REVOLUTION IN FOUR ACTS

The 2018 Performance Studies Focus Group (PSFG) Pre-Conference at ATHE

July 31 – August 1, 2018
Boston, MA

Curated by Michelle Liu Carriger, Krista Miranda, Jessi Piggott, & Gwyneth Shanks
About PSFG

Since its inception over a decade ago, the Performance Studies Focus Group (PSFG) has helped to expand the scope of the ATHE conference as a whole. By drawing upon interdisciplinary methods, scholars, and ideas, PSFG has consistently worked to challenge and critique the boundaries of performance itself and performance-based inquiry. To that end, PSFG has consistently sponsored a wide variety of multidisciplinary panels, fostering scholarship and discussion about the keywords, models of cultural efficacy, and research methodologies defining the fields of “theatre” and “performance.” Since 2003, PSFG has hosted annual pre-conferences exploring a vibrant series of topics. Starting with the foundational question, “What is performance studies?”, pre-conference themes have gone on to include: pedagogy, local and national identities, history, politics and power, spirituality, play, and labor.

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2018 Pre-Conference Curators
Michelle Liu Carriger, Krista Miranda, Jessi Piggott, & Gwyneth Shanks
Program Design: Jasmine Mahmoud

If you would like to learn more about PSFG, please attend our annual membership meeting Friday, August 3 at 11:30am in Stone 1206.
On behalf of the organizers, we want to welcome you to Revolution in Four Acts, the 2018 PSFG pre-conference at ATHE, where we’ll be engaging Boston, revolution, and performance through a series of participatory and conversation-oriented events. Taking up this year’s theme, “Theatres of Revolution,” we wanted to organize a pre-conference that takes seriously what types of “revolutions”—big and small—need to happen in our field, in art-making, in universities, in conferences, and in our everyday lives. As such, each event is built around the premise that collective conversation is key to questioning and producing new knowledges and solutions.

While thinking through the themes of revolution, resistance, and protest within and beyond higher education in our current political climate, we must reckon with the ways our resistance practices—like the 2017 and 2018 Women’s Marches—have often failed to be intersectional. As we combat social injustice and inequity, is there any hope for revolution without coalition? Our kick-off event, Act I: The Revolution is Live, enacts our own form of coalition politics by bringing together participants across focus groups. Our hope is that pre-conference coalition through performance encourages participants to meditate on the relationship between interdisciplinarity and intersectionality throughout the entirety of the conference. What is, after all, revolutionary about interdisciplinarity? The Revolution is Live foregrounds performance, and queer night life specifically, as an instrumental mode of resistance that not only fosters solidarity across disciplines, but also provides the conditions for world-making through the celebration of difference.

In Act II: Inside the Institution, we visit an institution allied with the university and the theater—the art museum—as the setting for our inquiry into how institutions are and should be responding to attempts to reckon with their status as cultural battlefields. Assailed from both right and left as too conservative, racist, highbrow, and too liberal, activist, and trendy, we’ll be asking, what can a museum do? What should it do? How can we articulate a clear vision for the promise of art and representation while keeping the limitations of art as political engagement in perspective?

Act III: Outside the Institution gives an activist twist to the professionalization session. Rather than focusing on what individuals can do to prepare themselves for the job market on their own, we wanted to take a step back and look at collective efforts to re-shape the labour conditions of higher education. Invited guests for this lunch session will share their experiences with how academics are organizing and advocating in the context of precarious employment, the challenges they face, and tips for getting involved.

In our final session, Act IV: Revolution NOW: Radical Pedagogy In and Beyond the Classroom, we turn our attention to pedagogy as a practice that both animates much of our professional lives in the classroom and functions as a methodology for understanding and critiquing the business of higher education. Invited guests share their pedagogical strategies, which draw upon social media platforms as well as community outreach, and speak to the possibilities present inside and outside of higher education.

-- Michelle Liu Carriger, Krista Miranda, Jessi Piggott, & Gwyneth Shanks
The integration of the practical knowledge of theater-making with the humanistic knowledge of the history and theory of performance is central to our department’s vision.

At TAPS, theory and practice are inextricably linked and mutually reinforcing.

We prepare our students to become scholar-artists fluent in both of these languages.

If the idea of the scholar-artist is at the core of our department’s vision, then teaching is at the center of our mission.

We teach our graduate and undergraduate students in academic classes and seminars, in acting and dance studios, and by mentoring them in their creative work and scholarly research.

Creating the context for probing dialogues and participatory experiences in our classes is essential to guiding students into discoveries of how the performing arts can be utilized as a fresh platform for illuminating pressing social issues and paths of change.
Schedule

Tuesday, July 31

**ACT I – THE REVOLUTION IS LIVE**
Queer cabaret and social event

9:30pm
Performances by: Mal Malme, Jayden Jamison KA St. James & Just JP
Location: Bella Luna, 284 Amory St, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

**Wednesday Aug 1**

**ACT II – INSIDE THE INSTITUTION**
Tour and discussion at Institute for Contemporary Art

9:15am
Breakfast at Sorelle Cafe
Location: 100 Northern Ave, Boston, MA 02210

10:00am
Introduction & Tour of ICA
Speakers: Dr. Ellen Tani (Assistant Curator, ICA)
Location: 25 Harbor Shore Drive, Boston, MA 02210

**ACT III – ...OUTSIDE THE INSTITUTION**
Lunch session on advocacy and activism in academe

12:15pm
Lunch at The Lawn on D
Speakers: Angelica Pinna-Perez (Lesley), Anne Fleche (Northeastern), Sheridan Thomas (Tufts) & Kari Barclay (Stanford)
Location: 420 D Street, Boston, MA 02210

**ACT IV – REVOLUTION NOW**
Roundtable: Radical Pedagogy In and Beyond the Classroom

2:00pm
Westin Boston Waterfront (room TBD)
Speakers: Ellen Gerdes (UCLA)
Professor Jessica Pabón-Colón (SUNY New Paltz), and
Professor Patricia Ybarra (Brown University)
Location: 425 Summer Street, Boston, MA 02210
Handbook for the Revolution
For full texts, please visit https://psfgboston2018.wordpress.com/register/readings/
Password: Readings4Revolution

ACT I - The Revolution is Live

“What were the relationships between individual self-fashioning and notions of community and political agency through the relationships between bodies as they danced? How did meaning in and of a queer lifeworld get constructed not only by the individual dancing, but also by bodies dancing together? I contend that from the physical and verbal articulations of at least some participants, improvised social dancing in queer clubs did not exist outside of everyday life. It drew from it and informed it. What people could imagine kinesthetically and/or politically, on the dance floor and on the street constructed lifeworlds. I want to explore some of these political aspects by unpacking the view that dance itself is mindless and those who indulge in it are not only guilty of mindlessness, but of a dangerous surrendering of political agency, and how individuals, as active agents of queer world-making, learned how to be with others on the dance floor and in a queer lifeworld through incorporation and realized the shape of both through embodied practices of energy transmittal and movement mimesis.”

ACT II - Inside the Institution

Juxtaposing the video footage of Eric Garner’s murder at the hands of police and the work of performance artist William Pope.L, this short article dovetails with other urgent questions in museum and performance studies about the political promise of art and representation. What is the efficacy of a representation if it can’t convince a jury? Is there a different promise instead in a “refusal of representation,” like William Pope.L’s 1991 performance “Eating the Wall Street Journal”?

How might considering what representation can and cannot do inform our consideration of the museum’s promise, especially in light of recent controversies at the Boston ICA over the display of white painter Dana Schutz’s painting ‘Open Casket,’ a stylized painting of the famous photo of Emmet Till’s battered face, and a solo exhibition of Nicholas Nixon’s photography, ended early by the artist’s request after the revelation of numerous allegations of sexual harassment against him by former students at MassArt?

ACT III - Outside the Institution

Co-authored by the executive director of the National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education and the Professions, this article provides an overview of unionization trends in higher education since 2016. Starting with a brief history of collective bargaining in the academic labor force, it moves on to map the contemporary fault lines between various labour groups (public/private, tenure line/non-tenure line/grad, full-time/part-time) and the legal landmarks shaping their actions today.

This interview with William B. Gould IV (former chairman of National Labor Relations Board, emeritus law professor at Stanford) considers the 2018 supreme court decision (Janus v. AFSCME) to ban union security agreements requiring non-members to pay union dues (“fair share” contributions) and the impact it could have on higher education.

ACT IV - Revolution NOW: Radical Pedagogy In and Beyond the


This self-reflexive essay addresses issues of teaching and pedagogy for social change in the Trump era. It places current teaching reflections in the context of the history of the corporatization of the university, systemic inequities in academia, and current political debates. It expands upon the structure of a teaching philosophy in order to share critical reflection, relevant sources, and pedagogical strategies drawn from the author’s experience teaching in dance departments.


In this article, Tracy L. Hawkins observes it is clear that educational technology use has moved beyond Blackboard and Desire-2-Learn (D2L) to include the use of public sites and social media tools. This move toward inclusion of social media and other Web 2.0 technologies in education is important because it means that tools/products not created for or concerned with education have entered the once off-limits space of the classroom. Given this need to include social media in the curriculum, it becomes necessary to think about what teachers hope to achieve with its inclusion. Motivated by the belief that feminist teachers need to teach social media in their classes, Hawkins created a project entitled Sexual Ethics that challenged students to use and analyze "Twitter." Hawkins argues that cyberfeminists need to participate in shaping the ways that technologies, particularly social media technologies like Twitter, get incorporated into education.


“Neoliberalism, Professionalization, Debt, and the MFA” explores the ideological and theoretical conundrums that misrepresent MFA education as a professionalization rather than as knowledge production. This article claims that viewing arts production as research allows us to see art making as a public good that should be funded by a larger social body.
UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television
Department of Theater

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