(M)asking the landscape/body-scape of heritage in South Africa: the Well Worn theatre company and transcultural site-specific theatre.

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"Storytelling appeals to our social intelligence. It arises out of our intense interest in monitoring one another” (Boyd, 2009: 382)

By focusing on the use of body and ensemble in performance practice this paper aims to draw links between Richard Schechner’s theory on ritual in ‘Towards a Poetics of Performance’ and the site-specific work of the Johannesburg-based Well Worn theatre company, established in 2008.

Using performance and play as an activist tool to examine, interpret and discuss the most pressing eco-social themes of our time, Well Worn creates the space and conditions necessary for critical thinking and open dialogue. The company devises physical and visual theatre work for crafting a poetic and meaningful connection between audience, subject matter and play. Essentially they are committed to acting imaginatively to address and reflect on issues of eco-socialism, climate justice and Earth-consciousness. In this way, placing more emphasis on that ancestral act of monitoring ourselves and our communities.

As a case-study the Well Worn theatre company, and particularly the Baobab Project (2014), provides an area of focus for our considerations on embodied heritage as well as how the efficacy of mask-work and site-specific theatre breaks the boundaries (and theatrical conventions) with regards to framing culture.

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