

# CA 370 Research

I'm Sylvia Roberts, the Liaison Librarian for Contemporary Arts.

I'm here to coach you in your creative and critical research pursuits.

Please contact me at  
[sroberts@sfu.ca](mailto:sroberts@sfu.ca)

We can also meet by Zoom or phone.

# OUTLINE

- Production Ensemble research guide
- Research behavior of theatre professionals
- Posing the question(s)
- Sources & strategies for:
  - Creative research
  - Professional research
- Search strategy demonstration

# Did you know?

- There is a field of study called “human information behavior”
- Explore factors relating to the information seeking behaviour of students and creative professionals



# Information seeking behavior of theatre artists

## *Reasons for research*

- Historical, cultural, critical background of a work
- Sources of inspiration
- Learn about contemporary / historical productions, artists, events
- Technical or process information
- Finding performance materials
- Further career goals

Medaille (2010)

# Other findings

- Theatre artists often conduct extensive research using a variety of sources
- Many view the research process as integral to their preparation
- Idiosyncratic and ongoing
- Frequently seek “non-art” information for their creative practice; anything can be relevant
- Often prefer to seek information from their social networks over other resources
- Collaboration and information sharing typically impacts creative and collective choices

# RESEARCH STRATEGIES

## SEARCHING

Actively trying to locate information that meets specific parameters



## SAVING / ORGANIZING

Attempting to retain information sources to use, reference or rediscover later

## BROWING / FORAGING

Pursuing topics of interest with or without any specific direction in mind

## ENCOUNTERING

Serendipitous exposure to information through expected or unexpected means

# **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

# RESEARCH STRATEGIES

## SEARCHING

Actively trying to locate information that meets specific parameters



## SAVING / ORGANIZING

Attempting to retain information sources to use, reference or rediscover later

## BROWING / FORAGING

Pursuing topics of interest with or without any specific direction in mind

## ENCOUNTERING

Serendipitous exposure to information through expected or unexpected means



# Background sources

- [Wikipedia](#)
- [Specialized encyclopedias](#)
- Visual reference: [images](#) / film
- Sound: effects, music
- Handbooks / manuals
  - Properties of materials
  - Occupational health and safety

# Inspiration



Belvedere depicts objects which could not possibly exist. It is impossible for the building to exist because in order for it to exist, the rules of Euclidean geometry would have to be violated...

Escher and other artists such as Oscar Reutersvärd have frequently used impossible figures of varying types in their work, and mathematicians have studied the mathematical and computational properties of impossible figures to try and develop formulas and algorithms for modelling impossible objects, for use in such things as computer vision.

Cognitive scientists have been interested in the processes involved in continuing to see impossible figures as possible even when we know them to be impossible.

# Inspiration



Belvedere depicts objects which could not possibly exist. It is impossible for the building to exist because in order for it to exist, the **rules of Euclidean geometry** would have to be violated....

Escher and other artists such as **Oscar Reutersvärd** have frequently used **impossible figures** of varying types in their work, and mathematicians have studied the mathematical and computational properties of impossible figures to try and develop formulas and algorithms for modelling impossible objects, for use in such things as **computer vision**.

**Cognitive scientists** have been interested in the processes involved in continuing to see impossible figures as possible even when we know them to be impossible.

# Inspiration



Philosophers have also been interested in what impossible figures can tell us about the nature of the content of experience (Macpherson 2010).

For example, impossible figures seem to provide examples of experiences with content that is contradictory, which some philosophers have taken to count against the claim that perceptual states are belief-like, because if they were, when experiencing *Belvedere* one would simultaneously believe that such a figure could exist and that it could not. This would seem to entail that one was being irrational, because one would simultaneously be holding contradictory beliefs. But it seems highly implausible that one is being irrational when undergoing this illusion. For discussion of this general point about whether perceptions are like beliefs, see Crane & French (2016).

# RESEARCH STRATEGIES

## SEARCHING

Actively trying to locate information that meets specific parameters



## SAVING / ORGANIZING

Attempting to retain information sources to use, reference or rediscover later

## BROWING / FORAGING

Pursuing topics of interest with or without any specific direction in mind

## ENCOUNTERING

Serendipitous exposure to information through expected or unexpected means

# Framing research questions

- Topic
- Detail:  
What, who, where, when, why
- Your identity / perspective / role

# SFU SCA grad research questions

- 'Dramaturgy of distributed agency' - taking in not just what is happening on stage, but all the back stage work as well; discussions of light, sound, projections in theatre
- Slowness in cinema and choreography, the phenomenon of near stillness; concepts related to reversals

# Search terms

- impossible figures
- illusions
- perceptual state / perception / belief
- contradictions
- M.C. Escher / Oscar Reutersvard



# Tracking citations

- In-text:  
(Macpherson, 2010)
- Reference list / bibliography:  
Macpherson, F., 2010. Impossible Figures. In Goldstein, E. B. ed., *Sage Encyclopedia of Perception*. Sage Publications, Inc.

# **SEARCH DEMONSTRATION**



## Sounding Corporeality

Fintan Walsh

1 July 2021

Last update: 22/06/21 07:47

The forthcoming special issue of *Theatre Research International* (46.2) is devoted to the subject of Sounding Corporeality. The first fully dedicated special issue of the journal since 2014 (39.3), it takes as its focus the relationship between sounds and bodies in theatre and performance. As the editors tell us in their editorial, the issue 'acknowledges and examines the intimate interactions, intersections and interventions of the aesthetic, the social and the political, to explore how corporeality sounds and how sonicity moves.'

The issue includes research articles, artist reflections and dialogues that engage experimental performance, dance, choreography, installation, opera, and the dynamic interactions between performance forms and media. Contributors survey practices from the US, Israel, Northern Ireland, Singapore, Italy, the UK, India and Australia.

# Extending your reach

- Think laterally
- Change the scope of your search:  
geography, chronology, related concepts
- Search words: broader, narrower, alternative
- Try a different search engine
- Follow promising leads (bibliography, author's name, key words, citations)
- Ask a Librarian

# Professional research

- Sample topics
  - [Occupational health and safety](#)
  - [COVID-19 safety plan for back of house](#)
  - [Sustainable practice for set construction](#) and [beyond](#)
  - Effective communication within and across teams
- Authoritative sources?

Who produces credible  
information?

How do you know?

**AUTHORITATIVE SOURCES**

# Authority is constructed and contextual

- Authority is a type of influence recognized or exerted within a community
- Different types of authority
  - subject expertise (e.g. research studies, professional knowledge)
  - societal position (e.g. elected or appointed officials, elders)
  - special experience (e.g. participant in historic event)
- Authoritative content may be packaged formally or informally and may include sources of all media types

# Authority is constructed and contextual

- Know how to seek authoritative voices but also recognize that unlikely voices can be authoritative
- Develop and maintain an open mind when encountering varied and sometimes conflicting perspectives

(ACRL, 2015)



QUESTIONS?  
COMMENTS?

**Sylvia Roberts** [sroberts@sfu.ca](mailto:sroberts@sfu.ca)