

Mapping and Projecting a Collabo-writing Process through various 'Modes' of Writing

A Workshop led by johnmichael rossi in collaboration with Jonathan Heron and Joanna Bucknall for the IFTR 2012 Conference in Barcelona.

Introducing Context:

My research focuses on concepts of writing, authorship, collaboration, readership and participation. I am currently developing a site-specific interactive play, *Rumi High*, which critiques the public education system in America, which is being written through various modes of writing, including live performances and workshops, enabled by digital technology, to exist as a literary work. This practice-led project has arisen out of a concern for the declining presence of theatrical works, specifically plays, in the literary world, as a result of the rise of interactive, immersive and site-specific works being created, which often diminish the role of text/speech, and present challenges to documentation. *Rumi High* is being written as a multi-linear narrative in a digital and 'live' space, located at a website, which employs various hypermedia to write a text that performs for and with an audience.

My paper, *Routes To The Continuous Present: Mapping The Writing Process Of A Site-Specific Interactive Play Towards A Digital Hyper(play)text*, considers Barthes' concept of the 'writerly' text and Gertrude Stein's 'continuous present' in relation to my playwriting practice which is traced back to journal writing and journeys across an ever-expanding network of collabo-writers who write in various spaces through various modes of writing, in order to realize the 'work.'

This workshop activity will consider the various modes of writing that are available to us in the 21st century, and how they can enable or challenge the form of writing, playwriting, which I argue to be inherently and highly collaborative, even in its most orthodox practices. The format of the workshop also models particular approaches and structures that are a signature of my practice.

- **Opening Activity: 3-minute Free Write** (3 minutes)
 - Participants will be asked to start the session with a 3-minute stream-of-conscious free-write.
 - If needed, paper and pens will be provided, but participants are given the choice to use laptops, tablets or smartphones if they prefer.

- **Group Brainstorm: 'Modes of Writing'** (7 minutes)
 - Participants will be asked to reflect on the various ways that they have committed the act of 'writing' in the last 24 hours... the last week... month... year. [A list will be scribed on chart paper to document the discussion]
 - Questions to Consider:
 - What is the physicality of these modes of writing?
 - In what ways are these modes public/private?

- Do these modes lend themselves to more or less to collaborative processes?
 - As an extension: What ways have you engaged with the writing of others?
- **Seeding an Idea towards Collaboration** (10 minutes)
 - One participant will be asked to offer a fragment of writing (a word, phrase, concept, theme) from his/her free-write to be planted into the activity. [This fragment will be presumed to be an idea for/towards the creation of a theatrical work].
 - The group will briefly brainstorm some possibilities of how the fragment could be used as the stimulus for a theatrical work.
 - The group will break up into smaller groups (perhaps the already existing PaR Working groups) with the task to:
 - Choose from the 'modes of writing' list created to imagine how a theatrical text (in relation to the stimulus/fragment) might be written and read.
- **Collabo-Writing** (10 minutes)
 - Each group will have approximately 1 minute to share their ideas/findings.
 - The larger group will consider how the various ideas can be weaved together to create one literary text that evokes the inherent theatrical/performative quality of the play.

Supplies:

- Paper and Pens
- Large Pad/Tablet/Chart Paper
- Markers (for scribing)