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PROFILE

Supervisors

Prof Peter Boenisch, Dr Broderick Chow

Project Title

Staging Eastern Europeans: performances of Eastern European identities in England, 2010-2019

Abstract

My research investigates how immigrant artists in England constructed Eastern European identities since 2010, when the Conservative-led coalition entered government. It articulates a localised Eastern European identity, promoted during this period by the national media and imposed onto immigrants who become Eastern European: imagined as criminal, draining resources, culturally backward, and a danger to English people's prosperity. I investigate how this identity was reimagined through the work of Eastern European immigrant artists.

The research encompasses aesthetically diverse work which devises different representational, performative and structural strategies to challenge distinct aspects of the normative Eastern European identity, including its transparency, its connection to low-skilled work, or its exclusion from the English public. I employ methods derived from interdisciplinary research on Eastern Europe, and combine them with tools of performance research, including performance analysis and policy analysis. Each chapter also draws on concepts developed within traditions including anti-colonialism, neo-Marxism, feminist theory, and critical race theory, contributing to a complex methodology that is responsive to distinct and disjointed strategies developed by immigrant artists.

The research aims to uncover a recent history of performances authored by immigrant artists which confront, dislodge and reshape the Eastern European identity. Showing how this work is created within an art infrastructure which excludes Eastern European communities, the research argues that an analysis of this marginalisation points towards hidden structural inequalities in England's theatre and performance.

Profile

I am an artist, writer and researcher exploring immigration: national and displaced identities, migrant labour, migrant cultural, economic and social practices, and exclusions of immigrants. I am currently a PhD student at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, where I am researching the construction of Eastern European identities in the work of immigrant artists. Outside of my PhD, I have contributed to research projects on audience development, politics of translation, and theatre criticism.

My performances, installations, texts, and non-denominational works have appeared in physical and digital spaces in the UK, Serbia, and internationally, including at Tate Modern (London) and Center for Art on Migration Politics (Copenhagen), and in collaboration with Home Live Art (Hastings) and Performing Arts Hub (Norway).

I think/write/perform about migration, borders and internationalism as part of [Critical Interruptions](#), a Serbo-Romanian critical cooperative I founded with Diana Damian Martin. Between 2010 and 2019, I made work as part of the performance company There There. I am a member of [Migrants In Culture](#), a network of migrants organising to create the conditions of safety, agency and solidarity in the culture sector for migrants, people of colour and all others impacted by the UK's immigration regime.

Practice

Performance and installation (selection)

2023 *The Uncommon (Travel Area)*, An Táin Arts Centre, Dundalk, Ireland

2022 *The Uncommon (Travel Area)*, Centre for Contemporary Art, Derry, UK

2022 *Remote...Local*, Good Stuff in St Leonards-on-Sea / Home Live Art, UK

2022 *The Ottoman Avantgarde*, part of Choreographic Devices, ICA, London, UK

2021 *Just Gibanica*, FIX21, Catalyst Arts, Belfast, UK

2020 *Temporary Works*, performing borders LIVE 20, Deptford Lounge, The Albany, digital/UK

2019 *Patrolling*, performing borders, Live Art Development Agency, London, UK

2018 *Durational Performance of Journalistic Insults*, Tate Lates, Tate Modern, London, UK

2018 *The Romanians Are Coming Back*, ODD & Tranzit.ro, Bucharest, Romania

2018 *How to uhygge with an alien*, CAMP, Copenhagen Culture Night, Copenhagen, Denmark

2016 - 2018 *Trigger Warning*, venues and festivals include Tate Exchange (London), Journeys Festival International (Leicester), Eurotopia (Transform Festival, Leeds), National Maritime Museum (London), b-side (Portland/Dorset)

2013 - 2018 *Text HOME to 78080*, commissioned by Giving in to Gift; venues and festivals include SPILL National Platform (Ipswich), Experimentica (Chapter, Cardiff), dis/placed (LADA and Counterpoints Arts, Shoreditch Town Hall, London), Performing Britain Festival (Leeds)

2012 *Waste of Space*, commissioned for the Streets of Gold exhibition, Museum of London

2011- 2016 *Eastern Europeans for Dummies*, venues and festivals include Brunel Museum, Rich Mix, Rosemary Branch (London), (in)Xclusion Festival (Leeds), The Basement (Brighton), Migration Matters Festival (Sheffield)

Teaching

2016 - present Visiting Lecturer, BA Performance Arts, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama

2022, Associate Lecturer, MA Performance: Theatre Making, MA Performance: Politics and Social Justice, Wimbledon College of Arts, University of Arts, London

Teaching includes leading and contributing to units on immersive performance, archiving & documentation, performance criticism, and cultural policy, as well as project and dissertation supervision

I also regularly design and lead performance criticism workshops with Critical Interruptions – most recently as part of CODA Festival, Oslo and Tanz Im August, Berlin.

Conference Presentations

2022 'Inscribing diaspora: Eastern Europeans as Birmingham locals', Theatre and Performance Research Association; Performance, Identity, Community working group, University of Essex, Colchester, UK

2021 'Unknowing Eastern Europeans: dismantling low skilled work through participatory performance', Theatre and Performance Research Association; Theatre, Performance and Philosophy working group, Liverpool Hope University, UK

2020 *The precarious nature of the new university: the prospects, problems and aspirations of 'early career' theatre and performance researchers*, Intersections conference co-chair, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, London, UK

2019 'No box to tick: Eastern European artists and the Creative Case for Diversity', In-Between Spaces: Central and Eastern European Art and Artists in the UK, University of Birmingham, Birmingham

2019 '(Re)Claiming Eastness: constructions of Eastern European identities in the work of UK-based immigrant artists', Fictions of Europe: Imaginary Topographies and Transnational Identities across the Arts, Frieje Universiteit Brussels, the University of Antwerp, and Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Brussels

2018 *Collective Works: Questioning Collectivity in Contemporary Theatre*, symposium co-chair, AICT-IATC and Sterijino Festival, Novi Sad, Serbia