

Hannah Ballou

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Education:

PhD, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, 2011-2015

(currently writing up, expected completion: March 2015)

Thesis title: hoo:ha: Illuminating and exploiting a dissonance between funniness and sexiness with the female comic body in performance.

(Funded by a Central Research Bursary)

Supervisors: Dr. Stephen Farrier and Dr. Experience Bryon

Brief synopsis of research: *hoo:ha* is the development of a practice that defines, illuminates, and exploits a dissonance between laughter and desire, funniness and sexiness, and amusement and seduction in order to

1. create comic strategies at the expense of said dissonance, and
2. challenge heteronormative and patriarchal strands of humour theory.

The research utilizes practice as research (PaR) methodology. The practical element of the thesis takes the form of three devised solo performances which manifest the proposed dissonance by various methods.

A detailed synopsis is in the attached appendix to this CV.

MA, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, 2007-2008

Advanced Theatre Practice: Distinction

Thesis project: *La Petite Mort*, wherein I developed a method for ensemble devising using cabaret structures and *auto-cours* to direct MA students in an original production.

Professional Training Program, Dell'Arte International School of Physical Theatre, 2003-2004

Modules: clown, commedia dell'arte, melodrama.

Skills: acrobatics, tango, contact improvisation, mask-making and performance (neutral and commedia), tai chi, mime, ensemble-devising

Bachelor's Degree, University of Kansas, 1999-2003 Theatre & Film, minor concentration: Dance

Departmental honors thesis project: Bharatanatyam-inspired choreography of *Jungalbook*, director: Dennis Christilles

Modules included: acting, Meyerhold & biomechanics, musical theatre, directing, theatre history

Winner University Theatre Kulkhe Humanitarian Award, 2003.

Topeka High School, 1996-1999

National Merit Scholar

Additionally I have attended HE development sessions offered by PALATINE (marking performance, Paul Kleiman) and Queen Mary University of London (labour and teaching, Elyssa Livergant) to support my work as a VL and completed the pedagogies training at Royal Central.

I was recently selected by performance artist Stacy Makishi to participate in her September 2014 Live Art Development Agency DIY workshop Uncivil Partnership, a performance workshop which culminated in a participatory ceremony at New Unity Church in Islington.

Other current projects include Get In The Back of The Van's Community Live Art Musical production of *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* commissioned by the Spill Festival (Oct 2014) and Marina Abramopug: <http://marinaabramopug.tumblr.com/>

'We bow down to you, Abramopug' - Huffington Post

'YAY for Marina Abramopug! - Kate Bornstein

'If you want a good laugh out loud, check out Marina AbramoPUG! So fun. Love it!

- Annie Sprinkle

'Honestly, if I had to pick between Marina Abramovic and her pug counterpart Marina Abramopug, I would choose Marina Abramopug.' -Bustle

Riveting. [...] This dog is the latest craze in contemporary art. -Redesign Revolution

'Marina Abramopug is the world's most important dog performance artist.' - Vocative

'Crazy genius' - Honour Bayes, theatre critic Stage, TimeOUT, and Total Theatre

Employment:

2014 Visiting Lecturer, Arts Educational Schools London

I taught the comedy performance module for the Post Diploma BA (Hons) program, focusing on feminist stand up and humour theory. I advised students undertaking individual and group research projects and assessed presentations.

2014 Visiting Lecturer, University of Kent

I teach variety song and dance on the Popular Performance module of the Drama and Theatre BA (Hons), both instructing students in variety performance skills and developing their research and performance proposals.

2011-2014 Visiting Lecturer, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama

On the BA Drama, Applied Theatre and Education (BA DATE) course I taught: movement for actors (for which I designed my own curriculum including Laban, Lecoq, Gaulier, yoga, and improvisational techniques) as well as feminist theory and performance. I also served as movement consultant for student productions, and conducted interviews for the course, and marked performances. I am currently supervising six dissertation students for 2015 submission.

I supervised research dissemination for the PGCE course. I facilitated the MA courses' Performing Research conference. I taught feminist theory on the BA Advanced Theatre Practice course. I currently teach on the Methods of Devising Theatre unit for the Singapore Institute. I also worked as a writing tutor for the Learning Centre at Central and successfully mentored BA, MA, and fellow PhD students.

2013, Visiting Lecturer, Canterbury Christchurch University

I conducted a masterclass to prepare the BA students for their American drama practical assessment; scenes from *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

2013, Master Teacher, International Schools Theatre Association (ISTA)

I led the secondary drama teachers in a masterclass in physical comedy and humour theory.

2008-2011, Teacher, Perform Inc.

I delivered drama, dance, and singing workshops for young people (Key Stage 1 and 2) across London and the surrounding areas.

2010, Producer, *The Lambchop Magoo Show*, Proud Cabaret

I produced and starred in a weekly cabaret show at Proud Cabaret that featured such well known performers as Tricity Vogue, Audacity Chutzpah, Beau Burlington, Katerina Vrana, Lady Carol and Jon Davison. I supervised print and digital marketing.

2008-2014, Freelance Performance Artist and Consultant

Spill Festival, Get in the Back of the Van's Community Live Art Musical: *The Best Little*

Whorehouse in Texas, 2014, The New Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich

hoo:ha, two:ha and trois:ha, 2011-2013, PhD practice as research (performer/researcher)

You Me Bum Bum Train, 2008 (performer)

Brahms hater, site specific piece at the Barbican Centre, commissioned by the London Symphony Orchestra (performer-deviser)

Three Ladies, Three Whores, and the Uninvited Guest, PanicLab with Joseph Mercier, RichMix, Edinburgh Fringe, The Space (performer-deviser)

The Clockwork Quartet, 2010, Original Content London, Horse Hospital, Russell Square (performer/co-writer)

JEW(ish) 2012, Eyespy Arts, The Place, (directing consultant)

10 Women, 2014, Jackdaw, Ovalhouse theatre (panel respondent)

2008-2014 performed live art, cabaret, and comedy at the following venues:

Duckie, Royal Vauxhall Tavern, London

Battersea Arts Centre

Leicester Square Theatre, Funny Women showcase

Hackney Empire

Bluestockings Society, London

Volupte Lounge, London

Sideshow, London Arts Theatre

Bongo Club, Edinburgh

The Slipper Room, New York

Barbican Centre (London Symphony Orchestra)

Bethnal Green Workingmen's Club

Wasserwerks, Berlin (Client: Microsoft)
London Burlesque Festival 2009
Madame Jojo's
Whoopee Club, London
Chelsea Theatre
JW3, Turnip Prize
New Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich (Spill Festival)

2005-2007, Development Assistant, Artist Repertory Theatre, Portland Oregon

Duties included fundraising event planning, donor database management (Tessitura software), serving as staff liaison to the board of directors.

2004-2007, Freelance Actor and Choreographer, Portland Oregon

Selected productions:

Elsa, If You Take One Elf Off the Shelf, Theatre! Theatre!
Lucifer, The Bobbsey Twins Go to Hell (film), Moontribe Studios
Smug 10-Year-Old, Owen Meany's Christmas Pageant, Artists Repertory Theatre
Tintinabula, A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum
Anonymous Theatre, Portland, OR
Choreographer/Queen of Hearts, *Alice in Wonderland*, New Moon Productions
Choreographer, *The Wizard of Oz*, New Moon Productions
Crow, A Murder of Crows, defunkt theatre

Selected Conferences attended:

Wikimania 2014, Barbican Centre (Mainstage compere and facilitator):
presented Salil Shetty, Secretary General of Amnesty International,
Jimmy Wales, Founder of Wikipedia, et. al.
London Comedy Forum (guest convener and keynote) 2014: Feminist
Humour, Institute of Education, London
Playing for Laughs: Comedy in the Community, 2014, De Montford
University, Leicester
Contemporary Gendered Performance and Practice, 2013, Queens
University, Belfast
International Society of Humour Studies Conference, 2012, Jagellonian
University, Krakow

With Humorous Intent Symposium, 2012 Mostyn Gallery, Llandudno, Wales
TAPRA, 2011, University of Kingston
Authoring Theatre, 2011 Central School of Speech and Drama
NeoFeminist Burlesque, 2008, Central School of Speech and Drama

Publications and Conference Papers

Peer reviewed journal articles:

'Pretty funny: Manifesting a normatively sexy female comic body' (2013)
Comedy Studies, Volume 4, Issue 2, Taylor & Francis

Conference papers:

'Feminist Humour in 2014' (Keynote) London Comedy Forum, Institute of Education
'Lady and The Tramp: Staging dissonance in the female comic body' (2013) Contemporary Gendered Performance Practice, Queens University, Belfast
'A neofeminist burlesque (mis)treatment of Derrida and Ridout' (2013) Colloquium of Performance Research, University of London
'Flora and Fanny' (2012) International Society of Humor Studies Conference, Jagiellonian University, Krakow
'Suspended Dissonance of the Deadpan Comic Nude' With Humorous Intent Symposium, March 2012 Mostyn Gallery, Llandudno, Wales
'Tickled Pink: Recontextualising Corporeal Laughter as a Feminist Comic Strategy' Performing Research, Creative Exchanges, Central School of Speech and Drama, Jan 2012.
'The Eyes Have It: Eye Contact in Performance Practice' (2008) (with Joseph Mercier and Zlata Camdzic) Performing Research Conference, Central School of Speech and Drama.

Skills

Administrative:

- Conference planning and facilitation
- Talent booking and publicity (including social media marketing)
- Interviewing/auditioning course candidates
- Budget management
- Fundraising event planning
- Donor correspondence
- Timetabling and deadline structuring
- Funding applications

Teaching Areas:

Ensemble Devising Methods, Physical Theatre styles (Lecoq, Gaulier, Mazzone-Clementi), Movement, Feminist Theory and Performance, Humour Theory, Live Art, Dance for Musical Theatre, Popular Performance Yoga, Clown, Contact Improv, Mask, Commedia, Clown, Stand Up Comedy

Interests

I have an active yoga practice. I also enjoy rock climbing and playing the ukulele.

Appendix

Detailed synopsis of PhD

The thesis addresses how we might experience the comic in juxtaposition with the erotic, as performers, as spectators, and as bodies. Also discussed is the experience of the female comic('s) body staging desire, lust, and sexiness. The project articulates how locating a humorous incongruity within the funny, nude female body might transcend heteronormative comic practice. Theoretical conceptions of the comic body (e.g. Andrew Stott, Simon Critchley, Henri Bergson) are reconsidered from a Dolanian materialist feminist position so that normatively attractive women's bodies, though still the ideological location of heterosexual desire, are not excluded.

hoo:ha utilizes a practice as research (PaR) methodology. The key development within the PaR is the Lightbulb Method, a system for devising performance by linking theory and critical framework to the devising practice via daydream and reverie. The research has yielded a comic persona modeled after *Il Dottore* (the comic pedant of the commedia dell'arte) who emerged from and is a vehicle for coping with the tensions of humour scholarship.

The practice is located within a lineage that straddles several genres of performance: neo-burlesque/cabaret, feminist live art, and stand up comedy.