

Institution: University of Brighton	
Unit of Assessment: D34 Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory	
Title of case study: Performing at the Margins	ICS [4]
1. Summary of the impact	

Researchers at the University of Brighton (UoB) have disrupted established canons and concepts and repositioned professional and public attitudes as to what constitutes performance. They achieve this through the inclusive processes, innovative methods and modes of expression they employ in building new audiences, by engaging marginalised and under-represented communities and by re-situating both performance and audiences in new and unexpected places. Their work has impacted upon a range of communities in over 40 countries with 230 performances, public screenings and festival presentations, and via widespread online dissemination. Indicative of their importance was AGGISS and COWIE's position as British Council 'performance ambassadors' for screen dance (*Forward Motion*) while both KARIKIS and FOX's research in their respective communities has stimulated paradigm shifts in public perceptions of inclusivity.

2. Underpinning research

Performance researchers at Brighton have brought together musical composition, voice, sound, choreography and time-based media technologies to extend and challenge the nature of contemporary performance and to engage with disenfranchised and marginalised communities. Harnessing the creative agency of performance, they have unlocked and presented new visual, experiential and auditory compositions and positioned these in different contexts.

From AGGISS' anarchic dances, exploring the paradoxes of stage and screen dance, and KARIKIS' 'exploded opera', to FOX's inclusive arts exhibition at the Southbank, their research uses performance to confront the fragilities and foibles of the human condition, including ageing, identity, disability and authenticity. Through the physical and conceptual re-positioning and engagement of audiences online, on screen or in a theatre or gallery, their research persistently blurs the boundaries, unsettling the relationships between performers and audiences, art and life. This manifests itself through practices of co-creation, as found in KARIKIS' relationship with Kent mining communities (*Sounds from Beneath*, 2011) [reference 3.5], the collaborative choreography of FOX's *Smudged*, performed at the Tate [FOX, 2] with disabled and able-bodied artists, and through the distillation of human behaviour in AGGISS' *Beach Party Animal* [AGGISS, 2].

Drawing historical references from European expressionism, in particular the aesthetic traditions of German and Austrian *tanztheater*, AGGISS and COWIE have expanded the practice of screen dance through creative innovation, technical experimentation and theoretical explorations [3.2]. They have developed choreographic concepts that are possible only through the mediation of the camera, editing suite and screen. Building upon earlier interdisciplinary research *Motion Control* [3.1], an award-winning 'dance for camera', they produced *Men in the Wall* (2003), a four-screen, 3D, stereoscopic screen dance installation that redefined dance and screen practice in a gallery context. These early works have subsequently been developed in COWIE's 3D holographic dance installation *Tango De Soledad* [3.3] and AGGISS's performance film *The English Channel* [AGGISS, 2]. Both works challenge and engage audiences; COWIE through the intimate intensity of an encounter with a solitary holographic dancer in a confined space and AGGISS through the choreography and dynamic relationship between live performance, film and a narrative of self-deprecating feminist humour.

Harnessing human voices and sound as his primary materials to create social sculptures, KARIKIS' research uses technology to mediate and orchestrate sound, performance and ethnographic research with particular communities of labour. Forefronting the celebration of collective human voices, he distils and elevates difference to reflect this back to audiences and performers alike as part of what he refers to as an 'exploded opera', augmented visually through film and creative immersive gallery installations, for example at the Arnolfini, Bristol, and online in *SeaWomen* [3.4]. Similarly, and building on her 2005 film *Degrees of Separation*, FOX brought together over 30 companies from the field of inclusive arts through her direction and curation of

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Side-by-Side [3.6] at London's Southbank Centre. Here she examined and demonstrated the agency of visual and performative practices to both facilitate and unlock creative endeavour by presenting and reflecting on models of inclusive collaborative working between artists with and without learning disabilities and creating a forum for discussions about the nature and legitimacy of inclusive artistic practice. FOX and the Rocket Artists, in partnership with Mayfield Arts, Cork and The Kunstwerkplaats, Amsterdam were awarded the Grundtvig European Life Long Learning Fund (€60,000) for their *Artists on the Move* project, Sept 2012–Sept 2014. In this knowledge-exchange project, each organisation will host a public exhibition and creative workshops to share best practice.

Key researchers:

- Liz Aggiss: Lecturer (Sept 1976–Aug 1994), Senior Lecturer (Sept 1994–July 2002), Principal Lecturer (June 2002–July 2003), Professor of Visual Performance (July 2003–to date).
- Billy Cowie: Lecturer (Sept 1977–Dec 1984), Senior Lecturer (Jan 1985–Jan 2000), Principal Lecturer (Feb 2000–Mar 2003), Principal Research Fellow (Mar 2003–to date).
- Alice Fox: Research Fellow (May 2004–May 2006), Senior Lecturer (June 2006–Jan 2013), Principal Lecturer (Feb 2013–to date), Assistant Head (Apr 2013–to date).
- Mikhail Karikis: Lecturer (Sept 2006–Aug 2010), Senior Lecturer (Sept 2010–to date).

3. References to the research

- [3.1] AGGISS, L. and COWIE, B. *Motion Control* (2001). [Quality validation: submitted to RAE2001 – Quality Profile for RAE2001: Rated 5].
- [3.2] AGGISS, L. and COWIE, B. (eds.) (2006) *Anarchic Dance*. Abingdon: Routledge. [Quality validation: submitted to RAE 2008 – Output quality profile for RAE2008: 81% 2* and above.]
- [3.3] COWIE, *Tango de Soledad* (2011). [Quality validation: submitted to REF2014; see Output 1. Commissioned by South East Dance with support from the Jerwood Charitable Foundation, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Arts Council England.]
- [3.4] KARIKIS, M. *SeaWomen* (2012). [Quality validation: submitted to REF2014; see Output 1. Supported by the Arts Council England].
- [3.5] KARIKIS, M. *Sounds from Beneath* (2011). [Quality validation: performed originally as part of the Brighton Festival and subsequently selected for: Whitechapel Gallery, 2012; Manifesta 9, 2012; and Tate 2013.]
- [3.6] FOX, A. *Side-by-Side* (2013). An inclusive arts exhibition, performance, and symposium in partnership with the Southbank Centre. [Quality validation: submitted to REF 2014 see Output 1. Supported by Arts Council England and commissioned by the Southbank Centre.]

4. Details of the impact

At the leading edge of contemporary performance arts for over two decades, performance researchers at Brighton have focused on the agency of performance as mediated by human difference and augmented by creative technologies. In drawing attention to and articulating cultural value, their research has impacted upon diverse sectors and communities, including the building of new public, and professional audiences. For example, AGGISS and COWIE have developed the international presence and professionalisation of screen dance as invited expert curators and cultural ambassadors for the British Council's screen dance collection *Forward Motion*, 2009 (source 5.1). Accompanied by an international tour of UK Screen Dance, this promoted 'UK PLC' as a place of cultural innovation and creative education. This has been screened over 330 times to a broad range of cultural, educational and intergenerational audiences in over 35 different countries, including India, North and South America, Japan, China and Spain. The tour was augmented by AGGISS' delivery of performance lectures and master-classes that stimulated professionals and enhanced public understanding (5.2).

Expanding and Developing audiences: Intrinsic to Brighton's performance research has been the use of distinctive and inclusive means to extend and engage new audiences, through the

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innovative use of screen and film technologies and locating and opening up the work in new contexts (AGGISS and COWIE); or through employing inclusive forms of practice (KARIKIS and FOX). Throughout AGGISS and COWIE's long creative collaboration (1980–2006), their work has developed and extended the representation of dance on screen, rather than on stage, in addition to autobiographical content and hybrid forms. Their continued innovation, influence and cultural enhancement of screen dance has intentionally blurred the boundaries between 'high art' and 'popular culture', rejecting any notion that the moving image's only role within dance was to document live performance. Through this they have increased audience access to screen dance both nationally and internationally, and in doing so have brought alternative forms of performance to a broader public consciousness (5.3). Since 2008 this has been evidenced by dedicated television profiles (eg *Diva*, Channel 4, peak-viewing (2009, 2010), a 20-minute feature on French/German arts channel ARTE (2011), invitations to participate in international festivals (AGGISS' *Survival Tactics* was presented at the Lubanja Women's Festival in 2011) and *Time Out: London* featured *Motion Control* (2001) in their Top Ten Dance Videos on the Web (YouTube viewing figures circa.100k) (5.4). Enhancing the international profile of screen-based performance and generating discussion on inclusion, feminism, and geopolitics, the work of AGGISS, COWIE, FOX and KARIKIS has been discussed online and in the national and international press. An article in the *New Zealand Herald* reported that AGGISS' work 'polarised the critics. Some, mostly male, were incensed, repulsed. Others, predominantly female, were thrilled to see this female dance body that broke with the stereotype' (5.5)

Engaging and affecting marginalised communities: Co-creation is central to KARIKIS' work with marginalised working communities, for which he harnesses the sounds and songs of others as his material. He employs visual media and various technologies to compose and orchestrate new forms of social sound sculptures that 'give voice' to these communities and their cultures and heritage. Its purpose is to engender belonging, reveal and accentuate the *genius loci* and locate the works within broader geopolitical contexts. Examples of this that demonstrate the impact and influence of his practice include: *Sounds from Beneath* (2011), developed with Snowdown Colliery Welfare Male Voice Choir in Kent (5.6) and; *SeaWomen* (2012), with elderly female sea workers living on the Korean island of Jeju (5.7). Attracting critical acclaim, he contributed to the Danish Pavilion at the 54th Venice Biennale in 2011 (visitors circa.440k), and Manifesta 9 in Belgium 2012 (visitors circa.100k) to illuminate the inclusive methodologies that underpin his research and to develop a wider understanding of them (5.8). Continued interest in his work has also led to the production of a dedicated profile on *SeaWomen* for TV ORF Austria (viewers circa.300k) and the inclusion of *Sounds from Beneath* as part of the UK tour of the BBC Big Screen's Opera Season and consequently an invitation to screen this film at the Tate as part of a survey of recent artists' film and video in Britain 2008–2013.

FOX similarly has worked with marginalised communities, shaping inclusive methods that employ performance as a means to extend and share ideas 'beyond words'. Her curatorial, creative and theoretical collaborative work brings together non-disabled artists with artists with learning disabilities, leading to the design of new public spaces for the creation and discussion of new and groundbreaking work (5.9). This commitment to transforming public perceptions and understanding is well represented by *Side-by-Side* (2013), the first major international inclusive arts practice exhibition staged. Attracting over 6,500 visitors, it was commissioned by London's Southbank Centre, supported by ACE (£58.5k), and brought together 150 artists representing the approach and outlook of 30 international organisations, including Rocket Artists, Corali Dance Company, JumpCuts, Kunstwerkplaats and Inventura. It provided these groups with a high-profile international venue to showcase their work alongside non-disabled artists. According to the Artistic Director of the Southbank Centre, the exhibition was 'groundbreaking in its ambition and realisation' and marked 'a paradigm shift for artist and audience perceptions of inclusivity' (5.9, 5.10). In this it had a major impact on the ways in which able-bodied artists and artists with learning disabilities engaged in performance.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- 5.1 British Council *Forward Motion* promotional pack. Commissioned by the British Council, this DVD boxset includes works by Lea Anderson, David Hinton, Vena Ramphal, and Lloyd Newsom. Supplementary evidence includes webpages extracted from the British Council website concerning the subsequent tour and a British Council video (hosted by a leading dance critic) that draws attention to the importance of the work of AGGISS and COWIE in shaping and enhancing the UK's dance profile and in establishing screendance as an internationally recognised genre.
- 5.2 Testimonial available from the Managing Director of the Gati Dance Company, participants in the Yellow Line Project. Supplementary evidence includes a review: *Time Out in Delhi*, a review in *The Sunday Guardian* (India), and a blog by one of the participants that discussed their learning experience.
- 5.3 Testimonial available from Director of South East Dance that highlights the influence of AGGISS' work on contemporary choreographic practice. Supplementary evidence includes the South East Dance websites that highlight the influential role of AGGISS and COWIE in shaping and forging a profile for dance on screen.
- 5.4 Feature in *Time Out: London* magazine (2009). Cited as one of the best dance clips on the web, *Motion Control* is placed alongside the works of Siobhan Davies, Natalia Makarova, and Swedish street dance group Bounce. Available at: <http://www.timeout.com/london/dance/best-dance-clips-on-the-web> [Accessed: 12 November 2013]. Supplementary evidence includes *Radio Times* entry for the screening of *Diva* on Channel 4 and a video file of the ARTE profile of AGGISS.
- 5.5 Article on AGGISS in the *New Zealand Herald* that looks back at her career and works. Available at: http://www.nzherald.co.nz/entertainment/news/article.cfm?c_id=1501119&objectid=10677690 [Accessed: 12 November 2013]. Supplementary evidence includes a selection of reviews and blogs that discuss the work of AGGISS, COWIE, FOX and KARIKIS. The range in the place, type, and medium of publication is testament to the broad and diverse audiences that engage with their work.
- 5.6 Testimonial available from the musical director of the Snowdown Colliery Welfare Male Voice Choir. The testimonial details the lasting effect of KARIKIS' work on the choir and how it caused them to rethink their past and consider ideas of loss, place, and heritage.
- 5.7 Video of YTN News (South Korea) featuring KARIKIS' *SeaWomen* (July 2012). The news piece discusses the importance of KARIKIS' work to Korean culture and heritage. Film available on request. Supplementary evidence includes reviews and blog posts discussing *SeaWomen* by the Korean Cultural Centre and London Korean Links.
- 5.8 Testimonial available from the Director of Whitstable Biennial. This highlights the groundbreaking elements to KARIKIS' *Sounds from Beneath*, its appeal to specialist and non-specialist audiences, and how it has been picked up by arts organisations internationally.
- 5.9 Testimonial available from the Artistic Director of the Southbank Centre highlighting the importance and innovative element of FOX's exhibition and the effect of the exhibition on attendees and cultural institutions.
- 5.10 Video of Private View of *Side-by-Side*, Southbank Centre which includes a speech by a Relationship Manager at Arts Council England on how those with disabilities have been excluded from arts discussions and how this exhibition and performance demonstrates that 'diversity is key in creative excellence'.