

**KAREN FOLEY:** The Arts Hub was an online, interactive event, and you're about to watch a session from that. But I wanted to explain to you how it all worked. You're about to see the video stream of the studio, but our audience participated online through chat and through interactive widgets. And those ideas were fed through into the studio from the social media desk. Of course, because you're watching it on catch-up, you won't be able to do those activities. But I do hope that you enjoy the discussion that follows.

Hello and welcome to another Student Hub Live event. This is an Arts Hub, and we have a very fabulous new studio. It's got lots of wonderful objects, because we're going to be talking a lot about this in this event. I'm Karen Foley, and over the next few days I'm mainly going to be sitting on this sofa. And I have an amazing array of guests who are going to come and talk about various modules you can study with the arts. We're going to be talking about some of the differences between level 1 and 2, about resilience, about why the past is important. We've got a jam-packed lineup that I'm sure you'll find really, really interesting.

Now, the idea with this event is really to inspire people to think about which courses or modules they're going to be doing next. But also, hopefully you'll have completed a module or you may well be partway through it. And this is a chance to really celebrate doing that-- having a bit of fun, especially in the evening sessions, and really enjoying the arts.

So I am going to welcome our social media desk first. We have HJ and Rachel. Now, you'll have noticed if you're in the Watch and Engage room that we have a chat box. And I can see some of you chatting in there already. If you are watching through the live stream only, it's really nice to come into the other room, because there you can talk to other people if you want to. And you can also see some widgets, which let us know where you are, how you're feeling, and whether you've decided which course you're going to be studying next.

So it really is a good idea, and you can do that by going to the website [studenthublive.kmi.open.ac.uk](http://studenthublive.kmi.open.ac.uk), and then selecting the Watch an Engage button. If you aren't currently an OU student or you can't remember your OUCU, you can just get a new one and look at the frequently asked questions section on the website to do that. It's really easy and simple, and it will make this whole experience a lot more fun.

Anyway, without further ado, I'd like to introduce you to our social media desk, who'll be

feeding all of your comments and chat back into the studio. Rachel and HJ, welcome.

**RACHEL:** Well, it's just me.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Oh.

**RACHEL:** I'm really excited. I can't wait. I mean, we're here. It's a student event. But HJ's otherwise disposed. So he's busy. He's busy.

**KAREN FOLEY:** He's busy?

**RACHEL:** He's busy.

**KAREN FOLEY:** But he knew we were starting at 11:00.

**RACHEL:** Well, you know-- he's been spotted now. He's been seen out and about on the street. People were having photographs taken with him. It's all over Twitter.

**KAREN FOLEY:** My producer's just-- HJ! I didn't see you there. What are you doing? We're starting at 11:00.

**HJ:** Yeah. Sorry, just had some last minute bits to finish off at the--

**KAREN FOLEY:** Well, I must say that the quiz set's looking great. Look at that sparkle and shimmer.

**HJ:** I know.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Yeah, well, OK. Welcome. That's at least given you a bit of an insight into our studio, so we're in a fairly cramped room and we've got lots going on. But anyway, let me now do it again. HJ and Rachel, welcome to the Student Hub Live. Would you like to tell everybody what's going to happen?

**HJ:** Yes. Well, we'll be chatting to you live from the studio. So if there's anything you think, any questions you have, we'll put it to our live studio. We love hearing from you, as well. We've got lots of widgets on the side, as well. So if you want to tell us what you're studying and where you are, we'd love to hear from you.

**RACHEL:** Basically, we really want to hear from you guys at home. We want to have you engaged, bring you into the studio, basically. That's what we're doing here. And we want selfies. We need to get a selfie of us two, to go on the board.

**HJ:** Yes.

**RACHEL:** And we don't have any selfies on our board. And if you're new to these events, you've never seen this board before.

**HJ:** Yes, we've jazzed it up for this one, as well.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Looking fabulous, I must say.

**RACHEL:** It's awesome.

**KAREN FOLEY:** So we've got the hashtag there.

**RACHEL:** We do.

**HJ:** Yes, so you can tweet us at #artshub16. And we'll be tweeting throughout the day, so if you want to keep up with the schedule, what's going on, or if you want to ask questions through Twitter as well, that's cool as well. We like that. But you can send-- like if you wanted to send us a selfie, because you can see our faces. We want to see what you're doing as well. Study buddies, as well-- we had some great ones last time, didn't we?

**RACHEL:** Yeah, yeah.

**HJ:** Didn't someone have a lizard as their study buddy?

**RACHEL:** That's right, yeah.

**HJ:** That was one of my favourites. So if you want to send them in to us--

**RACHEL:** We're looking for a crocodile this time, aren't we?

**HJ:** Yeah. You can email them to us as well. That's a good way to do it-- [studenthub@open.ac.uk](mailto:studenthub@open.ac.uk). But, yeah. Just send us the view from where you are.

**RACHEL:** Let us know what biscuits you've got.

**KAREN FOLEY:** What happens, then, when people email? I see you have a nice American-style letter box there going on?

**HJ:** Yes, well this is our inbox. So anything you send to us gets sent into our lovely inbox. And yeah, but we'll see if-- I don't think anything's up yet. We've got a little red flag that tells us.

**RACHEL:** Postman's not here yet, is he?

**HJ:** Yeah, always a bit late in the mornings.

**RACHEL:** A bit like you. It's tradition.

**HJ:** Yeah. Typical OU student-- last minute, eh?

**KAREN FOLEY:** Lovely. Well, thank you both. And of course, you've both been OU students for quite some time and are doing various other, different things. And I'm sure we're going to talk a lot about that later in the day. But do send us your stuff and see how quickly our producer can get that into the studio-- always a nice challenge for the backstage crew. So we'd like to see your selfies. Send us a picture. Tell us what you're doing. Or you might want to send us a picture of, ideally, a dog. But any other pet would do. But we're quite into dogs at the moment-- perhaps studying, perhaps messing up your study.

So without further ado, I'm going to introduce you to my guests who are officially here to open the event-- Richard Brown.

**RICHARD  
BROWN:**

**KAREN FOLEY:** Hi. You're the current interim executive dean for the arts.

**RICHARD  
BROWN:**

**KAREN FOLEY:** And Kim Woods-- so welcome to the studio. Now, I've asked you to bring some objects along, because as you know, we're talking a lot about this. And I wonder if you can tell us what you've brought, and what's inspiring you about the arts right now.

**RICHARD  
BROWN:** OK, well I brought, really, one of my favourite books. This is Shakespeare's sonnets. I'm going to turn it around so you can see the front cover. So this is a book of poems that Shakespeare-- who died 400 years ago, as you all know-- this was published in 1609, so not long before his death. This book absolutely obsessed me as a student. It obsessed me so much, I used to carry a small copy-- not as big as this big, heavy one-- around in my pocket all the time, when I was a student. So if I had a spare moment, I could read a sonnet. That's how sad I was.

**KAREN FOLEY:** What in particular did you like about sonnets?

**RICHARD BROWN:** Well, it's partly the form. It's a very tight form. Most, but not all, only have 14 lines and a very specified rhyme scheme. So they're very interesting as a structure, but they're also love poems. They're very-- so to a romantic young man, as I was then, they very much appeal. But they're not soppy. They're quite hard-core love poems. So there's quite a lot that are about sex, and there's quite a lot about being in love with someone who isn't in love with you, who you-- he gets quite cross about, or the speaker of the poems.

It's a really interesting one, because the speaker of the poems calls himself Will. So we think, ah ha! Is that Shakespeare? And one of the things you've always got to remember is, it both is and isn't the real Shakespeare. But that's why I brought this in.

**KAREN FOLEY:** So what would you do, then? Would you be reading these in lecture theatres, and what would you be thinking? Would it sort of get your imagination going? Or what did you actually do with these-- with the book, I guess?

**RICHARD BROWN:** I suppose what I was trying to do is figure out what's going on in these extraordinary poems. So most of the time, I was trying to memorise them. I was trying to figure out how they worked. And ultimately, when I became an academic myself, it was poems like this I wanted to understand more. So I went from Shakespeare to Spencer, who was one of his contemporaries. He also wrote a sonnet sequence. And what was motivating me, I think, was a fascination with poetry-- with the poetry of the past. You know, this is the distant past-- the poetry of Queen Elizabeth I period. So I wanted to know more about that society, more about what motivated these writers to write these, to me, quite extraordinary poems.

**KAREN FOLEY:** You're really in the field of literature, sort of.

**RICHARD BROWN:** Yes.

**KAREN FOLEY:** But one thing that is very apparent with the arts is that so much crosses over-- history, and culture, and all of these various things impact on each other. It's almost quite difficult to study something in isolation.

**RICHARD BROWN:** Exactly.

**KAREN FOLEY:** How did you feel about that, and how did you relate to that? And I guess, how did that change

over time as you started looking more academically at something, as opposed to it just as a beautiful thing?

**RICHARD  
BROWN:**

It's a really great question. In my own work-- when I started talking about this, I started talking about rhyme schemes-- I am very, very obsessive about structures and forms. But structures and forms are themselves the products of time. So people only start writing sonnets in English during the 16th century. So that tells you something about fashion. So there is a vogue for sonnets, which actually goes right the way across Europe from the 13th century through to the 16th century and beyond.

And the sonnets themselves tell us an awful lot about Shakespeare's society. So there's one I was reading earlier on, "When in disgrace with fortune in men's eyes," where what he's actually talking about is-- do you know what? I'm really sad because I haven't got any influential patrons. Nobody's backing me. Nobody's giving me any money. I'm a great writer, but do you know what? I'm down on my uppers. And the poem concludes, you know, what makes me happy is when I think of you. That's the only thing that makes me cheer up.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Oh! You couldn't help but fall for that, could you?

**RICHARD  
BROWN:**

Well, I don't know.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Maybe someone with better prospects. You know, pick himself up a bit more.

**RICHARD  
BROWN:**

Exactly.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Oh, lovely. Oh, thanks for sharing that. Now, this is also quite interesting because the fonts are quite interesting. So you've got, obviously, a nice, more modern font as well, with some of these, and a more traditional one. What's the importance then of looking at something in, I guess, a more historical sense, in terms of it visually-- like a sonnet, that has the previous fonts?

**RICHARD  
BROWN:**

Well, one of the things that's very interesting about this book is basically, scholars disagree really violently about, is this-- to put it in modern terms-- is it a bootleg, or is it an official publication? So in the past, scholars used to think that, basically, it was a bootleg. So in other words, Shakespeare would not possibly have let out these terribly, terribly scurrilous poems about sex. And I don't think I can-- I can't say enough how scandalous they are. So the first

126 are addressed to a boy, and the speaker is clearly a man. This would have been scandalous for the time. The last sequence is about a woman with whom the speaker is clearly having sex. They're utterly explicit.

And we know people reacted to this very badly. There's a copy of it where one of the sonnets that's clearly about having sex-- it's completely scored out, and another one where a reader has written in the margin, "What a wretched heap of infidel stuff." So they didn't like it at all.

What this tells us-- this is really interesting-- if it's a bootleg, one of the questions is, who's the publisher? This publisher-- T.T. and George Eld there-- they actually published some really important official work by other writers. So that problematises that story. Is it a bootleg? Is it not? We just don't know. So going back to your question, the font-- the form in which the book was printed tells us an awful lot about Shakespeare's society. And again, in some senses it simply generates a whole heap of more questions.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Wow, excellent. Thank you for showing us that. That's really interesting. Lovely. Now, Kim, you've brought some things as well, to talk us through. And your background is really in terms of art history.

**KIM WOODS:** Yes

**KAREN FOLEY:** Yeah, so you've brought some wonderful things to show us. Can you show us your first one? The first one is actually a module book. It's an old module now, and it's come off. But students have been around for a while. You never know, they might have done it. It's actually the first module that I worked on when I joined the art history department.

**KIM WOODS:** And the reason I brought it in is because I re-discovered something from working on this module. I don't know if you can see. There is a painting here of a girl with a candle, standing in a doorway. And it's in a book that I had no part in, and it's by one of my colleagues. I didn't write it.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Can you tilt it up a little bit? Thank you, Kim.

**KIM WOODS:** Yeah, is that better?

**KAREN FOLEY:** That's perfect.

**KIM WOODS:** When I saw it, I had a jolt of recognition. And I realised it was a painting that I used to look at

when I was a child. I was very fortunate in that I grew up in a family where my father was interested in art and did a bit of painting. And he had a set of six art books, *Art Through the Ages*, that I used to like to look at. And this was one of the paintings that I looked at when I was a child. And I'd completely forgotten about it until it turned up in the module material.

And of course, as a child I didn't care who'd done it or anything basic like that-- had no idea about the date, no facts whatsoever. I just liked it. I think what's interesting to me now is to look at it and think, well, why did I like it? And I think I probably know. I think part of it is around technique, because it's very loosely-painted. It's a sketch. And at its time-- this was painted in the first half of the 19th century-- at its time, this kind of loose technique where you can see the brushstrokes was quite avant garde. It's not the way that finished paintings were meant to look. But it's appealing, because you can see what the artist's done. You can see where the artist's been, if you like.

But I think the other thing is that it's the kind of world that's depicted here-- this rather low-toned, meditative, boring life of women in the painting, where nothing much happens and you hang around in a doorway with a candle. And actually, I think that's a bit more what my teenage years were like, as well. So it was a bit like looking at a mirror. So that's the painting that I rediscovered through starting to work at the Open University for the art history department.

**KAREN FOLEY:** It's an unusual painting to like as a child, isn't it? It's interesting, actually, because I think we often do like those sorts-- and it brings back memories for me of liking certain things. And I think, actually, it is unusual. I wonder if my daughter looks at certain things like that-- if those memories are being imprinted now, and how different we view art at home, especially. There are less prints like that around my house. Things are changing, in terms of how we view these things. So yeah, very interesting. Thank you.

And you've brought something else, which I'd really like to see.

**KIM WOODS:** Yes. Now, this is a bit of a weird choice. I work on sculpture, and I'm very interested in material. So I started off working on wood-- on wood sculpture. And I've now graduated to alabaster, which is rather more glamorous material. And this is a piece of alabaster. This is the stone that was quarried in the British Isles. But it's also quarried in Spain, which is where I got this from. And it's used to make sculpture, but it's also used to make windows because it's translucent. The light can pass straight through it. So I'm going to show you how this works.



So does that-- can you see that, the way that the light passes through it? So if you go to the Mediterranean, particularly Spain and parts of Italy, and you look up, you'll find that some of the windows-- particularly high up in churches-- are made, not of glass, but of alabaster. And this was a traditional material for making windows in the late mediaeval period. And some of them are still there. I think they've probably been renewed since then. I don't think they really last that many hundred years. But it's another thing that you can do with this particularly extraordinary stone. But it also makes fabulous sculpture, because the light shines through the sculpture just as it does through this piece, used as a window. So it looks very lustrous, very glamorous. It's a very prestigious material to have your tomb made out of, which is what I've been working on.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Wonderful. Well, thank you for showing that to us. That's very unique. And of course, you are doing a session on Saturday as well, where we're taking an object and looking at that in more detail, and thinking about both the materials as well as what that represents. So I'm looking forward to that, also. Well, thank you both for doing that.

I just wanted to come back to the social media desk and see how everybody at home is doing, and also talk through various other admin things as well, just to show you how to make the most of this wonderful platform that we're hosting this event on. So HJ and Rachel, what's going on?

**HJ:** Yes, well, we got lots of chatter. Everyone loves the set. They're saying lots of things about it.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Oh, good. I'm so glad, because this, of course, is our cabinet of curiosity. I'm not sure if I mentioned that before, because I've been harping on about it quite a lot. And of course, this was a really important idea in the arts, where people would have these wonderful displays of beautiful objects. And we've got some very fine pieces here as well, haven't we?

**RICHARD BROWN:** Well, there's [INAUDIBLE]. It looks like the back room of a shop to me. But--

**KAREN FOLEY:** Richard!

**RICHARD BROWN:** Back rooms of shops can be good. That's what Montaigne said everybody needed-- you know, for yourself. This 16th-century philosopher, he said for your soul, you need to go to the back room of a shop.

**KAREN FOLEY:** This is my cabinet of curiosities.

**RICHARD** Yeah, it's all right.

**BROWN:**

**KAREN FOLEY:** I'm hoping people will bring more things and put them on there.

**RICHARD** I'm intimidated by being behind Queen Victoria, I have to say.

**BROWN:**

**KIM WOODS:** I'm sure she wouldn't approve of you.

**RICHARD** That's my worry, so.

**BROWN:**

**KAREN FOLEY:** Excellent. Well, Queen Victoria-- if you're around, you can write in. Tell Richard-- OK, seriously. What else is going on? So I'm glad you all like the set. That's good.

**HJ:** Yes, we do love it.

**RACHEL:** To go back, Devin says it's easy to dust. So I don't know who's actually going to be dusting the set. But it's quite smart, isn't it?

**HJ:** It is. It's very smart. I think on Shakespeare, as well, Amanda and I didn't realise how naughty he was. So I might just going to go off and take a look at a copy, see what she can find later, I think. But if you are using the chat, sometimes-- because it's a live event-- sometimes you may have a little trouble with stopping or sound. Usually, just hitting Refresh will sort most problems out, which is--

**RACHEL:** So how do you do refresh? That's important.

**HJ:** Well, if you look at the top left of your browser, there's a little Refresh button next to the address. You can also hit F5 at the top of your keyboard.

**RACHEL:** Is that what we do at TMA time?

**HJ:** That's what we do at TMA time. When there's too many coming in, we just keep hitting refresh to wait for them to come back.

**RACHEL:** F5 to refresh.

**HJ:** But what's also really helpful is, at the top right of the chat box there's a little pin. And sometimes the chat can go a bit fast. So if you press Pin, then you can just scroll it at your own pace. And we do that a lot here, because it does go so fast and you can miss quite a bit. So we find that very helpful.

**RACHEL:** Yeah. Looks like some students, as well, were enjoying the books that were shared earlier, some of the details. Is there any chance we could just go back and just take the titles of them, so we can share them in the chat room later, after this session? So there's some good things happening already. So I think there's going to be some money spent on books already, so far.

**HJ:** Yes. Already planning how to spend these prizes from the caption competition, eh?

**RACHEL:** And don't forget-- #artshub16, and our email address, studenthub@open.ac.uk. We love to see your selfies and study buddies.

**HJ:** And the view from where you are, as well.

**RACHEL:** Absolutely.

**HJ:** Definitely.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Brilliant. Well, thank you very much, both. And you've explained a lot of the things. We'll go through those again throughout the day, because of course, people drop in and drop out. So do feel free just to come in and go back as you wish. You can also change the layout of the interface, which can be quite useful if you want to do a lot of chat or not. And that's at the bottom of the screen. We'll be showing a little video after this, about how to actually use the interface. So do watch that to make the most of it. And also, our caption competition as well-- don't forget to do those. I'll be choosing one that we're going to focus on in a minute.

But I just wanted to end the session by asking both of you something that's really inspiring you in the arts right now. Very, very subjective, and I just wanted to see what was really getting you going at the moment.

**RICHARD BROWN:** Oh, well, go for Kim first.

**KIM WOODS:** Oh, I was going to say you could start with that.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Can only choose one.

**RICHARD** Only one, oh my word.

**BROWN:**

**KIM WOODS:** OK. Again, it's going to sound very weird. The thing that I'm really interested in is speaking statues. So these are sculptures with open mouths, so that they seem to be addressing the viewer. And it's a very powerful thing, because usually art is here and you are at a distance looking at it. If you look at a speaking statue, it has a very different kind of dynamic. You think-- it kind of seizes you. It makes you interact. And it makes think, oh. What are you saying? And you almost try and listen to it. It's a very kind of weird thing.

So that's what I've been looking out for. So the most recent thing I did, I was at the conference in Spain, which is where I got my window. And I was peering through binoculars at a sculpture on the facade of a church, and trying to work out what this open-mouthed figure was doing. So that's the kind of weird thing I get up to. But you did ask, so--

**KAREN FOLEY:** Yes.

**RICHARD** OK, I've thought of something. It's interesting, I was looking down at this rhino here. And the  
**BROWN:** rhino-- I'm going to be inter-disciplinary. I'm going to do something art historical. Last weekend I was in Paris to celebrate my wife's birthday, and we went to the Musee Cluny, which is a museum of mediaeval art. It's got lots of things that Kim's very--

**KAREN FOLEY:** Probably very similar to this.

**RICHARD** Well, slightly plush here. And there is an incredible sequence of tapestries in there called-- in  
**BROWN:** French, it's [SPEAKING FRENCH]. In English, "The Lady with the Unicorn". And basically, there are five tapestries which seem to be an allegory of the senses. So there's smell, touch, taste, sight, etc. And there's another one that is very, very enigmatic. They're extremely colourful, extremely beautiful. So there's a lady in absolutely gorgeous mediaeval clothes. And in each tapestry there's also a unicorn and a lion, isn't there? And there are various other weird creatures.

Again, what really excites me about this is, we have vague ideas about what it's about. But it's enigmatic. It relentlessly forces the viewer to think, what on earth's going on here? So if you're in Paris, go and have a look at it. It is so spectacular.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Wonderful. Well, thank you both. It sounds like you're very inspired by them. So that's brilliant. Well, thank you for this introductory session. That's been really, really useful, Kevin Richard. And what we're going to see now-- if you're new to this sort of thing-- is we have these ad breaks, where we'll show you some video. The chat's still running, and I'd really like you to put in the Wordle how are you feeling right now. I'm going to show you that after the break. So if you haven't done that yet, you can just put three words in there with how you're feeling right now. You need to be on the Watch and Engage option to be able to do that.

And we're going to play some videos. The first one I want to play is how to use the interface, which is just basically where I'm showing you how to make the best use of Stadium, which is what you're watching this on. So do watch that. But if you need to nip and get a cup of tea or something, then you can get that on the website as well, on the frequently asked questions section. It's all on there. So we'll see you in about six or seven minutes for our next session, which is also going to be with Kim. We're going to talk about studying the arts. So we'll see you soon.