

## **Live Art Development Agency Study Room**

### **Study Room testimonials from the Higher Education sector:**

The Live Art Development Agency's Study Room is one of the most (if not *\*the\** most) important archives in the UK on experimental theatre, performance and Live Art. It has one of the best specialist book collections on these subjects and a fantastic array of DVDs stretching back over 40 years of artists' innovative practices. It is a major and indispensable resource for artists, scholars, students and journalists and furnishes a vital space for research, considered curatorial decisions, writing and contemplation.

**Adrian Heathfield, Professor of Performance and Visual Culture  
Roehampton University, London**

I have been taking groups of students to the Study Room as part of my core teaching at De Montfort University, Drama Studies department, in Leicester, since about 2006. I take both groups from the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year who are undertaking modules titled Devising and Independent Performance Practice on their BA degree, respectively. I have literally brought hundreds of students over the years.

I write these visits into my teaching because of the invaluable access to material. This includes DVDs/Videos, as well as the publications. The Study Room has material unavailable elsewhere such as rare recordings of performances by Marina Abramovic and Ulay and early works by Bobby Baker. There is also material that is by artists un-documented through mainstream channels, such as artists concerned with issues of race and sexuality... artists neglected by institutions and the authorial voice of academia. The reactions from the students is immense. Many of them haven't ever been to London before, let alone to an environment where contemporary practice is at the heart of an organisation, and I see the options for their own participation into practice immediately opened up. Often students go on to book the Study Room independently of me for either further investigations into practice for their performance development, or for research for their dissertations. This is a one-off environment made even more rich because it is not all on the internet/ a database, encouraging approaches to research through actually being somewhere, looking, handling and discovering the vast extent of the diversity of contemporary performance.

**Helena Goldwater, Lecturer in Performance at DeMontfort  
University.**

Thank you all for the time, care and commitment with which you facilitated my visit in November 2009, with 13 of my undergraduates. I developed a new seminar course last year, pitched just below Masters level at my very bright 3rd year students, titled "Performing the Body". As the title suggests, the course was intended to focus quite tightly and rigorously on recent "uses" of the body in performance and on the body "as" performance.

Our visit to you provided a platform and context for the students, and an insight into the professional field they were encountering, many of them

for the first time. Lois Keidan's introduction reverberated deeply for them (and still does) - quotations from her talk appeared in almost every essay written for the end of the class. She really got them thinking about the public face of the work, and the critical engagement it enacts. The students loved the space of the Live Art Development Agency itself, the way they felt genuinely invited into it and respected (rather than spoken down to or treated like pesky young people, which unfortunately can too often be the case...) and the way they were then trusted in the space to sit with the materials and find their way through them. It was an inspiring afternoon for us all.

The visit remained one of the things they all mentioned in their student evaluations at the end of the class as one of the best things about the course. But what's even more significant to me is that it moved them on in their journey as thinker-researchers in a lasting way, and it gave them this terrific sense of the political and cultural work of Live Art - it kind of de-sensationalised it for them, and they began to really get it at a much deeper level. As a result, I know several of them came back to spend more time there studying independently (for their essays but also just out of interest) and their seminar presentations and essays for this class were the highest cohort of essays I've marked from 3rd years in 10 years! The visit to the Live Art Development Agency was a really important marker, a catalysing moment for them that set them spinning at a different intensity. I think such days can remain so significant for us when we are young and in such an open and formative period. I know it has made some of them rethink the direction they now take their work in and at least one of them is considering a Masters in order to pursue this kind of work more intensively.

**Dr. Sara Jane Bailes, Senior Lecturer in Theatre and Performance  
University of Sussex**

The Live Art Development Agency's Study Room is a unique and vital resource for anyone carrying out research into Live Art. It provides access to a large collection of performance documentation that is unavailable elsewhere, which makes it the first port of call for any student or researcher looking for information about artists working in this field. It also has a wide and regularly updated range of international publications that exceeds any collection in the country, including the British Library. Having access to this resource is integral to my ongoing work as a writer about, on or with Live Art and performance.

**Mary Paterson, Writer**

The Study Room is one of the most valuable resources in the country for me as a writer, performance maker, and teacher in Higher Education. Every publication which is essential to the field is available here, in one place, as well as a vast array of resources which can be found nowhere else. It's my first port of call when beginning any research project, and a place that I keep coming back to again and again.

**Theron Schmidt, Writer, Artist and Teacher**