



Nexus#1: IN/ACTION

A Meeting of the
Contemporary Performance in Higher Education Network

Hosted by the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Wednesday 2, Thursday 3 and Friday 4 December 2020

The **Contemporary Performance in Higher Education Network** aims to bring together academics and practitioners from international Higher Education Institutions engaged in the education, research and practice of Contemporary Performance in its multiplicities. By creating a nexus for disparate programmes and individuals to intersect and exchange ideas we hope that we can work together in addressing the issues which are most pertinent in educating future-focused contemporary artists.

The past six months have significantly altered our contemporary society through major global, historical events. Within this moment a multitude of actions and inactions rise to the fore. Theatres and venues are physically inactive yet action takes place to reimagine performance practice as digital, distanced and derelict. Action is being taken to demand racial and ethnic equity, highlighting the inaction which has enabled institutional and systemic racism and manifold prejudice. As the world demands we live and think differently, performance remains an active force in the generation of knowledge and possibility. This inaugural meeting centres on the exploded dualism of *action/inaction* we currently find ourselves occupying as educators, artists, practitioners, students, and researchers. In the space between these states we look to the future of performance and the education of contemporary artists as a community inhabiting an uncertain liminality.

Nexus #1: IN/ACTION will be presented synchronously online as a digital symposium including presentations and panel discussions; provocations and round table discussions; collegiate working groups; and a collaborative web-based platform for ongoing dialogue, sharing, working action and documentation. Running parallel to the symposium sessions will be evening and lunchtime digital performances from institutions and individuals within the network.

PROGRAMME

WEDNESDAY 2 DECEMBER

This session is open to students, academics and practitioners involved in contemporary performance in Higher Education. This will be a day for sharing practice through presentations and panel discussions.

All times GMT

14.00

Welcome and Introductions

Session 1

Live Art in a Pandemic: Sites, Screens and Sanitiser

This session will consist of presentations followed by a panel discussion and Q&A exploring how artists, programmes and institutions have adapted performance within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. What is the relationship between liveness, digital mediation and distance? What new relationships, concepts and objects are emerging?

Dr Lucy Weir, Edinburgh College of Art, Edinburgh University

Dr Kate Craddock, Festival Director, GIFT: Gateshead International Festival of Theatre and Research Associate, Newcastle University

ATOM-r (Anatomical Theatres of Mixed Reality)

Mark Jeffery, School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Judd Morrissey, School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Moderator: **Prof Heike Roms**, Professor in Theatre and Performance, University of Exeter

15.15

Break

15.45 - 17.00

Session 2

Performance Research: Epistemologies of Action

This session will consist of presentations followed by a panel discussion and Q&A. Performance Research is a methodology which embraces action as a means for the production of knowledge centring performance as a plane of possibility, though can be as diverse as the words used to describe it, e.g. performance research, practice-as-research, practice-based research, research-creation. Researchers from a variety of institutions will discuss their approach to performance research and present case studies which exemplify their work or that of their students in this diverse field.

Dr Cara Berger, Visiting Lecturer & Research Fellow in Drama, University of Manchester

Dr David Overend, Lecturer in Drama and Performance Studies, University of Edinburgh

Dr Gillian Dyson-Moss and **Dr Laura Griffiths**, Senior Lecturers with Performing Arts, The Leeds School of Arts, Leeds Beckett University

Moderator: **Prof Laura Gonzalez**, Research Athenaeum Fellow, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

19.00 - 20.15

Evening Performance

She Dies For You

A performance film by **Maria Magdalena Kozłowska**,
produced by **DAS Theatre**.

She Dies For You is Kozłowska's MA graduation piece at DAS Theatre in Amsterdam. Combining theatrical apparatus and cinematic montage, the film portraits raising one's voice, both as a physical and political act. The Soprano, the Jazz Singer, the Flutist and the Hysterical Poet meet to re-enact and reclaim the gestures of staged female suffering known from opera, jazz and dramatic theatre. The artificial landscape of a painted forest facilitates an attempt to overcome their entanglement with the tragic. The women rework musical traditions by performing precise, playful and shameless vocal rituals. The piece inaugurates Kozłowska's research in voicing new architectures. She investigates the silencing logic of theatrical interiority in both nature and public spaces – urban parks, lakes, city squares. Through vocal expression of female choirs, she maps the trajectories of audibility and participation.

Following the screening of *She Dies for You* there will be a creative conversation with Maria Magdalena Kozłowska.

THURSDAY 3 DECEMBER

This session is open to academics and practitioners devising and delivering curriculum in contemporary performance with student representatives from participating institutions. This will be a day of knowledge exchange through provocations and discussion groups.

All times GMT

13.00 - 13.30

Lunch Performance

Anyone

A film on your mobile phone about longing, boredom, dreaming, love and TikTok, produced by **21Common**.

Session 3

Radical Pedagogy: Critical Contemporary Perspectives

Paulo Friere and bell hooks proposed radical and critical pedagogies which form the foundations for many in performance education, applied theatre, and socially-engaged practice. After over twenty-five years since the publication of *A Pedagogy of Hope* and *Teaching to Transgress* how successfully have these ideologies been enacted and how have they fared through the changing socio-political andscapes of Higher Arts Education? Who have we left behind in our approach to Learning & Teaching and how do we envision a radical pedagogy for our present futures? This session will consist of a series of provocations on future-focused pedagogies followed by break-out round table discussions on the themes arising.

Prof Jonathan Pitches, Head of School of Performance and Cultural Industries, University of Leeds

Dr Sarah Hopfinger, Lecturer in Contemporary Performance Practice, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Dr Diana Damian Martin, Senior Lecturer, Performance Arts & Course Leader, BA (Hons) Contemporary Performance Practice - Performance Arts, The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama

15.15

Break

15.45 - 17.00

Session 4

Anti-Racism: Decolonisation in Action

This session will address the history of performance art as platform for marginalised identities' visibilities and question how this project has fallen short within Western Arts Institutions and Higher Education. A series of provocations followed by break-out round table discussions will allow for debate and idea exchange as we propose action to address racial/ethnic inequity and visibility in arts education.

Dr Aylwyn Walsh, Associate Professor in Performance and Social Change & Programme Leader: MA Applied Theatre and Intervention, University of Leeds

Dr Jo Ronan, Independent Researcher/Practitioner

Prof Roberto Sifuentes, School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Facilitator: **Ashanti Harris**, Lecturer in Contemporary Performance Practice, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

19.00 - 20.00

Evening Performance

The Tenders

A Zoom-performance by **ATOM-r** (Anatomical Theatres of Mixed Reality) in collaboration with **Abraham Avnisan**. This session includes a creative conversation with the artists after the live performance.

All times GMT

11.00 - 12.10

Session 5

Working Session: Forming the Network

This session is open to academics and practitioners involved in contemporary performance education and interested in shaping the future of the network.

13.00 - 13.30

Lunch Performance

Exhuming Exhuming Johnny

A delegated 'reunion' performance instigated by **Dr Robert Walton**, Resident Artist, School of Computing and Information Systems, Melbourne School of Engineering.

Performed on Zoom by students on the BA with Honours Contemporary Performance Practice programme at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

15.00 - 16.30

Public Session

Beyond Contemporaneity: Futures of Performance

This session is open to students, academics, practitioners and members of the public.

In this public panel conversation, artists, producers, thinkers, graduates, and policy-makers will discuss the future of contemporary performance. This discussion will touch on the multiplicity of factors which will inevitably shape the future such as public health, economy, artistic trajectory, access and hierarchies of power, societal and political support, and education.

This event will be interpreted in British Sign Language and live-captioned in English.

LJ Findlay-Walsh, Artistic Director, Take Me Somewhere & Senior Performance Curator, Tramway

Ghost and John, Multidisciplinary Art Duo

Edit Kaldor, Theatre-maker and writer & artistic programme development and tutor, DAS Theatre Programme, the Amsterdam University of the Arts

Aura Onashile, Playwright, Actor, Director

Jo Verrent, Senior Producer, Unlimited