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Theatre/Archaeology: visualising past performance

Between 1981-2002 theatre company Brith Gof developed innovative approaches to theatre making in Wales and beyond: its productions included physical theatre, devised performance, site-specific work, large-scale events, bilingual exposition. The company also pioneered sophisticated forms of documentation such as self-published booklets and the recording of large-scale performances for television broadcast. The National Library of Wales is the current custodian of a substantial deposit of material on Brith Gof's work, in multiple formats and a variety of media: video, film, photographs and slides, audio tapes, plans, drawings, scenarios, scripts and note-books. This paper introduces a collaborative project currently being undertaken with the National Library to examine the differential survival and recovery of the documents of devised performance, and the potential tensions between memory and archive.

Applying a series of critical approaches first outlined in *Theatre/Archaeology* (2001), the paper discusses approaches to the aesthetic reconstitution and visualisation of past performance from its surviving fragments. It focuses upon attempts to develop and implement new on-screen documentary formats as transferable methodologies, in light of recent technological advances such as 3D rendition and the appearance of digital platforms including *Second Life*. Digital scenarios are imagined as complex juxtapositions and interpenetrations of text, image and aural material that might relate 'a story of the performance'. As a contemporary creative endeavour such scenarios make sufficient information simultaneously available not only to evoke the original works but hypothetically, at least, to render them restage-able.

Panel abstract:

Archival Events and Eventful Archives: In-Between Performance and Document
Participants: Paul Clarke, University of Bristol; Mike Pearson, Aberystwyth University; Heike Roms, Aberystwyth University (Convenor)

Panel abstract submitted by Dr Heike Roms