

SIUE's Schmitz receives Hoppe Research Professor Award

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Johanna Schmitz, PhD, professor of theater history in the SIUE College of Arts and Sciences.

EDWARDSVILLE — The Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Graduate School has presented Johanna Schmitz, PhD, with the 2018-2020 Hoppe Research Professor Award. Schmitz, a professor of theater history in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), is being recognized for her contributions to her field of study.

The Hoppe Research Professor Award recognizes and supports faculty members whose research or creative activities have the promise of making significant contributions to their fields of studies. The award supports a significant and discrete portion of a faculty member's larger research agenda for a two-year period.

Schmitz's project, "Building the Rose Theatre Archive (1989-2019): Discovery, Protection and Presentation of the Remains of Shakespeare and Marlowe's Theater," involves the creation of a digital archive to showcase the 1989 discovery of the Rose Theatre in London, which operated from 1587-c.1605 at the height of early modern theater in the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras.

"Dr. Schmitz blends her rich knowledge of Shakespeare's history to this unique archeology find to bring Shakespearean times into our physical world in a way that no other approach to the subject could," said Jerry Weinberg, PhD, associate provost for research and dean of the Graduate School. "The preservation through digital archiving creates an opportunity for scholars around the world to study these finds and brings international recognition to the high level of scholarship at SIUE."

"I am grateful to SIUE's Graduate School and the College of Arts and Sciences for the honor of receiving this award," Schmitz said. "I am looking forward to using these resources to bring the post-discovery archive to a point where it will serve diverse research interests in Shakespeare Studies including theater history, theater architecture, urban planning, performance and cultural monumentalism."

"The discovery of the Rose has impacted recent developments in architectural reconstruction including the design of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre," she continued. "It is not a stretch to say that this archive will preserve 30 years of important developments in our understanding of original practice, historical preservation policies, and even our contemporary sensibilities regarding current performance aesthetics and the construction of memorial spaces."

Located on the south bank of the River Thames in London, the Rose Theatre was a performance venue that featured the plays of William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe and their contemporaries. Sometime after 1605, the Rose was demolished and its timber was repurposed.

In 1989, during site preparation for the construction of a new high-rise office building, archaeologists discovered the Rose Theatre's foundation. After months of public protest and construction delays, a new building was redesigned so that the structure would span over the Rose rather than remove it to make space for

an underground parking lot. The UK government declared the Rose Theatre foundation an ancient monument in 1992.

Nearly every year since 1990, Schmitz has travelled to London to work and study. In 2001, she became associated with The Rose Theatre Trust, an organization dedicated to preserving the playhouse and began collecting materials for the archive. She will serve as the archivist for the Trust and continue to publish and present her research on early modern architectural reconstruction.

“Since some of the materials that were initially excavated from the Rose Theatre site are mostly in private collections, digitizing the archive is our best hope of making this collection available to the public,” Schmitz said. “The material collection grows every year, and over 450 items have already been uploaded to the online catalog.”

According to Schmitz, this digital archive will preserve the 30 years including the discovery, protest, preservation and ultimate re-opening of the archeological site as a scheduled ancient monument, museum and newly accessible modern performance space.

“Dr. Schmitz’s credentials, long-standing scholarly focus and recognition as an expert in her field deem her highly qualified to complete this project,” said CAS Dean Greg Budzban, PhD. “Her passion for this project, as well as her expertise in the area, undoubtedly indicate that her work will make an important contribution within the field of theater history. It will be exciting to watch the project unfold.”

A loan fund was established in 1976 through the SIUE Foundation by Joseph W. Hoppe, because he believed in SIUE’s mission and the value of faculty research. Four years later, the Hoppe endowment became the basis for the Hoppe Research Faculty Award. In 1999, the award was transformed with the help of SIUE academic deans into the current Hoppe Research Professor award program.