

Read Alan

The Dark Theatre: Ethnographies of the Capitalocene.

keynote lecture

The theatre had a single light switch with two settings: On/Off. Between 1977 and 1991 the light switch was on. Then it was off. Dark Theatre. I began working at this dockside warehouse in 1983 and was evicted with several hundred regular users of the building in 1991. All constituencies in the diverse community found themselves in a multitude of performances there: choreographic, site specific, spectacular, intimate assembly. Their resistance was to capital flooding the land, corporations at work. Small history. In the year I arrived, just downstream from Tower Bridge, the annual rent on the two-storey building measuring 30m x 15m, was £875 (27,298 CZK) by the time I left, £96,000 (2,994,990 CZK). My talk will reflect upon this quarter century interregnum of uber-accelerated economics, a state of financialised exception in which the irregularities of the market in 2008 will soon appear a mere ornament. While the Capitalocene describes the continuous conditions of production of 'cheap nature', historically orchestrated from these very docks, what might activism look like in such a scenario? What kind of philosophy might be adequate to such acts and how might such philosophies offer innovative, immanent, diagnostic and heuristic potentials for performance thought and practice?

Bio:

Alan Read was Director of Rotherhithe Theatre Workshop in the Docklands area of South East London in the 1980s, a freelance writer on performance and ethnographer of the *Corre Foc* (fire run) in Barcelona, and then Director of Talks at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in the 1990s, and was appointed Professor of Theatre at Roehampton University in 1997 and King's College London in 2006. As Director of the *Performance Foundation* he has been responsible for the architectural development of the *Anatomy Theatre & Museum* on the Strand and the *Inigo Rooms* in the East Wing of Somerset House. He is the author of *Theatre & Everyday Life: An Ethics of Performance* (1993) *Theatre, Intimacy & Engagement: The Last Human Venue* (2008), *Theatre in the Expanded Field: Seven Approaches to Performance* (2015) and *Theatre & Law* (2016). His radio works, *Plato's Cave* (2012), *Dreadful Trade* (2014) and *Soul Estuary* (2016) were broadcast by BBC Radio 4 and are available now on iPlayer.

