**SANITY, MADNESS AND THE FAMILY / FAMILY LIFE: an urgent retrospective, organised by Birkbeck Research in Aesthetics of Kinship and Community (BRAKC) and the Birkbeck Guilt Working Group**  
  
**Friday 24 April 2015, Birkbeck Cinema, 43 Gordon Square, 1pm-9pm**

1:00-1:15 Welcome by **Andrew Asibong** (co-director of BRAKC)

1:15-2:45 Panel 1

**Anthony Stadlen** (existential psychotherapist, family therapist, teacher)

Anthony will discuss *Sanity, Madness and the Family* and some provisional findings from his original research over the last fifteen years on the eleven actual families it studies. This research involves continuing, half a century on, the interviewing of family members undertaken by Esterson (and reported by him and Laing), including those of the eleven diagnosed "schizophrenic" women family members still living.

**Chris Oakley** (psychoanalyst, writer)

Chris’s presentation, “Sanity, Madness and the Psychoanalysts”, will examine Laing and his familiars, and how the issue of rivalrous resemblance came to haunt the scene of collaboration.

**Suman Fernando** (psychiatrist, academic, writer)

Suman, taking a transcultural-social approach, will discuss how since the breakup of the European empires and subsequent rise of racism  (in Europe) and civil rights movement (in the US),  “schizophrenia” in the West has been re-constructed to fulfil a political purpose (e.g. *The Empire Strikes Back* - CCCS, 1982; *The Protest Psychosis: How Schizophrenia became a Black Disease* - Jonathan Metzl, 2009).

**SHORT BREAK**

3:00-4:00 Panel 2

**Lynne Segal** (academic, activist, author)

Lynne will consider shifts in “sexual/personal politics”  over the last five decades: from the Laingian/anti-psychiatry critique of the family (parental collusion and the smothering mother) of the 60s to the 70s feminist critique of the male-dominated family, to the 90s emphasis on “choice” concluding with the politics of sexual intimacy in this neoliberal age of austerity.  
  
**Amber Jacobs** (academic, filmmaker)

Amber will reflect on Loach’s Laing & Esterson-inspired films *In Two Minds* and *Family Life* and Luke Fowler’s recent film/installation about Laing, as well as considering the apparent reluctance to teach Laing's work on psychoanalytic trainings.

**SHORT BREAK**

4:15-5:15 Panel 3

**Jacqui Dillon** (writer, campaigner, trainer)

Jacqui will speak about her personal and professional experience in working with trauma and abuse, dissociation, “psychosis”, hearing voices, healing and recovery.

**Robbie Duschinsky** (historian of psychology)

Drawing on the ideas of Lauren Berlant, Robbie will discuss Laing and Esterson's interpretation of the symptoms of "flat affect" as functioning as a mode of self-protection and reserve, and consider how the conditions which provoke flat affect remain live and significant today.

**SHORT BREAK**

5:30-6:30 Panel 4

**Oliver James** (psychologist, psychotherapist, author, broadcaster)

Oliver will argue that despite being disgracefully ignored, the Emotional Expression literature and that on Emotional Abuse give us strong reason to suspect that direct empirical tests of Laing’s theories would support them, not only as regards schizophrenia, but other psychoses, personality disorders and other mental illnesses.

**Lucy Johnstone** (consultant clinical psychologist, author, trainer)

Lucy will discuss the various ways in which Laing’s ideas have been denied, rejected or distorted in actual clinical practice, and give brief examples of some of the ways in which his central messages about meaning in madness are currently re-emerging.

**SANDWICH BREAK / WAYS FORWARD…**

7:15-7:30 Presentation by **Tony Garnett**, producer of *In Two Minds* and *Family Life*  
  
7:30-9:00 **Screening of *Family Life***, a 1971 feature film directed by Ken Loach