

## DR LIAM JARVIS

**Job title**

Reader in Theatre & Performance

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[Immersive Embodiment](#)

[Avatars, Activism and Postdigital Performance](#)

[Postdigital Performances of Care](#)



## COURSES

Advanced Theatre Practice, MA/MFA

## PROFILE

I joined Central as Reader in Theatre & Performance in 2024, teaching on the [MA/MFA Advanced Theatre Practice](#) courses.

Prior to this, I trained as a professional theatre director at LAMDA and worked as a Teaching Fellow in Theatre Studies at Royal Holloway (2004-15), a Visiting Lecturer at the University of Surrey (2013-14) and a Senior Lecturer at the University of Essex from 2015-23. At Essex, I was Director/Co-director of the Centre for Theatre Research (2019-23) and Director of Graduate Studies (2018-20).

My journey as a practitioner-researcher emerged through my professional practice with Analogue; an award-winning independent theatre company I co-founded and co-led from 2007-2017. Analogue's interdisciplinary work ranged from multimedia stage shows, one-on-one performances, audio-guided/site-based work and digital installations. The company toured the UK/internationally and was an Associate at Shoreditch Town Hall, Farnham Maltings and the National Theatre Studio. My creative investigations with the company formed part of my AHRC-funded PhD research entitled 'Feeling with Someone Else's Body: Self-deception and the Paradox of Immersive Performance'; a qualitative practice-based project that examined intersections between art theory, immersive performance practices/virtual reality and neuroscientific studies in body-ownership.

I have experience co-ordinating major research events and networks; I was Lead Organiser of the Theatre and Performance Research Association's (TaPRA) 2022 conference at the University of Essex, overseeing the delivery of the first hybrid event. I co-convened the [Intermediality in Theatre and Performance research working group](#) at the International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR) from 2017-2021, co-ordinating its research activities at conferences in Sao Paulo (2017), Belgrade (2018), Shanghai (2019), Galway (online in 2021). I co-edited essay collections and journal special editions arising from this network. I am also Co-editor of the [Performance and Digital Cultures](#) book series with Methuen Drama and a member of the Editorial Boards for the [International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media](#) (2022-present) and the [Body, Space & Technology](#) journal (2020-present).

In 2021, I was awarded the Times Higher Education's '[Most Innovative Teacher of the Year](#)' Award sponsored by Advance HE for initiatives to adapt Drama teaching online during the COVID-19 pandemic. I am committed to enhancing the quality of pedagogic approaches/curriculum design in Higher Education and as an External Academic Advisor, I have contributed to the validation of 10+ undergraduate and postgraduate degrees across the UK. I am currently External Examiner on the MA Immersive Arts/MSc Immersive Technologies at the University of Bristol.

I have in-depth industry knowledge and expertise as a Board member for National Portfolio Organisation, Theatre-Rites (2013-present). I have also acted as an embedded researcher for the company, analyzing the training methods of internationally renowned puppet director Dr Sue Buckmaster (Hons.) in a co-authored book that theorized 25-years of the company's practice.

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## AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Intermedial, Digital and Postdigital Performance
- Contemporary Performance-making
- AI in Performance
- Object-led Theatre
- Immersive & Participatory Performance
- Science-art Interdisciplinarity
- Virtual Embodiment

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## PHD SUPERVISION

To date, I have supervised/co-supervised four PhDs, including practice research projects exploring topics such as transgressive play, trauma and testimonial injustice in performance and interdisciplinary research in the medical humanities analysing neuro-memoirs; one PhD candidate successfully completed in 2023, with two candidates due to complete in 2024 and one in 2025. I have examined five PhD theses in the UK and internationally (both internally and externally) and one MA research dissertation.

I would welcome the opportunity to explore the supervision/co-supervision of interdisciplinary research combining my areas of expertise and those of other colleagues at Central. I am particularly interested in supervising doctoral projects in the areas of Contemporary Performance Practices, Digital/Postdigital Performance and Object-led theatre.

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## KEY PUBLICATIONS

### Sole-authored Research Monographs

2019. [Immersive Embodiment: Theatres of Mislocalized Sensation](#). Palgrave Macmillan.

### Co-edited/Co-authored Books

Forthcoming 2024. [Postdigital Performances of Care: Technology & Pandemic](#) co-authored with Karen Savage. Bloomsbury Methuen.

2021. [Avatars, Activism and Postdigital Performance: Precarious Intermedial Identities](#) co-edited with Karen Savage. Bloomsbury Methuen.

2021. [\*Theatre-Rites: Animating Puppets, Objects, and Sites\*](#) co-authored with Sue Buckmaster. Routledge. (Watch a [video](#) of an 'In Conversation With...' from the book's launch).

## Book Chapters

2019. 'Theatre, Appification and VR Apps: Disability Simulations as an Intervention in 'Affective Realism'', in [\*Theatres of Contagion: Transmitting Early Modern to Contemporary Performance\*](#). Ed. Fintan Walsh. Methuen Drama: Engage.

2017. 'Creating in the Dark: Conceptualising Different Darknesses in Contemporary Practice', in [\*Theatre in the Dark: Shadow, Gloom and Blackout in Contemporary Theatre\*](#). Eds. Adam Alston and Martin Welton. Great Britain: Methuen Drama Engage.

2016. 'Renegotiating Immersive Participation', in [\*Performance and Participation: Practices, Audiences, Politics\*](#). Eds. Anna Harpin and Helen Nicholson. Great Britain: Palgrave.

## Co-authored plays (published)

2011. [\*2401 Objects\*](#). Co-authored with Hannah Barker and Lewis Hetherington, L. Great Britain: Oberon Books: Oberon Modern Plays.

2011. [\*Beachy Head\*](#). Co-authored with Dan Rebellato, Emma Jowett, Hannah Barker and Lewis Hetherington. Great Britain: Oberon Books: Oberon Modern Plays.

## Online Articles/Journal Articles

2021. '[TechNO-fixes?: Performances within Ecological Emergencies](#)', *International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media*. Co-edited with Karen Savage (Guest Editors). Affiliated Issue with the International Federation for Theatre Research's (IFTR) Intermediality Working Group. 18.1

2021. '[Hosting industry professionals: embedding vocational skill-building into higher education](#)', *Times Higher Education Campus*

2017. '[The Ethics of Mislocalized Selfhood —Proprioceptive Drifting Towards the Virtual Other](#)'. *Performance Research*. Eds. Ben Cranfield and Louise Owen. 22.4, Taylor & Francis.

2017. '[Time-sculptures of Terrifying Ambiguity: Staging 'Inner Space' and Migrating Realities in Analogue's Living Film Set](#)'. *International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media* (IJPADM). Ed. Maria Chatzichristodoulou. 13.1. Taylor & Francis.

2011. '["The Work is the Fix": An Email Conversation with Darren O'Donnell, Artistic Director of Mammalian Diving Reflex](#)'. *Platform*. Eds. Mara Lockowandt and Emer O'Toole. 5.2.

## EXTERNAL PRACTICE

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Some indicative external practice-based projects are listed below:

### ***Sleepless* (2014-16) (co-author)**

Inspired by the true story of a family cursed with a rare genetic disease called fatal familial insomnia that deprives them of sleep until they die. *Sleepless* is a story that sits at the crossroads of two cutting edge areas of science: sleep research and prion disease research.

This stage show underwent research and development as part of a 6-week residency with Mountview Academy's third-year acting students ([article on the R&D](#)), and was subsequently commissioned by Shoreditch Town Hall and co-produced with Mainz Staatstheater (Germany). [Watch the video of \*Sleepless\*](#).

### ***Transports* (2014) (co-creator/researcher)**

*Transports* was an interactive installation incorporating [Raspberry Pi technology](#), first-person film and a motorized glove to explore the sensation of tremor in volunteers with Young-Onset Parkinson's Disease ( [New Scientist article](#) on the project).

The work was developed with support from charity Parkinson's UK, Professor of Neuroscience Narender Ramnani (Royal Holloway University) and was funded by a Wellcome Trust Small Arts Grant. The installation was presented at Forest Fringe (Edinburgh Festival), The Science Museum (London), Parkinson's UK Headquarters and with third-year undergraduate psychology students at Royal Holloway (as an immersive educative tool).

### ***Re-enactments* (2012-14) (author/director)**

*Re-enactments* is a multi-channel headphone performance that emerged from an Artistic Fellowship I undertook at Hanse-Wissenschaftskolleg (Germany), exploring the psychological conditions of dissociation and derealisation. The work cast 8 x unrehearsed audience members as 're-enactors' that are entrusted with the task of following instructions to stage an elaborate re-enactment to help the disembodied narrator feel 'real again' after a traumatic accident leaves him in a coma. Inspired by Tom McCarthy's novel *Remainder* and Charlie Kauffman's film *Synecdoche, New York*, *Re-enactments* transforms audience members into actors, sending them on a physical journey through the cavernous subterranean chamber rooms of Shoreditch Town Hall.

Early iterations of the work were performed at the Upstairs Art Gallery (Oldenburg, Germany) and the initial concept was shortlisted for the Oxford Samuel Beckett Theatre Trust Award in 2014.

### ***Lecture Notes on a Death Scene* (2011)**

*Lecture Notes on a Death Scene* is a one-on-one performance that invited a single audience member to follow a white line on the floor to a chair positioned at the centre of a darkened space. A mirror slides out of the darkness on a track towards them, casting them at the centre of the piece's narrative as a Lecturer who has just given a lecture on many-worlds theory in Jorge Luis Borges's *The Garden of Forking Paths*. He gradually becomes the subject of his own lecture; the mirror tilts to reveal fragments of his story and the audience member is set on a collision course with a version of themselves that made a different choice.

This performance was developed through an R&D with MA Advanced Theatre Practice students at Central in 2010.

### ***2401 Objects* (2011-12) (co-author/director)**

ISBN: 9781849431958

*2401 Objects* tells the story of Patient HM/Henry Molaison, who after undergoing experimental brain surgery in the United States in the 1950s, lost his memory from several years of his life and was unable to produce any new memories, becoming trapped in an unending present.

The production was created in collaboration with Dr Jacopo Annese, the neuroscientist at the Brain Observatory in California who was the custodian of Henry's brain. Annese conducted a 53-hour procedure in 2009 to slice Henry's brain into 2401 preserved slices for future scientific research.

This project was supported by the Arts Council and Wellcome Trust (Small Arts Award). *2401 Objects* won a Scotsman Fringe First Award in 2011

### ***Beachy Head* (2009-11) (co-author/director)**

ISBN: 9781849430111

*Beachy Head* was a performance mixing text, movement and 3D animation to explore one man's decision to jump from the clifftops through the narratives of histopathologists examining remains in the post-mortem, documentary film-makers and personal testimony. Watch the [video of \*Beachy Head\*](#).

***Mile End* (2007-08) (pictured above) (co-creator/performer)**

*Mile End* was a stage show inspired by the real-life story of Christophe Duclos, a commuter who was pushed from the platform at Mile End underground station into the path of an oncoming train by Stephen Soans-Wade in 2002; a man who sought to get himself hospitalised for mental health issues and substance abuse. Watch the [video of \*Mile End\*](#).

*Mile End* won a Scotsman Fringe First Award and Arches Brick Award in 2007.

**REGISTER OF INTEREST**

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Nothing to declare.

**IMAGE GALLERY**

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