

PROF BRYCE LEASE

Job title

Head of Knowledge Exchange

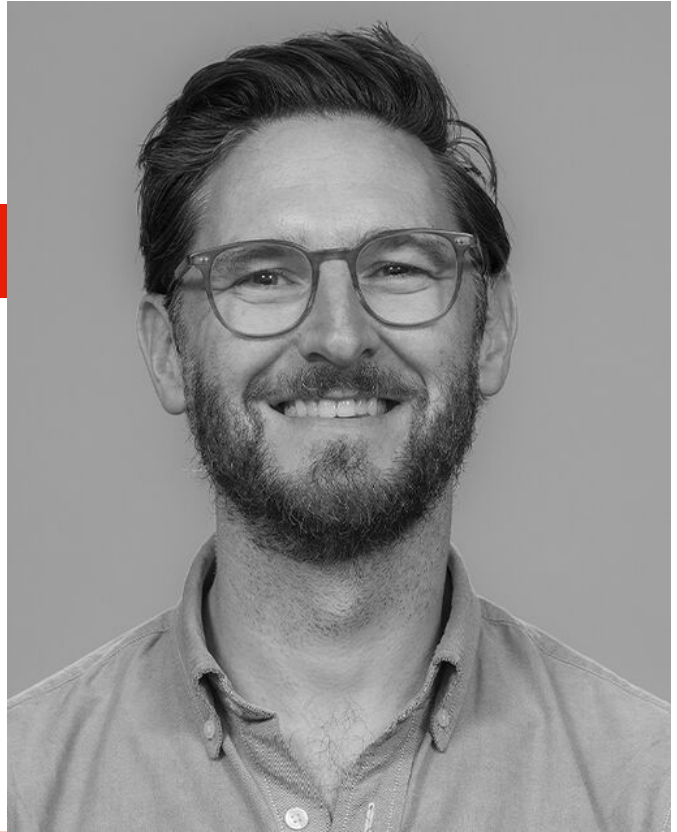
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PROFILE

I joined Central as Professor of Theatre & Performance Studies and Head of Knowledge Exchange in 2022. I previously worked at the Universities of Bristol, Exeter and Royal Holloway, University of London, where I developed the MA Theatre Directing with Katie Mitchell. My research shows a deep commitment to transnational engagement and collaboration across the European continent and the global south and north. In my role as Head of Knowledge Exchange, I am working with colleagues at Central to collaborate with and build meaningful partnerships with community groups, the cultural industries and the business sector. My interest in connecting scholars and researchers with those outside of the university – from marginalised communities to publically funded theatres and museums – has grown from my funded projects in South Africa, South America and Eastern Europe.

My writings on contemporary international performance have been published in numerous journals, including *The Drama Review (TDR)*, *Contemporary Theatre Review (CTR)*, *Theatre Research International (TRI)*, *Theatre Journal*, *European Stages* and *New Theatre Quarterly (NTQ)*. My research has been funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), the Newton Fund, the British Academy, the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Standing Conference of University Drama Departments (SCUDD) and the Brown International Advanced Research Institute (BIARI). In 2021, I was awarded a Thesaurus Poloniae Fellowship by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland.

I am Co-Editor of *Contemporary Theatre Review*, a founding member of the Executive Committee for EASTAP (European Association for the Study of Theatre and Performance), an advisory board member for *European Stages*, and a member of the Arts and Humanities Research Council Peer Review College. I have published numerous articles on Polish theatre and a monograph, *After '89: Polish Theatre and the Political*, which interrogates the rebirth of the theatre as a site of public intervention and social criticism since the establishment of pluralistic democracy, as well as three edited collections: *Contemporary European Playwrights* (Routledge) with Maria Delgado and Dan Rebellato, *A History of Polish Theatre* (Cambridge University Press) with Katarzyna Fazan and Michal Kobialka, and *Staging Difficult Pasts: Transnational Memory, Theatres, and Museums* (Routledge) with Delgado and Kobialka. Working on queer archives in the Global South, I have co-edited two special issues of peer reviewed journals: *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 'Outing Archives, Archives Outing', co-edited with Melissa Blanco Borelli and Royona Mitra. (2021); and *Safundi, The Journal of South African and American Studies*, 'Performing Queer South Africa', co-edited with Nadia Davids (2017).

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Cultural memory
- Difficult histories & the Holocaust
- Performance & museums
- Gender & sexuality
- Queer & digital archives
- Theatre & performance in Eastern Europe
- Politics & nascent democracies
- Intersectional ecologies
- Directing & dramaturgy

PHD SUPERVISION

I have supervised PhD theses in a broad variety of areas including political theatre, settler colonialism, multiculturalism, gender and performativity, European writing and directing practices, forms of censorship, queer theatre making and scenographics, and cultural memory. I have supervised postdoctoral projects that consider queer archives in South Africa, performance and transitional justice in Colombia, and museums and cultural memory in Argentina. I am interested in supervising doctoral projects in areas related to my current research interests and broader expertise.

KEY PUBLICATIONS

2024. [*Staging Difficult Pasts: Transnational Memory, Theatres, and Museums*](#), co-edited with Maria Delgado and Michal Kobialka (London and New York: Routledge).

2023. 'Transembodiment as Translation: Staging the W?ast/Komornicka Archive' in *Performance and Translation in a Global Age*, eds. Avishek Ganguly and K lina Gotman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

2022. [*A History of Polish Theatre*](#), co-edited with Katarzyna Fazan and Michal Kobialka (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

2021. Special double issue of *Contemporary Theatre Review*, '[Outing Archives, Archives Outing](#)', co-edited with Melissa Blanco Borelli and Royona Mitra. Including the article '[Realness & the Digital Archive: South African Drag Online](#)', *CTR* 31.1/2, pp. 153-71.

2021. 'Staging Difficult Pasts: The Labour of Remembrance', *Tadeusz Kantor: Widma/Spectres*, exhibition catalogue, Crikoteka.

2021. '[Adapting David Foster Wallace for the Swiss National Stage: An Interview with Yana Ross](#)', *Contemporary Theatre Review* 31.4, pp. 496-507.

2020. [*Contemporary European Playwrights*](#), co-edited with Maria Delgado and Dan Rebellato (London: Routledge).

2020. 'Krzysztof Warlikowski: Rupturing Taboos, Curating Publics' in [Contemporary European Theatre Directors](#), eds. Maria M. Delgado and Dan Rebellato (London: Routledge).
2020. [Interview with Katie Mitchell](#), *Contemporary Theatre Review* 30.2, pp. 253-59.
2019. [Counterpublics Cause so Much Trouble: Oliver Frliji?, Protest & Collectivity](#), *Critical Stages/Scènes critiques*, Issue 20.
2018. Special issue Oliver Frliji?, co-edited with Duška Radosavljevi?, [Interventions](#) 28.2.
2017. [Shared Histories and Commemorative Extension: Warsaw's POLIN Museum](#), *Theatre Journal*, 69.3, pp. 383-401.
2017. Special issue of *Safundi, The Journal of South African and American Studies*, [Performing Queer South Africa](#), co-edited with Nadia Davids. Including the article [Dragging Rights, Queering Publics: Realness, Self-Fashioning and the Miss Gay Western Cape Pageant](#), *Safundi*, 18.2, pp. 131-46.
2016. [After '89: Polish Theatre and the Political](#), Theatre: Theory – Practice – Performance Series (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press).
2015. [Theatre as Action, Dramaturgy as Streben: Cultural Confrontations at Lithuania's National Drama Theatre](#), *The Drama Review (TDR)*, 59.1, pp. 119-35.
2015. [Intersections of Queer in Post-apartheid Cape Town](#), *Theatre Research International (TRI)*, 40.1, pp. 70-74.
2015. 'In Warsaw's New York: Krzysztof Warlikowski's Queer Interventions' in [Queer Instruments: Local Practices and Global Queernesses](#), eds. Alyson Campbell and Stephen Farrier (Basingstoke: Palgrave).
2014. [Opening Borders, Closing Nations: How 'Generation Nothing' Stages Polish Migration](#), *Contemporary Theatre Review* 24.1, pp. 6-20.
2014. 'Kantor's Symptom or Grotowski's Fantasy? Defining a Political Theatre over a Theatre of Politics' in [Žižek and Performance](#), Performance and Philosophy Series, eds. Broderick Chow and Alex Mangold (Basingstoke: Palgrave).
2012. [Ethnic Identity and Anti-Semitism: S?obodzianek Stages the Polish Taboo](#), *The Drama Review (TDR)*, 56.2, pp. 81-100.

EXTERNAL PRACTICE

In 2023, I was PI on the project to launch Performance Lab, a catalyst for research and development in Theatre and Performance in immersive performance and digital technologies that received £1.37 million in investment from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). In 2024, we were awarded an additional £5.6 million in E3 funding to upscale the lab into the [Centre for Performance, Technology and Equity \(PTEQ\)](#). Working with partners from across a range of industries and the wider community including the arts, theatres, festivals, applied theatre, restorative justice, industry bodies, technology, manufacturing and SMEs, PTEQ will catalyse research and development at the intersection of performance and technology through the lens of social and resource equity.

From 2021-28, I am a Collaborator on the project 'Thinking Through the Museum: A Partnership Approach to Curating Difficult Knowledge in Public', working specifically in the 'National Heritage and Traumatic Memory' research group. The project is led by Erica Lehrer (Concordia) and is funded by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada. TTTM brings together international scholars, students, museum professionals, and community representatives from 20 museums, universities, and NGOs in Canada, the Netherlands, Poland, South Africa, and the US. The team will work within museum settings to co-produce exhibitions and design tools to challenge elite institutional knowledge systems, and beyond their walls to explore alternative heritage mobilization in festivals, grassroots archives, and site-based curating, where communities can set their own agendas.

From 2018-2021, I was the PI on the AHRC-funded project 'Staging Difficult Pasts: Of Narratives, Objects and Public Memory' in collaboration with Maria Delgado, Michal Kobialka and Cecilia Sosa. This project examined how theatres and museums are currently shaping public memory of difficult pasts through their staging of narratives and objects. Through fieldwork, workshops, public talks, and symposia the project specifically analysed transnational case studies in Argentina, Poland, Spain and the UK. The project website and archive can be found here: stagingdifficultpasts.org.

From 2018-2020, I was Co-I on the project 'Embodied Performance Practices in Processes of Reconciliation, Construction of Memory and Peace in Chocó and El Pacífico Medio, Colombia', led by Melissa Blanco-Borelli and Anamaria Tamayo Duque. The project was jointly funded by the Newton Fund in the UK and Colcencias in Colombia. Developing practices from 'Sequins, Self and Struggle' in the Western Cape (South Africa), I helped to develop modes of creating digital archives around local performance practices for marginalised communities. The project website and digital archive can be found at corpografias.com.

From 2013-15, I was Primary Investigator (PI) on the AHRC-funded project, Sequins, Self & Struggle: Performing and Archiving Sex, Place and Class in Pageant Competitions in Cape Town. This project was a collaboration among the Departments of Drama at RHUL and QMUL (UK), The Centre for Curating the Archive and the Centre for African Studies at the University of Cape Town (South Africa), Africana Studies at Brown University (US) and the District Six Museum. The project received international media coverage and resulted in several exhibitions in Cape Town and London, two documentaries, a symposium and curated panel on gay rights for the South Bank Centre's Mandela Weekend, and a digital archive hosted by the University of Cape Town.

REGISTER OF INTEREST

- External Examiner for the University of Manchester and King's College London.
- Board of Directors, field:arts agency (Dublin, Ireland)
- Advisory Board Member, Second World War and Holocaust Partnership Programme, Imperial War Museum
- Advisory Board Member for *European Stages* and *Didaskalia*