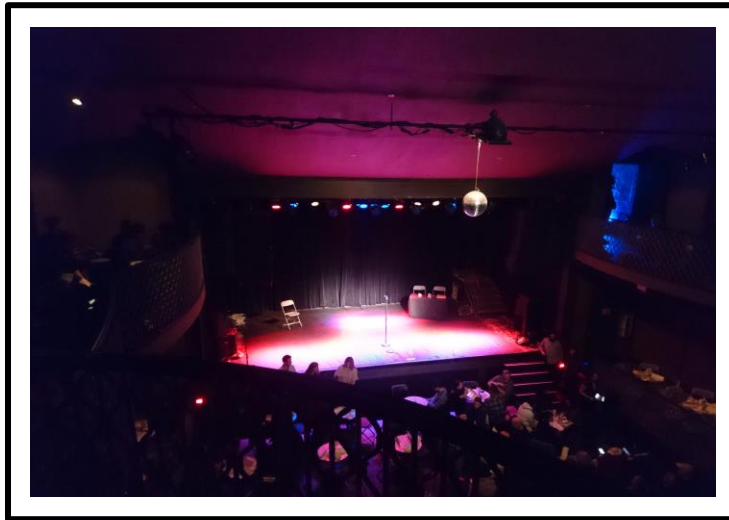Learning Places Fall 2018

SITE REPORT #3A
The Moth GrandSLAM XXXXIV Championship

A bird's eye view from the mezzanine

STUDENT NAME: Nakeita Clarke

SITE OBSERVATIONS

Bird's eye view of stage

Production perspective

View from standing room

Why did you choose these images? Do they summarize a feeling you have for the performance space? Do they focus on prominent objects or features? Explain.

I chose these images because I feel they best represented the mood and atmosphere of the venue. They also mostly show the stage which was the focal point for the entirety of the performances which was better lit than the rest of the performance space. These were the only pictures I took because at the beginning of the performance event the MC asked the audience to turn off their cell phones and likewise did so himself.

PERMANENT THEATER
Answer the questions below *only* if you attended a performance in a purpose-built theater or an adapted space that is now a permanent theater.

1. Briefly describe the genre or type of performance (one sentence).

   The performance was the art and craft of storying telling based on a theme.

2. Describe the dimensions, shapes, and arrangement of audience and performance spaces in the building: entrances, ingresses, egresses, lobbies, lounges, audience seating, box seats, and stage.

   The space was structured like a traditional proscenium theatre where there was a separation between the stage and the audience. There was wing seating on the left and the right of the auditorium, as well as winged seating areas on the second level accompanying the mezzanine. The entrance way to the auditorium was narrow, as were the stairs on each side of the auditorium that lead to the mezzanine.

3. Does the architectural design provide opportunities for voyeurism, food or alcohol consumption, reading, talking, or other interaction among audience members? Explain how the architecture might *encourage* or *limit* activities other than viewing the performance.

   Behind the production area, there was an open space which housed a bar, there was also a bar in the mezzanine and one more bar on the basement floor of the venue where the restrooms were located. Each bar area had space which would easily allow the audience to talk while drinking or waiting for a drink. Reading might be difficult unless all the lights were turned on in the venue.

   The space was certainly designed to allow the audience to drink and chat while the performance was taking place, as well as for the audience to move up and down between the first floor and the mezzanine.

4. How did the architectural design and fixtures affect your reception of the play (sight lines, acoustics, lighting, etc.)?

The lighting was made to solely draw the audience's focus to the stage. The design of the space seemed to have been meant for the audience to stand while watching performances, however, for the event, there was some seating for judges and V.I.P guests. The performers were using microphones and that in combination with the layout allowed the audience to clearly hear what the performers were saying.

5. Describe the dynamic between the audience space and the performer's space. Was the stage a proscenium, thrust, or theater-in-the-round arrangement? Did the performance and audiences spaces ever merge (audience in stage area, actors in audience area, for instance)?

The stage was a proscenium arrangement. There was no merger of performer and audience. The closest instance was the performers who sat in the front of the auditorium and moved from their seat to the stage to perform and then back to auditorium space to become audience again.

6. Use a metaphor to describe the audience/stage relationship (ocean, layer-cake, peephole, for instance...*and don't use these examples*!). Explain why you chose that image or idea.

The stage was like a pedestal where the performers once there were unjudged and admired simultaneously by the audience while the audience was like a solid emotional foundation for the performers to share their stories too.

ANALYSIS/DISCOVERIES [FOR EVERYONE]

Use this section to reflect on your observations. Remember to refer to your observations when drawing general conclusions.

Performativity: ways in which theater becomes life, words become actions, audiences become actors, objects become agents, buildings convey meaning, and participants become engaged in broader social concerns.

1. Describe the moments in the production where *theater* became more like *life* or when something occurred in the performance space that exceeded the internal action of the play itself.

   The eruption of laughter, the collective gasps where it felt as though the audience was rooting for the performer, however it was within the bounds of the performance space.

   Also, the audience was asked to contribute to the performance, there was someone from the event who walked around and handed out slips with a prompt for the audience to have their responses read in front of the audience.

2. How might the designed and/or natural features of the performance space enable moments of performativity? Or, on the other hand, do the architectural and/or natural elements inhibit performativity?

   The design of the space inhibits performativity; however, the space could be transformed by giving the audience playful, or balloon-like props to interact with performers.

QUESTIONS for FURTHER RESEARCH. Write down questions that require further research to answer. These should follow directly from your analysis section and be complex and specific enough to serve as the basis of a research project; do not include questions you can answer with a quick google search.

1. Question?

   The basis of the performances was truth, sharing stories and learning lessons, how do these performances address social or political issues?

2. Question?

   In a day and age where social media is seen as the main tool to share stories, how do Moth performances make a social impact?

3. Question?

   How does the history of the Williamsburg Music Hall lend to the type of performances which take and do not take place in the space?

SITE REPORT #3B

STUDENT NAME: Nakeita Clarke

FURTHER RESEARCH

Develop a new research question (or revise one of your questions from part 3A of this report).
This question should concern EITHER:

The relationship between the performance you viewed and the staging (if in a traditional
theater space) or the place where it was performed (if in a provisional theater space).

OR

The relationship between a social / political issue and the performance you viewed.

Research Question:

How do stage performances make a personal yet social impact audiences in an age where
social media is the main platform for sharing stories?

Find 2 sources. *You can choose to use: internet sources, books, archival documents or
ephemera, scholarly articles, newspaper articles, or performance reviews. Your choice should be
intentional.

1 source should have to do with the **production or performance** (this could either be about the
play itself or about something to do with the performance). For example, if I viewed a
production of *Hamlet* that was interactive, I might research "Hamlet" or conduct research more
broadly on "interactivity and Shakespeare."

1 source should be about the **place or social / political issue** that is articulated in your research
question.

Write an MLA citation for each source:

Source 1

Thoss, Jeff, et al. "Narrative Media: The Impossibilities of Digital Storytelling." *Poetics Today*, vol.

39, no. 3, Sept. 2018, pp. 623–43.

Source 2

Hoffman, Sharon Lynne. *Living Stories: An Intuitive Inquiry into Storytelling as a Collaborative Art Form to Effect Compassionate Connection.* Vol. 64(6-A), 2003, p. 2150.

Why did you select these sources? How do they address all or part of your research question?

I choose these sources because one relates to the social impact of storytelling as an art form and how it encourages compassion and connection, while the other source deals with the limitations that digital storytelling possesses in relation to it's unnatural and unconventional approach to narrative creation.

Describe the process you used to find this source including any keywords and the search engine or tool you used to search.

I opened the Chrome browser, typed "city tech library" in the URL bar. Then I clicked on the first result. Once on the page, I selected research guide from the navigation on the left-hand side of the screen. When the page loaded, I selected "By Group", clicked on Humanities and Social Sciences then Public Speaking. Once on that page, I clicked on Articles and then Social Sciences Full Text: Wilson (EBSCO). I entered my LIB ID number which lead me to the database site.

For my first source, I selected all databases and used "audience AND storytelling on stage" as my search terms.

For my second source, I selected all databases and used "live storytelling or narrative or storytelling or stories and digital story telling" as my search terms.

What other sources or further information would you need to answer your question? Where would you look for that information?

I would want to research data on people who choose to attend live performances versus those who choose not to. I would also research data on the impact live performances may have on the people who attend them, and I would also conduct research on people who spend most of their time on social media and how that impacts them. It would make sense to search for case studies, newspaper articles, and psychological journals.