

## PROF TONY FISHER

**Job title**

Professor of Theatre, Politics and Aesthetics

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### COURSES

Research Degrees (PhD)

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### PROFILE

I grew up in North-east England, in the city of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, where throughout the 80s the abrasive effects of Thatcherism permeated almost every aspect of life. The city's lo-fi music scene, in the aftermath of punk, provided an outlet, a potent mix of anarchic joy and seriousness, and also the conviction that art could say something important about our social world. Those early experiences shaped an outlook that continues to inform my approach to teaching and research today.

My interests in theatre, performance, film and visual arts practices are also reflected in my educational background. After completing a degree in fine art at Middlesex Polytechnic I moved to New York, where I studied at the Whitney Museum of American Art's Independent Study Programme with Hal Foster, Yvonne Rainer and Ron Clark. It was during my time in New York that I encountered theatre and performance for the first time – particularly through the work of the Wooster Group. Returning to the UK, I went to the National Film and TV School, and then pursued a short career in film-making before eventually going on to return to study, to complete an MA and PhD in European philosophy at the University of Essex.

Prior to joining Central I taught on critical studies programmes in art schools, and as a sessional lecturer in philosophy at Birkbeck. At Central, I was course leader for the MA Writing for Stage and Broadcast Media course for several years before becoming the Associate Director of Research, with responsibility for the PhD programme in 2016. As a researcher, my work has pursued two separate albeit related strands of thought: first, in the area of agonistic aesthetics, interrogating political understandings of contemporary critical art and performance practices; and, second, in exploring the cultural history of theatre, particularly in relation to the ambiguous proximity of theatre to state and governmental power.

I regularly represent Central at GuildHE Research Leads meetings.

I am currently seconded to the London Arts and Humanities Partnership (LAHP, AHRC consortium) as its Deputy Director (Training and Cohort Development) on a .5 basis.

## AREAS OF EXPERTISE

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- Theatre, art and democratic politics
- Aesthetic theory
- Environmental humanities and art practices
- Cultural history of the European stage
- Theatre and continental philosophy
- Research skills and methods
- Film and theatre
- Writing for film and theatre

## PHD SUPERVISION

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To date, I have supervised 10 PhD thesis to completion and externally examined 10 more in areas including film, performance philosophy and political theatre. I am currently supervising or interested in supervising doctoral projects in the areas of theatre and politics, theatre and philosophy, environmental humanities, and theatre and aesthetics.

## KEY PUBLICATIONS

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2023. *The Aesthetic Exception: Essays on Art, Politics and Theatre*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press).

2022. 'Theatre and its Discontents' in *Play and Democracy, Philosophical Perspectives*, edited by Alice Koubová, Petr Urban, Wendy Russell and Malcolm MacLean, (London: Routledge), pp13-32.

2021. *Theatre Institutions in Crisis: European Perspectives*, co-edited with Christopher Balme. (London: Routledge).

2020. '[Arte Político después del Giro Comunicativo \(Political Art after the Communicative Turn\)](#)' *Escritura e Imagen* 16, 2020: 285-305

2020. *Foucault's Theatres*, co-edited with Kéline Gotman, (Manchester: Manchester University Press).

2020. 'Problems of Stasis in *My Country*: The National Theatre and the Crisis of General Enculturation in Post-referendum Britain' *Performing Research* 24.8, 125-132, 2020.

2019. *Beyond Failure: New Essays on the Cultural History of Failure in Theatre and Performance*, co-edited with Eve Katsouraki (London: Routledge).

2018. "[Theatre at the Impasse: Political Theology and Blitz Theatre Group's Late Night](#)" in *Performance Philosophy Journal*, Vol.4, No1, pp.139-156.

2017. [Theatre and Governance in Britain, 1500-1900, Democracy, Disorder and the State](#), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

2017. [Performing Antagonism: Theatre, Performance and Radical Democracy](#), co-edited with Eve Katsouraki, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

2015. '[Thinking without Authority – Performance Philosophy as the Democracy of Thought](#)', *Performance Philosophy Journal*, 1, pp.175-184.

2013. '[Castellucci's Theatre of the 'Abject/Sublime'](#): or, the Theatre of Failed Transcendence', *Somatechnics* 3.1, pp. 31-49.

2011. '[Aesthetics and the Political – an essay on Francis Alys's "Green Line"](#)' *Cultural Critique*, Issue #78 (Spring).

2010, "[Heidegger and the Narrativity Debate](#)" *Continental Philosophy Review*, volume 43, number 2, 241-265.

## **EXTERNAL PRACTICE**

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2013. Director, *Zdenka's Journey* – an experimental documentary that follows one woman's journey through the nightmare of the Holocaust.

## **REGISTER OF INTEREST**

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Nothing to declare.