Critical Neurodiversity Studies Conference
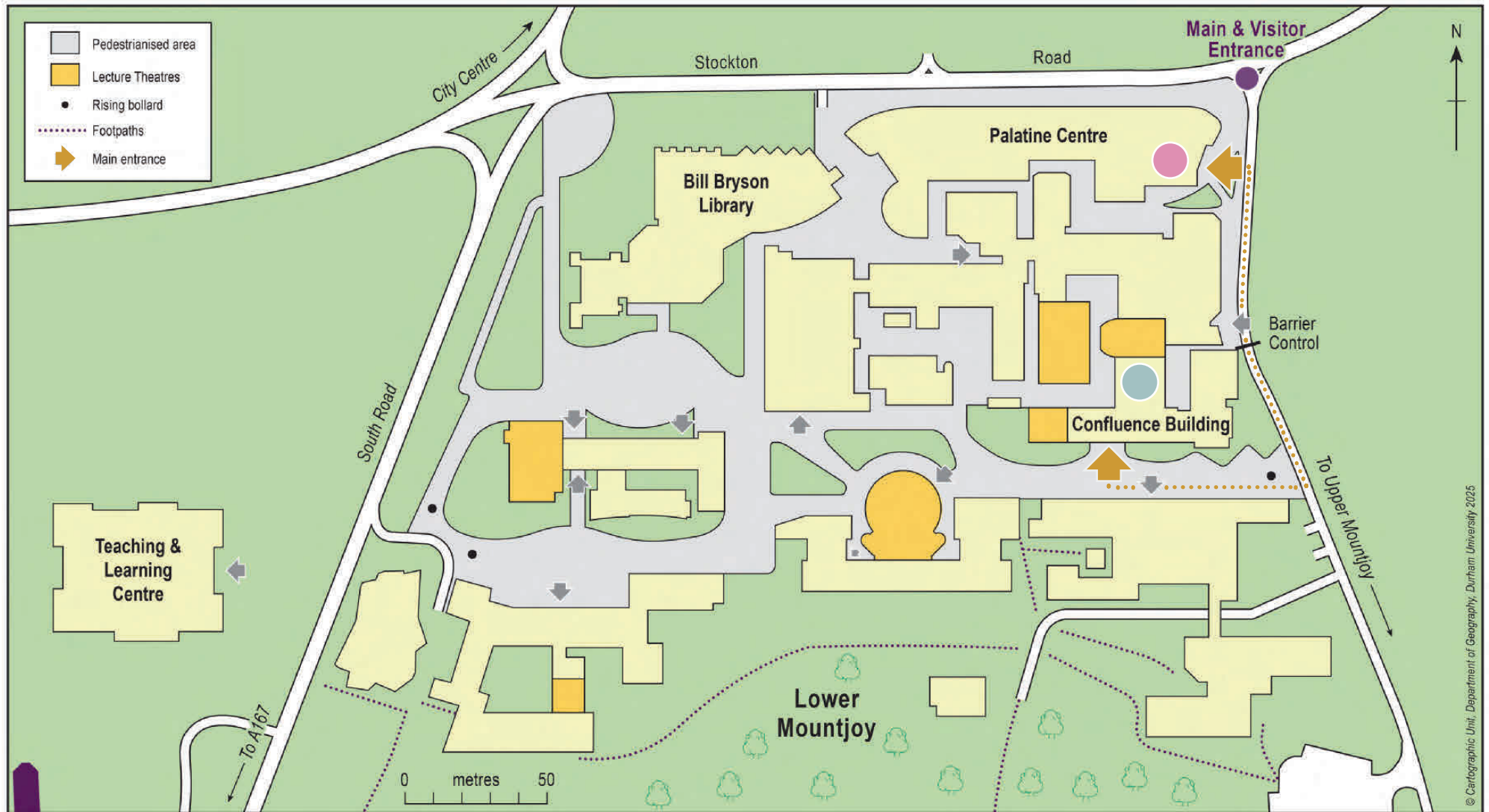
Directions | Intersections | Contradictions

24–26 June, 2025
Durham University | Online

Durham University
Institute for
Medical Humanities

wellcome

Conference location: Durham University Science Site

Venue 1: Palatine Centre
Stockton Road, Durham DH1 3LE

Venue 2: Confluence Building
Lower Mountjoy, South Road, Durham DH1 3LE

···· Route from Venue 1 to Venue 2

How do I get from Venue 1 to Venue 2?

Follow the QR code on the right for directions and photographs.

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Contents

Welcome

We are delighted to welcome you to Durham University for *Critical Neurodiversity Studies: Directions/Intersections/Contradictions*, an international gathering designed to challenge, expand, and transform the critical neurodiversity research landscape.

While traditional theory describes the world, critical theory seeks to transform it—and this is the spirit that drives our conference. We aim to foster a generative space for the next generation of neurodivergent scholar-activists, building a movement that departs from narrow, medicalised models of neurodiversity and instead centres arts, humanities, and liberatory social theory.

We are committed to ensuring that this conference is not only rich in thought but also welcoming, comfortable, and fully accessible to all attendees. From step-free access, access to green spaces and sensory rooms to hybrid participation and quiet spaces, our goal is to create an event where everyone can meaningfully engage—on their own terms.

This conference forms part of the 2024/25 Critical Neurodiversity Studies takeover of The Measurement Lab in the Discovery Research Platform for Medical Humanities, which was co-led by Louise Creechan and Robert Chapman, and is co-badged with the Neurodivergent Humanities Network.

The conference is generously supported by Wellcome.

Path leading up to Palace Green, Durham
Photo credit: Durham University

Conference Programme

For a full list of abstracts and speaker details, please scan the QR code or visit the website: **ndhumanities.com/programme**. The password has been sent to all delegates via email.

Day 1 | Tuesday 24 June

Time	Stream 1 PCL054	Stream 2 PCL048	Stream 3 PCL050	Stream 4 CB0027	Workshop CB0025
09:30-10:00	Introduction				
10:00-11:00	**Invited speaker: Diana Beljaars*** Spatialising Neurodiversity: Compulsive Geographies				
11:00-11:20	Break				
11:30-13:00	**Panel: Language Otherwise: Neurodivergent Justice, Materialities, and Mutuality** Eleonora Marocchini Gerald Roche Anouk Hoogendoorn	**Panel: Neuroqueer Readings and Aesthetics** Catherine Smale Denise Henschel Liselotte Van der Gucht	**Panel: Reimagining the Sacred: Mad, Black and Neurodivergent Theologies** Jessica Lee Caleb Day & Jonathan Dunn Warda Farah	**Panel: Neurodivergent Interventions in the Digital Age** Megan Fereday Kazimir Bielecki	
13:00-14:00	Lunch				
14:00-15:30	**Keynote: Lisa Johnson** Making Things Perfectly Queer Online only. Interactive live screenings across all Stream rooms.				
15:30-15:50	Break				
16:00-17:30	**Roundtable: Building Critical and Intersectional ADHD Studies (CI-ADHD Studies) Together** Dyi Dieuwertje Huijg, Eric Olund, Allison Moore, Rudolph P. Reyes II, Laura Basten, Warren Whitaker, Jane Dryden, Kat Stephens-Peace, Sohini Chatterjee, Kerry Mead, Inika Murkumbi, Naomi Lawson Jacobs, Katrin Heimann, Rajita Rajeshwar	**Panel: Arts-based Practices in Neurodiversity Research** Chris Bailey Sam Lucas Nina Danon & Niamh Gallagher Christian Hanser	**Panel: Neurodivergent Approaches to Artistic Writing and Performance** Matt Hargrave Nimalan Yoganathan Katharine Morgan	**Panel: Neuroqueer Worldmaking: Legal and Performed Resistances** Rebecca Jiggens Jess Orense	**Workshop: The Plurality Game** Liorah Hoek & Sanne van Driel

*Presentation will take place in Stream 1 (PCL054), with interactive live screenings in Streams 2, 3 and 4.

Day 2 | Wednesday 25 June

Time*	Stream 1 PCL054	Stream 2 PCL048	Stream 3 PCL050	Stream 4 CB0027	Workshop CB0025
09:30-10:00	**NDHums Network***				
10:00-11:00	**Invited speaker: Abs S. Ashley*** Divergent (A)socialities and Textualities in Post-Truth Landscapes				
11:00-11:20	Break				
11:30-13:00	**Keynote: M. Remi Yergeau*** Compulsively Yours: Ruminating on Trans-Mad Futures				
13:00-14:00	Lunch				
14:00-15:30	**Roundtable: How Critical is Critical Neurodiversity Studies? Reflecting on Intersectional Privilege, Self-(a)criticality and Micro-Politics**	**Panel: Uncontained: Stimming and Neurodivergent Creativity** Aby Watson Kate Fox Sean Yeager	**Panel: A Look in Time: Narrative Temporalities and Neuroqueer History** Mars da Silva Saude Bogi Takács Perelmutter Ash Paley Nat Paterson	**Panel: The Social Beyond Normativity** Nic Cottone Alfred Freeborn & Lisa Schmidt-Herzog	**Workshop: My Body in My Hands** Sam Lucas
15:30-15:50	Break				
16:00-17:30		**Panel: Neurodivergent Literatures: Forms, Feelings, and Futures of Resistance** Natasha Downs Prerna Tolani Lloyd Meadhbh Houston	**Panel: Decolonial Interventions in Critical Neurodiversity Studies** Mat Thompson Imane Kostet Mustafa Baqai	**Panel: From Lived Experience to Theoretical Framework: Perspectives on Neurodiversity from the Global South** Chunye Chai Marie Adrienne Robles Manalili Paras Arora	**Workshop: Neuroqueer Critical History** Katie Sutton

*Presentation will take place in Stream 1 (PCL054), with interactive live screenings in Streams 2, 3 and 4.

Day 3 | Thursday 26 June

Time*	Stream 1 PCL054	Stream 2 PCL048	Stream 3 PCL050	Stream 4 CB0027	Workshop CB0025
09:30-11:00	Workshop: How to Get Published at Bloomsbury Academic Ben Doyle	Panel: Against Normativity: Spectral Logics, Mad Knowledge, and Neurodivergent Lives Protichi Chatterjee El Dewar Paz Martínez Cassandra Lovelock	Panel: Critical Neurodiversity Studies: Social and Cultural Responsibility, Standpoint Theory and Critical Material Phenomenology Monique Botha Sahana V Rajan Jane Dryden	Panel: Crossing Borders: Neurodivergent and Neuroqueer Resistance in India Sanika Sardesai Meghan Manjari Mohanty Karen Coelho	Drop-in Session: NDHums Members of the Neurodivergent Humanities Network
11:00-11:20	Break				
11:30-13:00	Panel: Towards Neuroequality: Reframing Nonspeaking Communication, Cerebral Visual Impairment and Intellectual Disability Rachel Nelson Kendall (Kenny) Cowle Izy Utley & George Watts	Pre-launch Panel: Critical Neurodiversity Studies: Divergent Textualities in Literature and Culture Jenny Bergenmar, Louise Creechan, Anna Stenning & contributors.	Panel: Moving Away from Gender and Sexual Hierarchies: Neuroqueer Interventions Seyi Keyamo Kate Ellis & Elizabeth Straus Ruby Hake	Panel: Neurodivergent Worlds: Urban Space, Environmental Harm, and Species Relations Miriam Serini Aathira A S & Githin Gigi Mannakunnil Ombre Tarragnat Laura Restrepo Giraldo	Workshop: How to NEUROMANCE Aiyana Goodfellow Anisa Mawji
13:00-14:00	Lunch				
14:00-15:30	**Keynote: Daniel Oliver & Claudia Palazzo*** Performance Dork: Neurotransgressive Performance Lecture				
15:30-15:50	Break				
16:00-17:30		Panel: What the Voice Carries Adriana Minu Adam Nasser Benmakhlouf Grace Denton	Panel: Contested Borders: Neurodivergent Lives, Legal Epistemologies, Co-operative Working and Structural Violence Eilís Ní Chaoimh Kalyani Mehta Steve Graby	Panel: Indigenous Interventions in Neurodivergence, Storytelling, and Care Milo Ira Patty Douglas & Haley Clark Lisa Fernandes Sree Lekshmi Mini Suresh	
17:30-17:45	Break				
17:45-18:00	Closing				

*Presentation will take place in Stream 1 (PCL054), with interactive live screenings in Streams 2, 3 and 4.

Keynote presentations

Lisa Johnson (Online)
Making Things Perfectly Neuroqueer

Taking up *Fatal Attraction* (1987) as my case study, this presentation will bring forward a new method of textual analysis designed to read for glimpses of liberatory neuroqueer stories, sometimes tucked in places that would seem to harm us the most.

In the creative theoretical tradition of resisting readers, oppositional gazes, queer eyes, and crip spins, my call to make things perfectly neuroqueer asks the text—and the political realities that animate it—to function differently from its original intentions to silence, destroy, and abandon its neurodivergent inhabitants.

Bio: Lisa Johnson (she/her) is a crip theorist, adoptive mom, and small dog fanatic. As Professor and Director of Women's and Gender Studies at University of South Carolina Upstate, she teaches courses on feminist disability studies, mad feminism, girlhood studies, and LGBTQ studies. Her current research focuses on neuroqueer feminism and borderline personality disorder, a controversial and historically feminized diagnosis that can be usefully reframed through the destigmatizing contexts of neuroqueer theory and feminist public health. With her co-author/co-editor, Robert McRuer, she has also created and explored the concept of cripistemologies in the *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies* in a double issue in 2014 and a 10th anniversary issue in 2024. Her work has appeared in a variety of academic journals, including *Signs*, *Discourse*, *Feminist Studies*, *Feminist Formations*, *Social Text*, and *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*. Her books include *Girl in Need of a Tourniquet*, *On the Literary Nonfiction of Nancy Mairs*, *Third Wave Feminism and Television*, and *Jane Sexes It Up*.

Daniel Oliver, performing with Claudia Palazzo
Performance Dork: Neurotransgressive Performance Lecture

This will be a participatory performance lecture adapted from Daniel's show *Performance Dork*, recontextualised for this conference. It will be a dyspraxic-led exploration of magic, roleplay and a monotropic investment in experimental performance art that is part immersive fantasy show, part clothing optional improvised neurodivergent performance art chaos ritual, and part executively dysfunctional discussion space.

Music: Steve Blake

Flags: The piece has optional audience participation, possible nudity, loud noises, and mess. Conference participants are free to not participate, and attend from a different room that will be hosting a livestream of the keynote.

M. Remi Yergeau
Compulsively Yours: Ruminating on Trans-Mad Futures

This presentation examines how rhetorics of fixation structure popular understandings of what it means to be transgender. Among other questions, I explore how psychiatric self-help content frequently deploys the rhetorical tactics of anti-trans gatekeepers in its curation of fixation. These rhetorical tactics by and large understand transness as a pathological cultural obsession, as perseveration run amok.

In turning to trans-mad rituals, I am less interested in how anti-trans actors cultivate the personal transformation of their newfound bigoted cohorts than I am in thwarting these actors' demolition of trans life. How might we narrate the nuances of trans-mad distress, joy, pain, and obsession in ways that ensure trans-mad futures? How might we ethically respond to rhetorics of distress in a politically charged milieu that actively hinders living and thriving for trans and neurodivergent people?

Bio: M. Remi Yergeau (they/them/theirs) is an Associate Professor of Communication and Media Studies at Carleton University. They are the author of *Authoring Autism: On Rhetoric and Neurological Queerness* and one of many co-authors of *Technoskepticism: Between Possibility and Refusal*. Yergeau is currently at work on a few individual and collaborative projects that variously focus on anti-trans memes (with V. Jo Hsu), digital optimism (with the DISCO Network), as well as crip data and trans-mad perseveration (with lots of donuts). Presently, they serve as a co-PI for the DISCO Network, which receives support from the Mellon Foundation, and they are also a co-PI for "Crip Computing," which receives support from the Mozilla Foundation's Responsible Computing Challenge. Finally, and most importantly, Yergeau is obsessed with the Electric Light Orchestra (ELO).

Bio: Daniel Oliver (he/him) is a lecturer at Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, London in the degree program Performance and Contemporary Art. His research, which is both practice-led and theoretical, focuses on the roles and experiences of neurodiversity in contemporary, experimental performance. Alongside his academic role, Daniel creates solo and collaborative performances that take a neurodivergent-led and wilfully calamitous approach to world-building, audience participation, immersion, comedy, and pretence. His performances and workshops have been presented throughout the United Kingdom and overseas for 20 years. His publications on awkwardness and neurodiversity include *Awkwoods: Daniel Oliver's Dyspraxic Adventures in Participatory Performance*, published by the Live Art Development Agency.

Bio: Claudia Palazzo (she/her) is a London born artist working at the intersections and contradictions of dance, performance art, installation and alternative cabaret. It is often poetic, unmanageable, meditative and violent in its structure. Influenced by roots in nightclub culture, inner-city structures and psychophysical training. Her work often exists in a place of tension using the interplay between inherent strength and the impact of damage. Using embodiment and the live experience as a way of allowing transference and mutual recognition with each other and with objects as a way of processing and harnessing the power of a temporary community. Claudia is often preoccupied with how we embody things we don't talk about and how dancing can exist as mystery, affirmation and transformation. Her work is concerned with alternatives to individualism whilst also trying to decensor her autobiography. Claudia is currently looking for things to represent her dancing body in her absence and wonders how we can challenge ableist ideals of mobility without succumbing to soft control that is disguised as care. Claudia has also had a 15+ year career as a performer in the work of many artists and choreographers.

Invited speakers

Diana Beljaars
Spatialising Neurodiversity: Compulsive Geographies

When arguing that neurodiversity entails a different perception and understanding of the world, what world or worlds are we referring to? How can we describe these worlds without employing neurotypical frameworks of reference and staying true to the experience? This talk will offer such a way by focusing on compulsive affects, urges, and action. Taking a spatial approach and employing postphenomenological and post-humanist theories, and seeing compulsions as body-world relations, I critically deconstruct neurotypical environments to then reconstruct compulsive worlds. These worlds consist of multiple kinds of dynamic material constellations that require compulsive affirmation, stabilisation, and disruption. This work is based on narrative and multiple ethnographic methods and was conducted as collaborative research with 15 Tourettic people who also had autistic, ADHD, OCD, anxiety, and depression sensibilities. As such, this work contributes to critical neurodiversity studies a set of ordering principles within the neurodivergent experiential realm.

Bio: Diana Beljaars (she/her) is a research associate at the Swansea University Medical School. She is interested in spatial manifestations of medicalised phenomena, as well as the knowledge formation and institutional responses to them. As such, her work draws on human geography, medical humanities, continental philosophy, disability studies, and compulsion-related neuropsychiatry. Currently, she mostly works on mechanisms of (in)access to primary and emergency care for marginalised groups and sits on the Ministerial Advisory Group for Neurodiversity in Wales. In her first monograph *Compulsive Body Spaces* (Routledge, 2022) she set out a spatial theory for Tourettic compulsion. Her work also appears in *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology*, *GeoHumanities*, and she co-edited *Civic Spaces and Desire* (Routledge, 2019).

Abs S. Ashley
Divergent (A)socialities and Textualities in Post-Truth Landscapes

What does it mean to story neurominoritarian desires and futures, when the act of telling stories has become so fraught?

Possibilities of neurodivergent flourishing are increasingly threatened by dominant societal counter-narratives that enforce increasingly narrow ideals of 'normal' across systemic, institutional, and social contexts. Though certainly ableist, these are also colonial projects which uphold white supremacist, cissexist, heteronormative and capitalist ideals. These 'narratives of neuronormativity' rely on the incoherence of anti-intellectualism and are scaffolded by the cultural imaginaries that invite authority from former children's authors and far-right politicians. Yet, such narratives have tangibly manifested in political, legal, and medical endeavours which disproportionately harm nonconforming lives: disability funding cuts, EDI/DEI rollbacks, anti-trans legislation.

Such actions stifle neurominoritarian voices and desires along multiple trajectories. Even as the 'neurodiversity' concept is everywhere, and remains a valuable paradigm of thought, it is now overrepresented as a signifier. Neurodivergent subjectivities are dominantly presented in increasingly individualistic ways and by a few select knowers, or are subject to the reductive collapsing of experience in the popular imagination.

This talk examines the affectual and material landscapes that emerge from neurodivergent literary outputs, to disrupt dominant deficit-based narratives of asociality or harm and instead gesture towards ideas of commonality and interdependence. These approaches to storying offer valuable starting points for a more coalitional future in the face of the violently neuronormative crisis of the present.

Bio: Abs S. Ashley (they/them) is Lecturer in English at the University of Bristol. Their work explores the intersections of neurodivergence, gender dissidence and sociality in contemporary literature. Abs's monograph *Entangled Textualities*, is forthcoming, and their research has been published in *Transgender Studies Quarterly*, *Autism*, and *Neurodivergent Connection* among other places.

Building Critical and Intersectional ADHD Studies (CI-ADHD Studies) Together
Chair: Dyi Dieuwertje Huijg

Participants: Eric Olund, Allison Moore, Rudolph P. Reyes II, Laura Basten, Warren Whitaker, Jane Dryden, Kat Stephens-Peace, Sohini Chatterjee, Kerry Mead, Inika Murkumbi, Naomi Lawson Jacobs, Katrin Heimann, Rajita Rajeshwar

This roundtable offers an interdisciplinary group of ADHD thinkers – who, individually and collaboratively, have started, intersectionally and critically, to write about and research ADHDness, ADHD lives and anti-ADHD neuroableism – to reflect on 'Building Critical and Intersectional ADHD Studies (CI-ADHD Studies) Together'. Dr Dyi Huijg will start with a brief presentation on the 'echo chamber of ADHD knowledge construction'. After this, the roundtable participants will have a conversation with each other in which they explore what Critical and Intersectional ADHD Studies is and can offer, what it should and should not be, why we need it (or do not need it), and how it sits with and within other fields of studies, such as Critical Disability Studies, Critical Neurodiversity Studies, Mad Studies and Intersectionality Studies. The outcome of this roundtable will be published in the special issue 'Critical and Intersectional ADHD Thought: ADHDers Think Back' (guest editors Dr Dyi D. Huijg and Dr Eric Olund, *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies).*

Critical Neurodiversity Studies: Divergent Textualities in Literature and Culture
Pre-launch Panel
Panellists: Jenny Bergenmar, Louise Creechan, Anna Stenning, Leni Van Goidsenhoven, Abs S. Ashley, Liselotte Van der Gucht, Sarinah O'Donoghue, Alice Hagopian, Laura Seymour

Respondent: Ria Cheyne

In anticipation of their forthcoming edited collection, editors and contributors reflect on the core questions addressed in the volume: what would a neurodivergent critical framework for literary studies look like? How might we move beyond tracing representations of neurodivergence in literature and culture and questions of mimesis and authenticity, to consider how neurodivergence operates at the level of text in literary and cultural enquiry?
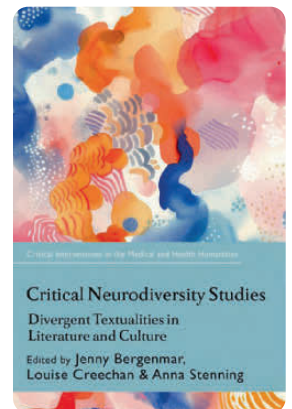
How Critical is Critical Neurodiversity Studies? Reflecting on Intersectional Privilege, Self-(a)criticality and Micro-Politics
Chair: Dyi Dieuwertje Huijg

This open roundtable offers an opportunity to critically reflect on Critical Neurodiversity Studies. Rather than merely focussing on ideas, the panellists will talk with each other about what *doing* Critical Neurodiversity Studies actually means and requires, and the audience is invited to contribute too. This roundtable starts with the realisation that Critical Neurodiversity Studies requires a theory and a praxis of intersectional social justice at various levels: the field, the 'group' as well as the interpersonal and personal levels. This implies that we have to address the tension between critically thinking about neurodiversity and critically *doing* neurodiversity studies. Specifically, this panel raises that such criticality requires us to intersectionally reflect on the role of privilege, self-criticality and the lack thereof, and the micro-politics of those doing the (critical) study of neurodiversity, and on the implications these doings and non-doings have on the field, on our interpersonal relations, and on us as individuals and, in turn, how that impacts what Critical Neurodiversity Studies 'is'.

Topics that we might explore in the roundtable can be e.g. (non-)accountability; playing lip service to intersectionality; *not* 'walking the talk'; the tension between theoretical and empirical research; entitlement and structural privilege; prioritising neurodivergence and neuroableism over other social identities, inequalities and injustices; the difference between being challenged and being bullied; citational violence; gatekeeping; heroes and hero culture; vindictiveness and harm; and punitive versus transformative justice.

Workshops

How to Get Published at Bloomsbury Academic
Facilitator: Ben Doyle

A presentation on putting together a book proposal and managing the thesis to book transition, followed by a Q&A. No need to register - you can join in person or online.

How to NEUROMANCE:
Falling in love with (neuro)divergence and building community-led mental health care
Facilitators: Aiyana Goodfellow & Anisa Mawji

How to NEUROMANCE is an interactive workshop where you will learn how to 'fall in love with neurodivergence'. We will explore radical neurodivergence and co-design alternatives to mainstream mental healthcare.

About NEUROMANCERS: NEUROMANCERS is a peer-led organisation providing autonomous, abolitionist, and accessible mental health care for and by the neurodivergent+ community.

The Plurality Game
Facilitators: Liorah Hoek & Sanne van Driel

Within critical neurodiversity studies the experience of having plural personalities is under-researched. In this session, we will explore together what plurality can bring to critical neurodiversity studies and how critical neurodiversity studies could add to plurality. This workshop takes the form of a game. Playfully we explore, embody and experience a multitude of positions on these topics. By switching, a specific mechanism of people with plural identities, we will be challenged to change positions and hold contradictory positions. To mess up and delve into the possibilities and limits of a critical neurodiversity perspective on plurality.

Flags: A maximum of 20 players can participate at once.

ND Hums Drop-in Session
Facilitators: Members of the Neurodivergent Humanities Network

A drop-in session for those interested in finding out more about the network and its activities. No need to register - just drop by.

A note about workshops

Apart from 'How to Get Published at Bloomsbury Academic' which is hybrid, the workshops are in-person only and that spaces are limited. As such, we ask you to register for these sessions using the QR code or by visiting our website:

ndhumanities.com/programme

Neuroqueer Critical History
Facilitator: Katie Sutton

Building on work problematizing ideas of norms in the history of medicine and sexual science, the workshop will complement the wider conference by going on a deep critical dive into early 20th-century sources pivotal in shaping diagnoses such as autism and ADHD, reading these through the intersectional lens of gender/queer, critical disability/crip, and critical race studies. Emphasis will be placed on workshopping archival sources that thematize neuro- and gender diversity in intersecting ways. There will be opportunities to connect the discussion of archival sources with participant's own research and methods. ECR participation is actively encouraged.

My Body in My Hands
Facilitator: Sam Lucas

This drop-in workshop called My Body in My Hands is inviting people to respond immediately to the provocation of 'How does it feel in your body?'. By taking a small piece of clay and creating a palm sized object through the embodied, haptic experience of touching clay they will be engaging in neuroscribbling in clay which is a form of stimming or self-regulating. The resulting dialogic objects follow the idea that form follows feeling and are imbued with unarticulated feelings. With permission, these objects will be photographed and added to an online social media gallery of others, in a research project that began in 2022 and is ongoing.

Flags: Physical interaction with clay.

Clay being shaped by "My Body in My Hands" workshop participant.
Photo credit: Sam Lucas

Guidelines for participation in the Conference

We are committed to making this conference as respectful, inclusive, accessible and enjoyable as possible. We ask you to observe the following principles, which have been adapted from the Scottish Trans Code of Conduct (**scottishtrans.org/code-of-conduct/**)

With thanks to Sage Brice for adapting these guidelines, and to Durham's Institute for Medical Humanities for their contribution to Scottish Trans for their use.

Respectful communication

- Use the names and pronouns that others have specified (if you are unsure, ask, or use "they").
- Be inclusive and supportive of those who are less confident or who have diverse communication styles.
- Friendly constructive discussion is welcomed but personal insults and demeaning or argumentative comments are not acceptable.

Equality and Diversity

- Be respectful of people's lived experience, identities, names and pronouns.
- Do not place pressure on people to disclose their lived experience or make assumptions about what their lived experience might be.
- Avoid negative comments, assumptions and stereotyping of people on the basis of their gender, gender identity, gender expression, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, nationality, class, disability, religion, beliefs, age, accent or culture.

Permissions

- Keep personal information shared at this event about others private and only share if they have given you permission.
- Get permission before sharing the work of any attendee, including on personal blogs, websites and social networking sites, e.g. Facebook.
- Ensure you have permission from everyone with their face visible in shot before taking a photograph.

General behaviour

- Attendees may leave the session at any time without explanation.
- The behaviours of others are never justification for anyone to disregard these guidelines in response.
- Shouting, swearing, harassing, threatening or humiliating behaviour (verbal, physical or sexual) towards others is unacceptable.

What happens if these guidelines are disregarded?

Please let us know as soon as possible if you experience or witness anything that makes you feel uncomfortable. Even if you do not want anything done, please still let us know.

Who you can talk to if you have concerns

In the first instance, you can talk to Carolyn Blake, one of the conference organising team who will be running the conference helpdesk. You may alternatively wish to speak to Louise Creechan, lead conference organiser and the EDI Lead for the Discovery Research Platform for Medical Humanities at Durham University (**louise.creechan@durham.ac.uk**). You will be able to identify our conference organising team by their brightly coloured bows, who will be able to direct you to the relevant person.

Please feel able to look after yourself and your own needs during the Conference.

We hope that you will find the Conference a stimulating and rewarding experience. At the same time, we understand that participating in a 3-day academic event can often be tiring and sometimes overwhelming. We also recognise that the Conference may address topics that you might find sensitive, difficult, or emotionally challenging. We would like all attendees to feel enabled to prioritise their own wellbeing during the Conference. This might mean taking an unscheduled break during sessions, or recharging your batteries by spending some time alone during breaks or after the Conference has finished for the day.

If you need to take a break from, or leave, a session for whatever reason, please feel free to do so. We will have the Sensory Den and dedicated 'quieter space' within the Palatine Centre and an additional 'quieter space' in the Confluence Building. The venue also has close proximity to green spaces: all conference delegates should feel able to use these spaces as and when they need them.

All conference presentations will be recorded and made available for a limited time on a password protected section of our conference website, so you can catch up later if you miss a session.

Grounds of St. Mary's College.
Photo credit: Durham University

Practical information

Accessibility

During the conference, you are welcome to engage with the presentations and activities as you feel most comfortable; we only ask that participants are mindful of others.

- Feel free to stand, stim, or move around during talks.
- You may bring pillows/cushions/yoga mats with you.
- You are welcome to wear headphones, ear plugs, or loops.
- Live transcription will be enabled for all presentations.
- If you would prefer to ask questions or contribute to discussions in writing or via the chat function on Zoom, our room hosts/online producers will facilitate this.
- Keynote and invited speaker presentations will be live streamed into additional conference rooms so that participants can choose to watch in quieter rooms.
- Remember to take breaks. We will be recording all papers with agreement of the speakers. These recordings will be available for one month after the conference via a password protected section of the website to those registered for the conference.

Conference staff will be wearing a brightly coloured florist's bow. You may approach any member of the organising team or hosting staff with questions.

Room hosts and runners will be able to guide you between venues and will ensure that the sessions run smoothly.

Representatives from the Neurodivergent Humanities Network will be wearing network badges.

While we have been mindful of accessibility throughout our planning, there may be specific requirements that we have missed. Do not hesitate to get in touch with the conference team – either before or during the event – if you would like to make us aware of any additional measures that we can put into place.

To contact the conference team, email **imh.mail@durham.ac.uk** or speak to someone at the registration desk.

Room PLC048 (Stream 2).
Photo credit: Durham University

The Palatine Centre
Stockton Rd, Durham DH1 3LE

Situated on Stockton Road within Durham University's Lower Mountjoy site, the Palatine Centre provides:
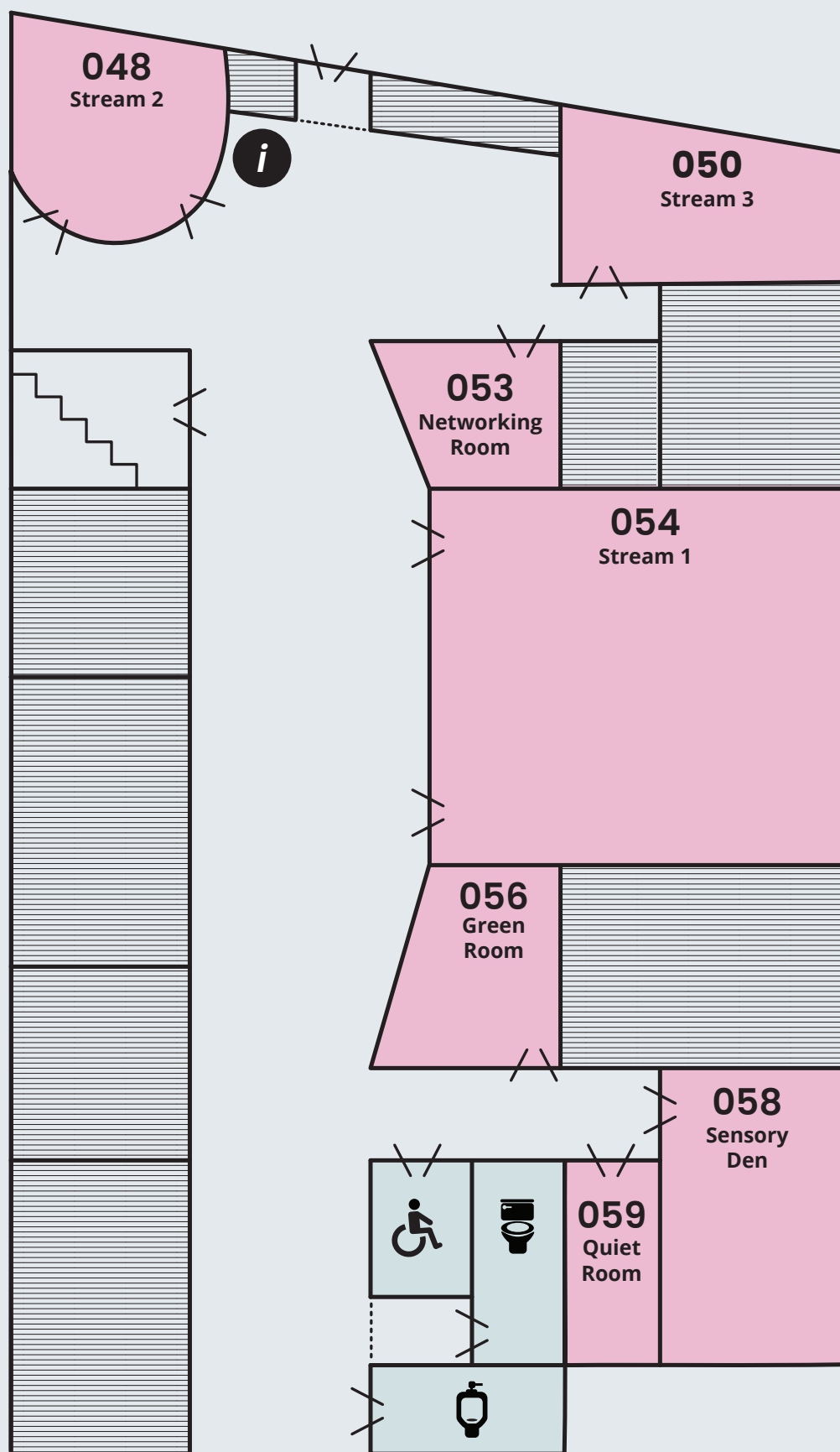
- Step-free access: The building offers step-free access throughout, ensuring ease of movement for wheelchair users and those with mobility impairments.
- Accessible and all-gender toilets: Accessible and all-gender toilet facilities are available on all floors.
- A Changing Places toilet : A Changing Places toilet is located on the ground floor, equipped with an adjustable changing bench and a powered overhead hoist.
- Hearing Assistance: A fixed hearing loop system is available to support attendees with hearing impairments. Please ask our team if you require any assistance with this.
- Lift Access: Standard lifts provide access to all floors, featuring tactile markings and audible floor indicators to assist visually impaired users.
- All seminar rooms and lecture theatres have dimmable lights, with considerations for acoustics and space to ensure comfortable movement for all participants.
- Access to green space: There are woodland and river walks within close proximity.
- Islamic prayer room: There is an Islamic prayer room at Grey College (within a 10-minute uphill walk) which requires use of one the following codes: 14789 or 45832. More information about the facilities available can be found on this webpage: **duisoccom.wordpress.com/prayer-rooms**
- Multi-faith room: A Quiet Room is also available within a ten-minute walk in the Teaching and Learning Centre. The room (TLC126) is on the first floor and has lift access.
- Lunch will be provided – you're welcome to take it outside.

The Confluence Building
Lower Mountjoy, South Road, Durham DH1 3LE

A short distance from the Palatine Centre, several of our conference Streams are held on the ground floor of the Confluence Building. This building offers:

- Step-free access: The building offers step-free access throughout, ensuring ease of movement for wheelchair users and those with mobility impairments.
- Accessible and all-gender toilets: Accessible and all-gender toilet facilities are available on the ground floor, close to the main entrance, and on Levels 1 and 2, ahead of the lift exit.
- Hearing Assistance: A fixed hearing loop system is available to support attendees with hearing impairments. There is also a portable loop system available at the reception desk. Please ask our team if you require any assistance with this.
- Lift Access: Standard lifts provide access to all floors, featuring tactile markings and audible floor indicators to assist visually impaired users.
- All rooms have dimmable lights, with considerations for acoustics and space to ensure comfortable movement for all participants.
- Access to green space: There are woodland and river walks within close proximity.
- Islamic prayer room: There is an Islamic prayer room at Grey College (within a 10-minute uphill walk) which requires use of one the following codes to access: 14789 or 45832. More information about the facilities available can be found on this webpage: **duisoccom.wordpress.com/prayer-rooms**
- Multi-faith room: A Quiet Room is also available within a ten-minute walk in the Teaching and Learning Centre. The room (TLC126) is on the first floor and has lift access.

Radisson Blu Hotel
Frankland Lane, Durham DH1 5TA

- Our conference dinner will be held at the Radisson Blu Hotel near the Durham city centre on Wednesday, the 25th of June. Reception will be open from 6.30PM, with the meal starting at 7PM for attendees joining us for the dinner.
- Conference attendees who have not booked a dinner space are also welcome to join us at the Hotel bar to celebrate the critical discussions, insightful conversations and meaningful connections we hope the conference has sparked. Please note that you may not bring external food into the venue. There are plenty of dining options to be found nearby around the Durham city centre.

Directions to the Radisson Blu Hotel can be found on this webpage:
radissonhotels.com/en-us/hotels/radisson-blu-durham/contact

Map of the Palatine Centre

048
Stream 2

i

050
Stream 3

053
Networking Room

054
Stream 1

056
Green Room

058
Sensory Den

059
Quiet Room

Room capacity

Palatine Centre:

048: 81 people

050: 32 people

053: 15 people

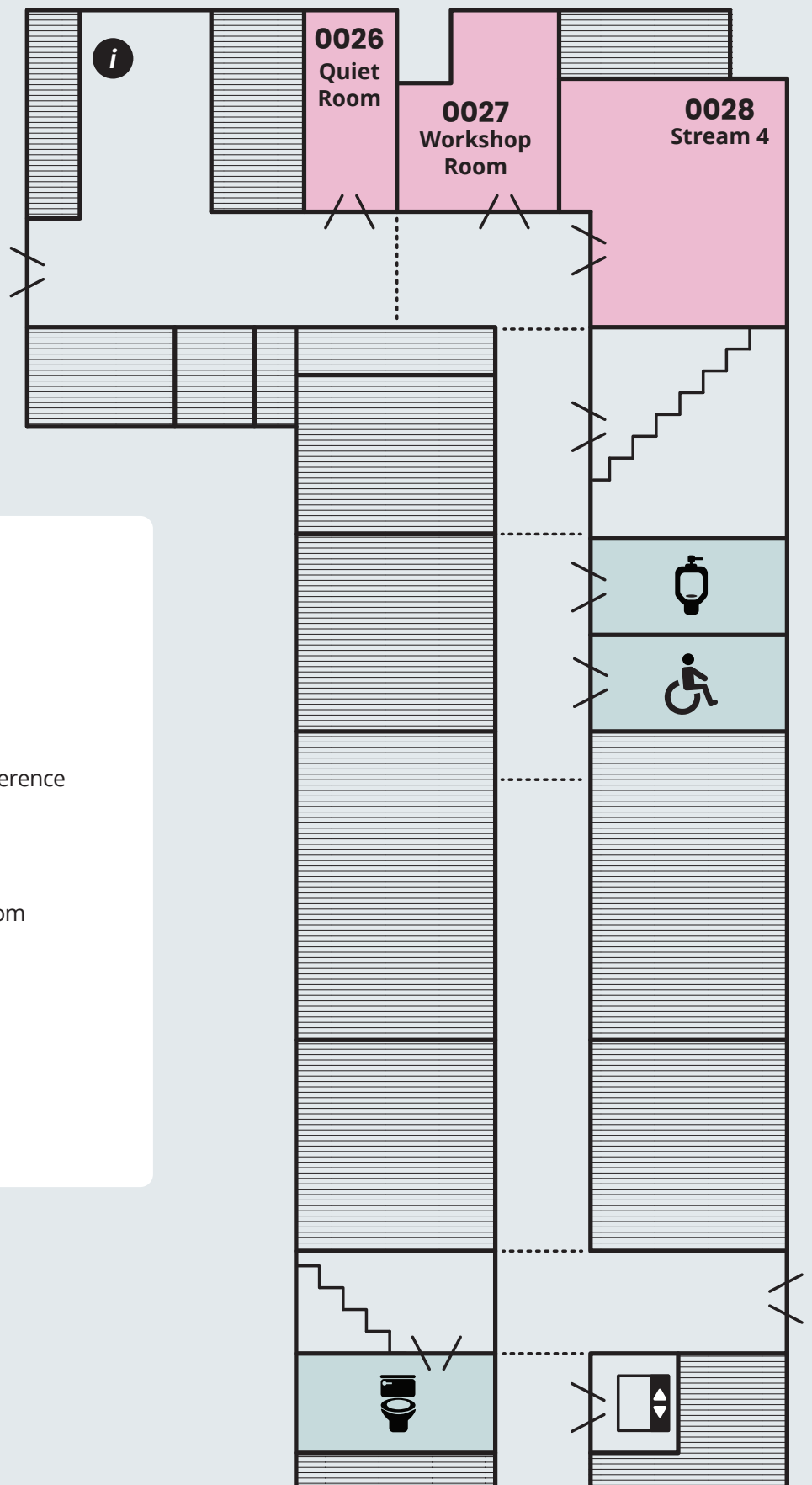**054:** 61 people

056: 11 people

058: 17 people

059: 8 people

Confluence Building:

0026: 25 people

0027: 27 people

0028: 28 people

Additional accessible, gender neutral and Changing Places bathrooms this way

Key

▨ (light blue)	Bathrooms
▨ (pink)	Conference room
▤	Not in use by conference
ⓘ	Information point
♿	Accessible bathroom
\ /	Doors
⌐	Stairs
▯	Lift

0026 Quiet Room

0027 Workshop Room

0028 Stream 4

Additional accessible and gender neutral bathrooms this way 🚽 ♿ ↓

Map of the Confluence Building

Dedicated rooms

In addition to the lecture theatres and seminar rooms where the conference papers will be presented, we will be offering the following dedicated rooms within the venue as part of our commitment to meet the access and inclusion needs of as many potential attendees, whether in person or online, as we possibly can.

Quiet Room (PCL059 and CB0026)

A quiet space with dimmed lighting. Personal laptops, tablets and mobile phones are allowed – please use headphones and be aware of sound levels for those around you. The room contains some seating and desk space. A small number of yoga mats are provided for stretching. Please feel free to bring your own mat and pillows.

The Sensory Den (PCL058)

The Sensory Den will be providing a fully equipped, calming sensory space at the conference – a safe and supportive environment for anyone who may need a break or moment of regulation during the day. The room features a range of sensory tools including bubble tubes, fibre optics, interactive lights, tactile toys, and soothing music. Whether you need to ground yourself, decompress, or simply take a breather, The Sensory Den is there to offer comfort, calm, and connection throughout the event.

Website: **thesensoryden.co.uk**

Networking Room (PCL053)

A space with room for movement and ample seating designed to foster connection and conversation, with optional prompts provided by our Creative Facilitation Unit.

Green Room (PCL056)

A space in the Palatine Centre for those who would like to practice or warm-up before their presentation or performance paper. Please note that this room is also doubling as a storage room – it contains some furniture that has been removed from other venues.
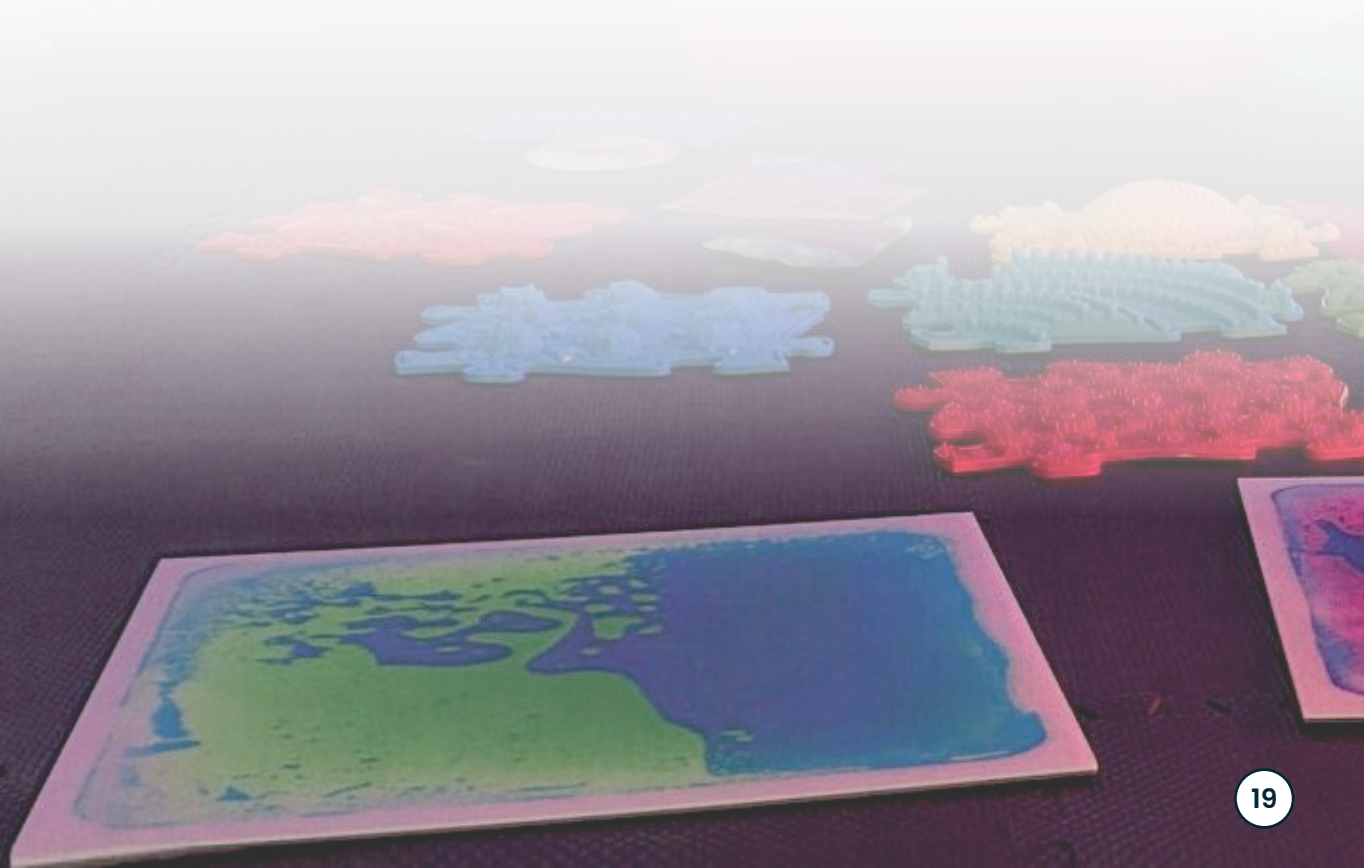
Social media

Feel free to share posts about the conference on social media but please be mindful not to share photos of others or information about their work without prior permission.

The conference team may wish to photograph you during the conference. These images may be used on IMH and Neurodivergent Humanities websites and social media. If you do not wish to be photographed, please wear the shiny sticker provided in your conference packs.

The IMH and Neurodivergent Humanities Network will be sharing information about the conference via Bluesky and LinkedIn. You can follow us here:

@ndhumanities.bsky.social

@durhamimh.bsky.social

linkedin.com/company/institute-for-medical-humanities

Recordings

We would like, for access reasons, to record the conference presentations and performances. These recordings will be made available to conference participants on a password protected section of the conference website for one month after the conference. After this point, the videos will be deleted.

The Q&A in each session will not be recorded.

To access the recordings, please scan the QR code or visit the website: **ndhumanities.com/programme**

The password has been sent to all delegates via email.

Some of the sensory tools in the Sensory Den, including fibre optics and tactile toys.

Photo credit: The Sensory Den

Traffic Light Communication Initiation System

We warmly invite conference attendees to participate in a traffic-light system to facilitate communication, using the coloured stickers and badges included in your conference pack.*

Red – here to observe

Please do not approach me to talk; I would prefer to listen only.

Yellow – no strangers please

I am happy to talk to people I have met before but would prefer not to be approached by people I do not already know. I may initiate conversation with others, if I feel comfortable.

Green – seeking communication

I am keen to speak to other attendees and would be happy for anyone to initiate conversation.

Please feel free to change your sticker at any time to suit your mood and energy levels.

*This system is adapted from Asterion, supporting neurodiversity in Classics (asterion.uk).

Traffice lights.
Photo credit: Birk Enwald on Unsplash

We acknowledge the continued threat to health posed by COVID-19 and our responsibility as organisers to have approaches in place to minimise the spread of airborne viruses. We encourage everybody to wear a facemask if able, and to be mindful of the preferences and safety of attendees. If you can't wear a facemask, that's OK – we want everyone to feel comfortable and welcome at the conference.

FFP3 masks have been provided in the conference packs. They are also available at the conference registration desk, where we have supplies of hand sanitiser.

The rooms in the Palatine Centre are mechanically ventilated and supplied with filtered, tempered fresh air. The filtration levels provided are G4 Pleated Panel Filters and F7 Bag Filters which are standard for ventilation systems serving conference, teaching and office environments.

Ventilation in the Confluence Building is achieved through openable windows and local heat recovery ventiltion units (HRUs) in each room.

Discord server

We are delighted to offer a private Discord server as an online networking space to allow attendees – both in-person and remote – to interact during the conference. You can join using the following invite link: **discord.gg/tJa96TdvW6**

Once you have registered, you'll be asked to agree to our server terms & conditions and to verify your identity by entering the email that you used to register for the conference.

After you've been approved, you'll have to wait ten minutes before you're able to post or take part in video discussions. We recommend using this time to familiarise yourself with the content in our '#how-to-use-discord' guide and '#code-of-conduct' channels.

Please note that the conference team can only approve joining requests during the working day and the process can take up to 3 hours.

To keep the server secure, it will be moderated via Discord's AutoMod function. Conference staff will also be checking it once a day.

If you run into any problems using Discord, please don't hesitate to contact us by emailing **imh.events@durham.ac.uk**.

The Discord server for the conference will close down on Friday 4 July 2025. Please remember to make a note of any resources (useful links, articles) shared on the platform before this date.

Useful contacts

Our team work during normal office hours (Monday to Friday 09.00 to 17.00) and are not available to provide support outside of those hours. You can contact them on the conference phone (+44 (0)744 815 6711) or via **imh.events@durham.ac.uk**.

The following contacts might be useful out of hours or in case of emergencies:

- Durham University Security: +44 (0)191 334 2222
- Non-emergency medical advice and asssistance: 111
- Non-emergency police assistance: 101
- Emergency services (police, fire brigade, ambulance or coastguard): 999 or 112

WiFi

If you're visiting Durham University and don't have access to eduroam, we've got you covered.

The University's wireless partner, Sky Wifi, provides wireless across the whole campus via TheCloud@Durham.

TheCloud@Durham is free to access, so you can check emails, meet online and browse the web whilst you're here.

Set up

Create a free TheCloud account at the Cloud Wifi webpage or on the login page that appears when you first try to access the network. Once you've set up your account, you can access the guest wifi network on your devices free of charge.

How to access

- Enable wifi on your device
- Select TheCloud@Durham from the list of available networks
- Log in with your TheCloud account details

Slido

We will be using Slido - an online Q&A platform - for the Q&A segment of the keynote and invited speaker sessions. Accessible via smartphones, tablets and computers, Slido enables participants to easily submit and upvote questions during talks.

How to take part

To join the Slido, you can either use the link shared during the session or enter the event code at **slido.com**.

Palatine Centre hallway.
Photo credit: Durham University

Joining online

Critical Neurodiversity Studies: Directions/Intersections/Contradictions is a fully hybrid conference. This means that every talk and panel (excluding workshops) will be available in-person and online via Zoom. Each will have an online producer on-hand to ensure the smooth running of the session.

If you want to attend an in-person session but find that the room is at capacity, there are multiple spaces within the conference venues and surrounding areas where you can sit and join online. These include any of the conference Stream or Workshop rooms (see maps on page 17 & 18) that are not being used by a session at the time. You can identify which rooms are not in use by looking for shaded-in squares on the programme (see pages 4-6 for the timetable).

We will be recording all papers with agreement of the speakers. These recordings will be available for one month after the conference via a password protected section of the website to those registered for the conference.

How to join

The link to each session stream is embedded in the online programme at **ndhumanities.com/programme**. Once edited, recordings will also be uploaded to the same place.

The password to this area has been sent to all delegates via email.

A note about Keynote and invited speakers

In-person Keynote and invited speaker talks will be delivered in Stream 1 while simultaneously being live-streamed in Streams 2, 3 and 4. Each of these rooms will have a dedicated host to facilitate Q&A sessions.

About the Conference organisers

Critical Neurodiversity Studies: Directions/Intersections/Contradictions is brought to you by the Neurodivergent Humanities Network and The Measurement Lab in the Discovery Research Platform for Medical Humanities at Durham University.

The Neurodivergent Humanities Network

The Neurodivergent Humanities Network is a safe and generative space that accommodates the diverse, individual needs of scholars working in the humanities, while offering a shared sense of community and support.

We believe that centering neurodivergent perspectives in academia and beyond will pave new avenues for collaboration, research, and methodological development. We explore new modes of thinking, being, and doing research in ways that better support our needs within and beyond institutional structures and practices. The research model we are developing will reject the prevailing deficit model in neurodivergence discourse; we seek to reframe best practices as teaching, learning, and research methods that can support the diverse needs and skills within our community in an academic environment.

ndhumanities.com
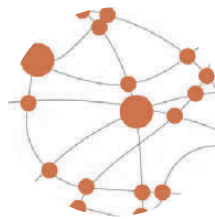
The Measurement Lab

The Measurement Lab examines the social, cultural, political and historical forces that shape the meaning and function of measurement in medicine, health and health sciences. It explores how these forces guide how we think about what is 'normal' and 'pathological', what is 'divergent' or 'typical', and how measurement can render some people and their health experiences visible or keep them invisible.

The Measurement Lab was co-led by Louise Creechan and Robert Chapman as part of the Critical Neurodiversity Studies takeover in 2024–2025.

medhumsplatform.org/labs/measurement

The Discovery Research Platform for Medical Humanities

The Discovery Research Platform for Medical Humanities (DRP-MH) brings different groups of people together to collaborate in tackling barriers – of diversity, risk, evidence and scale – faced in medical humanities research. It aims to empower health and wellbeing researchers from different sectors, disciplines, and areas of expertise to co-develop new approaches to widespread health challenges.

The Platform is supported by Durham University's Institute for Medical Humanities and funded by Wellcome until 2030.

medhumsplatform.org

The Institute for Medical Humanities, Durham University

The Institute for Medical Humanities conducts interdisciplinary research into what we call 'hidden experience' and investigates experiences of health and illness which are marginalised, difficult, unspeakable, unacknowledged, or invisible. Our aim is to transform knowledge within and beyond the critical medical humanities, improve health policy and practice, and benefit the lives of communities and individuals.

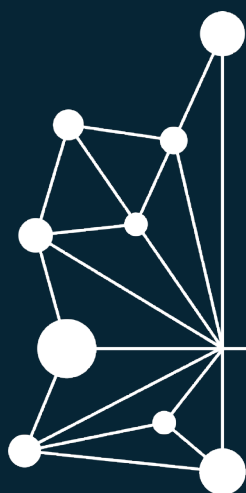**durham.ac.uk/research/institutes-and-centres/medical-humanities**

Thank you

We would like to offer a huge and heartfelt thank you to everyone who is working so hard to make *Critical Neurodiversity Studies: Directions/Intersections/Contradictions* the best possible experience. Thank you to Robert Chapman for their work envisioning the event and co-producing the conference programme. Thank you to the members of the conference working group - Nicola Simonetti, Claire Jeantils, Daniel P. Jones, Evelyn Tehrani, David Lowther, Melanie Earnshaw, and James Fox-Robinson - for being extremely generous with their time in planning and thinking through the complex logistics of the event. To the conference production team – Mary Robson, Carolyn Blake, Victoria Patton, Becca Doggwiler – for actually making the event happen. Thank you to those external collaborators who offered their knowledge and expertise to the blind peer-review process and to those who provided encouragement, those who advised on accessibility, and to those working with us to drive this field forward in ways that remain aligned with our fundamental commitment to inclusion. Thank you to the conference staff – online producers, helpdesk folk, room hosts, guides, Dawn Williams on the online 'mothership' - to the Operations Team – Alona/Zina/Joyanne - to the staff of the Discovery Research Platform, to Event Durham and the Palatine Centre. Thank you to the Wellcome Trust for funding this event via the Discovery Research Platform and to enabling us to find new ways of supporting neurodivergent researchers and this emergent (and urgent) field.

Special thanks to our Events and Fellowship Co-ordinators, Arya Ray and Haf Serajee, who have contributed so much to this conference – it would not have been possible without you.

And thank you to you, the conference delegates, for your enthusiasm and interest in this event, which we know you will approach with both intellectual curiosity and a commitment to mutual care and respect. We look forward to sharing this event with you and to connecting with you on and offline.

Louise Creechan

Critical
Neurodiversity
Studies

Directions | Intersections | Contradictions