

# Introduction

Imagine reading a performance flyer:

‘A Lecture upon Heads’, including: ‘Humorous Oration in Praise of the Law, Nobody’s, Somebody’s, Anybody’s and Everybody’s...Family of Nobody’s’.<sup>1</sup>

You decide to watch the show. The performer satirises the law and current politics and challenges colonising narratives dressed up as heroisms. One ‘Head’ is that of Alexander the Great, whose ‘greatness’ is sharply examined and critiqued. This solo performance could easily be mistaken for contemporary political stand-up comedy, akin to Steward Lee or Bridget Christie. In fact, it dates from 1765, and, in its own right, brought the monologue as art form to public attention. This work by George Alexander Stevens was hugely popular and was performed and -re--performed by others more than 1,000 times to crowded salons in eighteenth-century London and Europe. Yet initially, Stevens, as a solo artist, could not legally perform anywhere.<sup>2</sup> Artists are often expected to be transgressive, and solo artists in particular have a reputation for being strange, anti-social, illegal creatures. A multitude of marvellous bodies populated Renaissance fayres and travelling circuses, challenging the boundaries of what it meant to be man, woman, human, beast. More recently, graffiti artists, like early Banksy, moved art canvases out from galleries onto the streets and subways; the infamous NEA (National Endowment for the Arts) four – Karen Finlay, Holly Hughes, Tim Miller and John Fleck – all had their proposed government art awards vetoed due to the subject matter of their work<sup>3</sup>; in 1974, Philippe Petit performed a high-wire dance for an hour between the twin towers of the World Trade Center, before being arrested and cautioned. Stevens was an early example of one such maverick outlaw – literally performing without licence to audiences who clearly enjoyed the subterfuge and were alive to its unauthorised nature.

## Solo

The term ‘solo’, when used as an adjective, offers a proposition of oneness, of being alone, unaccompanied or unassisted. It defines a well-known way of working in all the arts, where it forms either part of a group practice – scriptwriter, choreographer, composer – or is a practice in itself, as with a painter, sculptor, musician, photographer or writer.

This sense of ‘as if’ oneness, of aloneness yet being ‘with’ others carried on into the later development of the word ‘soloist’ in the mid-nineteenth century. The soloist plays a singular line of music amidst an orchestra, as in a concerto. The performing soloist as musician is separated from the orchestra, even as it accompanies her or him. Again, the nature of the ‘solo’ state of being here does not in fact mean being solitary, but rather being literally ‘outstanding’, physically separated from the other musicians and playing a usually virtuosic, individual line of music.

Solitary practices also have historical legacies in religion, philosophy, coming-of-age rituals and aviation. The solo aviator crosses the Atlantic for the first time, delivering the night mail; the solo dancer or violinist is framed by light, demonstrating perfect technique; and the philosopher walks and thinks, alone. Religion offers us the practice of ‘eremitage’, choosing to be a hermit, anchorite or (lit) ‘desert dweller’, isolated in order to inspire ‘face to face’ experience with the divine.<sup>4</sup> Global rites of coming of age include being thrust alone into the wilderness, to do battle with nature and forces unknown.

## Defining Solo and the Focus of this Book

I am working with a definition of 'solo' in a making and performing context as being where one person is responsible for creating and holding the vision of a piece of work, from idea to performance, although others may be involved in its making. It is important here to add that an overly simplistic view of the solo performer as singular, working entirely alone and in isolation, is not the theme of this book, or a true reflection of practice. The practitioners included here make and perform solo and balance at least three roles: those of deviser, director and performer. It will also emerge in the interviews that the artists concerned firstly make regular use of others in their working processes, and secondly, collaborate 'with' their audiences in a way that makes them far from alone.

Whilst there is clearly a wide variety of solo theatre and performance forms, operating across both popular and experimental work and across arts disciplines, this book specifically focuses on the 'postdramatic' end of the spectrum of solo theatre practice – work that, among other things, goes beyond the primacy of a script.

'Further', the focus of this book is on solo *making* processes: what they are, how they are carried out and what they can entail. With the advent of popular media, YouTube, Vimeo and webcasts of live events, we have unprecedented access to versions of live theatre work. But we seldom have access to how that work is made – to the rehearsal space, which can be in a studio or at home, and the many detailed processes that go into creating a production. What often fails to reach audiences is the labour, expertise and craft involved in making. What is at stake is an invisibility and potential lack of valuing of these processes. This has consequences for funding and generally for the status of the work. However, talking about how one makes something is hard, and, at times, perhaps impossible – to rationalise what can sometimes be intuitive or non-verbal. This gap between doing something and speaking about doing something can, however, be acknowledged, without giving up on the attempt to verbalise and share knowledge. Practitioners themselves have multiple insights to contribute and can offer one important, informed version of what they do. These kinds of personal accounts are notable by their absence in the public arenas – for example in academic publishing or newspaper critical columns.

As an arts educator, I teach acting and theatre making. Questions of value, like 'What is good work and how do you make it?' are critical in the academy. Susan Melrose, writing on performance-making processes, asks pertinent questions about expertise in the arts, like what is it and how do we get it? What does it look like?<sup>25</sup> Such questions need explicit answers, as we charge students to learn theatre expertise and assess them on what they have learned. This book offers numerous examples of expertise relevant to the above questions.

In a sense, our wider culture idolises the soloist. We have never before been so engaged with the cult of celebrity, the 'stars' who may be virtuosic or simply notorious. The twenty-first century viciously fosters individualism, in ever-expanding global capitalist economies, and yet people have never been so homogenised. There is pressure to both conform and also be 'unique', as individuals and even as a nation. In the UK, in a post-Brexit climate, we are engaged in a geopolitical wrestling match between the illusion of an individual nation state and deep knowing of the ultimate power of the collective. It seems a useful skill, at present, to be able to negotiate individual ambition, desire, obsession and interest with group intelligence, expertise and strengths.

In a small way, these conversations about solo making contribute ideas to this debate. The practitioners interviewed make work they care about. They have something to individually say, and do, in performance. They also model ways of working which embrace collaboration and perform collages of multiple voices and viewpoints. The North American writer Richard Sennett, who has written on expert crafting and collaboration, identifies contemporary society as offering two brutal and simple edicts: 'us against them' coupled with 'you are on your own' (2012: 280). These solo practitioners speak of enjoying creative spaces where they can be deeply on their own, precisely because they are also severally connected with other practitioners, makers, producers and audiences – alone with others.

## A Very Brief History of Solo Performance

The term 'solo' means something different in theatre, dance and arts practices. My focus of discussion here is on solo drama, theatre and performance practices, which inevitably have a complex, intertwined history and of which I offer here a brief suggestion of the rich variety. One can begin in the oration and monologues of Greek address and the tales of minstrels, fools and medieval travelling artists, messages directed to the populace as well as their rulers. Subversion was and is written into fooling, an early example of satire and humour used to couch often serious messages of social dissent and critique. For wider public consumption, fayres and circuses, like Bartholomew Fayre of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England, provided arenas for the parade of solo entertainment: freaks, special acts, acrobats, magicians and fortune tellers who created intimate one-to-one performances, provoking and challenging their audiences with tricks and transformations. The monologue as oratory or lecture continued and grew in

popularity during the Restoration in the UK with satirists like Stevens and Foote performing the *Lecture upon Heads* (1765) or *The Diversions of the Morning* (1747). These specific examples of early solo performance from the eighteenth century lay some foundations for characteristics and ideas about it, which later recurred. These include solo having an ambiguous status, 'illegitimate' yet very popular, crossing social activity boundaries, as both artistic performance and social event. Later on, this was further developed in traditions of Victorian old time music hall in the early nineteenth century and in comedy, stand-up and cabaret. It aimed to be of widespread appeal, frequently satirical and self-reflexive, with both performers and audiences holding a beer in the hand.

The monologue gained traction as drama in the 'monopolylogue', where one person plays several roles, like Charles Matthews's early three-act multi-character farce *At Homes* (1818) and William Gillette's Sherlock Holmes (1899). Moving into the next century, other popular and equally enduring solo work included further variations on the monologue form in dramatic biographies of famous individuals' lives, for example Hal Holbrook's *Mark Twain Tonight!* (1954), numerous performances about Gertrude Stein (Pat Carroll, 1970), *The Belle of Amherst* and *Bronte* (Julie Harris, 1976). This kind of portrayal emphasised the skill of the actor, in playing a character other than themselves. A related 'showcase' model is the monodrama written for a particular individual performer. Well-known examples include Jean Cocteau writing *Le Bel Indifférent* for Edith Piaf, first performed in 1940, and Samuel Beckett writing *Krapp's Last Tape* in 1957 for Patrick Magee, Marisa Fabbri in *The Bacchae* (1976), and more recently Simon Callow in Peter Ackroyd's *The Mystery of Charles Dickens* (2012). This work again contributes to the association of solo work with performing virtuosity: the performer inhabits and switches between different characters, using spoken word, gesture, movement, and costume to represent the dramatic narrative.

A later, very different kind of monopolylogue work moving into postdramatic terrain is the solo verbatim theatre of Anna Deveare Smith. In it, she engages with real people and issues, most famously in situations of political or racial conflict. Her most well-known solo works include *Fires in the Mirror* (1991) and *Twilight, Los Angeles* (1992). However, Deveare Smith makes no attempt to use theatrical signifiers such as costume or light or mise-en-scène to create an illusion of 'being' these people: she works solely with voice, gesture and their edited narratives, to 'walk in their words'.<sup>6</sup> She performs a more fluid, inter-subjectivity: the multi-vocal montage of 'American' voices into which her own is mixed.

Solo performance is also prevalent in theatre forms that do not rely on dramatic narrative as the primary organising structure. Work in the *Commedia dell'arte* tradition, ranging from Dario Fo's religious satire *Mistero Buffo* (1988) with to the inclusion of vaudeville in Geoff Hoyle's *The Fool Show* (1988) and Stephen Wade's *Banjo Dancing* (1979), all prioritise strong performer presences rather than character and situations rather than plot structure and allow improvisation into the performance.

Comedy has a long tradition of solo working, traditionally occurring in a sociable environment. The 'joke' as a primary motif introduces the extreme dynamic within which much solo comedy performance operates, starkly revealing both performer skill and ever-present potential failure. In its live mode, it also relies strongly on an intimate connection with the audience, who are near and who can engage in live, direct and often confrontational address. Bryony Kimmings comes from this tradition of club stand-up, and this is evident in her very close tracking of the audience. Earlier traditions of magic and cabaret, started in Paris in 1881, also centralised the solo performer, and while cabaret's heyday was in the early part of the twentieth century, one can connect to its later developments of a particular strand of performance art. In New York in the 1980s and 1990s, and fast-made, trashy performance art experimented with new solo forms and invited in new audiences. Wendy Houston similarly locates London both in the 1980s and in 2010 as a time where such multi-disciplinary solo experimentation also flourished. She speaks of small London pub venues like the Rosemary Branch (Islington), the Hemingford Arms (Islington) or the Oxford Arms (Camden) and later Greenwich Town Hall, home of Friday Night Cabaret, as important small venues where diverse short pieces of solo material could be shown.

Moving across disciplines, visual art practices in the 1930s and the art of the Dadaists and Surrealists moved art work out of formal galleries, which placed specific value on it in relation to a commercial market, and presented instead in temporary exhibition spaces<sup>7</sup>. They went onto the city streets with the ambulatory work of the Situationists and subsequent site-specific graffiti and public art. This laid the groundwork for the solo site-specific work of Pearson, Houston and Baker.

Developing out of fine art in the USA in the 1960s, with parallels in Europe in 'action art', pursued by Beuys and others, performance art was and is typically performed solo (even though, interestingly, its immediate predecessor, the 'Happenings' of the 1950s, were typically group events). Performance art developed in the UK ten years after its USA counterpart and arose out of different initial contexts.<sup>8</sup> Historical performance art practices brought live performance into gallery settings and out to other sites. It offered solo autobiographical monologues and task-based processes of working, emphasising endurance over time, or the carrying out of a single concept rather than a series of actions as in

theatre. Bobby Baker helped create these traditions.

## My Solo Practice

For my own part, this work grew from my previous engagement in solo performance practice. I started making solo work in 2003, exploring my mixed ethnicity, and a number of questions came up in doing this, which I then put to other solo makers. These included how to have multiple voices in a solo, the different kinds of collaboration possible within solo working, how to work with important contemporary issues which concerned me (ethnic discrimination, geopolitics, population control, adoption) without seeming like a mad preacher and completely losing my audience, the art of folding in humour and lightness to weightier topics. Added to this, I also questioned how to work beyond autobiography and a number of other issues. I wondered how other people dealt with these, behind the necessarily closed doors of studio practice, particularly those who had been doing it for a long time. In 2004, in a lab with the Solo Contemporary Performance Forum, it became evident that these and other issues were shared by most other solo practitioners. Following that experience, I sought a more intensive way to address the questions. I undertook a series of extended interviews with six solo performance makers whose work I admired, which now form the basis of this book. I was fortunate enough to be given this very generous and privileged access to their thinking and reflection.

## The Practitioners

The practitioners included in this book are Bryony Kimmings, Bobby Baker, Tim Etchells, Mike Pearson, Wendy Houston and Nigel Charnock. I chose solo practitioners with backgrounds in either theatre, Live Art or dance, who work within a 'theatre event' idea of performance,<sup>9</sup> namely they all prioritise experiment, and consciously use and abuse theatre conventions, devices and frames.

Bryony Kimmings performs funny, vibrant, trashy, no-holds-barred solo performance, addressing her audience directly: 'Hello My name is Bryony...', and then launching into an aural and visual feast of spoken autobiographical monologues, songs and dances, with numerous objects. She is provocatively autobiographical, as in her infamous first solo *Sex Idiot* (2010), where she challenges notions of sex and the body as individualised or privatised by inviting the audience to cut off and contribute some of their pubic hair, which she gathers and makes into a moustache. She works as a theatre activist, speaking about current uncomfortable social and health issues such as cancer, sexual diseases, mental health, the policing of children's imaginations and child poverty. She manages this subject matter with a detailed light touch and a performed persona, which she allows to be both simultaneously likeable and annoying, funny and serious, tough and vulnerable. This is a ludicrously honest approach, allowing diverse and contradictory perspectives into the work, and reflects the true complexity of her subject matter.

Tim Etchells is a highly experienced writer, director and performer, known for his work with the theatre collective Forced Entertainment but also perhaps less known for his solo work, which he has engaged in simultaneously for many years. This includes theatre and video performance, books, and neon sign writing, installation and gallery exhibitions. He has worked for years around the question of what theatre needs or does not need, to exist, function and entertain. He also explores what artwork can do on a page, stage, and gallery space or in digital form. He has an acute dramaturgical and compositional sensibility – an expertise in standing back, to view a theatre piece as an 'economy' or working system which needs fine tuning, both in rehearsal and in performance. He is a quiet maverick with a performance persona that disarms through being casual and seemingly everyday, and yet beneath this lies a master orchestrator, composing intricate work with the random materials he has been sent by others. The result is often complex and dark and requires work from the viewer, whom he coaxes and deceives into thinking all is safe and easy. In his own working process, he emphasises the need for reflective time and solitary contemplation. Solo working fits him well, being perhaps a familiar state for a person who does a lot of writing as part of his practice.

Wendy Houston's solo work and the ways she speaks about it reveal clearly her strong physical and dance expertise. She prioritises physicality, her body and its intelligent knowing. Her early foundational work with the dance theatre company DV8 and Ludus Dance clearly informs this, as does her creation of subsequent numerous solos. She offers up what she refers to as personal manifestos in performance form. She uses dance, spoken word and film, to observe and transpose the state of the world into her work. Her performance persona is often contradictory; low-key, oblique, pedestrian and yet clearly propelled by an underlying anger and critique. She is a master at working with energetic states, frequently changing the dynamic of the work, disarming an audience who may expect to be told verbally but who are shown, physically, instead.

Laughter formed the baseline of Bobby Baker's interviews. Her approach to speaking and to making work shares irreverence and a furious exuberance that is also present in conversation with her. And she certainly is a conversationalist – her interview is packed full of examples of how she uses discussion to advance her making processes. Baker has been making performance work for more than forty years, highlighting in part how our contemporary image of a woman still remains buried under inaccurate notions of the so-called domestic realm: of (grand) motherhood, shopping, housework, mental health and family. As you might expect of a person coming from visual art, her work often begins with objects and specific locations, which she orchestrates with great dexterity, weaving them around her autobiographical narratives. She populates her work with many Bobby Bakers – from mother to cabaret dancer to grandmother to artist to wife to social activist to mental health patient, while always playing with the tone and aim of what she does, to challenge, disconcert, woo, engage and tickle her audience. She works with enormous detail, precision and patience to create works that look chaotic, temporary and messy. A thrilling mess; of objects, music, words, songs – all spilling out over tablecloths and baths, church floors and fields. Baker also speaks freely about intuitive working, which she mixes into her precisely planned work, to great effect.

Mike Pearson is most often known for his large-scale, spectacular site work such as, with Cardiff Laboratory Theatre and Brith Goff in the 1970s and 1980s. But he has also made recurrent, small-scale solo work throughout his long career. His are the aesthetics of extremity, challenging himself to learn and explore. He 'excavates' places, draws out their histories and stories and re-performs these to the communities who live there. His solo work has drawn out of him the ability to perform long monologues, akin to Greek tragedies, where he does not leave the stage and speaks continually. The opposite end of this is his creation of audio walks where he himself is absent and it is instead the audience who 'perform' the work, to explore place and story. He has also been an academic for the past twenty years and has written three books on performance, site and making, which illustrate his dramaturgical and precise compositional approach, also clearly manifest in the interviews.

Nigel Charnock died in 2012, subsequent to these interviews. He could be affectionately described as an 'exquisite irritant', in life, interview and performance. From his early work with DV8, his performances were provocative, high energy, vibrant and loud. His choreographic approach was relentlessly physical, precise and clear, informed by his dance training and continued pursuit of both technical and improvisatory excellence. He embraced contradiction, tension, argument and passion, alternately praising and insulting his audiences. His solo work was unashamedly autobiographical, giving form to his concerns about huge subject areas such as life, relationships, death, men and women. He performed high-status personae – he was not one for low-key humility. You got what you saw and as an audience you had to be involved. He went out to his audiences, sweated on them, and threw real sweets and metaphorical grenades, simultaneously. He was passionate about the state of the world and highly critical of our dubious place within it, furious at the English's contempt for performance, but always insistent that he enjoyed his work and working.

As is evident, these interviewees come from different disciplines within performance. Between them, they create a wide range of solo work as site-specific theatre, audio walks, autobiographical monologues, stand-up, physical theatre, cabaret, dance-theatre, live and performance art, durational events and performance lectures. What they share is a clear connection to what is now often termed 'postdramatic' performance practices.<sup>10</sup> They do not work with representing a scripted, dramatic narrative but instead experiment with multiple media to explore thematic interests and events arising out of the live theatre situation and their relationship with their audience. Theatre labours under the strong expectation of telling a story, and all theatrical elements are employed to serve this telling. Postdramatic work liberates space, time, writing, light, sound and also the actor and the audience from serving the story and instead allows them to become the story itself. Performance becomes an event, not a tale told. Solo postdramatic work, made by all these interviewees, works in the above ways. Solo performance intensifies the postdramatic audience-performer relationship. There is one axis of communication, between these two central protagonists – the audience and the performer.

## Some Similarities and Differences

What emerges from this book is a rich and varied set of articulations about how solo performances can be made, with some shared ways of working evident as well as multiple differences. Differences inevitably arise in the interview discussions themselves – different topics and preoccupations emerge as between one interviewee and another, not to mention the different ways of speaking about work. In addition, the interviews reveal different motivations for working, different methods of making work and different compositional styles.

Shared meeting points abound, in different configurations. So Pearson and Etchells shared a strong overarching

compositional perspective on the work even before it was made, Etchells speaking about it as an 'economy' or game, Pearson as dramaturgy, a timeline with blanks to be filled in. Baker and Kimmings share a prioritisation of their use of objects to bounce off ideas and narratives, 'step by step' with Baker and a strong use of humour wrapped around the issues they are passionate to discuss. Houston and Charnock prioritise physical improvising, thirty seconds of making choreographic material a day, 'just getting in there and doing it,' as ways they gather material.

The performance persona created by these different practitioners revealed elasticity in the kinds of energy and qualities involved. All shared the need to be able to hold the space alone, have good timing, physicality and control. Energetically, however, they varied between the high-octane fuelled energy of Charnock to the lower key, controlled rhythm of Houston. Etchells comes in low to the ground, casual and subtly menacing, Kimmings is friendly, funny, sharp and direct. Pearson is helpful, a guide, a demonstrator, enabler and family raconteur, Baker uncomfortable, awkward, funny and sharp. One persona works no better than the others – all work within the mix of the rest of the performance. All, however, must ultimately use great skill and control to perform alone, even when the performance signals a chaos. Kimmings and Houston spoke of developing their work further through performing it – Kimmings with precise questionnaires, Houston with feedback from fellow artists afterwards.

All the practitioners share a commonality as a set of people deeply absorbed in issues of their time, engaging with the world they live in and current problems and possibilities, ranging from issues of women's role in society to sexual disease, mental health, disappearing landscapes, child poverty, duality and existence, and include the subject of performance itself, its limitations and possibilities. They all reveal a clear vision within their work, as well as abilities to collaborate with friends, experts, and their audiences. They are all committed to specific detailed working, enjoying the precision that solo working affords. They all spoke of a deep awareness of their audiences' needs, desires, and live responses and interact with them in numerous ways, from mental to physical interaction.

## **Some Key Points from the Interviews**

My own research into the specifics of the solo-making context was hugely enriched by these interviews, where distinctions, problems, enjoyments and challenges particularly facing solo makers were discussed. The work confirmed my hunch that solo making was not an individual and isolated way to make work but part of a systemic method of performance production, connected to working with others and aesthetic, disciplinary, economic, and political concerns and practices. They revealed some shared challenges around the need to simultaneously be deviser, director and performer, and related questions of distance and closeness to their work, the need to guard against accusations of narcissism or self-indulgence or conversely, the tendency of audiences to always make autobiographical readings of the performance. Issues of finance, time, and space were on-going concerns. Conversely, all enjoyed the solitude, contemplative space, and silence offered by solo working. Self-authorship and self-direction were also valued, as offering the ability to be precise, 'no slippage' in making your own decisions.

What also emerged from this study were numerous examples of particular skills that expert solo performance makers need in order to work effectively. These include the ability to multi-task or orchestrate simultaneous working, be both inside creative working and have a perspective on it, cope with ambiguous situations, avoid closing down questions and curiosity too early in a creative process, have an acute awareness of audience, and enjoy working alone and with others. There are many more.

## **Choice of Interviewees and the Interview Process**

The interviews that follow focus on talking about making, with the practitioners themselves. My choice of interviewees was based on people whose work I enjoyed and also found challenging. As far as one can, in a tiny sample, I took into account geography, gender, ethnicity and diversity of formal working and discipline. I chose to focus on UK-based practitioners as my own practice is based in this context and I also wanted to limit the historical, economic or political differences so as to be better able to focus on artistic questions. I chose practitioners who had a considerable body of solo work already completed, to be able to benefit from their expertise and experience and to also have some basis for comparison. I also wanted to keep the gender balance as even as possible. I am acutely aware that the ethnicity of the interviewees became unfortunately limited to white European. Given that my own performance work and research is specifically about mixed ethnicity and what it can perform, this was frustrating. I approached several BAME practitioners (Anna Devere Smith, Mojisola Adebayo, Stacey Makishi) but for various reasons it was not possible to include them in this book. However, through the Solo Contemporary Performance Fo-

rum I work to increase access, opportunity and the profiles and presence of BAME practitioners, and this work will and does continue.

My invitation in the interviews was towards reflection and this musing involved many moments of pausing, thinking, hesitancy or wondering, often phrased as ‘I think’, ‘perhaps’, ‘maybe’ as well as several moments of new realisation evident in the transcriptions. However because of space limitations, and reading fluency, I have had to edit out many of the pauses or the ‘I think’ moments, which may lessen the musing-like quality of the spoken interview. It was important to take time. I interviewed each practitioner twice, with at least a space of a month between interviews and each person spoke with me on average for five hours. For this book, I needed to carry out major editing – reducing two interviews into one, reducing the word count and gathering some subject matter into similar areas. I also made slight changes to allow the spoken words to make as much sense when read.

## Organisation of the Book

The book comprises seven chapters; an introduction followed by a chapter for each interviewee. Each one is prefaced by an introduction to the practitioner, which aims to provide a brief sketch of what they are particularly known for, some points that came out of their interviews, which I found interesting and a chronology of their solo performance history.

There is no particular logic to the ordering of the series of interviews, apart from a sense I have of putting different perspectives alongside each other. I have included some notes at the end of each section, to identify people the practitioners referred to by first name and what they do, as well as to signal some further readings that may be of interest.

## Endnotes

1. Stevens, G. Alexander. 1765. ‘The celebrated LECTURE on HEADS’, Skinner Row, Dublin: J. Hoey, p. iii.
2. In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century London, England, only two theatre companies were licensed to perform, working in theatres chartered by the King under royal patent: The Theatre Royal (later Drury Lane) and its rival, Lincoln’s Inn Fields. Early practitioners like Samuel Foote and Stevens worked around this ban by performing at unusual times, like in the morning, or changing the reason for meeting from performance to social pursuit: ‘come and drink a dish of chocolate’ (14).
3. John Frohnmayer, fifth Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, was responsible for vetoing funding for their work. This decision was later overturned in 1993, after the case was heard by the US Supreme Court and the artists were given the monetary equivalent of the funding. However, this ruling led to Congress advising the NEA to halt its funding of individual artists.
4. Eremitage does also take place in the world; hermits also engage with people and help the poor, so it can be both solitary but also with a social purpose and at times interactive. Solo practice, in this sense, can serve a community of people.
5. Melrose, S. 2007. ‘Still Harping On About Expert Practitioner-Centered Modes of Knowledge and Models of Intelligibility’. Keynote presentation at the *AHDS Conference: Digital Representations of Performing Arts*, National e-Science Centre, Edinburgh, July 1–22.
6. Devere Smith, A. 2005. *Four American Characters*. TED talk. See [https://www.ted.com/talks/anna\\_devere\\_smith\\_s\\_american\\_character](https://www.ted.com/talks/anna_devere_smith_s_american_character).
7. A famous exhibition being the 1938 ‘Exposition international du surrealism at the Galleries Beaux-Arts at 140, Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré in Paris, whose exhibitors included Salvador Dali, Marcel du Champ, and Man Ray and which exhibited objects, inventions (Dali’s taxi, where visitors were watered, repeatedly) and early installations such as the ‘Surrealist Street’ (Lehmann, 2008: 66). This is not providing a gloss for ‘event art works’.
8. Kaye (1994: 2) locates UK performance art as being more linked to radical theatre practice and feminist work, compared to the focus in the USA on fine arts practices. However, Carlson (2007: 127) writes about the convergence of spoken word, autobiographical, political monologic performance art that existed both in the USA and the UK, from early performance art practices in the 1950s onwards. He suggests these more text-based, political works are often ignored in discourses on performance art that emphasis the abstract visual art qualities (Feral, 1992).
9. Phelan, P. 1993. *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*. London: Routledge, p. 16.
10. For more detail on the postdramatic, see Lehmann, H.T. 2006. *Postdramatic Theatre*. London: Routledge.