

ARTICULATION OPEN SPACE 2019

"What can we do to make great physical performance in Scotland?"

SESSIONS

1. Should Artists/Performers etc be self-funding and how?
2. Braw Circus Festival
3. What are the unmet needs?
4. How do we talk honestly about quality?
5. What can we do to share skills and inspire each other?
6. Circus Chat
7. Physical Performance and Youth Arts – How and Why?
8. Running Artist Led Spaces / What can we do collectively to open up spaces for physical performance?
9. How do you find collaborators outwith your current circle? Combined with: How do you make an artist's creative vision a reality?
10. What is outdoor arts relationship to venues? What could it be?
11. Physical Performance in Virtual Space
12. Posture – How to hold the body ... yay!
13. Solo? Or who is part of your Physical Theatre Productions?
14. Cultural Mapping
15. Circus and Aerial Rigging and Safety

1. SHOULD ARTISTS/PERFORMERS ETC BE SELF-FUNDING AND HOW?

Convened by: Angie Dight

Many in the group, did self fund in some ways.....ie, working for other Artists, companies etc as freelancers in order to fund their own work, one member of the group had worked independently for 30 years and had just taken on a PAYE job ' in the real World ' Perhaps only 2 members recieved a regular income through their main art 'practice'. The overall feeling was that people were self-funding already.

We spoke about the systems of Arts funding in the US, with it's mix of public and private funding, how much private funding there is and that it is a normal accepted thing on both sides. However there were also examples cited, were the Private funders wanted more input in the reach or resources of the 'work' or Company. It was also mentioned that in some circles artists were valued more as self -fundersthat it 'solidified a greater commitment to the art '.

The group felt we should look at non-arts funders, trusts, foundations, NHS. The agreement with non-arts bodies is often more straightforward ie beyond the work that they have hired you for, they do not require anything else, as long as you give them what they asked for. There is often a level of trust with this exchange, they do their job, you do yours.

We did not come to a conclusion about this, except to understand that in this cash strapped World, the realisation that the arts in the UK is not really valued, we compared with France (great arts engagement and support for artists) and also Italy which did not come out so well either.

Conclusion is that we all need to be advocating for the arts , to encourage it to be valued. Venue's and producers should also be advocating, recommending what they programme (past person at Lyth who personally recommended his programme was cited). Education needs to be championing the arts.....currently the opposite is happening, but mostly we need to do it !!!
Value of the arts should translate into support and then resources.
It will be missed once it is gone.

2. BRAW CIRCUS FESTIVAL

Convened by: Mark Gibson

Attendees:

Emily
Miriam
Jen
Lauren
Arran
Jaine

What do we want Braw to be? When and Where?

Not to be at the same time as the Aerial Edge Circus Convention

Possible venues to investigate:

- Platform
- Tramway
- Eden Court
- Dundee Rep
- MacRobert
- Festival Theatre Edinburgh

Mission:

An event where you can go and see Scottish made circus work in one weekend

Do we want any international work? The budget probably should go to Scottish artists at this stage in the events development

Worth exploring collaborations with other organisations who have a programming budget? Talk to The Workroom and Imagineate

12-18 months to set up the event

Frequency - it should be an annual event at the same time of year

Time of year - April/May or earlier

Is there any conflict over the name? To be investigated.

Be explicit about what works were unfinished

Resolutions at The Place have a good model for artistic development which would be worth investigating further

Marketing beyond circus people

Better scratch feedback is needed

Open Call for Creative Directors?

How does Braw relate to Surge's Festival of New Work? How does Braw fit into how we develop artists in Scotland?

3. WHAT ARE THE UNMET NEEDS?

Convened by: Martin Danziger

Platforms for work?

Scottish screen used to have programme supporting 4 minute piece, then 8 minutes, then 20 minutes (BAC)

Touring circuit? Supported? Possibility of expression? Directorial input!

How to create with public input from the get go? Audiences involved in the process involved.

How to solve the divorce/disjoint tween sector

How to find other collaborators –

A whole day but break off groups by sector?

Include element of skill sharing or tasters?

Breakdown by artform: circus, outdoor arts, clowning, physical performance?

Breakdown by need/theme: funding, touring, collaborating,

Have rolling focus on particular artform

4. HOW CAN WE TALK HONESTLY ABOUT QUALITY?

Convened by Jaine Lumsden

People at this:

Marie, Ian Cameron, Alexandra Patience, Adam, Ashling, Aran Sparks, Angie Dight , Lucas, Dylan Reid, Simon Hart, Jusstina Herman, William, Emily Davis, Diane, Bob, Heather, Ewan Downie , Vanessa Boyd, Skye Loneragan, Chrissie, Ruxy Cantir, Lauren Hendry, Camille, Erisa, Monika, Jaine Lumsden

Finished work

Artist is not interested in media reviews, these are about the status of the artist not the work itself. Wants feedback from other people creating work. Idea to have a group of artists (40?) who would see each others' work and provide one page review/critical feedback. This would be anonymous; the purpose of the anonymity is to remove any preconceptions the artist receiving the feedback might have about the reviewer. Suggested five people from the group see each show, tickets would be free.

Action Point Possibly Articulation could take the organisation of this on? Simon from PAS interested in using this at Manipulate 2020.

Possibly try a run with the reviews being anonymous, then without anonymity to compare quality of review?

Quality

Some discussion of what this means and how one could talk about it.

Various views: quality relies on consensus and causality and is a loaded term implying monitoring and evaluation

Quality depends on what the artist is aiming for and if this has been achieved\

Clarity of intention

For quality to be achieved the performance needs to be emotionally and intellectually engage

“Honesty” is the important word in the question

Gareth K. Vile considers that online fora can provide places for discourse and reflection (e.g. on football). Could this be useful for discourse around quality of work? Not just immediate reaction but a more nuanced debate that reflects societal concerns more broadly.

Feedback

Pro's and con's whether feedback is anonymous or not.

The timing of when feedback is provided is critical (e.g. not immediately when the artists come offstage); note that some people need time to distill their reactions/thoughts about work and that this may well change from right after the performance to some days later.

When an artist asks for feedback is this a request for a mirror or a roadmap?

Explanation of Liz Lerman Critical Response Process. A structured methodology to provide artist-focussed feedback only on areas of the work the artist has questions about at this point in their process. “Fix-its” and opinions are only allowed if the artist gives permission. The timing of when this happens in a work's development is important to ensure its maximum effectiveness – work-in-progress stage. CRP is not necessarily a “softly softly” approach.

There is a need for artists to develop resilience when receiving feedback; the artist is not obliged to pay attention to any feedback. There are cultural differences in audience/sector feedback – UK tends to be very polite while elsewhere (Poland, U.S. etc.) people very likely to be more upfront about any negative reactions to work and that UK artists tend to apologise for being artists. Important to remember that and negative feedback is about the work, not the person.

Dylan and Adam physical theatre group provides opportunities for peer review on skills/techniques – closed group that could open up.

Artists need to know why they want feedback – important for them to progress.

A good way of providing feedback is to ask questions. Why are you wearing that dress? (as opposed to that dress is horrible).

Can one separate personal taste from evaluation of quality?
Yes (said some).

Audiences for works-in-progresses

These tend to be other artists; it's really difficult to get programmers to attend – this applies to all performance, not just physical theatre. It would be good to get feedback from potential future audiences too – work for children and young people is good at this. Outdoor work the audience's staying power is an obvious way to get feedback.

5. WHAT CAN WE DO TO SHARE SKILLS AND INSPIRE EACH OTHER?

Heather Knudtsen (convenor)

Ewan Downie, Dylan Read, Adam Tompa, Ian Cameron, Monika Smekot, Alex, Lucas Chih-Peng Kao
and a roving cast of players.

A need: 1. to have somewhere to move, to keep awake and alive between creating shows.

There's also a need for:

2. skills workshops

3. development opportunities
4. scratch nights
5. further training opportunities (outside Scotland) – (see Company of Wolves' List of Further Training, here: <http://companyofwolves.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/FURTHER-TRAINING.pdf>)
6. places where people could work in the same building, for cross pollination, community and early showings of work. SURGE building, Dance Base, The Workroom. There was also a desire for spaces where multiple artforms could meet.
7. A jam space where different artforms can play, that doesn't descend into noodling. (suggested example Something Smashing)
8. Places to find out about these sorts of opportunities.

Sessions Articulation could usefully offer on the more business side...

9. Info sessions on funding applications. Strategy.
10. Sessions on working with a producer – demystifying the role of a producer:
 - What does a producer do? What's the process. Is there a checklist?
 - (Surge has an open door policy to help with producing skills, "Surgeries")
11. Knowledge of tools for artists self producing.
 - google docs, mailchimp, slack or glip, pushbullet, buffer, hootsuite, tweetdeck, asana, etc.
12. Tools for artists self marketing. To venues and to audiences.
13. Can ITC come to Scotland to do courses?
14. Attention on the issue of transitioning from being an emerging artist to being emerged. What is needed to bridge the gap between funding accessibilities?
 - touring funding for example
 - is this "emerge" and "emerged" language helpful?
 - (Luminate has opportunities for older artists)
15. New Media in theatre, knowledge about how to use new technologies, etc.
 - Surge is exploring "tech box"
16. A need for a calendar of theatre events across Scotland. Could articulation do this? Or FST?

It was felt that Articulation could usefully curate a list of the above things, and, more generally, a calendar of physical performance events in Scotland.

Here is a (very incomplete) list of

1. Places to move:
 - Eilon Morris and Zoe Katsilerou run sessions at CCA
 - Paul Michael Henry – Butoh Sessions
 - Company of Wolves – research working group and regular sessions (to start this year)
 - Edinburgh Physical Theatre Lab sessions
 - Contact impro: Dance base out of class sessions.
2. development opportunities
 - PITCH nights,

3. Places to find out about opportunities:

Physical Theatre Scotland Facebook

Epad

CS opportunities

Edinburgh Performing Arts

Puppet Animation Scotland

Surege

Articulation email list

6. CIRCUS CHAT

Session within “How can we make great physical performance in Scotland”

@ Summerhall Tech Cube, 25 Feb 2019.

Chair/ scribe: Lauren Hendry.

Attendees: Marie, Emily, Bob (with a beard), Imo, Simon (not Hart), Veera, Hania, Mark, Arron, Chrissie, Jusstina, Martin.

Later joined by: Miriam, Ruaraidh, Catriona. Jaine Lumsden & SJ Couzens hovered briefly.

Note: I have forgotten who said what in some places. Forgive any errors.

Training

Chat about Simon's plan for circus course which was never realised due to funding cuts. Was due to be one-year diploma covering aerial, acro and manipulation.

Mark mentioned Aerial Edge's 4-month full-time foundation course, about to being its 2nd iteration.

What's everyone making?

Marie- Fanny Riot. Scotland's answer to Pussy Riot. Group of female-identifying artists & activists, doing (roughly) monthly happenings. Central group of 12 (?) and wider circle of 50 fannies. Male-identifying people can join as honorary fannies.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/375932986285776/>

Veera- Studying stage management at the moment, taking up most of her energy. Ideas bubbling away for later, combining practical & artistic.

Emily- Made 20 min duet with Nathan Johnston, called Levels, performed at Resolutions Festival at the Place.

Hania- Making a show about family, with her own children. Discussion around performing licences with children. Martin said it's all about how many performances, and where. If more than 6/yr, need a licence from EACH local authority, so need to apply separately. Process is not often logical. Seek advice from those who have done it before. Perhaps it'd be ok because complaints are usually brought by the parents, and seeing as it's her own kids, it might be ok.

Arron- in Starcatcher's upcoming show for babies, Little Top

(<https://www.starcatchers.org.uk/production/little-top-2019/>) , and developing To Be The Best Too (<https://circusgeeks.co.uk/to-be-the-best-too/>) alongside Owen Reynolds.

Marie bigged up Cirquation's Cabaret (<http://www.delighters.co.uk/cirquation>) as an opportunity for circus makers to make. About: 4 events per year, in North Edinburgh Arts. There is a public call-out for acts which are loosely based around a selected theme, max 10 mins per act. Hope is to inspire creation of new work. Jusstina- plan to apply for funding as it's been self-funded so far, and only takes in about £600 in ticket sales. Possibility to tour show with selected acts. They're in convos with larger venues but would still need funding. Talk about the desire to maintain relationship with North Edinburgh Arts. Audience is around 1/3 circus community, and most of the rest are family & friends, or hear about it through word of mouth.

Discussion of Facebook group, Circus Applications! Not everyone knew about it as it's a secret group. It's a place to say "I'm putting in an application to Creative Scotland next week" so that CS don't receive multiple (competing) circus apps in the same round. Bob, Martin, Imo, Hania, Chrissie, Marie & Jusstina were added to group on request.

How is touring circus in Scotland?

Imo: Limited rigging. If touring smaller venues, best to take own rig.

How was the reception? Lauren- touring (a non-circus show) soon after No Show, everyone was raving about it. Martin- in rural areas, there's lots of the same kind of stuff so offering something different is helpful.

Chrissie- feedback from rural touring promoters from The Gathering 2018- use plain speech in your marketing materials, not arts waffle. If the show uses aerial, show it in your promo visuals. Lack of international work touring Scotland- based on split Arts Councils in the 4 home nations, meaning there are not enough venues of a scale to warrant most international companies applying for Creative Scotland funding, so they'll just tour England where there's more payoff for app writing.

Can we get to a stage where Scotland is exporting circus shows?

There are currently a few- No Show / Egg / Out Of This World, but come from existing relationships rather than new ones borne out of the shows.

Advocacy - "There's never a 'circus' box"

Discussion of new circus group within Equity formed by Vicki Amedume: Equity Variety, Circus and Entertainers Committee (<https://www.thestage.co.uk/advice/2018/upswing-circus-victoria-amedume-first-job-taught-importance-boundaries/>). Meeting was recently in London. Did anyone go- no! It was in London! Agreed that none of us would go to Equity if I wanted something done. But where? Should be Articulation but currently none of us (except Mark) have a voice within it. General discussion of what Articulation is- a fixed board who meet 4-6 x per year. Umbrella body for physical performance. About sector development & advocacy, not promoting individual members nor developing particular works. Noted lack of action, or lack of publicity around what it does. Could Articulation be a membership org like the Work Room? (<https://theworkroom.org.uk/>) Some general love for The Work Room. They are able to have a solid offer because of having a studio (gifted by Glasgow City Council).

Mark- currently in a working group with Jen discussing the membership options. LH- What would people want as an offer if it were not money/ residency space?

Marie- newsletter is good, but because it's so sprawling, would be good to be backed up by a webpage which can be more easily navigated. Could act as a directory.

Jusstina- Could membership fees go into perks to meet circus-specific needs? Residencies?

Mark- AE can talk about offering residencies but not as part of Articulation deal.

Imo: Could Articulation be advocating to venues who already host residencies, asking them to offer circus-based residencies?

Lauren- Example of Ade Berry @ Jacksons Lane- runs newsletter with residency/ funding opportunities, but before he sends it he calls the org offering it to ensure they are open to circus applications. This means they're primed for it, and circus people don't waste their time if they're not interested.

Mark mentioned Circus250 activities. It was noted that this Open Space event is not on the Articulation website. Hard to understand what Articulation is or does, because there's no mechanism for most artists to meet/ input/ ask questions/ get info.

Chat about Surge. Because they had a funding reduction/ stagnation, they've recently focussed on outdoor work which excludes most aerial/ circus. Lauren asked Jaine, are Surge accountable for supporting all of the art forms they claim to support (including circus)? Jaine- yes, over the course of their funding term (3 years). Mark had attended their annual meeting about the needs of artists. They are planning a festival of new work in Feb 2020. Ideally would take place at Tramway but unlikely because of Citizens Theatre being currently resident in there. Result may be that there isn't any aerial.

Lauren- about to write dissertation on lives of circus performers in Scotland. Please can you write your biggest problem in working in circus in Scotland on a big sheet on the wall?

Spaces Suggestion of making a list of riggable spaces. Could it be open-sourced to gather more/ better info?

LH- will action.

RESULT: Link to Google Sheet

(<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1yLyofGMB0eXKGU41QykOD2MHYpBbbMMmJ91rCeBLVLw/edit#gid=0>)

Please add to it and use it as you see fit. Please don't delete anything unless you're certain the info is wrong/ outdated.

7. PHYSICAL PERFORMANCE AND YOUTH ARTS - HOW AND WHY?

Session by Nichole Cook

Attended: Nichole, Martin, Benjamin, William

- We must be honest about WHY we do what we do – it's fun and enjoyable!!
- Using devising and physical practices with young people opens up a relationship and open working practice not as accessible via traditional text based theatre plays. We have to be original and devise! It means being in the room with the group.
- Sometimes our devising work can become stagnant – it is then time to find more imaginative ways to introduce devising to young people.
- Physical performance with young people is personal, it is an avenue to express emotional needs – “I am here, I matter” – where they may not be able to express this in words.
- Young people are at a stage where they are pulling together the pieces of themselves to create who they are. With physical performance they can: build skill – be celebrated – be motivated – build trust – and therefore build relationships.
- Physical performance foregrounds the skill: it is not arguable; you look at my skills.
- Some learning outcomes to consider: better communication, confidence, articulation in ideas, play.

8. RUNNING ARTIST LED SPACES/ WHAT CAN WE DO COLLECTIVELY TO OPEN UP SPACES FOR PHYSICAL PERFORMANCE?

Convened by Sara and ???

Why are we discussing this?

- Sheer number of people requesting spaces from organisations such as the Workroom is more than they can supply for.
- Full residency programme & people asking for ad hoc areas to work.
- Build up databases of people for other people to work however realised they could be quite expensive.
- Dance HQ, Scottish Youth Theatre, not affordable for underfunded artist.
- Responsibilities for artist lets space of the space & how to we manage it as a group/or as individuals.
- Health & Safety restrictions - asking artists to have to consider administrating building.
- Who has the keys?
- Where is the accountability when there are volunteers running a space?
- Who pays the bills?
- People to support the business.
- How can their partnership and exchange between different artist led organisations in Glasgow. i.e. workroom & GTAC, tramway & workroom.
- How to give people responsibility and agency within the organisation to give life to the membership not just as passive but in a way where people benefit from sharing the space artistically & collaboratively.

- Over-reliance in cultural sector on Creative Scotland funding & operations like GTAC are able to attempt a different way of dealing with that. Is it manageable & / or effective?

RESOURCES FOR SMALL ARTIST LED ORGANISATIONS:

- Arts & Business, Creative Scotland, Local Govan counsellors or culture and sport committee of the council, small business gateway free access to legal advice and help.
- Different board members with specific skills who could bring them for free for example the workroom used to have a board with someone with experience in HR, experience in accountancy etc. People do things like this for free because they are interested. 4 meetings a year.
- Directors of Place / Building Glasgow : discussions happening on a strategic level about what will be planned within the city.
- Volunteer Glasgow - post for roles if you need a particular skill set.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH ARTISTS WHO USE THE SPACE

Good artists come to the space & create work, can they credit the organisation when they use it? Thinking of the organisation not just in terms of fiscal survival but what is the cultural value of the work we support.

Possibility of offering collaborations where people can pay in kind through the value of a workshop or cleaning/piece of work.

Doors Open day

Can RFOs give space for free? Are there complications with that in relation to funding objective and what is allowed to be funded in those spaces. Is this an ethical problem with the way things are funded?

Open afternoons where people can share the space for an afternoon paying a low price such as £5 each.

Collaboration with other local organisations & offering space for low price if people call up on the day. This can avoid competition for money & space.

OTHER CONCEPTS FOR FINDING SPACE

Good idea to create a bank of spaces where there is someone always in where people can be requesting free space from.

'Somewhere to' a charity which formerly existed to find free spaces for emerging/young artists. 4 or 5 companies coming together to pay a chunk of the rent.

RFO's or bigger organisations giving space for free at the last minute when the space is lying empty.

Glasgow – Flying Duck – can ask if they have a last minute free space?

Creative development space 3 people together in hour

Recent or current graduates - advertise to them – offer residencies, apply for small grants of private/public funding.

Examples of organisations: the sculpture workshop, what used to be the forest in Edinburgh.

ACTIONS POINTS : Database of rehearsal spaces & prices & then rehearsal spaces that will give last minute bookings on the cheap or free

9. HOW DO YOU FIND COLLABORATORS OUTWITH YOUR CURRENT CIRCLE?

Combined with:

HOW DO YOU MAKE AN ARTIST'S CREATIVE VISION A REALITY?

Convened by Alexandra Patience, Ashling Findlay-Carroll

In attendance:

Alexandra Patience, Ashling Findlay-Carroll, Angie Dight, Zoe Darbyshire, Ian Cameron, Catriona Smith, Alice Strang, Melanie Broda, Lucas Kao, Monika Sunezot, Isabel Dehens, Adam Tompa, Andrew Simpson, Usztina Hermann

Summary of Discussion

How a producer can support a performer / creator, i.e. create a protected space for them within which to work freely, unencumbered by as much bureaucracy, admin, logistics as possible

Supporting your audience, provision of information, making them welcome, giving them confidence to participate

Repeat / recorded performance is NOT the same as the live original

How to notate performance art without intrusion.

Next steps:

Contact people like Buzzcut and the Tate, get networking and experience sharing!

10. WHAT IS OUTDOOR ARTS RELATIONSHIP TO VENUES? WHAT COULD IT BE?

Morning Session – Led by LJ Findlay-Walsh

In attendance: LJ, Jen Patterson, Skye Lonergan, Sara Johnstone, Emma Brierly, Angie Dight, Diane Thornton, Vanessa Boyd, Lesley Hepburn, Norn, Cami, Roxy, Jaime, Lumsden, Elisa, Tim Licata

No Big in Falkirk. Still a local authority focus to outdoor opportunities which is largely piecemeal and often resourced. Venues who have festivals are more likely to consider outdoor work but with less festivals how to we create connection between outdoor arts and venues directly? Considered artists working successfully such as Dudendance and Alex Rigg often work with heritage partners. Companies like Vision Mechanics stand alone and then bring in venue partners surrounding engagement work etc, not a traditional programming transaction.

We discussed barriers. Some of them ‘perceived barriers’:

Weather (audiences more resilient than programmers realise)

Venues don't understand outdoor arts. We recognise outdoor arts covers a variety of spectrums.

Companies not approaching large audiences like the Traverse who have historically supported site specific companies like Grid Iron.

Often no ticket income for venues

Marketing materials particularly important for outdoor arts. Recognise making trailers is expensive.

Not sure who at the venue is most appropriate to speak to Performance Programmer/Creative Learning/Audience Engagement.

Large organisations won't respond to individual artists it needs a middle man

Hard to get programmers to see work/respond to e-mails.

What can we do?

Individual companies can make themselves aware of statistics surrounding outdoor arts from Outdoor Arts UK website (formally ISAN), useful when communicating with venues.

Consider how to engage programmers (more below) when they are time poor

When unknown to a programmer state clearly your context, who you have worked with etc, don't expect that they have a lot of time to research you and your work. If presenting a work in progress perhaps it's better to do daytime showings/perhaps alongside another work in progress where possible. If you want programmers to see your finished work as part of a festival make it clear to them what else they can see when they travel, advocate for each other, group activity.

Is Ed at Cumbernauld interested in outdoor work as part of Cumbernauld's new strategy/building opening? **LJ to contact**

Can Articulation do something for outdoor arts similar to what Company of Wolves did for experimental physical performance by travelling and speaking to venues? **In process**

Should we put less emphasis on venues and recognise outdoor arts can be creative about partnership e.g Scotrail, Upswings work with care homes and wellness funds.

11. PHYSICAL PERFORMANCE IN VIRTUAL SPACE

Called by Elspeth – partly as an example of how to call a session but also because I am curious about the ways that new technology can be used as an enhancement of live performance and/or to help practitioners to communicate.

I almost took it off the menu but it sounded like people had different and intriguing ideas about what I might be talking about so we went ahead.

Who came? Melanie Jordan, Diane Thornton, Martyn Dempsey, Ian Cameron, Lucas Kao, Zoe Darbyshire, Bob Bennet, Alice Strang. Kirsty Niven.

Among the things we talked about were:

- My experience of having a very constructive 2 hour long Skype with Terrapin Theatre Company in Tasmania to discuss – with a dozen puppetry practitioners in Edinburgh – how they might develop a piece that we had seen on video. We used Critical Response Process and it was very interesting. And saved a lot of air miles.
- Surge Festival have a new thing called Tech Box where tech folk and artists can collaborate and where there's an ambition to look at how virtual spaces can be built into the thinking of a project from the outset.
- With *Mess* a work in development, the company is looking at how to use pre- and post-show opportunities to communicate in meaningful digital/virtual ways with the audience – through white boards and video and sound.
- How motion capture and apps and immersive theatre relates to virtual theatre. Les Enfants Terribles and their *Alice ... Underground* show used tech, removing the character of Alice and allowing the audience to see things through her point of view.
- Live streaming and/or recording an intimate performance art live experience – a one-off that needs thoughtful curation and archiving
- The experience of using a VR headset through a live show and liking it enough to get one's own. How there's potential for inviting people with limited movement to experience things that are far-out like flight. Or creating a memory room for people with dementia. Or VR performance. Ridiculissimus have used the internet – Skype or some such – for rehearsal with four participants all in different locations. Or Salford Uni using iPads with people with dementia to create a virtual clown.

In lots of these examples I confess to a certain degree of bafflement and needed to check who was where, what was what and who was in what dimension seeing or able to experience what. It was quite brain frying. In a good way!

More stuff we talked about:

- Immersive film – where there's projections and stuff. What's the difference between being aware of the medium that we're experiencing and feeling totally IN the thing. Immersively.
- Vision Mechanics show *Oz* with the app that you could use to conjure up a scene enhancing what was physically visible in the room. (I wish I'd been there!)
- Garage Magazine has a feature where, with a certain app, you can interact with something on the page with your phone and 'see' a 'character' (or something) 'pop up' off the page. Apparently!
- What about holographic concerts ... including the kind that you can watch on your kitchen table. That's a thing ... allegedly!

So I was wondering, there's all these different things that you could do, but looking again at the title and the topic here of physical theatre. Say, for example, an aerial act with silks. What could virtual hoo hah allow you to do to experience or develop that differently than a standard performance with a twirling body in space witnessed by a more or less static audience.

Which led to a slew of cool ideas that I didn't write down but might well dream about. Cos the thing is ... it's all pretty trippy!

So on the one hand there's the capture of ephemeral performances in digital form. And on the other, the use of these technologies to capture the transient experience of life itself – allowing people to experience a dead loved one in, say, holographic form.

Artistically – and/or emotionally – what are the uses of these technologies that allow you to look at life differently?

There are now more virtual visitors to the National Galleries of Scotland (I think) than there are real life ones. And is there a risk that the virtual visitors have an experience that has less 'heart' to it?

Well maybe – different. But then look – you can make people feel like they're flying!

I was asking what people would choose to go and see or walk through or experience if you could get any VR experience. (I am still thinking about this – and I would love to have a go on a headset – hoping that it is a 'well-done' thing in terms of production values and stuff).

In dementia care it's something that can open up a whole world – witnessing someone experience almost immediate and very obvious joy when being shown – on a VR headset – a beach that she had visited as a child.

It's a bit like the *Playlist for Life* project where you can choose the songs that spark lovely memories (before you lose the ability to do so). Likewise, perhaps in future we'll be invited to select locations or experiences to put in our virtual library of stuff to experience. Or shows we'd like to see again.

And what can we do to make these experiences inherently social rather than increasingly solitary? It's a fascinating thing to witness – people sitting/standing there responding in a highly animated way to some stimulus that's invisible to the onlooker. And how could you use that very spectacle – of the VR headset wearing person – as a further stimulus to the witnesses for creative writing or storytelling – invent the story that they are part of.

People respond in different ways to the same thing (obviously – but perhaps in a different way with this virtual stuff). Some people could be all glee about something while others might get freaked out or queasy. Or fall over ;-)

So all in all that was a very interesting session. Be prepared to be surprised. I have lots to think about and dare say that at some point in my lifetime I will have more experience of this whole medium (if it is a whole medium or inherently a cross-genre/platform thing) as a user and – who knows – from a creative/collaborative point of view.

12. POSTURE – HOW TO HOLD THE BODY... YAY!

Session called by Benjamin

Aids characterisation

A posture can inspire in creating a character, helps focus on what you're doing throughout the show and maintain that.

Imagination – you can imagine how you would put your body as that character and how it would move.

Practice and training is needed to train the body to do the movements, to put it in that position.

Tension points – find out where that is and control that.

Mentality – how you think of doing it.

Relax – how you relax the body depending on what your position is as the character.

After care – what you do after you have portrayed the character to make sure that you can do it again.

13. SOLO? OR WHO IS PART OF YOUR PHYSICAL THEATRE PRODUCTIONS?

Convened by Veera Laitinen

Summerhall 25th February 2019

Tech Hub

Own session notes:

Individual research:

Identifying points around SM and devised theatre (article read)

- in most cases the companies cannot afford external person to run the project
- most companies self-contained and performers self-sufficient (on and off stage)
- less likely to have separate person to call and operate the show (one person can react better)
- standard theatre SM might follow script slavishly – often during a show the plan might go out of the window and whole team needs to be able to react
- “enabler to the creative process”, organize, propose solutions
- “allows the creativity to keep flowing
- clash of personalities
- not wanting to give up the control over to someone else

From a producer and a performer:

- freeing space for creativity would be great
- SM and extended production team in play from mid-scale to large production (6+ people)
- most companies (in Scotland?) small scale enterprises – all wear different hats to survive
- needs: safety awareness!, awareness what is the work and who is responsible
- have authority to speak out and questions things (reasoning for actions)
- working in circus: understanding of rigging and safety
- possible to take a production team member along to creative process – different input?

Other thoughts:

Currently, Scotland has very limited or no at all offer of mid-scale or large-scale productions which could employ e.g. a SM.

Does audiences know what is physical theatre? What does it mean to attend a physical theatre performance? What should expect as an audience member? Why does this/these theatre/s or actors ask for feedback from their show?

The sessions could have been 45-60mins long to accommodate more sessions and access to more

topics. Leaving a group meant missing out and arriving to another talk too late to understand all of it when 90mins sessions; slightly too long.

Actions?

Feeling end of the day (in three):

small-scale

deflated

too early

14. CULTURAL MAPPING

Melisa Miranda Correa

Session report:

Through this activity, we have been able to identify valuable places for performing art producers.

Spaces for **music performance** include the Quaker Meeting House, Leith Depot, Cellar bar, Skylight Bar and Sneaky Pete's.

North Edinburgh Arts is an interesting **multi-artistic space**, similar to Lyra theatre and Vision mechanics, that is not centralized.

Education centres are also considered important places: Edinburgh Stage Management School/Edinburgh Lighting & Sound School, which works in collaboration with Queen Margaret University; Napier university, where acting, playwriting and directing is taught; and Leith school of arts at St James church. There is also value in high schools, which allows students extra programmatic activities such as specified in performative arts (music especially).

Community centres are significant not only because of the contact with communities but also for the courses they offer. Tollcross Community Centre, Priestfield Church and Church Hill Theatre (or Merchiston Church), are high-value community centres; however, they are threatened with disappearing. Aerial house is an interesting new space that aims to become a community centre accessible to deprived communities, considering that circus can heal people and work with anxiety issues, among other benefits.

About spaces considered as an **obstacle but also an opportunity** we identified two centres:

First, Creative Scotland is seen as an opportunity but also as an obstacle regarding funding opportunities. Second, Pleasance 2 is seen as an obstacle for circus development because it opens only during The Fringe and the rest of the year is used as storage space, with circus infrastructure already installed.

More **traditional spaces for performance** such as 'The Storytelling Centre' and the 'Traverse Theatre' are highly valued by the community.

We can conclude that during this session we were able to identify a grade of **fragility** in the spaces that the community values and uses; these intensively face gentrification factors. Edinburgh University has sold important spaces such as the Old Forest Café and Big Red Door. 'Teviot Depot' and 'Edinburgh Palette', along with some community centres, are constantly threatened with disappearing due to an economic pattern that follows the demand for more accommodation, spaces for students and tourism rather than the artistic community. Through this map we will make visible those spaces and their significance.

Finally, temporal arts and festivals require performance people to commute from different places in the country; therefore for this activity, we not only received participants from Edinburgh, but also from Glasgow, Stirling and Sutherland. They have highlighted significant spaces for performance not only for the city but also for the whole country.

15. CIRCUS AND AERIAL RIGGING AND SAFETY

Facilitated by: Imogen Michel

Present: Ruaraidh, Hania, Miriam, Mark, Benjamin

Notes:

- A **circus rigging course in Scotland** has been being developed as a collaboration between Aerial Edge and RCS for several years and is ready to go but has yet to run for the first time. Currently it is planned as a five day course including assessment but potentially might become a course which runs over two weekends instead.
- Occasional two days **Rigging Fundamentals for Aerial Performance courses** run by Bryan Donaldson have taken place in Scotland – e.g. Edinburgh in 2014 and Inverness in 2018.
- Discussion about how we can **assess the safety of 'non-conventional' rigging points** such as wooden beams – conclusion that it comes down to asking the right people (i.e.

structural engineer or architect) and getting this down in writing as evidence of due diligence.

- **Winches** were also discussed as an American company coming to Scotland has requested one to rehearse in Aerial Art House. Covered the Sam Panda accident using a car winch and the need to get a proper performer flying winch which has the correct safeties along with an operator – this can be expensive! Suggestion that AAH ask what effect the company is looking for and investigate whether cheaper/safer alternatives are an option.
- **Jewellery** was discussed as this poses a danger to both equipment (e.g. through damage to aerial fabrics) and to people (e.g. ripping out piercings, degloving of fingers), and concerns that some tutors are not being strict enough in making students remove all jewellery, rings, watches etc before aerial work.
- The question was asked **where do people get their safety information from?**
 - Experienced/knowledgeable people (e.g. riggers)
 - Experience and common sense
 - Regulations such as LOLER and PUWER
 - Documentation
 - Rope access/IRATA courses
 - Companies such as Abaris and Firetoys – for example Firetoys recently added a post on rigging from trees.
- **First aid and RIDDOR reporting** – do people insist all their staff are first aid qualified? Some have just first aid at work but first aid for working at height courses also exist. One company is looking at getting a custom first aid course designed for them – other companies may also be interested in joining this.
- There is a need for people who are **Fabricators** of specialist aerial apparatus in Scotland. Imogen has used Leith-based companies Blakes Metal Centre to fabricate and George Brown and Sons for load testing for fabrication of spreader bars and special shapes of hoops in the past.
- Discussion of **Risk Assessments** – some people get a third party (e.g. Peninsula) to independently review their risk assessments.
- People in the circus/aerial industry often aren't hearing about **Product Recalls** such as the recent Firetoys trapeze recall, or **Counterfeit/Illegal PPE** and other products entering the UK such as two swivels recently found with fake CE marking in Scotland.
- **Accident, Incident and Near Miss Reporting** was discussed – often this happens within a company but is rarely shared to the wider community. Concerns over reputational damage to a company of sharing that these things have happened. Could a system be set up to anonymise these reports to share information and learnings to make us all safer? Some people have had to submit RIDDOR reports about freelancers/employees, but should we be RIDDOR reporting for our students too?
- **Equipment Inspections** – how often are these required? What does the law say? General view is that every 6 months is required under LOLER/PUWER. Legally you can do your own inspections internally as long as they are conducted without potential for “fear or favour” – but this doesn't look so good if anything does go wrong. Better to get an independent examiner in; some companies get an independent inspector in once a year

and do their own internal inspection in-between so that inspections are happening every 6 months.

- **Action Point:** In general it was agreed that **better information sharing** would be of use for the circus and aerial industry within Scotland and potentially the UK. It was agreed that Mark and Imogen will work together to develop a website and mailing list with newsletter about circus and aerial rigging and safety, aiming to have the first newsletter come out in March or April 2019. The idea with the website would be to collect documents/information and resources to improve the general level of knowledge and safety within Scotland. Long term we would like to also provide some kind of anonymous accident, incident and near miss reporting and information sharing service.