

Marcelle Bitimbhe and **Violetta Liszka** who have both lived in Southampton for many years, established **NeuroSpicy Mind CIC** to raise awareness about autism (and neurodivergent individuals whose brains process information differently) as well as offering support and advice.

Through creative workshops, art exhibitions and insightful talks, NeuroSpicy Mind brings people together to address these challenging issues and help improve trust and self-confidence. The recent activities, which took place in the community room in James Street, included book binding, poetry and art for all ages.

Marcelle from Cameroon and a single parent of neurodivergent children says she felt it was important to raise awareness and empower this community. *“In my experience discussing autism within black minority communities is challenging and often seen as a taboo. There is still a lot of stigma attached to neurodiversity as the focus is often put on the negative side. This has led to under-diagnosis and reluctance to seek help, resulting in perpetuating these misunderstandings. We want to raise awareness, offer support and signpost to relevant services while offering advice.”*

The organisation also aims to shine a light on the stigmas and psychological impacts of inherited trauma from past generations, specifically Black African and Caribbean communities whose descendants were affected by slavery and colonisation.

Violetta's connection to inherited trauma comes from her family's experiences in the ghettos during World War II in Krakow, Poland. She says:

“Past trauma can influence mental health and social dynamics across generations. We believe that addressing this trauma is essential to overcome cycles of pain and, through artistic creativity integrating African spirituality we hope to offer a chance to a brighter future.”



Andrea Zittlau is a poet and lecturer of literature and cultural analysis in the American Studies department at the University of Rostock, Germany. She is the founding director of the Pink Gorilla Institute, a nonprofit organisation that runs creative writing and performance art workshops and publishes chapbooks as the proceedings of these workshops. She has co-edited with Jayne Thompson *N.I.G.H.T.* (2016) and *The Lighthouse Poems* (2020), two chapbooks with poetry by incarcerated men. Further joined (and ongoing) adventures are the *World Split Open* project that publishes community stories on broadsides and in the *First Friday* community poetry meeting.

Andrea has created together with communities in Germany, the United States, Hungary, Kenya, Iraq and elsewhere. Her approach to poetry goes beyond pen and paper and often involves performance, spaces, history, collections and non-human actors (such as plants).

T: +4917621911967 E: andrea.zittlau@uni-rostock.de

Dr Dennis Golm

Lecturer in Psychology, University of Southampton

Research interests

- Early adverse experiences (i.e. abuse, neglect, institutional deprivation, bereavement)
- Neurodevelopmental problems (i.e. ADHD, autism)
- Emotional processing (threat processing, empathy, emotional regulation)



Dr Emma Palmer-Cooper

Lecturer in Psychology, University of Southampton

Research interests

- Metacognition in Psychosis and other serious mental health conditions
- Creativity and Wellbeing
- AI and Digital Mental Health







**The Dreams
Creative Workshops
October 22nd – October 24th
(With Talk on 25th October)**

This workshop series have explored dreams in playful and experimenting ways focusing on visual art and poetry. As dreams are abstract and absent as well as vivid and detailed, we played with the creation of images and collected words to make our own dream books that have been exhibited at the end of the three-day workshop!





Sigmund Freud's Dream Interpretation

Sigmund Freud revolutionised the understanding of dreams with his landmark work "The Interpretation of Dreams" (1899). His approach was foundational to psychoanalysis and represented a significant departure from previous conceptions of dreaming.

Key Elements of Freudian Dream Theory:

- **Dreams as Wish Fulfilment:** At the core of Freud's theory is the concept that dreams represent unconscious wishes seeking fulfilment. These wishes, often repressed during waking life due to social taboos or personal anxieties, find expression through the symbolic language of dreams.
- **Manifest vs. Latent Content:** Freud distinguished between two layers of dream content:
 - **Manifest content:** The literal, remembered narrative of the dream as experienced by the dreamer
 - **Latent content:** The hidden, unconscious meaning that requires interpretation to uncover.





Dreamwork Mechanisms: Freud identified several processes through which the unconscious disguises prohibited wishes:

Condensation: Multiple dream thoughts compressed into a single image

Displacement: Emotional significance transferred from important to trivial elements

Symbolisation: Universal and personal symbols representing unconscious ideas

Secondary Revision: The mind's attempt to organise dream elements into a coherent narrative

Free Association: Freud's primary technique for interpreting dreams involved the dreamer freely associating to elements of the dream, allowing unconscious connections to emerge.

The Royal Road to the Unconscious: Freud famously described dreams as "the royal road to the unconscious," positioning dream analysis as the privileged pathway to understanding repressed psychological material.

Oedipal Content: Many dreams, according to Freud, contain disguised expressions of childhood sexual desires, particularly those related to the Oedipus complex.

Day Residue: Dreams incorporate recent experiences ("day residue") as raw material, reprocessing them according to unconscious wishes.



For Freud, dreams were never meaningless or random, they always contained significant psychological content that, when properly interpreted, could reveal the dreamer's deepest desires and conflicts



Walter Benjamin's Dream Interpretation

Walter Benjamin, the German philosopher and cultural critic, approached dreams quite differently from Freud, integrating them into his broader theories about modernity, history and collective experience.

Key Elements of Benjamin's Dream Theory:

- **Collective Dreaming:** Unlike Freud's focus on individual psychology, Benjamin often framed dreams in collective terms, seeing them as expressions of shared cultural and historical conditions.
- **Dreams and Awakening:** Benjamin employed dream imagery as a metaphor for historical consciousness. In works like "The Arcades Project," he explored how society lives in a "dream-state" from which it must awaken to achieve revolutionary consciousness.





Dreams as Historical Artefacts: For Benjamin, dreams were not simply expressions of personal wishes but contained fragments of collective historical experience. Dream images were "dialectical images" that could illuminate historical truths.

Surrealist Influence: Benjamin was influenced by the Surrealist movement's interest in dreams. Like the Surrealists, he valued dreams for their potential to disrupt conventional ways of thinking and seeing.

The Flâneur and Dreamlike Perception: Benjamin connected the experience of the flâneur (urban wanderer) to a dreamlike state, suggesting that moving through modern urban spaces resembled the experience of moving through dreams.

Technological Reproduction: Benjamin suggested that new technologies (like film) created dreamlike experiences by altering perception in ways similar to dreams.

Dream Kitsch: In his essay "Dream Kitsch," Benjamin explored how consumer culture creates a kind of collective dreaming through commodities and advertising.

Memory and Dreams: Benjamin linked dreams to his concept of "involuntary memory," seeing both as non-linear ways of experiencing time that challenge progressive historical narratives.



Where Freud saw dreams primarily as expressions of repressed personal desires, Benjamin viewed them as complex intersections of personal experience, collective history and cultural mythology. For Benjamin, interpreting dreams was not merely a therapeutic practice but a form of cultural and historical critique.





NeuroSpicy Mind gratefully acknowledges **SERVICES DESIGN SOLUTION** for their generous Bronze sponsorship package. Their timely donation enabled us to provide accommodation for a family with neurodivergent children, making a meaningful difference in their lives. We deeply appreciate your support of our mission to create inclusive environments for neurodivergent individuals and their families.



Find out more

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T: 01752 255 900

E: info@sdsolution.co.uk

HELP US TO MAKE IT HAPPEN SPONSOR US!

At **NEUROSPICY MIND Community Interest Company**, our mission is to make a meaningful impact on the African and Afro-descendant communities, while also supporting neurodivergent and post-trauma individuals.

We invite you to join us on this important journey by exploring our exciting sponsorship opportunities: **Bronze** (£190), **Silver** (£380), **Gold** (£570) and **Platinum** (£900).

Your support will have a tangible effect, enabling us to offer Autism Art Workshops that brighten the lives of individuals and families facing the challenges of autism. Your contribution could cover the costs for a child and their parent to attend workshops, or even fund three full days of artistic engagement for five families in Southampton's Black Community.

Every donation, no matter the size, plays a crucial role in our efforts.

In gratitude for your support, your organisation will receive exclusive access to our exhibitions, along with special discounts on photography and video services and uniquely handcrafted books.

Sponsoring us enhances your brand reputation as a socially recognised business and offers valuable public relations opportunities by showcasing your commitment to diversity and inclusion, positively impacting the lives of Black autistic children and their families.

NEUROSPICY MIND

OUR CAMPAIGN

SPONSOR US

ART WORKSHOPS



We offer Free Art Workshops for Neurodiverse Children based in Southampton, UK.

ENGAGING BLACK COMMUNITY



We do that especially within African and Afro-descendant communities.

TALKING @ INHERITED TRAUMA



We believe that slavery, colonialism, and systemic racism have left Black communities with impactful Inherited Trauma.

SUPPORTING NEURODIVERSITY



We provide insightful talks on neurodiversity and Inherited Trauma in schools, health and charity organisations.

EXHIBITIONS FOR CHILDREN



Participants in our programs have opportunities to display their work in the gallery. We believe that it nurtures personal pride and promote social inclusion.

HANDMADE BOOKS & VIDEOS



We offer handmade books and documentary films available for sale to commemorate childrens' art progress.



NeuroSpicy Mind CIC
Southampton, UK

www.neurospicymind.org
neurospicymind@gmail.com

T: +447949750841 Marcelle

T: +447881239582 Violetta