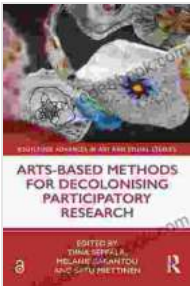


Arts-Based Methods for Decolonising Participatory Research: Routledge Advances



Arts-Based Methods for Decolonising Participatory Research (Routledge Advances in Art and Visual Studies) by Steven Hart

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

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Participatory research approaches have emerged in response to the critique of traditional research methods and the need for more inclusive and equitable research practices. Arts-based methods, with their emphasis on creativity, expression, and participation, have gained prominence as powerful tools for decolonising participatory research. This article explores the application of arts-based methods in decolonising participatory research, focusing on their potential for empowering marginalised communities, disrupting power dynamics, and creating more inclusive and equitable research processes.

Arts-Based Methods and Decolonising Participatory Research

Decolonising participatory research involves challenging the colonial and oppressive structures embedded in research practices. This necessitates

recognising the power dynamics between researchers and participants and acknowledging the ways in which these dynamics can influence research outcomes. Arts-based methods, through their focus on alternative forms of knowledge production, can disrupt these power dynamics and create space for marginalised voices to be heard.

Arts-based methods allow participants to engage with research in ways that are meaningful and empowering. By using creative and expressive techniques, such as storytelling, drama, and visual arts, researchers can create a safe and inclusive space for participants to share their experiences and perspectives. This enables the emergence of alternative narratives and challenges the dominant discourse often imposed by researchers.

Empowering Marginalised Communities

Arts-based methods can empower marginalised communities by giving them ownership over the research process and its outcomes. By involving participants in the design, implementation, and analysis of research, arts-based methods promote a sense of agency and ownership among participants. This empowerment enables marginalised communities to assert their own voices and priorities and contribute to the creation of knowledge that is relevant and meaningful to them.

For example, in research with Indigenous communities, arts-based methods can provide a platform for sharing cultural knowledge and traditions. Storytelling, dance, and visual arts can be used to transmit Indigenous knowledge systems, preserve cultural heritage, and challenge colonial narratives. By empowering Indigenous communities to lead the research process and share their knowledge on their own terms, arts-based methods promote self-determination and cultural revitalisation.

Disrupting Power Dynamics

Traditional research methods often reinforce existing power dynamics between researchers and participants. Researchers, often from dominant social groups, hold the power to define the research agenda, interpret the data, and disseminate the findings. This can lead to the silencing of marginalised voices and the perpetuation of oppressive structures.

Arts-based methods, through their emphasis on collaboration and participation, can disrupt these power dynamics. By involving participants in all aspects of the research process, arts-based methods create a more horizontal and equitable relationship between researchers and participants. This enables participants to challenge the researcher's perspective, contribute their own knowledge and experiences, and participate in the decision-making process.

In participatory action research (PAR), for example, arts-based methods can facilitate collective analysis and decision-making among participants. By using visual representations, such as mind maps or timelines, participants can collectively identify issues, develop strategies for change, and monitor the progress of their actions. This participatory approach empowers participants to take ownership of the research process and make informed decisions about their community's future.

Creating Inclusive and Equitable Research Processes

Arts-based methods can contribute to more inclusive and equitable research processes by creating a welcoming and accessible space for all participants. By incorporating multiple forms of expression, arts-based methods allow participants to engage with research in ways that are

meaningful to them, regardless of their cultural background, educational level, or social status.

For instance, in research with people with disabilities, arts-based methods can provide alternative ways of communication and expression. Dance, music, and visual arts can be used to facilitate storytelling, create inclusive spaces, and challenge the dominant narratives that often exclude people with disabilities. By breaking down barriers to participation, arts-based methods promote inclusivity and ensure that all voices are heard and valued in the research process.

Arts-based methods offer transformative potential for decolonising participatory research. They empower marginalised communities, disrupt power dynamics, and create more inclusive and equitable research processes. By embracing creativity, expression, and participation, arts-based methods enable marginalised voices to be heard, challenge oppressive structures, and contribute to the creation of a more just and equitable society.

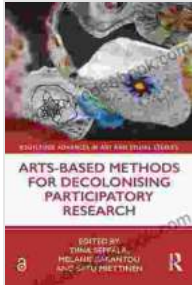
As participatory research continues to evolve, arts-based methods will play an increasingly important role in decolonising research practices and creating more inclusive and equitable research processes. By fostering collaboration, empowerment, and creativity, arts-based methods can help to dismantle colonial legacies and create a truly participatory and transformative research paradigm.

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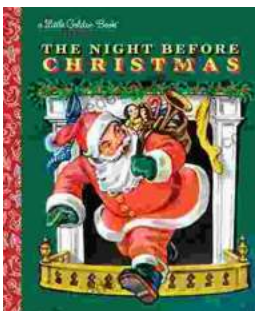
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