

Information for students and researchers on Clean Break Theatre Company

In recognition of our 40th anniversary in 2019, a public archive of Clean Break's work was established at Bishopsgate Institute, funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund. [Clean Break | Bishopsgate Institute](#)

As part of our heritage project, we also now have a digital timeline: [A History | Clean Break](#)

Clean Break has also been the subject of a research project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council into Clean Break's practice and the unique way the company operates. The project **Women, Theatre, Justice** is an interdisciplinary project exploring the history of the company in relation to its distinctive organisational practices, spatial geographies, and performance legacies. <https://womentheatrejustice.org/>

Publications

Bartley, S and McAvinchey, C, Dean, D, Greene, AM ([in press](#)) 2024: **Clean Break Theatre Company: Origins and Practices**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press Elements Series.

Feminist Then and Now – Celebrating 50 Years (2024), introduction by Aston E.; 50 Year of women theatre makers in the UK and Ireland and their battle to make their voices heard, have their work produced professionally, and promote social justice. Here, the pioneers and leading lights of the newly energised feminist theatre movement continue to fight for an equitable, diverse and inclusive theatre which speaks for all. In 30+ essays, covering three generations, the interviews and essays in this book give important insight into the lived experience of women working in theatre and what it takes to rise in an industry where race, gender, class and parenthood can be serious obstacles to success. Chapter on **Clean Break** by Anna Herrmann. <https://www.aurorametro.com/product/feminist-theatre-then-and-now/>

Greene, AM, Dean, D, Bartley, S and McAvinchey, C (2022) **Locked up and down: incarceration, care and art in a pandemic**. *Gender, Work & Organisation* 29(4), 1346–1359 <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12801>

Applied Theatre: Women and the Criminal Justice System (2020), by Dr Caoimhe McAvinchey, offers unprecedented access to international theatre and performance practice in carceral contexts and the material and political conditions that shape this work. Extracts of performance texts, developed with Clean Break theatre company, are interwoven through the collection. <https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/applied-theatre-women-and-the-criminal-justice-system-9781474262552/>

Equal Stages (2020) by Nick Awde, contains an interview with Anna Herrmann.

Published in association with the Other National Theatre and the International Theatre Institute, the book takes a look at diversity, representation, visibility and inclusion in the live performing arts, particularly theatre. <https://www.waterstones.com/book/equal-stages/nick-awde/9781908755384>

“Inside Bitch: Clean Break and the ethics of representation of women in the criminal justice system”, chapter in Applied Theatre Reader (2nd Edition, 2020), edited by Tim Prentki & Nicola Abraham. Anna Herrmann and Dr Caoimhe McAvinchey have co-written a chapter on Clean Break’s 2019 production, Inside Bitch. The Applied Theatre Reader is the first book to bring together new case studies of practice by leading practitioners and academics in the field and beyond, with classic source texts from writers such as Noam Chomsky, bell hooks, Mikhail Bakhtin, Augusto Boal and Chantal Mouffe. <https://www.routledge.com/The-Applied-Theatre-Reader/Prentki-Abraham/p/book/9780367376291>

“Unlocking Potential: The Role of Theatre Writing in Prisons in the Work of Clean Break”, chapter in Prison Writing and the Literary World (2020), edited by Michelle Kelly and Claire Westall. Clean Break has contributed to a chapter that tackles international prison writing and writing about imprisonment in relation to questions of literary representation and formal aesthetics, the “value” or “values” of literature, textual censorship and circulation, institutional networks and literary-critical methodologies. It offers scholarly essays exploring prison writing in relation to wartime internment, political imprisonment, resistance and independence creation, regimes of terror, and personal narratives of development and awakening that grapple with race, class and gender. <https://www.routledge.com/Prison-Writing-and-the-Literary-World-Imprisonment-Institutionality-and/Kelly-Westall/p/book/9780367616236>

A group of Clean Break Members’ poetry and prose were published as a chapter under the title “Our Voices Should Be Heard” in The Monument Fellowship’s 2019 Crime and Consequence: What should happen to people who commit criminal offences? <https://www.koestlerarts.org.uk/shop/books/crime-and-consequence-2/>

Anna Herrmann was interviewed on the work of Clean Break for a chapter on women’s theatre for the 2018 publication: Scenes from the Revolution Making Political Theatre 1968-2018, edited by Kim Wiltshire, Billy Cowan.

Rebecca Manley, former Assistant Head of Education (Learning) carried out some research for her MA Social Justice and Education at the Institute of Education in 2012. Her dissertation looks at theatre practice in Clean Break’s former education programme from a post-structuralist feminist perspective. It is available as a pdf if you email our Members Admin Support at participation@cleanbreak.org.uk

“The Mothership”, a piece by Anna Herrmann, offers insight into the experience of a group of women on the former education programme (1993-2017). It appears as a chapter in The Applied Theatre Reader (2008), Prentki, T. and Preston, S. (eds) published by Routledge.

The Arts Alliance evidence library (<http://www.artsevidence.org.uk>) is an online resource containing evaluations, reports, and academic research on arts projects within the Criminal Justice System. Articles can be searched for by a number of criteria including institution, art form, participant profile and date. The library contains a wide range of relevant research including six pieces relating specifically to the work of Clean Break. Five of these can be found using the following link:

http://artsevidence.org.uk/evaluations/?participant_gender=1

Some other excellent literature that may be of use to you are:

Inspiring Futures (2023): [Inspiring Futures – National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance \(artsincriminaljustice.org.uk\)](https://www.artsincriminaljustice.org.uk)

<https://www.artsincriminaljustice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Clean-Break-case-study-August-2017.pdf>

http://www.cleanbreak.org.uk/media/uploads/theory_of_change_final_april_2017.pdf

http://www.cleanbreak.org.uk/media/uploads/celebrating_success_clean_break_and_royal_central_school_of_speech_and_drama.pdf

Producing

With regards to our produced work, we have a range of play texts which are available to purchase either direct from the publishers or via our website. These are as follows:

Trials and Passions of Unfamous Women (not published)

Dixon and Daughters by Deborah Bruce

Favour by Ambreen Razia

Typical Girls by Morgan Lloyd Malcolm

Bli-sta by Sonya Hale (listen to the radio play [here](#))

Sweatbox (recorded as a short film, linked [here](#))

Yard Gal by Rebecca Prichard

[BLANK] by Alice Birch

Inside Bitch Conceived by Stacey Gregg and Deborah Pearson, Devised by Lucy Edkins, Jennifer Joseph, TerriAnn Oudjar and Jade Small

House by Somalia Seaton and **Amongst the Reeds** by Chinonyerem Odimba

Joanne by Deborah Bruce, Theresa Ikoko, Laura Lomas, Chinonyerem Odimba and Ursula Rani Sarma

Pests by Vivienne Franzmann

Billy the Girl by Katie Hims

Black Crows by Linda Brogan

Compact Failure by Jennifer Farmer

This Wide Night by Chloë Moss

it felt empty when the heart left at first, but it is alright now by Lucy Kirkwood

Mercy Fine by Shelley Silas

Charged – six plays by Chloë Moss, winsome Pinnock, Rebecca Prichard, E V Crowe, Sam Holcroft and Rebecca Lenkiewicz

In 2019 as part of our 40th anniversary celebration we published **Rebel Voices: Monologues for Women by Women** which celebrates monologues from across Clean Break's history and work in theatre, prisons and the community. It can be purchased on our website.

In 2021 we also published **Voices from Prison**, featuring writing by women in prison during the pandemic, with an accompanying short film.

<https://www.cleanbreak.org.uk/productions/voices-from-prison/>