

Using Applied Theatre to explore issues in Prenatal Screening – Inside View

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I. INTRODUCTION

This performance has been funded by the Wellcome Trust as part of A People's Award - Engaging The Public in Science. Its intention is to stimulate and inform debate about prenatal screening for genetic anomalies during early pregnancy. The dilemmas and questions are explored from the perspective of both health professionals and pregnant women. The performance raises questions about some of the social, ethical and cultural issue and will stimulate debate.



Transformation of Research Data to Performance

Excerpts from research data provided to performance team

Visits to clinic by members of performance team

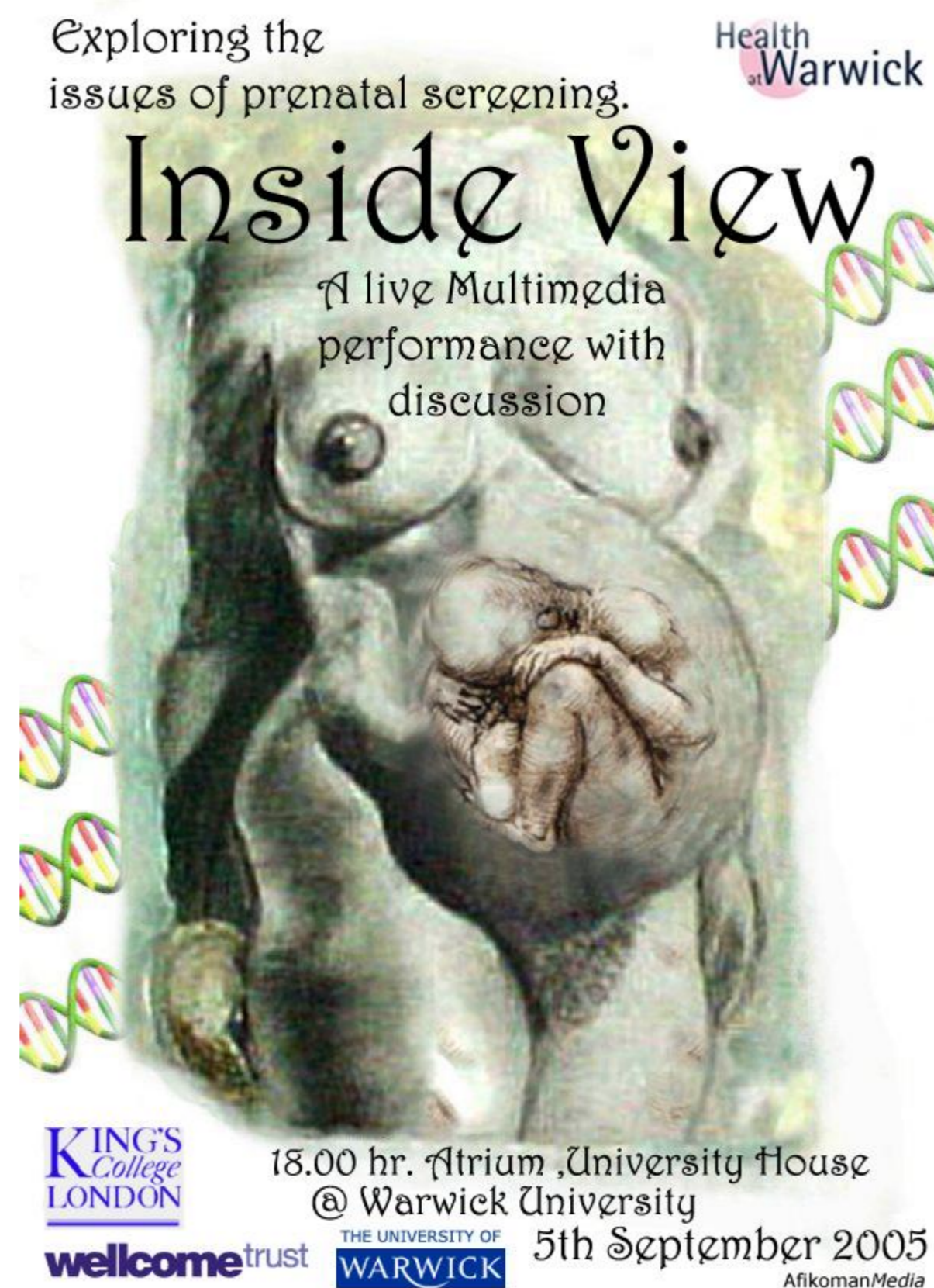
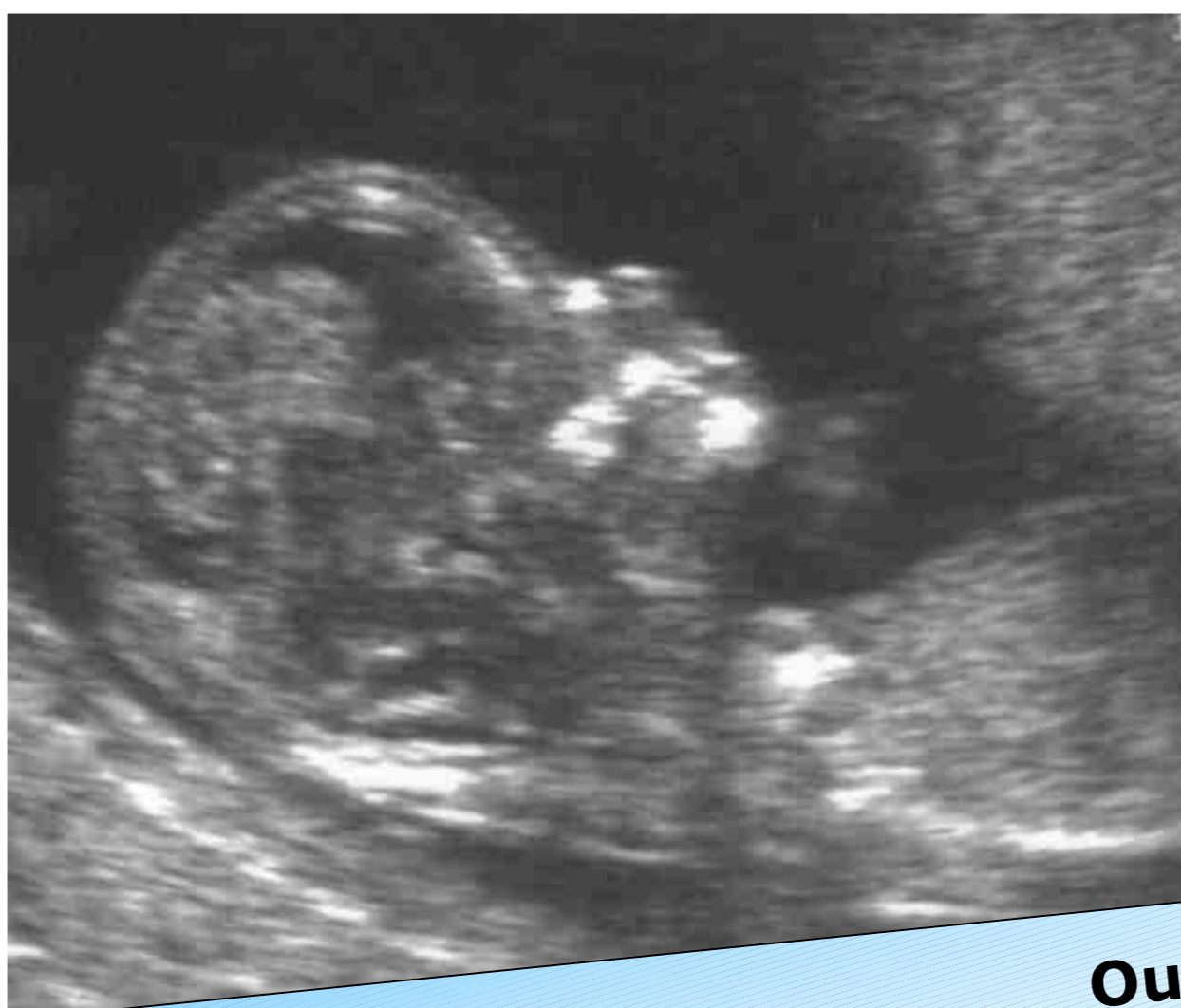
Development of images and draft text

Discussion with both teams

Rehearsals and performance development

Synthesising the visual and aural material through live performance

Resulting in a One Woman Show against a projected backdrop of real and computer generated imagery.



Performance Team

Theatre Director – C. Bryanston

Media – Saul Cross

Writer – Tinch Minter

Performer – Kathy Joyce

Photographer – S.H. Garas

Research Team

Medical Anthropologist – GLH

Sociologist – PL, JS

Biochemist - KS



II. METHODOLOGY

The performance draws on the findings of a research project on the Social and Organisational Implications of One Stop First Trimester Prenatal Screening funded by the ESRC/MRC Innovative Health Technologies programme. The project collected questionnaires from several hundred women in two different locations before and after birth. It also carries out interviews with women during pregnancy and postnatally. It recorded consultations within two maternity clinics and interviewed staff working there. The project provides a wealth of rich narrative data, from health professionals, women and their partners about prenatal screening which has been used in this performance.



Performed in non theatre spaces to a range of audiences

Medical, biomedical engineering and midwifery students, SureStart pregnant mothers, Young Parents Forum, Health Professionals, Policymakers, academics and user groups.

Issues raised in the performance and post discussion

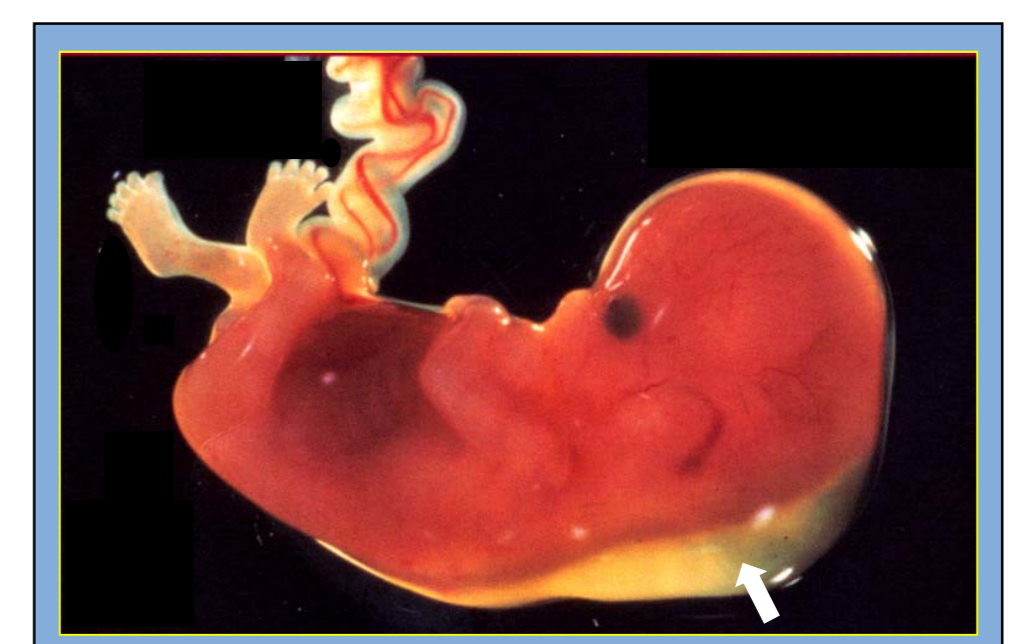
Visualisation of the fetus

Routinisation of screening

Choices and responsibilities

Impact of technology on experiences of women

Disability issues



Outcomes

DVD with discussion material to be available by post

Evaluations from the audiences very favourable

Plans for developing an interactive training tool for a web site for women and partners and health professionals.