

'What is a theatre? Where is it and how do you get there?'

#3 TRACES



Is theatre a site of experimentation? We talked about how dangerous that word is, but I want to use it in the sense of a laboratory. It first occurred to me when we were making 'Schrödinger's Box' with Reckless Sleepers, that a theatre could be an experimental chamber, laboratory, or space. Like those early scientific demonstrations from the age of enlightenment, where something was not truly 'true' until it had been demonstrated and reproduced in front of an audience. This model of theatre is for witnessing the outcome of some research, usually conducted without an audience because it takes so long and is full of doubt and failure.

Another model, and one that Sophia and I have used many times in our durational pieces, is to put the doubt, emptiness and failure on display. This is of course often as 'dramatic' as the former model. You watch people creating something in the moment. Needless to say, there is no rehearsal for such pieces. Doing them without an audience is just another piece of your life and rehearsing for someone else is the show itself.

After graduating in 1989, I co-founded a short-lived theatre group called In The Big Room. Our company name referred to both the auditorium and the world as a whole. We were interested in porosity.

Something Cathy, Phil, Simon and I have also been interested in, working together as Wrights & Sites. In an attempt to side-step time-consuming issues of access, and the rules governing walled-in spaces, we began to walk. Walking is a porous activity. Material seeps in. Material seeps out. The indeterminate nature of most everyday environments calls for latitude in the structure and content of walking-based activities, an openness to (potentially disruptive) things encountered, a playful attitude towards displacement.