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Arts & Humanities  
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Teaching Materials

# Continuing Bonds: Creative Dissemination

# Workshop 1: Inspiration

Let's talk of the dead...



# Timetable

5 mins	Welcome and keeping it safe
10 mins	Let's talk of the dead
15 mins	Keeping the dead close and difficulty with objects. (With a 5 min exercise.)
15 mins	Archaeological objects – for inspiration
	-Break-
10 mins	What Object would you have as your legacy? (Exercise)
10 mins	Objects and loss. (Exercise)
5 mins	Drawing to a close and the next workshop
5 mins	Art Exercise

# Welcome

## Today's Focus

- Meeting fellow writers
- To be inspired! (Introduction to archaeological and contemporary materials)
- To start creating your piece

## Ultimate aims

- 3 workshops ('Inspiration', 'Deepening Connection', 'Editing/finalizing' – more space for working on your piece in latter two)
- Widening the boundaries on talking about death, dying, bereavement and grief

# Let's keep it safe

Creative writing 'death café': not therapy... (importance of information packs)

## 'Rules'

Non-judgmental, supportive atmosphere – giving everyone space to speak if they wish to

Confidentiality

Constructive feedback - what you liked, what you would like to see more of, framing points positively

## Looking after yourself

Sources of support on information sheet in your packs

Take a break whenever you need

Allow yourself to 'hold back' if you need to

# Where did the inspiration materials come from?

- Archaeological sources
- Contemporary experiences of death, dying, bereavement and grief.
  - Quotes taken from project workshops run by the Continuing Bonds project

# Let's talk of the dead... (1)

- Different researchers, authors, organizations say we don't talk enough about death, dying, bereavement and grief.

“[When I was a] student there [was] an older lady who [told me], ‘in the 1940s or 50s grandma used to die in the parlour and you would all see the dead body. We talked about death but we didn’t talk about sex. Whereas,’ she said, ‘I notice with your generation [you] are very happy talking about sex but [you] don’t talk about death. And, is that because [you] don’t see it?’.”

# Let's talk of the dead... (2)

- Not talking about death can lead to difficulties, both for the dying and families/friends

“My ex-girlfriend, her father got cancer and he knew he was going to die. It was terminal. It wasn't very long, about 8 months, but he had time to sort things out [and] he didn't. Then it was the responsibility of his daughter, who was my partner at the time, and it was devastating for her. This man should have sorted things out. Instead of grieving for her Dad [my girlfriend] was having to organise everything.”

# Let's talk of the dead... (3)

- The Continuing Bonds theory.
  - Klass, Silverman and Nickman (1996)

*“when your loved one dies grief isn’t about working through a linear process that ends with ‘acceptance’ or a ‘new life’, where you have moved on or compartmentalized your loved one’s memory.*

*Rather, when a loved one dies you slowly find ways to adjust and redefine your relationship with that person, allowing for a continued bond with that person that will endure, in different ways and to varying degrees, throughout your life”*

<http://www.whatsyourgrief.com/continuing-bonds-shifting-the-grief-paradigm/>

# We keep the dead closer than we might think (1)

- Because we don't talk about death that much, we're not always aware of what other people 'do' with their loved ones. Lots of people like to keep the dead close.

"My mum had a Retriever. He died and was cremated. He was quite a big dog and it's amazing how heavy [his ashes are]. You think it's going to be really light and he was heavy in death as well as life! But that follows her everywhere. She has moved house two or three times now and he still lives under the bed. At some point in the future something will happen to her and [] I am going to have to ask her [] 'do you want to be cremated? Do you want the dog with you? Do you want us to keep it separately?'

"I was in a friend's kitchen a couple of weeks ago and there was a 1950s biscuit tin. I said, 'oh it's nice' and they said, 'it's my share of my dad'. I said, 'have your brothers both got a tin' and they said, 'yes'. So, the three of them all had a tin with a third of Dad."

# We keep the dead closer than we might think (2)

- Archaeologists explore communities who were literally closer to their dead
  - Plastered skulls
  - Intimacy of care
  - Longevity of presence among the living
  - Continuing bonds...

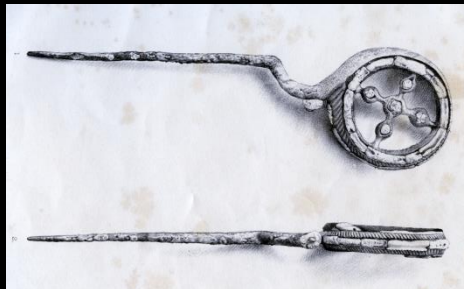


Tell Aswad, Syria (c. 8500BC) © Danielle Stordeur

# We're never quite 'done' with the dead

- Archaeology teaches us we're never quite 'done' with the dead
  - No 'time limit' on loss or grief
- The dead place 'debts' upon us. Not just emotional but the 'stuff' of their lives
  - Grave goods vs heirlooms
  - Bequests
  - The 'left behind' detritus we cannot quite get rid of. 'The burden of things'.

"My mum died very suddenly. [] Just before she died she'd bought a big tub of Horlicks which she gave to me for some reason. [] I could not throw this away. It was in the cupboard for five years! And it was solid. But because she'd bought it, it became like an artefact."



Line drawing by Agnes Mortimer of a coral and bronze hair pin excavated by her father, John Mortimer, from an Iron Age burial in the Yorkshire Wolds. 1911.

# Why do we have 'difficult stuff' and trouble with keeping or throwing things away? (1)

- The sense that they are not 'ours'?

“Dead people’s flowers, what happens? They get put in the bin. That is a very symbolic thing, ‘when do I put them in the bin? I don’t want to put them in the bin. They’re his’.”

- Because it symbolises a change? Maybe an act of 'moving on'. An act of 'forgetting'?
- How we treat objects can change over time – e.g. clothing in the aftermath of the death can be 'needful' and then later, too painful (hidden away, untouched)

# Why do we have 'difficult stuff' and trouble with keeping or throwing things away? (2)

- Some objects are intensely connected with the person

“Well, my dad, I remember him as a kid – very smart, very well dressed, polished shoes and stuff. When he got older, bless him, he was stooped. He had real problems. His feet swelled up and he had this pair of shoes, [] these dreadful misshapen shoes, and I couldn't throw [them] away. One day they were sitting in my bedroom as it's as if I could hear his voice in my head. 'Why are you doing this? Do you think that's how I want you to remember me? Get rid of them'. So I got rid of them. I think you have to hold onto things until it's time to release them.”

Exercise: Have you had any objects (which represented the deceased) you've not been able to throw away which are meaningful or vital to you? (You don't have to share)

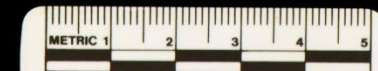
Objects for Inspiration...

# Oil lamp and loom weight

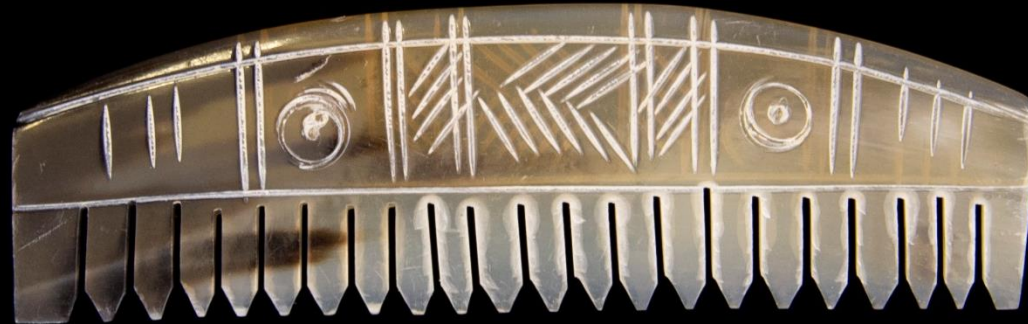


Oil lamp (above): Oil lamps are sometimes found in graves and may have represented a concept of bringing light to the afterlife, or may relate to burning to mask aromas or for inhalation.

Loom weight (below): Loom weights are usually circular stone or clay objects, with a hole at the centre for weighing down the warp threads when weaving. When such objects are found in graves they are thought to relate to occupations or roles in life.

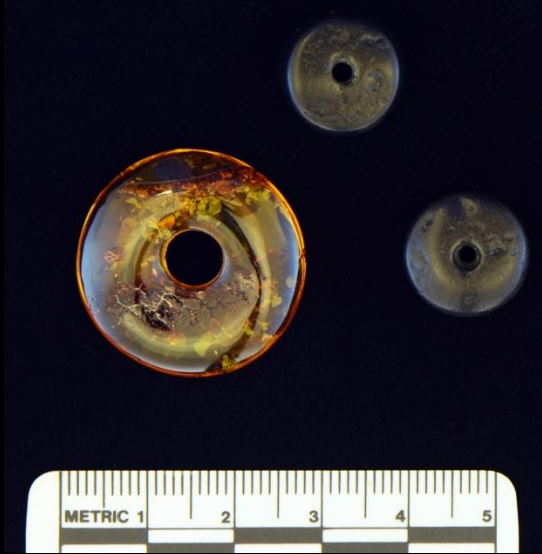


# Comb



Combs were found in many Anglo-Saxon burials, as a highly personal and beautifully crafted object which also spoke of care for the dead: making them look their best for the afterlife. It was also a last act of care and tenderness that the living could provide for the dead.

# Amber Beads and Roman Bracelet



Amber beads are rare but were found in Bronze Age and Iron Age burials, sometimes as a beautiful necklace or a single bead. Amber came from afar and it seemed to shine with warmth and power, providing something beautiful to the dead whilst also showing off their connections with foreign places and people.

Bronze Romano-British child's bracelet. Found in Colchester, England. C.100 AD.



# Grave Pots



Pots are the most common grave good we find. Sometimes they contain food, sometimes drink. They may be well-made, or newly fired, beautifully decorated or quite plain.

They can be a container for the ashes of the dead or a vessel for the afterlife. These three replica pots - one large and two small - are copied from Khok Phanom Di, Thailand (2,000–1,500BC): the larger one for an adult, the miniature versions for a child; both given a vessel that fits their identity and prepares them for the afterlife.

# Heirlooms



This necklace is from the Queen's Barrow, Arras, East Yorkshire (c. 400-2– BC). It is made of about 100 glass beads, of which 67 survive.

The beads comprise five different types, not often seen together. They also display different degrees of wear, suggesting that some are new (perhaps made for the grave) and some are old.

Break

# Exercise: What object would you have as your legacy?

“My dad, he is currently [] at my mum’s house. He is dead and he is cremated. He sits in a green pot and he lives on the window sill because he wanted to be in the light. That was really important to him, to be in the light. [] It was really important to him he wasn’t in the dark.”

## EXERCISE 1. Free writing.

- An exercise which can provide a starting place for a piece, help develop ideas, or move us past writer’s block
- Whatever comes into your mind. Don’t censor yourself.
- 5 minutes
- “The object I would have as my legacy is...”

# Exercise: Free writing – objects and loss

- Choose an object related to an aspect of bereavement, loss of grief
  - Ashes of the retriever
  - 1950s biscuit tin with a 'third of dad'
  - Plastered skulls
  - Horlicks
  - Flowers
  - Shoes
  - Green pot
  - Pottery vessel , beads, oil lamp, roman bracelet, loom weight...
  - Something personal to you
- Free writing
  - Remember: Whatever comes into your mind. Don't censor yourself.
  - Can write from your own perspective or that of a character.
  - 5 minutes
  - "As I think about the (insert object), I..."
  - "As [insert character's name] thought about the [insert object], s/he..."

# Drawing to a close...

- Let the materials 'work' on you and then spend some time gathering your thoughts and ideas (we'll be doing much more writing next time)
- If you want to bring an object from home (or a photo of this), you're welcome to bring this to next session
- Look after yourselves... use the sources of support if need be

# Next time

## ‘Deepening Connection’

- Again, the opportunity to engage with the objects and the archaeological case studies
- Some basic creative writing/poetry guidance
- Time to develop your piece
- Feedback buddies ( see ‘Giving Helpful Feedback’)

# Leave us with your thoughts...

- Art exercise
  - Draw round your hand
  - In your hand-print, write something you'd like to leave behind at the workshop



**Cueva de las Manos in Santa Cruz, Argentina**

**13,000 to 9,000 years ago/ 11,000-7,000 BC**

Thank you :)

**These materials were developed by the  
Continuing Bonds: Creative Dissemination  
project**

[https://continuingbonds.live/creative-  
dissemination/](https://continuingbonds.live/creative-dissemination/)

# Workshop 2: Deepening Connection

Working with the dead...



# Timetable

10 mins	Start
10 mins	Welcome, Safety, Aims, Plan, Recap
5 mins	What's your story?
10 mins	The politics of death, and difficult death
	-Break-
20 mins	Either reflect on materials from last time, work independently on your piece, or learn about writing/poetry theory
10 mins	Sharing (writing, objects, personal experiences)
10 mins	Close (and questionnaire)

# Welcome

## Welcome newcomers and returners

- Newcomers, please pick up a Sources of Support sheet and a Giving Helpful Feedback sheet

# Plan for today

- More writing time
- More discussion time (about the materials and with each other)
- Deepening connection with the materials
- Introduction to some writing/poetry theory
- Sharing your work and your experiences (if you like)
- Buddying up for feedback (re-cap)
- Art exercise

# Let's keep it safe

- Workshop rather than a therapy group

## 'Rules'

Non-judgmental, supportive atmosphere

Confidentiality

Constructive feedback - what you liked, what you would like to see more of, framing points positively

- See 'Giving Helpful Feedback' in W1 pack

## Looking after yourself

Sources of support in your pack

Take a break whenever you need

Allow yourself to 'hold back' if you need to

# Ultimate aims of the project

- 3 workshops ('Inspiration', 'Deepening Connection', 'Editing/finalizing')
- Widening the boundaries on talking about death, dying, bereavement and grief

# Recap on W1

- Continuing bonds
  - Throughout time and across the globe, we have kept the dead close
  - Rather than 'moving on' we keep the memories and legacies of loved ones alive
    - Through objects
  - Death can be a tricky and political time
    - Made worse when we do not talk about it
    - What is 'normal'? What do people want for their funeral?
- Accounts of death, dying, bereavement and grief
- Archaeological case materials and objects
- Free writing

What is your story?

# Death can be a political time...

“A very good friend of mine died. Her family weren’t that bothered about her. [] Because they were the family they got to say where she got buried and she got buried in Ireland. [] The one time I went over [to Ireland, her grave] was just left to wrack and ruin. [] What it said to me was, ‘this is so wrong’. We would have taken care of her in Oxford. We would have gone to see her, gone to talk to her, gone to remember her. [] But her family had got the right to do what they wanted. [] The family often get the biggest say. [] Friends often don’t get any.”

“I have a friend, almost four years to the day, who took her own life. To understand that, I knew I had to go and see the body. [] Immediately I thought, ‘that’s not you’. [] She was in a winceyette nightie. She was in her thirties and the most proud dresser. She had more shoes than I have seen in a shoe shop. [] This seemed a bit of an insult. I was thinking, ‘why didn’t you ask somebody who she was? A winceyette nightie? You’re kidding me’.”

“I nursed my friend through the end of her life. Her sisters [] wouldn’t listen to what she wanted. She knew she was dying because she had cancer. They told her to stop molly coddling about dying. After the biopsy [] she couldn’t leave the house and she deteriorated from there. [] They would never discuss anything with her. Everything that we discussed never happened at the funeral. Down to music. I think the only thing they requested was that everyone wore pink. The music she wanted wasn’t played.”

“Possession of the ashes is sometimes a contentious family issue. Who has the ashes? Should ashes be in one place? One family [at work] was like, ‘can you divide the ashes so they are equally shared across the family’. [One person’s reaction was], ‘my God, you can’t do that’. One body in life and one place in death.”

# Death can be, and often is, difficult...

- Long-term care preceding death
- Sudden and unexpected death
- Untimely death
- The injustice of death

“I work in a care home. [We had a resident who] got told by the hospital she had two weeks [to live]. She had cancer. She started kicking off. She [was] 97 and didn’t want to go. Because of that she kept on and on and [was] trying to fight it. She had antibiotics and she said, ‘ah, will these make me better?’ It [was] more because she didn’t want to leave her family.”

“I have one son [who] will not talk [] about my death. My other son [will]. I keep saying to him, I am going to have to tell you [my wishes] because Freddie won’t listen.”

Break

# Exercise...

## Options:

- Spend some time with the material from last time
- Work independently on your piece
- Spend time learning about writing or poetry theory

# Writing theory: Poetry (1)

‘Poetry holds out the promise that what has been experienced cannot disappear as if it had never been’ John Berger – Once in a Poem

Use poetry to give voice to an experience that is uniquely yours

- Choose one or two of these tasks to try...

## Task 1:

Think of an object, and remember or imagine the emotion that might be associated with it. Describe its material, patina, shape, weight and appearance. What is it about this object which best embodies the person or our relationship with them?

## Task 2:

Think of a funeral, a memorial, or a rite that has happened - in the ancient past or in your own life. Did this help, comfort, and give shape to your grief, or not? What kind of 'send-off' or memories of the dead were made through these ceremonies?

## Task 3:

Think of the place where the dead are laid or scattered: ancient or modern. Why here, and why is it meaningful? Are they alone or in company? Describe its atmosphere. What weather do you associate with it? What memories does it evoke?

# Writing theory: Poetry (2)

Elements to think about when creating your poem:

## Voice:

Who is the speaker?  
Is it you? Third person?

## Form:

What shape or structure  
do you want your poem to  
have?

## Imagery, symbolism and metaphor:

What images, symbols and  
metaphors might you use  
to help your reader make  
connection they might not  
otherwise?

## Language:

Avoid weak and familiar  
words, and stereotypes.  
What words might surprise  
or delight your reader?

# Writing theory: Short stories/flash fiction (1)

Common aspects to consider/look out for

## 1. Point of view.

- The perspective from which the story is told. E.g.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> person – “I went... I jumped... I felt...”
    - You can only tell the reader what your main character knows
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> person – “You went... You jumped... You felt...”
    - Rarely used. Makes the audience a character.
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> person – “Jane went... She jumped... She felt...”
    - Three types (omniscient, limited, objective)
- 
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKi56cPUSFk>

# Writing theory: Short stories/flash fiction (2)

- 2. Show not tell
  - Writing comes alive when we show what is going on rather than telling
  - This means we allow the reader to deduce what is happening rather than state it outright

Telling	Showing
Sara was cold.	Pulling her scarf up over her mouth, Sara shivered.
I was so angry.	My hands bunched into fists and a heat rose up my neck to my cheeks. “Are you alright?” Harry said. “You look like you’re about to blow.”

- <https://jerryjenkins.com/show-dont-tell/>

# Writing theory: Short stories/flash fiction (3)

- Starting with the character

- Writing: You can start with your story or your character. For some, writing is easier when you start with your character. (You know who they are and how they would react when things happen to them).

Brief Exercise: Have you decided who your protagonist (main character) is?

- If not, pick two random letters of the alphabet. These are your character's initials.

- Using your setting

- Setting can be helpful for depicting the mood of the scene. (Pathetic fallacy).
  - Imagine: Wedding 1: On the morning of Jill and Peter's wedding, the sun rose bright over lush green fields.

Wedding 2: On the morning of Jill and Peter's wedding, dark clouds covered the sky and thunder rumbled on the horizon.

# Exercise: Sharing...

- In groups, either:
  - A. Share some of what you have written
  - B. Tell the group about the object you have brought
  - C. Freestyle! What has the workshop brought up for you...?

# Feedback buddies

- Buddying up for feedback (optional)
  - Pairs or small groups (Whatsapp? Facebook? Email?)
  - Refer to feedback guidance (Giving Helpful Feedback)
  - Aim to have a good draft by next workshop – will need something to work on

# And before we end...

- Bring a substantial draft of your piece for next time
  - Please bring three copies of your work with you
- Look after yourselves... use the sources of support if need be

Thank you 😊

**These materials were developed by the  
Continuing Bonds: Creative Dissemination  
project**

[https://continuingbonds.live/creative-  
dissemination/](https://continuingbonds.live/creative-dissemination/)

# Workshop 3:Editing and Finalizing

Working with the dead...



# Welcome :)

## Timetable :

10 mins	Grab a brew, settle in, safety
25 mins	Feedback and editing
10 mins	(Early) Break
35 mins	Sharing your creative process and learning from others' (7:45-8:10 – groups of 3; 8:10-8:20 – the wider group)
10 mins	Where next? Art exercise

# Let's keep it safe (recap)

- Workshop rather than a therapy group

## 'Rules'

Non-judgmental, supportive atmosphere

Confidentiality

Constructive feedback - what you liked, what you would like to see more of, framing points positively

- See 'Giving Helpful Feedback'

## Looking after yourself

Sources of support

Take a break whenever you need

Allow yourself to 'hold back' if you need to

# Exercise 1: Feedback and editing

- In groups of 3
- 10 minutes each
  - Read your piece
  - Feedback from group members
    - » E.g. What strikes you most about the piece? What did you like in particular? What would you have liked to see more of?
    - » If you have made notes, please give them to the person whose piece they are about

Break

# Exercise 2a - Your Creative Process

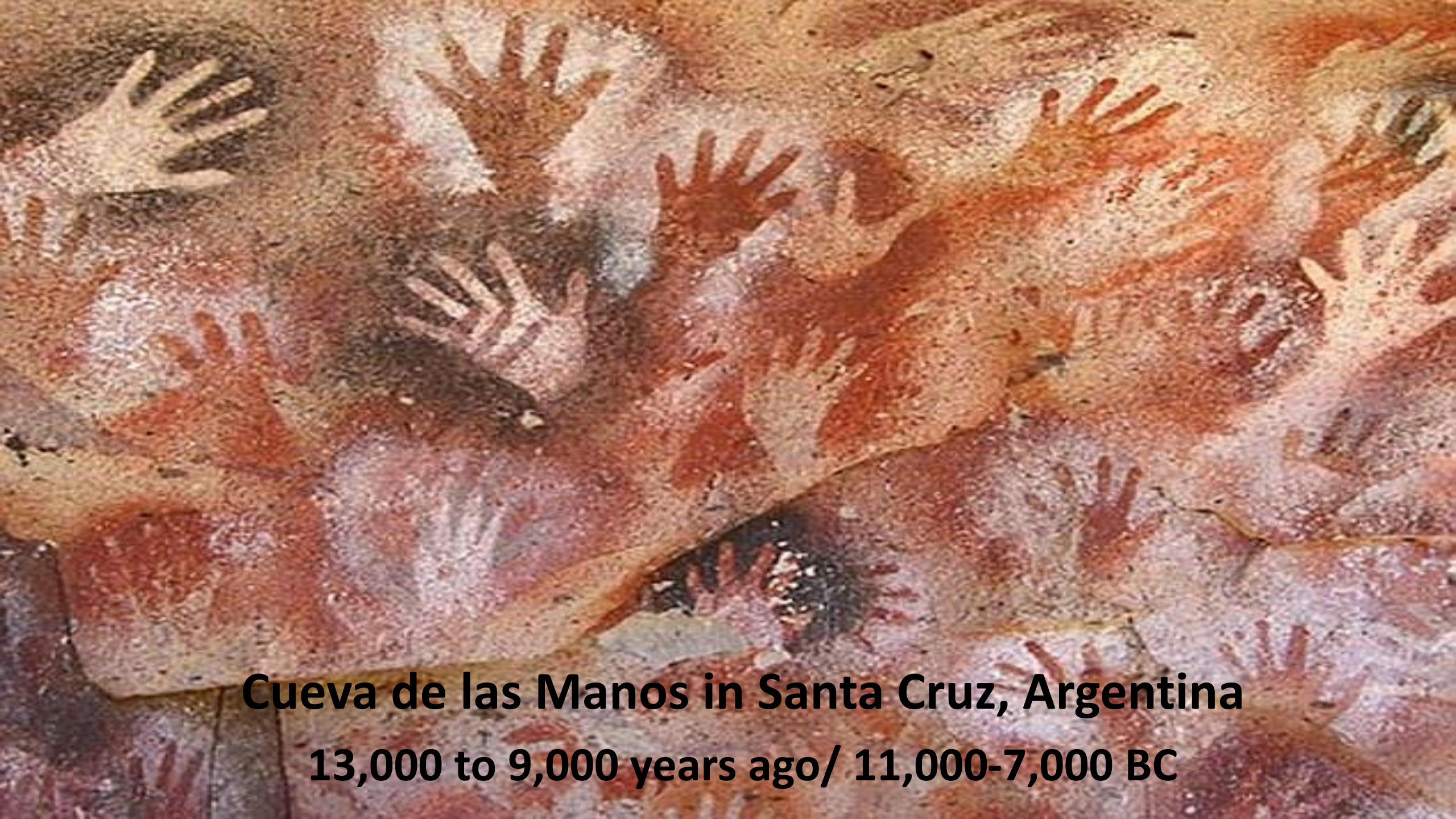
- Back in groups of 3
- Explain to your group:
  - How you created your piece (what was your creative process?)
- 5 mins each for the group to ask questions about the creative process and learn about this

## **Exercise 2b - Feed back to the wider group:**

- What did you learn?
- What struck you from your discussion?

# And before we end...

- Art exercise



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**13,000 to 9,000 years ago/ 11,000-7,000 BC**

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We'd love to hear from you 😊

If you have used these teaching materials to run workshops of your own, please do tell us about it by emailing us at:

[continuing\\_bonds@bradford.ac.uk](mailto:continuing_bonds@bradford.ac.uk)

# Keeping in touch



<https://www.facebook.com/continuing.bonds.58> (Profile rather than a page on Facebook)



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Acknowledgements

# Sources

Case material	Source
Plastered Skulls image	Karina Croucher (courtesy Danielle Stordeur)
Hair Pin image	Melanie Giles (drawn by Agnes Mortimer, 1911)
Oil Burner image	Continuing Bonds: Creative Dissemination project, University of Bradford
Loom Weight image	Continuing Bonds: Creative Dissemination project, University of Bradford
Comb image	Continuing Bonds: Creative Dissemination project, University of Bradford
Amber Beads image	Continuing Bonds: Creative Dissemination project, University of Bradford
Roman Bracelet image	Continuing Bonds: Creative Dissemination project, University of Bradford
Grave Pottery image	Continuing Bonds: Creative Dissemination project, University of Bradford
Bead Necklace image	Continuing Bonds: Creative Dissemination project, University of Bradford
Image of Cueva de las Manos	<a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cueva_de_las_Manos#/media/File:SantaCruz-CuevaManos-P2210651b.jpg">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cueva_de_las_Manos#/media/File:SantaCruz-CuevaManos-P2210651b.jpg</a>

# Where to find out more:

Büster, L., Croucher, K., Dayes, J., Green, L. & Faull, C. (2018). From plastered skulls to palliative care: what the past can teach us about dealing with death. *Online Journal In Public Archaeology*. 8(2).  
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