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PROFILE

Project Title

'The system enabled it': Sexual Violence and Contemporary UK Theatre Institutions since 2017

Supervisor/s

Dr Tom Six and Dr Diana Damian Martin

Abstract

This project works towards a feminist reconceptualization of sexual harms across UK Theatre institutions between 2017-2023. Through interviews, discourse analysis and archival research, I think of sexual violence and its attendant harms not as 'fact'; functional and normative, but as an analytical framework through which we might come to know the theatre institution. Departing from data-focussed research on patterns and prevalence of sexual violence in the theatre, I call on theatre's rich lineage of feminist materialism in order to speak to the material conditions of sexual harm embedded in the institutional apparatus of theatres, training environments and entertainment unions. I contend that a feminist reconceptualization of sexual violence might be expanded out from the temporal and spatial bounds that govern its discourses, its operation considered instead as a kind of affective atmosphere, which lingers and permeates *-always already* at work. Through careful engagement with a rich body of feminist work on institutional politics, abolitionist feminist practice and feminist epistemologies, I contend that mapping affective atmospheres of sexual violence reveals how contemporary theatre institutions normatively function, offering an alternative to the liberal feminist logics with which these discourses are encased. I ask how we might come to think differently about sexual violence prevention for the theatre institution, foregrounding transformative justice mechanisms that understand experiences of sexual violence as expansive and atmospheric. Through considering the material conditions of sexual violence across contemporary theatre institutions, this project contends that to think 'with' sexual violence is to think with fragments: of feeling, of knowing and of experiencing, that through their shattering, come to guide how we might know, or how we might navigate around, the contemporary theatre institution.

Profile

I am a LAHP-funded doctoral candidate at Central, where I am also a visiting lecturer and practitioner. My work focuses on sexual violence across contemporary theatre institutions and across the Higher Education landscape in the UK. I come to my PhD research from a cluster of different practices which I have developed through working with a range of grassroots organisations, including Intimacy for Stage and Screen, the 1752 Group, The Violence Against Women and Girls Research Network, Birkbeck's Sexual Harms and Medical Encounters Project and Moving Body Arts. I am interested in themes of transformative justice, feminist (re)imagining, abolition and institutionality as they pertain to sexual harm. Other responsibilities including co-organising Intersections festival of research and representing the PhD cohort at Central through my role as Representative.

Teaching

I teach, supervise and tutor on a range of Undergraduate and Postgraduate courses at Central, covering feminist theory and feminist practice. Recent units I have worked on include Contemporary Studies, Collaborative Outreach on the BA Drama, Applied Theatre and Education course, as well as units on BA Experimental Arts and Performance, MA Applied Theatre and MA Advanced Theatre Practice.

Conference Presentations

"Rule-Making, Code-Breaking: The Ethics of Intimacy and Improvisation in Capoeira and Theatrical Performance", Worldmaking in Languages, Literature and Cultures, Kings College London, May 2023.

"We Won't Do This Alone: A Collective Love Letter to Kinship", Intersections, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, June 2023.

"Can we be a band again?": Queer feminist kinship along the edgelands of the institution", Theatre and Performance Research Association Annual Conference, University of Leeds, August 2023.