

Kolaiti, Christina (2023) Teddy Bear
Cabinet: Photography Exhibition at Northumbria Specialist
Emergency Care Hospital, Northumbria Healthcare NHS
Foundation Trust. [Show/Exhibition]

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The Teddy Bear Cabinet

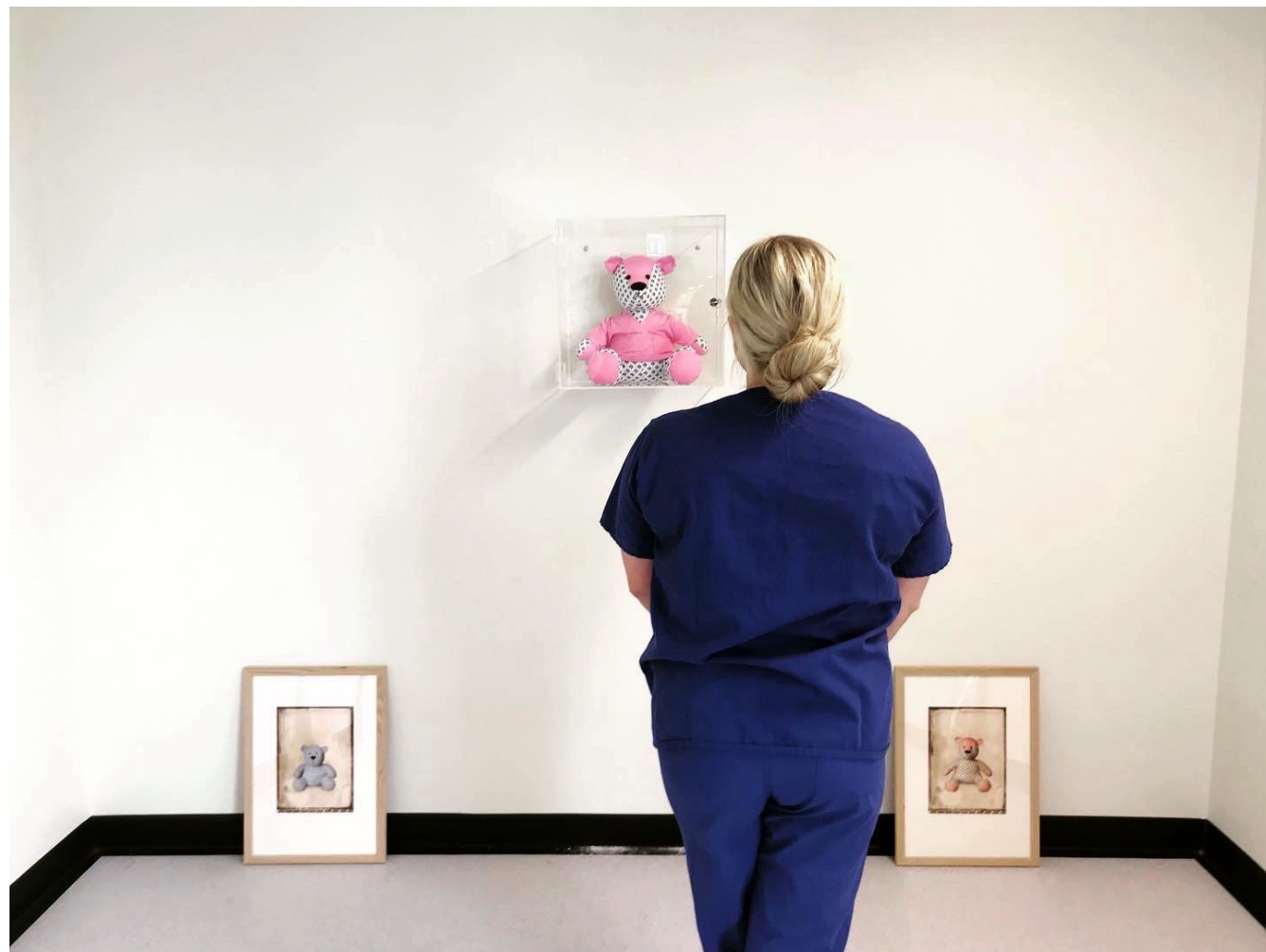
Photography Exhibition

Northumbria Specialist Emergency
Care NSEC Hospital, Cramlington,
Northumberland


Bright Arts, Northumbria Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

June 7, 2023 - on permanent display





Aww i love this photo! Its me! It's absolutely beautiful what you have done xxx


 Northumbria Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

The Teddy Bear Cabinet

Christina Kolaiti


The Teddy Bear Cabinet features a series of portraits of handcrafted teddy bears. The portraits resemble 19th century *cabinet cards*; an early form of photography, which was often displayed in glass cabinets. This practice evolved into the conventional family album.


The teddy bears have been made from keepsakes such as baby clothes, muslins, pregnancy jumpers and baby blankets. The images represent familiar memories of nurturing in the elusive cabinet of stories of early motherhood.

This work draws upon the Theory of Attachment, introduced by British psychologist John Bowlby in his book *Attachment and Loss*, published in 1969. This theory proposes that the mother-infant physical closeness and responsiveness during the early years of life is most crucial to emotional nurturing, cognitive development and lifelong mental health. This also endorses a "*lasting psychological connectedness between human beings*" (Bowlby, 1969).


Dr Christina Kolaiti is a practising artist based in North Tyneside and senior lecturer in photography at York St John University, whose research over the past two decades has converged the fields of arts and healthcare.

The exhibition has been organised by Northumbria Healthcare's Bright charity. For the past 20 years Bright has developed an award-winning healing arts programme, which uses art to enhance the hospital environment for patients, visitors and staff. For information, see <https://www.northumbria.nhs.uk/>


WITH THE TEDDY BEAR CABINET


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> **North Tyneside artist opens her new baby-focussed art exhibition at Northumberland hospital**

15 June 2023

North Tyneside artist opens her new baby-focussed art exhibition at Northumberland hospital



Dr Christina Kolaiti, practising artist based in North Tyneside, has opened her newest art exhibition, The Teddy Bear Cabinet, at the Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital (NSECH).

The Teddy Bear Cabinet features a collection of portraits of 12 handcrafted teddy bears, resembling 19th century cabinet cards; an early form of photography often displayed in glass cabinets.

Each teddy bear represents a baby, as this project is inspired by British psychologist John Bowlby's Theory of Attachment, which highlights the importance of the mother-infant relationship.

This theory suggests that the bond between a mother and her infant during the early years of life is crucial to emotional nurturing, cognitive development, and lifelong mental health outcomes. Bowlby's work also highlights the importance of physical closeness and responsiveness, as well as their importance in endorsing a "lasting psychological connectedness" between people.

The 12 teddy bears have been handcrafted from keepsakes such as baby clothes, blankets, muslins, and pregnancy jumpers, giving them a warming and baby-like feel. They were made by a local seamstress, Inga's Sewing Room in North Shields, who did an amazing job in honouring the previous materials and making unique teddy designs with them. These keepsakes were provided by 12 different mothers who were keen to be part of the project.

There is also a teddy bear which has been specially made for NSECH, crafted from hospital scrubs and gowns. This can be found on display at the hospital's exhibition, which is located by the Pregnancy Assessment Unit.

After having her own baby at NSECH, Christina expressed her desire to give back to their maternity department: "My experience as a service user of the maternity department was one of being surrounded by highly specialist and empathetic staff and I strongly felt that I wanted to contribute to the department. The artworks convey the sense of security and connection that describes this experience, which has been engrained amongst my precious memories of early motherhood."

This exhibition has been organised by Northumbria Healthcare's Bright charity, who have developed an award-winning healing arts programme to enhance the hospital environment for patients, visitors, and staff.

Brenda Longstaff, head of the Bright charity, said: "We know the role that art can play in supporting patients and visitors at our hospitals, so we're glad that our NSECH hospital is able to host The Teddy Bear Cabinet exhibition. It's a colourful and fun exhibition with such sentimental meaning, and it does a great job in highlighting how important nurturing is. We hope that this can encourage and motivate mothers to build unbreakable bonds with their children."

Christina is also using The Teddy Bear Cabinet to promote Infant Mental Health Awareness Week (IMHAW), which takes place from the 12th- 18th June. The Teddy Bear Cabinet: Please Mind the Gap further raises awareness of the importance of early attachment in infant mental health.

It responds to the Parent-Infant Foundation's pledge to raise awareness of a 'baby's blind spot' in the UK's mental health provision by highlighting the positive impact of nurturing before birth and during the early years of life.

This project will be hosted throughout the week on the Tyne & Wear Metro, as an on-board exhibition in the form of carriage cards. They will be positioned facing the buggy areas on the carriages, in easy sight for parents and carers boarding the Metro.

This project is in collaboration with The Parent-Infant Foundation, The Association of Child Psychotherapists, and The Institute of Child Psychology. It has also invited contributions from award-winning blogs and authors such as Tracy Gillett (@RaisedGood), Dr Greer Kirshenbaum (@NurtureNeuroscienceParenting) and Tiffany Belanger (@Cosleepy).

Christina's research over the past two decades has converged the fields of arts and healthcare. She was one of the first Arts in Health PhD students that was supported to undertake arts research in the Trust.

Her PhD research 'The Influence of Photographic Narrative in Healthcare Dialogue' was an Arts and Humanities New Collaborations Award with the University of Northumbria and Northumbria Healthcare Foundation NHS Trust. This partnership received the Combined Colleges Medal by the Royal Photographic Society, The Royal Colleges of Physicians, Obstetricians and Surgeons in 2011.

Christina has also worked with the NHS in other projects. She developed the 'Just Well Loved' project at the children's area in Wansbeck Hospital in 2003, and she has co-taught the Medical Photography SSC: The Camera Never Lies? with Dr Mark Welfare and presented medical students photography exhibitions at Wansbeck and North Tyneside Hospitals.

Christina is also a senior lecturer in photography at York St John University's School of The Arts and has also curated her students' artwork at NSECH and local hospitals around York. She played a key role in embedding the teaching of arts and healthcare into the BA Hons Photography curriculum.

To learn more about the mother-infant relationship and Infant Mental Health Awareness Week, please visit [The Teddy Bear Cabinet Instagram Page](#), and the [Parent-Infant Foundation website](#).



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Hand crafted teddy, Inga's Sewing Room





 NSEC Hospital 18 June 2023 


Northumbria Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust



CHRISTINA KOLAITI,
NORTH TYNESIDE ARTIST



THE TEDDY BEAR CABINET,
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