

# ROYAL CENTRAL

SCHOOL OF SPEECH & DRAMA

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

## BRIAN LOBEL

Job title

Knowledge Exchange Fellow



### PROFILE

I am a performer, curator, and researcher who trained at University of Michigan - Ann Arbor (with performance artist Holly Hughes) and later at Queen Mary, University of London. Career highlights include performances at Sydney Opera House, National Theatre, Harvard Medical School and on five continents, giving Keynote Presentations at the World Congress of Adolescent and Young Adult Cancer Care and 50+ Medical Schools, having my show *Purge* interpreted by artists in five languages, and winning Come Dine with Me in 2017.

A cancer diagnosis at age 20 and the monologue I created about it (*BALL*, 2003), started my career as a solo performer and interest in the intersections of health, illness, disability and medical research. My PhD research at Queen Mary - *Playing the Cancer Card: Illness, Performance and Spectatorship* - formalised these concerns and looked at how theatre can shift the dynamic between cancer patients and society at large. As an artist, I've written a number of autobiographical works (*BALL & Other Funny Stories About Cancer*, *An Appreciation* and *While You Wait for a Cancer Diagnosis*) as well as facilitated a number of works with other cancer patients (*Fun with Cancer Patients* in Birmingham, Ghent and Kanazawa). In 2016, I co-wrote the book of the musical *A Pacifist's Guide to the War on Cancer*, with Bryony Kimmings which ran at the National Theatre before a UK and Australian tour. And in 2017, I led *There is a Light: BRIGHTLIGHT*, a performance collaboration between Contact Young Company (Manchester) and BRIGHTLIGHT, the world's largest medical/psychosocial study of young adult cancer patients. The show featuring young adults with and without cancer, and toured the UK to medical conferences, theatres and young adult cancer events. I have also written a number of chapters, journal articles and popular press articles on the subject of cancer, survivorship, survivor-porn, and what it means to witness a cancer story including in *The Routledge Handbook of Disability Arts & Culture* (2018), *Performance, Health and Well-Being*, *Performance & The Medical Body* and *Contemporary Theatre Review*, *Performance Research* and a number of medical journals. From 2014-2016 I served as a Wellcome Trust Public Engagement Fellow, during which time I created a number of new interactive performances and co-founded (with Tracy Gentles) The Sick of the Fringe, which supports artists and audiences tackling difficult realities in ingenious and accessible ways. My book *Theatre & Cancer* comes out in 2019.

Reflections on witnessing and difference led me to an interest in interactive performance, greatly influenced by the UK's dynamic Live Art scene. My work *Purge* examined social media and friendship, and asked strangers to vote over which of my 1500 Facebook friends should be kept or deleted. Other works have asked audiences to sell a minute of their time (*Carpe Minuta Prima*), dance with me over 8 hours (*Hold My Hand and We're Halfway There*) or partake in a Jewish folk dance lesson (*Ruach*). I am a also passionate maker, curator and researcher of one-to-one performance. My curation project Cruising for Art has facilitated over 200 performances since 2009 and my one-to-one project *You Have to Forgive Me, You Have to Forgive Me, You Have to Forgive Me* was featured at All About Women Festival (Sydney Opera House), the British Council Edinburgh Showcase and was featured

on the all-important EveryOutfitOnSATC Instagram account, where it was seen by 100k people within 24 hrs.

I am fascinated by formal and informal modes of sharing ideas and knowledge and support artists, academics and biomedical researchers to share in more meaningful and innovative ways. I served as Reader in Theatre at University of Chichester from 2012-2018, and I am currently a member of the AHRC Peer Review College, a Board Member for Fierce Festival (Birmingham) and Marlborough Theatre (Brighton).

## COURSES

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Research Degrees (MPhil/PhD)

## OTHER DETAILS

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**Research Areas - Illness, Health & Disability; Gender & Sexuality; Interactive Performance; Practice-Based Research; Practice As Research; Patient Advocacy; Public Engagement; Arts & Health Collaboration**

### PhD Supervision

I am particularly interested to supervise research students interested in Practice-Based Research, particularly around the subjects of illness, cancer, disability and arts & health collaboration.

### Key Publications

2019. *Theatre & Cancer*, London: Palgrave

2016. *Purge*, London: Oberon

2012+2015 *BALL & Other Funny Stories About Cancer*, London: Oberon

2012. *CANCERCANCERCANCERCANCERCANCER* (Artist DVD), London: Live Art Development Agency

Chapters:

2018. 'On the Fringe of the Fringe: Artmaking, Access, Rights & Community', (co-authored with Jess Thom), in Hadley, Bree and Donna McDonald eds, *The Routledge Handbook of Disability Arts, Culture and Media*, pp. 243-250

2017. 'Proud Disclosures and Awkward Receptions: Between bodies with cancer and their audience' in Low, Katherine and Victoria Baxter, eds. *Performance, Health and Well-Being*, London: Methuen, pp. 168-179

2016. 'Fun with Cancer Patients: the affect of cancer' in Bouchard, Gianna and Alex Mermikides, eds. *Performance and the Medical Body*, Methuen, pp. 99-114

2016. 'Timeline of a Sex Life, Timeline of a Cancer Life,' for *The Patient, Exhibition Catalogue*, edited by Bec Dean, Sydney: UNSW

2013. 'Spokeswomen and Posterpeople' in Johnson, Dominic, ed., *Critical Live Art: Contemporary Histories of Performance in the UK*, London: Routledge, pp. 79-93

Articles

2016. 'Why We Wrote an All-Singing, All-Dancing Musical about Cancer' for *INews*, 13 Sept 2016, Online and Print Edition

2015. 'The Sick of the Fringe' (co-authored with Hannah Maxwell), *Contemporary Theatre Review*, Volume 25.4 - Online Feature

2014. *Performing Ethos: Special Issue on the Ethics of One-to-One Performance* (co-edited with Eirini Kartsaki and Rachel Zerihan), Volume 3.2

2014. 'The Morning After: A Roundtable Discussion with Cruising for Art' *Performing Ethos*, 3.2, 191-204

2014. 'Music is Disease: Cancer Blogs and Spectatorial Expectation' in *Performance Research: On Medicine*, 19.4, 88-96

2014. 'Ruach', *Performance Research: On Affirmation*, 19.2, 93-96

2012. 'Spokeswomen and Posterpeople', *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 22. 1, 77-93

### Practice

**24 Italian Songs & Arias**(Finalist for the Oxford Samuel Beckett Theatre Trust Prize) | Royal Opera House, London | Latitude Festival | The Yard, London | 2015-2018

**A Pacifist's Guide to the War on Cancer**(co-created with Bryony Kimmings and Tom Parkinson) | National Theatre, London | HOME (Manchester) | UK / Australia Tour | 2016 + 2018

**You Have to Forgive Me, You Have to Forgive Me, You Have to Forgive Me** | Sydney Opera House | Hotel Obscura Vienna | Latitude Festival | Ovalhouse London | Compass Festival Leeds | 2014-2018

**Cruising for Art** | Victoria & Albert Museum, London | Tanssin Talo, Helsinki | ANTI Festival, Kuopio, Finland | In Between Time Festival, Bristol | Recyclart & Brigittines for Nuit Blanche, Brussels (collaboration with Isabelle Bats) | BFI for the London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival | Forest Fringe, Edinburgh | Tate Britain, London | 2009-2017

**Fun with Cancer Patients** | Fierce Festival Exhibition created in association with Birmingham Teenage Cancer Trust, Queen Elizabeth Hospital and Birmingham Children's Hospital | MAC (Midland Arts Centre), Birmingham | Supported by funding from Wellcome Trust | Otter Gallery, Chichester | Vooruit, Ghent | 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa | 2013-2018

**An Appreciation (Selected) Dramaturgische Gessellschaft, Hanover | Brighton Festival, Brighton | Frascati, Amsterdam | Abrons Arts Center, New York City | Summerworks Festival, Toronto | Frascati, Amsterdam | CounterPulse, San Francisco | Duckie, Sadler's Wells and Sacred Festival of Live Art, London | Manchester Museum of Science and Industry, Manchester | Performance Studies International, Toronto | 2009-2018**

**BALL & Other Funny Stories About Cancer | New York Academy of Medicine, New York City | Cape Town Live Art Festival | Harvard Medical School, Boston | SeymourCentre at Sydney University | Bodies of Interest at Victory Garden, Chicago | OUTBURST Festival, Belfast | The Junction, Cambridge | Glamorgan University, Cardiff | Queen Mary, University of London | Contact Theatre, Manchester | decibel Performing Arts Showcase, Manchester | Edinburgh Science Fest. | Leicester Comedy Fest. | Colchester Arts Centre | DaDa Festival, Liverpool | Marlborough Theatre, Brighton | ArtsAdmin, London | Camden People's Theatre, London | 2011-2016**

**Purge (Interactive Installation and Stage Performance) | Commissioned by MotiRoti, London | ANTI Festival, Kuopio, Finland | NUS Festival, Singapore | Southbank Centre, London | Malthouse, Melbourne | Lagos Theatre Festival (with Gideon Okeke and Marcy Dolapo Oni), Lagos | Summerworks, Toronto | Santarcangelo Festival | Vooruit, Ghent | Small Projects, Tromso | Maison des arts de Creteil, Paris | Beursschouwburg, Brussels | Fusebox, Austin | Battersea Arts Centre, London | Brighton Festival | AUAWIRLEBEN, Bern | Abrons Arts Centre, NYC | 2012-2018**

**Love Letters & Lehman Brothers | Library of Birmingham | Abrons Arts Centre, New York | Brighton Festival | Forest Fringe, Edinburgh | Frascati, Amsterdam | 2013-2014**

**Hold My Hand and We're Halfway There | Scala Cinema, Bangkok | New Visions Festival, Hong Kong | Carpe Diem, Lisbon | British Film Institute, Sadler's Wells, Shunt Vaults, London | Nuit Blanche - Recyclart, Brussels | The Basement, Brighton | Santarcangelo Festival | Forest Fringe, Edinburgh | Performed as a durational, 5-day performance in New York City through an LMCC Swing Space | 2008-2016**

**Carpe Minuta Prima | Tokyo Performing Arts Marketplace (TPAM), Yokohama | Infecting the City Festival, Cape Town | Fusebox Festival, Austin | La Jolla Playhouse, San Diego | Ptarmigan, Helsinki | The Junction, Cambridge | PULSE Festival, Ipswich | Brixton Village Market, London | Kirkgate Market for Compass Festival of Live Art, Leeds | 2009-2014**

**HORA and Ruach | The Place, Ovalhouse, JW3, ArtsAdmin, Chisenhale, and Camden People's Theatre, London | Ashley Wood, Corsham | GIFT, Gateshead | Latitude Festival, Suffolk | Contact, Manchester | Arnolfini, Bristol | The Junction, Cambridge | LAB, Leeds | Marlborough Theatre, Brighton | Summerworks, Toronto | 2008-2015**