

Salamanda Tandem
'Anything we make ourselves is intrinsically better than what we are given'

Isabel Jones
(Director Salamanda Tandem)

In this paper the author describes her concern with the physical and psychological barriers that obstruct people's creativity and how this led her to be involved equally in the process of making art as by the artwork itself. The paper explores one of the 12 working principles or values that the author founded salamanda tandem upon - *'anything we make ourselves is intrinsically better than what we are given'*.

This provides a context to talk about a project called 'Eye Contact' which over a 13 year period has developed a creative process that brings the life stories of visually impaired, blind and deafblind people to light through movement, sound and visual performance. This project provided a creative context in which, despite the force of preconceptions and cultural prejudices, the uniqueness of each individual contribution came to the fore and had a wide and unmistakable meaning.

Laying out the 12 principles, the paper examines how these values have helped and guided salamanda tandem over 20 years of operation to identify and remove the social barriers that are disabling to people in order to make artworks that are distinctively *their own*.

Taken from our extensive archive the paper will include still photographs and video clips (if possible) in order to illustrate the work.

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To celebrate 20 years of salamanda tandem, a number of arts work with people practitioners, and academics will work with Isabel Jones to disseminate and debate the underpinning values and philosophy that influence our day to day creative practice of working with people. This paper is the first of 12 in this series.

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