FORUM OF ORIGINAL THEATRE THEORY

FEBRUARY 25–27, 2021
ONLINE

BORDERED STATES

Centre for Drama, Theatre & Performance Studies
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

CONFERENCE PROGRAM
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Welcome from the FOOT 2021 Organizers

Welcome to the 29th annual, newly rebranded, and first virtual iteration of the Forum of Original Theatre/Theory/Thought at University of Toronto’s Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies! FOOT, formerly the Festival of Original Theatre, began as a student-led initiative to showcase original dramatic works in a festival format. Over the last decade, FOOT has evolved from these festival beginnings into a diverse conference featuring academic papers, panels, workshops, and performances.

In launching FOOT 2021: Bordered States, we have decided to rebrand the former ‘festival’ to encompass the rich variety of its current creative offerings. We view FOOT as a forum – a place to gather, share, and discuss ideas. By adding theory/thought to its title, we hope to acknowledge the interdisciplinary nature of both the conference and the Centre for Drama, Theatre, and Performance Studies. With paper panels that include performances and roundtables that evolve into DJ sets, FOOT 2021 fulfills this interdisciplinary promise.

As we ‘gather’ in a time marked by travel restrictions, lockdowns, and quarantines, we find ourselves acutely aware of the many borders that surround us. From the dangerous surge in regionalism and protectionism, worldwide calls for racial justice by the Black Lives Matter movement, to protests against pipelines that threaten to encroach on unceded Indigenous territory – the global politics of today are marked by borders. Our conference theme, Bordered States, seeks to engage with this bordered existence.

The events of the next three days examine the impact of pandemic, question the borders of culture, identity, and place, and unpack the complexities of nation. We are particularly honoured to host Black Women’s Work and Joy on Thursday, February 25 – a conversation about advocating for anti-racist work in post-secondary institutions (Ahlam Hassan, Lisa Karen Cox, Khadijah Salawu), as well as our keynote panel on Friday, February 26 which features a discussion between multidisciplinary artist Rebecca Belmore, Dr. Gabriela Soto Laveaga (Harvard University), Dr. Yana Meerzon (University of Ottawa), and Syrus Marcus Ware (artist, scholar, and core-team member of Black Lives Matter Toronto).

With the theme of Bordered States – notions of land, treaty, and nation inform the very dramaturgy of our conference. We want to acknowledge that the University of Toronto is situated on sacred land. This is the territory of the Huron Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. While we gather in virtual space, we want to acknowledge that the virtual requires physical resources – from the minerals mined for our devices, to the land occupied by data servers. The headquarters of Zoom – the platform for this conference – are located in ‘Silicon Valley’ on the territory of the Mukwekma Ohlone people. We encourage you to learn more about the land on which you live, work, and gather at native-land.ca.

Finally, we want to thank the generations of students, staff, and faculty who have sustained FOOT for 29 years and those who have helped make FOOT 2021 possible.

We look forward to an engaging three days!

Warmly,

Rohan Kulkarni
Robert Motum
Julija Pesic
Ross Slaughter
ABOUT THE ORGANIZERS

Rohan Kulkarni (he/him)

Rohan Kulkarni is a second year PhD student at University of Toronto’s Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies. His doctoral research is focused on South Asian theatre, specifically exploring the rise of South Asian diaspora theatre and performance under Canada’s official multiculturalism policy. His research is a continuation of his SSHRC-funded Master’s thesis, completed at the University of Alberta. Rohan’s other passions include teaching, dramaturgy, and community engagement in the arts. He has taught as a Course Instructor at the University of Alberta, offered pre-performance lectures and participated in panel discussions for Edmonton Opera, worked as a production dramaturg, and contributed program notes for several theatre and opera performances. Rohan has presented his research at conferences including the annual Canadian Association for Theatre Research conference, the Association for Asian Performance conference, and FOOT 2020. He is pleased to join the stellar FOOT 2021 team as a co-organizer.

Robert Motum (he/him)

Robert Motum is a playwright, director, and artist-researcher. With a background in site-specific performance, Robert has staged work on an active city bus, in a castle, over Snapchat, in a dorm room, in a gallery, in a vacant Target store, and occasionally even in a theatre space. He is the playwright of A Community Target (Outside the March), a documentary play which examines the collapse of American retailer, Target, in Canada. His writing has also been supported by the Stratford Festival Playwrights’ retreat, Why Not Theatre, Studio180, Convergence, the Ellen Ross Stuart Opening Doors Award, and the Ontario Arts Council. He holds an MA in Practising Performance from Aberystwyth University (Wales), a BA in Honours Drama from the University of Waterloo and is a current PhD Candidate in the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies at the University of Toronto. Robert’s dissertation, Scripted Borders: Locating a Dramaturgy in the Performance of Micronationhood, examines micronations (self-declared nation-states) as performances of nationhood, governance, and borders. His practice-based research involves the creation of a new country and its performative secession from Canada.
Julija Pesic (she/her)

Julija Pesic is a University of Toronto researcher focused on performance art, cultural anthropology, and cultural studies. Her doctoral dissertation project investigates cultural specificity and global dynamics in the artistic work of Marina Abramovic, a Belgrade-born, New York City-based performance artist, now best-known for her record-breaking 2010 MoMA retrospective. This exhibition drew over 850,000 visitors within three months with its central event The Artist Is Present — a 736-hour and 30-minute live performance — in which Abramovic invited each audience member to sit opposite to her in the museum’s atrium. Julija’s doctoral project is awarded by Social Science and Humanities Research Council Doctoral Fellowship (SSHRC), the Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS), including the Metal-Trebbin-De Boni Scholarship for the strong academic record and Helen Krich Chinoy Dissertation Fellowship by American Society for Theater Research (ASTR). Julija is also an alumna of Harvard University’s Mellon School of Theatre and Performance Research. Before immigrating to Canada, Julija completed BA honours in South Slavic Literature and MA in Dramatic Literature at the University of Belgrade with expertise in subversive humour in contemporary European drama.

Ross Slaughter (he/him)

Ross is a third year PhD student at the Centre for Drama, Theatre, and Performance Studies. His PhD thesis focuses on Videocabaret and their History of the Village of the Small Huts 21 play cycle, which stages Canadian history from 1534 to 1993 in their signature style: a mix of over the top satire, their ‘black box’ staging, and 60 scenes a minute pacing that some have (for lack of a better word) termed a ‘comic strip history’. His other research areas include performing history, community engaged theatre, dramatic literature, and Racine’s Phaedra. He invites everybody at any time to talk to him about these things either in person or through email. Ross operates as both a scholar and practitioner and joins FOOT 2021 as a co-organizer.
Day 1: Thursday, February 25th

ZOOM ROOM 1

3:15 – 5:00 PM
PAPER PANEL
Theatre in Emergency: The Impact of Covid-19 on the Arts
PANELISTS
Leda Davies
Elise LaCroix
Taylor Marie Graham
Soji Cole

5:00 – 6:30 PM
PAPER PANEL
Migration, Borders, and Performance in the Mediterranean
PANELISTS
Art Babayants and Deniz Basar
Suhaila Meera
Stefano Muneroni

6:30 – 6:50 PM
PERFORMANCE
tangled routes, Greek/Turkish (coffee) grounds
Myrto Koumarianos
Asli Turan
Jeremy Goren

7:00 – 8:30 PM+
ROUNDTABLE / DJ SET / PLAY READING
Black Women’s Work and Joy
Ahlam Hassan
Khadijah Salawu
Lisa Karen Cox

ZOOM ROOM 2

4:00 – 5:45 PM
PAPER PANEL / PERFORMANCE
Bordered Choreographies: Dancing through photos, pandemics, and identities
PANELISTS
Sariel Golomb
Ilana Khanin
Anna Paliy
Kayla Chambers (performance)

5:45 – 6:45 PM
PAPER PANEL
Bordered Bodies
PANELISTS
Lara de Vries
Sarah Haley
Day 2: Friday, February 26th

ZOOM ROOM 1

1:00 – 2:30 PM
PAPER PANEL / PERFORMANCE
Disability, Institutions, and Community Engaged Performance
PANELISTS
Jenn Boulay
Stephen Sillett
Ellen Denny (Performance)

2:30 – 4:00 PM
ROUNDTABLE
I Was Never Alone: Disability Performance as Research Creation and Creative Ethnography
Jessica Watkin
Cassandra Hartblay

4:00 – 5:45 PM
PAPER PANEL / PERFORMANCE
Performance, Pandemic, and Politics
PANELISTS
Alisha Grech
Miggy Esteban
Kevin Skelton (Performance/Paper)
Sophia Swettenham (Performance)

6:30 – 8:00 PM
KEYNOTE PANEL
PANELISTS
Rebecca Belmore (Multidisciplinary Artist)
Syrus Marcus Ware (Artist/BLM Toronto)
Dr. Gabriela Soto Laveaga (Harvard)
Dr. Yana Meerzon (Ottawa)
Moderated by Dr. Seika Boye (Toronto)

ZOOM ROOM 2

1:00 – 2:00 PM
PERFORMANCE PANEL
Core Concepts in Improvisation: Addressing Bordered States During a Pandemic
Jemma Llewellyn (Panel Chair)
Members from the University of Guelph’s Critical Studies in Improvisation Program

2:00 – 3:00 PM
WORKSHOP
Breaking Through the Zoom Borders for Improvisation
Alice Nelson

3:00 – 4:00 PM
PAPER PANEL
Borders in Dramatic Literature
PANELISTS
Ryan Borochovitz
Dana Tanner-Kennedy

8:00 – 9:00 PM
SOCIAL HOUR
## Day 3: Saturday, February 27th

### ZOOM ROOM 1

**10:00 – 11:30 AM**
**PAPER PANEL**
(Non) Human Objects and Performative Tools
**PANELISTS**
Caitlin Gowans
Alex Lazaridis F.
Julija Pesic

**11:30 AM – 12:00 PM**
**PERFORMANCE**
Materialize with the B Party
Viktorija Kovac
Nada Abusaleh

**12:00 – 12:50 PM**
**WORKSHOP**
Exhibit Play: Utilizing Museum Theatre Techniques in Performance
Jackie Mahoney

**1:30 – 3:00 PM**
**PAPER PANEL**
Moving Online: Digital Performance Methods During the Pandemic
**PANELISTS**
Tyler Cunningham
Jeff Gagnon
Sophie McNeilly

**3:00 – 4:00 PM**
**PERFORMANCE**
In Time, Out of Place
Keira Mayo
Debleena Tripathi

### ZOOM ROOM 2

**10:00 – 11:30 AM**
**ROUNDTABLE**
Too Much Tease: Neo-Burlesque, Nation, and Policing Borders
**PANELISTS**
Julia Matias
Julia Mauro
Jessica Thorp

**12:00 – 1:20 PM**
**PAPER PANEL**
Feminism, Queerness, and East-West Relations in Asian Performance
**PANELISTS**
Siqi Dong
Zhixuan Zhu
Thomas Elias Siddall

**1:20 – 1:50 PM**
**PERFORMANCE**
The Sky is Also Blue on the Other Side
Sarah Shahab

**2:00 – 3:00 PM**
**PRESENTATION**
Who’s Afraid of Video Documentation? Geographies of Rights and Restrictions
Members of the 2020–2021 videocan research team
Day 3: Saturday, February 27th (Continued)

ZOOM ROOM 1

4:00 – 5:30 PM
PAPER PANEL
Challenging Canada: Performance Beyond the Myth
PANELISTS
Grahame Renyk
Heather Cant
Wallis Caldoza and Mariah Horner

5:30 – 5:50 PM
PERFORMANCE / EXHIBIT
Thirsty Concrete: How Porous Borders Perform Notions of Place
Jillian Groening

6:30 – 8:30 PM
PRESENTATION WORKSHOP
Breached Boundaries, Imposed Borders: Gestural Explorations and Somatic Remapping of the Hyperlocal
Jill Carter
Ange Loft
Available all three days on FOOT2021.com

PRESENTATION / PANEL / PERFORMANCE
Revalorizing Racialized Performance in Canada: Spectatorship, Surveillance and Decentering the White Gaze

Dedra McDermott

Revalorizing Racialized Performance in Canada: Spectatorship, Surveillance and Decentering the White Gaze takes a distinct look at performance and protest, or performance as protest, through the lens of Black and Indigenous artists by positioning labour — the act of legitimizing racialized arts praxis and performance — as a border. Black and Indigenous artists invariably find themselves fighting to legitimize their voices while navigating the patent requisite of performing palatable racialized histories for majority white audiences. The performative nature of this autoethnographic writing, as well as the subsequent performance, and then I got angry, indicate how Black and Indigenous artists/identities experience a bordered existence. This work chronicles the internalized unravelling these artists experience due to the labour of traversing this border. Focusing on Ghanaian-Canadian artist Esie Mensah and Ojibwe/South Asian performer Yolanda Bonnell, this paper explores Black and Indigenous artists’ revolt within the landscape of Canadian theatre and performance. This pre-recorded paper presentation/performance also includes a panel discussion moderated by Seika Boye and features panellists Dedra McDermott, Esie Mensah, Yolanda Bonnell, and Ravyn Wngz.

Dedra McDermott is a new generation artist of colour, working as a professional dancer, emerging choreographer, scholar, and movement dramaturg in Toronto. She recently earned a Master of Arts from The University of Toronto’s Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies. Her research explores BIPOC artists’ labour within the context of politicized bodies in motion and the voyeurism within the critique of racialized performance.

PERFORMANCE SCREENING
Shine Your Eye

Ross Manson and Volcano Theatre

This is a filmed performance of Shine Your Eye by the late Kenyan literary superstar Binyavanga Wainaina. Volcano commissioned this show as part of The Africa Trilogy, which premiered at the Luminato Festival in 2009. It was performed at the Fleck Dance Theatre at Harbourfront. Shine Your Eye, by Binyavanga Wainaina (winner of the Caine prize for African Literature) is set in Lagos, Nigeria, where a young woman fleeing her Ogoniland past becomes involved with a group of internet scammers defrauding people across the world. The play explores the notion of territory — and what possible territory might exist for a new generation of Africans, now in their twenties. The main character, Gbene Beka, is an enormously talented hacker, who is forced to choose between two possible futures: one Western, one African. In so doing, she must look forward, into her own future, and make a choice about where to go, and what boundaries she may have to transgress to get there.

“Shine Your Eye” is a Nigerian expression, meaning “wake up, look at what’s really happening”. The stage play was directed by Ross Manson, assistant directed by Mumbi Tindyebwa-Otu and choreographed by Teddy Masuku and Heidi Strauss. It starred Dienye Waboso as Beka, with Milton Barnes, Lucky Onyekachi Ejiim, Muoi Nene, Araya Mengesha, and Karen Robinson. Designers were Teresa Przybylski (set), Bonnie Beecher (lights), Milan Shahani (costumes), Thomas Ryder Payne (sound), fettFilm Germany (video), and Kenyan visual artist Wangechi Mutu (avatar design).

Ross Manson is an award-winning director, an actor, a translator, and the founding artistic director of Volcano, an internationally acclaimed theatre company based in Toronto. Volcano is an independent, concept-driven company characterized by formal experimentation, risk-taking and multi-disciplinarity. Ross has directed over twenty shows for Volcano, which have toured to three continents, and won or been nominated for over seventy local, national and international awards.
FOOT 2021 Keynote Panel

“Bordered States/Bordered Bodies”

Friday, February 26, 2021
6:30 – 8 PM • Zoom Room 1

Seika Boye  Keynote Panel Moderator
Seika Boye is a scholar, writer, educator and artist whose practices revolve around dance and movement. She is an Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream at the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies, University of the Toronto and works as a dramaturg and consultant in the performing arts. Seika curated the archival exhibition *It’s About Time: Dancing Black in Canada 1900–1970* (2018) and co-curated *Into the Light: Eugenics and Education in Southern Ontario* (2019). She was an Artist-in-Residence at the Art Gallery of Ontario (2018), Toronto District School Board’s African Heritage Educators’ Network Arts Honoree (2019) and a 2020 recipient of the Lieutenant Governor’s Heritage Trust Award (co-curator, Into the Light). Seika lives and works in Toronto with her husband and their two sons.

Yana Meerzon
Professor Yana Meerzon teaches for the Department of Theatre, University of Ottawa. She was appointed a President of Canadian Association for Theater Research in June 2020. Yana’s research interests are drama and performance theory, theatre of exile and migration, cultural and interdisciplinary studies. She is the author of three books, with the latest volume *Performance, Subjectivity, Cosmopolitanism* published by Palgrave in August 2020. She co-edited seven collections, including History, Memory, Performance with David Dean and Kathryn Prince (Palgrave 2015) and now Migration and Stereotypes in Performance and Culture with David Dean and Daniel McNeil (Palgrave 2020). Her current research project is entitled Between Migration and Neo-Nationalism(s): Performing the European Nation — Playing a Foreigner; and it has been funded by The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).
Gabriela Soto Laveaga

Gabriela Soto Laveaga is Professor of the History of Science and Antonio Madero Professor for the Study of Mexico at Harvard University. Her current research interests interrogate knowledge production and circulation between Mexico and India; medical professionals and social movements; and science and development projects in the twentieth century. Her first book Jungle Laboratories: Mexican Peasants, National Projects and the Making of the Pill (Duke University Press, 2009) won the Robert K. Merton Best Book prize in Science, Knowledge, and Technology Studies from the American Sociological Association. She is completing two book manuscripts: one on doctors as agents of social unrest and her third book examines agricultural science exchange between India and Mexico. She has held numerous grants, including those from the Ford, Mellon, Fulbright, DAAD, Santander, and Gerda Henkel Foundations. She was awarded the 2019 Everett Mendelsohn Excellence in Graduate Mentoring Award and was a member at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton for the academic year 2019-2020.

Rebecca Belmore

A member of the Lac Seul First Nation (Anishinaabe), Rebecca Belmore is an internationally recognized multidisciplinary artist. Rooted in the political and social realities of Indigenous communities, Belmore’s works make evocative connections between bodies, land and language. Her work has been presented in solo exhibitions at institutions including Audain Art Museum, Whistler, British Columbia, Canada (2020); MAC, Musée d’Art Contemporain de Montréal, Montreal, Quebec, Canada (2019); AGO, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario, Canada (2018). Belmore’s work has been presented in major international exhibitions including the Istanbul Biennial, Turkey (2019); documenta, Kassel, Germany (2017); and 51st Venice Biennale, Italy (2005). Belmore has received numerous awards and recognitions, including the Gershon Iskowitz Prize (2016); Governor General’s Award in Visual and Media Arts (2013); Hnatyshyn Visual Arts Award (2009); and Jack and Doris Shadbolt Foundation’s VIVA Award (2004).

Syrus Marcus Ware

Syrus Marcus Ware is an Assistant Professor at the School of the Arts at McMaster University and an ABD PhD candidate at York University in the Faculty of Environmental Studies. He is a Vanier scholar, visual artist, activist, curator and educator. Syrus uses painting, installation and performance to explore social justice frameworks and black activist culture, and he’s shown widely in galleries and festivals across Canada. He is part of the Performance Disability Art Collective and a core-team member of Black Lives Matter — Toronto. His on-going curatorial work includes That’s So Gay (Gladstone Hotel, 2016–2020) and BlacknessYes!/Blockorama. He is the co-editor or the best-selling Until We Are Free: Reflections on Black Lives Matter in Canada (URP, 2020).
Frequently Asked Questions

Where and when will the conference be hosted?
FOOT 2021 will take place virtually and synchronously over Zoom from February 25–27, 2021. Zoom links will be shared with participants a few days before the conference. All conference times are listed in EST – Eastern Standard Time (Toronto).

What is Zoom?
Zoom is a virtual meeting platform. It is an easy and reliable platform that allows video, voice, content sharing, and chat across mobile devices, desktops, and telephones.

I've never used Zoom before. How do I participate in the conference?
No worries! Click here to visit Zoom’s Support page featuring excellent step-by-step video tutorials. Learn how to join a meeting, share your screen, mute/unmute, and many more functions. You’ll be a pro in no time!

What does it mean that the conference will take place “synchronously”?
This means all conference sessions will happen live and in real-time. People will gather virtually in Zoom meetings at the assigned times (in EST/Toronto time) to present their papers, panels, workshops, and performances for an audience.

What are the different ways I can present my conference paper?
There are many ways to present your conference paper. You may choose to:
• read aloud from a fully written paper (we recommend 7–8 pages double spaced)
• present an outline or some ideas that you are working through but are not yet fully developed
• give a lecture-style presentation, using a slideshow if needed
• combine any of the above or try out a creative new presentation style!

How long should my paper presentation be?
If you are on a paper panel, your presentation should be 15-20 minutes maximum. If you choose to read from a prepared conference paper, the paper length should be around 7-8 pages (double spaced). Our moderators in each panel will keep the time, so we recommend practicing beforehand to ensure your presentation does not exceed the time limit.

Will there be an audience Q&A after my presentation?
Yes, the time slot for every paper panel includes time for a Q&A at the end, after all the presenters have finished. This will be a chance for the audience to ask questions or share their thoughts about the presentations.

Can I invite friends, colleagues, and family to my presentation?
Absolutely! In fact, we encourage it. One of the great things about FOOT 2021 being online is that people who may traditionally not attend a conference will have a chance to do so. Please ensure that you ask those who are interested in attending to register through our website.

Is there a registration fee for FOOT 2021?
No, there is no registration fee. This conference is completely free to attend. Simply fill out our registration form to ensure you are on the list of participants.

Do I have to register to attend specific sessions?
You do not need to register for each session separately. You only need to register once and will have access to all the exciting panels, workshops, and events offered at FOOT!

Will there be videos of sessions available to watch afterwards?
No. As a general rule, we will not be recording entire sessions. However, we might take photos or record audio/video snippets of certain sessions for the purposes of social media and archives.
Conference Etiquette

Punctuality and time:

Whether you are presenting or attending a presentation, please ensure that you arrive on time. If you arrive and are placed in the Waiting Room, please wait patiently as the previous presentation could still be in session. You will be let in eventually.

If you are presenting, please have your slides, documents, videos, audio clips, etc. ready to go for screen sharing.

If you are late to a session, please wait in the Waiting Room. The meeting host will message you to acknowledge your presence and will let you in once there is a suitable break in the action to ensure the least amount of disruption. The host will communicate the expected wait time with you while in the Waiting Room.

In-session:

Mute/unmute – Please ensure that unless speaking, you remain on mute throughout the session. This will allow the main speaker/presenter to deliver their presentation without interruptions or distracting background noise from other participants’ microphones.

Q&A – As such, unless the presenter themselves engages with the audience, participants are expected to hold their questions and comments until the end of the panel. The moderator will then invite participants to ask questions and share their thoughts. During this time, you may raise your hand (using Zoom’s ‘raise hand’ feature, or simply do so on screen) and the moderator will cue you to speak.

Using video – All presenters are expected to have their videos switched on while delivering their presentations. Attendees are encouraged to have their videos on during sessions as well, as a courtesy to the presenters and to give them the feeling of an active audience.

Eating/drinking – FOOT 2021 will be in your home and we acknowledge that eating and drinking is part of your day. It is totally fine, as long as you remain on mute to minimize distractions for the presenters.

Kids/pets – Once again, FOOT 2021 is in your home environment and that includes any children, pets, and/or other family members that might make an appearance. If this happens as you are presenting, no need to worry – we will all enjoy a chuckle! If you are an attendee, use your best judgment and if you feel it could be distracting for the presenters, feel free to turn off your video temporarily.

Internet problems – If you encounter connectivity issues during your presentation, we will try our best to ensure you are able to finish smoothly. If there is significant trouble, we might move on to the next presenter while we wait for you to fix the issue and return. Ultimately, it will be the moderator’s decision on how best to proceed in the moment.

If you need to leave a session, please wait until a suitable break in the action, if possible. It could be distracting for a presenter if someone leaves the room while they are speaking.

Accessibility – Here are some suggestions to help make your presentation more accessible:
• If you are reading from a prepared paper, please share the document in the meeting chat or share your screen with the document on it (that is, if you aren’t using any other visual aids such as a slideshow or videos).
• For slideshows, please ensure the font size, font type and spacing allows easy readability. We recommend standard fonts such as Arial, Calibri or Helvetica and at least size 20. Please describe any visuals included in your presentation.
• For audio and video clips, if available, please choose ones with closed captions.
• When speaking, position your face at an angle that allows participants to read your lips. Avoid speaking while facing away from the audience, or while looking down at papers or other screens.
• Please say your name before asking a question. Once you are finished asking your question or sharing a comment, please indicate you are done by saying something like “that’s the end of my thought”.
• If engaging in experiential activities make sure you have planned for the inclusion of all participants.
FULL CONFERENCE SCHEDULE:

Thursday, February 25th
ZOOM ROOM ONE

3:15 – 5:00 PM
PAPER PANEL
Theatre in Emergency: The Impact of Covid-19 on the Arts

Soji Cole

Staging ‘The New Normal’: Space, Place, and Ergonomics of (Covid-19) Live Theatre Performance on Zoom

The global explosion of the Coronavirus pandemic compelled a wave of ‘canceled/postponed’ projects of live theatre performances all over the world. As various countries entered the stage of lockdown, it became imperative that live theatre had to redesign itself to avoid a plunge into a ‘dark era’. To retain their audiences, many theatre productions had to utilize digital avenues to actualize their performances. Drawing on the rich history of radio plays, some theatre companies resorted to podcast productions via audio devices, while many more adopt zoom; an audio-visual digital platform to stream performances. Theatre production on zoom initiated a new kind of symbiotic relationship with technology. Thus, defining theatre space in this hybrid environment becomes an artistic as well as a philosophical challenge. This presentation seeks to respond to the following questions; (1) as an inter-active hybrid model, which discipline between theatre and technology is primary and consequently integrate the other in the zoom performance? And (2) which discipline holds the epistemic and phenomenological authority on the context of the theatre performance on zoom? This presentation will respond to these questions by mapping the contexts of interactivity of the performance on the audience as well as the performers. It extends the probe to further contextualizing the framework of integration as different from complete interdisciplinary relationship. By considering the affect and effect of the zoom technology space and place, I will argue that the perceptions of the audience in zoom theatre is substantially constructed and shaped by the algorithms of the computer technology rather than the artistic nuances of the performers. Thus, watching theatre performances on zoom is more of an interfacial relationship with the computer than it is a relationship between performers and audience.

Soji Cole is an international PhD student in the Interdisciplinary Humanities Program at Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada. He is a scholar, creative writer, and theatre practitioner from Nigeria. He has won the African Theatre Association (AfTA) ‘Emerging Scholars’ Prize’ (2011), the International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR) ‘New Scholars’ Prize’ (2013), the Association of Nigerian Authors’ (ANA) Playwriting Prize (2014), and the Nigeria Prize for Literature (2018); which is the biggest literary prize in Africa. He is an alumnus of the Fulbright fellowship to Kansas State University in the United States between 2014 and 2015. He taught Playwriting, Theatre, and Film, for almost a decade at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria, before leaving in 2019 for further studies in Canada. His current PhD research explores the ‘ideo-aesthetics’ of history and memory in contemporary drama of the indigenous people of Canada. He hopes to spend his future thinking, teaching, writing, making theatre and film, drinking great wines, and traveling.

Léda Davies

Fish at the Bottom of the Sea: A circus-theatre project

This (virtual) paper presentation aims to move through the oral, physical and embodied aspects of my practice-led research for the project Fish at the Bottom of the Sea, which integrates theatrical text and aerial circus movement into a cohesive art form, placing emphasis on collaboration and non-hierarchical dramaturgical approaches. The text of the circus-theatre project, written by Nicole Schafenacker, tells the story of a young woman, Eve, who has lost her lover in a car accident and explores of the transformative process of grief. The project also uses an aerial bungee apparatus which acts as a visual and physical representation of the liminal space found in the text and Eve’s desire to cross an impossible threshold to her lost love. Like the bungee I am rebounding as I navigate the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, along with my collaborators and society as a whole, but the direction we are going is unpredictable. This presentation aims to return to a state of questioning by reflecting on how Fish at the Bottom of the Sea embraces notions of instability in its process. It also speaks to the theme of “boarded states” by examining the dialectic tension between life and death, the boarders imposed...
between circus and theatre and the project’s resistance to hegemonic notions of performance creation and traditional theatrical roles. To further support the somatic nature of the project, the paper presentation will also feature video and still images captured during the creation process.

Originally from Calgary, AB, Léda Davies has been an active member of Canada’s professional theatre, dance, and circus scene for over a decade and has performed across Canada and worldwide with some of Canada’s leading theatrical companies. For five years Leda trained with renowned coaches from Cirque du Soleil and the National Circus School in Montreal, QC. Her aerial skills have been featured in music videos, stage productions and outdoor festivals in Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa, Calgary and Edmonton. Léda is also the co-founder of the Screaming Goats Collective, a company dedicated to strengthening the creative communities of both Calgary and Montreal. The company’s current project, Persephone Bound, challenges traditional theatrical narratives by combining text, dance, aerial circus technique and live music, in a modern treatment of the Ancient Greek myth of the rape of Persephone (https://www.imagotheatre.ca/persephonebound). Leda completed her MFA in Theatre Practice at the University of Alberta, with a focus on aerial circus movement in theatre. She is currently an aerial instructor at Firefly Circus in Edmonton and a sessional instructor with the School of Creative and Performing Arts at the University of Calgary.

Elise LaCroix

**Eraser: A New Normal – Adapting Theatre for Young Audiences During Covid-19**

*Eraser*, an interactive show for young audiences, was scheduled to tour to middle schools this fall as part of Theatre Direct’s 2020/21 season following a successful run at the 2019 Riser Festival in Toronto. In its original form the play involves splitting student audiences into groups that follow one of six characters through their own unique journey. In the spring when schools closed in response to the pandemic, the show’s creators began developing a filmed version that could be sent to students digitally, and through this process *Eraser: A New Normal* emerged. My paper will explore the process of adapting a theatrical experience for young audiences in the midst of the current global pandemic. Navigating across various forms of difference between characters and within each character’s individual intersectional identity is at the core of *Eraser*. The characters experience loss, explore their sexualities and genders, grapple with differences across culture, language, ability, and religion, and struggle with the culture shock of moving from Pakistan to Canada. *Eraser: A New Normal* attempts to hold onto these core themes while placing the characters within the Covid-19 pandemic, their only tool for communicating with classmates various online platforms. Through analysis of both versions of the play, conversations with the creative team, and comparisons of student feedback between the initial and digital run, I will examine what has had to change and what new possibilities of meaning have emerged in this pandemic motivated digital adaptation.

Elise A. LaCroix is a dramaturg and academic. She holds an MA in Drama from the University of Alberta with a research focus on intercultural new play dramaturgy relationships. Currently she is working as assistant editor on a forthcoming collection of essays, *Performing #MeToo: How Not to Look Away*, as well as continuing her dramaturgy practice working with creators in both Toronto and Edmonton.

**Taylor Marie Graham**

**Non-essential Status and Existential Dread: Canadian Theatre’s Performance of Nation in the Time of Covid**

March 21, 2020, the Prime Minister’s Office announced that Canada and the US agreed to, “temporarily restric[t] all non-essential travel across its borders,” to help stop the spread of Covid 19 (Public Safety Canada). This, of course, was not the only closure since the start of the pandemic, as gathering restrictions required Canadians to stay away from public spaces including theatres, deemed as non-essential. In response to this crisis of value, theatres like Blyth Festival Theatre and Tarragon Theatre have turned to their past repertoire, sharing documentaries and performing readings of their early works of the late 1960s and 1970s. The choice to focus on this specific moment in Canadian theatre history is not accidental as the Canada Council was established just prior to this time after a long fight from Canadian dramatists to prove Canadian theatre’s value to the nation. Now that this essential status is under attack again in 2020, a return to theatre created to, “uncover important parts of our national psyche,” is understandable as a means to survive in this difficult time (Theatre Passe Muraille, 14). What are the consequences of this decision, however? As post-colonial theorist Benedict Andersen argues, a national essence is instead an, “imagined community” (Imagined Communities 6). Feminist and decolonial theorists such as Alan Filewod warn, there are often troubling representations or complete omissions...
of women, BIPOC people, people with disabilities, and members of the LGBTQ+ community from representations of an, “imagined community,” of Canada on its stages (Performing Canada, XIV).

Taylor Marie Graham is a theatre artist, writer, and educator invested in exploring the complexities of women’s voices from rural regions. Currently, she is a PhD student at the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada, exploring the 45 year history of the Blyth Theatre Festival found in rural Ontario through post-colonial and rural feminist lenses. She also works with Pat the Dog Theatre Creations as an artistic associate helping to develop regional feminist and decolonial theatre/storytelling/digital creation. www.taylormariegraham.com

5:00 – 6:30 PM PAPER PANEL
Migration, Borders, and Performance in the Mediterranean

Art Babayants and Deniz Başar

Destabilizing the Borders of the Colonial Space, Ethics and Aesthetics: The Dramaturgy and Labour of Creating Theatre as a Counterpublic Sphere

In 2019-2020, a first-generation immigrant from Turkey, Deniz Başar, wrote a play entitled Wine&Halva. The aesthetic style of the play is defined as “narrative theatre” within Turkey’s theatre discourse, which in this case means that the play’s three narrators guide audiences through an intimate epic of an unusual friendship as they fluidly transition between the play’s two protagonists while simultaneously commenting on the world surrounding them. Throughout the play, Farias, a white (or white passing) gay man from a fictional North American city called “New Stockholm”, and Derya, a Turkish woman, who immigrates there and is forced to deal with many invisible cases of institutional discrimination alone, slowly create an unbreakable bond. The play investigates the labour and process of their unlikely friendship while asking if, and how, people can do justice to each other’s experiences and histories when they have almost nothing in common. As the COVID-19 pandemic closed down established theatres and limited public gatherings, a group of emerging Montreal artists gathered around Başar, attempting to use the unexpectedly available funding resources to experiment with new dramaturgical and ethical approaches to create theatre. Learning from the taboo defying dramaturgies of black-box Istanbul theatres — specifically the collectives which operate under the constant threat of closure and with extremely limited financial resources — Montreal’s Sort-of-Productions, in collaboration with director Art Babayants, engaged BIPOC, black, trans, queer performers that lack opportunities to accumulate social capital in Canada’s theatre world to work on the play together. The goal of this rehearsal process was not simply to produce a new play while socially distancing (meaning rehearsing in various public parks with masks on), but also to develop a counterpublic sphere in a city seriously hit by both the pandemic and a rising wave of populist politics. In his ground-breaking work, Publics and Counterpublics, Michael Warner describes a counterpublic as “publics [that] are defined by their tension with a larger public” (66: 2005). This article will explore how the pandemic production of Wine&Halva attempted to decolonize public space in the times of a major global health crisis, what approaches the collective took to destabilize the normatives of the colonial Canadian theatre aesthetics, and how the group’s debates around the ethics of professionalism shaped the production. The analysis will be based on the autoethnographic accounts created by the playwright and the director (the co-authors of the article) as well as the interviews with the producers, performers, scenographers, and audience members. The article will also elucidate how the COVID-19 pandemic inadvertently provided material circumstances for an unlikely production of an unlikely play written by an unlikely playwright — a first generation immigrant woman who continuously aims to destabilize the dominant dramaturgies of mainstream Canadian theatre.

Art Babayants is a Canadian actor, playwright, director and educator of Armenian origin. Before becoming artistic director of the Toronto Laboratory Theatre, he worked in Great Britain, the United States, Malta, Latvia and Russia. He also has a doctorate in Theatre and Performance and is involved in research-creation. His research focuses on multilingual theatre and multilingual actor training in Canada. During his artistic career he has directed musical performances (Seussical, 2007; Gypsy, 2009; Godspell, 2014), contemporary Canadian plays (The… Musician, 2014), ‘mock’-umetary theatre (as part of the collective The DitchWitch Brigade, 2009-2011) and multidisciplinary projects (VIVISECTION, ScotiaBank Nuit Blanche, 2015).

Deniz Başar is a theatre researcher, puppet maker and two-time national award-winning immigrant playwright from Turkey. In 2014, she received one of the most prestigious playwriting awards in Turkey for her play The Itch, which was published in the award winning collection of that year. In 2016, she won the Derbent Playwriting Contest, which was a collaboration project between Iranian and Turkish independent theatre
artists, with her play *In the Destructible Flow of a Vast Monolithic Moment*, and her play was translated into Persian. Living in Canada since August 2014, she took part in multiple productions in Toronto and Montreal as a dramaturge and puppet maker. Some selected research includes: “Intimate Enemies and Geographies of Betrayal: Representation of the Impact of Kurdish-Turkish War in Micropolitics of Daily Life” in Palgrave Handbook of Theatre and Race; “Feminist Erotic Puppet Theatre from Istanbul with Love” in Women and Puppetry: Critical and Historical Investigations by Routledge; and “Puppetry as a Pedagogical Tool of Ethics and Politics for Adults: A Reflection on Pedro Reyes’ *Manufacturing Mischief* (2018)” in Creative Activism: Research, Pedagogy and Practice by Cambridge Scholars Press. She is currently finishing her PhD in Concordia University’s Humanities Department.

**Suhaila Meera**

**Between Being and Acting: Performing Childhood and Statelessness in The Jungle**

In October 2016, Calais, France’s migrant village, known as “the Jungle,” housed approximately 10,000 migrants, around 1,300 of whom were unaccompanied children. British playwrights Joe Murphy and Joe Robertson lived as volunteers in the camp for seven months and wrote *The Jungle*, a play about eighteen residents and their desire to migrate to the UK, which premiered at the Young Vic in December 2017. Two Syrian children are central: 6-year-old Little Amal, played by eight local children across the production’s tour, and 3-year-old Alan Kurdi, who drowned in the Mediterranean Sea in 2015. Scholars have established that spectators experience child actors as simultaneously transparent and unknowable – and therein, I propose, lies their affective power. Based on interviews with co-director Justin Martin and actors Ammar Haj Ahmad and Zara Rasti, I contend that Zara and the other “Amals” played not only Amal, but childhood itself. They performed a particular brand of diasporic childhood their London/New York/San Francisco audiences could identify with, ultimately compelling an unavoidable reckoning with the condition of statelessness. In his critique of our time, Achille Mbembe notes “a refusal to recognize” that “at bottom, we are made up of diverse borrowings from foreign subjects and that, consequently, we have always been beings of the border.” Amal-as-performed reveals that notions of performance, childhood, and citizenship constrain while they tear at the seams; that, like a child outgrowing their clothes, any imagination of the world as divided by national borders, by “their” children and “ours,” no longer fits.

Suhaila Meera holds a BA in History and Film from Cornell University, has studied acting with Barry John and at the Stella Adler Studio, and has a background in jazz, hip-hop, and Indian folk dance. Before beginning her Ph.D., she worked in operations and development at Delhi-based arts management firm Teamwork Arts, New York-based nonprofit Girls Write Now, and The Juilliard School. Recent artistic endeavors have included dancing with Chocolate Heads Movement Band (2017), directing Nick Payne’s *Constellations* (2019), and dramaturging *The Seagull* (2019) and *Everybody* (2020) at Stanford. Her research explores the intersections between childhood studies, refugee art and performance, and theories of acting and affect.

**Stefano Muneroni**

**Vertical Borders and Fluid Subjectivities in Italian Plays about Mediterranean Migrations**

Drawing on Annalisa Camilli’s understanding of “liquid borders” and Philip Steinberg’s notion of “wet ontologies,” this paper considers how in recent years selected Italian playwrights construed the Mediterranean as a critical site in order to question claims of national purity, xenophobic policies, and violation of international laws. The verticality of sea borders confounds rigid land-based frontiers and offers new theoretical paradigms to interrogate and problematize both geographical and interpersonal borders. Through a close reading of plays by Lina Prosa, Marco Gobbetti, and Gianni Clementi, to mention only a few, this paper will argue that the Mediterranean is a site of synergy and potentiality where characters are free to explore their identities and to probe the limits of national boundaries. As a result, they undergo radical transformations that intrinsically stem out of, and feed into, the liquid borders they inhabit. Such potentiality brings back the verses of Ariel’s song from Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* where a “sea-change” transforms humans “into something rich and strange.” Liquid borders, as a setting for plays, allow migrant characters to exist outside of their stereotypical representations as either violent invaders or helpless victims. The work of these playwrights is politically relevant especially at a time when Italy financially supports Libyan militias to deter migrants from reaching Europe. While theatre continues to workshop what might happen to individuals crossing the Mediterranean in search of a better life, it also provides a critique of Italy’s migration policies which have led to countless deaths at sea.
I am an Associate Professor of Theatre at the University of Alberta where I teach theatre history, intercultural theatre, and dramaturgy. My most recent staged translations include Sforza Pallavicino’s *Ermenegildo, A Jesuit Tragedy*, Xavier Villaurrutia’s *The Absent One*, and Osvaldo Dragún’s *A Toothache, a Plague, and a Dog*. I have published articles on Latin American theatre, religion and drama, migration, and translation. My book *Staging Sainthood in the Early Modern Period* was published by Palgrave in 2017 and my translation of Sforza Pallavicino’s *Martyr Hermenegild* was published in 2019 by the Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies. My current SSHRC-funded project looks at how Italian theatre engages with the ongoing politicization of migration and the construction of Italy’s national identity.

6:30 – 6:50 PM
**PERFORMANCE**
**tangled routes, Greek/Turkish (coffee) grounds**

**Myrto Koumarianos**  
**Asli Turan**  
**Jeremy Goren**

Asli is Turkish. Myrto is Greek. When a Turk and a Greek meet, there’s often a moment of attentive hesitation: the two read each other and prepare for the next moment of recognition or misrecognition. Our nations border each other, and, over many centuries, Turkish-speaking and Greek-speaking people have been friends, neighbours, and also enemies. The political propaganda and enmity are not old news unfortunately: our long-contested borders are again in the spotlight in relation to fracking interests and to the movement of refugees in the Mediterranean. Asli and Myrto met in 2016, and they started learning each other’s traditional songs in 2019 in a residency in an old Greek village in Turkey. Hatching ideas for collaborations, we’ve been thinking about the invisible borders of nationality, ethnicity, language, and religion that have both bound and separated our people in our long history of living side by side. We’ve also been thinking about the differences and similarities in vibrations, tonalities, and languages in our songs – some of them shared, with variations, across our storied borders. A great proportion of these imagined border lines are drawn over water… What kind of border is a water border? How deep does it go? How does it move (us)? Water… fluid, unpredictable… does it move like song?

For FOOT 2021, we are curating a selection of our ongoing work of gathering, thinking, and creating, through various means of (currently, virtual) collaboration, including reading each other’s Greek/Turkish coffee grounds and exchanging songs, stories, and cultural practices that crisscross our borders, languages, and shared history. Some of the literary and historical material we’ve been working with includes: Louis de Bernières’ book, *Birds Without Wings*, histories of the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire and its aftermath, testimonies of the destruction of Izmir/Smyrna (1922) and of the forceful exchange of populations authorized by the Treaty of Lausanne (1923), and our shared musical heritages.

Myrto Koumarianos is a Toronto-based, first-generation immigrant-settler of Greek heritage. She is a writer, performer, dramaturg, and PhD candidate at the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies and at the Women and Gender Studies Institute at the University of Toronto. Her dissertation project is entitled *A Practice in Song: Performance and Prayer with the Open Program*.

Aslı Turan is an Istanbul-based actress and a PhD student at Anadolu University State Conservatory in Turkey. In her work she is searching for ways to combine the narrative forms and techniques of her culture with modern day stories and vice versa. She is interested in the roots that are hidden inside tradition and is fascinated by the encounters that can spark a possibility of an old wisdom borne inside and between our bodies, flesh, and bones, buried and carried by our ancestors.

Jeremy Goren is a New York-based performer, teacher, and creator of devised and community-engaged performance events, most recently *Feast Your Famine: a watch-and-play*, a five-day performance/festival of art and activism. He’s received residencies from LEIMAY-CAVE (four times), The Center at West Park, and AliveWire Theatrics and was a Master Artist for the Lincoln Center Directors Lab. Jeremy earned a M.F.A. in Performance and Interactive Media Arts at CUNY Brooklyn College.
Thursday, February 25th
ZOOM ROOM TWO

4:00 – 5:45 PM
PAPER PANEL / PERFORMANCE
Bordered Choreographies: Dancing through photos, pandemics, and identities

Sariel Golomb

“Alive to a Double Sense in Which Things Can Be Taken”: Rethinking Camp Sensibility in Contemporary Experimental Dance

This paper identifies a movement within contemporary experimental dance that makes critical interventions into the tired aesthetics of camp by politicizing the border between irony and sincerity, play and labor. This movement— which I deem “double sensing”— takes popular forms of physical expression as source material, re-contextualizes them through durational studies, and draws meaningful attention to the exuberance and transgression of occupying space and time in a black, brown, queer, or female dancing body— a body connoting excess. I compare Jumatutu M. Poe’s transformation of J-Sette dancing in Let ‘im Move You (2009-2020), Milka Djordjevich’s feminist worldmaking through real and fictive line dances and clapping games in ANTHEM (2018), and Miguel Gutierrez’s celebrated DEEP Aerobics dance parties (2007-2017). Through a profound and studied combination of play, irony, hope, labor, and virtuosity, these works would seem to represent critical aspects of camp as defined by Susan Sontag in her definitional 1964 essay. Yet I argue these works double back upon the “failed seriousness” and apoliticism Sontag describes, the exclusivity camp can represent, and the neoliberal commodification for which it has fallen prey. Instead, double sensing enters a realm of sincerity that suggests future-facing queer longing. Double sensing pressurizes the borders between a single dance’s meanings and affects as a means of bringing the body itself into sharp relief. It offers a model for what camp might become given its definitional temporal contingency, and a vision for how it might recover its lost status as an art form for the marginalized.

Sariel Golomb is a PhD Candidate in Theater & Performance Studies at Stanford University. She holds a BA in Dance and English from Columbia University. Her current research intersects dance and performance studies; medical humanities and disability; critical race and queer theories to consider corporeality, abjection, and excess in modern and contemporary dance/performance. Sariel is also a practitioner, curator, and dramaturg of dance, and her writing has appeared in Dance Research Journal and The Brooklyn Rail.

Ilana Khanin

How to Dance When Everyone is Watching

Moving the body through space has become an activity fraught with risk. Two meters — a choreographic imperative. It is a personal, ethical and legal necessity to provide structure to everyday movement. David Byrne’s American Utopia, a dance-concert where the musicians are “untethered” and remain in near-constant motion, provides a blueprint for understanding how bodies (re) negotiate relationships to move with and through each other. Crossing the boundaries between concert and dance piece, American Utopia (a title both deeply hopeful and deeply ironic) asks us to reorient our understanding of choreographic structures. As the past year and the perceptible future have asked us to become more aware of our daily patterns, to each become choreographers and dancers AU rehearses how to be premeditated and spontaneous all at once.

Ilana is a PhD student at the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies and holds a BFA in Theatre and an MA in Performance Studies from New York University. She is a theatre director, working on experimental new plays and musicals and was recently an artist-in-residence at Montclair State University. www.ilanakhanin.com

Anna Paliy

Frozen Flâneuse: Capturing Subjectivity at the Crossroads of Physicality and Place in the Photographs of “Ballerina Project”

In today’s visual media, the attributes of the ballerina’s body are often represented as pieces of an object to behold or consume; seldom are they considered as nuances of a subject in the dynamic act of living. Rarely have questions been posed about the agency of the female classical concert dancer as one of many active participants in the throes of quotidian, pedestrian experience: as a citizen and a dweller, at ground level and in-process. But, what if right within the media of her fetishization - for instance, in photography - we
may find embedded the potential for spatial subversion: “elsewheres” to be explored precisely through the ballerina’s senses, rather than despite them? I invite an interpretation of how the ballerina’s interior world is made exterior through the contoured environment she physically inhabits by using the gendered Symbolist figure of the “flâneuse” as conceptualized by Dr. Petra Kuppers (“Moving in the Cityscape”, 2010). Using images by Dane Shitagi of Alys Shee in the Toronto cityscape as a case study, I argue that the viewer of the dancer’s intimate trajectory through the polis is prompted to re-envision her as an artist and a worker, a strong and a vulnerable body, an innovator and an imitator: never either/or, but always both/and. As such, the ballerina emerges through the photographic frame as a sensually engaged being on her own terms, underlining the longstanding and limiting dichotomy which positions her primarily as a passive source of aesthetic refinement and erotic spectacle. Like Donna Haraway’s cyborg, the ballerina can thus be understood more holistically: both as a creature and a creator participating not only within her geographical landscape but also her cultural history.

Anna Paliy is a doctoral candidate in the Centre for Drama, Theatre, and Performance Studies at University of Toronto, with an MA and BA in Comparative Literature. Her dissertation, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, analyses artistic receptions of ballet across cultures at the start of the twentieth century. Using archival evidence, the project explores how the sensory language of dance is historically represented by women in visual art forms such as drawing, painting, and sculpture. Anna is also broadly interested in intersections between materiality, spectatorship, embodiment, and the archive. She is a member, research assistant, and social media coordinator at the Institute for Dance Studies, as well as a 2019 alumna of the Emerging Arts Critics Programme organized by the National Ballet of Canada, Canadian Opera Company, and Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Her essays have been published in the journals Kino (University of Western Ontario), Semicolon (University of Western Ontario), and Transverse (University of Toronto), while her music and dance reviews appear in The Dance Current and The WholeNote magazines. Formerly a provincially competitive rhythmic gymnast in Kiev/Ukraine, Lyon/France, and Ontario, Anna now enjoys practicing circus acrobatics and painting in her spare time.

Kayla Chambers (performance)

I remember when our cells danced together.

i remember when movement with others brought joy, slowness and intention.
soft.
beyond the mechanics of necessary here to there… quick paces, completing tasks before hiding in offices and homes.
sanitizing before touching what’s mine…
touch.
i used to hug strangers around the world
dancing micro dances
sharing gravity—feeling toes, hips, shoulders through fingertips,
our nervous systems synchronized.
our bodies together.
now your air is dangerous, i don’t let it touch me.

As a dancer—a social dancer—I am among those who have spent thousands of hours attuning to others—negotiating sound and space within the embodied dialogue of moving bodies. Through moment-by-moment connections with diverse others, social dancing prior to the COVID-19 pandemic contained scenes for relational negotiation of boundaries and radical world-making. In each dance, borders were blurred through sensing bodies—the intimate contact and coalescence of skin, breath, mirror neurons, and affect (Manning 2007). In this presentation, as (social) dancer and frontline worker, I move and speak through questions of felt presence during COVID-19 physical distancing. As a researcher-artist-practitioner who understands bodies as key sites for meaning-making and transmission, what does it mean to reach across screens in digital time-space to dance with others? What happens in the spaces between sensing skin, sanitized and hypervigilant, under layers of PPE? In the memory of dancing in-touch, sharing relational-somatic improvisation with others, what is sensed now? This performance-presentation-project is explored through intermodal arts-based performance praxis, autoethnographic sense experiences of cyber-mediated relationality, and memories of (social) dancing.

Kayla Chambers (she/her) is a white settler originally from Treaty 7 territory, currently living and working in Tkaronto, on Treaty 13 territory. She holds a Bachelor of Music from the University of Alberta and a Master of Arts in Ethnomusicology from the University of Toronto, where she engaged in SSHRC funded research surrounding performances of politics through voice and embodiment. Kayla currently spends her days working with intermodal...
expressive arts process as a therapist in training and frontline shelter worker. As an aspiring scholar-artist-practitioner she is deeply curious about arts-based somatic psychotherapy, presence, and ethnographic performance explorations of identity and imagination. In the absence of late night partner dancing, she has been engaging in a self-study of dismantling white-body supremacy and taking performance workshops in a borrowed crowded sunroom. Recent explorations include several month-long butoh intensives with Nektan Art, dance workshops with Aeris Körper, and a cyberperformance with La Pocha Nostra’s first Virtual School of Dreams & Psychomagic.

5:45 – 6:45 PM
PAPER PANEL
Bordered Bodies

Lara de Vries

Bodily Boundaries: An Inquiry into the Performance of Death and Life at Body Worlds

The collective sensory-experience that the audience-performer community shares as they occupy synchronized notions of time and shared physical space during a live, in-person performance does not translate identically to digital performances. Our recent experiences of digital theatre-‘going’ and theatre-making suggest that we need to build and critically reflect on new repertoires of communication to facilitate the valuable affective sharing that is an integral part of live, in-person performances. In 2003, Diana Taylor argued that “performance functions as vital acts of transfer” (2003). Discussions on what constitutes such a transfer precedes and proceeds from Taylor’s intervention. Brecht, Boal, and Rancière, for example, knew that performance created conditions for fostering multiple forms of interpersonal relations; performance moved through borders between individuals, between actor and spectator, and between the aesthetic and the “Real.” Affective transfers are crucial to community formation. How are they altered by digital performance? In other words, so much work has been done to date the blur boundaries between audience and actor; do the logistics and etiquette of platforms like zoom reinstate some of those boundaries? In the proposed project, we enquire what challenges or new possibilities this affords performers, especially those who rely heavily on audience-performer interaction (comedians unable to hear laughter, for example). We will curate three short digital performances that would cater to certain parameters of engagements specified in the call we would circulate. For example, we might ask all audience members not to mute their microphones while they attend the performances. This showcase will be followed by a facilitated discussion and reflection with the artists and audiences.

Lara is a 4th year student in the Centre for Drama, Theatre, and Performance Studies and also studies in the Art History department and the Material Culture department. She is interested in performance art, photojournalism, and displays of the other in museums. Currently her research has been engaging with photojournalism, critical disability studies and death and life studies.

Sarah Haley

Transgressed Bodies as Transgressed Borders in Koffi Kwahulé’s Jaz

An Ivarion playwright living in France, Kwahulé’s work is entrenched with the postcolonial experience and the trauma of empire. Kwahulé’s play Jaz, about a woman reliving her vicious and brutal rape, directly confronts the complete transgression of body and bodily autonomy. Historically, the body has been used as a metaphor for the state. This is especially true about the female body within Diasporic and postcolonial communities, where longing for the ‘motherland’ is evident. Thus, “the image of the mother invites connotations of origins – birth, hearth, home, roots, the umbilical cord – and rests upon the frequent, and some might say ‘natural’, identification of the mother with the beloved earth, the national territory and the first-spoken language, the national tongue” (Boehmer 27). Even Kwahulé’s homeland is feminized in the colonizer’s language of French, making it ‘La Côte D’Ivore.” Thus, the transgression of the female body in Kwahulé’s Jaz parallels the violent colonial transgression of a community’s geographical and cultural borders. This paper will explore the relationship of the colonized experience and the transgression of the female body in Kwahulé’s Jaz. Combining Hans-Thies Lehmann’s work on Tragedy and Postdramatic and its relationship to transgression with Nira Yuval-Davis’ Gender and Nation, and eminent Postcolonial scholarship like Edward W. Said’s Culture and Imperialism, this paper will investigate the parallel between the female body and the nation embodied as a woman. In doing so, it will show how the transgressed body of Jaz can serve as a metaphor for the transgressed borders of Kwahulé’s Ivory Coast.

Sarah A. Haley is currently pursuing her MA in Theatre Theory and Dramaturgy at the University of Ottawa.
Her research focuses on the Palestinian reception to Shakespeare and the creation of a unique Palestinian dramaturgy. Her most recent work, *Olive: a Culinary Landscape*, an autobiographical cooking show premiered at the Ottawa Fringe Festival in 2019, was featured on CBC radio’s “All In a Day” segment on the theme of “Crossing Borders.”

**Thursday Evening Event**

**Zoom Room One**

7:00 – 8:30 PM+

Roundtable / DJ Set / Play Reading

Black Women’s Work and Joy

Ahlam Hassan
Lisa Karen Cox
Khadijah Salawu

Black Women’s Work & Joy

This will be a discussion between myself (Ahlam) and the fellow Black women who authored the Call to Action on Racism at the CDTPS letter and Lisa Karen Cox, author of an open letter to National Theatre School of Canada on systemic racism. Both of these letters were triggered by the respective departments/schools choices to make statements on BLM, which brings into focus the masculinization of the movement for Black liberation and the active erasure and avoidance of Black women working to hold leaders accountable. Our work is often rendered invisible despite being all encompassing and in this digital discussion I would like us to explore that in conversation. Following this digital discussion between us, we will engage in a practice of collective care, love and joy. We will move from the discussion about our experiences navigating the negotiation processes with drama departments to a practice of investment in Black art forms: a short DJ set by Khadijah Salawu and a short reading of a new work by a Black playwright. I feel it is important to draw ourselves back to our joy in the work of art, particularly in times when we are investing a significant amount of time, labour and energy in efforts to reform and transform racist institutions.

**Friday, February 26th**

**Zoom Room One**

1:00 – 2:30 PM

Paper Panel / Performance

Disability, Institutions, and Community Engaged Performance

Jenn Boulay

Performing Identity: Making the Non-visible, Visible

My paper explores how non-visible marginalized identities sit on the border of performing their identity(ies), or perform to pass as the dominant cultural expectation. I will examine how non-visible disabilities are read by our culture—as abled-bodied—thus, needing to perform to access accommodations. Or, on the other hand, to perform and pass for able-bodied. I have framed this research through the words of performance studies scholar, Richard Schechner, who writes, “performances mark identities, bend time, reshape and adorn the body, and tells stories” (22). Through this framework, I will illustrate how someone’s identity is placed in the middle and borders able-bodiedness and disability. Thus, within this border they are forced to, at times, make the difficult choice to either perform their non-visible disability or perform and pass as an able-bodied. In this presentation, I plan to take an intersectional approach, acknowledging that disabled people are not the only ones whose identity borders visible and non-visible—queer folks, racialized folks etc. I will illustrate how this border impacts the lives of marginalized people through cultural sites and case studies; they include the TTC’s “Priority Seating,” aesthetic sport performance, and academic institutions. While the performances of passing and visibility are necessary for the survival of many marginalized people, through this presentation I would like for people to understand how detrimental this performance can be—hoping we become empathetic towards people who live their lives on this border.

Jenn is an emerging interdisciplinary theatre artist/creator, playwright, singer-songwriter, musician and scholar. She is a student in her final year of her undergraduate student studying at the University of Toronto pursuing a specialist in Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies and a minor in Critical Studies in Equity and Solidarity, focusing on disability studies. Her research interests are locating the
gaps in Canadian Disability Theatre, intersectional identity politics, disability studies/theatre and performance and finding ways to make contemporary theatre accessible to both performers and audiences. Over the past few years, Jenn has been developing a play that embeds audio description into her plays. Within her work she experiments how to interweave her academic research into her artistic practice. She has had her work and interviews published in Feminist Space Magazine, Knots: An Undergraduate Journal of Disability Studies (Knots), THIS Magazine. Additionally, Jenn has work forthcoming in Theatre Research in Canada (TRIC), Canadian Theatre Review (CTR), UC Magazine, and will be the co-editor of the sixth issue of Knots.

Stephen Sillett

InFusion Space: New Spatial Approaches to Research the Interpersonal Dynamics of Complex Immersive Experiences

Drama for development workshops and immersive theatre performances are examples of community-engaged practice that involves multi-sensory perception and action. They are also highly contextual and dynamic, requiring calibration by facilitators based on the spatial arrangement of the space, emotional states of participants and how the content being explored unfolds. Of particular relevance to my work are the 3-day large group process called Socio-Drama Topography and an immersive theatre event developed for and with communities with complex disabilities called Come to the Edge. I will share some details of both, and why I wish to understand the enactive-ecological dynamics at play for participants and artist-facilitators involved in the events.

Stephen Sillett is a Practice-based PhD Candidate, Participatory Theatre Artist, Facilitator, and director of non-profit Aiding Dramatic Change in Development in Toronto. Stephen is applying enactive-ecological psychology approaches to establish a range of multi-scale principles to unify mind-body-environment interventions. These attention-based principles can enhance his devised theatre practices, multi-arts performances, and InFusion Lab explorations with trans-disciplinary teams.

Ellen Denny (Performance)

In-Development Performance: Project Qyzra

Section 38 of Canada’s Immigration and Refugee Protection Act states a person or family can be denied permanent residency on the likelihood they will “cause excessive demand on health or social services”. When an immigrant family faces deportation back to a country where their disabled daughter has no future, they make the desperate decision to take their own lives. Project Qyzra is a solo play that follows a young immigration officer in the wake of this tragedy, as she confronts her own complicity and guilt within a failing system. This work-in-progress sharing would be a live stream performance from the first draft of new Canadian play Project Qyzra written and performed by Ellen Denny, with direction by Megan Watson (Artistic Associate, Grand Theatre). This dramatic piece is inspired by the 2013 deaths of a Tanzanian family whom the playwright knew growing up in London Ontario. Told through monologue, Project Qyzra challenges its audience - especially those who have only known the privilege of citizenship - to confront the discriminatory nature of Canada’s immigration system by asking who deserves to get in...

Ellen is a Toronto-based playwright and actor who has worked across Canada. Her contemporary comedy Pleasureville premiered at Halifax’s Neptune Theatre in 2019. Recently, Ellen was a 2020 finalist for the Cayle Chernin Award - Theatre for her in-development solo show Project Qyzra. Her work has been performed as part of Live Bait Theatre’s Social Distancing Short Play Festival, Driftwood Theatre’s Trafalgar 24, and Musical Stage’s Launch Pad program. She is also currently developing a play called Wonder about her great-great-aunt Harriet Brooks, Canada’s first female nuclear physicist. As a performer, Ellen has worked with companies including NAC English Theatre, Mirvish, Manitoba Theatre Centre, Citadel, and the Segal Centre. She received a Dora nomination for her portrayal of Alice in Life After (Canadian Stage) and was named one of Now Magazine’s Breakthrough Toronto Stage Artists (2017).
2:30 – 4:00 PM
ROUNDTABLE
I Was Never Alone: Disability Performance as Research Creation and Creative Ethnography

Jessica Watkin
Cassandra Hartblay

I Was Never Alone: Disability Performance as Research Creation & Creative Ethnography

Dr. Cassandra Hartblay’s first book combines her dissertation research of the experience of Disability in Russia and the play she wrote while interviewing Russian Disabled people related to her research. Now, she is working towards staging this play in the face of a new performance industry online, with a Disability-centred approach, while also using the production of the play as an opportunity to research the ways we can combine both research and art ethically. This conversation will talk through the ways in which Cassandra and Jessica are conceptualizing moving forward with original Russian contributors to the play’s original production through the power of wifi and zoom calls; involving the Russian theatre community in Toronto; involving Disabled creators to contribute to the production; and finding creative ways to make this project accessible and work smoothly digitally.

Jessica Watkin is a PhD Candidate at the University of Toronto’s Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies. Her research focuses on Disabled artists in Canada and how they create performance, their dramaturgies, and their support systems.

4:00 – 5:45 PM
PAPER PANEL / PERFORMANCES
Performance, Pandemic, and Politics

Alisha Grech

The Borders of Documentary Performance: The Line

How far is far away? COVID-19, in many ways, lead to the construction of new borders. Borders between persons in physical and social distancing, between nations and borders that only served to reinforce harmful societal and political systems in America. In the past months, COVID-19 has caused unparalleled devastation to many systems, such as the healthcare system in the United States. In many ways, medical frontline workers were left abandoned by the larger American political structure at play. Director Jessica Blank’s The Line, co-written with Erik Jensen, showcases the stories of New York City medical responders during the beginning of the pandemic. Six characters constructed from the testimony of medical workers told a story of restriction—a broken system that continues to perpetuate borders of race, care, class and violence against vulnerable populations. The Line redefined the idea of ‘collective experience’ that may be defined in relation to COVID-19, highlighting the ways in which America’s current political structure caters to those with more privilege. The Line examines the proximity between the fields of documentary performance and journalism while also questioning borders of crisis and care. Vikrim, a doctor in The Line, says that COVID was just the beginning: “underneath is diabetes and high blood pressure and gun violence and police brutality, right? And this exposed all of that.” Spectators find themselves impacted in the stories that are shared through verbatim theatre but also immersed in the subject matter that continues on around them once the performance is over.

Alisha Grech is a part of the 2020 PhD cohort of the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies at the University of Toronto. Alisha’s most recent work Talk To Me: An Engagement with Millennial Women (@TTM_WH on Instagram) interrogated topics of millennial feminism(s) and verbatim performance. Currently, her research focus is on the relationship between documentary theatre performances and journalism.

Miggy Esteban

Embracing Borders: An Entangled Dance of Need and Desire

“We are in the middle of a new dance. Our everyday lives have been disrupted. Connection must now be made from a distance. I feel frustrated. I need contact. I want a hug.”

The above sentiments inspired my performance of “Free Hugs”, an interactive dance installation that sought to activate Toronto’s Lisgar Park amid the city’s attempts to reopen during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through this performance, I encountered my desire to connect with audience members by inviting them to respond to the question, “What does a hug mean to you?” Verbal responses and the bodily witnessing of my movement became the inspirations for our interpretation of a hug. This resulted in unique and unexpected embodiments of connection, despite our separation marked by a line of chalk.
These improvised moments of distanced connection gesture to the border between our competing desires and needs, the border of our social bubbles, the border traced with chalk on the pavement. Through this paper, I engage with my attempts to perform a hug that has been restrained by and mediated through these borders imposed on us, that we impose on each other. As we navigate our need to stay safe and our desire to care for each other, to touch and be touched by one another, I encounter my attempts to perform the gesture of a hug. I reveal a practice of re-engaging with our frustrations and uncertainties through processes of research-creation that invite us to dwell within the drawing, navigation, and transcendence of borders.

Jose Miguel (Miggy) Esteban is a Filipino-Canadian contemporary dance/movement artist and educator. Through his performance art group, Impetus Movement Project, he unpacks the intentions behind movement to (re)imagine, (re)create, and (re)encounter dance. Miggy is currently a PhD student in the Department of Social Justice Education at OISE/University of Toronto. Influenced by the work of disabled artists, scholars, and creative practitioners, he encounters the inspiration and repetition of gestures through interpretive methods of research-creation in order to release the multiplicity of narratives that choreograph our bodies, our belonging within space, and our relations with one another.

Kevin Skelton (Performance/Paper)

**PULSE**

As I began my quarantine at home in Italy, after 5 weeks stranded in Belgium during the lockdown, I started practical work on my first solo performance in several years. Many of the ideas were already present pre-COVID-19, but I couldn’t find the time to devote to it amidst the combination of doctoral research and performing engagements. Under quarantine, I had lots of time and no outside distractions, and most importantly I had the borders of my small studio (5x7 metres) where I could start my creative process. I am currently referring to PULSE as a ‘continual work in progress’ as I intend for it to endlessly evolve with me, my body, my voice, my research, and also in relationship with those who I encounter and who encounter my performing of it. The performance is currently envisioned as a pop-up installation to be performed in various churches in which I establish new borders (though still 5x7 metres) for performing and sharing and seeking new inspiration to start the creative cycle anew. My contribution to FOOT would aim to share my process in this endeavour through a creative and active exchange of embodied knowledge via video and/or zoom.

Kevin Skelton has a multifaceted career as a performer, director, choreographer, teacher, and scholar. Equally at home on the concert and operatic stage, Kevin specializes in seventeenth-century music, the Bach Evangelist roles, and experimental music theatre. Kevin has performed with some of the world's finest early music ensembles including Collegium Vocale Gent, L’Arpeggiata, and Concerto Palatino and in numerous theatres and festivals throughout the world including Teatro La Fenice, La Monnaie, Aix-en-Provence, Opéra Royal de Versailles, and the early music festivals in Boston and Utrecht. In recent years Kevin has begun a new initiative exploring the possibilities of integrating the performing arts. His unique facility combining voice and movement has been showcased in productions of the Netherlands Reisopera, Veenfabriek, Zilbersee, Opera Atelier, Sasha Waltz & Guests, the Dutch breakdance company ISH and the Japanese theatre company SPAC. Kevin has produced numerous videos and live performances under the auspices of his own company ātmā having performed at the Operadagen Rotterdam, Theater aan het Vrijthof in Maastricht, and Festival Les Nuits de Septembre (Festival de Wallonie).

Sophia Swettenham (Performance)

**The Roots That Clutch**

**Performers:** Sophia Swettenham and Orlando Grant

**Directors:** Leo Lion and Lee Melillo

**Stage Manager:** Alden Kennedy

*The Roots That Clutch* explores how physical borders impact the development of a romantic relationship during spring 2020 of the Covid-19 pandemic. Evan (an American businessman) and Joan (a Canadian actress) both lived in New York City and began dating shortly before the pandemic required Joan to return to Canada. Now, they exist in two separate “bordered states”. Desiring to remain connected, they attempt to overcome the physical border by meeting in-between, in virtual liminal zones. The two bond, despite the border between them, as Evan navigates the fear of living in a hotspot and uncertain economy, and Joan acclimatizes to being an unemployed artist. Through Joan and Evan’s conversations, the impact of less permeable national borders on emerging political, philosophical, and psychological perspectives is revealed. In this way, the growing apart of the romantic
partners mirrors that of their countries. Interpersonally, this play examines how physical borders both erase and create emotional borders: when a political border thwart the physical development in a relationship, the emotional side flourishes. As emotional development over-accelerates, each partner imposes new borders in an attempt to restore balance. At what point does a physical and political border distort the emotions and personalities of Joan and Evan so as to become psychically insurmountable? The Roots That Clutch will be performed by two actors as a series of “Zoom dates”.

Sophia Swettenham is an actor and playwright, who has performed internationally. Her recent acting credits include: The Winter’s Tale, Cyrano, As You Like It (St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival), The Amorous Servant (Odyssey Theatre), The Turn of the Screw, Delirium, God of Carnage (Fordham Theatre), Head Over Heels, Fair Cruelty (Edinburgh Festival Fringe), Miss Bruce’s War (Ottawa Fringe). Since COVID-19, Sophia has participated in various virtual theatre endeavours, including an online workshop at TACTICS, a filmed monologue for SLSF’s virtual Pandemic Tales, and a Zoom production of a new work for Fordham Theatre, entitled Madeline May. She currently works as the Communications and Outreach Coordinator for the Youth Infringement Festival. After the pandemic, Sophia will return as a senior to Fordham University’s College at Lincoln Center to complete her Bachelor’s in Theatre Performance and English.

Friday, February 26th
ZOOM ROOM TWO

1:00 – 2:00 PM
PERFORMANCE PANEL
Core Concepts in Improvisation: Addressing Bordered States During a Pandemic

Jemma Llewellyn (Panel Chair)
Emmalia Bortolon-Vettor
Taylor Marie Graham
annais linares
Joe Sorbara
Bob Wiseman
Shaghayegh Yassemi

In response to the physical restrictions placed on us as graduate students attending arts-based programs at the University of Guelph amidst the global health pandemic, we have been co-creating a best practices document that attempts to observe and interact with several technological, aesthetical, and disciplinary borders. As domestic and international students, we find ourselves not only questioning these borders, but also the dominant colonial narratives that are present in graduate studies. Our questioning has led us to think about how borders divide and exclude us willingly or unconsciously even outside of a global pandemic. This question is being guided by our independent and collective interests as artist-practitioner-scholars in the process of free falling through the course, “Core Concepts in Improvisation,” facilitated by Dr. Daniel Fischlin. Free falling is a generative, non-predictive, intuitive reading and research technique that relies on trust and critical self-interrogation. We propose to share the outcomes of using free fall techniques to address the bordered states we find ourselves in because of physical distancing and our exposure to texts addressing critical pedagogy, poetic film-making, performances that challenge the role of an audience, and music inspired by the civil rights movement. Through a co-facilitated panel of three performance presentations, we will highlight our intersectional, interventionist, interdisciplinary approaches to improvisation as a social practice. Throughout, we invite participants to question and consider what Boaventura de Sousa Santos refers to as the ‘abyssal line,’ a border that—willingly or unconsciously—produces and erases, divides and excludes, protects and respects.

This panel will be made up of MA and PhD students from the Critical Studies in Improvisation program and School of English and Theatre Studies at the University of Guelph.

Emmalia Bortolon-Vettor is a musician and multidisciplinary MA student. They are exploring concepts of improvisation in elementary school curriculums.

Taylor Marie Graham is a theatre creator and educator invested in rural feminist and decolonial theatre/storytelling/digital creation. Her PhD research is focused on the Blyth Theatre Festival.

annais linares is a musician/ multimedia social practice artist working alongside under-served communities to participate in creative dialogues of collective future realities through sound, play, delight & improv.

Jemma Llewellyn is an applied theatre practitioner, from Wales. Her PhD research looks at the intersections of performance, activism, social media and adult-centrism.

Joe Sorbara is a musician, educator, and PhD candidate based in Toronto, Canada. His work will focus on the ways
that musicians learn and teach the musical practice of free improvisation.

Originally a zygote, Bob Wiseman is currently researching the practice of melodicism.

Shaghayegh Yassemi is a filmmaker, multidisciplinary practitioner and PhD candidate from Iran. She is currently working on practice-based research to explore the ways that poetry could be experienced within film.

2:00 – 3:00 PM
WORKSHOP
Breaking Through the Zoom Borders for Improvisation

Alice Nelson

A practical workshop on improvisation through the Zoom platform. As theatre educators, we are now faced with the challenges of teaching studio classes virtually. Something that is even more (if not equally) as terrifying and exciting as doing improv! Improv companies have had to move online to stay relevant and keep their audiences. Many have turned to the videoconferencing platform of Zoom as a playground for inventing new improv games and formats. Improv can be intimidating at the best of time and digital performing platforms can be equally as intimidating when you are on camera. This is why it is paramount to set up a safe space in a digital environment. This hands-on workshop will look at ways to make the digital space safer for taking risks and trusting yourself. Participants will be guided through some of the traditional games that translate well to the digital world, as well as be introduced to new approaches. The workshop will also highlight the most important aspects of good improv, listening, storytelling and making your partners look good.

Alice Nelson, BFA, MFA, BEd, is an Assistant Professor in Drama in Education and Community in the School of Dramatic Art at the University of Windsor, Ontario. She teaches courses in TYA (Theatre for Young Audiences), Theatre for Social Action, Applied Theatre and Improvisation. She trained in improvisation at Loose Moose Theatre, where she was a company member for over a decade. Using Keith Johnstone’s narrative improv approach, she has taught improv to youth with developmental disabilities, as well as homeless and at-risk youth. Currently, she is teaching Improvisation, Commedia, Forum Theatre, Ensemble Devising and Playback Theatre online. When the Borders open up again, she’ll be back at Planet Ant, the improv theatre in Detroit.

3:00 – 4:00 PM
PAPER PANEL
Borders in Dramatic Literature

Ryan Borochovitz

Dialogue at a Distance: Epistolary Form in Plays Adapted from Private Correspondence

How does one stage physical distance between characters, when constrained by the relatively close quarters of the playing space? When telling a story about two people (usually spouses and/or lovers) separated by vast expanses of geographic space, how does the presence of the stage and actors theatrically intervene upon this dramatized absence? How can letters traverse these borders? Epistolary form poses unique challenges to our understandings of drama and theatre. Letters are very much at home in the realm of the novel – and often cited for the role they played in that genre’s proverbial “rise” in the eighteenth-century, in the works of Richardson and Laclos – due to them both belonging to the medium of text-on-paper. To present correspondence theatrically is to reconnect the link between the text’s presumed author and an embodied voice. Ironically, the mode of letter-writing replicates dramatic form’s exchange of dialogue, but notably does so in discrete units of monologic narrative, without the immediacy of face-to-face conversation. Moreover, staging private correspondence necessitates a public enactment of a private text, giving an assembled audience unmitigated access to thoughts that were originally intended for a single addressee. This paper will offer a brief survey of various ways in which epistolarity has been employed theatrically, examining cases that are wholly fictional (e.g. A.R. Gurney’s Love Letters), cases adapted from epistolary novels (e.g. Christopher Hampton’s Les Liaisons Dangereuses), and those adapted from actual correspondence between real people (e.g. Sarah Ruhl’s Dear Elizabeth and Carol Rocamora’s I Take Your Hand in Mine).

Ryan Borochovitz is currently a second-year PhD student at the Centre for Drama, Theatre, and Performance Studies at the University of Toronto. His primary research interests include autobiographical theatre, adaptation theory, fictionality, and narratology. This paper is a germinal first draft of one of the chapters of his dissertation, which concerns stage adaptations of life writing sources.
Beyond the Borders of Secularism in Quiara Alegría Hudes’s Water By the Spoonful

In a 2018 address to the Association for Theatre in Higher Education, Latinx playwright Quiara Alegría Hudes, questioned the religious skepticism she inherited from an earlier generation of American writers as part of a set of aesthetics she labeled as predominantly “atheist, white,” and “male.” Hudes’s playworlds reject hard borders between the religious and secular, reflecting in dramatic terms an ongoing academic debate about the postsecular and the increasing return of religion to the public sphere. In her Pulitzer Prize-winning play Water By the Spoonful (2012), Hudes stages this increased porousness across identities, geographies, digital spaces, and spiritual realms. In her restless world, characters travel across physical borders throughout the play, flying to Puerto Rico or Japan to reconnect with familial roots. Others break boundaries between cultures and class, moving nascent friendships from the digital realm of an online addicts’ support group to the real world. The spiritual world, too, refuses containment: an Iraqi ghost haunts an American soldier with PTSD and a “white light suddenly pours in from above” to claim the life of relapsed addict. The America of Water By the Spoonful exists within a redrawn cosmic map — one that is wholly democratic and pluralistic but moves beyond secular Enlightenment values and the horizontal modern imaginary to reintroduce a vertical, spiritual span. Hudes renders the theatre itself a kind of third space emerging from the troubled boundaries between the religious and the secular, things embodied and things spiritual, and the private made public for spectators.

Dana Tanner-Kennedy is a scholar, dramaturg, and a Postdoctoral Fellow in the University of Alberta’s Department of Drama. Her book manuscript An Agnostic Arena: Postsecular Theater on American Stages introduces a theory of “postsecular theater” to describe religion’s persistent presence in American drama and performance in our so-called secular age. Dana’s work has also appeared in Theater, Ecumenica: Performance and Religion, and Religions. She currently serves on the faculty of the Summer Conservatory for Actors at Yale University and teaches at the University of Alberta. Formerly, Dana spent five seasons in the education department at Dallas Theater Center, serving as Associate Director for two, and worked in the literary offices of Atlantic Theater Company and The Public Theater. Dana is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama, where she earned her MFA and her Doctor of Fine Arts in Dramaturgy and Dramatic Criticism.
Human Animals takes place within a sickness which sweeps through the urban non human and human animals of London. The results are neither limited to one individual, nor one species, nor do they impact only single aspects of any one animal’s life. Rather, Stef Smith’s dramaturgy upsets scenic conventions such that scenes bleed into each other, revealing the entanglement of not only the human characters but their companion species, and all of their roles in a capitalist response that profits off of a crisis rather than bolsters the kinships that provide support and care for all species but also the world in which they co-exist.

Caitlin Gowans is a PhD candidate at the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies at the University of Ottawa. Her research focuses on posthuman dramaturgies in plays at the Royal Court Theatre in London. Caitlin previously completed her MA in Theatre Theory and Dramaturgy at the University of Ottawa.

Alex Lazaridis F.

No borders: working with other-than-human collaborators

Fight With a Stick Performance (FWaS) is a theatre/installation-art hybrid that has created at least one mainstage work a year since 2015. Our transdisciplinary process is one of conscious collaboration between human and other-than-human materialities. Rather than assuming mastery-over, we treat both human and other-than-human as “vibrant matter” (Jane Bennett) that partners to seduce, suggest, and impose upon process. This goes against a dominant legacy of Western thought — the categorization of nature and culture as ontologically separate (Philippe Descola). Our approach also blurs the boundary between human identity and other-than-human materiality. Identity as defined by gender, nationality, “culture,” and as coherent biological unit separate from its surroundings, becomes a more fluid expression of “forces” (Baruch Spinoza) that converge to create a temporary situation (or identity), one that can last seconds, days, or eons. Climate stress, for example, doesn’t know national boundaries but flows as dynamic systems of heat, pressure, accumulation of gasses, drought, flood, and so on. Human migration on the other hand, forced or chosen, must navigate socio-political cartographic delineations that can be conceptually intransigent during a human life, but that have much less stability over generations and eons. Climate and human migration create mutual systems and assemblages. FWaS creates performances that encourage a heightened awareness of all human and other-than-human contributors (from the geological to the socio-political), and blur one’s sense of separateness from these “intensities” (Deleuze and Guattari). We engage with the socio-political reality of borders while resisting the tendency to reify them. We look for moments of a felt-sense of borderlessness in order to recalibrate our relationships with boundaries of all kinds. I propose a discussion, with video examples, of the kind of work FWaS does, how it is situated in the ecology of live performances that explicitly draw inspiration from New Materialism, and how current debates around identity, as tied to gender, state, and biology are navigated with this context.

Dr. Alex Lazaridis F. is Artistic Director of Fight With a Stick Performance, one of Canada’s leading transdisciplinary performance companies. He is the winner of multiple awards for innovation, directing, and acting. Alex is also lead faculty in the Bachelor of Performing Arts program at Capilano University and is on faculty in the School of Creative Arts at the University of the Fraser Valley. His dissertation, Scenographic Encounters: using cognitive theories to explore audience embodiment of performance spaces (UBC) examined scenography as embodied cognition. His masters work, Productive Tensions: a theory of documentary theatre, was based on his collaboration with the Philippine Womens Center of BC, as director of and lead developer of Nanay: a testimonial play. This advocacy work was performed in Vancouver, Berlin, and Manila.

Julija Pescic

A Spectacular Exhibition as an Example of Political Power

My paper explores a paradoxical function of performance art vis-à-vis commodification of the artist as a brand name in a post-socialist context, as demonstrated in the most recent 2019 Belgrade retrospective of Marina Abramovic’s The Cleaner (Čistač). I argue that Abramovic’s self-fashioning identity continuously plays a key role in the artist’s recognition, popularity, and success, contributing to the artist’s (re)positionality in the international art scene, globalized art market, and public space. This specificity of Abramovic’s work coincides with the complex and violent shifts caused by state border modifications in Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the collapse of Yugoslavia during the 1990s, and the modes of communication, changed by the Internet. While asking the questions of how and why performance art in the 21st century has been shifting from less to increasingly more mimetic forms, my paper opens the conversation about the ability of performance art to address simultaneously
global and local issues, and to provide us with an insight into the repositioning of artist as a type of advertisement in a consumerist society.

Julija Pesic is a University of Toronto researcher focused on performance art, cultural anthropology, and cultural studies. Her doctoral dissertation project investigates cultural specificity and global dynamics in the artistic work of Marina Abramovic, a Belgrade-born, New York City-based performance artist, now best-known for her record-breaking 2010 MoMA retrospective. This exhibition drew over 850,000 visitors within three months with its central event The Artist Is Present — a 736-hour and 30-minute live performance — in which Abramovic invited each audience member to sit opposite to her in the museum’s atrium. Julija’s doctoral project is awarded by Social Science and Humanities Research Council Doctoral Fellowship (SSHRC), the Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS), including the Metal-Trebbin-De Boni Scholarship for the strong academic record and Helen Krich Chinoy Dissertation Fellowship by American Society for Theater Research (ASTR). Julija is also an alumna of Harvard University’s Mellon School of Theatre and Performance Research. Before immigrating to Canada, Julija completed BA honours in South Slavic Literature and MA in Dramatic Literature at the University of Belgrade with expertise in subversive humour in contemporary European drama.

11:30 – 12:00 PM
PERFORMANCE
Materialize with the B Party

Viktorija Kovac
Nada Abusaleh

“Materialize with The B Party” is a digital performance over Zoom. Two women share their auto-ethnographic narratives using object theatre, where sentimental and ordinary objects represent past and present borders of their identities. The audience will journey across the borders of their adolescence and adulthood. This performance is a continued exploration based on an ongoing project in development formerly titled “The B Party,” now known as “#BBetter.” We hope to test our exploration against the FOOT 2021 theme of bordered identities in a performatve way. The experimental performance will not be longer than 25 minutes, in addition to the reading of our Artistic Statement and a Q&A session. We would appreciate the opportunity for audience feedback, if possible. If not, we can share contact information for anyone who is interested in connecting with us afterward. By presenting on a digital platform, we are allowing our co-creation to exist within a new technological border, and are curious to see how a lens will translate the work. This is a performance that uses object theatre approaches to storytelling, and we will be asking the questions: In the era of Covid-19, why does our project intrinsically need to be theatre and performance, and not become a film? How do we border ourselves as Canadian theatre makers?

Independent theatre artists, Viktorija Kovac and Nada Abusaleh, have come to be nicknamed as “The B Party,” and you can find them hosting special one-time-only pop-up events (now online, during the pandemic). Since 2017, “The B Party” has been a project in development by Cosmic Fishing Theatre (@cosmicfishing) and it was conceived in response to the Women’s March on Washington movement. Nada Abusaleh is a Palestinian Jordanian-Canadian next generation theatre and performance artist. She recently debuted as an actor in Ahmad Meree’s Suitcase, presented within the Theatre Passe Muraille 2019/2020 season. Next, Nada is developing a shadow puppetry piece called SHADED, and is continuing the co-creation and development of “#BBetter,” which is the second installment of “The B Party”. Viktorija Kovac is the founder of Cosmic Fishing, and a director-creator with a keen interest in object theatre and puppetry arts. Next year, she is the artist-in-residence at THEMUSEUM in Kitchener, where she is researching and creating a performance for infants and toddlers, called “DiSCoVeR”. Viktorija is one of those practicing artists who is ripe for graduate school.

12:00 – 12:50 PM
WORKSHOP
Exhibit Play: Utilizing Museum Theatre Techniques in Performance

Jackie Mahoney

When presenting history in any performative context, it can be difficult to bridge the gap between the history and the performance. The goal of this workshop will be to demonstrate how Museum Theatre techniques can be used to create new connections between the audience and the piece. Because Museum Theatre lies on the border of museum interpretation and theatrical performance, it is uniquely positioned to be able to blend the methods of both while creating new methods of engagement. It will touch on the ways in which Museum Theatre can be used in the development process as an exploration technique for performers, how it can act as a (good) chaotic agent that undermines the dominant narrative, and how it can be woven into the performance to engage with the audience in new ways. This workshop
will be very interactive, as every piece of Museum Theatre usually is, and will encourage attendees to engage with each other and their ideas in previously unexplored ways.

Jackie is a Museum Theatre artist based in Toronto. She has worked as a Historic Performer at Black Creek Pioneer Village, an Educational Interpreter at the Gibson House Museum, and as a Historic Show Designer and actor with the internationally touring theatre company Live History. Most recently, Jackie developed an online interactive performance set on the RMS Carpathia on the night of the sinking of the Titanic. She is a graduate of the University of Waterloo’s Theatre and Performance program.

1:30 – 3:00 PM
PAPER PANEL
Moving Online: Digital Performance Methods during Pandemic

Tyler Cunningham
real-view mirror: Inter(medial)(border) Echoes & Digitized Empathy

Treatment of the computer screen has shifted amidst COVID-19 stay at home orders and social distancing guidelines; once a tool for meeting over vast geographical distance, video-conferencing & communicating in the screen is the norm in a contemporary moment that renders touch dangerous. Yet, the screen is a border: from friends & family, from work, from performances, and from feeling. I am applying to the 2021 FOOT Conference: Bordered States for a paper/project presentation that examines the computer screen as a border that echoes, transforms, and mediates empathy. I will construct my theoretical framework by extending Micke Vallee’s reading of Henri Lefebvre’s Rhythmanalysis, an analysis in which Vallee understands the echo as a rhythm of change and transformation, by thinking about the consequence of mediating the echo and how intermedial (or, interborder) repetitions might further complicate a message’s transmission. Here, Judith Butler’s theorisation of subjectivity and grief, especially Butler’s analysis of Emanual Levinas’s face in her Precarious Life, is complicated by the mediated face: a face that is and yet is not. Having set a framework, I will end the presentation by working through a collaborative project by composer Julie Zhu, dancer/choreographer Liana Kleinman, and myself called real-view mirror, a piece that employs Zoom’s Video Conferencing along with FaceOSC, MaxMSP, & Wekinator to research empathy as one looks at themself; the piece asks: Do I see you? Can you see me? Are we here, together, right now?

Jeff Gagnon
Re-Occupying Cyberspace: The Treaty of Waitangi as a Case for a Decolonized Internet

Much has been said over the past few years about the real-world effects of online discourse. Concepts such as “the alt-right pipeline,” “cancel culture,” “Cambridge Analytica,” “Pizzagate,” and others have all become emblematic of a growing understanding that the borders between cyberspace and meatspace are significantly less rigid than they were considered to be a decade ago. Likewise, various forms of place-based activism have been organized online. The relationship between activism and the net, however, is not unproblematic. Nishnaabe scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, for instance, troubles the adoption of social media platforms by Idle No More from a position of skepticism towards platform capitalism, expressing concerns rooted in an understanding of the ephemerality of cyberspace as irreconcilable with land-based ethical frameworks. Rather than cede ground to views of digital networks as immaterial, I propose a rethinking of the digital from within
a materially grounded conceptual frame informed by critically applied theories in geography and performance in order to open it up to critique through land-based practices which may reinvigorate the relationship between grounded and digitally networked solidarities. By way of example, I make use of the case of Māori activists in New Zealand who reconceptualize digital networks in material terms and refuse arguments for the immateriality of cyberspace in order to demand that cellular networks be subject to the Treaty of Waitangi.

Jeff Gagnon is a PhD candidate at the University of Toronto’s Centre for Drama, Theatre, and Performance Studies.

Sophie McNeilly

Play With Me in the [Cyber] Space: Digital Connection and Virtual Liveness in Role-Playing Games

Role-playing games are a site of boundary-breaking in performance studies; play breaks down the barriers between professional and amateur, between performer and spectator, between writer and (en)actor. However, in the era of COVID-19, a new kind of barrier has been erected within the genre. Unable to meet at the physical tables that have defined tabletop role-playing games since their inception, many players and performers have turned to virtual spaces in order to continue their play (and work, for those who play professionally). It is easy to construct this shift as a simple substitution; however, the change to virtual play-spaces has the potential to expand the definition of liveness within the context of TTRPGs. This paper will explore the ways in which digital platforms and virtual tables impact the experience of live play in a genre that was previously defined by its physical immediacy, and will argue for the experimental potential that this shift has in terms of the design and dramaturgy of play experiences. In addition to this, it will argue for the significance of this shift to the digital as a testing ground for other forms of performance media that are experiencing a similar crisis of liveness.

Sophie is a graduate student at the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies. Her previous work has been a synthesis of Early Modern literature, game studies and performance, with a focus on how contemporary role-playing games act as both an extension of the tradition of closet drama and a pedagogical tool for the teaching of theatre in non-professional contexts.

3:00 – 4:00 PM

PERFORMANCE

In Time, Out of Place

Keira Mayo

Debleena (Munia) Tripathi

The collective sensory-experience that the audience-performer community shares as they occupy synchronized notions of time and shared physical space during a live, in-person performance does not translate identically to digital performances. Our recent experiences of digital theatre-‘going’ and theatre-making suggest that we need to build and critically reflect on new repertoires of communication to facilitate the valuable affective sharing that is an integral part of live, in-person performances. In 2003, Diana Taylor argued that “performance functions as vital acts of transfer” (2003). Discussions on what constitutes such a transfer precedes and proceeds from Taylor’s intervention. Brecht, Boal, and Rancière, for example, knew that performance created conditions for fostering multiple forms of interpersonal relations; performance moved through borders between individuals, between actor and spectator, and between the aesthetic and the “Real.” Affective transfers are crucial to community formation. How are they altered by digital performance? In other words, so much work has been done to date the blur boundaries between audience and actor; do the logistics and etiquette of platforms like zoom reinstate some of those boundaries? In the proposed project, we enquire what challenges or new possibilities this affords performers, especially those who rely heavily on audience-performer interaction (comedians unable to hear laughter, for example). We will curate three short digital performances that would cater to certain parameters of engagements specified in the call we would circulate. For example, we might ask all audience members not to mute their microphones while they attend the performances. This showcase will be followed by a facilitated discussion and reflection with the artists and audiences.

Keira is a PhD student at CDTPS in collaboration with the Women and Gender Studies Institute. Her research examines how racism and sexism are built into the structure, practice, and rhetoric of theatrical improvisation, or improv. Keira currently works as an editorial assistant for Theatre Research in Canada and serves as the President of the Graduate Student Union at the Centre. She is committed to anti-racist praxes, collaborative art-making, and going slowly.

Munia is currently a 2nd year PhD Student at the University of Toronto. In the years before beginning
with her PhD, she worked as a Kolkata based theatre director and playwright. She enjoys making performances collaboratively with different groups and communities. With each performance, she strives to connect to more people and tries to facilitate the creation of a more tolerant world around.

Saturday, February 27th
ZOOM ROOM TWO

10:00 – 11:30 AM
ROUNDTABLE
Too Much Tease: Neo-Burlesque, Nation, and Policing Borders
PANELISTS
Julia Matias
Julia Mauro
Jessica Thorp

This roundtable seeks to discuss the influence of national borders on the circuit-based performance practice of neo-burlesque and other other low-brow performing arts. The group will be comprised of three neo-burlesque practitioner/scholars who are currently studying at CDTPS: Julia Matias, Julia Mauro, and Jessica Thorp. However, we are open to featuring additional scholars or practitioners in fields that face similar challenges. While varying regional styles are commonly addressed in neo-burlesque scholarship and public discourse, the implications of national borders, laws and policies within the form remain under-examined. The construct of nation and its borders have a tremendous impact on neo-burlesque performance for many reasons.

Possible topics of discussion within the round-table include:
• the dominance of US-based burlesque productions and institutions on the overall neo-burlesque community/industry:
  • inaccessibility of US work Visas for neo-burlesque artists
  • influence of the FOSTA/ SESTA bills and other anti-sex work legal restrictions on neo-burlesque
  • border detainment/bans
• the influence of national, provincial/state and regional “blue” (nudity) laws
• how the borders of national/legal policies spill into virtual burlesque spaces
• implications of COVID-19 restrictions on burlesque in live venues between different nations
• lack of government/state support or recognition for neo-burlesque as an art form
• differing attitudes towards ethics in performance between nations: Americas/European divide

The panel will be facilitated by Julia Matias. It will be organized informally, with each invited speaker offering commentary on one or more of these topics to set the groundwork for our attending participants before moving through a guided discussion. The event will close with a Q&A with the audience. We are open to any suggestions from the FOOT 2021 organizing committee around shaping this roundtable discussion to best suit its participants.

Julia Matias is a PhD student working on a collaborative degree with the Centre for Drama, Theatre, and Performance Studies, and the Women and Gender Studies Institute at the University of Toronto. She holds a BA in Devised Theatre and English from York University, and an MA from CDTPS. Her research centres around representations of exoticism as they are staged and challenged in neo-burlesque performance. Matias is also an award-winning neo-burlesque practitioner and a co-producer of the “Creme de La Femme” feminist cabaret series in Toronto.

12:00 – 1:20 PM
PAPER PANEL
Feminism, Queerness, and East-West Relations in Asian Performance

Siqi Dong

Introducing Mei Lanfang into English: Translators’ Identity and Influence in Mei Lanfang’s American Tour

Mei Lanfang’s tour in America marked a milestone success in the history of Peking Opera’s “going out” and the communication between East and West. Traditional theatre, as well as Mei himself was well received in the USA despite the culture difference and language barrier. There were many elements helped to dissolve such barriers, among which Mei’s translators, e. g. George Kin Leung and P. C. Chang, made great contributions before and during the tour. From the perspective of translator identities, this paper analyzes the various identities of the translators and their influence on both the translation and Mei Lanfang’s American tour. A mode of inviting
Zhixuan Zhu

The Rebellion of the “Other”: Asserting Feminism through Intercultural Theatre Adaptation of Oscar Wilde’s *Salome* in Su Xuelin’s Kunala’s Eyes

A vivid representation of Oscar Wilde’s (1954-1900) decadent aestheticism, *Salome* (1893) inspired a wave of theatrical works in early 20th century China, among which is the intriguing *Kunala’s Eyes* (1935) by Chinese woman writer Su Xuelin (1897-1999). Drawing on Jacqueline Lo and Helen Gilbert’s model of intercultural theatre, this paper identifies Su’s work as a synthesis of three cultural influences: that of Wilde’s decadent Salome, the Sanskrit text *Asokavadana*, and the Chinese “New Woman” Cultural trend. *Kunala’s Eyes* incorporates feminist traits of *Salome* while also subverting the femme fatale character through the Sanskrit text, both aspects challenging the oppression and objectification of femininity in the Chinese culture. On the one hand, *Kunala’s Eyes* inherits the feminist ontology in Wilde’s *Salome*, featuring a rebellious woman with irresistible sexuality who deconstructs the gender dichotomy by appropriating the male power. On the other hand, Su consciously rewrites *Salome* by merging it with *Asokavadana*, constructing a theatre discourse across multiple borders. Su does away with the voyeurism in *Salome*’s “dance of the seven veils,” rejecting the objectification of women in translations and adaptations of *Salome* by Chinese male dramatists at her time. She also utilized elements of Buddhism to bring the implicit connotation of spiritual transcendence in *Salome* into the spotlight as a form of resistance against the exploitation of the New Women by patriarchal political discourse in Republican China.

Zhixuan Zhu is a first-year MA student in Theatre Studies at the University of British Columbia. Her research interests include cross-cultural theatre, Asian theatre, feminist theatre, and the theatrical representation of the autistic mind and mental health issues such as depression and anxiety. She also applies her interdisciplinary knowledge of theatre and Chinese-English translation to examining theatre translation topics such as the Chinese translation of popular English musicals.

Thomas Elias Siddall

Marriage Anxiety

This work explores the international politics of LGBTQ rights, specifically the practice of same-sex marriage, and situates these practices as a constituent of the Taiwanese state’s security regime which orders the queer/ed migrant body, the homonormative LGBTQ, and queer Taiwanese diasporas in today’s increasingly digital global society. Through exploring the discourse around family and marriage and their particular relations to the state’s security, a series of belongings and expulsions constitute the global progressive neoliberal rights regime wherein heterosexual cross-border migrants in Taiwan are actively marginalized, the LGBTQ in Taiwan become a hallmark of progress, and “Taiwan” becomes a body entangled in the relationships of empire. This necessitates a reparative return to line work as a queer method. The data collection for this work was enabled through primarily textual analysis of news reports and media discourse, dominantly in the first chapter, and Allan Sekula’s *Fish Story* (1995) and Hsu Yoshen’s *Stones on the Shore* (2003), dominantly in the second chapter. These data are interpreted through discourse analysis and empirical literature, and they uncover the process of performances of LGBTQ normalization as both material and cultural economies. While this thesis is primarily concerned with same-sex marriage, it is mutually constituted with heterosexual cross-border migrant marriage and so the later provides a control case study for my analysis of same-sex marriage and its practice. Ultimately, this thesis asks how has the Taiwanese state’s adaption to heterosexual cross-border marriage enabled it to transition to support same-sex marriage and what are its implications on society and the international sphere? I conclude with some ideas on the future of queerness in international security.

Thomas Elias Siddall is a researcher at the University of Toronto with the Richard Charles Lee Asian Pathways Lab, the School of Cities, and the John H. Daniels Faculty
of Architecture, Landscape, and Design, and a student of International Relations and Contemporary Asian Studies at the same institution. They research at the intersection of migration, technology, postmemory, and borders. Their work’s regional foci are the Sinosphere and Asian diasporas in Canada and the United States. Their current work intervenes into our global “progressive” neoliberal rights regime as necessarily creating the conditions for expulsion and exclusion of those who it is designed to protect.

1:20 – 1:50 PM
PERFORMANCE
The Sky is Also Blue on the Other Side

Sarah Shahab

The Sky is Also Blue On The Other Side is a 15-minute play focusing on young children from two different social classes; a group of friends from the suburbs of Toronto who grow up in an underprivileged neighborhood, and two boys from uptown, in an upper-class neighborhood. When a tragedy from both ends of the city takes the lives of two young people, the groups of friends step back and try to look at their differences, and how classism plays a role in their society. The play explores how classism affects children and the way it divides the youth in the city.

Sarah Shahab is an Undergraduate film student, aspiring to be a film director and writer. Growing up in Scarborough, Sarah aspires to tell stories that often get forgotten about and represent those who have always been underrepresented, and misunderstood by society. Alongside becoming a filmmaker, Sarah wants to create programs and opportunities for low-income communities that will help young people grow as artists and see the power and potential in their own voices. You can find Sarah writing and journaling, or outside shooting with her film camera.

2:00 – 3:00 PM
PRESENTATION
Who’s Afraid of Video Documentation?
Geographies of Rights and Restrictions

Members of the 2020–2021 videocan research team:
Patrick Blenkarn
Milton Lim
Mariah Horner
Tamar Tabori
Matt Horrigan

Since October 2020, videocan has begun researching the restrictions and limitations placed on video documentation by performing arts collective agreements, both in Canada and abroad. In this group presentation, members of the videocan research team will each present their findings, beginning with a comparative analysis between international archiving institutions and the Canadian context. Our talk will specifically refer to the Theatre of Film and Tape Archive in New York, the National Video Archive of Performance in London, and the Archive des Freien Szene in Berlin. With this international landscape in mind, we aim to contextualize Canadian and Quebecois artists’ experiences with video documentation. We’ll discuss archival restrictions in agreements put forth by the Canadian Actors’ Equity Association, Union des Artistes, and the Canadian Association for Dance Artists. Our presentation will also report upon the interviews and conversations that we have conducted with artists over the course of our first research phase and illustrate the ways in which the academic community can play a role in shifting policies regarding performance video documentation and its viewers.

Begun in July 2019, videocan is an artist run initiative dedicated to making video documentation of Canadian performance available for educational and professional development purposes. Their key objective is to promote video as a key resource for enriching artistic discourse in Canada. Their website hosts a growing catalogue of works, as well as its videocommentary series, in which artists are commissioned to provide frame-by-frame commentary on their works. videocan is led by Patrick Blenkarn and Milton Lim. Its current research team includes: Karen Gross, Mariah Horner, Sophia Wolfe, Peter Dickinson, Matt Horrigan, and Tamar Tabori. For more information about the project, go to: videocan.ca
SATURDAY EVENING EVENTS
ZOOM ROOM ONE

4:00 – 5:30 PM
PAPER PANEL
Challenging Canada: Performance Beyond the Myth

Grahame Renyk

“Welcome to the Rock” – *Come From Away* as mythos-building happiness machine

Inspired by the work of Sara Ahmed, I will propose that popular musicals like *Come From Away* are predominantly ‘happy objects.’ Popular musicals are workshopped in the laboratory of the auditorium; audience reactions are observed and the show is modified accordingly. Whether the result of a profit motive or a need to cover the substantial costs of producing and developing these works, their orientation is typically towards generating popular appeal and approval. Thus, works of popular music theatre seek to be accessible, easily comprehended, and to have a generally pleasant and positive affect on the spectator. They are happy objects, almost by default, and they can act as veritable happiness-making machines capable of adhering their own happy affects to other objects, both physical (e.g. material goods, bodies) and conceptual (values, ideals, myths). My focus is on *Come From Away* as an illustrative example of both a ‘Canadian musical’ and a happiness-making machine. I will explore how it has responded to the mythos constructed on the other side of the border by the classic American musical (with its history of celebrating American exceptionalism, individualism, assimilation, and what Andrea Most calls “theatrical liberalism”) by adhering happy affects to its own values, ideals, and myths. I will discuss how *Come From Away* – both wittingly and unwittingly – contributes to the creation, reflection, and promotion of alternative Canadian mythoses, including those of Canada as utopia of tolerance and togetherness and Canada as something I call ‘exceptionally unexceptional.’

Grahame Renyk is a Lecturer in the Dan School of Drama and Music at Queen’s University. He has recently returned to PhD studies at the Centre for Drama, Theatre, and Performance Studies at the University of Toronto. His dissertation project explores how the unique social, cultural, political, and economic characteristics of the Canadian theatre ecology have shaped the development of popular music theatre in this country, not only for musicals that remain at home, but also for those that travel abroad.

Heather Cant

Expanding Ways of Knowing: Theorizing the Process-As-Relation Paradigm

Cognitive imperialism is the overt and subliminal messaging that perpetuates colonialism by influencing how and what we think. In order to engage in decolonization practices, it is necessary to break this thought boundary and begin to hold an anti-imperial mindset. Engagement with Indigenous epistemologies can aid in developing a critical understanding of the anti-imperial thinking that is central to Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and engaging with the world. Process-As-Relation is the paradigm yielded from my study of Indigenous worldviews in artistic praxis. While it was generated to shift my own artistic ontology – how I embody my worldview in artistic practice – it is a system of thought that can aid other artists in addressing their own relationship to imperial thinking in their artistic praxis. The framework and methodology of Process-As-Relation reflects the practices of intersectionality, decolonization, and heterarchical power distribution and ethically considers alternate ways of knowing through the ethnographic research of Indigenous peoples’ cultural perspectives and artistic practice in the theatrical medium. It can be understood to be a paradigmatic system that allows for the fluidity of paradigmatic substance to be generated through artistic process dramaturgy and the participants. It is intended to resist the fragmentation that underlies western philosophical thought patterns and encourage relational thinking. By incorporating the Process-As-Relation paradigm in curating the artistic process as well as anchoring each individual’s artistic practice, we can dissolve the barriers of imperial thinking to prioritize wholism and the nourishment of both the individual and the collective.

Heather is an accomplished theatre practitioner who works as a director, actor, creator, and producer. Primarily based in BC, her work has taken her throughout Canada, having worked for such companies as the National Arts Centre, Western Canada Theatre, Citadel Theatre, Gateway Theatre, Thousand Islands Playhouse, Persephone Theatre, Pi Theatre, Axis Theatre, Presentation House, Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan, Upintheair Theatre, Project X Theatre, Urban Ink, and
Wallis Caldoza and Mariah Horner

“What if we just don’t call it “Canadian” “theatre”?”

Whilst completing her MA in the UK, Wallis was asked repeatedly to describe what Canadian theatre was. Finding this task impossible, she offered up: “adaptable”, “flexible”, “contemporary” – immediately critiquing these descriptors, too: “shit is shit is shit”, no matter where you go. She wasn’t describing Canadian theatre; she was describing her theatre practice and, now, was giving up her story to the narrative-consuming and conflating machine that is Liberal Canada and its mandate of multiculturalism (and neoimperialism) – she was building nationalism, really, and performing it. But is building nationalism the same as building a nation? Wallis won’t make Canadian theatre because Canadian theatre didn’t make her. Mariah’s story here is significantly less interesting but in the middle of a global pandemic, she’s certainly through with old, white dudes publishing articles in the CBC about how digital theatre is not theatre. Mariah and Wallis spent the summer collaborating on live theatre-for-radio with hearing and Deaf artists, coast-to-coast, in the middle of the pandemic. They spent the summer brainstorming anti-hierarchal, anti-capitalist, femme led collaborative spaces with a focus on care. They abandoned borders associated with theatre making because the space between artists and collaborators grew by at least six feet and a WiFi connection. They believe in Quotidian dramaturgy, the notion that the theatre of the everyday has more porosity worth troubling and performative connotations than whatever is behind the fourth wall. Our practice is anti-hierarchical; it does not place human at the centre. We happen to theatre and theatre happens to us. Why cling to “Canadian theatre” as if that’s a framework we want? Abolishment and radical practices are being engaged constantly by our Black and Indigenous brothers and sisters and they’re willing to risk it all, on stage and in protest. Should we be abolishing the border of Canadian theatre in the same breath we’re abolishing police, prisons, and the surveillance state? What would it mean to let our stages have run the narratives of those it most often utilized as props and bodies to build Canadian theatre? Wallis and Mariah think there is a difference between Canadian theatre and doing theatre on Turtle Island. If we don’t call it Canadian theatre what should we call it? Does it even need a name?

Wallis Caldoza is a dramaturg and PhD student at OISE/UT in the SJE department. Her doctoral research project, supervised by Dr. Rosalind Hampton, examines how Canadian universities take up institutional recognition in the form of “listening” and “acknowledgement” practices that naturalize white hegemony and construct Black and Indigenous scholars and scholarship as devalued “Other” (Ahmed, 2012; Coulthard, 2014; Hampton, 2020).

Mariah Horner is a theatre creator and PhD student based in Kingston. She directed Kingston’s Storefront Fringe Festival from 2016-18 and was the inaugural winner of the Patrick Conner Theatre Ticket Award. From 2017-2019 she was on the core team for SpiderWebShow’s FOLDA. Co-founding site-specific theatre company Cellar Door Project in 2013, Mariah has produced 15 original works in situ. Mariah has an MA from uOttawa in and she has been published by SpiderWebShow, Visit Kingston, Canadian Theatre Review, the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario. She is a lead researcher on play/PLAY: Dramaturgies of Participation with Dr. Jenn Stephenson.

5:30 – 5:50 PM
PERFORMANCE
Thirsty Concrete: How Porous Borders Perform Notions of Place

Jillian Groening

Thirsty Concrete: How Porous Borders Perform Notions of Place investigates the durational practices of conciliation which both placate and interrogate the settler-colonial state. By critically engaging with the problematics of nationhood, Thirsty Concrete asks how place-making and place-knowing might occur through methods that are ethical, caring, and autonomous. Bringing together Helene Vosters’ examination of nationalist narratives in Unbecoming Nationalism: From Commemoration to Redress in Canada (2019), Glen Coulthard’s articulation of “grounded normativity” found in Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition (2014), and David Garneau’s discussion of “perpetual conciliation,” Thirsty Concrete grapples with the complications of belonging on land exploited by white settler-colonialism. Thirsty Concrete is a six-minute video work that integrates found footage and text. In laying anecdote and critical analysis over top recordings of thirsty concrete, a sponge-like asphalt that drinks up water poured over its surface, the short film brings to light the impacts of environmental exploitation caused by settler colonialism, the performance of nationhood, and the ongoing process of conciliation. The relationship between place, nation, and
conciliation are examined through the disciplinary arenas of performance studies, Canadian studies, and Indigenous studies. By drawing on the choreographies enacted by water and porous asphalt, *Thirsty Concrete* uses new materialism-influenced methodologies for engaging with embodied practices.

Jillian Groening is a contemporary dance artist and writer of mixed settler-colonial and Mennonite descent living on Treaty One Territory. Her research moves between performance and text to explore memory, temporality, and embodiment through methods of scoring and sensory-oriented documentation. Her work has been presented by A Space Gallery in Toronto, MAWA (Mentoring Artist’s for Women’s Art), and Plug In ICA’s Summer Institute. Her writing has been published through *The Journal for Curatorial Studies*, *The Dance Current*, and *Dance International*. Groening has performed throughout Winnipeg, Toronto, and Vancouver in choreographic works by Rachel Browne, Jolene Bailie, Marie-Josée Chartier, and Pablo Bronstein. She has had opportunities to explore the sticky spaces between temporal arts and their documentation by being a research assistant for Freya Björg Olafson via York University, undergoing a professional placement with Franklin Furnace Archive Inc., and being an indexer for Ugly Duckling Press’ Emergency INDEX 2019. She has also participated in Video Pool’s New Artists in New Media residency and Festival TransAmériques’ Conversations on Performance seminar. Groening holds a BA(Hons) in Dance from the School of Contemporary Dancers in affiliation with the University of Winnipeg and recently obtained a Masters in Theatre and Performance Studies from York University.

Indigenous residents of Tkaron:to. Polishing the Chain examines the historical significance and contemporary relevance of three key intercultural agreements that underpin territorial negotiations, inter-First-National relations, and relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in the city today: the Covenant Chain/1764 Treaty of Niagara, the Dish with One Spoon, and the so-called Toronto Purchase of 1787/1805. Out of this project will emerge a Treaty Guide for Torontonians and with this, a curated series of lesson plans, take-home activity prompts and participatory workshops to stimulate organic, multi-sensorial understandings of treaty responsibilities and to activate somatic response. For Bordered States, Loft and Carter will offer a lecture-workshop through which participants are carried through and invited to respond to a series of explorations devised for the forthcoming Treaty Guide for Torontonians. Unfolding online, this lecture-workshop provides an opportunity to undertake a gestural exploration through which to better apprehend an Indigenous perception of borders and boundaries.

Jill Carter (Anishinaabe-Ashkenazi) is a theatre practitioner and researcher, currently cross appointed to the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies; the Transitional Year Programme; and Indigenous Studies at the University of Toronto. For this presentation, Jill is collaborating with Ange Loft who is a multi-disciplinary artist from Kahnawake Mohawk Territory. Currently serving as the Associate Artistic Director of Jumblies Theatre, Ange specializes in and facilitates interdisciplinary creation, arts-based research, oral history, outdoor performance, community art design, wearable sculpture, and project planning.

6:30 – 8:30 PM
**PRESENTATION / WORKSHOP**
**Breached Boundaries, Imposed Borders: Gestural Explorations and Somatic Remapping of the Hyperlocal**

**Jill Carter**
**Ange Loft**

Ange Loft and Jill Carter are two members of a transdisciplinary team that has been assembled to work on a SSHRC-funded project Polishing the Chain. This knowledge mobilization project leverages the community and arts-based research out of which Talking Treaties (Jumblies Theatre & Arts) and By These Presents (for the Toronto Biennial of Art 2019) have emerged to continue the instigation, amplification, and enrichment of public discussion around our treaty responsibilities as settler and...
SPECIAL THANKS

FACULTY AND STAFF AT THE CENTRE FOR DRAMA, THEATRE & PERFORMANCE STUDIES:

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Director

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The CDTPS Graduate Students Union

Canadian Association for Theatre Research

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