

Fiona Wilkie

Mapping the Terrain: a Survey of Site-Specific Performance in Britain

Who is producing site-specific performance in Britain? Who sees it? Where do these performances occur, or, more particularly, 'take place'? What tools are used to construct a performance of place? Why is the site-specific mode chosen? And, crucially, how is it variously defined? Drawing on a survey of British practitioners conducted between November 2000 and December 2001, Fiona Wilkie sets out to explore these questions. While pointing to the wide variety of practices that might be delineated by the term 'site-specific', she analyzes the implications of such generalizations as can be made – about the types of performance site chosen, the effects of funding policy on the character of work being made, the possibilities for identifying a 'site-specific' audience, and the debates surrounding the terminology itself. Fiona Wilkie is currently completing a PhD at the University of Surrey, on which this article is based, which aims to develop a theoretical model for site-specific performance, with particular reference to the spectatorial role.

THIS SURVEY is an attempt to provide something of a map, sketching the field of current site-specific performance practices in Britain, inking in some of the prominent landmarks within that field, and pointing to potentially rewarding paths that might be followed from here. It is a map that has emerged primarily from a questionnaire (see pages 142–143) completed by performance companies and by solo artists, but that also draws together information from supporting documents and telephone conversations, from funding bodies and press reviews. While it is occasionally appropriate to use a statistical format listing proportions and relative percentages, in the main my presentation of the survey results is discursive, reflecting the nature of many of the questions asked and responses given.

There is room on this map to indicate not only common points of reference but also points of departure: the aim is not to arrive at an all-encompassing paradigm of site-specific practice, but rather to explore some general questions. What are the preoccupations – thematic, formal, and pragmatic – of practitioners producing site-specific performance? And how do practitioners represent themselves, their work and site-

specific performance in general to themselves – and to others?

Inevitably, as a survey of this kind seeks to include certain people and practices, it also excludes others. I have only, for instance, included artists based in England, Scotland, and Wales – this provides a relatively small (but, in practical terms, manageable) geographical area that none the less covers a variety of political and cultural as well as actual landscapes. Such a decision concerning the range of the survey clearly skews the results in ways that will not be known until comparative studies are available; in particular, it would be interesting to compare this British perspective with like practices across other cultures.¹

Similarly, the process of targeting people for the survey needs to be acknowledged, because this too will affect the nature of the results. Potential respondents were sought through a number of methods: in addition to contacting artists of whom I had previous knowledge, I used web searches, recommendations (from funding bodies and from those already responding to the survey) and two internet mailbases (one on the theme of live art and one for university drama departments). Though leaning more towards the

'theatre' end of the performance spectrum, the survey includes responses from dance, dance-theatre, installation, and live art. This diversity allows us to ask what is happening in and between these various categories with regard to their various relationships to place.

The 44 practitioners represented (as listed on page 159) range from those who define themselves precisely through their site-specific approach (such as Wrights & Sites, a performance collective, and Grid Iron, a theatre company) to those whose non-theatre-based work engages with some of the methodologies arising out of site-specific practice (these might include Station House Opera and London Bubble); and from live art practitioners to theatre companies producing scripted plays. Nine work as solo artists, and in the case of the companies the make-up is generally small. Almost all follow the pattern of having a core group of permanent members (four on average) and then drawing on a pool of (an average of 15) associates, collaborators, and freelancers on a project-by-project basis.

Though this survey is concerned particularly with site-specific work, it should be noted that less than a third of the respondents work solely with this mode; the rest produce some theatre-based work as well, though it is impossible to summarize the site-specific/non-site-specific ratio as the proportions vary enormously. These facts are not irrelevant to this study, as they outline the context within which site-specific work is created. For those practitioners working both in theatre buildings and in and from other sites, a relationship between the two modes is forged; an example of this is given by Theresa Heskins, artistic director of Pentabus, when she notes that site-specific work 'allows us to review and experiment with dynamics that are dictated by modern theatre buildings, especially the relationship between performer and audience and performer and venue'.²

How far do the responses to the survey situate site-specific performance in a particular era? Of the 41 respondents for whom I have a founding date (three solo artists did not give dates of starting to perform), the

average (median) date of founding is 1993. Of these:

- 1 (Out of the Blue) was founded in 2000;
- 24 were founded in the 1990s;
- 9 in the 1980s;
- 5 in the 1970s;
- 2 (Welfare State, Moving Being) in 1968.

It may, of course, be that these figures simply reflect the short life-span of performance companies of all kinds, making it obvious that I would find far more details of companies founded in the past decade or so. It does seem to be the case, however, that the term 'site-specific' only really began to have currency in theatrical (rather than sculptural) terms in the mid- to late-1980s, with companies such as the influential Welsh-based Brith Gof popularizing the form. And it is only in the last four years or so that newspaper reviewers (particularly in *The Guardian* and *Observer*) have begun to use the term to describe theatre and performance works (the London International Festival of Theatre has, together with companies such as Edinburgh's Grid Iron, been instrumental in bringing such work to the attention of reviewers).

Locating

We can, perhaps, move further towards plotting the *geographical* patterns of site-specific performance, using the survey results to ask where in Britain such work is being produced. This question has two components: firstly discerning the pattern across different areas of the country; and secondly identifying the *types* of site that site-specific performance chooses. I will return to this latter component shortly.

On the former, though, we might make some observations which approach a hypothesis. Just under a third of the respondents are based in London; many of these tend to fall into the live art/performance art bracket. The majority of the artists, then, are based outside London and the south-east, in rural as well as urban areas: for example, in Scotland, Yorkshire, Cornwall, Devon, and Wales.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Site-Specific Performance in Britain

Questionnaire for companies/practitioners

The 'Site-Specific Performance in Britain' survey is being conducted as part of PhD research at the University of Surrey. Its aim is to produce meaningful statistics regarding a performance form that is little documented and whose practitioners are often working in isolation from a sense of the wider context within Britain. While I realize that most people working in performance are always overworked, I would greatly appreciate your taking the time to complete and return this questionnaire and hope that the results may prove to be of benefit to your work. Please number your answers on a separate page, or create space for your answers between the questions below if you prefer. The fuller your answers, the better represented your company will be in the final report. You may feel that some questions do not apply to you; please answer only those questions relevant to your group. If your group has been disbanded or no longer produces site-specific performance, please indicate this and go on to answer the relevant questions in the past tense.

General

- In what year was your group founded?
- Is your group operational at this time? If not, when did the group disband and for what reasons?

Terminology

- How would you define 'site-specific performance' in the context of your work?
- According to this definition, roughly what proportion of your work fits the category 'site-specific'?

- In what year did you produce your first site-specific performance?
- Would you use the term 'site-specific' when describing your work:
 - to someone within the performance profession?
 - to someone outside of the performance profession?
 - on a funding application?
- If not, what other terms would you use to describe this sort of work, and why?

Practicalities

How is your work funded?

- By whom (e.g. Arts Council, Regional Arts Board, sponsorship, workshops and education projects)?
- On what basis (per project, or for the company over a specified period)?
- Are you funded differently for site-specific and non-site-specific projects?
- Have you ever been commissioned to produce a particular site-specific performance by the controllers of that site? If so:
 - who commissioned the work?
 - for which site?
 - in which month and year?
 - please give the name, and any further details if possible, of the resulting performance.
- What are your reasons for producing site-specific performance? (Please expand on your answer and choose more than one category if appropriate.)
 - financial
 - political

Is there something in these places that attracts practitioners to their sites? Is an ideological positioning in opposition to theatre-based work allied to a positioning against London? Does this work spring from a lack of theatre auditoria outside the main metropolitan centres?

Wales has only a limited range of theatre auditoria. Experimental theatre has always sought

other venues. This is not solely through expediency, but to challenge the notion that the auditorium is a neutral vessel of representation, and see it rather as the spatial machine of a dominant discourse which distances spectators from spectacle and literally 'keeps them in their place', in the dark, sitting in rows, discouraging eye contact and interaction. (Pearson, 1997, p. 94–5)

Echoing Pearson's words, Cornish company Kneehigh note that 'Cornwall is very low on

- aesthetic
- challenge/experiment
- reaching a wider audience
- other (please specify)

Material

- What proportion of your site-specific work would you class as 'local' to the area in which you are based? Is a sense of immediate locality important to your work?
- Does your site-specific performance tour? If so, do you feel that this affects the 'site-specificity' of the work? In what ways?
- What proportion of your site-specific performance takes place:
 - indoors?
 - outdoors?
- What proportion of your site-specific performance takes place:
 - in real space?
 - in cyberspace (e.g. on the Internet; on CD ROM)?
- Is the majority of your performance work:
 - text-based?
 - non-text-based?
- Does this differ for your site-specific performance – i.e. is the majority of your site-specific work:
 - text-based?
 - non-text-based?
- In your work, does the site tend to influence the performance in terms of:
 - form (the physical aspects of the performance)?

- content (narratives and stories inspired by the site)?
- both of the above?
- other (please specify)?

Membership

- How many members does your group have? (Indicate both permanent members and associates regularly worked with if applicable.)
- Have any of your group members been (or are they currently) involved with other companies producing site-specific performance? Please give details (e.g. who? which other companies? on which projects? when?).
- Have you ever collaborated with other companies or individuals to make site-specific performance? If so:
 - please give details (e.g. who? on which projects? when?).
 - for what reasons was the collaboration instigated?

Other Information

- Please name (and give details of if possible) any other British companies or practitioners you know of who produce site-specific theatre/performance and should therefore be included in this survey.
- Any further details you could provide of your company and your site-specific performance would be greatly appreciated. For instance, a list of your site-specific performances with date and site information would be extremely useful in compiling the survey report. Any publicity or press material would also be very useful.

conventional performance spaces – the Hall for Cornwall, the only venue in Cornwall which has a middle-scale capacity, only opened in 1997'. This fact informed the company's progression from working with unconventional spaces to developing its 'almost filmic form of site-specific performance', Landscape Theatre.

I am suggesting, then, that site-specific work often involves a (more or less explicit)

political decision to work against the dominant discourse of London, its theatre buildings, and its theatre tradition. This might be particularly true in Wales, Scotland, and Cornwall, which have variously sought their independence from a 'Great Britain' or 'United Kingdom' that would tie them politically and socially to the English capital. There is a strong positive correlation between being based outside London and

prioritizing a sense of locality in the work: few of the London-based artists are especially concerned with immediate locality, many taking their work outside London on a regular basis, while the social, cultural, and political resonances of their bases are particularly important to companies such as Welfare State International (Cumbria), Cotton Grass Theatre Company (Peak District), Moving Being (Cardiff), Kneehigh Theatre (Cornwall), Wrights & Sites (Exeter), and Storm Theatre Company (Coventry).

For 19 of the 44 artists I surveyed, the decision to move out of the theatre building is an explicitly political one, 'engender[ing] ideas of place and community' (Lone Twin) and 'renegotiating what a space has come to mean' (Storm Theatre) in spaces that are variously controlled, accessed, and inhabited.

What Kind of Site?

And what of the other component of spatial patterning: the type of site that site-specific performance chooses?

Certain spaces act as sites for the performance of identity. (Hetherington, 1998, p. 105)

If, as Richard Schechner has suggested, 'theatre places are maps of the cultures where they exist' (Schechner, 1988, p. 161), the search for alternative venues in which to stage performance is a means of encountering and creating other maps of the cultural space. The survey results reveal certain similarities and possibilities for categorization, and the most popular sites can be delineated as follows:

PARKS / PLAYGROUNDS: London Bubble's *Gulliver's Travels*;³ Grid Iron's *Decky Does a Bronco*.⁴

WORK BUILDINGS / SITES (e.g., factories, disused offices, former mines): Kneehigh's *Hell's Mouth*;⁵ Creation Theatre's *Hamlet*.⁶

CHURCHES: Kate Lawrence's *St Catherine's Chapel Performance*;⁷ Bobby Baker's *Box Story*.⁸

GALLERIES / THEATRE BUILDING ENVIRONS: The Olimpias' *Landscaping*;⁹ Jude Kerr's *Conundrum*.¹⁰

MUSEUMS AND GROUNDS: Hester Reeve's *From Trees to Houses*;¹¹ Brith Gof's *From Memory*.¹²

BEACHES: IOU's *A Drop in the Ocean*;¹³ Red Earth's *Meeting Ground*.¹⁴

TUNNELS (recurrent images in Freudian psychoanalysis), **SHOPPING CENTRES**, **HOSPITALS**, and **CASTLES** are also popular.

What are the implications of these sites? What associations does each carry into the site-specific process? Parks and playgrounds might be grouped with beaches in their status as public spaces; such sites are, as Hanon Reznikov notes in interview with Cindy Rosenthal, 'homo ludens' spaces, play spaces (in Cohen-Cruz, 1998, p. 157). Though operating differently from the street, these spaces allow performance to utilize one of the ideas behind street theatre: hoping, as Sophia Lycouris of Kunstwerk-Blend notes, 'to attract the passers-by'. The park, along with the beach and, indeed, the shopping centre, is suggestive of 'public inhabitability' (Bloomer and Moore, 1977, p. 84) and therefore is a factor in enabling artists 'to make the work accessible' (London Bubble).

The appeal of sites such as museums, galleries, and theatre buildings (but not the traditional stage area) is, it seems, somewhat different. It is here that performance forges an intervention into cultural spaces, 'reflecting or inverting its own habitat' (Jude Kerr). Churches, too, are privileged cultural spaces, but it is perhaps more significant that they are associated with heightened emotions and, frequently, with evocative architecture.

Work sites, on the other hand, bring with them a different dynamic, and one that is essentially quotidian, placing the performance in the context of the everyday. Depending partly on the type of work site, its status (operational or disused), and the timing of the event (during or outside working hours), site-specific performance might choose



Sue Palmer and Vic Llewellyn, *Hair Raising*, performed at GJ's Hair Salon, Shepton Mallet, February 2001, as part of the Year of the Artist. Photo: Piers Rawson.

to expose political or social issues surrounding the site to those outside or to engage with those for whom the site is a workplace.

An example of the former approach might be found in Brith Gof's 1998 *Gododdin* which, spurred by the impetus of Thatcherism and what it had left behind, was 'conceived, constructed, and initially presented . . . in the engine-shop of the enormous, disused Rover car factory in Cardiff, itself a potent symbol of economic decline and industrial decay' (Pearson and Shanks, 2001, p. 103). The latter approach was a concern of Sue Palmer's in all stages of her *Hair Raising* project (performed in GJ's hair salon in Shepton Mallet, February 2001). Palmer recalls that:

With *Hair Raising* the thing that excited me was that this place I had chosen was peopled, it was a working everyday environment. It wasn't abandoned, or derelict. . . . So for me it's not just about a place, but the people who normally inhabit and use that place. For it wouldn't exist without them.

Though performed in the evenings, after the salon had closed, the work extended into

the everyday life of the salon in a number of ways. As well as (eventually) encouraging some of the salon staff and customers to attend the performances, Palmer made installations for the salon and placed booklets (featuring stories about hair) among the magazines. These installations and booklets, along with the project website featuring audio files of hair-related recordings, become a further form of performance, manifestations of non-traditional disseminating strategies that can be experienced alongside or independently of the live performance. It is also significant that such 'extras' can be named as project 'deliverables' for the purposes of attracting funding, functioning to take the work to a wider public than the live event itself could reach.

A further point to make about the sites chosen by practitioners might be drawn from Marvin Carlson's research on *Places of Performance*. Carlson suggests that,

generally speaking, the populist directors who have utilized the streets and other non-traditional

urban locations during the past twenty years have not wished to repeat performances in a specific space, but have on the contrary sought new spaces for each production, spaces whose already existing semiotics would provide an important element of the performance.

(Carlson, 1989, p. 34)

This trend reflects the work of the majority of practitioners in this study, who continually seek out new sites to provide fresh performance dynamics. Creation Theatre Company, however, persist in re-using the same site for more than one performance under the label 'site-specific'. Thus, with the exception of their¹⁵ recent productions of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* at the BMW factory in Oxford, Creation's performances have all been sited within the grounds of Oxford's Magdalen College School.

This work differs from the popular 'al fresco Shakespeare' category of performance through the re-engagement with the physical aspects of the site that informs each production; as a recent article in *The Guardian* stated, 'Creation takes the notion of open-air theatre extremely seriously, arguing that too much of it fails to exploit properly the possibilities presented by the environment in which it is performed.'¹⁶ Repeatedly exploring the same space enables the company, as Carlson suggests, to 'draw upon the same environmental semiotics and indeed develop new codes out of an accumulated performance experience' (1989, p. 36).

In all cases, though, the site-specific work of these practitioners is located in real space. Despite web terminology which talks in terms of sites and visits, the tendency is not to approach cyberspace as part of the same mode of practice. Cyberspace, of course, has features specific to it when compared with other modes of communication, but unlike 'real' spaces it is broadly non-specific in its replicability and vastness; that is, one part of cyberspace behaves and looks very much like any other.

The tendency not to define its use as site-specific does, however, raise questions of how a site can be defined and where its boundaries might be drawn. Where cyberspace features in the work of the artists surveyed,

its role is generally in the fields of documentation, promotion, or education; alternatively, as in the case of The Olimpias, 'cyber' movement is woven into the performance sites in order to explore the two orders of space 'in relation to each other and as they impinge on each other'.

Artists, then, might be interested in the implications that cyberspace holds for our understanding of 'real' spaces, but would not usually use the 'site-specific' label for web-based projects. As Impossible Theatre argue, 'the thing is, real "sites" already have a presence, a history, an identity which adds to the work – not really true in the same way of cyberspace'.

Funding

The economic context of current performance, particularly site-specific performance, is of interest to this project because it not only helps to decide who creates performance work and where this work will be seen, but also, significantly, impacts upon the types of work that can be made.

Leaving aside the differences in types of site, does the choice of a non-theatre venue in itself affect the way the work is funded (and therefore the way in which it is produced)? Ten of the 31 respondents who also produce non-site-specific work feel that they are funded differently for their site-specific practice, though this can have positive as well as negative connotations:

'In my experience it's easier to convince a company to give you cash for a venue-based work' (Justin Mckeown).

'I believe that YOTA¹⁷ only funded the project because it was site-specific' (Sue Palmer).

'I was able to (and needed to) raise a lot more in sponsorship and in kind donations than I have in the past for non site-specific projects' (Kate Lawrence).

Those responding to the survey reported widely differing experiences of the economics of producing site-specific performance. For Emergency Exit Arts, it can be 'costly, risky, and challenging'; similarly, Helena

Goldwater suggests that 'it is a very hard choice to make over the luxury and ease of a theatre booking', and therefore the site is chosen 'because it is right for the idea' rather than for financial reasons. Others point to the expense of bringing in appropriate resources, including sometimes electricity, as well as to the one-off nature of much site-specific work, making it less financially viable than performance that can enjoy a long run at one venue or tour to a succession of arts centres and theatres.

On the other hand, non-theatre sites may offer cheap or free performance and rehearsal space (Bill Aitchison, for example, states that 'it is certainly true that I never pay for the use of a space. As my work is not funded I can continue to work independently by using the types of spaces that I do') and might provide naturally rich or spectacular settings and 'effects'. As Rotozaza maintain, 'it's often been a way of producing work of maximum impact on a minimum budget'.

Most of the practitioners in the survey (36) receive some funding through the Arts Councils or Regional Arts Boards,¹⁸ of these, all but five rely on other sources of funding as well (for example, lottery grants, workshops and education projects, sponsorship, commissions, festivals, and box-office split). Almost two-thirds of the respondents have to seek funding separately for each project; a third supplement some revenue funding with project funding, while only two are fully revenue-supported.

Categorization

One area of dissatisfaction that emerges from the survey is the issue of categorization for the purposes of funding. The Arts Councils and RABs are divided into departments, but responsibilities are liable to be redistributed and departments re-named, there is no uniform division across the funding bodies, and artists often find themselves funded through different departments from project to project.

Julian Maynard Smith, of the London-based performance art company Station House Opera, expresses dissatisfaction with

the way performance has to be categorized in this country. He explains that, because continental funders are not as interested in labels, 'over the years it has been European work that's sustained us'.

The Whalley Range All Stars echo the feelings of many when they state, 'Our work doesn't fit easily into convenient "boxes",' when it comes to funding. 'Site-specific' does not operate as a category in itself in this context: instead, such work has been variously funded under the banners of 'visual arts', 'combined arts', 'performing arts', 'drama', 'multidisciplinary arts', 'dance', 'collaborative arts', and 'theatre'. In some recent instances, though, it has *helped* to work across categories and between disciplines.

Southern Arts, for instance, 'operate a cross-artform "new work" fund which includes "temporary and site-specific work" in its list of eligible projects'.¹⁹ And Moving Being Theatre Company have found that working site-specifically has enabled them to target certain alternative pockets of funding, particularly those that are interested in promoting a cross-over between the categories of art and science. Here, the cross-over can be achieved not only through performance content but also by working in, and from, scientific institutions (in Moving Being's case an example has been the National Botanic Library of Wales).

IOU's feeling that 'there is more interest in site-specific work at the moment' might be reinforced by the recent Year of the Artist scheme, run by Arts 2000 through the Regional Arts Boards between June 2000 and May 2001. The scheme invited proposals for 'innovative new work for spaces and places throughout the UK, focusing on everyday areas where artistic activities don't usually happen or appear',²⁰ and was open to artists working in any form or discipline.

Ten of the companies and solo artists represented in this survey created work as part of the Year of the Artist.²¹ Sue Palmer, whose *Hair Raising* project was one such commission, comments that completing the application for funding was 'for the first time an enjoyable experience, one where the idea fits the project guidelines without compromise'.

In some instances the means of funding for site-specific performance has been different because it has focused on different aspects of the work: its intervention into everyday spaces has meant that its effect might be harnessed and put into the service of social and political concerns and issues of community. An example of one aspect of this shift in focus is drawn from the work of Kneehigh:

The Landscape Theatre shows are not in themselves pieces of community theatre – the main cast, direction, design, are professional Kneehigh artists – but they will be strongly influenced by the culture, concerns, characteristics of the community in which they take place. The shows serve as a public platform for a broad programme of training and work in the community, and as such receive funding through trusts and funding bodies who support training young people, community rejuvenation, the environment. Funding secured for the site-specific work therefore tends to be less about funding the art itself, and more about the vast process behind it.

The survey highlights one avenue of funding (and therefore an opportunity for creating work) that presents itself only in terms of site-specific performance. Many artists receive commissions from site-owners or controllers: that is, by people who would not normally commission theatre work, for spaces that would not normally see this work. More than two-thirds (30) of the 44 respondents have been commissioned in this way, usually on more than one occasion, and one further company is currently in negotiations to take on such a commission.

The majority of commissions have come from councils (of towns, cities, and rural areas), but commissioners have also included organizations such as English Heritage, the National Trust, universities, and retail chains. Performance is thereby used as a vehicle for site promotion. Not all respondents, however, have had this experience of creating work, and they report differing experiences of negotiating space:

Kneehigh: 'If anything, the company tends to have to fight for the right to use a site, pointing out the mutual benefits to the controller.'

Storm Theatre Company: 'We usually approach a site/site controller and negotiate with them. They are usually delighted to have their space used and are invariably very helpful.'

It is worth noting, also, that the funding avenue provided by such commissions may not be altogether a good thing. It may be that Arts Councils and Arts Boards will prioritize other work over site-specific performance, assuming that the latter has access to alternative sources of funding. This would heighten the effect of Cerberus Theatre Company's assertion that 'there is an awkward balance between arts-specific funding and community/local authority funding that becomes more of an issue with site-specific work'.

Site-specific performance has, it seems, been located at the intersection of a number of territories (those of, for instance, tourism, town planning, art, community, and social control) and therefore has provoked new questions about how and by whom the work should be funded. These questions will find new answers as the territory of the site-specific continues to be re-defined.

Naming

'A real location . . .'

'Found spaces . . .'

'In tune with a site . . .'

'Made to measure . . .'

'Listening to the space . . .'

'Once-off, time-based, and non-theatrical . . .'

'A spirit of place that exists beyond and before the event' . . .²²

What do performance-makers mean by 'site'? How specific is site-specific?

The only generalization that can be drawn from the attempts within the questionnaire to define site-specific performance is that it is concerned with issues of place and the real spaces of performance. Whether or not this is its primary concern is a point of debate.

Within these broad parameters, the general feeling is that we are dealing exclusively with non-theatre spaces (and Sophia Lycouris of Kunstwerk-Blend – who uses the term for work within theatre spaces because ‘I take into account the nature of those spaces in a rather major way’ – recognizes that this is not the usual understanding of the term and would not use this description ‘without clarifying the character of my site-specificity’).

Brighton-based performance and installation company Red Earth manage to encapsulate the essence of the majority of the definitions when they suggest that site-specific performance is ‘inspired by and designed to integrate with the physical and non-physical aspects of a specific location’. The main features of site-specific performance that recur throughout the responses might be summarized as follows:

Use of non-theatre locations (‘found spaces’).

Influence of site in the creation of the performance.

Notion of ‘fit’ – that the performance ‘fit’ the site and vice versa. It is important to note, however, that the ‘fit’ may not be a comfortable merging with the resonances of the site but might be a reaction against them.

Site-Specific or Site-Generic?

The overriding issue of contention arising from the survey turns around the question, ‘Can site-specific performance tour?’ This is a question that might more explicitly be phrased, ‘Does “site-specific” imply “site-exclusive”?’ The responses to this are divided almost exactly between those who believe that site-specific performance can tour (often with qualifications (Impossible Theatre, for instance, believe that ‘it can – with care. Obviously it loses something, but also can perhaps carry something else away with it’) and those for whom the notion of touring such work is a contradiction. It seems that there are two ways of dealing with this. The first is to draw distinctions between levels of site-specificity:

Some projects are completely site-specific, i.e., they could not take place anywhere else without losing a strong thread of meaning and connection; while other more flexible projects may work around a certain sense of place, i.e., the spirit or concept at the heart of the project would work in several – but not all – locations.

(Red Earth)

Bill Aitchison and the Whalley Range All Stars are respondents who also offer two definitions in this way. And similarly, Justin Mckeown distinguishes between the site-specificity of up to half of his work (which is ‘directly derived from a chosen site’) and the more general way in which all of his work ‘takes into account the inherent meanings within the site’.

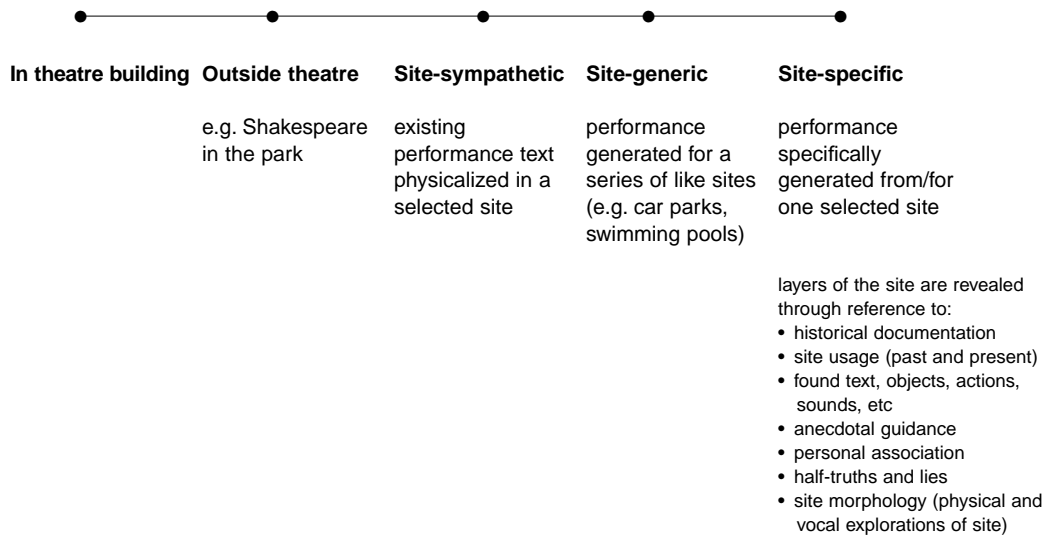
Paul Pinson, artistic director of Scottish company Boilerhouse, agrees; he too makes a distinction between types or levels of engagement with the performance space. And while Boilerhouse work does sometimes tour, as Pinson points out,

that’s not pure site-specificity. You can recreate a work in response to a number of differing sites, which is totally valid in itself and is an element of site-specificity but is different from making a piece of work in response to one specific site.

This raises the issue of ‘purity’: can we distil a *pure* model of site-specificity, with which other, related, practices might also be illuminated? Such an approach would recognize the validity of each performative response to place while acknowledging the ways in which it differs from the ‘pure model’, as Helena Goldwater argues:

To make a truly site-specific piece means it sits wholly in that site in both its content and form, otherwise, if movable, it becomes more about the site as a vehicle/vessel. I don’t think this matters but it must be considered.

The second way of dealing with the complexities arising from the issue of touring is to create a new terminology. Wrights & Sites, for example, propose a possible continuum, which is illustrated in the diagram overleaf, within which to locate a variety of theatre practices in terms of their relationships to place.²³



This scale reserves the label ‘site-specific’ only for performances in which a profound engagement with one site is absolutely central to both the creation and execution of the work (these performances work with and from one site, do not tour, and do not perform pre-existing scripts), and suggests new labels to distinguish other theatrical experiments with non-theatre spaces.

This still leaves the question of what to do with those performances that seem to fall somewhere between the ‘site-generic’²⁴ and ‘site-specific’ points on the scale. I am referring to that set of work which is not so much *toured* as *re-located*, that is, re-worked to fit each new site. Many of the practitioners in the survey produce work in this manner. Gregg Whelan, of the live art partnership Lone Twin, argues that their work does not tour ‘in a “repeating” way’ but rather that ‘the concerns of the work are recontextualized for a particular environment’. And Bill Aitchison comments on moving a show to different sites: ‘Each rendition was different but they all were most intimate with the sites. I would not unleash a performance indiscriminately upon a site ignoring what could arise from the meeting of these two strangers’.

For some, this kind of touring or relocating has an enriching effect on the work: it ‘radically expands concepts’ of site-specificity

(Bobby Baker) and ‘allows for a constantly changing dynamic in the performance’ (Theatre Nomad). Further questions ensue from this discussion. If a performance is re-worked, to what extent can it then be said to be the ‘same’ performance? And, perhaps more importantly, at which stage would we agree that a performance has been adapted *enough* to retain the label ‘site-specific’?

This last question resonates also on a pragmatic level, as there are important issues of funding, and therefore of time, involved in how much each performance is able to be worked and re-worked for a particular space. IOU discuss this problem in relation to a recent production:

Cure is touring, we wanted to have a core performance element that could be taken to and informed by new sites; in practice this has been very difficult – impossible really, as there simply is not enough money to re-work shows in relation to the specific site. There are very few promoters who can pay the costs of creating work on that scale.

As a postscript to this discussion of touring, I want to point to Manchester-based company Walk the Plank, whose practice complicates the issue still further. Their work might be divided into two categories: celebratory performance that is commissioned indivi-

dually for each site and community; and performances created on board the company's ship, making use of its physical features as well as the stories it might inspire.²⁵ In the latter category, 'our site can tour, in effect'. The company write that

the ship tours, and we like the fact that we can exercise some control over the site (we can control what happens on board, but the environment in which the ship is berthed changes from seaside harbour to working dock).

Walk the Plank are keenly aware of the ramifications of the waterfront regeneration projects of the 'eighties and 'nineties and feel that 'as artists we should be working in places of change and the biggest transformations have been happening in waterside locations – with derelict docks being reclaimed, etc'. Where, in this case, do we draw the boundaries marking the performance site? Is the site wholly contained in the ship, or is it extended differently and with fresh implications with each new berth?

Given the level of debate surrounding its application, how useful is the term 'site-specific'? Despite Grid Iron's assertion that 'there does seem to be a general increase in the public awareness of what site-specific theatre is', many answers implied that the term 'site-specific' might be explained, or replaced with something more appropriate, when describing the work to those outside the performance profession, particularly audiences.²⁶ This aims to 'reduce uneasiness about what [spectators] will experience' (IOU), often because, as Lone Twin point out, 'site is a word that sits a little oddly outside performance discourse'.

The phrases replacing 'site-specific' in these situations tend to be either a more detailed description of that company's particular approach – 'live animation of objects within a site' (PickleHerring Theatre)²⁷ – or a way of playing on the novelty of the site-specific encounter as a popular selling point: 'Wrap up warm and join us on an unforgettable journey as the magnificent Ludlow Castle tells its story of love and betrayal' (Pentabus Theatre).²⁸ Other terms which are used include:

Context-sensitive

Environmental art

Outdoor performance

Interactive

Landscape theatre

Installation

Season-specific

Public

Promenade

Contextually reactive

Street theatre

Place-orientated work

Square pegs in square holes

One-off specially commissioned performance

Made specially for . . .

Sue Palmer makes an important point when she suggests that 'by using other words you help to define the thing for yourself and to stretch and understand its meaning on many levels'.

Witnessing

Discussing street theatre, Bim Mason has argued that 'the purpose of doing theatre on the streets is to reach people who are unfamiliar with theatre'; he goes on to note that 'the vast majority of outdoor theatre is intended to be attractive and accessible to an audience far wider than those who visit indoor theatres' (Mason, 1992, p. 13). While it is important to remember that the categories of 'street theatre' and 'site-specific theatre' overlap but are by no means synonymous, and that we are discussing indoor as well as outdoor non-theatre venues, Mason does touch here on an area of interest to many site-specific practitioners. More than two-thirds of the companies and solo artists surveyed identified 'reaching a wider audience' as a reason for working in the site-specific mode.²⁹

For some, it is in fact the primary reason. London Bubble's artistic policy, for example, states that their 'main objective is to attract

new users to theatre and to provide appropriate entry points for this to happen'. They aim 'to work particularly with and for people who do not normally have access to theatre for geographical, financial, or cultural reasons'.³⁰ Similarly, Theatre Nomad 'are politically committed to the development of new audiences and to reaching as wide an audience as possible'. Theatre Nomad's belief that 'it is easier to do this outside of a traditional theatre environment' is shared by many.

'Do you go to the theatre often?' That many have never gone, and that those who have, even in countries with established theatre traditions, are going elsewhere or, with cable and VCRs, staying home, is also a theatrical fact, a datum of practice. (Blau, 1992, p. 76)

In the context of site-specific performance, Blau's question, 'Do you go to the theatre often?' becomes blurred. One no longer needs to 'go to the theatre' (in terms of the theatre building, together with all the cultural implications of the process of 'going to the theatre') in order to see or even become part of a theatrical performance. Does the spectator, who may have happened upon a performance in a public space, even put the two experiences in the same category?

So site-specific performance may create an audience that doesn't know it is one, that 'has no idea there is going to be art there and come[s] across it by accident' (Miriam Keye). Its sought-after 'wider audience' might alternatively plan to attend the event, attracted precisely by the removal of the theatre building, and simultaneously the 'preconception about what type of people "theatre-goers" are' (Grid Iron), along with the 'red curtains, spotlights, blank verse, laughter, darkness' that Peter Brook found 'confusedly superimposed' on the image of theatre (Brook, 1996, p. 9). But to what extent is this wider audience actually found? In 1993 Alan Read felt that the mounting interest in site-specific performance had not in fact engendered a new audience for the work:

Currently there is renewed experiment internationally with 'non-theatre' spaces, significantly the architecture of the industrial period, reconditioned

for a 'new theatre to meet a new public'. New theatre there may well be, but the identity of the audience continues to confirm the suspicion that the 'old public' is simply willing to travel further to see what it has always wanted – good theatre. (Read, 1993, p. 4–5)

What Spectators Experience

This introduces the sense of a collective audience identity (the 'old public'), a knowing audience that constructs itself appropriately as an interpretative body *via* a cumulative framework of contemporary performance experiences. A series of questions follows from this notion. How is an audience's sense of its identity and role created? What are the possibilities for this identity to be altered? And how might new and multiple audience identities be accommodated?

Later in the decade Jan Cohen-Cruz also questioned whether the removal of the theatre building, this time in the context of street theatre, really does open the work up to a new public:

Space is always controlled by *someone* and exists *somewhere*, so is inevitably marked by a particular class or race and not equally accessible to everyone. . . . While the mobility of much street performance facilitates the seeking out of diverse audiences, one must question if access to a broader audience really is a difference between performance in the street and in theatre buildings.

(Cohen-Cruz, 1998, p. 2)

Clearly, whether the site-specific mode can indeed reach the wider audience that many of its practitioners seek will depend on the type of site used, on issues of accessibility, on cultural and social positioning, and on the terms in which the experience is couched

London-based theatre company The Lion's Part aim to 'escape from the bureaucracy of the theatre building' by ensuring that their sites 'are free in access'; in monetary terms, too, 'our events are free. Theatre is a part of the event, and the sites part of the pleasure as they bring new and unsuspecting audiences!' This use of the description 'event' is indicative of a trend across the field of site-specific performance and reflected in the survey responses. The notion of the event



Exeter Quayside: one of the sites for *The Quay Thing* by Wrights & Sites, Summer 2000.

moves away from the highbrow associations of the theatre and closer to reaching a public well-versed in the popular culture of gigs, festivals, and celebrations. It emphasizes the significance of the spatial encounter and is conceived as a whole experience for the spectator.

While the term 'event' is widely used, The Lion's Part's experience of accessibility cannot apply to all site-specific performance. Each site, whether outdoors or indoors, has differing practicalities of either restricting or encouraging access. In some cases there may be two separate audiences: the paying, knowing audience, and the unsuspecting, accidental audience that, for Bill Aitchison, 'adds to the complexity of the event'.

Grid Iron's *Decky Does a Bronco*, for instance, was performed in a series of playgrounds; although audiences paid admission, director Ben Harrison remarks that the children who had claimed each playground as territory were not shut out from or charged admission to the public space. He recalls that, in groups, they would approach the performance area intermittently, when

things looked interesting, retreating to other parts of the park during 'the boring bits'. Grid Iron's experience in general has been 'that we do get a new audience, people that, for one reason or another, haven't gone to the theatre before'. Kneehigh, too, find that the site-specific process creates a new audience:

The work in the community behind the Landscape Theatre really does take the theatre to a new audience, whether their involvement has been as audience only, steward, making, technical, music, or performance. The Clay District is economically poor, and theatre would not normally be a major concern for the majority of the village communities there. In *Hell's Mouth* last summer, bikers from the area performed the English/Cornish skirmishes in the Mad-Max style Cornwall of the future. This, and the sort of involvement previously listed and reasonable ticket prices, encouraged a strong local percentage of audience, who would not normally see the company's work or theatre of any sort.

Here, the encounter with a new audience seems to be linked to the fact that, for Kneehigh, 'a sense of the immediate locality, culture, concerns, and character is inherent in the work'.

This leads us on to a related discussion, which has to do with the community of a site. The practice of the performance company The Olimpias is frequently concerned with political issues of site ownership and re-interpretation, particularly dealing with disability. For Petra Kupperts, artistic director of The Olimpias, site-specific performance is 'attentive to the local community and its ways of inhabiting its environment'. The company 'work with the community to take new forms of ownership of site, re-interpret the site, keep its history and presence alive'.

The work of Wrights & Sites, similarly, is 'above all . . . interested in the place and in the people who meet us in that place'.³¹ Fittingly for a practice that has roots in community theatre (as well as in sculpture and the economies of place that it explores), site-specific performance often approaches its sites as *lived spaces*, working to a greater or lesser extent with or for those who inhabit them.

One of the first companies to use this process, Welfare State International have always prioritized 'a commitment to drawing in local energies and leaving behind a residue of skills and confidence after the company's withdrawal' (Coult and Kershaw, 1983, p. 9), and in 1983 they extended this work when they settled permanently in Ulverston, Cumbria. The company popularized the idea of celebratory performance, a mode also practised by some of the other artists in the survey, including Emergency Exit Arts, The Lion's Part, and Walk the Plank. Bim Mason writes of Welfare State that

their shows could be said to be audience-specific as well as site-specific. They devise their performances from the local culture, both historical and contemporary. . . . All the ingredients are designed to be appropriate to the particular site, the whole area, and the specific audience.

(Mason, 1992, p. 137)

The development of the artistic residency, which 'blossomed in the 1970s and '80s' (Stephens, 2000, p. 14), might also be said to create 'audience-specific' work. The Year of the Artist scheme, referred to above, established 980 residencies in everyday sites across England, defining residency as 'an

artist, or group of artists, in any art form, working in, or responding to, a particular place or context' (Capaldi and Chadbourne, 2001, p. 33). These residencies took place in sites such as work places and retail settings, heritage sites and city parks, schools and hospitals, airports and train stations, and in many cases the creative process was as much 'the work' as any final outcome.

The notion of process also gains new importance in much site-specific performance. Escaping the theatre building often means escaping the rehearsal room, and, if a performance is to be created from and in a public place, a fluid and provisional audience is formed. As Carolyn Deby, of the dance company Sirens Crossing, finds: 'a by-product of having your creation process exposed to passers-by is that they feel empowered to comment, to ask questions, to have an opinion . . . and, ultimately, to attend the actual performances'.

Deby also reminds us that the challenge in site-specific work is not only to attract a wider audience but to enable this audience to have a 'radically different relationship' to the performance. Potential new relationships might be explored through 'degrees of scale, intimacy, proximity . . . the possibility of the audience member moving through or past the performance . . . the lack of usual theatrical conventions . . . the challenge to focus the viewer's eye without the usual tricks . . . '.

Shaping

So what does site-specific performance look like? What might it contain?

The survey results suggest that it is almost twice as likely to take place outdoors as indoors: the average proportion of outdoor to indoor performance is 64:36 per cent. Eight of the practitioners produce 100 per cent outdoor productions, compared to three producing 100 per cent indoor work, and 12 respondents reporting that the proportion in their work is roughly 50:50. But, as Gaston Bachelard reminds us, outside and inside are unstable categories, 'always ready to be reversed' (Bachelard, 1994, p. 218). Some of the practitioners felt unable to answer this

question, because they frequently move between outdoor and indoor spaces in one production.

Another category that appears unstable in much current performance work is that of text. How are we to define this, in the context of 'text-based performance'? This question becomes especially significant when dealing with work which 'include[s] song lyric as text', 'has a created text but utilizes non-textual work also', includes text but is 'not text led', or 'may have words, music, or poetry within [it]'. In the questionnaire I had used the phrase 'text-based performance' to indicate scripted work, but, as Lone Twin point out, 'work that has no readable page-based writing in it could be understood as being textually driven'.

This discussion raises a number of questions. Are we looking for text used as a starting point or text that is utilized in other ways and at other stages of the work? Does text need to have been written/printed prior to its use in performance? The scripting or non-scripting of performance text is an important issue that continues to gain significance in contemporary performance; that is, do spoken words count as text? Does song?

And site-specific performance finds its own texts. The issue is therefore complicated further when practitioners begin to refer to the 'texts' of a place (see, for example, Etchells, 1999). New texts might also merge with a place as a result of performance. The Olimpias, for example, create a text through their work that 'becomes part of the site (chalk on roads, leaflets on the ground, traces in clay . . .)'. Part of this issue has to do with the evolution of the term 'performance text' from metaphor to its current literal use (just as modern scholarly usage allows us to talk of 'reading' an image, a movement, or a sound in the same way as we might read a book), making it difficult to pinpoint the connotations of the word 'text' with clarity.³²

The various relationships between text, site, and performance that are represented in the survey results have less to do with issues of site-specificity than with the mode of work itself: scripted plays, devised work,

dance, performance art. In the few cases where the relationship differs from the theatre-based to the site-specific work of one practitioner, the site-specific work is 'perhaps less likely to be text-based' (Impossible Theatre). The reasons given for this refer to the practicalities of performing in the open air or in a site with the distractions of the everyday. Kneehigh, for instance, report that their 'Landscape Theatre form uses text sparingly – words do not travel over distances or in strong winds'.

The responses to the survey begin to build a picture of how a performance of place is constructed and which tools might be most significant to this construction. In the vast majority of cases (36 of 44) the site-specific process allows the site to inform both the form and content of the work, though the discussion surrounding this area suggests that a very broad generalization might be made, asserting that live art and dance practices are more likely to draw on a site for their form and theatre practices for their content. In many cases, a thematic engagement is deemed less necessary (or, in one or two instances, less desirable) than a geometric or structural one in order for a piece to be termed site-specific.

We attempt to respond to the physical qualities of the site. The work includes a large proportion of movement, dance, and physical theatre, so this tends to develop in this way. The influence on content is far less direct and not even through each piece. In general we try to 'dream' the site rather than interpret it literally.

(Storm Theatre)

There are, of course, many different ways of responding to a site's physical aspects. Dance practitioners may derive a new 'movement language' from the sites in which they work, but the nature of their work often means that practical considerations are paramount: certain types of movement become impossible if, for example, a site presents unsprung floors. Such physical restrictions also affect performance in other disciplines: Station House Opera, for instance, often fly performers into and around the space, and so they seek out sites which have the height to enable this movement.



Through the picture frame. Another of the sites on Exeter Quayside for *The Quay Thing* by Wrights & Sites, Summer 2000.

Adjustment

Performance form may develop, then, as a means of dealing with the perceived shortcomings of a site. Alternatively, the physicality of the site might offer 'different stimuli elements' to the creation process as 'experimentation with playing spaces and the different audience interaction elements that suit each space provide fresh perspectives for working' (Riptide). A number of the companies producing scripted performance (including Cotton Grass Theatre Company and Pentabus Theatre Company) commission the script for a particular location, thus allowing the space into the foundations of the work. This might involve the performative use of a site's natural rhythms, as Pentabus found when preparing for their performance of *Shot Through the Heart* at Ludlow Castle:

Discussions began with the scenographer, who talked about natural lighting, and specifically the movement from daylight through dusk to night. This corresponded to space in the castle. The large open grassy outer space seemed ideal for daytime. . . . As dusk fell, act two began and the audience and the captured tribes were led into the castle by a bunch of mercenary soldiers. As the audience entered the castle a threatening drumming replaced the melodies of the first act – here the castle was used as a sound box, its acoustics creating resonance. . . . Act three was text-based, again using the natural acoustic of the castle. . . . Here the text was complex too, and drew much inspiration from the replacement of melody by rhythm in the new culture of the story, and from the natural darkness by which we were surrounded.

Place has tended to exert a different kind of influence on the development of performance content, an influence more often abstract and imaginative than purely literal. A site brings its own historical, cultural, or political implications, which are then interwoven with other concerns and aesthetics into the final piece. This process may be either explicit, as in Bobby Baker's *Kitchen Show*,³³ or implicit, as for *Fragments and Monuments*, who

bring their own stories to the site. The site is used in an abstract way and not as an illustration of a narrative. We look for spaces that can be transformed into something unexpected. We project our own reality onto the locations.

What are the politics of 'projecting' onto a site, either metaphorically, as here, or literally, as in Pentabus's *Shot Through the Heart* (in which video was 'projected directly on to the massive castle walls')?

There is some thinking that you cannot import anything into a site-specific work that is not in the site already. Yet you import yourself, your imagination, your senses, ideas, so I think you can import other objects. However, a site can easily push away objects that are imported and attention must always be paid to the intention behind the importation. This is part of the very fine line that makes a production or performance able to be transient and to exist away from the site.

(Sue Palmer)

This sets up a debate between what is brought into a site and what is already there, representing a choice that will begin to



Sirens Crossing, *Trace and Flight: 1*, performed as part of the Stoke Newington Festival in June 2000 at Abney Park Cemetery, London N16 (choreographer: Carolyn Deby; dancer: Pia Nordin). Photo: Mattias Ek.

establish a particular relationship between the performance and the site. Cathy Turner of Wrights & Sites finds that 'a work can be more or less aggressive in its assertion of itself within the space' and prefers to work with an idea of performance that 'may be no more than a set of footprints in the sand'. The notion of 'building into' or 'dressing' a space, adding to it as part of a performance, might be an attempt to create a stage environment within the location, so reducing the physical aspects of that location available to be worked with, but it might alternatively offer 'an interesting way of responding to and interrogating the space' (Storm).

The Variety of Work

So, to return to the question that opened this section: what does site-specific performance look like? It is a question that can only be answered with reference to what it *has* looked like in its various manifestations. In recent years it has looked like . . .

IOU's Island (1996). Commissioned as part of Copenhagen '96, Europe's City of Culture celebrations, this show explored the theme of earth and was presented within the old city ramparts and moat.

SIRENS CROSSING's *Trace and Flight* (2000). A two-part piece exploring two very different public sites (Abney Park Cemetery in Stoke Newington and the Royal Festival Hall on the South Bank) through choreography and live, original music, each part linked conceptually and leading the audience on a journey through the spaces.

WRIGHTS & SITES' *The Quay Thing* (1998). A season of six performances presented at different locations on Exeter Quayside. The locations ranged from public to private, from open access to closed and inaccessible: the former municipal power station, the empty maritime museum, a medieval bridge, a condemned boatyard.³⁴

ANNE-MARIE CULHANE's *Night Sky* (1997). A visual arts work commissioned for and made in response to Rothwell Colliery, involving the posting of the work through every tenth letter box on the site: 'We never knew what the impact was.'

THE WHALLEY RANGE ALL STARS' *Day of the Dummy* (1999). Commissioned by Marks and Spencer for a store in Covent Garden, this piece involved six living mannequins animating the shop floor and streets outside throughout one day.

KNEEHIGH's *Roger Salmon – Cornish Detective: the Case of the Uncertain Woman* (2001). A performance in Geevor Mine, Pendeen, Cornwall, in which, the advertising leaflet tells us, 'the walls whisper their own memories. As the audience descends through the old mine buildings they and the journey itself unravel this seemingly impossible case.'

Site-specific performance engages with site as symbol, site as story-teller, site as structure. As performance continues to find new ways of engaging with its sites, new reasons for moving out of the theatre building, and new ways of forging relationships with its audiences, the map created here will be re-drawn, its boundaries reassessed and its meanings renegotiated.

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- Wrights & Sites, 'Site-Specific: The Quay Thing Documented', *Studies in Theatre and Performance Supplement* 5, August 2000.

Notes and References

1. On this point, an interesting remark was made in the questionnaire response of Rotozaza, a company that has produced work in Italy as well as Britain. Core company member Anthony Hampton writes that 'the term "site-specific" doesn't exist in Italy yet. No one I spoke to knows of a term to be used for what I understand it to mean.'
2. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations are taken from questionnaire responses or telephone conversations, with permission given for use within this article.
3. Tour of six London parks, July–August 2001.
4. Tour of children's playgrounds, Scotland 2000, England 2001.
5. Hendra Pit (claypit), Nanpea, Cornwall, Summer 2000.
6. BMW group plant, Oxford, February–March 2001.
7. St Catherine's Chapel, Guildford, April 2001.
8. St Luke's Church, Holloway, June 2001.
9. Stairwells of Chisenhale Dance Space, London, April 2001.
10. 291 Gallery, London, November 2000.
11. Grounds of Chelmsford and Essex Museum, 1992.
12. Trilogy of performances at Welsh Folk Museum, Cardiff, 1991–95.
13. Brighton beach, May 1984.
14. Brighton beach, 1997.
15. For the purposes of clarity and consistency, I have tended throughout this survey to go with common rather than grammatical usage by using the plural and not the singular form to refer to a group or company. This fits with the tendency of the majority of survey respondents.
16. Mick Martin, 'Romeo and Juliet: Oxford', *The Guardian*, 30 June 2001.
17. The Year of the Artist scheme funded through the Regional Arts Boards (see Note 18, below).
18. The Arts Councils provide arts funding with monies from the government, though they are non-political and operate independently. There are three British councils: the Arts Council of England, the Scottish Arts Council, and the Arts Council of Wales.

Companies and Solo Artists Participating in the Survey

<i>Name</i>	<i>Based</i>	<i>Website</i>
1028	Glasgow	www.x1028.org
Bill Aitchison	London	
Bobby Baker	London	www.invisible.gq.nu/index7.html
Blaize (formerly Charivari)	West Yorkshire	
Boilerhouse	Edinburgh	www.boilerhouse.org.uk
Cerberus Theatre Company	Edinburgh	www.cerberustheatre.co.uk
The Common Players	Exeter, Devon	www.common-players.org.uk
Cotton Grass Theatre Co	Peak District	www.cottongrass.mirai.co.uk
Creation Theatre Co	Oxford	www.creationtheatre.co.uk
Anne-Marie Culhane	Edinburgh	
Emergency Exit Arts	London	www.eea.org.uk
Fragments and Monuments	London	
Helena Goldwater	London	
Grid Iron Theatre Company	Edinburgh	
Horse + Bamboo	Lancashire	www.horseandbamboo.org
Impossible Theatre	Yorkshire	homepages.poptel.org.uk/impossible
IOU	West Yorkshire	www.ioutheatre.org
Jude Kerr	London	
Miriam Keye/Strandlooper	Leicester	
Kneehigh Theatre	Cornwall	www.kneehigh.co.uk
Kunstwerk-Blend interdisciplinary company	London	www.kunstwerk-blend.co.uk
Kate Lawrence	Surrey	www.artform.demon.co.uk/stcatherines.htm
The Lion's Part	London	www.thelionspart.co.uk
London Bubble	London	www.londonbubble.org.uk
Lone Twin	London	
Justin Mckeown	Preston	www.justinmckeown.20m.com
Moving Being Theatre Company	Cardiff	
The Olimpias	Wales	www.olimpias.net
Out of the Blue Dance Company	London	
Sue Palmer	Somerset	www.glastonburynetradio.co.uk/hairraising
Pentabus Theatre Company	West Midlands	www.homeusers.prestel.co.uk/pentabus
PickleHerring Theatre	Manchester	
Red Earth	Brighton	www.redearth.co.uk
Hester Reeve	Lancaster	
Riptide	Leicester	www.riptide.force9.co.uk
Rotozaza	London	www.rotozaza.co.uk
Sirens Crossing	London	
Station House Opera	London	www.stationhouseopera.com
Storm Theatre Company	Coventry	
Theatre Nomad	London	www.theatrenomad.com
Walk the Plank	Manchester	www.walktheplank.co.uk
Welfare State International	Cumbria	www.welfare-state.org
Whalley Range All Stars	Manchester	www.good.co.uk/WR.ALLSTARS/
Wrights & Sites	Exeter, Devon	www.exeter.ac.uk/~shodge/ws.html

N.B. 45 additional practitioners have been contacted. I hope to include further responses in future work.

The Arts Council of England works in conjunction with ten Regional Arts Boards, through which about 30 per cent of its funding is delivered. These Regional Arts Boards (RABs) are: Eastern Arts; East Midlands Arts; London Arts Board; Northern Arts; North West Arts Board; Southern Arts; South East Arts; South West Arts; West Midlands Arts; Yorkshire Arts.

19. Nicholas Young (Theatre Officer, Southern Arts), in response to my questions.

20. From the Year of the Artist website, accessible at www.yota.org.uk.

21. These were:

Bobby Baker (live art performances at two Time Out magazine award ceremonies: *Food, Drink, and Performance* and *Wearing the Christmas Dinner* for the Christmas awards, June 2000–January 2001);

Helena Goldwater (*Gone Dark*, guided walks created with the local community at Theatre Royal Margate, March–May 2001, South East Arts).

Grid Iron's Ben Harrison (*Into Our Dreams*, promenade performance with 40 young people, Almeida Theatre, June 2000, London Arts).

Miriam Keye (with Andy Reeves – *Signal*, dance/drama performance with Leicester Deaf Children's Society, Richard Attenborough Centre, Leicester University, July–September 2000, East Midlands Arts).

Kate Lawrence (with visual artist Janine Creaye – *St Catherine's Chapel Project*, dance/theatre/visual art performance along the River Wey and at St Catherine's Chapel, Guildford, January–April 2001, South East Arts).

Sue Palmer (with Vic Llewellyn – *Hair Raising*, performance and installations at GJ's Hair Salon, Shepton Mallet, February 2001, South West Arts).

Red Earth (two projects for South East Arts: Caitlin Easterby – *Hive*, sculpture project in conjunction with Sussex Wildlife Trust, Woodfield Nature Reserve, Henfield, West Sussex/Booth Museum, March–April 2001; and Simon Pascoe – *Aquifer*, walk, installations and events along underwater aquifer routes from North Downs to the sea at Brighton).

Riptide (two projects for East Midlands Arts: *Who Let the Wolf In?*, exhibition and performance at Hayes and Borraro Veterinary Surgeons, Leicester, November–December 2000; and *The HeART of Leicester*, one of four sets of artists creating work on the Leicester Mercury website, made in conjunction Leicester City Council and Stayfree Multi-Media).

Welfare State's John Fox (with Peter Moser) – *Cheap Art*, songs, objects, and stories at outdoor markets in Cumbria and Lancashire, April–May 2001, Northern Arts.

Wrights & Sites. The core members were involved in three projects for South West Arts: Stephen Hodge – *Exeter A-Z*, scrolling LED signs on Exeter buses, Stagecoach Devon Ltd, September 2000;

Simon Persighetti – *Passages*, performance events in Exeter's underground passages, January–April 2001; and Cathy Turner and Phil Smith – *Outer Space/Inner Space*, research and writing of a play about physics for secondary schools, University of Exeter School of Physics, February–March 2001.

The company also created a Year of the Artist launch event for South West Arts: *The Dig* at Exeter Phoenix, June 2000.

Not all of the projects were site-specific. Further details of the projects and Year of the Artist in general can be found in Capaldi and Chadbourn, 2001.

22. These examples are drawn from practitioners' responses to the question: 'How would you define "site-specific" performance in the context of your work?'

23. The continuum was proposed by company member Stephen Hodge during a presentation given by Wrights & Sites at the Performance of Place conference, University of Birmingham, May 2001.

24. A category referred to by Rotozaza as 'multi-site-specific'.

25. For example, the company's successful production of *Moby Dick*, touring to ports, quays, and harbours around Britain in 2000 and 2001.

26. While 36 of the respondents would use the term to funders and those within the performance profession without further explanation, only 23 would use it in the same way to those outside the performance profession. However, it is worth noting one response that provides an antithesis to the other answers: for Justin Mckeown, 'site-specific' seems to be the more self-explanatory and user-friendly term, and he would therefore use it to those outside of the profession so as not to alienate them but might use 'terminology more specific to art actions' when speaking to someone more familiar with performance art.

27. Manchester-based puppet theatre company.

28. Line used in advertising literature for *Shot Through the Heart*, Summer 2000.

29. Of the respondents, 31 chose this, making it the second most popular choice after reasons of aesthetics (33). Artists could identify more than one reason for creating their site-specific work.

30. The London Bubble artistic policy can be found on the company website at www.londonbubble.org.uk.

31. Cathy Turner of Wrights & Sites, document sent with the questionnaire response.

32. Walter Ong, objecting strongly to the 'monstrous concept' of 'oral literature', writes:

In concert with the terms 'oral literature' and 'preliterate', we hear mention also of the 'text' of an oral utterance. 'Text', from a root meaning 'to weave', is, in absolute terms, more compatible etymologically with oral utterance than is 'literature'. . . . But in fact, when literates today use the term 'text' to refer to oral performance, they are thinking of it by analogy with writing. (1982, p. 13)

33. First performed in Baker's own kitchen in London as part of LIFT '91.

34. Each part of the project is very well documented in Wrights & Sites, 'Site-Specific: *The Quay Thing Documented*'.