

## Memory, Nostalgia and Theatre // Obrador d'estiu 2024

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***"Memory believes before knowing remembers."***

*William Faulkner, Light In August*

Where are we, now, in time? We're in the present. The little seconds. Those little seconds that hold a little thought and then gone. Where do they go? All these thoughts that become the past as soon as they are born. Where are they now? Lost, somewhere in the folds of a brain. In the spaces between matter. In the air. Where are they? All these memories? All these memories of moments now lost. Lost moments that you want back so much it hurts. Or lost moments that you wish had never happened. You wish so hard it hurts. Where are they? Somewhere in time. Somewhere you can't feel them, literally, anymore, but they remain. Don't they? Echoes. Echoes of moments that make you, and us, who we are. That make the world how it is. How we live. They shape the future. Those moments. They shape it all. But where are they? Where have then gone? And why do people spend so long wishing, so desperately, that those moments, those past moments, were right now? It comes up so much. In politics, in societies, in geographies. But also within us. In our yearnings for a time now gone. Our desire to forget a pain that won't go away. Our need for love.



Nostalgia is a strange thing. Especially now. It feels like it's everywhere. People nostalgic for a time they never knew. Nostalgic for a time they did know and wish they were back there now. Is everyone hiding in the past because the future looks so daunting? So violent? So destructive? Perhaps. Or maybe it's smaller than that.

Maybe thinking about the world is too big. So people retreat into nostalgia for when they felt safe. Their childhood bedroom? Those endlessly bright summer holidays with your friends? Where everything felt possible and reality felt, happily, so far away? A teenage romance where nothing and everything felt alive. Lost love. Do we retreat into memory when what is in front of us feels too overwhelming?



Nostalgia comes from Ancient Greek. Nostos - return, home. Algos - pain. A pain for home. To return home. A sickness that can only be helped by returning home. Nostalgia is a sickness and to return is the cure. But what if there's nothing to return too? When that home has gone. Been destroyed or lost in time. When home was love. When that love has gone and won't come back. The yearning for a time that you might never see again.



That's what we will think about together. Memory and nostalgia. And theatre. How can we understand memory? How can we express nostalgia? How can we try and make sense of the world in the present day, when so long is spent looking into the past?

***"Goodbye, goodbye!  
There was so much to love, I could not love it all;  
I could not love it enough."  
Louise Bogan***

Your short plays respond to this. They are about memory and nostalgia. That is the theme. How you interpret that is entirely up to you. The play could be explicit in its idea of memory. Or it could be abstract - perhaps nostalgia is subtextual, driving the characters towards their future? How you interpret that is up to you. But think about how to challenge the idea. Do you want to write about a relationship that has been lost? Grief? How the past and present interact? Maybe you want to write about home? Whatever home means to you. Write whatever you like. But make your plays, in some way, big or small, respond to memory and nostalgia.

***"The old is dying and the new cannot be born."  
Antonio Gramsci***

