



THE LIVED FEMALE BODY IN PERFORMANCE

3rd April, 2019.

Stage@Leeds, University of Leeds.

Organized and convened by:

Anna Fenemore, Jenny Lawson and Jacki Willson

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A big thanks also to the Bodies and Performance Research Group postgraduate members Denny Bouzioti, Stefania Di Paulo, Romain Burtin and Alison Andrews for their help with this event.

OVERVIEW

The symposium explores the lived female body as it is experienced, felt, represented, performed and understood. With reference to scholarly work on the grotesque (Russo), the abject (Kristeva), impurity (Douglas), fluidity (Irigaray), and viscosity (Grosz), we will consider the ways that the female body has been constructed as fleshy, as seepage and as visceral. These ideas are very much embedded in a 1990s context that used laughter, unruliness and excess to challenge sterile notions of the nude passive female body. It could be argued that these ideas nevertheless reduced female subjectivity to an essentialist notion of body fleshiness that privileged white, cis-gendered Western bodies. Yet this context of performance and scholarly work still clearly resonates with the current context where unruly female flesh – that is old, diseased, fat, licentious, infertile, dead – is still an object of shame, repulsion or exotic fascination.

The range of papers and practice demonstrations consider to what extent ideas about the fleshy body continue to resonate in a 21st century, digital, post-feminist context? Debates around period tax, access to sanitary products in food banks, breastfeeding in public, the ageing female body, trans rights, abortion, reproduction and body shaming evidence that the female body is still heavily framed and regulated within legislation, and by cultures of morality and shame. We ask, then, how can performance practice and scholarship interrogate and negotiate these conceptions of the lived female body?

SCHEDULE

9am REGISTRATION

With abstracts performed by Quilla Constance

9.30-9.45 Welcome

- Introduction by Anna Fenemore, Jenny Lawson and Jacki Willson

9.45-11.15am (chaired by Jacki Willson)

PANEL 1: 'Natural'/Artificial Bodies

- Sarah Gorman (Roehampton University)
'Stubborn Stains: Challenging Menstrual Taboo through Performance'
- Denise Ackerl (Chelsea College of Art, UAL)
'Wombtopia': a future scenario of genetic preproduction in and outside the female body'
- Simon Bowes (University of Greenwich)
'Make it Come Out!': On Repetition, Insistence and Vocative Force in Eirini Kartsaki Performances'
- Sophie Swoffer (De Montfort University, Leicester)
'Posing, pouting and pretence: Re-envisioning Mulvey's theory of the male gaze and the hyper-feminine body'

..... 11.15am-11.30 BREAK (tea, coffee and biscuits)

11.30-1pm (chaired by Jenny Lawson)

PANEL 2: Motherhood and Bodies

- Hannah Ballou (Kingston University)
'Subversive pregnant comic bodies'
- Jodie Hawkes (University of Chichester)
'Playing Kate: Revolting Maternal Performance'
- Ellie Harrison (Performance Maker and Artist living in Leeds)
'Absent mothers/Invisible mothers: On performing grief and saying the unsayable'
- Natalie Raven (University of Plymouth)
'Pregnancy <standing in the chasm> Abortion'

1pm-1.45 LUNCH

(Quilla Constance will perform [20mins] during lunch)

1.45pm-3.15 (chaired by Jenny Lawson)

PANEL 3: Femininities and Resistance

- Gillian Dyson (Leeds Beckett University)

'Eating the plate, an analysis of the uncanny performance of mouth, plate, dirt'

- Sara Reimers (Royal Holloway, University of London)

'Making an Appearance: Female Performers' Experience of Aesthetic Labour'

- Laurel Jay Carpenter (Northumbria University)

'Monumental Dresses and Intimate Moments'

3.15-4pm

PERFORMANCE BY ANNA FENEMORE

'Cries and Whispers' (working title)

+Q&A (15mins)

.....**4pm-4.15pm BREAK**..... (tea, coffee and biscuits)

4.15pm-5.25 (chaired by Jacki Willson)

PANEL 4: Deviant Bodies

- Fenia Kotsopoulou (University of Lincoln) and Aylwyn Walsh (University of Leeds)

'Deviant women: embodied archives, living documents'

- Fiona K. O'Neill (Independent Researcher)

'Still (only) Making a Right Tit of Myself: stories of everyday performativities; corporeality & somatechnicality'

- Gemma Collard-Stokes (University of Derby)

'Neo-burlesque and the ageing female body: 'true' liberation or 'superficial' empowerment?'

5.25-5.35pm BREAK (tea, coffee and biscuits)

5.35pm-6.45pm

Practice Panel & Screenings (chaired by Anna Fenemore)

- Bridie Moore (University of Huddersfield)

'Seeking Significance and Accomplishment: Towards an Aged Female Embodiment'

- Hannah Buckley (Dancer and Choreographer based in the North of England)

'We Are Now'

- Francesca Steele (University of Derby)

'Recount'

7pm.-7.45pm

PERFORMANCE BY QUILLA CONSTANCE

'Strategies for Exploring and Asserting Dissent'

7.45 -8pm Q&A and Thank you from Anna Fenemore, Jenny Lawson, Jacki Willson.

You are welcome to join Anna, Jenny, Jacki and Quilla Constance for dinner and drinks afterwards at a local vegetarian restaurant.

ABSTRACTS

(in alphabetical order)

Denise ACKERL

‘Wombtopia’: a future scenario of genetic preproduction in and outside the female body

This talk foresees the u/dis/topian vision of digitized genetic reproduction via artificial intelligence, a so-called ‘wombtopia’. It is part of a series of talks that are a critical investigation of the relationship between politics, the female body and technology. In this talk career obstacles in particular for female performers, like child care and bodily decline, are the starting point to introduce EIVA, the *Electronic In Vitro Application*. EIVA is an ‘online womb’ where a person’s own DNA can be mixed with another; a form of artificial intelligence that could offer a ‘solution’ to all these issues. It allows the genetic reproduction process to be shifted to the digital sphere, turning it pain- and risk-free. In the talk through the so-called Turing test, which was developed to distinguish human from machine, the audience is offered an insight into what it could mean to have pregnancy shifted into the online sphere. Here a potential future scenario of full control where genetic reproduction is fully detached from the own body, is put into question.

BIOGRAPHY

Denise Ackerl is a practice-based PhD student at Chelsea College of Art, where she investigates strategies of resistance in a post-Fordist economy from a feminist performance perspective. Over the last three years she has been presenting at numerous conferences (UK, Germany, US, Lithuania, South Korea) as part of her research. In 2017 she received the TECHNE doctoral research award and in 2016 the MEAD British School at Rome research scholarship. Previous to her PhD, she completed the MA Fine Art of Chelsea College of Art and studied painting, business administration and political sciences in Vienna, Austria.

Hannah BALLOU

Subversive Pregnant Comic Bodies

I will screen documentation from my 2016 comedy show, *goo:ga*, a continuation of my previous research into the manifestation of a dissonance between funniness and sexiness as a feminist comic strategy, and discuss it in conjunction with Ali Wong's 2018 stand up performance, *Ali Wong: Hard Knock Wife*, the second of two specials that coincide with the late stages of the comedian's pregnancies. I will contextualise how both my research and Wong's practice deploy a dissonance manifested by the juxtaposition of funniness and sexiness in a feminist critique of, in this case, patriarchal and/or postfeminist conceptions of pregnancy and maternity. *goo:ga* was a feminist reclamation of fertility as spectacle, a resistance to the guilty pleasure of binary foetal gendering, and a neo-burlesque attempt to exploit multiple modes of sexiness (Lintott & Irvin, 2016) whilst harnessing of the comic abjection of pregnancy, I'll draw some connections between the practice and both Ann Cahill and Kelly Oliver's reflections on Iris Marion Young's seminal essay on pregnant embodiment & subjectivity.

BIOGRAPHY

Hannah Ballou is a lecturer in Drama & Theatre Arts at Kingston University. Her recent projects include the trilogy *hoo:ha* (Camden People's Theatre), *goo:ga* (Komedia, Brighton) and *moo:ma* (performance lecture commission from the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama) and *The Doctor is In* (Calm Down Dear Festival). Her latest work, *Shhh*, is a comic live art collaboration with her two-year-old that pits bedtime against showtime, and was recently produced at The Place by the collective Woman SRSLY.

Simon BOWES

The Lived Female Body in Performance : CfP : “Make it Come Out!” : On Repetition, Insistence and Vocative Force in Eirini Kartsaki Performances

The paper explores several iterations of a recent performance, ‘Herpes’, in the wider context of a body of autobiographical writing, performance and research by Eirini Kartsaki. Whilst *thematically*, ‘Herpes’, addresses ‘Fertility, conception, birth, adoption and surrogacy’ and the ‘Oozing, leaking unfinished body’ (CfP, Fenemore et al.), *formally*, it consists in repetition (she literally wrote the book on it, Kartsaki 2017), insistence, vocative force.

“We do not know what a body can do” writes Spinoza - “a declaration of ignorance” which, for Deleuze, “acts as a provocation” (1988: 17) with continuing implications for contemporary philosophy and performance (Bennett 2010, Butler 2015). “Make it Come Out!” considers a further provocation: in attending to Eirini Kartsaki performances, we no longer know where a “voice” comes from. “Voice” becomes, simultaneously, a claiming and a ceding of territory. As Mladen Dolar notes, after Deleuze, the voice is a territorializing, deterritorializing, force (2006: 186). In this movement, no elevation can be found. We are utterly base.

This is what Eirini Kartsaki insists upon: that the voice opens something more than an embodied, claimed, reclaimed femininity or feminism, where desire is recognised as a ‘nonhuman, pre-personal force, which is everywhere’ (Stark 2017: 50). The voice belongs to a body, to a language, to a gender but also, within this, and firstly, to the endless vying of material forces; non-human forces, nonhuman becomings. Her practice proposes, at once, a return to and departure from ‘women’s corporeality’: as the body is deterritorialized, the voice is freed.

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Grosz, Elizabeth: *Volatile Bodies: towards a corporeal feminism*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1994

Kartsaki, Eirini: *Repetition in Performance*, London, Palgrave, 2017

Stark, Hannah: *Feminist Theory after Deleuze*, London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2016

BIOGRAPHY

Simon Bowes is a writer, researcher and educator. His current research explores embodiment and materiality in contemporary performance. He has presented at *From Heidegger to Performance* (Leicester, De Montford, 2018) *John Berger Now* (Canterbury Christ Church University, 2018). In 2017 he convened *Hold Everything Dear: Performance and John Berger* at University of Greenwich, where he lectures in Drama.

Hannah BUCKLEY

We Are Now

Hannah Buckley will be sharing elements of her intergenerational project *We Are Now*. The project began in 2015 and aims to celebrate intergenerational exchange and women. The project is focussed on how to empower and give space to women and girls, question the age segregation in our society and provide a positive counterbalance. Early in the project Hannah made a film with her Nana Elsie Brown and film maker Rowland Hill using Trisha Brown's iconic solo 'Accumulations' as a starting point. As part of the symposium Hannah will be sharing the film and reflecting on the process.

BIOGRAPHY

Hannah Buckley graduated from The Northern School of Contemporary Dance in 2010 and since then she has been working as a freelance dancer and choreographer. The primary concern of her work is to question existing social structures of oppression, with a focus on female experience. Her work is quietly political and she aims to create processes and art that are spaces / forms of both critique and care. Her work has been supported and presented through out the UK by venues and organisations such as The Place, Dance4, Greenwich Dance, Yorkshire Dance. Her current solo project *The Mountain and Other Tales of She Transformed* is funded by Arts Council England and amongst other dates will be presented as part of Leeds International Festival.

Hannah often collaborates with other artists in a variety of contexts, such as multi disciplinary artist Nicola Singh at Baltic39 (2017) and musician Alex De Little at The Hepworth (2017). As a performer she has worked nationally and internationally as part of festivals such as Manchester International Festival, the Venice Biennale and Transform Festival. Hannah is the recipient of The Leeds Dance Partnership Fellowship at The Northern School of Contemporary Dance and will be using it as an opportunity to develop her teaching practice in a way that is deeply rooted in her artistic processes. Through the fellowship she will bring together different strands of my work and research, and use her intergenerational project *We Are Now* as a frame through which to think about education.

Laurel Jay CARPENTER

Monumental Dresses and Intimate Moments

A reflective analysis of the sculptural wearable in visual art performance, 'Monumental Dresses and Intimate Moments' traces, within a feminist investigation, the elasticity and slippage of spectacular space, materiality, and identity. Comparing works from the span of the artist's career, the body serves as a standard measure; the oversized garments in *Red Crest* (2003), *Again with Gusto* (2009) and *Of Wanting* (2017) each adjust the scale of the performer with a linear extension from the back, connecting and conflating the body with larger space and site. The woman extends, connecting to architecture, to earth and to the surrounding community. In these performance garments, she is also tethered, contained and burdened. Yet, her determination transcends the circumstance, overlapping and inverting multiple measures to reveal subtle calibrations: from spectacle to intimacy, archetype to identity, and self to collective. Theoretical contextualization draws from Feminist New Materialism, the emergent and minor gestures as defined by Erin Manning, and theatre historian Amy E. Hughes' reclaiming of the techniques of spectacle for resistance. After all, monumentalizing a woman, in any form, is still a radical act.

BIOGRAPHY

Laurel Jay Carpenter is a US visual art performer, investigating longing, devotion and intimacy in her durational live works. She has exhibited extensively in New York City and internationally including, most notably, the 2013 Bergen International (Festspillene i Bergen) in Norway, and as part of the 2007 Venice Biennale. Carpenter has been a fellow and invited artist at the Performance Studies International Conference, the MacDowell Colony, the CAOS Art Center in Terni, Italy, and for three seasons at the Salem2Salem German/US Artist Exchange.

Carpenter was an active member of the Independent Performance Group (2004-2007), founded and facilitated by Marina Abramović as an early incarnation of her Institute in support of the next generation of durational performers. Currently, she collaborates regularly with Norwegian artist Terese Longva as Longva+Carpenter; their new feminist

protest performance *Lineage* will premiere at the Prague Quadrennial this June. After 11 years of service, Carpenter recently resigned her tenure as a professor of art at Alfred University in New York, USA to embark as a PhD candidate at Northumbria University with supervisor Sandra Johnston. She now lives and works in Newcastle, UK.

Gemma COLLARD-STOKES

Neo-burlesque and the ageing female body: 'true' liberation or 'superficial' empowerment?

Rejecting the correlation between ageing and asexuality that persists in the UK's cultural representation of the female ageing body, this presentation reveals the importance of sexuality and maintaining a sexual identity to 'older' women, paying particular attention to how they negotiate such representations. Through in-depth interviews and ethnographic participant observation of a cohort of women, aged 50 and older engaged in a programme of recreational burlesque dance, the presentation explores the transformative possibilities mediated through taking part in dramatic arts and the processes thereby initiated. The presentation examines how the construction of a performed identity, through carefully conceived personas and stage names, supports a sense of empowerment and increased self-esteem through sexualized dance. In conclusion, the paper discusses the psychological and physiological benefits of such an activity and its capacity to negate social invisibility as experienced by older women.

BIOGRAPHY

Gemma Collard-Stokes is a Research Fellow within the University of Derby's College of Health and Social Care. Her practice-based research explores the therapeutic function of mixed modal participatory arts practices. Her PhD - Dissolving Borders: the integration of writing into a movement practice, demonstrates how principles of dance improvisation can be applied to writing to enhance articulation and assimilation of the Suchness of our lived experienced. Yet she maintains a focus on the historical development of experimental British new dance and contemporary performance practices.

Recent collaborative research takes Gemma's interests down very diverse paths. The 'Birth and Arts' project is working towards the development of an expressive arts-based support programme for navigating parental distress following premature birth. 'Creative Ageing' is invested in challenging current perceptions of older women in our society. While, 'Disruption in the field: radical approaches to arts for health' project, connects and

stimulates collaboration between disparate but relevant disciplines, which share a particular perspective on arts for health, which could be considered radical, critical or marginal.

Quilla CONSTANCE 'QC' aka Jennifer Allen

Strategies for Exploring and Asserting Dissent



Quilla Constance 'QC' is an 'exotic' militant punk persona created and deployed by Jennifer Allen to interrogate category driven capitalist networks and locate points of agency within systems of power. As QC, Allen stages and virally inserts aspects of her artistic practice within pop and social media culture, traversing music venues, forging street protests and entering art galleries in order to emulate, interrupt and critique the operations of these cultural zones. Quilla Constance stages interventions across an interdisciplinary practice of paintings, installations, lectures, photographs, live performances, costumes and music videos. On April 3rd Quilla Constance will deploy a performance titled: 'Strategies for Exploring and Asserting Dissent'

BIOGRAPHY

Quilla Constance has given performative lectures and exhibited at platforms such as: Autograph ABP, Camden Arts Centre, Freud Museum, ICA, Modern Art Oxford, Standpoint Gallery, The Royal Academy, Toynbee Hall and Zabłudowicz Collection. Recent solo exhibitions include - *Transcending The Signified* at MOCA London, 2017 - *#QC* at The Kendrew Barn, St John's College, Oxford, 2016 - *PUKIJAM* at 198 Contemporary Arts, 2015 (Funded by Arts Council England). Quilla Constance will be artist in residence at Tate Exchange, Tate Modern in spring of 2020. Allen/QC studied at The Ruskin School of Art, University of Oxford and Goldsmiths, University of London

Gillian DYSON

Eating the plate, an analysis of the uncanny performance of mouth, plate, dirt.

Crockery serves a functional and symbolic role in the day-to-day household and as such is an instrument in the construct of the homely. My practice-based research concerns the troubling female (Ahmed): aging, naked, wilful and indifferent. My focus has been to investigate and articulate why the performance of the everyday has an especially uncanny outcome, and why this uncanny is located in the particular dramaturgical relationship of the female body and material object.

This paper interrogates a moment in my performance that involves repetitively 'eating the plate'; biting into unfired, raw ceramic clay (dirt). I will discuss the implications of this action through a reflection on my embodied experience of the work and analyse the action through discourse with the abject (Kristeva) and the formless (Bataille), and reference to Douglas's discussion on the horrors of the viscous and the fluid in relation to the instability of the feminine (Douglas in Grosz). The practice has been further contextualised with research into the historic role of women in industrial ceramic manufacturing in 18th to 20th century Britain (Buckley, et al.) and the paradoxical relationships between maker, consumer and user of household ceramics in the construction of the homely.

This paper identifies that the everyday ceramic domestic object has a particular and uncanny role to play in expressing both the repetitive banality of homely consumption, but also the peculiar moments of public and private ritual. I conclude that the resulting performance articulates the (un)homely feminine through the deconstruction of the normative domestic whilst addressing the artist's own feminine identity as intrinsic to the work.

BIOGRAPHY

Gillian Dyson (b. 1966, UK) is an artist based in Leeds, UK. She makes live performance, video and visual art works that explore identity, site and memory. Gillian has exhibited and performed in national and international festivals, galleries and theatres, most recently:

Konsthallen, Gothenberg Sweden, Baltic Newcastle Gateshead, Tetley Leeds and Whitworth Manchester. Gillian also devises and directs community and educational socially engaged or site works, and has been a member of a number of artist-led initiatives included Hull Time Based Arts and New Work Network. She co-curated the *ReROOTed* programme for The Humber Street Gallery, Hull 2017 UK City of Culture. Gillian is currently a Senior Lecturer in Performance for Leeds Beckett University, and completing a practice-based research PhD into *the uncanny deconstruction of the domestic in feminist performance art* with University of Glasgow.

Anna FENEMORE

Cries and Whispers (working title)

This is an early first draft of a one-woman adaption of Ingmar Bergman's film *Cries and Whispers*. *Cries and Whispers* shows us a dying woman named Agnes and those who have come to wait with her as she dies, her sisters Maria and Karin and her servant Anna. Agnes's death and dying is filmed as uncanny, she is imagined as monstrously dead by those who wait with her to die, she speaks to them from within/after death and they imagine/dream of her as dead. What this new performance work proposes is that our central experience of death is as a form of the uncanny. When we confront extreme trauma, death or fear, we often say 'it was like being in a film or a play' ('*as if*'). For Lacan, the 'Real' erupts whenever we are made to acknowledge the materiality of our existence, an acknowledgement that is usually perceived as traumatic (since it threatens our very "reality"). Emotions such as fear and grief, emotional contagion, the acts of death and dying and the way in which our sense of smell can stop us in our tracks and take us away from where we stand now, all force such an acknowledgement of the materiality of our existence and are all 'uncanny' in that they make us say 'it was like I was in a film, or a play'. Extremes of reality often do not feel 'real', and we really don't quite know how to put the uncanny into discourse.

BIOGRAPHY

Anna Fenemore is Associate Professor in Contemporary Theatre and Performance at the School of Performance and Cultural Industries, University of Leeds. She is also Artistic Director of Manchester based Pigeon Theatre and a freelance performer/maker.

Sarah GORMAN

Stubborn Stains: Challenging Menstrual Taboo through Performance

The concept of 'free-bleeding' whereby women actively choose not to stem the flow of menstrual blood has caused controversy in feminist and mainstream media alike.

Feministing.com features an article describing free-bleeding as 'more of a mindset than it is an action' (Feministing.com) whereas James Delingpole dismisses it as 'a ludicrous hoax' (spectator.co.uk). This paper will consider how a renewed openness about menstruation marks both a revision of and 'return' to essentialist theories historically marginalised by liberal and materialist feminist voices. As Sara Ahmed et al. asserted in 2000, 'the term essentialism has ... become an 'accusation' within feminism'. Along with Ahmed et al I want to question the assumption that 'essentialism is inherently conservative' (Ahmed, Lury, McNeil, Kilby and Skeggs 2000: 21).

In *There Will be Blood* (2012), photographer Emma Arvida Bystrom frames images of women going about their everyday business unconcerned by the blood staining their clothes and December 2016 saw London's Soho Theatre play host to Marisa Carnesky's *Dr Carnesky's Incredible Bleeding Woman*. The show has been promoted as, 'putting the magic back into menstruation' and features, 'a cast of extraordinary women from London's cabaret scene [who] have reinvented menstrual rituals for a new era drawing on the hidden power of a forgotten matriarchal past' (sohotheatre.com). This paper will explore the social and cultural factors contributing to Carnesky's sense that we, as feminists, have entered a 'new age'. It will consider the phenomenon of 'free-bleeding' and consider this as a performative way of returning to and engaging with essentialist approaches to feminism.

References

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BIOGRAPHY

Sarah Gorman is a Reader in the Department of Drama, Theatre & Performance at Roehampton University, London. Her research focuses on contemporary feminist performance and European/North American experimental theatre and Live Art. She is currently working on her second monograph for Routledge: *Women in Performance: Repurposing Failure* (due Spring 2020) and has recently co-edited a themed edition of *Contemporary Theatre Review* with Jen Harvie and Gerry Harris (September 2018). Her *Reading as a Woman* blog contains transcripts of interviews held with Lauren Barri Holstein, Selina Thompson, Rachael Young, Lois Weaver, GETINTHEBACKOFTHEVAN and Karen Christopher. It can be found at <http://readingasawoman.wordpress.com>.

Ellie HARRISON

Absent mothers/Invisible mothers

On performing grief and saying the unsayable.

Mothers are hard to spot, especially when their children aren't there in plain sight running around by their knees, or their children aren't visibly bulging from their pregnant tummies.

I'm thinking of adoptive mothers (like my mum was for my siblings).

I'm thinking about the mothers who might have been, standing there silently with knickers full of blood at work or in the pub or cooking dinner.

I'm thinking of bereaved mothers and how there is no word for that.

I've been thinking about the times my mother has been invisible and the times I've been an invisible mother.

This performance paper would look at the blurring of boundaries; between life and art, between performer and participant and between public and private in the work of The Grief Series. Discussing leaking, experiences of loss society would like to become invisible and when life happens in the wrong order.

BIOGRAPHY

Ellie Harrison is a performance maker and artist living in Leeds and working internationally. She creates a range of solo and collaborative devised performance work for studios, galleries, found and public spaces. Participation is at the heart of all of her work as a performer, facilitator and mentor of young people. Her work is often characterised by a playful and provocative approach to difficult topics, encouraging audiences to make decisions and participate. Ellie lectures on her practice, giving talks and workshops in a wide variety of contexts. Since 2010 Ellie has been making a seven part body of work, the highly acclaimed Grief Series. Working on Grief Series has seen Ellie travel to Prague, Paris, Mexico City, Sibiu Festival and Timisoara Romania. The Projects in The Grief Series have gained national press attention. She has been invited to speak on Radio 4 Women's Hour and included in Lynn Gardner's theatre pick of the year.

Jodie HAWKES

Playing Kate: Revolting Maternal Performance

This paper reflects on *Playing Kate*, a PaR project that forms part of my PhD '*Mother-trouble-makers: revolting maternal subjects and public performances of the family in austerity Britain.*' *Playing Kate* has multiple artistic outputs, including performance, video and photography as I attempt to disrupt neoliberal performances of motherhood through the reconfiguration of the relationship between the lived and the staged in the early public appearances of Kate Middleton as new mother. Middleton is represented as part of a celebrity motherhood culture, reinforcing austerity ideals of good mothering e.g. thrift, the retreat into the domestic and the respectable maternal body (Allen et al., 2015). Through a process of 'normalisation' (Clancy, 2015), Middleton becomes the embodiment of neoliberal aspiration and a living manifestation of austerity rhetoric of equity and togetherness. In her official public appearances, Middleton (with her baby) stages her 'normality' as a means of obscuring the privilege of her lived reality. *Playing Kate* attempts to reconfigure this relationship through a series of performative actions that deliberately clashes these two *normals* – the staged 'normality' of Middleton and the daily-lived experience of my own mothering. My research focuses on troubling the relationship between social class and the maternal in contemporary feminist performance as I blur the borders between our two maternal spectacles. In *Playing Kate* I position notions of class and specifically the 'revolting' (Tyler 2013) working class mother (who I argue is still relatively invisible within contemporary feminist maternal performance) into the foreground. Whilst Middleton attempts to appear *just like us*, here I am performing *just like her* as she tries to perform *just like me*.

BIOGRAPHY

Search Party is the collaboration of artists Jodie Hawkes and Pete Phillips. Formed in 2005 our work has encompassed theatre, live art, durational performance, participatory art, home video and performative writing. We have made performances for theatres, galleries, public squares, 24-hour parties, high streets, village fetes, parks, shopping centres, across rivers, between bridges and along seafronts. Our work has been performed in venues and

festivals in the UK and Internationally, including Culturegest (Lisbon, Portugal), The National Review of Live Art (Glasgow, UK), ANTIfestival (Kuopio, Finland), Plateux (Frankfurt, Germany), Nuit Blanche (Amiens, France), PAD (Mainz, Germany), InTacto (Vitoria de Gadiz, Spain), ArtBatFest (Almaty, Kazakstan) and Junction Arts Festival (Launceston, Australia).

Both Jodie and Pete are senior lecturers in Theatre at the University of Chichester.

Fenia KOTSOPOULOU and Aylwyn WALSH

Deviant women: embodied archives, living documents.

This presentation explores performance for camera, and photographic documentation in a dynamic sequence that undertakes an excavation of the judgements made on and about women's bodies when they are seen as deviant or unruly.

In her work on violence, feminist cultural critic Lynda Hart reflects on the preoccupation with the '(im)morality of women and the ever-present paranoia that women possess an inferior sense of justice'. She goes on to state that psychoanalysis 'obsessively reproduces "women" as implicitly dangerous' (1994: 25). This relates to the discursive characterisation of all women as dangerous, modelled by Cesare Lombroso (1895). Lombroso's nineteenth century anthropometric investigation into what constitutes 'female offenders' serves as an opening trope in order to assert the trouble posed by deviant women. Lombroso's scientific research aimed to construct a taxonomy of criminal bodies by learning how to read the 'living documents' contained in prisons as what he called 'palimpsests in reverse' (cited in Horn, 1995: 113). His claim, according to Horn, was that if 'read correctly' the body-as-text 'yielded up its submerged truths: the signs of degeneration and atavism' (1995: 113).

In this presentation, we work with a series of original works that explore the abject female body, hair and ambiguity. The self-portraiture sequence by artist Fenia Kotsopoulou on deviant women seeks to position categories of 'woman' via tropes of fashion photography and labels that reduce the fleshy body to archetypes. We read the series through the archive of portraiture that captures or evidences the lived experience of deviance or unruliness.

BIOGRAPHIES

Fenia Kotsopoulou

Fenia is a cross-disciplinary artist based in the UK, whose practice encompasses performance art, dance, video and photography. She holds a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Lincoln, and a BA in Dance from the National Dance Academy in Rome. Pivotal

topics of her rhizomatic practice include: the body as a site of transformation and as the repository of emotions; personal and collective memory; performing documentation and alternative uses of archives; formation and deconstruction of female identity.

In the past few years, as dance performance artist, producer and visual practitioner, her works and the work of close-collaborators have been shown at a wide array of festivals and art platforms, encompassing the fields of dance, experimental performance, video-art, live-art, such as: Venice Performance Art Week, Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art, Athens Digital Art Festival and more.

Since 2016, Fenia is artist in residence at x-church (Gainsborough, UK) exploring the idea of “residency” in an old ex-church on Ashcroft Road, Gainsborough (UK). Furthermore, she works as Associate lecturer at the University of Lincoln, where in 2016 she started teaching dance technique, screendance, and bodies in performance.

Video art festival participation: Movimiento en Movimiento (1st prize, Mexico, 2018); MADATAC 07 (Spain, 2016); Addis Video art festival (Ethiopia, 2016); Without Words Film Festival (3rd prize, France, 2015); 30th VideoFormes (France, 2015), FILE festival (Brasil, 2015, 2014), InShadow (Portugal, 2015), Video Performance Art Exhibition: “Pancaroba” (Indonesia, 2015) and more.

feniakotsopoulou.wix.com/artist vimeo.com/feniakotsopoulou

Aylwyn Walsh

Aylwyn is programme leader of the MA in Applied Theatre & Intervention at University of Leeds’ School of Performance and Cultural Industries. She has recently worked on projects including a recovery college *Converge* with participants referred by mental health services in Leeds. Her current project relates to *Prison Cultures*, mapping performance, resistance and desire in women’s prisons (Intellect, forthcoming 2019). She was co-editor of *Remapping ‘Crisis’: A Guide to Athens* (Zero Books, 2014). She co-organised the *Arts of Logistics* about the politics and poetics of infrastructures, counter-logistics and mobility.

Some of her publications have been on arts and migration in *Performances of Crisis, Capitalism and Resistance and Theory in Action*; about protest in *Qualitative Inquiry; Cultural Studies* \leftrightarrow *Critical Methodologies; Journal of Arts and Communities*. She has also published about arts and health *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance* as well as feminist criminology, prison and performance in *Liminalities; Crime, Media, Culture; Contemporary Theatre Review; Prison Service Journal*.

As an artist, she has performed in Berlin Biennale, National Arts festival in South Africa as well as Istanbul's 'A Corner of the World' festival. She has directed work at Contact Theatre (Manchester), the National Theatre (London), Love Arts Festival (Leeds). She is artistic director of Ministry of Untold Stories.

Bridie MOORE

Seeking Significance and Accomplishment: Towards an Aged Female

Embodiment

Following Kathleen Woodward (1991), to reject our mirror image as we age produces a disconnection between the visible manifestation and the subjective experience of identity, producing a crisis of embodiment and legibility. Woodward proposes that at the end of life there is an equivalent stage to Lacan's mirror stage of infancy, in which in a reversal of the Lacanian infant – who understands and accepts the image in the mirror as a representation of his or her own body – the old person rejects their mirror image as *not* a true representation of their embodied self. This rejection brings on a psychic crisis: '[w]here then would we be located? Outside the mirror? Caught between the double and the absent?' (Woodward, 1991: 67). How is it possible for the ageing female body to be inhabited and to be read? Can performance acknowledge and shift perceptions of the ageing female body as abject, incontinent and fearful, (Kristeva, 1982), or scandalously anachronistic (Russo, 1999).

Developed partly in conjunction with Terry O'Connor (Forced Entertainment) and meditating on the exquisite dilemma of ageing female embodiment, in which ageing is both perceived and rejected, this autoethnographical performance lecture will expose the reflexive dilemma and the phenomenological experience of a migration towards ageing femininity.

Performance, as Hamlet claims, is the mirror 'held up, as 'twere, to nature'. As such it is also able to bring into appearance acts that counter normative assumptions about the 'natural' ways of reading the ageing female body; accordingly the piece proposes, discusses and demonstrates scenographical and physical strategies designed to encounter the phenomenon of ageing femininity as well as questioning the 'constitutive acts' (Butler, 1990) that produce age in its intersection with femininity. It finally proposes a radical embodiment of 'significant shape' and 'accomplished form' (Cristofovici, 1999) as a possible performative practice that might be undertaken by the ageing female body.

Emerging out of Bridie Moore's practice-as-research PhD project this Performance Lecture draws on Feminist literature from the 1980s and 90s to develop a performative and autoethnographical exploration of the lived experience of ageing femininity.

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BIOGRAPHY

Bridie Moore is Lecturer in Drama Theatre and Performance at The University of Huddersfield. In 2018 she completed her AHRC funded PhD *Effects, Metaphors and Masks: Reading and Doing Age in Contemporary British Theatre*, undertaken at the University of Sheffield. Her article 'Depth Significance and Absence: Age Effects in New British Theatre' was published in *Age, Culture, Humanities* in 2014 and 'The Age Performances of Peggy Shaw: Intersection, Interoception and Interruption' was published in the 2017 Palgrave edited collection, *Ageing Women in Literature and Visual Culture: Reflections, Refractions and Reimaginings*. Her article "'It did get rid of that 'these people are old people' thing in my brain": Challenging the Otherness of Old Age Through One-to-One Performance' has recently been published in *ArtsPraxis* Volume 5, Issue 2.

Fiona O'NEILL

Still (only) Making a Right Tit of Myself: stories of everyday performativities; corporeality & somatechnicality

I've lived with just 1 breast for 11yrs. I've discussed with other 'survivors' the various and dynamic a/effects of living with a changed embodiment; that 'queer' our experience and expression of self. From making, and living with, one-off and everyday corporeal and somatic /somatechnic choices, I shall illustrate and discuss: the aging, 'undone' body from within to without; the curious lived-experience of dislocated-dead/ened body-parts; the tangible neuropathic memories of breastfeeding; the personal politics of 'going toplessly commando'; the mimetic boundary issues of what is indeed natural/artificial. Following an NHS mastectomy, you are offered prosthetication and then reconstruction – but you are not asked if you have come to terms with your changed embodiment. In time, I aim to offer, through somatically informed practices, ways to make space for and give support to those going through similar experiences of changed embodiment; that engage with the multiplicity of 'fleshy' e/affects encountered, in order to find liveable informed choices.

BIOGRAPHY

I am a transdisciplinary working within the practice and theory of Somatics: including Ecosomatic, Somaesthetics and Somatechnics. My post-doctoral research considers awareness, experience and expression of human embodiment within everyday life, feralling; wellbeing, and performativity.

My practice-as-research is in embodiment and ecosomatics; my research methodology utilises phenomenology, somatics, and digital technologies allied to computer mediated communications; toward thick description, depth appreciation and aesthetic expression. With particular interests in sensory awareness toward the nature of presence, e/affect and 'belonging' within everyday embodiment, performativities; and embodied-environmental - technological relations. Presently, I am undertaking independent research into 1. The Value of Somatic Awareness in Breast Cancer Recovery: Re-embodiment, somaesthetics, ecosomatics and somatechnics; enabling care, recovery and decision-making, following

mastectomy. 2. Modalities of Witnessing. 3. Feralling. 4. Ethics, wellbeing and somatic practices.

I am a freelance researcher, writer, artist; academic/creative mentor and a body-mind-life coach [google: Becoming Attentive with Fiona O'Neill]. I facilitate 1-1 and small group sessions; informed by my training and practice within movement meditation, Authentic Movement, butoh, yoga, Hakomi, Solution-focused practice, expressive arts, Zen, phenomenological philosophies, ecosomatics and Permaculture. I took a career break to self-care for breast cancer, and then to care for my elderly parents.

My doctoral and initial postdoctoral work was in embodiment and human-technology relations; including the somatosensory, psycho-social & ethico-political aspects of prosthetication, broadly construed. My transdisciplinary PhD (& early publications) considered: Uncanny Belongings: Bioethics and the technologies of fashioning flesh. I have an eclectic background but have always been a creative facilitator, educator, mentor. Including having worked as: a Problem-based learning and special study modules tutor at Lancaster University Medical School, for 2nd-4thyr medical students; and as a lay-academic member for the NHS North West Research Ethics Committee. As a Primary school teacher, including running a 70 place nursery in inner-city London; and as an Outreach-education officer, for The Zoological Society of London, and Lancaster City Museums.

Natalie RAVEN

Pregnancy <standing in the chasm> Abortion

In May 2018 women's reproductive rights were the topic of huge political debate across the UK and Ireland, when a referendum was held over whether women in the Irish Republic should have access to legal abortion. Voters ultimately chose to repeal the Eight Amendment, and the ban on abortion was lifted. Watching news coverage of the referendum unfold at home in England, I listened attentively to the range of voices and opinions unfurling in front of me, sometimes with unease. I read opinion pieces in national newspapers, and followed vitriol hashtags on twitter. Women's bodies were the subject of mass debate, and such debates were often conducted by those who would never be faced with the prospect of pregnancy or abortion.



Natalie Raven (2018) *Consultancy Scan*. Mount Gould Local Care Centre, Plymouth UK.

Digital image. Photography by Dagmar Schwitzgebel.

Rejecting conjecture, this paper charts the lived experience and realities of termination from my own perspective as a woman living through the process. I describe what it is like to be stood in the chasm between pregnancy and abortion questioning life, death, responsibility, poverty, and pain. I examine slippage into the 'performance of pregnancy', alongside offering reflections on physical and emotional experience, decision-making processes, disclosures of pregnancy and abortion, and how other people's reactions illuminate a wide variety of socio-cultural attitudes towards women and motherhood. It is hoped that in offering an upfront, honest, and frank conversation about abortion and its processes, feelings of embarrassment bound up in cultures of silencing and shame may be overcome.

BIOGRAPHY

Natalie is an artist and Ph.D candidate in the department of Theatre and Performance at the University of Plymouth. Alongside her artistic collaborator Dagmar Schwitzgebel (Church of Performance), she practically explores the re-presentation of women and womanhood in contemporary performance art.

Sara REIMERS

Making an Appearance: Female Performers' Experience of Aesthetic Labour

This paper will discuss the “Making an Appearance” project, a research collaboration between the Centre for Contemporary British Theatre at Royal Holloway, University of London and the Equity Women’s Committee, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. The project – a Creative Economy Engagement Fellowship – explores performers’ experiences of aesthetic labour, examining how actors feel about their bodies and the work they do to make them “castable”.

Focussing on the gendered nature of aesthetic labour, this paper will discuss the types of activities that are undertaken by female performers to generate and/or maintain a particular appearance and the financial, social, and emotional impact of these activities. It will explore testimonies from female performers, building on the work of Deborah Dean (2005, 2007, 2008) and Roanna Mitchell (2014, 2015) to examine the gender politics of aesthetic labour from a feminist perspective.

BIOGRAPHY

Sara Reimers is an AHRC Creative Economy Engagement Fellow in the Department of Drama, Theatre and Dance at Royal Holloway, University of London. Her research project – “Making an Appearance” – explores actors’ experiences of aesthetic labour and builds on work she undertook as part of her AHRC-funded doctoral research examining casting and the construction of femininity in contemporary stagings of Shakespeare’s plays. Sara is also an emerging director and has worked on a number of productions on the London fringe.

Francesca STEELE

Recount (short edit)

My practice although based in Live Art practice has recently become more focussed on writing, where I use autobiographical mining and various experimental writing techniques to create works that sit between fact and fiction, storytelling, knowing and unknowing to create the need for an 'active reader' or participant to the work. William Burroughs refers to this as a 'Bio-Cutup' where the reader relies on their own subjectivity to navigate a work. In a sense the relationship between the text and the reader becomes alive. This is what I hope to create through *Recount*, drawing footage from my most difficult project to date, this involved a deeply transformative process through bodybuilding practice between 2008-2012.

Through this process I am revisiting a rigorous Live Art project I undertook in 2008. Here I responded to Kathy Acker's question in an essay about her bodybuilding practice: 'Is the equation between destruction and growth also a formula for art?' (in *Bodies of Work*, 1997; originally published in Kroker and Kroker [eds.] *The Last Sex: Feminism and Outlaw Bodies*, 1993). To find answers, I undertook the lifestyle of a bodybuilder. Overarching competition procedure was artistic priority: bodybuilding methodologies specifically engaged as a performance practice. This allowed me to create a new critical perspective from my position of maker. Too, as a female artist that had used my own body and presence over many years, I felt a weight to this dialogue of transformation and a potential to extend critical positions; those of gender paradox, discipline, work and skill within artistic practice and bodily presence.

I am revisiting and re-evaluating this work now with body that is undoing or undone this previous phase of work, this is allowing me new perspectives to dissect and look at what happened closely. I consider this act of 'doing and undoing' and process of 'looking' critical to my practice and work. I am now able to separate voice from body, and body from work, noting my personal outcomes and those wider implications from this durational work. *Recount* is one of the outcomes of this process.

BIOGRAPHY

Francesca Steele is an artist researching the body as document at the University of Derby. Steele uses autobiographical mining to create works that shift between body, screen and page.

Having exhibited internationally, her work also features on internet sites like 'girls with muscle' and persists outside the traditional white box space.

Sophie SWOFFER

Posing, pouting and pretence: Re-envisaging Mulvey's theory of the male gaze and the hyper-feminine body



This performative presentation demonstrates how my performance art practice dissects and challenges fetishized representations of the lived and performed female body. Focusing on my most recent performance, *It's Sophie!*, this presentation will explore the often derided and under-acknowledged film figure of the 'starlet', and through a re-envisaging of Mulvey's male gaze, will examine how my practice presents her as an active figure of feminine excess. My practice explores modes of subversive hyper-femininity, a transgressive and deliberately constructed version of the normative femininity that Mulvey discusses. This hyper-femininity manifests in *It's Sophie!* through a layering of excessive and monstrous personae, that draw upon Irigaray's theorised challenges to lack, displaying the female body as excessive in its sexuality, with 'sex organs more or less everywhere' (1985:28). Through exploring *It's Sophie!*, this presentation will present the starlet, as a figure whose abject behaviour seeps out from the internal and hidden areas of the feminine body, in order to disrupt the dichotomy between female performer and the male gaze.

It's Sophie! specifically expands the practice of feminist performance artist Lauren Barri Holstein along with sex positive artist, Penny Slinger. Both artists have sought to create work that display the feminine body as a troubling site of agency. This presentation demonstrates how *It's Sophie!* draws upon these modes of framing the body, by spitting, oozing and spluttering feminine monstrosity. Through exploring this behaviour, this

presentation argues for the necessity of continuing to resiliently challenge the male gaze, uncovering its potential impact upon feminist performance art and spectator consciousness.

BIOGRAPHY

Sophie Swoffer is a performance artist in the second year of her practice-based PhD at De Montfort university, Leicester. Blurring the boundaries between the sexual and the grotesque, Sophie's work draws upon elements from both performance art and film studies, in order to explore alternative and monstrous representations of agency-filled femininity. Through creating intermedial environments, Sophie interrogates these representations and their relationship to the male gaze.