

Place-Based Performance: A Phenomenological Approach

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Research Question: How can I use performance as a way to research bodies as place?

What is Place?

Massey: "... both personal identity and the identity of those envelopes of space-time in which and between which we live and move (and have our 'Being') are constructed precisely through that interconnectedness" (1994). **Our human identities and those of places are not singular units, but contingent and ever-morphing webs of interconnectivity.**

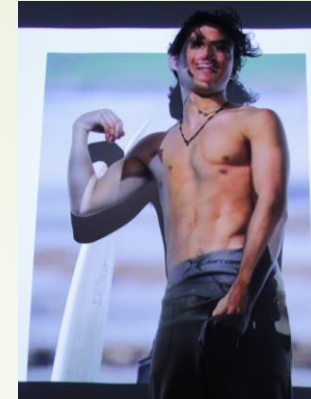


Image of a 'surfer's body' projected onto my body. This was part of my thesis project **Being the Touristed, Part 1: The Unspoken.**

Place instead of Nature:

Place-based performance is an embodied exploration of the ways in which we are embedded in the world, and our relationship to place. Ecotheatre tends to be used to describe issue-plays about environmental themes. It is used as a way to disseminate knowledge about climate change, deforestation, etc.

Place and Phenomenology:

"No matter where you are or what you are doing, you always find yourself already and immediately in the world and, more important, any questions about the world (or any knowledge of it) instantly presuppose and invoke this situatedness..." (Larsen and Johnson 2012)
A phenomenological approach to making place-based performance must start by simply being in place, so that we may investigate from 'being here'.

Bodies as Place:

Our bodies are connected to the places we have been a part of, and our sense of self is therefore linked to places by the past and present enactments of our habitual actions, or what Cassey calls our schemes. (2001)
Simply put, our self bears the traces of places by having carried out actions in them, by living in/as them.

Place-Based Performance Approach:

- The place of the performance is clearly linked to the content of the piece. The action of the performance is not formulated separate from and imposed on a 'set'. Instead it is grounded or rooted in the place.
- To get to know pre-existing narratives that inhabit a place, we can look at an *insiders* whose body/self has been influenced by a place or influenced a place.