

Nina Kane, Cast-Off Drama / Ocarina Nina Street -Theatre & Singing.

Playful Loitering /Busking Bodies/ Subversive Singing: Why street-theatre is essential to our cities

The paper draws on the speaker’s 25-year history of busking in UK city centres, and notes the increasing importance of playful loitering in the urban space. It notes the changing attitudes of the general public to costumed performance in the city in recent years and considers the role of leisure technology, CCTV and street-policing in influencing public response to live urban performance. It suggests that singing– particularly acapella singing – brings a necessary breath to the streets and is essential to maintain. The paper further argues that costumed performance in the current climate effects a disruptive and transgressive intervention that troubles the British public with an uneasy nostalgia. It considers whether buskers can provoke *unheimlich* conditions with song, and asks how performers can adapt to changing social and legal conditions that render the simple act of public singing ghostly, subversive and queer. The paper suggests that street-singing has always enjoyed an ambivalent relationship to commerce, and brought mixed responses from the public and from city authorities. It asks what cultural or economic values street-singers represent and whether these values are increasingly in tune or at odds with the British public’s perception of normalcy, performance and the function of city spaces. Noting Michel de Certeau’s ideas on space, the paper asks whether buskers effect a necessary delinquency to the ‘practiced place’ of the street, and how the singing, busking, performative body can resist marginalisation and ‘inscribe itself into the interstices of the codes’ of the urban space it both ‘undoes and displaces’.

Dr Nina Kane is Artistic Director of Cast-Off Drama and Ocarina Nina Street-Theatre & Singing. She performs The Singing Secretary, Fiona Folk and Christmas Carol in festivals, shopping malls, streets and bus stations. She has busked for 25 years and holds a PhD in Drama and Philosophy.

Simon Pope, The Ruskin School of Art, University of Oxford, UK and **Saskia Warren**, University of Birmingham, UK.

Performing public art-geography in Simon Pope’s ‘Forwards Back Together’

This paper represents a collaborative documentation of Simon Pope’s *Forward Back Together* (2013), a commissioned dialogic artwork which used participatory methods to engage different publics. It stages a fictional and non-fictional performance of the story of Raymond Mason’s *Forward* (1991), a work of public art destroyed by arsonists in 2003. *Forward*

Back Together involved: meetings with participants; a four-hour long recorded script development workshop; a radio broadcast and public Q&A. Simon Pope designed the artwork in dialogue with the commissioners, Vivid Projects, Birmingham. The main body of the paper comprises fragments of participants' voices recorded during the workshop and taken from the limited-edition transcript. In cultural geography this work builds upon the writing of Tim Hall on Mason's *Forward* and, in particular, his concern on the limitations of studies on the post-industrial urban landscape that miss "the crucial and complex audience dimension" (Hall 2003: 231). Performance is utilised as a way of intervening in the cultural memory of the city by re-staging events to offer alternatives to the dominant narrative of urban regeneration and resistance; transforming an arson attack into a radical public engagement with public art and public space. The dialogic is presented as a philosophical concept in *Forwards Back Together* raising questions of: responsibility and engagement in public artworks; the problematics of speaking on behalf of others; and the challenge of representing the liveliness and spontaneity of human and nonhuman encounter. The audio excerpts are curated in this paper, a new interaction of *Forward's* life, with visual prompts.

Simon Pope, artist and doctoral researcher, is interested in walking and talking with others, and establishing more-than-human engagements through dialogic art practice e.g *Memory Marathon* (2010), *A Song, A Dance And A New Stannary Parliament* (2014). Pope is author of *London Walking* (2000) and represented Wales at the Venice Biennale (2003).

Dr Saskia Warren is a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow in Cultural Geography. She is lead researcher on an AHRC funded project *Cultural Intermediation and the Creative Urban Economy* and principle investigator on a Communities and Culture Network + funded project *The Birmingham Surrealist Laboratory*. Her current research interests are community engagement and practice-based interventions in the cultural and creative economy, with a focus on Birmingham.

Greg Foster, University of Salford and **Jana Wendler**, University of Manchester, UK.

Enchanted rabbit holes: inviting play in the city

The city is a unique location for play: its vibrancy, diverse material environments and intense social interactions provide a great basis for the creativity and challenges of playing. This is where pervasive (or street / urban / alternate reality) game designers situate their work. They create experiences that disrupt the everyday, construct new meanings and encourage a different relationship with the city. Yet it is hard to define pervasive games, and their potential is only beginning to be explored in an academic setting, as they blend different art forms and alternative urban engagements into something new.

As a theatre practitioner and an urban geographer working together in the game design company The Larks, we want to draw on our joint experience and different academic backgrounds to discuss a key concern for pervasive game makers: how can we invite people to play in the city? This question is fundamental for our work, which tries to take people from their everyday life into what are often strange and fantastical worlds, and which require more than a little jump down the rabbit hole.

But this issue of play invitation has relevance beyond making a particular game experience work. It corresponds to a more general concern about participation and emancipation. How can we entice people away from their role as spectators – in a theatre, in a city – towards a more active, engaged mode of being, in which they have the possibility to act in response to their environment? By drawing on examples from our work with the Larks, we want to explore pervasive games as a wider political urban performance.

Greg Foster can often be found collaborating with pervasive game company *The Larks* (Manchester) and has attended conferences and festivals in England, Germany, Denmark, Poland and Italy. He is currently working towards a Ph.D at the University of Salford. The research is looking into the links between theatre/performance and gaming and the emergent live work in this area. magicedars@me.com

Jana Wendler is a Human Geographer currently finishing her PhD on urban spaces of experimentation. She has worked on creative urban projects with guerrilla geographers *The Geography Collective* and Berlin-based *ExperimentCity*. She is also part of the Manchester-based pervasive game company *The Larks*, where she has co-designed games for streets, museums and theatres. jana.wendler@manchester.ac.uk

Gillian Dyson-Moss, Leeds Metropolitan University, UK.

Behind the Houses

The paper will reflect upon a photo-research action that took place in the ten-foots of suburban West Hull. The research action was a mapping of the social- domestic site; locating the inhabiting of place *in*, and *of* the liminal, non-places of these specific alleyways. How is this a method of action research, and where is this process located in the (sub)urban context? How is the detritus found in such a place a reflection of the material culture of the (sub)urban landscape?

I will reflect my experience of working with notions of 'site specificity', looking at the semiotics of object and architecture as a means of communication sense of place. I will refer to a body of work that emerges from the intersection of different cultural practices (architecture, heritage archive, fine art) and reflect upon the performance as both an exploration of 'non-place' and as a redefining of 'sense of place'. (Augé, M 1995)

How does the artist embody a *genius loci*; looking and materials in site, simultaneously located in the 'here' and the 'absent'? I will look at the performance as creating a 'place of memory' for artist and audience, and in turn contributing to the cultural mapping of peripheral spaces, with particular reference to detritus objects found on site or taken into site in the performance action.

Gillian Dyson's practice explores identity and memory, with internationally commissions including National Review of Live Art 2010, and Visualeyez Festival Canada 2011. Currently working with Union 105, on a new live work for Chapel Town, Leeds, Dyson is Course Leader in Performance, Leeds Metropolitan University, and is undertaking PhD Research Studentship in Theatre Studies, University of Glasgow.