

DR JAMES ROWSON

Job title

Lecturer in Theatre and Cultural Policy

Orcid ID

0009-0002-4783-0610

Email

james.rowson@cssd.ac.uk



PROFILE

I am a Lecturer in Theatre and Cultural Policy. My research investigates contemporary performance practices, focusing on political and activist theatre, censorship, cultural memory, and institutional change.

I was previously a Postdoctoral Researcher on the transnational research project [Theatre after Covid](#) at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich and Central led by Professor Christopher Balme. My ongoing work in this area analyses the long-term institutional effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on theatre and explores how the industry might adapt and transform in response to the crisis. Before arriving at Central, I was a Postdoctoral Researcher at the University of Essex between 2020 and 2022. Here, I worked on two major research projects examining the impact of Covid on cultural organisations and freelance theatre workers in the United Kingdom. My research for these projects centred on how the pandemic has foregrounded and condensed pre-existing inequalities in the UK theatre industry, re-conceptualising freelance theatre-makers' relationships with cultural institutions and employers.

I received my PhD from the Department of Drama, Theatre and Dance at Royal Holloway, University of London. My thesis explores new theatre writing in Russia since 2000, in the context of the political, social and cultural background of the Putin era. It contends that a collection of innovative theatre artists resist and provocatively subvert established discourses by articulating the experiences of marginalized citizens who have been excluded from Putin's state-building strategies. In doing so, they frame dissent against the Putin regime as an ardent rejection of official state-sanctioned rhetoric, providing a locus for alternative political debate. I have published on this area of my research in a number of journals, including *Contemporary Theatre Review* and *Studies in Theatre and Performance*.

I have previously taught at Brunel University London and Royal Holloway, University of London. In addition, I am an editorial assistant for *Contemporary Theatre Review*.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Contemporary political performance

- Theatre and performance in Russia
- Creative and cultural industries
- New playwriting
- Cultural memory
- Collaborative exchange
- Verbatim and documentary theatre
- Performance analysis

KEY PUBLICATIONS

2023. [‘Documenting Crisis: Artistic Innovation and Institutional Transformations in the German-Speaking Countries and the UK’](#) (with Thomas Eder), *New Theatre Quarterly* 39.4, 333-54.
2022. [‘Staging International Theatre Festivals in Mid-Pandemic Russia: An Interview with Roman Dolzhanskiy’](#), *Contemporary Theatre Review* 32.3-4, 281-87.
2022. [‘Theatres Beyond the Stage: The Recovery of Regional Theatres as Placemakers in the East of England’](#) (with Rosemary Klich). University of Essex.
2022. [‘Freelancers in the Dark: The Economic, Cultural, and Social Impact of Covid 19 on Theatre Freelancers’](#) (with Holly Maples, Josh Edelman, Ali FitzGibbon, Laura Harris, Rosemary Klich, Kurt Taroff and Alexandra Young). University of Essex.
2022. ‘Theatres in the Dark: Covid-19s Impact on Digital Performance, Advocacy and the Online Public Sphere’ (with Holly Maples) in *Theatre, Performance and Dance in the Time of Covid-19*. ed. Tomaž Krpi? (Ljubljana: FDV Publishing House, Ljubljana University), 101-10.
2021. [‘Pandemic Narratives: Regional Disparities in the Experiences of Theatre Freelancers during the Covid-19 Pandemic’](#), University of Essex.
2021. [“‘He did not go back to the army’: War, Patriotism and Desertion in Pavel Pryazhko’s *The Soldier*”](#), *Studies in Theatre and Performance* 43.2, 200-21. DOI: 10.1080/14682761.2021.1917873
2020. [‘Documentary and Dissent: Performing protest in Teatr.doc’s *The Bolotnaya Square Case*’](#), *Contemporary Theatre Review* 30.1, 91-106.
2019. ‘Elena Gremina and Mikhail Ugarov Obituary’, *Contemporary Theatre Review* 29.1, 108-110.
2018. ‘Justice for Magnitsky: Staging the Material Document in Elena Gremina’s *One Hour Eighteen Minutes*’, *Journal of Arts Writing by Students* 4.2, 135-146.
2017. [‘Natalya Vorozhbit’s *Bad Roads* at the Royal Court: Russian and Ukrainian Drama in The UK’](#), *The Theatre Times*.

REGISTER OF INTEREST

Nothing to declare.