



Dr Eleanor Rycroft
BA(Sus.), MA(Sus.), DPhil(Sus.)

Lecturer

Area of research

Practice-based research into early theatre

Cantock's Close,
Clifton, Bristol BS8 1UP
([See a map](#))

+44 (0) 117 3315282
e.rycroft@bristol.ac.uk

Summary

I am a theatre historian of early English and Scottish drama, and my research often involves practical explorations of early modern plays. I have worked on major collaborative projects that have staged theatre in the historic sites of Hampton Court, Stirling Castle, Linlithgow Palace, and Lancaster Castle, including the AHRC-funded 'Staging the Henrician Court' and 'Staging and Representing the Scottish Renaissance Court'.

I have a special interest in gender and its relationship to ideologies of manhood during the period. My monograph - *Facial Hair and the Performance of Early Modern Masculinity* (Studies in Performance and Early Modern Drama, Routledge, 2019) - concerns the role of beards in the construction of masculinities on the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century stage. My next research project will investigate the staging of walking in early modern theatre.

My work has appeared in leading peer-reviewed journals such as *Medieval English Theatre*, *Early Theatre*, *Journal of the Northern Renaissance* and *Shakespeare Bulletin*, and has been published by Oxford University Press, Palgrave, Wiley-Blackwell, and Ashgate. I have written on material cultures and spatial practices of the early modern stage, hair and beards in travel literature, theatre at the court of Henry VIII, early Tudor and Stewart drama, practice-based research as a research methodology, and the historical performance of witchcraft.

Biography

I was appointed Lecturer in Theatre and Performance in September 2013 and have a special interest in practice-based research into Tudor and Stewart drama.

Following a DPhil on beards and masculinity in the work of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, I was appointed as the Research Assistant on 'Staging the Henrician Court'. The project staged John Heywood's *The Play of the Weather* in the Great Hall of Hampton Court Palace in order to investigate the politics of space at the court of Henry VIII.

Between 2011-12 I was Lecturer in Early Modern Literature at Lancaster University, and directed *The Late Lancashire Witches* at Lancaster Castle as part of the 400 year anniversary of the Pendle Witch trials.

From 2012-2013 I worked as a Research Fellow at Edinburgh University on 'Staging and Representing the Scottish Renaissance Court', playing a key role in the first staging of Sir David Lyndsay's *A Satire of the Three Estates* since 1554 at Linlithgow Palace. Film of this production can be found at www.stagingthescottishcourt.org

My work draws on a wide range of practical methods, printed sources, historical records and material objects in order to present fresh ways of thinking about the late medieval and early modern theatre. Alongside a research specialism in the gendered subjectivities of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and especially how manhood and boyhood were constructed during the period, I have recently started research into the embodiment of walking on the early modern stage.

I am an elected trustee of the British Shakespeare Association and Chair of the BSA Honorary Fellowships Committee.

Selected recent papers include:

'Hair and the Semiotics of Difference in the BBC'S *The Hollow Crown: Wars of the Roses*' (British Shakespeare Association conference, 2019)

'Drama and/as Other', roundtable discussion, Leeds International Medieval Conference (2017)

'Engaging Twenty-First Century Audiences', invited plenary paper, RECIRC conference, NUI Galway (2017)

'Hairs, heirs, and airs: Locating Masculinity in *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*', invited speaker, Leicester Early Modern Research Seminar, University of Leicester (2016)

'Space, memory, and transformation in the 1540 and 1554 versions of *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*', Shakespeare Association of America Conference, New Orleans (2016)

'Facial Hair and Liminal Masculinities on the Early Modern Stage', Framing the Face symposium, London (2015)

'Practice-based research in the Great Hall of Hampton Court Palace and the ruins at Linlithgow', Society for Renaissance Studies conference, Southampton (2014)

'Place and Space in the Late Medieval and Sixteenth Century Drama: The case of the *Satire of the Three Estates*', Sogang University, Seoul (2014)

'Kings on-stage in Scotland and England', Scottish Medievalists conference, Croy; Renaissance Society of America conference, New York (2014)

'iShakespeare: New Media in Research and Pedagogy' workshop, Shakespeare Association of America conference, Boston (2012)

Teaching

I have extensive teaching experience in early modern drama and literature, contemporary theatre, and critical theory.

At Bristol, I have taught, designed, and/or convened Early Modern Theatre Practice, Performance Histories, Interpreting Plays, Performance Forms and Analysis, Contemporary British Theatre, Independent Study, Criticism and the Arts, Site-specific and Immersive Theatre, and Approaches to Shakespeare, and on the MA units Space, Place and Performance, Performing the Body, and Research Methods and Questions: Archives.

Keywords

- Practice-based research / practice-as-research
- Early modern literature and drama
- Late medieval and early Tudor theatre
- Gender - especially masculinity
- Beards and hair
- Walking and exercise in drama
- The Scottish Renaissance
- Site-specific performance and heritage
- Material culture
- Cultural materialism
- Witches
- Place and space theory

Memberships

Organisations

[Department of Theatre](#)

Academics by department

- [Theatre](#)

Selected publications

- Rycroft, E, 2019, '[Facial Hair and the Performance of Early Modern Masculinity](#)'. Routledge
- Rycroft, E, 2019, '[Staging kingship in Scotland and England, 1532-1560](#)'. *Journal of the Northern Renaissance*.
- Rycroft, E, 2018, '[Hair, Beards and the Fashioning of English Manhood in Early Modern Travel Texts](#)'. in: *New Perspectives on the History of Facial Hair: Framing the Face*. Palgrave Macmillan
- Rycroft, E, 2017, '[Place on the late medieval and early modern stage: The case of *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*](#)'. *Shakespeare Bulletin*, vol 35., pp. 247-266
- Dustagheer, S, Jones, O & Rycroft, E, 2017, '[\(Re\)constructed spaces for Early Modern drama: research in practice](#)'. *Shakespeare Bulletin*, vol 35., pp. 173-185

- Rycroft, E, 2014, '[Voicing Women, "Community" Drama, and The Late Lancashire Witches](#)'. *Preternature: Critical and Historical Studies on the Preternatural*, vol 3., pp. 168-189
- Rycroft, E, 2013, '[Gender and status in John Heywood's The Play of the Weather](#)'. in: Suzannah Lipscomb, Thomas Betteridge (eds) *Henry VIII and the Court: Art, Politics and Performance*. Ashgate Publishing Ltd., pp. 255-270
- Rycroft, E, 2012, '[Morality, Theatricality, and Masculinity in the Interlude of Youth and Hick Scorer](#)'. in: Greg Walker, Thomas Betteridge (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Drama*. Oxford University Press, pp. 465-481
- Rycroft, E & Cave, R, 2010, '[The deployment of artificial and natural beards in the plays of Richard Brome](#)'. *Richard Brome Online*.
- Rycroft, E, 2009, '[The Play of the Weather in Performance in the Great Hall at Hampton Court](#)'. *Medieval English Theatre Journal*, vol 31., pp. 13-27

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