

SCUDD 2021: Beyond Inclusion

Thursday 24th & Friday 25th June 2021

University of Warwick



SESSION by Still House with Steppaz and Empire Sounds

The aim of this conference is to bring together artists, academics, and students to think together about the politics of inclusion: its opportunities, challenges, and limits. The conference begins with a sense that institutional work on diversity and inclusion has tended to rearrange the deckchairs but leave the ship intact and on course for disaster. This conference seeks to identify and interrogate inequalities of access, safety, and opportunity across experiences of exclusion. The purpose here is to identify both the specificities of lived experiences of structural and systemic exclusion but also to look across exclusory practices and phenomena to build resistive solidarities. Moreover, the conference will debate what it might mean to shift the conversation away from inclusion, which retains a sense of the centre enveloping the margin, and instead think through the possibilities for our campuses and our industry to become sites of anti-exclusion.

The Standing Conference of University Drama Departments (SCUDD) represents the interests of Drama, Theatre and Performance in the Higher Education sector in the UK. SCUDD acts as a mediator with

bodies such as funding councils, the AHRC and the Arts Councils and is consulted by such organisations when matters of future policy are discussed and decided. Its annual conference concerns topics, issues and debates relevant to those working in drama, theatre and performance in HE. This year's conference will make space for reflections on working in our field during covid-19 and will continue discussions around advocacy for - and threats to - the discipline. As part of the conference, SCUDD's AGM will take place.

This year's conference will be hosted online by Theatre and Performance Studies and the School of Creative Arts, Performance and Visual Cultures at the University of Warwick. Organising the conference are Dr Anna Harpin, Dr David Coates, Dr Tim White, Dr Ronan Hatfull and Alice Golisano.

THURSDAY 24TH JUNE 2021

9am-9.30am: Welcome Addresses

9.30am-11.15am: SCUDD Panel: COVID Reflections

Rob Dean and Louise Peacock will follow up Rob Dean's work on adaptations to teaching during the COVID pandemic and lockdowns. Rob presented this work at the SCUDD Conference in 2020, drawn from colleagues' responses across the discipline. In 2021, here's the follow up.

11.15am-11.30am: Screen Break

11.30am-1pm: Collaboration and Allyship

Chair: **Nadine Holdsworth** (University of Warwick)

Speakers:

Doreen Foster (Warwick Arts Centre)

Black Lives Matter for More Than A Moment: Who's Paying Attention Now?

Max Dean (C&T)

Digital Allyship

Prarthana Purkayastha (Royal Holloway, University of London)

On the Limits of Inclusion, Or Why I Don't want to be Included

1pm-2pm Virtual Lunch Break (via Wonder.Me)

2-3.30pm: Access and Evaluation

Chair: **Milija Gluhovic** (University of Warwick)

Speakers:

Jo Bannon (Artist)

Film Screening: Kitchen Alba by Jo Bannon

Dave Calvert (University of Huddersfield)

Crisis, what crisis? Some reflections on access and identity.

Jessi Parrott (University of Warwick)

'[She is] not a specimen, she's a mother!' – Call the Midwife as an example of positive practice in the representation and recruitment of Deaf and disabled performers and characters

3.30pm-4pm: Virtual Coffee Break (via Wonder.Me)

4-5.30pm: SCUDD Annual General Meeting

5.30pm-6pm: Virtual Drinks Reception (via Wonder.Me)

7.30pm: Show: Still House *In the Letting Go* and *SESSION*.

Chair: **Anna Harpin** (University of Warwick)

We are very excited to be able to share an exclusive documentary film of Still House's fantastic piece *SESSION* made in collaboration with Steppaz and Empire Sounds. This dance party, gig, and social was led by an ensemble of young dancers who move across hip hop, contemporary folk, and Afrobeats to celebrate community, youth, and belonging. Please watch this in advance of the live event at 7.30pm on Thursday 24 June 2021:

(This YouTube link will expire after the conference concludes)

On Thursday evening, we will be joined by the artistic director of Still House and the artists involved in the company's current project *In the Letting Go* – a dance exploration of masculinity, power, and love. The evening event will comprise a screening of work-in-progress sections of the show and live discussion with the creative team about dance, politics, race, and patriarchy. We look forward to seeing you there.

FRIDAY 25TH JUNE 2021

- 9am-10.15am:** SCUDD Panel: Representation in Drama Project
Romana Fello and mezze eade will discuss the Representation in Drama Project. Representation in Drama aims to address systemic imbalances in KS3, GCSE and A level drama by supporting intersectional anti-racism work happening in UK schools, theatres and theatre companies. The project promotes the study, directing and programming of plays by writers from the global majority.
- 10.15am-10.30am:** Screen Break
- 10.30am-12pm:** Representations and Reparations
Chair: **Glenn Odom** (University of Roehampton)
Speakers:
Ben Buratta (Central School of Speech and Drama)
Dancefloor Dramaturgy: Reparative practices for making theatre queerly
Robin Craig (University of Roehampton)
Trans Casting: The representation of trans actors and creatives in the UK theatre industry
melissandre varin (artworker)
healing as a prerequisite
- 12pm-1pm:** Lunch (via Wonder.Me)
- 1pm-2.30pm:** Voice and Audibility
Chair: **Julia Peetz** (University of Warwick)

Speakers:

Nia-Cerise Conteh (University of Cambridge)

Devon Glover (Artist)

The Sonnet Man: Shakespeare & Hip Hop

Wendy Lennon (The Shakespeare Institute, University of Birmingham)

Shakespeare, Race & Pedagogy

2.30pm-3pm: Virtual Coffee Break (via Wonder.Me)

3pm-4pm: **Futures Roundtable**

To close the conference, a panel of five academics from Theatre and Performance Studies will reflect on the events of the two day programme. They will explore what the future holds for the discipline and reflect on the continuing need for work within the areas of diversity and inclusion.

Chair: **Ronan Hatfull** (University of Warwick)

Panellists:

Soudabeh Ananisarab (Birmingham City University)

Tom Cornford (Central School of Speech and Drama)

Pedro de Senna (Middlesex University London)

Steve Greer (University of Glasgow)

Celena Monteiro (Kingston University London)

Speaker Abstracts and Biographies

Jo Bannon (Artist)

Film Screening: Kitchen Alba by Jo Bannon

Jo Bannon is an artist working in performance, choreography and live art. Her work is concerned with identity, sensory perception, and human encounter and explores how our physical bodies experience the world around us and how this sensory experience can or cannot be conveyed. Her work is informed by her identity as a disabled woman with albinism and attempts to unpick the ways we look, hear and sense our immediate environment in order to rethink or make unfamiliar these intrinsic human behaviours. Bannons work is led by form and so manifests in various mediums including intimate encounters

designed for single or small audiences, staged performance, dance, film and installation. Recent work includes *Absent Tense* (2020), *We Are Fucked* (2018), *Alba* (2015), *Dead Line* (2013) and *Exposure* (2011).

Kitchen Alba is a reimagining of the staged work, *Alba*, for a domestic kitchen. This new film version, *Kitchen Alba*, made in 2021 amidst a world 'working from home' places the miraculous in the most mundane of domestic spaces, blurring the border between the ordinary and the sublime. Riffing on religious iconography, disability, white goods, family and faith, *Kitchen Alba* prompts us to look anew at our most ordinary and homely of spaces and to find meaning, miracle and mystery wedged between the cookery books and the stack of dirty dishes.

Ben Buratta (Central School of Speech and Drama)

Dancefloor Dramaturgy: Reparative practices for making theatre queerly

The dance floor, with its specific rhythms, visual and physical tropes and behaviours, proffers a site in which new ways of doing and thinking theatre queerly can arise. As Artistic Director of Outbox, I have consistently staged work on dance floors, created work to feel like dance floors and used the ecology of the dance floor to create modes of meaning-making. Through the development of what I term 'Dancefloor Dramaturgy', my practice research establishes a distinct approach to theatrical form that explores and captures queer potentiality. Dancefloor Dramaturgy addresses the problem of exclusion and under-representation of LGBTQIA+ narratives and performers in UK theatre by inventing structures that represent and mirror their experiences.

This presentation will reflect on the making processes of two Outbox shows, *Affection* (2016), which was performed on the dance-floor of queer venue The Glory and *And The Rest of Me Floats* (2019) which translated the dramaturgy to mainstream theatre. Finally, the paper looks towards a new project, *GROOVE*, which will consolidate this practice research by staging an intergenerational dance floor. By commingling auto-ethnography, dramaturgical theory, and queer futurity (Muñoz, 2009), Dance-floor Dramaturgy offers a reparative practice of theatre making that shines light on ways of living, knowing, and being in the world queerly.

Dave Calvert (University of Huddersfield)

Crisis, what crisis? Some reflections on access and identity.

Dave Calvert joined the University of Huddersfield in 2006 as Senior Lecturer in Drama, Theatre and Performance, and has been Chair of the EDI Committee in the School of Music, Humanities and Media for ten years. Previously, he was a theatre practitioner working mainly with learning disabled performers including as Director of Theatre Education at Mind the Gap (1998-2003), and as a street theatre performer with The Pierrotters (2002-2009). His research areas emerge from this practice, focussing primarily on the aesthetics and politics of contemporary learning disabled performance, and the history of the British Pierrot. He is currently Chair of Dark Horse theatre company in Huddersfield, and a trustee of Holmfirth Arts Festival.

Widening access across UK universities appears to be (almost) universally heralded as a good thing, an urgent challenge and a necessary project. At the same time, it often remains low and slow on the practical list of competing priorities. This presentation will consider ways in which access issues are often valued, or not, in relation to the ongoing crises facing universities and reflect on the extent to which avoidance of such issues masks a deeper institutional crisis of identity, and what this might mean for the future of access initiatives in/and HE.

Nia-Cerise Conteh (University of Cambridge)

Nia-Cerise was a master's student at Cambridge University reading Education, Arts and Creativity. She is passionate about arts-informed education and seeks to merge the forces of theatre and activism for social change. Nia-Cerise has spoken about her experiences of being black within a predominantly white institution and her numerous encounters with institutional racism at Cambridge University.

Robin Craig (University of Roehampton)

Trans Casting: The representation of trans actors and creatives in the UK theatre industry

Robin Craig is a PhD student with Roehampton University and Shakespeare's Globe. His thesis is titled 'The Limits of "Human": Medicalised Bodies in 21st Century Shakespeare' and focuses on trans and disabled Shakespeare performance. He is also a freelance culture writer and has been published in *VICE*, *Refinery29*, and *Huck Magazine*. In late 2020 he wrote a report for the Central School of Speech and Drama on the state of trans casting in the UK, which is what he is presenting on today. You can find him on Twitter at @Robin__Craig (two underscores!).

This paper outlines the findings of the Trans Casting Statement Report. The report findings concluded that commercial or "mainstream" theatres rarely commission or host trans-led work, and explicitly trans roles are extremely limited. When these roles are present, cisgender actors are regularly hired to play them. In addition to this, a majority of trans-led performance is occurring in self-produced productions, often at fringe venues or on tour.

The report was commissioned as part of the development of the Trans Casting Statement, which is a collaboratively-produced charter that specifies theatres will not cast a cisgender actor into a trans, nonbinary, or gender non-conforming role. This paper will reflect on the report findings in light of the statement's official launch and consider how trans casting practices impact who and what reaches the mainstream stage.

Max Dean (C&T)

Digital Allyship

Max is Director at C&T Applied Theatre Company, a National Portfolio Organisation of Arts Council England. Max is also currently in receipt of a collaborative doctoral award here at Warwick University.

C&T Applied Theatre Company is, by instinct, digital. Based in Worcester, C&T operates at the nexus of theatre, pedagogy and technology. Combining drama and digital, C&T creates pedagogically driven experiences that are authentic, inspiring and inclusive, equipping young people and schools with the literacies that will shape the next generation of creatively and technologically literate citizens. The core of this practice is Prospero, an online utility created, coded and managed by C&T. In 2020 Prospero was named 'Global Education Innovation' by Helsinki education think tank HundrED. Prospero brings the world together through theatre and technology. It is a digital platform that enables anyone to imagine, create and learn: a space for mass participation and collaboration. Currently 2,012 schools are using Prospero. C&T have signed up to the West Midlands 'More Than a Moment Pledge', The West Midlands Arts sector's promise to take radical, bold and immediate action, to dismantle the systems that have for too long kept Black artists and creatives from achieving their potential in the arts and cultural industries. However, as a small NPO with an already diverse staff and board, combined with very limited staff turnover, C&T's utilisation of recruitment policies such as the 'Rooney Rule' has limited impact on the wider systemic issues facing Black creatives.

Rob Dean (University of Lincoln)

SCUDD Panel: Covid Reflections

Rob Dean, is Associate Professor, College of the Arts, University of Lincoln.

mezze eade (Creative Practitioner)

SCUDD Panel: Representation in Drama Project

mezze worked for seven years as an administrator for Motionhouse, touring with the company around Europe and to the US. After leaving, mezza developed their creative engagement practice working with adults in prisons and youth companies. mezza was Participation Director at the Oxford Playhouse for five years before moving to London to work for the Young Vic. mezza is currently a freelance creative practitioner and regularly works for the Old Vic. mezza is also working with the CLA and LTC, and schools, theatres and dance organisations around the country to change representation in the arts and create better inclusion in arts education and training.

Romana Fello (Royal Court Theatre)

SCUDD Panel: Representation in Drama Project

Romana Fello is Participation Manager at the Royal Court Theatre.

Doreen Foster (Warwick Arts Centre)

Black Lives Matter for More Than A Moment: Who's Paying Attention Now?

Doreen has been Director of Warwick Arts Centre since September 2018. She began her arts career at Kokuma Dance Company in Birmingham before joining Arts Council England (West Midlands) as Dance and Mime Officer where she had responsibility for the regional strategy for dance and mime. She is former Deputy Director of Black Cultural Archives, the country's only building based archive dedicated to illuminating black presence in Britain where she was instrumental in the establishment of the organisation in its own building. She is former Chief Executive of Bernie Grant Arts Centre in Tottenham where she led the capital project and establishment of the Arts Centre and has held roles at the Arts Council, the Prince's Trust and in regeneration projects. She is a Trustee of Clean Break Theatre, Heart of Glass (Creative People and Places in St Helens), The Triangle Trust 1949 Fund and a member of the West Midlands Combined Authority Cultural Leadership Board. She is a 2005/06 Clore Fellow.

Devon Glover (Artist)

The Sonnet Man: Shakespeare & Hip Hop

Devon Glover is a teacher, rapper, poet, playwright and actor from Brooklyn, New York. He performs Shakespeare's Sonnets through Hip-Hop as The Sonnet Man in schools and theatres worldwide. Devon has appeared on NBC, BBC, and at Conferences and Festivals worldwide, including Stratford, Ontario, and Stratford-upon-Avon. He has taught with Stratford Shakespeare, Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, and Shakespeare Behind Bars. Devon has written adaptations of Shakespeare for various companies. In the Spring 2019, Devon was commissioned by the University of Warwick and Shakespeare Birthplace Trust to write a hip-hop adaptation of Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night." Devon is currently working on a one man show based on Shakespeare's play, Othello, commissioned by the New Perspectives Theatre. For more information, visit www.SonnetMan.com.

For the SCUDD panel, I will discuss my work as The Sonnet Man. Throughout the discussion, I will break down the process and reasoning of myself transcribing Shakespeare's words to Hip Hop, as well as the thought process when crafting my assemblies and workshops for students of all ages. I would like to discuss with my fellow panelist the different innovative methods of pedagogy I developed throughout my experiences working in classrooms over the years. My talk will include an example of my work shown for the attendees. Hopefully, the attendees of the panel will begin viewing Hip Hop and Shakespeare in a different lens afterwards.

Wendy Lennon (The Shakespeare Institute, University of Birmingham)

Shakespeare, Race & Pedagogy

Wendy Lennon FEA is a PhD student at the Shakespeare Institute, an English teacher and the Founder and Director of '[Shakespeare, Race & Pedagogy](#)'. Wendy is a member of the British Shakespeare Association's Education Committee, the Early Modern Scholars of Colour steering group and was

delighted to accept the nomination as a 2021 Fellow of the English Association. Wendy is also on the Editorial Board of The English Association's journal, *English*.

This paper will question the term 'voice' and consider the voices in performance, academia, the classroom and on the curriculum.

Jessi Parrott (University of Warwick)

'[She is] not a specimen, she's a mother!' – Call the Midwife as an example of positive practice in the representation and recruitment of Deaf and disabled performers and characters

Dr Jessi Parrott completed their PhD at Warwick in 2019, based between the School of Theatre and Performance Studies and Warwick Business School. Their thesis positioned disability as an employment issue in UK theatre and television through exploring the interplay of representation and recruitment in disability casting. They now work as a performer and an independent researcher.

I am hopeful that this conference's interdisciplinary nature, and this year's title, "Beyond Inclusion", means my proposing a paper whose predominant focus is a television drama rather than a theatrical one will be forgiven. Especially as that distinction is why I am proposing it. In interviews conducted for my PhD research into the interplay of representation and recruitment in disability casting, a prominent theme was participants' feeling that TV was "doing better" or "further ahead" than theatre. The comparative analysis of the difference between the two media, and their sectors, then became the substance of my thesis. Heeding this conference's call to go beyond inclusion, my paper will present aspects of my chapter on *Call the Midwife* to highlight how, as a primetime period drama, the show offers opportunities for its Deaf and disabled characters as well as the performers who portray them to feel not merely included but valued. In so doing, the paper will also illustrate how TV is in some ways at the stage my participants' wished theatre could be with regards to disability.

Louise Peacock (De MontfortUniversity)

SCUDD Panel: Covid Reflections

Louise Peacock is Associate Professor, School of Humanities and Performing Arts, De Montfort University.

Prarthana Purkayastha (Royal Holloway, University of London)

On the Limits of Inclusion, Or Why I Don't want to be Included

Dr. Prarthana Purkayastha (she/her) is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Drama, Theatre and Dance at Royal Holloway University of London. She is the author of *Indian Modern Dance, Feminism and Transnationalism* (2014), co-editor of the *Oxford Handbook of Indian Dance* (forthcoming with Oxford University Press) and co-editor of *Theatre Research International* journal's special issue on 'Sounding Corporeality' (forthcoming in July 2021). Prarthana is Chair of Royal Holloway's Black and Global Majority Staff Network, and an advocate for anti-racism and race equality in HE.

This talk will offer reflections on why and how language fails when taking into account the lived experiences of Black and Global Majority individuals in the academy. Reni Eddo-Lodge suggests that the word 'multiculturalism' has become "a proxy for a ton of British anxieties about immigration, race, difference, crime and danger." (2017:119). I follow in Eddo-Lodge's footsteps in querying how 'inclusion', too, can become a limiting word for those striving to dismantle racist bias in the academy.

melissandre varin (artworker)

healing as a prerequisite

Building worlds collaboratively from a situated fractal Afro and Caribbean diasporic quotidian melissandre investigate the role of collective dreaming in moving beyond inclusion.

Elaborating on care as a path towards liberation melissandre share elements of personal testimonies inviting all of us on a meditation on humbling ways to contribute to on-going work to abolish, re-imagine, and reshape futures beyond hostile environment.

Centering healing practices as a way to grow otherwise inside and outside systems of knowledge. melissandre use a fractal autoethnographic account punctuated by extracts of *Out of Order Please Do Not Use* (2020); extracts of dreams from *B.O.O.K* a healing space melissandre varin is curating commissioned by Coventry Biennial; and an overview of the soft infrastructure of *Open Call* a digital branch of STP journal for artists/researchers, they are curating.