

Seed Gathering

The Gaia Foundation's Seed Sovereignty UK & Ireland Programme

11th & 12th February 2023

Speakers:

Adam Alexander

Adam Alexander is a filmmaker and gardener. He has been growing fruit and vegetables since a boy and organically for nearly fifty years. Although a professional horticulturalist in the seventies, for forty years he produced both ethnographic TV programmes as well as popular series about food and gardening. His book *The Seed Detective - Uncovering the Secret Histories of Remarkable Vegetables* was published in September 2022. Adam is a passionate advocate of the conservation of genetic diversity and the importance of indigenous food culture. Since the late eighties, he has built a library of some 500 varieties of rare and endangered vegetable varieties, many of which he has discovered on his travels making films. These are grown out for seed and shared with other growers. Adam brought back seeds from Syria in 2011 which is now being grown by refugees in gardens and allotments in the UK, northern Europe and Canada. He is currently increasing the diversity of Ukrainian heirloom and heritage vegetables in his collection to grow out and share. Adam is a Trustee of Garden Organic and a Seed Guardian for the Heritage Seed Library for whom he grows a dozen or more varieties a year. His mantra is Sow, save, share, saviour.

Alessandra Coppola

Alessandra Coppola is an Italian-born artist living in Brussels. Mainly trained in the field of dance / theatre and cinema (University of Bologna DAMS - theatre and cinema disciplines). She works in the audio-visual, performance art and public art, producing artworks as well as social artistic processes. Her artistic practice comes from very heterogeneous educational and professional experiences. She studied Philosophy as well as History of Cinema and Theatre while, since the age of 10, she trained as dancer. She searches about politics of crisis on a broad sense.

Andrew Merritt

Andrew Merritt (UK) explores social and ecological issues through experimental solution-based work in the form of permanent installations and functional sculptures, which provide frameworks or foundations for communities and ecologies to build and grow upon. Andrew often works as one half of the duo Something & Son.

Anna Clow

Anna recently joined the Seed Sovereignty Programme team in 2022, and previously worked to support the Programme's first official Seed Gathering in 2021. She is an avid grower with a passion for creating accessible technologies for community related projects. As a steering group member for the London Freedom Seed Bank, she helped to build the London Freedom Seed Base - a database that aims to capture the interactions between Varieties, Growing Spaces, Seed Batches and Growers. Get in touch to collaborate on anything seedy/ techy!

Ashley Wheeler

After being brought up on an council smallholding run as a market garden by his parents, Ashley studied Horticulture at Reading University and went on to specialise in historical garden restoration. However, the pull of vegetables was too strong and with Kate his partner he set up Trill Farm Garden in Devon in 2010. They sell produce to local restaurants, cafes and shops as well as through a box scheme. Ashley also runs courses on salad growing, market gardening and seed production. Seed production is an integral part of the market garden, and each year they produce more and more seed commercially. Ashley and Kate won the Young Organic Growers of the Year in 2021.

Ben Gabel

Ben Gabel is one of the two founding directors of Real Seeds, a seed company based in Wales that specialises in open pollinated vegetable seed for UK gardeners, and provides free seed-saving public education. Ben is also a maker and designer at www.invisibletopos.co.uk and has released several open-source plans for seed processing and packing equipment to encourage home seed saving and help seed company start-ups.

Catherine Howell

Catherine coordinates the seed network in the north of England supporting amateur and professional growers to grow more open pollinated seed for thriving, diverse and resilient food production. She is a co-director and founder of a 'plot to plate' community interest company in Teesside, runs the Middlesbrough Farmstart programme and has a background in helping people from diverse and challenged communities create gardens in urban spaces, particularly where these lead to new enterprises or work opportunities. Catherine is particularly interested in local and heritage varieties and celebrating the stories that sit behind them, and enjoys chatting to people at length about their growing adventures! When not actively engaged in mud, she enjoys making and crafting, which somehow always ends up back at seeds...

Charlotte Bickler

Charlotte Bickler leads on knowledge exchange and policy at the Organic Research Centre. Following a PhD studying the evolutionary potential of *Primula veris*, and postdoctoral research on the crop wild relative collections at the Kew's Millennium Seed Bank, Charlotte joined ORC within the Crops Research team and coordinated the academic response to the EU's Temporary Experiment on Heterogeneous Material alongside the European Consortium for Organic Plant Breeding within the LIVESTED EU project. She is currently working with the UK Grain Lab to explore where we are with heterogeneous material for grain production in the UK, and what is needed to support the wider use of heterogeneous material.

Cherry Truluck

Cherry Truluck is an artist, writer, researcher and creative director of Custom Food Lab. Working with community building, botany, cooking, farming and performance, she seeks rhythms in the dialogue that food creates between the body and the land. Since early 2022, Cherry's practice has focused on temporalities and rhythms in the processes of growing and breeding oats. Building on research at the Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences (IBERS) at the University of Aberystwyth, she has been growing 9 varieties of oats in her front yard, beginning what she intends to become a long term project of temporal attunement.

Chloe Blackmore

Chloe co-runs Little Bishops Organics, a three-acre market garden set on her family's farm in Devon. As well as supplying 65 CSA boxes per week, plus local market and wholesale, Little Bishops also grow vegetable and flower seed crops, both commercially for Vital Seeds and for the Southwest Seed Savers Network.

Chris Keeve

Chris Keeve is a seed worker and chaotic gardener based in Lexington, Kentucky. They are also a PhD student in Geography at the University of Kentucky. Their research, community work, and land work focuses on the cooperative geographies and political ecologies of seed grower networks and participatory agrobiodynicity projects in the U.S., with an eye towards Black, queer, and liberatory futures. They are excited to chat about care, interdependence, and multispecies relations through and with seed.

Colm O'Driscoll

A craft gardener and dedicated exponent of regenerative organic horticultural principles Colm's seed-saving journey started out in earnest 6 years ago when he became a seed guardian for Irish Seed Savers Association. Colm has since been actively involved in GAA trials as well as Irish organic conditions. Increasing the number and quality of open-pollinated varieties available organically has been, and still is his primary motive for seed saving.

Dan Brisebois

Dan Brisebois wants market growers to grow some of their own seed, which is why Dan hosts the Seed Growers Podcast and blogs about seed at <https://danbrisebois.com>

Dan is a seed farmer at Tourne Sol co-operative farm in Les Cèdres, Quebec. Tourne-Sol grows organic seeds for an online seed store and a wholesale rack program; and grows vegetables for 500 weekly veggie baskets. Dan also runs the Farmer Spreadsheet Academy to help farmers learn tools and tricks to be better farm managers.

Dan Saladino

Dan Saladino is a food journalist and presenter of BBC Radio 4's The Food Programme. His first book, *Eating to Extinction: The World's Most Endangered Foods and Why We Need to Save Them* is an epic journey into the history, culture and future of food, and involved 15 years of travel and story collecting. Since publication Jonathan Capen the UK and FSG in the United States, *Eating to Extinction* has won multiple awards, including: Winner of the prestigious Wainwright Prize for Conservation and Nature, recipient of the Jane Grigson Trust prize for a debut food book, Special Commendation by the Andre Simon Awards, awarded The Fortnum & Mason Book of the Year, winner of the Guild of Food Writers Food Book Award and also the Guild's First Book Award, and winner of Corriere Della Serra's Book of the Year. *Eating to Extinction* was also shortlisted in the Stanford Travel Writing Awards.

David Catzel

David worked as a mixed vegetable farmer in Canada for over 20 years, with a special interest in sustainable systems and seed production, before taking on the challenge of managing the BC Seed Security Program for FarmFolk CityFolk in 2019. He has taught workshops on composting, permaculture, and seed saving to adults and children throughout BC. For the last three seasons each fall, David has been on the road with a trailer full of seed cleaning equipment to share with farmers across the province in an attempt to scale up production and quality of locally produced seeds.

Debbie Gillies

Debbie is the one that drives Tru Harvest Seeds, a plant conservation charity based in County Down, Ireland. She holds qualifications in Computing (Bsc Hons), environmental education, community facilitation, community environmental leadership, RHS level II Hort and seed conservation techniques from Kew. Her true passions lie in growing plants, setting up garden spaces and working with teams from collecting expeditions to working in the field harvesting, cleaning and testing seeds.

Dennis Toulitos

Dennis is a grower and FarmStart trainer at The Plot; an organic market garden south of Lancaster which trains new entrants to agroecology in commercial organic horticulture.

He is also a member of The Lancaster Seed Library and a researcher at the Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience at Coventry University.

Ellen Rignell

Ellen is a seed grower based in the South West of England. She has worked at Trill Farm Garden for the last 7 years, growing veg and coordinating their seed production for on-farm use and for sale commercially to small seed companies like the Real Seed Catalogue. She is now in the process of setting up her own business with more of a focus on seed crops.

Emilio Hernández Martínez

Emilio Hernández Martínez (Mexico), is a creative researcher and a design thinker, working at the intersection of learning space design, social entrepreneurship and design activism. He is a member of Cocina Colaboratorio (Collaboratory Kitchen), a transdisciplinary collective that gathers creatives (artists, designers, architects), farmer communities, scientists and chefs around the kitchen table to exchange knowledge, design and take action towards sustainable food futures.

Dr Emily May Armstrong

Dr Emily May Armstrong is an interdisciplinary researcher, engaging biological threats, disability, queer ecologies, and plant futures. Emily specialises in weaving seemingly disparate threads into cohesive stories considering plants, place, and people. They hold a PhD in molecular genetics in plants from the University of Glasgow, and most recently completed a postdoctoral research project identifying the most pressing issues facing kinship and ecology on a global scale. Emily's research interests include botanical genetics, plant-human kinship, ethnobotany, and vegetal thinking. Learn more www.emilymayarmstrong.com

Francine Hajilou

Francine Hajilou leads Custom Food Lab's 'Entangled Roots' Reading/Walking groups and is a founder of emerging growers group Diaspora Garden. She is an emerging writer of dual English and Jamaican heritage, originally from Coventry. She lives in Fokestone and is currently researching for her upcoming PhD in Creative Writing. Her interests are Black British identity, notions of race and the reality of racism, embodied knowledge, writing gender and the body, racial justice, surviving trauma, nature writing, life writing, short fiction and poetry, land justice and community food growing.

Francis Everson

Francis Everson is the Seed Sovereignty Programme's South East network coordinator. He has a broad background of work within production horticulture, including commercial organic seed cultivation and field-scale vegetable production. He also holds qualifications in engineering, welding and fabrication and has a strong interest in developing and building equipment appropriate to growers needs.

Finlay Keiller

Finlay Keiller grew up in the Western Isles and later the Shetland Islands. He is now based near Inverness where he is in the process of setting up a small business to sell vegetable seeds. Last year he set up a community growing space focusing on seed saving with a strong link to a local Gaelic music and arts charity Fies Rics.

Fred Groom

Fred's background is in ecology and since starting Vital Seeds in 2018 has developed a keen interest in data collection and record-keeping using relational database tools such as Filemaker and AirTable.

Fulya Batur

Fulya BATUR is a trained lawyer and legal consultant specialised in agricultural and environmental law, focusing more specifically on the law of the seed. She is a consultant, facilitator and trainer versed in different national, European, and international policy topics, with a focus on agricultural policy, the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources, and plant role in European, regional, national, and local food systems. She has over ten years of experience as a legal researcher and adult educator, having organized and animated numerous trainings and workshops for very different audiences, from the most general presentations to highly technical discussions amongst experts. She provides trainings and legal guidance for a wide range of civil society organisations and movements working on seed diversity across the European continent and beyond. Based in Brussels, she is also engaged in policy analysis and project management, being involved in several research and consultancy projects for European public institutions.

Gerald Miles

Gerald Miles is a seventh-generation farmer. Together with his son, Gerald runs an organic pasture-fed Belted Welsh Black suckler herd in Pembrokeshire. They grow 20 acres of ancient wild varieties including Black Outie, Emmer Wheat, Einkorn Wheat, April Beard and Hen Oymr. Gerald helped set up Wales' first Community Supported Agriculture scheme. He is an anti-GMO activist and a celebrity on the agroecological farming scene.

Jacqueline Anne Morgan

A chef, food advocate and activist who was born and raised on the Towy estuary in a small fishing village in Carmarthenshire. Her work is inspired by the natural Welsh landscape and devoted to telling its stories through the art of cooking.

Jason Horner

Jason Horner is the Seed Sovereignty Programme's Coordinator for Ireland and a part time seed saver based in Co Clare where he grows for Brown Envelope Seeds. He has 30 years' experience in commercial organic horticulture and is now working as a consultant for the programme in Ireland. In 2010 he completed an MSc. in Organic Farming at SRUC (formerly SAC) Aberdeen. With a keen interest in the natural world he can be found outside work hours cycling, fishing, bird watching or swimming.

Josiah Meldrum

Josiah Meldrum is co-founder of Hodmedod, a Suffolk company whose aim is to encourage us to grow and eat a wider range of British grown pulses, grains and seeds - creating healthier and more diverse diets and farming systems. Working with farmers Hodmedod has pioneered 'new' crops for the UK, such as lentils and revived long forgotten staples, like naked barley. His PhD was focused on farm biofuel production from seed to refined production. This enables change by encouraging the creation of more complex rotations, through more direct routes to market, and ultimately by adding economic and agroecological value. Prior to Hodmedod Josiah worked for NGOs, farmer co-operatives and retailers whose aim was to create a more equitable and sustainable food system.

Joseph Lofthouse

Joseph adopted the principles of landrace reversion in response to the harsh growing conditions in a high-altitude, short-season, desert garden. Instead of relying on expensive inputs, labor, and materials to cultivate the plants, he encourages genetic diversity, cross-pollination, and survival of the fittest, allowing the plants to adjust themselves to the current and ever-changing ecosystem, thus simplifying gardening and seed saving. Landrace gardening teaches that plants are stronger, tastier, and more reliable if impure parents are cross-pollinated and undergoing survival of the fittest selection. A landrace is a variety that was developed long ago, on a far away farm, and has undergone 50 years of inbreeding. Landraces are locally adapted to current conditions, and have enough genetic diversity to change with the ecosystem.

Kate McEvoy

Kate McEvoy is a founder member of Real Seeds and has been growing and selling vegetable seed since 1998. Based in Pembrokeshire, Real Seeds supplies seed to home gardeners and promotes small scale seed saving amongst gardeners & growers. Over the last few years they have been working with the Gaia Seed Sovereignty Programme to develop a network of commercial seed growers across Wales producing open pollinated locally adapted seed.

Katie Hastings

Katie is coordinating the seed sovereignty programme in Wales. She is also co-founder of the community organisation Mach Mathlon where she coordinates a horticultural training programme, food hub and community growing scheme. She grows what as part of a collective, which is baked by a local bakery and eaten by people in Mid Wales. In her free time she grows field scale potatoes and sales by a local 'solidarity veg box scheme'. She is especially interested in rare oats.

Kimberley Bell

Kimberley founded Small Food Bakery in 2016 with the objective to demonstrate that small scale food manufacturing businesses have a crucial role to play in enabling transition to a more resilient, nourishing and equitable model of agriculture.

Lane Selman

Lane Selman grew up on a citrus farm her Sicilian great-grandparents planted in 1919 on Florida's space coast. She studied Agronomy (BS) and Entomology (MS) at University of Florida before moving to Oregon in 2000. Lane is a Professor of Plant Breeding in Oregon State University where she has worked with organic vegetable and grain farmers, managed collaborative use of genetic research projects, and plant role in European, regional, national, and local food systems. She has over ten years of experience as a legal researcher and adult educator, having organized and animated numerous trainings and workshops for very different audiences, from the most general presentations to highly technical discussions amongst experts. She provides trainings and legal guidance for a wide range of civil society organisations and movements working on seed diversity across the European continent and beyond. Based in Brussels, she is also engaged in policy analysis and project management, being involved in several research and consultancy projects for European public institutions.

Laura Valli

Laura Valli is a PhD student at WSU (Washington State University) researching the historic, cultural, agricultural and environmental significance of rye with both a contemporary and historical perspective. Her focus is on the US, but she often brings in comparative material from her home country Estonia. Her work includes conducting field trials (different rye varieties, field blends and maslin), milling, baking, tasting and talking to farmers, conservation, and sustainable use of genetic resources, and plant role in European, regional, national, and local food systems. Last year, she developed and taught a course entitled Rye: Cultural History and Embodied Practices in collaboration with Dr Maria Tompeter and Jeremy Oldfield from Yale University that will be offered again through Yale Summer School this year.

Liv Torc

Liv Torc is a Somerset poet, artist and project maker who plunders the vast caverns and dormant volcanoes of the human and planetary condition. A Radio 4 Slam winner, a former Bard of Exeter, host of the Rainbow Fish Speakeasy and of The Hip Yak Poetry Shack. Liv runs the poetry stage at WOMAD, The Hip Yak Poetry School, Hot Poets and the lockdown Haikus and photography project, Haiku + featured on the BBC's Radio 4 Today Programme. In 2019 her climate change in the face of motherhood poem The Human Emergency went viral across the world and she performed at Gastonbury Festival on the Poetry & Words Stage. She also represented Somerset for the BBC's National Poetry Day celebrations.

Liz O'Neill

Liz O'Neill is the Director of UK umbrella campaign GM Freeze. A campaigns and communications specialist with experience across the arts and environmental sectors, Liz first encountered genetic modification in the lab, as a Biochemistry student. Now she is on a mission to help others navigate the boundaries between science, technology, corporate control and food sovereignty. Email: lizz@gmfreeze.org

Lucy Shepherd

Lucy has been the Seed Officer at the Heritage Seed Library since 2019, looking after seed stocks for the core library as well as seed for distribution to members. As well as supporting the horticultural team, Lucy deals with the seed from the point of harvest including managing seed quality, germination testing and stock management.

Nico Enjalbert

A French native, Nicolas Enjalbert grew up in the rural landscape of Central France. Nicolas began his studies of Agronomy and Plant Breeding in Europe before moving to the US where he received a PhD in Plant Genetics from Colorado State University. His PhD was focused on on farm biofuel production from seed to exhaust looking for unique brassica such as brassica juncea and camelina that could withstand drought. He spent the next 10 years working for international seed companies prior to launching SeedLinked. His expertise in data architecture, crop modelling, fundamental breeding techniques and participatory breeding strategies, and management and plant breeding program development find full expression in his continuing work and development of SeedLinked.

Pat Thomas

Pat Thomas is a journalist, author and award-winning campaigner specialising in environment and health. She is founder and director of Beyond GMO A Bigger Conversation in the UK and a former editor of the Ecologist magazine. She has sat on the boards of the Soil Association, the Organic Research Centre and GMO Free USA.

Pete Iannetta

Pietro (Pete) Iannetta is plant biologist and ecologist based in the Agroecology Group at the James Hutton Institute's Dundee Campus. He delivers strategic and applied research, mainly on the multi-functional potential of legumes, though also of wild (arable) plants too. He works with a broad range of stakeholders developing novel cropping systems and processing techniques. Pete's current projects include: Principal Investigator, Scottish Government's (RESAS) Strategic Research Programme on 'novel crops and farming practices'; deputy-Coordinator, RADIANT; work-package leader, econutri; advisor, FRAMEWork. Coordinator, MARINADE. His recently concluded projects include: TRUE, Coordinator; TOMERs, work-package leader; and, advisor, DIVERSIFY.



Pippa Chapman

Pippa Chapman is a gardener, designer, forest garden and horticulture consultant and author of 'A plant lovers backyard forest garden'. Along with her partner Andrew they are collective known as 'Those Plant People' working together to create and maintain beautiful, sustainable and organic spaces.



Raju Rage

Raju Rage is proactive about using art, education and activism to forge creative survival. Born in Kenya, raised in London and living/working beyond, they explore the spaces and relationships between dis/connected bodies, theory and practice, text and the body and aesthetics and the political substance. Their current interests are around sustainability, economics, care, and resistance. They are a member of Collective Creativity arts collective and are a creative educator and independent scholar with an interest in radical pedagogy. Raju has a their story in activism, self and collective organised queer/ transgender/ people of colour movements and creative projects in London and beyond from which their politics and works draw on and from.

Raju has trained as a pastry chef and baker, worked in several community kitchens and been part of a baker's collective.



Richie Walsh

Richie joined the team in June 2020 as the Scotland Seed Sovereignty Coordinator. He has an academic background in amenity horticulture, market gardening and plant conservation. He has a passion for community food growing. Over the last two decades, he has set up and run community gardens in Dublin, Amsterdam and Glasgow.

He is a member of Scottish Craft Brewers and passionate about using underused heritage grains in beer production. When not digging in a garden, Richie can be found brewing his own beer, home malting heritage grains and running trials with his brewing club.



Robyn Minogue

Robyn is the coordinator for the South West of England as well as a grower and horticulture teacher. She currently runs a kitchen garden for a local seasonal restaurant and is an active member of the South West Seed Savers Network. With a background in arts and activism Robyn is particularly interested in the intersection of food and social justice, having previously worked as part of a prisoner resettlement charity running their market garden. Robyn can often be found helping others set up new growing spaces from scratch in whatever space may be available, she is committed to supporting others to overcome barriers to both food growing and seed saving.



Ruth Levine

Ruth is an artist based in Sheffield, Yorkshire. Her work operates in and outside of the art world, practicing the culture in agriculture and following the flood water back upstream. She joins others on a journey to collectively unravel and reveal the everyday infrastructure that shapes our lives and disconnects us from our food, water & land in what has become the new normal. She then tries to resurrect, experiment and create spaces for practicing what has gone missing. Her work is research-based & participatory and socially engaged and often involves mapping, walking and video.

See www.ruthlevine.co.uk and [@sheffieldheatexperiment](http://www.thesheffieldheatexperiment.co.uk) to find out more



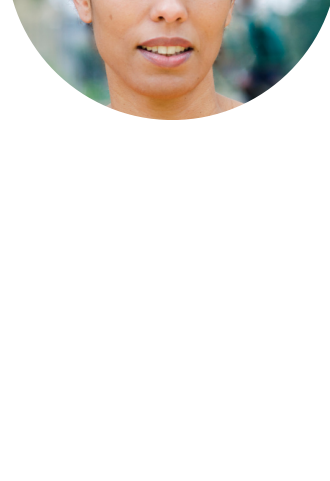
Sinéad Fortune

Sinéad supports the programme at a national and international level. This includes engaging with advisors on legislation, coordinating the overall framework of the programme, creating opportunities for engagement and education, and developing partnerships with key organisations. With a background in food security, community empowerment and social enterprise, Sinéad's previous work has been in community-based food production, sustainable food innovation and community funding.



Shambala Fisher

Shambala Fisher is the founder of Nottingham based Pasta Shambala, which shares its home with Small Food Bakery. Open two days a week, it serves hot pasta to eat in, dried pasta, pasta sauces and meal kits to cook at home. These come with handwritten recipes and serve as a resource to encourage local home cooks to use seasonal, fresh, handmade ingredients to make simple and nourishing food. Shambala makes colourful pasta that celebrates the beauty and delicious diversity of good ingredients that can grow in the UK. The pasta shop works solely with passionate local producers who are working in harmony with nature.



Steven Jacobs

Steven Jacobs has been working in food and farming for 30 years and is currently business development manager at Organic Farmers & Growers C.L.C. Starting in market gardening and moving through broadscale farming to retail via catering, Steven joined Organic Farmers & Growers in 2007, following work with the Permaculture Association, the Co-operative Wholesale Society, Fresh & Wild (now Wholefoods Market) and Essential Trading Co-operative. He represents OFG on roundtables, forums and working groups including Agricology, IFoAM Organics Europe, the Defra Industry Partners Working Group, the NFU Organic Forum and the Agriculture Working Party of Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming. Steven is also co-founder of the UK Grain Lab and the founder He is also deputy co-chair of the Welsh Organic Forum, a member of the Welsh Grain Forum and also sits on the steering committee for the Wales Real Food and Farming Conference - WRFFC / Cynhadledd Ddir Feyd a Ffermio Cymru – CGFFC.



Steve Sando

Steve Sando likes to eat. A lot. It was through his love of good food and his troubles sourcing ingredients he wanted that led him on his odd journey to become one of the country's leading purveyors of dry heirloom beans, as well as a cheerleader for other indigenous New World foods like posole, chiles, quinoa and other items from the Americas. Sando's company, Rancho Gordo, grows, imports and promotes heirloom beans over the internet, through specialty stores and in America's top restaurants.



Viviana Checchia

Viviana Checchia is a curator, critic and lecturer active internationally. She is currently Residency Curator at Delfina Foundation, London. Previous to this role she was Senior Lecturer in Fine Art at HDK Valand, Gothenburg. At Valand, she taught on the MFA, focusing on ideas of publicness and the role of the artist in society. In addition to the MFA, Checchia contributed to the Masters programme on Commissioning and Curating Contemporary Public Art, and was course leader for a new elective in, Art, Pedagogy and Social Action.



Zoë Palmer

Zoë Palmer is a writer, facilitator + herbalist whose work spans performance, installation, text + participatory events. Her regenerative practise explores our relationship with the more than human world. A natural beekeeper for 15 years, she's currently growing a british african herbal.