

**PERFORMING PLACES: a
participatory practice**

Out-Topias, Athens, 1st Oct 2016

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Order:

- Performing Place characteristics
- Place today
- Project: Challenging Place
- Performing Place Practices: commonalities
- Project: Performing Local Places
- And next?



Performing Place: characteristics

- An applied theatre practice (for me)
- Participant-based
- Site-based
- Performance-based
- Aimed at enhancing people's relationship with place



Place

- Relegated (space/time; mobility)
- Place 'attachment' important now.
- I am suggesting three things about place:
 - that place is animated space;
 - that place might be temporary but can still be affective;
 - that place *matters*.

Place

Key theorists who have influenced my own thinking on place:

Doreen Massey, Tim Cresswell, Tim Ingold, Haydn Lorimer, Deidre Heddon, Mike Pearson, Edward Casey, Aristotle(!), Ash Amin and many others.



Key point for me:

Can performance practices change the way people think about place?

Project 1: Challenging Place 2011-2014

Research questions:

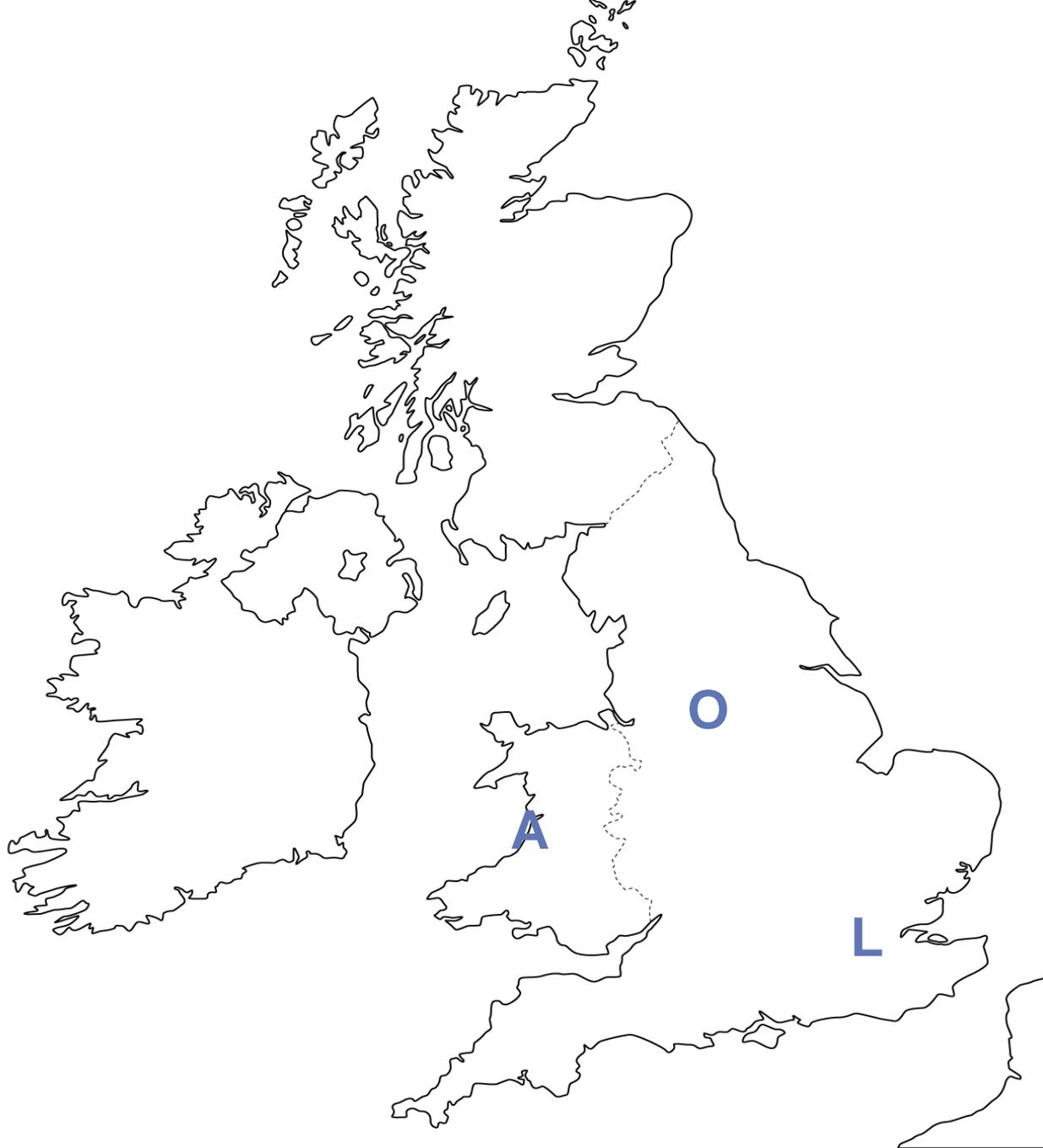
- What can practical intervention tell us about how abstract concepts such as place, community, dislocation and belonging, as theorised by contemporary academics, map onto the 'real life' experiences of vulnerable social groups?
- Can one or more models of performance practices help ease feelings of 'dislocation' among community participants, where such feelings exist?
- How might such models be evaluated, disseminated and made fully accessible to community theatre organisations?

Or (more simply):

- Does theoretical 'place' connect with real world 'place'?
- *Can* performing place practices help people with their location?
- How do we share 'the findings' for others to use?



- AHRC – Arts and Humanities Research Council funded my work: ‘Challenging concepts of “liquid” place through performing practices in community contexts’
- Oldham (near Manchester)
- Aberystwyth (Wales)
- London



- Oldham (near Manchester):
 - 'drop in' refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants.



- Aberystwyth (Wales)
 - Disabled and non-disabled community performance company: Cyrff Ystwyth





- London

- A youth group in a tough part of London: Half Moon Theatre



I am from (theatre





HALF MOON THEATRE

43

Gels; outside tea party; responses

- [http://www.performingplaces.org/placepraco
penotw.html](http://www.performingplaces.org/placepraco
penotw.html)
- [http://www.performingplaces.org/placepracsi
tesotw.htm](http://www.performingplaces.org/placepracsi
tesotw.htm)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TEuXDue
UOEQ&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TEuXDue
UOEQ&feature=youtu.be)

(8.52)

Three place-threads (again):

- that place is animated space;
- that place might be temporary but can still be affective;
- that place *matters*.



Performing Place Practices: commonalities

- Re-experiences: repeated 'performances' in everyday settings;
- Subversions: improvisations in different locations that subvert their normal use;
- Scapes: framing everyday sites through sound, object, crafts or other methods to create an alternative representation of location;
- Markings: activities that focus on very precise detail of places and 'home';
- Narratives: unusual, imaginary narratives focussed on place and followed throughout a timespan.



Performing Local Places, 2016-17

- Camden, London
 - Working in a home for adults with mental health issues (towards new places)
- Clarksfield, Oldham
 - Working in one neighbourhood with the community who are 'divided'.











First





And next?

- Complete the practical project in Camden.
- Evaluations
- Symposia in Oldham and London for all local authorities
- Reports to go out to all UK local authorities.
- Further roll out

Performing Landscapes: Home



Relevant bibliography of Sally's work

- www.performingplace.org
- www.performingplaces.org
- 'Applied theatre practice as research: polyphonic conversations', *RiDE: the Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 2016 (in press as hard copy; online: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13569783.2016.1220250>)
- 'Place and applied theatre: performing location' in Hughes, J. and Nicholson, H. (eds.) *Critical Perspectives on Applied Theatre*, Cambridge University Press, 2016. Pp106-126
- 'Cuckoos in the Nest: performing place, artists and excess', *Applied Theatre Research*, 1.1, 2013, pp. 43-61 (with a contribution by Sarah Cole).
- 'Performance, place and allotments: *Feast or Famine?*' *Contemporary Theatre Review* 2007, 17.2, pp. 181-191.
- 'Taking Place: some reflections on site, performance and community', *Research in Drama Education: On Site and Place* 2007(with Nicolas Whybrow) 12.1: 1-14
- 'Drama Landscape and Memory: to be is to be in place', *Research in Drama Education*, 2002, Vol 7, No 1: 9-25.
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