

## Impact case study (REF3)

<b>Institution:</b> University of East London (UEL)		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 33 Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Not Sorry! Re-staging learning disabilities and neurodivergence in performing arts		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2013 – 2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Liselle Terret	Senior Lecturer and Programme co-leader	2015 – present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2015 – 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> No		

**1. Summary of the impact** (indicative maximum 100 words)

Liselle Terret's practice-based research has significant impact in three key areas, addressing ongoing systemic discrimination and exclusion of learning-disabled and autistic (LD and A) people from the performing arts:

- championing inclusion through creative co-production and inclusive programming;
- creating opportunities for learning-disabled artists as theatre makers, through training, mentoring and partnerships for casting;
- promoting self-representation and self-advocacy for disabled people through policy and curriculum contributions that reach beyond national and disciplinary boundaries.

This work has been delivered through partnerships with the disability arts organisation Access All Areas (AAA) and commissions and productions at theatres including Soho Theatre, The Royal Court, and the South Bank Centre, and in TV/film through Netflix, Sky and the BBC.

**2. Underpinning research** (indicative maximum 500 words)

Figure 1 Not your Circus Dog performing at Electric Brixton, London 2016

Terret identifies as learning-disabled, as a neuro-divergent person with ADHD. Her work as a performance artist and director foregrounds this identification, disrupting theatrical norms through a radical Crip, queer, collaborative and feminist approach across her solo work, mentoring, consultancy, teaching, writing and directing.

Practice-based research in the form of theatre-making is

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complemented by writing, grounded in the ethic of care and collaboration, to bring the lived experience of disabled artists to the centre. These innovations led to new training pedagogies and creative opportunities for emancipatory self-representation. The research was conducted in partnership with disabled artists, co-constructing radically political questions about continued exclusion and discriminatory assumptions around binaries of 'ability/disability' (R1).

Terret's work is driven by a central research enquiry framed by the following questions:

1. How can Crip and queer performance create an accessible aesthetic to engage the wider public / audiences in active considerations of their own lives?
2. How can theatre-making processes be deployed to enable, include, champion, and celebrate neuro-diverse and learning-disabled artists as equals and as leaders in the industry and in training?
3. How can a new Crip theatre implicate audiences in challenging ongoing discrimination experienced by learning-disabled people?

Through close engagement with Emancipatory Disability Research and the Political-Relational Model of disability (Kafer 2013), Terret has developed a method that foregrounds learning disability or Crip aesthetics and re-affirms the performer as creator and leader in authoring performance. The politics of disability arts lies at the heart of the practice-as-research: the practice is about visibility of agency and understanding the systems that reinforce discrimination (R2).

The primary work constituting this research includes co-created theatre productions, articles and chapters, reports for the industry, training, consultation, national and international presentations, created by Terret with key partnerships and collaborations with the Disability Arts organisation Access All Areas, The British Council and The Live Art Development Agency (R3, R4).

A core company of artists (*Not Your Circus Dog Collective*), directed by Terret, developed through iterative process *Not F\*\*kin' Sorry!*, a punk Crip queer theatre production drawing on the company's lived experiences of disability discrimination. Terret's research, bringing artists whose work usually falls outside dominant cultural markets to high profile stages (The Royal Court, Soho Theatre, South Bank Centre), challenges venues and audiences in their understanding of whose stories are told, and on which stages they are permitted (R5, R6).

Terret's pioneering work demonstrates the potential of University research applied to the field of professional performing arts with radical activist intent. The methods and practices in performance forms devised by Terret resonates nationally and internationally through collaborations across the sector.

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

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**R1.** Selwyn, E. and Terret, L. 2019. Defiant bodies: a punk rock Crip queer cabaret: criping and queering emancipatory disability research, in Duffy, P., Hatton, C., Sallis, R. (eds.) *Drama Research Methods Series: Provocations of Practice, Bold Visions in Educational Research*, 161-180. Co-authored with Selwyn, E. an autistic actor and member of *Not Your Circus Dog*. [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004389571\\_010](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004389571_010)

**R2.** Terret, L. 2016. Repositioning the Learning-Disabled performing arts student as critical facilitator, in Preston, S. (ed.) *Applied theatre: facilitation pedagogies, practices, resilience* Methuen Drama. 131-150 <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781472576965.ch-006>

**R3.** Terret, L. 2018. An Overview of Performing Arts as They Relate to Disability in the United Kingdom in Castaño, A. (ed.) *Jornadas sobre la Inclusión Social y la Educación en las Artes Escénicas (2009-2018)* El Instituto Nacional de las Artes Escénicas y de la Música (INAEM). pp. 251-259

**R4.** Keber, E., Terret, L. 2019. Artist development and creative collaboration research *LADA ELEVATE*: The systemic barriers to independent and sustainable career opportunities for learning disabled and artists and how we might begin to dismantle them, Policy document in collaboration with Access All Areas (AAA) London).

**R5.** *Not F\*\*kin' Sorry!* (2016- ongoing). Performed in 2016 at venues including: The Royal Vauxhall Tavern, R&D at Soho Theatre and The Electric, Brixton. The work continued in 2018 through commissions by Women of the World 2018 (WoW, Southbank Centre, and The Royal Court Theatre. In 2018 an additional ACE National Lottery Project Grant furthered the work with a commission for Soho Theatre, Terret led a new devising and development process for *Not Your Circus Dog* and delivered a sold-out run.

**R6.** Terret's solo performances as alter-ego **Doris La Trine** involves making, performing and directing feminist, Crip and queer performance art. From 2005-2019, the autobiographic show *Flushed* has toured venues including Burlesque Gorefest, 'Domestic Appliances', Bristol; Bethnal Green Working Men's Club, London; Café De Paris, London; The Candy Box, Birmingham; The Chelsea Theatre with Annie Sprinkle and Beth Stevens, London; The Big Chill Festival; The Tassle Club, Dublin; The Posh Club, Brighton; The Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh; Take up Space at the Royal Court Theatre, London; DaDa Festival, Liverpool; Limerick Arts Festival, Ireland; WoW Festival, London; The Big Chill Festival and Glastonbury Festival.

Funding for *Not F\*\*kin' Sorry!*:

**G1.** Access All Areas (Liselle Terret project partner), Arts Council England Elevate Grant, September 2016 to January 2019, GBP139,128.

**G2.** Liselle Terret, Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants, Soho Theatre for July 2019 to November 2019, GBP 20,579.00, plus GBP10,000 Access to Work.

#### **4. Details of the impact** (indicative maximum 750 words)

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Terret's practice-based methodologies for co-creation with Learning Disabled and Autistic artists have led to impact in three key areas:

##### **1. Inclusion of LD and Autistic artists and audiences.**

**1.1 Creative co-production.** Terret's ongoing partnership with the arts organisation Access All Areas (AAA) has led to changes in the way that they work with and support artists (**S1**). Creative support workers are now directly involved in the rehearsal room, and disabled artists are trained in leadership skills to enable self-advocacy in and beyond the creative process.

**1.2 Inclusive programming.** Following Terret's work at Southbank Centre, the Women of the World Festival now centres inclusion of LD and autistic artists at their global events, with further impacts on Southbank and WoW's practice in terms of disability and access. Her collaborative work with the Royal Court Theatre in 2018 on *Take Up Space* cabaret has generated measures to forefront diversity and engage new audiences, including the creation of a new engagement producer role (**S2**).

**1.3 Inclusion by design.** Following collaborative work with Terret, industry professionals have adapted their practices to forefront access and inclusion, instigating new working methods to include disabled artists and audiences. These methods have been put into practice with: Paines Plough, Tamasha, Unicorn Theatre, Greenwich and Docklands International Festival, and through Hale's work in access training with the FUEL Freelance Task Force (**S3**).

##### **2. Opportunities and empowerment for LD and autistic artists.**

**2.1 Ensemble devising/Theatre creation with disabled artists.** *Not Your Circus Dog*, a disabled-led company directed by Terret and co-founded with Access All Areas, provides ongoing paid work for a group of 5 artists. Artists have developed professional level skills, and gained experience performing at venues including Soho Theatre, the Royal Court, The Royal Vauxhall Tavern, Southbank Centre and in the forthcoming BFI film 'Girl Almighty' (£50k funding over 3 years)

**2.2 New partnerships for diverse casting.** Terret's consultancy with AAA and the Simon and How Agency has led to a branch of the company's work that has diversified casting for film, TV and theatre (800 days paid work for LD and A artists since 2017). **(S4)**

**2.3 Training for LD and A artists in leadership skills.** Terret's partnership with AAA and her contribution to their creative development work underpinned a new programme in leadership training for LD and A artists, leading to self-advocacy, employment opportunities and representation in arts organisations across the UK (ACE funded £285k, 2018). **(S5)**

**2.4 Mentoring.** Terret provides mentoring and support to LD and autistic artists including Emma Selwyn, Adam Smith and DJ Hassan. Selwyn has gone on to devise and present solo shows, co-facilitate training sessions, and co-direct AAA projects. Selwyn and Terret have co-authored an article exploring their collaborative Crip queer methods **(R1, S6)** and have co-curated events for the Live Art Development Agency on performance and learning disability.

### **3. Policy development and curriculum change, overcoming discriminatory practices for LD adults.**

**3.1 Contribution to policy development.** Terret contributed to the British Council's 'Social Inclusion in the Performing Arts' project with the Spanish Ministry of Culture, contributing to Spanish policy documents in 2018 **(S7)**. Her research underpins an inhouse policy report on inclusion by AAA supported by Arts Council England for UK theatres. Her creative practice features in a report commissioned by Spectra on inclusion of LD and A artists. These reports have led to debate within the sector and their impacts have wide-reaching implications for the social inclusion of LD and A artists **(S8)**.

**3.2 Curriculum development.** Terret's work with AAA has contributed to developments in the Performance Making Diploma for Learning Disabled and Autistic Adults at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama through opportunities for an LD and A artist to co-direct the diploma. New York University's Theatre department attest to her impact on their Applied Theatre curriculum:

*"Liselle Terret's ground-breaking practice has inspired the NYU Educational Theatre Community, and her work has become a central component to our teaching and learning about Disability and Theatre". (S9).*

**3.3 Informing practitioners.** Terret's practice-as-research with Anna Clock has influenced Clock's collaboration with Dr Lauren Sankary (Neuroethicist, Cleveland Clinic USA) training medical doctors at Columbia University on telehealth and listening (USD160,000). Terret's work on sexuality, relationships and identity politics with LD and A artists has been adapted for use in a general support setting for LD and A adults in Israel (Roni Ankari, Maas Rehovot).

### **5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)

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**S1a.** Testimonial letter from Nick Llewellyn, Artistic Director, Access All Areas

**S1b.** <https://www.thisisliveart.co.uk/events/access-all-areas-at-lada/>

**S2.** Testimonials from:

**a.** Jude Kelly, Women of the World, Southbank Centre.

**b.** David Luff, Creative Director of Soho Theatre.

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- c. Vishni Velada-Billson, Head of Participation, Royal Court Theatre.
- d. Simon Casson, Producer Duckies

**S3.** Testimonials from industry professionals:

- a. Dais Hale (producer)
- b. Anna Clock (sound designer)
- c. Tim Kelly (lighting Designer)
- d. Alex Covell (producer)

**S4.** Testimonial from Simon & How, Actors Agency.**S5a.** Testimonial from Jo Hammot, Arts Council England**S6.** Testimonials from Not Your Circus Dog Collective Actors.

**S7.** Spanish Ministry. Terret, L (2018) An Overview of Performing Arts as they relate to disability in the UK <http://www.culturaydeporte.gob.es/dam/jcr:64b3fae5-59d6-4706-8287-dce971ff19b6/publicacion-jornadas-inclusion.pdf>

**S8.** NFS was featured as a best practice case study in the 2019 Spectra report by Bella Todd *Improving Critical Engagement With Theatre Made By Artists with Learning Disabilities*: [LAUNCH: Full Report & Executive Summary \(wearespectra.co.uk\)](https://wearespectra.co.uk/launch/)

**S9.** Testimonial from Professor David Montgomery, Program Director of Educational Theatre Department, New York University, USA.

**S10.** <https://notyourcircusdog.wixsite.com/liselleterret> this website archives, evidences and holds videos, further testimonials, reviews and articulations of Terret's impact