PERFORMANCE OF THE REAL

8th – 10th JUNE 2016
@ Uni Otago

POSTGRAD AND EARLY CAREER RESEARCHER SYMPOSIUM
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Upcoming Events

Mediating the Real

31st August – 2nd September 2016 @ University of Otago

Keynotes: Agon Hamza (Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts); Misha Kavka (The University of Auckland); Allen Meek (Massey University)

This conference addresses what the ‘Real’ might mean in contemporary media studies. Mediating the Real specifically applies psychoanalytic and Lacanian understandings of the Real to mediated cultures.

Performing Precarity: Refugee Representation, Determination and Discourses

31st August 2016 @ University of Otago

Keynotes: Nikos Papastergiadis (The University of Melbourne); Suvendrini Perera (Curtin University)

This interdisciplinary conference aims to draw together scholars from a wide variety of fields to examine the ethics and politics surrounding refugee representation, determination, and discourses.

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About the Performance of the Real Research Theme

The Performance of the Real Research Theme is an interdisciplinary project that investigates what it is about representations and performances of the real that make them particularly compelling and pervasive in our current age. At its core is the study of how performance/performativity, in its many cultural, aesthetic, political and social forms and discourses represents, critiques, stages and constructs/reconstructs the real.

The Theme draws Otago together with other international researchers in a series of generative encounters (symposia, conferences, research and methodological master-classes, reading groups, public lectures and more) that promote international interdisciplinary exchange and development.

Our researchers come from a broad range of disciplinary backgrounds, both within the University of Otago and from overseas institutions and our steering group is made up of researchers and lecturers from the departments of Theatre Studies; Tourism; Music; Media, Film and Communication; and Languages and Cultures.

**Website**  

**Email**  
performance.real@otago.ac.nz

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The welcome function (Wednesday evening) and Bree Hadley’s keynote (Thursday evening) will take place in the Richardson Building, in the 6th floor tearoom, and the 10th floor Moot Court respectively.
The presentations on Thursday will be in Black/Sale House, and the workshop on Friday at Allen Hall Theatre.

Programme

Wednesday, June 8
Level 6 Richardson Building Tearoom
17:00-18:00 Conference Registration
Welcome Joint Social Function with “Revisiting Audiences” Symposium

Thursday, June 9
Lecture Room, Ground Floor Black/Sale House
08:45 Coffee and Registration
09:00-10:30 Writing the Real Panel
Chair: Suzanne Little

Emily Duncan
A Heterotopic Dramaturgical Model for Writing a Site and its Histories

Fran Kewene
Kōrero pono: A Kaupapa Māori Approach to Devising and Performing the Real

Sean Coyle
Wandering and Wondering in Wonderland

10:30 – 11:00 Morning Tea Break

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11:00 – 12:30  **Placing the Real Panel**  
Chair: Sarah Thomasson

**Susan Weidman**  
A Great Delusion of Satan: Performing the Salem Witch Trials

**Macmillan Veitch**  
Facing the Real: An Analysis of Dark Tourism Sites in Cambodia

**Jo Coghlan**  
Excitable Speech and Performances of the Real on the Heterotopian US Political Primacy Stage

12:30-13:30  Lunch

13:30-14:40  **Embodying the Real Panel**  
Chair: Rosemary Overell

**Rebekah Wilson**  
Dancing in Assam, India: Ethnography Research

**val smith**  
Fake Realness: Queering Performance through Fakery and Other Failing Methodologies

14:40-15:00  Tea and Coffee Break
15:00-16:30  The Spiritual Real Panel
Chair: Rosemary Overell

Megumi Yamaguchi
Religious Implications and the Construction of Subjectivity in Japanese Popular Manga and Anima after 3.11

Loraine Haywood
Oblivion: ‘The Real’ Intrusion and Disruption

Irene Karongo Hundleby
Traversing Transition: Laments of Lau-Mbaelelela, Solomon Islands

17:00-18:00  Public Keynote, Moot Court 10th Floor Richardson

Bree Hadley
It’s A Social Experiment: Pranks, Political Activism, and Performing Marginality for a Politically Correct Mainstream Audience

18:30  Conference Dinner @ Eureka Café & Bar, Albany St

Friday, June 10
Meet In Front of Allen Hall Theatre

10:00-11:30  Workshop: Bree Hadley
In this paper, I investigate the phenomenon of so-called ‘social experiments’, where pranksters perform stigmatised identities in public spaces and places – from breastfeeding mothers, to Muslim women wearing burqas, to disabled people using canes, crutches and wheelchairs – to prompt a response from passersby. Though cast as politicised performances of the real designed to draw attention to the prejudices of the average passerby, the structure of these ‘social experiments’, frequently focused on candid camera style pranks they film, and upload on social media for all to see, with the hope of going viral and getting a run on morning television, raises performative, political and ethical questions. In this paper, I unpack some of these questions, using examples of social experiments focused on (dis)ability, race, religion, and gender identity. I examine some of the different effects these social experiments can produce, depending on whether they are performed by actors, pranksters or political activists, and whether they are performed by people who really occupy the stigmatised identity they perform or people who are simply wanting to say something about a fraught social topic. I ask whether these social experiments, when they go viral online, produce bonding social capital within communities impacted by current social prejudices.
bridging social capital between these and broader communities, both, or neither.

**Bree Hadley**  
Queensland University of Technology

Bree Hadley is a Senior Lecturer in Performance Studies at the Queensland University of Technology. She is currently a Director of Performance Studies international. Hadley’s research investigates the construction of identity in contemporary, pop cultural and public space performances, and concentrates on how work by artists marked by disability and other bodily differences mobilise media. She is currently working on two books: *Theatre, Social Media and the Democratisation of Spectatorship* and *The Performativity of Pranks – Dark Play, Spectatorship and Subversive Social Practice*. Her work has been published in *Performance Research Journal, Liminalities, M/C and Australasian Drama Studies*. 

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In this workshop, I invite participants to investigate different ways of performing the real in public spaces and places for activist purposes, including the different effects of more and less metaphoric representations of the real in prompting passersby to stop, look and think about the political statement the performer makes, and think in the short, medium or long term.
Excitable Speech and Performances of the Real on the Heterotopian US Political Primacy Stage

Jo Coghlan

Heterotopias are structured spaces, that when apparent in performance, reflect or comment on the real (Tompkins 2014:1). The current US presidential primaries see respective candidates perform on political stages that are heterotopian because the political stage is a specific site and there exists a social context for their performances. The stage acts to sustain the performance and the performance acts to sustain the political stage. It is in the interrogation of space, performance, and context that power and knowledge returns the concept to its Foucaudian traditions (Foucault 1971). Analysis of performance, including speech, within a heterotopian space can reveal how political meanings are produced within specific spaces. In applying a heterotopian lens to the performance of politics, the duality of spaces that distinguish from the real while also resonating with the real, provides a rich landscape to evaluate performances of the real.

Performative political speech conducted on the heterotopian political stage also provides for an interrogation of the Butlerian notion of ‘excitable speech’. Butler’s 1997 essay ‘Excitable Speech: A Politics of Performative’ argued that if ‘performance is the linguistification of the political field’ then how can language produce failure and conformity as well as unpredictability and innovation (Butler 1997:74). This paper considers how the heterotopian spaces of political stages can explain the failure of Marco Rubio, the conformity of Hillary Clinton, the unpredictability of Donald Trump.
and the innovation of Bernie Sanders in the 2016 US presidential primaries.

**Jo Coghlan**  
Southern Cross University

Dr Jo Coghlan (BA, Hons. PhD, UOW) is a lecturer in Australian and International Politics in the School of Social Sciences at Southern Cross University, Coolangatta, Queensland. Jo’s current research interests are in the intersection between politics and culture in both media and gender studies. Recent research, published in the *Australasian Journal of Popular Culture*, has examined how ‘new’ television engages in counter-hegemonic projects that act to expose the failure of America’s neoliberal project. Other research projects are examining postfeminist representations on American television and the impact of this on female political candidates.
Between 1906 and 1911 in Tamarama Sydney there existed the largest open-air amusement park in the southern hemisphere - Wonderland City. The site of this failed colonial endeavor had previously been known as The Pleasure Gardens. From the mid twentieth century the area became a popular ‘beat’ (a site for men cruising for sex). During the 1980’s this area became the preying grounds for an epidemic of homophobic violence with gangs of youths entertaining themselves through the blood sport of ‘poofter bashing’. During this period a number of men were thrown from the surrounding cliffs to their deaths.

This paper presentation explores my concept of ‘Wonderland’ as a personal model for creating performance, scenographic photography and installation that references these specific locations and historical ‘real’ events. Throughout my presentation I will be drawing upon Judith Halberstam’s Queer Art of Failure to negotiate how the inherent darkness within landscapes of trauma can be memorialized and recontextualized through art and performance and what value, if any, can my practice-based research have in helping to understand and communicate these specific sites of homophobic violence.
Sean Coyle
University of Tasmania

Sean is a graduate of Toi Whakaari: The New Zealand Drama School and has a Graduate Diploma in Dramatic Arts Design from VCA Melbourne University and an M.A (Art and Design) from Auckland University of Technology. He is currently a PhD candidate and lecturer at the Tasmanian College of the Arts UTAS. Sean has worked extensively throughout New Zealand and Australia for over twenty years as a performance designer, art director and photographer. Prior to moving to Tasmania Sean established the Pacific Institute of Performing Arts (PIPA) in Auckland New Zealand and remained Head of School for ten years.
In this paper I explain how I employed Foucault's concept of Heterotopia as a dramaturgical model for writing a play about a real site in the Maniototo, New Zealand that was a tuberculosis sanatorium (Orangapai 1914-1960), a correctional facility for young men (Waipiata Youth Centre 1961-1980), and currently operates as a privately owned and run Christian community (En Hakkore). The writing of the full-length playscript is central to my practice-based PhD research, which also comprises an exegetical examination of the dramaturgical principles and models that were investigated and employed in writing the script.

Core to my interest in writing a play about the Waipiata site was the expression of the physical site. This was not to be a site-specific performance, but a playscript with the site as the narrative driver and anchor of the world of the story. I also decided against writing a verbatim script; although there were the resources to do so, the verbatim model did not align with the site-central dramaturgical model I envisioned.

Heterotopia was identified as a suitable structuring principle in order to anchor the broad and multi-layered narratives associated with the site, its history, and the institutions, whilst incorporating theatrical elements, conventions, and tropes into the playscript. Heterotopia are real sites that can be considered “other” or counter-sites, at which an alternative social ordering is apparent. Therefore, the heterotopic model is ideal for writing a script that explores the history of a site and the institutions that have operated there.
Emily Duncan
University of Otago

Emily Duncan is a PhD candidate at the University of Otago. In her thesis she employs Foucault's concept of Heterotopia as a dramaturgical model for writing a playscript. Emily is an award-winning playwright, who has had her plays produced at the Otago Festival of the Arts (*Palliative Care* 2008, winner Write Out Loud Dunedin 2006), BATS theatre in Wellington (*Lips* 1999, runner-up Playmarket Young Playwrights Competition 1999), and Allen Hall Theatre (*Lips* 1999, *When You Were Mine* 2015). Her play, *Eloise in the Middle* (winner Playmarket Plays for the Young 2013) was published by Playmarket in the Anthology *Here/Now* in 2015.

http://www.playmarket.org.nz/playwrights/emily-duncan
Obivion: ‘The Real’ Intrusion and Disruption

Loraine Haywood

Joseph Kosinski’s science fiction film Oblivion (2013) explores the odyssey of the main character, Jack Harper, who attempts to break through to ‘the Real’ of his existence. Jack’s journey is a revelation that he has been cloned. What is revealed is his own death. The story begins with his internal struggle for origins and truth that works against Jack’s reality. These dreams that “feel like memory” intrude on a constructed narrative in the film provided by an alien power, known as Sally. The story that is given to the clones constructs a reality and gives purpose to their existence in the Skytower (Haywood, 2016, 4). Within this world picture are Biblical Christian master narratives that underlie and imprint upon the film maintaining our understanding and compliance particularly in the closure that is suggested to the audience by the film. The apocalyptic backdrop of destruction of the earth is symbolic of an inner trauma “the Real” experienced by Jack within the resurrection/second coming story. It is also a real trauma experienced by the earth and its ecological systems. At the conclusion of the film the Christian narrative attempts to assert a redemptive closure, however “the real” intrudes and disrupts the notion of a resolution.

In this paper I will refer to the Lacanian Real as a basis for exploring Oblivion as a discursive enactment. The film embodies death (“the Real”), destruction of earth’s systems and Western Christian Biblical narratives that attempt to assert a religious power over the narrative of the film.
Loraine Haywood
University of Newcastle

Loraine Haywood is a postgraduate Theology Masters student with the University of Newcastle, Australia and the Broken Bay Institute. She has an undergraduate degree with the University of Newcastle in English, Film, and Ancient History. Loraine’s research focus is the creation accounts in Genesis 1-3. Her interest is in Eco-feminist theology, and she uses the term “God” as a divinity in the earth and earth’s systems as in indigenous cultures.

She sees film as a religious experience. Her research has been published in the recent issue of Seachanges, Journal for Women Scholars in Religion and Theology.
In a Malaitan world, the real embodies physical and spiritual planes as one. Consequently, our musical and cultural worlds engage with both the natural and the supernatural as relevant, intertwined extensions of the other. Spirits are felt, seen and heard and are therefore real; and so music is performed to communicate between, and for, the ‘living’ and the ‘dead’.

While Malaitan women’s music is historically informal in nature, absent from kastom (cultural) pagan rituals, and subject to tabu restriction; laments, wailing and funerary music are publicly performed by women. Up until the last 50 years, the au maku dance was performed by women to mark the beginning of funerary rites following the death of a pagan high priest. The au maku is an exceptional example of performance of the real, whereby songs not only accompany the high priest into the spirit world, but also emit intense and powerful expressions of grief and love – from and for the ‘living’.

As a bicultural (Solomon Islands-New Zealand) ethnomusicologist, I am apprenticing under my Lau-Mbaelelela elders to learn more about our women’s music, dance and cultures. This paper explores how Malaitan ‘realness’ is performed within maea (funereal process), and delves into the significance of sound at the heart of women’s maea songs and belief.
Irene Karongo Hundleby
University of Otago

I am currently conducting Ph.D. research exploring women's music in Lau-Mbæelelea, North Malaita, Solomon Islands. As a bicultural researcher (Solomon Islands-New Zealand) I am focused on using/developing collaborative methods that embrace indigenous epistemologies and values. I am also co-owner of 'Relics' an independent music/record store.
How does one ethically perform the real? In Aotearoa New Zealand Kaupapa Māori (a Māori research framework) provides guiding principles for devises performance of the real ethically. This presentation will present how and why I applied Kaupapa Māori principles in devising a one-women show using a hybrid of Māori and Verbatim Theatre techniques.
Fran Kewene
University of Otago

Francis Kewene (Tainui/Waikato) trained at Toi Whakaari New Zealand Drama School in 1990 and has pursued a number of varied career pathways over her lifetime. Fran is currently completing her Masters in Arts and has been exploring how Verbatim Theatre techniques can be used to document people’s experiences of hauora. Fran is enrolled as student in Theatre Studies with the Music Department at the University of Otago. Fran is also interested in the humanities interface with medicine.
Fake Realness: Queering performance through fakery and other failing methodologies
val smith

In this performance paper, I articulate a series of Fake Realness tests. I enact, examine and reflect on each of these embodied fakery techniques to critically question the methodology of bringing together somatic dance processes and queer theory. Is queer choreography real? Can queerness be made visible? Am I queer here now?
val smith
University of Otago

val smith is a white genderqueer choreographic artist and dance educator based in Auckland, NZ. Their performance work rethinks the political body through perceptual experiments that challenge the conventions of spectatorship. Queer, feminist and post-structuralist theories underpin choreographic tests in a fluid relation with collaboration, somatic pedagogies and site-oriented practices.
Dark tourism is a concept originating from ‘thanatourism,’ introduced by A. V. Seaton in 1996. Emma Willis contends that the popularity of visits to these sites is due to the inescapable desire to contemplate and face mortality. Academics have since argued that dark tourism sites operate performatively in their depiction of trauma and violence, leading to ruminations on the mode of encounter experienced in these spaces. The Cambodian Genocide, committed by the Khmer Rouge, spawned two major dark tourism sites: The Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum and Choeung Ek. Using these sites as case studies, this paper explicates the politics and ethics of encountering the real. Visitors are cast as witnesses to the trauma which has been perpetrated and are pulled into a close relationship with the real which is not only performed in the space but also embodied within the material archive. This paper addresses the conflict of applying generalized discourses on trauma and violence to dark tourism sites, where reducing the unavoidable specificities and affordances, both cultural and material, of the sites in contention allows visitors and academics to keep the real at a safe distance. Using Derrida’s writing on the ‘archive,’ alongside a consideration of Levinasian ethics and Gene Ray’s updated view of the sublime, this paper proposes a more nuanced consideration of tourists’ confrontation with the real arguing that these sites actively emancipate the tourist from mere witness, repositioning them in the space as participant in the critical re-presencing of trauma and history.
Macmillan Veitch
University of Otago

Macmillan Veitch is a fourth year student endeavouring to complete Combined Honours for a Bachelor of Arts in English and Theatre Studies. He has a strong interest in post-colonial discourses and intercultural performance practices. He is currently writing a dissertation for Honours requirements in English which is concerned with locating and analysing the presence of mythical allusions and references in Mark Z. Danielewski’s House of Leaves. This analysis is linked to an examination of how materiality in the novel communicates an affirmation of the novel form over e-texts which have become increasingly prevalent since the epoch of the internet.
During the year of 1692, 150 people were accused of, and twenty executed for, practicing witchcraft in Salem, Massachusetts, USA. Today, Salem has become a popular dark tourism destination, and several attractions in the small city (pop. 42,000) interpret and/or recreate the witch trials for tourist consumption.

Dark tourism engages tourists with sites of, or related to, death, disaster, and the macabre (Lennon and Foley, 2000) and is increasing in global popularity. Within the context of dark tourism, interpretive performances of historic events are opportunities to educate visitors about the past. However, interpretation can be controversial. Dealing with the past is a difficult task, made more so by the fact that people do not agree about whether the suffering of real people should be exploited for the sake of entertainment, education, and/or profit.

The conflict between the historical and commemorative voice with modern-day concerns becomes evident when historical discourse enters the tourism arena. Additionally, the moral acceptability of interpretive narratives of dark sites varies among visitors (Sharpley & Stone, 2009), and between managers of ‘dark’ attractions. Who has the right and responsibility to make decisions about how to interpret and present dark events?

This presentation examines the interpretation of the Salem Witch Trials as ‘performed’ by historical museums and tour guides in Salem, based on qualitative fieldwork undertaken in August of 2015, and discusses the struggle the city faces in grappling with how best to commemorate and tell the story of 1692.
Susan Weidman  
University of Otago  

Susan Weidmann is a PhD candidate in the Department of Tourism at the University of Otago where she is studying emotions generated by promotional brochures of ‘fright’ and ‘scare’ attractions. Prior life adventures include jobs as a cheesemonger and student finance executive in New York City, and manager of a luxury adventure lodge in Alaska.
Dancing in Assam, India: Ethnography Research
Rebekah Wilson

Ethnography is the study of people and cultures through observation of a society from a particular point of view (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Some authors even refer to ethnography as a performative art in itself (Castaneda, 2006). This was a concept we took as a group of researchers, dancers and students when we went on an ethnographic journey to the Assam, India. Here we immersed ourselves in the elaborate city and rural culture of the Assamese communities with a particular focus on dance and its daily use. We were privileged to perform for many communities and were treated like "royalty". It was through these experiences we established a storyline through ethnographic processes, and created a "theatre of life" of information. As separate individuals we all had our own interest areas from looking at training regimes of Classical Indian dance forms, the small communities and their traditional practices and how they compare to our New Zealand cultural practices, how religion connected to the performance art forms and the use of creative movement in education. This presentation will present an auto-ethnographic perspective as I recorded my own reflective responses to this field trip. It will also look at what happens when you put six New Zealanders into a different country and cultural environment and how that unravels learning experiences and research intentions over a period of three weeks. It will describe the physical encounters we had during our research trip and how these experiences grew into research topics for the students.

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Rebekah Wilson
University of Otago

Rebekah has recently graduated with a Master of Physical Education where she looked at cardiovascular disease in prostate cancer survivors. However, her love for the arts has never gone a miss. She tutors a first year dance/gymnastics paper at the PE School, but spends much of her spare time dancing for various Dunedin freelance choreographers and productions.
Religious Implications and the Construction of Subjectivity in Japanese Popular Manga and Anime after 3.11
Megumi Yamaguchi

The paper explores how Japanese popular visual culture such as manga and anime functions as a vehicle to offer narratives which speak to the audience in post-disaster Japan, with the focus on Nanohana (Canola Flowers) (2011) by Moto Hagio, and Kaguyahime no Monogatari (The Tale of Princess Kaguya) (2013) directed by Isao Takahata. In the last two decades, Japan experienced major social changes due to economic deterioration and a series of natural and social disasters in 2011. In such a period of uncertainty, Hagio and Takahata created narratives of psychological depth, providing a sense of empowerment with religious implications by incorporating intertextualised pretexts and culturally recognised images, which not only serve to transmit cultural values, but function as modernity’s otherness or a metafictive device to provoke audiences’ thoughts. The elaborate mixture of narrative and visual strategies for engaging and distancing audiences reveal Japanese manga and anime’s preference on positioning them as an active participant in meaning making for the construction of their own spiritual insights. In addition, the blurred boundary between life and death in a liminal setting reinforces a sense of life’s continuity and interrelatedness of all life while rejecting anthropocentric notions of self, which serves as a source of empowerment. Such characteristics reveal not only Japanese religious views and the construction of subjectivity, but how the view of life and death
which is deeply imbued within the culture emerges at the time of social crisis.

**Megumi Yamaguchi**
University of Otago

Megumi Yamaguchi is a PhD student in the Department of Languages and Cultures at the University of Otago (from June 2016). After receiving B.A. in English Literature from Tsuda College, Megumi completed her M.A. degree in Children’s Literature at Macquarie University. Her research interests are in Japanese manga, anime, crossover picturebooks, and more specifically, the interaction between literature and popular visual culture in Japan. She is particularly working on the representation of subjectivity in post-disaster Japan with a close analysis of narratological strategies.