

Bell Vikki

Argentina's Arts of Dramatisation: Performing the (Dictatorial) Past

standard lecture

This paper draws inspiration from the speculative philosophy of Isabelle Stengers (2005) in its exploration of multiple 'arts of dramatisation' performed across various forums within Argentina's post-dictatorship landscape. Approached as an 'ecology of practices', these sites – artistic, memory sites, archives, legal trials – stage the past variously, conjuring it up in distinct ways, placing different constraints on how it appears, using different material assemblages, probing it and pursuing details and contours under different obligations and constraints. Deferring the political 'long enough to allow the apparently reduced circumstances of a more reticent, less ambitious reading of possibilities to be carried out'(Read, 2008:21), the paper argues that what counts as evidence, what is understood as 'successful', what is dismissed as irrelevant, are all negotiated within the specificities of the forum. The 'proposals for truth' that emerge are consequently not only 'situated' but also necessarily 'partial' forms of world-making that nevertheless enact real ethical and political achievements.

Bio:

Vikki Bell is Professor and Head of Department of Sociology at Goldsmiths, University of London, and author of *The Art of Post-Dictatorship: Ethics and Aesthetics in Transitional Argentina* (Routledge/Glasshouse, 2014). Widely published, her previous monographs include *Culture and Performance* (Berg, 2007) and *Feminist Imagination* (Sage, 1999). Her numerous articles have addressed questions of ethics, aesthetics, subjectivity and politics across the social sciences and theoretical humanities. She is an associate member of the Núcleo de Estudios sobre Memoria at IDES, Buenos Aires, and an international Research Associate of the Faculty of Humanities, Universidad de San Martín, Buenos Aires.

