



INSIGHT EXCHANGE

ARTS LAB

The Creative Book Exchange

© Insight Exchange & collaborating Artist Louise Whelan

Introduction

The Creative Book Exchange is an invitation to participate in creating and/or contributing to a tangible (or non-digital) collection of handmade artist books. Analogue books are not subject to digital obsolescence.

The books include entries and creative expressions of de-identified experiences of family, domestic and sexualised violence.

Through the arts, 'The Creative Book Exchange' allows for a creative and discrete approach to exchanges of insights, experiences, expressions, observations, interpretation and excerpts of violence and resistance to violence.

'The Creative Book Exchange' has been designed by an artist. The invitation to participate is open, there is no need to consider yourself an artist to take part.

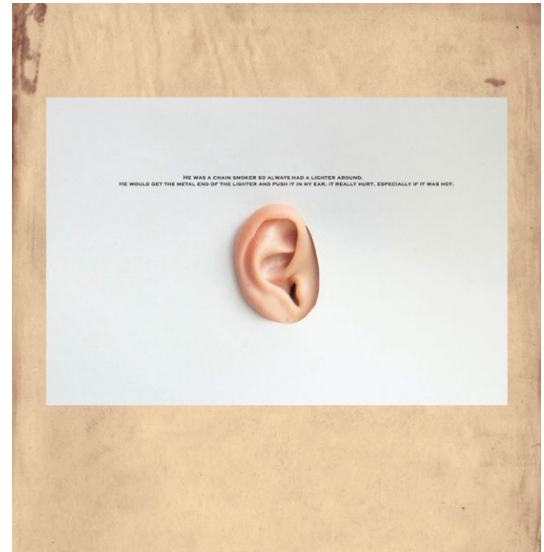
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De-identified lived experience excerpt, mixed media, digital collage.

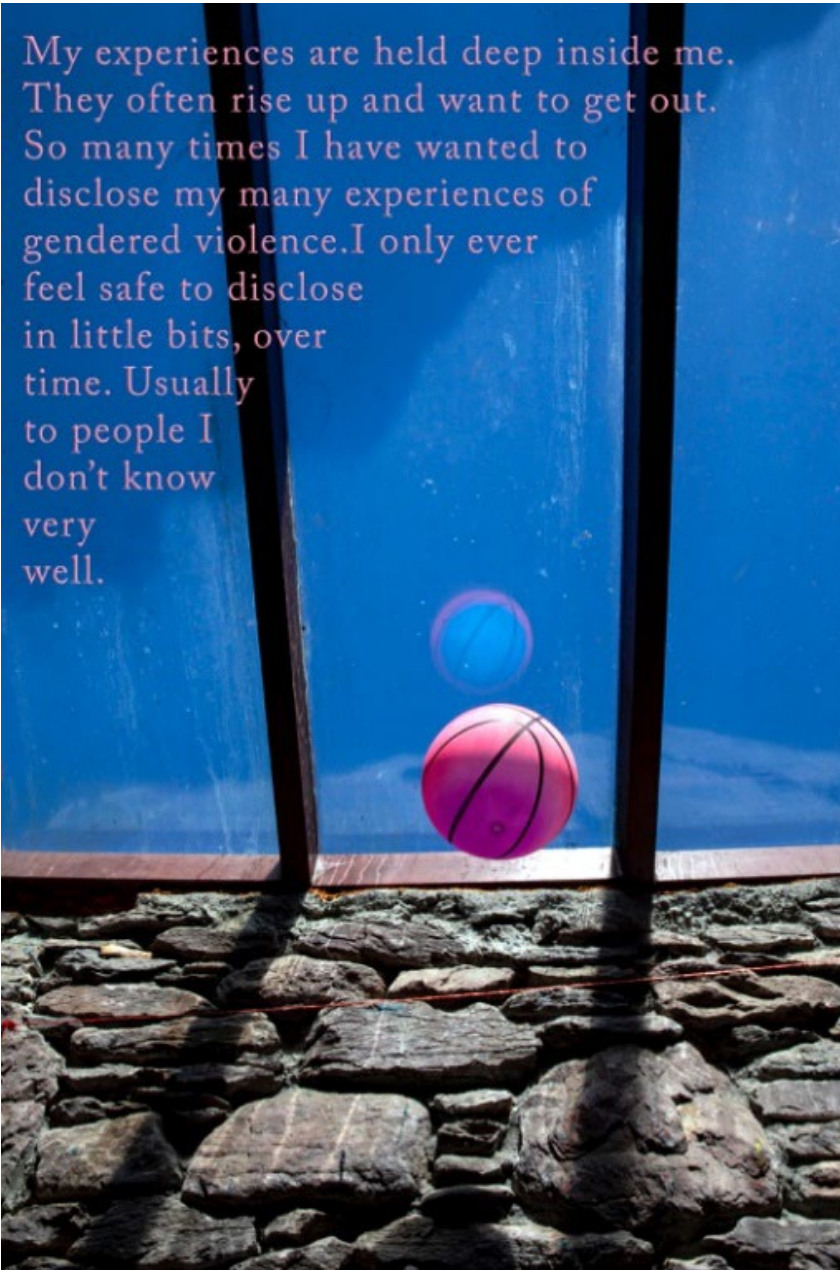
“

Yes! We are from the world, our stories matter, our stories, experiences, and lives are actually ‘material’ to create archives from experience-based memory, we don’t need institutional or state authority.

(Participant)

”

My experiences are held deep inside me.
They often rise up and want to get out.
So many times I have wanted to
disclose my many experiences of
gendered violence. I only ever
feel safe to disclose
in little bits, over
time. Usually
to people I
don't know
very
well.



Creating Possibilities

“

It was satisfying and rewarding to both make and interact with the book object, knowing my memories and parts of me had been transmuted into a tangible object that would migrate through time. My experiences safely tucked away in the pages and envelopes of the book.

Corroded and fresh memories materialised – to be shared and witnessed as part of bigger cultural memory dialogue with others.

(Participant)

”



What is an artist book or book object?

Artist books have a broad definition, however the notion of a definition may lead to excluding something.

‘An artist’s book is a harmonious composite of design, form, content, and context with no one area dominating or responsible for the bulk of intended message(s). The overlapping of form (materials) and content (message) is quite often the major vehicle for creative expression.’

Darryl Baird

It can be works of art that utilise the form of the book. They are often produced as one-of-a-kind objects or as a collection of books.

As an object these books are created, seen, felt, touched, handled, shared, responded to, examined, collected, planned, discussed, appreciated, cherished, and archived.

The artist book object is many things.

- **A facilitation for conversation and communication for the otherwise silent or silenced.**
- **A place for both interweaving and standalone dialogue for victim/survivors.**
- **A vehicle of expression for the silent, silenced, or people who find other places unsafe, impossible, or unnecessary.**

Rather than assuming a cultural authority by ‘services’ and ‘sectors’ (e.g., psychiatric, legal, health or criminal frameworks) in responses to violence, ‘The Creative Book Exchange’ opens a space for the arts, as a participatory action, a responder, a messenger or a visual telling of sorts.

The collection of books will be archived into cultural institutions to contribute and add value to the cultural memory of our time.

The Creative Book Exchange aims to bypass the hierarchal and historical structures of who and what narratives and experiences can be seen, heard and remembered.

How to participate

“


I can use what is currently in my life, what is around me to make the book. The book is like a companion, it is alive . I can take it with me as I create. I am living through it and beyond it.

(Participant)

”



You can participate in one, any or all of the options.

<p>1. Watch how to make book parts</p> <p>View 20min step by step video</p> 	<p>2. Create parts of the books</p> <p>Create handmade envelopes, constructions of book chapters, and folding hidden compartments. See templates and guidance</p>
<p>3. Circulate books and directly add insights</p> <p>Request a book or sections of a book for participation and circulation. Books are circulated discretely for participants to contribute in de-identified ways.</p>	<p>4. Send in your insight</p> <p>Anonymously send in your insights via a communication channel safest for you.</p> <p>Attn: The Creative Book Exchange via Email: contact@insightexchange.net OR Website: www.insightexchange.net/contact-us/</p>

The books have blank pages for (but not limited to) writing, drawing, collage, needlework, printing, poetry or other forms of scribing and expression. Envelopes, in envelopes, in hidden pockets that can be either sealed, or left open. Included in the books are images and words that can be act as a catalyst for response.

Participants can create an entry based off their own experience or respond to words and images in the book. Narratives and entries are not limited by time, scale, frequency, place, perceived social norms or structure. Entries can be based on responses to violence, resistance to violence and experiences of responses from society, services and systems. There is no set time for when and how to contribute, or how long it takes to create scribe or mark in the book.

Ideas:

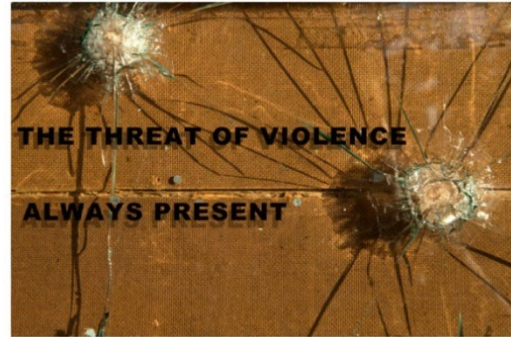
You may want to explore and respond to experts of Artists Louise Whelan's [photographs](#), [library of words](#), or images on Unsplash <https://unsplash.com/@photolouise>

Artist Statement:

‘The Creative Book Exchange’ is about a collaborative witnessing of disclosure at many scales. Like waiting for the words to exist to express an experience, or an assemblage of experiences, this project makes way for a different way of communicating and representing people.

The handmade books become the architecture for a discreet and dignified expression. Memories are not stored in a linear sequence in our minds nor are they retrievable that way. The process and collective approach of making these books both amplifies and represents this idea.

The books are not flat, they have many ways of seeing and saying, they don’t require or insist on linear descriptions. The style of the book has been created in such a way to suggest a discrete collection of insights.



*Mixed media, lived experience, sound waves
printed on tissue paper and recycled books*

There is no aesthetic certainty that can define the complexities of family, domestic and sexualised violence. Working with and beyond linguistic representation, moving past the myths that have persisted through time, ‘The Creative Book Exchange’ encourages unique creative collaborations. Generating a place for expression, disclosure, and discovery.

The umbrella of violence and control is broad. The ‘The Creative Book Exchange’ opens a space for making sense of this multiplicity of experiences. The architecture of the books allows for a collection experiences, fragments of excerpts that bear witness to the silent and the silenced.

INSIGHT EXCHANGE

Insight Exchange centres on the expertise of people with lived experience of domestic and family violence and gives voice to these experiences. It is designed to inform and strengthen social, service and systemic responses to domestic and family violence.

Launched in Australia in November 2017, Insight Exchange was established and developed in collaboration with Dr Linda Coates and Dr Allan Wade from the Centre for Response-Based Practice, Canada.

Insight Exchange is governed by Domestic Violence Service Management, a registered Australian charity (ABN 26 165 400 635).

Insight Exchange is sustained by generous donations from individuals and a silent donor, for the benefit of many.

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Artworks: © Louise Whelan

For more information visit
www.insightexchange.net

Insight Exchange website has a quick-exit button.



Insight Exchange acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our work and services operate and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We extend this respect to all First Nations peoples across the country and the world. We acknowledge that sovereignty of this land was never ceded. Always was, always will be Aboriginal land.



Insight Exchange is for all people. Insight Exchange respects the diversity of all sexualities and gender identities including but not limited to; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and asexual + identities as well as heterosexual and cisgender identities.



Host: To host an Artist in residence book making workshop, artist talk and exhibition of Voices of Insight Collection – contact Insight Exchange to discuss.

INSIGHT EXCHANGE

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Insight Exchange website has a quick-exit button.

Scan the QR code to open Insight Exchange.

Privacy: This is a static QR code to eliminate any collection of your data when scanning

