

ROYAL CENTRAL

SCHOOL OF SPEECH & DRAMA

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

JESSICA BOWLES, BA

Job title

Principal Lecturer, Course Leader MA/MFA Creative Producing



PROFILE

I am an academic with a background in professional practice as a theatre designer across the UK including at Dukes Playhouse Lancaster, Young Vic, and the RSC and as a producer of large-scale festival experiences. I trained as a Designer for Film and TV at what was the old Granada studios in Manchester and started off specializing in costume working in both film and live performance. My design work took me all over Europe but gradually as the projects became larger I realized that getting to grips with the logistics inspired me as much as shaping the vision, so whilst still very much a visual artist, I would describe myself now as a Producer. At Central, I wrote the BA (Hons) Theatre Practice Course, along the way introducing new undergraduate programs to Higher Education including the first Circus and Puppetry degrees and graduates from these courses now lead the profession in their field. As a Course Leader of the MA Creative Producing, working in partnership with professional theatres inspires my work as an academic. For over 20 years I have brought together professional companies and students to collaborate on projects that enable both sides to risk and learn something new by making something tangible together.

I think Producers play a pivotal role in the current 'distributed' cultural landscape, connecting artists with audiences. The same could be said about the role of education as a cultural incubator for new work and new practices. In my role as Head of the Centre for Excellence in Theatre Training (2008-11) I led research into the factors contributing to the sustainability of graduate companies which in turn led to the development of the MA / MFA in Creative Producing, the course I now lead. I am known for my ability to connect people and facilitate collaboration and between 2010 and 2014, I was on the Board of the Centre for Creative Collaboration (C4CC), a University of London initiative to bring together leading researchers from London's universities together with creative industry freelancers, small businesses, and students. In 2011 and 2015 I produced the educational component of the Prague Quadrennial, the world's largest festival of performance design and space, more information on this is at www.pq.cz. I have been invited to speak about my work as Creative Producer in the Netherlands, Taiwan, the USA, Denmark and the Czech Republic. My educational and research practice focuses on the materiality of performance and the collaborative and interdisciplinary nature of performance-making. Since 2008, I have been collaborating with Prof. Bob Shiel, Director of the Bartlett School of Architecture UCL and this has developed into a new strand of collaborative research between making, performance, and 3D scanning, in collaboration with SHUNT, and ScanLAB projects. For over 20 years I have been active in the development of Puppetry and in 2014 was invited onto the Board of award-winning company Theatre-Rites, a field leader in the creation of experimental theatre for children.

COURSES

Creative Producing, MA/MFA

TEACHING AREAS

Collaborative Practices and pedagogies
Creative Producing Practices
Entrepreneurial approaches to theatre-making
Audience development
Scenography

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Cultural Placemaking
Objects in Performance
Designing curricula for creative pedagogies
Materiality and manipulation of the scenographic space
Pedagogies of cultural enterprise

PHD SUPERVISION

Scenographic spaces

PRACTICE

2015. Artistic Director for *SpaceLab*, Prague Quadrennial in 2015
2014. Conference Director '*Social Enterprise and the Creative Producer*', Theaterschool Amsterdam and Fondspodium, NL
2012. Curator '*Objects of Emotion*' a programme of Puppetry and Science-related events with 'in conversations' and a one-day symposium at the Wellcome Trust
2011. Artistic Leader *Scenofest*, Prague Quadrennial in 2011
2011. Project Director *Puppetry and Architecture 'Jeudi'* Centre de Pompidou, FR.
2010. Conference Director for '*Theatre Applications*' an international conference on performance with a purpose.

REGISTER OF INTEREST

Board Member – Theatre-Rites since 2014 (Charity No: 1048058)