

Aberystwyth
June 18-21 Mehefin 2009

Arts & Humanities Research Council



Landscape &
Environment

Programme Conference 2009

LIVING LANDSCAPES

An international conference on
performance, landscape and environment

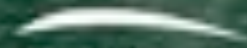
report



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www.landscape.ac.uk/2009conference.html

living landscapes

an international conference on performance,
landscape and environment

AHRC Landscape & Environment Programme Conference 2009

Aberystwyth University, 18-21 June 2009

Final Report



[all photos: Cara Brostrom]

Submitted by Dr Heike Roms and Professor Mike Pearson
Conference Directors
November 2009

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The AHRC Landscape & Environment Programme Conference 2009 was hosted by the Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies at Aberystwyth University. Under the title “Living Landscapes – An International Conference on Performance, Landscape and Environment” the conference brought together multi-disciplinary approaches to the myriad ways in which performance shapes and is shaped by landscape and environment. The theme was chosen because of its currency for a field of enquiry in which diverse scholarly, artistic and activist practices and perspectives mutually inform and challenge one another. As Professor Stephen Daniels, Director of the AHRC Landscape and Environment Programme, stated in his welcome: “Performance has emerged strongly as a programme theme, reflecting its influence as a paradigm across the arts and humanities and social sciences, especially in research and practice concerned with site, space and place. Performance enriches and enlivens landscape and environment as fields of research and arenas of creativity and public engagement”.



Longshore Drift

The success of the conference confirmed the importance of the thematic. Its widespread appeal was evidenced by the remarkable number of proposals, inquiries and registrations we received from around the United Kingdom and beyond, which far exceeded our original projections. Over the 4 days of the conference, 167 individual events were taking place, which included plenaries, panels, performances, film works, exhibitions, roundtables, interactive installations and walks. Final registration at the conference counted 217 delegates, representing 110 academic and artistic institutions across the United Kingdom and 14 other countries.

Presenters included scholars from Performance, Theatre and Dance Studies, Geography, Anthropology, Archaeology, English, Film Studies, Communication Studies, Religious Studies, Folklore, Music, Fine Art, Architecture, Design and Engineering. Practising artists came from the fields of theatre, dance, performance, video, film, fine art and sound art. Others were architects, arts administrators and environmental activists.

This report will provide an overview of the event.

The programme for the conference was structured around three major strands:

- (1) four **plenary** sessions which featured invited guests. These were attended by all participants and concerned the major themes of the conference.
- (2) seven **'breakout'** sessions which were drawn primarily from an open call for presentations. These breakout sessions, featuring smaller panels, work sessions, performances, exhibitions, films and other contributions, were held concurrently and allowed in-depth focus on specific issues; and
- (3) daily **'wrap-up'** sessions and other social events (artist's breakfasts, discussions, reception, dinner) that offered opportunities for further exchange.

Simultaneously investigating and creating a multi-disciplinary field of enquiry, we took into consideration a number of **priorities** when curating the programme:

- We aimed to accommodate a wide range of formats, each of which presented a different manner of enquiry into the theme of performance, landscape and environment. **Formats** included: paper, illustrated artist's talk, panel discussion, demonstration, workshop, performance, site work, sound installation, film installation, exhibition, video work, soundwork, online project, itinerant event (walk, run, tour), artists' breakfast (discussion), daily wrap-up, collaborative research event.

- We gave equal importance to all presentations regardless of format (i.e. artistic presentations were scheduled as equivalent modes of enquiry, not merely as supplementary to the scholarly programme).

- We gave equal importance to all contributors regardless of institutional affiliation, experience or academic status (i.e. postgraduate students presented on the same panels as established scholars and artists).

- We aimed to include in each panel a diversity of perspectives on a given theme, drawn together from different scholarly and artistic disciplines. We determined the order of speakers to allow for resonances between the papers to emerge.

- We punctuated the programme with a number of plenaries, which offered an opportunity to engage with the AHRC Landscape & Environment programme priorities from a variety of different scholarly and academic perspectives.

- In limiting the number of parallel events to five in each 'breakout' session we attempted to strike a balance between accommodating as large a number of contributions as possible and maintaining coherence to the programme.

- We devised a number of innovative formats in order to foster debate across and beyond individual sessions. These included a daily wrap-up event and number of informal social occasions for discussion (artist's breakfasts, feedback sessions and roundtable discussions, project design session on the final day).

- We gave over the final day of the conference to an in-depth consideration of key themes and issues emerging from the conference and a discussion of possible future developments and the setting of new agendas

- We invited a number of contributions that explored the conference itself as a site of performance.



Work session led by Marilyn Arsem



David Matless

living landscapes _____ plenaries
final report p.3

The programme was punctuated by four plenaries. Because the conference aimed to map existing research on performance, landscape and environment from across a diversity of disciplines, create from this a field of enquiry, and anticipate future agenda for this field, we decided not to schedule individual key-notes speakers. Instead, we set up a series of hour-long plenary sessions, which featured a number of scholars and artists from different background. They each gave 10-minute provocations and interventions whose intention was to raise themes that would percolate through the conference as a whole. These themes were drawn from the main aims and ambitions of the AHRC 'Landscape and Environment' programme, including questions relating to disciplinary exchange, audiences and communities, and modes of documentation and dissemination.



Conference Opening: Professor Stephen Daniels (Geography, Nottingham University; AHRC Landscape and Environment Programme Director), Professor Mike Pearson and Dr Heike Roms (Theatre, Film and Television, Aberystwyth) and Dr Peter Merriman (Geography & Earth Sciences, Aberystwyth) welcomed delegates and outlined the aspirations for the gathering.

George Monbiot, writer, environmental and political activist, opened the conference. Monbiot reminded us of the environmental costs of events of this kind and appealed for a greater level of theoretical and creative engagement with the major environmental issues.

Plenary 1: "On Exchange" was devoted to the following questions: How are landscape and environment understood in different disciplines? How to facilitate exchange? How to promote effective working between disciplines? How to develop a research field? How to explore new approaches? The session was chaired by Dr Peter Merriman (Geography & Earth Sciences, Aberystwyth) and Dr Heike Roms (Theatre, Film and Television, Aberystwyth) and featured presentations by Dr Dee Heddon (Theatre, Glasgow), Zoe Laughlin (Engineering, King's, London), Professor Alan Read (Theatre and Performance Studies, King's, London) and Dr John Wylie (Geography, Exeter).

Plenary 2: "On Dissemination" addressed the following questions: How to include and address various audiences? How to contribute to public awareness and understanding? How to address concerns? How to assess impact? It was chaired by Dr Heidi V. Scott (Geography & Earth Sciences, Aberystwyth) and Professor Mike Pearson (Theatre, Film and Television, Aberystwyth) and included contributions by Wapke Feenstra (artist, Netherlands) and Dr Hayden Lorimer (Geography, Glasgow).

Plenary 3: "On Method" explored the the following questions: How to develop new methodologies, themes and approaches? How to enhance innovation?

How to embed new procedures within research agendas? How to sustain collaboration? It was chaired by Dr Carl Lavery and Dr Paul Newland (Theatre, Film and Television, Aberystwyth) and featured contributions by Professor Jane Rendell (Architecture, Bartlett, London), Professor David Matless (Geography, Nottingham) and Professor Baz Kershaw (Theatre Studies, Warwick).

For details on the final day events see below.



Alan Read, Dee Heddon

A total of 29 panels across 7 'breakout' sessions explored issues relating to landscape and environment through a broad spectrum of performance contexts.

A major concern emerging from the panels was an attention to phenomenology (in all its varied forms), which ran through many of the presentations. Reflections on the 'phenomenalities' of landscape in its relation to embodied experience and perception was addressed most notably in 'Landscape Occupations and Preoccupations'; 'Points in and on space: Buildings, breaches and bothersome relatives'; and '*Still Life*: Composition and Decomposition in Site-Specific Dance and Live Art'. The complex relation of body and landscape and its exploration through a variety of artistic practices (especially dance and other body-based art) also informed 'Body/Landscape' (on bodyweather) and 'Landscapes of Encounter' (on site-specific dance, participatory choreographic design and street performance).

An encounter not just with landscapes but with the communities that inhabit them was the focus in 'Landscape, Art, Communities in Wales', and 'Transient Place-making' (which engaged with rural and suburban communities). The panel on 'Animals' was devoted to the encounter between human and non-human animals (through angling, conservation and the leisure industry).

A large number of panels concerned themselves with charting a variety of creative responses to landscape(s), which included writing, music, dance and visual arts. Panels devoted explicitly to such artistic engagements included 'Sonic Landscapes'; 'Enacting Landscapes through Art' (investigating land art and popular music); 'Redefining Space through Performance' (discussing artistic approaches to derelict urban spaces in central London, North Frisian islands and forests in Finland); 'Performing Regionality' (through various practices of narrating, articulating and mapping); and 'Filmic Landscapes'. Other panels investigated approaches to particular places and spaces such as 'Gardens' (domestic, public and artificial); forests in Germany, the USA and Argentina ('Forest Art'); '(Military) Landscapes' (and their staging through sound, scenography and modelling) and 'Building Sites' (and other architectural spaces).

Artistic engagements with places that are characterised by conflict, dereliction, loss or ecological destruction were the theme of 'Conflicted Landscapes – Northern Ireland'; 'Terrains Vagues – Savage Landscapes'; 'Writing Absence in / of Landscape' (which investigated writing in its relation to landscape) and 'Performing Ecology' (which addressed the relationship of performance to ecological concerns).

Questions of re-enchantment, affect, spirituality and ritual were also theme in 'Sacred, Spiritual and Therapeutic Landscapes' (with reference to neo-Paganism, pilgrimage, Aboriginal dreaming and the healing properties of walking); 'Geographies of Love'; and 'Myth, Folklore and the Performance of Landscape'.

Historical engagements with landscapes in the past and present engagements with landscapes of the past were explored in 'Histories of Occupation: Archaeological Landscapes' (in reference to practices of travelling, dwelling and community building) and 'Heritage Landscapes' (including museums, castles and stately homes in the US and England)

An interest in the potential of itinerant practices informed a number of panels, most notably 'Walking Practice' (which focused on walking as artistic practice), and 'Walking research' (which explored walking as a research methodology). Other, more technologically-dependent forms of mobility and connectivity (including train travel, globalised urbanity, interactive technology and global satellite navigation), were explored in 'Connecting Spaces'.

living landscapes performances, exhibitions, films etc. final report p.5

The conference featured a multitude of performative modes of enquiry. These included 32 performances, interventions, walks, artist's talks and the nightly 'Showroom Shortcuts'; 8 films and video works (shown repeatedly through the conference); 10 installations and exhibitions and 16 work sessions, demonstrations, roundtables and discussions.

Among these were:

- an artist talk by BBC Wildlife Sound recordist, Chris Watson, who played extracts from his extensive collection of wildlife sounds to an audience listening in the dark. Watson also presented an installation based on sounds from the nocturnal Kalahari desert (*Midnight at the Oasis*)

- *Descend of the Angel*, a vertical-dance piece by Kate Lawrence, presented in collaboration with the National Library of Wales

- Mike Pearson's *Carrlands: Hibaldstow (Remix)*, a live reinterpretation of a section of *Carrlands*, a AHRC-funded audio work for the Ancholme valley in North Lincolnshire

- *Home of the Wiggler* by Birmingham-based theatre company Stan's Café, a show set in a near future without cars. All of the light and sound in this show was generated by the cast live on stage, using a range of aging technologies. The work was presented in collaboration with Aberystwyth Arts Centre.

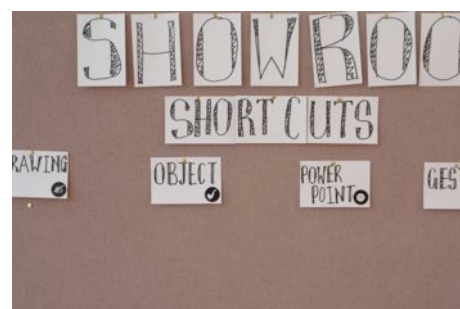


- the work of three Artistic Associates of the Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies: Eddie Ladd (*Llyfr Gwen Rhydderch*, a run from Ystrad Fflur to the National Library in Aberystwyth); Simon Whitehead (with Barnaby Oliver: *PIINGS*, an exploration of geographical distance and synchronous action) and Mike Brookes (with Rosa Casado: *one small white house far away*, an interactive installation featuring a bike powering a radio and a light-bulb).

- participatory itinerant explorations by Stephen Hodge and Simon Persighetti (*Longshore Drift*); Sorrel Muggridge and Laura Nanni (*Further Afield* – a simultaneous performance walk between Aberystwyth and Montreal); and Mark Hunter (*Welcome to... Aberystwyth*, a guided walk gathering the town's vernacular histories)

- daily work sessions led by Marilyn Arsem and an evolving site work by members of the Dance Department at Coventry University

- a number of interventions that explored the conference itself as a site, including the nightly *Showroom Shortcuts*, which featured a playful 'index' of the conference (collecting gestures, images and words) compiled during the day by members of the Aberystwyth-based artists' collective, Showroom, and used as a stimulus for daily wrap-up sessions in a club setting; *Walking the Conference*, a documentation of delegates' feet by Blue MacAskill and Alex Allpress.



- *Dancing in/to All Languages*, a performance for all conference delegates, enacted simultaneously with the *Moving Topographies: Sites, Bodies, Technologies* conference at Stanford University and led by Louise Ritchie.

- performances by GoodCop BadCop; Tom Payne; small things dance collective; etc.

- video and film works by Lee Berwick; Miranda Whall; He Yun Chang; Leo Asemota; Richard O'Sullivan; Emily Richardson; and many others.

The final morning of the *Living Landscapes* conference was planned as three distinct but accumulative phases, to create a sense of momentum towards and beyond the culmination of the event.

Phase 1 9.00-10.00

Delegates were offered either an opportunity to discuss with contributing artists, in a chaired session, their performance and installation works presented at the conference; or to join members of the early morning workshops to discuss their performative approaches to landscape; or to participate with departmental creative fellow Simon Whitehead in his performance *Pings (Water Table)*. The accent here was on direct engagement with creative methodologies, eliciting responses from a broad spectrum of delegates.

Phase 2 10.00-11.00 *The Square Mile*

This exercise in project design conceived by Mike Pearson and Adrian Kear was staged in the largest of the department's 'black box' studios and involved the participation of all delegates. On a record card included in the conference pack, individuals were invited to identify five key moments that they found significant – experiences, ideas, occurrences – that might influence their own future work; and the location of such moments. In groups eight they were first invited in turn to read out their lists; then in white chalk to locate them on the floor in group devised and agreed modes of registration and mapping; then to take another group on a guided tour of their map; then to choose one moment from the map to develop further as a research project; and finally to constitute their joint idea as a series of questions.

Delegates participated with great enthusiasm and there was an open opportunity for everyone to contribute substantially to the process. Throughout, groups were free to view processes of mapping from above, from a gallery around the room and from a trampoline grid directly above. The final map – which covered the entire floor – was videoed and photographed in detail. Whilst playful in its manifestation, the exercise revealed commonalities of experience that might be regarded as significant issues; and both the satisfactions and difficulties of designing an interdisciplinary project, either scholarly or artistic in aspect, particularly in the field of practice-led research – the artistic impulse was immediate, its characterisation as research questions more problematic.

Phase 3 Plenary – *On Sustainability: Keeping up the Momentum*

The ambition of the final session chaired by Stephen Daniels and Mike Pearson was to keep up the impetus for participation and to suggest future directions for the programme and research in the field. Whilst some delegates did take the opportunity to reflect upon the form and content of the conference, others spoke of the likely influence on their work. Of particular significance were the short, planned interventions by a number of conference guests and contributors to identify emerging themes. Amongst these later, two seemed particularly important for research in the



interdisciplinary field, for further initiatives within the programme, and for the Research Council:

the need for, and desirability of, nurturing new forms of academic writing, particularly in relation to practice-led research and scholarship;

the potential of extended and shared notions of fieldwork, to inform and enact interdisciplinary research methodologies.

documentation

The conference was documented extensively through the medium of photography (photos: Cara Brostrom) and video (video: Russell Basford, Chris Okerberg). A **DVD** of highlights from the conference, interspersed with interviews with conference participants, is currently being produced and will be available shortly.



The conference **website** at www.landscape.ac.uk/2009conference.html, hosted by the AHRC's Landscape & Environment programme, will act as a future platform for documentation and other material generated at the conference.

publication

Themes arising from and responding to the *Living Landscapes* conference will be further examined in a forthcoming issue of *Performance Research* journal. The issue is entitled *Fieldworks* and is edited by Stephen Daniels, Mike Pearson and Heike Roms. Publication date is December 2010. A call for contributions is currently being distributed. Further publication opportunities are currently being investigated.

other outcomes

Beyond these formal outcomes, we know that many of the conversations initiated by this conference continue in numerous venues. New exchanges were inspired, collaborations were forged, and joint projects and publications conceived. It is too early to give a comprehensive account of the new initiatives that arose from *Living Landscapes*. To name but a few: Dr Dee Heddon (Theatre, Glasgow) and Dr Owain Jones (Countryside & Community Research Institute) are currently working on a joint panel proposal to the annual Royal Geographic Society conference 2011 on 'Autotopography'; Dr Heddon is collaborating with Sally Mackey (Central School of Speech and Drama) on a special issue on 'environmentalism' for *RIDE: the Journal and Applied Theatre and Performance*, to be published in 2012.

The following AHRC – Landscape & Environment Programme –funded projects were present at Living Landscapes:

- PI: Professor Andrew Church, University of Brighton

Small Grants (LE): *Writing the landscape of everyday life: lay narratives of the home garden*

Presentation at LL: Mark Bhatti, Paul Stenner (Applied Social Science, Brighton); Andrew Church, Amanda Claremont (Geography, Brighton) ‘Experiencing and expressing the garden landscape: lay narratives of domestic gardens’ (Paper; Panel: Gardens)

- PI: Professor Sara Cohen, University of Liverpool

Larger Research Grants (LE): *Popular Musicscapes and the Characterisation of the Urban Environment*

Presentation at LL: Sara Cohen and Brett Lashua (Popular Music, University of Liverpool) ‘Popular Musicscapes and the Characterisation of the Urban Environment’ (Paper; Panel: Enacting Landscapes through Art)

- PI: Professor Mike Pearson, Aberystwyth University

Small Grants (LE): *Carrlands: mediated manifestations of site-specific performance in the Ancholme valley, North Lincolnshire*

Presentation at LL: ‘Carrlands: Hibaldstow (live remix)’ (Performance)

- PI: Mr Nigel Stewart, Lancaster University

Research Networks and Workshops (LE): *Re-enchantment and Reclamation: New Perceptions of Morecambe Bay through Dance, Film and Sound*

Presentation at LL: ‘Site-Specific Dance and Live Art: *Still Life* - Composition and Decomposition in Site-Specific Dance and Live Art’ (Paper and Panel)



The following additional AHRC – Landscape & Environment Programme –funded project was discussed at the conference:

- Research Networks and Workshops (LE): *Living in a Material World: A cross-disciplinary location-based enquiry into the performativity of emptiness* (PI: Dr Angela Piccini, Bristol University)

Presentation at LL: JD Dewsbury (Geographical Sciences, Bristol) – Network Participant: ‘Landscape Preoccupations’ (Paper; Panel: Landscape Occupations and Preoccupations)

The following AHRC –funded projects were discussed at the conference:

- PI: Professor Mick Wallis, Leeds University

Research Grants (Standard): *Inter-war village drama survey: archival, printed and oral sources relating to institutions, biographies and practices*

Presentation at LL: Mick Wallis (Performance and Cultural Industries, Leeds) ‘Fields of practice: landscapes in interwar English village theatre’ (Paper; Panel: Performing Regionality)

- PI: Dr Jo Robinson, Nottingham University

Research Grants (Standard): *Mapping performance culture: Nottingham 1857-1867*

Presentation at LL: Jo Robinson (English Studies, Nottingham) ‘Transforming landscapes of performance: Nottingham 1865’ (Paper; Panel: Performing Regionality)

The Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies at Aberystwyth University (TFTS)

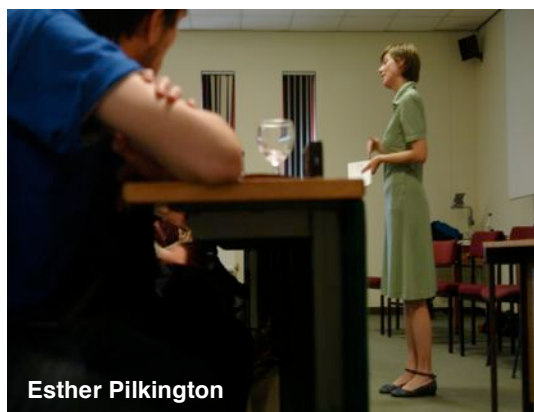
Firmly located in Wales, and with an established international profile across its constituent disciplines, the Department foregrounds research and study of regional, national and international significance in theatre, film, performance and media within a globalised cultural environment.

According to the results of the 2008 RAE, 30% of the research conducted in the Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies is 'world-leading' (4*). A further 30% is rated as meeting the standards of 'international excellence' (3*).

The Department is a leading centre for research into performance. Questions of landscape and environment inform the research of a large number of staff and students across theatre, film and performance studies.

Presentations by TFTS staff and students at *Living Landscapes* included:

Paper Presentations by:



Esther Pilkington

Richard Downing, Scenographic Studies: 'The Butterfly Man' (sculpture and other ephemera)

Dr Andrew Filmer, Theatre and Performance Studies: 'Terrains of Power: Performing Parliamentary Architecture'

Dr Carl Lavery, Theatre and Performance Studies: 'Belfast to Boston: Orphic Landscapes in Astral Weeks'

Dr Paul Newland, Film Studies: 'Ohm Sweet Ohm: moving through liminal landscape(s) in *Radio On* (Chris Petit, 1979)'

Charmian Savill, Astudiaethau Theatr, with Lis Hughes Jones: Tir Afalau: Planting, Grafting, Performance'

Dr Amy Staniforth, CPR, Theatre Studies: 'Ancestral landscapes: Origins and Olduvai in the 21st century'

Performances by:

Professor Mike Pearson, Performance Studies: *Carrlands: Hibaldstow (live remix)*

And by TFTS's Associate Artists:

Mike Brookes (with Rosa Casado): *one small white house far away* (installation); *something happening/snapshot* (performance)

Eddie Ladd (with Tim Bromage): *Llyfr Gwyn Rhydderch* (run)

Simon Whitehead (with Barnaby Oliver): *TINGS (Water Table)*

Film / Video works by:

Richard O'Sullivan, Film Studies: *Fragments of the Los Angeles River* (Installation)

Margaret Ames and Roger Owen, Astudiaethau Theatr: *Inappropriate Responses*

Postgraduate Presentations:

Lee Hassall (PhD candidate, Performance Studies) *Responding to Thomas Rowlandson* (installation/ performance)

Tom Payne (MA) *Video Tape (October Half-Term 1985)* (performance)

Esther Pilkington (PhD candidate, Performance Studies) 'A Long Walk' (paper)

Louise Ritchie (PhD candidate, Performance Studies): *Dancing in/to 'All Languages': Living Landscapes & Moving Topographies* (simultaneous performance)

Richard Allen, Gareth Llŷr Evans, Esther Pilkington, Louise Ritchie (PhD candidates, Performance Studies; with Daniel Ladnar, Kasia Coleman): *Showroom Shortcuts*

Chairing of Sessions by: Dr Andrew Filmer, Prof. Adrian Kear (Head of Department), Dr Carl Lavery, Dr Paul Newland, Prof. Mike Pearson, Dr Heike Roms

For *Living Landscapes*, the Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies collaborated with staff in the Institute of Geography and Earth Sciences (IGES) at Aberystwyth University.

IGES is one of the oldest and most respected, yet vibrant and innovative Geography departments in the UK. In the 2008 RAE the department ranked 12th in the UK with 20% of the research within the department classified as "world leading" and 65% as either "world-leading" or "internationally excellent".

Dr Peter Merriman and Dr Heidi V. Scott from IGES were members of the *Living Landscapes* Advisory Panel.

Presentations by IGES staff at *Living Landscapes* included:

Paper Presentations by:

Dr Christopher Bear with Dr Sally Eden (Geography, Hull): 'River readings – the environmental knowledge-practice of angling'

Dr Gareth Hoskins: 'On arrival: performing landscapes of memory and migration'

Dr Peter Merriman: 'Landscape, architecture, dance: inhabiting environments with Anna and Lawrence Halprin'

Dr Heidi V. Scott: 'Landscape and the subterranean in colonial Latin America'

Chairing of Sessions by: Dr Peter Merriman, Dr Heidi V. Scott

Other Aberystwyth University Staff and Students at *Living Landscapes* included:

- Dr Richard Marggraf Turley; Dr Howard Thomas; Dr Jayne Archer (English) 'Darnell, and all the idle weedes that grow': remembering the land in *King Lear*

- Catrin Webster (PhD candidate, Art): 'Intimate Distance – A Painter in Contemporary Landscape' (exhibitions; open studio; drawing event)

- Miranda Whall (Art): Marine Dialogues (Film)



publicity

The call for papers was published in June 2008. A specially-designed leaflet of the call was mailed via the AHRC L&E programme mailing list and exhibited at a number of important conference in the fields of performance studies and geography (incl. *Living in a Material World: Performativities of Emptiness* Conference, Bristol June 2008; PSi Performance Studies Conference, Copenhagen August 2008; TaPRA Theatre & Performance Research Association Conference Leeds, September 2008; *Landscape in Theory* Conference, Nottingham June 2008; Royal Geographical Society Conference, August 2008). The call was also posted on a number of discussion lists related to performance studies and geography, reaching thousands of subscribers. The internet generated most of our international responses. The conference was also advertised on specially designed pages on the AHRC L&E website www.landscape.ac.uk/2009conference.html.

The conference itself was advertised on the AHRC L&E website, Aberystwyth University's and Conference Office website, TFTS's website and a number of other websites in the field (such as 'Theatre in Wales'). An advert was published in *Performance Research*, one of the leading journals in the. Press releases in English and Welsh promoting the conference were sent to all major newspapers and broadcasters via the AHRC's and Aberystwyth's University's press offices. A specially designed bilingual leaflet and posters that advertised the public programme were distributed in Aberystwyth and through the Aberystwyth Arts Centre. The Arts Centre's brochure included information on the conference and the publicly accessible programme. The press office of the National Library of Wales promoted their collaboration with the conference. Information on the conference was sent to a large number of internet discussion lists, and conference schedule, other information and registration forms were made available over the net.

Coverage of the conference appeared on the BBC Wales news programme, the BBC Wales website, a large number of websites and blogs, and the *Cambrian News*, who ran a series of articles on the event.

publicity



local collaborations and public programme

We were keen to involve an audience beyond the scholarly community in the conference. To this end we collaborated with two local institutions.

The **Aberystwyth Arts Centre** presented Stan's Café's theatre performance, *Home of the Wiggler*, a piece concerned with ecological issues, in which power is generated by the cast live on stage, within the context of the *Living Landscapes* conference. The Arts Centre also scheduled a special film programme to run alongside the conference, including a showing of Gideon Koppel's *sleep furiously* and, in collaboration with *Living Landscape*, a special screening of Emily Richardson's short film, *Cobra Mist*, with a soundtrack by the conference's special guest, Chris Watson. The Arts Centre further supported a wide range of conference activities in its spaces, including the nightly *Showroom Shortcuts* wrap-up session, conference bar, the conference dinner and a number of interventions and installations throughout the conference.

The **National Library of Wales/ Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru** enabled us to show two events in its premises, an iconic building that dominates the landscape of Aberystwyth. Lee Hassall's performance installation, *Responding to Thomas Rowlandson*, is part of Hassall's ongoing doctoral research into the Library's collection of drawings by Rowlandson. Kate Lawrence's vertical dance performance, *Descent of the Angel*, performed on the imposing Library façade, drew a large crowd of spectators from beyond the conference community and generated wide coverage in the Welsh media.



A specially designed bilingual leaflet that advertised the publicly accessible programme (including all events in the National Library, the Aberystwyth Arts Centre and a range of other installations, exhibitions and film showings during *Living Landscapes*) was distributed in Aberystwyth and through the Aberystwyth Arts Centre.

All public events were free.



other collaborations

Two conferences on related themes occurred in parallel or in close temporal proximity to *Living Landscapes*, and offered opportunities for collaboration and exchange with *Living Landscapes*.

- The annual Society of Dance History Scholars's conference, *Topographies: Sites, Bodies, Technologies*, at Stanford University and the University of San Francisco, California, 19-22 June 2009:

Louise Ritchie, PhD student in Performance Studies at Aberystwyth University, staged '*Dancing in/to 'All Languages': Living Landscapes & Moving Topographies*', a simultaneous performance with the *Topographies* conference at Stanford University, which is related to her doctoral research in to the movement vocabulary of 'In All Languages'. Ritchie was assisted by Dr Sabine Soergel from Aberystwyth University, who attended the Stanford conference. Documentation of this event is available at:



<http://inalllanguagesphd.blogspot.com/2009/06/blog-post.html>

- the 15th annual Performance Studies Conference PSi15, *MISPERFORMANCE: Misfiring, Misfitting, Misreading*, Zagreb Croatia, June 24 – 28, 2009:

Showroom Detours, a development of *Showroom Shortcuts* presented at *Living Landscapes*, connected the two conferences by transposing the documentation and traces collected at the *Living Landscapes conference* to PSi #15, where they were made available for new responses, reflections and negotiations.

bookshop



A comprehensive bookshop, displaying a large number of publications on the themes of landscape, environment, performance and related art practices, including publications by conference presenters, was open throughout the conference. It was organised by the Centre for Performance Research.

advisory group and the selection process

A specially convened advisory group assisted with the programming of the conference. The following contributed to the group:

Professor Adrian Kear, Dr Carl Lavery, Dr Paul Newland, Lee Hassall and Esther Pilkington, Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies; Dr Peter Merriman and Dr Heidi V. Scott, Institute of Geography and Earth Sciences

The main task of the advisory group was to help with the selection of conference presentations, advise on programming and assist with the chairing of a number of conference events. The selection of conference presentations was subject to a rigorous peer-review process – proposals were read anonymously and selected by members of the advisory group.

attendance and participation

The great number and diversity of participants enabled us to share the critical conversations on performance, landscape and environment across a number of different constituencies.

Most participants hailed from universities; a significant number also came from a variety of art organisations.

We aimed to keep registration costs affordable for unwaged participants (such as **artists** without institutional affiliations and **postgraduate students**). As a result, almost a fifth of registrations were from freelance artists and independent scholars. Nearly a third of the total number of participants were postgraduate students.

Regarding presentations, 38 contributions, nearly a quarter of the total number, were by artists or scholars without academic affiliations; another quarter (41) were by PhD students. 5 presentations were by arts administrators, environmental policy makers and architects.

Although we were keen not to separate out contributions by postgraduate students and artists (see above), we scheduled a number of events to support their particular needs, including a postgraduate forum to foster exchange and networking among the postgraduate community, and a number of artists' breakfasts and roundtables, which allowed for informal feedback to the artwork presented at the conference.

The large majority of delegates came from the United Kingdom. The onset of a world-wide recession led to the last-minute cancellation of a number of **delegates from abroad**. Nonetheless, the conference still managed to attract 38 delegates (more than a sixth of registered participants) from beyond the United Kingdom, including from neighbouring European countries (France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, Latvia, Finland and Norway), the USA, Canada, New Zealand, the Philippines and Bangladesh. We were particularly pleased by the large number of delegates that came from our immediate **community** of Mid- and West-Wales, including artists, arts administrators and environmentalists.

Please find below a record of conference demographics.



- 266 proposals
- 154 acceptances

- 167 individual presentations
of which:
 - 8 films and video works (shown repeatedly throughout conference)
 - 94 papers and illustrated talks
 - 32 performances, interventions, walks, artist's talks, showroom
 - 10 installations, exhibitions
 - 7 plenary sessions which featured 14 presentations
 - 16 workshops, demonstrations, roundtables, discussions
plus receptions, dinners and other social events

- 217 registrations
- 8 additional contributors
- 34 members of the conference team
- 259 participants in total

of which:

- 41 freelance artists and writers
 - 69 postgraduate students
- for institutional affiliations of delegates see overleaf

- 213 from United Kingdom
- 1 from Bangladesh
- 3 from Canada
- 3 from Finland
- 1 from France
- 7 from Germany
- 3 from Ireland
- 1 from Latvia
- 5 from Netherlands
- 2 from New Zealand
- 1 from Norway
- 1 from Philippines
- 3 from Spain
- 2 from Switzerland
- 5 from USA



living landscapes affiliations of registered participants final report p.16

A.H.R.C	Public Space
Aberystwyth University	Queen Mary University of London
amino	Red Earth
Amsterdam School of the Arts	Roehampton University
Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL	Royal Holloway
Birkbeck College	SAP Dance
Birmingham Institute of Art & Design	School of the Museum of Fine Arts,
Blaengar	Boston
Body Weather Amsterdam	Small Things
Buckinghamshire New University	St Mary's University College
Cardiff University	Stan's Café
Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design	Studio Andrew Todd architects
Central School of Speech & Drama	Tea
Centre Diart: Natura	The Open University
Coleg Ceredigion	The School of Art Institute of Chicago
Countryside & Community Research Inst.	Theatre Academy Helsinki
Coventry University	Universität Leipzig
CPR	University Campus Suffolk
CREU-AD Heritage Interpretation	University College Falmouth / Dartington
Dead Good Guides	University of Aberdeen
Edge Hill University	University of Art & Design Helsinki
Equilibre Horse Theatre	University of Auckland
Exeter University	University of Brighton
Fernhill	University of Bristol
Fevered Sleep	University of Cambridge
Foot on Earth	University of Central Lancashire
G.M.I.T Galway	University of Chester
Goldsmiths, University of London	University of East London
Good Cop Bad Cop	University of Exeter
Government Bangladesh	University of Glasgow
Harvard University	University of Hertfordshire
Harvest Heritage Arts & Media	University of Hull
Hereford College of Arts	University of Kent
John Hardy Music	University of Latvia
Kasteel Groeneveld	University of Leeds
King's College, London	University of Lincoln
Lancaster University	University of Liverpool
Landscape Architects	University of Manchester
Leeds Metropolitan University	University of Nottingham
Leeds University	University of Oxford
London College of Communication	University of Plymouth
London Metropolitan University	University of Portsmouth
Lou Wilson Co.	University of Potsdam
Loughborough University	University of Sheffield
Louisiana State University	University of Southampton
Massey University	University of Surrey
McGill University Montreal	University of the West of England
Monash University	University of Ulster Belfast
myvillages.org	University of Warwick
National Theatre Wales	University of Winchester
Nottingham Trent University	Utrecht University
Oslo University College	UWIC
Oxford Brookes University	Verein für Internationale Waldkunst -
Oxford University	International Forest Art Association
Pervasive Media Studio	Wrights & Sites
plan b	ZHAW Zürich University of Applied Science

living landscapes extracts from participants' responses final report p.17

Thank you very much for all your work and kindness!! I think this was the best conference I've ever been to. (John Wylie, University of Exeter)

Many thanks for giving me the opportunity to take part in what I felt was a ground-breaking and innovation-making event. (Alison Moore, Lincoln University)

What liberating fun it was, and what a truly stunning show you and your community of postgrads put on for us. I can safely say I have never been made to feel so welcomed and included at a conference in such a variety of inventive and light-spirited ways. There were blue shirts, big smiles, waving hands and helpful voices across the campus all day, every day. Geography has so much to learn about hosting. (Hayden Lorimer, Glasgow University)

It was a truly wonderful experience. (Jane Rendell, Bartlett School of Architecture)

What a wonderful event ! The best conference I have been to (and I've been going to them for over 35 years). (Stephen Daniels, Nottingham University)

It was a real pleasure for us to cooperate on what turned out to be a thrilling occasion - and possibly the most photographed and video'd event ever staged here. (Andrew Green, Librarian, National Library of Wales)

I loved the conference – very enjoyable and very thought provoking not to say inspirational. I really hope various things can continue/develop out of the networks and conference. (Owain Jones, Countryside & Community Research Institute)

Thanks again for a fantastic conference - I didn't have too much of an idea what to expect when I came, but it was very well worth it and I am really looking forward to keeping in touch and perhaps working with some of the people I have met. (Geoffrey Samuel, Cardiff University)

There was much good humour at this conference, which made it a convivial space for sharing knowledge and learning. The mapping exercise on Sunday was a prime example of this and I was surprised how easily the group I was in collaborated and, in fact, came up with three pretty sound research questions! Models of such strategies are useful for encouraging interdisciplinarity and can, I think, be applied within field work. (Dee Heddon, Glasgow University)

I enjoyed the conference enormously and I thought it wonderfully well curated, brilliantly organised and run with exemplary thoroughness, one of the very best I've ever attended in those and other respects. (Baz Kershaw, Warwick University)

A lovely and inspiring event (Rupert Allan, Artistic Director, rupertallan.com)

I had a great day, I think the project went really well, and I met so many interesting lovely people, and new contacts. (Blue MacAskill, artist)

Many thanks for such a wonderfully inspiring event. It was great to be there. (Stuart Andrews, Surrey University)

It was a real pleasure to meet up with such a inspiring and diverse gathering of delegates. (Chris Watson, Wildlife Sound Recordist)

Just another big thank you to you for a fantastic conference, and for the amazing smooth running of it, and the generosity. I am sure many seeds were planted!
(Karen Smith, artist and postgraduate student, Plymouth University)

I want to say again how much I appreciated and enjoyed Living Landscapes and the colleagues and experiences I met with over the weekend. It was a great privilege to take part and I very much look forward to future discussions. (Georgina Guy, postgraduate student, King's University)

Thanks so much for organising this amazing event. I wish I had been able to go to so many more sessions!! (Simone Abram, Leeds Metropolitan University)

Can I thank you for your hospitality and excellent hosting of the conference, which was a pleasure to be a part of. I look forward to developing some of the ideas initiated at the conference. I am still assimilating many of the ideas, coincidences and associations that were generated that long weekend. (Paul Gough, UWE)

We had a very stimulating time in Aber; a very fine event - thank you! It's clear a lot of very generative things will spill out of what was an extremely good conference.
(David Williams, University College Falmouth/ Darting College of Arts)

Thank you all for such a rich conference. (Anne Eggebert, Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design)

The way the papers were scheduled and curated and how the students supported us in finding our ways made it very easy to actively engage with the structure and the content of the conference. You managed to set up a hugely inspiring place from where a community of curious and pro-active artists and academics is growing.
(Rebecca Egeling, postgraduate student, University College Falmouth)

Your Inboxes must be overloaded! Just to say enormous thanks and to congratulate you on a really exceptionally successful conference. So refreshing and exhilarating.
(Sally Mackey, Central School of Speech and Drama)

Many people remarked that this was the best conference they had ever been to, and I would agree. (Peter Merriman, Aberystwyth University)

I can't tell you how much I enjoyed the conference and being a part of it, It was a real privilege, extraordinary and vital. You have created something unique there in Aberystwyth. (Lee Hassall, Hereford College of Arts)

Thanks for a most enjoyable conference and for the enormous amount of hard work and creative programming that went into it. (Richard Povall, Uni College Falmouth))

We really enjoyed the conference. It felt like the perfect context for this piece. I kept sitting in panels and hearing striking connections between the speakers discussions and what we were trying to explore through this work. (Sorrel Muggridge, artist)

Thank you for all you (and the team) did to make Living Landscapes such a welcoming, convivial, inspiring, thought-provoking, smooth and fun event - it really was a treat whilst at the same time a provocative challenge to established and entrenched modes of thinking/doing. I was part of Marilyn Ansem's workshop in the early mornings which was both instructive in itself and an excellent example of putting theory into practice, something I much appreciated. A bit of tangible 'living' landscape! (Suze Adams, artist and postgraduate student, UWE)

It was great to be able contribute and be able to arrive into something so special.
(Simon Whitehead, artist)

The whole experience of *Living Landscapes* was outstanding in both content and quality. (Bren C Unwin, University of Hertfordshire)

Living Landscapes was certainly a brilliant event - a wonderful introduction for me, an ethnologist, to the world of performance! So much excellent work and passionate ideas. (Sarah Blowen, UWE)

Well done for organising such a stimulating and invigorating conference. (Jane Lloyd Francis, artist, Machynlleth)

I had a great time at the Living Landscapes conference last month - it's given me a great deal to think about and has sown the seeds for a new way of thinking about my research - so thank you! (Zoe Millman, postgraduate student, BIAD)

Thanks for putting together such an inspiring and welcoming conference. Being part of it restored my faith in lots of things that I was doubting. (Anna Farthing, Bristol University)

Thanks so much for providing such a fantastic event – a truly inspiring four days. Carrlands was one of many highpoints. I am very proud to have been involved in such a great event (Paul Newland, Aberystwyth University)

It was a real pleasure to be involved in such a fantastic conference. (Heidi V Scott, Aberystwyth University)

A big thank you for such a wonderful few days in Aberystwyth - the energies of the event were fantastic, and left me with much to reflect upon. (Joanna Robinson, Nottingham University)

Thank you again for organising such a fantastic conference. (Greer Crawley, Buckinghamshire New University)

Thanks again for all the wonderful work you and Mike did on a very memorable conference. (Stephen Bottoms, Leeds University)

Well done on a wonderful conference. The conference was majestic on all levels. (André Stitt, UWIC)

I'm just one of several who thought this was the best conference we'd ever been to. (Dydia DeLyser, Louisiana State University)

The conference was really exciting for me and I still think of some of the compelling papers. (Jose Ferreira, The School of Art Institute of Chicago)

Just to thank you very much for such an inspiring conference. Some great exchanges have come out of it and many things to think about, as well as some nice memories. (Cathy Turner, University of Winchester)

Thanks to you and all who made the Aberystwyth Landscape Conference the best gathering of this sort I have ever been too. The generosity and hospitality and fine programming of the whole event and its eventhood were fantastic (Simon Persighetti, University College Falmouth, Wrights & Sites)