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THE NEW SPACE OF AUTHENTICITY

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Proposal for presentations to The **Scenography Working Group of the International Federation of Theatre Research** in special collaboration with the **Czech Theater Institute in Prague**

To Dr Dominika Larionow (University of Lodz - Poland) larionow@gazeta.pl and Professor David Vivian (Brock University - Canada) dvivian@brocku.ca.

From : Dr Anna Birch mob: +44 07791778432 silvabirch@btinternet.com

Institutional Affiliation: Research Fellow Theatre / Drama, Manchester Metropolitan University, U.K.

Technical requirements: DVD/CD player with audio facility and Power Point projection, internet connection

Title: How can the spectator support meaning making in the multi-media performance process?

By discussing the touring exhibition of artefacts from *Wollstonecraft Live!*¹ 2005-2007 participants will be offered the opportunity to investigate how the spectator engages in making meaning. The emphasis will be on 'the significance of authenticity for a discipline rooted in material artefacts (e.g. set, lighting, sound, costume, etc.)'

Short clips from two films, the specially composed audio sound track from the live show and high quality images showing a series specially designed posters and the 'Box Dresses' worn by the multiple Wollstonecraft's in the live show will provide the basis of this presentation. The methodology is a demonstration of how The Dramaturgical Toolkit² can be applied to these materials.

Anna will contextualise the development of the project to include brief descriptions of the different spaces that the traveling exhibition has visited and the plans for future projects.

The lense will tighten onto the aesthetics of the research outcomes under discussion eg. the storyboarded drama film **VINDICATION** set against the poststructuralist performance documentary *Wollstonecraft Live!* as examples of meaning making. In these films the scenographic languages employed comment on the live performance in a reflexive and dialogic relationship. In the context of multimodal formats for creating performance the processes involved in curating will be discussed.

¹ *Fragments & Monuments* latest work *Wollstonecraft Live!* written by Kaethe Fine, celebrates the life and writings of Mary Wollstonecraft, first British feminist, human rights activist, author and mother of Mary Shelley, the creator of Frankenstein.

² The Dramaturgical Toolkit is an open access kit designed by Dr Anna Birch as part of her practice based PhD at SMARTlab, Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design available online from autumn 2007.

Dr Anna Birch

Since 1996 Anna has created and produced new performances for locations in and around her home city London, UK and New York City, Holland and Morocco. Her work has been seen at numerous theatres across Britain including the Royal Court and Salisbury Playhouse; festivals have included the Edinburgh Festival in Scotland and SPIT-LIT Festival in London. Her artwork has been reviewed by such publications as Time Out, The Guardian and The Independent newspapers, Theatre Forum, Women and Performance and Total Theatre journals. She has lectured about her artwork and supervises PhD students in institutions such as Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, London College of Fashion, University of the Arts, London and SMARTlab, University of East London where she is a research fellow. She has been the recipient of a number of grants, fellowships and awards including Awards 4 All arts funding, Royal Netherlands Embassy, and an award from the Royal Court Theatre, London. She is an innovator pushing back the frontiers in performance technology practices with three short films directed by her and a major performance and pedagogy tool for making and analysing new performance works all designed and produced by her. She is Research Fellow in Theatre / Drama at Manchester Metropolitan University, UK and her site-based, multi-media performance company *Fragments & Monuments* has just returned from the A.I.R. Gallery, N.Y.C. where they presented ***Wollstonecraft Live!*** on tour.