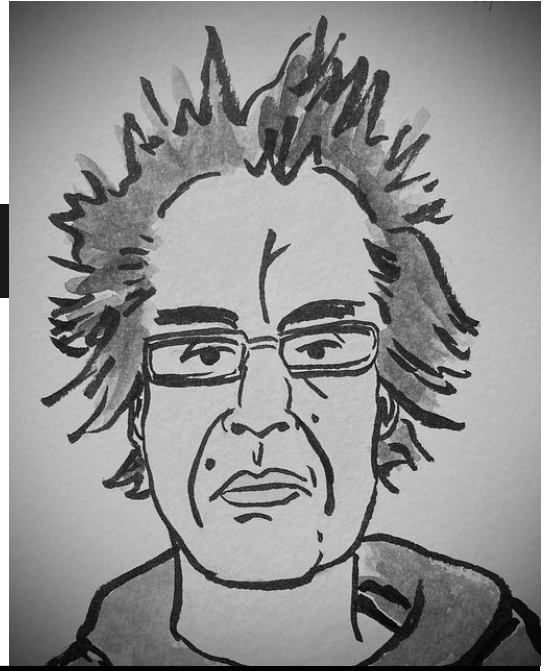


PAUL ROBERTS

Email

paul.roberts@cssd.ac.uk



PROFILE

Project Title

Staging Professionalism: The role of the ABTT in the development of post-war British technical theatre

Supervisor/s

Dr Tony Fisher, Dr Kate Elswit, Simon Sladen, and Robin Townley

Abstract

My thesis examines the influence of the Association of British Theatre Technicians (ABTT) on the development of post-war British technical theatre. It argues that the ABTT was central to the professionalisation of post-war British theatre, and that as a result, backstage labour came through increasing forms of regulative governance, with the ABTT substantially influencing the way models of standardisation developed across the sector, particularly in its formative years, 1961 – 1985. Responding to growing contemporary interest in technical theatre and labour professionalisation, the research contextualises and historicises current debates, providing a new discursive framework. The thesis does this by firstly, exploring the role played by technical theatre, more generally, in the diversification of labour across post-war, civic and subsidised British theatres, and secondly, by looking at how theatre as an organisation, civic structure, and institution, developed in line with emergent technologies and technical professions. This is achieved by focussing on the bifurcation of specialist roles, particularly evident within stage lighting and sound, and the influence of expertise upon architecture, policy, and stage design. The thesis, therefore, focusses on the influence of the ABTT during its formative years, and its contribution to the conditions of politics, governance and power within theatre, by exploring the association as a model dispositif within technical professionalisation.

Profile

I am a PhD candidate at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. My research examines the professionalisation of technical practice in post-war Britain, particularly during the rise of civic and subsidised theatre building, as an emerging standardisation of specialist labour incorporated new and influential representative bodies.

Prior to joining Central, I have been involved with a range of theatre institutions, in both rural and urban settings, across commercial, public, and charitable sectors. Always more comfortable off the stage than on it, I have gained a wide range of front and back of house experiences, working on small-scale projects, new theatre buildings, adaptable spaces, and capital projects.

My interests include the development of specialist stage machinery, architectural design, and the role of civic subsidy in British theatre. Previous research has focussed on the theory and history of visual arts, cultural policy within the U.K. and theatre consultancy as an academic framework.

Teaching

Guest speaker – MA: Creative Industries - University of Warwick
Case Study specialist – BA Health and Safety – University of Birmingham

Conference Presentations

ITEAC 2018: The future of theatre