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The Magazine for Theatre at York St John  
Issue 9 Autumn 2014

## Objects in Performance

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## OBJECTS IN PERFORMANCE

We use objects in every aspect of our daily lives. We are almost always in contact with some kind of object: soft objects like clothes, bed sheets and sofas; hard objects like tables, phones and watches. We might argue that these objects are functional and, for the most part, necessary. There are, however, other, arguably unnecessary objects that aren't strictly speaking dysfunctional but do function differently. These objects may be in less contact with our bodies, they may be decorative, flat or temporary. However, the functionality of our objects does not change their importance or their complex relationship to our own subjectivity.

In our increasingly digital lives objects have become extensions of ourselves and other, 'actual' objects #irl, they increasingly 'stand-in' for a multiplicity of other things. For example, in June 2014 U.S. Ambassador Suzi LeVine was sworn in to office by placing her hand on an e-reader and not a printed book. Responses ranged from indifference to outrage as people began to question the authenticity of object meaning in this ritualized performance. What does it mean to swear an oath whilst placing your hand on the Bible? Could it be any book? Or a digital book as with LeVine? Or could it simply be the word 'bible' hand-written on a piece of paper? Whatever the answer, in our society, objects are given cultural, social and political value. Interestingly, in 2008 another controversial story caught the headlines for the opposite reasons.

The Royal Shakespeare Company's production of *Hamlet* confessed to be using a real skull for the part of Yorick. Actor David Tennant (yes, him off the telly) told the story of RSC pianist Andre Tchaikovsky who bequeathed his skull to the company in his will in 1982. The skull was unused until 2008 and fulfilled the wishes of Tchaikovsky who hated the use of a fake, plastic skull. Responses to this story were mainly unsupportive and said that the real skull was 'distracting' for audiences. Do theatre audiences find authenticity distracting? Are they actually that bothered, and can they really tell the difference from the stalls? In theatre and performance we are used to using objects as representations, extensions, signifiers and symbols. Other objects are used as authentic, everyday or readymade objects, closing the gap between art and life.

In traditional theatre the value of an object has relied upon its aesthetic qualities, its superficial appropriateness. Prop is a funny word, an abbreviation of 'property', which suggests that these objects belong to the characters that use them (but not the actors who play the characters who use them). However, the word prop also suggests a kind of holding or supporting, i.e. to prop something up, and in some respects this is perhaps more useful for us in relationship to contemporary performance. To consider the performance object as a support, as the thing that balances, holds, or enables the performer to perform. Is this where the authenticity of the object exists?

I don't think performance objects are too different from the objects we place value on in our lives but I do have a few questions about them. What is a performance object? Is there a difference between a performance object and a prop? Do the objects perform or do we perform them? Is an object in performance always a representation?

In order to answer these questions we have collected together 14 objects (and some props) from a variety of sources and a wide-range of practitioners. This issue of Theatre Pages presents these 'things' as an archive of performances, practices, forms and concepts. From the sculptural to the banal, the physical to the virtual, the hand made to the mass-produced, these objects are a mixture of scenography, phenomenology, utility and historiography. And, like the rest of the work involved in the practice of contemporary performance making, the objects presented here have their own stories, inscribed on their surfaces and described by their operators, handlers and owners. Familiar objects, found objects, sacred objects, objects that transform, objects that speak, objects that move and objects that present themselves. We have arranged these objects in a way that seemed fair, their size, from smallest to largest.

We hope that in understanding the personal ecology of our performance objects we might also come to understand the cultural and political economies of objects in performance.

Or, if you like, props.

## **NATHAN WALKER**

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## BISCUITS



Kingsley Baird is a visual artist and academic whose primary research field is an investigation of memory, cross-cultural memorialisation and public art. He is Associate Professor at Massey University, New Zealand.

*In July 2014 artist Kingsley Baird built a temporary memorial named Stela in the Militärhistorisches Museum der Bundeswehr in Dresden. The memorial comprised two elements: a stainless steel 'cenotaph' and biscuits in the shape of soldiers of different nationalities who fought in the First World War. During a 10-day performance in which he stacked 18,000 Anzac biscuits around the cenotaph, he had many interactions with the museum staff and visitors.*

Herr S. was bored. In the land of his birth perhaps he'd had a more stimulating occupation than museum attendant. But here, at least, his tall, thin frame was free to glide through the corridors of the majestic, nineteenth century Military History Museum. From time to time, during his 'rounds', Herr S. would stop to talk. On one occasion, fixing his gaze on the sculpture he observed:

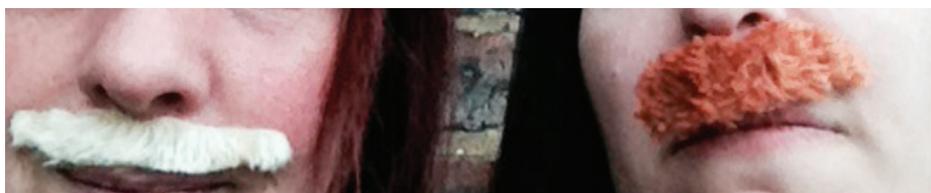
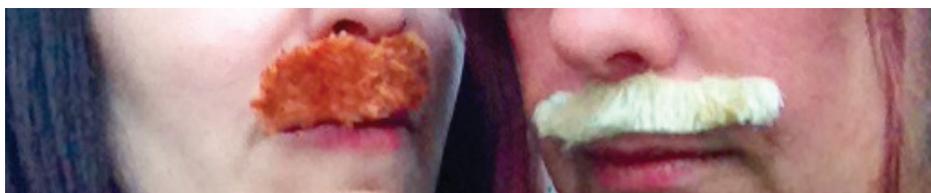
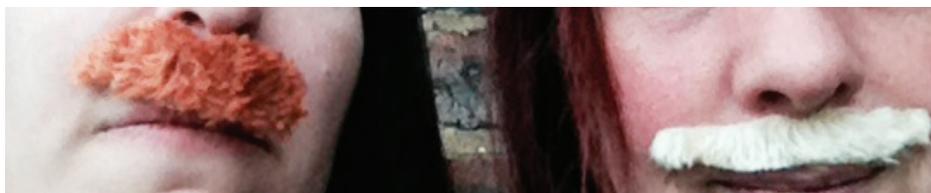
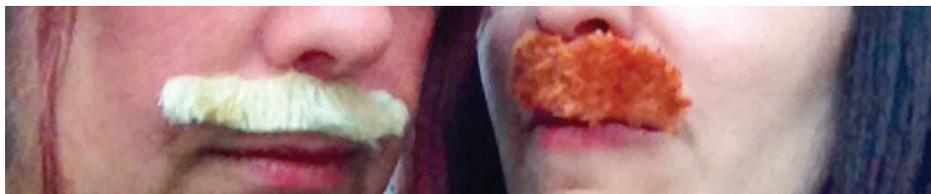
"I heard you describe it [to the visitors] as a denkmal. It is not a denkmal", he declared matter-of-factly. "A denkmal is like a building; it is a permanent place for memory to reside. This is not a denkmal". An affable discussion followed and I explained why it was a memorial even though it was made from temporary materials. Being ephemeral, it reflected the nature of memory and the eventual fate of the specific memory ascribed to remembrance forms. Herr S. said nothing; he would need to think about this notion of a memorial which was foreign to his own.

Herr S. and I shared repetitive actions. He walked (glided) around and around while, in public view, I stacked biscuits higher and higher against the four vertical sides of the steel cenotaph. The bottom two horizontal sections, each 300 millimetres high and containing approximately 3,000 soldier-shaped biscuits, had to be constructed while kneeling. As the stacks got taller I could stand upright. This enabled me to work faster, less concerned that the frequent conversations with visitors would compromise my completion date.

Eighteen thousand biscuits sounds a lot but soon I got into the rhythm of building the columns, until about 38 layers per section had been stacked. The number of layers varied a little because none of the biscuits – although quite precise in their length and thickness – was exactly the same as the next. Once the stacking was completed, visitors to the museum would be invited to eat a biscuit until finally all were consumed and the cenotaph was completely visible again.

On the tenth day, when the stacking was almost finished, Herr S. approached me. Obviously, he had been reflecting on our conversations which always returned to the nature of the sculpture I had been building. "You are right", he said without further explanation, "this is a denkmal."

## FALSE MOUSTACHE



Helen Turner is Senior Lecturer in Fine Art & Theatre at York St John University. She is also one-half of the folk duo Union Jill. [www.unionjill.org](http://www.unionjill.org)

What is it with men and beards at the moment? Are they asserting their masculinity in an area where women cannot easily compete? Or is it pure laziness? In a world where facial hair seems strictly the socially acceptable domain of the male, can women reclaim the moustache as their own?

Frosted feminist folk duo *Union Jill* have used facial hair in their shows long before Conchita Wurst won the 2014 Eurovision Song Contest. Having spent small fortunes and considerable amounts of time experimenting with different ways to remove the real thing (electrolysis is painful, bleach looks terrible and laser or IPL requires a mortgage) what is now required for our performances is a false moustache. But why would we want to disguise ourselves so unconvincingly as men?

In Saudi Arabia it is still illegal for women to drive. Some women are brave enough to risk arrest, protesting by driving at nightfall in supermarket car parks *#saudiwomen2drive*. What would I do if faced with this scenario? Sit at home, watch the telly and wait for the law to change? Or slap on a false moustache and try my luck driving on the highway? It is easy to be passive about inequality and segregation. *Union Jill* won't be passive, I won't be passive.

I'll never be mistaken for the bravest one,  
Who stands up for the rights of woman kind,  
but who will yet be counted when all's said and done  
is this some other woman's fight?

Would you drive, or would you hide?  
Would you swallow your frustration inside?  
Would it make you feel alive  
If you drive?

The path of least resistance leads to ruins end  
Abandon hope if you do enter here.  
Passive keeping distance and nothing mends,  
We are held by our own fear.

Somewhere in the night, she's taking her own time  
Somewhere in the night, she's making up her mind,  
Somewhere in the night, she's driving till she finds  
Courage or the ones outspoken, those who sleep shall be woken...

CORPUS



Lawrence Crawford is a performance maker and MA Theatre & Performance student at York St John University.

Some people spend their entire lives trying to find Jesus – I met him last April, in a church of all places! Now, it is necessary to the plot to tell you that I am not a Christian, but when I met him – Jesus, that is – he was a lot smaller than I had imagined. Nor was he moving; I feared him dead, so to make sure, I performed an autopsy cadaverum on him there and then, to which he bled the words of the Pathologist:

“Payouts Oats Yup Soya Put Oat Yups Auto Spy Pats You Taps You Past You Spat You Sputa Yo Spay Out Pays Out Yaps Out Apt Yous Pat Yous Tap Yous Pay Outs Pay Oust Yap Outs Yap Oust Say Pout At Soupy Tau Posy Ya Stoup Ya Pouts Ya Spout Ay Stoup Ay Pouts Ay Spout A Typo Us A Sot Yup A Toys Up A Soy Put A To Yups A Out Spy A Toy Ups A Toy Pus A Toy Sup A Yo Puts Pa Toy Us Apt Yo Us Pat Yo Us Tap Yo Us Pay To Us Yap To Us As To Yup As Toy Up As You Put Sat Yo Up Say To Up At So Yup At Soy Up At Yo Ups At Yo Pus At Yo Sup Ya Top Us Ya Pot Us Ya Opt Us Ya So Put Ya Sot Up Ya To Ups Ya To Pus Ya To Sup Ay Top Us Ay Pot Us Ay Opt Us Ay So Put Ay Sot Up Ay To Ups Ay To Pus Ay To Sup”

Something on a similar vein can be heard in The Book of Deuteronomy, Chapter 21: Verse 22-23, for those interested in what it has to say. But I believe (as does Miss Connors – coroner\* and lead singer of 1950s pop band The Teddy Bears), that the negligence of disregarding what 21: 22-23 says, will jeopardize the request for an optology report – to perform a full retinal removal and inspection of the deceased, to allow me to see with his eyes what determined cause of death – so, for now, we may never know.

\*Miss Connors is not a trained coroner

## SMOOTH STONES



Cath Heinemeyer is a Storyteller and PhD candidate at York St John University.

These stones are silky, cool and individual, with swirling patterns, seams and cracks. I keep them in a chocolate truffles box and bring them to storytelling workshops with teenagers or adults. Their tones are poised between 'earth' and 'bright' so that they feel like the best colours of nature – they bring a little bit of the natural world into an environment teeming with lurid elastic band bracelets and hot pink stationery.

When pairs or groups work together in storytelling exercises they need an object to pass between them, to anchor the teller and give them the right to hold the floor – like the conch in *Lord of the Flies*. These stones fit the bill. For an anxious teller, one of these can also act as a worry stone while it's their turn.

The first challenge is for groups to choose one. Here all pretence of indifference is swept away and the entire collection is pored over until the perfect stone has been chosen. Arguments can break out.

Then it might be that each person in the group has to tell a personal experience to the others, or retell part of a story from last week. The others will not be allowed to comment or ask questions until the teller is finished their story. This is a shockingly unusual type of conversation – you wouldn't manage it without something tangible to represent the rules.

My collection is smaller than it once was because sometimes one or two stones get stolen. I know this because occasionally a boy or girl will be leaving the classroom and then turn back hesitantly to give me back the stone that they had stashed away in their pocket.

# BLUE KETTLE



Matthew Reason is Professor of Theatre and Performance at York St John University.

I honestly cannot remember whether or not there was a blue kettle in Caryl Churchill's play, *Blue Kettle*. If there was then it wasn't this one.

The play is about a man who pretends to be the long-lost son of five elderly women who gave their children up for adoption. It draws the audience into these compelling encounters, gets us emotional invested, and then proceeds to undercut the naturalism of the drama through the erosion of language. As if infected by a virus the words 'blue' and 'kettle' begin to replace the logical words in sentences, kettle the characters can only blue the words 'blue' kettle 'kettle'. Eventually kettle these blue kettle are removed blue bl blu kettle only ket blu bl k k k.

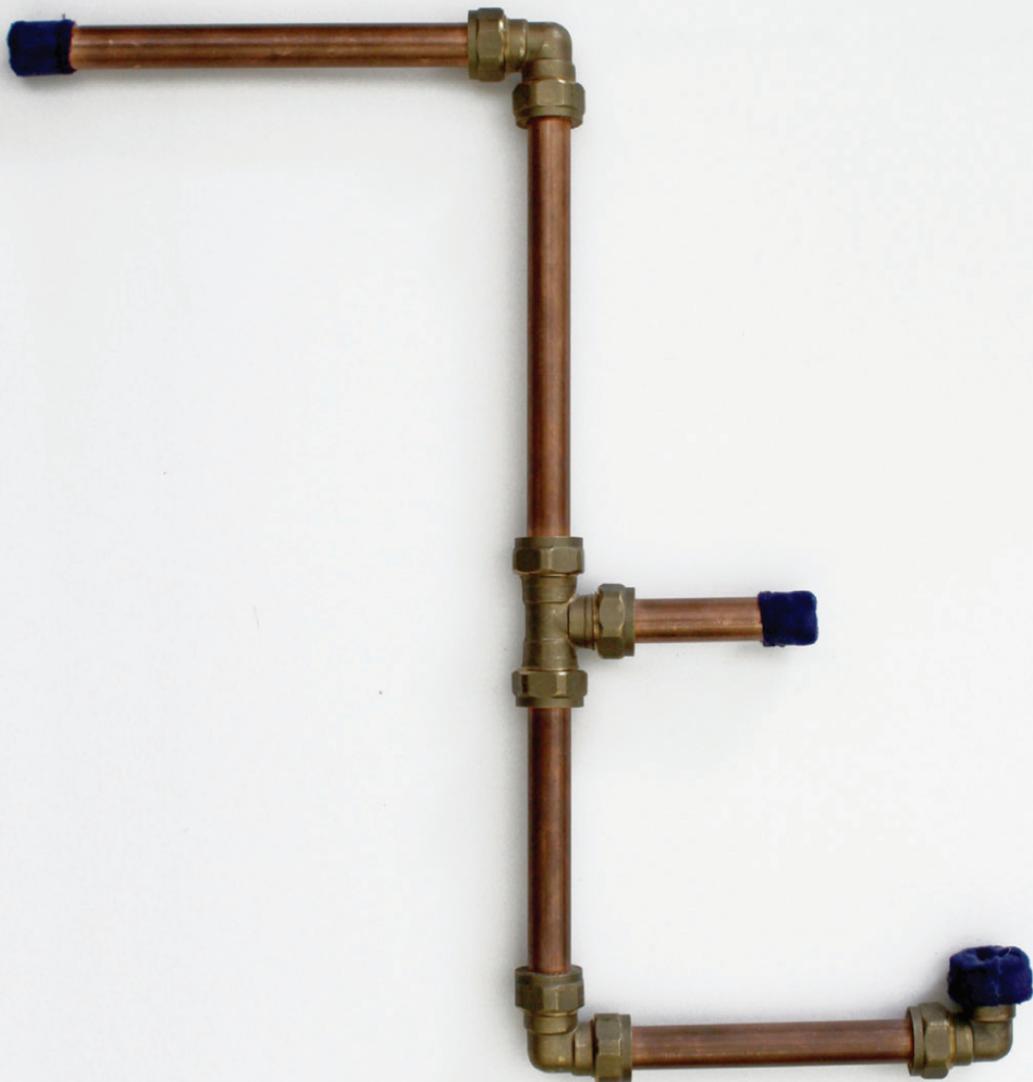
At what should be the emotional climax of the play, when the man is confronted about his callous behavior and we learn the reasons for his actions, the language has become entirely incomprehensible. While the audience can still follow the emotion and the tension, through the gestural and emotional performances of the actors, the removal of the specifics of the story – who where when why – both distances and elevates the action to a more metaphorical level. The breakdown of language performs the breakdown of the characters' lives, symbolic of the inadequacy of language and the artificiality of naturalistic theatre. *Blue Kettle* is what Churchill has termed an 'anti-play', which very consciously and deliberately destroys it's play-ness from within.

Soon after seeing the performance – at the Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh, in 1997 – my partner and I needed a new kettle and of course we bought a blue one. And over the next 17 years each time our kettle has needed replacing we have bought a blue one. We used to have to make visits to dozens of shops to find one we liked. The internet has made life much easier.

So for me boiling the kettle – or buying a new kettle – is always a reminder of the betrayal of language in the face of our most desperate need to communicate. Or, more positively, it reminds me of the potential of theatre to stimulate not just in the moment of performance but also enduringly. For the audience a performance does not end with the applause or even that cursory aftershow conversation. The best of theatre can resonate far longer.

In many ways the play is not the thing. The play is just an excuse for the imaginative, emotional and intellectual responses of the audience. And equally the blue kettle is not kettle thing. The blue kettle is blue a kettle for blu blu ket bl bl ket k ke bl. Kettle.

## COPPER PIPING



Ella Finer is a writer, artist and lecturer whose practice in theatre, photography and sound explores the relationship of the gendered body and voice.

I made this object six years ago for a performance installation where I was seated, speaking and listening to myself through the copper pipe 'listening prop'. I named and conceived of this structure as a prop quite specifically as I am interested in how the voice has the ability to act like a shifting stage property, as an immaterial material belonging to many bodies, times and spaces, even appearing as ventriloquised through other stage objects. In this instance, I used the copper piping structure to funnel the sounds of my voice back into my own ear as an exercise in channelling, experimenting with constrictions of voice as an artistic choice. I wonder how the material properties and qualities of the voice might alter in listening through the piping structure.

In practice, the act of constricting my voice meant that not only access to the materiality of voice was restricted, but meaning too. **The only way an audience member could hear me would be to place an ear to the plumbing thus constricted** by the route I had directed and designed for my voice. The audience sitting at a distance had to change their own body's position in the space and become a part of my installation if they wanted to hear what I was saying. Copper as a solid material conducts the vibrations of sound more quickly than air, so **the acoustics of the listening apparatus led to a transmission which at times became non-linguistic**, as the material of the conduit reverberated with my breath.

BOX / WOMAN



Victoria Little is an MA Theatre & Performance student at  
York St John University.

An Object is a thing, a being and a concept; an object is a Box. *Peeping out and peering in-stuck, stored in that trunk. Hidden from button-bridal sight, shipped up, sent still waiting.* And the box represents objectification, compartmentalisation and personal affliction.

The physical body and presence of the object in '(WO)MAN STOW', an MA one wo-man show I performed in 2014, was consumed and concealed within an assembly of masses, of other trinkets and tokens, manifesting as an absent organism upon the stage. It sought to echo Peter Emil Madsen's collection of donations to York City Art Gallery; he was a generous benefactor and the project's objective muse.

This commission was set up as a theatrical understanding and venture into the philosophical importance of objects. We desired to pinpoint the effect of their deeper substance, their qualitative apprehension and their relation to former, other and self.

Through this process I noted that man reveals himself and not his objects. In a patriarchal world dependent on 'thing', 'having', 'ownership' and 'object' I wished to pursue woman's revelation, exposure and selfhood. If man reveals himself (his mind) and NOT his object (his form), does this depict woman as an article for gaze; revealing her presence merely as physical, unsolicited for uttered appreciation? Why is wo-man boxed away?

*Words emerge, shoulders of words, legs, arms, hands and plams -  
Ready to story-share- scr-r-ritch, scractch, scratch, scritch.*

We could argue that objects should so be arranged by their ability to tell their very own story. An object or 'objective narrative'; but negotiating between the themes of inheritance, value and place, it seemed clear that this boxed-in-being deserved a microphone.

*In dust and decay-The pending (Wo) man stowed and secure.*

If so what are the consequences, what does the object entity and form reveal? What is its worth?

# TUMBLEWEED



Jonathan Curd is a graduate of BA Theatre at York St John University and member of Meander Indoors Theatre Company.

Here come the Comedians, dressed in their lavish felt jackets and smartest worn out shoes. The first takes his spotlight, centre stage, as white knuckles clench the microphone. His shaking breath resonates from the dying PA, as the working class predators wait for him with fierce stares and half-supped bitters. The Comedian drops his jaw and reaches for a napkin his Mum packed for him and begins wiping the sweat dripping from his trembling brow.  
Right.

*A Man walks into a Pub and ask for a Pint a Water. Bar Man says "That'll be £3.75." Man says "Why?" Bar Man says "Cause you just bought a Pint from a Pub.*

Tumbleweed do enter stage right the scene from a Western; a lone wanderer, trailing with the howl from the endless wastelands. The symbol of the barren, the humourless, the off-time punchline. The occupant of the isolate; the propagation of desolation. A backdrop prop, unheeded extra. Like the cryptic leather jacket, Harley driving drifter who travels the states alone; that's just how he rolls...

*(Harsh Wind Howl/Cricket Noise/Tumbleweed)*

...and there he goes again.

The Ruderal Opportunist, Home Town: Eurasia.  
At the borders of Portmanteau, polluted by the mafic (Magnesium/Ferric) smog (Smoke/Fog), the Metrosexuals (Metropolitan/Heterosexual) and Feminazis (Feminist/Nazi) busy themselves in Pleather (Plastic/Leather) Motels (Motor/Hotel) with their cyberdelic (Cybernetics/Psychedelic) literotica (Literature/Erotica).

*(Harsh Wind Howl/Cricket Noise/Tumbleweed)*

...and there he goes again.

Even with nothing in sight, the tumbleweed will keep on rolling.  
(Unless it's caught by a fence, or tangles with another tumbleweed, then it can't roll.) The Tumbleweed tumbles best in barren lands.

*(Harsh Wind Howl/Cricket Noise/Tumbleweed)*

...and there he goes again.

With thanks to: Amaranthaceae, Amaryllidaceae, Apiaceae, Asphodelaceae, Brassicaceae, Boraginaceae, Caryophyllaceae, Fabaceae, Lamiaceae, Poaceae.

# CHAIR



Jane Arnfield is Reader in Arts at Northumbria University, Newcastle.

Carol Martin is Professor of Drama at Tisch School of the Arts, NYU, New York.

When Mike Alfreds and Jane Arnfield began the development phase of adapting the book *The Tin Ring*, a memoir by the Holocaust survivor Zdenka Fantlova, into theatre in May 2011, they used a single chair as their sole set piece. The text excavation work that preceded rehearsal had taken eighteen months. Collaborative editing from recorded interviews with Zdenka allowed for discussions about the importance of her story and of telling and retelling the story in rooms full of chairs filled with spectators. “I imagined an audience entering an auditorium of empty seats waiting to be filled. One empty chair facing the auditorium would stand waiting for its storyteller and the story itself,” wrote Jane.

The simple wood chair used in *The Tin Ring* acts as a prop, a designator of place, a character, an indicator of presence and absence and simply as a chair. It is a specific material object and a signifier of rooms, places, worlds, situations, memory, loss and redemption. The empty chair on stage before the performance begins foreshadows a story of one, singularly told. As the performance unfolds, the chair on stage is the single iteration of the multiple seats in the auditorium. On stage and in the auditorium the chairs wait for human presence to fill them and for something to happen. On the first day of rehearsal, a sentence ricocheted in Jane’s head as both the director and performer homed in on the content: “Pull up a chair Jane, pull up a chair Mike, and tell me a story...” Coming together to create a sustained telling symbolized here by ‘pulling up a chair...’ became, for Jane, a roadmap for the construction of a theatrical world that begins with a conversation between Zdenka and an interviewer who asks her about her life. The interview frames the performance and gives a reason for its telling.

The transformation of the chair accompanies and embodies the narration of Zdenka’s life: in turn, a single chair on stage becomes the family dinner table, a bedroom, a hospital, a sick bed, a biscuit factory, London, Prague, and concentration camps. The chair refers to these, stands for these, and invokes these. The chair is Eliot’s “objective correlative”, the physical thing that is not what it stands for and is all the more powerful for pointing and becoming. In performance the togetherness shared by performer and director, Arnfield and Alfreds, became the creation shared by performer and spectators.

The chair is the marker of the journey of one life as told by another. Zdenka’s inside becomes Jane’s outside. The theatrical inventions invite spectators to co-construct the story with Jane. Spectators create on the screen of their imaginations the details; they dress the set and see the characters populating the different places in the story. The spectators see in their mind’s eye what is not there and in so doing place themselves in the center of the action.

BODY / IT



Amy Camsell & James Norris are graduates of BA Theatre at  
York St John University.

Refer to it as 'it' in order to avoid gendering.

It can be used individually as 'other' or indeed to replace one of our bodies.

It will be treated with respect and care.

It will not represent anything specifically.

'It' is not a specific part.

It won't stop standing in for my mother and our unborn child.

It's stuffed full of stolen fabric.

It was constructed by dismantling a Halloween dummy; it used to have green rubber hands.

**– AMY**

'It' became the saviour of the performance. 'It' allowed for moments of complete separation, it allowed James to interact with his Mum, it allowed me to interact with our unborn child, it allowed us to interact as though it were each other, it allowed us to have another presence in the space which never spoke or had anything specific to do other than just be. I could not play James' mother, he could not play our child and so 'It' allowed us to redefine the positions we each held in the space. The dummy allowed us to take a step back, leaving the other person to have an uninterrupted moment with whatever they wanted 'It' to be at that time.

**– JAMES**

Our bodies, including the dummies are explored in relation to one another, we acknowledge our similarities and differences and wonder what part our bodies play in the building and forming of people. My mother gave birth to me; she killed her body; Amy will give birth to our child; Amy's body is undergoing a constant trauma of Crohn's disease; I fear that my body is too weak to support hers. To explore one's body is to explore one's life, forwards and backwards in time. To explore another's body is to explore the inner working of relation. To borrow the body of a dummy is re-enact and fabricate realities in order to understand, attempt to 'fix' the past and project into the future.

## CORSET(S)



Mark Jeffery is a Chicago based performance/installation artist, curator and educator at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He co - founded ATOM-r in 2012 with Judd Morrissey. [atom-r.com](http://atom-r.com) / [www.markjefferyartist.org](http://www.markjefferyartist.org)

The Operature's set is comprised of a DIY interactive operating table and four modular table-leaves that, when combined, form a large banquet table that, at times, serves as a stage. The central table is used as an instrument to control screen-based content and map AR overlays to geo-physical coordinates in the space. Bryan Saner built the tables for us. He also built two 'legs' that were to be attached at either end of the central screen based table as a way to heighten and stabilise the table. During a rehearsal in November of 2012 ATOM-r performer Chris presented an image that would become foundation for the work to come, and also one that was startling and for me a turning point in the making of the work. He placed the two table legs around his waist. Locking his torso in with these wooden blocks. Tight. He held his hands around the two blocks at his hips so they could hold him in. He lay on the floor. He lay facedown on the constructed table. He was divided, his legs and torso. We invited Bryan back to the rehearsal space and asked him if he could think of a way that the blocks could be put together during the performance. Bryan drilled two brass hooks onto either end of the wooden blocks so that Chris could also walk without having to hold onto the blocks. We thought of him as if wearing a corset.

In rehearsal as the performance developed, we knew we wanted Blake, Justin and Sam to also have a corset to wear. Bryan built us three more corsets. At a #rehearsalsaturday on March 16th 2013, that Judd was overseeing, Blake, Justin and Sam, one by one lay themselves on top of each other, with their bodies locked into the corsets. At the next #rehearsalthursday Chris completed the 4 stacked men image and mounted on top of three body pile to create four men stacked, piled, inserted, grouped, a vertical daisy chain, a final image that became one of curiosity, intensity, torturous: 4 laced bodies of bondage, stiffness and scanned and surveilled by Judd completing the image reading from the screen on his phone a data location driven poem over the 4 men, shirtless, trouserless, sock, shoes removed. Legs stacked, spread, butt cheeks exposed with a rose tattoo and jockstrap.

## DOORS



Nathan Walker is an artist and writer working primarily in performance art. He is Senior Lecturer in Performance at York St John University and co-director of Oui Performance. [www.nathan-walker.co.uk](http://www.nathan-walker.co.uk).

I tend to work with (too) many objects, never generic, always specific. Over the last few years I have worked predominantly with a collection of objects that belong(ed) to my dad or were 'lifted' from my family home in West Cumbria, without permission. I use these family objects because their history is somehow shared with mine, we grew up in the same house. It is that house that has also provided the impetus for working with domestic, interior, solid wooden doors.

In 2009 I presented a durational performance entitled *HARD POOR & DEAD* at Plymouth Arts Center. I was fortunate enough to work with three doors and a multitude of other objects as part of a series of improvised actions. I had previously used doors as surfaces for collages; found surfaces for found objects. However, **the doors in *HARD...*** were not used as actual doors. Like most of the objects in my performances the doors were used unconventionally (dysfunctionally?) and with sculptural intentions. As a domestic object, we can read doors in multiple ways. Semiotically, we might think of them as markers of thresholds, liminal objects, or things that open and lead, or close and restrict. But I'm not really bothered about semiotics. I have been drawn to doors because of their size and weight. A door is an unwieldy, clumsy thing, difficult to carry. Proportionally human scale, domestic doors are the size of a person. They became transformed into other bodies in the space of the performance. I performed tasks of holding the door, throwing one door at another, and eventually fragmenting the doors into door-limbs.

In 2013 I was commissioned by Performance Space, London, to produce a new install-action and I returned to working with doors. This performance, *NAPE*, **used doors sculpturally to create an installed space where the performance could emerge.** I had prepared 6 doors by painting them black and for each hour of the performance I wrote, unsighted, onto each door with chalk. This task was a durational writing exercise; an experiment in semi-automatic writing. **The doors in *NAPE*** were used as enlarged surfaces for writing, inverted black pages for white 'text' to build into white noise.

## WARDROBE



Jules Dorey Richmond is a sculptor who makes books, video installations and performances. She is Senior Lecturer in Theatre at York St John University.

For as long as I can remember, I have been fascinated by wardrobes. The wardrobe is a recurring motif in my arts practice, and it appears in no less than 7 original pieces of work ranging from performances, to installations, photographs, video and book works.

I have transformed the wardrobe into a shrine, confessional, bomb shelter, secret garden and stage for a nativity play. I have filled it with clothes, books, salt, earth, leaves, sound and light. I have projected film, video and slides onto, out of, as well as within the wardrobe, images of blue sky and scudding clouds, the moon and stars, green rolling hills, crashing waves, a house, room, street. Moving backdrops for women lost and found, and caught between projections of a naked Adam and Eve playing catch on either side of the wardrobe doors – their various objects appearing and disappearing with every catch and throw.

I have hidden in it, reading extracts from Anne Frank's Diary, my body squeezed into a tiny shelf space lit only by the light of a torch the image seemingly hovered like magic in mid-air.

In *Keep Mum* the wardrobe is a place of discovery and self-reflection, as I recall how as a young child that, "I would sit in the bottom of my mum's wardrobe, the top of my head skimming the bottom of her dresses. Contained within in a buff A4 envelope, her first wedding photos. Fingering the ancient black and whites my eyes would search for clues as to what she felt on that day. Shouldn't it have been the happiest day of her life?" I have made a flick-book depicting my own wardrobe, which opens to reveal my daughter occupying the space under the hems of my brightly coloured dresses.

I have invited people into, and through, the wardrobe to encounter dreamlike spaces – of a suspended tissue paper wrapped house holding the image of a child dancing in slow motion; using it as a liminal space between two worlds of the real and imagined, between the here and now and the half-remembered there and then. The wardrobe, as a container of memories and dreams, has never lost its mystery, magic, and sense of excitement that I initially experienced when I was a child but that's another story...

# STATION WAGON



Sam Van Aken is an artist and Associate Professor of Art at Syracuse University. His work crosses and melds such genres as sculpture, sound, video, and performance.

The installation, 01:18:42:27, is from the body of work entitled *Becoming Roy Neary*. At the center piece of this installation is a 1986 Buick Century station wagon, purchased for \$300 at a Kiwanis Club auction in Old Town, Maine; intended to emulate the 1977 Ford LTD station wagon from the film *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. In a contemporary version of Don Quixote, the car was driven to Muncie Indiana and from there traced the pilgrimage of the film's protagonist, Roy Neary, from Indiana to Devil's Tower in Wyoming. *Becoming Roy Neary* attempts to carry the narrative of the 1977 sci-fi classic into lived experience and like Cervantes novel exists in the dissonant moments that occur where the lived and the fictive converge. Like Quixote's armor, the station wagon is a crude approximation of desire, an absurd prop unless looked at through the lens of narrative.

# FORTHCOMING PERFORMANCES AND EVENTS

Wed 17th Sept	Performance Fields MA Festival
1pm	Performance by Nathan Walker in Theatre Studio 2
5pm	Performance by Lawrence Crawford in Arts Workshop
Thurs 18th Sept	
2.30pm	Performance by Kiran Tanna in Theatre Studio 1
6pm	Performative Lecture by Carl Lavery & Lee Hassall in Quad South Hall
Fri 19th Sept	
5.30pm	Presentation by Artists in Residence Ella Finer
Wed 1st Oct	Performing House 'Rantin' by Wounded Knee in Quad South Hall
Wed 8th – Fri 11th Oct	Cultures of Memory II. An International Research Symposium hosted by York St John University
Sat 12th Oct	Memory Matters. Masters student symposium on cultural memory, in collaboration with Syracuse University
9.30am-4.30pm	
Mon 13th Oct	'Arthur Author' by Meander Indoors Theatre Company at York Theatre Royal. Theatre Graduate Prize 2014 Showcase Event
7.45pm	
Tue 14th – Thurs 16th Oct	Level 1 Theatre trip to Featherstone Castle
Wed 15th Oct	Level 2 Dialogue Day
Mon 20th Oct	Narrative, Women and Prisons. International Centre for Arts and Narrative Studio Talk at York Theatre Royal
7.00pm	
Wed 29th Oct	Performing House 'Bird' by Root Theatre in Theatre Studio 1
Mon 3rd Nov	Narrative, Art and Democracy. International Centre for Arts and Narrative Studio Talk at York Theatre Royal
7.00pm	
Wed 5th Nov	Performing House 'Control Signal' by Karen Christopher Haranczak/Navarre in Quad South Hall
Mon 10th – Wed 12th Nov	Level 3 Theatre trip to London
Tue 18th – Thurs 20th Nov	'More Tales from Kafka' by Out of Character Theatre Company at York Theatre Royal
7.45pm	
Sun 18th – Wed 21st Jan	Level 2 Theatre trip to Karkow, Poland