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Dr Scott Palmer

TaPRA 2018 Aberystwyth University 5-7 September 2018

Scenographic Landscapes: *Estate* and *Estate 360°*

Estate 360° (2018) is an experimental film based made in collaboration with students and researchers at University of Miami, USA. It emerges from a relational, site-specific performance staged at The Deering Estate, a heritage site on Florida's South-East coast (April 2017). Delivered via the smartphone screen and VR headset, *Estate 360°* offers a digital simulacrum of the live performance in which the viewer navigates the environment as a witness to the characters and their stories. Although there are some significant dramaturgical differences, a scenographic sensibility was central to the creation of both live and digital performances in which the buildings, objects and the sub-tropical landscape, became key components of the audience experience.

Estate and *Estate 360°* were offered as a microcosm of the nation state, revealing disturbing histories and posing some uncomfortable questions: 'Who owns the land?' The familiar local landscape was therefore revealed through performance as something other...

This paper aims to explore the relationship between the two artefacts. The project raises key questions and new possibilities for exploring performance documentation and designing audience experiences. *Estate 360°* remains as a version of the performance, accessed via the mobile phone screen which Dorita Hannah suggests recasts spectators as participants and creates scenarios which can facilitate a new reflexive or critical engagement with performance material (2017). Through the ubiquitous mobile phone the realm of scenography is expanded beyond the frame of the stage and offers the potential for new interactions and exchanges to emerge: "the screen has become an extension of the body and lived space as well as a contemporary site for re-iterating or challenging worldviews." (2017: 40).

TaPRA Gallery Exhibit

***Estate 360°* - an interactive 360-degree film**

Dr. Scott Palmer

Estate 360° (2018) is an experimental interactive film made in collaboration with professional playwrights, students and researchers at University of Miami, Fl. USA. It emerged from a relational site-specific performance '*ESTATE*' staged in a heritage site on Florida's South East coast in April 2017. Delivered via the smartphone screen and head-mounted display, this 'immersive' 360-degree film offers a digital simulacrum of the live performance in which the 'experiencer', just like the original audience member, is invited to navigate the environment as witness to the characters and their stories.

Although there are some significant dramaturgical differences from the original performance (not least that it was designed to be experienced at night and in the dark) *Estate 360°* raises questions not only in relation to performance documentation and actor training, but for the creation, development and design of future audience experiences using theatre practice and 360-degree filming and VR technologies and techniques.

The video *Estate 360°* was first published on-line in January 2018 and is freely available to download <https://interactive.miami.edu/estate/> Full credits to the creative team for the original performance and 360-degree video production are included in the film.

TaPRA Gallery Exhibit

Contents

- 1. Interactive 360-degree film *Estate 360°* accessed through VR headset**
- 2. Seminole Patchwork Tribal Jacket (on dressmakers' stand)**
- 3. Notebook and Pen for audience response (on table)**

Estate 360-degree interactive video

You are invited to sample this experimental film which has many individual scenes and runs continuously. The experience like the original performance is fragmentary and non-linear.

You can navigate between scenes by moving the small white dot in your vision into the superimposed arrowed circles – the next scene will then load.

You have freedom to look all around you – and to cut scenes and move on by following the arrows.

User instructions

Place the VR Headset on your head.

You can adjust the headstraps and speakers for comfort.

You should adjust the lenses to match your pupil distance by moving the black wheel on the outside of the top of the headset.

You can adjust the focal distance by moving the silver controls at the side of the headset.

You are now free to explore the world of Estate

Seminole Patchwork Jacket

This modern Seminole tribal waistcoat has been hand-stitched in traditional fashion, originally using fabric exchanged with Europeans at South Florida trading posts. It is Royce Osceola's own personal garment, worn in his role as 'The Indigenous Guide' in the performance of *ESTATE*.

The waistcoat patterns each have symbolic meanings and the garment itself holds personal affinities associated with ceremonial tribal rituals, spiritual events such as the Green Corn Dance and other profound life experiences.