

Lucy Neal - Hon DLitt (Honorary Doctor of Letters)

Lucy Neal is a theatre maker and community activist, interested in how celebratory events act as a catalyst for change.

Like Rose Fenton above Lucy Neal is a graduate of the University of Warwick (BA English and Italian 1979). Following her graduation she joined with Rose Fenton in co-founding LIFT (the London International Festival of Theatre) in 1980 with the first festival running in 1981. She said: 'I co-founded LIFT in 1980 with Rose after we both graduated from Warwick University. The idea was to create a London-based festival which would welcome artists and theatre-makers from all over the world.'

Rose Fenton will also receive a Warwick honorary degree in the same ceremony as Lucy.

Over the 25 years that Lucy and Rose Fenton were co-directors of LIFT, they contributed to a significant development in exposure to and perspectives on theatre both in London and more widely in the UK. Under their leadership, LIFT introduced British audiences to theatre from around the world; unearthed new companies and artists previously unknown to British audiences or (often) theatre practitioners; programmed work by artists who were censored or denied opportunities in their own countries; innovated in the form and remit of arts festivals; developed modes of engagement between artists and communities; and established a legacy by way of LIFT's continuing success at time of writing.

She has been an active player in the grassroots Transition movement since 2008 and initiator of Transition Town Tooting.

Her recent book *Playing for Time – Making Art As If the World Mattered*, published in 2015 by Oberon Books, is co-written with over 60 artists and activists and has been described as 'a hand book for life'; 'a manifesto; a work of art'. Joining dots between the big stories of energy, food, finance and climate change it maps the collaborative arts practices emerging in response to global challenges.

Lucy is Happiness Associate of the Happy Museum Project, co-author of MMM's Sustainable Ability and co-founder of The Case For Optimism. She is co-author with Rose Fenton of *The Turning World – stories from the London International Festival of Theatre (Gulbenkian)* and was awarded an OBE in 2005 for services to drama.