

PROF SELINA BUSBY

Job title

Professor of Applied and Social Theatre

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COURSES

Applied Theatre, MA
Applied Theatre With Young People, PG Certificate
Drama, Applied Theatre and Education, BA
Research Degrees (PhD)

PROFILE

At Central, I am a Professor of Applied and Social Theatre, teaching on both the [BA Drama, Applied Theatre and Education](#) and the [MA Applied Theatre](#) courses. After studying at Middlesex University, I worked as a drama teacher in a Further Education college as well as in schools and prisons. I have also taught at both Buckingham Chiltern University College and Royal Holloway, University of London as well as at Central on their PGCE.

My research and practice focus on theatre that invites the possibility of change, both in contemporary plays and in participatory performance. My doctoral thesis looked at the representation of dysfunctional families on the British stage between 1993 and 2001. As a practitioner, I work in prison settings, youth theatres, and with young people living in adverse conditions both in the UK and internationally. Current projects include work with communities who live in India, youth and community theatres in the UK and USA, young people often described as hard-to-reach, and those in the prison system. My monograph, *Applied Theatre, A Pedagogy of Utopia* (2021), theorises my practice and the ethics which have underpinned my work in over 25 years of working in applied theatre contexts. Currently I am co-writing a book with Dr Kelly Freebody on the politics of youth theatre for Routledge.

I am a co-editor of *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre*. I have delivered keynotes and lectures at Yunnan Arts University, China, De Montfort University, Leicester, Central Saint Martins, London, The National Institute for Performing Arts and Music, Barcelona, Westminster College, Utah, The Korean University of the Arts and The Pontifical Catholic University of Chile.

In 2023 I worked with [C&T](#), the Trust for African Rock Art, the National Museum of Kenya and a Kenyan drama practitioner to create a [digital resource](#) for Kenyan rock arts sites that was used with school children in Nairobi. I have been working in partnership with Divya Bhatia in Mumbai since 2006 on a [range of projects](#) with young people and women.

I am also currently working on research projects to investigate the impact theatre has on community groups in partnership with both [Company Three, London](#) and [Irondale Theater's To Protect, Serve and Understand](#), New York.

Since 2015 I have been an advisor on the development of a PG Cert in Applied Theatre at The Pontifical Catholic University of Chile and since 2020, I serve on the Academic Advisory Committee for the Post-Graduate Diploma in Applied Theatre at the Applied Theatre India Foundation.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Applied and Community Theatre
- Young People's Theatre
- Prison Theatre
- International collaboration for community theatre making
- Drama Pedagogy
- Applied & Community Theatre in a range of settings
- British Theatre of the 1990s
- Contemporary Political Theatre

PHD SUPERVISION

To date, I have supervised 4 PhD and externally examined 14 doctoral submissions in the UK, Australia, Chile and South Africa. Areas include Indian & Pakistani Contemporary Theatre, theatre and addiction, theatre for young people, Chinese Queer Performance, Drama in Education, and Community theatre.

I am currently supervising and interested in supervising doctoral projects in the areas of international practice, contemporary British theatre in a range of applied theatre contexts that includes work with those who have experience of the criminal justice system, marginalised youth and street dwellers.

KEY PUBLICATIONS

Book

2021. *Applied Theatre: [A Pedagogy of Utopia](#)* (London: Bloomsbury Methuen)

Co-Edited Volume

2022. *Routledge Companion to Theatre and Youth*, co-edited with Charlene Rajendran and Kelly Freebody (Abingdon: Routledge)

Articles

2018. 'Streets, Bridges, Cul-de-sacs and Dreams: Does inviting shelter-dwelling youth to work with culture industry professionals engender a sense of cruel optimism?' *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre*, 23.2, 355-372

2017. [Finding a Concrete Utopia in the Dystopia of a 'sub-city'](#) *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 22.1

2015. '[A Pedagogy of Utopia](#)' *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 20.3. pp 413-416

Book Chapters

2021. 'Dancing in the Wings: Is Prison Theatre a Form of Radical Containment or Does It Offer a Pedagogy of Utopia?' in ***Show me the Way Out: Prison Theatre and the Global Crisis of Incarceration***. ed. Ashley Lucas. (London: Bloomsbury Methuen), pp. 165-175

2019. 'The Biggest Youth Theatre Festival on the Planet': National Theatre Youth Connections. *Education and Theatres: Beyond the Four Walls*. Eds. Michael Finneran and Michael Anderson (London, Springer) pp.115-30

2019. 'Forward' *Playing for Time Theatre Company: Perspectives from the Prison* Annie McKean, Intellect Bristol, pp. ix-x

2019. 'How Do Culture and Power Work in and through Drama Research? An e-Conversation between Selina Busby and Brian.' With Brian S. Heap. *Drama Research Methods: Provocations of Practice*. Eds. Peter Duffy, Christina Hatton, and Richard Sallis. Boston, Brill Sense. Pp. 135-46 2022. Routledge Companion to Theatre and Youth (Abingdon:Routledge) Co-editors Sharlene Rajendran and Kelly Freebody

2018. 'Utopia: Performance and Social Geography, Shattering the real with the Utopian.' *Performing Interdisciplinarity: Working Across Disciplinary Boundaries Through an Active Aesthetic*. Ed. Experience Bryon (Abingdon : Routledge) pp.102-113

2013. 'International collaborations: A Theatre for Social Justice project in the UK' with Catherine McNamara in *Theatre of Social Justice: Collaborating to Create Activist Theatre*. Eds Norma Bowls , and Daniel Nadon. (Southern Illinois University) pp. 174-85

2006. 'Queering Kane' with Stephen Farrier in *Alternatives Within Mainstream II: British Postwar Queer Theatres*. Ed Dimple Godiwala (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press) pp. 142-59

Evaluation Report

2015. "[Celebrating Success: How has participation in Clean Break's Theatre Education Programme contributed to Individuals' Involvement in Professional or Community Arts Practices?](#)" with [Dr Nicola Abraham](#).

EXTERNAL PRACTICE

From 2018 Selina has worked in partnership with the British Council on their People-to-People project with artists and practitioners in the Baltic States and in Central Europe to create theatre and verbatim theatre that uses stories from the community to strengthen social cohesion and promote co-creation in and between different groups.

From 2015-2019 she was an advisor and partner on the [Crossing Bridges](#) project that brought together the youth of New York's Covenant House shettle and Broadway artists twice a year to make theatre.

Since 2006, Selina has worked closely with Divya Bhatia, a partner in India to support projects with several schools, NGOs, and disadvantaged youth in Mumbai and in Delhi at a care home for young women. One of the projects in India that takes place with young slum dwellers in Dharavi was the [subject of an article](#) in *The Times Higher Education Supplement* and accompanying [podcast](#). In 2016 this project was nominated for The Times Higher Education award for Excellence and Innovation in the Arts. Find out more about [Concrete Utopias in Dharavi](#). We also work together on the [GCFR project Worli Koliwada: My Neighbourhood My Responsibility](#) which in 2020 was shortlisted for the AHRC and Wellcome Trust Medical Humanities Best International Research project

REGISTER OF INTEREST

Nothing to declare.