



Royal Conservatoire
of Scotland



Nexus#1: IN/ACTION

The Contemporary Performance in Higher Education Network

2 - 4 December 2020

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES (in alphabetical order)



Josh Armstrong

Lecturer in Contemporary Performance Practice, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Josh Armstrong is an interdisciplinary performance director, researcher and lecturer. His work is characterised by bold design, visual composition and artistic collaboration. He is the Artistic Director of *Objet-a Creative Studio*. Josh has worked with the Glasgow-based internationally-renowned producing art house *Cryptic* since 2009, becoming the first *Cryptic Artist* in 2011. He has directed the work of composers including Gavin Bryars, Kathryn Joseph, Oliver Coates, David Donaldson, Tan Dun, David Lang, Peter Maxwell Davies, Purcell and Shostakovich in productions that have been staged across the UK including *Tramway*, Glasgow; *Summerhall*, Edinburgh; *Tolbooth*, Stirling; *Horsecross*,

Perth; *Opera North*, Leeds; *Kings Place*, London and *St Magnus Festival*, Orkney. Further afield Josh's work has been shown at *De Singel*, Antwerp; *Melbourne Recital Centre* and *St Mary's Cathedral*, Sydney, Australia; *November Music*, *Den Bosch*; *Grand Theatre*, Groningen and *Rotterdamse Schouwburg* during *Operadagen*; *National Theatre* and *Concert Hall* in Taipei, Taiwan; and *Womadelaide*, Australia. He edited, designed and published the international, multidisciplinary creative-research publication, *becoming-Botanicaland* is in the process of editing the second edition in the *BECOMING* series, *becoming-Feral*. In 2016, Josh was awarded a *Jerwood Opera Writing Fellowship* at *Snape Maltings*. Josh studied *Experimental Theatre* at *New York University* and *Contemporary Performance Practice* at the *Royal Conservatoire of Scotland*.



Cara Berger

Visiting Lecturer & Research Fellow in Drama, University of Manchester

Cara is a researcher, educator and dramaturg, she teaches at The University of Manchester and *Rose Bruford College*. Her work straddles theory and practice, and she has specialist interests in dramaturgy and curation, live art, European theatres and performance theory. She is currently working on a monograph on ecology, feminism and performance from 1962-2020 (forthcoming with *Manchester University Press*) that deals widely with interdisciplinary performance practices including live art, earthworks, postdramatic theatre, dance and experimental opera.



Dr Laura Bissell

Interim Head of the Contemporary Performance Practice Programme, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Dr Laura Bissell is Interim Head of Contemporary Performance Practice BA (Hons.) and Lecturer in Research at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Laura was a visiting lecturer on the MRes in Creative Practices programme at Glasgow School of Art from 2012-2018 and has taught on the Transart Institute MFA in Berlin. She has a PhD (Feminism, Technology and Performance: Performing a Feminist Praxis, University of Glasgow), an MPhil by Research (The Posthuman Body in Performance, University of Glasgow), and a first-class MA(Hons) degree in English Literature and Theatre Studies (University of

Glasgow). Laura has a Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Arts Education and is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. She worked as at the University of Glasgow in the Theatre Studies department as a lecturer prior to her appointment at RCS. Laura is currently External Examiner for the European Theatre Arts Programme at Rose Bruford College. Laura has had her poetry, creative writing and academic writing published in journals and anthologies.



Dr Kate Craddock

Festival Director, GIFT: Gateshead International Festival of Theatre and Research Associate, Newcastle University

Kate is Founder and Festival Director of GIFT: Gateshead International Festival of Theatre, an artist-led festival celebrating contemporary theatre. Kate has worked across creative and academic contexts since 2005 and she completed her practice based PhD 'Collaboration in Performance Practice: Trust, Longevity and Challenging Proximity' in 2010. Kate is currently a Research Associate at Newcastle University, and prior to this led the MA Theatre and Performance course at Northumbria University (2015-2019). As a theatre maker, Kate has performed throughout the UK and internationally. She is a

Trustee for ARC, Stockton Arts Centre and The Paper Birds. In 2018/19, Kate was recipient of the Clore Cultural Leadership Theatre Fellowship. @katecraddock @GIFTfest www.giffestival.co.uk



Dr Diana Damian Martin

Senior Lecturer, Performance Arts & Course Leader, BA (Hons) Contemporary Performance Practice - Performance Arts, The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama

Diana Damian Martin is a writer and academic working at the intersection between writing, politics and performance. She is a Senior Lecturer in Performance Arts at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. She is editor of *On Time: a SPILL Reader* (2018) and (states of) *wake: Dedicating Performance* (2018), as well as co-editor of *Critical Interruptions Vol 1: Steakhouse LIVE* (2018) and *Critics in Conversation* (2018). She is editor of [Margins] section of *Performance Philosophy Journal*, part of *Performance Studies International's* Future Advisory Board and co-convenes the working group

Documenting Performance for the Theatre and Performance Research Association.



Gillian Dyson

Senior Lecturer with Performing Arts, The Leeds School of Arts, Leeds Beckett University.

Dr Gillian Dyson's live performance, video and visual art works 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 sited 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 completed a practice-based research PhD with University of Glasgow, Department of Theatre Studies. She is a Trustee of the Centre for Live Art Leeds.



LJ Findlay-Walsh
Artistic Director, Take Me Somewhere

LJ became Artistic Director of Take Me Somewhere festival in June 2017 having acted as Associate Programmer since September 2016. She worked as Producer and Programmer of renowned Glasgow venue The Arches from 2005 – 2015 working on festivals that included Arches Live for emergent practitioners, and international performance festival Behaviour. She has worked across Europe, including co-curator of an edition of Plateaux live art festival in Frankfurt. She is Senior Performance Curator of Glasgow contemporary arts venue Tramway, working on year-round activity that includes DIG (Dance International Glasgow). She is a Board Member of Articulation, (Scotland's advocacy organisation for physical performance) and has held various advisory roles through the Federation of Scottish Theatre, including arts mentor and panel member for their Producer's Award. She has worked on various award panels including the Fringe Brick Award and Adrian Howells Award and is an ISPA fellow (International Society for the Performing Arts).



Ghost and John
Multidisciplinary Art Duo

Ghost and John are a Hongkongese multidisciplinary art duo based in London, working across dance, theatre and visual art. From Computer Science and Biology backgrounds, they investigate how art is being received by society and is the tool to uphold the freedom of expression, utilising digital interactive technology to influence theatre politics. In recent years, the issues of political oppression in Hong Kong has risen to international attention and became their main drive to make works that reflect on their perspective and archive this time of instability that we are all in. They focus on an experimental artistic practice that emphasises collaboration between artforms and audience experience. Through both the making and presenting of their works, they are constantly studying the post-colonial trauma of the city, questioning the cultural identity of being a Hongkongese and challenging new forms of arts.



Laura Gonzalez
Athenaem Research Fellow, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Laura González is an artist, writer, yoga teacher and an Athenaem Research Fellow at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Her work inhabits the space between medical humanities, psychoanalysis, performance and Eastern thought, investigating knowledge production and the body of the hysteric. She has published books on madness, seduction, intersemiotic translation and performance and is currently writing one on hysteria. She is also translating Freud's case histories into one-to-one durational works and exploring the dramaturgical potential of a breath practice.



Dr Laura Griffiths
Senior Lecturer with Performing Arts, The Leeds School of Arts, Leeds Beckett University.

Dr Laura Griffiths' research focuses primarily upon notions of archive in relation to contemporary dance practice, in particular the concept of the body as archive. She has published book chapters and journal articles around this subject, most recently in 'Dance Fields: Staking a Claim for Dance Studies in the Twenty-First Century' (Dance Books, 2020). Professional industry experience encompasses project management within the arts, dance teaching in community settings, lecturing and research project management. Laura was Project Manager and Post-Doctoral Research Assistant for 'Respond' (www.respondto.org), a partnership between Yorkshire Dance, University of Leeds and Breakfast Creatives (funded by Nesta, ACE, AHRC). Laura is currently Deputy Chair of Dance HE, the representative body for the teaching of Dance in Higher Education She also sits on the board of Leeds Dance Partnership, a sector-led initiative with an emphasis upon supporting the dance ecology in the city of Leeds and beyond.



Sarah Hopfinger

Lecturer in Contemporary Performance Practice, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Dr Sarah Hopfinger is a lecturer, practitioner and researcher, who works at the intersections between live art, choreography, performance, ecology, intergenerational collaboration, chronic pain and crip practices, disability, and queerness. Sarah has an artist- and research-led reaching approach, and works across the Contemporary Performance Practice (CPP) programme. In her artistic practice, Sarah devises new choreography based performances, often with diverse collaborators including children and adults, disabled and non-disabled people and professional and nonprofessional performers and dancers. Sarah has presented her performance work and research

nationally and internationally with diverse venues and organisations, including Battersea Arts Centre, South London Gallery, Platform, Summerhall (UK), ArtFart (Iceland) and Earth Matters on Stage (USA). She has published several peer-reviewed articles in leading performance journals including *Research in Drama Education*, *Studies in Theatre and Performance*, and *Performance Research*, and she regularly presents her practice-led research at national and international conferences.

Mark Jeffery

Associate Professor, Performance School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Mark Jeffery is a Chicago based performance/installation artist, curator and Associate Professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Since 1994 Mark Jeffery has developed unconventional collaborations with visual artists, scholars, video artists, sound artists, new media and code artists, dancers, choreographers, curators, and writers. In 2012, he co-founded the language, performance, and technology collective Anatomical Theatres of Mixed Reality (ATOM-r). Recent performances and exhibitions include: Graham Foundation, Chicago, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Chisenhale Dance Space, London, Alfred De Vrove, Prague, International Museum of Surgical Science, Chicago, Performance Arcade, Wellington, NZ, Australian Centre for Moving Image, Melbourne and 606 Trail, Chicago.



Ashanti Harris

Lecturer in Contemporary Performance Practice, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Ashanti Harris is a multi-disciplinary artist and researcher based in Glasgow, Scotland. Working with dance, performance, facilitation, film, installation and writing, Ashanti's work disrupts historical narratives and reimagines them from a Caribbean diasporic perspective. As part of her creative practice, she is co-director of Project X – a company platforming dance and performance from the African and Caribbean diaspora in Scotland; and works collaboratively as part of the collective Glasgow Open Dance School (G.O.D.S) – facilitating experimental movement workshops and research groups. Recent commissions and exhibitions include: OHCE, Radiophrenia, 87.9fm (2020); Being Present, OGR, Torino (2020); In The Open, The Common Guild, Glasgow (2020)



Edit Kaldor

Theatre-maker and writer & artistic programme development and tutor, DAS Theatre Programme, The Amsterdam University of the Arts

Edit Kaldor is an Amsterdam-based theatre-maker, writer and researcher. She is recognized internationally as a unique voice in the contemporary theatre landscape, working mostly with nonprofessional performers and often integrating the use of digital interfaces. Her performances, which stretch considerably the boundaries of theatrical conventions, have been presented in over 30 countries. Kaldor has taught at (performing) art academies across Europe. Her longest affiliation is with DAS Theatre, where she works on artistic programme development and as a tutor. Since 2017 she is artistic

research fellow at the Norwegian Theatre Academy, where she is developing the artistic-pedagogical research project *The Many and the Form*. She is currently also co-editing, together with Joe Kelleher, the book *Theatres of Powerlessness* (Bloomsbury / Methuen 2022).

Maria Magdalena Kozłowska

Performer, singer, writer and director

& Graduate, DAS Theatre Programme, The Amsterdam University of the Arts

Maria works with mixed media materials, using voice, video and live performance. In 2013 she graduated from College of Inter-Area Individual Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Warsaw. In 2020 she graduated from DAS Theatre program at the Academy of Theatre and Dance in Amsterdam. In her video pieces and performances she researches affectual labour of the singing voice. She works with opera singers, exploring the entanglement of voice, language and the landscape. Her practice concentrates on non-normative female voices and praises female eccentricity.

Judd Morrissey

Assistant Professor, Art and Technology School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Judd Morrissey is a writer and code artist who creates poetic systems across a range of platforms incorporating electronic writing, internet art, live performance, and augmented reality. He is the creator of digital literary works including *The Precession: An 80 Foot Long Internet Art Performance Poem* (2011), *The Last Performance [dot org]* (Electronic Literature Collection Vol.2, 2011), *The Jew's Daughter* (Electronic Literature Collection Vol.1, 2006), and *My Name is Captain, Captain* (Eastgate Systems, 2002). He is a recipient of a Creative Capital / Andy Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Grant, a Fulbright Scholar's Award in Digital Culture, and a Mellon Foundation Collaborative Fellowship for Arts Practice and Scholarship. Judd is an Associate Professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in Art and Technology Studies and Writing. From 2006-2009, he worked with the seminal performance group, Goat Island. In 2012, he co-founded the collective Anatomical Theatres of Mixed Reality (ATOM-r).

Adura Onashile

Plawright, Actor and Director



Adura Onashile is an award winning Glasgow based artist. She has been a part of the British Council Edinburgh Showcase and has worked with companies such as Untitled Projects, Royal Shakespeare Company, Young Vic, Theatre Royal Stratford East, Chicago Shakespeare Company and St Anne's Warehouse, New York. She has premiered two productions, *HeLa* and *Expensive S**t* at The Edinburgh fringe festival, winning a Fringe First, Edinburgh Guide Best Scottish Contribution to Drama and TOTAL and Amnesty nominations. Both shows toured nationally and internationally supported by the British council and Creative Scotland. Her inquiry into the contexts in which she

makes and tours work as a Black artist in Scotland, led to a series of discussions titled "Empowering Change: Discussions on Art, Race and Privilege". Named number 10 in The List magazine 2018 HOT 100, she was described as "creating politically charged and provocative work, Onashile is proving that she simply cannot be ignored". Her debut as a filmmaker, short film, *Expensive s**t*, premiered at the London Film Festival 2020 as part of the UK FOCUS strand and is part of *16 films 16 days*, platforming female filmmakers and campaigning to end all forms of violence against Womxn. She is currently writer and lead artist for *Ghosts*, a National Theatre of Scotland's immersive AR digital interrogation of our history. A lament to lives lost and a call to action in the present day, going live in February 2021. She is developing new work across Theatre, Film and Television and is a recipient of the Channel 4 playwright bursary.

Dr David Overend

Lecturer in Drama and Performance Studies, University of Edinburgh



David Overend is a Lecturer in Drama and Performance Studies at the University of Edinburgh. His research focuses on contemporary theatre and performance, often at the intersection with cultural geography. Publications include articles for *Contemporary Theatre Review*, *New Theatre Quarterly*, *GeoHumanities*, *Humanities* and *Cultural Geographies*, and an edited collection, *Rob Drummond Plays with Participation* (Bloomsbury Methuen Drama 2021). As a director, David has worked for the National Theatre of Great Britain and several other theatres, and has toured internationally with award-winning productions.

Jonathan Pitches

Head of School of Performance and Cultural Industries, University of Leeds



Jonathan has research interests in all aspects of performer training and directing, in environmental performance and in blended learning. He co-edits the *Journal of Theatre, Dance and Performance Training* and has recently finished editing two large book projects: *Stanislavsky in the World* (with Stefan Aquilina, Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2017) and *Great Stage Directors - Copeau, Komisarjevsky and Guthrie* (Bloomsbury Methuen Drama 2018). In addition, Jonathan has developed an all-consuming interest in the relationship between theatre, performance and mountains and finished a 24 month AHRC-funded fellowship to write about this in November 2018. The

monograph associated with this project - *Performing Mountains* - is now with the publishers for publication in early 2020. Jonathan was appointed to the Chair of Theatre & Performance in the School in 2006, and finished a three and a half year period as Director of Research for PCI in 2014. Jonathan enjoyed being the first Blended Learning Champion for the faculty (2013-16), and continues to serve on committees and research in the area of Digital learning. Jonathan is also the Deputy Director of the Stanislavsky Research Centre. Although not strictly a practice-led researcher Jonathan has always based his research and writing on a deep curiosity and engagement with laboratory training practices and this interest has taken him to Brazil, Italy, Japan, China, India, Malta, Prague and Australia to explore these practices with students and professional actors.



Heike Roms

Professor in Theatre and Performance, University of Exeter

Heike is Professor in Theatre and Performance at the University of Exeter. She has published on contemporary performance practice, the history of performance art in the UK, performance historiography and archiving, performance and pedagogy, and performance as a mode of knowledge formation and dissemination. This year, she edited a special issue of the Journal Theatre, Dance and Performance Training on the subject of "Training for Performance and Live Art". She is currently working on a project (with Prof. Gavin Butt, Northumbria University) on the history of performance in the context of British art schools.



Jo Ronan

Independent Researcher/Practitioner

Jo is an artist and practice-based researcher. Her doctoral thesis proposes a new dialectical model for non-hierarchical collaborative theatre-making and spectatorship. She was Associate Director with 7:84 (Scotland) directing productions such as, *Eclipse* by Haresh Sharma and *The Algebra of Freedom* by Raman Mundair, based on the unlawful shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes. Jo pioneered new writing in Singapore, co-founding The Necessary Stage Theatre Company in 1987 and was its Associate Director till 1994 when she settled in Scotland. She was until recently a Performance lecturer at the University of the West of Scotland but after thirteen years in post, she has decided to develop projects as an independent artist/scholar.

Roberto Sifuentes

Professor of Performance, School of the Art Institute of Chicago

BA, 1989, Trinity College Hartford CT. **Founding Member:** La Pocha Nostra Performance Group. **Performances/Installations:** National Review of Live Art, Glasgow; Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol; Performance Studies International/Live Art Development Agency, London; Center for Performance Research, Wales; Hemispheric Institute, Centro Cultural Recoleta, Buenos Aires; Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington DC; Detroit Institute of Arts; De Young Museum, San Francisco; Highways Performance Space, Los Angeles; Performance Space 122, El Museo del Barrio, Creative Time NYC. **Collections:** Smithsonian Archives of American Art. **Books/Publications:** "Exercises for Rebel Artists, Radical Performance Pedagogy," Routledge 2011; "Temple of Confessions: Mexican Beasts and Living Santos," co-authored with Guillermo Gómez-Peña, Powerhouse Books, 1997. **Bibliography:** Performance Research; TDR: The Drama Review; Theater Forum.



Jo Verrent

Senior Producer, Unlimited

Jo believes that 'different' is delicious not divergent, embedding the belief that diversity adds texture, turning policy into real action. Jo is senior producer for Unlimited - a commissions programme for disabled artists, getting work seen, discussed and embedded within the cultural fabric of the UK and beyond. Since 2013, Unlimited has provided over £4 million to 300 disabled artists through commissions, awards and support. Jo co-runs SYNC, examining the interplay between disability and leadership (England, Australia, Korea, Singapore and Canada). Jo has won Cosmopolitan's woman of achievement, is a Clore fellow, is on the board of The Space, Global Disability Innovation Hub, and the Northern ACE advisory panel. She would always like to be resuscitated.



Dr Aylwyn Walsh

School of Performance and Cultural Industries, University of Leeds

Dr Aylwyn Walsh Associate Professor of Performance and Social Change at the University of Leeds in the School of Performance and Cultural Industries. Ally is programme leader of the MA in Applied Theatre & Intervention and artistic director of Ministry of Untold Stories. Her book *Prison Cultures* maps performance, resistance and desire in women's prisons (Intellect, 2019). She co-edited *Remapping Crisis: A Guide to Athens* (Zero books, 2014). Much of her research has engaged with incarceration and the role of theatre and performance in carceral contexts. Grounded in feminist and decolonial approaches to practice, she considers the relationship between performance and activism, protest and participation. Methodologically, recent work is informed by co-creation and participation. She is currently working on youth, dispossession and arts activism in South Africa. She leads Ministry of Untold Stories and is trustee for Leeds Tidal, working on climate justice.



Dr Lucy Weir
Edinburgh College of Art, Edinburgh University

Dr Lucy Weir is a specialist in dance and performance. Her monograph, Pina Bausch's Dance Theatre: Tracing the Evolution of Tanztheater (2018), is published by Edinburgh University Press. She is co-editor of Performance in a Pandemic (Routledge), a forthcoming collection of essays looking at the impact of Covid-19 on theatre, dance and live art across the UK. She is currently working on a new book exploring masculinity and self-injury in performance practice. In 2020, Lucy was named a New Generation Thinker by the AHRC and BBC. Lucy obtained her PhD in History of Art and Theatre Studies from the University of Glasgow in 2013. Since then, she has lectured on art and performance

at various institutions, including the University of Edinburgh and Glasgow School of Art. In 2015, she held a Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities (University of Edinburgh), before taking up her current post. She completed her Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice at the University of Edinburgh in 2018, and is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. Lucy and Roberto Filippello co-convene SEXES, a cross-ECA research cluster involving early-career researchers and senior faculty in the fields of gender and sexualities. She is a co-founder and committee member of 'Modernist Methodologies: Beyond Fine Art,' an SGSAAH-funded research network. She convenes 'Scotland's Cultural Landscape: Nation, Heritage and the Arts,' an international summer school jointly hosted by the University of Glasgow and the Hunterian Museum in partnership with Hong Kong University. Lucy maintains a strong interest in movement practice alongside her academic research. She is a Visiting Lecturer in Dance at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.