BETA SOCIETY at TATE EXCHANGE:

1. This feedback information will be used for reports printed & online so please indicate if you'd prefer your feedback was kept anonymous: **A**
2. Your Name (leave blank = anonymous). Nicola Rae
3. Your Email (leave blank = anonymous). nicolarae8@gmail.com and n.rae@arts.ac.uk
4. Where are you from please? **A**
5. How did you contribute to the Beta Society event (Multiple options)? **A C**
6. Days Feedback relates to: **A-F**

**Extended Feedback**

1. *What specific things did you want to achieve by being part of the Tate event (to reach your personal aim)?*

It was my aim to fully engage in collaboration with our local communities - LITC, Black Thrive and CRIN – as well as with current CCW students and staff invited by me to join the Digital Maker Collective this year. My main collaboration was with Jheni Arboine (CCW Visiting Practitioner and PGCE student), Julia Piekarczyk (LITC and Camberwell BA Drawing Alumna) and Charles Yassin (LITC). The invited students that also took part included: Erasmus student Aesun Kim (MA Fine Art Digital, Camberwell), Leila Nithila-George (BA Graphic Design Communication, Chelsea), Olivia Northcote (BA Textile Design, Chelsea) and Ruxin Lyu (BA Theatre Design, Wimbledon). All of these students were known to me through my Academic Support sessions in CCW Libraries, including Jheni from a few years ago.

Jheni and I attended many community meetings at Camberwell Playground and the work that we collaborated on developed out of an active listening process. During one meeting a dialogue developed between Charles and Jheni concerning the sounding of dialects. ‘Yonder’ when spoken in Caribbean Patois by Charles’s Mum became ‘Yandar’, and this became the start of a Concrete Poetry project that would respond actively and participatively to audience input on three days of our BETA Society project. As a result of conversations with participants, I uploaded suggested phrases on Arduino OLED screens that responded to the community focus on each day. These scrolling, glitched texts were magnified through a digital microscope and then back-projected onto tracing paper attached to Tate Exchange’s wooden tripod structures.

Among the students invited by me to take part included Erasmus student, Aesun Kim, who led a ‘Gesture Drawing Gloves’ workshop. This event was fully supported by me although I did not want to take this over and so just facilitated. Aesun had developed many wearable tech skills at the University of Linz, Vienna (connected to Ars Electronica) and so I knew that she was very capable of leading this workshop. Leila Nithila-George and Olivia Northcote worked very well with Aesun and they became friends who intend to work together in the Makerspaces. Ruxin Lyu also worked productively with two other groups on the days that she was in, showing much initiative.

1. *Was being part of the event successful for you, why? Did you have a personal or group objective/aim you want to achieve?*

This event was very successful for me as due to the process of attending at least ten hours of meetings per week during the previous month, I did feel fully connected with the three local communities. This understanding became even greater during the Tate Exchange week as each group explored their issues and concerns in depth.

Although the *Yonder/Yandar* project that Jheni and I developed was intended to focus on LITC’s Thursday, active participation developed on Wednesday through displaying aspects of CRIN’s manifesto, as well as with International Women’s Day activism during Friday. Jheni also ran Concrete Poetry workshops using rubber stamps, ink pads and paper, which were particularly well attended by families on the weekend and also on LITC’s Thursday.

The active listening that Jheni and I developed in previous meetings continued into the Debates, which formed a crucial part of our BETA Society week. Jheni’s marker pen notes on A3 sheets and my scribbled sketchbook notes meant that we could easily refer back to debates and issues, as could others.

Working with the communities does feel part of an ongoing project in which the process is more important than transitory outcomes. Yet the focus of spending a whole week together at Tate Exchange did become a potential catalyst for action.

1. *What did not work for you?*

Maybe the Southwark Room could have been used more productively throughout the whole week.

1. *Evidence of success, feedback you received, new contacts, offered an opportunity, interaction, blog posts, social media feedback, some change has happened, positive output?*

Some really interesting contacts were made during the week. On LITC’s Thursday I met Melissa Haniff, a Freelance Architect, who is part of a collective called Black Females in Architecture as well as being a friend of Charles Yassin (LITC). One of my school friends who lives in Chicago has previously discussed the possibility of collaborating through Gensler (her husband is a director) and they have worked closely with i-NOMA <https://www.i-noma.org/about-us/> who have created a platform to support minority designers. Gensler have an office in London and have recently won an award for co-creating Your Space at the Stephen Lawrence Centre. This space fosters networking and collaboration among emerging architects and there may be future possibilities.

Paul Atherton’s questioning of whether life is better for all with technology was a fascinating perspective on the barriers faced by homeless people. My husband’s cousin is a consultant at the Department of Work and Pensions and is always interested in representing alternative points of view in relation to accessibility and inclusion. If a podcast was available of Paul’s talk I would certainly like Alex to see this.

1. *If required, would you be happy to be interviewed for future DMC/UAL related publications and/or research?* ***A yes***