICE' AND CONVERSATION** (dialogue, investigation, protest) (Plush 2015)
- Goes beyond signification and meaning to something else- **AFFECT**. Lodges itself differently in the spectator/maker. (O'Sullivan )



# Web of Expediency (Rooke 2013)

## ARTWORK SYMBOLIC ECONOMY

Critically acclaimed artistic work at local, nation and international levels.

## LOCAL CONTEXT

Economic, political, social, environmental conditions  
Power relations  
Languages  
Cosmologies

Artist's own intention,  
values, knowledge  
and skills.

## FUNDERS AND SOCIAL INSTRUMENTALITY

The remit and expectations of the Wellcome Trust.  
The degree of reporting and accountability to the Wellcome Trust.  
Degree of and shape of interest in this project within the portfolio of funded projects.

## PARTICIPANTS AND ORGANISATIONS THEY ARE WORKING WITH

Degree of porosity and access to culture  
Understanding and commitment to the approach  
Managing multiple expectations/ hopes/ aims  
The time and availability of involved actors