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Papers should not exceed 4500 words (including notes and references). Practice-based papers should normally include images in JPEG format (300ppi). Reviews should be around 1000 words. Photo essays should not exceed 2000 words and 10 pictures. All contributions should be formatted according to the MLA style guidelines (see Gibaldi's *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*) and should include a 200-word abstract of the article submitted as well as the article itself. Authors should also send a 50 word bio with their submission.

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Editorial

In the wake of Peggy Phelan's influential work on the ontology of performance - identifying performance as that which 'cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations' (146) - theatre and performance studies scholars have encouraged us to revisit, revise and contest how 'ephemerality' relates to performance, asking: what remains? What haunts? What lasts? In short, what does performance leave behind? These remnants are theatre and performance's legacies. Whether we hold them in our hands, within our bodies or inside our memories, these legacies influence the production of our histories, the genesis of our performances and the theorisation of our field.

In a way, the concept of performance legacies disrupts what it is to study or create histories. It seems that of late the label 'historian' has developed a somewhat pejorative connotation in the world of theatre/performing arts scholarship – at times carrying undertones anywhere from 'outdated' to 'irrelevant'. Conversely, it seems that some who do identify as 'historians' see themselves as a vanguard of sorts, defending the benefits of interpreting the theatre and performances of the past. In reflecting upon this issue, 'Performance Legacies,' we are happy to have highlighted the idea that all inquiries involve a wrestling with the past; creating perceptions of what has come before is implicit in all of our investigations. But whether an 'historian' or not, we are all engaged with creating a narrative of the past. In every reference to what has come before, a history is being written. The challenge of the performing arts scholar is to reconcile the tangible and intangible legacies with what we have to say today.

In his 'Theses on the Philosophy of History,' Walter Benjamin considers a painting of an angel, Paul Klee's *Angelus Novus*. Benjamin uses this painting as a metaphor for history. In the painting Benjamin imagines that:

His [the angel's] face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet [...] a storm is blowing

from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.
(249)

If the storm propelling the angel of history is progress, than the trumpery at his feet is our legacy. When we engage with that legacy, we are writing a history of it, whether explicitly or implicitly.

As you will see, the theme of this issue has brought forth a breadth of submissions which expand the ontological understand of performance legacy: ranging from the archival legacy's influence on performance to performative experimentation with legacy. The issue begins with a personal story from Sean Aita, an Associate Professor at the Arts University of Bournemouth, of how his life and research have been influenced by legacy. Aita ponders over whether performance's legacies remain only for those who can perceive it and, when under investigation, if what is perceivable reveals itself to be a rich palimpsest of histories. *Platform* would like to thank Associate Professor Aita for these musings which provide wonderful food for thought on the topic of this issue.

In the first article, 'Storied Space: Epistemology and Place in the Theatre Museum' Ella Parry-Davies examines how the dramatization of museum space intersects with performance legacies. With particular reference to the practice of documentation through performance of Suzanne Lacy's *Silver Action* and non zero one's *this is where we got to when you came in*, Parry-Davies interrogates the relationship between the culturally inscribed, carefully curated space of the performance museum and the material it presents. Foregrounding how these works have playfully deconstructed notions of 'authentic' knowledge, Parry-Davies demonstrates how the performance museum can provoke a creative engagement with performance legacies.

Next, Harriet Curtis' article 'Performance Legacies in Print and Practice: *High Performance Magazine*, 1978-1983,' examines the legacy and history of the Los-Angeles based

performance art magazine. Curtis conducts a historical inquiry that presents the magazine as both material permanence and transient archive. Drawing on its cultural context, disciplinary relationships and theoretical implication, Curtis pays particular attention to two projects, an exhibition and performance platform, making the case for the magazine as presenting a continuous revision performance art history and a publicly engaged historical record.

Penny Newell's article, 'Merz Merz Merz Merz: Performing the Remains of Mr. Kurt Schwitters,' is indeed just that: a performance. Newell problematises the narrative approach inherent in the discourse surrounding the collage-based Merz artworks of Kurt Schwitters. As the sources of this investigation become more and more layered, Newell's writing morphs into a collage of its own. This interrogation of the archive touches upon the essence of Schwitters's collages through the scholarly use of collage or merZ as a method of REseArCH.

Cristina Delgado-García's 'Dematerialised Political and Theatrical Legacies: Rethinking the Roots and Influences of Tim Crouch's Work' presents a re-assessment of the role of conceptual art in the work of Tim Crouch. Delgado-García emphasizes both the significance of Crouch's dramaturgical roots in a revisited theatrical ontology and materiality, and the politicised nature of conceptual art, both ideologically and aesthetically. Drawing on three works by the author: *Shopping for Shoes* (2003), *My Arm* (2003), and *ENGLAND* (2007), Delgado-García inflects a different relationship between Crouch's work and the term 'dematerialisation'.

Lastly, in 'Dynasty, Memory, and Terry: Curating the 1896 *Cymbeline*,' Sophie Duncan explores the creation and dissemination of performance legacies in Shakespeare. Focussing on Ellen Terry's seminal performance of the role of Princess Imogen in Henry Irving's 1896 production of *Cymbeline*, Duncan considers the multiple methods through which legacy is initially generated and then curated by subsequent stakeholders. Duncan's argument demonstrates the importance of a play's performance legacies to contemporary performances of Shakespeare.

This issue departs from a post graduate conference

funded by Royal Holloway, University of London, 'Performance Legacies,' which took place in the university's Handa Noh Theatre on 25 March 2013. The conference saw new scholars present on many facets of performance legacies, from the knowledge based in oral tradition to experimenting with the past by performing the archival remains. We would like to thank Royal Holloway, where this journal is based, and its staff for their backing of this conference and for their continued support of *Platform*. Developing, reviewing, writing for and publishing a print journal is an invaluable method of learning for postgraduates and early career researchers, the funding of which demonstrates Royal Holloway's commitment to providing opportunities for new research and the development of research skills.

We would also like to thank the peer and academic reviewers for their time and thoughtful feedback. Their support has provided assistance to the research of all who have submitted to this issue and this issue would not be possible without them. We would also like to thank Palgrave Macmillan, Manchester University Press and Methuen Drama for book review copies. We would also like to thank the authors of the articles and book reviews of 'Performance Legacies.' Their hard work speaks for itself.

Will Shüler, Editor

Diana Damian-Martin and Sara Reimers, Guest Editors

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Notes on Contributors

Sean Aita has had a career as an actor and director spanning over thirty years. He led the Education and Community department at the Northampton Theatres Trust, and spent five years as Artistic Director of Forest Forge Theatre Company where his work was short-listed for the Stage Awards for Achievement in Regional Theatre. Sean is currently Associate Professor – Theatre with the Arts University at Bournemouth (AUB).

Harriet Curtis is a PhD candidate in the Department of Drama at Queen Mary, University of London. Her PhD thesis (due 2014) focuses on the performances of US artist Paul McCarthy, and argues that his work offers a productive case study for making disciplinary connections across art history and performance studies, thus complicating and contributing to readings of performance in both. Harriet is a Teaching Associate in the School of English and Drama at Queen Mary, and is Editorial Assistant for *Contemporary Theatre Review*.

Dr. Cristina Delgado-García is an Associate Lecturer in Drama at Manchester Metropolitan University. She is also conducting research under the auspices of the international, three-year research project ‘Ethical issues in contemporary British theatre since 1989: globalization, theatricality, spectatorship’, which is funded by the Spanish Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad (FFI2012-31842). Cristina has published on Sarah Kane, and a book chapter on the work of Quarantine theatre company is forthcoming.

Sophie Duncan is Supernumerary Fellow in English at Harris Manchester College, Oxford University. She completed her DPhil, *Shakespeare’s Women and the Fin de Siècle*, in September 2013 at Brasenose College, Oxford. In October 2014, she will begin a three-year postdoctoral research project on Shakespearean and Greek tragedy, within the Calvea Centre at Magdalen College, Oxford.

Catriona Fallow is an AHRC-funded PhD student and Teaching Associate in the Department of Drama at Queen Mary University of London. Her thesis considers the role of new writing at the Royal Shakespeare Company and Shakespeare's Globe. In it, she explores how contemporary literary and theatrical productions within specific institutions co-exist with the historical and cultural heritage invoked by these institutions.

Catherine Love is currently studying on the Theatre and Performance MA programme at Queen Mary, University of London. Her research interests include authorship, adaptation and the relationship between text and performance in contemporary British theatre. She is also a freelance arts journalist and theatre critic, writing for publications including *The Guardian*, *The Stage* and *Exeunt*.

Penny Newell is a poet and postgraduate researcher at King's College London, where she is currently in the first year of English doctoral research on the topic of clouds. She has spoken at several UK institutions, including Aberystwyth University, CSSD, Surrey University and the School of Advanced Study, and has most recently been invited to speak on clouds at Canalology Arts Festival in the summer of 2014. Her writing and visual poetry has been published through various online and print publications, and exhibited as part of WHITEOUT at the Hundred Years Gallery in Hoxton. Most notably, in 2013, Penny was Poet-in-Residence at the Merz Barn, the late and last artistic site of Mr Kurt Schwitters.

Christopher O'Shaughnessy holds an MA in Theatre (Playwriting) from Royal Holloway. His verse drama *The Strokes* was published in *Platform*. Chris is a practice-as-research doctoral student in Theatre and Performance at Goldsmiths. His new verse drama, *The Ruth Ellis Show*, is scheduled to be performed there in July, 2014.

Ella Parry-Davies is a PhD candidate funded by a split-site doctoral studentship between King's College London and the National University of Singapore. Her doctoral research

attends to interdisciplinary conversations between performance studies and practice and the cognitive sciences, focussing on memory and mnemonic architectures. She is co-convenor of the conference *Beirut: Bodies in Public*, in association with Performance Philosophy, which takes place in Beirut in autumn 2014. She is also co-convenor of *Research with Reach*, a student-led training initiative for post graduate researchers in the arts and humanities, based at King's College London. Her work as a performance critic has appeared in *Exeunt* and *TheatreVoice*.

Mark Smith recently submitted his PhD at the University of York. Since January he has been a full-time Teaching Fellow at that university's Department of Theatre, Film and Television. He directs, both for the department and within the local community, and is the Yorkshire Editor for the British Theatre Guide online. His PhD research was on the interaction of writing and devising in contemporary British theatre, with a focus on the (highly-contrasting) work of Frantic Assembly and Forced Entertainment, and his research interests also include the uses of physicality within these creative processes.

Thoughts on Performance Legacies

By Sean Aita

The thematic focus of this issue of Platform, exploring the remains, traces, ghosts and legacies which theatrical performance might leave behind, is something which resonates very strongly with my own personal history as I was brought up in a theatrical family. My grandmother had been a ballerina at Covent Garden in the 1930s and her sister, my great aunt, managed and performed in a weekly repertory company at the Watford Palace Theatre during the same period. Stories and anecdotes relating to performances which had taken place decades earlier, a photograph of my grandmother in a tutu doing a pose arabesque, and a box full of faded programmes belonging to my great aunt, were all the evidence that remained of lives dedicated to the performing arts. They were also potent, totemic objects of prophecy which spoke of a potential future career for me.

I now have my own collection of programmes, photographs and scrapbooks, contained safely in a suitcase under my bed. In my living room there is a large painted screen which featured in the production of *Lady Winderemere's Fan* I directed at the Royal Theatre, Northampton, and the decaying rubber head of a puppet made by Forkbeard Fantasy for my play *Yallery Brown* produced at Greenwich Theatre. Naturally my relationship to these two sets of memorabilia, the one from my childhood and the one I have gathered myself, is different. The first spoke of a mysterious and seemingly glamorous past existence two people close to me had experienced, the second whilst retaining an element of nostalgia also contains problematic connotations touched on by Aoife Monks in her (2010) book *The Actor in Costume*. During a key note speech at the 2013 TAPRA conference, referring to her book, Monks suggested that when we see a costume without an actor in it, it is not dissimilar in some ways to viewing a corpse. I feel somehow that the same is true of the theatrical ephemera which I have gathered around me throughout my career as an actor and director.

The urge to hold onto these scraps and remnants, despite the element of uncanniness which clings to them, seems

universal amongst theatre practitioners. I have never met an actor or director who did not have some physical memento of their time in the business either concealed somewhere in their homes, or on public display. One of my friends refers to these items as his theatre *relics*; as touchable, tangible mementos they are imbued with an undeniably talismanic presence mediating between the present and the past, the material and spiritual.

The iconography found in some of the external and internal decorations of European theatre buildings, particularly those constructed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, operates to my mind in a similar fashion. I recently found myself sitting in the stalls at the Playhouse Theatre in the West End, and whilst waiting for the show to begin I began to look around the auditorium. High above me on the ceiling I saw an inscription on a golden plaque naming the muse of comedy and of idyllic poetry Thalia. I then identified two huge sculptures of her sister Terpsichore on either side of the stage boxes. A bas-relief of what appeared to be a goat's skull emblem wound round with a chiton trailed along the front of the dress circle hinting at the provenance of tragedy. Around me it appeared that very few of my fellow playgoers were paying much attention to their surroundings. The majority were buried in their programmes. In spite of the fact that the auditorium was dominated by artefacts representing the sacred ritualistic origins of our art form, they were somehow both fully present, and at the same time completely invisible. It was as if the building had been deliberately seeded with codes which spoke to actors, directors, playwrights, and designers in the same way that the symbols of freemasonry might be apparent to the initiated, and yet meaningless to those outside the order.

This feeling was compounded further when I looked up at the walls above the boxes. On the stage left side was a plaque bearing the inscription 'George Bernard Shaw' - a name most theatregoers might be expected to recognise, whilst on the stage right side a similar plaque read 'Marie Tempest' - a name that has now begun to vanish into the theatrical past. I wondered how long it would take for Shaw's name to become as obscure to the play-going public and questioned the reluctance of the Playhouse Theatre management to re-decorate or to update the

names. Would they remain for as long as the building stands or only until the next refurbishment? Were there, in fact, other names concealed beneath the ones I had read - the walls a rich palimpsest of theatrical history?

There can be little doubt that works of art such as the ones I was surrounded by at the Playhouse Theatre; Klimt's *Altar des Dionysos* at Vienna's Burgtheater; or Henry Bird's mural on the safety curtain at the Ashcroft Theatre exist in some degree to offer those members of the audience capable of, or willing to, interpret them with a way of engaging with the cultural and historical traditions of performance. I think they also fulfil a much more significant function for theatre artists. It may seem a somewhat grandiose suggestion, but I would contend that these objects not only demonstrate the provenance of our art form they also prompt reflection on the eternal nature of the desire to 'make meaning' through live performance. It is this, and this alone, which counterbalances the impermanence, and precariousness of the profession.

I know for certain that the memorabilia which I mentioned at the outset of these musings are kept partly as evidence that I actually *did* appear on stage as an actor at one time, and was paid to direct plays. Since without them I would only have my increasingly untrustworthy memory to rely upon. Gazing around the Playhouse Theatre caused me to consider the possibility that the décor within a theatre building can be, and has been, used as a powerful way of exorcising the spectre of ephemerality. It is unfortunate that the 'low information rate' favoured by modern theatre architects, unwilling to distract attention from the stage, mitigates against the representation of our gods and goddesses in their interiors. I fear that I shall not see the names of any current practitioners enshrined in letters of gold within a contemporary theatre building. I wish the architects and commissioners of our modern theatre buildings would re-consider. They are potentially condemning us all to the fate that actors dread – to have been the poor player who 'struts and frets his hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more'.

Storied Space: Epistemology and Place in the Performance Museum

By Ella Parry-Davies

Abstract

The paper interrogates the relationships between space and knowledge in performance museums, with reference to two interventions which explore the possibilities of a practice of documentation through performance: Suzanne Lacy's *Silver Action* (Tate, 2013) and non zero one's *this is where we got to when you came in* (Bush Theatre, 2012). In light of the increasing provision for live performance within museums, the paper examines the dramatization of museum space as a means of engaging with performance legacies. Querying art historian Donald Preziosi's critique of performativity as the basis for a somatic and spatial teleology of history, a reading of the 'performatic' will be proposed in light of Diana Taylor's notion of the 'scenario'. As manifested in non zero one's exploration of the Bush Theatre, the scenario allows for a generative ambivalence to permeate museum-going, in which the tendentiousness of history-writing and museology are playfully and self-reflexively made visible. Foregrounding the participant's performative and imaginative agency rather than the 'authentic' discovery of prior truth, the piece signals an interdisciplinary slippage between performance and museology which advances a progressive and self-challenging historiographic practice.

As the Tate Modern opened its new extension, the Tanks, in autumn 2012, an inaugural symposium announced a problematic that pinpointed the anxieties of a new gallery space devoted to 'Art in Action': an apparently paradoxical venture aiming to curate and exhibit artworks that no longer existed. Entitled *Inside/Outside: Materialising the Social*, the seminar focussed on concerns surrounding the exhibition of historical performance and live art practice as well as the contentious notion of using objects, text and audiovisual media to represent formerly live works within the museum context. The act of 'materialising' is itself an ambiguous term, here implying the realisation or

concretisation of action in object form, which might then be displayed in the gallery. Constituting the museum as a locus of archival matter seems to presuppose a particular relation between itself and history, one in which the latter (or rather, its artefacts) are contained within and/or simulated by the former. In both cases the museum is cast as a receptacle of history, indexical to time rather than part of it. The museum's own historicity and materiality are very rarely explicitly acknowledged in displays or galleries. White walls, vicariously projecting the curator's disembodied voice and a meditative 'indoors' separation from busier 'outdoors' social space, all serve to create a partitioned space of reflection *on*, rather than *in*, history and social space (See Duncan; Forgan; Casey 81-83). Here a second resonance of the term 'materialising' might come into play, one in which museums may themselves be materialised in public thought – designated not as neutral spaces within which history may be preserved or observed, but as (historically) material and economically and culturally invested artefacts in themselves. As a culturally-specific epistemological practice, museum-making and museum-going (the latter of which shall be the primary focus of this article) is seen not so much as the discovery of prior knowledge, but as a performative, culture-*constructing* act. Attending to this performative quality, my discussion examines two works which speak to a revision of the term 'performance museum,' indicating not just the display of performance history, but also the performativity of the display itself. Both Suzanne Lacy's *Silver Action* and non zero one's *this is where we got to when you came in* document performative events of the past, but equally enact a practice of documentation *through* performance, in doing so affirming and announcing the embeddedness of museology in social space and time.

Emphasizing the epistemological capital associated with archives and their interpretation, art historian Donald Preziosi suggests that museums are places in which we construct narratives of the past which are useful to the ideologies of the present: 'museology and art history are instrumental ways of distributing the space of memory [...], transforming traces of the past superimposed upon the present into a storied space' ('Performing Modernity' 34). The crucial significance of

museums to contemporary narratives of history and culture is therefore paramount: the museum is a public, institutional synecdoche within a wider process of collective history-writing. The agency of the museum, however, is specifically one of embodiment and site – a materialising of time through spatial distribution and the arrangement of matter in place. The museum's 'storied space' is the construction site of the present's instrumental readings of the past, or rather, the site within which they are performed. Derrida's often-cited reading of the archive as a formulation of knowledge and power (elaborated in *Archive Fever*) insists, similarly, upon the importance of place: 'the archives could do neither without substrate nor without residence' (Derrida 2).

Conversely, performance is often conceived of as an art form that dematerialises in space, jettisoning the physical matter that might, in Preziosi's terms, be storied or distributed. Peggy Phelan, perhaps the most influential voice in this regard, excludes 'ephemeral' performance works from any such arrangement or reproduction of historical symbols, since 'performance's only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations' (Phelan 146). Phelan locates performance's radicality in an ontology of disappearance: barred from an economy of signs due to its perpetual vanishing, performance is always already precluded from the circulation of image and matter, and therefore also from the retrospective storying of space.

It is precisely, however, the 'performative' that Preziosi associates with the hegemony of the museum. Space itself, and the distribution of bodies and/or matter within it, is the foundation of performance; as such, Preziosi identifies the museum space as 'one facet of a dramaturgical practice [...] central to the performance of our modernity' ('Performing Modernity' 38). Performative (that is, spatial and somatic) activities such as museum-going are crucial in maintaining cultural narratives. Lacking an ontological essence or guarantor, they must be constantly participated in and (re)articulated: simultaneous, if not synonymous actions. In contrast to Phelan's notion of performance as excluded from object-hood and representation,

for Preziosi, performance is precisely the means by which space and matter gain their cultural currency and force.

More recently, Phelan's position has been challenged by critics who install her work within a tradition of scholarship predicated upon categories of originality and authenticity. Emphasising instead the notions of embodied knowledge and residual behaviour, designated as 'performatic' (Taylor 6), over the logocentric 'performative', Diana Taylor describes performance as a collective system of 'learning, storing, and transmitting knowledge' (16). Taylor's 'repertoire' is a mobile and adaptable transferral of embodied practice that includes corporeal mnemonics and lingering patterns of movement and gesture. Taylor is productively ambivalent about the capacity of the embodied repertoire to allow for ongoing individual agency typically excluded from written history. Her postulation of the 'scenario' (28-33), adaptable plot structures that exist within specific cultural imaginaries, allows for the creative parody and mutation of learnt behaviour (as shall be seen below), and is also ghosted by the prescriptive cultural formulae that reappear in Preziosi as frameworks of dominant culture-making: performance and repertoire belong 'to the strong as well as the weak' (22) and the performatic has hegemonic, not just radical potential.

The flexibility and open-endedness of performance-based knowledge transferral is predicated, however, upon its nature as embodied and spatial, thus 'the repertoire both keeps and transforms choreographies of meaning' (20). Through the reiterated actions (choreographies) of bodies in space, the repertoire allows for both the retention and the transformation of corporeal knowledge. Nuancing Preziosi's theorisation of performed historiography as hegemonic narrativisation, Taylor proposes that, 'instead of focussing on patterns of cultural expression in terms of texts and narratives, we might think about them as scenarios that do not reduce gestures and embodied practices to narrative description' (16). Using performance studies research to explore the implications of Preziosi's paradigm of the museum-as-performance therefore offers dual import: performatic scenarios might be seen as prescriptive frameworks in which material resonances are (re)produced and

(re)enacted. However, as a state of play and experiment which takes place through singular and inflected actions, performance can offer real potential for the subversion of normative codes of behaviour and the exposure or reformulating of epistemological hierarchies.

This dialectic was paralleled by Duncan Cameron as early as 1971, who proposes a twin paradigm to designate the museum either as ‘temple’ or as ‘forum’, both metaphors that have also been repeatedly deployed in academic and popular discourse to characterise theatre (Cameron 11). As a temple, the museum offers an apparently objective frame of reference, a model of reality against which the perceptions of individual visitors may be measured. A parallel in theatre might be a performance that purports to represent a complete, hermetic reality, foreclosing or pre-empting imaginative responses and thus constituting the spectator as passive voyeur. Just as the museum is posited as an objective, authoritative model that may be discovered and read by its viewers, so this theatre signals itself as a central locus of knowledge which informs and persuades its audience. In this sense, the fictitious theatrical presentation is even comparable to Preziosi’s analysis of museums as ‘instruments for the production of cogent and convincing knowledge,’ and indeed Preziosi goes on to ask, ‘Why else would the labor of [...] watching a play or a film, or walking (performing) a museum be seen as socially useful unless it were framed as resulting in the (proper) discovery of the ‘truth’ of individuals?’ (‘Performing Modernity’ 32).

This dynamic of truth-revelation posits a supposed hierarchy of authentic knowledge from which the spectator is virtually excluded. Conversely, Cameron’s forum depicts the museum as a place for divergence and argumentation: a multi-directional sharing of knowledge, in which spectators are also designated as speakers or authors. This model has enjoyed rich experimentation in twentieth century performance history via intellectual, affective and physical interactions. Moving beyond their role in the co-creation of meaning, the active, bodily *inclusion* of participant-spectators in the performance itself has been the aim of practitioners as diverse as Allan Kaprow, Jerzy Grotowski and Augusto Boal. In the wake of curators’

increasing attention in the last decade towards performance and its histories (significantly, the Tate Tanks, opened in 2012, have been claimed as the world's first museum galleries permanently dedicated to performance), today's museum spaces often seek not just to represent but also to incorporate live performances within their walls. A much-debated field of curation, this move invites the interdisciplinary slippage of performance and museology into one another, so that the parallels drawn above become real possibilities for formal overlay and exchange. Drawing on performance's history of radical experimentation may offer parallel – and indeed practical – models for progression in the ways that performance is documented, represented and accessed in the museum context.

Suzanne Lacy's performance *Silver Action* was staged as part of the Tate Live series on 3 February 2013. Maintaining her interest in the cause of older women who, though neglected by superficial media fascinations, nevertheless offer valuable life experience and knowledge, Lacy facilitated a live, unscripted discussion between hundreds of women aged sixty and over who had been involved in feminist activism between the 1950s and 80s. The women were invited to London's Tate Modern, to sit at an arrangement of tables in groups of four debating a set of previously agreed questions.* Members of the public could freely access the South Tank, where the performance took place, and gather on the peripheries of this central bloc. Since we could not walk amongst the tables, it was difficult to hear any of the discussions clearly, but individual women were 'picked out' (Harvey) to speak to transcribers: transcripts were typed in real time and projected onto the walls of the space as well as diffused through social media, particularly Twitter. The piece was explicitly inscribed within a genealogy of experimental (participatory) performance art, notably, Lacy

* The questions can be paraphrased as follows: 1. What can older women contribute? What challenges can we face? 2. Discuss something you witnessed or experienced that propelled you to action. 3. What differences are there for young women (and men) today? What role do value perceptions play? 4. What needs questioning? What needs to be done? What are you willing to take action on now and how?

frequently cites her mentor Allan Kaprow*, and the piece also acts as a ‘re-investigation’ of Lacy’s 1987 work, *The Crystal Quilt*, whose documentation was exhibited in the adjacent Tank (Lacy, ‘Artist’s Statement’; ‘*Silver Action*: Performance Recreation’). Moreover, there was a clear impetus to transmit the women’s subjective narratives of political protest – as well as the vestiges of *The Crystal Quilt* – to people who had missed the events themselves. The piece thus functions as a form (or forum) of documentation or even a live ‘museum’ in itself: as iterated above, an act of documenting *through* performance. The transmission was doubled by the projection of textual fragments of the discussions into dynamic online networks and consolidated by publicity and literature around both the work and the Tanks which emphasise a drive to constitute spectators as active interlocutors or even performers (‘Suzanne Lacy: *Silver Action*’; Holtham; Searle).

Lacy’s performance is perhaps an apt response to Taylor’s ‘scenario,’ which allows the past to be made visible through corporeal as well as discursive (written) action; or equally to Phelan’s call for performative documentation, ‘the act of writing toward disappearance’ (Phelan 148). Both in its form and its content, *Silver Action* explores an alternative to the conventional logo- or image-centric historical showcases often found in museum spaces, typically aligned in contemporary - particularly feminist - theory with patrilineal and/or white-cultured perspectives. However, if the medium and the message of *Silver Action* are in this sense married, they are, in another, contradictory. Whilst the interactions between the women participants seemed fluid and engaging (indeed Lacy highlights the benefit of the project for the participants themselves), the work’s provision for embodied exchange did not extend beyond the group itself, reiterating very traditional models of exclusion and reinstating the epistemological hierarchies discussed above. Aurally, spectators were straining to hear the women’s conversations, and any access we did have was transmitted through transcriptions, speaking disembodied from the walls of the Tanks in essentially the same medium as conventional

* Lacy began working with Kaprow as a student at the California Institute of the Arts in the 1970s.

exhibition plaques. This represented not so much a valuation of the text over the vocal conversations, but, for many spectators (as well as online viewers), a substitution for the aural and/or physical experience. Tectonically, the piece was arranged according to a clear centre-margin dichotomy, which was reinforced by the focussing of light onto the participants with relative darkness on the peripheries – just as in a museum display case or proscenium arch theatre.



Suzanne Lacy, *Silver Action*, 3 Feb. 2013, Tate Modern. Photo: Johannes Bondzio.

Whilst both *Silver Action* and *The Crystal Quilt* emphasise the importance of visibility for older women, this work risks replicating the same epistemological inequalities the artist claims to debunk. Essentially, the women could be seen but neither heard nor spoken to. The work was a culmination of workshops with the women, and a sense of intimacy, even domesticity, was mustered in the image of the small tables (the last element of the project was a series of filmed discussions known as the ‘Kitchen Table’). The performance in question, however, was curated as a focal event at the heart of the economic and cultural capital of the UK, with ripples of online discussion emanating from a ring of onsite Tweeters. The experience may have resembled a typically forum-like discussion for the women participants, but, in its wider remit, the event reproduces the

museum as a source or 'temple' of knowledge. Its performative model offers no guarantee of equality of expression, and indeed manages to reverse Lacy's own politics of inclusive visibility. The contradiction of the work may come as a result of, as Amelia Jones observes, 'claims of the special status of performance as authentically delivering 'presence' [coming into] direct conflict with the simultaneous efforts to raise the status and economic value of performance events by displaying them in museums' (Jones 199). On the other hand, live performance lends itself well to a culture fascinated by dynamic online platforms and experiential commodities, which may attract greater cultural (if not economic) capital for the Tate than its valuable permanent collections (compare Casey 80; Lütticken). The materiality of Lacy's piece, then, is enacted *through* its performativity: it dramatises space via a centre-margin dichotomy that organised both the Tank and the virtual space of the Tate's online networks.

Performance group non zero one's production *this is where we got to when you came in* (Bush Theatre, September 2011) also did much to blur the boundaries between performance and museum. Commissioned by the Bush Theatre as a farewell to its venue at the time of its relocation, the performance explored the history of the theatre building, presenting it for exploration to the public. Using wireless headphones, spectators were guided around a series of installations within the building, played excerpts from interviews with practitioners who had worked at the theatre and invited to participate in the performance in various ways. The piece was researched so as to provide an informative (but often anecdotal) account of the history of the building, which had been the Bush Theatre venue for over forty years; its goal was thus comparable to that of any performance museum that provides access to a history of theatre or performance. In conceiving of the theatre building itself as an archive, non zero one speak back to Derrida's analysis of the archive's etymological resonance; as Derrida insists, the *arkheion* refers to a domicile: 'The dwelling, this place where they dwell permanently, marks this institutional passage from the private to the public' (Derrida 2). Derrida recognises this passage inhering in the conversion of the Freuds' private house to the public Freud Museum; likewise, the rendering public of the Bush Theatre

building – its passing from the private spaces of administration, rehearsal and performance, to the public space of historical matter – takes place. In its public ownership, Derrida notes, the archive is also democratized through ‘the participation in and the access to the archive, its constitution, and its interpretation’ (Derrida 4, fn.). The guiding voice, heard through speakers or headphones, states from the outset that all areas of the Bush will be accessed, and later, disregarding a sign marked ‘private’, that for now, this notion simply doesn’t apply. The fact that *this is where...* was itself a ticketed event for a very small number of participants (four per performance) troubles the claim to its theorisation as a rendering public of the Bush venue; equally, its opposition to the much larger remit of Lacy’s work (from participants to spectators to online audiences) risks a critique of exclusivity. Yet it was precisely within this small-scale format of the production that the notion of public access to the site-as-archive was made possible. A different quality of participation was produced within this ‘scenario’ of historicization – both discursive and corporeal – which challenges easy correlations between inclusivity and democracy.

From its opening, the performance dramatizes the temporality of the event, situating itself at the very end of the venue’s history as a theatre and reminding the participants (through the headphones) of previous moments they may have experienced at the theatre and that this will be their last. The participants never encounter any other people in the building, and yet the debris of the space – coffee cups, cigarettes, paperwork – amplifies the immediacy of its pivotal transition. Moreover, the historicity of the performance is something the participants are themselves made part of. Cast as explorers in Taylor’s atemporal ‘scenario’ of discovery, the participants are nonetheless very aware of their own personal and social identities: the scenario thus ‘allows us to keep both the social actor and the role in view simultaneously, and thus recognize the areas of resistance and tension’ (Taylor 30): in this case, pointing up the tendentiousness of the archival act. In one installation, the participant is invited to sit in a toilet cubicle and compose a message. Through the headphones, s/he is directed to find an (ultraviolet) pen; simultaneously, ultraviolet light replaces the light in the room

and other messages are suddenly illuminated on the toilet walls. Each participant is invited to contribute memories of working at the theatre, stories of creative collaborations or recollections of performances attended – including *this is where...* itself, thus highlighting the event of the participant's own visit within a history of theatrical presentations. This installation constructs an ongoing performance of documentation, through which the participant may access a collective archive, not just as observer, but as co-author. Participants in *this is where...* were invited to engage in performance history through the writing on a toilet wall: a playful, personal and quotidian exchange.

This installation speaks back to the strengths of Suzanne Lacy's work in its foregrounding of the act of history-writing as an embodied and performative practice. In this sense, both works offer a riposte to Preziosi's above-cited suggestion that the labour of watching a performance is only socially useful in that it results in 'the (proper) discovery of the 'truth' of individuals'. On the contrary, the commonality of these productions lies in their insistence upon the contingency of historical 'truth', a fiction forged in the fires of individual and social positionalities. Whilst this emphasis is more explicit in *Silver Action's* discursive exchanges between feminist activists, a less obviously forum-like potential inheres in *this is where...* Indeed, *Silver Action* might be more easily compared to non zero one's subsequent production *you'll see me [sailing in antarctica]* since here, participants, seated together at a table, were invited to engage in a structured discussion about their own memories. Company member Alex Turner's claim to 'communality' (non zero one 'Interview') might be queried by the fact that, aside from lying down together in the cramped dressing room, and the moment in the toilet cubicle (which is of course a peculiarly private space), the audioguide cultivated a sense of solitude rather than verbal communication – additionally, the participants did not always follow the same path. In doing so, however, the production (as do many of the company's others) created space for individual experiences within the group. Although open to reproofs of discrepancy, it perhaps offers a more sensitive alternative to the structures of anonymisation installed in *Silver Action* through the block of identical tables, and the darkness in the rest of the

Tank. Rather than a comparison to the conversational *you'll see me [sailing in antarctica]*, the contrast outlined here highlights the potential for an animation of space which is non-verbal, but powerfully performatic.



non zero one, *this is where we got to when you came in*, Bush Theatre, 15-30 Sept 2011. Photo: non zero one.

The brief timeframe of *this is where...* was one in which the space and the objects within it – soon to become (at least for the Bush) obsolete – were *differently* valued, accruing a resonance that spoke more to human absence than material presence. A missing dimension was alluded to, which was reconstructed within the participant's own imaginary, inscribing him/her within the creation of the space through a meaningful, if not vocal, practice. As a representation or document of past action, the space is mined for its affective potential, and inscribed within a spatial dramaturgy through which the participant is directed. On the surface, then, non zero one reproduce Preziosi's critique of 'performance' as a teleological re-alignment of (plural) histories. Crucially, however, the performance consistently foregrounded the sense that the participants could never know the whole story and that the objects belied an unrepresentable past life. The space and the objects within it were not constituted as stand-ins for past events, but rather conspicuously incomplete traces, and it was for the participant her/himself to imagine (and never accurately, of course) what their histories were.

Silver Action, which staged a typically forum-like discussion between a central bloc of speakers, might be considered a performance of history writing - it thus contains

the potential of Phelan's 'writing towards disappearance' - but equally results in the exclusion of non-speakers, reproducing a wider temple-like dramaturgy of centralised knowledge. In *this is where...*, however, an imaginative dialogue is constructed between participant and site: not an act but a 'scenario' of discovery which, 'by definition introduce[s ...] generative critical distance between social actor and character' (Taylor 30). It is the participant her/himself who both becomes and resists the figure of archivist or historian. The participant's role was not one of understanding or decoding documents, but rather of speculating and imagining. Thus, non zero one underscored the impossibility of ever writing a coherent or comprehensive history, either of place or people. The production's playful dismissal of 'authentic' knowledge and the always-already incompleteness of its vision of the past is a helpful reply to the growing incorporation of performance into museums, who stand to benefit from the opening-out of historical epistemologies onto theatres or choreographies of memory. *this is where...* acknowledges the self-consciously performative historicity of museology and the theatre-museum is openly recognised as an invested, subjective and 'storied' space.

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Performance Legacies in Print and Practice: *High Performance Magazine, 1978-1983*

By Harriet Curtis

Abstract

This article examines the history and legacy of *High Performance*, a Los-Angeles based magazine devoted to documenting performance art. I interpret the magazine as a record of performance history, a self-contained archive of documents and as a source for creating new performances and re-enactments. In the process I put forward a number of different, at times contradictory characterisations of the magazine as both a permanent historical record and a transient document. After contextualising the magazine's historical significance and exploring the materiality of the magazine through a theoretical discussion of the archive, I examine two projects that use the magazine both as a record of performance history and as a source to inspire the creation of new works: a 2003 exhibition about the history and influence of the magazine and a 2012 performance platform incorporating digitised documents and live performances. *High Performance*, a magazine which nurtured its relationship to the present moment, also endures and resurfaces as a generative source for artists and audiences. The projects outlined here utilise *High Performance* as a site for continuous revisions of performance art history, and to reflect on how audiences engage with this history through the documents that record it.

The performance art magazine can be variously described as an archive, a temporary exhibition space and a transient document to be shared between friends, that risks being thrown away. This article addresses broader histories of performance documentation and art magazines, and examines the specific history of *High Performance*, a Los Angeles-based magazine founded in 1978, that focused exclusively on performance art. The magazine ran until 1997. Here I focus on the first five years of the publication, 1978-1983, during which the magazine's main feature, the Artists' Chronicle, was published.

In a publication exploring live art and performance in Los Angeles within this period, Peggy Phelan states that ‘much more than documenting the early days of performance, [*High Performance*] helped produce the history of live art as we know it today’ (8). Here Phelan acknowledges the historical significance of *High Performance* whilst situating it within current understanding of how performance histories are created and remembered. As a historical document the magazine provides a material record of live events which might otherwise have been lost. Not unlike other modes of performance documentation such as photographs and videos, the magazine circulates far beyond the events themselves. However, in providing a specific format and context for the circulation of these documents, the magazine has shaped the way that contemporary curators and practitioners engage with this particular performance history.

This article looks at two projects that use the magazine in this way, both as a record of performance history and as a source to inspire the creation of new works. It examines the different types of documentation that the magazine embodies, and the different temporal structures within the magazine, its circulation and collection within archives, its re-presentation and display in exhibitions and its use as source material to produce new live performances. A look at the versatile nature of this magazine, and its participation in what Liedeke Plate and Anneke Smelik have called ‘memory practices’, the act or processes by which cultural memory is transmitted through art and popular culture, and are ‘intimately connected with [...] the act of creation’ (4), reveals how *High Performance* might facilitate the revision and renewal of performance histories.

The first project is an exhibition from 2003: *High Performance: The First Five Years, 1978-1982*, curated by Jenni Sorkin and presented at Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE). Pages from the magazine were displayed in the gallery space alongside other objects and documents, photographs, videos and performance props (Klein 111), presenting the history and legacy of the magazine to a wider public. The second project is a performance platform organised by Los Angeles-based artist Liz Glynn in 2012 entitled *Spirit Resurrection*. This project developed in part from the digitisation of documents

from the 1980 performance festival, *Public Spirit*, recorded exclusively in *High Performance*. Discussing these projects alongside each other, both of which take *High Performance* as their source material, illustrates the magazine's significance as a record of performance history. That the magazine is also used in these projects as inspiration for the creation of new performance works, suggests that it potentially exceeds the transiency of the artists' magazine genre, and the artistic form it represents.

Although proposing that the magazine both captures and transcends the ephemerality of performance is perhaps somewhat idealistic, I would like to suggest that *High Performance*, a magazine created by artists, for artists, is positioned at the intersection of a number of different temporalities of performance. Working against the notion that there are 'two contrasting ways of bringing the past into the present; acting out and remembering', Plate and Smelik suggest that they might be seen as a continuum (4). Similarly, I propose that *High Performance* operates on a continuum between the historical archive and the contemporary performance platform.

High Performance Magazine

High Performance was founded in Los Angeles in 1978 by Linda Frye Burnham, who declared it 'the first magazine ever to be devoted exclusively to performance art' ('*High Performance, Performance Art, and Me*' 15). At this point she defined performance art as 'live performance created by visual artists', a category which emphasised the liveness of the form, namely, artists performing for a live audience in a shared time and space, and its roots in visual art practices (15). This definition initially excluded dance, theatre, music and comedy, since these forms were more substantially represented elsewhere. However, this definition became increasingly untenable, particularly in the late 1980s and early 1990s as performance art developed across the boundaries of other forms. Published quarterly until 1997 the magazine enabled performance artists to disseminate their work outside or alongside the mainstream art press, which otherwise overlooked or actively vilified the form (Sorkin 37), and had three primary aims: to provide a space for artists outside the New York City art capital to document and share their work;

to create a forum in which the rich diversity of performance art could be represented; and to enable artists to convey their work to wider audiences through text and images authored and arranged by the artists themselves (black and white photographs and short descriptions which appeared in the Artists' Chronicle), rather than through the words of critics.

Between 1978 and 1982 Burnham ran open submissions for documentation of performances presented within one year of the published issue. This time frame ensured that the magazine was publishing and circulating up-to-date contemporary performances straight after their first iteration. The documents were collated and formed the magazine's main feature, the Artists' Chronicle, the last of which appeared in 1983. Burnham insisted on a balanced representation of renowned and lesser-known artists, male and female, and on the inclusion of work from around the world ('Performance Art, and Me' 38). This broadly democratic approach to representing performances in print soon after they were performed ensured that the magazine both reflected and influenced the dynamic and shifting performance art community.

High Performance might be characterised as an artists' magazine, in that the majority of the content was produced *by* artists *for* artists and operated in an economy of ephemerality akin to the performance art it documents. In her book *Artists' Magazines: An Alternative Space for Art*, Gwen Allen suggests that to publish artists' magazines is to 'enter into a heightened relationship with the present moment. [...] Their transience is embodied by their unprecious formats, flimsy covers, and inexpensive paper stock, and it is suggested by their seriality, which presumes that each issue will soon be rendered obsolete by the next' (1). Rather than an art journal based on representations of artists mediated by critics, or a book-length publication designed to endure both materially and canonically, *High Performance* nurtured its relationship to contemporary performance; its material transience matched by its ideology and commitment to the present moment. However, whilst each issue of *High Performance* may be flimsy on its own, as a collection or body of work the magazine might also be characterised as building a canon of performance artists whose work, in turn,

becomes part of the history of the magazine,

Whilst Allen's characterisation of the magazine implies that its significance is located in the kind of elevated irreverence it demands from its audience (akin perhaps to the valued ephemerality of live performance), Burnham has described the documents in *High Performance* as 'absolutely primary material', capturing events which might otherwise have been lost. For Burnham, the process of recording and disseminating live events through documentation is significant because it extends the life of the performance without defaulting to the binary opposition of authentic live event versus secondary documentation.

Similarly, Amelia Jones has argued specifically against 'this binary so often posed between the "authentic" live body [in performance] and the "secondary" archive' which is 'by definition filled with scraps, representations, impressions of subjects who did something at some past time' (117), a description similar to *High Performance*. However, Burnham's insistence on the primacy of *High Performance* is problematic because documenting a performance does not mean it has been saved from obscurity; documents, even when compiled as an organised set of records, are still liable to be lost, concealed, or disregarded. Artists' magazines, as Allen points out, '[favour] processes over product, and risk being thrown away' (2). In short, she says, 'they court failure' (2).

Alternatively, *High Performance* might be described as a temporary exhibition space; a collection or series of works that, for a limited time reflects the work of contemporary artists, before lapsing into history and becoming instead, an archive nonetheless open to active processes of preservation and intervention. The magazine occupies an ambiguous position in which it risks being thrown away, but also comes readymade as an archive or anthology of documents which collectively build towards a history of performance, for example, held as a collection in archives and libraries. Similarly, it both captures and transcends the ephemerality of performance. Documents are susceptible, on one hand, to an overinvestment in meaning that they are originary, primary material, and provided for many artists the only means of disseminating their early work

(Sorkin 38). On the other, the magazine might be equated with the ephemerality of performance and therefore willingly disregarded. Whilst the ephemerality of performance is, in this sense, to be valued, it also risks elimination from histories of performance which depend on images and texts as indexical markers for the events themselves. By choosing to retain the magazine for future reference, audiences are also preserving or disregarding the legacy of performance the magazine represents. In Jones's terms, '[we cling to [such] scraps from the past, *re-embodiment* them through projection, interpretation, restaging them in written art histories or performative art works, in order to try to claim infinite futures' (117).

In the 1970s and early 1980s *High Performance* provided a platform for the visibility of performance, making it a public, political act in itself, and as Allen suggests, 'one that challenged the art world' (7). By providing a mode of dissemination for performance that sought to counter the material and economic conditions of the art world, including art galleries as sites of display, documents of performance art circulated in *High Performance* in a mode of activity additional to the mainstream. However, when the Artists' Chronicle was discontinued its documents were effectively taken out of public circulation; they are now mostly available in back issues of *High Performance* held within the comparatively private spaces of libraries and archives. The two projects discussed in the latter part of this article engage with *High Performance* as a historical document or archive, but also re-frame it and work to bring it back into public visibility. Despite the celebrated ephemerality of the artists' magazine, as outlined by Allen, the collection and preservation of *High Performance* in archives is essential to the process of revising and re-shaping the histories it documents.

The Archive: *High Performance*

Issues of *High Performance*, held collectively as a set of documents, appear in archives both in the UK at the Tate Library, London, and in the US at the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles. Individual issues might also be characterised as archives, independently of the whole. In her article 'The Seductions of the Archive', Harriet Bradley suggests that '[t]he archive is a

repository of memories: individual and collective, official and unofficial, licit and illicit, legitimating and subversive' (108). Arguably, acceptance into an archive challenges the idea that any document retains its 'unofficial' or 'illicit' status, or indeed that documents are included indiscriminately. If *High Performance* is an archive, as I am proposing, then it is no exception. Inevitably editorial decisions about what to include have affected which artists' works have made it in to the magazine, particularly when, in 1982, the number of open submissions peaked and it became clear that it was impossible to represent them; it was at this point that the Artists' Chronicle was discontinued ('Artists' Chronicle' 27). Each issue of *High Performance* is therefore a collection of voices representing the diversity of performance art, but one which is underpinned by the editor's vision for the communality of the magazine.

Furthermore, the result of a collective and collaborative labour, the magazine was distributed for the contemplation of individual readers, just as a researcher enters the archive to engage with historical material. I am interested here in the relationship between the multiple voices of artists in the magazine, representative of a performance community at a specific time in history. These voices are then relayed to audiences, individual readers or researchers who contemplate the magazine at their own pace, returning to it repeatedly if necessary, in a time and place far beyond the historical and geographical specificity of the performances themselves.

And yet, *High Performance* also resists this definition of the individual readership. As Jenni Sorkin has observed, when it was published, issues of the magazine were shared between groups of friends. These accounted in part for the relatively modest number in circulation; at its peak, it was around half that of *Artforum* but double that of *October* (Sorkin 38). As a document of performance, Sorkin is suggesting, the magazine was potentially as collaborative in its reception as it was in its production and publication. In its aims and ideology, the magazine sought to represent a cacophony a voices and allow artists a platform to disseminate their work; albeit under the rubric of an editorial policy. In an article on the history of *High Performance* published in 1986, Burnham described

performance art ‘not as an art form’ and ‘not a group of artists’, but as an audience or community of performers and spectators (‘Performance Art, and Me’ 17). ‘This audience’ she says ‘was nurtured at the breast of visual art but reared by an information network of which [*High Performance*] is an important part’ (17). *High Performance* is therefore both a vehicle for representing performance, and a catalyst for creating new events and audiences, for example in Sorkin’s 2003 exhibition and Glynn’s 2012 performance platform.

In a similar way, Bradley suggests that by engaging with archives ‘we strive to recover what we [...] have lost, and to relive the lost past by telling its stories’ (109). But, she qualifies, ‘in that endeavour of writing history we also inevitably rewrite history, that is, re-create the past in new forms’ (109). *High Performance*, and documentation of live works more generally, already re-creates performance in new forms as a kind of self-historicising function, in which the printed documents circulate more widely than the events themselves. Although, as Allen argues, the magazine too is always in danger of becoming obsolete (2). Sorkin and Glynn use *High Performance* as a catalyst for their own projects which address the history of the magazine and re-frame the individual performances it documents. Rather than asking how or why these documents and this particular legacy has been preserved, perhaps a more relevant enquiry for these projects is to ask what kind of work is being done by artists and researchers when these documents are revisited in order to make multiple new works, adjusting or extending the temporal framework of the magazine and its legacy, in the process. As Plate and Smelik suggest, ‘[foregrounding the *work* of memory, the active labour of remembering and of forgetting brings the focus on its creative aspect and functions theoretically to push representation beyond its borders as just representing meaning’ (6).

Ann Featherstone and Maggie B. Gale suggest that ‘if the archive encourages researchers to examine and process multiple truths, to see the [...] networks of connective materials rather than the flat negative, then there is an argument for a creative archival process’ (37). Responding to the notion that the archive harbours a universal truth which needs only to be uncovered,

Featherstone and Gale characterise the archive as a source for potential creativity, in order for ‘multiple truths’, perhaps even contradiction or failure, to emerge (37). In its initiation *High Performance* reflected a network of artistic exchange already extant in 1970s performance culture. Featherstone and Gale’s endeavour to characterise the archive as part of a wider network of material reflects the culture of interactivity captured in *High Performance*. Similarly the projects described here use the magazine as a means to access performance history, and as a source for creating new works and audiences.

The Exhibition: *High Performance: The First Five Years, 1978-1982*

The 2003 exhibition *High Performance: The First Five Years, 1978-1982*, curated by Jenni Sorkin, displayed correspondence, photographs, videos and artists’ books, some borrowed from the *High Performance* magazine archive, then held at the 18th Street Art Center in Santa Monica. The exhibition also included displays of pages from the magazine which were left open to view, Sorkin wrote and published an article entitled ‘Envisioning High Performance’, that offered an overview of the magazine, including its key aims and concerns. A third element of the project, a programme of live performances by contemporary artists entitled *The Rebirth of Wonder*, was organised by LACE curator Irene Tsatsos. These included performances, concerts, readings, and digital documentation of works by a diverse group of artists working across different media, including audio performances, durational pieces, video projections and story-telling (LACE). The exhibition, the ‘historical and retrospective’ element of the project physically opened up the pages of the magazine, making public that which was otherwise closed to public view (LACE). The exhibition makes literal the artists’ magazine as an alternative exhibition space for art. However, in this case it is not the art that is on display, but its documentation. Arguably, this was an exhibition about the history of a particular collection of performance documentation, its circulation in print culture and the influence of *High Performance*, rather than performance art as such. The live performance programme featuring ‘a forward-looking series of fresh work and new ideas by artists who [were]

emerging and based in Los Angeles', provided a counterpoint to the exhibition, offering a public engagement with contemporary performance beyond the relative containment of the exhibition space (LACE).

Problematically perhaps, the exhibition repositions the artists' magazine that, by definition, supports experimental forms of art outside or alongside the gallery system, within a conventional mode of display. However, since the project of the exhibition was to recognise and celebrate the legacy of *High Performance*, particularly its role in nurturing an audience for performance art, LACE was an ideal venue. *High Performance* and LACE, both founded in 1978, were equally committed (indeed LACE continues to be so) to providing a space alongside mainstream cultural institutions for artists to share their work. At the same time, by re-framing the magazine in a public space, Sorkin encourages an engagement with how performance art was documented in the past, and how performance histories are constructed and reconstructed in the present.

In his writing on the archive, Charles Merewether questions if documents are 'sufficient in representing those histories where there is no evidence remaining' (12). He asks, '[is what is materially present, visible or legible, adequate to [represent, for those not in attendance at] an event that has passed out of present time?]' (12). The adequacy or legibility of this material dictates the way histories are constructed and reconstructed in the present, particularly in the process of re-performance, to which documentation and archives are a significant part. It seems our preoccupation with performance documentation and archives is matched only by our fascination with re-performance. Indeed the two are arguably inseparable. The process of re-performance necessitates a period of research and often the creative use of archival materials; as Michael Ned Holte has argued, 'any act of "reperformance" is, at the same time, a curious act of scholarship' (41). Whilst *High Performance* has recorded the outcomes of performance-related activities it cannot replicate the collaborations and networks between individuals. Instead the exhibition of the magazine requires a parallel series of live works which enact something of the communal spirit which *High Performance* sought to capture.

The performances programmed alongside Sorokin's exhibition, although not framed as re-enactments, but rather innovative pieces which respond to the contemporary environment, went some way to indicate that the legacy of the magazine lay not just in the way performance is documented, but also how it informs and influences contemporary performance making.

The Performance Platform: *Public Spirit* and *Spirit Resurrection*

Primarily *High Performance* served to document and disseminate artist performances, but in 1980, the *Public Spirit* performance festival, organised by an artist group closely associated with the magazine, addressed broader audiences. *Public Spirit* was developed in part to expand the project of *High Performance* beyond the provision of performance documentation towards the activation of live works, and to act as a nexus for both. For Burnham, the title of *Public Spirit* 'symbolized a joining of hands by all the performance artists of Los Angeles to support and showcase each other, to make [their] activities visible by linking them under a single banner' ('What about Public Spirit?' 165). Comprised of works by artists living and working in Los Angeles, including Allan Kaprow, Suzanne Lacy, Paul McCarthy, Rachel Rosenthal and Barbara Smith, with performances held throughout Los Angeles in May and October 1980, this was the first festival of its kind to be held in the region and was documented exclusively in *High Performance* ('What about Public Spirit?' 1). This special double issue (11-12, 1980) now stands as the primary document of *Public Spirit*, and acts a festival catalogue and stand-alone archive, as well as part of the larger archive of the magazine.

Public Spirit was the inspiration for Liz Glynn's performance platform *Spirit Resurrection*, which took place in 2012 as part of the Pacific Standard Time (PST) Performance and Public Art Festival in Los Angeles. Documentation of *Public Spirit* as well as items from the magazine archive – which by this point had moved to the Getty Research Institute – played a significant role in the realisation of the project. Documents from the festival, including press releases, programmes, artists' proposals and photographs, were digitised and uploaded to the

Spirit Resurrection website. Whilst Sorkin's exhibition opened the pages of the magazine to gallery audiences, Glynn took the next step in disseminating the magazine as an online archive, broadening further its potential for interpretation and adaptation. Although both projects were built on the same foundation of documents, namely *High Performance*, each adds to an accumulation of interventions which re-frame the magazine's history in new ways.

Glynn invited artists to potluck events to discuss how to go about adapting or re-enacting the *Public Spirit* performances and a series of re-inventions took place at venues across Los Angeles, including: *Black Box*, a temporary performance space which operated alongside *Spirit Resurrection*, Machine Project, LACE, Museum of Public Fiction and Workspace (Hoetger). Events at *Black Box* included talks and performances by Motoko Honda, Kim Jones, Barbara T. Smith, and Paul McCarthy, and re-performances and adaptations of works from the *Public Spirit* festival included: an adaptation of Barry Markowitz's *Think About It Susan* (1980), which Markowitz re-performed in 2012 as *How I Learned to Draw* at LACE; Jon Rutzmoser created and performed *Pleasure of the Piss: Arm Utterances* at LACE in conversation with Anne Mavor's performance *Venus on the Half Shell and Other Poses*, which was presented for *Public Spirit* in 1980; and *Untitled (remodel)* was presented at Machine Project by sound artists Yann Novak and Simon Whetham as a reinterpretation of Carl Stone's untitled performance at the Vanguard Gallery in October 1980. In an article on the use of re-performance during the Performance and Public Art Festival, Megan Hoetger described *Spirit Resurrection* as foregrounding 'the overwrought relation between performance and its archives', and whilst 'the project was a platform for manifold events and re-inventions, the "performance" in *Spirit Resurrection* was the physical and conceptual unpacking of the archive' (n.p.). In *Spirit Resurrection* re-performance was merely one element in a series of related activities which entailed the opening up of archives, making them available as a source for creativity. Hoetger suggests that through *Spirit Resurrection* 'Glynn performed the dual meaning of the concept of archive, pointing to its function as both a repository for knowledge (the website) and an active

process (the potluck and subsequent re-inventions)' (n.p.).

Another element in this process is the communication and collaboration between artists and audiences. By re-framing *Public Spirit* as a platform for exploring Los Angeles' performance history in a contemporary context, *Spirit Resurrection* highlights the network of interactions and artistic exchange which *High Performance* stood for. At the time of writing (March 2014), the *Spirit Resurrection* website is still live and the documents still available to be viewed online. The magazine as a stand-alone archive has been left open for the possibility of further interventions, adaptations, and re-performances to occur, addressing, as Jones proposes, our desire to 'claim infinite futures' (117).

Conclusion

This article started with an exploration of the artists' magazine as a transient entity, whose survival depended on the whims of individuals to either disregard or preserve it. Its survival is still dependent on the intervention of human activity, but not necessarily through the maintenance of the archive as an organised set of documents. Instead, the history of *High Performance* and its role in documenting and shaping the legacy of performance art is transferred through interactions between individuals and audiences.

The magazine, in its initial publication, engaged in specific temporal structures, for example the one-year deadline for documentation submissions indicates that each issue was succeeded by the next (Allen 1), and seemingly reflected the ephemerality of the form it documented, with its flimsy materiality, communal readership and participation in delayed readings of the historical contemporary. Whilst the presence of *High Performance* issues in art collections such as the Tate, and the preservation of the magazine archive at the Getty certainly indicate an acknowledgement of the magazine's history at an institutional level, the communal and collaborative spirit of the publication seems to demand that its legacy be borne out by interactions and exchanges between individuals. The projects outlined here offer alternatives for the artists' magazine beyond its seemingly pre-determined transiency. In fact, they utilise

High Performance as a dynamic site for continuous revisions of performance art history, and to reflect on how we engage with this history through the documents that record it.

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Figure 1: Pitch at the Barrier-Gate. Langdale Valley, Cumbria. Author's Own (2013)

Merz Merz Merz Merz: Performing the Remains of Mr. Kurt Schwitters

By Penny Newell

Abstract

This paper opens up questions about the methodological practice of critical writing about collage art. As Elza Adamowicz astutely suggests, to respond to the alterity of collage is to negotiate a route through wordless *jouissance*, inarticulate pointing, and stammering emotion, toward speaking sense. The twofold object of this study is to problematise the act of making sense of the collage works of the artist Kurt Schwitters, and through that to enact a methodological experiment in performative writing. Initially, I stage an analysis of the artist's late collage works, seeking to define Schwitters's neologism *Merz*. Yet, I do so only in order to pass through that definition to a crisis of clarity, critiquing lucidity and deploring the implied possibility of describing the formal synthetic identity of works the nature of which is to remain fragmentary in form, nonsensical in meaning and beyond critical comprehension. The paper thus proceeds into self-effacement, becoming the remains of an alternative methodological research journey, made in response to *Merz*.

I looked for a collective name for this new genre, as I could not classify my pictures in old terms, like Expressionism, Cubism, Futurism or such-like. I called all my pictures as a genre, after the characteristic picture, Merzpictures.

Themerson quoting Kurt Schwitters, *Schwitters in England*

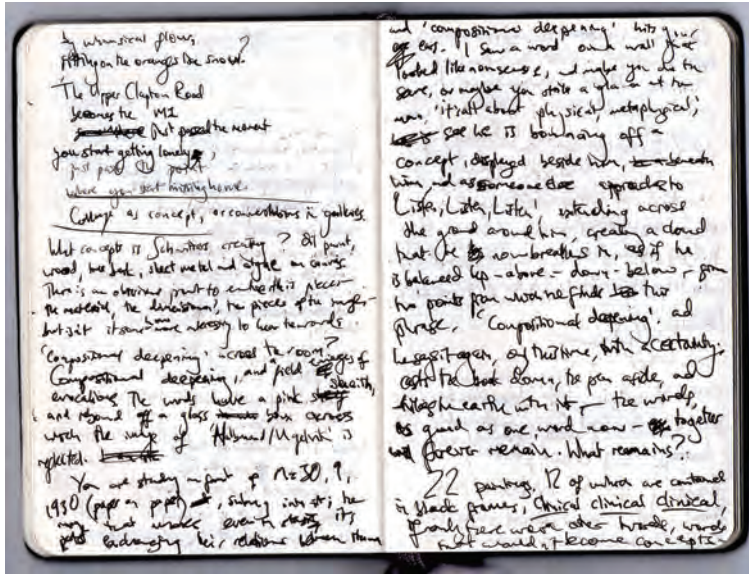


Figure 2: Collage as a Concept, or conversations in galleries. Author's Notebook (2013)

'Compositional Deepening', and a field emerges of evocations. The words have a pink sheath [sic], and rebound off a glass, box across which/watch the image of 'Halbmond/Ugelvik' is reflected. You are standing in front of Mz 30, 9, 1930 (paper on paper) and, sinking into it; the image that moves even in stasis, its parts exchanging their relations between them/trauma and 'compositional deepening' hits your ears.

Preface

This article principally reflects upon the late collage works of the twentieth century German artist Kurt Schwitters, pertaining to a period of exile from Nazi Germany spent in

Britain from 1940 to 1948. In particular, this article responds to the works produced from 1945 to 1948, when Schwitters lived and died in Cumbria. This became an ideal access point for several reasons. Firstly, the 2013 *Schwitters in Britain* exhibition at Tate Britain invited fresh critical interest in this period, awakening new thoughts in this extended project of methodological reflection. Secondly, and more specifically, whilst Schwitters's artistic output from his time in rural seclusion in Cumbria – including the portraits he was forced to produce and sell for subsistence – are often seen as redolent of the isolation or cultural banishment of exile, an important resistance to this conclusion stemmed from a pre-existing artistic connection I have to this area of Britain. There are places with which we may, as writers, make critical contact, whilst there are other places that could only ever function as reason and logic-transcendent platforms for shadowy acts of poetry.

Defining Merz

There is no neat narrative to collage. Indeed, with the eruption of pictorial signification into a surface of fragments, Dadaist collage and assemblage pieces of the early twentieth century came to contain, as Christine Poggi suggests, 'myriad paradoxical and contradictory clues' (117), for critical exegesis. This is not to say that our critical relationship to collage works is not one that foregrounds a process of narration; collage, as Elza Adamowicz writes, leads us down a route through wordless *jouissance*, inarticulate pointing, silent fascination and stammering emotion, toward speaking sense: that is, down a route toward troublingly eliding the nonsensical nature of the work about which we speak (Adamowicz 5). Indeed, the myriad clues contained in collage perhaps invite this imposition of critical narrative, and it is this fragmentary invitation, luring critics toward collage, which I will first address.

Take as an example the work *Untitled: Y.M.C.A OFFICIAL FLAG THANK YOU*, made by Schwitters in the year 1947: a collage of text and images, produced using the materials of oil, paper and cardboard. This collage is disproportionately dominated by a monotonously olive-painted piece of card; whilst the upper two thirds of the right of the collage bustle and

clamour with colour, text and image, this olive section is only interrupted by three small pieces of paper, one of which contains a blue stamp. This stamp functions to draw our eye to the upper left of the collage, where – dirtied yet clearly legible – we find an envelope, bearing the Ambleside address of the final home of ‘Mr. Kurt Schwitters’.

The attention that this envelope demands introduces multiple breakages and tensions of disruption into the work. Firstly, we are drawn to reflect upon the disjunction between the mechanically produced, typewritten name – Mr. Kurt Schwitters – found on the envelope, and the unfaltering human hand behind the familiar signature upon the work. This tension opens the possibility of a further disjunction, that is, the phonetic apposition of the Teutonic ‘Mr. Kurt Schwitters’, and the Old French ‘Ambleside’. I would argue that this brings us to further reflect that, whilst ‘Mr. Kurt Schwitters’ is clearly the correct addressee of 4 Milans [sic] Park, this self-evident fact carries none of the sense of ease or belonging expressed so vividly through the undisrupted flow of the handwritten signature. The collage is thus overcast with a sense of paradoxical self-fragmentation, exposing an identity status that is at once conflicting yet cohesive, multiple yet singular; a narrative of exile made evident across the visual axis of the plane of the assemblage.

The fragmentary nature of collage thus allows this art form to unfold into narratives of fragmentation: an especially cogent conclusion with regard to Schwitters’s British-made works. In Schwitters’s *left half of a beauty*, produced also in 1947, a woman’s face disproportionately dominates the work, extending across its centre. The flow of this image is disrupted by a sluice-like grey paper, which cuts through this face, threading a counter-current from the river of the background scenery to the bottom of the work. As such, we feel we are caught between two currents, the collage establishing potentials of flows of movement and beauty, which the action of collage functions to disrupt:

‘oy its famous bridge is the third bigges
h Empire (130,000), after London and’

In this cut-up text found at the bottom of the work, the incomplete clause, ‘after London and’, seems particularly pertinent for

exploring the ways in which the fragmentary action of collage functioned to allow Schwitters to explore his own uncertain life of exile, whereby fixed places became reconfigured as unstable passages in-between. On the whole then, performing the disruption of sensical totalities – faces, sentences, letters, words – and the displacement of materials from utility into elucidatory artistic juxtaposition – envelopes, bus tickets, coins – Schwitters's art actively translates sensical totalities into nonsensical fragments. These nonsensical fragments form new fragmentary wholes, inviting sense due to their existence within the artistic frame of the collage work.

Collage thus performs as a platform for the construction of narrative through critical engagement, even if that narrative is one of displacement, disjunction and fragmentation. Yet, through reaching this narrative, we are inevitably and endlessly drawn back to a picture plane or surface that makes us re-realise the nonrepresentational status of the work within which we locate this meaningful content. Collage thus seems to establish a dynamic tension between an epistemological space of understanding that it draws us to enter as critics, and the perspectival space of the canvas. Indeed, through the capacity to draw critics into the epistemological space that it creates, and by nature refutes, repudiates, or refuses, collage enacts a shift in our grounds for understanding art. It is permissible to explore the implications of this interpretive shift by aligning collage with 'modern philosophy', in line with the thinking of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari:

[...] whereas romantic philosophy still appealed to a formal synthetic identity ensuring a continuous intelligibility of matter (a priori synthesis) modern philosophy tends to elaborate a material of thought in order to capture forces that are not thinkable in themselves. (Deleuze and Guattari 377)

The epistemological space constructed by collage is unthinkable in itself. And as such, we are drawn through collage, back to collage – back to 'the material of thought' that lays bare the falsification entailed in the construction of that space beyond the picture plane. The critical implications of this are clearly troublesome: how can we speak about collage without affirming

an epistemological space that the material insistence of collage functions to refute? In the field of Schwitters criticism, this troubling question has seen the falsification of an autonomous concept, enveloping and enclosing his collage works; the circular problem of the self-effacing self-generating synthetic identity of collage has led to a locus of reactive fascination for seeking new and sturdy epistemological grounding within Schwitters's term *Merz*. *Merz* has thus become the synthetic identity of Schwitters's collage works – a strange neologistic breed of an a priori space, ensuring the intelligibility of the matter of collage.

It is the nonsensical nature of *Merz* that allows this term to function as a synthetic identity for otherwise troublingly unthinkable works. The word 'Merz' does not predate the artist Schwitters; indeed, Schwitters produced it early in his career, taking an advertisement for 'KOMMERZ-UND PRIVATBANK', splicing it, and adopting as a word the phoneme 'MERZ' that remained (Schwitters, cited in Themerson 20). The originary *Merz* thus exists only in Schwitters's definitions: 'I called all my pictures as a genre, after the characteristic picture, Merzpictures' (100). 'The word Merz denotes essentially the combination of all conceivable materials for artistic purposes' (Schwitters qtd. Chambers 6). These methodological statements, dressed up as theoretical terminology, abound in citations within Schwitters criticism. And this is no surprise, since the self-given, self-defined, and otherwise unintelligible concept of *Merz* permits critics to refer collage back to this term, the essentially nonsensical meaning of which permits it to perform as sturdy grounds for speaking about collage.

In the context of Schwitters criticism an entire atmosphere of disjunctive definitions of *Merz* are shored up against the ruin of collage critique. We jump at the opportunity to commence defining *Merz*: 'it might refer to the products of low-level commerce that Schwitters found in the gutter' (Taylor 45). *Merz* is offered as, 'part of the verb *ausmerzen* (to eradicate, expel)' (45); *Merz* 'might be linked with the fact of that those fragments have been thrown away or reflected' (45); '*Merz* also rhymes temptingly with *Schmerz*' (45-6). *Merz* is suggested as a reactive force: 'he performed the act of renaming Dada[...] with a neologism of his own: *Merz*' (Dickerman 104); indeed,

Richter offers *Merz* as a creative rebuff to Schwitters's rejection from Dada circles in 1918 (138). Most tellingly, Nick Wadley recently suggested that, 'Merz can mean anything and can mean nothing – nothing can contradict it.' It is this malleability of *Merz* that accounts for Schwitters's eventual 'total Merz world view' (56); due to its nonsensical nature, he was able to stretch *Merz* to extremes of evocation:

I called my new manner of working from the principle of using any material MERZ[...] Later I expanded the title Merz, first to include all my poetry, which I had written since 1917, and finally to all my relevant activities. Now I call myself MERZ (Schwitters qtd. Elderfield 13).

It is easy enough to follow Schwitters down the route of endlessly grounding collage in disparate definitions of *Merz*, resolving the multiple and manifold reality of collage under the terms of a false synthetic unity. Yet, as we do so, we must realise that to ground collage in *Merz* is to ground collage in Schwitters, and thus to make appeal to Schwitters as a 'formal synthetic identity ensuring a continuous intelligibility' of his works. There seems to me to be something basically presumptuous about this appeal, as if Schwitters were a strange human breed of an a priori space, lending form to thoughts of 'forces that are not thinkable in themselves'. Schwitters may be the shadow standing beyond or behind each collage, but it is surely better to remain in silence than to speak as if we might draw sense from those shadows.

In his 2011 publication, *I Swear I Saw This: Drawings in Fieldwork Notebooks, Namely My Own*, Michael Taussig offers a methodological route to perceiving research as a creative pursuit, generated by actively pursuing the manifold reality of our objects of critical study. For Taussig reality *is* cut-up: it was the 'very multiplicity of difference along with its associated fragmentation that was reality' (149). This bifurcation of reality into a set of co-extensive multiple worlds, resolves some of the potentially problematic aspects of Taussig's anthropological fieldwork; whilst the text that this produces dehierarchises its own theoretical grounding through diversifying its objects of study, seeking to describe without attempting to resolve.

In this, I am reminded of the words of Jun'ichurō Tanizaki, in his historicisation of the aesthetics of interior spaces

in Japan: ‘the quality that we call beauty, however, must always grow from the realities of life, and our ancestors, forced to live in dark shadows, presently came to discover beauty in shadows, ultimately to guide shadows towards beauty’s ends’ (29). Accepting the meaninglessness of the term *Merz* is tantamount to accepting the shadows that we are forced into as writers, extending beyond the collage. The interior reflexive journey of critiquing the artworks of Schwitters thus brings us rushing to the doors of this shadowy domain of unthinkable concepts, and upon entering that space we must accept the reality of our theories and ideas as fabrications and falsifications, and through that, embrace our inability to truly narrate or know. John Berger writes of missing a loved one: ‘it is as if your person becomes a place, your contours horizons’ (78). It is as if *Merz* and Schwitters jointly become the inconceivable exterior landscape of our critical practice, to be traversed merely through methods premised on the blind faith of modes resembling things like love or pilgrimage.

Undefining Merz

Transcript of a Notebook:

*I wonder I might exile myself—~~with~~ from the usual research
process~~from~~*

take notes,

order ~~out~~

new structure

a new coherence

~~The Desk.~~

~~The Desk.~~

~~The Desk.~~

Yours Sincerely,

The Author.

I could see the celluloid reflection of an existent parallel between this The Usual Enacted Process and the process of the artist Kurt Schwitters; saw also a difference in what remained of these enactments, in the end: one speaking sense, one defiantly and deeply meaningfully nonsense. For some reason, Edith and Victor Turner's Image and Pilgrimage has laid on The Desk:

[...] experience is a journey, a test (of self, of suppositions about others) a ritual passage, an exposure to peril, and an exposure to fear. Does this not sum up something akin to fieldwork, even to pilgrimage, which is, again etymologically, a journey 'through fields' (*per agros*), a kind of peregrination? (Turner and Turner 7)

Five pages of typed quotes from Victor and Edith Turner

Three notebooks

OL7 Explorer Map

A 1972 Olympus OM-1 Camera

Two reels of film

Windermere

Kendal

Silverstone

Matsuo Bashō

A bridge over dry earth; weeds where there might be flowers

the Merzpen with which I Merzwrite on this Merzpaper...

p t h r r r - C h u c k

Inside, a flickering bulb

There was another beginning, cast across the paper as the shadow of the ending:

After many days of solitary wandering, I came at last to the barrier-gate of Shirakawa, which marks the entrance to the northern regions. Here, for the first time, my mind was able to gain a certain balance and composure, no longer a victim to pestering anxiety, so it was with a mild sense of detachment that I thought about the ancient traveller who had passed through this gate with a burning desire to write home. This gate was counted among the three largest checking stations, and many poets had passed through it, each leaving a poem of his own making. (Bashō 105-6)

I carried my notebook to *Schwitters in Britain* in the Tate Britain Gallery. Visitors queued and filed silently into the Tate. Some are tourists. Some are pilgrims. All weave in and around the glass

boxes containing remains and relics; bound up in a communal, kinetic ritual; drawn along on the current of a church or temple, around the embalmed body of a saint or monk.

I am pilgrim.

I am tourist.

I am seeing this.

I am something else.

I carried Bashō on a train journey. Bashō journeys to see with his own eyes the full moon – the full moon that he cherishes in the words of the poet from Kyōto, but becomes instead fraught and overcast by clouds he cannot penetrate. Frustrated, uneasy, his characteristically peaceful resolve shattered, he sits

Cast

under Thick Clouds

The Hapless Moon

with a Wandering priest

and a Masterless youth

and Bashō himself not writing

The priest writes a poem.

Regardless of weather,
The moon shines the same;
It is the drifting clouds
That make it seem different
On different nights. (Bashō 68)

Bashō does not write.

Bashō (*stunned by his own uneasiness, undergoes a poetic and psychological metamorphosis–metempsychosis–into a bat*) ‘which passes for a bird at one time and for a mouse at another’ (Bashō 65).

The enlightened priest is the bird, transcending the reality of the clouds. The mouse sits in their long shadow, earth-bound and in darkness.

I am pilgrim.
I am tourist.
I am seeing this.
I am something else.

C

irculating the room containing the glass boxes and 22 early works of Kurt Schwitters, I drew a line under a poem ~~that I was doodling about the M1 leading North~~ and traced the words ‘Collage as concept’, which I underlined. I began to write about the first work on the wall, but, resistant to the analysis of Schwitters’ collages, became distracted by a visitor speaking the words ‘Compositional Deepening’, words I heard rebound off the glass box across which the image of ‘Halbmond/ Ugelvik’ reflected; thick clouds across the moon. I followed the title with what is perhaps a synthesis of that moment, ‘or conversations in galleries’.

H

ere are two paradigmatic ways of perceiving the shrines of a pilgrimage (Coleman and Eade 4). Number One: glass boxes enshrining objects of deep symbolic value (each Tate visitor making a transformative journey toward the objects that remain as relics of Schwitters’s practice of *Merz*) unified through this into a *communitas*, through the sympathy of common belief (Turner and Turner 10). Number Two: for ‘glass boxes’ read: mirrors, or even vessels (Eade and Sallnow 15). For ‘communitas’, read: ‘there can be no shared meaning or narrative concerning pilgrimage’ (Ross xxxviii).

Uneasy I copy some phonetisca

double-spread from Schwitters's periodical, Merz (no.8).

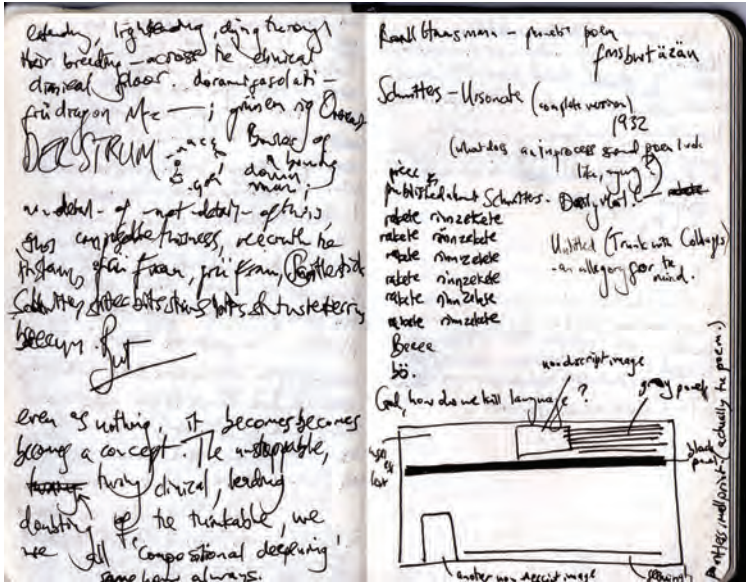


Figure 3: Copying some Merz writings. Author's notebook (2013).

(A bridge over dry earth; weeds where there might be flowers.) Karin Orchard entitles a section of her contribution to the *Schwitters in Britain* catalogue, 'Merz Theory', endeavouring to elucidate 'the concept of Merz that Schwitters set out on the 1940s' (Orchard 59-60). Isabel Schulz is similarly drawn in her entry of the catalogue to conceptualise Merz, exploring: 'Merz constructions', 'Merz art' and 'Merz principles' (Schulz 132). Elsewhere, Dorothea Dietrich writes, 'the house of God – the church or cathedral – has been transformed into a house for Merz. Thus Merz is declared a new religion' (170). (A plastic model of the Virgin Mary. Inside, a flickering bulb.) Indeed, Merz invokes a theoretical joke that is in currency in Schwitters-related writing, particularly in the old and current visitors' books at the Merz Barn: Merz is extracted from its usual contexts and pasted onto the beginning of random words for comical effect.* (the Merzpen with which I Merzwrite on

* I am grateful to Ian Hunter and Celia Larner, founders of Littoral Arts, for permitting me access to their collection of visitors' book, dating back to 2006.

this *Merz*paper...)

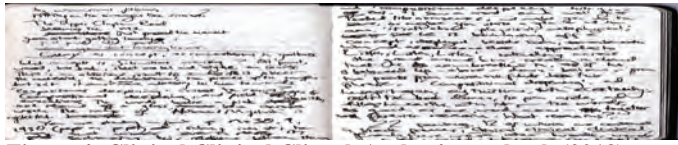


Figure 4: Clinical Clinical Clinical. Author's notebook (2013).

Not a method
not a doing,
nor a sense of simply being —
 (*The sound of a shutter—pthrrr-Chuck!*)
We see through celluloid film

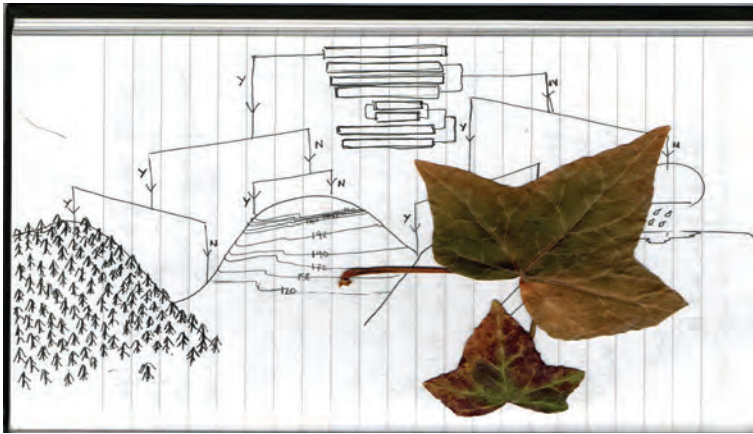


Figure 5: Doodle during Nick Wadley speaking. Author's notebook (2013).

This doodle.
Nick Wadley, speaking.
'Merz can mean anything and can mean nothing
'nothing can contradict it' (Wadley).*
Under the leaf, the key.

* Nick Wadley presented the paper 'Kurt Schwitters and Stefan Themerson' as part of the *Schwitters in context: the British years* symposium at the Tate Britain on 20 April 2013.

In ‘Traveling Theory’, Edward W. Said writes of the process by which radical and reactive theories are re-used, tamed, and domesticated into academic settings (230). Said warns against the circumnavigation of a theory by researchers, warding us from allowing methodological breakthroughs to erupt into theoretical and ideological trappings (244). Wadley highlights a parallel that I see existing between Said’s fears and the actualities of Schwitters research at present. Schwitters theorists are opening Merz to the historically contingent moment of its current usage as a malleable theory, a process that begins to undo its original radicalism as method, to tame its history, poetry and power.

Bashō again. For Bashō, the liminal mode of travel eventually grows into a totalizing theory; ‘travel’ is his poetic worldview, encompassing every field that he as the theorist enters. When he reaches the barrier-gate of Shirakawa, he stops. He faces a moment of critical distance, of resistance to the current that carries him along. And it is here that Bashō the traveller becomes obscured by another: the ancient traveller. With a slip of syntax, Bashō doubles into self and other: he is both present within the journey and ceased somewhere beyond it; he looks in on his own travels. The moment is so rich that each self burns with a desire to write. Indistinct, each self recreating itself as a past cut off as or even through a movement into the future as a kaleidoscope of pairs: shrine and object, pilgrim and witness, performer and anthropologist, theorist and critic, the etic and the emic,—

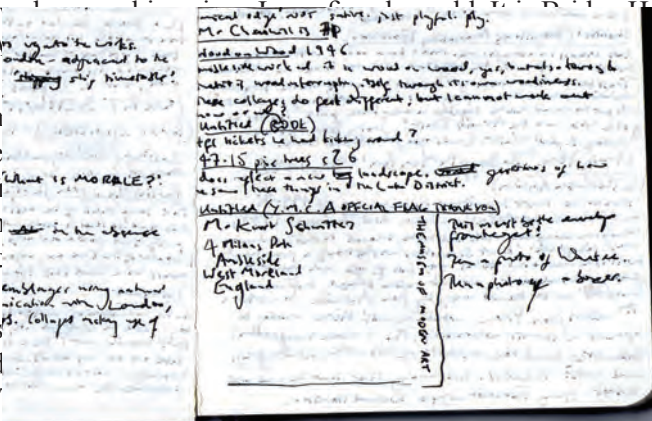
unprecedented				coherence,
which		as		it
to	to		to	speak
the				method
to				re-enact

Should we not rather stand?



Figure 6: Bridge house, from memory. Ambleside, Cumbria. Author's own (2013).

Schwitters has an oil painting that I recognise from the memories I have in my mind. Our Cun... whe... in fi... men... Stoc... free... mys... card... the... addressed to Mr Kurt Schwitters from the MOMA, pasted to a square of wood. In my notebook, I copy down the address as it



appears on the letter.

Said later revised the conclusions of 'Traveling Theory', suggesting that there are indeed instances in which borrowing, adaptation, domestication and taming, are not



Figure 7: 'All sites of pilgrimage have this in common: they are believed to be places where miracles once happened, still happen, and may happen again' (Turner and Turner 6). Millans Park, Cumbria. Author's own (2013).



Figure 8 'A tourist is half a pilgrim, if a pilgrim is half a tourist' (Turner and Turner 20). 4 Millans Park, Cumbria. Author's own (2013).

Taussig the travelling anthropologist becomes Taussig the mystic, traversing the exterior, physical landscape of fieldwork, and the interior, mystical journey of theories and ideas. For

Taussig, notebooks are documents of the liminal passage between these worlds, ‘documents that blend inner and outer worlds’ (Taussig xi).

We Undo Our Memories, for this

The lambs came
early this year.
The snow stayed late.
So much of this is
about remembering,
unchristening
memories *how we*
undo ourselves, our
journeys,—undo the
daylight onto the
re-awakened ground—

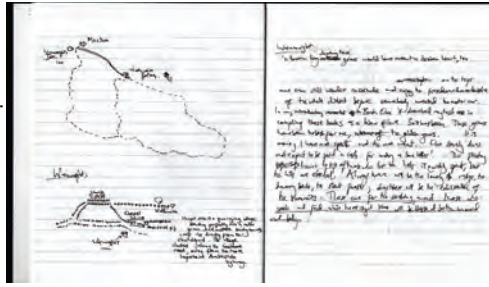


Figure 9: Copy of Wainwright’s Chapel Stile. Author’s Note book (2013).

The penance post is perhaps a large staff carried by pilgrims.



Figure 10: ‘For many pilgrims, the journey itself is something of a penance’ (Turner and Turner 7). Langdal Valley, Cumbria. Author’s own (2013).

Perhaps.



Figures 11-15: Barn Symbolism (1-IV). Sheepfold - Chapel Stile, Cumbria. Author's Own (2013)



Figure 16: ‘The pilgrim “puts on Christ Jesus” as a paradigmatic mask, or persona, and thus for a while *becomes* the redemptive tradition, no longer a biophysical unit with a specific history’ (Turner and Turner 11). Langdale Valley, Cumbria. Author’s own (2013).



Figure 17: ‘To confront, in a special “far” milieu, the basic elements and structures of his faith in their unshielded, virgin radiance’ (Turner and Turner 15). Loughrigg Tarn, Cumbria. Author’s own (2013).



**Figure 18: This Was His Favourite Place. Loughrigg Tarn, Cumbria.
Author's Own (2013)**



**Figure 19: We Drank Along the Way. Loughtigg Tarn, Cumbria.
Author's own (2013).**

In *A Note Upon The Mystic Writing-Pad*, Sigmund Freud describes a trace-receptive surface for recording thoughts and memories. Freud writes, 'it, while the Mystic Pad has writing on it, we cautiously raise the cellophane from the waxed paper, we can see the writing just as clear.' (Freud, 22) This transparent cellophane layer resonates with two intertwined meanings, referring both to a synthetic artificiality and to the quality of a film. These two meanings are symbolic of its function within the mechanisms of the *Mystic Writing-Pad*, as the cellophane allows us both to perform the act of writing, and to witness the remains of that performance. Since this layer is merely transparent, we might be drawn to challenge its necessity (Suggested Annotation: *should we not write directly upon the wax? What harm would it do to peel away this transparent layer and intervene directly, with the remains that lie beneath?*) the question may arise whether there should be any necessity for the cellophane portion of the cover. Experiments will then show that the thin paper would be very easily crumpled or torn if one were to write directly upon it with the stylus. The layer of cellophane thus acts as a protective sheath. (Freud, 22)

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Figure 20: 'Increasingly circumscribed by symbolic structures [...] underlying the sensorily perceptible symbol-vehicles are structures of thought and feeling' (Turner and Turner 10). Cylinders Estate, Cumbria. Author's own. (2013).

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**Figure 21: What We Drank Along The Way (II). Chapel Stile, Cumbria.
Author's own. (2013).**

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Dematerialised Political and Theatrical Legacies: Rethinking the Roots and Influences of Tim Crouch's Work

By Cristina Delgado-García

Abstract

This article reassesses the legacies of both theatre and conceptual art in Tim Crouch's practice, and suggests re-routing the reception of his work towards a more balanced and politicised understanding of his influences, trajectory and current dramaturgy. The article first reflects on the prevalent account of Crouch's engagement with theatre, and problematises the claim that the language-based minimalism of his work authorises spectators to imaginatively co-create it. This section also outlines a complementary narrative about the relationship between theatre and Crouch's practice. This narrative draws from a less restrictive view of the twentieth-century theatre tradition and from the theatre-maker's lesser known, politically-committed theatrical and pedagogical career. The article then moves on to examine the ideological and aesthetic affinity between Crouch's theatre and conceptual art, with particular reference to three plays that have been overtly aligned to this paradigm: *Shopping for Shoes* (2003), *My Arm* (2003) and *ENGLAND* (2007). Here, it is argued that conceptual art's ambiguous relationship with capitalism has been understated in the debate on Crouch's work. A thematic critique of conceptual art's potential for banality or exploitation is also unveiled in his plays. Moreover, the article questions the use of the term 'dematerialisation' with regards to Crouch's practice, and calls for a reconsideration of theatre ontology, and a politically-inflected revision of the role of materiality in his work. It concludes that conceptual art in particular and art in general offer Crouch suitable metaphors to question the ways in which some human lives become exploited, commodified or rendered immaterial to warrant the pleasure of others. It therefore recommends for a more nuanced understanding of Crouch's engagement with conceptual art, as well as sensitivity to his theatrical roots.

In the incipient debate on the work of British theatre maker Tim Crouch, two aspects have taken prominence. The first is the indebtedness of his plays to conceptual art. This legacy was originally recognised by Crouch in his 2006 online interview with Caridad Svich, examined subsequently in Stephen Bottoms's article 'Authorizing the Audience: The Conceptual Drama of Tim Crouch' (2009), and expanded in Emilie Morin's 'Look Again': Indeterminacy in Contemporary British Drama' (2011), where the influence of Fluxus artists is also considered*. The second aspect is Crouch's widely documented intention to promote spectators' imaginative, intellectual and ethical implication in the work.** These two questions have been portrayed as interconnected: his plays' minimalistic aesthetics and suggestive language have been seen as paramount in spurring the audiences' co-creative work and ethical engagement. 'By minimising staging apparatus', Bottoms has argued, 'Crouch opens up the possibility for audience members to make circumstantial interpretations of their own' ('Materialising' 448).

*Although the chronological and formal boundaries separating conceptual art from other artistic movements are blurred, the term refers to a heterogeneous practice in the visual arts that, particularly during the 1960s and 1970s, problematised the received constitutive elements and attributes the artwork. With roots in Marcel Duchamp's readymades, conceptual artists such as Sol LeWitt, Joseph Kosuth, Terry Atkinson or Michael Baldwin challenged some of the received prerequisites of an artwork: evidence the artist's manual skill, originality, uniqueness, cohesion and marketable objecthood. Key to conceptual art is the reduction of the material elements of the artwork, and an increased emphasis on the viewer's integration of visual, textual and contextual elements for the completion or conceptual creation of the piece. Originating in the early 1960s, Fluxus is the name given to a loosely organised group of avant-garde artists, whose practice 'range[d] from minimal performances, called Events, to full-scale operas, and from graphics and boxed multiples called Fluxkits to paintings on canvas' (Higgins xiii). According to Fluxus artist Dick Higgins, the Fluxus enterprise loosely fulfilled nine criteria: 'internationalism, experimentalism, iconoclasm, intermedia, the resolution of the art/life dichotomy, implicativeness, play or gags, ephemerality and specificity' (qtd. in Smith 30). Influenced too by Duchamp, as well as by John Cage's concrete music, Fluxus artists included George Maciunas, George Brecht and Yoko Ono amongst others, and their activities extended until the 1970s.

**E.g. Bottoms, 'Authorizing', 'Materialising'; Freshwater; Frieze; Lane; Ilter 396; Morin 79. Crouch's interventions have also been crucial in positing spectatorial engagement as key to his dramaturgy, e.g. Crouch, *In Conversation*; 'Response'; Svich.

For Bottoms, this strategy responds to Crouch's 'concern to individualise spectatorial response – to *authorise his audience*' ('Materialising' 448; emphasis added). However, in the important task of mapping some of the influences of Crouch's work in the realm of conceptual art, the critical narrative to date has overlooked the aims and aesthetics of important twentieth-century theatre practices. Moreover, the political idiosyncrasy of both conceptual art and Crouch's theatre has been downplayed or subsumed exclusively to the economies of the artistic exchange. The resulting reading of Crouch's work risks appearing somewhat anti-theatrical, as well as relatively apolitical – a situation that, I would argue, is particularly striking given that questions of economic exploitation, collective responsibility, vulnerability and agency thematically and structurally underpin all of his work.

Taking this on board, the aim of this article is not so much to challenge the undeniable influence of conceptual art on Crouch's theatre-making, but to interrogate and enrich the existing critical narrative linking the two. To this end, I offer a reappraisal of a debate that has invoked claims about the artwork's authorisation of the audience, about its relationship with capitalism and about the ontology of theatre. By foregrounding Crouch's lesser known background in politicised theatre practices, this article also draws attention to the possible legacies that may have been omitted from the debate thus far. The article then highlights a thematic critique of conceptual art's potential banality, exploitative voyeurism, or self-involved obliviousness in *My Arm* (2003) and *ENGLAND* (2007) and reassesses the political significance of materiality in these works and in *Shopping for Shoes* (2003). These arguments indicate that the roots, influences and antecedents of Crouch's theatre cannot be contained solely within the realm of conceptual art and that the connection between his work and conceptual art is not simply one of programmatic or aesthetic affinity.

Revoking authorisations, invoking invisible legacies

Crouch's professed discomfort with some traditions of acting and theatre-making, alongside his fascination with conceptual art, have partly contributed to the critical dismissal of his full

theatrical background and antecedents. Crouch has consistently explained that his playwriting emerged from dismay with psychologically-based acting and the aesthetics of social realism, which in 2006 he considered to be ‘the dominant form of British theatre’ (qtd. Svich). According to Crouch, his training and early career as an actor brought him to perceive such ways of theatre-making as oversaturated, redundantly imitative and stultifying for the spectators (Crouch, *In Conversation*), as well as unsatisfactory and unsuccessful for himself as an actor (qtd. Hytner et al. 120). His work consequently developed from the will to challenge this type of theatre, and ‘to explore ways to authorize the spectator’s participation in the performance process’ (Bottoms, ‘Authorizing’ 67; ‘Materialising’ 448). Like conceptual art, Crouch’s practice is often described as relieving theatre from any duty to produce works that are fully and immediately apprehensible, and from having to host its audience through meaning (Lane 133); the authority of the writer, director or cast is allegedly lifted (Lane 133), ‘move[d] ... off the stage and into the auditorium’ (Ilter 396).

I have some misgivings with regards to how Crouch’s work has been framed in relation to theatre – particularly how theatre spectatorship, theatre histories, and Crouch’s own theatrical past have been portrayed in the scholarly debate. Firstly, Crouch’s orchestration of spectatorship has been posited as illustrative of Jacques Rancière’s theses in *The Emancipated Spectator* (e.g. Bottoms, ‘Materialising’ 448, 454; Ilter 397). Crouch’s concerns can indeed be related to the Rancièrian conviction that the spectator is always-already intellectually active – and perhaps the theatre maker’s familiarity with Rancière’s *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* and *The Emancipated Spectator* is worthy of note (Crouch, Personal interview). Yet, as a matter of fact, the vocabulary utilised for expressing Crouch’s practice is decidedly anti-Rancièrian, insofar as it contravenes the understanding of equality that underpins the philosopher’s work on politics, art and education. Rancière’s definition of equality establishes that we are all already equal and that, therefore, equality can never be gained or bestowed on others – it can only be confirmed, verified (*Disagreement* 31-35; ‘Politics’ 60; *Ignorant* 45-73; *Politics* 52-53). When

discussing the theatrical event, Rancière argues for the equality of intelligences, capacities and activities of everyone involved in theatre making *and* spectating (*Emancipated* 12-14). Contrary to this, the suggestion that Crouch's work may 'authoriz[e] individual engagement' (Bottoms, 'Autorizing' 72) or 'liberat[e] the authority of the audience' (Crouch, qtd. Bottoms, 'Authorizing' 67) draws a clear hierarchical relationship between the artist/artwork and the audience, who in this case is given the exceptional permission to think and imaginatively participate in the work. Albeit expressed here in unselfish terms, this remnant of authorial authority presumes the very *a priori* unequal distribution of capacities between theatre-makers and spectators that Rancière critiques (*Emancipated* 12-14). In short, Rancière would say that the authorisation or liberation of the audience's authority is redundant.

Crouch's suspicion towards some forms of theatre-making and the alleged modes of spectatorship they foster is also deeply at odds with Rancière's propositions. 'If all the agency of transformation has been taken by the actor', Crouch explains in relation to illusionist theatre forms, 'then the process is complete, and the audience lose that transformative agency that they should have, and that they do have in other art forms and have less so in theatre' (Personal interview). Crouch's minimalist stage design, evocative language and resistance against impersonation are therefore presented as part of a devolutionary scheme, returning part of the creative work to the otherwise inactive spectators. This position, however, demonstrates a rather sceptical, if not anti-theatrical, stance towards the spectatorial activity normally allowed by the stage. As Rancière argues in *The Emancipated Spectator*, this is a recurrent narrative, whereby '[t]heater accuses itself of rendering spectators passive' and 'consequently assigns itself the mission of . . . restoring to spectators ownership of their consciousness and their activity' (7). Yet, contrary to the default equation of theatre spectatorship with passivity and ignorance, Rancière proposes that the spectator is always already an autonomous, intellectual agent in the theatre event (*Emancipated* 7-17). It is essential to emphasise here that Rancière does not argue for a shift in theatrical practices so as to promote or maximise the spectator's emancipation. In Rancière's

words, '[b]eing a spectator is not some passive condition that we should transform into activity' (*Emancipated* 17). Rather, *The Emancipated Spectator* argues against the equation of a theatre's audience with 'community, gaze and passivity, exteriority and separation' (7), and its opposition to theatrical performance as image, appearance, activity, self-ownership and knowledge (7). As Rancière notes, this prejudiced distribution of roles fails to acknowledge that audiences are always 'both distant spectators and active interpreters of the spectacle offered to them' (13), 'plotting their own paths in the forest of things, acts and signs that confront or surround them' (16). If we consider, as Rancière does, that the spectator is already emancipated, then it follows that she is always actively co-creating and translating the theatre work – irrespective of the aesthetics of the piece.

In short, these early interpretations of Crouch's work are useful in expressing the theatre maker's refusal of exclusive ownership over the production and interpretation of meaning. However, the terminology mobilised by Crouch warrants critical distance for a consistent engagement with Rancière's theories. Arguably, the relationship between Crouch's work and the spectator might be better framed by taking into account both Rancière's vindication of an already emancipated spectator and what Claire Bishop contends, following Umberto Eco, about art in general –therefore including more conventionally staged performing arts: 'every work of art is potentially 'open' since it may produce an unlimited range of possible readings; it is simply the achievement of contemporary art, music and literature to have foregrounded this fact' ('Antagonism' 62).

A second problem with the portrayal of Crouch's plays as rejecting the legacy of theatre and embracing instead that of conceptual art is that this story forgets the remit and aesthetics of avant-garde, popular and political theatres. Like Crouch's work, these theatre forms have historically sought spectators' intellectual and/or physical participation, often resorting to minimal stagecraft and the abolition of the fourth wall. In fact, it is interesting to note that precisely those conceptual and Fluxus artists that are deemed influential in Crouch's theatrical practice locate themselves as inheritors of the theatrical experiments of the historical avant-garde, as well as other performative, non-

artistic forms. George Maciunas, who coined the label 'Fluxus' and coordinated the events of this group of artists between 1962 and 1978, illustrates these legacies in his *Diagram of Historical Development of Fluxus and Other 4 Dimensional* [sic], *Aural, Optic, Olfactory, Epithelial and Tactile Art Forms* (1973). Maciunas's chart connects the neo-Haiku events and chance operations of George Brecht, as well as John Cage's concretism, to Futurist variety theatre, Synthetic theatre and Total theatre. Beyond their genealogical relation to theatre, conceptual and Fluxus artworks can indeed be situated at the intersection between the visual and performative arts for their requirement of an audience to complete the piece.* There is no room here to index Crouch's possible theatrical antecedents in the twentieth century – theatre practices that disregard humanist characterisation and acting, use minimal or inexistent stage-designs, and aim to stimulate or provoke spectatorial intellectual and imaginative participation. However, Bertolt Brecht's and Peter Handke's work stand out as important aesthetic, and arguably political, references. In any case, these allusions to theatre history, and to the theatrical legacies and features of conceptual art and Fluxus work, indicate that Crouch's plays need to be inscribed in a much more intricate and theatrical genealogy than the framing of his work thus far would suggest.

Thirdly, in the attempt to see in Crouch's work a renewal of theatrical form through contact with conceptual art, part of the playwright's own political and theatrical history has been understated. Crouch's previous career as an actor is often cited as defining in his rejection of traditional theatre forms; it is rarely acknowledged that Crouch's early work also included his acting for the theatre group Public Parts, which the author has described as 'a very politically motivated theatre company' (In Conversation) and Dan Rebellato has labelled as socialist (126). Public Parts was co-founded by Crouch in 1985, and constituted as a cooperative which devised and toured work in the South West of England (Crouch, 'On Public Parts'). According to Crouch, the political allegiances of Public Parts were apparent in their 'performing in non-theatre venues, in places where

*In an acute observation of this overlap, Crouch has described Michael Craig-Martin's conceptual sculpture *An Oak Tree* (1973) as 'the most important theatre text' that he knows (qtd. Rebellato 133).

there was no theatre provision, making plays about the Workers' Theatre Movement, [and] making plays with explicit political themes' (In Conversation). Crouch left Public Parts in 1992, and it seems hardly coincidental that the company established in 2003 by Crouch, Karl James, a smith (Andy Smith) and Lisa Wolfe to help produce Crouch's work was named 'news from nowhere', like the 1890 utopian socialist novel by William Morris. Even outside of his theatre-making practice, Crouch has been deeply involved in teaching, and some ethical and political commitments can be seen to have permeated there too – for example, he led a week-long Conflict Resolution in Theatre course at the Gerard Bechar Theatre in Jerusalem in 2006 ('news from nowhere/Tim Crouch').

It would be simplistic to presume a direct relationship between Crouch's prior involvement in political theatre and his current theatre practice. Yet Crouch's roots in political theatre have been downplayed or ignored in scholarly accounts of his trajectory, which may have contributed to a somewhat formalist appraisal of his plays since *My Arm*. In fact, he has occasionally described his present work as politically inflected, albeit 'not in terms of party politics, but in terms of the public, the people, of giving a different model of being together that . . . acknowledges more than those other plays [produced with Public Parts] how we are together, and what we mean to each other when we are together' (In Conversation). Supplementing Crouch's own reading of the political aspects of his current theatre practice, I would argue that his work has shifted from a more traditional embrace of leftist political theatre, its sites, topics and audiences with Public Parts, to a more universalist approach in his practice after 2003. To put it differently, the political gestures in the structure, themes and aesthetics of his current work may not be hinged to identity politics, but nonetheless raise generic and crucial political questions that are capable of traversing any struggle. As my examination of *Shopping for Shoes* (2003), *My Arm* (2003) and *ENGLAND* (2007) below suggests, collective responsibility for the commodification and exploitation of others, and the fabrication and disruption of consensus are among these political preoccupations.

Theatrical readymades and dematerialisations

Bringing to the foreground these absent theatrical and political frames in the contextualisation of Crouch's work does not deny the importance of conceptual art in Crouch's practice; however, the debate on this legacy needs critical reappraisal. Crouch's interest in evincing and stimulating the status of spectators as co-creators of the theatre piece by way of combining suggestive language, minimal stagecraft, and non-representational performance can indeed be related to the concerns and strategies of conceptual art as it emerged in the 1960s and 1970s. Artists such as Sol LeWitt and Michael Craig-Martin also privileged the cognitive processes involved in making and viewing art, foregrounding audience participation and (partially) dematerialising the artwork. In the words of LeWitt, '[i]deas can be works of art' yet '[a]ll ideas need not be made physical' (qtd. Goldia and Schellekens 56). These principles reverberate theatrically in all of Crouch's plays, which have also been described as conceptual and deploying dematerialising strategies (Bottoms, 'Authorizing' 75; 'Materialising' 449; Morin 82).

In 'Authorizing the Audience: The Conceptual Drama of Tim Crouch', Bottoms traces the genesis of Crouch's first play for adults back to the Duchampian 'readymade' (73). The suggestion here is that Crouch aligns himself with conceptual artists who 'select[ed] material or experience for aesthetic consideration rather than forming something from the traditional materials of art' (Carlson 111). By transposing these artists' premises to the theatre event, Crouch's pieces present ordinary items on the assumption that the spectators will produce layers of fictionality, meaning and aesthetic value when given the smallest material and/or linguistic cues. Such readymades feature in his first play for young audiences, *Shopping for Shoes* (2003), which sees Crouch alone on the stage manipulating a number of trainers and sandals, which stand for the characters that he ventriloquizes. Performed exclusively by Crouch, his first play for adults, *My Arm* (2003), also contains ordinary objects donated by the audience, which are invited to be perceived as characters. Consolidating a reading of his work vis-à-vis conceptual art, Crouch has often used the term 'dematerialisation' as one that suitably describes his aims and aesthetics with regards to spectatorial engagement.

One of the most recent examples is his 2012 performance-lecture *What The Eye Doesn't See: Representation and Figuration in Theatre*, which was described in the promotional poster as 'some thoughts about a de-materialised practice'. In reference to his third play for adults, *ENGLAND* (2007), Crouch has explained that the performance 'dematerialises' a year, a heart transplant operation, the murder of a supposed donor, about which the author remarks: 'It's not there, I don't act it' (Personal interview).

The creation of hermeneutic links between conceptual art and Crouch's practice has also offered cues to read his work in a political light – albeit tentatively and often in relation to the specific politics of the artistic exchange. First used by Lucy Lippard in her 1973 book *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972*, 'dematerialisation' not only refers to 'a deemphasis on material aspects (uniqueness, permanence, decorative attractiveness)' (5) that conceptual artists placed on their work. This strategy was also very much aligned with their purported wish to remove art from the logic of an all-encompassing commodification that was deemed to fuel and be fuelled by capitalism. By 'removing material definition', Crouch has similarly explained, a play becomes an open piece that is 'not owned by the actor and the production team', but by the spectator, who allegedly completes the play with their own imagination and ideas (Personal interview). Bottoms has complemented this view reporting that, for Crouch, theatre 'functions as a 'return of the repressed'' in the arts' unconscious: because of its impermanent nature, theatre has the potential to resuscitate the 'betrayed promise' of conceptual art of becoming uncommodifiable ('Authorizing' 75). Morin's analysis of *ENGLAND* has suggested a further politically significant link between Crouch's work and conceptual art. Like these artists, Morin contends, Crouch is concerned with art's relationship to late capitalism and commodification (73), and the aesthetics of his work are attuned to our age of immaterial labour (73). However, Morin quickly abandons this promising line of argumentation with claims that 'attempting to ascribe clear political intentions to the play [*ENGLAND*] is self-defeating . . . since its concern with the workings of late capitalism is

subsumed under a relentless interrogation of . . . performance’, ‘an interrogation of the relation between theatre and conceptual art’ (76).

Theatre ontology and materialism

This narrative about the aesthetic and political legacies of conceptual art in Crouch’s practice is problematic in at least three counts, which this final section will explore. I will begin with the suggestion that theatre can revisit and fulfil the promise of conceptual art of sidestepping commodification and consumption and, with them, capitalism. In the case of conceptual art, such promise was never completely sincere. In *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity* (2003), Alexander Alberro argues that the claim that conceptual art attempted to ‘eliminate the commodity status of the art object . . . is mythical’, as these artists sought and indeed found ways of marketing their work (4). For Alberro, the movement’s ‘egalitarian pursuit of publicness and the emancipation from traditional forms of artistic value were as definitive as the fusion of the artwork with advertising and display’ (5), a situation that complicates the existing framing of Crouch’s work. Moreover, theatre’s ephemerality and purported inability to accrue value do not comprise all the ways in which theatre can and does participate in the logic of capitalism. Even putting to one side questions of ticketing, funding, programming and differential access to the arts, examples of the symbolic entanglement between theatre and capitalism abound. As *ENGLAND* cleverly intimates, living in aesthetic enchantment with the world *qua* ready-made art object may be a contributing factor in our obliviousness to the injustices we performatively sustain.

Second, the notion of ‘dematerialisation’ firmly places Crouch’s work in contact with conceptual art, but the label is a misleading descriptor – even for the art form it originally sought to define.* ‘Dematerialisation’ implies that Crouch’s performances

*In the preface to the 1997 edition of *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972*, Lucy Lippard has retrospectively acknowledged the inaccuracy of the term ‘dematerialisation’, insofar as ‘a piece of paper or a photograph is as much an object, or as ‘material’, as a ton of lead’ (5).

evacuate the theatrical event from its material substance, or that materiality plays a secondary role over the ideas enticed by the work or offered by the spectators. However, what is often described as an effect of dematerialisation is actually a repudiation of the aesthetic foundations of representational theatre-making, foundations that are both material *and* immaterial. More specifically, what is ‘not materialised’ in Crouch’s performances is the mimetic representation of a story, the impersonation of individuated characters by the actors, illusionist stage designs, and the symbolic erasure of the audience behind the fourth wall. Rather than ‘dematerialised’, the pared down aesthetics of Crouch’s theatre pieces might therefore be best described as non-representational, meta-theatrical and post-Brechtian.

In fact, matter and materialism play a huge role in Crouch’s dramaturgy and its politics – particularly with regards to how his work presents a critique of materialistic forms of understanding and dealing with human beings and how it also ethically renegotiates the notions of subjectivity and intersubjective relations. Re-examining *Shopping for Shoes* and *My Arm* in this light can help a reading of Crouch’s work beyond the identification of the readymades it contains. In *Shopping for Shoes*, the trainers and sandals manipulated by Crouch literally illustrate the confusion of commodities with identity, the capitalist synecdoche that takes a subject’s possessions as the subject as a whole. The capitalist alignment of consumption with self-expression is synthetically summarised in the play’s own narration of the encounter between its two protagonists, Siobhan and Shaun: ‘Shaun tells her about his shoes. About belonging to a tribe, about being an individual, about feeling special, about being cool. . . . About how every shoe in his collection expresses a different bit of him. Every brand says something. . . . It’s about your identity. It’s about who you are’ (70). Similarly, in *My Arm*, the random objects collected from the audience and that stand in for the secondary characters in the play offer an image of the extreme reification and utilitarian manipulation of humanity that art can inflict on its subjects, as is the case with the protagonist.

Thirdly and finally, despite the obvious aesthetic and ideological affinities between Crouch’s work and conceptual art, it is important to note that his plays also thematically

critique certain artistic practices and the aesthetic disposition that conceptual art in particular requires. *My Arm* follows the consequences of what is described as a ‘thought-less’ (14) gesture of a child who one day raises his arm for good and eventually becomes the precious subject/object/abject of an avid British conceptual artist and an American art dealer. The protagonist is posed here as the paradoxically thought-less, *concept-less*, piece of conceptual art. Whilst allegedly embracing the principles of conceptual art, *My Arm* also reflects on art’s potential fascination with the grotesque, its capitalisation of pain, its ability to generate grandiose narratives from a vacuum, and its solipsistic and self-aggrandising use: ‘Don’t think that this gesture is about belief’, the protagonist confesses early in the play,

It isn’t for a moment about belief, or conviction or integrity. I’d like to be able to tell you that this all sprung out of some sort of social protest. That it was incensed by the stories from Cambodia. . . . I think it was none of these. If anything it was formed out of the absence of belief. I think at some point I was struck by the realisation that I had nothing to think about. I was thoughtless. I couldn’t cause thought. I was not the effect of thought. (14)

References to conceptual art are also present in *ENGLAND*, a play for art galleries with multiple nods to work of the Young British Artists, and the abstraction of Willem de Kooning. *ENGLAND* also intertwines themes of aesthetic sensibility with elitism, exploitation, consumerism and the perpetuation of global injustice. In this site-generic play for art galleries, the two performers – Tim Crouch and Hannah Ringham in the original production – take turns to present a joint, first person singular narrative about how a heart condition threatens the life of the English protagonist. Alongside this narrative, audiences are constantly requested to equate the world as a readymade work of art. They are asked to appreciate the aesthetic value of the body in itself, the beauty of how it interacts with objects and space. They are commanded to pay attention to the quality of the protagonist’s boyfriend’s soft skin, and to marvel at the physical changes that illness brings to the body of the protagonist. Buildings, paintings, cashmere

jumpers are all subject to the command of being observed as works of art. Framed by the real space of the art gallery, the play suggests that the living body can be apprehended as art if we are able to look at it with an aesthetic disposition. 'All this is art. This is how we look' (28), says the protagonist. This abolition of the distinction between life and art – a throwback to Fluxus, conceptual art and the avant-garde – would initially appear as innocuous, if not quite democratic. It would seem that our aesthetic inclination may find art everywhere, that this aesthetic disposition can promise an enchanted existence for all. However, the play strongly makes the case for art being a commodity, and a very gainful one: 'Good art is art that sells!' Yet, if any subject can be apprehended as an art object, and art is a commodity, it follows that the subject can therefore be commodified too, priced and traded – as we learn has been the case with the Eastern citizen called Hassam in Act Two, whose heart was sold in dubious circumstances to guarantee the life of the protagonist. The enchanted existence of the privileged protagonist, keen on finding pleasure and beauty both in the everyday and in the extraordinariness of art, is therefore posed as intricately linked with the market. The repeated instructions to not touch the artwork, or indeed to not touch anything, suggest that this aesthetically sensitive gaze is accompanied by a lack of real contact with the world.

Conclusion: materialising the political gestures in Crouch's work

There are obvious connections between Crouch's plays and conceptual art, regarding the not-necessarily-material ontology of the artwork, the importance of concepts and ideas involved in the production and reception of art, the use of everyday materials, and the overt emphasis on the active role of spectators. However, the structural inequalities of globalised capitalism, the confounding of consumption with individual particularity, and the injustice of consensus, to name but a few of the political concerns of his work, have been the blind spots of the debate thus far. Sensitivity to Crouch's theatrical roots, and a more nuanced engagement with conceptual art and theatre histories, can provide less formalist methodologies and contribute to flesh

out the political gestures in his work that have been rendered immaterial.

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Dynasty, Memory and Terry: Curating the 1896 *Cymbeline*

By Sophie Duncan

Abstract

This article looks at the creation and dissemination of performance legacies in Shakespeare, from the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries, looking particularly at *Cymbeline*. Henry Irving's 1896 production of William Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* starred Ellen Terry as Imogen, Briton princess and ideal Victorian Shakespearean heroine. The production's timing and reception confirmed Terry's current role, and contributed to her eventual legacy, as one of Britain's best-loved actresses. Simultaneously, coverage of the production mediated the evolving cultural status of Queen Victoria, who became Britain's longest-reigning monarch on 23 September 1896, the day *Cymbeline*'s first-night reviews were published. Reviewers also highlighted the presence of Terry's son in *Cymbeline*'s cast. Performing in 1896 as her theatrical heir (both within the plot and within *fin-de-siècle* theatre), Edward Gordon Craig, like his sister Edith Craig, would also become curators of their mother's memory. Dynastic memorialisation remains important to an actor's posthumous cultural capital: the familial stakeholder is still powerful today. The drive to identify professional, as well as biological heirs also persists, as Terry's successors and *their* successors are identified by twentieth- and twenty-first century theatre critics.

The ephemerality of iconic performances is countered by the energy with which they are memorialised. In his book, *Cultural Selection*, Gary Taylor notes that 'a crucial determinant of artistic reputation is the availability of *someone* who, after the artist's death, has a stake in preserving his or her memory' (5). Today, social media creates an evolving electronic archive of performance, including the digital content theatre companies develop themselves. Taylor's '*someone*' can be anyone: 'preserving' the 'memory' of a performance begins as soon as that performance occurs. The modern stakeholder

is less a eulogist than an ongoing curator, managing a perhaps impossibly huge variety of personal and corporate ‘memories’ of an iconic theatrical moment. But for Victorian performers – indeed, all performers before the internet age – the greatest theatrical stakeholder, Taylor’s ‘*someone*’ was almost invariably a relative. Today, the power of the familial stakeholder remains significant – examples from popular music include Miley and Billy Ray Cyrus, or Willow and Will Smith – and ideas of performance dynasties and theatrical ‘succession’ persist when we (still) try to fix a performance’s meaning.

Ellen Terry (1847-1928) was Victorian Britain’s favourite actress, and, excluding Queen Victoria, Britain’s highest-paid woman (Clark 205; Auerbach 209). The most acclaimed twenty of her seventy years in theatre were spent at the Lyceum Theatre, opposite Henry Irving, Britain’s first theatrical knight. Terry herself was made a Dame Grand Cross (GBE) in 1925; to date, only two actresses have been so honoured, with Judi Dench, Maggie Smith et al. receiving the lower rank of DBE. Terry’s cultural prestige came mainly from her gallery of Shakespearean heroines, including Portia, Ophelia, Beatrice and Lady Macbeth. In 2009, the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust appointed her one of the twelve ‘Great Shakespeareans’ in their hall of fame, alongside David Garrick and Laurence Olivier, and her Kent home, Smallhythe Place, survives as a memorial museum.

Today, she is probably best remembered for her Lady Macbeth (1888-9), which survives in two artistic artefacts that have become the visible afterlives of her performance. The first is Sargent’s 1889 portrait, on display at Tate Britain and on the covers of several editions of *Macbeth* (Watts 1992; Brooke 2008). The second artefact is the green dress decorated with real beetle-wings, painted by Sargent and returned to public consciousness by its well-publicised restoration (Tinker 2012). In comparison, her 1896 performance as Imogen in Shakespeare’s *Cymbeline* is barely remembered outside the theatre. Nevertheless, recent scholarship on *Cymbeline* has revealed the now-overlooked influence Terry’s performance had on contemporary Gothic culture, most notably Bram

Stoker's *Dracula* (Wynne 2013; 2014).

This article shows how Terry's performance illuminates Victorian and twentieth-century memorialisation strategies. *Cymbeline* contributed to her status as Britain's best-loved actress, while simultaneously mediating the evolving status of Queen Victoria. Alongside the lexis of queenship used to describe both Terry and Victoria, the presence in *Cymbeline*'s cast of Terry's son highlights the role dynastic memorialisation plays in the curation of an actor's cultural capital, particularly at a *fin de siècle* moment necessarily concerned with issues of succession and change, as the elderly Victoria became Britain's longest-reigning monarch, and approached her Diamond Jubilee. In the twentieth century, *Cymbeline* was evoked within the theatrical possession, as actors including Roger Rees and Harriet Walter situated Terry as both performer and theatrical 'ancestor', and as multiple critics sought to identify her 'successors' in the role.

The zenith of Terry's career occurred at a period in which Shakespeare's plays were both the cultural constant of the Victorian repertory, and theatre's most privileged dramatic form. Beyond the theatre, Shakespeare's impact on Victorian visual arts, literature and political discourse have been well-attested (Marshall et al., 2012), while, across the Empire, Shakespeare became the 'dominant component of the new subject of English Literature' – a powerful Imperial export, and tool for teaching Englishness at home (Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare*, 184). Terry's twenty-year partnership with Irving was defined by the Lyceum's lavish, pictorial Shakespearean revivals. Her pre-eminence as a specifically Shakespearean actress meant that, as an 1893 article asking 'Who is the Greatest Living English Actress – And Why?' concluded, Terry was 'over-tops' by default amongst her profession (Knight et al. 394). Her artistic formula, which a perceptive Bostonian journalist defined as Renaissance heroines 'reconstructed' on a 'nineteenth-century plan' of charming womanhood (Shattuck 168), was key to her status as a late-Victorian 'star' actress. Stokes defines the *fin-de-siecle* star actress as 'protean, multiple, yet [...] unmistakably themselves and no one else' in performance, and in their 'celebrity' both 'famous,

charismatic, mythic' and 'undeniably [...] in the here and now [...] embodying their own complex times'. Stokes applies his definition to a 'select group' of European actresses (Bernhardt, Duse and Félix), but it also applied to Terry (Stokes 210). As art critic Frederick Wedmore noted in 1889, Terry was 'the sympathetic actress, whom not to admire is to be [...] out of the fashion' (Wedmore 14).

Imogen, *Cymbeline's* heroine, was the last 'young' Shakespearean heroine Terry added to her repertoire. *Cymbeline's* plot is complex and fantastical, encompassing an appearance by both Jupiter and the Roman army. Imogen is the infinitely faithful and forgiving British princess who, framed for adultery, adopts a new cross-dressed identity and is – after five acts of suffering – vindicated and reunited with her 'lost' brothers, father, and penitent husband. Earlier commentators, led by Hazlitt, adored her 'peculiar excellence', and 'boundless resignation' (qtd. In Bate 297); Coleridge felt she epitomised what was 'holy' in womanhood (qtd. in Bate 531). By 1896, it was still agreed that Imogen was 'the noblest woman [Shakespeare] ever drew' ('Thursday' 4), about whom there could be no 'differences' ('In view of to-night' 3). Terry's performance exactly upheld the Victorian belief, exemplified by commentator L.M. Griffiths in 1889, that *Cymbeline's* 'all-pervading idea' was 'the moral beauty of womanhood' (173). As 'this most womanly of Shakespeare's heroines', critics found Terry 'captivating [...] charming' and – a word used across five regional and national publications – 'perfect' (Calvert 42; 'W.H.P.' 559; 'From Our London Correspondent' 6; 'Lyceum Theatre' 5; 'London Letter'; 'Facts and Faces'; 'Cymbeline Again' 615). The universal approbation contrasted especially strongly with the many controversial major Shakespearean performances in the mid-1890s. In early 1897, Janet Achurch's Cleopatra was condemned as 'ugly' for 'tricks of style which pass for inspiration in Ibsen' ('Olympic Theatre'). Either side of Terry's Imogen, Mrs. Patrick Campbell gave a controversial triumvirate of performances at the Lyceum: a Juliet which inspired 'an extraordinary divergence of opinion', as William Archer noted, and which William Winter found 'limp and powerless' (qtd. in Campbell

104-5); an Ophelia whom critics called ‘a mere excrescence on the play’, but who chilled Shaw (qtd. in Terry Gielgud 62), and an 1898 Lady Macbeth who was either ‘perfectly possible and plausible’ (Walkley, qtd. in Peters 171) or ‘wholly inadequate’ (“Macbeth” 3).

Late twentieth- and twenty-first scholarship on Terry’s performance legacies has increasingly emphasised her resonances for New Women and the suffragists. Penny Farfan’s assertion Terry could, in the 1890s ‘be imagined as absolutely supporting the New Woman cause’ is questionable (158). Terry’s impatience with sexual orthodoxies, support for women’s professional activity and power at the Lyceum are contiguous with a ‘New Woman’ perspective. However, during the 1890s, Terry argued against staging ‘New Women’ plays at the Lyceum and called Ibsen’s heroines, the most *avant-garde* theatrical embodiment of New ideas, ‘silly ladies’ drawn reductively on ‘straight lines’ (qtd. in Hiatt 105). It’s true that Terry, in her subsequent lecture tours, likened Shakespearean heroines to ‘modern revolutionaries’ (Terry ‘Shakespeare’s heroines’, f3). Nevertheless, Lisa Tickner exaggerates in calling her ‘an ardent suffragist’ (22). Instead, Kelly illustrates how Terry only ever became ‘a sly, ambiguous and sometimes reluctant feminist’ (71), who insisted newspapers correct claims her 1910 American and Canadian tour was affiliated with suffrage (Terry, letter dated 4 August 1910), yet called herself ‘a suffragette’ in Australia (Manville 209). She also bemoaned her daughter Edith Craig’s involvement with ‘those rotten Suffragettes – the Idiots’ (letter dated 20 May c.1906), and approvingly quoted a friend who claimed that Edith’s involvement with the Independent Theatre would make her ‘frowsy, trollopy and dirty’ (qtd. in Holledge 113).

Although Farfan defines Terry’s performance as Imogen as ‘Feminist Shakespeare’, her Imogen had little political resonance in comparison with her Lady Macbeth (1888-9), which inspired Jess Dorynne’s essay on ‘The Lady of Undaunted Mettle’ in *The True Ophelia* (1913), or in comparison with Lillah McCarthy and Esmé Beringer’s partnership as Hermione and Paulina in Harley Granville-Barker’s 1912 *The Winter’s Tale*. Beringer’s Paulina was ‘the

darling of all the eager young Suffragettes' (qtd. in S. Carlson 133), whom *Votes for Women* felt 'could have been written since 1905' ('The Conspiracy Trial of Hermione' 18 October 1912, qtd. in S. Carlson 133) *Suffragette* called her 'the real heroine of the play' and 'the eternal Suffragette' (18 October 1912, 5). McCarthy's Hermione, meanwhile, revealed 'the humiliation of women's position' (qtd. Stokes 191). Terry's Imogen, however, was interpreted as conservative. *The Times*, *Belfast News-Letter* and *Theatre* all reiterated Imogen's 'artlessness' (qtd. in Calvert 42) as Shakespeare's 'most tender and artless' heroine ('Our London Letter' 5; 'In London' 212) who displayed the 'artlessness and unostentatiousness' of her 'character [...] at every turn' (qtd. in Calvert 42). This was contiguous with Victorian theatre's celebration of Terry as an 'artless' performer, despite Terry's assertion, published the following year, that the 'true artist always calculates to a nicety' (qtd. in Hammerton 175). The reading also overlooks Imogen's textually rebellious resourcefulness in contriving a secret marriage, outwitting her stepbrother, and sustaining a false male identity even when heartbroken.

Rather than offering feminist innovation, the Lyceum *Cymbeline* offered what Marvin Carlson calls a 'sense of return' in *The Haunted Stage: Theatre as a Memory Machine* (3). The production expanded Terry's already-large collection of charming Shakespearean heroines, and created a 'return' to the Lyceum's earlier casting practices. Irving's *Cymbeline* company was resolutely of the 'old school'. Walter Lacy (Cornelius), Charles Kean's colleague, was Irving's traditionalist advisor. Lacy had backed Irving in past disagreements with Terry over traditional 'gags' in *Much Ado About Nothing* (1882), and costumes in *Hamlet* (1878) (Terry 'Story' 163). Terry had wanted to wear black as Ophelia; Lacy made it very clear that 'the only black figure in this play' could be Irving's Hamlet (Terry 'Story' 157).

Irving's commitment to the 'old school' extended to sacking younger performers when a traditional actress became available. Geneviève Ward, who had begun her career as a singer in 1850s Milan, returned from retirement to play the Queen, replacing the already-cast, younger Helen Kinnaird.

The lesser-known Kinnaird had advertised her Lyceum engagement at in the *Era* on 22 and 29 August. She was also named as *Cymbeline's* Queen by *Lloyd's Weekly* on 30 August ('Promenade Concerts' 11) and the *Glasgow Herald* on 31 August ('Music and the Drama' 4). However, by 4 September, the *Leeds Mercury* was congratulating Irving on having 'persuaded' Ward 'out of her partial retirement to play the Queen' ('Musical and Dramatic Notes' 5). On 5 September, the *Dundee Courier* reported that Kinnaird had 'relinquished the part for some reason at present unknown' ('London Letter' 5). However, Kinnaird (presumably believing herself secure in the role) had paid for another week's advertisement in the *Era*, who listed her as engaged by the Lyceum again that day. No London publication ever alluded to the change, and the *Dundee* correspondent was ostentatiously back on-message by 10 September, insisting he 'knew' the Queen would 'safe at the hands' of the 'finished and statuesque' Ward ('London Letter' 5). Without any evidence of illness, it seems unlikely that Kinnaird, who generally played supporting roles in D'Oyly Carte productions, would have voluntarily 'relinquished' the role.

The vintage cast helped provoke a flurry of theatrical retrospectives. Marvin Carlson's argument that 'all plays [...] might be called *Ghosts*', in which the 'past reappear[s] [...] in the midst of the present' (3), was especially true of Lyceum Shakespeares, with productions' longevity through revivals, recurring casts and the Lyceum's centrality to the national Shakespearean consciousness as 'the National theatre of the English world' (Grein 260). Even before *Cymbeline* opened, the production was identified as a kind of living archive of the Lyceum's legacy: well before the first night, the *Glasgow Herald* praised *Cymbeline* as 'a return to the earlier and better traditions of Sir Henry's management' ('Thursday' 4). By October, *Theatre* identified *Cymbeline* as one of many 'debts of gratitude' the 'younger generation' owed Irving ('In London' '12).

Cymbeline's timing and Terry's casting also collided with another moment in the national heritage. Ricks argues convincingly that Tennyson's *The Princess* (1847) resonated

with contemporary depictions of the young Queen Victoria. Ricks likens Victoria's 'kind of presence' in *The Princess* to 'James I's presence in *Cymbeline*', comparing the two texts' themes of 'prince and princess', transvestism, and 'war foreign, civil and domestic' (137). Lander also links Imogen and the young Victoria; however Lander's assertion that 'Victorian Imogen's most celebrated act' was willingly resigning the throne to her brothers is debatable (160): the *Pall Mall Gazette* typified 1896 opinion by deeming 'the love of Imogen for her banished husband' the play's entire 'motive' ('Theatrical Notes' 1). Moreover, in 1896, the real link between *Cymbeline* and the Crown was between Ellen Terry's princess and Victoria as contemporary, aging queen. By striking coincidence, the day after *Cymbeline* opened was also the day on which the length of Victoria's reign exceeded that of any previous monarch. It was not the first time *Cymbeline* had collided directly with popular constructions of a British queen. In 1820-1, George IV had attempted to divorce Queen Caroline by Act of Parliament, asserting her adultery with the Italian Bartolomeo Pergami. During Caroline's 'trial' the Lord Chief Justice, cited *Cymbeline* and *Othello* to defend Caroline, noting that Shakespeare laid 'his scene in Italy' whenever he depicted 'a man anxious to blacken the character of an innocent wife' (qtd. in Fulford 207).

Terry's performances had had contemporary significance before – the overlap between *Macbeth* and continued debate over the 1888 Whitechapel murders saw the production described as 'The Macbeth Murder Case' – the coincidence between *Cymbeline* and contemporary events had never been as intense as on the morning of 23 September 1896. This was the publication date for many of *Cymbeline*'s first-night reviews, making the juxtaposition of assessments of British theatrical royalty and England's real queen inevitable. Often *Cymbeline* reviews and nationalistic retrospect (anonymously written, offering the tantalising possibility – however remote – that they were produced by the same person) appeared on the same page (as in *Sheffield*) or immediately opposite each other (as in the *Morning Post*). Structurally and linguistically, each type of article functioned as a lionising retrospective

on its heroine's popularity, creating lasting images of their professional activities simultaneously and symbiotically. The Sheffield correspondent described Victoria as having 'never at any moment' been 'so secure in the affection of her people' ('Queen's Reign' 4), irresistibly recalling Terry, who had, 'it was generally conceded [...] never appeared to greater advantage' ("Cymbeline" at the Lyceum). Victoria had 'never made a serious mistake' during her 'most honourable reign [...] most happy reign [...] most hopeful reign' ('Queen's Reign' 4). Terry had 'never excelled' as Imogen ('Shakespearean Revival' 4), and was 'unassailable' as the 'leader of the front rank of actresses' ('The Lyceum Theatre' 3). As 'fine type[s] of womanhood', both Imogen and Victoria could arouse 'a very strong, human, partly pathetic interest' ('Queen's Reign' 4).

Above all, coverage of Victoria and Terry's Imogen on 23 September presented them as wives. Like Imogen, Victoria had evinced 'feminine tenderness and desperate grief' ('The London Theatres' 10) in her public widowhood, although Imogen's husband actually survives, and both constantly enacted 'sweet remembrances of their husbands' ('Facts and Faces' 195). Despite Victoria's popularity problems during her reclusiveness, by 1896 both Victoria and Terry were celebrated for responsiveness to public taste. Victoria's ability to 'move with the times' in a 'State' which 'appeals openly to the people's will' ('Queen's Reign' 4) reflected the new reality that queens, as Terry had long argued of 'players', had to 'feel the pulse of the public' (Terry 'Actions + Acting' 1).

Just as Victoria's popularity derived from having lived 'in our midst as one of the people' ('Queen's Reign' 4), so too, as Stokes notes, a *fin-de-siècle* theatrical star had to be both 'mythic' and in 'the here and now' (211). As the Lyceum's queen, Terry embodied the 'higher poetic drama' of Victorian culture ("Cymbeline" at the Lyceum), one in which 'literature has been brought down to the people [...] the tone of public thought has been raised' ('Queen's Reign' 4). Terry had longstanding associations with patriotism. Beerbohm called her a 'genial Britannia' (qtd. in Auerbach 15), and aged fifteen, she had played Britannia herself in Stirling Coyne's high-profile, patriotic pageant following the Prince of Wales's marriage.

On 23 September, the *Morning Post* directed England to ‘the simple and beautiful words of the Prayer-book’ on Victoria’s behalf, with the petitionary subjunctive ‘Grant her in health and wealth long to live’ (Untitled item 5). Reviewing *Cymbeline*, the weekly *National Observer* ‘thank[ed] Heaven!’ that Terry was ‘alive to give us the noblest entertainment’ (*Cymbeline* at the Lyceum’ 559).

For Terry, this lexis of queenship and triumph continued through her subsequent theatrical activity. In 1899, following an 1897 revival of *Cymbeline*, and the 1898 publication of Frederic Whyte’s *Actors of the Century* – which used an image of Terry’s Imogen as the frontispiece – Terry continued to tour as Imogen and other Shakespearean heroines. In the same year, Clotilde Graves rejoiced that Terry could ‘rule us still’, concluding that there were ‘never greater days than these’ (Graves 195). As Bloodworth notes, Graves’s tribute, ‘laced with metaphorical drawings’ on ‘imperial female majesty’ evoked the ‘aged Queen Empress and embodiment of female power’ (49). After Terry’s death, Edward Percy described her as ‘our greatest actress, as the Duke of Wellington was our greatest soldier, and Henry VII our greatest king’: the object of national pride and emotional investment, and implicated in national identity (Percy 9). The symbiosis between Terry and Victoria’s September 1896 memorialisation demonstrates the value of revisiting performance receptions in their own context, avoiding the ‘habitual excision’ of reviews from their ‘own discourse’ within contemporary journalism (Smith 285).

In 1896, *Cymbeline*’s emphasis on succession was apropos. Victoria was seventy-seven and in declining health, her imminent Diamond Jubilee inevitably signalling the approach of her reign’s culmination. Despite the patriotic moment, Terry may have seemed a more satisfying surrogate, with a less problematic legacy, than the real-life queen. Victoria’s successor was the aging, potentially unreliable Prince of Wales. Terry’s Imogen staged, textually and dramatically, two kinds of positive succession. A desirable heiress herself, Imogen’s discovery of her brothers provides two valorous, healthy young men to succeed *Cymbeline*. The specificity of *Cymbeline*’s casting meant that Terry herself offered or

‘ghosted’ a positive continuation of theatrical lineage via her son, Edward Gordon Craig, who played Arviragus, Imogen’s onstage brother and Terry’s onstage ‘heir’. In 1896, Craig was well-regarded as an actor, and his casting both demonstrated the wisdom of ‘infusing’ the Lyceum with ‘some of that new blood’ alongside the veteran actors, while providing a vessel for the continuation of that ‘old blood’ as Terry’s genetic and potential theatrical successor (‘Thursday’ 4). Terry’s two promptbooks for *Cymbeline* are collaborative documents passed between herself, Irving, Craig, and potentially other company members including Frank Tyars. The books reveal Terry and Irving’s symbiotic relationship as editors: both have pages in which lines are reinstated in both Irving and Terry’s hands. On one, restorations to Caius Lucius’s part are begun by Irving and continued by Terry. On another page, Irving and Terry use the same pen. Terry wrote detailed instructions to Irving on playing Iachimo – making her writing unusually large and clear – but her instructions to Craig are both striking and critical. Her exasperated ‘Do wake up Ted’ (Terry *Cymbeline* 2 38), and scheduling of rehearsals that she, apparently, led - ‘You must time this scene better = Come up into the Saloon tomorrow at 10.30 + lets go at it -’ (Terry *Cymbeline* 1 51v) – evince a sense of personal directorial responsibility for him.

The 1897 Jubilee necessarily emphasised Victoria’s genealogy and heritage: phenomena equally key to subsequent recognitions of Terry’s longevity and artistic and genealogical importance. Terry’s 1906 Jubilee Benefit committee included six Dukes, two Marquises, eleven Earls and seven Lords, a powerful statement of legitimacy. Even more importantly, Terry, celebrated as one ‘whose illustrious name can never fade’, was situated within a theatrical family of ‘Twenty Terrys on the Stage at One Time’, a dynasty to rival Victoria’s (Stead 14).

The importance of this dynasty to Terry’s specific performance legacy is pertinent to the broader issue of creating and maintaining posthumous prestige.

As well as Edith and Edward Gordon Craig, who worked in the visual and performing arts until their deaths in 1947 and 1966 respectively, many of Terry’s other relatives remained in the

theatre. The most famous was her great-nephew, John Gielgud (1904-2000). Family does not guarantee posterity, however. Terry's contemporary, Dame Madge Kendal (1848-1935), was described by Shaw as 'incomparably the cleverest, most highly skilled, most thoroughly trained, and most successful actress' of her generation (qtd. in Gibbs 384). She was also the only other actress to receive the GBE (Foulkes). She and her actor husband had six children; indeed, Madge Kendal's celebrity persona as 'Matron of the Drama' was predicated mainly on her exemplary domesticity and virtue (Kendal 17). In fact, Kendal disowned all four of her surviving children, notably son Hugh Dorrington for his poor 'economy', and youngest daughter Dorothy, after the latter married a Jewish theatre manager. Gary Taylor's 'someone, who, after the artist's death' is prepared to memorialise the artist and ensure 'artistic reputation' (5) is especially important for performers, whose art survives only in cultural memory. Terry (like Irving) had children, grandchildren and protégés to curate her memory. During Terry's lifetime, Edith Craig edited her mother's memoir alongside partner Christopher John. Craig photographed her mother's bedroom the morning after she died, and ensured another relative, Olive Terry who strikingly resembled Ellen, succeeded her as curator of the house, thereby creating a living memorial.

In contrast, the faultlines between the Kendals' public and private personae may have contributed to Madge's absence from scholarship. While her maternal personae contributed to her lifetime fame, her familial estrangements meant the absence of a willing 'someone' to ensure her posthumous prestige.

Terry recognised the instability and uncertainty of performance legacy. Her draft of a lecture entitled 'Acting + Actions' concludes that even the most celebrated performance, no matter how useful as a stylistic or historical 'reference book' may 'seem worthless in fifty years' (Terry 'Acting + Actions' f.2). Terry's heirs were unusually successful as the bearers and sustainers of cultural memory. However, the (potential) endpoint of Terry's *Cymbeline* legacy illustrates how a performance might survive beyond the limits of memory and of

familial curation, if valued by her profession.

In 1979, David Jones directed *Cymbeline* for the Royal Shakespeare Company, with Judi Dench as Imogen and Roger Rees as Posthumus. Writing in 1985, Rees likened Dench to Terry, arguing that just as Terry's 'charm and gaiety' made it 'natural' for Irving to stage *Cymbeline* in 1896, 'in 1979, our Imogen was Judi Dench and our premise was exactly the same' (144). The actresses become as interchangeable as their personae: Rees's early rehearsal nerves are overcome as 'Ellen Terry held my hand for comfort, or rather Judi Dench did (the same thing really)' (144-5). Rees also uses Henry James's review of Terry's 'young wife youthfully in love' to describe Dench's final performance (144-5). Rees's evocation of legacy, and the above creation of artistic genealogy are only possible within a theatre culture that values performance heritage, and antecedent interpretation – Dench's 'predecessors' – alongside novelty, innovation and theatrical discovery. Typically, this occurs in accounts of male performance: Derek Jacobi has called Hamlet 'the greatest of all acting traditions', while Patrick Stewart sees the role's stage history as 'handed down from one age to the next' (qtd. in Holmes 95). Rees's account identifies not merely an embedded tradition of choosing star vehicles, but Dench and Terry's equivalent cultural profiles, based on personality, critical recognition and professional skill. John Miller identifies Terry as Dench's 'theatrical ancestor' (Miller 161). Dench cited Peggy Ashcroft as her more immediate influence John Gielgud called Ashcroft 'nearest' to Terry, as did Alec Guinness and Peter Hall (Billington, *Peggy Ashcroft* 7-8) – but stressed the importance of 'keep[ing] the memories of our predecessors alive', mentioning Terry by name alongside Sarah Siddons and Irving (278). Most recently, Eileen Atkins has asserted that Terry had 'the charm of Judi Dench and the beauty of Vanessa Redgrave' (Atkins). Notably, Billington, Gielgud, Guinness, Hall, Miller and Atkins all *want* to locate 'the Ellen Terry qualities' (Billington, *Peggy Ashcroft*, 8) in a successor, whether it be Dench, Redgrave or Ashcroft. In reviews of major British productions of *Cymbeline* since 2000, echoes of Terry's performance are fainter, but still respond to the paradigm of charming perfection she created,

mainly by upholding it. In 2001, Jane Arnfield played Imogen at the Globe (dir. Mike Alfred), embodying for Charles Spencer ‘the most lovable of Shakespeare’s heroines’ (Spencer 2001). Despite relocating the play to Mumbai and Dubai, Samir Bhamra’s radical production for Phizzical at the Belgrade in 2013 saw Sophie Khan Levy’s Imogen (Innojaan) display the ‘Miranda-like’ – i.e. youthful and virginal – ‘innocence’ (Dunnett) that had also characterised Terry’s ‘poetic and virginal’ (‘The Week’ 428) and ‘impulsive + innocent’ (Terry 1896 18r) Imogen back in 1896.

In 1987, the actress Harriet Walter wanted to overthrow the legacy of the ‘Victorian fairy-tale-princess-as-wife’ and ‘clear away [Imogen’s] reputation’ in Bill Alexander’s 1987 RSC production (Chillington Rutter 73-74). Her performance did not prove a sea-change: Yukio Ninagawa’s 2012 production at the Barbican offered audiences ‘a fairytale heroine’ in Shinobu Otake’s Imogen, according to Lyn Gardner (2012). Occasionally, critics have applauded actresses attempting to move away from the heroine – Gardner was ambivalent about Otake – but here, again, the Victorian rhetoric is strong. In 2003, Michael Billington commended Emma Fielding for eschewing the ‘idealised Tennysonian image of female purity’ (‘Cymbeline’ 2003) – perhaps unexpectedly, given his interest in locating ‘the Ellen Terry qualities’ in younger generations. This was possibly because Billington thrice identified echoes of, and perhaps a successor to, Dench (and thus by implication Terry) in Fielding’s RSC contemporary, Alexandra Gilbreath (Billington ‘Dark and thrilling’; ‘*Taming/Tamer*’ 2003; ‘*The Taming of the Shrew*’ 2004). Mainly, however, unusual Imogens are criticised in ways that evoke Terry: thus Charles Spencer condemned Emma Pallant’s 2005 Imogen for insufficient charm, and lacking ‘humour and ardour’ (Spencer 2005).

The popular desire to link present and past Shakespeare performances can create uneasy collisions, as when the black British actor Adrian Lester, appearing as the National Theatre’s Othello, was asked on a September 2013 episode of the BBC *One Show* if he’d drawn inspiration from the film of Olivier’s blackface performance in the same role. The *One Show* of

17 September 2013 also illuminated the theatrical family's enduring power to sustain a performance legacy. Bisecting Lester's interview was a lengthy recorded feature on Laurence Olivier, presented by his eldest son. Tarquin Olivier remains his father's biographer, a personal and professional stakeholder in his memory: like Edy and Edward Craig, he has also published a biography of his famous parent.

Victorian and Edwardian enthusiasm for the kind of theatrical retrospectives that focused on Ellen Terry was not universal: W.T. Stead looked at the elderly, mid-Victorian cast of Ellen Terry's Jubilee gala and called it a 'monster anachronism' (15). However, similar galas, starring Terry and her contemporaries, celebrated George V's 1911 coronation, and the 1916 Tercentenary. In 2014, the National Theatre's 50th anniversary gala included – alongside some younger performers – veteran actors including Dench (79), Jacobi (75), Maggie Smith (79) and Ian McKellen (74) in scenes from Shakespeare, as well as 84-year-old Joan Plowright in a scene from Shaw's *St Joan*.

The lasting legacy of both Terry's *Cymbeline* and Olivier's *Othello* demonstrates the importance of genetic and professional descendants to curating artistic prestige. It is interesting to speculate on the future evolution of the familial stakeholder's role. Digital recordings of performances, and performers' increasing extra-theatrical accessibility via social media may subsume the familial curator's privileged position, as social networks increase fans' senses of intimacy with performers. Simultaneously, platforms such as Digital Theatre and NTLive create corporate archives of performers' activities, not family collections.

Equally, incorporating today's performers' legacies into future actors' work – extending the Terry-Ashcroft-Dench chain to a later performer – is contingent on younger actors' willingness to assimilate into established artistic genealogies. This creates an interesting tension. Contemporary cultural capital in Shakespeare performance is frequently predicated on presenting theatregoers with novelty and departure – whether from English-language performance, as in the 2012 Globe to Globe Festival; from Shakespeare's text, as in

Kneehigh's 2006 *Cymbeline*, or from inherited canons, as witnessed by recent revivals of *Double Falsehood* (including the RSC's 2012 *Cardenio*) and recent publication of the texts of Shakespeare's 'collaborations' (Shakespeare et al.). Given the artistic emphasis placed on newness and discovery (even rediscovery), performer participation in theatrical genealogy is far from guaranteed. Simultaneously, the past performances that are successfully retained as part of popular consciousness as much about our culture as the productions staged today. The frequency of *Cymbeline* revivals since 2000 may reflect the modishness of a once rarely-performed play. Meanwhile, the persistence of the Terry-Imogen paradigm, and the continued will to identify Terry's successors confirms the long legacy of Victorian Shakespeare.

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Book Reviews

***Theatre-Making: Interplay Between Text and Performance in the 21st Century* by Duška Radosavljević**

Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, 275pp. (softback)

By Mark Smith

Duška Radosavljević's latest work draws on similar material and thinking to her collection of interviews *The Contemporary Ensemble*, also published in 2013. It provides an idiosyncratic but expansive take on contemporary questions relating to the role of the author and the nature of performance in an almost up-to-the-minute context.

Significantly, the author takes steps to avoid reliance on the almost continually redefined term 'devising', pointing out recent scholarship's struggle with the concept and the tendency to conflate the term with 'ensemble' (62). Radosavljević acknowledges the UK/continental European divisions in understanding of such methodologies, pointing out convincingly that these fault-lines stem from the historical tendency in the UK to conceive of 'devising' as non-text-based: an increasingly false dichotomy (82). Radosavljević usefully engages with such terms and ultimately chooses to consider 'theatre-making', 'text' and 'performance' and to exclude 'devising', where perhaps five years ago it would have been the on-trend terminology (see Heddon & Milling 2006; Govan, Nicholson & Normington 2007).

Radosavljević sets out clear and provocative terms of engagement at the beginning of the work, and pitches as one of her main theses the need for a new understanding of the division(s) of labour involved in contemporary (Anglophone) theatre-making practices. This is not, in itself, a novel line within scholarship on such practice: as early as 1969 Theodore Shank was arguing in the same terminology that 'because there is so much overlapping' among the 'activities' of playwriting, directing, acting and designing, 'it is more accurate to think of these terms as indicating rather arbitrary divisions of labour' (Shank 1969: 9).

But Radosavljević takes this work much further than

Shank's. Also central to its argument is the refiguring, common to many of the works Radosavljević examines, of the role of the audience as 'a co-creator of meaning' (149). This she links convincingly to the spirit – crucially *not* the ideology – of Brecht. Her argument moves swiftly from Brechtian audience engagement into considerations of community, through discussions of Theatre in Education in particular. More directly, though, Radosavljević links Brecht's interest in an engaged audience with the more ethereal, lingering sense of community felt by spectator/participants at Ontroerend Goed's controversial performances. She examines the ways in which community is expressed through the boom in networks such as the 'blogosphere' and forums like the *Guardian* comments pages. Radosavljević dissects mainstream critical reaction to the performances in question astutely, but prioritises such 'interactive' forums, all the while strengthening her case for 'relationality' as the dominant obsession of these performances, and, as mentioned, for the significance of 'the reinvigorated legacy of Brecht' (151).

Radosavljević's examples range from Brecht to Strasberg and Stanislavsky, from Cicely Berry to Croatian ensemble Shadow Casters. This admirable eclecticism is magnified by some quirky arrangements. Though Radosavljević's experience of Shadow Casters' work and interviews with their members form the final significant case study of the book, they crop up as something of a surprise witness. Unquestionably augmenting her observations on Ontroerend Goed's related work, but not even mentioned until Radosavljević announces, in the final chapter and somewhat abruptly, their last-minute substitution for any deeper consideration of Purcărete's production of *Faust*, which had been mentioned at length in the Introduction.

The work might also suggest significant questions which are not here noted, let alone addressed – such as the full implications of this reconceptualisation of theatre-making processes and the subsequent need for potentially earth-shaking reconfigurations in funding, marketing and copyright frameworks, such as those currently being fought over in the worlds of online music and other media distribution. When a work is considered, as Radosavljević considers Tim Crouch's *The Author*, 'not simply as the work of a playwright or an actor – nor as a work of a director

[...] – but as a work of theatre’ (which ‘includes the audience’) (158), how can or do such frameworks bend to accommodate it? Jacqueline Bolton, who is cited by Radosavljević, has made valuable opening ventures in reconsidering such structures in recent history (e.g. Bolton 2012), and here might have been an opportunity to press them further.

The assertions of the theatre-makers are at times left unpressured by Radosavljević – for instance Crouch’s invocation of the potentially rich and difficult term ‘story’ (159), or the claims on the part of various theatre ensembles that they involve a ‘relinquishing of directorial authorship in favour of dramaturgical facilitation’ (83). But in a work of this scope and momentum, such questions perhaps inevitably arise and subside as Radosavljević diverges from and returns to her main thrust: ‘modes of authorship’ and their relationship to what might be deemed ‘text’.

Radosavljević also presents three interviews, with Simon Stephens, Philip Ralph and Tim Crouch, as useful appendices. A fourth appendix proves even more helpful and unusual: it is a form of ‘script’ for Ontroerend Goed’s controversial interactive show *Internal*. For those who only followed at a distance the critical storm around it but did not experience the performance itself, the text presented here provides a flavour of what the furore was about, as well as illuminating Radosavljević’s own reading of the company’s work.

There are, then, some oversights and other oddities in Radosavljević’s work – at one point she seemingly ascribes the coining of the phrase ‘dead white males’ to Nicholas Hytner in 2007, for instance, and some of the linguistic tics, such as a tendency to describe most phenomena as ‘interesting’, begin to grate. But Radosavljević’s intervention is timely and surveys a vast amount of ground with great speed. In moving from personal engagement with specific performances to dizzyingly fast-moving overviews of key scholarship in the field(s), she raises questions of the apt metaphor for theatre-making in terms of text: adaptation, translation, faithfulness, musicality, or something else. In her adoption of ‘theatre-making’ rather than the both more blurred and more apparently restrictive ‘devising’, she argues that the latter term ‘increasingly requires to be seen

as a ubiquitous creative methodology [... rather than] a genre of non-text-based performance' (p68). Hence Radosavljević's *Theatre-making* certainly offers a valuable contribution to discussions begun in earnest by the likes of Heddon and Milling and Govan, Nicholson and Normington. Perhaps most significant is the way it shifts the terminology away from questions of 'devising' and hence opens the field to wider considerations of how new work is actually being made in 21st century contexts.

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***Acts and Apparitions: Discourses on the Real in Performance Practice and Theory, 1990-2010* by Liz Tomlin**

Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013, 226 pp. (hardback)

By Catherine Love

The postmodern and poststructural discourses of the last few decades have confronted both scholars and artists with a seemingly intractable dilemma. Following Jean-Francois Lyotard's famous 'incredulity toward metanarratives' (xxiv) and the work of thinkers such as Jacques Derrida and Jean Baudrillard, the notion of an originary, non-ideological 'real' has rapidly lost its authority, leading to the widespread acceptance of postmodern relativism. How is it then possible to make a statement about the world when all truths are subjective and contingent?

It is into this precarious landscape that Liz Tomlin's new book intervenes. Her choice of opening quotation, in which Her-

bert Blau posits that ‘we’re not quite sure where we are’ (1), is an apt primer for the investigation of the real and the radical that follows. While uncertainty may be endemic, however, Tomlin puts forward an appealing argument for plurality and self-reflexivity in the face of relativism. Embracing the left’s political application of the word ‘radical’ in the context of Marxism, as well as its origins in the Latin for ‘roots’, Tomlin’s book proposes a project of ‘digging down’ (5). Her study utilises a fresh reading of Derrida to challenge some of the binaries within contemporary theatre – between dramatic and postdramatic, text-based and non-text-based – that his poststructuralist critique has previously been employed to support, and interrogates the dominance of this poststructuralist narrative in current performance theory.

Where Tomlin significantly departs from other work in this field is in her striking rejection of the binary established by Hans-Thies Lehmann between the dramatic and the postdramatic. Ever since the publication of Lehmann’s seminal text *Postdramatic Theatre* in 1999, the vocabulary put forward by this study has permeated throughout the theatre and performance ecology, leading to a new rift between ‘radical’ postdramatic work and its ‘traditional’ dramatic counterpart. Tomlin’s analysis is refreshing in its questioning of this straightforward division, as well as its interrogation of the postdramatic’s claims to radical intent.

In doing so, this book also represents a more sustained and nuanced exploration of ideas that Tomlin has previously explored elsewhere, offering an intriguing development of her own thesis in regards to the postdramatic. In a 2009 essay for *Performance Research*, while usefully breaking down divisions between ‘text-based’ and ‘non-text-based’ theatre, Tomlin’s argument remained simplistically wedded to the notion of the ‘no-longer-dramatic text’ (‘Poststructuralist performance’ 57). Here, however, the ‘ever-widening of the postdramatic boundaries’ (52) to admit texts that seem to unsettle the dramatic model is abandoned in favour of the acknowledgement that both dramatic and postdramatic theatre is, following Derrida’s insights, ‘always already representational’ (76). Tomlin subsequently proposes that poststructuralist interrogation might instead lie in ‘practice that explores ways of exposing and acknowledging its

own representational structures and narratives, and examines all notions of the real' (76).

Following Tomlin's thorough, succinct and remarkably clear survey of poststructuralist thought and theories of the post-dramatic, the remainder of the book consists of an examination of how this intersects with contemporary performance practice. Tomlin moves smoothly through a number of different performance models, including citational aesthetics, verbatim theatre and experiential participation, in each instance linking these practices to her discourse on the real and investigating their claims to radicalism. Her examples range from the rejection of traditional characterisation in the work of Forced Entertainment and the Wooster Group to the one-to-one work of Adrian Howells, effectively illustrating how various arguably radical performance interventions have set themselves in opposition to 'dramatic theatre' across the two decades of her study, as well as emphasising the multiplicity of current performance practices.

In her introduction, Tomlin explains that she has structured the chapters with the intention that each might be read independently, but the sheer complexity of the ideas under examination means that none of these sections fully stands alone as hoped for. Instead, they slot persuasively together in support of her central thesis, collectively probing poststructuralist performance's often uninterrogated claims to a radical politics of form. Tomlin also, importantly, warns against the emergence of a new totalising narrative from the ubiquity of practices that unquestioningly espouse the radical narrative of poststructuralism and produce a series of unquestioned postdramatic conventions which might be just as stultifying as the dramatic model they oppose.

Hopes for radicalism within contemporary performance, however, are not entirely quashed. Tomlin's decisive move is her suggestion that a fractured, unsettled understanding of reality is not incommensurable with the notion of a radical performance practice today, making this a vital contribution to the study of poststructuralist performance and its political potential. While we may accept that every narrative is contingent and ideological, Tomlin argues that this 'does not equate to the acceptance that any given narrative is thus beyond ideological analysis or

distinction' (6) and that the favouring of one narrative over another can still have a 'real' impact on the 'ideological shape of the historical period in which the work is situated' (7). In other words, we may not be able to appeal to a foundational understanding of 'the real', but our narratives themselves still have a 'real' impact on the contexts – political, economic, social, artistic – within which they are circulated.

Countering a narrative of radicalism that has stubbornly pitted itself against the dramatic model of theatre, Tomlin instead argues that the 'poststructuralist imperative [...] demands a radical practice that is not based on the reification of its own conclusions, but on a self-reflexivity that can serve to always and already destabilise its own manifestations of authority' (207). Taking its lead from Derrida's deconstructive project, the self-reflexivity that is advocated by Tomlin is equally applied to her own work, which she wisely posits as the start of a new discourse, opening up her conclusions for further intellectual debate.

While *A Theory of Modernity* is absent from Tomlin's concise survey of postmodern philosophy, this call for 'self-reflexivity' seems to invite a dialogue with Agnes Heller's concept of 'reflected postmodernity' (1), implying a postmodernism that reflects upon itself and demands the acceptance of responsibility for one's actions and their impact. Much as Heller reclaimed the notion of responsibility for the postmodern age, Tomlin's convincing new formulation of the 'poststructuralist imperative' might just rescue the idea of performance's radical potential for scholars and practitioners alike.

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***Modern British Playwriting: The 1950s* by David Pattie**

London: Methuen Drama, 2012, 281 pp. (softback)

By Christopher O'Shaughnessy

David Pattie's *Modern British Playwriting: the 1950s* is a careful and perceptive contribution to the Methuen Drama series *Decades of Modern British Playwriting*. It is different in tone to Chris Megson's book on the 1970s partly, one suspects, because post-war 1950s is not within living memory of the writers, or not so easily recalled (123), and therefore the section giving an overview of the 1950s does not have the consistent, almost personal, perspective of Megson's book. Nevertheless there is a painstaking and convincing evocation of this 'festival of change' (145), its censored culture and uncertain politics in the first chapter: *The British Theatre 1945-60*.

The four playwrights chosen to represent the era and introduced in Chapter 2 are T.S. Eliot, Terence Rattigan, John Osborne, and Arnold Wesker - with individual essays on the achievements of those playwrights in Chapter 3. In scope, the book is in tune with works focused on a specific period like Dan Rebellato's *1956 and All That* which maps and interrogates playwriting across the decade.

Fifties theatre is portrayed as a post-war phenomenon of old certainties giving way painfully to a surfeit of new disparate creative initiatives, this phenomenon resisted stubbornly in the public arena of West End theatre with its pre-war adherence to plays reflecting middle-class or upper-class concerns (72). Several strands of potent theatre are identified by the author as emerging side by side, for example: the more traditional well-made dramas of Terence Rattigan and J.B. Priestley; the poetic dramas of T.S. Eliot and Christopher Fry; the contaminating originality of Samuel Beckett and Bertolt Brecht; and the 'kitchen-sink realism' of John Osborne and Arnold Wesker. Though Osborne had suggested a new theatrical momentum with *Look Back in Anger*, according to Pattie's analysis of the harlequin nature of this playwriting era, there seemed no real certainty as

to which strand or initiative would eventually be in the ascendant (73).

This is a thought-provoking interpretation, notwithstanding Rebellato's well-known evaluation of this period, given that Osborne's play is still seen by some critics (Billington, Gillemann, Sierz) as the revolutionary turning point in fifties theatre. Innovative writing was tolerated and praised in small presentations, but there was no infrastructure to sustain the budding revolution (73). In this, as Pattie says, 'the 1950s British stage was a true mirror of its time: like British society, British theatre was subject to an incomplete transformation - and uncertain how far, and how fast, the changes that began during the decade would go' (73). This uncertainty is reflected, to some extent, in the somewhat safe choices of the four representative playwrights. Safe because each represents a known fifties trend e.g. the sudden popularity of verse drama; the survival of the well-made play not only in *Rattigan* but still identifiable in Osborne and Wesker. An unsafe choice like John Whiting might have illuminated further how a more idiosyncratic and visceral playwrighting talent prefigured the violence of Edward Bond and Sarah Kane (58).

A reevaluation of Eliot's drama is long overdue and Sarah Bay-Cheng provides a tantalising critique of the later plays - *The Cocktail Party*, *The Confidential Clerk* and *The Elder Statesman* - finding that in all three 'the theatre itself becomes a place where the illusions of social behaviour and identity, so often taken for reality, are exposed as empty performances' (97). Insights like this could well lead to renewed directorial appraisals but Bay-Cheng is curiously dismissive of the import of her own evaluations: 'one can only conclude that Eliot's various dramatic attempts, though interesting, failed' (118). Such a sweeping conclusion does not acknowledge phenomenally successful productions of earlier work such as Michael Elliot's 1979 production of *The Family Reunion*. Misleadingly, Bay-Cheng perpetuates the Steiner myth that Eliot wrote his plays in blank verse* when, actually, he wrote them in free verse.

No especially new insights are offered for the work of

*'The recent plays of T.S. Eliot give clear proof of what happens when blank verse is asked to carry out domestic functions. It rebels.' Steiner, 244.

the remaining playwrights. Rattigan, Osborne and Wesker are all seen as forced by the social pressures of the period to write plays depicting the emergence of an individually complaining voice, often despairing, tortured and crushed but occasionally achieving very real victories of self-actualisation (124, 170, 188). Patie suggests that the plays of Terence Rattigan - *The Winslow Boy*, *The Browning Version* and *The Deep Blue Sea* - are not so much coded expressions of a suppressed homosexuality as articulations of a private human voice at odds with the world in which it finds itself (145). There is very little interrogation of Rattigan's often faultless stagecraft, much admired by present-day writers such as David Mamet, and how a consummate literary technique may be responsible for their dramatic power.

Luc Gilleman views John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*, *The Entertainer* and *Luther* as 'a sentimental theatre for a changed Britain' (147) and for all their political volatility are essentially melodramatic, straining against the structures of the well-made play. Gilleman references the closing dialogue of *Look Back in Anger* to prove his point but entirely misses the possibility that the images of squirrels and bears in the text might denote a moment of embryonic spiritual growth for both Jimmy and Alison.

John Bull sees Wesker's plays as enabled by the zeitgeist of the fifties and, in their reflection on the legacy of the second World War, prefiguring the 'state of the nation' plays of Hare and Edgar with the trilogy *Chicken Soup with Barley*, *Roots*, and *I'm Talking About Jerusalem*. Wesker's characters are interpreted as lone (mainly Jewish) voices negotiating their way with difficulty through political and familial minefields from 1936 to 1959 (174/175).

A *Documents* section covers, via appropriate interviews drawn from the Theatre Archive Project *, the emergence of social phenomena like Theatre Workshop, the Lord Chamberlain and censorship, the Royal Court Theatre, the initial impact of Beckett and Brecht on British theatre practitioners and the contribution of influential critics like Kenneth Tynan and Harold Hobson.

What emerges vividly from this book is the evaluation

*A collaboration between the British Library and De Montfort University.

of the promise verse drama once had, given its ability to attract high quality directors (E. Martin Browne, John Gielgud, Laurence Olivier) and star actors (Edith Evans, Alec Guinness, Tyrone Power). Pattie himself provides a brilliant mini-critique of *Murder in the Cathedral*, which he thinks is ‘arguably Eliot’s most successful play’: ‘it dramatises the murder through a set of shifting poetic registers which make use of the striking images of his early poetry’ (80). It is a shame there is no re-assessment of Christopher Fry’s remarkably successful fifties work. The fact that Eliot is excluded from the *Afterword* in a book which discusses four playwrights who, each in their own way, are concerned with issues of transcendence, is not so much an oversight - considering the vitality of the production cited above - but more a real injustice to a dramatist who, arguably, has had more academic attention than all three of the others put together, and continues to be seminal in the theatre not only as an influence on later playwrights like Derek Walcott and Sarah Kane but also through Andrew Lloyd Webber’s ubiquitous musical, *Cats*.

That said, David Pattie’s *Modern British Playwriting: the 1950s* portrays the period as an era searching in a multitude of ways for a cultural identity, with playwriting as a manifestation of this. The acknowledging of the variegated nature of post-war playwriting results in a stimulating, discursively rich addition to the series which is bound to provoke further discussion. The very extensive Notes, Select Bibliography and Index are excellent.

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***Modern British Playwriting: 2000-2009* ed. Dan Rebellato**

London: Methuen Drama, 2013, 340pp. (softback)

By Catriona Fallow

Modern British Playwriting: 2000-2009, is the last in the Methuen *Decades* series that seeks to chronicle the ‘nature of

modern British playwriting' (vii) from the 1950s into the beginning of the new millennium. Unlike other recent publications which also consider new writing in the 2000s such as Aleks Sierz's *Rewriting the Nation* (which privileges contemporary, singularly-authored, naturalistic plays that are typically set in the UK in particular urban, underprivileged social contexts), the contributions to *Modern British Playwriting: 2000-2009* note and endorse a growing commitment to collaboration, an increasingly urgent sense of enquiry into global events (frequently in the Middle East and Africa) and also explore the limitations of realism or naturalism. The work of five playwrights – Simon Stephens, Tim Crouch, Roy Williams, David Greig and debbie tucker green – is discussed at length, illustrating these subtle but nevertheless crucial shifts in British playwriting from the previous decade.

A contextual introduction by editor Dan Rebellato, 'Living in the 2000s', offers insights into a range of topics from domestic life, society and culture to science, technology and politics. Rather than offering a chronological account of the decade, this introduction moves from topic to topic using a range of linguistic registers and forms, conveying a sense of the way information was presented and consumed in the 2000s: fast and furious. Tables detailing 'What things cost', quotations from influential cultural figures and timelines of events such as 'The Banking Crisis', 'The War in Iraq' and major terrorist attacks present key information while also establishing a necessarily global context for later discussions of the content and political imperatives of the featured plays and playwrights.

In Chapter One, 'Theatre in the 2000s', leading online theatre critic or 'blogger', Andrew Haydon focuses on some of the significant shifts in British text-based theatre. For the most part, Haydon eschews much of the 'main stream' repertory and West End productions of the early 2000s, looking instead at wider artistic trends, such as the growing popularity of verbatim, multimedia and site specific/sympathetic theatre, as well as tracing shifts in theatre criticism and making a compelling argument for the role of the director as 'author' (77). In so doing – and in stark contrast to critics like Sierz – he advocates for a 'future where old divisions between 'New Work' and 'New Writing''

(98), or ‘the nominal division between newly written plays and almost any other form of theatre that had been arrived at by another route’ (40), has dissolved to create space for collaboration, where ‘“Britain’s Best” nationalism’ has embraced internationalism and where ‘even the most rigid theatre spaces [have] begun to question their relationship with their audiences.’ (98). His sentiments prefigures some of the perspectives that are explored further in the following chapter.

Chapter Two, ‘Playwrights and Plays’, comprises separate critical discussions of the work of five seminal playwrights and three of their texts produced between 2000-2009: Jacqueline Bolton on Stephens’s *One Minute*, *Motortown* and *Pornography*; Rebellato on Crouch’s *My Arm*, *An Oak Tree* and *The Author*; Michael Pearce on Williams’ *Sing Yer Heart Out for the Lads*, *Fallout* and *Days of Significance*; Nadine Holdsworth on Greig’s *San Diego*, *The American Pilot* and *Damascus*; and Lynette Goddard on green’s *dirty butterfly*, *stoning mary* and *random*. Offering a range of dynamic, clearly articulated points these contributions are perhaps best understood when read in dialogue with one another which reveals several striking points of commonality.

Bolton, for example, effectively plots the debate between the singularly authored ‘writing’ versus the collaboratively developed ‘work’, describing how Stephens’ career is ‘distinguished by a willingness and enthusiasm to work collaboratively’ – most notably with German director Sebastian Nübling – and concluding that, ‘to work creatively in the theatre [...] is to embrace and engage with the intangible energies, in order to collectively explore their potential’ (124). Similarly, Rebellato emphasises that, while Crouch is the focus of his chapter, his work is often developed collaboratively, specifically with fellow practitioners a smith and Karl James (127). Holdsworth also insists that, in addition to Greig’s work as a solo playwright, ‘collaboration at home and abroad has been a hallmark of Greig’s output’ (169).

Elsewhere, Holdsworth argues that, while a key figure in contemporary Scottish playwriting, ‘the passionate internationalism of Greig’s writing’ (170) is often overlooked, a fact that her chapter seeks to redress by focusing on his works set in the

US and the Middle East. Similarly, though describing William's work as 'rooted within a British social realist style and urban geography' (146) Pearce also suggests that he is a playwright with certain international concerns, 'turn[ing] his hand to the Iraq war' (161) in *Days of Significance*. Later, Goddard describes how green's casting of white British actors to perform stories typically associated with black people in Sub-Saharan Africa in *stoning mary* 'unsettles familiar associations with these stories as specifically African issues by situating them within the context of a wider/(global) world' (201).

Goddard also argues that this particular casting decision points to green's 'experiments with theatre realism' (200) while also suggesting that green's formal morphing of rhythm and language is a way of breaking from black playwrights' 'usual concerns with identity politics depicted through social realism' (193). Careful to distinguish between realism and naturalism, Bolton suggests that part of Stephens' international success (particularly in Germany) is due to his plays testing and perhaps revising 'established ideas of naturalism even as they subscribe to a naturalistic rationality' (103).

Each of these contributions usefully extends popular understandings of the playwrights in question while also challenging the supposed generic parameters of 'New Writing', complicating assumptions about what modern British playwriting can or 'should' be during the first decade of the new millennium and in the future. In addition to the critical work of the contributors, Chapter Three, 'Documents', offers a range of interviews, process documents, diary entries and edited scenes from each of the playwrights that provides more, fascinating insights into their work and creative processes.

Modern British Playwright 2000-2009 is a clear, nuanced and immensely readable text that should prove useful and enjoyable to students at all levels as well as to a wider, non-academic readership. While some readers may seek it out for a specific chapter a featured playwright or for a general introduction, many will find it hard to resist reading the volume in its entirety. This is testament to the quality and clarity of the material and to the careful way in which each contribution has been considered and curated as part of a wider, on-going dialogue on the future of

British playwriting. *Modern British Playwright 2000-2009* not only sheds light on its specific areas of investigation, then, but also invites reflection on where we are now and, crucially, where the next *Decade* may take us.

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