Impact case study (REF3b)

Institution: University of Greenwich

Unit of Assessment: (UoA 34) Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory

Title of case study: Studio for Electronic Theatre

1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)

Studio for Electronic Theatre (SET) is a group of researchers examining the relationship between technological advance and creative practice. They examine how technology can change the nature of performance environments in specific spaces and address social and political issues in distinct places. Specific performances have:

- Drawn very large audiences (3,000 people attended the Tate Britain show in 2011) allowing work done in the University to reach the outside world
- influenced significant political figures.re phrase
- Offered new opportunities for collaboration between spatially separated participants.

Additionally, the work being carried out engages directly with non HEI partners and has resulted in members of the group being invited to communicate with a range of interested partners beyond the academy: Greenwich Theatre, Albany Deptford, Kids Company.

2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)

Through the use of visual projection, music and performance Studio for Electronic Theatre transforms time and space philosophically, technologically and through art. In an age where digital convergence encompasses and contains all art forms our research both enacts and questions the material conditions of this convergence by reconfiguring and disrupting linearity, and narrative expectation.

Between 2009 and now the work of the studio has examined the relationships between technology, performance, and contemporary philosophical and political thought. In doing so it has contributed to the latest research and development in digital technologies that have introduced new possibilities for interaction between people and computers. The research develops a critical understanding of the possibilities provided by advances in digital technology to extend the influence and significance of art and performance in contemporary aesthetic, social, and political contexts. Research into how interactive immersive environments can be practically built has been carried out in our research studio. Equally, theoretical engagement with questions around space and connectivity has been central to the research. The collaborative work of SET includes:

- *Oedipus* explored the configuration of the traditional gallery space and examined new possibilities that were demonstrated against a thematic background of contemporary technological anxiety, as the fate of humanity becomes increasingly linked to technology.
- In *Memories in the Deadzone* the performance returns to a site of conflict (Cyprus) to show how performance and technology can be used to re-contextualise complex political questions.
- *Echostate* explored the technological challenge of linking two locations in a single performance and offers new possibilities for collaboration.

The nature of our research findings are threefold:

1. Consumer technology such as sensors that are present in games consoles can be used to enhance the experience of visitors to gallery spaces. Indeed they can transform those spaces into immersive three-dimensional environments.

2. Multimedia performance is able to re-contextualize political questions in a manner that can facilitate and provoke renewed debate

3. Problems presented by spatial dislocation can be technologically addressed using standard and accessible means such as Skype to create collaborative networks

The key researchers who make up Studio for Electronic Theatre are: Alev Adil (Artist in Residence at the University of Greenwich and Programme Leader for Creative Writing). Dr. Nuno Salihbegovic (Lecturer in Media & Communication and Media Arts Production), Dr. Stephen Kennedy (Programme Leader for BA Media & Communication, BA/BSc Media Arts Production and MA Media Arts Philosophy and Practice),

Their collaborative work can be accessed via this link.

3. References to the research (REF1 submitted staff in **bold,** **REF2 Output)

**3.1 Adil, A. Performance: Memory in the Dead Zone
http://www.memorymap.org.uk/projects/alev-artos-foundation
http://www.memorymap.org.uk/projects/jocastas-dream
http://www.memorymap.org.uk/projects/performing-memory-dead-zone
http://vimeo.com/17113843#at=0

3.2 **Adil, A. (2009). Translating and mutating identities: Cypriots who write in English. In M. Bülbülcü (Ed.), *Literary Criticism and Study. Series of Modern Turkish Cypriot Literature* (Vol. 7). Cyprus: Freebirds Press. http://gala.gre.ac.uk/1647/

3.3 **Salihbegovic, F.** *Oedipus*, a series of performances. Premiere, Stephen Lawrence Gallery, University of Greenwich 2013

3.4 **Kennedy, S. (2013). Echostate. *Zetesis: Research driven by curiosity,* 1(1). ARTicle Press

3.5 **Kennedy, S.** Echostate (Live) – Humboldt University Berlin Feb 2011
http://vimeo.com/24087954)

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)
The *Oedipus* project enabled both the participants and the audience to explore the nature of the experimental space created as a result of the fusion of different arts and technology. The production investigated this newly acquired territory and the related creative potential emerging from the established bonds between digital and analogue, virtual and physical, sonic and visual. It did so both thematically and formally and opened up new possibilities for large audiences to engage with work of this kind.

The 'digital stage' remains alive after the performance with real actors actually ends. Moving from one part of the stage to the other the spectators listen to the digital 'echoes' of the performance and discover hidden histories and detailed versions of the main events. The perspective is always changing, so are the events. For each spectator, the material becomes more and more personalised. Historical exactness and certainty are being replaced by split-second revelations and chaotic factual uncertainties, moving the whole event far away from the mediatised image of the history and much closer to the question – what will (has) really happen(ed).

Oedipus project was made in collaboration with international partners Cactusbloem, Antwerp (Belgium), PVC Theatre, Novi Sad (Serbia), the United Nation Refugee Agency UNHCR and Aurasma (Augmented Reality Platform). The project was first performed at Steven Lawrence Gallery in Greenwich in August 2011. It was also performed at Tate Britain in November 2011. 3000 audience members were invited to explore the stage setting as participants rather than audience members as the gallery itself was transformed into an immersive audio visual space.

Oedipus was also presented at the International Meeting of Contemporary Scenography organised by the Study Centre for Scenic Arts in Bologna, Italy in October 2012. This meeting gathered together some of the most important names from the contemporary opera/theatre scenography and architecture, including Henning Brockhaus and Jean-Guy Lecat (Peter Brook's scenographer for more than 30 years.

The Oedipus project was selected in the main programme of the International Festival in

Alternative and New Theatre INFANT, Novi Sad, Serbia, June 2013, where it was presented at the Serbian National Theatre (see the link).

Due to the great success of this project, Dr Salihbegovic was invited by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNESCO to design and organise a series of lectures, seminars and workshops in the filed of digital media arts and performance for the postgraduate students at the Academy of Arts in Belgrade, He worked with 20 domestic and international MA students in two international programmes: MA International Performance Research and UNESCO programme for Cultural Policy and Management in Culture (see the link).

As a final part of this project was the Summer School in Electronic Theatre which happened in Novi Sad. The Summer School was organised in the eminent Gymnasium in Sremski Karlovci. The School had 10 participants from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (see the links: 1, 2, 3 and 4).

In collaboration with Drs Kennedy and Salihbegovic Alev Adil devised and performed her 40 minute one woman show *Memory in the Dead Zone* on both sides of divided Cyprus (North Cyprusin April 2011 and March 2012, at the University of Greenwich/Birkbeck College Cross Genre Festival (July 2010) and presented it as an installation at Tate Britain (November 2011). Building on the success of Adil's performance at *The Poet and His World* Festival in Nicosia in 2010, she was invited by the cultural foundation *Ideogramma* to devise a multimedia performance of London and local Cypriot poets at the ARTos Foundation in 2012 in collaboration with Fredericks University, Cyprus, whose final year BA Applied Art students made posters of Adil's poetry. As an outcome of her research she has shared a platform with both former President of the Republic of Cyprus, George Vassiliou and President Dimitris Christofias. As a result of these relationships a series of diasporic and bicommunal Cypriot poetry workshops and events are scheduled in 2013 with the co-operation of the above organisations.

Adil's related research into how digital poetics can create creative communities through MemoryMap has impacted upon sharing and archiving of memory in the context of creative workshops and networks through the website www.MemoryMap.org.uk which has 150 active users who have created 432 projects and has attracted 12,069 visits to date and approximately 70,000 page views. Users have created prizewinning films in Greek, Italian and Trinidadian Film Festivals and have exhibited work showcased on the site. Artists working in Lithuania, Cyprus, Greece, South Korea and the UK have become memorymappers. The site has been visited from over 89 countries.

Echostate –: Invited by Shintaro Miyazaki to speak at Humboldt University in Berlin as part of their Sonic Theory/Oscillation Series (Feb 2011). Formally experimenting with long-distance video link up for educational purposes, *Echostate* was the first in a planned series of presentations that combine academic presentation with immersive video and sound that can be streamed for a worldwide audience. It dealt with a philosophical understanding of sound as an organizing principle of creative environments (http://sonictheory.com/?paged=2). It was an interactive performance/lecture that connected participants in London and Berlin on February 27th 2011. The presentation allowed participants in a public event in Berlin to directly communicate with researchers in London in real time. This piece is another example of the collaborative work developed by SET.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

Late at Tate Programmer, Tate Britain

Post-doctoral Researcher, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland

[Personal Website]
http://www.shintaro-miyazaki.com/

[Institute for Algorhythmics - Art and research project]

http://www.algorhythmics.com/

Policy Makers and Influencers
Former President of the Republic of Cyprus, George Vassiliou.
http://cypriotsforcyprus.org/?s=alev+adil
http://www2.lse.ac.uk/europeanInstitute/research/hellenicObservatory/pdf/Seminars/C4C_Adil.pdf
http://www.acikgazete.com/ingiltere/2008/10/17/kibrisli-siyasetciler-iyimser.htm?aid=25377
http://www.starkibris.net/index.asp?haberID=16299