Call for Papers: Theory and Criticism Focus Group of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE), 2018 Conference
Boston, MA August 1-5, 2018

Please send questions to Theory and Criticism Conference Planner:
Daniel Ciba (daniel.ciba@tufts.edu)

1) “Manifestos and Manifestations”—An Interactive Roundtable Event

In response to the 2018 ATHE conference theme, “Theatres of Revolution: Performance, Pedagogy, and Protest” and the host city of Boston—the “birthplace of the American Revolution”—the Theory and Criticism Focus Group seeks praxis and scholarship that considers and rethinks relationships among performances, manifestos, and revolutionary action.

Like the locations on Boston’s Freedom Trail—the Boston Massacre, the Boston Tea Party, and Bunker Hill—manifestos serve as sites of contention where theorists and critics communicate and debate the revolutionary impulse. As Julian Hanna notes in The Atlantic, manifestos are public, provocative, paradoxical, exhibitionist, and inherently theatrical.¹ Martin Puchner’s “Manifesto=Theater,” frames the manifesto as intimately connected with revolution: “As a political genre, the manifesto had been geared toward a revolution, a cut in the historical process, an act that attempts to change suddenly the course of history.”² Twentieth-century theatrical practitioners, such as Filippo Marinetti, Antonin Artaud, Jerzy Grotowski, and Bertolt Brecht, aimed radically to change theatrical conventions with their manifestos. In that spirit, ATHE’s 2018 Boston conference offers an opportunity to theorize and collectively critique manifestos in relation to performative revolutionary manifestations.

How might exploring the connections between “manifestos” and “manifestations” impact contemporary performance criticism? Is the manifesto irredeemably Eurocentric and male—the refuge of history’s monsters Adolf Hitler, Ted Kaczynski, and Anders Breivik? Or can the form be reimagined to bring about Benjamin’s “real state of emergency?” How does the impact of manifestos, broadly interpreted, become manifest in everyday, academic, activist, and theatrical performance practices?

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The Theory and Criticism Focus Group seeks position papers from theatre artists, educators, scholars, activists, philosophers, and critics interested in examining our 2018 Roundtable Series theme, “Manifestos and Manifestations.”

The roundtables eschew formal paper presentations in favor of short position papers and provocations designed to encourage interactive critical conversations among panelists and audience members. Building on our previous roundtable series, we strive to include a diverse range of participants from graduate students and emerging scholars, to professional critics, artists, and senior scholars.

Position papers can take the form of a short essay, a manifesto, an outreach exercise, a critical review, a theoretical musing, a research report, a creative project, an interview, or an embodied performance practice. Questions include, but are not limited to:

- **Theoretical**: What is the form of a manifesto? Is it necessary to rethink the manifesto to interpret and/or generate new and diverse kinds of performances? How does viewing diverse texts, ranging from Bharata’s *Natyasastras* and Zeami’s *Fūshikaden* to Augusto Boal’s *Theater of the Oppressed*, as manifestos change the impact of these theories? Does this change the way that scholars interpret revolutionary acts of theatre and performance? How does a radical interpretation of manifesto leave the page and leap into life or onto the stage?

- **Critical**: What are the historical and contemporary reasons to draft manifestos to interrogate revolution? Can we apply the manifesto/manifestation relationship to read the performative elements of theorists such as Karl Marx, Guy Debord, bell hooks, and Jose Esteban Munoz, or activists such as Angela Davis, Harvey Milk, or Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor? How does the manifesto compare to other forms of criticism? Does the form itself hold a politics? How do manifestos contain, reveal, or refigure classed, racialized, nationalized, and gendered histories? Can new manifestos reframe these histories?

- **Pedagogical**: How do we teach theories and criticism as manifestos? What is the value of having students write their own manifestos? What is the pedagogical relationship between manifestos that document revolutions and scholarship? What manifestos do we teach? Is there a dramaturgy of manifestos?

- **Performativ**: Can a performance constitute a manifesto? Are prefaces and stage directions manifestos from the playwright? Does performance require subscription to a manifesto? Which comes first the performance, the manifesto, or the manifestation? What does reading certain performances as manifestos enable? How does interpreting performances as manifestos promote revolutionary context?
The Theory and Criticism Focus Group will accept individual, 250-word position paper abstracts for the “Manifesto” Roundtable Series until **Monday, October 16, 2017**. Submissions should include:

1) Abstract (250 words or less)
2) Title
3) Contact information (name, institutional affiliation, email address, and phone number)
4) A brief bio of 50 words or less
5) Any specific A/V requirements (only if absolutely necessary)

T&C will inform participants of their acceptance by **Friday, October 27**, and the Theory and Criticism Focus Group will oversee the submission of the Roundtable Series panels through ATHE’s online proposal process. Send your position paper abstracts to the Theory and Criticism Focus Group conference planner Daniel Ciba at daniel.ciba@tufts.edu.

**2) Call for Complete Session Proposals, Sponsored by the Theory and Criticism Focus Group**

We also seek complete session proposals for the 2018 conference that include a broad range of theoretical/critical interrogations and applications. We encourage multidisciplinary dialogues across the fields of performance scholarship and praxis. We also seek participants from a variety of focus group affiliations.

The Theory and Criticism Focus Group supports broad definitions of criticism and performance, and therefore encourages a wide range of examples and topics. Feel free to explore both historical and contemporary critics and theorists, in popular culture, academic scholarship, and performance praxis. Panel proposals that engage scholarly conversation in creative ways are highly encouraged.

Please Note:
- Single Focus Group Sessions can address questions to the conference planner (daniel.ciba@tufts.edu) before submitting their proposal.
- Multidisciplinary proposals must be authorized by TWO sponsoring ATHE focus groups. Email and get authorization from each focus group’s conference planner before submitting.
- You can only participate in 2 sessions.
- You can only choose **1 Free A/V aid**: audio or CD player OR flip chart OR LCD projector.
- If you need additional A/V, you or the focus group will need to apply for a conference grant. Let your conference planner know.
- For more detailed information see: [http://www.athe.org/page/18_home](http://www.athe.org/page/18_home).

Complete session proposals (**separate from the Roundtable Series**) should be directed directly to the ATHE website (www.athe.org). You must have the names for all participants ready for the proposal. The website includes submission information and forms. The session proposal deadline is **November 1, 2017**.
NOTES:
If you have questions about the ATHE panel proposal submission process, feel free to email Daniel Ciba at daniel.ciba@tufts.edu.

Single paper submissions (outside of our annual roundtable series or a completed session proposal) looking for a session home may contact Daniel Ciba at daniel.ciba@tufts.edu.

Individuals do not need to be a member of the Theory and Criticism Focus Group or ATHE to submit single presentations or panels. However, if chosen and scheduled, participants must become members of ATHE by the time of the conference.