

Institution: Goldsmiths, University of London		
Unit of Assessment: 33, Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies		
Title of case study: Living in the Mortal Body - Creative Practices Towards Health, Arts and Educational Impacts on Individuals and Organisations		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2001-2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Anna Furse	Professor, Theatre and Performance	2001-
Sue Mayo	Lecturer, Theatre and Performance	2012-
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014-2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
<p>1. Summary of the impact Furse and Mayo's diverse artistic activities confront negative body image, assumptions about age(ing), and fear of mortality. Their work has positively impacted a broad spectrum of beneficiaries in professional services and healthcare, artistic practice and programming, education, and society more broadly. Furse has empowered people to articulate newfound bodily awareness with greater confidence in social and medical environments. Mayo has enhanced the quality of life for individuals and communities by working intergenerationally, through the body, on communication and identity. They have influenced over 5,000 audience members, workshop participants and professional practitioners through performances, films, talks, publication, teaching and mentoring. Their innovative outputs have changed the way people think and inspired new practices for individuals and organisations.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research Since the European Enlightenment, the intellect has been prioritised, leaving the body habitually perceived as accessory, crude or rude. Deliberately foregrounding the body as a source of knowledge and a point of view in itself from which to engage with the world, Furse and Mayo's works contribute new models of practice to the growing fields of arts and health and socially applied performance respectively.</p> <p>Furse has conducted research into performance and medicine since 2001, and Mayo has been a UK leader in applied theatre for three decades. Throughout their practice, research and impact form an integral whole, contributing symbiotically to each other. Both have benefited from competitive peer-reviewed funding totaling over GBP 90,000, and from commissions and residencies with leading arts, and arts and health organisations (see Selected Grants, Section 3, R3, R4, R5). Mayo also appears in peer-reviewed publications (R1, R2).</p> <p>Mayo addresses the fact that the erosion of community, together with accelerated lifestyles, results in a fracturing society where older people can feel alienated, their bodies invalidated (R1). Furse addresses the inevitability that at some point in their lives every individual becomes a patient in an increasingly technological clinical environment, in which mortality is often a prevalent anxiety (R3). These multiple issues produce fear, stress and alienation. From cultural, social and medical perspectives, both researchers consider why these central human experiences remain taboo.</p> <p>Mayo and Furse each ask how theatre processes can help people overcome such anxieties, frequently experienced as a form of disassociation from the lived-in self, so as to connect them - transformatively - to how they perceive their own bodies and how they imagine these are perceived by others. Providing support, they invite participants to confront common anxiety and shame concerning the body as experienced socially, introducing themes such as the maternal body, body image disorders, illness, ageing, ageism and death (R4, R5). They investigate how, in creative contexts, matters concerning the body can be foregrounded to become a vehicle for better expressing, articulating, and being in control of one's own life. Their outputs have explored ways in which performance practices can improve individuals' confidence to 'use their own brains and their own tongues' and 'speak the body' about realities and themes that are often relegated to private spheres or spoken about with self-disgust and fear (R4, R5). Overall, they bring original, unusual and difficult subject matter to arts audiences, and new and diverse audiences to artistic events.</p>		

Mayo and Furse invite participants to focus on what bodies are made of (anatomy) and what they mean (culture), exploring the body's autobiographical, material and social realities. By way of example, Furse promotes public understanding of the dark history and cultural meaning of anatomical dissection so as to confront people's lack of accurate knowledge of their physical body, an ignorance that she links to a disavowal of death. She has thereby fostered conversation on how human interiority might be imagined, for example by bringing artists, medics and academics into interdisciplinary dialogue (R4). Mayo brings different generations together through physical practice to challenge the deeply held assumptions and behavioral norms that contribute towards ageism and intergenerational conflict (R5).

Moving away from traditional community performance forms such as choirs or amateur theatre, both practitioners experiment with multi-faceted interactive formats including digital production, performance lecture, film, audio, immersive and pop-up performance, innovative artefacts, curated public talks, installations and touring exhibitions. In each case, they ask how a given aesthetic can generate dialogue between the general public, specific communities, artists, medical professionals, researchers and students. They investigate how the imagination can be harnessed to creative ends to enable participants to think *from*, *into* and *through* their bodies and bring about the transformation of previously held assumptions (R2, R3, R4, R5). Engaging participants and audiences in non-didactic yet entertainingly informative experiences, they invent ever-evolving means for creative play to offer people – especially women – the opportunity to reflect inwardly and express outwardly what their bodies are *saying*; to articulate their needs and wishes in social and medical settings; and to listen to each other's experiences, fostering the unique reciprocity, connectivity and community regeneration that can emerge from collective practice (R2, R4, R5).

3. References to the research

(R1) Mayo, S. (2013) "A Marvellous Experiment": Exploring Ideas of Temporary Community in a Magic Me Intergenerational Project', in McAviney, C. ed, *Performance and Community*. London: Bloomsbury. [Available on Request]

(R2) Mayo, S. (2020), 'The Gratitude Enquiry: Investigating Reciprocity in Three Community Projects', in Abraham, N. and Prentki, T. *The Applied Theatre Reader*. London: Routledge [submitted to REF2021 within R5 practice portfolio]

(R3) Furse, A. (2018) '[Spectacular Body](#)', *Arts and Health.ie*, Waterford Healing Trust/CREATE, Ireland

(R4) Furse, A. (2016 - 2020) [The Theatre of Our Bodies](#) [practice portfolio] [Submitted to REF2021] Includes:

- [I Am Not a Piece of Meat](#) [website]
- *Anna Furse Performs an Anatomy Act: Show and Tell* (2016-2018) [performance],
- *Interiority: An Exploration of the Inward Gaze*, Freud Museum and Old Operating Theatre Museum (2017) [exhibition]
- *Interiority: Workshops with Professor Anna Furse* (2017-2020) [workshop]
- *Corpography* (2019) [book];

(R5) Mayo, S. (2014-2020) [Developing and Disrupting Intergenerational Performance Practice](#), [practice portfolio] [Submitted to REF2021].

Selected Grants and commissions:

- Mayo, S. LB Tower Hamlets: *Rooms with A View*, Arts Council England, 2015, GBP 6,135;
- Mayo, S. *The Gratitude Enquiry*, Arts Council England, 2016, GBP 14,934;
- Furse, A. *An Anatomy Act*, Live Collision Festival, 2016, GBP 4,300;
- Furse, A. *An Anatomy Act*, Create CAPP EU, 2016, GBP 8,000;
- Furse, A. *An Anatomy Act*, Arts Council England, 2016 - 2017, GBP 14,888;
- Furse, A. *Interiorities*, Wellcome Trust, 2016 - 2017, GBP 4,900;
- Mayo, S. *Decorum*, Arts Council England, 2017-18, GBP 10,940;
- Furse, A. *An Anatomy Act*, publications, Create CAPP EU, 2018, GBP 22,000;
- Furse, A. *An Anatomy Act*, Trinity College Dublin, Provost's Fund for the Visual and Performing Arts, 2018, GBP 2,000;
- Furse, A. *An Anatomy Act*, commission from ACE application for the performance by Chisenhale Dance Space, GBP 2,000;

4. Details of the impact

Furse and Mayo's research and impact activities intersect. As Furse puts it, 'There is the research that goes into the work and the research that comes out of the work. And then there is the research that *is* the work' (S2). This Practice Research method has generated new ways of thinking about the body, ageing, death, identity and community for a broad spectrum of beneficiaries at local, regional, national and international levels, including doctors, medical students, midwives, health workers, new mothers with mental illness, and marginalised community groups. Their enquiry has been shared via performances, training and mentoring, talks and online platforms reaching over 300 workshop participants, 340 theatre practitioners and artists, 12 cultural organisations, 450 attendees for talks, 1,700 live theatre audiences, 2872 engaging interactively online, and 260 postgraduate students.

Societal Impact: research-led engagement with marginalised audiences leads to increased sense of inclusion and self-awareness

Mayo engages participants as co-researchers on all her projects. Working in collaboration with the intergenerational arts charity Magic Me, her research has enhanced the quality of life for individuals and communities by raising public awareness of the benefits of communication, relationship and creativity across generations. *Rooms with a View* (2015), *The Gratitude Enquiry* (2016 - ongoing) and *Decorum* (2017-18) brought together generations (aged 14-90), predominantly of girls and women from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds in East London, Peterborough and Southend, to create immersive events where participants shared (sometimes divergent and conflicting) knowledge and experience of place and belonging, body image, mental health and the manners expected of twenty-first-century women.

Reflecting on her experience in *Rooms with a View*, a year-long project conceived and directed by Mayo, which attracted over 500 participants, one student responded, 'This opportunity has helped me make new friends of all ages. [It] has helped me academically, and helped me get outside my comfort zone, meet new people, and interact using the common knowledge of my community' (S1). The cultural participation from two often marginalised and under-represented groups - the young, and older people - in Mayo's research-led performance practices, increased their integration and societal inclusion, contributing to their improved wellbeing. Participants' feedback reported growth in confidence, increased sense of community belonging, new understanding of people from other communities, less stereotyped views of other generations, and enjoyment from working on a project that was not age-specific: 'Don't call me dearie, call me by my name!'; 'I'm free now, free of the categories'. In *The Gratitude Enquiry*, women celebrated their differently-shaped and differently-mobile bodies: 'This is my body which I have loathed all my life. Now I realize the error of my ways' (S1).

Furse's work has also improved participants' body image and awareness, empowering people to speak about their bodies with confidence and knowledge. In her performance lecture *An Anatomy Act* she invented public-understanding-of-anatomy test cards to prompt dynamic audience engagement, and delivered informative, entertaining reflections on the history of anatomy theatres, dissection, and the status of the cadaver past and present, to confront the fear and disavowal of death. Artist Researcher (CAPP) Susanne Bosch notes Furse's 'personal lead into the live performances that allows the audiences to engage in multiple levels of head, heart, hands and humour' (S2). Furse invited audiences and workshop participants to adopt the Renaissance literary form the 'Blason', where poets wrote a eulogy celebrating the smallest body-part. Recognising how liberating this exercise was for women in particular, who frequently suffer negative body-image, Chats Palace, a community arts venue in East London, commissioned her to extend this into an interactive digital artwork *Dear Body* (March 2021) during the COVID-19 pandemic (S3).

Impact on professional services within healthcare

Furse has led workshops for health professionals, impacting on medical training for improving patient care (Motherworks/Maternal Journal, May 2019; Oxford Brookes School of Nursing and Midwifery/Maternal Journal, October 2019; National Arts and Health Conference, Cork, 2018). These collaborative encounters disrupted boundaries between expert researchers, participants, audiences and disciplines. When she participated in the KCL Anatomy Summer School, she offered some relevant artistic references to the Dissection Lab tutor who commented, 'we are

learning from each other' and offered Furse a hands-on dissecting relationship with cadaveric specimens by way of involving her in an exchange of knowledge. Her workshops encourage medical participants to step out of their conventional working practices by thinking through their own bodies, enabling them to change their attitudes and to rethink patient empathy. Participants commenting on her interventions said she 're-inserted our own bodies as a presence that is often overlooked in medicine and in arts and health as the focus is primarily on the patient /service user' (Create Workshop for National Arts and Health Conference, Cork); 'your workshop was absolutely wonderful: strong, sensitive and you deftly pushed us to open: not easy! [...]. I loved the interwoven historical perspective - and your choice of 'womb' rather than 'uterus' (Dr Ethel Burns, Senior Lecturer in Midwifery, Oxford Brookes University). Furse has also contributed workshop guidance material to the *Maternal Journal* website and their forthcoming book (2021) (S4).

Impact on the Arts

Furse and Mayo have collaborated with, and been commissioned by, professional arts venues, festivals and programmers, generating new forms of artistic practice that inform the ongoing activity of these cultural and community organisations and offer cultural organisers opportunity for widening participation in their programming. They confront uncomfortable subject matter and produce strong reactions and positive results. They have facilitated spectators/participants and live audiences of around 2890 people to articulate a specific kind of bodily awareness towards shifting anxieties commonly experienced about the social and medical body, and have attracted 2872 online participants to engage similarly.

Ailbhe Murphy, Director of Create, Ireland, the national development agency for collaborative arts in Ireland that commissioned *The Theatre of Our Bodies* within the Creative Europe Collaborative Arts Partnership Programme (CAPP EU) reported 'Audiences for [Furse's] work have been surprised, informed, moved and most of all deeply engaged by the depth of her research and the quality of the work itself which extends the possibilities for contemporary performance practice and for the arts and health sector in Ireland'. Lynnette Moran, Founder and Director of Live Collision Festival and Co-founder of CAPP EU notes, '*An Anatomy Act* and *iamnotapieceofmeat.com* were exemplary works that broke new ground and stand as a significant leading example of interdisciplinary, collaborative, socially engaged practice across the sector.' (S5). Following her keynote address to Ireland's National Arts and Health Conference *Check up/Check in*, Crawford Gallery, Cork (2018) the Director of this national museum commissioned a new work from Furse that will involve schools and outreach activity in an interactive museum installation (*Muscle*, postponed to 2022 due to Covid-19). In addition, the distinguished US choreographer and film-maker Yvonne Rainer adapted some of Furse's text from *An Anatomy Act* into her own performance and publication *A Truncated History of the Universe for Dummies, a Rant Dance*, USA (2018) (S6).

Mayo's methodology has influenced creative practice and venue programming via her intergenerational projects, training and mentoring collaborations with Sydenham Garden, Ovalhouse, Metal Peterborough, Metal Southend and Magic Me, where she is Associate Artist. Between 2014 and 2019, Mayo trained and mentored 240 practitioners, sharing her Practice Research expertise in leading intergenerational projects with staff at Battersea Arts Centre (2014), the Royal Albert Hall (2015), Ovalhouse (2015), London Bubble (2017) and Metal (2018). Capacity-building is integral to her practice, and she has established intergenerational cross-disciplinary teams of artists to work with community groups. With Metal in 2018, she mentored two local artists and delivered training to twenty local artists and facilitators, helping the organisation deliver their first intergenerational project: 'The result is a genuine debate and exchange of viewpoints and experience. It is unlike traditional models of intergenerational arts that I have witnessed in which one age group is 'teaching' or 'telling/sharing' with the other their generational experience. [...] [Mayo's] process shines the light on participants across generations, drawing out connections and differences, ensuring that they are at the heart of the creative process as co-creators.' (Executive Director: Metal 2018) (S7).

Educational Impact

Mayo teaches intergenerational practice to all *MA Applied Theatre* students. The reach of her influence is international: she has trained groups in Brazil (2013), South Korea (2018), the

Baltics (2018 and 2020) and the UK (2000 to date). Via her alumni, Mayo's pioneering intergenerational methodologies have enriched the education practices of diverse international communities: 'The games and tasks I experienced during my studies and my internship during Sue Mayo's project *I Live In It* showed me how to create a space with people from different generations that is safe, invites them to take creative risks and connects the whole group on a deeper level. By reflecting on my own feelings while participating in this exceptional intergenerational project I understood much more about safe spaces than any theoretical text I read could explain to me'; 'My direct interactions with Sue lasted for 1 year, [...] but her influence, encouragement and the lessons I learnt have been lasting and far-reaching, with at least 5 cohorts at Barbados Community College, the ageing community and several different audiences across Barbados being indirectly impacted by her work' (S8).

Furse donated her analogue book *Corpography* to fifteen university, arts and public libraries, including the Wellcome Collection, Live Art Development Agency and a new Live Art organisation in Istanbul. Professor Alan Read from KCL has said that this innovative publication 'challenges us and changes us' (S6, S9). In 2019 she created a unique 'sci-art' *MA Performance and Medicine* module, impacting on the HE drama curriculum by introducing an historical and contemporary braiding of theatre with a science discipline, inviting guests such as the distinguished director of *The Plague*, Neil Bartlett. The perceived significance of the course is corroborated by students: '[it] should be mandatory in every school or university related to performing arts. It is very important in terms of developing a critical thinking between arts and society in a historical context. It opens a new dialogue among science, ritual and aesthetics' (student module evaluation 2019); and External Examiner: 'intriguing, demanding and exciting [...] opens up an innovative range of research avenues' (External Examiner) (S9).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

S1: Mayo's role in 'Rooms with a View and evidence of impact on project participants is detailed in an evaluative report for Magic Me; i) See McAvinchey, C., (2016) ['Rooms with a View: Disrupting and Developing Narratives of Community through Intergenerational Arts Practice'](#) [Report for Magic Me], p. 29, 37-38; 53, 56-60; ii) Participant feedback on the impact of [Decorum](#) is recorded on Magic Me's website; iii) 'This is my body which I have loathed all my life. Now I realize the error of my ways' (from the film *I Live In It*) (R5) [Grouped Source]

S2: Testimony and written statements from participants and reviewers, including i) Evaluation Forms from *Interiority Workshop* led by Furse (2018) (collected Create Ireland); ii) Audience Survey from Create/CAPP Furse workshop for Practice and Power programme, (2018); iii) Interview with Susanne Bosch, (2019) ['I Am Not a Piece of Meat: Collaborative Practice and the Body'](#) Create News 26; iv) Live audience feedback cards from *An Anatomy Act* (NB this item is available on request) [Grouped Source].

S3: Testimony from Paula Van Hagan, Director, Chats Palace.

S4: Testimony and written statements from Ethel Burns; www.maternaljournal.org.

S5: Testimony and statements from cultural organisations on the impact of Furse's research on audiences: i) Dr Ailbhe Murphy, Director, Create Ireland; ii) Lynnette Moran, Founder and Director, Live Collision, Co-founder of CAPP [Grouped Source].

S6: References to the artistic impact of Furse's work: i) testimony, Yvonne Rainer, ii) citation in 'A Truncated History of the Universe for Dummies' talks by Yvonne Rainer (2020) & *Revisions: Selected Essays by Apollo Musagète, Yvonne Rainer and Others* (2020) New York, no place press, p.23; iii) written statement, Professor Alan Read, Director: Performance Foundation, Kings College London [Grouped Source].

S7: Statements from cultural organisations on the impacts of Mayo's mentoring and training workshops: i) Susan Langford (MBE), Director, Magic Me; ii) Colette Bailey, Artistic Director and Chief Executive, Metal (September 2018); iii) Royal Albert Hall [Grouped Source].

S8. Testimony relating to Mayo's educational impact: i) Michelle Cox, Coordinator/Tutor at Barbados Community College; ii) Kristina Verner, Co-Director, Baltic Applied Theatre School [Grouped Source].

S9. Sample feedback on Furse's course and texts; i) Sample Library responses to *Corpography* donation; ii) Sample Student Module Evaluation; iii) External Examiner Report; [Grouped Source].