

Institution: University of Cambridge, Faculty of English		
Unit of Assessment: 27 English Language and Literature		
Title of case study: <i>World Factory</i> and <i>Future Scenarios</i> : developing public understanding and policy through artistic practice		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2012 to present		
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:
Dr Zoe Svendsen	Judith E Wilson Drama Research Fellow	September 2009 – September 2012
	Lecturer in Drama and Performance, University of Cambridge	September 2013 to present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2015 to the present		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words) <p><i>World Factory</i> (2012-17) and <i>Future Scenarios</i> (2016-present) are connected performance-led research projects in the English Faculty at Cambridge which engage audiences in current and future problems. They provided audiences with new ways of understanding complex issues related to exploitation in the global textile industry, and possible solutions to environmental crisis. Beneficiaries include creative/theatre professionals who have been presented with a new model of participatory performance and a new means of thinking about solutions to the industry's response to the climate crisis. This research has also reached more than 50 activists, architects, planners, urban theorists, conservationists, and policy makers through engagement at the Oslo Architecture Triennale and the Cambridge Conservation Initiative.</p>		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words) <p>Dr Svendsen's continuing practice-based research project explores the possibilities of theatre that is experimental, political, speculative, and participatory. It was pioneered in the climate change work <i>3rd Ring Out</i> (2009-11), where audiences interacted in decision-making processes which led to varied possible outcomes. Outputs of the research include major performance pieces [R1-4] and methodological essays discussing approaches [R5-6].</p> <p><i>World Factory</i> brought consumers into live interaction with the workings of the global textile industry. This work involved up to 96 audience members in a game, facilitated by actors, in which they played the roles of factory owners trying to maintain profitability and a workforce. With her co-creator Simon Daw, Svendsen undertook a three-year research process, in and beyond Cambridge, both into the structures of the industry and into the development of a participatory theatrical form. Research, development, and production took place from 2013 to 2016, with funding amounting to GBP194,000 (plus approximately GBP100,000 in-kind). It included a series of residencies, public talks with experts in the textile industry, and exchanges with a Shanghai-based performing arts company (Grass Stage).</p> <p>The output of this original research was a theatre production, which previewed at, and was partially funded by, the New Wolsey Theatre in Ipswich, and was finalized at the Young Vic</p>		

Theatre in London in May/June 2015, before touring in 2016/17 to venues in Brighton, Burnley, Cambridge, and Manchester [R1]. It was shortlisted for the Berlin Theatertreffen Stückemarkt Award in 2016. In addition to the performances, other outputs from the research included: the digitally-enhanced *World Factory* shirt; the *World Factory* Digital Quilt; and the *World Factory* book, containing the card game at the heart of the show [R2].

Building on the relationship between participatory theatrical forms and social concerns, *Future Scenarios* (2016-present) drew on the success of *World Factory* to address the problems of climate crisis [R6]. This work made people imagine future situations where the necessary steps to avoid catastrophe have successfully been taken. The research was initially funded (2016-17) by a 'networked' residency, supported by the University of Sheffield and Jerwood Charitable Foundation. Svendsen was then awarded Artsadmin's Green Commission 2018. The continuing research process involved extensive consultation, according to a 'research in public' methodology, with climate change specialists, economists, architects, and geographers. It broadened to include a wide range of emerging and established artists and directors, through a series of talks and workshops. In total, nearly 3,000 members of the public, students, practitioners, and experts, participated in this development.

The main output was *We Know Not What We May Be* (WKNWWMB), a five-day interactive performance installation (5-9 September 2018), presented as part of the Barbican Centre's Art of Change [R3]. This was a GBP30,000 commission from Artsadmin (matched by GBP15,000 from the Cockayne Foundation), with an ultimate budget of over GBP100,000 (including GBP47,000 from the Arts Council). The Pit Theatre was transformed into an immersive installation into which groups of 30 audience members at a time were invited to listen to a talk by a visionary speaker (the list included Frances Coppola, Paul Mason, and Kate Raworth), before entering 'the factory of the future', where they became actively involved in conversation, speculation, and storytelling, supported by performers. The resulting ideas and scenarios were displayed in the installation itself, feeding back into the performed elements. The success of the event was demonstrated not least by an important commission for a follow-up, *Factory of the Future* (FOTF), for the Oslo Architecture Triennale in 2019 [R4], at which development both of the formal possibilities, and of the impact on policy-making, continued.

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

- [R1] *World Factory* (2015) <https://metisarts.co.uk/uncategorized/world-factory-video>
 [R2] Svendsen, Z, and Simon Daw, *World Factory* (London: Nick Hern Books, 2017)
 [R3] *We Know Not What We May Be* (2018)
 <<https://metisarts.co.uk/projects/we-know-not-what-we-may-be>>.
 [R4]. *Factory of the Future* (2019)
 <<https://metisarts.co.uk/projects/factory-of-the-future>>.
 [R5] Svendsen, Z. 2017 'The Dramaturgy of Spontaneity: Improvising the Social in Performance' in *Improvisation and Social Aesthetics*, ed. Georgina Born, Eric Lewis and William Straw (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2017), ISBN: 9780822361947.
 [R6] Zoe Svendsen and Lucy Neal, 'Rehearsing for a climate-changed future: practising not preaching for environmental accountability', *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 17 (2012), 289-306, ISSN: 1356-9783 (Print), <https://doi-org.ezp.lib.cam.ac.uk/10.1080/13569783.2012.670427>

GBP17,044 Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin, 2014-15.
 GBP7,000 The British Inter-University China Centre, University of Manchester, 2014-15.
 GBP24,950, grant from the Arts Council, *World Factory*, Spring and Autumn 2014.
 GBP59,000 grant from the Arts Council, *World Factory* in performance, 2015.
 GBP57,798, grant from the Arts Council, *World Factory* UK tour, 2016-17.
 GBP15,000, Cockayne Foundation, *We Know Not What We May Be*, 2018.
 GBP47,000, grant from the Arts Council, *We Know Not What We May Be*, 2018.

GBP30,000 Artsadmin 'green' Commission Award, 2018.

R1, R3 and R4 were deeply researched experimental performance projects, which went through a series of peer-review-like processes in their development. They are being submitted in portfolio outputs for REF 2021. R2 will be part of the *World Factory* portfolio and is an offshoot of the performance project. The underlying methodology is explored in further publications (R5-6) that underwent peer-review and/or editorial processes at journals.

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

World Factory's participatory form had clear effects on its audiences in making them think about the state of the global textile industry, and prompted changes in plans and practice among theatre professionals. In April 2015, 562 people attended its first shows at the New Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich, before its main run at the Young Vic (including a week's extension), where 2,432 people attended (97% capacity). There followed a well-attended tour funded by a GBP57,798 grant from the Arts Council and GBP24,000 in fees from venues [E1] (p. 13). As reported to the Arts Council, these performances resulted in 834 days of artist employment, and an extensive programme of educational outreach for schools and higher education (engaging in total 31,663 people through broadcast and online interactions) [E1] (p. 74).

Impact on public understanding

Feedback from these varied audiences conveys the success of *World Factory* in generating a critical understanding of the global economy. This involved not only the ethical dilemmas facing consumers, but also the complex decision-making and lack of autonomy of the producers. School children remarked: 'it made me think about the poor conditions people work in', and '[it made me think] how just one decision can change the lives of so many', but also 'it made me get a better understanding of the pressure that the factory owners are under' [E2] (p. 11). A wide array of reviews picked up on this multi-faceted response, and noted an unusual degree of self-awareness. Some had their expectations met: 'stunning exposé of ruthless transnational exploitation in the clothing industry' (*Morning Star*). More often they noted ways the involving experience led to enlightening and unexpected responses [E2]. Paul Mason wrote in *The Guardian* 'what shocked me – and has surprised the theatre – is the capacity of perfectly decent, liberal hipsters on London's South Bank to become ruthless capitalists when seated at the boardroom table' [E2] (p. 15).

Impact on creativity and culture

The potential demonstrated by *World Factory* has changed the way many practitioners think about immersive performance. Talks and workshops disseminated (and continue to do so internationally) the project's methods for political and participatory theatre. A former Artistic Director of the Young Vic called it 'extremely likely that other theatre-makers will follow in its footsteps into the new territory that it explored' [E3]. The project's collaborators have testified to its influence on their subsequent work: a Director calls it 'a gold standard for participatory theatre and the dramaturgy of interactive theatre, leading to concrete developments in the practice of many artists including myself [...] in new contexts across a number of productions and shows' [E4].

Developments in Svendsen's own work further demonstrate the effects of *World Factory* on thinking among arts organisations. *WKNWMB* performed at the Barbican Centre in 2018 to 650 audience members, including 47 young people and others on low incomes ordinarily excluded from the arts; they acclaimed the creation of 'a space to discuss possibilities', and 'the intergenerational aspect felt important' – a validation of the effort made to diversify the audience [E6] (p. 3). The founder and ex-Director of Artsadmin noted that this work, bringing audience into collaboration with performers and experts, 'will continue to demonstrate that change is possible' [E5].

In addition to media talks and debates (including, in November 2018, a BBC Radio 4's 'Costing the Earth', 'Art and the Environment') [E7] (p. 6), and workshops for theatre practitioners around the UK, Svendsen's work led to a substantial collaboration with Cambridge Junction arts centre, which declared a climate emergency in its governing policy, and appointed Svendsen to its Board. The Artistic Director confirms Svendsen's research 'has been vital to the development of our strategies, policy and actions [...] leading to genuine and practical changes to our delivery of programme and operations, influencing wider communities of peers' [E7].

Impact on conservation policy and urban planning

As a result of *WKNWWMB*, the Norwegian government think tank for design innovation (Design and Architecture Norway, DOGA), in collaboration with the 2019 Oslo Architecture Triennale (OAT), commissioned and funded (NOK450,000) its successor, *FOTF*. This was developed partly during a three-month residency (June-August 2018) at the Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI). Through workshops and smaller installations in the public spaces of the building, Svendsen's work reached the many groups (with links to over 180 countries) for whom CCI acts as a hub: conservation programme managers and directors; museum curators and learning officers; many external organisations including key conservation NGOs and the UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre; and government (Department for BEIS).

The benefit of the collaboration was recognized at an organisational level: CCI 'will seek to commission more work like this', having gained 'a belief in the benefit of process driven participatory activity and the benefits that this type of residency brings' [E8]. One direct consequence was evident in a 2019 report for BirdLife International on 'Achieving transformative change'. The first recommendation was to 'create an ambitious vision for change and tell the story of how that change will be achieved' (p1); Svendsen's advocacy for this approach, and especially collaborative investment in stories, is described in the report [E9] (pp. 20, 33-34).

FOTF informed the form and content of the whole Triennale wherein it was installed; the key theme of the event was 'degrowth'. The Project manager at DOGA and a representative of the Oslo Architecture Triennale note: 'Dr. Svendsen's work highlighted to us new ways of engaging different urban stakeholders to work together in developing innovative approaches to urban change' [E10]. The final work was a video installation for the full two-month duration of the Triennale, involving approximately 50 architects, urban planners and policy stakeholders in its development [E10]. Participants recognised the potential of the methodological shift. The Project manager at DOGA says that the methodology is 'arguably one of the most appropriate and effective tools we can engage with to create the positive action we need'. The collaboration has enabled their 2020 'Future of Rural Districts' project and provides a knowledge base of how to approach future scenario work [E10]. The collaboration with Svendsen has had 'a significant influence on how we have gone on to plan our projects in DOGA's Urban Development initiative'. One participant in the Triennale workshops summed up the reception of *FOTF*: 'I see it as a very concrete tool to create change' [E10] (p. 18).

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

[E1] Arts Council reports: *World Factory* final activity report 11.10.2017 (p. 1-43); *World Factory* stage management show reports (p44-69); *World Factory* tour income and expenditure report Autumn 2016 (p. 70); *World Factory* activity report form (pp. 71-87).

[E2] *World Factory* Press and Reviews summary from 2015, including audience commentary (p1-13); Mason, The Guardian, *How to turn a liberal hipster into a capitalist tyrant in one evening* 24.05.2015 (pp. 14-20).

[E3] Letter from former Young Vic artistic director, 16.10.2015

- [E4]** Testimonial from Associate Director for *We Know Not What We May Be* at the Barbican and *World Factory* at the Young Vic and on UK tour, 16.10.2020
- [E5]** ArtsAdmin testimonial 17.09.2020
- [E6]** Letter from theatre maker and independent researcher / evaluator 20.10.2020 (including *We Know Not What We May Be* audience feedback).
- [E7]** Cambridge Junction testimonial from artistic director and climate emergency announcement.
- [E8]** Report on CCI Residency, including written and verbal participant feedback, by curators Fanshawe and Holland, December 2019.
- [E9]** Birdlife International policy recommendations: *Achieving transformative change for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework* November 2019: Rosalind Helfand's report: *Achieving Transformative Change for the Future of Biodiversity & the Post-2020 Framework for the Convention on Biological Diversity* August 2019.
- [E10]** Testimonial from Design and Architecture Norway, regarding Oslo Architecture Triennale; panellist reflecting on their participation in the 'Future Scenarios' workshops as part of the Oslo Architecture Triennale, taken from transcript of public symposium at Design and Architecture Norway, 24 October 2019.