Earthing the Laboratory
Speculations for doctoral training

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TOPSOIL: IMAGINING DOCTORAL UTOPIAS

For all the discussion of training in theatre and performance studies, relatively little attention has been paid to the ways in which future researchers are trained. In this essay I begin from the premise that, for performance studies, the arena of training most crucial to theorize and transform is that of the doctorate. I will not worry here about any subtle distinctions between doctoral training, doctoral education and doctoral research. While doctoral work must include an original research contribution, that is its final aim rather than its starting point and a substantial part of what it means to undertake a doctorate is to undergo training. That we sometimes imagine this training to be less embodied or psychophysical than, for example, actor and performer training, is an illusion owing to the hegemony of its techniques. We rarely stop to examine the intensive embodied techniques of reading and writing that define the practice of humanities research. Partly as a result, the undeniable challenge of this labour is more often encountered by doctoral students as an individual failing or mental health problem than as a common effect of intensive training. But learning to read and assimilate large quantities of text is no less psychophysically challenging than learning to dance or to fight. Doctoral training might also include such explicitly advocated techniques as critical thinking, archival research, interviewing or thick description. Underpinning these are a host of techniques that structure university life even more profoundly, but that go unnamed because they are even more hegemonic: logocentrism, individualism, distancing, whiteness.

Doctoral training is both a gateway to academic positions, funding resources and power, and the disciplinary structure through which generations of researchers are shaped and oriented. It therefore matters a great deal how doctoral programmes are designed, from who is accepted to how they are supported to the form that a doctoral thesis or dissertation can take. These issues are of course not fully separate from other aspects of academia. To an extent, what I have written above applies equally to undergraduate education, a transformation of which could arguably be even more radical because it directly involves many more people. And, at the other end of the spectrum, there is an urgent need to reimagine the academic conference session and the scholarly journal article, forms that impact all researchers, from postgraduate students to senior academics. But in this essay my focus is on the doctorate and in particular on the form and structure of PhD programmes in theatre and performance, an area to which Janelle Reinelt pointed more than a decade ago as crucial to countering the imperial tendencies of performance studies (2007: 14). What are we training in these programmes? How might the form of the PhD programme respond to the intensifying neoliberalization of academia, the increasing digital networking of the globe and the growing pressure of liberal and radical movements for social and ecological justice? What possibilities exist for reimaging the doctoral programme as a utopian or heterotopian space? Could the doctorate itself become a leverage point from which to shift the discipline of theatre and performance studies, the practice of the humanities, and even the university itself as a social-epistemic institution?

The scope of this essay is necessarily broad and speculative. I undertook doctoral training in Theatre at The Graduate Center, The City University of New York, from 2007 to 2013, including three years of course work, two sets of written and oral exams (generalist and specialist), a language requirement and a written thesis. I currently supervise doctoral research projects in Europe, primarily at the University of Huddersfield, where a PhD student typically...
enters the programme with their research proposal already formulated and completes their study in three or four years. At Huddersfield, the relatively flexible regulations governing the implementation of practice (as) research allow our doctoral students to determine with significant autonomy the relationship between written text, audiovisual material and live performance in their final theses – a degree of flexibility that goes beyond what is available at some more established universities in the United Kingdom. I also supervise PhD students in Finland and Sweden, where I have been asked to share ideas from my work on audiovisual embodied research methods. The national, regional, disciplinary and institutional differences between these contexts make it impossible to offer any detailed ‘how-to’ proposals for renovating doctoral study that would apply to all of them. A research methodology that might seem conservative in Finland would be judged heretical in New York; explanations generated in Belgium answer questions that are deemed superfluous in California. My aim in this essay is only to highlight some of the implicit limitations that structure current approaches to doctoral training and to point towards some possible – or at least imaginable – alternative futures.

After more than a decade of practice research in the UK, artistic research in Europe, and research-creation in Canada, there is little consensus on the implications of these developments for the structure of doctoral research. In the US, at least four senior scholars have patiently explained to me why nothing like practice research can or should be implemented at the doctoral level, either because (as two giants in the field told me) the concept of practice research is fundamentally illegitimate, or because (as two less canonized but also senior scholars told me) of the need to maintain a protective boundary around theory and history, uncontaminated by artistic practice. But even at an institution like Huddersfield, where doctoral-level practice research is well-established in Music and rapidly growing in Drama, the infrastructure to support its implementation remains underdeveloped.² My own PhD students have at times needed to avoid or cancel complex and potentially generative research projects, falling back on conventional reading and writing methods instead, because of a lack of resources. Funding is a major issue, but not the only one. Even among the members of a highly qualified cohort of doctoral researchers, collaborative research is usually undertaken on a piecemeal and ad hoc basis, because of the absence of rigorous collaborative practice research methods that would support the relative independence of individual projects within larger collaborative frameworks. The emphasis on the individual researcher, carried over from the humanities and arguably no more applicable to practice research than to laboratory science, undercuts the potential of PhD cohorts. Underpinning all of this are the exclusions – of identity, of disability, of religious practice, of illness, of parenting, of alternative kinship and communities – that structure the university at every level. But another university is possible.

Many of the debates over the status of practice research and artistic doctorates have been traced by Robin Nelson (2013: 11–17) and Henk Borgdorff (2012). I will not review them here. As the latter notes, there is often assumed to be ‘a self-evident kinship’ between artistic research and the humanities, a connection that is ‘often reflected in institutional proximity’ (150, 151). Yet existing humanities methods and forms have little capacity to substantively grasp or support the embodied, interactive, collaborative, material, emplaced, ecological techniques that structure what we know as performance. Too often, the reality of practice research is that PhD candidates are expected to arrive at the university having already mastered their own ‘practice’ and are then required to train in techniques of reading, writing and discursive analysis by which that practice can be rendered properly academic. This leads to a situation of practice + research, with research added onto and surrounding practice, rather than a radical reformulation of the university as a site in which practice = research (Spatz 2011). Navigating such an institutional context, the PhD researcher has two major options: either they can organize their practice research independently, making use of previously established artistic and professional contacts and resources; or they can develop a predominantly solo research practice within the university. With the former, they keep their artistic identity alive and remain

² In fact, I know someone who moved from the US to the UK specifically in order to do a practice research PhD, only to discover that there were virtually no resources to support their project, a situation that eventually led them to produce a conventional written thesis instead.
engaged with a world outside academia, but the university itself remains largely unchanged and unchallenged, the division between research and practice still intact. With the latter, a more thorough integration of practice and research is possible, but at the cost of the collaborative and distributed methods that define so much of what is most valuable in performing arts. In the solo model, the artist-scholar or practitioner-researcher holds everything within their own body, the research itself becoming individualized after the model of the lone humanities scholar. Conducting research on undergraduate students might appear as a third alternative, but the inherent constraints of that context tend to pull the research towards a focus on pedagogy.

Following recent calls for a ‘planetary’ approach to performance studies that ‘breaks from the orthodox singularity of the academic voice’ and makes fuller – although not uncritical – use of digital network technologies, how might we reimagine the doctorate?

A recent report on Artistic Doctorates in Europe concludes that, while ‘[a]rtistic research is a crucial part of the future of academia’, nevertheless, ‘the full potential of the Artistic Doctorate is going unrealized’ (Artistic Doctorates in Europe 2017: 20). Among the reasons given for this are the lack of adequate support and ‘resources (time, space, funding)’ and the need for further ‘dialogue between the cultural sector and research communities’. I will go further and suggest that the very form of the doctoral experience, the doctoral cohort and the doctoral thesis need to be reinvented. Practice research and artistic research have set important precedents that can help us do this. For example, Nelson describes a collaborative practice research project that ‘resulted in one joint submission for which each [of two contributors] was awarded a PhD’, pushing the boundaries of collaborative creation and authorship beyond what had been allowed (2013: 75). But the practice of collaborative research needs to be taken much further. Doctoral training in these areas cannot hope to make serious advances or interventions in the fabric of knowledge if it relies on existing structures of artistic production. Collaboration cannot only mean working with artists and partners outside the university, on a case-by-case basis, or with support from arts funding institutions. Instead, the question of collaboration, as well as the question of what actually constitutes practice (Spatz 2018), needs to be brought inside the university, destabilizing the institution’s assumptions about authorship, authority and the individual as maker and holder of knowledge. There is no limit to how far such a line of questioning might go, once we recognize that collaboration takes place not only between researchers but also in the relations of identity and community, care and kin, that intertwine our practices and our lives. With this we could move towards a radical queering and decolonization of the university.

It may be suggested that now is the wrong time to reinvent doctoral study, when the university itself is under attack through neoliberalization, with undergraduate and postgraduate programmes across the arts and humanities under threat of dismantling. When departments are being defunded, when students face increasing pressure to financialize their degrees and when the value of the PhD itself is increasingly interrogated in economically quantifiable terms, how dare we imagine the doctoral programme as a site for the invention of new worlds? My response to this concern would be that the university is not worth saving if it does not see itself as a full participant in all of these linked struggles. There is no need to save the humanities, if this is not linked to a disinvestment from extractive capitalism. There is no need for the doctoral degree to exist, if its meaning and substance is not decolonized. There is no need to scramble for more doctoral funding, if those resources are not to be redistributed across lines of class, racialization and citizenship. There is no need to wrest the use of technology away from corporate consumerism, if we are not going to reinvent the university itself as a different form of life. There is no need to decentre logocentrism in favour of more embodied and audiovisual ways of thinking, if that decentring does not also interrogate white supremacy. There is no need for an interdisciplinarity that cannot also hold space for sickness and disability, for queerness and parenting. There is no need for the university to be defended, if it is not going to undertake a thorough, profound and sustained
process of truth and reconciliation around its own ongoing complicities with racial capitalism and colonialism.

**SUBSOIL: ARCHIVAL OBLIGATIONS**

Artistic research still often finds itself shoehorned into research methods and structures that derive from the humanities and that, despite their value as interdisciplinary interlocutors, fail to grasp the most important ways in which research is conducted in performing and embodied arts. A new approach to doctoral training is needed in order to recognize the epistemological and ultimately socio-political potential of knowledges that exceed the textual. To theorize practice research, I have in the past turned to studies of laboratory methods in the sciences. This was not in order to plug artistic and embodied practices into technoscientific laboratories – which only too gladly consume them as research objects to reinforce their own epistemic primacy – but rather to rethink our own lineages and techniques, as practitioners, through the lens of social epistemology and its critical study of laboratoriality (Spatz 2015). With these and other frameworks in mind, the time has come to imagine concretely what a new kind of laboratory might look like: one that is modelled not on technoscientific methods but on the broader onto-epistemic principles that social epistemologists and theorists in science and technology studies have derived from their critical perspectives on technoscience. Today, we find all sorts of ‘labs’ popping up across the university and beyond. But to what extent do these labs involve the degree of investment of time, money and methodological stamina that would be required to bring forth major discoveries? But to what extent does the ‘lab’ framework disrupt hegemonic epistemologies and to what extent does it simply reappropriate subjugated knowledges within them? What would it be like to run a ‘real’ artistic or embodied research lab? To what forms of epistemic rigour would such a lab be submitted and to whom would it be accountable?

I attempted to run one such lab for six months, from May to October 2017, with funding from the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council (Spatz 2020b). This was the most generative period of my professional life and its results profoundly inform my writing here. Yet this lab was made possible only by an extraordinary privilege of funding and was not sustainable beyond that six-month period. Nor is there any obvious way in which another lab along those lines could be constituted, except through another major research grant. In contrast, the potential to implement rich and sustainable laboratory cultures at the level of doctoral training is already within our grasp as a field. Only a paradigm shift is needed, away from individual PhD research projects and towards larger and broader endeavours that accommodate the interests and participation of multiple students and staff. This would be a space for structured interaction and experimentation that carefully avoids, on the one hand, the strictures of conventional interaction and experimentation into individual projects. More than any critical textual ‘turn’, such a practical change in the training of doctoral students, with corresponding changes in the format of the PhD thesis, opens the door to a new kind of university in which artistic and embodied practices could be centred rather than marginalized.

Laboratory studies – the critical study of laboratory science – offers an image or model of the laboratory that reaches far beyond the technosciences themselves. My reflection here is based upon the work of several theorists of laboratory science, especially Bruno Latour (1983); Andrew Pickering (1995); Hans-Jörg Rheinberger (1997); Karin Knorr Cetina (2001); and Karen Barad (2007). Following these thinkers, we can conceive of the laboratory as a place in which all manner of forces, materials, bodies and knowledges collide in ways that are carefully orchestrated yet also rigorously unpredictable. A laboratory generates new phenomena by defining that which is old, known or ‘technical’. Continually drawing and redrawing a line between the known and the unknown, the laboratory moves gradually forward, through iterative experimentation, not towards any kind of complete or total knowledge but simply to a different location in epistemic space, a place at which affordances manifest that were previously inaccessible. Through this movement, for which

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3 For detailed citations of these authors and explanations of how my general description here draws upon their work, see my books (Spatz 2015, 2020a, 2020b).
spatial displacement can only be an imprecise metaphor, objects are continually unfolded into fields, while fields are continually refolded into objects. At the core of this movement is always embodied technique, the practical knowledge of experts, which exists in continuous relation to a limitlessly unfolding substrate of relative reliabilities. But what distinguishes a laboratory from the majority of embodied research sites is its relationship to circulating documents. Documents of various kinds are what allow a laboratory to create a short circuit between the local and the planetary, between practice and discourse.

To a certain extent, theatre and performance artists have already explored laboratoriality, most famously through the European tradition of the ‘theatre laboratory’ (Schino 2009; Brown 2019; Kosiński 2020), but also in countless theatre and dance companies and projects that foreground collaborative creation (Colin and Sachsenmaier 2016). At its best, a performance ensemble can be what Katherine Profeta describes, in reference to choreographer Ralph Lemon’s work, as a kind of laboratory in which the grandest questions – about ‘the tensions between individual and group’, about freedom, history and spirituality – ‘bubbl[e] up easily from just below the surface of the daily work’, linking ‘effective intercorporeal exchange’ to the largest scales of human activity (2015: 204–5). Yet such companies have an uneasy relationship, at best, to the archival obligation that underpins the technoscientific laboratory and defines the university as an institution. After all,

it is possible for intercorporeal work to be radical on a radically small scale. If the knowledge gained in the rehearsal room is not effectively disseminated, the collaboration will have been very meaningful for a very small number of people.... And thus [we are drawn] back to that old question of audience. How might other bodies, beyond those bodies in the room, feel the reverberations of this physical work? (205)

This is arguably the central question for academic practice research at any level: How to meet the archival obligation that allows the laboratory to connect the local to the translocal, discursive or planetary? How to inscribe our understanding differently into discourse, in a way that honours lived experience without resigning from the social? For too long this problem has been posed as a binary opposition between the ephemerality of performance or experience and the insufficiency of established forms of writing, documenting and knowing. Such a dichotomy, I believe, derives in complex ways from the intertwined histories of writing and colonialism (Brander Rasmussen 2012). But there are other ways to design a laboratory. There are other ways to think.

If the laboratory is a site at which short circuits are sought that link small discoveries to larger contexts, then some kind of archival obligation surely pertains. Yet we need not think of the archive in conventional terms, as a library of written texts. Every laboratory needs to make ‘cuts’ (Barad 2007: 175), dividing lines or borders, between the known and the unknown, the technical and the epistemic. But these cuts are not static. They do not signal a permanent distinction between subject and object. The lines themselves can be moved, the cuts made elsewhere, the circuits differently connected. We need not constantly recreate, as if worrying a half-healed wound, the dichotomy between ‘a legitimate archive – one external to me and one that might ensure my professional success and upward mobility’, and ‘the messy, embodied, illegitimate archive’ of bodies and lived experience (Singh 2018: 27). Instead, the question of the archival and the documentary can become a central impulse around which to reimagine the university, perhaps beginning with the practice research doctorate, where this question has long lingered and continues to vex. It is from this starting point that we might begin to imagine how a doctoral programme could be much less bound by the formats and structures of conventional scholarly outputs, precisely because it is much more richly engaged in the circulation of documents.

To honour embodiment, corporeality or practice today is not to shut out the rest of the world in favour of a private, esoteric or neutral space, but rather to find new ways of inviting the world in, as well as new ways of moving outwards into disparate worlds. A doctoral programme organized along these lines would not ask how a given artistic practice can be linked to a documentary outcome, but would start much further back in the process. How do various kinds of circulating
documents bring practitioners together around common objects and within shared fields? How can the archival obligation, in its most basic form, be integrated into our practices without damaging them? This first of all requires a reckoning with the power of the archive, the bloody history of writing, as well as photography and videography, in the construction of nations and empires. What might it look like to deconstruct the act of writing, to dismantle the textual, to defuse the power of the camera, to reappropriate the computer, bringing these into other spaces of practice and care? At the same time, how might we carefully, yet vulnerably, expose our embodied practices to the critical archival interventions of those far away, in the understanding that their perception of the traces we leave behind will never coincide with our own experience? I can think of a handful of possible answers to these questions, which may be specific to my personal trajectory, but here I want to point more broadly to the archival obligation as a leverage point that speaks back to dominant assumptions in both artistic and scholarly practice. The archival obligation does not allow the artist simply to proceed with their art, but requires them to learn from and contribute to a larger and more referentially stable context. But neither does this obligation coincide with the narrow conventions of scholarly forms like the article or the book. The archive is not a single technology that can be used or rejected, but a fundamental question about communication and transmissibility.

**BEDROCK: EARTHING THE LABORATORY**

The laboratory as proposed here suggests neither a sterile, technoscientific environment nor a closed, esoteric ensemble, but a *place of making* in which all available tools might be integrated within a space that is continually shifting and being redesigned in relation to multiple fields of knowledge and power. To imagine a laboratory model for doctoral training requires us to rethink and remake the subject/object division itself and with it the dynamics of authorship, the generation of knowledge and the relationship of research to the body and to the earth. I am thinking here about an *earthing* of the laboratory in multiple senses: ecological, epistemic and decolonial. In an ecological sense, I mean a laboratory that takes responsibility for itself, that does not simply accept the massive accumulation of wealth and power inherent in the university, that seeks to recreate its own foundation according to a liveable ethics. This would be a laboratory that recognizes the need for healthcare and childcare; that builds kinship and community into its structures; that cares for everyone involved in the construction and maintenance of its spaces; that develops democratic modes of governance and transformative modes of justice – an ecological laboratory that incorporates air, water and other flows as invaluable elements, essential to its existence. These are basic and fundamental concerns, yet constantly overlooked or willfully ignored by the university as we know it. And this is only the beginning of what is needed.

In an epistemic sense, such a laboratory would recognize the impossibility of universal knowledge and trade instead in the relative reliability of the transmissible, which moves from place to place without ever becoming completely ungrounded. Giving up logocentrism is the first step along this path: We have to realize the extent to which the technology of writing has transformed the practice of thinking and we have to recognize the breadth of thought and knowledge that exists beyond the written word. An earthed laboratory takes as its premise the inextricability of technique, identity and place. This means that it accepts the relationships between the technical, the reliable, the factual and the particular bodies and sites in which knowledge is made. Yes, even the science of climate change, even the invention of a vaccine, even the laws of mathematics are no more than techniques: relatively reliable ways of working and practicing and living, which find their use and value, whether healing or harmful, in how they are applied by living beings. Epistemic earthing throws open the gates of what might be counted as knowledge, without rejecting the archival obligation. It does not relieve us of the responsibility to communicate, to contribute to discourse, to reach out and touch the social as it circulates through uncountable written, auditory, imagistic, videographic, animated, printed, and digital media. Earthing does not, in other words, free us from the social. But it grounds the
social, it earths the social in the embodied and the emplaced, demanding that we rethink our relationship to documents and to archives.

Decades after his work on scientific laboratories, Bruno Latour (2018) begs ‘us’ (that is, in his terminology, the ‘Moderns’ who have never been modern) to come ‘down to earth’ in terms that resonate with my description of the laboratory as a short circuit. To counter the rising tide of virulent nationalism, he writes, we will have to be able to succeed in carrying out two complementary movements that the ordeal of modernization has made contradictory: attaching oneself to a particular patch of soil on the one hand, having access to the global world on the other. (Latour 2018: 12)

In this way Latour evokes a kind of grounding, wherein ‘there is nothing more innovative, nothing more present, subtle, technical, and artificial (in the positive sense of the word), nothing less rustic and rural, nothing more creative, nothing more contemporary than to negotiate landing on some ground’ (53). But can we trust Latour’s vision of grounding? As he quickly warns us, ‘The return to the Earth must not be confused with Lebensraum, the back-to-the-land movement’ associated with fascism and ecofascism. Hence, ‘the urgency of repolitizing what it means to belong to a land’ (54). In a sense, the laboratory might be the last possible type of institution that could be grounded or earthed. Given the colonial history of social science research (Smith 1999), the task itself may be an impossible one. Yet this is precisely why I have proposed the laboratory, and in particular the undertaking of doctoral research within a laboratory, as a possible leverage point. More than the classroom, conference room, or journal, the laboratory is the site at which knowledge is most fluid, most open to change. Latour’s early work showed how a laboratory can change the world. How might the world change the laboratory?

If our intention is to not only to make the university ecologically sustainable and epistemologically sound, but also to decolonize the structures that have solidified racism and climate injustice through knowledge production, then perhaps, instead of Latour, we might better think with Nishnaabeg writer Leanne Betasamosake Simpson and her concept of grounded normativity. I am acutely aware of the important warnings against the superficial invocation of decolonization. Indeed, decolonization is not a metaphor (Tuck and Yang 2012) and the term is already too easily employed when describing ‘sloppy attempts to “decolonize” a syllabus or a programme without any real structural changes – in the programme, the class, the faculty, or the university’ (Appleton 2019). Writing from within my own considerable whiteness, supported by a predominantly white institution, for a predominantly white journal, it might well be considered inappropriate to invoke the decolonial at all. On the other hand, the great difficulty of decolonization does not give us/you a pass to not attempt to decolonize academia, but rather start planning the ways in which to do it and putting into place plans (hiring indigenous faculty on permanent positions, provide scholarships to indigenous students, accommodate teaching/learning structures to different knowledge production sites and ways, etc.) starting now. (Appleton 2019)

Some of these proposals are more easily and directly applied in Canada or Australia than in England, but this does not change the fact that decolonization is the necessary bedrock of earthing the laboratory. Earthing the laboratory in the UK, for example, cannot limit itself to the ecological and epistemological levels I have described, but must go further in its grappling with the legacies of empire and the continuities of neo-imperial capitalism. This is why, when I talk about earthing the laboratory, I am talking about structural changes to programmes, to classes, to faculty and to the university.

Simpson (2017) writes about embodiment and embodied knowledge; about the interdependence of theory and practice; about songs, dances and stories as channels of knowledge as well as culture, of theory as well as tradition. A comparison between her call for ‘embodied resurgent practice’ (191) and current discussions of practice research is striking, as much because of their differences as their similarities. Over several decades, practitioners and scholars in theatre and performance studies have learned from indigenous sources and lineages of knowledge. Sometimes these sources have been
cited, sometimes they have been downplayed and culturally appropriated and in many cases they are not even recognized or understood by those who learn from them. Increasing focus on embodiment, identity and place within theatre and performance studies owes much, if not everything, to such hidden sources. Yet the field remains very far from anything approaching what Simpson, following Dene theorist Glen Coulthard, calls grounded normativity: 'ethical frameworks generated by ... place-based practices and associated knowledges' (22). Such ‘ethical intelligence is ongoing; it is not a series of teachings or laws or protocols; it is a series of practices that are adaptable and to some degree fluid’, perhaps not exactly an ethical framework but more like ‘a series of complex, interconnected cycling processes that make up a nonlinear, overlapping emergent and responsive network of relationships of deep reciprocity, intimate and global interconnection and interdependence, that spirals across time and space’ (22, 24). To imagine a doctoral programme in such terms may seem impossible, especially within the UK and Europe. Yet that is what I mean by earthing the laboratory – and that is how far the topsoil is from the bedrock.

An earthed laboratory is a place of making grounded in relations of deep reciprocity, in which local micro events can be connected with translocal, transnational and global or planetary (but not universal) contexts; in which interpersonal and material ethics are short circuited to social, cultural and economic politics; and in which the flow of documents is orchestrated to serve the care and thriving of living beings. From where you/we are standing right now, it may indeed not be possible to cultivate such places directly, but earthing is a process. Even to ask the question of what grounded normativity might look like in your own body and place, through your own situation – in whiteness, in blackness, in indigeneity, in Jewishness; in a properly or improperly sexed body; in a disabled or temporarily abled body; as an immigrant, as a refugee, as a citizen, as a settler, as a diasporic – could be a first step. Asking such questions invites us to reframe the value of theatre and performance, as well as theatre and performance studies, and of the university itself. That questioning is urgent and essential. Let us think together about how an earthed laboratory could be made, who would need to be present, how we might assemble, what we might do, where we might land, whose permission we might need, which walls might have to be torn down. There are many different points at which such questioning could begin, but the design of a doctoral programme – as the formal academic threshold separating training from research, the technical from the epistemic – is unique in its flexibility and importance. It is true, but an understatement, to say that the potential of the artistic doctorate is going unrealized. Let us say instead that we have not yet begun to imagine what an artistic doctorate could be.

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