

**Performance, place and space -  
creating places from spaces through  
performance**

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# Place making performances

- Action (what happens here?)
- Event (why this, why now?)
- Relationships (who acts, who watches?)
- Stories (how is this story stored, how is it retold, by whom, why?)
- Documents (what evidence is there, who creates it, who shares?)

# What is space?

- If space is indeed the product of interrelations, then it must be predicated upon the existence of plurality. Multiplicity and space as co-constitutive. ... we recognise space as always under construction. ... It is never finished; never closed. Perhaps we could imagine space as a simultaneity of stories-so-far.
- (Doreen Massey (2005), *For Space*, London: Sage, 9)

# Placemaking in shared space



# What is a place?

- In the full sense of the word, a place is a space where relationships are self evident and inter-recognition is at a maximum, and where each person knows where they and others belong.
- (Auge, 2010: 229)

# Subversion



# The stories we tell...

- What we have today is what he [Certeau] calls a 'recited society'. 'Our society has become a recited society in three senses; it is defined by *stories* (*récits*, the fables constituted by our advertising and informational media), by *citations* of stories, and by the interminable *recitation* of stories' (*The Practice of Everyday Life*, 186).
- (Graham Ward (ed) ([2000] 2004), *The Certeau Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 6)

# Acting to camera - From *I was there* to *Look, where I am*





# Who is in charge? Who documents?

- *The Bristol Zombie Walk 2011 is taking place in just over a weeks time on the 29th of October, it is likely to be early afternoon starting from College Green.*
- *However for more sure times and places keep an eye on the Facebook [event](#). I'm already looking forward to covering it from a photography standpoint! So keep an eye out here for photos!*
- *Oh and if you happen to be a member of the authorities, please note that I have NOTHING to do with the organising of the event, I am simply a member of the public putting myself in harms way by documenting the Zombie Apocalypse for you!*
- *BRRRRRRrrrrrrrrrrrrrrraaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiinnnnnnnnnnnnsssssssssssssss  
SSSSSSS...*
- **(Photographer who was responsible for ensuring people knew about it (top google search) selling images of the event to the participants.....)**

# Case Study – launching M Shed

- A new city history museum for Bristol
- Mired in controversy over budgets, build time and thematic content
- THE TASK – create performances to establish a new beginning.
- Link past, present and future
- Ensure maximum participation AND maximum quality

# Placemaking performances

Spectacles – large scale events (not just battles!)

Songs – building on folk song tradition

Dance – intercultural, contemporary

Rituals – spiritual and/or multi-faith

Small scale and intimate happenings

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m3cAqZU8iaE&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m3cAqZU8iaE&feature=player_embedded)

# Your Tasks....!

- **Discuss with a partner - consider some these questions:**
- Do you know of a public space that has a private secret?
- Who knows that secret? How can it be discovered? Who has access?
- What kinds of use and/or performance by specific communities reveal the nature of a place?

# Here and Now

- **Look around**
- Find a space
- Decide what is interesting about it – what makes it a special place
- How can this be revealed through performance?

# Place making performances (2)

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# Site-specific performances are..

...conceived for, mounted within and conditioned by the particulars of found spaces, existing social situations or locations, both used and disused: sites of work, play and worship: cattle-market, chapel, factory, cathedral, railway station. They rely, for their conception and their interpretation, upon the complex coexistence, superimposition and interpenetration of a number of narratives and architectures, historical and contemporary, of two basic orders: that which is of the site, its fixtures and fittings, and that which is brought to the site, the performance and its scenography: of that which pre-exists the work and that which is of the work: of the past and of the present. They are inseparable from their sites, the only contexts within which they are intelligible.

Performance re-contextualises such sites: it is the latest occupation of a location at which other occupations - their material traces and histories - are still apparent: site is not just an interesting, and disinterested, backdrop. ...The multiple meanings and readings of performance and site intermingle, amending and compromising one another

(cf. McLucas and Pearson 1996).

Mike Pearson: From *Theatre/Archaeology* (<http://humanitieslab.stanford.edu/BrithGof/92>)



# Thank you

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