

WOMEN'S VOICES IN PARLIAMENT

Representation in the Year of Vote 100

JUNE 13, 2018, 5-7PM

OCTAGON

Queen's building, Queen Mary University of London

One hundred years since the Representation of the People Act, which first granted women the right to vote in UK parliamentary elections, what kind of space do powerful institutions grant to women's voices? What progress has been made, and what still needs to be done?

WELCOME

We are convening tonight not in the Palace of Westminster, but in the historic Octagon, the former library of the People's Palace: a space—as Nadia Valman writes in the following essay—representing a potent legacy of inclusion and community. The Octagon has, since 1954, been a space owned and managed by a powerful institution: the University. And more recently, it was occupied for weeks on end by students protesting drastic cuts to bursaries. Many different claims to ownership result from its many uses: as rental, as venue, as legacy, as examination hall, as ghost library, and recently so powerfully as home to students challenging those in power to respond to their own vital assembly.

We have invited you all to this most celebrated space of Queen Mary University of London in order to discuss who is represented in/by powerful institutions, and in what ways their spaces have been and can be *invaded*, to use Nirmal Puwar's important term. In the year of Vote 100 we remember and pay tribute to those women who occupied both public and private spaces in the Palace of Westminster: Margery Humes chained to a statue's spur, Emily Davison hidden in the cupboard of the Crypt. More than simply celebrating, however, we must use the discursive opportunities arising from this centenary to question who feels entitled to invade in the first place. In asking how the public sphere is constituted and performed, we seek to discover who has been systematically excluded, both then and now. Not all women got the vote in 1918; those who did had property, social status and education.

Calls for “Votes for Women” did not result in votes for all, and still they have not.

The Women’s Voices in Parliament project attends to women not as homogeneous but intersectional. It listens not only to the voices that are more audible in centric spaces of power, but for those voices which seldom get heard and acted on. Thank you for joining us in speaking and listening alongside and for each other tonight: for thinking forward while looking, and listening, back.

–Emma Bennett, Ella Finer and Maggie Inchley

JUNE 2018

OCTAGONS

Nadia Valman

The Octagon is one of the few fragments remaining of the People’s Palace, a unique institution for recreation and learning built, in 1887, with the support of charities and public donations, for the working people of Mile End. Originally boasting a vast concert hall, winter garden, swimming baths and gymnasium as well as technical, art and trade schools, it was an unprecedented project to provide modern facilities for employment training and leisure for free, or at a low cost. The Octagon was at the heart of the complex, a free library that extended accessibility to fiction and non-fiction and took account of working hours by opening on evenings and Sundays.

The Octagon was constructed as an East End miniature of the Round Reading Room of the British Museum in Bloomsbury. Open to anyone who could provide a reference letter, the British Museum Reading Room served as a space for research, writing and networking for women writers and activists of the 1880s, who had limited access to higher education. The People’s Palace library, on the other hand, required no reference letters and even admitted teenagers, who were barred from other free libraries. Like the Round Reading Room, it had tables arranged around a central desk and assistants used a funicular railway system to deliver books on overhead wires from the stacks. In another echo of Bloomsbury, those on the library floor would feel the stern gaze of the busts above the book stacks of the canon of eight male writers, from Chaucer to Wordsworth. These references to the British Museum were

intended to demonstrate that the working women and men of the East End should be entitled to just the same cultural privileges as wealthy West Enders. Such symbols, however, were also designed to keep the readers – and perhaps the librarians too – in their place.

Unusually for its time, the People's Palace library was staffed by women. I've often reflected on the conversations that would have once taken place in this space, between the young middle-class librarians – for whom working in Mile End was both a vocation and a chance of professional work – and the readers, who came to self-educate or be entertained. For the spatial organisation and visual language of the library reflected the broader social mission of the People's Palace. The librarians at the central desk were there to offer advice, guidance and encouragement to readers and formed part of the Palace's project to shape working-class leisure time, steering East Enders away from the perils of drink on the one hand and political radicalism on the other. In the library's early years, unemployment, low wages and exploitative employment conditions were fuelling unrest and strike action all over east London, and cultural uplift was seen by some philanthropists as a way of mitigating social inequality. But local dissent was simmering, as the socialist writer Margaret Harkness noticed during Queen Victoria's visit to Mile End to open the People's Palace: she heard hissing, rather than applause, from the onlooking crowd. And the librarians of the People's Palace discovered that their readers had a very good idea of what they liked (popular sensation fiction and war stories) and resented condescending advice. Even in its

earliest days, the Octagon was a space of competing interests and uneasy encounters.

Today, with its Victorian desks removed, the Octagon is no longer a reading panopticon. When I visited the student occupation during spring 2018, the open space of the room had become a powerful symbol of unity and co-operation. The students' demand for increased transparency in university management put me in mind of the origin of the idea for the People's Palace and its library, which was first imagined as a 'Palace of Delight' in Stepney in a utopian novel published in 1882 by Walter Besant. In the novel, Besant insisted that once set up, the Palace should be governed entirely by its users. Although many of his ideas were taken up in the design of the People's Palace in Mile End, such a notion of democratic management was a step too far in the volatile 1880s. But as the student occupation reminded me, that radical proposal, for learners to shape and manage the institution of their learning, is surely worth another read.

WOMEN AS SPACE INVADERS: THE FORCE OF THE SOMATIC NORM

Nirmal Puwar

There is both change and sedimentation occurring when we consider women in Parliament. Women have been slowly entering the (political) house that was built for men. In the general election of 2017, 208 women were elected to Westminster: an increase from 191 elected in 2015. Proportionally, women now constitute 29% of Members of Parliament. No longer are they outsiders fighting to be allowed in. Still though, the weight of the past is not past yet. Legally, both Houses were built for men of specific masculinities. Positions were not historically or conceptually reserved for women. Even as women are in the process of becoming the norm or, what Drude Dahlerup dubbed to be a substantive “critical mass”, they are entering a political lion skin, as noted by Carole Pateman, which has been designed for men. And the political lion skin is still considered to be “ill-fitting” for women.¹ Or, rather when women wear the male lion skin they are considered to be unbecoming of that skin.

Over time, Westminster has been very slowly changing. The ideal figure of citizenship has been amended beyond the human shape granted to leaders and citizens by political theorists of democracy, such as John Locke, Rousseau, and J.S. Mill, to include the hitherto excluded.² Now women, ethnic and racialised minorities as well as disabled bodies enter these institutions as legitimate representatives. Nevertheless, the infinitesimal modes of measurement are such that the historical and conceptual weight of who is

the ideal figure of leadership pervades the allocation of authority and judgement. Legitimacy is not only a legal category; it is also a social category, in this case of who has the legitimate right to belong, represent, and lead. Positions of leadership are, historically and conceptually, reserved for some bodies over and above others. There is still considered to be more of a “natural” fit of some bodies over other bodies. Particular processes illuminate how women and racialised bodies are not the ideal occupants due to the ways in which both spaces and bodies have been historically figured. They are in the tenuous location of being both insiders and outsiders at the same time. In fact, rhetorically speaking, they are “space invaders”.³

The analysis of women and racialised minorities in parliament points to the importance of looking beyond easy notions of diversity which focus on counting diverse heads. Instead we need to consider conditions of existence. After researching and observing women and minority ethnic bodies in leadership over time, the following processes can be identified in Westminster as well as across other public spaces.

DISORIENTATION

The arrival of women MPs in the space today clearly does not cause the same proportion of aftershock as the presence of Lady Astor did when she entered the House as the first woman to enter the house as a MP in 1919. Upon her entrance into the House, Winston Churchill remarked:

I find a woman's intrusion into the House of Commons as embarrassing as if she burst into

my bathroom when I had nothing with which to defend myself, not even a sponge.⁴

The sense of an assumed masculine territory is somewhat disturbed by a female presence. The private intimate nature of the public space of democracy becomes unsettled. The response is incredibly telling of how particular fraternities are constitutive of the very ways in which the public sphere is lived and defined as a space of belonging.⁵ The cathexis of an exclusive masculine habitual zone befits uneasiness.

The situation today is of course nowhere near as stark as 1919. Nonetheless, there can still be a mismatch between bodies and spaces, precisely because of how spaces are framed and bodies are received. Elizabeth Grosz notes how we live and move in space as bodies in relation to other bodies.⁶ Or, as Henri Lefebvre, puts it each living body “produces itself in space and it also produces that space.”⁷ There is thus as Grosz notes the “ongoing possibility of a different inhabitation.”⁸

Female and racialised bodies still have to work against the grain of both how their bodies, and the spaces they move in, are defined. When I interviewed Bernie Grant, he recalled an incident from when he was first elected in 1984. Then, he was one of four black minority ethnic MPs. Initially, before the service staff got to know him, he was told to not enter the members’ lift as it was members only. Hence the political lion skin is not only gendered, as noted by Pateman, it is also racialised.⁹ Staff were disoriented upon seeing a black male body in a members-only zone because members are not naturalised as black.

Only as recently as 2016, the black MP Dawn Butler publicly remarked on an almost identical incident of disorientation. Butler stated that when she was in the members’ lift, an MP said, “This lift really isn’t for cleaners.” Relaying another incident of very obvious disorientation because of the ways in which particular racialised bodies jar presumptions of both bodies and spaces, Butler noted how former senior Tory minister David Heathcoat-Amory confronted her in the Members’ section of the terrace. He said to her: “What are you doing here? This is for Members only”. He then asked her, “Are you a member?” When she said she was he turned around and said to his colleague, “They’re letting anybody in nowadays.” Butler analyses how, “This man could not equate the image he saw in front of him with that of an MP.”¹⁰

INFANTALISATION

There are particular moulds in which leadership has been imagined over time. Some bodies fit the mould and others are seen to be ill-fitting. Due to the difficulties of seeing women and racialised bodies in specific roles, they are infantilised. They are often seen to be more junior than they are, and hence viewed as secretaries, assistants or researchers. Rather than as MPs. The dynamics of infantilisation operate across sectors and institutions.

BURDEN OF DOUBT

There is a somatic norm to leadership positions. Some bodies are seen to embody the appropriate capacities, whereas others are seen not quite to be up to the mark.

Often, specific kinds of masculinities are defined as a safe pair of hands. Thus when women do take up positions of leadership they often endure a burden of doubt. There is a nagging doubt attached to their skills and competencies because they don't quite fit the somatic norm. People are often uncertain of their capacities to deliver and perform. There is an element of suspicion in the air.

SUPER-SURVEILLANCE

The gaze which accompanies the burden of doubt puts women and other relative outsiders under a spotlight. They are watched for the most minor of mistakes. Any errors or minor mishaps are amplified. This adds to the suspicion that authority is misplaced in these bodies. Thus a most micro error can be used to confirm the need to displace a woman from a position of authority. The gendered dynamics are such that the same mistakes in men are either not noticed or they don't become an issue. They are not picked up and picked out in quite the same way. Once the woman comes under attack, a collective attempt to displace her can emerge and spike. At that point, the criticism can become especially personal and vitriolic. It can be extremely interesting to observe how personalities and institutions almost form a pack of attacks when women are being publicly ousted. Again, this can be observed across institutions.

BURDEN OF REPRESENTATION

The burden of doubt generates a burden of representation whereby outsiders feel they have to do well otherwise they will be seen to be letting the side down. Even though MPs

are elected to represent their constituencies and political parties, women and racialised minorities are at the same time seen to represent the capacities of a group. Of, for example women per se. And, if they are not doing the job well, they can be considered to be letting the side down; to not be showing women in a good light. This has possible implications for opportunities being closed down or limited for further women. The burden of representation also operates in another respect. This is especially the case for racialised MPs. They are considered to represent all black or Asian people, in addition to their constituencies. Black and Asian people across the country, far beyond their constituency, get in touch with them with concerns. Which in turn also increases their workloads.

BECOMING INSIDERS

Women MPs are not plain outsiders. They are also, to different degrees, insiders. As space invaders, they certainly occupy the tenuous space of being both outsiders and insiders. It is important to appreciate the processes involved in becoming insiders and how women too partake in some of these processes. It is too simplistic to define people in terms of their marginality, whether that is in terms of gender, race or class. They are also located in other structures of opportunity and they also are vested in professions, skills and places. Attention to their spaces of possibility are just as important for understanding their context as is an awareness to spaces of impossibility.

HABITUS

Class trajectories, in terms of family and education, have a huge bearing upon what one becomes. Class is not only an element of wealth, property and income. It is also embodied in the ways in which we carry ourselves, how we talk and the tastes we have. Combining both Frantz Fanon and Pierre Bourdieu, we can see how speaking the imperial legitimate language carries symbolic power.¹¹ Our tastes and cultural knowledge, depending on where they are derived from, accrue cultural capital. Educationally speaking, elite schools and universities accrue cultural capital. Not every MP has been through these routes. But certainly for women and racialised minorities, if one has moved through these channels, these are very important routes for outsiders to become insiders. As are the attributes acquired and carried through these trajectories.

NETWORKS

Educational routes can offer carriage and strong bearing. Additionally, networks of influence and shared friendship impact on who becomes an insider, as well as how one becomes an insider. In parliamentary politics, networks come through parties, unions, clubs, universities, schools and families too. There are masculine fraternities at play, impacting upon who is noticed and trusted. Women may be in some of these networks, though they are often at the edges of the fraternities. Endorsements are a central feature of networks. Depending on who the endorsements are from, they carry weight, and are a central feature of opportunity structures in politics. Thus, if one wants to understand how women and minority ethnic MPs have

come to be where they are, it is highly relevant to note the processes of endorsement. This is the case for everyone, since these are the ways in which spaces are produced.

CONCLUSIONS

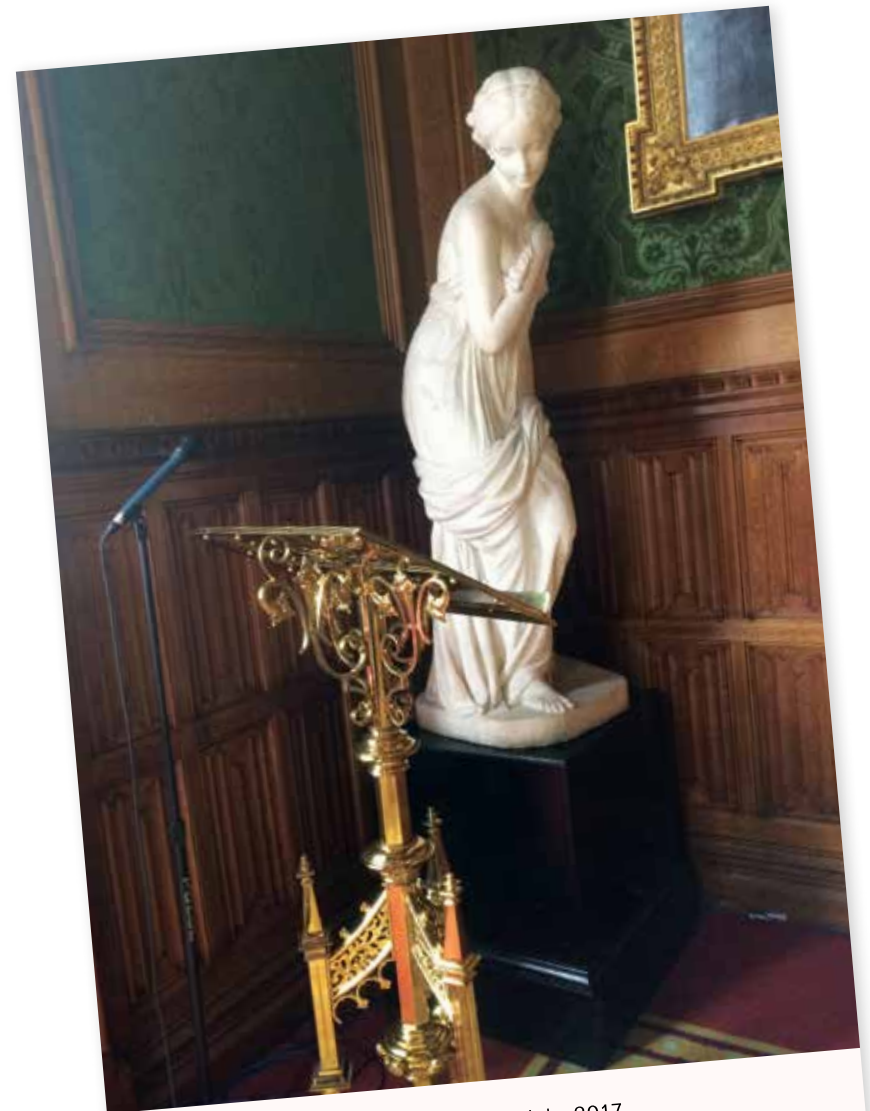
This short discussion of an analysis I have elaborated upon in the book *Space Invaders* leads me to conclude that there are two operations in motion when considering women and racialised minorities in parliament. Westminster has historically and conceptually been made in the vision of particular types of masculinities. There is a somatic norm which has been repeated again and again. Often unthinkingly. When women and other outsiders enter and occupy the space, they disturb the space and its naturalised linkages with masculinities. At the same time, the presence of what I have termed as space invaders highlights the tensions posed by their arrival. Disorientation, infantilisation, super-surveillance, burden of doubt, burden of representation ensue to illuminate how they are still not the somatic norm as MPs. Whilst negotiating these tensions, women also become invested in political institutions. And, in the very process of becoming MPs, they illuminate what the conditions of becoming are for all MPs. Trajectories, habitus, networks, and endorsements all come into view. Still though, the force of the somatic norm (of the masculine white figure) prevails large as the historically constituted force to be measured against. The spotlight shines on the space invaders, with mistakes and warts easily noticed as signs of displaced authority.

NOTES

1. See Drude Dahlerup, 'Representing Women: Defining Substantive Representation of Women', in Maria C. Escobar-Lemmon and Michelle M. Taylor-Robinson (eds.), *Representation: The Case of Women*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 58–75; and Carole Pateman, *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism and Political Theory* (Cambridge: Polity, 1995).
2. See David Theo Goldberg, *The Racial State* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002).
3. See Nirmal Puwar, *Space Invaders: Race, Gender and Bodies out of Place* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2004).
4. Winston Churchill, cited in Elizabeth Vallance, *Women in the House: A Study of Women Members of Parliament* (London: Athlone Press, 1979), p. 23.
5. See Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988).
6. Elizabeth Grosz, 'Bodies-Cities', in Janet Price and Margrit Shildrick (eds.), *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader* (Edinburgh University Press, 1999), p. 92.
7. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), p. 170.
8. Elizabeth Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), p. 9.
9. See Carole Pateman, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997); and Carole Pateman and Charles Mills, *The Contract and Domination* (Oxford: Polity Press, 2007).
10. Dawn Butler, 'Being Different: My Life As a Black Woman MP', in Moosa, Z (ed.) *Seeing Double: Race and Gender in Ethnic Minority Women's Lives* (London: Fawcett Society Publications, 2008), p. 33.
11. See Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power: The Economy of Linguistic Exchanges* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992); and Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (London: Pluto Press, 1986).

WOMEN'S VOICES IN PARLIAMENT

Programme



River Room, Houses of Parliament. July 2017.

17.00
Welcome

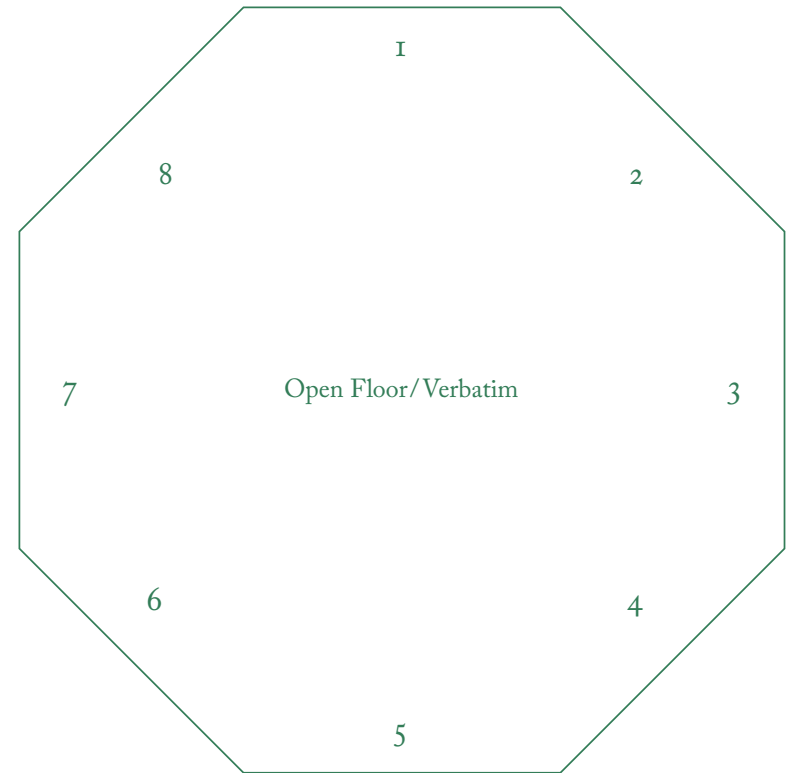
17.15
Speakers

18.00
Workshop and Verbatim Performance

18.15
Open Floor

18.45
Verbatim Performance

19.00
Closing Remarks



1. Jen Harvie
2. Naomi Paxton
3. Nirmal Puwar
4. Rainbow Murray
5. Nephertiti Oboshie Schandorf
6. Sarah Childs
7. Jemima Hindmarch and Lewis Williams
8. Lise Olson

SARAH CHILDS is Professor of Politics and Gender at Birkbeck, University of London, UK. Her research expertise centres on the theory and practice of women's representation, gender and political parties, and re-gendering parliaments. Sarah is currently writing a book on the theory of women's representation, with Karen Celis. In 2015 she published two edited books *Gender, Conservatism and Representation*, and *Deeds and Words* with Celis and Campbell respectively, both ECPR press. She has also received the Political Studies Association 'Special Recognition Award', 2015. 2016 saw the publication of *The Good Parliament Report* following a secondment to the UK House of Commons. On Sarah's recommendation a new group of MPs, The Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion was established by Mr Speaker. Sarah is currently advising this group.

JEN HARVIE is Professor of Contemporary Theatre and Performance at Queen Mary University of London. Focusing on the cultural politics of contemporary performance, her publications include *Theatre & the City* (2009), *Fair Play – Art, Performance and Neoliberalism* (2013), and *The Only Way Home Is Through the Show*:

Performance Work of Lois Weaver, co-edited with Weaver (2015). She co-edits Palgrave Macmillan's *Theatre &* series, interviews performance makers on her podcast *Stage Left with Jen Harvie*, and is working on a monograph on feminist theatre and performance over the last decade in the UK and an edited collection on the work of queer, working class performance artist Scottee.

RAINBOW MURRAY is a Professor of Politics at QMUL. She is an expert on political representation, gender quotas, candidates, elections and parliaments, especially in France and the UK. She has published widely in these areas as well as serving as a consultant to media outlets and international organisations. She is currently working on four major projects. The first is the conclusion of a book project looking at the impact of gender quotas on representation in the French parliament. The second is a project exploring how financial resources help or hinder women's access to politics. The third is a study of male over-representation, with a particular focus on the political representation of minority and marginalised men. The fourth is an analysis of what it really takes to be a good MP, combining conceptual work on "merit" with a study of unprecedented renewal in the French parliament in 2017. When not

working, Rainbow enjoys (gentle) exercise and baking vegan cakes.

LISE OLSON currently leads the MA in Acting at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. She relocated from Merseyside, where she trained actors for a decade at the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts (LIPA). An American ex-pat, she has been working professionally in the UK for over 20 years. She holds a BA in Theatre from Northwestern University in Chicago and a Master of Fine Arts in Directing from the University of Utah. The recipient of directing awards in both the US and UK, she was a founding director of Seattle's first small specialist musical theatre company. Her West End credits include *The Witches of Eastwick*, *Coyote on a Fence* and *A View From The Bridge*. Other UK credits include the Royal Exchange Theatre, Bristol Old Vic, Birmingham Rep, Belgrade Theatre, Dukes Playhouse Lancaster and Bolton Octagon. Although she is an acknowledged international specialist in the areas of Vocal Violence, Theatre Voice and Acting Through Song, she is equally at home with her professional business clients.

NAOMI PAXTON is a researcher, writer and performer. Her doctoral research at the University of Manchester explored the work of

the Actresses' Franchise League, and her research interests include the performative propaganda of the suffrage movement, and networks and cultural histories of feminist theatre. Naomi frequently speaks about her research in public, is a BBC Radio 3/AHRC New Generation Thinker, and recently curated an exhibition in Parliament entitled *What Difference Did the War Make? World War One and Votes for Women*, which is available to view online at www.parliament.uk/whatdifference. She is an Associate Fellow at the School of Advanced Study, University of London and Associate Artist of feminist production hub Scary Little Girls, and still performs as her comedy character Ada Campe, recently winning the 2018 New Act of the Year, and the 2018 Old Comedian of the Year competitions. Publications include *The Methuen Drama Book of Suffrage Plays* (Bloomsbury, 2013), *Stage Rights! The Actresses' Franchise League, activism and politics 1908–1958* (Manchester University Press, 2018) and *The Methuen Drama Book of Suffrage Plays: Taking the Stage* (Bloomsbury, 2018) www.naomipaxton.co.uk Twitter: @NaomiPaxton

NIRMAL PUWAR is Reader in the Sociology Department of Goldsmith's College, University of London, where she has lectured

for over ten years. She has authored *Space Invaders: race, gender and bodies out of place* (2004). The concept of Space Invaders has been developed and discussed in a number of institutional sectors. Puwar has co-edited 17 Collections, including: *Post-colonial Bourdieu; Orientalism and Fashion; Intimacy in Research; Live Methods* and, *South Asian Women in the Diaspora*. A number of her writings have been translated into different languages. She was Co-Director of the Methods Lab for over ten years, undertaking projects to re-think, stretch and connect the very walls of the academy beyond the academy. She takes a critical historical approach to 'public engagement' and has worked collaboratively using creative methods. These projects have been funded by the AHRC, BFI, ESRC, British Academy and the Arts Council.

NEPHERITI OBOSHIE SCHANDORF is a producer and researcher of contemporary art with a focus on performance, audio and moving image in non-gallery contexts. Her practice is informed by the formation of protective networks and cultural archives. She has delivered exhibitions and programmes with the Royal College of Art in partnership with the British Film Institute and LUX Moving

Image (2013–14). She has produced discursive works, collaborations and research projects, and assisted in the coordination of major exhibitions including, *We Face Forward* and *Coal on Cotton* with the Whitworth and Manchester Galleries, the Cultural Olympiad and Manchester International Festival (2012–13). She is currently the Producer for Larry Achiampong's *Relic Traveller*, an Arts Council England funded project developed in partnership with PS/Y, Artsadmin, the Hayward Gallery, Jerwood Visual Arts and Somerset House. Nephertiti holds a BA in photography from the Manchester School of Art and an MA in Curating Contemporary Art from the Royal College of Art.

NADIA VALMAN is Reader in English Literature in the School of English and Drama at Queen Mary University of London. A scholar of nineteenth and twentieth century urban culture with special interests in religion, gender and migrancy, her publications include *The Jewess in Nineteenth-Century British Literary Culture* (2007) and *British Jewish Women Writers* (2014). Her most recent research is on the cultural history of the East End. She has also collaborated with musicians, artists and archivists in public engagement activities in east

London. In 2018 she was awarded the Hawking Award for Developed Understanding of Public Engagement for her collaboration with the Migration Museum Project on 'Migrant Literature Walks' in 2017 and 2018.

JEMIMA HINDMARCH AND LEWIS WILLIAMS were members of the recent student occupation of the Octagon. Despite looking like a spontaneous action emerging from a rally on the front steps of the Queen's building on 12 March 2018, the Octagon occupation was actually a plan carefully drawn up in secret over many weeks of debate and discussion. While originally, the plan was to be there for an afternoon, maybe 24hrs at most, to the awe of all involved, these plans quickly grew and grew with the outpouring of support and enthusiasm from fellow students and staff alike. The month of occupation became a centre for political expression and action, which succeeded not only in showing support for striking staff and opposition for the planned bursary cuts at QMUL, but in winning over half a million pounds for a two year intermediary fund; securing a commitment to further research into the efficacy of bursaries from the university, and even securing an increase in bursaries from the figure originally quoted in the

planned cuts. These tangible successes were only the beginning of a movement. Occupy the Octagon succeeded in bringing radical politics to Queen Mary, and challenging the marketisation of education.

VERBATIM PERFORMANCES

Using extracts of interviews with, and personal reflections from:
Tulip Siddiq MP
Baroness Boothroyd
Baroness Hayman
Baroness Williams of Crosby

With performers:
Ilayda McIntosh
Clara Moschetta
Tink Flaherty
Arielle Siler
Loulou von Kohl

Women's Voices in Parliament
is produced by Emma Bennett,
Ella Finer and Maggie Inchley

EMMA BENNETT is an artist and researcher working with performance. Her primary interest is speech – as act, as compositional material, as communal social practice fraught with politics. She has performed and discussed her work widely, at festivals, symposia and concert series in the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and Romania. She holds a PhD on performance, rhetoric and stand-up comedy from Queen Mary University of London, and is Teaching Fellow in Contemporary Performance at the University of Leeds.

ELLA FINER's work in sound and performance spans writing, composing and curating with a particular interest in how women's voices take up space; how bodies acoustically disrupt, challenge or change the order of who is allowed to occupy – command – space. Her ongoing project *Sound Politics* queries the ownership of cultural expression through sound, informing her most recent curated event *Selector Responder: Sounding out the Archives* at the British Library (as part of their Season of Sound). She is a 2018 Sound and Music Composer-Curator and a trustee of Longplayer (longplayer.org).

Verbatim performances directed
by Sarah Bartley

SARAH BARTLEY is a community arts practitioner working across a number of prison arts organisations including Rideout, Shifting Point, and Unlock Drama. She recently completed a PhD in Drama at Queen Mary, University of London. Sarah's research explores intersections of performance and social policy, with a particular focus on cultural representations of the welfare state. She is a visiting lecturer at Queen Mary; Royal Central School of Speech and Drama; and Goldsmiths, University of London.

Technical director: Tom Wilson
Project assistants: Khadra Ibrahim,
Anna Dean, Jack Ridely,
Xinyue Zhang

This event is part of the Women's Voices in Parliament project led by Dr. Emma Bennett, Dr. Ella Finer and Dr. Maggie Inchley. The project has been generously supported with a Large Grant from the QMUL Centre for Public Engagement.



Peopling the Palace

Centre for Public
Engagement



Queen Mary
University of London

Designed by Joe Hales