

Teacher Education, Curriculum and Pedagogy Hub  
& Sustainability in Education Research Group  
*supported by the Robertson Endowment as part of the Stewart Alan  
Robertson Lecture Series*

***STEAM garden as a provocation***

Teaching, Community and Transdisciplinary Research Practices

**You are cordially invited to a two-day event,**

**25<sup>th</sup> September 2025:** Exhibition opening, 3.30-6.00

**26<sup>th</sup> September 2025:** Ateliers and seminars, 9.00-3.30

Moray House School of Education and Sport

**R.S.V.P 30<sup>th</sup> July 2025**



*"Tell me you come Home", Jane Wheeler, Oil on Canvas*

### *The Context*

At a time of mounting social and environmental crises, it becomes imperative for educators to reflect and reconsider the aims and purposes of education. Beyond its immediate functions to serve societal expectations of formal training in a competitive market, we consider education as a relational practice and a place of encounter within a community of humans and more than human others. What images can we look towards to help us re-imagine the ways in which we conduct our work as educators? And what forms of research and teaching practices can sustain ourselves in this endeavor?

As a place that sits both within and outside the boundaries of the home, or the perimeter of the school, humans have long turned to gardens for sanctuary from the tumult that surrounds them or for resistance and recuperation against conflict and destruction.

Standing both as a metaphor and a lived reality, the garden encapsulates a physical and intellectual space, which is both cultivated and untamable. In its essence, the garden becomes a place of suspension and interruption, where the desire to manage and control sits in tension with the necessity to slow down and to observe one's own presence in the eyes of the other. Crossing the boundaries of multiple disciplinary frameworks and at the same time exceeding them, the garden is a place where competing discourses come into play, and where differences are not resolved; they are lived out.

### *The Invitation*

**Day One, Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> September** celebrates the 'STEAM' garden, a transdisciplinary construct which integrates the discourses and practices of the Sciences, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics with those of the Arts, Design and Crafts. These come together through aesthetic practices; those being physical acts of attentive observation as well as caring for the life of plants, alongside the ability to make and to attend to one another and to oneself in an exhibition of visual artefacts and poetry.

**The exhibition opens with a talk from the visual artist Jane Wheeler** in conversation with an interdisciplinary panel chaired by Laura Colucci-Gray and Kirsten Darling-McQuistan (Moray House School of Education and Sport), taking inspiration from Jane Wheeler's painting "Tell me you Come Home" (Wheeler, 2025; oil on canvas), currently displayed on site at Moray House School of Education and Sport. The dialogue will explore the interconnected themes of biography, well-being, community and the aesthetic and material encounters with the garden both as a lived reality and an experience of making.



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**A collective artistic action involving all participants** will follow in the Moray House quad and will continue in Charteris Land with the **official opening of the exhibition of soil paintings** and poetry readings by student teachers enrolled in the Postgraduate Diploma of Primary Education.

**Day Two, Friday 26th September** focuses on curricula and educational practices, inviting participants in a range of Ateliers inspired by the STEAM garden and drawing on resources and inspirations developed during the SENSE. project. The aim is to bring a diverse community of people into conversation to inspire human thinking about life and mortality, order and power, and for educational research to nurture greater awareness of the ways in which we come to know the world.

The day will open with an exploration of the **potentialities and tensions of ‘STEAM gardens’ for curricula and practices in schools and Higher Education**, led by Laura Colucci-Gray. This initial provocation will be followed by opportunities to engage in making-practices within an Atelier. You will have the opportunity to choose between extraction of pigments with Donald Gray and Claire Ritchie, and Watercolour and soil painting with Ramsey Affifi and Isobel Finnie; *or* responding to place in poetry with Caroline Gordon, Mhairi Wallace, Sasha Brown (HVL, Norway) and Michael Riebel (Hawkins Brown Architects).

After this initial interaction with materials, we will be led by Lydia Schulze Heuling (HVL, Norway) and Joan MacKay (Education Scotland) and invited to consider how we might **infuse sciences with the arts** and what this might mean for education and curricular change. The final Atelier of the day will explore possibilities for **decoloniality in educational research**, with hands-on opportunities to craft collective narratives through Palimpsest Methodology, with Jonathan Hancock, Kirsten Darling-McQuistan and Sue Chapman-Kelly.

The day will draw together with an opportunity to share personal reflections and consider **lines of flight relating to materiality, decolonisation and activism** in curricula: from schools to higher education... and beyond.

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