

Oral Presentation

Imagination. Inspiration. Improvisation – A visual arts enquiry into understanding suicide

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Arts based research has the ability to explore issues and contribute to knowledge through engagement with the imagination despite it often being misunderstood. As both a suicide attempter and a suicide survivor my intention is to research the phenomena from the inside out rather than as an observer looking in, using *first-person data* or *first-person methodologies* that are generally absent from studies into suicidology and mental health. As a practitioner-based researcher my aim is to consciously incorporate the lived experience in my work and to engage in a variety of creative practices as research tools in an effort to understand the complexities that surround the human condition. My artworks and installations provide a vehicle for expressing what words often fail to do and through which allows for further investigation and understanding. My work seeks to humanise the issues surrounding suicide and to allow for insight to occur through macrocosmic and microcosmic perspectives. In expressing lived experiences through art, I seek to remind the audience (and myself) that we are more than just a body and a mind. Our humanness/soul/spirit also needs to be heard, nurtured and (re) considered both in academic research and in daily life.

Mic Eales - Biography

Mic is a suicide survivor in the sense that his brother took his own life in 2002 and also in having made two attempts on his own life as a teenager. He is currently undertaking a PhD in Visual Arts at Southern Cross University focusing on the personal, social and cultural ramifications of suicide. He was the 2008 winner of the Windmill Trust Scholarship award for regional artists. He has a passionate interest in storytelling that is expressed through his art.