

# Beyond the illustration of research data:

Using professionally facilitated image making techniques to enable participants to describe, enhance and extend data originally captured using traditional text-based methods of research



Julie Mooney-Somers<sup>1</sup> & Kris Smith<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Centre for Values, Ethics and the Law in Medicine, University of Sydney; <sup>2</sup> School of Creative Arts, University of Newcastle



## The Growing Up with Cancer project design

- Young people's experiences of dealing with cancer, its treatment and long terms consequences at the same time as they are growing up
- 19 young people aged 16-29 years who were diagnosed with cancer between the ages of 11-22 years
- Interviewed about their experiences of growing up with cancer
- Created self-portraits about their experiences of growing up with cancer
- Interviewed after completed self-portrait

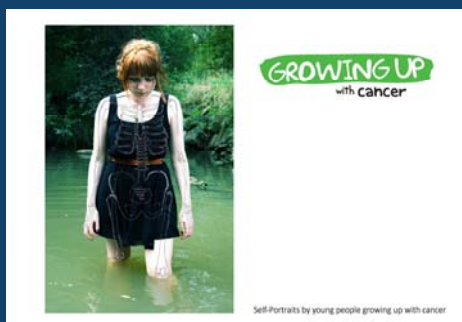


## How we supported the creative process

- Work in any medium
- Regular workshops with Kris (artist) and Julie (researcher) to develop ideas, develop technical skills, try things out
- Work with artist one-on-one in person, by phone or online (with screen-sharing)
- Access high end digital camera and video recorder, laptop, post-production software

## The different ways young people worked

- Worked entirely alone
- Used workshop to generate ideas then worked alone
- Reworked creative works, post-production work by artist
- Produced SP in single workshop using brought materials and images taken on the day; post-production by artist
- Worked closely with artist for extended period
- Not everyone finished a self-portrait



## What we produced

- 21 mixed media, graphic, photographic, and musical self-portraits
- Printed catalogue of 21 self-portraits plus artist statements
- Exhibition toured 8 venues across Australia, and now internationally
- Project website to share self-portraits, exhibition photos, videos of young artists talking at exhibition launches

## The benefits of a creative process for a research project

- Different to a 'hit and run' single interview
- Process provided an extended opportunity – and for some, multiple opportunities – to reflect on their experiences
- Created different way to think about self and experience
- Young people decided what they wanted to represent and how – not all the portraits are simply about cancer
- Creative process more than a catalyst for a subsequent interview
- Self-portraits engage research audiences in different way to traditional research outputs

## Want to know more?

See the self-portraits in the exhibition hall  
Project website [www.sydney.edu.au/GUWC](http://www.sydney.edu.au/GUWC)  
Email [GUWC.research@sydney.edu.au](mailto:GUWC.research@sydney.edu.au)