



## Celebrating Our Stories

Written by Farrell Renowden, January 2023

After more than eight years in this role and many more years specialising in socially engaged creativity, here is something that I know to be true: *no-one* is a better advocate for the creative ageing than creative older people and *no-one* is better placed to influence the future of the sector than creative older people. What I also know to be true, is building platforms to support those with the most diverse perspectives on ageing to have increased visibility and voice is tough.

Inequality impacts all our lives, but across the life course, inequality grows, in many cases it multiplies, and everyone's experience of ageing and creativity is different. There is a misconception by many of those in positions of power that cultural organisations are 'dominated' by older people and other age categories are in more need of development, but what kinds of 'older people' are we talking about? The young people we identify as under-served in the cultural sector are ageing and those that have come before them are still the under-represented majority- only older. Research shows that people with similar life experiences have more in common than people with the same birthday, so why are these stereotypes about who is and isn't in the creative room not questioned more? According to the World Health Organisation, Ageism starts with stereotypes, develops into prejudice and peaks with discrimination: we need to stop the stereotypes for good.

To support this, the Age of Creativity Festival 2023 aims to profile the voices of older people far more than it has done in the past and include more diverse stories of creativity across the life course. The theme of the festival is 'Celebrating our Stories' and was chosen by the new National Creative Ageing Lived Experience Network (CALEN) that we launched in October, as part of the [Creative Later Life 2025 project](#). We are so pleased to be working alongside such a creative and capable group of older people and look forward to where this work leads.

We are encouraging everyone in the Creative Ageing Sector to join us in this celebration of stories by sharing their own work on the festival website and getting involved: [Age of Creativity | Home](#)

CALEN are making key decisions on how we celebrate stories in the festival this year, so watch this space for news of how older creatives in your area can get involved and be the best advocates and influencers we have, to get more recognition for Creative Ageing. We are all older people or older people in the making, so if we want creativity in our lives at every age, May 2023 is the time to shout it loud and proud.

Farrell is part of [The Team](#) at Age of Creativity, Head of Cultural Partnerships at Age UK Oxfordshire, EDI Champion for Age England Association and a Trustee of Human Story Theatre.  
[farrellrenowden@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk](mailto:farrellrenowden@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk)

