Women and Theatre Program (WTP) invites panel proposals for the 2021 Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) Conference

ATHE 2022 Conference Theme:

Rehearsing the Possible: Practicing Reparative Creativity
July 28 – 31, 2022

If you would like to present at ATHE 2022 and…

…have a **complete panel of three or more presenters** whose work fits together, fits the larger theme of the conference, and examines issues through the **lens of WTP** (in other words not co-sponsored with another focus group) **submit these directly to ATHE** on their website (www.athe.org). ATHE highly recommends that the Session Coordinator contact WTP in advance to verify sponsorship. While this is recommended, it is not required for single focus group panels. To list WTP as your session sponsor, simply select WTP in the “Session Sponsor” field of the online proposal form. The deadline for proposals is Friday, December 3, 2021.

…have a **complete panel of three or more presenters** whose work fits together and addresses the larger themes of the conference from **multiple or multidisciplinary standpoints**, consider submitting a multidisciplinary panel sponsored by two focus groups. Contact the conference planners for both focus groups involved to **confirm approval of a multidisciplinary session before submitting the panel proposal directly to ATHE** on their website (www.athe.org) by Friday, December 3, 2021.

…have an **individual paper or presentation idea** and **would like support putting a panel together**, please feel free to communicate with WTP members on our focus group web page which is linked under “Groups” on the www.athe.org main page. Alternatively, you may also use the WTP listserv to introduce your idea and find other members for your panel. You may also contact WTP’s conference planner, Winter Phong (winter.phong@okstate.edu) or Megan Stahl (megan.stahl@bc.edu). Whenever possible, efforts will be made to connect you with other potential session members.

…have an individual paper or presentation idea and **would like to be placed into a panel at the discretion of WTP Conference Planners**, Winter Phong (winter.phong@okstate.edu) or Megan Stahl (megan.stahl@bc.edu), submit your paper no later than Monday, November 1, 2021.

The 2021 Conference Theme
From ATHE’s Conference Site:

**Rehearsing the Possible: Practicing Reparative Creativity**

After two years of remote engagement, ATHE 2022 promises to bring its members together in person in Detroit, Michigan. Detroit, or Waawiyaataanong, is the multi-national ancestral and contemporary homeland of the Anishinaabe three fires confederacy: Ojibwe, Ottawa, Potawatomi, and Meškwahki-aša-hina, Myaamia, Mississauga, Peoria and Wyandot tribes. An original stop on the Underground Railroad, today it is also a city made up of residents who are majority Black, Indigenous and People of Color, including one the largest Middle East/North African populations in the United States. Detroit, sometimes called the Renaissance City, has repeatedly risen from literal and proverbial ashes—destruction by fire and decimation by deindustrialization and neoliberal policy, among them—to emerge as a home to Black creative and artistic excellence, from Motown to Dominique Morisseau. Following adrienne maree brown’s vision of emergent strategy, or “[..] ways for humans to practice being in right relationship to our home and each other, to practice complexity and grow a compelling future … [to] change in ways that grow our capacity to embody the just and liberated worlds we long for,” we ask: How can our collective live presence in Detroit offer emergent strategies that shape sustainable change in our field, our host city, and our communities?
Building upon the work of the 2021 conference of RE: (claim, frame, pair, write, etc.), 2022 invites ATHE to deepen engagements with questions that Detroit urges us to address. How will we abolish institutional, embedded racist structures? As we seek to reimagine, rebuild, and rise up, what are some new arrangements of the possible that we might pursue? In Worldmaking, Dorinne Kondo asserts that "reparative creativity offers possibilities to work through effects of affective and structural violence," reminding us that the “reparative is a critical, political, and artistic practice.” Engaging this line of thinking, we query: How will we engage our practices to harness the power of theatre for social justice?

As theatre artists and scholars, we recognize that rehearsals, the acts of constant creation, can be more significant than the product and, indeed, that the work is ongoing and incomplete. Can we rehearse for the possible in all aspects of our research, pedagogy, and practice for the better present and future we want to embody, or as Tina Campt frames futurity, “live the future now”?

- What are some of the ways theater and performance can enable us to imagine and embody new possibilities?
- How do theater and performance rearrange our relationship to the impossible?
- How might the theatre as a space of imaginative possibility work to rethink the world in practical and impractical ways?
- How might rehearsing the possible ask us to rethink potential theatre careers for our students, opening up possibilities for how students might use theatre differently to change the world?
- Drawing from Kondo’s view of the reparative as a practice that makes and unmakes race throughout the creative process, what processes that uphold white supremacy can we abolish from our classrooms, rehearsals, production, and performance spaces and what do we imagine in their place?
- What are white theatre scholars, artists, and educators willing to risk to dismantle white supremacy and enact collective liberation?
- Given the austerity we are experiencing nationally across colleges and universities, how might we actualize potentiality amid ongoing crises?
- Detroit and the state of Michigan have long traditions of theatre making in prisons. How does grassroots theatre making with historically excluded groups, like the incarcerated and the homeless, help us to rehearse for social justice efforts or otherwise contribute to social change? How can theatre learn from such transdisciplinary grassroots work as we re-imagine a more inclusive field and engage trauma-informed practices?
- How might ATHE and/or theatre makers and organizations contribute to efforts to make reparations to historically enslaved or oppressed communities? In what ways can theatre and performance work to help equalize the economic and education gaps that exist in places like Detroit?
- How might theatre training institutions engage in actively creating space to advance discussion on climate crisis as it relates to performance, protest, and the disproportionately impacted global majority (BIPOC communities and nations)?
- Nina Simone said “It is the artist’s duty to reflect the times in which we live.” With this in mind, what is the role of the theatre practitioner/scholar in social justice and revolution in these current times? Why and how does theatre reify historic inequalities?
- If we think of abolition as Critical Resistance and as some define it, being about presence rather than absence, how might the theatre help shore up the presence of vital resources that could help alleviate the perceived need for prisons, weaponized policing, and other institutions that perpetuate structural racism and harm to marginalized communities?
- What types of theatre and performance have arisen (emerged) from our collective time in isolation and from the demands for equality such as those from “We see you white American Theatre”? What changes have you or your institutions made? How will this work be sustained?
Possible WTP topics include, but are not limited to:

- How might our reflections on feminist waves, works, and performance impact contemporary practice centered on female and non-dominant gender identities?
- Pivotal moments of confrontation that drive women and non-binary artists, scholars and laborers forward in theatre practice, theory, pedagogy
- How do we train future practitioners to embrace changing and inclusive performance practice?
- How might we reflect on/dismantle White-feminism, as we integrate intersectionality in feminist thinking, theories, and practices within theatre?
- What women and non-binary artists inhabit our contemporary stages? Who was here before they were? Who is (still) missing?
- How do we interrogate challenges facing women and non-binary artists in academia, training, and professional environments as we imagine and embody new possibilities?
- In what ways has inequity impacted our creative labor? What practices combat this?
- How might intersectional feminist theory, praxis, and methodology be considered/reflective in reparative creativity?
- What emerging practices, methods, performances, are having a positive or effective impact for female and non-dominant gender identities?
- Feminist approaches to play structure that renegotiate the concepts of well-made, Aristotelian plays and scenes
- Women and non-binary artists and technologies

Instructions for Submitting a Proposal:

Please consult the ATHE website, www.athe.org; it offers a user-friendly, step-by-step guide to submitting your individual paper proposal (due Monday, November 1, 2021) or your panel proposal (due Friday, December 3, 2021), which must be entered through the site by or for panel proposals (the online module for submitting proposals is available).

Note that your proposal should include all special requests, such as audio-visual support.

Multidisciplinary sessions are those that are sponsored by two or more focus groups. Contact the ATHE conference planner for all intended sponsors before proposing your session. Winter Phong (winter.phong@okstate.edu) and Megan Stahl (megan.stahl@bc.edu). A list of other focus groups and their contacts is available on the ATHE website: www.athe.org.)

Incomplete proposals will not be accepted. Be sure to enter information on all required fields (including names of all session members).

The inclusive dates of the conference are July 28-31, 2022; unfortunately, specific time-slot requests cannot be granted, so session participants must be available through that time period. (Please let WTP know if this stipulation hampers your ability to participate and we will work with ATHE to see if accommodations can be made for issues such as caregiving, disability, etc.)

You will receive confirmation of your proposal directly from ATHE shortly after submission; you will receive notification regarding acceptance to the conference in March 2022.

If you have questions regarding the process that cannot be answered through ATHE’s website, please feel free to contact WTP’s ATHE Co-conference Planners, Winter Phong (winter.phong@okstate.edu) and Megan Stahl (megan.stahl@bc.edu).

About the Women in Theatre Program
The Women and Theatre Program (WTP) is a self-incorporated division of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE). Founded in 1974, our mission is to bring theater professionals together with academics and activists. In the years since our inception, WTP has sponsored panels and activities at ATHE’s annual conference. In 1980, WTP began holding its own annual pre-ATHE conference. WTP conferences feature panels, informal discussions, workshops, and performances as a means to foster both research and production of feminist theatre activities. WTP conference topics have included the intersection of theory and performance, multicultural theatre, lesbian theory and theatre, and many related aspects of feminist inquiry. In addition to its conference activity, WTP, in collaboration with ATHE, sponsors the Jane Chambers Playwriting Award. This award is one of the few nationally recognized competitions for women playwrights and attracts over 200 submissions annually. The award-winning play is given a reading at ATHE, and an annotated list of the top contenders is circulated to the WTP members and over 400 regional theaters. The continuing goal of WTP is to enable feminist inquiry and to provide opportunities for discussion between those who teach, perform, and theorize about feminism, theatre, and performance.