



LITHUANIAN CULTURE RESEARCH
INSTITUTE

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ASSOCIATION OF
NORDIC THEATRE
SCHOLARS

ANTS Annual Conference 2025 Theatre and Natural Intelligence

Lithuanian Culture Research Institute
25-27 September 2025



Theatre and Natural Intelligence

Association of Nordic Theatre Scholars

Annual Conference
September 25-27, 2025

Hosted by Lithuanian Culture Research Institute

BOOK OF ABSTARCTS

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Practical Info

Conference Logistics

The entire conference programme will be held at *Muzeoteka* of the Lithuanian Theatre, Music and Cinema Museum (Vilniaus St. 41, Vilnius).

All four keynote lectures, ANTS Annual Meeting, and odd numbered panels will be held at the big conference room.

Even numbered panels will be held at the small conference room.

Opening reception and the coffee breaks will be held at the foyer.

Registration Desk will be operating at the foyer throughout the conference.

Special Events

Opening Reception: September 25, 2025 at 17:00.

Foyer of *Muzeoteka* of the Lithuanian Theatre, Music and Cinema Museum (Vilniaus St. 41, Vilnius).

This event is open to the registered conference participants and invited guests only.

Tour: September 26, 2025 at 16:30. Guided tour of the Storage Facilities at the Lithuanian Theatre, Music and Cinema Museum. This event is free of charge for registered conference participants, but pre-registration is required.

Performance at the Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theatre: September 25 and 26, 2025 at 18:30.

Ballet “Čiurlionis” (Composer: Giedrius Kuprevičius, Choreographer: Robert Bondara). This event requires a ticket.

ANTS Annual Meeting: September 27, 2025 at 13:30.

Muzeoteka of the Lithuanian Theatre, Music and Cinema Museum (Vilniaus St. 41, Vilnius). This event is open to the ANTS members only.

Along the Conference: all exhibitions of Lithuanian Theatre, Music and Cinema MUSEAM is free of charge for registered conference participants.

Map: Location of the *Muzeoteka* of the Lithuanian Theatre, Music and Cinema Museum (Vilniaus St. 41, Vilnius)



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Welcome

Dear ANTS 2025 Conference Attendees,
Welcome to Vilnius!

We are about to begin extraordinary discussions on the current state of theatre. One of the main goals of this conference is to explore the dynamic intersections of human cognition, creativity, and artificial intelligence in theatrical practices, theories, and performances. There are numerous timely issues that need to be addressed and reflected upon. To name just a few: contemporary challenges to human agency in creative processes, appearance of the hybrid, machine enhanced co-creation, and everlasting resilience of human mind, its ability to adapt and to invent.

The three-day programme, hosted by the Lithuanian Culture Research Institute at the Lithuanian Theatre, Music and Cinema Museum will feature twelve panels on topics ranging from transplanted performers to embodied intelligences. We are especially excited to be able to present four keynote addresses from distinguished scholars and artists: Annie Dorsen (US), Jeanette Ginslov (SE), Stefan Kaegi (DE), Michael Rau (US).

We are delighted that more than forty scholars from all over Europe and beyond responded to our call for papers and made it to Vilnius. Thank you for your contributions and we hope that this conference will accelerate our discussion and inspire many new ideas!

ANTS2025 Vilnius Team

Lithuanian Culture Research Institute

Lithuanian Culture Research Institute (LCRI) is a state scientific research institution. Institute scholars investigate Lithuanian culture, development of art and philosophy, their peculiarities and links with European and global cultural history and its development. LCRI arrays Lithuanian culture and its constituent parts: fine art, music, theatre, philosophy, analyses their links with political and social state development. Research is carried out in cooperation with other Lithuanian and foreign scientific research and studies institutions. The institute has its own publishing centre where a major part of the institute's scientific production is prepared for publication: monographs, collections of articles, continuous ("Culturology", "Historical Studies of Fine Art", "Athena") and scientific periodicals ("Art Critics", "Sovijus"), "Religious Studies of Cultural Heritage" and other.

<https://www.lkti.lt/en/>

ANTS Annual Conference 2025

Theatre and Natural Intelligence

Conference venue:
Lithuanian Theatre, Music
and Cinema Museum
Vilniaus St. 41, Vilnius

Lithuanian Culture Research Institute
25-27 September 2025

DAY 1 Thursday, September 25

09:00–09:30 Registration

09:30–09:45 Welcome Address

09:45–11:15 Parallel Sessions

Panel 1 → Performing Memory and Reimagining the Past

Chair: [Martynas Petrikas](#)

Madli Pesti – Performative Strategies of Storytelling, Memory and Identity Politics. The Case of Internal Climate, Narva, Estonia

Kamilė Rupeikaitė – “No Applause, Please.” Concert Programs of the Kaunas Ghetto Police Orchestra as Source of Storytelling and Memory

Helmutas Šabasevičius – Classical Ballet Heritage in Lithuania: Traditions and Experiments. Case of “Coppelia”

Hélène Ohlsson – From a Repentant Magdalene to a Societal Norm-Breaker in the Name of Love: The Unstable Memory of an Actress in Fiction and Historiography

Panel 2 → Voice and Identity in Lithuanian Performance

Chair: [Asta Petrikienė](#)

Laima Budzinauskienė – Multilayered Creativity in the Margins of 19th–20th Century Musical Manuscripts

Vytautė Markeliūnienė – Perception of Personality: the Footprint of Vlada Mikšaitė in Opera, Pedagogy and Directing

Jonas Vilimas – From Human as Mechanism to Conventional Patterns. R. Descartes, Musical Affektenlehre of Baroque and A/N Intelligence

Rasa Vasinauskaitė – Participatory Theatre: Between Mediated and Direct Experience

11:30–13:00 Parallel Sessions

Panel 3 → Soundscapes and Natural Perception

Chair: [Annelis Kuhlmann](#)

Małgorzata Budzowska – Thinking Between Breaths. Phenomenology of Stage Soundscape in the Finnegans W/Fake by Katarzyna Kalwat and Wojciech Blecharz

Leo Marko – Revealing the Concealing: Live Theatre and the Experience of Nature

Stephen Atkins – Carnality: Reframing Acting at the Threshold of Embodiment and AI

Jūratė Landsbergytė-Becher – Intellect of Nature in Lithuanian Music: from Čiurlionis to the Hum of Light

Panel 4 → The Thinking Body: From Somatic Practice to AI-Enhanced Presence

Chair: [Kamilė Rupeikaitė](#)

Ramunė Balevičiūtė and **Agnė Jurgaitytė-Avižinienė** Exploring the Intersection of Theatre Studies, Psychology, Improvisation, and AI: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Theatre Practice

Kiki Selioni – Intelligent Body through Physical Training: The Case of Rudolf Laban

Dionysios Tsafaridis – DMS / Dark Movement Human Spaces: Reclaiming Embodied Intelligence and Happiness in an Age of a Toxic, Artificial (audio)visual, Flattened Cosmos

13:00–14:00 Lunch Break

14:00–15:30 Parallel Sessions

Panel 5 → Digital Theatre and Revitalization

Chair: Anna McNamara

Rébecca Pierrot – Digital Theatre or the Art of Human Revitalization

Annika Ley – Performances in Museum

Marleena Huuhka – Performances in Virtual Borderlands: Case Gaza

Panel 6 → Limits, Empathy and Play

Chair: Małgorzata Budzowska

Goda Dapšytė-Šlektavičienė – (Im)Possibility of Uncensoring

Melanie Fieldseth – Practices of Memory, Empathy and Fallibility in Mette Edvardsen's Time Has Fallen Asleep in the Afternoon Sunshine

Riina Oruaas – The Ludic Laboratory of “Rat’s Rumba”: Play, Act, and Reflect

15:30–16:00 Coffee Break

16:00–17:00 Keynote 1: Jeannette Ginslov – Through the Body, Beyond the Screen: Drawing Us Together in MR Encounters

Chair: Anna McNamara

17:00–19:00 Reception

18:30–20:40 Ballet “Čiurlionis”: Composer Giedrius Kuprevičius, Choreographer Robert Bondara (Theatre ticketholders only)

DAY 2 Friday, September 26

09:30–10:30 Keynote 2: Stefan Kaegi – On Transplanted Performers, Remote Controlled Audiences and Digital Tools

Chair: Martynas Petrikas

10:30–11:00 Coffee Break

11:00–12:30 Parallel Sessions

Panel 7 → Systems, Imagination and Participation

Chair: Ramunė Balevičiūtė

Jurgita Staniškytė – Between Interactive Gaming and Social Engineering: Theatre and Participatory Turn

Weronika Żyła – New Relations Prototyping. Human and more-than-human Coexistence in Polish Contemporary Theatre

Mischa Twitchin – The Cave of Remembered Dreams

Panel 8 → Embodied Intelligences and Cross-Disciplinary Performance Practices

Chair: Rūta Mažeikienė

Lauma Mellēna-Bartkeviča – Hybrid Intelligence Enabled? Opera “Salome” by Alvis Hermanis

Gisele Edwards – Natural Intelligence: The Neuroscience of 5 Performative Action Spaces

Birutė Banevičiūtė and **Giedrė Subotinaityė-Gabriūnienė** – Bodily Kinesthetic Intelligence in Dance Performance as Means of Communication with Non-Verbal Children Audience

Monika Citvaraitė-Lansbergienė – Contemporary Circus as a Site of Natural Intelligence and Interdisciplinary Innovation

12:30–13:30 Lunch Break

13:30–14:30 Keynote 3: Annie Dorsen – The Real Thing and the Fake Thing

Chair: Jurgita Staniškytė

14:30–15:00 Coffee Break

15:00–16:30 Parallel Sessions

Panel 9 → Actor's Awareness and Psychological Insight

Chair: [Hélène Ohlsson](#)

Annelis Kuhlmann – The Actor's Backbone. On the Natural Intelligence of "the System" in Stanislavsky's Works

Merilin Jürjo – We Are Nothing Without Psychology: Understanding Theatre through the Lens of Psychological Reception

Anna McNamara – Living Experiences and the Locus of Control: Natural and Artificial Intelligence in Contemporary Performer Training

Rūta Mažeikienė – Performing AI-Augmented Dramaturgy: A Case of "The Frankenstein Complex"

Panel 10 → Ritual, Architecture and Conscious Performance

Chair: [Lauma Mellēna-Bartkeviča](#)

Knut Ove Arntzen – Theatre in-between the Ritual and Digitalized Performance

Vicky Spanovangelis – Dancing Ancestral Intelligence / Living Ancestry: Virtual and Physical Museum Architectures as Bio-Choreographic Design

Milda Al-Slamah – Chasing the 'phi': Performance as a Conscious System

Berit Aarrestad – Nature Trail for Long-Term Thinking

16:30–17:30 Guided tour of the Storage Facilities at the Lithuanian Theatre, Music and Cinema Museum

[Please note: advance registration is required for guided tours.](#)

18:30–20:40 Ballet "Čiurlionis": Composer Giedrius Kuprevičius, Choreographer Robert Bondara (Theatre ticketholders only)

DAY 3 Saturday, September 27

09:30–10:30 Keynote 4: Michael Rau – Distant Viewing, Close Reading: AI-Assisted Analysis of Theatrical Movement

Chair: [Asta Petrikienė](#)

10:30–11:00 Coffee Break

11:00–12:30 Parallel Sessions

Panel 11 → Artificial and Artistic Intelligence in Music, Dramaturgy and Scenography

Chair: [Melanie Fieldseth](#)

Frank Pecquet – AI and Human Intelligence in Theatrical Music: Toward a Hybrid Creation

Laura Gröndahl – Scenographic Design as an Intelligent Artistic Process

Jane Tapper – Programming in Natural Intelligence and AIs – Creativity?

Panel 12 → Audiences in Transition: Perception, Accessibility and Belonging

Chair: [Madli Pesti](#)

Keiu Virro – Theatre, Accessibility, and Human Interaction: Rethinking the Theatre's Impact on Diverse Young Audiences

Justina Paltanavičiūtė – Audience Perception and Engagement / Beyond Tradition: Technology's Role in Shaping Audience Perception of Contemporary Opera

Deimantė Dementavičiūtė-Stankuvienė – Video Technologies and National Identity in Contemporary Lithuanian Theatre

12:30–13:30 Lunch Break

13:30–15:00 Annual General Meeting

Abstracts & Biographies

Keynotes

Annie Dorsen

The Real Thing and the Fake Thing

From the Turing Test to the Eliza Effect to OpenAI's "reasoning models," the goal of language-based AI has always been to create the impression of thinking, rather than thinking itself. In fact, the history of AI development is in many ways an ongoing project of sustaining the "suspension of disbelief" – the quieting of critical judgment in order to maintain theatrical illusion. The stagecraft of language models is not incidental, but is rather central to the technology's function and appeal. By understanding LLMs as a form of interactive theater, we can better grasp the social and political implications of this technology.

The stakes are high. The Eliza Effect – the tendency of users to imagine a mind behind the machinic outputs – poses a grave threat to the shared social reality required for political judgment and action. Drawing on Hannah Arendt's work, I suggest that the proliferation of these "fictional improv partners" risks producing a mass condition of loneliness and political isolation.

The theater itself, however, may hold one key to navigating this crisis. Theater's unique ability to hold in tension the real and the illusory, the actor and the role, offers a model for approaching AI in a way that preserves our shared sense of reality. By recognizing the theatrical nature of these technologies, we may find a path out of the epistemological quagmire they have created.

Biography

Annie Dorsen is a director and writer whose works explore the intersection of algorithmic art and live performance. Her projects have been widely presented in the US and internationally, at venues and festivals including at Festival d'Automne, the Sharjah Biennial, Holland Festival, Brooklyn Academy of Music, and more. She has written frequently about performance, culture, and technology for *The Drama Review*, *Theatre Magazine*, *Etcetera*, *Frakcija*, and *Performing Arts Journal (PAJ)*, among others. Dorsen received a 2019 MacArthur Fellowship, a 2018 Guggenheim Fellowship, and the 2014 Herb Alpert Award for the Arts in Theatre. She is a 2024 graduate of NYU School of Law, where she focused on tech law and public policy.

Jeannette Ginslov

Through the Body, Beyond the Screen: Drawing Us Together in MR Encounters

This keynote examines the complex dynamics of hybrid Mixed Reality (MR) environments that integrate digital dance, embodied cognition, and emerging technologies. Through the affordances of Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), and Artificial Intelligence (AI), these environments amplify somatic resonance and expand embodied presence, that slide beyond our bodies and screens, across physical and digital domains, to audiences who embody these states within a wider somatic field. They may even shift our receptive embodied intelligence and collective embodied presence.

Framed through postphenomenological and feminist posthumanist lenses, the talk interrogates how MR encounters foster new relations between humans and technology – where movement, affect, and perception are co-constructed. AI's role in enhancing performative creativity and embodied materiality is explored, with an emphasis on how participatory engagement activates somatic fields and reshapes reception.

These entanglements generate a "dance of agency," wherein affective states ripple across bodies, screens, and networks, to suggest new modes of collective embodiment and aesthetic experience. MR and VR in this context, challenges conventional boundaries of live and mediated performance and calls for an expanded understanding of creative practice, that "draw us together".

To contextualise these theoretical perspectives, I will present selected works: *P(AR)ticipate* (2014), *CATALYSTS – Somatic Resonance* (2022), and *Deep Focus in VR* (2025). Attendees will have the opportunity to engage with excerpts from *CATALYSTS* and, selectively, the multiplayer version of *Deep Focus in VR*. Participants are encouraged to download the *CATALYST* AR app in advance. Please note: some media presented includes nudity.

Biography

Dr. Jeannette Ginslov (PhD, MSc, MA) is a dance and media artist whose research and practice span

somatic, digital, and embodied materialities. She holds a PhD in Arts and Creative Industries, with her dissertation *Deep Flow* investigating the intersections of dance, biosensor technology, lived experience, and the material entanglements of human and nonhuman bodies.

With an extensive portfolio of over 200 Screendance works, her projects have been screened internationally and recognised with multiple awards for choreography and innovation in Screendance. Ginslov's artistic practice integrates video, somatic movement, Augmented Reality (AR), Mixed Reality (MR), and Virtual Reality (VR) to explore how digital and physical experiences converge—inviting audiences to inhabit spaces where inner and outer worlds meet.

Since 2010, she has worked independently as a Screendance and documentary maker, producer, lecturer, and workshop facilitator, with over 30 academic and creative publications and presentations to date. Based in Malmö, Sweden, she has taught and supervised MA students locally and internationally while participating in interdisciplinary collaborations in Screendance and AR works. She is currently exploring embodied drawing techniques in VR environments, *Deep Focus in VR*.

In 2023, she founded GINSLOV MEDIA STUDIO, a creative platform dedicated to dance media innovation. www.ginslovmediastudio.com; www.jginslov.com

This presentation was made possible by the generous grant from the Nordic Council of Ministers Office in Lithuania.

Michael Rau

Distant Viewing, Close Reading: AI-Assisted Analysis of Theatrical Movement

Abstract: This presentation explores how computational analysis of theatrical movement patterns illuminates fundamental questions about directorial creativity and embodied knowledge in performance. Through application of pose detection algorithms to archival recordings, this research investigates how directors develop and maintain distinctive choreographic signatures across multiple productions, contributing to broader discussions of artistic style and creative consistency in live performance.

Traditional theater criticism has long identified intuitive patterns in prominent directors' work—tendencies toward specific spatial arrangements, gestural vocabularies, or actor-audience relationships. However, the ephemeral nature of live performance has limited opportunities for systematic verification of such observations. Pose detection technology now enables researchers to quantify movement characteristics across substantial corpora of recorded performances, providing empirical foundations for understanding how directorial vision manifests through embodied practice.

This computational approach reveals that directorial style operates not only through dramatic interpretation but through consistent patterns of physical staging that persist across different works, venues, and cast configurations. Such findings suggest that creative intelligence in theater extends beyond textual interpretation to encompass systematic approaches to spatial composition and gestural language that function as distinguishable artistic signatures.

The presentation examines implications of these findings for understanding creativity as both individual expression and learnable craft, while acknowledging the limitations of reducing complex artistic practice to quantifiable movement data. This work positions computational analysis as a complement to traditional criticism rather than a replacement for interpretive engagement with theatrical art.

Biography

Michael Rau is a live performance director specializing in new plays, opera, and digital media projects. He has directed in Germany, the UK, Brazil,

Ireland, Denmark, Mexico, Canada, Australia and the Czech Republic, and in NYC at Lincoln Center, The Public Theater, Ars Nova, and The Bushwick Starr. His production of “temping” was selected by the Guardian and the Telegraph as one of the best productions of the 2022 Edinburgh Festival Fringe, and the piece was featured twice in New York Times. In the US, his work has been seen at the American Repertory Theatre in Cambridge, MA, the Ann Arbor Summer Festival, and the Humana Festival at Actors Theater of Louisville. His work with composer Kate Soper has been performed at the Seattle Symphony and The New York Philharmonic. He has developed new plays at the Eugene O’Neill National Playwrights Conference, the Playwrights Realm and the Kennedy Center. He is a recipient of a 2021 Artists + Machine Intelligence Research Award from Google, as well as fellowships from the Kennedy Center, the Orchard Project and Akademie für Theater und Digitalität. Rau is a Forward/Story fellow and a speaker at Ars Electronica, Books in Browsers, Performing Robots and StoryCode. He has been an assistant director for Francesca Zambello, John Turturro, Robert Woodruff and an associate director for Anne Bogart, Les Waters, and Ivo Van Hove. He is a New York Theater Workshop Usual Suspect and a member of the Lincoln Center Directors Lab. At Stanford University, he is an Assistant Professor of Directing and Devising in the Theater and Performance Studies Department and he is an affiliate faculty member with the Stanford Institute for Human Centered Artificial Intelligence. MFA: Columbia University.

Stefan Kaegi

On Transplanted Performers, Remote Controlled Audiences and Digital Tools

How to stage script trees and wrap documentary experiences tightly around individual spectators? Welcome to the grey zone between reality and fiction, game and storytelling. Allow documentary material and theatrical interventions to seduce you into complex topics like climate change or European politics. Stefan Kaegi will show and comment short videos on recent productions of the German theatre label Rimini Protokoll including remote controlled museum visitors in the roles of spies, 500 spectators dancing in front of a mirror as well as re-enactment strategies for international weapon dealers and a humanoid robot hanging from strings.

Biography

Stefan Kaegi coproduces works with Helgard Haug and Daniel Wetzl, under the label “Rimini Protokoll”. Using research, public auditions and conceptual processes, they give voice to ‘experts’ who are not necessarily trained actors. Recent works include the multi-player-video-piece “Situation Rooms”, “100% Hongkong” with 100 local citizens on stage and the “World Climate Conference”, a simulation of the UN-conference for 650 spectators in Schauspielhaus Hamburg. Their „Utopolis“ for 48 portable loudspeakers opened at the Manchester International Festival. Their „Conference of the Absent“ is touring on stages in dozens of languages. More and more they also create works for museums: The Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (CCCB) recently showed their eco-installation „win < > win“ as well as their immersive walkable movie „Urban Nature“.

Stefan Kaegi is based in the swiss mountains as well as in Berlin, produces documentary theatre plays and works in public space in a diverse variety of collaborative partnerships. Kaegi has toured across Europe and Asia with two Bulgarian lorry drivers and a truck which was converted into a mobile audience room (“Cargo Sofia-X”). He has adapted “Remote X”, an audio tour for 50 headphones to dozens of cities from Taipei to Santiago de Chile, and toured the interactive installation “Nachlass” that portrays people who have not left much time to live. Recent works also include “Uncanny Valley”, a monologue for a humanoid robot, and “Temple du présent.”, a solo for a live octopus on stage. With Caroline Barneaud he conceived and curated „Shared Landscapes“, a day in nature with performative Land-Art.

Paper Presentations

Berit Aarrestad

Nature Trail for Long-Term Thinking

An artistic research project presented as part of “Wonderful World” – The Nordic Festival for Philosophy and Science, Stavanger, 2024.

Artistic Team:

Artistic Director: Berit Aarrestad

Dramaturge: Nina Helen Godthlibsen

Scenographer: Tonje Broch Moe

Composer: Gunhild Seim

The aim of this artistic research project was to develop a performance that combined enlightenment and experience in a way that fostered increased knowledge, wonder, and transformation among its participants.

We sought to invite the audience into an alternative “Nature Trail,” an interactive space for reflection, with the goal of raising awareness around the intrinsic value of nature and our ethical responsibility to think long-term and show empathy toward future generations.

The various stations along the nature trail were designed to serve as a response to what we refer to as “slow violence” – the gradual and often invisible degradation of our planet through the overconsumption of resources and the loss of nature and biodiversity.

We worked according to the method of “conceptual devising,” as presented by Torunn Kjølner in *The Actor at Work* (Kobbernagel et al., 2025), where the creative process is guided by a conceptual artistic vision. In this approach, artistic concepts function as guiding principles throughout all phases of the work.

Theoretical framework:

- Fischer-Lichte, E. (2008). *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*. New York & London
- Kobbernagel, L., Borg, M., Christoffersen, E., Frandsen, M., Harne, E., Kjølner, T., Mathiesen, M., & Riis, J. (2015). *The Actor at Work*. Frydenlund.
- Sauter, W. (2008). *Eventness: A Concept of the Theatrical Event*

Biography

Berit Aarrestad is Associate Professor of Drama and Theatre at the University of Stavanger. In addition to her academic position, she is an active theatre director working within the independent performing arts sector at local, national, and international levels. Her artistic research is primarily concerned with performing arts for children and young audiences. Aarrestad has directed and managed large-scale artistic projects in collaboration with cultural and societal institutions, and she serves as academic lead for the University of Stavanger in several international research collaborations both within and beyond Europe.

Milda Al-Slamah

Chasing the 'phi': Performance as a Conscious System

While the industry of Production Theatre (PT) normalizes supplier-consumer relationship between audiences and theatre-makers and encourages artists to chase socio-economic gain, the essential quality of theatre as a communal transformative experience, in which the observer could be considered a co-creator, appears to be of a secondary importance. In my doctoral artistic research project I have looked for a shift in perspective which would help me overcome this limiting understanding of theatre imposed by the industry which I - as a theatre-maker - felt entrapped by.

Since the methodology of artistic research allows for the research to take place within one's own artistic practice, I conducted this research by creating performances "Connections", "(in)security" and "MIND THE GAP" which challenged the norms of PT. This has led me to start my own chase - only this time I was not chasing goals imposed by the industry, but instead chose to chase the 'phi': the emergence of consciousness in performance as defined by the Information Integration Theory (IIT) of consciousness.

According to IIT, consciousness is the result of the workings of a system that produces a greater result than just the sum of its parts. This theory, proposed by neuroscientist Giulio Tononi, suggests that the level of consciousness in a system could be defined by Φ [phi] - symbol that represents the amount of information integration in the system. Having identified the need for greater 'phi' in theatrical performances, I have moved towards a new theatre-making paradigm which proposes to understand performance as a conscious self-organizing system - the Theatre of Consciousness (TOC). The findings of this research suggest that the paradigm shift from PT to TOC can assist in liberating the creative potential of a theatre-maker otherwise repressed by the 'silent' norms of the industry. In this presentation I intend to reflect on this research.

Theatre. Her performances, which have been shown internationally in such historic locations as Waikare Marae in New Zealand, Lebanese National Theatre in the city of Tyre and the ancient town of Marathon in Greece, propose and further investigate the concept of Theatre of Consciousness.

Biography

Dr. Milda Al-Slamah is a performance maker and researcher passionate about Artistic Research and the Science of Consciousness matters. She holds a Theatre Practice BA degree from the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama (University of London, UK) as well as MA in Acting and DA in Directing from the Lithuanian Academy of Music and

Knut Ove Arntzen

Theatre in-between the Ritual and Digitalized Performance

This presentation will give an outline of theatre and digitalization with regard to elements of rituals and new authenticity. It will show how natural intelligence and image effects are changed in productions marked by digitalization. In early postmodern theatre the ritual and tableaux were based in analog illusion making, which by digitalization in late postmodern theatre has transformed tableaux into a more and more convincing authenticity of image effects. The scenic expression is turning into digitalized scenic presence, involving an expansion of visual images as related to use of video and close circuit filming. Digital live performance and streaming is a new way of creating or show the authentic, which has to be seen in conjunction with the personal and autobiographical, situated in-between the ritual and digital experiential. I will look upon different examples, like Jan Fabre's "Das Glas Im Kopf wird vom Glas" (1986), Baktruppen Tonight): (1994/1995) and Hotel Pro Forma's "Neo Arctic" (2016) as examples of ways to combine rituals and tableaux with regard to the historical heritage of the baroque period, from the Romantic, more gothic (Fabre) to a digitalized and more convincing authenticity showing the climate crisis as a digital show (Hotel Pro Forma).

Biography

Knut Ove Arntzen, born 1950, is a professor emeritus of theatre studies at the University of Bergen, Norway, a theatre critic since 1976 and assistant, associate and later full professor in Theatre Studies since 1984. He has published a series of essays and books in Norway and internationally. He has taken part in many symposia and conferences of both academic and in artistic research and has been a visiting professor to universities and theatre academies, such as in Antwerpen, Frankfurt am Main, Kaunas, Oslo, Helsinki.

Stephen Atkins

Carnality: Reframing acting at the threshold of embodiment and AI

This paper investigates the divergent capacities of natural and artificial intelligence in actor training and rehearsal methods. It draws from Mikhail Bakhtin's notions of theatre as a dialogic and participatory space where meaning emerges through embodied, relational presence rather than fixed representation. Parallel concepts from Constantin Stanislavsky's Active Analysis, are explored as immanent cognition that emerges through sensory presence, and imaginative resonance.

AI, by contrast, excels in making combinations and recombinations of fixed symbolic forms. Its strength lies in revealing novel patterns and juxtapositions that might elude human cognition, bound by habituated forms. However this ingenuity is incomplete and disembodied, without the weight of action, or the dynamism of intersubjectivity.

My own research in Crosspoints will be placed in contrast to these two extremes. Using Bakhtin's concepts of "unrepeatability," "once-occurrent eventness," (McCaw, 2016, p. 89) and "answerability" (ibid., p. 79) of real, lived acts. The paper and demonstration will explore acting as a dialogic "phasing-between" first-person immersion and third-person authorship.

Revisiting *carnival*, from *carne vale*, a farewell to the flesh, a demonstration of relevant segments of the Crosspoints will outline how AI and other language/symbol models may mark a departure from embodiment. But they are also capable of generating symbolic matrices through which new forms of embodiment might emerge. AI may refashion the symbolic terrain, but it is the *carnal* actor who moves through it, enlivening signs with intentionality.

Work Referenced:

McCaw, D. (2016). *Bakhtin and theatre: Dialogues with Stanislavsky, Meyerhold and Grotowski*. Routledge.

Biography

Stephen Atkins, PhD (University of Kent); actor, director, educator, and founder of the *Crosspoints* actor training method. Grounded in Stanislavsky's Active Analysis, his work integrates Grotowski, Suzuki, Viewpoints, Meisner, and Chekhov techniques. He has trained and taught across Australia, Canada, the UK, and Asia, developing original curricula and intercultural projects.

A regular university instructor, he also coaches actors privately. His research on embodied performance appears in *Stanislavsky Studies*, *Canadian Theatre Review*, and the forthcoming *Milestones in Actor Training* (2025). His research into *Crosspoints* combines the Viewpoints with Active Analysis in a framework inspired by Gilles Deleuze and Mikhail Bakhtin.

Ramunė Balevičiūtė and Agnė Jurgaitytė-Avižinienė

Exploring the Intersection of Theatre Studies, Psychology, Improvisation, and AI: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Theatre Practice

This study explores the intersection of theatre studies, psychology, improvisation, and artificial intelligence (AI), utilizing a multidisciplinary approach to enhance theatrical practice. By employing an interpretative phenomenological lens, we conducted in-depth interviews with three professional artists: a dancer, a composer/musician, and an actor. Our findings reveal four key themes – authenticity, freedom, choice, and the pursuit of meaning – highlighting how improvisational practices facilitate a deep connection between human cognition and creative expression.

Theatre is an inherently interdisciplinary field that draws upon psychology and emerging technologies. Through a practical experiment involving the artists, we investigated how psychological principles and improvisational techniques enhance creative expression. Additionally, we examined the role of AI, specifically ChatGPT, in generating dialogue, assisting improvisational exercises, and expanding the creative process. Our results suggest that AI can serve as both a creative partner and a reflective tool, providing new perspectives on character development, narrative exploration, and spontaneous interaction.

By bridging cognitive science, artistic intuition, and technological innovation, this research underscores the importance of understanding the artist's lived experience in improvisation. It reveals how these moments of creation can lead to self-discovery and transformation, while contributing to the broader discourse on the intersections of human intelligence, creativity, and the evolving landscape of contemporary theatre-making in the digital age.

Biography

Dr. Ramunė Balevičiūtė is a theatre researcher, critic, and expert who actively contributes to the development of Lithuanian cultural processes and higher education policy in the arts. She teaches at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, where she serves as the Vice-Rector for Art and Research. In addition to writing theatre reviews and critiques, she participates in various evaluation activities and conducts scientific research. Her research areas include acting, artistic research, and

theatre for young audiences. Dr. Balevičiūtė has published a monograph on director Rimas Tuminas (1953–2024) and, in collaboration with Dr. Ramunė Marcinkevičiūtė, compiled the book “Modern Lithuanian Theatre: Names and Performances” in English. She has also prepared collections of articles and other publications.

Biography

Dr. Agnė Jurgaitytė-Avižinienė is a clinical psychologist, existential psychotherapist, and supervisor. She earned her Ph.D. in Psychology from Vilnius University and serves as an Associate Professor at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre. Actively engaged in projects that promote psychological science, artistic research, and adult education, she also works at the Center of Consulting Psychology and is an enthusiastic member of the Book Club.

Birutė Banevičiūtė and Giedrė Subotinaitė-Gabriūnienė

Bodily Kinesthetic Intelligence in Dance Performance as Means of Communication with Non-Verbal Children Audience

In dance as a non-verbal art form communication with the audience is implemented through movement and its variations in space, time and energy. Regular adult audience sometimes experience challenges to perceive and understand contemporary dance, especially abstract, without narrative or recognizable plot. Though, small children, babies in their pre-verbal developmental stage or non-verbal children with autism, neurodiversity or disability mostly communicate by movements and use sensomotor system for perceiving world, including dance. Dancers have a high ability to use body for cognition, expression and communication, as a result of manifesting kinesthetic intelligence, which is by the Theory of multiple intelligence of H. Gardner (1983) is one of eight outlined areas of human ability to perceive, interpret, learn and act in seeking one's goals. Kinesthetic intelligence involves not only body movement skills, coordination, balance, but also skills to manipulate objects. We both are dancers and choreographers of Dansema dance theatre and during our almost 20 years of professional experience in creating performances for children we realized that enriching communication and deep understanding between children audience and dancers happens when performance creates mentally and emotionally safe space for movement exploration and time for building mutual trust. Carefully designed dramaturgy of kinesthetic interaction and object manipulation in the performance, as well as duration of children response waiting time and dancer's reaction to that response is a foundation of a creative communication with non-verbal children audience. During our presentation we will share our experiences and findings which reveal great need of human body presence in artistic environment when seeking communication with young audiences, especially non-verbal children.

Biography

Birutė Banevičiūtė is an award-winning Lithuanian choreographer, dance researcher and teacher with more than 30 years of professional experience in contemporary dance. She is a pioneer in dance performances for audiences of babies and children with disabilities. She has created more than 20 performances for young audiences in Lithuania and

abroad which toured in 30 countries around the world. Birute is also known for her impact on dance education development in Lithuania. She writes articles and books on dance and dance education, gives seminars for performing arts professionals and pedagogues nationally and internationally.

Biography

Giedrė Subotinaite is dancer and choreographer of Dansema dance theatre since 2007. She is also dance educator working with children with disabilities.

Lauma Mellēna-Bartkeviča

Hybrid Intelligence Enabled? Opera “Salome” by Alvis Hermanis

The latest opera production made by Alvis Hermanis is “Salome” by Richard Strauss at Latvian National opera premiered in February 2025. Given the public expectations around this production, the bait thrown to chew to the media was the use of AI in the production without clarifying too much detail, and the spatial and temporal setting of the production – Israel in nearest future. Attempting to cope with the increasing presence of AI today, the director’s strategy aimed to enable hybrid intelligence but resulted in embarrassing combination of metaphoric and symbolic aspirations illustrated by primitively prompted AI images. The research aims to track the supposed incompatibility of visual languages chosen for this production and problematic messages it generates for today’s audience.

“Clowns to the left of me, jokers to the right – here I am stuck in the middle of you” – this phrase from a hit by “Stealers Wheel” is what comes across the mind about “Salome” by Alvis Hermanis. Though, the research leads to the discussion on experiences and challenges from both theatre maker’s and scholar’s perspective regarding the intersections of natural and artificial intelligences on stage today. The analysis will be developed in the lights on relevant theoretical sources, i.e. works by Steve Dixon, Sarah Bay-Cheng and other.

Biography

Lauma Mellēna-Bartkeviča holds a PhD degree in Arts by the University of Latvia (2018), she is music and theatre critic and academic researcher at Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music. International relations coordinator at Latvian Theatre Workers Union. Main research interests cover such fields as opera, music theatre and music culture both from the historical and contemporary perspectives. Since 2020, Lauma Mellēna-Bartkeviča is the editor-in-chief of the only Latvian musicology journal *Mūzikas akadēmijas raksti* (scriptamusica.lv) Publishes reviews and articles in Latvian periodicals since 2004. In 2020, edited “Contemporary Latvian Theatre 2010–2020. A Decade Bookazine” in English.

Jūratė Landsbergytė-Becher

Intellect of Nature in Lithuanian Music: from Čiurlionis to the Hum of Light

With its signs, nature first established itself in the works of Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis (1875–1911). They are frequently mentioned in his letters: gusts of wind, the rustling of pine trees, the secrets of the depths of the sea, which enter his works, not only in his art but also in music, such as the symphonic poems *In the Forest* and *The Sea*. The gestures of the universe are encoded in the piano preludes. This grandeur and cosmism of the sea is taken up by Vytautas Bacevičius (1905–1970), who developed a new philosophy of the transcendental cosmic soul in music through his work. Later, nature awakens in the works of Lithuanian composers as an essential aspect of freedom and purity, merging archaism and historical drama into a new concept of liberation from imposed constraints. These are the works of Bronius Kutavičius (1932–2021), which played a crucial role in the nation's spiritual breakthrough, beginning with an awareness of the significance of nature, as seen in *Pantheistic Oratorio* (1969), the quartet *A Year with the Grasshopper*, the opera *Thrush – Green Bird*, and others. Kutavičius reveals the pagan power of national resurrections concealed in the depths of nature. This paradigmatic theme has remained a focal point of attraction for decades and continues influencing 21st-century Lithuanian music. Composers like Ričardas Kabelis (*1957) and Ramūnas Motiekaitis (*1976), who relate their works to the phenomena of the laws of the universe and nature, exemplify this trend by listening to them. The leitmotifs of Algirdas Martinaitis' (*1950) works include the song of a bird and the *Book of Nature*, as seen in the oratorio *Cantus ad futurum* (1978), dedicated to the birds of the *Red Book*, and the *Song-thrush's Apprentice*, *Cantus relictus vilnensis*, *Visa of Life* (2020), among others. Potentially, the intelligence of nature represents one of the most essential directions in Lithuanian music, aiming to liberate and reveal the nation's archetypal, authentic, vital powers and their significance for rebirth.

Biography

Jūratė Landsbergytė-Becher is a musicologist and an actively performing organist both at home and abroad. She holds a Doctorate in Humanities (*Music Art*), is a scientific researcher at the Lithuanian Culture Research Institute and is a member of the Lithuanian Composers Union and the Lithuanian Musicians Association. She has authored numerous

articles, studies, and monographs on organ music in Lithuania, including *The Modernity of Creative Work* (2008) and *Baltic Phenomenon in Organ Soundscapes* (2020), and is a member of the scientific committees for international conferences. Modern music, particularly Baltic organ music, plays a significant role in J. Landsbergytė's repertoire. She has recorded many organ works on CDS and for Lithuanian and German (Berlin) Radio Funds. Jūratė successfully integrates her creative activity with research. Her research interests include new organ music, sacred music, archetypes, vision and transcendental landscapes, and the connections between art, psychology, philosophy, poetics, politics, history, and literature.

Laima Budzinauskienė

Multilayered Creativity in the Margins of 19th-20th Century Musical Manuscripts

In her academic work, the author of this paper has researched various aspects of musical manuscripts preserved in Lithuanian archives from the 19th and early 20th centuries. This paper will focus on another part of the content of these sources – marginalia and the multifaceted creativity of the people who created them. Information recorded in various forms in the margins of manuscripts (both literally and figuratively) rarely attracts the attention of researchers, although it is undoubtedly an important expression of cultural communication in manuscripts.

Most of the surviving marginalia originate from creativity. The surviving musical manuscripts reflect not only the ability to write down or transcribe a piece of music, to create art, but also to decorate the manuscript with various details and sometimes even express personal emotions. The creative process gives rise to thoughts and ideas that sometimes spill over as an impulse, creating a secondary art form of marginalia inspired by multi-layered creativity. Marginalia – an expression of subjective creativity – is a clear manifestation of inspiration coming from Latin spiritus (life, courage, and soul) on paper.

The subject of the presentation will be several manuscripts stored in the Collection of Musical Scores no 105 at the Rare Prints and Manuscripts Department of Lithuanian National Library. The manuscripts are enriched with various types of marginalia that reveal the multi-layered creativity of the author or the person who transcribed the manuscript: from modest attempts at writing, autographs to poetic texts, portrait graffiti and even creative strokes of the pen. The presentation will use methods that will allow for a comprehensive examination, evaluation, and disclosure of the meanings of the content of the marginalia found in the manuscripts, which are directly related to creativity.

Biography

Laima Budzinauskienė is a musicologist, associate professor and a doctor of humanities. She graduated from the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre in 1996 continuing her Master's studies in musicology. In 2000 she defended her doctoral dissertation in humanities (art research, musicology) on "Late 18th-century–19th-century Lithuanian church capellas. Activities and repertoire"

(supervisor Dr. Jūratė Trilupaitienė). From 2002, she has been a research fellow at the Lithuanian Institute of Cultural Research. From 2010, she has been a lecturer at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre and the head of the Department of Music History since 2012. Budzinauskienė has written over 30 scientific articles and read papers at Lithuanian and international conferences, and in 2007–2012 she was the compiler of the *Menotyra* journal dedicated to musicology. From 2013 she has served as the editor-in-chief and compiler of the *Ars et praxis* journal. She has been a member of the Lithuanian Composers' Union since 2012. Budzinauskienė's objects of scientific research are 18th–19th-century Lithuanian music history, musical manuscripts, personalities from this field, and the activities and repertoire of church capellas. In 2021 she wrote a monograph titled *Vilniaus katedros kapela (Vilnius Cathedral Cappella)*.

Małgorzata Budzowska

Thinking Between Breaths.

Phenomenology of Stage Soundscape in the Finnegans W/Fake by Katarzyna Kalwat and Wojciech Blecharz

The paper will focus on the experience of stage soundscape exemplified by the production *Finnegans W/Fake* by Katarzyna Kalwat (director) and Wojciech Blecharz (composer) (Polski Theatre in the Underground, 2022). The performance will be analysed from the intertwined perspective of phenomenology and semiotics in order to emphasize that a meaning reveals itself in experience. As the theoretical framework the concept of phenomenology of implication by Mark Hansen will be employed. Within this approach body on stage is perceived not as “the site for the materialization of a linguistic or performative artifact” but more “as an open-ended surface of contact with an environmental domain of sensibility” that can be created (or implying) by technology. Thus, embodied human agency and intelligence, cognitively and ontologically supplemented, serves not as a centre but as a part of larger environmental stage event. The performance by Kalwat and Blecharz appears to be an excellent example to explore this new approach as it becomes a human/objects/AI sound score of theatrical music that enjoys a challenge to stage a multilingual universe of Joyce’s masterpiece. Surprisingly enough, the performance of human bodies, objects, and artificial intelligence turns out to be inspired by very natural intelligence of Irish author who created an open-ended environment of language performativity beyond human imagination. Analysing this creative sequence of implications can provide an inspiring perspective towards new forms of performance.

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Małgorzata Budzowska is Associate Professor in the Department of Drama and Theatre, University of Lodz in Poland and Research Associate in the Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama at University of Oxford. She publishes academic books and articles regarding classical reception in contemporary theatre and the political in theatre

and performance. Currently she is involved in the research project funded by the National Science Centre in Poland: *Critical Disillusions. Refiguring the Tragic in Polish Postdramatic Theatre*, that investigates dramaturgical and directing strategies to express environmental, migration, and emancipation crises from the perspective of ecosophy and critical postumanism.

Biography

Małgorzata Budzowska is Associate Professor in the Department of Drama and Theatre, University of Lodz in Poland and Research Associate in the Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama at University of Oxford. She publishes academic books and articles regarding classical reception in contemporary theatre and the political in theatre and performance. Currently she is involved in the research project funded by the National Science Centre in Poland: *Critical Disillusions. Refiguring the Tragic in Polish Postdramatic Theatre*, that investigates dramaturgical and directing strategies to express environmental, migration, and emancipation crises from the perspective of ecosophy and critical postumanism.

Monika Citvaraitė-Lansbergienė

Contemporary Circus as a Site of Natural Intelligence and Interdisciplinary Innovation

Contemporary circus has emerged as a dynamic and multifaceted art form, characterized by its constant evolution and "openness to a greater diversity of practices and discourse" (Louis Patrick Leroux). This paper examines how contemporary circus artists in the Baltic region construct singular performances by blending elements from theatre, dance, and visual arts while navigating the influence of both local and international trends. What dramaturgical and aesthetic practices define the singularity of contemporary circus performances in the region? Using Franziska Trapp's concept of intertextuality as a mediator "between scholarly discourse and artistic vocabularies," this case study focuses on how Baltic circus artists redefine dramaturgy and aesthetics. By tracing how traditional circus elements are replaced or reinterpreted, the paper explores how these transformations contribute to the global evolution of circus arts and whether it maintains regional specificity. What forms of embodied cognition and social intelligence emerge in these processes?

This research highlights the role of contemporary circus as a space where natural intelligence—embodied creativity, emotional depth and collective engagement—converges with interdisciplinary innovation, enriching current debates on the evolution of performance aesthetics and dramaturgy.

Biography

Monika Citvaraitė-Lansbergienė is a third-year doctoral student at Vytautas Magnus University (Kaunas, Lithuania) in the Faculty of Arts, Theatre Studies department. She holds a bachelor's degree in education and a master's degree in Theatre Studies and Performing Arts Management. Her research interests are centered on contemporary circus, particularly its development and emergence in the Baltic countries. In addition to this, she explores circus history and the influence of Nordic and French-speaking countries on the art form's evolution. Monika is also actively involved in the field of contemporary circus, working in festival organizations and as a producer, promoting circus and its social and artistic values.

Goda Dapšytė-Šlektavičienė

(Im)Possibility of Uncensoring

The notion of "uncensoring" implies a reversal of repression, a return to an unmediated, untainted state. But is this process ever conclusive? In the Lithuanian theatrical landscape, Soviet censorship did not merely suppress content—it actively shaped discourse, producing not just omissions but alternative frameworks for meaning. Many works staged under censorship, far from being erased, continued to circulate after independence, persisting as "corrupted originals" embedded in the theatrical canon. These works demand careful scrutiny, not only because of their historical conditioning but also because they have been absorbed into cultural memory as an unchallenged part of the theatrical landscape. If they were not openly propagandistic, they often evade re-examination, raising the question: can a censored discourse ever be truly uncensored, or does the very attempt to restore what was lost merely generate a new form of inscription?

Memory, as both an individual and collective phenomenon, does not function as a neutral archive but as a narrative structure shaped by selection, omission, and reinterpretation. Theatre, as a storytelling medium, plays a crucial role in this process, influencing how historical realities are framed and understood. In post-censorship Lithuanian theatre, attempts to reclaim suppressed creative and educational territories are not merely acts of excavation but of reconfiguration, where the past is both recovered and rewritten by creators and audiences alike.

Some Soviet-era plays remained in the repertoire until 2022, blurring the line between censorship and acceptance. The full-scale war in Ukraine forced a reexamination of postcolonial heritage and collective memory, disrupting nostalgia—a key factor that had previously hindered certain uncensoring processes.

The Lithuanian case highlights a central tension: what happens when censored works are neither restored nor rejected but persist without scrutiny? If some "corrupted originals" remain unchallenged, does this signal the impossibility of fully uncensoring theatre history, leaving us instead with the task of continuously negotiating its contradictions?

Biography

Goda Dapšytė-Šlektavičienė is a theatre scholar and critic. She holds a PhD in theatre research. Her work experience includes teaching at the Lithuanian

Academy of Music and Theatre, editing a theatre themed website and a theatre column in a cultural newspaper, as well as public relations of various venues, theatres, and cultural organizations in Lithuania. She debuted as a playwright in 2003 and has worked with several projects as a dramaturg since. She is also a regular contributor for popular cultural paper '370' writing about contemporary Lithuanian theatre. Currently, she is Head of the Department of Art History and Theory At Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre.

Deimantė Dementavičiūtė-Stankuvienė

Video Technologies and National Identity in Contemporary Lithuanian Theatre

This report talks about national identity, which is explored through video technologies in contemporary Lithuanian theatre. Recently, video projections have become extremely popular in drama theatre, which maintains a close relationship with video artists. It is popular to film actors performing live on stage and broadcast the image on a large video screen. The report analyses the strategies, what new ways of perceiving our identity does this offer, what does the contrast of the live subject and his mediated image gives. Video projections allow to look at yourself, to talk about painful and complex topics about the history of the country in different way, encouraging the dialogue between different generations. The greatest attention is paid to the main characters who become the personifications of the nation, analyzing them through the theory of post-colonialism. The subject experiencing the colonial state is always linked by a contradictory relationship with the colonizer, who seeks to make the colonized imitate him but the similarity is only partial. At one time, the colonized seeks to assimilate, at the other – to resist, he always feels his difference. In the post-Soviet discourse, the subject is also mimicry, because he seeks to imitate the West, to resemble it, by experiencing his own otherness. East – West becomes the main dichotomy in the performances, describing the post-colonial state of the main character. The identity of the postcolonial hero is fragmented, he is characterized by an ambivalent relationship between consciousness and subconscious. He creates his new identity by collecting fragments of his hybrid portrait, which are scattered between the past and present. He is characterized by self-analysis, so Lacan's theory of psychoanalysis is also applied. In video screen is like a mirror. Lacan's theory of the "mirror stage", the imaginary plane creates an optical illusion, which both defines and deforms the identity.

Biography

Deimantė Dementavičiūtė-Stankuvienė is a theatre scholar, PhD, works pedagogical and scientific work at the Department of Theatre Studies of Faculty of Arts, Vytautas Magnus University (Kaunas, Lithuania).

Gisele Edwards

Natural Intelligence: the Neuroscience of 5 Performative Action Spaces

My proposal considers the ‘theatre (of life) and natural intelligence,’ through a lens of neuroscience. My research project at UCL is an exploration of the nature of embodiment and abstraction and how these enable artistic form. Usually understood as standing in contrast, in my project these broader themes are understood as forming a dialectical pairing. Both are intrinsic aspects of our experience of the world, and of theatre making.*

Part of my research is an embodied enquiry into the geometry of 5 Action Spaces as developed by neuroscientist Alain Berthoz, which suggests the brain has different networks for different action spaces¹. In this paper, I will introduce Berthoz’s discussion of this geometry and, from the perspective of physical theatre practitioner /researcher, suggest how it serves as a pertinent example of the deeply interconnected nature of the analogue and technological; how advanced technology-led enquiry in neuroscience has led us back to the pivotal role of the ‘analogue’ function of brain/body in our perception and creative function.

As part of Berthoz’s research he invited the participation of theatre practitioner and director Jos Houben, with whom I collaborated in developing this paper.

An understanding of these action spaces offers a chance to appreciate afresh how our natural intelligence operates and provides a powerful lens and tool for theatre practitioners with which to develop their creative practice.

To best align with conference arrangements, I will introduce the 5 action spaces in the form of a standard 20-minute oral paper.

* I suggest that an embodied awareness of our co-existing capacities to embody and abstract (as well as allowing us to better know, and potentially be, ourselves), may give us a potential intelligence advantage in regard to how we manage, develop, interface and control AI (which relies heavily on abstraction to simplify complex systems into manageable models, but, as yet, has no biological body.)

1. *Space-Time Geometries for Motion and Perception in the Brain and the Arts*, T. Flash and A. Berthoz (eds.), Springer.

Biography

Gisele trained at CSSD (London), National Centre for Circus Arts and L’École Jacques Lecoq, Paris (*Laboratoire d’Etude du Mouvement*), where she studied under architect Krikor Belekian. Accolades include: commission by London Symphony Orchestra; Trevor Nunn / Ralph Feinne’s *The Tempest* (London); shortlisted, European Jeunes Talents competition; winner (2008) and finalist (2010), Festival of Firsts (Royal Opera House); Lauréat, Centre International des Récollets, Paris; winner, Jerwood Prize for Circus. Gisele studied Oriental Studies (Mandarin Chinese) at Cambridge University and initially qualified and worked as an Equity Analyst in the City. Post-Brexit, she lives between London and Paris, where, amongst other things, she sings in a rock band called *Lutèce*.

Melanie Fieldseth

Practices of Memory, Empathy and Fallibility in Mette Edvardsen's Time Has Fallen Asleep in the Afternoon Sunshine

Mette Edvardsen's "Time Has Fallen Asleep in the Afternoon Sunshine" (2010-) is a library of living books in which each of the performers has endeavoured to memorize a book of their choice that visitors can loan and "read" by having the book recited to them. The premise of the project is inspired by the science fiction novel "Fahrenheit 451" (1953) in which the authorities, to control the intellectual and emotional capacities of the populace, restrict access to knowledge and the stimulation of empathy and critical thinking by banning books. In response, an underground community of people begin to memorize and recite books to preserve them for the future.

By engaging with my own experience as a "reader" and extensive project documentation that offers reflections on reading, practice and memory, this paper will discuss Edvardsen's project from two perspectives.

First, using insights from performance analysis that emphasize the effects of performativity and affect on the relationship between performer and spectator, it will examine how the performative situation of reading a living book activates social and emotional forms of intelligence on the part of both participants. The project has been presented on more than 90 occasions across countries and continents. At each location Edvardsen has invited new performers to join which has expanded the selection and language of the books held in the library.

Second, it will engage with questions of memory, preservation, erasure and the fallibility of memory. These issues are inherent in the project and have been addressed by Edvardsen as part of the practice and consequence of learning by heart. This paper will examine them in the context of our contemporary situation and the vulnerabilities and questions we face related to veracity, access to and suppression of information and knowledge, thus returning to themes in the dystopian novel.

within artistic practices and expressions, impact our understanding of recent theatre and dance history in Norway. She has previously worked as advisor and researcher at Arts and Culture Norway, and is also a critic, writer and dramaturg. In addition to reviews and articles, she has published the book "Navnet forplikter. Teaterhuset Avant Garden 1984-2018" on the history of Rosendal Teater in Trondheim.

Biography

Melanie Fieldseth is a PhD candidate at the University of Bergen in Norway. Her research focuses on how transnational and cross-cultural influences, encounters and interrelations that have occurred through infrastructural developments as well as

Laura Gröndahl

Scenographic Design as an Intelligent Artistic Process

Since the turn of the millennium, the focus of scenographic research has been on non-hierarchical collective devising, expanded scenography and process-based creativity, which emphasize the here-and-now of the performative moment and the unpredictable intra-action between human and non-human actors. A less discussed aspect has been the designing and preplanning of the spatial, visual and auditive framework for the performance events and their creative rehearsals. However, the increasing request for ecological and social sustainability calls for thought-out overall supervision of the production processes.

The distance between creative planning and the experience of a finished performance makes it difficult to position scenographic design as an artform precisely. Even in the most process-based productions, there is always some kind of conscious or non-conscious anticipatory planning that determines the conditions and guidelines for a not-yet-known artistic event. Instead of projecting their vision directly on stage, a designer must be able to foresee and enable different kind of budding performative and aesthetic potentials. They work with material and mental practicalities that make a complex system, where any factor may have unexpected consequences on anything else. The know-how of design connects theatre work to the surrounding society and ecosystems extending its scope beyond the aesthetic and artistic spheres.

Based on my recent book on Finnish stage designers' artistic and occupational practices (Gröndahl 2024) I will elaborate on theoretical questions about the special expertise of scenographic design asking, why it seems to have escaped the discourses of both academic and artistic research. Regarding the theme of the conference, I ask, how recent digital technologies have changed the design practices, the ways of planning and the human agency of the designer.

and as university lecturer at the universities of Lapland and Tampere. Her main expertise areas are scenography and design, documentary theatre and artistic research. She has written and edited several scholarly publications and holds the title of Docent in Theatre Research at Helsinki University.

Biography

Laura Gröndahl is university lecturer and vice-dean in research at the Theatre Academy of the University of the Arts, Helsinki. Initially trained as stage designer and employed in various Finnish theatres 1983–2002, she graduated as Doctor of Arts in 2004. Before her present position, she has worked as professor in stage design at AaltoArts,

Annika Ley

Performances in Museum

We would like to speak about performances in a museum. Our lecture is based on a 6-week permanent performance in a large exhibition space of the Kunstmuseum Bonn under the title “Garden of Resistance”, inspired by the texts and ideas of the French gardener and philosopher Gilles Clement. During these weeks we were able to gain intensive experience with the different audiences and the question of the effect of the form of the performance on the relationship with the visitors.

Using images and video material, we will vividly explain the significance of time and space (design) on the relationship between performer and audience and highlight the key differences to performances in the theatre.

Biography

Annika Ley studied stage and costume design at the Academy of Fine Arts in Maastricht. She then worked for three years at Theatre Bonn. Since 2009, she has been working as a freelance stage and costume designer. Her designs have been featured in productions by Theatre Bonn and CocoonDance Company, among others. She is also a permanent member of the artistic team of fringe ensemble.

In 2015, Annika Ley participated in the Summer Academy at the Watermill Center in New York, led by Robert Wilson, as a scholarship holder.

She incorporates video and other digital media into her stage designs, co-creating innovative forms of storytelling. In recent years, she has developed numerous productions with fringe ensemble, including novel adaptations, author-driven projects, and performances in public spaces. This work spans international collaborations in Europe, West Africa, and India.

Annika Ley also leads workshops and lectures on the use of digital media in theatre. With the award-winning production *Map to Utopia* (A MAZE./Berlin), she was invited to symposia such as *Play Perform Learn Grow 2021* and *Next Level – Festival for Games*.

Marleena Huuhka

Performances in Virtual Borderlands: Case Gaza

In my presentation, I explore social media posts filmed, staged and published by Palestinians living in Gaza. These posts – mostly Instagram stories, reels and posts – feature street performances such as circus or musical numbers, children’s play, and urban sports, such as skating and parkour. All these videos and pictures have been taken during current Gaza war, and the stage is the stage of war. In the midst of destruction Gazans dance, sing, play, and exercise, creating haunting yet defiant and hopeful images and videos. Performing in the middle of war is an act of rebellion and resistance.

These video and image streams create performance assemblages that are guided and curated by algorithms for the audience, shaping their experience of watching and witnessing life amid genocide and, on the other hand, the potential of performing arts and children’s/adult play as forms of resistance.

My presentation explores the in-between spaces and boundaries between war and peace, narrated and lived reality, as well as material and virtual performance. I ask what kinds of performances emerge in these spaces and what kinds of resistance potentials a hybrid, border-crossing performance can evoke. As these hybrid performances are directed by the algorithm based on my preferences, I also ask how the algorithmic production changes my perception as an audience?

Biography

Marleena Huuhka (PhD) is a researcher interested in intermedial, immersive and augmented performances and performance spaces. Her current work focuses on mediated and performative potentialities of resistance.

Merilin Jürjo

We Are Nothing Without Psychology: Understanding Theatre through the Lens of Psychological Reception

Theatre, in its purest form, is an interaction between performers and an audience. To understand how we perceive a theatrical performance, we must first explore the underlying psychological processes. Human psychology is central to this experience. Before examining how artificial intelligence (AI) influences us, it is essential to understand how theatre impacts our minds.

In this presentation, I aim to bridge psychology and theatre studies by exploring the psychological foundations of audience engagement. I will address two key questions:

1. What psychological mechanisms govern how an audience watches and engages with a performance?
2. How do our thinking and attitudes evolve after a theatrical experience?

To answer these, firstly I will introduce a psychological reception model developed during my PhD studies. This model offers a comprehensive framework for understanding how audiences process and interpret theatre. It integrates various psychological processes, including information processing, attitudes and prior experiences with reception theory concepts like empathy, the horizon of expectations, and identification. By combining these elements, my model presents a holistic view of how human psychology is activated and shaped during the act of watching a performance.

Secondly, I will present findings from my research, which investigates how theatrical experiences can influence audience members' thinking and attitudes. Using both questionnaires and in-depth interviews conducted with audience members, I have explored the nature and extent of these changes. The results reveal how live theatre can prompt changes in thinking, emotional engagement, and shifts in perception, offering valuable insights into the psychological impact and transformative potential of theatrical performance.

Ultimately, I argue that theatre is a powerful medium for psychological engagement. By analyzing these dynamics, we can gain a deeper understanding of theatre's transformative potential – an essential foundation before considering how AI might shape human perception and interaction.

Biography

I hold master's degrees in psychology and theatre studies and am currently pursuing a Ph.D. in theatre studies at Tartu University. My research explores how theatre influences thinking and attitudes by integrating reception theory with psychological processes. I am also a licensed psychologist and have authored two fiction books and written plays. My goal is to merge psychology and theatre in both research and creative work, offering people insights into human psychology and new ways of understanding themselves and the world.

Annelis Kuhlmann

The Actor's Backbone

In the thinking of Konstantin Stanislavsky in his famous volumes on the nature of the actor's work, creativity as processes is in focus. These processes can be seen as reflected in the complex creative relationship between the conceptualized forces it takes to become an actor. Not only imagination, fantasy and intuition 'play a role' in the highly theatricalized novels, where the daily life in the representation of a theatre school follows pedagogical routes of thematic lessons of an educational journey. Surprisingly, the collection of Stanislavsky's volumes also forms a well composed corpus of texts and mimes the anatomy of the body of an actor's knowledge and consciousness, represented as an organism with its own natural intelligence of creativity. Stanislavsky named the actor's situated condition a *second nature*, which indicated an artificial way of labelling the techniques in "the system" towards individual integrity. These techniques meet, coordinated in the actor's backbone.

My research question is concerned with how to investigate Stanislavsky's terminology of the backbone of the artistic body can be seen as reference of how to define the notion of the actor's creativity as means of natural intelligence.

Biography

Annelis Kuhlmann is a dramaturg, philologist, and theatre scholar, Aarhus University, Denmark. Among her recent publications are 'Bartering and Cross-Border Embodied Performances', 2023, (Performing Memory: Corporeality, Visuality, and Mobility after 1968, eds. R. Dieter and L. Passerini. Berghahn Books (Making Sense of History, vol 47), 'Hamlet and Its Danish Double. The Historical Performance as Medium for a Utopian Monarchy: A Crooked Mirror of the Local Political Realities', 2023 (Nordic Theatre Studies, 34 (2022: 2). Co-editor of and contributor to Grønlands Teaterhistorie – på vej (Greenland's Theatre History – on its way, 2019), 'Strawberry fields (not?) forever? "Iceberg Reflections" in Critical Stages / Scènes Critiques <https://www.critical-stages.org/30/strawberry-fields-not-forever-iceberg-reflections-on-performing-greenland/>

Leo Marko

Revealing the Concealing: Live Theatre and the Experience of Nature

Heraclitus' fragment "Phusis kruptesthai philei", often translated as "Nature loves to hide" has reverberated throughout the history of Western thought, as is described in the work of Pierre Hadot. The fragment may be said to express a metaphysical concept of nature as essence—the nature of things, which hides behind mere appearance and signification. While this idea still exerts influence today, it is also obscured by a more dominant modern conception of nature as other to the human and to culture. The complex significances of "nature" and the "natural" are often jumbled, and the word may in some ways constitute a hindrance to ecological thought (Morton). Yet, foregrounding the idea of nature as essence might serve to remedy nature's externalization, while still affirming its otherness to what is culturally constituted. Conversely, Heraclitus' words may also indicate a different understanding of essence: if nature, what something "is", always hides, then nothing is what it is. In this paper I explore possible directions of an investigation of nature as essence in experiences of theatre. Theatre has an exceptional capability of actualizing otherness in the reality of the present moment, indicated in the concept of "utopian performatives" (Dolan) and studies of theatrical presence (Power). In this way theatre enables experiences which reveal the concealing of both presence and essence. Although liveness and presence are often equated with immediacy, they can also be considered its opposite. As Walter Benjamin already observed, while dissolving a certain sense of presence, medias of reproduction are superior in rendering reality more immediate. It is relevant to consider if artificial intelligence similarly transforms meaning into immediate facts through an automated process of input-output which, perhaps, excludes ambiguity (Birhane), thus effacing the essence or nature that loves to hide.

Biography

Leo Marko is a researcher at Stockholm University, Department of Culture and Aesthetics. He received an MA-degree in aesthetics from Södertörn University in 2013 and a PhD in theatre studies from Stockholm University in 2024. His doctoral dissertation develops a theory of liveness through considerations of sense-making and ineffability, drawing on both contemporary performance theory and Zeami's fifteenth century writings on *nō* theatre.

Anna McNamara

Living Experiences and the Locus of Control: Natural and Artificial Intelligence in Contemporary Performer Training

Developing the rationale of agency as dependent on a sense of control (McNamara, 2022a), the focus must firmly be on [...] empowering the individuals within it as they dynamically move through an ever shifting and evolving continuous living experience [...], rather than holding to the static concept of the lived experience as a fixed notion (McNamara, 2025).

The rapid and dynamic emergence of AI and GenAI within the creative sectors has raised a multitude of questions, possibilities and concerns relating to the value and currency of the human-as-creative, as we increasingly intersect with AI and Gen AI tools as part of creative development and outputs. Responses from leaders in the field of theatre and music have both quietly welcomed and harnessed these tools and simultaneously called for caution in practice. The arising blurring boundaries of the definition of creativity interfere with human understanding of the locus of control (McNamara, 2022) and are being felt keenly in the training sector.

The locus of control relates to the sense of internal/ external autonomy in response to environmental and social influences (Angelova, 2016: 249). The impact of an imbalance of external forces compared to internal choice, both actual or perceived, results in a sense of a lack of control and a heightened sense of rejection of or redundancy within processes and systems (Ozen Kutanis, Mesci, and Ovdur, 2011: 116). Applying this concept to the rapidly evolving landscape of the application of AI and GenAI in the performance industries, leaders and teachers in training institutions can embed a sense of control and understanding within their students' living learning experiences through the pro-active harnessing of hybrid intelligence (Akata et al., 2020).

This paper will position the training sector at the forefront of development through the presentation of a case study drawing from both professional applications and pedagogic scholarship of a practical application of hybrid intelligence within a pedagogic model, arguing that future and emerging models of creative development can be imagined, realised, analysed and understood.

Biography

Professor Anna McNamara is Director of the Manchester School of Theatre. Prior to this, she has served as Director of Learning and Teaching at the Liverpool Institute for the Performing Arts (LIPA), previously holding a number of senior roles at the Guildford School of Acting (GSA) for over a decade. Anna has presented internationally on performance and education and is editor of the books "Be The Change: Learning and Teaching for the Creative Industries" and "Inspire: Learning for Teaching in Higher Education", as well as the recently published "Actor Trainers on Acting: For the Twenty-First Century" (Routledge).

Vytautė Markeliūnienė

Perception of Personality: the Footprint of Vlada Mikštaitė in Opera, Pedagogy and Directing

Mikštaitė's professional presentation would be rather laconic: singer, director, vocal teacher. All three of the major professional fields she developed interacted organically and continuously. They manifested themselves in a concrete, intense, permanent and almost never fading into routine form. The importance of the three of them is not indicated by the following sequence, which simply uses a realistic chronology: in 1948, as a student, she made her debut as a singer in the opera house, in 1955 she began to teach singing at the Conservatoire, and in 1963 she made her debut on the professional opera stage as a director. However, in addition to her major activities, there are also, let's say, minor ones - librettist, translator, press collaborator. Considering the totality of Mikštaitė's major and minor activities, a very polyphonic interaction is created, which in its own way testifies to the atypicality of this personality, which is characterised by a deep and comprehensive knowledge of the professional horizontal and vertical.

Mikštaitė joined the national musical theatre scene in the 1970s, at a time of significant changes in music culture. Initially as a soloist in the preamble of this period, and later becoming an active participant in these real changes, sometimes as a generator of them, even capable of shaking the stage. It is understandable that in this context of stylistic renewal, Mikštaitė first emerged into the public discourse as a director, staging the premieres of two operas that were the most modern in the Lithuanian theatre repertoire at the time - Prokofiev's *Love for Three Oranges* (1963) and Orff's *Die Kluge* (1965). Having successfully directed these works, as well as Wagner's *Lohengrin* (1969), which was staged a little later, and which impressed with the coherence of all the elements and the clarity of the idea of the performance, Mikštaitė immediately added to the theatre's golden fund. A number of other stage works would follow, not necessarily of the same artistic temperature as the first. However, according to contemporaries, there was not a single one that lacked theatrical life. Having debuted as a striking opera soloist, then plunging into directing, Mikštaitė eventually established herself as a vocal teacher.

Biography

Vytautė Markeliūnienė graduated from the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre in 1990. In 2007, she defended her PhD in Humanities (Musicology), with a dissertation titled "The Development of Lithuanian Musical Theatre During the Time of Historical Upheavals (1940–1945)".

She works as a music history teacher at the National M. K. Čiurlionis School of Arts, a lecturer at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, and a researcher at the Lithuanian Culture Research Institute.

Since 1997, she has been a member of the Lithuanian Composers' Union. Since 2008, she has served as a board member of the International Thomas Mann Cultural Centre and as the curator of the musical programme of the International Thomas Mann Festival.

Her field of musicological research includes Lithuanian musical theatre, as well as the creative work of performers and composers during the interwar and wartime periods. She has published critical articles and reviews, prepared academic publications in the Lithuanian press, written articles for the Music Encyclopedia, CD booklets, and curated programmes for Lithuanian National Radio's "Klasika" channel. She also hosts concerts, creative evenings, and public lectures.

She has published articles in foreign journals and delivered lectures in Vienna and Graz (Austria). In 2018, she was awarded by the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture for her achievements in music journalism.

Rūta Mažeikienė

Performing AI-Augmented Dramaturgy: A Case of *The Frankenstein Complex*

As digital technologies become more prevalent in the arts, artificial intelligence (AI) is being increasingly integrated into creative theater and performance practices. One notable approach is the use of AI-generated or AI-augmented texts in performance creation. This practice not only introduces new dramaturgical forms but also presents significant challenges for actors, who must engage with AI-influenced language during the process of role construction.

This paper explores how the use of AI in performance-making affects the creative process of actors in contemporary drama theatre. Focusing on the 2022 production *The Frankenstein Complex*, co-produced by the National Kaunas Drama Theatre (Lithuania) and Dirty Deal Theatre (Latvia), it examines the artistic challenges actors face when working with AI-augmented dramaturgy. Directed by Valters Silis and written in collaboration between playwright Kārlis Krūmiņš and an AI program, the performance serves as a case study to investigate the following questions: What does it mean to perform a character not written solely by a human? How does machine-produced language affect the actor's process of interpretation, embodiment, and emotional connection?

Drawing on recent theoretical perspectives on AI creativity, interviews with the creative team, and performance analysis, the paper investigates how AI and hybrid dramaturgical practices reshape the actor's creative work in contemporary theatre and challenge traditional methods of role construction.

involvement in contemporary theatre. She is a member of *International Federation of Theatre Research (IFTR)*, *European Association for the Studies of Theatre and Performance (EASTAP)* and *Association of Nordic Theatre Scholars (ANTS)*.

Biography

Rūta Mažeikienė, Ph. D., is associate professor and researcher at Theatre Studies department at Vytautas Magnus University (Kaunas, Lithuania). She has published numerous scientific and critical articles on contemporary Lithuanian theatre and has given presentations in a number of national and international theatre conferences. She contributes to various journals and magazines on contemporary culture and art, belongs to the editorial board of scholarly periodical *Outline of Theatre Research*. Her academic experience includes research of contemporary Lithuanian theatre, focusing on different forms of acting and performing as well as strategies of participation and community

Hélène Ohlsson

From a Repentant Magdalene to a Societal Norm-Breaker in the Name of Love: The Unstable Memory of an Actress in Fiction and Historiography

Around the mid-nineteenth century, literature and drama increasingly embraced a new archetype: the kind-hearted yet morally fallen woman. This trend reached its apex with Alexandre Dumas the Younger's "The Lady of the Camellias" (1848), which tells the story of a celebrated courtesan who, through the transformative power of true love, attains nobility and "purity," only to meet an untimely death regretting her sins.

Within this cultural context, Emilie Höggqvist (1812–1846) emerged as one of the great stars of Swedish theatre during the Romantic period. Her persona and life story seamlessly aligned with this prevailing narrative, a resonance that writers who had known her eagerly incorporated into their works. This fictionalization of Höggqvist gradually seeped into historiography, complicating attempts to distinguish fact from romanticized portrayal. As such, I contend that these accounts cannot be considered reliable historical sources without rigorous critical examination – a process that remains neglected in much of popular history.

While Höggqvist's audience indisputably mourned her passing, the stories constructed around her life became a vehicle for remembrance and, paradoxically, for continued admiration by later generations who had never seen her perform. Her memory reached its zenith in the mid-twentieth century, approximately a century after her death.

Drawing on the theoretical framework of feminist historiography and Joseph Roach's concept of public intimacy, this presentation investigates how Höggqvist's memory evolved across fiction and historiography over time. I argue that her narrative underwent a significant transformation: from the archetype of a repentant Magdalene to a figure more closely aligned with the ideals of the twentieth-century modern woman – a woman who defies societal norms in the pursuit of love.

mainly revolves around the professional history of actresses, with a particular interest in critical theories of femininity and whiteness studies. She is preoccupied with the relationship with the past and historiography, as well as how celebrity experiences such as divadom and dandyism are politicized. Since she is also an actress and theatre director, her research always takes its starting point in situated knowledge.

Biography

Hélène Ohlsson holds a PhD in theatre studies and is a senior lecturer in gender studies at the Department of Social and Psychological Studies at Karlstad University. Her research lies at the crossroads between theatre history and gender studies and

Riina Oruaas

The Ludic Laboratory of „Rat’s Rumba“: Play, Act, and Reflect

“Rat’s Rumba” (Kanuti Gildi SAAL, 2024) by young performance artists Anumai Raska, Kärt Koppel and Liisbet Horn is a work where the audience is invited into a soft, girlish pink, but also interactive and hybrid performance space to play along with their social media games. The audience is aware of recording the performance, but the final outcome is edited in a way that is not predictable. This technique is not new but triggers some new alertness in the new context of widespread social media and AI usage.

“Rat’s Rumba” is an example of new feminist wave in Estonian performing arts and can be contextualized as post-digital performance. The new girlish, vulnerable, corporeal, playful, but ironic and critical feminist performance is using social media aesthetics and tactics to provoke, engage and manipulate the audience emotionally. In the paper, I discuss the aesthetics of the social media usage as a critical and ethical tool, also the corporeal and interactive layers of the event. The performers take a role as social rats and thus create a ludic laboratory where each participant’s acts and responsibility are tested and reflected back to the audience. Although “Rat’s Rumba” was not an AI-generated production, it raised questions of spectator’s agency, control and privacy in the performance.

Biography

Riina Oruaas is Lecturer in theatre research at the Institute of Cultural Research, University of Tartu. Her research is focused on transforming aesthetics in Estonian theatre since 1990s, including dramaturgy, performing, scenography, and intermediality. She gives courses on theatre history, textual and performance analysis, has also taught in Estonian Academy of Arts and Tallinn University Baltic Film, Media and Arts School. Oruaas co-edited the book *Views on Contemporary Estonian Theatre* (original title: *Vaateid Eesti nüüdisteatrile*, University of Tartu Press 2016), co-authored university online textbook “Research Methods of Performing Arts” (original title: *Etenduskunsti uurimismeetodid*; University of Tartu, 2022)

Justina Paltanavičiūtė

Audience Perception and Engagement/ Beyond Tradition: Technology’s Role in Shaping Audience Perception of Contemporary Opera

The tradition of the opera genre is inextricably linked to a number of specific production, distribution and consumption characteristics. For instance, traditional opera is typically multi-act in nature, comprising arias, recitatives, choral and instrumental introductions/interludes, live singing by soloists, accompanied by a live symphony orchestra, and a musical expression of emotion and lyricism. However, many contemporary opera examples, especially those outside national theatres, seek themes, artistic expressions and forms that are not typical of historical opera. The integration of various audiovisual technologies into live performances is a common practice, particularly in the musical domain.

This paper contributes to the aim of the conference to explore audience perception and engagement and focuses on how audiences respond to unconventional form of the opera that involves not only human intelligence, but also technology in the creative process. An inductive study on the perception of the opera “Traviatas” (produced by Operomanija, with music composed by Maximilian Oprishka and directed by Artūras Areima) was conducted, and data was collected through a focus group method. The study revealed that audience evaluation of the opera sample is closely linked to audience expectations of the opera genre.

This research is based on the theoretical framework of Hans Robert Jauss's concept of the "horizon of expectations". This notion, as outlined by Jauss, encompasses a combination of both aesthetic and historical connotations (Jauss 1982). In essence, Jauss's argument posits that the reception of a work of art is chiefly influenced by the established conventions of style and genre with which the viewer is already familiar.

The researched presented in this paper reveals the expectations of respondents with regard to the genre of opera. In addition, it seeks to analyse how audiences from diverse cultural backgrounds evaluate and interpret the electronic soundtrack of “Traviatas” and the pre-recorded documentary narratives of the opera's protagonists.

Biography

Justina Paltanavičiūtė is a musicologist, music and musical theatre critic, PhD student at the Department of Digital Cultures and Communication at Vilnius University.

J. Paltanavičiūtė's research interests include the relationship between opera and other forms of musical theatre and politics, the topic of communication of political meanings in musical theatre, the reception of art, and the concepts of the political impact of art. Her current research endeavours are focused on her dissertation, which bears the title "Communication of Political Meanings in Contemporary Opera: Correlation of Reception with Sociocultural Differences in Consumer Parameters".

J. Paltanavičiūtė has presented the findings of her research at international conferences and in publications in the scientific journals such as "Creativity Studies" and "Nordic Theatre Studies".

Frank Pecquet

AI and Human Intelligence in Theatrical Music: Toward a Hybrid Creation

The integration of artificial intelligence into theatrical music challenges traditional creative processes, redefining the roles of composer, performer, and audience. Rather than opposing human and artificial intelligence, this paper explores how their combination fosters new modes of composition, improvisation, and real-time interaction in live performance.

AI systems can generate musical material, adapt to performers' actions, and create dynamic soundscapes in response to stage movement. However, they lack intentionality, dramaturgical understanding, and the expressive depth of human creativity. Conversely, human composers and musicians face limitations in speed, adaptability, and cognitive load, making AI an attractive complement to traditional practices.

This study examines hybrid approaches where AI functions as a creative assistant, generating motifs that human composers refine; as an interactive performer, responding to actors and musicians in real-time; or as a dynamic dramaturgical tool, shaping live sound environments based on audience or stage interactions. Case studies from contemporary theatre productions incorporating AI-driven music, alongside technological frameworks such as machine learning and real-time generative algorithms, illustrate the challenges and possibilities of these hybrid models.

By analyzing the interplay between machine-driven generation and human artistic intent, this paper argues that AI does not replace human creativity but reconfigures the creative process. It proposes a model where the composer acts as a curator and sculptor of AI-generated material, fostering an evolving dialogue between algorithmic automation and human expression. This research contributes to broader discussions on how AI reshapes artistic agency and musical dramaturgy in contemporary theatre.

Biography

Professor/researcher in digital creation applied to media at Paris1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University. Member of the ACTE research team, in the "Aesthetics and Critical Cultural Theory" axis. Latest publications: Sound design, application, methodology and case studies, Editions Dunod, Paris, 2021 (with Paul Dupouey) ; From musical composition to sound design, Editions Delatour, Paris,

2022 ; Values and uses of sound, Editions Delatour, Paris, 2023. Responsible for the « Art and Sound Design » research project at the ACTE institute, EAS, University of Paris1, he is also a composer, last work One Day, One Year, One Sound, 2024.

Madli Pesti

Performative Strategies of Storytelling, Memory and Identity Politics. The Case of Internal Climate, Narva, Estonia

The focus of my presentation will be on a new production Internal Climate that premieres in August 2025 at Freedom Festival in Narva, Estonia. Freedom Festival (3rd edition this year) is an international performing arts festival that is dedicated to the freedom of speech and showcases mostly documentary performances (as do performing arts center Vaba Lava who organises the festival).

The new documentary performance Internal Climate is based on interviews with former employees of the Baltijets military factory, historians, architects, and young people from Narva. Baltijets military factory (where Vaba Lava Narva is situated today) was built in Narva so secretly that even the locals knew almost nothing about it. It was known only by its codename: Postbox No. 2. The factory was closed off, strictly classified, and erased from both city and regional maps. Some believed uranium was enriched there, others thought it produced space technology. The performance asks, who were the people who travelled from all over Russia to Narva, and how much did they really know about where they were going. Also, what is the ecological footprint of a military factory, and what about the footprint of war itself? The production is created by Estonia's experienced documentary theatre makers Piret Jaaks and Mari-Liis Lill.

My presentation puts Internal Climate into the context of the series of documentary performances on the history and people of Narva that have been created in the last 7 years. How has human cognition, creativity, empathy and innovative storytelling helped to lift the EU border town of Narva out of cultural peripherisation? My paper discusses the topics of Audience Perception, Storytelling and Memory, and is part of a larger research on performative strategies on making documentary theatre about the memory and identity of the people in Narva.

Biography

Madli Pesti has a PhD in theatre research at Tartu University, Estonia (dissertation "Political Theatre and its Strategies in the Estonian and Western Cultures", 2016). She has studied at the University of Aarhus, at the Humboldt University and Free University Berlin. Pesti is working as a senior researcher in the Estonian Academy of Music

and Theatre and runs the practice as research PhD programme. Her research areas are performance analysis and theory, political and applied theatre. She has also been writing theatre reviews since 2002, winning the award as the best theatre critic at the Estonian Annual Theatre Awards in 2019.

Rébecca Pierrot

Digital Theatre or the Art of Human Revitalization

The aim of this paper is to analyze how the introduction of new technologies into the theatrical creation process and stage performances lends the spectacle a quasi-anthropological dimension. The use of avatars leads to a possible redefinition of the human being, enabling the actor to approach his body and his ego in a new and singular way, paradoxically discovering a new sensuality in a virtual and therefore dematerialized world, as well as unsuspected territories of the unconscious. As soon as he transcends the physical and mental boundaries of everyday life, a real doorway to intimacy opens up. For if VR enables the theatre to appropriate new spaces, they are not only external: VR can also lead to an exploration of one's own intimate landscape.

This analysis will be based on experiments carried out within the Digital Performance Network (DPN), a platform bringing together artists and academics from various disciplines, who are interested in new technologies in the creation of performances. DPN performances take place simultaneously on stage in each of the countries involved, and in the virtual world that unites them, via their avatars. The connected actor thus becomes a bridge between text and performance, countries and their cultures, stage and audience, tangible and virtual worlds.

This new concept of creation necessarily implies a new type of dramaturgy to tell and be told differently, in a hybrid and creolized world according to the wishes of poet and philosopher Édouard Glissant. Artificial intelligence and new technologies are a way of revitalizing the art of theatre by creating a new community capable of transgressing space-time boundaries, with ChatGPT even enabling a dramaturge to revive a deceased author by dialoguing with him. More than ever, theatrical creation is a laboratory of the human soul.

Biography

Rébecca Pierrot is a doctoral student at the Université Paul-Valéry Montpellier 3. Her thesis, *Can stage direction be passed on? Krystian Lupa and the new Polish theatrical generations*, is based on a corpus of young directors who have worked with Krystian Lupa. Her research is based on observation of the creative process during rehearsals and interviews. Since 2023, she has also been collaborating as dramaturge on shows by Polish director Krzysztof Garbaczewski (1983), whose work is closely linked to new technologies.

Kamilė Rupeikaitė

“No Applause, Please.” Concert Programs of the Kaunas Ghetto Police Orchestra as Source of Storytelling and Memory

Although in recent decades Lithuanian and foreign scholars have done some research into the musical life of the Vilnius and Kaunas ghettos, there is still a lack of more detailed examination of concert repertoires, as well as of the biographies of Lithuanian Jewish musicians and their fate during the Holocaust.

This paper, based on archival material and diaries and memoirs of former Kaunas Ghetto prisoners, focuses on the analysis of the specific repertoire of Kaunas Ghetto police orchestra that operated in the Kaunas ghetto in 1942–1943. Despite the fact that the orchestra rehearsed and played under conditions of incomprehensible dehumanization, the remained concert programs reveal not only the diversity of the authors of the music that sounded in the Kaunas Ghetto, but also the efforts of the orchestra's artists to preserve the spirit and identity of the imprisoned and systematically exterminated Jewish community.

The analysis of the concert programs of the Kaunas Ghetto Police Orchestra combines bidirectional interactions between storytelling and memory. These documents, being a source of specific storytelling related to the creative activities, capabilities and moral strength of the imprisoned musicians, also are of crucial significance in fostering historical-cultural memory and in contributing to a more detailed comprehension of different aspects of the history of the Holocaust.

Biography

Dr. Kamilė Rupeikaitė is a senior researcher at the Lithuanian Culture Research Institute and associate professor of music history at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre. She has participated in international conferences in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Israel, Finland, Germany, Slovenia, Poland and elsewhere, has published articles in peer-reviewed Lithuanian and foreign publications. Her research interests include multicultural contexts of music, symbolism of musical instruments, musical culture of Lithuanian Jews. She is author of the monograph on renowned Lithuanian contemporary composer Anatolijus Šenderovas (2020, in Lithuanian).

Kiki Selioni

Intelligent Body through Physical Training: the Case of Rudolf Laban

Rudolf Laban's book *The Mastery of Movement on the Stage* (1950) coincides with this epistemological imperative, both in its title and in its resounding invitation to actors to engage in a complex understanding of the body in motion in order to acquire essential movement skills.

In his book, Laban develops a methodology based on his analysis that targets the kinesthetic awareness of actors and dancers. Laban believes that through training the human body is able to understand its kinetic behaviour and move forward by expanding its boundaries to kinetic experiences. It is linked to memory and is constantly developing its ability to store, analyze and combine the information it receives.

Laban states that: ‘Rhythmic deficiency of any kind can be corrected by training, e.g., by accustoming oneself to repetitive exercise in order to accomplish those forms of rhythm which at first seem to be unachievable’ (Laban 1950: 135).

While Laban discusses the body on stage, what is really at the heart of this research is human existence in terms of survival in a digital and technological world.

This talk will bring to the surface a discussion initiated by Aristotle in his books *Poetics* and *Nicomachean Ethics* and will use Laban's methodology as a tool to demonstrate that the stage-trained body is an intelligent entity capable of meeting the challenges of this new AI world.

Biography

Dr Kiki Selioni is a movement teacher and acting coach in various Drama Schools and Institutions internationally. She has completed her studies in Dance Theatre at the Laban in London (BA and MA, City University, and PhD at Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. She was Research Fellow at Royal Central School of Speech and Drama in a post-doc research project (Biophysical Acting) regarding a complete acting method based on Laban's work and Aristotle's theory. She is the Founder and Artistic Director of The Makings of the Actor. Currently is working on Marathon Project. <https://crco.cssd.ac.uk/id/eprint/460/>; <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Laban-Aristotle-methodology-movement-training-ebook/dp/B08R5RPMY7>; <https://themakingsoftheactor.com/>; <https://blogs.kent.ac.uk/kei-case-studies/2024/08/21/making-a-rural-drama-school-in-greece/>

Vicky Spanovangelis

Dancing Ancestral Intelligence / Living Ancestry: Virtual and Physical Museum Architectures as Bio-Choreographic Design

Architecture & Performance have become increasingly intertwined fields of embodied, hybrid spatial practices at the forefront of scenographic, digital and interactive design for stage, site-specific performance or urban design interventions in the built environment. Experience design (Austin, 2020) in storytelling is increasingly gaining currency in the field of museum architecture, with particular focus on performance, interactive design, flow and digital elements (Macleod et al, 2012). Following early 21st century shifts in contexts of immersive, experiential, participatory arts, this paper explores integrated practices of modalities of storytelling, movement and memory drawing upon examples of experimental choreographic participatory performance (*Living Ancestry / De-Code: Mnemonic in Motion* 2019-present) leading towards a proposition for virtual and physical museum architectural design.

In response to the conference *Theatre and Natural Intelligence*, the paper explores embodied cognition in live performance as a tool to explore the potential of inhabiting digital interfaces of newly emerging interactive, immersive (VR), and augmented reality (AR). The *Living Ancestry* project proposes a virtual architecture as a live archive repository of intergenerational experiences of cultural memory. Following Laban (1966), Lefebvre (1991), Tschumi (1994) and Masumi (2002), the research rationale examines sensory-perceptual embodied processes of storytelling as emergent creative practices reflecting social transformations of cultural memory. How can immediacy in processes of ancestral storytelling become part of interactive museum design to enable collaborative interactions? The *Living Ancestry* project therefore aims to explore ancestral storytelling as an emergent process, not as a question of the linear historical narrative but as a fluid, multiplicity of continuous transformation.

The research is part of a doctoral thesis of performance practiced-based research on choreography and architecture as hybrid creative practice, arguing for embodied knowledge of the kinaesthetically trained dancer/performer/actor body to enhance architectural design practice, leading to a more empathic, skilful, creative, and socially responsible design practitioners of the future.

Biography

Vicky Spanovangelis is a London-Athens based architect, choreographer, dancer, (Bartlett UCL, RCA, Trinity Laban London). Vicky has exhibited internationally, directed design projects, artistic research collaboration performances in the UK, Greece, France, Germany, USA. Her doctoral research focuses on choreography & architecture as creative practice, she lectures in higher education on multi-media, dance on screen and site-specific environments, previous experience includes The Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL, Trinity Laban London, RCSSD London. Vicky is artistic director of 'Nomads & Urban Dwellers' a creative collective working at the intersection of body, film, movement, and space, cultural heritage and digital technology with special interest in museum event architectures.

Jurgita Staniškytė

Between Interactive Gaming and Social Engineering: Theatre and Participatory Turn

According to many scholars who analyze the participatory turn, this transformation was heavily accelerated by user-oriented technological innovations: broadband Internet, phones with interactive multi-media capabilities, file-sharing and social media platforms, etc. As a result, the notions of interactivity, participation and engagement have permeated almost all areas of contemporary society – culture, academia, economy, politics, and human relations. In the context of these transformations, can theatres become places of live and enabling participation? Having looked at the historical development of audience participation strategies, one should not become overly optimistic about the possibilities of artistic practice to ensure or even to facilitate the transition from social exclusion to inclusion. Furthermore, the discourse of participation, creativity and community was easily appropriated by post-industrial commodity culture and used as a manipulative form of “soft power” or social engineering.

Consequently, the tension between artistic and social critiques, entertainment and political activism, or more generally the question about the actual socio-political implications of participatory artistic practices becomes the central focus of almost all debates on audience participation. In order to understand the implications as well as effects of participatory turn in theatre, the paper will analyze the strategies employed and outcomes provided by recent examples of audience participation in Lithuanian theatre.

The analysis of various examples of audience participation in Lithuanian theatre will illustrate the complexities and tensions embedded in the notion of participatory theatre, not only as a new form of rehearsing social interactions, but also as a site of risk and ambiguity.

Biography

Jurgita Staniškytė – heads the Faculty of Arts and is a Professor of Theatre Studies Department at Vytautas Magnus University (Kaunas, Lithuania). She has published numerous scientific and critical articles on contemporary Lithuanian theatre in the context of the processes of Baltic stage art, performative aspects of post-soviet Lithuanian culture, audience research and development. Jurgita Staniškytė actively participates in various scholarly

and artistic organizations as well as international and national research projects. Jurgita Staniškytė is the Board member of HERA (Humanities in the European Research Area) and the Governing Board member of EU Joint Programming Initiative (JPI) on Cultural Heritage and Global Change. She served as a chair of the Board of “Kaunas the European Capital of Culture 2022”.

Helmutas Šabasevičius

Classical Ballet Heritage in Lithuania: Traditions and Experiments. Case of “Coppelia”

The presentation will focus on the practice of reconstructing classical ballets in the second half of the 20th century in Lithuania, namely the ballet “Coppelia” by Léo Delibes, which was the first production of newly established ballet company in the State Theatre in Kaunas (1925). Different approaches used by Lithuanian choreographers Genovaitė Sabaliauskaitė, Vytautas Brazdylis, Kirill Simonov and Martynas Rimeikis will be discussed. The paper considers the strategies used by Lithuanian choreographers in their productions of this ballet from the 1950s to the present day, and how tradition, improvisation and intuition influenced the final artistic forms of these performances.

Biography

Born in 1964, graduated from the Lithuanian State Institute of Art (now Vilnius Academy of Arts) in 1989, where he received a degree in art history. In 1994 he defended his doctoral dissertation in the field of humanities, since 1997 he has been a researcher at the Department of Music and Theatre History at the Lithuanian Culture Research Institute. He researches the history of Lithuanian theatre, art, scenography, choreography, 19th century visual culture, theatre and art relations, has published scientific and popular articles, reviews of exhibitions and performances in the Lithuanian and foreign press, participates in scientific conferences, and gives public lectures. He teaches at the Vilnius Academy of Arts, the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, and is the editor-in-chief of the art culture magazine “Krantai”. In 2017, he got the Lithuanian Government Award for Culture and Art, and in 2019 – the Golden Cross of Merit of the Republic of Poland.

Jane Tapper

Programming in Natural Intelligence and AIs – Creativity?

In my proposed congress paper, I study a connection between natural intelligence and artificial intelligence (AI) by discussing about programming as a term shared by both (see Rountree & Condee 2021; Coeckelbergh 2020; Tegmark 2017; Tapper 2025). AIs are needed to be programmed to respect human ethical values and basic motives. I will examine misunderstanding and errors generated by attempts to make AI and robots to serve in cultural tasks. Humans cannot express themselves well in terms of programming. I will examine the relation of human natural intelligence and artificial intelligence (AI), in theatre, performance, film, and cultural performance, on the basis of my article “AI and the human making theatre: a Perspective on mutual amateur-ness” (Tapper 2025).

Film director Lars von Trier has been programming scenarios, characters and realities, to initiate games, in films, using game theory (see Simons 2007; Wenaus 2016). Thus, human characters are both scenarios and solid personalities. Programming increases creativity, within natural intelligence of von Trier, similarly as in AIs. I study programming generating creativity in performance art.

I examine how reprogramming of classical music’s scale – from tonal scale of eight tones into atonal scale of twelve tones – increased creativity in musical compositions; natural intelligence can be reprogrammed alternatively in music (see Roberts 2006). I will examine how performance scholar Jon McKenzie (2001) has reprogrammed the theory of performance by understanding that humans have been enacting technological language game and abandoned humanistic language game. The result is a peak of creativity within performance studies. However, within traditional theatre studies, it is not easy to deal with differences between natural intelligence and its merely material and computational dimensions, that are part of human intelligence. Their fusion suggests theatre theory, in which reality has an equal position with the human.

Biography

Jane Tapper holds a PhD in theatre studies from the University of Helsinki, Finland (2012), and an MA in theatre directing from the Theatre Academy Helsinki (1987). Between 2016–2019 he worked as a post-doctoral grant researcher, within a project Reality Runs Theatre: Awakening into Human Contingency,

funded by the Finnish Cultural Foundation. He has worked on research projects at the Universities of Helsinki and Jyväskylä, Finland, and the Theatre Academy. Since 1987, he has worked as a free-lance theatre director at several City Theatres as well as The Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE).

Dionysios Tsaftaridis

DMS / Dark Movement Human Spaces: Reclaiming Embodied Intelligence and Happiness in an Age of a Toxic, Artificial (audio)visual, Flattened Cosmos

Part of ongoing research since 2020, “DMS / Dark Movement Human Spaces”, a term coined by the researcher, this paper addresses the challenge to a “happily intelligent” human body existence that is increasingly dominated, alienated, and threatened by artificial, screen-mediated reality. There is a continuous “shrinking” of reality, which stands further and further apart from a holistic perception of the world, consequently impacting critical thinking and a happily intelligent body. In response, this research introduces the Dark Movement Human Spaces (DMS) method, a pedagogical approach employing self-imposed visual obstruction, or a “Dark Experience”, to intentionally cultivate spatial, kinesthetic, and temporal awareness through non-visual means. By exploring Kinesis and Metakinesis within the context of the Dark Experience, participants are encouraged to connect with, discover, and evolve their embodied intelligence, accessing a richer understanding of movement through amplified non-visual sensory channels. Grounded in Rudolf Laban’s movement analysis and Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences, particularly kinesthetic and spatial intelligence, and partly musical intelligence, this research re-evaluates movement perception and execution in the absence of sight while investigating alternative creative processes. This exploration/research investigates natural embodied intelligence within the context of movement and, arguably, existence. What is the identity of a happily intelligent body? If one exists, at least in theory, what is its place in today’s world?

Biography

Dionysios Tsaftaridis, a Greek choreographer, dancer, and researcher, holds degrees from the State School of Dancing Art and postgraduate studies in Physical Theatre. His PhD explored Maya Deren’s screendances. As a choreographer, he’s collaborated with the Greek National Opera and national and international theatre companies and artists. He has directed in 2018 and 2022 two full length theatre plays and his dance films have been featured and awarded in festivals. Currently, he’s developing DMS- Dark Moving Spaces, a training method enhancing kinaesthesia and spatial perception through darkness. His goal is to make people discover and love their happily moving bodies.

Mischa Twitchin

The Cave of Remembered Dreams

For over a decade the Polish theatre artist, Krzysztof Garbaczewski, has been a leading figure amongst those exploring virtual- and AI-theatre. (This is also the principal topic of his teaching for final year directing students at the Warsaw Theatre Academy.) With audiences in both physical spaces and in VR, his work stages encounters with a theatrically accessed “multiverse”, where the actual and the virtual meet in their relation (indeed, tension) rather than the one simply displacing the other. As my title suggests, I will weave an approach to (but also, crucially, with) Garbaczewski’s work through a sense of the “virtual” and the “technological”, the embodied and the digital, with the further examples of Werner Herzog and Plato. The famous simile of the cave, with its essentially theatrical model of “knowing”, is a key point of reference for Garbaczewski, as it ciphers questions of time and space posed by dream and memory, technology and forgetting. With reference to his 2022 production of Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (still in the repertory of the Stary Theatre), the presentation will consider what asks to be remembered in the practice of theatre, irreducible to its technologies. The idea that technology offers a “mastery” of experience (whether external or internal) touches on a fantasy that elides metamorphosis and artifice. This “translation” (in Shakespeare’s terms) has often been conceived of as “magic” and echoes with what André Leroi-Gourhan called “the technological illusion”, when (in 1960) he described “humans, as it were, naked before their machines”. This “as it were” still haunts the technology we already call theatre, whatever its sense of “intelligence” and agency. My discussion will explore this sense (recalling Bert States [2001] here) of the metaphors of the dream, “connecting an imagined and the ‘real’ world in a ‘blended space’”.

Biography

Dr Mischa Twitchin is a senior lecturer in the Theatre and Performance Dept., at Goldsmiths, University of London. He has contributed chapters to several collected volumes, as well as articles in journals such as *Memory Studies*, *Contemporary Theatre Review*, *Nordic Theatre Studies*, and *Performance Research* (an issue of which, “On Repertoire”, 29.1, he also edited). His book, *The Theatre of Death – the Uncanny in Mimesis: Tadeusz Kantor, Aby Warburg and an Iconology of the Actor* is published by Palgrave Macmillan; and an edited volume, *Wittgenstein and Performance*, by Rowman and Littlefield.

Rasa Vasinauskaitė

Participatory Theatre: Between Mediated and Direct Experience

The theatre of the last decade is unimaginable without its participatory element. The experience and aesthetics of participation are discussed by theatre critics and theorists, who emphasize the community that participatory theatre creates, as well as the acquisition of new social and aesthetic experiences. There are many examples of participatory theatre in Lithuania, but I would like to highlight two in which direct audience participation is mediated by technological means: in the performance “Vedami,” the audience communicates with the performers (real prisoners) through questions posed by telephone; in the play “Glaistas,” the life stories of Vilnius Jews are told through headphones. Both performances allow for the emergence of a fleeting but united community through a new and unique experience. How does this happen, and why is direct experience more important here?

Biography

Rasa Vasinauskaitė – Doctor of Humanities, theatre critic and historian; senior researcher at the Lithuanian Culture Researcher Institute, a professor at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre. Author of monographs „Laikinumo teatras. Lietuvių režisūros pokyčiai 1990–2001 metais [Theatre of Impermanence. Outline of Lithuanian Directing in 1990–2001]“ (2010) and „(Ne)pilkoji zona. Lietuvių teatro kritika 1920–1980“ [„(Not) A Grey Area. Lithuanian Theatre Criticism from 1920 to 1980“] (2023), parts of collective monographs on the Lithuanian theatre and theatre history („Post-Soviet Lithuanian Theatre: History, Identity, Memory“, 2014; „Lithuanian Theatre History 1929–1990“, 2002, 2006, 2009, „Lithuanian Theatre. A Short History“, 2009, etc), numerous scholarly and popular articles on contemporary Lithuanian and foreign theatre, Lithuanian theatre history.

Jonas Vilimas

From Human as Mechanism to Conventional Patterns. R. Descartes, Musical Affektenlehre of Baroque and A/N Intelligence

René Descartes in his “Les passions de l’âme” considers a human being as some kind of mechanism while exploring various conditions of human psyche. This treatise made a certain impact on the so-called Affekten- and/or Figurenlehre, an important music theory in Baroque era, although its beginnings might be traced in the 16th century. It developed certain intelligent patterns on the basis of rhetoric. From the later perspective, it might appear as a kind of artificial development when applied to the composition of music. While exploring the principles of this theory and its practical application to music, one might not just discover different methods of interpretation of such music, but also some interesting parallels with the principles that are used in the development of AI.

Biography

Jonas Vilimas, PhD, musicologist, Associate professor at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre (LAMT), scholar at the Lithuanian Culture Research Institute. He has studied at the LAMT, Central European University (Budapest campus), his doctoral thesis *The Features of Tradition of the Gregorian Chante in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania* was defended at the Faculty of History of Vilnius University. The principal area of scholarly interest and research – church music and Gregorian chant in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. He has published quite a number of scholarly papers on these subjects as well as a significant number of encyclopedic articles.

Keiu Virro

Theatre, Accessibility, and Human Interaction: Rethinking the Theatre’s Impact on Diverse Young Audiences

This paper explores theatre as a space for fostering human interaction, empathy, and communication, in relation to young audiences with diverse abilities. While theatre has long been recognized for its potential to engage and transform audiences, its accessibility remains a challenge, often marginalizing children with neurodivergence, physical disabilities, or sensory impairments. By examining how accessible theatre practices influence participation, this study situates accessibility as a crucial aspect of cultural inclusion and human connection.

How do we define meaningful participation in theatre for all children? Can accessibility itself be considered a fundamental cultural right? Through a critical review of existing research and case studies in Estonian theatre, this paper investigates the impact of inclusive performances not only on young audiences but also on caregivers, performers, and theatre institutions. The study highlights the ripple effects of accessibility, demonstrating how inclusive theatre enhances social interaction, fosters empathy, and challenges traditional notions of audience engagement.

Beyond individual benefits, this research contributes to broader discussions on the role of theatre in shaping societal values. It argues that accessibility should not be treated as an afterthought or a special accommodation, but rather as an essential foundation of cultural participation. By identifying gaps in current knowledge and advocating for structural changes in theatre practices and policies, this paper calls for a reimagining of theatre as an inherently inclusive space—one that reflects and nurtures the diverse ways in which humans connect, communicate, and understand one another.

Biography

Keiu Virro is a junior research fellow and PhD student at Tallinn University’s School of Governance, Law, and Society. Her research focuses on accessible theatre events and their social impact. She holds MAs in Change Management in Society (cum laude, University of Tartu, 2024) and Cultural Studies (Tallinn University, 2012), and a BA in Semiotics and Theatre Studies. With a background in journalism, she has received the Estonian Ministry of Justice’s Violence Prevention Award (2024) and the Reet Neimar Prize in Theatre Criticism (2022).

Weronika Żyła

New Relations Prototyping. Human and more-than-human Coexistence in Polish Contemporary Theatre

Human and technological coexistence is one of the main issues related to the Anthropocene, which often returns in the context of dealing with the negative effects of human expansion on the planet. It is presented both as a remedy for the upcoming catastrophe (by theorists associated with the transhumanist movement, e.g., R. Kurzweil) and as an ambiguous tool that may lead to a deepening of the crisis (B. Stiegler).

Theatre performance, as an ideal way to explore speculative scenarios, is increasingly becoming a space for posthumanist musing on the coexistence of humans and more-than-humans, including robotic, cyborg, and virtual beings, emerging due to rapid technological progress. The proposed paper will present conclusions from the analysis of two contemporary Polish performances: *Życie Seksualne Dzikich* (The Sexual Life of Savages) (dir. Krzysztof Garbaczewski, 2011) and *The Employees* (dir. Łukasz Twarkowski, 2023), with particular attention paid to how they address issues such as the co-presence of humanoid robots and humans (1), ways of presenting interspecies relations (2), and the very image of more-than-human artifacts, ontologically and epistemologically different from humans, also in terms of the division into artificial and natural intelligence (3), as well as possible ethical problems and their solutions implied by the artists (4).

The main analytical context is posthumanist philosophy about the relationship between the posthuman and technology, represented by researchers such as R. Braidotti, D. Haraway, and K. Hayles, but the concepts of the Anthropocene and speculation as a research method (I. Stengers) are equally important.

In order to be able to formulate the right conclusions, the author will use a product-oriented (Ch. Balme) analysis (including formal, content, and interpretative analysis) of theatre works. However, the theatre research method will be supplemented by discourse analysis and the comparative method.

combines philosophical, sociological, and aesthetic perspectives, examining how these technologies shape contemporary performance art and redefine human identity. Since 2024, I have been leading the research project “*Virtual Reality, Artificial Intelligence, Robotic Bodies: Polish Contemporary Theatre and New Media*”, funded by the National Science Centre (NCN).

Biography

Weronika Żyła – PhD student at the University of Łódź. In my doctoral research, I explore posthumanism and its connections with modern technologies (AI, VR, robotics) in theatre. My work

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