



# Sam Shepard and the Aesthetics of Performance (What is Theatre?)

*Emma Creedon*

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This book argues that a consideration of Sam Shepard's plays in the context of visual and theoretical Surrealism significantly succours our understanding of his experimental approach. Emma Creedon's study reveals how Shepard's plays rely on a veneer of realism that the playwright then actively exploits and rejects. In this mode, these plays indicate a sophisticated deconstruction of American realism and a manipulation of dramatic conventions; moreover, the incantatory functioning of his dramatic language reveals the influence of such Surrealists as Antonin Artaud. Indeed, this, along with his long admiration for and textual references to Samuel Beckett's plays, positions him as a dramatist working within the European tradition of Absurdism.

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