

Abstracts and Bios

Exploring the tension between performances of ordinariness and extraordinariness: the case of Jean-Luc Mélenchon as an illustration of charismatic leadership in left-wing populism

Theo Aiolfi

The question of leadership has always been a controversial issue within left-wing movements. Ideologically rooted within a culture that favours equality and horizontality over hierarchy, that emphasises community over individuality and that is sceptical of “great man” narratives of History, the Left has had an ambiguous relationship with charismatic leaders. However, with the dramatic rise in recent years of right-wing populist leaders like Donald Trump, Rodrigo Duterte or Jair Bolsonaro, the question of whether left-wing movements should emulate this phenomenon by fostering and encouraging the emergence of appealing and instantly recognisable leaders within their own ranks. Beyond this pragmatic question of emulation, the contributions made notably by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe have brought substantial theoretical support to this idea. Laclau in particular insisted on the pivotal role of the leader within populism as “an empty signifier” within which societal demands could aggregate and that was central in the performative articulation of “the people”. Likewise, Mouffe argued for the need to develop a specific form of left-wing populism to counter right-wing populism, using the more inclusionary discourse of a critique of the neoliberal elite rather than an exclusionary discourse of xenophobic nationalism that targets vulnerable minorities, be them migrants or religious communities.

In this paper, I will use the interdisciplinary approach to populism as a performative political style to analyse the case of Jean-Luc Mélenchon and develop the topic of the ambiguous place of the leader in left-wing populism. I will notably focus on the inevitable tension between two types of political performances of identity that are inherent to populism: performances of ordinariness and performances of extraordinariness. Exploring the way Mélenchon embodies both of these dimensions, with all the contradictions that it entails, this paper seeks to showcase the problematic issue of leadership by empirically analysing Mélenchon’s political performances during both his 2017 presidential campaign and his time as head of a parliamentary group since then.

Théo Aiolfi is a PhD candidate at the University of Warwick. In his research, he develops an interdisciplinary approach to populism as a performative political style, which combines politics and performance to apply it in particular to the case of right-wing populism

From Community Reflection to Resistance: Interventionist Political Performance in Austria Today

Dr Vicky Angelaki

Associate Professor of Theatre, University of Reading

In a dramatic reversal of political scenery, the seeds of which had already been visible, in two consecutive years Austria saw a radical shift in its election performance. After a tightly fought Presidential race that drew extensive international coverage, in December 2016 Alexander Van der Bellen was confirmed as President. Less than a year later, Austria's parliamentary election produced a result demonstrating a right-wing turn, which eventually delivered a coalition government led by the ÖVP (conservative party) and the FPÖ (the far-right party).

In this paper I will consider Austrian theatre, performative practices, politics and society more broadly and using Austria as a paradigm for conflicting political discourses and ideologies that evidence both a strong centre-left/left resistance and the unquestionable rise of right-wing populism, I will ask:

- How has the 'Long Summer of Migration' (2015) influenced political trends in European countries that experienced it particularly intensely?
- What do performances of citizenship mean today in the context of elections and protests?
- How might the theatre, from institutional to unorthodox performance contexts, act as unifying forum for reflection and intervention? What is the role of subsidy?

Dr Vicky Angelaki is Associate Professor of Theatre at the University of Reading. She has published extensively in the areas of contemporary theatre, society and politics and her research concentrates on internationalism and cultural sociology through the lens of performance. Major publications include the monographs *The Plays of Martin Crimp: Making Theatre Strange* (Palgrave Macmillan 2012) and *Social and Political Theatre in 21st-Century Britain: Staging Crisis* (Bloomsbury 2017), the edited collection *Contemporary British Theatre: Breaking New Ground* (Palgrave Macmillan 2013; 2016) and the forthcoming *Theatre & Environment* (Summer 2019) and *The Cambridge Companion to British Playwriting since 1945* with Dan Rebellato (2020). Angelaki is also the co-editor for the Palgrave Macmillan series *Adaptation in Theatre and Performance*.

The Hard Road to Feminism's Renewal

Elaine Aston

As my title suggests, this paper is indebted to the writings of Stuart Hall – more specifically, I take my cue from Hall's observations on 'political imagery' and the 'game of impression-management' in order to reflect on feminism's renewal. Routinely subjected to 'impression-management' by the Right, feminism also has been overlooked by the Left, not least because, as Hall observed, 'the culture of patriarchy is nowhere so deeply embedded as within the left itself'. Arguing in Gramscian terms for 'a war of position, conducted on many fronts at once',

Hall was clear that for the Left to become hegemonic it must recognise the interconnectedness of social struggles. Aiming to reflect on what today's feminist 'front' brings to the larger, hegemonic struggle for a politics of the Left, I shall examine 'feminist imagery' from three different shows. These are: Laura Wade's satirical portrait of the middle-class housewife-by-choice in *Home, I'm Darling* (2018) that urges the necessity of disarticulating 'choice feminism' in order to rearticulate the equality agenda of liberal feminism; the radical-feminist protesting of persistent violence against women staged in David Greig's version of *The Suppliant Women* (2016-17); and the socialist-feminist image/imagining of the seventies Grunwick Strike in Townsend Theatre Productions' *We Are the Lions Mr Manager* (2017-2018). Radically different in style, form and feminist dynamics, together these performances evidence the re-radicalisation of feminism(s): exemplify a feminist 'network of resistance' fighting on different but interconnected fronts against inequalities and injustices.

Elaine Aston is Professor of Contemporary Performance at Lancaster University, UK. Her monographs include *Caryl Churchill* (1997/ 2001/ 2010); *Feminism and Theatre* (1995); *Feminist Theatre Practice* (1999); *Feminist Views on the English Stage* (2003); *Performance Practice and Process: Contemporary [Women] Practitioners* (2008, with Geraldine Harris); *A Good Night Out for the Girls* (2013, with Geraldine Harris); and *Royal Court: International* (2015, with Mark O'Thomas). She is the co-editor of *The Cambridge Companion to Modern British Women Playwrights* (2000, with Janelle Reinelt); *Feminist Futures: Theatre, Performance, Theory* (2006, with Geraldine Harris); *Staging International Feminisms* (2007, with Sue-Ellen Case); and *The Cambridge Companion to Caryl Churchill* (2009, with Elin Diamond). Elaine has served as Senior Editor of *Theatre Research International* (2010-12) and is currently IFTR's Vice President for Publications and Internationalisation. She has been elected to serve as IFTR's President from July 2019.

UNINVITED GUESTS' MAKE BETTER PLEASE: PROFANING THE NEWS MEDIA, DEMOCRATIC APPARATUS AND POLITICAL CONSENSUS.
Dr Paul Clarke

Clarke's practice-as-research with *Uninvited Guests* explores strategies and structures for collaboration with audiences, and interrogates the politics/ethics of participation in performance. *Make Better Please* took shape in response to the question, 'What form could contemporary political theatre appropriately take?'

Giorgio Agamben's (2007) essay 'In Praise of Profanation' proposes 'profanation as the political task of the coming generation' (92), an act of resistance to forms of separation. This paper will use Agamben's text as a frame through which to think about the aesthetics of *Uninvited Guests' Make Better Please* and will think through this performance about Agamben's proposal.

Rather than being site-specific, *Make Better Please* was specific to the date on which it was performed, with each day's unique script emerging from conversations with audience members, prompted by reading the day's

newspapers. The audience-generated content fed into a structure that borrowed from other forms and media, both popular and archaic; Quaker or town hall meetings, shamanic rites, radio broadcasts, rock gigs, political protest, folk performance and 'What the Papers Say'.

Unlike polemical, campaigning socialist theatre, Make Better Please did not attempt to deliver a singular political message. Neither was our agenda to persuade or unite the public around an issue, or to assemble them for or against a cause. Many diverse issues were raised and given voice to by those who happened to have come together temporarily for the show. Like Jean Luc Nancy (2001), I should be wary of using the word community here, because of implied homogeneity and its political, religious and ethnic misuse. Our interest was in 'being-with' other people, in 'sharing and sharing out of space, at most a contact: a being-together without assemblage' (32). Also in the sharing and shifting of roles or responsibilities, a circulation of positions in relation to the performance, what you do in it and can do. What the work attempted to produce was a space for political dialogue and debate, within which social actors are able to occupy differential (and perhaps incommensurable) positions. These positions may have been antagonistic, to the work, to the performers, to each other and each other's points of view, but these struggles and unresolvable tensions were often productive.

In Make Better Please we were interested in multiple voices retaining their singularity, not becoming subsumed into a collective, unified or fully inclusive "we"; in the people who were there holding onto their diverse interests and precarious identities. There's a relationship with Mouffe and Laclau's conception of a "radical and plural democracy" (xv), constituted and sustained by conflicts of interest between people or groups, as well as through processes of identification or agreement. The show took up Mouffe's proposal that democracy should be envisaged in the form of a dialogue and that controversial issues might be resolved by listening to one another. The desired outcome is not necessarily a harmonious resolution, to attain some impossible consensus, but rather to open a space for the many different voices that a democratic society — and a participating audience — encompasses, to acknowledge conflicting interests, differing positions and irresolvable antagonisms. What is resisted is sacralizing consensus, which in Agamben's terms would also mean commodifying consensus and therefore separating the public from this political possibility. Mouffe and Laclau's 'radicalization of democracy' (xv) might enable people with diverse agendas to come together, to meet and be with one another, despite continuing to be adversaries; to take collective action without consensus. This is what Make Better Please attempted to rehearse.

See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j3nksLZUyWU>

Or <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rC3I2Zqueg8>

Dr Paul Clarke is an artist, writer, and teaches Performance Studies at University of Bristol. From 2008-2010 he was the Research Fellow on [Performing the Archive: the Future of the Past](#), hosted by University of Bristol's Live Art Archives and Arnolfini archive, and is a co-investigator on the AHRC-

funded [Performing Documents](#) project. He is an artistic director of the theatre company Uninvited Guests, which authors work collaboratively with audiences and explores new approaches to political performance. Uninvited Guests' work has toured internationally and shown at Southbank Centre, Tate Britain, Royal Shakespeare Company, National Review of Live Art, BAC, Fierce Festival and Historic Royal Palaces. Paul is also a member of the art collective Performance Re-enactment Society (PRS), and has recently co-edited the book *Artists in the Archive: Creative and Curatorial Engagements with Documents of Art and Performance*, which was published by Routledge in June 2018.

See: <https://bristol.academia.edu/PaulClarke>

The UK Human Rights Act, Populism and Neoliberalism

Tanzil Chowdhury

This paper will examine what challenges radical right populism may pose for the UK Human Rights Act (HRA). Populism posits a Manichean view of the world between two antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite'. It generally argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* of the people. Populists thus tend to claim a 'moral monopoly of representation' that concomitantly (though not always) simplifies contemporary political and socio-economic issues to such an extreme that it is rendered distinct from the ordinary parameters of public. The paper begins by asking what radical right populist critiques of the HRA might look like before going on to examine the Tory party's proposal to replace the HRA with a British Bill of Rights (BBoR). Here, we speculate whether such a 'domestic-human rights instrument' (like the BBoR) would be underwritten by a potentially fatal tension of human rights-entitlements predicated on citizenship or stringent residency requirements-arguably a partial concession to radical right populists. Finally, it is necessary to acknowledge some legitimate critiques of the HRA which populist driven attacks have been able to exploit and ask whether the HRA has been concomitant with neo-liberalism that has arguably presaged a surge in populism. In light of these issues, we make some remarks on what any reforms of the HRA ought to look like.

Tanzil Chowdhury is a lecturer in Public Law at Queen Mary, University of London. His current research areas looks at the British Overseas Territory and UK War Powers, drawing on the scholarship of Empire and Imperialism. He has a forthcoming book with Routledge titled *Time, Temporality and Legal Judgment*.

What Cannot be Imagined: Milo Rau's General Assembly and Practical Populism for the Left

Lily Maeve Climenhaga

"What Cannot be Imagined" explores how Swiss director Milo Rau and his production company the International Institute of Political Murder's (IIPM) 2017 political action project *General Assembly* serves as a practical example of what

Chantal Mouffe calls Left populism. It examines what it means to bring representatives of the fractured cultures of the Left – academia, activists, critics, experts – together into a single space alongside adversarial figures. Using examples from the first sitting of the General Assembly, this presentation undertakes an examination of the aspirations and successes of the first General Assembly; its shortcomings as well as the corrections necessary for the project's future iterations. I examine how General Assembly creates a “symbolic utopian institution for the future” (Rau) – an intuition that exists within a non-legitimized and therefore fictive space – which marks a starting point for the real-world counterpart: an institution that does not yet exist in the real world and that pushes beyond the theatrical frame. Using what could be described as critical utopianism, General Assembly attempts to find a way around the failures of existing institutions to create a framework for future real-world organizations that also responds to their many failures and shortcomings.

Lily Maeve Climenhaga is a PhD candidate in a joint PhD in Performance Studies and Theaterwissenschaft with University of Alberta (Edmonton) and Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität (Munich). Lily is writing about the political, controversial, and undeniably exciting theatre of Swiss theatre- and film-maker Milo Rau and the International Institute of Political Murder. Lily currently resides in Munich and in addition to academic pursuits, also works as a dramaturg, editor, blogger (lostdramaturgininternational), translator (Milo Rau's Global Realism), and occasional stage manager.

Creating the Political, Bridging the Social: The Role of Praja Natya Mandali in Rural Andhra & Telangana

Komita Dhandra

Emerging out of the Left-cultural movement in the early 1940s Praja Natya Mandali (PNM) carried out its ideological work by using popular folk forms among the land-less peasants, agricultural workers and women against the oppression by the Nizam (monarch) and local landlords in rural Andhra-Telangana region of the southern plateau in India.

Based on the material gathered about PNM, the paper maps the history of the organisation with particular focus on the cultural works of its women actor-organisers during key mass movements namely Telangana Armed struggle, Anti-Arrack movement and the Nation Literacy Mission. Through its cultural work PNM mobilized hundreds of women from the economically and socially ostracized communities into the streets. The paper seeks methodological framework to complicate the idea of the cultural work as the political task taken up by the women actor-organisers in PNM, who devised new roles for themselves within their gendered organisational structures? How non-recognition of the cultural work of these women can be countered by studying the moments of agency in performances and organisational histories within the collective? It examines whether, in the context of PNM, the cultural Left ever developed a distinct identity or was it merely another manifestation of the political Left?

Komita Dhanda has been working as an organizer, actor, director and writer with Delhi based street theatre group Jana Natya Manch (JANAM) since 2004. She has served as Secretary of the group. After working with the group for over a decade, in 2017, she started pursuing M.Phil.- Ph.D. in Theatre & Performance Studies at the School of Arts & Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University. She has taught in the Department of Development Communication & Extension at Lady Irwin College, University of Delhi. Currently, she is teaching an elective course on Reading Cities through Neighbourhoods as a guest faculty at Centre for Community Knowledge, Ambedkar University, Delhi.

Living archives as embodied collective memories. Forms of resistance and for claiming a right to the city

Adriana Diaconu and Grégory Busquet

The right to the city as advocated by social movements worldwide encompasses a large spectrum of claims and are themselves part of more global movements of contestation and resistance to political and economic systems. From this perspective the presentation will question the relations and divergences between social and cultural claims made by subaltern groups in Brixton, UK and Cluj, Romania. While in Cluj the claims for redistribution, equality of rights and welfare for Roma are situated in a more classical rhetoric of the Left that refuses cultural designations, in Brixton cultural claims for recognition of the black community and of a memory of slavery are used for social objectives in fighting gentrification. Our approach of the two contexts focuses on performances of mobilisation and resistance and on collective memory formation using documentation, creation and use of archives for present action. We claim that memory's role is essential in both cases. Supported by the institutionalised form of community archives, collective memory gives its cultural identity to Brixton while it is also used in social struggles. In Cluj, informal forms of documenting the lived experience of struggles by activists supports memory formation that refuels contestation, giving struggles a cumulative character.

Dr. Adriana Diaconu is lecturer in urban studies and planning at the University Grenoble Alpes - Institute of Planning and Alpine Geography, where she directs the first year Master program in Urbanism. She conducts research as part of UMR PACTE (CNRS) research laboratory in social sciences. Trained in architecture, planning and urban studies she develops interdisciplinary approaches to urban spaces and places by addressing both social practices and embodied experiences in the city and their relations to political discourses and urban policies. She published on housing policies and urban transformation, on cultural heritage claims and collective memories of vulnerable social groups. In her recent research work Dr Diaconu addresses epistemological and methodological exchanges between social sciences and the arts as part of the cross-disciplinary Performance Laboratory program of the University Grenoble Alpes.

Dr. Grégory Busquet holds a PhD. in urban studies, is senior lecturer in sociology at the University of Paris-Nanterre and conducts his research activity at UMR LAVUE (CNRS). He is at present visiting professor at IUAV university in Venice.

Based on critical urban theories, his research focuses on the stakeholders and the ideologies underlying urban policies and town planning. His fieldwork expanded to address urban struggles and the use of collective memories in urban movements opposing urban renewal and gentrification in France and Great Britain. These questions are placed in the theoretical perspective of the right to the city, as a means of emancipation, of reclaiming one's difference and of legitimizing its place in the city. Dr. Busquet published especially on the right to the city, social movements, urban policies, participatory town planning, ideologies and utopias and more broadly on the relation between space and politics.

Community Plays: Creating a New Unity in Society

Marianne Drugeon

Theatre is a social experience and is therefore by definition a communal activity. For many it is also the perfect political tool. Among politically-committed experiments in the United Kingdom is Community Theatre: plays are written by professional playwrights, with and for particular communities, often cities or regions, and include hundreds of volunteer cast members from the community.

This paper aims at exploring how Community Plays created in the past three decades for Dorchester have tried to engage in new ways of defining a community, focusing on what different groups, divided by their social classes, their geographical origins or their religious faith, may find in common, beside living in the same city, through the creation of a play. Focusing on the various possible definitions of what is (the) common(s) (G. Delannoi, P. Dardot), we would like to look deeper into the tensions articulating the dialectics of community and communitarianism. How can artists recreate a sense of bonding, a feeling of a shared cultural experience, without erasing in the process what makes each individual different and special in the community? How can they build on those differences and try to create a new society enriched by the variety of its components?

Marianne Drugeon is Maître de Conférences (Senior Lecturer) at the Université Paul-Valéry Montpellier 3 and a member of the research center EMMA. As a specialist of British theatre of the 19th and 20th centuries, and more particularly of contemporary committed playwrights, she has published extensively on David Edgar but also on G. B. Shaw, Oscar Wilde, Samuel Beckett or Tom Stoppard. She wrote together with Emmanuel Vernadakis a book on Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* (2014) and co-translated two plays by Tom Stoppard, *The Hard Problem* (2017) and *The Invention of Love* (to be published). She is currently shadowing the work of playwright Stephanie Dale, who is writing the next Community Play for the city of Dorchester, to be performed in June 2020.

Representing Migration: Idioms of Crisis and Resistance in Turkey **Emine Fişek**

Since the eruption of the Syrian Civil War in 2011, the influx of refugees in to Turkey has been unprecedented in the country's history, with political developments like the Turkey-EU deal of 2016 not only exacerbating public debate surrounding the Turkish government's "open-door" policy, but placing the question of Syrian migration at the center of Turkey's lengthy and fraught relationship with Europe. Theatre practitioners have been slow to address this migratory moment, but an exception has been veteran actor and director Genco Erkal's 2017 production of Romanian-French playwright Matei Visniec's play *Migraaaaants*. Developed in the context of Europe's own migratory "crisis," *Migraaaaants* is composed of a series of vignettes that critique European refugee policy and the deadly economies that it has prompted in the continent's borderlands. But what might it mean to produce *Migraaaaants* in a national context where the binary of European "hosts" and non-European "refugees" gives way to another set of political identities? How do we assess the political, ethical and aesthetic blueprint left behind by the emergence of a shared paradigm of "crisis"? And finally, what does this tell us about the possibilities as well as the blindspots of a trans-national repertoire of resistance on the Left?

Emine Fişek is Assistant Professor in the Department of Western Languages and Literatures at Boğaziçi University. She is the author of *Aesthetic Citizenship: Immigration and Theater in Twenty-First-Century Paris* (Northwestern University Press, 2017) and *Theatre & Community* (Red Globe Press, 2019). Her current research is on the impact that cultural memory, urban transformation and international migration have had on Turkish theatre in the twenty-first century.

The Political Work of Art as "Speech Act" – the Efficacy Debate Reframed

Tony Fisher, The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama

Writing in response to Sartre's essay on engaged literature, Adorno proclaimed: 'This is not the time for political works of art; rather politics has migrated into the autonomous work of art, and it has penetrated most deeply into works that present themselves as politically dead'. In this paper, I challenge some of the assumptions that inform much of the thinking about the nature of political works of art by asking what makes a work political today? I examine two theories of effect based on an analysis of the 'communicative turn' – one that I allege leads to a sociological reduction of the political in art; and the other that I suggest provides a basis for understanding art's political efficacy in terms of three factors which constitute a political speech act as 'dissensual': (1) the 'agonic', in that it expresses an 'adversarial' relation (Mouffe); (2) the 'phatic', in the sense that it is 'counter-interpellative' and able to 'disarticulate' existing fixed discursive subject positions in order to help rearticulate them 'hegemonically' in a 'chain of

equivalence' (Mouffe and Laclau); and, finally, (3) the 'parresiastic', in that in asserting a social *truth* the work of art necessarily risks direct confrontation with a power that would rather not hear it (Foucault).

Tony Fisher is Reader in Theatre and Philosophy, at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. His monograph, *Theatre and Governance in Britain, 1500-1900: Democracy, Disorder and the State* was published in 2017 by Cambridge University Press. He is also co-editor (with Eve Katsouraki) of *Performing Antagonism: Theatre, Performance and Radical Democracy* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017) and *Beyond Failure: New Essays on the Cultural History of Failure in Theatre and Performance* for Routledge, 2018 (also edited with Eve Katsouraki). A third edited volume, *Theatre, Performance, Foucault!* with Kéline Gotman will be published by Manchester University Press in 2019.

"Not just theatre, also politics, law": Democratic assemblies and theatre-making with detention centre Sjælsmark and Trampoline House.

Helene Grøn PhD candidate in Theatre Studies at the University of Glasgow and Glasgow Refugee, Asylum and Migration Network (GRAMnet)

Like the rest of Europe and the world, right wing politics and anti-immigration initiatives have seen a steady rise in Denmark. Recently, (and among others) these have been the establishment of Deportation Centre Sjælsmark (run by the Prison and Probation Service), specifically designed to pressure the rejected asylum seeker to give up and leave the country and, arguing the impossibility for diversity to flourish without Danish culture losing its integrity by politicians and media - both of which frame the refugee as the perpetual stranger, outsider and criminal.

Set against this socio-political framework, this paper explores firstly how assemblies like Trampoline House (community house for refugees and asylum seekers in Copenhagen), work to provide a place of welcome and hospitality through a holistic approach to democracy. Secondly, it reflects on the ethics and aesthetics at play in making theatre with a group from Detention Centre Sjælsmark in Denmark. In workshop sessions, they pushed for a more radical approach of "not just theatre, also politics, law". Thus while it is problematic to proposing theatre and community spaces as the solution to larger political operations, the theatrical process with the group lends valuable thought to notions of counter-na

Helene Grøn is a Danish playwright, librettist, facilitator and researcher, currently residing in Glasgow. Helene has co-founded a theatre company, Leylines bringing to the stage stories of home, homelessness and being caught between languages and cultures; written librettos and operas for Scottish Opera, *The Night With...*, *Cottiers' Chamber Project*; her plays have had readings and

been performed at The Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh, The Arches in Glasgow, The Scottish Storytelling Centre and at The Copenhagen Theatre Circle. She has facilitated creative community projects with refugees and asylum seekers for Kaleidoscope, YCSA, Trampoline House and Detention Centre, and frequently works in the intersection between research, community and political engagement and arts practice.

Momentum and the disco turn: popular strategies for Party politics and rebuilding political cultures of the Left in 21st century Britain

Rebecca Hillman and Sarah Weston

Over the last decade austerity politics and deepening inequality under neoliberalism have prompted a resurgence of explicitly socialist politics. In the UK, the election of Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party in 2015 has rekindled interest in socialist praxis among party activists, some of whom have departed from traditional meetings and recruitment activity to vest energy in running popular social and cultural events. This paper focuses on the Manchester branch of the pro-Corbyn organisation, Momentum, and their recruitment of activists through locally embedded art projects and a social programme that includes activities such as hiking excursions, football matches, cinema, gigs and disco nights. Inspired by activists from international movements across the 20th century, they have also looked closer to home, specifically at organised socialist activity in 1930s Salford. Our paper will consider that legacy, as well as the group's interest in affectual political experience and strains of utopian counterculture that promotes 'feelings of collective joy' (Gilbert, 2017). Some orthodox activists have criticised Manchester for 'doing nothing but parties and gigs', while other branches have begun to emulate their approaches. We will consider how, by recontextualising specific traditions, activists are attempting to produce a politics that moves beyond party organising and towards creating sustainable cultures of resistance.

Dr Rebecca Hillman (R.A.Hillman@exeter.ac.uk) - Rebecca is a Lecturer in Drama at the University of Exeter. Her work as a trade unionist and political activist inform her theatre making, teaching, and her research into the function of cultural forms in social movements and political organisations. She enjoys convening an undergraduate module at Exeter called Activism and Performance, and working as a trustee for a radical independent arts fund called Future's Venture. She is especially interested in socialist and working-class culture, the way political theatre has been canonised, and contemporary movements that harness cultural forms to make change in the world.

Dr Sarah Weston (S.E.Weston@leeds.ac.uk) - Sarah is a Lecturer in the School of Media and Communication at the University of Leeds, specialising in voice, performance and political communication. Her research is largely practice-based, investigating voice training as a tool of political intervention with young

women. She is currently Co-Editor of the Theatre Dance and Performance Training Blog, creating a new dimension of the blog that explores training in applied theatre contexts. She is also a theatre practitioner, specialising in community work particularly with her theatre company Salford Community Theatre.

Proletarian and Fascist Performance Cultures: Revisiting Frames of Analysis

Eleftheria Ioannidou
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At the beginning of the twentieth century the discontents of capitalist modernity begot the quest for alternative forms of life [Lebensformen] which could recover a sense of collective unity. The call for transformative communal experiences was shared by the political and artistic movements which emerged in industrialised countries across Europe. Theatre practitioners sought to restore theatres' festive and communal function, breaking away with the bourgeois stage and turning to older forms of religious theatre, and especially Greek tragedy. The turn to Greek theatre underpins different types of experimentation, from the use of open-air spaces to the massive choruses in Max Reinhardt's Theatre of the Five Thousand. Aspects of Greek theatre such as the chorus and the ritual character not only provided the means to revolutionise theatre aesthetics but were also deployed within the political cultures that developed in the inter-war period. Within both avant-garde theatres and revolutionary politics theatrical and political articulations merge, turning performance into a shared area of radical possibility. In this respect, performance can provide a heuristic tool to explore the synergies between politics and aesthetics.

The proposed paper will examine the intricacies of the political performance cultures in inter-war Germany through a comparative analysis of proletarian and Nazi theatres and manifestations.

The proposed paper aims to challenge the assumption that similarities in proletarian and fascist manifestations attest to affinities in their respective political and cultural programmes. Despite the formal resemblances and interconnections, I will argue that there are radical divergences in the way power structures are framed and embodied in fascist theatre and events compared to the earlier proletarian performances. Whilst the positioning of bodies in proletarian choruses defies hierarchical organisation, fascist performances organise the masses around the individual leader. Paying attention to these differences is even more urgent in the present time, as contemporary radical and anti-establishment movements with distinctive political legacies, values, and pursuits are often categorised as populist by mainstream discourses. The analysis will pose methodological questions pertaining to the historical legacies of the left and the ultra-right; (how) can we study the genealogies and homologies of the political ideologies of the past outside the ideological value systems shaped by historical experience?

Eleftheria Ioannidou is Assistant Professor in Theatre/Performance in the department of Arts, Culture & Media of the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. Prior to her current appointment, she was a lecturer at the University of Birmingham, UK and a Humboldt Fellow at the Freie Universität of Berlin. She studied theatre at the University of Athens (BA) and Royal Holloway University of London (MRes) and read for a doctorate at the University of Oxford. Her research interests lie in the reception, adaptation, and performance of Greek tragedy in the twentieth century. She has published the monograph *Greek Fragments in Postmodern Frames: Rewriting Tragedy, 1970-2005* (OUP, 2017). Her ongoing research investigates performances of Greek tragedy under fascist regimes in Germany, Italy, and Greece during the interwar period.

Left Problems, Nationalism and the Crisis

Malcolm James and Sivamohan Valluvan

In spite of the rise of Jeremy Corbyn's Labour party, emboldened nationalism remains at the centre of British politics. After all, much of the past decade has seen nationalism become the most reliable broker of electoral power. It has informed the rise of far-right populisms whilst also fortifying centre-right rule. These nationalisms manifest along multiple registers. At times, the emphasis is economic protectionism. Elsewhere, they rails, against the dictates and opacity of various supranational institutions, not least the EU. Sometimes, they amount primarily to nostalgia for the 'green and pleasant' land. Common however to all forms is the compulsion to place the bulk of a society's challenges at the door of racialised ethnic communities, domestic and foreign.

So, as western capitalism reneges on the welfare contract, creating a new political vacuum, it is painfully frustrating that nationalism is rehabilitated as the most likely custodian of political discourse. And it is doubly frustrating that some who propagate for a left alternative also seem wedded to the nation – in asserting control over migration, over defence, over security, and over how we imagine our everyday sense of community.

As these frustrations multiply, our talk will provide a historically attuned analysis of the relationship in Britain between the current crisis and xeno-racist nationalism, including an engagement with the myths surrounding whiteness and the working class. On the one hand, we wish to press the importance of recognising the central role of racial nationalism in recent governance. On the other, we contend that an alternative left vision for governance must, as a minimum, start with the repudiation of nationalism and also of the left's routine submission to such nationalism. It is our wider argument that this repudiation can only manifest through a solid understanding of the contemporary crisis in which these nationalisms arise.

Malcolm James is a writer and teacher employed by University of Sussex. His research interests are in cultural studies, post-colonial and critical race approaches to youth, urban culture, migration, music and sound. Much of his work is community based, around youth clubs in East London. His essays, articles and journalism are widely published. He is author of the books *Urban*

Multiculture: Youth, Politics and Cultural Transformation (shortlisted for Philip Abrams Memorial Prize), and co-editor of the book *Regeneration Songs: Sounds of Investment and Loss in East London*. He is currently writing on the alternative sonics, intimacies and politics of reggae/jungle/grime. He can be found in person, on twitter @mookron or emailed at malcolm.james@sussex.ac.uk.

Sivamohan Valluvan is Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Warwick. Valluvan has written widely in the areas of racism and ethnicity, nationalism and cosmopolitanism, consumerism, and social and cultural theory more broadly. His forthcoming book, provisionally titled *The New Nationalism*, aims to, among other things, critically unpack and challenge recent invocations of a 'Left Behind' in much public analysis. He is on the editorial board of the journals *Sociological Review* and *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. Valluvan can be mailed at s.valluvan@warwick.ac.uk

Anuradha Kapur is a theatre-maker and teacher. Her theatre work has travelled nationally and internationally, and she has taught in theatre schools and universities in India and abroad. She is a founding member of Vivadi, a working group of theatre practitioners, visual artists, film-makers, musicians and writers. Vivadi seeks to do interdisciplinary work and attempts exchange between practice and research. Vivadi's works have ranged from performance sculptures and installation projects (*409 Ramkinkars*, on the practice of the artist Ram Kinkar Baij, 2015) to working on actor's biographies, on texts ranging from Tagore, Mohammed Hadi Ruswa, Mahesh Elkunchwar, Vijay Tendulkar, Shakespeare, Ibsen and Heiner Müller, among others. Her writings on performance have been widely anthologized and her book, *Actors Pilgrims Kings and Gods: the Ramlila at Ramnagar*, was published by Seagull Books, Calcutta (1993, 2004). Anuradha Kapur was invited to curate the performance window for *body.city: siting contemporary culture in India*, presented at the House of World Cultures, Berlin, in September 2003. She cocurated the theatre section of the *Serendipity Arts Festival* in Goa in 2016 and will do the 2017 edition as well. Anuradha Kapur completed her term as Director, National School of Drama, New Delhi, in 2013, where she was also Professor of Acting and Direction. She is presently Visiting Professor at Ambedkar University, Delhi.

Staging the People: Performance, presence and representation

Professor Adrian Kear, University of the Arts London

This paper will seek to investigate a key question at the heart of the relation between counter-hegemonic politics and populist forms of political address – the tension between the discursive construction of 'a people' around a political frontier or division aimed at articulating an egalitarian political subjectivation and collective action (Mouffe 2018), and the affective register of the inequality and dispossession felt by ordinary people in their subjectively experienced lives (Berlant, 2011). This might be summarised as the inevitable non-equivalence and recurrent conflict between presence and representation in both the political

and aesthetic sense; a tension made manifest in the internal contradictions of 'representative democracy' and the post-democratic attempt to render politically obsolete actual people as such. The paper will seek to examine how the practice of 'staging the people' might be considered central to imaging and constituting 'the people' in an increasingly theatricalised 'populist moment' and to articulating competing representational claims.

If the theatrical logic of democratic representation is dependent upon the exercise of a political claim to represent 'the people'; coextensively, the performative construct of 'the people' is dependent on the aesthetic logic of representation and its capacity to frame, codify and remediate the presence of people per se. Enacted through representation—recalling Marx's dictum in the Eighteenth Brumaire that 'they cannot represent themselves, they must be represented'—'the people' nonetheless remain different from, and in excess of, any particular representation or mode of representation. As Rancière insists, 'the people' are 'always more or less than the people'; the locus of an 'internal division' and index of the unbridgeable gap between presence and representation that constitutes politics' primary condition and site of operation (1999: 22, 87).

This gap, the paper will argue, appears and re-appears in the current conjunction as a tear in the very fabric of the visible; as a crisis of representation 'in representation' (Frank 2010: 35) that exceeds and undermines the normalising effects of politics as a post-democratic show. It thereby serves to re-open representation as the ground of the political as such, and as the site of its re-appearance within the otherwise bounded theatricality of the representational regime.

The argument will build on comparative analysis of two contemporary theatre works explicitly concerned with 'staging the people', performed in Manchester and Salford in the Spring of 2016: Quarantine's Quartet and Rimini Protokoll's 100% Salford. Both works examine how the lived experience of everyday lives might be brought to the stage through an apparent logic of presentation rather than representation: by ordinary people occupying the space of theatrical performance rather than seeing themselves and their lives represented by others (i.e. 'actors' – whether theatrical or political). Following the reading of these (pre-Brexit) works, the paper seeks to question whether the aesthetic shift towards self-presentation might correlate with a broader critique of the structures of political representation, or whether they serve as contemporary 'visits to the people' (Rancière 2017: 28) in which the frame of representation anticipates, accommodates and appropriates the insertion of the material presence of (some of) the people in advance.

Professor Adrian Kear is Programme Development Director, Performance Arts, at Wimbledon College of Arts, University of the Arts London. He is the author of numerous books and articles investigating the relationship between performance, politics and cultural practice. Adrian's books include: *Thinking Through Theatre and Performance* (with Maaïke Bleeker, Joe Kelleher and Heike Roms, Bloomsbury); *Theatre and Event: Staging the European Century* (Palgrave); *International Politics and Performance: Critical Aesthetics and Creative Practice* (with Jenny Edkins, Routledge); *Psychoanalysis and*

Performance (with Patrick Campbell, Routledge); and Mourning Diana: Nation, Culture and the Performance of Grief (with Deborah Lynn Steinberg, Routledge).

Neopopulism, neoliberalism and the performance of protest

Andy Lavender

This paper examines contemporary popular protests in terms of performance – and asks what we might make of this conjunction of performance and politics, where a range of large-scale civic expressions of disagreement share similar features across both ‘right’ and ‘left’ political perspectives. The paper considers the complicated intersections here. It examines some of the tropes and modes of performance that feature in this volatile scene of public and civil expression, including the mouvement des gilets jaunes (yellow vests movement) in France and elsewhere, the costumed protests that reference Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale*, the Black Bloc movement, the Pussyhat Project, and the Guido Fawkes mask deriving from the graphic novel *V for Vendetta*, popularised by the 2005 film of the same name, and used widely in ‘Hacktivist’ work, ‘Occupy’ demonstrations and others besides. In so doing, the paper examines the place of performance within contemporary protest, expanding on McKenzie’s notion (2001) that performance has become ‘an onto-historical formation of power and knowledge’ and Thrift’s (2008) concerning performance as cultural knowledge. How can the performance of protest help convey and secure the intentions of protest? How does protest persuade amid stark differences of perspective, and the staging of agonistic expressions of affective presence?

Andy Lavender is Professor of Theatre & Performance and Head of the School of Theatre & Performance Studies and Cultural & Media Policy Studies at the University of Warwick. Recent writing includes the monograph *Performance in the Twenty-First Century: Theatres of Engagement* (Routledge 2016), and the articles ‘Living in the moment: duration now and then’, *Performance Research*, 23:4/5 (2018), 186-190, and ‘The Internet, Theatre, and Time: transmediating the theatron’, *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 27:3 (2017), 340-352. He is series editor of *4x45*, published by Digital Theatre (online videos) and Routledge (print volumes).

Performing Counter Racial-Nationalism

Goran Petrović-Lotina

The unprecedented influx of people into the EU in 2015 strengthened the institutionalisation of the right-wing populist parties, legitimising racism as a defensive strategy against immigrants who they see as a threat to the nation-state and national identity. Drawing inspiration from the left-leaning vertical social movement performances that practice engagement with dominant institutions as a strategy for contesting hegemonic politics (such as Podemos), I will employ engagement with representation and identity appropriated by

dominant institutions as a strategy capable of contesting contemporary forms of racial nationalism, which advances discrimination of people on the basis of their race, religion, ethnicity, culture and gender. Examining the relationship between contemporary cultural performances and theatrical performances within the current context of a growing power of the right-wing populist parties, the objective of this paper is to envisage collectivity in terms of identification symbolically evolving around anti-racist struggle.

Goran Petrović-Lotina is a researcher, curator and theorist. He is Assistant Professor at Sciences Po: Paris Institute of Political Studies, where he teaches on performance and politics; a founder of PEPPER RAD Club: Philosophy, Ethology, Politics and Performance Reading and Discussion Club that he moderates at Ghent University within the research platform PEPPER; and a founder and co-curator of Fogo Island Film, a long-term project concerned with the diversity of relationships between nature and society, which takes place annually on Fogo Island in Canada. Petrović-Lotina's main field of inquiry is to explore how artistic practices, and cultural performances in particular, may contribute to contesting dominant politics and invigorating democracy. He finds inspiration in post-Marxist theories of discourse analysis, hegemony and antagonism, and is publishing on relating issues in various journals, books and catalogues.

Glitch, Bending, Obfuscation: A Destinerrant Tactic of the Left

Natasha Lushetich:

In the 1950s the Situationist International called for action in the sphere of the social. They felt that life itself, colonised by consumerism, had to be reclaimed. They rejected the idea that the increased income could ever outweigh the psychological impoverishment inflicted by capitalism. Key to this revolt was the practice of *détournement* – the subversion of signifying process that made up advertising and televisual communication. In the late 1990s, the Yes Men initiated the practice of (h)activist culture jamming in response to the dictates of global neoliberalism. Having, in the first instance, redirected the World Trade Organisation's website to www.gatt.org where they posed as the WTO officials, enumerating instances of the WTO's abuse of corporate power, they continued to sabotage monetary organisations and high-profile corporations by making appearances at landmark conferences (in Salzburg, Sydney, Tampere, and Philadelphia, among others). In similar fashion, etoy and Knowbotic Research practiced digital displacement and unintelligibility as a simulacric activist strategy.

In the 2010s, artists and software developers such as Menkman, Szaudr and Norby began reconfiguring cultural memes, memories, and rewriting communicational codes by producing glitch documentary footage, images and websites as well as by embroiling such artefacts as the IOs maps. The obfuscation movement, for its part, with activists like Nissenbaum and

Brunton, uses computing to disorder proprietary software production through databending that embroils image-producing software and programmes by camouflaging meaningful user data from advertisers and ‘parasitising’ useruploaded videos on social media platforms.

Acknowledging the erosion of the public sphere, the shift from the society of exploitation to that of auto-exploitation and the internalisation of violence (Han) as well as the resulting ineffectiveness of (direct) opposition, the first claim of this paper is that cultures of the left have shifted to a different realm – the realm of the digital. Mobilising, on the one hand, theories of ‘radical mediation’ from McLuhan to Grusin, and, on the other, the legacy indeterminacy, from Stengers and Prirogine to Barad, the second claim this paper makes is that the digital tactics of re-articulation operate by way of derailment and dislodgement, but without direction. They neither rely on nor produce a concerted strategy but, instead, use chance operations, convolution and destinnerrance (Derrida). This claim is corroborated with insights from alternative pattern-recognition data analytics that suggest a potential for a different understanding and, importantly, navigation of control, subjectivity, and the human-machine future, one that acknowledges the power of algorithmic destruction (O’Neil) yet proposes an alternative view, based on an indeterminate reading of big data.

Natasha Lushetich is Professor of Contemporary Art & Theory at the University of Dundee. Her research is interdisciplinary and focuses on intermedia, biopolitics and performativity, the status of sensory experience in cultural knowledge, hegemony, disorder and complexity. She is the author of two books: *Fluxus: the Practice of Non-Duality* (Rodopi 2014) and *Interdisciplinary Performance* (Palgrave 2016). She is also co-editor of ‘On Game Structures’, a special issue of *Performance Research* (Taylor and Francis 2016) and editor of *The Aesthetics of Necropolitics* (Rowman and Littlefield 2018). Natasha’s recent writing has appeared in *Artnodes*; *Contemporary Aesthetics*; *Environment, Place, Space*; *Media Theory*; *Performance Research*; *Text and Performance Quarterly*, *TDR*, *The Journal of Somaesthetics* and *Total Art Journal* as well as in a number of edited collections.

Political Performance: Building Equal and Opposite Forces of Action **Aparna Mahiyaria**

Right wing populist politics have made their advent in areas of performance that were erstwhile seen as inherently progressive or left. The street theatre festival Udaan [Flight] has been taking place annually in Delhi University, growing its participation base each year. The festival is organised by the political Right, and even-though this fact is not stated forthrightly, closer examination reveals organisational kinship that it has with the fraternity of right-wing organisations. To juxtapose, the paper presents the organisational aspects of the practice of Jana Natya Manch, Delhi based amateur left political theatre group. It contends that, against the mammoth organism of the right-wing that the Left faces, for any resistance to sustain, alongside the political and ideological terrains of struggle,

it must simultaneously develop a robust organisational arm. The paper seeks to present possibilities of counter-struggle and also, potentially, contribute to a more nuanced understanding of political theatre and its efficacy.

Aparna Mahiyaria is a PhD candidate at the Drama Department, University of Exeter. Prior to this, she has been associated with Jana Natya Manch as an actor and with Students' Federation of India as an activist. Her research explores various forms of street theatre practices in the national capital region of Delhi, India. Her other interests include theatre and urbanscapes, theatre and students, Indian theatre history, Indian classical dance forms, folklore, and folk performances.

Of loud and quiet resistance

Anika Marschall

In response to the rise of authoritarian regimes (Turkey, India, Hungary,...) and the urge to self-determination of many peoples across the globe (Kurdistan, Catalonia, Scotland,...), new artistic movements have emerged. In this paper, I seek to critically examine and juxtapose Jonas Staal's New World Summit and Hamja Ahsan's Shy Radicals. While Staal's work revolves around statelessness and the reclaiming of propaganda for the Left, Ahsan works for a vanguard identity politics movement, which presents the figure of the shy radical who opposes what he terms "extrovert supremacist culture" (2017). While the New World Summit has very real consequences for participants crossing borders, contesting travel and trade bans; Shy Radicals presents a fictional creative state-building project. While the former views the state as something oppressive, which needs a radical kind of overthrowing, the latter views the idea of the state as an inventive form of power with the potential to uphold progressive human rights protection and good public services, which needs a more liberal kind of co-opting. This binary is not new for Left aesthetics of resistance, but both political campaigners provide new insights into structural violence, essentially providing new humanist narratives and vocabularies – Staal rather loudly, Ahsan quietly.

Anika Marschall (University of Glasgow, a.marschall.1@research.gla.ac.uk) is an AHRC-funded PhD candidate at the University of Glasgow and member of the Glasgow Refugee Asylum and Migration Network. Her research focuses on contemporary art and human rights. Her work has been presented at international conferences and she has published about artistic responses to the so-called refugee crisis, the politics of listening, dramaturgies of statelessness, and the aesthetics of Antonin Artaud and Jacques Rancière. Anika is co-editor of the Scottish Journal for Performance. Currently, she is working on a contribution for Performance Research, reflecting on the Macintosh art school fire in 2018. Anika has assisted curating the intercultural event Political Animal (2019) in collaboration with the Glasgow School of Art, the Leverhulme International Network for Contemporary Studies and The Drouth arts/literary journal. Together with Viviana Checchia and Johnny Rodger, she has co-curated the

exhibition project *The Scottish-European Parliament* by Jonas Staal at the CCA Glasgow (2018).

Fahrenheit 1789/20..? Staging a New Left - Reclaiming Cosmopolitanism

Yana Meerzon

In the 2018 documentary *Fahrenheit 11/9*, Michael Moore blames the US oligarchy for allowing the rise of Trump and points at Trump's skillful manipulation of media that in its hunt for "a hot story" has created a phenomenon of Trump(ism). He demonstrates that populists like Trump are always ready to exploit the divide between the language of the educated leftist elite and the needs of the underprivileged. In her book *For a Left Populism*, Chantal Mouffe engages with similar effects of populist rhetoric, arguing that the time has come for the Left to reclaim its political weight using strategies of populist performance. In its objective to re-construct the peoples – the collective we of 'the workers, the immigrants, and the precious middle class' (24), the New Left must fight for "the radicalization of democracy" (24), and must use affect to mobilize this new collective subject. Scholars of humanities and artists are well positioned to speak directly to "the matters of the soul" (Mishra 115) and operate in the realms of "subjective emotions" (115). Using strategies of populist performance rooted in the processes of collective identification and affect (Mouffe 72-73), artists can speak from the place of concrete problems that "people encounter in their daily life"; they can also offer "a vision of the future that gives them hope" (76). Following this proposal, I locate such artistic practices within Peter Weiss' aesthetics of resistance, of which theatre of cosmopolitanism can serve as an example. I use the outreach project *Refugee Tales*, initiated by Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group and Kent University, as a sample of this practice. I locate its political program and performative aesthetics within the practice of staging affective citizenship and creating communities of hope.

Professor Yana Meerzon teaches at the Department of Theatre, University of Ottawa. Her research interests are in drama and performance theory, theatre of exile and migration, and practical dramaturgy, with book and articles publications on these topics, including *Performing Exile – Performing Self: Drama, Theatre, Film* (2012), the 2015 special issue of *Theatre Research in Canada* on theatre and immigration; and the 2018 special issue of *Modern Drama* on migration and multilingualism in European theatre. Currently, she is editing a two volume publication on theatre and (im)migration in Canada for Playwrights Canada Press. Her new book project is entitled *Being Cosmopolitan: Staging Subjectivity in the Age of Migration and Rising Nationalism*, and under the contract with Palgrave.

People's Culture and the National Imagination: Delhi IPTA and Experiments in Cultural Progressivism

Shayoni Mitra

A new nation is an act of territorial imagination. With Independence on 15th August 1947 India, a geographical entity, as vast in its territory as complex in its demography, was brought into existence by the stroke of a colonial pen, flanked on either side by Pakistan and East Pakistan. While the word Indian had been used since at least 1885 by the Indian National Congress as an act of political imagination, the spatial configurations of the new nation continued to be negotiated long after the British had left. Yet, even before the final Indian Independence Act, the subjects of its ruling had starting addressing themselves to the task of who or what were Indians. The Indian People's Theatre Association (henceforth IPTA), formed in 1943 coalescing out of progressive movements in arts and literature, imagined popular theatre as a means of addressing themselves as and to Indians. Importantly, it offered an alternative imagination of 'the people' than was being currently propagated by Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, arguably the two most prominent figures of the freedom movement, as unconditionally opposed to and uncooperative of the British. IPTA, taking its cue from the Communist Party of India, recognized on its platforms a broader global anti-fascist struggle. From its inception the national was thrown in tension with the local and the international. In this paper I chart the history of the IPTA against a topography of Communist Party politics. Moments of crises within the CPI are replicated in IPTA's activities. In briefly presenting a history of the all-India IPTA, I chart the political ambitions and aesthetic implications of its theatrical practice. While the performative ethos of IPTA has often been cited by scholars because of IPTA's interest in the 'folk,' showcasing a pan-Indianess that became de facto state cultural practice post-Independence, I wish to emphasize the essential modernity of IPTA's enterprise. Whatever vision of 'India' IPTA embraced (and this was a variable rather than a constant imaginary), I use the organization's journal Unity to establish that its practice was always tied to modern technologies of print, reading, and travel cultures. I work my argument through a close study of the Delhi division of the IPTA. I explore how the disintegration of the IPTA is not only the loss of an exemplary cultural organization but also of an idea of India that was predicated on popular practice with progressive ideology. Within the span of a decade since Independence (1947-57) the notion of Mitra_People's Culture and the National Imagination a popular people's theatre as a national theatre is dismissed as untenable or simply undesirable and instead the aspiration for a robust theatre gets conflated and collapsed into professional and proscenium theatre. State regulation and corporate sponsorship encroached into the realm of political performance. Theatre became recognized and supported as a national endeavor rather than a regional practice. Language battles took hold where Hindi was the preferred language in Delhi and beyond, and not any of the vernaculars. And in this encroaching hierarchy and not heterogeneity, the popular inevitably bowed to the classical. The desire in the postcolony for a national theatre had done its work, through it we see the institutionalization of once radical tradition. The history of the Delhi IPTA, much like that of the city itself, can be contained within the bookends of political events - the ban on the CPI in the early 1940s and its split in 1964, with Partition being a devastating interregnum. Political theatre resides in this delicate liminality between the party politics and the imperatives of professionalism. And while IPTA was able to successfully straddle the two for

a time, evolving its own radical aesthetic, it is only much after the wars of Independent India have been fought and the Emergency declared over with that political theatre finds a steady voice in Delhi again. It has never been a stronghold of Leftist politics – it has neither the history of organized labor struggles in the face of capital like the Bombay mill workers nor the radical intellectual extremism of student and proximate peasant movements like Calcutta does. It is this sense of marginality that marks the political theatre of Delhi – the promise of a revolution always to be realized – that makes it worth a close study.

Shayoni Mitra is Assistant Professor, Department of Theatre at Barnard College, Columbia University. She is the Faculty Fellow for Transnational Feminisms at the Barnard Centre for Research on Women. Professor Mitra has essays in various peer reviewed journals such as Contemporary Theatre Research, The Drama Review, Asian Theatre Journal, and Comparative Studies in South Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Her chapters on Indian theatre and women's performance are included in the edited volumes Gender, Space, Resistance and Mapping South Asian Through Contemporary Theatre. Professor Mitra's research focuses on political, feminist and Indian theatre and performance. She teaches courses on Asian Performance, World Theatre, Feminist Performance, Interculturalism, and Political Theatre. She has her PhD in Performance Studies from New York University. Professor Mitra was also an actor with Jana Natya Manch, a street theatre company based in New Delhi, India.

One Alawya Fails to Speak of the Things One Loves

Shirin Rai

Shirin M. Rai is Professor in the department of Politics and International Studies. She has written extensively on issues of gender, governance and development in journals such as Signs, Hypatia, New Political Economy, International Feminist Journal of Politics and Political Studies. She has consulted with the United Nations' Division for the Advancement of Women and UNDP. She is a founder member of the South Asia Research Network on Gender, Law and Governance, and she was Director of the Leverhulme Trust programme on [Gendered Ceremony and Ritual in Parliament](#) (2007-2011). Prof Rai has just published her new book, [Performing Representation](#), commentary on women MPs in the Indian Parliament.

Turning Full Circle: Can left populism resolve the gender paradox?

Naaz Rashid

Representations of Muslim women in populist debates, are heavily couched in the language of women's rights and gender equality. By contrast, the trend of populism in the UK, across Europe and beyond with regards to women's rights is regressive in a range of different ways. The disproportionate attention given to gender equality in Islam therefore highlights the contradictory and racialised ways in which feminism is deployed in contemporary populist narratives.

The argument for a left populism rests on the assumption that it is possible to reclaim populism from right wing xenophobic rhetoric and that this can be done via the language of social justice. The argument also suggests that alternative rights movements (on the grounds of gender, race and sexuality) have been so successfully integrated into the progressive left so as to be detrimental to class concerns. Such an argument, however, ignores the interconnectedness of battles for class, gender, and racial justice as black and postcolonial feminists have long argued. An intersectional perspective should not therefore be seen as a mere addendum to reclaiming populism from the far right. Rather it should be seen as absolutely integral to the project. This paper will discuss whether a left populism can achieve this.

Dr Naaz Rashid is a lecturer in Media and Cultural Studies at the School of Media, Film and Music at the University of Sussex. She obtained her PhD in sociology from the LSE in 2013, having been supervised by Dr Suki Ali. A monograph of her PhD, *Veiled Threats: Representing the Muslim Woman in Public Policy Discourses*, was published in 2016. She is interested in representations of gender, 'race' and religion in the media and policy world and how gendered anti-Muslim narratives circulate on both liberal and populist narratives.

Performing an Aesthetics of the Left: Retrieval, Recuperation, Transformation
Janelle Reinelt

In his 2000 meditation on *Performing History*, Freddie Rokem suggested that performance could

‘create restorative energies, in the sense of recreating something which has been irretrievably lost and attempting, at least on the imaginative level and in many cases also on the intellectual and emotional levels, to restore that loss. These creative attempts aim at overcoming the destructive energies without necessarily becoming a direct process of mourning for that loss’ (13).

The wise kernel of thought contained in Rokem’s suggestion applies equally to the larger project we have been engaged with in examining ‘Culture(s) of the Left, as well as the challenge of the current moment of right-wing populist ascendancy. How to restore and re-energize the past with regard to an unstable and uncertain future is surely the task of anyone who identifies with the historical Left. That there are many Lefts from the past hurdling into the present only serves to show that the potentials in this task are manifold—at least as much as they are risky.

In this presentation, I shall follow Rokem’s fine analysis of the historical stakes in postwar theatre to push into the present, seeking the sources of renewal in such old Left values as equality, collectivity, and economic justice, alongside more recent values of diversity, global planning and environmental justice. My goal is

to meet the challenge of this populist moment, to refresh and redefine the meaning of 'the people' in order to animate a new collective political subject.

Theatre and other forms of performing arts can play a unique role: their embodied address, embracing varieties of expression from rational to affective, from language to movement, from sound and spectacle to quiet reflection—these can be harnessed to a powerful political motivation forming an aesthetics of resistance and change if we can achieve clarity about how to retrieve and transform the legacy of the Left.

Examples will come from avowedly left US and UK theatre artists including Tony Kushner and David Edgar. Theoretical ideas about populism and the Left from Chantal Mouffe and Etienne Balibar as well as Jodi Dean and Wendy Brown.

Professor Janelle Reinelt is one of the most internationally respected academics in the discipline, receiving the Distinguished Scholar Award for lifetime achievement from the American Society for Theatre Research (2010) and the Excellence in Editing Award from the Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) in 2012. She has served a four-year term as the President of the International Federation for Theatre Research, the leading international academic organisation for theatre and performance studies. She is co-editor of the series *Studies in International Performance* for Palgrave Macmillan and an ex-editor of *Theatre Journal*. Her major area of interest is contemporary performance with an emphasis on contemporary British theatre, and international performance research and pedagogy. In May 2014 she was given an honorary doctorate degree from the University of Helsinki.

'Quite the best news in some considerable time'

Nicholas Ridout

In their 1972 film, *Letter to Jane: An Investigation About A Still*, Jean-Luc Godard and Jean-Pierre Gorin proposed to address the question of the role to be played by intellectuals in the revolutionary struggle. Nearly 50 years later Nicholas Ridout and Lindsay Goss, working initially from a video of the film carrying Portuguese subtitles, set out to explore their own relations to this question in an ongoing theatrical project entitled (after a comment on Yanis Varoufakis' website) *quite the best news in some considerable time*. In this talk I will reflect a little on why it may have made sense at the time, and may still make sense now, for two leftist intellectuals to tackle this question by way of making theatre rather than by writing about it in either scholarly or activist registers. The evidence suggests that they often found themselves dealing mainly with unexpected subjects: from the predictable enough desire to overcome left melancholy, to less obvious anxieties about sincerity, confusions about acting, and enthusiasm for song and dance routines, expertly or inexpertly executed. In this talk I will attempt to understand why this may have been.

Nicholas Ridout is Professor of Theatre at Queen Mary University of London, where he has taught since 2002. He has recently held Fellowships at the Huntington Library and the Freie Universität. He is the author of *Stage Fright, Animals and Other Theatrical Problems* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), *Theatre & Ethics* (Palgrave, 2009) and *Passionate Amateurs: Theatre, Communism and Love* (Michigan, 2013). He is the co-author, with Claudia Castellucci, Romeo Castellucci, Chiara Guidi and Joe Kelleher, of *The Theatre of Societas Raffaello Sanzio* (Routledge 2007) and co-editor, with Joe Kelleher, of *Contemporary Theatres in Europe* (Routledge, 2006). He is co-editor, with Patrick Anderson, of the book series *Performance Works* at Northwestern University Press. He is currently completing a new book, *Scenes from Bourgeois Life*.

Futures and Frontiers: A Dispatch from the Millennial Left

Promona Sengupta

The question of “What is left of the Left” for many radicalized millennials is not only a disavowal of their own political radicalization and everyday work towards building and sustaining a radical position of alterity in a capitalist world, but also a historiographical lie that sustains Francis Fukuyama’s reactionary views on how historical breaks occur with the triumph of capitalism. For those many of us who still believe that historical breaks can only appear within the framework of revolution, it is of paramount importance to be realistic about what Left resistance can do at the moment, what our anti-capitalist strategies could be in the face of personal and professional precarity, and what cultural vocabularies we deploy to write new manifestoes of the future.

In this presentation, I will be discussing the formation and work of Mo’Halla, a Delhi/Berlin-based Left cultural and political collective, that came out of a critical moment in student politics on the JNU campus in recent history. I will be presenting on a collectively produced manifesto, bringing into discussion the specific political frontier that the contemporary campus inhabits vis-à-vis nationalist Right wing majoritarianism in India, and how we can imagine ways of radically breaking through cynicism and fatigue within the “Millennial Left” (in the context of student politics), if there at all is such a category of activist work.

Promona Sengupta is a PhD candidate at the International Research Center: Interweaving Performance Cultures at the Freie University, Berlin. She has published in the *Theatre Research International* and presented at various conferences such as the IFTR 2018 Belgrade, the PSI 2017 Hamburg and the Radcliffe Seminar, Harvard 2018, among others. Along with Jyothidas KV and Prabhash Tripathy, she is a member of the Berlin/Delhi-based Left-wing cultural collective Mo’Halla.

The performance of left-wing populism in transitional democracy: the case of the disrupted South African State of the Nation Address

Lone Sorensen (University of Huddersfield, UK)

In this paper I query how populists perform representation in a transitional context and the implications of such performances for the country's democratic development. I investigate the South African case of the radical-left populist party The Economic Freedom Fighters' (EFF) disruption of the President's State of the Nation Address (SONA) in 2015. The EFF's annual disruptions were the main factor in dethroning Jacob Zuma in early 2018 following a major corruption scandal.

I approach populism through the lens of political performance and see disruptive performance as a paradigmatic manifestation of populist ideology. In a transitional context, disruption can be a necessary means of ensuring government accountability and of moving on a stalled transition process. However, in the South African case, the populist performance is accompanied by an essentialism that points to a less liberal-democratic interpretation of South Africa's institutions and their future, reducing deliberation, public agency and pluralism.

My study approaches the EFF's performances from a media ecology perspective through the analysis of videos of live performances in parliament, tweets, newspaper reports and media appearances. Using mixed methods, I integrate data analytics of tweets with an interpretive analysis based on grounded theory and sensitised by Alexander's model of social performance.

Lone Sorensen is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Media, Journalism and Film at the University of Huddersfield, I completed my doctoral thesis in the summer of 2018 on a communication approach to populism. In this work I developed a political performance-based perspective on populism and compared cases of left- and right-wing populism in established and transitional democracy. It will be published as a research monologue by Palgrave in early 2020. I have previously published a number of journal articles and book chapters on populist performance, mediation and democratisation. I am now working on a new pilot project on the role of performance-based opposition in transitional democracy, looking at cases in Georgia and Serbia. I am also in the process of planning a co-edited volume with Sarah Weston on political performance in which I am also authoring a chapter on populist performance.

The Difficulty of Creating Political Performances in North America: Going Beyond the Symptoms and Beyond (Neo)liberal 'Engaged' Performances

Ülfet Sevdı and Nicolas Royer-Artuso

In this talk, we will delve into the difficulties and encountered obstacles of

creating leftist artistic practices in North America and this, even when it comes to the majority of what is called 'committed' (performance) art. We will argue that the causes are to be searched in a situation that is systemic: they do not only concern the artistic fields, but the society as a whole. Art is only one of the fields where the effects of this system are felt, but the symptoms we can witness tell a lot about why political activism as well cannot develop.

In that sense, what we want to tell about art in North America will also tell many things about the society where these art practices emerge. Therefore, if we can find a solution to the problem of how to change the situation of art practice and make it truly political and transformative, we might at the same time be in a better position to find solutions to the problem of how to make the society more political, more inclined to fight for social justice and against different types of oppressions: we might find a way to transform it. But we argue that we ought to go beyond the symptoms and understand the causes of the present state of affairs.

Ülfet Sevdi is a writer, theatre director, dramaturge and Theatre of the Oppressed practitioner based in Montreal, Canada. She graduated from the Department of Fine Arts and Theatre at Mersin University, Turkey, in 2001. Her work deals with oral history, social narrative and is theoretically grounded in feminist theory and the social sciences. She was the co-founder and director of nü.kolektif (Istanbul, 2009-2014), an Istanbul based collective of multi-disciplinary artists working collaboratively on politically oriented performances and is the co-founder and co-director of Thought Experiment Productions (Montreal, 2015-). She is currently an Individualized Program Master student at Concordia University. Her mission is to present a reflection on some important sociopolitical contemporary themes. Her approach is highly conceptual, experimental and is theoretically grounded in the critical social sciences. One of her main concern is: how to make political art artistically satisfying and how to make aesthetics politically satisfying. Her last performance, Numbers Increase as We Count... (February 27-March 2, 2019, MAI) was very well received.

Nicolas Royer-Artuso is a composer, musician, musicologist, linguist, writer, music teacher, performance artist, and Theatre of the Oppressed practitioner, based in Montreal, Canada. A key aspect of his musical and academic work is the theoretical and practical use of "heterophony." He co-founded the Istanbul-based collective of multidisciplinary artists nü.kolektif (2009-2014). In 2015, he co-founded the Montreal based Thought Experiment Productions, a multidisciplinary production company dedicated to the production of performances with political content using research in the social sciences as a methodological framework.

Self-Management as (artistic) inspiration: the foretold death and a surprising resurrection

Igor Stiks

Faculty of Media and Communications, Belgrade

Workers' self-management—the official ideology of socialist Yugoslavia from the early 1950s until 1990—was meant to be a system of economic democracy based on workers' ownership of their factories and firms and a delegate-based political system. This ambitious and unique project had both spectacular and disappointing results and was in various ways criticized even during socialism, most vocally in the 1980s. With the demise of the socialist regime and the restoration of capitalism, self-management was dismantled, whereas its political component was replaced by multi-party electoral democracy. No one suspected that self-management—largely dismissed and even ridiculed, as idea and practice—would make a curious comeback in the 21st century. However, the 2008 crisis opened a space for first public articulations of an anti-capitalist critique in the post-socialist Balkans after two decades of unchallenged dominance of neoliberal and right-wing ideologies and political actors. Over the last ten years one could thus observe a growing interest in self-management both in artistic production and political practice of the 'new left' movements in this region. Besides the resurrection of the so-called plenums—plenary citizens' assemblies reminiscent of self-management practices—and the experiments in horizontal democracy by students, workers and citizens, self-management has become an inspiring artistic subject-matter, most notably in theatre but also in contemporary art, popular music and literature.

Igor Stiks is a writer and scholar. Earning his PhD at the Institut d'Études Politiques de Paris and Northwestern University, he worked for years at the University of Edinburgh. He is currently professor of politics at the Faculty of Media and Communications in Belgrade. His recent publications include *Nations and Citizens in Yugoslavia and the Post-Yugoslav States: One Hundred Years of Citizenship* (Bloomsbury, 2015) and, together with Srećko Horvat, *Welcome to the Desert of Post-Socialism* (Verso, 2015). His award-winning novels *The Judgment of Richard Richter* and *A Castle in Romagna* have been translated into fifteen languages.

Theatre of Witnessing and the 'aesthetics of resistance': The revenant as a political poetics

Dr Amanda Stuart Fisher, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama
(Amanda.stuartfisher@cssd.ac.uk).

Playwright Peter Weiss argues that certain forms of theatre emerge at particular moments of time in order to respond to the politics of a situation. Citing his choice of the documentary form in the writing of *The Investigation*, a play that

examines the Frankfurt War trials and the post-war context of Germany in the 1960s, Weiss states that 'Forms don't die, they change and reappear' (Weiss 1966). This paper examines how a dramaturgy of witnessing can produce a mode of parrhesia (Foucault 2001), in which the witness "speaks out" against an injustice through an act of political truth-telling. Through an examination of two very different examples of theatre that both respond to real situations of racism - *The Colour of Justice* (1999) by Richard Norton-Taylor and *The Hounding of David Oluwale* (2009) by Oladipo Agboluaje - I consider the limitations of the tribunal theatre form and argue that a dramaturgy of witnessing that moves beyond a re-iteration of transcribed trial material and which intervenes within the re-telling of a past event can generate a means of speaking truth to power, creating a form of theatre that resists the violent and erasing discourses of racism by placing the black subject at the centre of the narrative.

Dr Amanda Stuart Fisher is a reader in contemporary theatre and performance at Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. Her research focuses on verbatim and testimonial theatre and care and performance and has been published in journals such as: *Performance Research*, *TDR* and *Studies in Theatre and Performance*. She is currently working on a co-edited collection examining the relationship between performance and care and a monograph on verbatim and testimonial theatre.

Mapping Resistance in Hyperspace

Dragan Todorovic

Pilgrimage is a journey towards the place of moral and/or spiritual gravity. Protests walks are pilgrimages, but on the road to recalibrating their centre of gravity protesters also perform other important socio-political functions. They transform streets into spaces (de Certeau) by their walks. They reclaim the public space which regimes tend to empty out, as for the authorities the beauty of the deserted square is the beauty of a well-controlled society. They are exiles from public sphere turning agonistic space to agora by performing return. The core of political and social activities has moved into hyperspace, helped by social networks and means of instant communication and/or participation. Both confrontational and consensual voices have become simultaneous and all flow into the same borderless space, thus promising a true horizontal democracy. However, hyperspace is not linear. It is based on a network in which the nodes connected—hypertextual units of information—are all on the same plane and hierarchy is absent. Movement is possible in any and all directions at once. This space does not allow for maps, so it does not have moral centre, perceived or real. There is no pilgrimage in hyperspace.

With some success, the social movements created in hyperspace swarm their perceived enemies and shut them down, but the social change resulting from this is limited. The Occupy Movement in the States and elsewhere, *Gilets jaunes* in France and elsewhere, #1of5Million in Serbia—all have similar characteristics: they are horizontally organised, they do not have leaders, and they have fluid demands. Political establishment in most cases chooses to safely tolerate such movements.

This paper investigates the changes the social movements created in hyperspace face when they land in reality.

Dragan Todorovic's novel *Diary of Interrupted Days* was shortlisted for Commonwealth Writers' Prize, Amazon First Novel Award and other awards. *The Book of Revenge*, his memoir, won The Nereus Writers' Trust Non-Fiction Prize and was shortlisted for British Columbia's National Award for Canadian Non-Fiction. Sound art project *In My Language I am Smart*, commissioned by CBC Radio One, was presented at Deep Wireless Festival and published on a CD in 2012. His collection of interactive poetry *Five Walks on Isabella Street* was the winner of the Astound International Competition. Dragan is the author of a number books of non-fiction, poetry and fiction, and has recently contributed his stories to several collections, most notably *Refugee Tales*, *Cobra*, *A Midlands Odyssey*, and others. He has worked extensively in print and electronic media, both in Yugoslavia (where he was born) and in Canada (1995-2005). He wrote and directed numerous radio plays, TV documentaries and hosted over hundred and fifty live TV interviews (Culture Channel, 3K—Serbia). Several of his works have been anthologised. He teaches creative writing at the University of Kent and is primarily interested in liminal forms of writing.
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Political Interpellation in Precarious Times: The Cassandra Commission

[Paper/Spoken-Word Performance]

Liz Tomlin

Scepticism of the authoritarian ghosts of ideological propaganda continue to haunt the post-Marxist Left and underpin the poststructuralist distrust of interpellation that seeks to determine a specific political response. Consequently, the most common mode of interpellation in contemporary political theatre is the ironic hail to the spectator-subject as a good subject of neoliberalism; an intentional misrecognition that opens up the gap for self-critique that must remain, nonetheless, autonomous and undetermined in its political direction.

Without rowing back on the significant progress that poststructuralism has enabled within a discourse of the left, this paper and performance will ask what might yet be gained by renewed consideration of a sincere and ideologically-determined counter-hegemonic interpellation, focusing here on its potential to offer the spectator-subject the feeling of a stable and full identity rather than merely exposing the reality of the fractured, provisional and partial 'post identity subject' (Butler and Athanasiou 2013). Such a reality may appear more like a threat than a promise for disenfranchised subjects whose proper place, historically, has been that of 'non-being' (2013: 19), holding particular risks in a climate in which spectator-subjects are being so expertly interpellated by the seductive myths of identity and agency propagated by the far right.

Liz Tomlin is Professor of Theatre and Performance at the University of Glasgow where she specialises in the analysis of British and European contemporary

theatre through the lens of political and cultural theory. Her key works include *Acts and Apparitions: Discourses on the Real in Performance Practice and Theory 1990 – 2010* (2013); *British Theatre Companies 1995 – 2014 ed.* (2015) and *Political Dramaturgies and Theatre Spectatorship: Provocations for Change* (forthcoming in June 2019). Liz is currently the principal investigator of the AHRC Research Network Incubate Propagate which brings together arts policy makers and funders, theatre producers and academics to investigate pathways to emerging artist development programmes and platforms for those without university backgrounds and training. She was previously a playwright and director with Point Blank Theatre (1999 – 2009) and has published that body of work in *Point Blank* (2007).

Performing reactive and political solidarity in neoliberal Serbia

Jelena Vasiljević

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Solidarity plays an important yet ambiguous role in solidifying communities, as it advocates for interdependence and full inclusion, and at the same time solidifies the exclusionary “we”. The ambiguous role solidarity (calls) can play within communities becomes especially obvious today, in neoliberal regimes, where, as I will show in the case of contemporary Serbia, it can be deployed to foster very different, arguably mutually opposing kinds of political subjectivities and citizens’ activism. The paper will discuss three examples of solidarity mobilizations for vulnerable groups in the region that testify to the need for citizens’ self-organization to compensate for the absence of adequate institutional responses. Even though the implicit critique of the absence and ineffectiveness of the state is an inherent part of such mobilizations, they are, in themselves, at the same time, unwilling accomplices to new order of things that normalizes citizens’ proactivity as a substitute for vanishing welfare institutions. In order to better understand this complexity, as well as to grasp alternative, yet still marginal, ways of performing solidarity with the excluded, I propose to distinguish between situational, reactive solidarity and political solidarity of new emerging social actors on the Left.

Jelena Vasiljević is a Research Associate at the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade. Her background is in political and legal anthropology, and citizenship studies. She has written on transformations of citizenship in the post-Yugoslav states, memory politics, narratives and identity politics during the Yugoslav wars of 1990s. Her current research interests lie in politics of solidarity, activist citizenship and protest movements in the Balkans, and in reconciling the tensions between the notions of citizenship and solidarity. She was a Research Fellow at the University of Edinburgh and a Research Fellow at the Centre for South East European Studies, University of Graz. She published a monograph *The Anthropology of Citizenship* (in Serbian, 2016), and her

articles appeared in Nations and Nationalism and Citizenship Studies, among other journals.

Interventions

Last Pioneer – Between Childhood-Happiness and Midlife-Utopia

“Last Pioneer – Between Childhood-Happiness and Midlife-Utopia” is a performative / visual presentation of my “Last Pioneer” (life-long) project – in seven scenes – a journey through 4 continents, with very personal (maybe sentimental) stories but also with a critical view of how and where do we as “children of the revolution” and 21st century adults go... Traveling, observing, learning more about other cultures, East & West, religion, history, customs, meeting wonderful people, with all language boundaries, smiling and crying together... I strongly feel that this Planet, our only home, is such a wonderful place for all of us to live in – if we give ourselves all a chance... a chance to live happy and in freedom. More and more I believe that politics and the politicians can not change this world. This is not their goal. Nor their wish. They fight for power and profit. Playing games – dangerous, war games. Without wars, “crises”, Brexit(s), and all their senseless discussions and arguments they would be unemployed. And not just they...

But I do believe that art and artists can unite the people and overcome stupidity, greed, racism, phobias and hatreds... and change & make this world a better place.

Snežana Golubović

Snežana Golubović is an artist and writer. Born in former Yugoslavia, she moved to Germany in 1992 and has worked independently as an actress / performer in professional productions directed by renown's such as Alexander Brill, Dirk Hauser, Angie Hiesl, Saskia Boddeke and Peter Greenaway.

From 2003 to 2007 she was a member of the Independent Performance Group (I.P.G.), which was founded and led by Marina Abramović. Her works have been shown internationally at, among others: NMAC Foundation, Cadiz, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam, Avignon Theatre Festival, Venice

Biennale, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels as well as at numerous exhibitions and performance art festivals in Europe, Asia, North and South America. She is a co-founder and a member of the performance art trio TRaG (Trojan, Reiser and

Golubović). She currently teaches performance & art interventions in public space at the University of Applied Sciences in Frankfurt.

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'Battle of Stories': a Provocation

Susan Haedicke (s.haedicke@warwick.ac.uk) and **Tim White** (t.white@warwick.ac.uk)

Department of Theatre and Performance Studies
University of Warwick

Activist artist, David Solnit insists that there is 'not much difference between people who are trying to shift consciousness through their art, their theatre, their music and those who organise actions, resistance and protest to shift consciousness'. Solnit has practical experience to back up his claims as he was the main organizer for the WTO Protests in Seattle in 1999 and orchestrated the shutdown of San Francisco the day after the US invaded Iraq in 2003. Arts organizer, puppeteer and a co-founder of Art and Revolution, Solnit uses giant puppets, placards and banners, cantastorias (or stories told or sung accompanied by visuals), and theatre in mass mobilizations as an organizing tools. He argues that the skills involved in the arts and performance are essential for radical socio-political change since stories and images not only document the present, but also create a vision of a possible future and a 'laboratory of resistance'. For Solnit, the core conflicts in society arise from fights between narratives, a 'battle of stories' told through words, images and 'performance', so the need for a compelling narrative is key to affecting social change. Sociologist Francesca Polletta concurs and has repeatedly argued, 'stories are better able than other kinds of messages to change people's opinions because we immerse ourselves in the story, striving to experience vicariously the events and emotions of the protagonist's experience and this experience of immersion can lead to lasting changes of opinion'. For Solnit, it is the 'system' that keeps people in their place through narratives that reinforce the status quo and present it as normative and unchangeable. The way to resist is to create counter-narratives that deconstruct the opponent's story and tell compelling new stories. Artists, he insists, are particularly adept at telling stories that communicate the 'heart and gut and not just facts and figures' and celebrate the hope and determination to win the 'battle of stories.'. Artist do not just decorate the protest; they shape direct action so that it is clear and powerful.

Susan Haedicke will briefly introduce the strategies of David Solnit's direct action/art-based social change campaigns and give an example of his successful direct action by creating a counter-narrative to the dominant narrative. This example will be from his work with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, a highly success human rights organization working with migrant farm workers in the United States. The provocation is then two-fold. First, Tim White will present a video contention that challenges Solnit's premise that this is a battle of stories, and he suggests instead that the discursive has atrophied and that political debate is now about statements or non-narratives. Second, we will open the discussion/workshop the audience on whether a dominant narrative of right-wing populist movements can be identified and, if so, how the left should compose and tell an alternative narrative or, if not, how can public discourse be revitalized. We need about forty-five minutes to one hour for this provocation.

Susan Haedicke is Reader of Theatre and Performance at the University of Warwick. She has also worked as a professional dramaturg in France (with Friches Théâtre Urbain, a street theatre company based in Paris) and in the United States. Her primary responsibilities are devising performance pieces and adapting non-theatrical texts.

Her current research, including practice-as-research, focuses on local food growing initiatives and community gardens worldwide and how they 'perform' in the larger social setting. She is currently involved in a practice-as-research project in Montreuil, France, *Hope is a Wooded Time*, that uses the arts to engage the surrounding communities in the restoration and preservation of a protected woodland that is a part of the old Murs à Pêches (plots where espaliered peach trees grew).

Tim White is Associate Professor in the School of Theatre & Performance Studies and Cultural & Media Policy Studies, University of Warwick. His teaching and research interests include food and performance, immersive practices, online performance, video, and performance in public spaces. In 2012 he was presented with the Warwick Award for Teaching Excellence. His most recent publication is the concluding essay in *Occasions of State*, the forthcoming volume in Routledge's European Festival Studies Series.

Chairs

Dr. Trina Nileena Banerjee

After completing her MA in English Literature from Jadavpur University, Trina Nileena Banerjee proceeded to complete a Masters of Studies (M St.) in English at the University of Oxford. For her PhD, she worked on a history of women in the group theatre movement in Bengal between 1950 and 1980. She has also been researching the interfaces between women's movements and political theatre in contemporary Manipur for several years now. Her essays and reviews on these and other subjects have appeared in national and international journals, as well as in several edited volumes. She writes both in English and in Bengali. Between 2011 and 2013, she taught at the Theatre and Performance Studies Department at the School of Arts and Aesthetics in Jawaharlal Nehru University. She is currently Assistant Professor in Cultural Studies at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta. Her essays have been published in several edited volumes and national/international journals. She writes in both Bengali and English. Her research interests include Gender, Performance, Political Theatre, Theories of the Body, Postcolonial Theatre and South Asian History. She has also been a theatre and film actress, as well as a journalist and fiction writer. Her first

book *Performing Silence: Women in the Group Theatre Movement in Bengal* is forthcoming from Oxford University Press (India) in 2019-2020.

Bishnupriya Dutt is Professor of Theatre and Performance studies, in the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi India. Her area of research includes colonial and post colonial histories of theatre, feminist readings of Indian Theatre and contemporary performative practices and popular culture. She has also been an actress and director in the theatre in India.

Her publications include 'Performing Resistance with Maya Rao: Trauma and Protest in India' (CTR vol 25 issue 3, August 2015); monograph (with Urmimala Sarkar Munsri) *Engendering Performance, Indian Woman Performers in Search of an Identity* (Sage, 2010); 'Actress Stories: Binodini and Amal Allana', in *Staging International Feminisms*, Eds. Aston and Case (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); 'Historicizing Actress Stories: English Actresses in India (1839-42)', in Ed. Lata Singh *Play House of Power: Theatre in Colonial India* (OUP, 2009); 'Theatre and Subaltern Histories, Chekov Adaptations in Post Colonial India', in Eds. Clayton and Meerson, *Adapting Chekhov: The Text and Its Mutations* (Routledge, 2012); 'Unsafe spaces of Theatre and Feminism in India; Identity Politics Forum', *Theatre Research International*, 37:1 (March 2012).

Along with her colleagues from JNU and the School of Theatre and Performance Studies, University of Warwick, she has recently completed a research collaboration (UGC and UKIERI sponsored) on *Gendered Citizenship: Manifestations and Performances* and is the Principal co-I on the Cultures of the Left project.

Milija Gluhovic is Associate Professor of Theatre and Performance at the University of Warwick. His interest in memory and history has resulted in *Performing European Memories: Trauma, Ethics, Politics* (Palgrave, 2013), which explores the intersections between contemporary European theatre and performance, the interdisciplinary field of memory studies, and current preoccupations with the politics of memory in Europe. From 2010–2012 he convened (with Karen Fricker, Brock University) an AHRC-funded international, interdisciplinary research network titled "Eurovision Song Contest and the 'New' Europe". The project resulted in edited volume *Performing the 'New' Europe: Identities, Feelings, and Politics in the Eurovision Song Contest* (Palgrave, 2013).

Silvija Jestrovic is Reader in Theatre and Performance Studies at the University of Warwick. Before joining the Warwick University in 2005, she studied Dramaturgy at the University of Belgrade, gained her PhD at the University of Toronto and worked as a dramaturge, playwright, journalist and lecturer. She is the author of *Theatre of Estrangement: Theory, Practice, Ideology* (U of Toronto Press, 2006), *Performance, Space, Utopia: Cities of Wars, Cities of Exile* (Palgrave, 2012) and the co-editor (with Y. Meerzon) of the collection *Performance, Exile, 'America'* (Palgrave, 2009). She is leading the British Academy funded project

Cultures of the Left: Manifestations and Performance and she is also one of the co-editors (with Shirin Rai, Milija Gluhovic and Mike Saward) of *The Handbook of Politics and Performance* to be published by Oxford University Press in 2020

Urmimala Sarkar Munsi is an associate Professor of Theatre and Performance Studies at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India. She is a Social Anthropologist, specialised in dance Studies. Beside her principle area of work on body, dance and Society, her research interest is in gender and performance, documentation of living traditions, and performance as politics. She is a choreographer and dancer trained at the Uday Shankar India Culture Centre.

Her publications include *Engendering Performance: Indian Women Performers Searching for Identity*, co-authored with B. Dutt (Sage publishers, 2010), *Traversing Traditions: Celebrating Dance in India*, co-edited with S. Burridge (Routledge, 2009), edited collection *Dance: Transcending Borders* (Tulika Books, 2008), and many journal articles and chapters in edited books.

Urmimala is currently the Vice President of World Dance Alliance - Asia Pacific, and the Network Co - Chair for World Dance Alliance, Research and Documentation.

Mallarika Sinha Roy is an Assistant Professor at the Centre for Women's Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Her book *Gender and Radical Politics in India: Magic Moments of Naxalbari (1967-1975)* (London and NY: Routledge) has been published in 2011. She has also published articles in journals like *Economic and Political Weekly*, *Feminist Review*, *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, *Contemporary South Asia*, *Feminism and Psychology*, *South Asia History and Research* and *Journal of South Asian Development*. Her research interests include social movement studies, gender and political violence, history and politics of South Asia.

Ameet Parameswaran is currently Assistant Professor in Theatre and Performance Studies, the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University. He completed his Ph.D. (2012) in Theatre and Performance Studies at the University of California - Los Angeles. His publications include *Performance and the Political: Power and Pleasure in Contemporary Kerala* (Orient Blackswan, 2017); 'Contemporaneity and Collective: The Reportage in Amma Ariyaan', in Eds. Sathese Chandra Bose and Shiju Sam Varughese, *Kerala Modernity: Ideas, Spaces and Practices in Transition* (Orient BlackSwan, 2015); 'Affirmation and Disidentification: The Labour of Performing 'Brand India'', in *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts*, 19:2 (June 2014).

Dr Trish Reid is Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching)) in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Kingston University, London, UK. She is the author of *Theatre & Scotland*, editor of *Contemporary Scottish Plays* (Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2015) and has contributed to *Decades of Modern British Playwriting the 1990s*, edited by Aleks Sierz (Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2012).

Anupama Roy is a Professor at the Centre for Political Studies in Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi. Her research interests straddle legal studies, political anthropology of political institutions, political ideas, and gender studies. She obtained her MPhil degree from University of Delhi, and her PhD degree from the State University of New York at Binghamton, USA. She is the author of the books *Gendered Citizenship: Historical and Conceptual Explorations* (Orient Longman, 2005, paperback, 2013), and *Mapping Citizenship in India* (Oxford University Press, 2010, reprinted 2015), and has co-edited *Poverty, Gender and Migration in South Asia* (Sage, 2008). Her most recent publication is *Citizenship in India* brought out in 2016 by Oxford University Press in the Oxford India Short Introduction Series. Her book on the Election Commission of India (co-authored with Ujjwal Kumar Singh) is being published by Oxford University Press. Her research articles have appeared in various national and international journals. She was a senior fellow in the Centre for Women's Development Studies, Delhi, and a visiting scholar in Warwick University, Sydney University, and University of Wuerzburg, Germany. She was the recipient of Sir Ratan Tata post-doctoral fellowship, at the Institute of Economic Growth in Delhi and KTP Fellow at University of Technology, Sydney, Australia.