Reactivating the Record: Performance, Spaces of History, and Researching the 1990

Cambodian National Dance Company Tour to the U.K.

Dr Amanda Rogers, Department of Geography, Swansea University, Swansea, SA2 8PP. UK.

Abstract

This is an autoethnographic reflection about doing research on the 1990 Cambodian

National Dance Company tour to the UK. Drawing upon research on performance, history and

reactivation, I argue that the situated encounters, memories and experiences associated with

performance documentation – the archival 'record' – complicates our sense of performative

endings. I reflect on the seeming inability to study an 'original' performance and the passing

of dance masters during the course of my research, whilst simultaneously finding pictures and

reports about them in archives and online. Through this, I consider how the affective

investments of performances linger, often for decades.

Key words: archive; Cambodia; dance; performance; reactivation.

Introduction

The lights go down, the auditorium goes dark, the applause starts. This is how a

performance conventionally 'ends.' A seemingly singular, definite moment in space and time.

A set of performative cues that we are encultured to read and respond to means that we

know that the finish line has been reached. The performance is over, and we can go home.

However, in this reflection, I offer a counterpoint to conventional assumptions around

performance endings by creatively exploring their multiple and on-going space-times.

Ultimately, this leads to a consideration of how the affective investments of performances

can continually re-emerge and filter across spaces and social relations over many years. This

is illustrated through a short autoethnographic account of researching the 1990 Cambodian

National Dance Company tour to the U.K. My work here is inspired by research on

performance, history and re-enactment, bringing together Philip Auslander's (2018) ideas on

documentation as performance (particularly his notion that performance is 'reactivated' in

the moment of our interaction with its recording) and Rebecca Schneider's (2011) book

Performing Remains: Art and war in times of theatrical reenactment which draws attention

to the out-of-sequence encounters of past, present and future in performance. My reflections

draw out the geographical dynamics of their work by emphasizing my evolving experience of

the tour through multiple situated encounters with documents and people. Thinking about

reactivation also offers an alternative lens for research in historical geography that attempts

to excavate embodied practices from written archives as it views encounters with documents

as performances in and of themselves (Griffin and Evans 2008; Gagen et al 2007). The

research travels I relay here created situated encounters, memories and experiences that are

constantly being re-composed from – and into – a performance record. One that does not

have 'an' ending.

Let the turntable start.

Track [01]: An End in a Beginning.

My father loves three things: poetry; music; and charity shops. They often go together.

His taste is eclectic, and I sometimes wonder if he just goes for the covers. Growing up on a

remote farm, literally at the end of every road and every line, his books and records were

portals to other worlds. I was curious, to be sure, but mostly, I was just bored.

This is how I first encountered *Homrong*, the record of the musicians from the National

Dance Company of Cambodia, made by Real World Records and WOMAD in 1990. A record I

first played sometime around 1993 or 1994, just as I became a teenager. I do not know how I

came to play it, only that I was on my own, one afternoon in the summer holidays, and that I

picked it out from the open folds of dad's vinyl collection. Maybe the sunlight caught the gold

embroidered costumes worn by the dancers on the cover. Maybe I just thought, 'What's he

been buying now?' Maybe I wanted to see what he'd been listening to. I can't recall. But its

slightly worn edges signalled that it came from a charity shop. I opened it, put the needle to

the groove, and with that action this record's journey with one owner 'ended' and bled into

one of the starting points for my own.

<Insert Figure 1 here. Caption: Homrong by Real World Records. Dad's/My copy. Photo © the</p>

author.>

Track [02]: The Chance Comment.

Phnom Penh, May 2014. Research diary (typed).

<Insert Figure 2 here. Caption: Meeting Sin Sama Deuk Chho. Photo © the author.>

Polin took me to visit his teacher Neak Kruii Sin Sama Deuk Chho today at her home. I

took fruit and noodles. We do things the traditional way; 'jomnay bpail.' 'Spend time.' It is a

mark of respect, a test of patience, and ultimately a gauge of the desire to learn. Time is the

currency of knowledge for this generation. We sat on the floor. We talked. Watched tv.

Sometimes Polin danced, Neak Kru corrected him, he moved my comparatively inflexible

body that is not trained to hyper-extend. Sometimes just silence. In between, she talked

about her life as a dancer. She told me about touring the USSR, China, the U.S., but she said

Scotland. The first time to the West after the Khmer Rouge. " 'Neak Kru, gonlaing neu

Skodtlen?' I asked, thinking Edinburgh, festivals. She said Glasgow, and I paused. And then,

'Many cities' in the U.K. Why did they go to the U.K.? The 1990 U.S. tour is famous, but the

U.K.? Glasgow?

I get back to my room, chuck everything on the floor in that way I do when I am

obsessively gripped by something, sit down, open my laptop, and immediately google it:

'Cambodian dance tour 1990 U.K.'

Click on 'Images.'

And there it is.

The record sleeve.

I have known this, and not known it, for most of my life.

Track [03] Death: The Ultimate Ending?

London, January 2018. Research diary (handwritten, red book).

<Insert Figure 3 here. Caption: My 2018 field diary. Photo © the author >

Track [04]: Six Sporadic Years.

Fragmented remains from a handwritten, black diary.

'Where are the dancers?' I think, as once again, I find nothing. This time in Glasgow. It

is June 2016 and I have encountered another dead end. Every archivist tells me that there is

nothing about the Cambodian dancers there, but I still look. Experience tells me to look.

<Insert Figure 4 somewhere in this section depending on typesetting – but preferably here as</p>

the content flows best in between these paragraphs. Caption: A mocked-up version of a

redacted^{iv} document about the dance tour that I found in the National Archives, Kew.>

It is well-established that archives are fragmentary, partial, incomplete, the political

product of their makers (Stoler 2009). As Mills (2013) outlines, there are increasing attempts

to move away from viewing archives as sources from which we simply, and neutrally, 'extract'

knowledge to instead recognise the potential for 'animating' sources, and for creatively

composing them in new ways to highlight marginal subjects, provide glimpses into lives past,

and reflect on our own shifting subject positions as we engage with archival material (see also

DeSilvey 2007; Sui and DeLyser 2012). We compose leftover, incomplete fragments into new

'ad hoc archives' (Patchett 2017, 391) that are responsive modes of encountering and (re)-making histories.

I always think of performance as being about embodied practice, but I have never found footage of the dancers and musicians on the U.K. tour. I know they were filmed performing on regional news programmes. Those recordings are listed in the BBC archival catalogue but they cannot be accessed. Yet whenever I present or write about this tour, I am always asked: What were their performances like? What was their embodied form? Can you provide some dance ethnography of the actual performance?

Slowly, I stop looking for footage. I start to resist the temptation to look for an 'original' performance. I come to another realisation: that, for me, in this present time, these performances are reconstructed differently.

Track [05]: Interlude.

In Reactivations: Essays on performance and its documentation Philip Auslander (2018) argues that recordings of performance are themselves sites of performance. Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, contemporary performance was collapsing the distinction between the live performance and the archive; that is to say, it is not that documents (e.g. a video or a photograph) record an 'original' that is somehow more authentic. Rather, most audiences now encounter 'live performance' through recordings, through documents, through 'shards of information' (2018, 6). Documentation is not secondary to live performance, rather the experience of live and recorded performance is equal but different,

as the recorded version is still an affective – and ultimately embodied – experience. For Auslander:

'the ontological relationship between a performance and its document is far less interesting and significant than the phenomenological relationship between the document and the beholder who experiences the performance from it' (2018, 15).

Whenever we listen to, or watch, a recording, whenever we see a photograph or read a review, Auslander (2018) argues, via Benjamin (1969), that we 'reactivate' the performance in the moment of our interaction with the document. Reactivation is an interactive and performative event, one that does not simply enable the replication of a past performance in the present, but produces a performance happening *now*. As is implicit in the quotation above, the form of performance documentation is also of less interest to Auslander, not least the idea that one medium is better than another at capturing a performance, because this would imply an 'authentic original' that his argument works against. Similarly, whilst a video, a photograph and a written record may elicit different experiences of reactivation, different experiences of performance, this is secondary to his emphasis on how reactivation is historically and culturally contingent – there is, for Auslander, no 'privileged relationship to the 'truth' of the performance' (2018, 43).

What is therefore implicit in Auslander, but not fully realised, is that reactivation is geographical. Following Benjamin (1969), Auslander highlights that reactivation involves both deterritorialization and reterritorialization, as the process of reproduction enables documentation to move and enter networks of circulation, but individual encounters with

those documents occur in particular settings. The same document can therefore be experienced differently depending on the shifting time-spaces of encounter. In thinking further about the encounter with documented performances, Auslander (2018) deploys philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer's (1989) idea of the hermeneutic conversation to emphasise that the experience of documented performance is an unfolding dialogue between past and present (2018, 56). Reactivation does not take us back to the 'original' moment of enactment because performance contains more complex temporalities:

'I hear the music unfold in real time as I listen to it; it is happening for me in the here and now. I am very much aware, however, that it also happened there and then' (Auslander, 2018, 49).

To reactivate a performance through documentation therefore means that we experience it in the present, but we are also aware of how it reaches out to us from the past. Auslander (2018) also describes how the act of recording imagines a future audience, but for me, his account is less oriented towards those future dimensions. I am also struck by how, even in the quotation above, 'the performance' is positioned in a singular – almost binaristic – manner both 'now' and 'then', 'here' and 'there', whilst reactivation bridges the space in between. It is what happens in this space of betweenness, in this dialogic conversation, that I want to trace, for I argue that it is here that multiple temporalities and spatialities are drawn together. In this process, the performance never really 'ends.' Here, I take the idea of reactivation and emphasise how the situated space-times of fieldwork lead to multiple encounters with, and understandings of, documents that, in turn, produce richer performances. Although a reactivated recording may finish in a literal sense, there is also an

affective force to reactivation that is part of its on-going nature; that is to say, documented

performances also demand a consideration of how the affective dimensions of performance

linger (Thompson 2009). Here, Rebecca Schneider's (2011, 16) argument in Performing

Remains is fruitful, for her work suggests that performance, as a mode of re-enactment,

contains 'zigagging, diagonal and crookedly imprecise returns of time.' There is no pure

'present', rather performance remains, it 'leaves a residue' (p.100) that allows the past, the

present and the future to porously bleed into one another, to linger, and to re-turn in dynamic

ways that exceed linear imaginations. As such, for Schneider (2011, 22), memory 'remains a

future act: not yet recalled, if also never yet forgotten' with the past being 'a future direction

in which one can travel – [...] it can stretch out before us like an unfamiliar landscape waiting

to be (re)discovered.' Such futurist imaginations contain less a sense of 'endings' and instead

a recognition that performance's enactment and reactivation through documentation is an

elliptical and multidirectional event that ultimately allows affective experiences and

memories to span years, even decades. Indeed, contra Auslander, it becomes questionable

whether the document itself, as a material object, is even needed for reactivation as its

affective force takes on a life of its own, creating ambivalence over how, and when,

performance ends.

And so, my task becomes slightly different: I start to think of the research process as

one through which I create my own ever-evolving performance of the tour.

Track [06]: The Passing of a Golden Age.

Phnom Penh, January 2018. Research diary (handwritten, red book).

watching the Royal Ballet rehearsal with the *sva*^{vi} master Lok Kru Chap Siphat. He is fidgeting. He leans over and says to me in a combination of Khmer and English, 'They are not quite right, they are not evenly spaced, they are not quite in line. The timing is wrong.' HRH Princess Norodom Buppha Devi stops the rehearsal for this reason; he mutters in agreement. The dancers start again, and he tells me, 'Khynom mean arom bibakjet' - he feels sad watching this. I ask why and he says that they used to practice every day until a dance was perfect. He is normally exuberant, but he is quiet. He doesn't say it, but I sense that things now are not

It is my birthday, and I am sitting in the Chaktomuk Conference Hall auditorium

<Insert Figure 5 here. Caption: Tour flyer for the Cambodian National Dance Company Tour.</p>

quite the same. Something intangible has shifted. After we have sat there in silence for a while

watching, he tells me to come on Monday to the Department of Performing Arts so that I can

S/SWT/2/7/6 Sadler's Wells Archives. ©Sadler's Wells Archives. Reproduced with

permission.>

learn more.

Track [07]: 'A' Performance.

Finally, in March 2020, I find a performance programme in the records of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office at the National Archives, Kew.^{vii} The dances ran:

- 1. Apsara
- 2. Moni Mekhala

- 3. Sovann Maccha
- 4. Lakhaon Khaol (extract)
- 5. Tep Monorom

Interval

6. Ramayana

My experience of these touring performances is one of the distributed spatialities and temporalities of documentation. In knowing exactly which dances were performed, I look anew at documents previously found and remember my experiences. Reactivation produces yet another event of performance. This time, the performance is recalling the excitement of finding photographs of dance poses taken during press calls, photographs of daily rehearsals, school workshops, and classical dance performances of the Reamker in The Scottish Theatre Archives. The performance is the surprise of seeing some footage of the dance company rehearsing in the Royal Palace whilst sat watching a 1989 episode of the children's television programme Blue Peter in the British Library. That moment when red and blue rehearsal costumes appeared, sandwiched in between presenter Caron Keating holding a hoe in the BBC studio, and footage of her in Cambodia reporting on the poor state of country's road infrastructure as part of the Kampuchea Appeal. VIII The performance is the delight of finding a copy of the documentary film *The Tenth Dancer* on YouTube whilst sat at home, a film made in the very same year of 1990 that focuses on the lives of the dancers – particularly the relationship between the dance master Em Theay and her student Pen Sok Chea.ix I recognised parts of the dances they were rehearsing, dances they performed in the U.K., but now I know their order.

<Insert Figure 6 here: The Cambodian National Dance Company performing in St. Enoch's Square, Glasgow, June 1990. Photo by Alan Crumlish. @Alan Crumlish. Reproduced with permission.>

In looking at the tour programme, I also have another realisation: that this is the standard repertoire. I realise that there is no 'original' experience for me to trace because my experience of watching classical Cambodian dance performances in person or online is, in some sense, to have also watched the performances of the U.K. tour – whether that was on my first visit to Cambodia in 2008 when, by chance, I watched a performance of Sovann Maccha in Siem Reap and I intuitively knew that somehow this would be what I researched next, or in 2018, when I met the husband of one of the dancers who toured the U.K. at the National Museum just as an Apsara dance was about to start, or when watching HRH Princess Norodom Buppha Devi performing the Apsara dance in the 1966 romantic drama film *Apsara* made by her father King Norodom Sihanouk. Perhaps, therefore, performances from the classical Cambodian dance repertoire could be said to open up the creative field into a neverending domain. Yet master dancers would likely say that the quality of movement was different in each of these spatial-temporal enactments and dependent on the skill of the individual performing. Indeed, one of their concerns in bringing the dances to the U.K. was that they were not as high quality as they were before the Khmer Rouge. The repetition of the repertoire – the beginning and ending of a performance – does not always form a continuous loop, but instead, deviates. Some performances, some re-enactments have

ended, are ending, are happening now. Nevertheless, when I look at the performance programme, 'a' performance happens for me that brings all of these situated temporal-spatial encounters, and more, together in the moment of reactivation.

Track [08]: Shared Temporal Ellipses.

Phnom Penh, January 2018. Research diary (handwritten, red book).

Most of my week has involved getting up at 6am and going to the Ministry's Department of Performing Arts meeting those who toured to the UK in 1990. They will not all talk to me, of course, and some have already returned to the provinces, so the dancers ring them up for me. Lok Kru Chap Siphat introduced me to Neak Kru Om Yuvandy [the dancer on the left of the record sleeve]. She has taken me under her wing which has given me the necessary blessing, including with the Head of Department Buth Channah, who was also part of the tour. She tells me they are so happy to talk about this time and no-one has ever asked them about it before. They laugh at incongruous details in the photos I've found: Em Theay wearing a puffa jacket over her traditional dress as she was so cold in the British summertime; Om Yuvanna wearing Apsara eyeliner whilst dressed as Sovann Maccha; things that 'went wrong'. Every day they also bring me their own photos to talk about and encourage me to take photos of them. Photos of photos. I now have 'my' copy which is also 'their' copy. It is a multiply documented history even as the act of photographing also leaves me as a custodian of it. I find myself with new perspectives on events, as they show me their 'behind the scenes' photographs of the carefully choreographed press conferences. I also face repeated questions about what happened to all those they met, only a few of whom I've managed to find. Lok Kru (Siphat) loves looking through the newspaper images on my tablet – every day he takes it and wanders around all the performers showing them the photos of when they were young. They look at the photos of themselves dancing and talk about the sheep and the Brownie hut. The school workshops. The time they burnt their clothing with an iron. The one who committed suicide. The dignitaries and the canal boat ride. The friends who now live elsewhere. The trip to the supermarket. The one who had a baby whilst in the U.K.. The photo call with the film star Julie Christie. The ones who vanished. The diluted whisky. The parties. There is laughter and I am not sure I should ask – for not all is, or can ever be, my experience, and not all can, or should be, shared. The next generation of performers rehearse before leaving for India tomorrow.

<Insert Figure 7 here: Members of the Cambodian National Dance Company waiting for the photo call with Julie Christie, Glasgow, June 1990. Photo by Alan Crumlish. @Alan Crumlish. Reproduced with permission.>

Reflecting back on this experience now, I am aware of the multiple reactivations of performance even as we were all sat in the same space – some of which I was able to share in, and some of which I was not. Yet it all increased my knowledge and experience of the photographs I had found and of the tour in general, shaping my future encounters with these and other documents. But I am also left wondering, when does a creative performance end? Does it ever? Does reactivation ever end? Who gets to own that ending – who gets to share in it, who can declare that it is, finally, 'over'? Where do endings happen, and for whom? The presence of a researcher turning up one day in a rehearsal and performance space in the middle of Phnom Penh reignited the experience of something that, in Cambodia, was

considered long past, long finished, in a country far, far away. Yet it was literally dug out of boxes and brought back to the present (again). Can I reproduce those photos of photos? Should I? What might their reactivation be for readers none of us know? Perhaps we can all share in some of these 'endings.' But not all.

Track [09]: Listening.

Sometimes when I want to write about my research on Cambodia, I need to listen to the country. I listen to Cambodian hip hop, to 1950s and 1960s Cambodian rock, to contemporary pop, to sound recordings that I've made when in the streets or fields, when on transport, and of course, sound recordings of performances. Sometimes I listen to VOA Khmer radio and programs via Facebook where I catch odd Khmer words and phrases. And, of course, <u>I listen to Homrong – but nowadays I stream it</u>, rather than listening to the vinyl. I can pick out the voices of Em Theay and Sin Sama Deuk Chho – their singing reaching out to me across time, space, and now, death. I hear the song Breu Peyney and I think of another, when Em Theay sang to me outside the Department of Performing Arts. I smile at this memory, and at how she wore a necklace containing a picture of the late King Norodom Sihanouk. Her incredible pride, strength, courage, and beauty in the way she spoke about her art. The immensely humbling privilege I had of meeting one of Cambodia's greatest living artists – the last surviving Mistress of the Royal Ballet before the Khmer Rouge, a woman who was 86 years old when we met. In 1990, the British media reported that she had over 5,000 songs in her head. In 2005, when she came to perform again, she appealed for information about her son who never returned from the U.K.. These linkages of located memories that comprise my reactivated performance 'haunt' me (Mills 2012) as they combine a swirl of feelings; of happiness, respect, sadness, care, that motivate me to write.

Track [10]: Discarding the Document?

Nowadays, I do not even need to hold the record to reactivate it as a performance. I can hear it in my head. Sometimes I find myself humming it as I go about my daily life. When cleaning. Walking down the street. Reading my emails. When I realise what I'm doing, the multiple space-times and experiences of reactivation explored here come to me in new configurations depending on the situation I am in. This recording, the performances surrounding it, and the people who made it, are now part of me and so, in a sense, live on in my own particular dimension of experience beyond documentation. But documentation never fully goes away. Even after my formal grant funding to research the tour has 'ended', after I have told myself, 'It's time to stop researching it now', small pieces of information that are new to me still come to light: another footage fragment on YouTube; the meaning of another specific gesture; another story shared. These periodic additions complicate any sense of ending; rather, these documents render reactivated performance richer, more nuanced, in its ongoing recomposition.

(Whispering) Secretly, I still hope one day to find that footage.....

Bonus Track.

'While it may be tempting to tidy up the fragmentary sources and loose ends presented, it is important to emphasise we can leave them in this way' (Patchett 2017, 401).

The open-endedness of the creative endings explored in this paper are, perhaps, reflective of a general idea that performance is a process, an embodied activity, one that, particularly when it comes to dance, is always difficult to neatly delineate owing to the continuity of motion. Yet to think about documentation within this, and the space-times of reactivation in particular, offers experimental routes for considering when and where performances happen, and opens up our sense of how creative endings are multiply situated and owned. Performances end in different ways, at different times, for different people. They are also both final and temporary, for in thinking about that relationship between the body, the performance, and the archive, it is apparent that performances can often lie dormant. Perhaps they do not end, but merely hibernate, waiting for reactivation.

During the course of writing this piece, in the space of a few short weeks, I find out that both Em Theay and Om Yuvanna have become ill. By the time I revise it, they have both died. I had commissioned a contemporary dance film and the choreographer told me. Yet through the sadness we shared memories of kindness. Em Theay's death (affectionately called 'grandma' by dancers) was nationally significant and widely reported. There is a sense that a particular era is ending as master artists die, even as the government emphasis is on 'conservation for development and development for conservation.' The dances are being passed on, but there is also a recognition of evolution and change, not of endings, but new beginnings, beginnings that incorporate past performances to prevent cultural and creative knowledge from dying out. Yet it is surreal to simultaneously experience loss and connection,

to work with the documents again and reactivate performance at a time when its resonance and meaning dramatically shifts. This time, I don't know that I want the documents to reactivate performance. Reactivation is increasingly ambivalent for me, because too many custodians have died, because that sense of finality can sometimes feel too real.

But then, I look..... and the stories, the music, and the movement, start again.....

<Insert Figures 8 and 9 here, side by side. Caption for Figure 8: The author with Em Theay and her daughter. Photo © the author. Caption for Figure 9: The author with Neak Kru Om Yuvanna and Lok Kru Chap Siphat. Photo © the author.>

Acknowledgements

A special thank you goes to all those involved in the 1990 Cambodian National Dance Company Tour and who agreed to participate in this research. Special thanks also to Alan Crumlish for his hospitality, kindness and time in hosting and helping me, for converting his photographic files, and for giving me permission to reproduce them. Thanks also Sadler's Wells Archive, the British Library, the Scottish Theatre Archives, the National Archives and the Bodleian Library for their assistance, and for permissions. Thanks to Dr Charlotte Veal and Dr Ruth Raynor for inviting me to contribute to this special issue and for their insights and encouragement. Thanks also to reviewers for kind and sensitive comments. Finally, thanks to dad.

Biography

Dr Amanda Rogers is an Associate Professor in Human Geography and the GeoHumanities in the Department of Geography at Swansea University, Swansea, SA2 8PP, UK. Email: a.rogers@swansea.ac.uk. Amanda researches the geographies of performance and the performing arts, particularly theatre and dance. Her current work focuses on post-conflict performance cultures in South East Asia and their relationship to the re-production of nationality. She is particularly interested in contemporary Cambodian performance and how it expresses, and is embedded in, history, culture and identity. This work is being written up into a monograph provisionally entitled *Choreographing Cambodia: Exploring geopolitical imaginaries of nationality and identity in contemporary dance* which will be published by Bloomsbury.

References

Auslander, P. 2018. *Reactivations: Essays on Performance and its Documentation*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Benjamin, W. 1969. 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.' Translated by Harry Zohn. In *Illuminations*, ed. H. Arendt, 217-251. New York: Shocken.

DeSilvey, C. 2007. Salvage memory: Constellating material histories on a hardscrabble homestead. *cultural geographies* 14: 401–424.

Gadamer, H-G. *Truth and Method*. 1989. Translated by Joel C. Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall. 2nd ed. New York: Continuum.

Gagen, E.A., Lorimer, H. and Vasudevan, A. (eds.) 2007. *Practising the archive: Reflections on methods and practice in Historical Geography.* Historical Geography Research Series 40 London: Royal Geographical Society.

Griffin, C. and Evans, A. 2008. Historical geographies of embodied practice and performance. *Historical Geography*, 35: 5-16.

Mills, S. 2013. Cultural–Historical Geographies of the Archive: Fragments, objects and ghosts, *Geography Compass*, 7: 701-713.

Mills, S. 2012. Young Ghosts: Ethical and methodological issues of archival research in children's geographies. *Children's Geographies* 10: 357–363.

Patchett, M. 2017. Taxidermy Workshops: Differently figuring the working of bodies and bodies at work in the past. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 42: 390-404.

Schneider, R. 2011. *Performing Remains: Art and war in times of theatrical re-enactment*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Stoler, A. L. 2009. *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic anxieties and colonial common sense.*Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press.

Sui, D. and DeLyser, D. 2012. Crossing the qualitative-quantitative chasm I: Hybrid geographies, the spatial turn, and volunteered geographic information (VGI). *Progress in Human Geography* 36: 111–124.

Thompson, J. 2009. *Performance affects: Applied theatre and the end of effect.* Houndsmill: Palgrave Macmillan.

¹ The tour took place from 5th June 1990 for nearly two months, during which time the dancers toured across the U.K. and Ireland, followed by a performance in Rome. The tour was supported by Oxfam UK, the world music festival WOMAD and Glasgow 1990 (the European Capital of Culture).

ii Neak Kru is the polite Cambodian phrase for 'teacher'. Neak Kru is used to address women teachers, Lok Kru is used to address male teachers.

iii The Khmer Rouge was a brutal Communist regime that ruled Cambodia from 1975-1979, killing an estimated 2 million citizens, and 90% of all Cambodia's artists.

Freedom of Information Act exemptions 27 (1), 40 (2) and 41: the grounds that the contents would damage UK interests abroad or relations with a foreign state; contravene the protection of third-party data; and the information was provided in confidence in person.

The British government was interested about the extent to which the dance tour was being used as propaganda for Hun Sen as a political leader. This was important because Britain did not recognise the State of Cambodia at this time or allow entry to government members.

The document I refer to here was a report from a senior civil servant about a dance

performance and after-party, so it is possible that it contained confidential information provided in person. It is also possible that there was discussion about Hun Sen, as in less organised and formal archives, I have found character and political assessments of key Cambodian government figures by the British civil service. Hun Sen remains Cambodia's Prime Minister, and these might be seen as potentially damaging foreign relations today.

The database is only a listing of broadcasts and this does not mean that recordings have survived. There are a range of reasons for this, which are listed here:

https://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/bbc-archives--wiped-missing-and-lost/z4nkvk7 (accessed 22 September 2022)

The form of classical Cambodian dance contains four roles: neay rong (male); neang (female); yeak (giant); and sva (monkey). Traditionally, women performed all four roles until the late Queen Mother undertook a programme of modernisation in the 1950s and 1960s. One of the well-known alterations is that men began to perform monkey roles. Together these four roles are used to tell stories from the *Reamker*, or Cambodian Ramayana. There is also an all-male dance form called *lakhon khol*. The male monkey performers on this tour, including Lok Kru Chap Siphat, are *lakhon khol* dancers.

- vii Foreign and Commonwealth Office archives FCO 15/6006, National Archives, Kew.
- viii Blue Peter's second Kampuchea Appeal in 1988-1989 was part of Oxfam UK's wider fundraising appeal for Cambodia at this time.
- ix The full documentary has since been removed from YouTube, but an excerpt can be seen at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m CAlqlpaCk (accessed 14 May 2021)
- * 'Culture could get you killed' by M. Pallister, Evening Times 11th June 1990. STA TAG 11/8, Scottish Theatre Archives, University of Glasgow, Glasgow UK.

https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1120452078481313 (accessed 14 September 2021)

xi Speech by Phoeurng Sackona, Minister of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, Royal
Government of Cambodia, 8th Aug 2021