

Dear Mad Studies Network,

We have an exciting meeting for this month in the midst of what is possibly the world's longest lockdown for Melburnians! In October, we have Hannah facilitating a session on the film *Sincerely Survivor*. We hope you enjoy our brief foray into film club territory.

Date: Tuesday 19th October 2021

Time: 7pm AEST (Melbourne time) This is 9am UK time now for those who weren't aware!

Zoom link: <https://vla-vic-gov-au.zoom.us/j/67330604786>

Password: 347989

Facilitator: [Hannah Friebe](#)

Topic: Sincerely Survivor – The Dance Film

Sincerely Survivor is a film that explores an art-based research approach to the mental health system and informal response to the Victorian Royal Commission. The film was created as a documentation of Director Hannah Friebe's recovery journey who found healing through dance and movement (rather than talk therapy). In this work, dancers take on the role of pilgrims, exploring asylums of old - using art to enable our empathy. The dance choreography was entirely improvised with one-take cinematography, where dancers had a score to 'be present with the space, be present with each other and be present with yourselves'. Four artist residencies were held at the (now abandoned) J Ward Asylum for the Criminally Insane, Aradale Lunatic Asylum and Pleasant Creek Hospital, with the footage edited together throughout 2020. Sincerely Survivor the Dance Film debuted at Melbourne Fringe Festival last year and was awarded the Best Emerging Performance Ensemble Award, described by audiences as saying "there are no words to truly describe that experience. You expressed what can't be found in the writings, reports and rationales of countless people without lived experience"... "I was deeply moved... At the end I just sat quietly for a while, it deeply touched my spirit."

The film runs for 50 minutes and may contain triggering themes pertaining to mental health, institutional abuse and trauma. The trailer [can be watched here](#).

Please write to us at madstudiesmelb@gmail.com for a link and password to watch the full film.

Here are some prompt questions to get you thinking!

- How did you feel when you watched the film? What thoughts or emotions came up for you? Any artistic responses?
- Did this work make you feel like your experiences of mental health were seen, understood and empathised with?
- How can The Arts act as a tool for documenting our healing, finding new language and enabling social change?
- What are the connections and learnings we can make between the consumer/survivor experiences of the 1990's Victorian mental health system reforms, and the present day reform agenda?
- How can The Arts offer people with lived experience more accessible ways of telling their story?

- How can The Arts be integrated in approaches to mental health research?
- How is art-based storytelling empowering for people with lived experience?

More info about Sincerely Survivor (and its emerging identity as The Lived Experience Creative Agency) can be found at www.sincerelysurvivor.org.

We would also like to share the launch of a new Mad informed global think tank and lived experience leadership institute, [The Australian Centre for Lived Experience](#). You can provide feedback or subscribe here: [Contact — TACFLE - The Australian Centre for Lived Experience](#)



Hope to see you in a few weeks,

Antonia and Zara