

Session 8:

Growing Great Practice: Workforce Development for Stronger Early Childhood Outcomes



Feed

Elaine Speight

—
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Place, University of Lancashire

Supporting public
breastfeeding
through art, design
and culture.



In
Certain
Places



the Whitworth



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V&A apologises after breastfeeding mum told to 'cover up'

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 News + World News + Breastfeeding

Mum kicked out of pool slams lifeguard who said breastfeeding is 'hygiene risk'

A mum-of-two has hit back at staff at her local swimming pool after she was criticised for breastfeeding

Claridge's hotel criticised after telling breastfeeding woman to cover up

 News + UK News + Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding mum shamed and told to cover up by Wetherspoons pub worker

A staff member asked Becky Bolger to cover her 17-month-old son Sebastian's head to hide the act from others

Breastfeeding mum told to cover up while surrounded by nudity

This is really odd

'The truth is that you can feed your baby anywhere and in all sorts of chairs. The main issue is public perception. I was kicked out of a cafe once for feeding a very small baby even though I had a large scarf draped over boob and baby – and had also turned to face the wall. I had to leave an almost full coffee, with a crying angry baby, looking for the nearest toilet cubicle to feed him whilst having a little angry cry myself.

The importance of a breastfeeding chair is that it sends a signal that it is your right to feed your baby in a public space, not just to mothers but to the public at large. It takes up public space without the mother having to feel like she has to claim it, because it is already claimed by the chair and thus normalises the idea of breastfeeding in public even when not in use.'

On a bench

In a café

On a windowsill

In a lift foyer

On a train

On a wall

On the floor

Stood up holding them

Stood with them in the pram

On steps at the beach front

In the toilet

Standing up

Anywhere available

Once in M&S whilst my husband tried on shoes

On a rock

In a window display as it was the only chair I could find

Walking around with baby in a carrier

On some grass

A bed in a bed shop

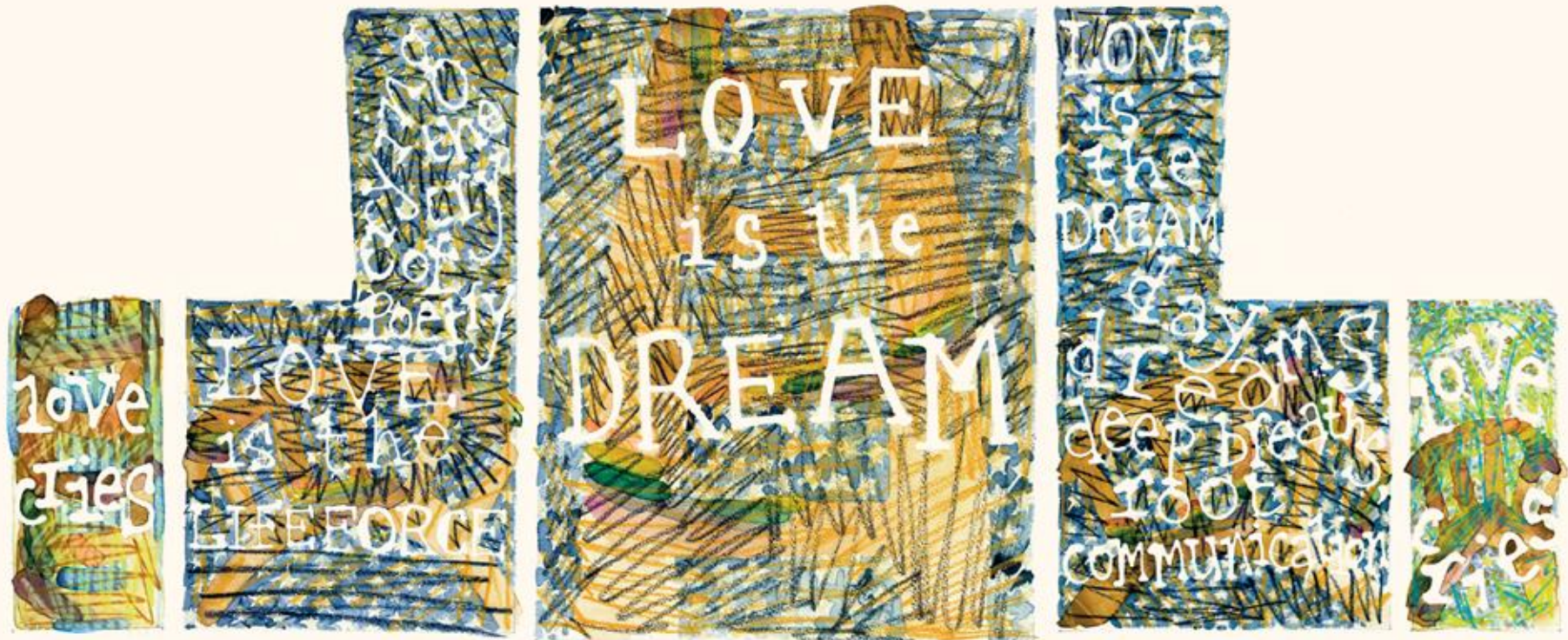
At work meetings

On the bus

On a seat watching a video work in a gallery

Literally walking around holding him to my boob

Queuing in Lidl





Feeding Chair



Feeding chair

tour:

The Tetley · Leeds · Nov 2023

Leeds Art Gallery · Leeds · Jan – 2024

Ikon Gallery · Birmingham · Jun – Jul 2024

Watershed · Bristol · Aug 2024

Woodend Gallery · Scarborough · Mar – Jun 2025

Chapter Arts · Cardiff · May – Sept 2025

Gallery of Modern Art · Glasgow · Sept 2025 – Jan 2026

Birmingham Central Library · Birmingham · Jan – June 2026

Walker Art Gallery · Liverpool · June – Sept 2026

Harris Museum, Art Gallery & Library · Preston · Sept 2026 - Jan 2027

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Feeding Chair

Found Cities, Lost Objects

—
Leeds Art Gallery

Jan – April 2024



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Sally Sutherland

The Floor Flag Manifesto

—
Leeds Art Gallery
April – Nov 2024



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Sally Sutherland The Floor Flag Manifesto

Leeds Art Gallery

April – Nov 2024



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Nurture

—
Woodend Gallery

Scarborough, March – June 2025



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The Milky Way

—
Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow

Sept 2025 – Jan 2026



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Ania Bas Milk & Blankets

—
Community hubs across Birmingham

March & April 2025



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Amelia Hawk

Milk & Blankets

—
Community hubs across Birmingham

March & April 2025



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Joanne Masding Milk & Blankets

—
Community hubs across Birmingham

March & April 2025



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Milk & Blankets Picnic

—
Midlands Arts Centre
June 2025



Participant Feedback



*‘The Feeding Chair is trying to do something with **real people in a real space**. People are used to seeing finished artworks in galleries, but this invites **process and interaction** — it encourages conversations about the gallery space itself.’*

—
Sally Butcher, Feed artist in residence, Birmingham (June 2024)

‘This project has grown absolute wings! We started off taking part in workshops and we are now running a weekend group at the gallery, aimed specifically at parents who may have returned to work and are feeding an older baby, and we’re planning a photography project.’

—
Suzanne Tobin, Leeds Bosom Buddies peer supporter (Nov 2024)

*‘The Feeding Chair provides an **opportunity through the visual arts to discuss barriers to infant feeding with fresh eyes.**’*

—
Dr Justin Varney, Director of Public Health, Birmingham City Council (June 2024)

*‘Thank you for creating this space where our stories of **motherhood can be seen, felt and honoured**’*

—
Sylvia Ciszewska, project participant, Scarborough (May 2025)

*‘The beauty of the Feeding Chair is that it bridges both the artistic and the educational—it’s an artwork to be looked at and discussed, but also to be sat in, touched, and listened to. **Bringing this functional artwork into gallery spaces is quite a radical proposition—it challenges traditional ideas of what belongs in an art space.**’*

—
Linzi Stauvers, Artistic Director, Ikon (July 2024)

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Harris Museum, Art Gallery & Library

—
Sept 2026 – Jan 2027



Thank You

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