



Centre for Drama, Theatre & Performance Studies
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

FESTIVAL OF ORIGINAL THEATRE

FOOT33

Interdependent Networks

Book of Abstracts





Interdependent Networks

February 6-7, 2025

Book of Abstracts

PANEL: PERFORMING PLACE

Evan Moritz: "Habitat Relationality: Performing the Planet in Three Inuit Katajjaq Songs."

Abstract: My paper explores the ways that performance operates as a relational practice which connects communities to planetary concerns. Hence, reconsidering scale is crucial to my thinking, and I follow Max Liboiron's reconfiguration: "Scale is not about relative size. Scale is about what relationships matter within a particular context" (2021, p. 84). I argue that to consider a shift in scale as a shift in relationality, additionally invites thinking where objects typically thought of a "large-scale" may manifest in unlikely places—assuming a similar network of relations. Within this theoretical context, I will discuss how performances of habitation in Arctic Canada reveal a planetary scale with innumerable relations, belying the small population size of some communities in the north. I will focus on three Inuit throat songs—one traditional and two contemporary—which evince diverse connections to planetary concerns, even as they centre on the particularities of Arctic habitation. Along the way, I will note moments which reveal the planetary scale, observing how often the more specific instances of a performance of habitat resonate strongest at this large relational scale. This presentation will contribute to my ongoing formulation of "habitat relationality," in which I argue that planetary poetics for performance in an era of climate catastrophe can be evocative and actionable when they work at the meso-level of communities—distinct from the macro- or micro-levels of nations or individuals.

Evan Moritz (he/him) is a PhD student at the University of Toronto's Center for Drama, Theatre, and Performance Studies. He is interested in the outer limits of science-fiction and fact with performance and research exploring the history and future of habitation, Indigeneity & settler colonialism, planetary catastrophe on Earth & off, and the impact of science fiction on contemporary practices. His project "Performing Arctic Habitation: Mars Analogue Research and Inuit Katajjaq as Meso-level Iterations of the Planetary", explores the role performance plays in understanding habitation, local biomes, planetary effects, and extraterrestrial exploration.

Ming-Wei Chen: "Performing Place and Its Community in Taiwan: A case study of Slash Theatre's Residence Project in Haikou Village."

Abstract: This article examines the possibilities and challenges of performing place and its community through the case study of three residency works by the Slash Theatre troupe, invited by the Luo Shan Feng Arts Festival curatorial team to Haikou Village in Checheng Township, Pingtung County, Taiwan, from 2018 to 2021. The three works are *The Authentic Flavor of Haikou* (2019), *The Maze Project: Let's Stroll Around Haikou Together* (2020), and *The Voice of Haikou* (2021). In the first year, the Slash Theatre troupe utilized oral history to interact with the community from the Haikou Women's Workshop, creating *The Authentic Flavor of Haikou*. This piece sought to shape the collective memory of local residents, presenting Haikou Village as a nostalgic utopia. In the second year, audiences of *The Maze Project* strolled through the village, listening to stories and memories while watching dramatized scenes at specific spots. This allowed them not only to learn but also to experience and witness the village's change. In the third year, with a deeper understanding of the village, the Slash Theatre troupe adopted a new approach by incorporating outsiders as main characters in *The Voice of Haikou*, focusing on revitalizing the village and imagining its future. In addition, this study analyzes the three-year creative process of the Slash Theatre troupe with the community. This collaboration highlights how both the theatre troupe and the local community can serve as active agents in the creative process.

Ming-Wei Chen is a PhD student at CDTPS at UofT. His research interests include participatory theatre, applied theatre, drama education, and site-specific performance. He explores how theatre can bridge different generations and backgrounds, encouraging audiences to engage in discussions on challenging topics. In addition to his research, Ming-Wei works as a producer, performance planner, and drama educator in Taiwan. He has ventured into directing and has studied the role of a Xiaosheng in Kunqu opera. Ming-Wei is also a critic and observer of Taiwanese theatre.



Interdependent Networks

February 6-7, 2025

Book of Abstracts

WORKSHOPS 1A: DANCE AND PLAY

Lisa Davenport: "Recess Time: Facilitating a Community Through Play and Improv."

Abstract: In 2023, I led an introductory improvisation program for international graduate students in London, England. Young interdisciplinary scholars from around the world voluntarily returned to my weekly classes to participate in improv activities - which led to strong friendships being formed with one another. This experience led me to question if a community was formed because of the improv activities or the learning environment that I facilitated. This workshop presentation will explore a modelling as teaching pedagogical approach as the activities facilitated can be used in practice to foster connections amongst participants. Whilst my workshop will engage with introductory improvisational activities as a means of building collaborative learning environments (Spolin 1985), it will also illuminate the centrality of the facilitator in enabling a community to be formed (Johnstone 1999, Neelands 1984). The purpose of this workshop is to provide participants with activities and facilitation techniques to integrate in their own practices, while also providing an opportunity to connect with one another through creative play (Balfour 2016). Throughout my practice, I have noticed a lack in community-oriented programming for young adults. Though members of this generation have stated a desire to connect with their peers, they have also noted a lack of inviting environments to do so. This workshop will also allow for an open discussion at the end to reflect and examine how improvisational activities and dedicated time to play together could be the answer to the social connection that some demographics and communities yearn for.

Lisa Davenport is a PhD Student with the CDTPS at the University of Toronto. She holds an MA in Applied Theatre from the Royal Central School of Speech & Drama, University of London, and is an OCT Certified Teacher. Her artist educator journey has allowed her to work with organizations like Young Peoples Theatre, the Almeida Theatre, and the Canadian Improv Games. Lisa has worked with all ages to foster creativity, encourage curiosity, and form strong bonds between one another. She has taught in traditional classrooms, facilitated creative play in community spaces, and loves spending her summers as a camp counsellor.

Sanjukta Banerjee: "Interconnectedness of Nature between Mohiniyattam dance vocabulary and Tagore's musical composition."

Abstract: Embodiment of Tagore's Poetic Vision are explorations of interconnectedness between ecology, poetry taking place within the genre of Mohiniyattam. The dances are choreographed to the Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore's musical compositions. The process of dance making as visualized by Tagore is inspired from the vocabulary of different Indian classical dance forms (Mohiniyattam is what I select to explore in this presentation). The residency explores the question of how Bengali dancers are choreographing and intersecting Tagore's poetic compositions with their knowledge of the vocabulary acquired from the specific dance genre. It is important to consider why it is a common practice to learn the Indian Classical Dance forms and engage with the creative process. This is done according to the components of nature and metaphorical interpretations in Tagore's poetic composition. Specifically, this analytical process will engage how the choreographic process interconnects between the dance vocabulary, worded description, rhythm and philosophical interpretation of the specific composition. This will guide the hybrid process to formulate knowledge with equal importance on transmission of the traditional dance pedagogy within the site of the body. The dialogic discourse on performance will allow to study and encourage new understandings of the mechanisms of exchange, sharing and reshaping within the contours of performance studies and theatrical artforms; by the rise of the hybrid dancing style nurtured through the vocabularies of Indian classical dance forms within the periphery of Tagore and his vision of incorporating dance and ecology to his compositions open new discourses.



Interdependent Networks

February 6-7, 2025



Book of Abstracts

Banerjee is an acclaimed Indo-Canadian interdisciplinary artist-scholar whose work revolves around traditional Indian dance practices, and creative collaboration. She holds a doctoral degree in dance from York University, Toronto. She has performed in more than 300 National and International Festivals in Asia, Middle-East and North America. Founder and Artistic Director of Saugandhikam Dance Academy, she mentors young practitioners in Canada and North America. Banerjee offers courses, lecture-demonstration and residencies in various Universities of North America and Europe. Banerjee has been awarded the title of "Singar Mani" from Haridas Sangeet Sammelan, Mumbai, and "Natya Kala Rathna", Toronto.



Interdependent Networks

February 6-7, 2025

Book of Abstracts

WORKSHOPS 1B: IMMERSION AND SPECTATORSHIP

Carmen Osahor: "Granny Square."

Abstract: Granny Square is an experimental healing ritual at the intersection of interactive theatre, immersive theatre and contemplative/meditative retreat experiences. Inspired by my own nostalgia towards the homemade blankets of my childhood, Granny Square is centred around treasured textiles as objects rich with sensation, memory, and meaning. The audience is invited through a series of activities to slow down together, intentionally connect to their hearts and bodies, and to give attention to how we are woven together by these objects to our communities and the earth. The character of Granny is the guide for the experience. She playfully welcomes the audience into an immersive blanket fort installation. She then leads them in a meditation that brings attention to the sensory experience of blankets, to an imaginative exploration of their material origin and history of creation, and then to memories of a treasured comfort object from their past. After the meditation, there is time for solo exploration of the installation, which provides multiple prompts for rest, or further reflection or creative engagement. Finally there is a coming together for sharing of tea and cookies, stories and a collective song. This project has been in development since 2021, including a workshop presentation at Earthdance in 2023 and OAC funding for creative research in 2024.

Carmen Osahor (she/her) is a performer, indie theatre creator, director, producer and co-founder of The Fox Den Collective (TFDC). Selected credits: Co-Creator/Producer: Benched (TFDC/ Theatre Direct), Co-Creator/Co-Producer/Actor: The Big Sad (TFDC/ Fringe), Director: The Wolves (All the Hats), Co-Creator/Producer/Director: S.I.S.T.E.R. (TFDC), Co-Creator/Actor: Queen Lear is Dead (TFDC/ Fringe/ Winnipeg ShakespeareFest), Actor: Prophecy (Impossible Mongoose/ Fringe/ Springworks). She has a BFA in Acting from the U of A, and is currently pursuing a MA at the Center for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies at the U of T.

Colin Tucker: "The Relational Spectator: Making Racializing Relations in Concert Music Protocols."

Abstract: The racializing politics of spectatorship are widely discussed in performance studies, with David Lloyd investigating canonical texts of aesthetic philosophy, Dylan Robinson (Stó:lō and Skwah Nations) examining colonial positionality in listening, and Rizvana Bradley discussing the instrumentalized position of Blackness in spectatorship. Yet these perspectives have not considered the racializing work of default protocols of spectatorial performance. This paper fills that gap, by attending to the issue of racializing relations inherent in normative spectatorial protocols. Specifically, I bring ethnic studies scholar Denise Ferreira da Silva's analysis of the relational, racializing constitution of the modern subject to historical watershed articulations by Wilhelm Wackenroder and Eduard Hanslick of concert music's version of this subject, the spectator, in order to trace how these texts secure the racially-unmarked Quietness of silent, immobile listening over-against racially-marked figures of Loudness. I then attend to present-day newspaper accounts of incidents of racializing policing of and by concert hall listeners, in order to read these as evidence of unofficial concert music protocols organized according to similar racializing regimes of Quiet/Loud. The presentation also offers a concurrent artistic embodiment of this argument through a realization of an installation art work; for details, see <https://bit.ly/cx/Rfpzg>. I argue that the historical emergence of concert music as a racially-unmarked High Art is contingent upon the racially-marginalizing marking of bodies as Loud. In conclusion, by attending to the spectator's interdependence with racializing relations, this paper reveals unthought perspectives on the persistent whiteness of spectatorial performance.



Interdependent Networks

February 6-7, 2025



Book of Abstracts

Colin Tucker is a musician and curator who investigates intersections between music, art, decoloniality, and abolition. Through scores, videos, installations, and artist books, they undertake critical investigations of sensory politics in the concert hall and of colonial grammars of territorial possession. Colin's works have been performed by the Detroit Symphony, ensemble dal niente, Ensemble Linea, SEM Ensemble, and Ensemble Surplus and presented at Akademie Schloss Solitude, Darmstadt Ferienkurse, and Eastman School of Music. As a curator, they are founding artistic director of Null Point, an artist-run initiative focused on interchanges between music and contemporary art. For more information: colintucker.studio.





Interdependent Networks

February 6-7, 2025



Book of Abstracts

KEYNOTE LECTURE

Guest: Dr. Natalie Alvarez

Natalie Álvarez is Professor of Theatre and Performance Studies and Associate Dean of Scholarly, Research and Creative Activities in the Creative School at Toronto Metropolitan University. Her research on immersive simulations in the public sphere, Latina/o/x performance, and performance activism in the Americas has been widely published in international journals and compendiums. She is the author, editor, and co-editor of five books, *Theatre & War* (Methuen/Bloomsbury, 2023), *Sustainable Tools for Precarious Times: Performance Actions in the Americas* (Palgrave, 2019; winner of ATHE's Excellence in Editing award), *Immersion in Cultural Difference: Tourism, War, Performance* (U of Michigan P, 2018; winner of the Ann Saddlemyer Award by CATR), *Essays on Latina/o Canadian Theatre and Performance* and *Fronteras Vivientes: Eight Latina/o Canadian Plays* (Playwrights Canada Press, 2013; winners of the 2014 and 2015 Patrick O'Neil Book Prize by CATR). She is also the incoming co-editor of the *Theatre & book* series with Methuen/Bloomsbury. Alvarez is co-investigator (with Laura Levin, PI, York U) of Hemispheric Encounters: Developing Transborder Research-Creation Practices, a seven-year, SSHRC Partnership Grant-funded research program that brings together scholars, artists, activists, and community organizations from across the Americas to explore hemispheric performance as an artistic practice for addressing social and environmental justice. She is also Principal Investigator of the SSHRC Insight study "Scenario Training to Improve Police Response to Individuals in Mental Crisis: Impacts and Efficacy", a multidisciplinary research team she has led with Dr. Jennifer Lavoie (WLU) and Dr. Yasmine Kandil (UVic) composed of people with lived experience of mental illness, clinicians, Indigenous cultural safety experts, simulation experts, researchers, and de-escalation trainers, who have designed a scenario-based training curriculum and evaluation framework, the Mental Health and Crisis Response Applied Training and Education Program (MHCR). As of 1 April 2024, the MHCR is now a regulatory requirement and mandatory training for all police officers in Ontario, establishing for the first time in history a professional standard in de-escalation and mental health crisis response.



Interdependent Networks

February 6-7, 2025

Book of Abstracts

WORKSHOP 2

Dr. Jill Carter: "Indigenous Research Methods: Ceremonial Scholarship Grounded in Love and Service."

Abstract: What if all researchers began their work with the premise that all participants are partners in whatever project we are pursuing, whatever knowledge we are creating. What if we all took it for granted that we all have a personal stake in the project? What if we kept it foremost in our minds that for the research partner who stands outside the academy and its privileges, the stakes are precariously high? The project we undertake together may mean the difference between health and dis-ease or between continuance and dissolution—for the individual, for her family, for her community, and for her descendants yet unborn. This workshop is designed for all researchers--artists and scholars—who seek to infuse their research endeavours at every stage of the work (from proposal to dissemination) with "loving responsibility" (Walters, cited in McGregor 73) that honours their ancestors, that serves living communities and that will nourish and sustain future generations. Works Cited: McGregor, Deborah. 2013. "Indigenous Women, Water Justice and Zaagidowin (Love)." *Canadian Woman Studies*. 30(2/3), 71-78.

Based in Tkaron:to where she was born and largely raised, Jill is an Anishinaabe-Ashkenazi theatre-practitioner, researcher and educator at the University of Toronto. Her research and praxis base themselves in the mechanics of story creation, the processes of delivery, and the mechanics of Affect. She is an active member of the Talking Treaties Collective, founder of the Collective Encounter, and serves as researcher and tour guide for First Story, Toronto with which she also devises land activations, mapping interventions, and personal cosmography workshops.



Interdependent Networks

February 6-7, 2025



Centre for Drama, Theatre & Performance Studies
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



Book of Abstracts

KEYNOTE PRESENTER

GUEST: Dr. Jessica Watkin





Interdependent Networks

February 6-7, 2025

Book of Abstracts

PANEL 2A: REALITIES

Laine Matkin: "Human-Digital Interdependency on Social Media."

Abstract: At first glance, social media platforms appear to be a hotspot for human performance; people show off their clothes, food, vacations, and so much more. In doing so, social media engages a very unique form of performance: a quotidian performance that is as false as it is true. Social media's performances are an exhibition of the fluidity of the real, a look into the Phelanian absences that constitute a form of truth. Phelan's explorations of the real and performativity are easily applied to sites such as Instagram, exposing how one person's real is hidden underneath the advertising, spam, and bots that serve to engage users. We often forget how much social media relies on bots and tracking technology in order to serve us a platform that appeals to our personal preferences, but we rely on them to show us relatable content as much as they rely on us to keep scrolling and clicking. The question I aim to explore is as follows: how does Phelan's work on the real help to expose the complicated digital ecology behind Instagram that creates a symbiotic relationship between human and computer? In answering this question, I will engage in research studies on Instagram and its bot networks and algorithms, applying current technological work to Phelan's *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*. This is an investigative work, connecting technology and humanities together to highlight the dangers of human-computer cooperation that often go ignored, allowing Instagram users to forget which real is actually real.

Laine Matkin is a first year Master's student in University of Toronto's Centre for Drama, Theatre, and Performance Studies. They have a BFA in Music Theatre from the University of California Irvine and are part of the prestigious American fraternity Phi Beta Kappa. Laine is fascinated by the interaction of human and digital beings, hoping to research what Artificial Intelligence's performances of humanity can teach us about human cognition and communication. They hope to explore what it means to make sense of humanity through the lens of those parading as human.

Sanyukta Mitra: "Sharing the Space: Co-Creating Realities and Representation in Performance Spaces."

Abstract: Within the space of live performance, the relationship between audience and performer has an interdependent dynamic where it engages with personal interpretations of realities and exists in a space where meaning is constantly negotiated based on positionality. This paper explores this co-creative relationship through a queer-feminist lens, focusing on the contemporary Indian performances like Meyeder Khela and Atho Hidimba Kotha. These works, through fragmentation, (in)visibility, and nonlinearity, challenge conventional storytelling practices by emphasizing the temporality, relationality, and the discomfort of engagement. Drawing on Peggy Phelan's concept of the "unmarked" and José Esteban Muñoz's theories of temporality and futurity, this paper investigates how these performances subvert traditional notions of "realness" and representation, questioning the politics of visibility and the ontological status of what is seen, unseen, or imagined. The performances challenge dominant narratives surrounding caste, gender, and sexuality, offering alternative interpretations of identity and power. This paper explores how these Indian theatre performances highlight marginalized voices within the broader theatrical discourse of India, questioning hegemonic cultural narratives and reshaping conventional notions of visibility and representation. By challenging dominant representations, Meyeder Khela and Atho Hidimba Kotha open spaces for alternative voices and narratives. In resisting exclusionary practices, they also hold transformative potential for cultivating a more inclusive and diverse theatrical community. Through a queer-feminist approach, these performances highlight the potential of performance to reshape dominant cultural frameworks, providing new ways of seeing and understanding identity, agency, and representation in the Indian performance space.

Sanyukta Mitra is an MA student at the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies of the University of Toronto. Her research interests focus on storytelling, oral tradition, and audience reception



Interdependent Networks

February 6-7, 2025

Book of Abstracts

PANEL 2B: DRAMA AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Dr. Kathleen Gallagher & Dr. Christine Balt: "Global Climate Education and its Discontents: Using Drama to Forge a New Way: Artistic Encounters in the Relationscapes of a Global, Interdependent Research and Theatre-Making Network."

Abstract: This presentation will engage with the anthology *Global Climate Education and its Discontents: Using Drama to Forge a New Way* (London: Routledge) edited by Dr. Kathleen Gallagher and Dr. Christine Balt and emerging from Dr. Gallagher's multi-sited research ethnography, *Global Youth (Digital) Citizen Artists and their Publics: Performing for Socio-Ecological Justice* (2019-2026). This book, consisting of chapters from an international, 'interdependent network' of researchers, artists, and community leaders in Toronto, Lucknow, Coventry, Kaohsiung, Bogotá, and Thessaloniki, examines the ecology of artistic practices that were put to work to ask if drama could offer up new, performative pedagogical orientations to the climate emergency beyond those of critique. Arising from an array of creative engagements with verbatim theatre, devising, site-specific theatre, and virtual performance, the chapters point towards the affordances of collective theatre-making in (re)encountering the social, ecological, cultural, historic interdependencies of a more-than-human, relational ontology. This presentation will offer the audience insight into these artistic practices emerging across all of the research sites and engage with what new forms of local and global civic culture - and more-than-human togetherness - arise through the artistic innovations of an interdependent research and theatre-making network collaborating in uncertain times.

A Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, Distinguished Professor, and Director of the Centre for Drama, Theatre & Performance Studies at the University of Toronto, Dr. Kathleen Gallagher studies theatre as a powerful medium for expression by young people of their experiences and understandings. Her current SSHRC ethnographic project explores youth theatre in relationship to socio-ecological justice. Dr. Christine Balt is a postdoctoral fellow at the Centre for Drama, Theatre & Performance Studies at the University of Toronto. She is interested in ecological performance and finding 'collective wellbeing' in the drama classroom. She has published articles in *Theatre Research in Canada*, *Research in Drama Education*, and *Studies in Theatre and Performance* and is the recent recipient of the CATR Richard Plant Award for best English-language article on a Canadian theatre topic.

Hillary Sunberg: "Performing the Wild: Embodying an Interdependent Ecocriticism in Toronto's Urban Wild."

Abstract: This presentation will focus on a research-creation workshop held outdoors in Toronto's Cedardale Ravine in January 2025. Based on Martin Shaw's myth "The Lindworm" (*Courting the Wild Twin*, 2020), the workshop used an immersive performance tool known as "process drama" to explore an embodied approach to ecocritical engagement. A pedagogical innovation which generates discourse born from both theory and practice, process drama prioritizes process over product and refutes inactive spectatorship by dismantling hierarchical barriers between performer and audience, instructor and student, and, in more recent years, human and nonhuman. Process drama pioneer Dorothy Heathcote's dramaturgical framing techniques call for the creation of a narrative kinship which shifts focus from individual perspectives to the collectivity of process drama's storied, interconnected container—a world within a world which is keenly sensed, affectively and corporeally, by its participants. With this workshop, which will form the basis of one of my dissertation chapters, I sought to explore how process drama methods might interact with Shaw's emphasis on forests as places of wisdom, unravelling, and narrative incitement in the midst of actual Torontonians trees, reimagining the ravine's interdependent mycorrhizal systems as a dramaturgical frame that intertwines human, nonhuman, and story. In so doing, my ongoing goal is to strengthen the relationship between theory and practice within the environmental humanities field and redefine what it means to "read" land-based narratives in an age of climate catastrophe.



Interdependent Networks

February 6-7, 2025



Book of Abstracts

Hillary Sunberg (she/her) is a PhD Candidate in the University of Toronto's Centre for Drama, Theatre, and Performance Studies, where she is using process drama performance tools to develop an embodied approach to ecocriticism. She is a seasoned playwright, stage manager, arts educator, and performer, holds an MA in Theatre Education (Emerson College) and an MA in English (University of Toronto), and is an active member of the University of Toronto's robust and innovative environmental humanities community.



Interdependent Networks

February 6-7, 2025

Book of Abstracts

PANEL 3A: PARTICIPATION AND ACCESS

Bethany Schaufler-Biback: "Beyond Compliancy: Cultivating Access Intimacy in and Amongst Theatre Audiences Through Accessible Practices."

Abstract: In an era where theatre practitioners are striving to move beyond accessible practices being treated as an afterthought, what does it mean to create spaces where disabled audiences feel truly understood— not only accommodated, but intimately seen? This paper explores "access intimacy," as first conceptualized by Disability studies writer Mia Mingus, within a theatre and performance context. Access intimacy describes the elusive feelings which become when one's access needs are deeply understood by another. Much like other theorizations of intimacy from nightclubs (Garcia-Mispirota) to participatory performance (Jacobson & Schaufler-Biback), Mingus emphasizes the presence of intimacy brought upon by and between strangers. This facet makes its exploration imperative between audience members during live theatre performance. While discussions on accessibility have gained traction in Canadian theatre over the past decade, many accessibility practices remain rooted in what artist and scholar Alice Sheppard terms "compliancy" or "inclusionary thinking"—approaches that conceive disability as a problem and attempt to "solve" disability through surface-level interventions, often tacked onto the end of a project (Disability Justice). This paper examines how an understanding of access intimacy in relation to theatre audiences might reshape these approaches by analyzing The Disability Collective's production of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, featuring an all D/deaf shadow cast. Drawing on affect theory, disability studies, and audience studies, this investigation calls on theatre practitioners to embrace the slowness of interdependence, integrating practices curated by and reflective of the community to better bring disability into the theatre. In doing so, it offers theatre practitioners integral insight on how their accessibility practices may better serve their communities by emphasizing the feeling and experience of disability.

Bethany Schaufler-Biback is a PhD student at the Centre for Drama, Theatre, and Performance Studies where she also recently earned her MA. Bethany's research lives within the realm of audience studies, concerning ideas of audience care, affect, and Disability Justice. In addition to her work as a student, Bethany is a theatre practitioner, where she frequents roles in stage management, producing, and accessibility coordination.

Willow Martin: "Interdependent Documentation & Research Practices."

Abstract: As the conversation surrounding Accessibility in Tkaronto's performance culture develops, it has become clear that any discussion of access necessitates a discussion of space: for who or what a space is intended, how the space defines and upholds the rights it grants to each group, and who the outliers are, have become common tenets of the conversation. In cities like Tkaronto, which flout themselves as bastions of multiculturalism, these conversations are held in isolation of each other. As a result, the culture of accessibility is a volatile one, prone to shifts, and inconsistent from place to place. In order to properly stabilize, and facilitate the development of accessibility, it is clear that the ways in which we establish space must be central to the discussion. This paper investigates existing performance scholarship surrounding what Henri Lefebvre defines as "The Right to the City", seminal texts within the field of contract law, and outward facing resources of Tkarontonian performance companies, placed in conversation with the testimony of a diversely selected panel of interviewees: establishing a conversation surrounding how written and unwritten social contracts of space are developed in performance settings. By problematizing accepted methods, and moving toward new theories of interdependent documentation, this paper aims to answer the question of how diverse bodies can be equitably represented in a single space together, and defines a centralizing, living model of documentation which may serve as a central hub, or container, for future conversation surrounding accessibility and space.



Interdependent Networks

February 6-7, 2025

Book of Abstracts

A practicing member of the Toronto & GTA performance communities for upwards of three years. A first year MA student in the CDTPS department at the University of Toronto. My artistic practice and research interests intersect with my identity as Neurodivergent, Queer, & Biracial: as such, intersectionality has always seemed obvious to me. I believe that the need for community and an understanding of how to function interdependently as people is our path forward as a people. My work asks questions of identity, perception, and values. Asking the why and the how to "progress" while demanding action.

Shira Leuchter: "Making the Imperfect Thing Together: Collaborative Attempts."

Abstract: This talk looks at four performances, each structured to be incomplete, relying on meaningful collaboration to determine the course of the performance's content. Each extended a different type of invitation: *All The Things I've Lost* relied on improvised collaboration between performers, *Lost Together* relied on improvised collaboration between the performers and the audience member, *Sight Lines* relied on collaboration between audience members, and *The Haunting* relied on collaboration with the unknown. I use collaboration in these performances as an invitation, a task, a thing-to-be-done that can't be done without the explicit contributions of all the participants. The risk inherent in this collaborative performance is that I have no certainty that everyone will agree to the terms, or that our potential collaboration will result in anything. Every performance contains the possibility that it will end in nothing, which forces us to rely on each other and respond to each other in a way that is not predetermined and that allows us to explore our relationships, the ways in which we listen, and the ways in which we solve problems. As Jenn Stephenson and Mariah Horner write in *Play: Dramaturgies of Participation*, scenes in *Lost Together* are "deeply collaborative and unpredictable in their cooperative contingency" (50). The staged interdependence that I invite in my work can feel awkward, vulnerable, imperfect, and I'm interested in practicing these feelings together, for "through this interdependence, the explorations are shared between us—it becomes about our intimacy, our risk, our trust, our challenge, our transformation" (Adrian Howells).

Shira Leuchter makes performances that invite audiences to imagine new ways for us to be together. Her performance *The Haunting* enjoyed a sold-out run as part of Tarragon Theatre's Greenhouse Festival. Her live art performance *Lost Together* won the 2018 SummerWorks Production Prize and has toured extensively. She's won commissions from institutions including Harbourfront Centre and Gardiner Museum. She recently completed an MA in Theatre and Performance Studies from York University and is a graduate of the National Theatre School of Canada. Her writing has appeared in *Canadian Theatre Review*, where she is also co-editing an upcoming issue on Care.



Interdependent Networks

February 6-7, 2025

Book of Abstracts

PANEL 3B: NATURE, CULTURE, AND INDIGENEITY

Lisa Woynarski: "Urban Ecologies in Performance: from Colonialism to Community."

Abstract: We are living in the 'urban century' (Gaston 2010) as global patterns of urban migration mean that more than half the world's population now live in cities. They are not mere geographical locations, rather they shape the lives of those who live in and around them – socially, politically and ecologically. They reflect the inequalities of society at large and embody historic nature/culture divides, histories of displacement and dispossession, anthropocentrism and material inequalities. As urban ecologies become essential to consider through climate crisis, we need cultural acts of imagining different ways of living together in more just and equitable ways. Peter Morin's (Tahltan Nation) Cultural Graffiti in London (2013) embodies Indigenous knowledge and culture by foregrounding how legacies of colonialism are living in the structures of contemporary cities. In this site-based work, Morin sang Tahltan songs to different monuments in London (UK), bringing Indigenous awareness, presence and art into the city where Indigenous presences have been wilfully forgotten or erased. The Strategy Room by Fast Familiar (UK 2023) is a participatory work in which audiences are immersed in a fictional future and need to make decisions about their local communities to support carbon reduction policies. I argue that the combination of principles from each work allows us to see the potential of performance in imagining a more climate just future, by taking the colonial marked systems and transforming them into community-driven ones that prioritise equality and environmental justice for the human and more-than-human world.

Laurel Green: "Seeding the Future (This Is Not a Metaphor) Participatory Acts of Public Gardening with Yarrow Collective."

Abstract: On lək'wəŋən territory, colonially known as Victoria, BC, Yarrow Collective creates multidisciplinary installations that invite communities into creative acts of public gardening. Co-founder Laurel Green will share the methodologies behind developing playful participatory encounters as explorations of our contemporary and ancestral relationships with invasive plants and the impact they have on our communities' identity, health, and belonging. To confront her own settler-inherited, extractive notions of what a garden should be and to investigate what healing the land means today, Laurel and her team collaborated with Coast Salish Elder Johnny Aitken and engaged gardeners, land stewards, naturalists, homeowners, and members of remote island communities through seasonal site visits to a Gulf Island facing irreparable environmental devastation from invasive plants and fallow deer. Reflecting on these experiences, Laurel envisions the transformative potential of weaving together her artistic practices in an ongoing collaborative relationship with the life cycles of Indigenous plants and pollinators. She imagines what becomes possible when gardening is shifted from expert labour to become a shared creative act. Yarrow Collective's installations became meeting places for intergenerational temporary communities that offer ecological resources, held space for uncomfortable truths, and yield opportunities for ongoing stewardship as both collective journeys and site-responsive living artworks. Expanding upon a recently published article in Canadian Theatre Review (Winter, 2024), this presentation will take up FOOT's Interdependent Networks theme by asking: in a world beset by climate crisis, how can we as artists create participatory performance work that moves audiences from distant spectators to become active agents with an awareness of the role they play in a larger ecosystem? What does it mean to consider the needs of non-human collaborators, and work with a life-centred dramaturgical approach that offers communities an opportunity to collectively rehearse a more sustainable and just future for people and planet?



Interdependent Networks

February 6-7, 2025

Book of Abstracts

Laurel Green (she/her) is an artist, producer, and doctoral scholar who creates invitation to participate and provocations for change. She is a nationally recognized dramaturg and creative producer of new work, from world premiere plays to gameful performances, digital experiences, gardening installations, and community activations. As a Ph.D Student in the Graduate Program in Theatre, Dance, & Performance Studies, York University, Laurel is a Research Associate at Sensorium: Centre for Digital Arts and Technology, and a Trainee with Connected Minds. She holds a Master's degree in Drama from the University of Toronto. <https://www.laurel-green.com/>.

Raphael Glazov: "Indigenous Adaptations of Shakespearean Eucatastrophe."

Abstract: This presentation explores how Indigenous storytelling, characterized by unique narrative structures and cultural resilience, enhances J.R.R. Tolkien's concept of eucatastrophe—the sudden, joyful turn that consoles sorrow and grief—and themes of hope and redemption in Shakespeare's works. By examining adaptations by Indigenous artists such as Monique Mojica, Yvette Nolan, and Jani Lauzon, I will illustrate how Indigenous storytelling emphasizes relationality, communal memory, and cycles of resilience, thus expanding the notion of eucatastrophe. I will analyze Shakespeare's plays—specifically *The Tempest*, *Macbeth*, and *Julius Caesar*—where Indigenous interpretations reveal narratives of identity, survival, and interconnectedness, harmonizing with Tolkien's concept of eucatastrophe by highlighting cross-communal grief and healing. Through these adaptations, which incorporate Indigenous storytelling elements like language, ritual, and symbolism, the themes of power, loss, and reconciliation are reframed. Examples will demonstrate how performances create a "eucatastrophic" shift by inviting audiences to process historical injustices while envisioning restorative futures. Mechanisms such as cultural symbols, role reversals, and ritual braiding within narratives affirm Indigenous identity and agency, emphasizing collective interdependence and the need for societal healing. Ultimately, this discussion aims to reveal the profound connections between Shakespeare's works, Tolkien's fairy tale eucatastrophe, and Indigenous storytelling—not as isolated genres but as interwoven narratives of redemption that link kinship, memory, grief, and new interpretations of hope-filled joy.

Raphael Glazov is a third-year PhD student at the University of Toronto's CDTPS, specializing in the intersection of Shakespearean plays, fairy stories as explored by scholars like J.R.R. Tolkien, and Indigenous methodologies of storytelling and adaptation. He holds a BA Cum Laude in Fine Art with a minor in Theatre Performance from Seton Hall University, a BA with First-Class Honours in Theatre Studies from the University of King's College, and a Master's from the University of Toronto. Raphael is an actor and director with a passion for Shakespeare, highlighted by productions like *Twelfth Night*, *Macbeth*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.



Interdependent Networks

February 6-7, 2025

Book of Abstracts

KEYNOTE WORKSHOP: "EVERYONE IS INTERESTING."

GUESTS: Isabel Ahat and Kathy Vuu from Mammalian Diving Reflex

Abstract: *Everyone is Interesting* is a community-focused project that aims to explore, engage with, and unite the individuals within a community. Inspired by our internationally acclaimed social acupuncture workshops and performances, we use intensive exercises to facilitate flows of energy and connection between people, providing a series of intimate, unusual, and joyful experiences that prove the universal truth: *Everyone is Interesting*. *Everyone is Interesting* is a format that produces a bespoke experience and performance tailored to a specific community. This performance operates with a deep awareness of the effects of connecting with others and the understanding that, in the right context, people will take care of even the most random stranger.

Mammalian Diving Reflex creates site and social-specific performance events, theatre productions, participatory gallery installations, videos, art objects and theoretical texts to foster dialogue and dismantle barriers between individuals of all backgrounds. Our work has been experienced in 105+ cities in 29 countries across 200+ unique tours and is known in Canada & abroad for innovative approaches to performance, receiving numerous accolades for creative collaborations. In 2022, we were awarded South Korea's prestigious Dong-A Award for 'Best New Conceptual Play' for *All the Sex I've Ever Had*. We have been shortlisted for a number of awards: the ANTI Festival International Prize for Live Art (2019); the BKM Preis Kulturelle Bildung (2017); the Ellen Stewart International Award (2016) for promoting social change & in 2016 were named to San Francisco's Yerba Buena Center's Top 100, an international list of creative minds shaping the future of culture.

Isabel Ahat, is a Tkaronto (Toronto)-based artist and the Associate Producer and Assistant Finance Manager at Mammalian Diving Reflex. At the age of twelve, she first joined Mammalian as a Food Critic for *Eat the Street in Toronto* (2009). As one of the original crew from the neighbourhood of Parkdale, Isabel is an important part of the company's succession strategy, which is focused on diversifying the cultural sector with young creators of colour. Isabel currently produces many of Mammalian's new works, including *Walk With Me While I Remember You* and *Everything Has Disappeared*. She continues to tour Mammalian's productions and social-engagement methodologies, both locally and internationally, all while managing their finances.

Kathy is a regular Mammalian collaborator, and has worked on numerous projects including: *All the Sex I've Ever Had* at Sydney WorldPride in Sydney, Australia (2023), Freedom Festival in Hull, UK (2022) and True Colors Festival & Kyoto Experiment in Japan (2020 & 2021), *Sex, Drugs and Criminality* to ANTI Festival in Kuopio, Finland (2019), *Teentalitarianism* to The Lowey in Manchester, UK (2018) and the Ruhrtriennale in Germany (2016), and *Nightwalks with Teenagers* to The Benway in Toronto (2022), LIFT in London, UK (2018), Hangö teaterträff in Hanko, Finland (2018), Theaterfestival Base in Basel, Switzerland (2016), University of Leeds in Leeds, UK (2012) and Cape Breton (2011), as well as *The Producers of Parkdale*, *Dare Night: Lockdown*, *How to Hook Up*, *Promises to a Divided City*, the film mini-series *High School Health* and the short film *Teen Thoughts*. In spring 2016, Kathy presented a talk and workshop at the Lunenburg Symposium on Mentorship in the Arts. Kathy continues to be an important part of the company's succession strategy, which is focused on diversifying the cultural sector with young creators of colour.



Interdependent Networks

February 6-7, 2025

Book of Abstracts

FILM SCREENINGS

Sophie Rivers: "More to Say: Intergenerational Connections and Cultural Identity."

Abstract: We are a team dedicated to exploring intergenerational work and cultural identity. To us, interdependence highlights the innate connections we share with our parents, grandparents, and broader familial networks. Building on our multidisciplinary digital project from 2022, *What Else to Say?* (linked in this application), we seek to further develop this artistic documentary work through a live performance that integrates verbatim theatre and movement, drawing on material collected from our previous project. This presentation will also incorporate video footage and sound. Our central question is: What is our responsibility as the next generation to ethically document and learn from our elders? Older generations bear the vital task of passing down wisdom, information, and history, while the younger generation must interpret and implement these teachings to create a better world. We are literally and figuratively dependent on one another for both physical and mental support across all ages. This intricate web of interdependence is worth exploring, particularly in its emotional complexities. We aim to pose questions that evoke vivid memories from our elders, recognizing that they are often overlooked and rely on younger family members for various forms of support. Mental health, in particular, can be neglected in these dynamics. By engaging in reflective conversations with their children and grandchildren, we believe mutual growth and strength can be cultivated. Through the continuation of this project, we aspire to explore collective memory and inspire others to engage in similar dialogues. We will provide all necessary technical support for this installation presentation.

Sophie Rivers is a multidisciplinary artist, writer and educator from Toronto. She holds a BAH in stage and screen from Queen's University, and a Masters degree in Performance from Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts (London UK). Through her research in devising, ensemble creation, cultural identity and mythology, she has produced work exploring identity through storytelling. She is currently developing her own show, *Odd at Sea*, and an adaption of Alison McCreesh's graphic novel, *Degrees of Separation*. She is also a painter, most notably producing a show at The Gallery on 47th street in Yellowknife in 2024. She has worked in theatre, most recently the lead in new work *Death: A Love Story* (Toronto, Hamilton). She has appeared in commercials and tv, as well as award winning short film *From A to Q* (London). Olivia Daniels (she/her) is a theatre artist based in Toronto. She holds a BFA in Drama from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. Recent credits: *I was Unbecoming Then* (Producer/performer, Next Stage Festival), *Falsettos* (Trina, Bowtie Productions), *The Storyteller* (Director; Hamilton Fringe Festival) *Small Mouth Sounds* (Director/Producer; AIR), *Unravel: A Jewish Monologue Slam* (Creator/Producer; HGJTC). Olivia is the co-founder of Artists in Residence, a theatre company created during the COVID-19 pandemic to support artists' mental health by focusing on community, connection, and collaboration. www.olivia-daniels.com

Daniella Vinitzki Mooney: "Zeno's Paradox: Unpacking Experiments in Dialogue Towards Peace and Equity in IP."

Abstract: In summer 2024, Jewish theatre practitioner-scholar Dr. Daniella Vinitzki Mooney and Palestinian Canadian animation-artist Danny Atari conceived and produced *Zeno's Paradox: An Experiment in IP Dialogue and Equity*, a micro-documentary short commissioned by Theatre Agora's "Just Meetings" initiative—spaces focused on decolonial frameworks inspired by bell hooks' "safe brave space." The project gathered Canadian Jews, Muslims, Palestinians, and Israelis in the diaspora with direct ties to the region, who met in an intimate Toronto setting and shared a peace vision organically co-crafted over the course of discussion, and whose conversation was inspired by a live reading of Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish's *Rita and the Rifle*. [...]



Interdependent Networks

February 6-7, 2025

Book of Abstracts

[...] This exchange was captured in our experimental documentary, set for release in November 2024 through Theatre Agora, highlighting an anti-war, anti-occupation, anti-oppression, and humanitarian worldview, enhanced by Atari's animation. I propose sharing this six-minute project, beginning with a contextual introduction and moving into a discussion about the project vision and evolution in light of ongoing Middle Eastern heavy realities. This conversation ultimately aims toward a peace-driven and equitable vision for Palestinian liberation alongside Israel, imagined as a "third space"—a term coined by the collective—as a celebration of cultures and future generations living aside and among one another, in a stark rejection of violence and war. In summary, this presentation showcases Zeno's Paradox (a title reflecting an irresolvable math equation as a self-reflective question on the region) through film and discussion.

I am an award-winning PhD/MFA practitioner-scholar with over 20 years of professional work and peer-reviewed publication and teaching. I currently live in the GTA and my areas of expertise include but are not limited to: acting, immersive frameworks, experimental theatre, and DEDI. I teach equity and inclusion for Algoma-Yorkville and recently completed design of a physical theatre fundamentals course for Humber College. Recent monograph: *The Immersive Theatre of GALE GATES* (Routledge; 2022) Link to research gate: <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Daniella-Vinitski-Mooney> website: daniellavinitski.com

Julia Aplin: "Embodied Aesthetic Arts Practices with Arboreal Kin."

Abstract: I propose to share my research into relational practices with trees that reaches towards an understanding of our kinship relations. I will share and contextualize some of my art in the form of videopoems that I created in collaboration with trees and people during my research project for my Masters of Environmental Studies at York University's Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change. I will also share some simple embodied practices that participants are invited to experience as part of the presentation. Video poems: <http://upwardspiral.me/dancing-with-trees/>

Julia Aplin has been studying and practicing movement for over 40 years. She has an intense curiosity about the human body in motion and draws on a variety of tools and techniques in her current practice. Julia danced full time for 15 years with Dancemakers, under the Artistic Direction of Serge Bennathan performing around the world. She is an award winning choreographer and has created dances for theatres, rivers, boxing rings, wading pools, cyberspace and neuroscience labs. Julia is on faculty at University of Toronto and Centre for Indigenous Theatre teaching movement to actors. She is a consultant with PULSE research team for movement and aging at McMaster University. She is an artist in residence at the LIVElab a world class facility for the scientific study of music, sound and movement in relation to human health. In September 2022, she led three installations for riverMOUTH with Urbanvessel and Art in the Park to offer Torontonians a closer relationship to the Cobecheonk/Humber River. She works with a wide range of people from elite performers to beginners. She has created work with the Canadian Opera Company on the Four Seasons stage and with the neighbourhood public school in the basement gym. Julia founded and led Triple C, community dance group for creation, collaboration and community 2019-2021. She held a fellowship with rareCharitable reserve in Cambridge, Ontario. Her research is focused on embodiment and kinship through human and tree relations. She is a member of Wild Soma, an artist collective for embodied World-Making.