

PaRLab meeting – Monday, 16 October, 2017

Present: Chris Dowling; Maud Haddon; Andy Lavender; Sebastian Hulkov; Sarah Penny; Maria Estrada-Fuentes; Michael Piggott; Carolyn Deby; Carmen Wong

via Skype: Christoph Hoerl; Eva McIntyre; Claire French

Apologies: Nese Tosun, Jessi Parrott, Susan Haedicke, Natasha Davis, Mark Hinton, Leo Bazzuto, Nikita Hayden.

Please see below the Action Points for recorded minutes.

Next meeting: Monday, 4 December, 2-6pm

Draft Agenda

2-3pm: Workshop

3-3:45pm: Pecha Kucha sessions

4-6pm: PaR Reading group discussion / PaR portfolios, REF and prev. PaR samples

ACTION POINTS – arising from the meeting (in suggested order of priority)

wish* to build a knowledge and resource base, to draw on PaR approaches from a variety of disciplines. Think about ways to analyse practice research (not always artistic research).

ACTION > from December: begin bibliography and include a 'Reading practice' group activity at every bi-monthly meeting: discussions of PaR texts; develop into reviewing and 'reading' of performances or other practice.

ACTION > from December: members of the group to present own projects or other specific examples of work to be practice-read in a session? (share projects in a way that forces articulation and to stress test the project or work-in-progress – share tactics and methods of PaR or making). Suggest Pecha Kucha format (20 images x 20 sec / no more than 7min per person) so we can cover at least 3 members per meeting to begin, then assess and see how this can evolve into workshops or presenting works in progress.

wish* to understand PaR output for the REF: methods of inquiry/production/project adjudication; accessing, sharing, discussing samples of examined/passed PhD PaR projects and what their research and findings are; examining consistency and trajectory of how findings are articulated

wish * to ask what does practice research require OR how does practice emerge out of research – look at PaR infrastructures, scales, research questions (& methods that open up questions); challenges and problems addressed through practice.

ACTION > December: Andy to present on preparing PaR portfolios for REF and offer first few examples of PhD PaR projects.

wish * desire to open up individuals' practice/rehearsals as opportunities for reverse-engineering of research questions

wish * to develop our community; create networking opportunities (monthly drop-ins with topical discussion); an 'Artist Dating Agency'

ACTION > [by January](#): agree and circulate rehearsal room etiquette for open practice – compile with contributions from interested people in the group. [Need someone to lead on this \(Clare?\)](#).

ACTION > [by January](#): individuals in the group who wish to run open practice sessions to send out calls for colleagues to attend (including location/date) – these are separate from the termly group meetings?

ACTION > [from December](#): at each meeting, offer one workshop about practice approaches. Carolyn to lead first workshop in Dec?

ACTION > Perhaps an ancillary activity/excursions to explore urban spaces or other venues to be considered for projects? [when/who to organise?](#)

wish * to focus on how to gather and analyse PaR data, esp in group work

ACTION > might be covered with some of the previous discussions but perhaps needs its own session ([revisit in Jan/Feb meeting](#) to determine what specifically needed)

wish * to begin finding collaborations on writing practice for publication

ACTION > [when/who to organise?](#) look at calls for papers and share/discuss with group

wish * to discuss documentation techniques; what is considered valid or best?

ACTION > [discuss in Jan/Feb meeting](#) to define specific needs

MINUTES FROM MEETING on 16 October 2017

Introductions from attendees:

Carmen – food and diaspora; theatre director with collaborative practice in Washington DC; has ended that; experimental hybrid performances; gender, cultural studies, memory studies; personal narrative and story-telling; site responsive

Christoph – from philosophy dept (professor); no experience of practice research; recently has become involved in an AHRC project on the nature of time and is collaborating with artist groups on that

Claire – 3rd year PhD student; practice in London but PhD isn't practice-based; mostly documentary work, considering the older female body

Eva – 2nd year part-time PhD practice as research; experienced artist; how do I gather data; story-telling in a church context; also an Anglican priest ; solving problems of dis-functional people

Sarah Penny – soon to submit her thesis (in January); practice-research; face-to-face interviews; will be teaching on an practice-based IATL module on sport, philosophy and performance; phenomenology; drawing on own experience of playing rugby

Andy – Head of Theatre & Performance Studies, Warwick; has supervised PhD practice researchers; has also submitted his own practice to the REF; works as a director of multi-media theatre (devised); his research involves questions to do with form, how technologies contribute to shaping meaning; motion capture; devising.

Sebastian – MA by research (part-time) just started; background in acting; not familiar with the academic side; last 10 years has done about 20 semi-professional productions; life sciences background; freelance practice; leading workshops; still formulating; connection between science and performance;

Carolyn – part-time PhD candidate in Theatre & Performance; background in theatre and visual arts; undergraduate degree in contemporary dance; 28 years of making performance as an artist, incorporating a range of artistic forms; interested in 'audience experience' in context of everyday life where all elements, sensory impressions, etc are part of the experience; particularly interested in humans and non-humans within an urban assemblage including nature and the wild.

Chris – 2nd year part-time masters Practice-Research MA; undergrad in English at UCL; was directing theatre at UCL and decided to pursue that; did shadow theatre

Maud – an undergrad; part of a research workspace in Frankfurt; develop new ways to create theatre for young people; has to make a presentation about her research in March; Susan suggested she attend; wanted to get out of her bubble; skypeing collaboration; political

Maria Estrada-Fuentes – finished her PhD last year; has a dance background (classical ballet) then went to art school and became interested in durational performance; part of a collective in San Francisco; started working more on political performances, have impact on policy development; interested in pedagogy that will inform policy

Michael – didn't have a practice-research background right up to the level of PhD; now as a professor has been developing practice but wants to understand what that is: what is the difference between artistic research and practice research?

C-DARE (Coventry University, Centre for Dance Research): Carmen explains a little about their Practice as Research group as an example of where our group could go (sharing methods; ideas; dialogue; possibilities for collaborations)

KEY QUESTION: What is practice-research?

We need a resource base to refer to...place that we can test; work practically; reflect on practice.

Carmen: this could be a reading group; different people proposing different ideas about practice as research; we need the role of a creative producer

Andy – there is a history that brings us to this particular point: PhDs that allow practice have been a driver; visual arts was first – PaR was regularised in visual arts (partly due to how art school is taught); music began to permit composition to be submitted, but then fell behind the curve; theatre caught up with an invigorated discourse on research & practice; dance developed new but interesting methods on investigating embodied practices. Another pressure is the REF; ways in which institutions and individuals present their practice-based outcomes; theatre and performance has accepted it as a method of enquiry; the difference between art and research is the articulation framework that exists around the work; a practice research enquiry has a challenge, questions or an enquiry; what can be baffling is to see practice research monolithically; what does the research require? The practice can take many different forms and exist on different scales; might only be one element of a larger project.

Claire – our research enquiries aim at contextual factors that are specific to the group; what do each of us want? Depending on what field we're in...

Discussion: WHAT DO WE EACH WANT?

Claire – how do we hone research questions at the research and development stage of a rehearsal process? Could we actually go to each other's rehearsals? – also workshopping or devising to push for provocation in ways of devising

Eva – dilemma over data-gathering with people; wants to look at how to analyse and gather; ideally someone being able to come to a rehearsal and watch and give feedback.

Christoph – not sure about the idea of a reading group; more interested in the practice side; what is considered to be best 'practice'; what has been submitted to the REF? What do they look like?

[Andy has agreed to do a session specifically about the REF at another meeting]

Sarah – mostly interested in the networking possibility; has always felt it was important to create a physical space and dialogue with PhDs and post-Docs; community for peer-to-peer feedback

Andy – interested to share projects and articulate them as a test and to get feedback; potentially to present work-in-progress and get feedback; also to support other people in doing the same

Sebastian – networking; participatory element; interested in meeting with more regularity, even on a weekly basis; workshops; developing a multi-media projects, also meditation and other different forms of developing forms; consider the nature of embodied knowledge; what is the nature of knowledge; happy to contribute to anything in a performance based context

Carolyn – practice as knowledge production, but also as an articulation of knowledge; the important role of documentation (various different approaches to this); how do practice and theory work together?

Michael – knowledge and words; alternative modes of producing the outcomes;

Chris – spatial stuff; reading is old-fashioned; want to get to grips with practice research; youth culture in urban spaces; you can transform a room; leverage on other people's examples and experience; support network; am only part-time and so only on campus 20 days per year

Sebastian – we need scope to experiment within the sessions

Maud – everyone has already said what I would say

Maria – wants to understand how work is assessed for the REF rankings

Carmen – what about the idea of a conference in a year's time; and are we talking about a 1.5 day event per term? or more frequently?

Andy – space might be a problem...perhaps need to think about outside of term time?

Sarah – sharing examples of good outputs; bibliography and recommendations for sources we've found

Andy – recommends Robin Nelson's book on practice research

Claire – eg. the dramaturg's network in London meets once per month; led by one person; the advantage is that you can always rock up and attend without pre-booking (drop-in)

Eva – struggling with the idea of a day and a half; what about a day or half a day? (especially for people not living in Coventry)

Sarah – seems like we have two different desires here; practice in depth (1.5 days); and something shorter but more regular; both aims/approaches might not be compatible;

Carmen – suggest we're too small a group and too new to have a drop-in thing

Chris – we could use a monthly chat to build towards a more intense thing over a 1.5 days