

# EDITH CRAIG & THE ART OF THE THEATRE:

## IN AND OUT OF HISTORY

PROFESSOR KATHARINE COCKIN

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\*Edith Craig (1869-1947) was an influential theatre director and costume designer. Her career was long and varied. She had great successes with single productions of the most experimental, innovative and controversial plays, many of which were performed in translation from Russian, Dutch, French or Italian. She was the leading director of women's suffrage drama and in the 1920s she promoted amateur theatre and sparked several new art theatres. Craig's 'laughing self-effacement' was noted by one interviewer.

\*This talk will explore Craig's achievements, how she came to influence others and some of the processes at work that have overshadowed her theatres of art. She resisted prejudice and fought against inequality. Her life was woman-centred and she lived with her two partners, Christopher St John and Clare Atwood, in a household that became a magnetic centre for new ideas and cultural innovations. She was a pioneer in many ways.

\*Katherine is Professor of English Literature in the Department of Literature, Film and Theatre Studies at Essex University. She has researched extensively in the lives and work of Ellen Terry, the 19<sup>th</sup> Century actor and her daughter Edith Craig who was an influential theatre director and activist in the women's suffrage movement. Publications include; *Edith Craig: Dramatic Lives* (1998), *Women and Theatre in the Age of Suffrage: The Pioneer Players 1911-25* (2001) and *Edith Craig and the Theatres of Art* (2017). Katherine is editor of *The Collected Letters of Ellen Terry* (2010) and Principal Investigator of the AHRC Ellen Terry & Edith Craig Database and AHRC searching for Theatrical Ancestors



Professor Katharine Cockin