**Experiments in Online Clowning Practices**

**Richard Talbot**

*School of Arts & Media, University of Salford*

**Project Portfolio: 300 word statement**

The portfolio comprises an investigation into *both* online and live ‘Elderclown’ practices developed for interactions in the context of social care provision. The project explores new approaches to applied clown performance supplemented by online performance interactions and environments. It documents a number of Elderclown laboratories, and workshops as well as performances and research dissemination in residential care homes, dementia cafés and social clubs for older people and their caregivers.

The investigation is led by the following questions:

* What approaches to digital media might be appropriate for a ‘physical’ comedy online *as a complement to live performance*.
* How might online environments be designed for optimum interaction predominantly in social care settings.
* How does documentation of the practice operate as and through research?
* How do we measure the efficacy of the project and any attendant impact on new audiences?

A practical challenge of the work is how to engage participants who are experiencing cognitive impairment in the use of new technologies. Ethical and ontological concerns here arise from the deployment of clownish figures that inherently disrupt and further destabilise perceptions of reality.

A further question therefore emerges:

* What might be learned from extant Elderclown practice, and from applications of clowning in other contexts with vulnerable people?

The findings of a series of four laboratories and workshops are disseminated through interdisciplinary conferences and an article, plus an online Virtual Clowning eBook These propose that devising clowning through and alongside digital interactive media invites a re-framing of the substance or materiality of physical clown comedy and clown texts.

A substantial element of the project involved, between 2016-2018, an interdisciplinary collaboration between Canadian scholar Dr Clare Dormann (University of Liverpool) and Dr Richard Talbot.

The project has been conducted with support from a Leverhulme Trust/British Academy Small Arts Grant, Impact funding from the School of Arts & Media, and from Salford Institute for Dementia, both at the University of Salford

**https://tinyurl.com/ludicresearch:**

Once at this website, click More and then look under ‘Virtual Clown’

It is possible to view video content on Richard Talbot’s Vimeo page: <https://vimeo.com/201672431>.

Virtual Clown related videos on this Vimeo page can be viewed using the password: **Virtual Clown**

Other videos relating to the project may be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLjwVpPcMbX5U2FtTfQ_FmbVJSwfuTVLot>

**Dr Richard Talbot**
Senior Lecturer in Performance  | Performance Research Group Lead

School of Arts & Media, University of Salford
New Adelphi Building, 6.02, Desk 169

The Crescent, Salford, Greater Manchester  M5 4WT
t: +44 (0) 16 129 56367  |  m: +44 (0)7899-872-215
[r.talbot@salford.ac.uk](https://portal.salford.ac.uk/%2BCSCO%2B0h75676763663A2F2F666E797362657166726B70756E617472736E657A2E666E79736265712E6E702E6878%2B%2B/owa/redir.aspx?C=Cg5iPCL480qhkb9-6dVZ6y4CmazH4tMINt_WNxcQuL1FA1wwNItsSj4QAOJHnZngAj5VrqYqhxU.&URL=mailto%3ar.talbot%40salford.ac.uk" \t "_blank)  | [www.salford.ac.uk](https://portal.salford.ac.uk/%2BCSCO%2B0h75676763663A2F2F666E797362657166726B70756E617472736E657A2E666E79736265712E6E702E6878%2B%2B/owa/redir.aspx?C=Cg5iPCL480qhkb9-6dVZ6y4CmazH4tMINt_WNxcQuL1FA1wwNItsSj4QAOJHnZngAj5VrqYqhxU.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.salford.ac.uk%2f" \t "_blank)