CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Performance Studies Focus Group (PSFG) Sessions
Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) Conference
August 1st-4th, 2024– Atlanta, Georgia

“Revisioning the Story”

Submission Deadlines:
January 2nd: for submission of abstracts for individual papers to conference planner Krista Miranda at krista.miranda@gmail.com
January 16th: for submission of complete panel proposals directly to ATHE at www.athe.org.

The Performance Studies Focus Group (PSFG) of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) invites paper and session proposals for ATHE’s 2024 annual meeting in Atlanta. Proposals will be welcomed in many formats—e.g. scholarly panels, seminars, roundtables, performance-based presentations, working groups, and other innovative, alternative-session structures—as well as on all theatre- and performance-related topics, particularly those that address the 2024 ATHE conference theme of “Revisioning the Story.”

In “Then Again,” Adrian Heathfield ruminates on “the multiple lives of performance,” specifically referring to theories of performance founded in “disappearance,” “reappearance,” and “the viral” (32). Noting its tendency to be “dissected, represented, re-performed,” Heathfield suggests “that one of performance’s most consistent and recurring conditions is transformation” (32). To engage with performance, the event, and their iterations, is to engage with the potential inherent in transition, and the capacity to begin again. As we reflect on ATHE 2023, which asked, “what is ATHE’s story?”, we are now tasked with transforming the stories that surround us to reflect the change we want to see, such as the stories of our institutions, our disciplines, our communities, our self actualizations through performance. Importantly, PSFG asks, What are we revisioning toward? An inherently interdisciplinary space, PSFG continues to foster inclusivity within and beyond its community, and therefore is particularly interested in submissions that engage with anti-racist, anti-ableist, anti-colonialist, abolitionist and other social justice-oriented performance practices and praxis.

PSFG encourages papers and proposals representing all historical periods and geographic locations. Proposals might consider, but are not limited to, some of the following questions:

- Performance studies prides itself on its interdisciplinarity, engaging with critical race, gender, queer studies, and critical disability studies. And yet, this
interdisciplinarity has been held in tension with a commitment to establishing PS as a distinct discipline, which often means rehearsing many of the same ideas and citational norms, making interdisciplinarity challenging at times. How might we name (and revision) these contradictory impulses? In reimagining the field, how might we also envision connections between other emerging fields and practices like critical refugee studies, ecocriticism, and human/nonhuman relations?

• Without imposing false binaries, how might PSFG serve as a bridge between practice-oriented and theory-oriented scholarship and pedagogy? How might performance studies scholarship offer unique insights for theatre practice (and vice versa) into racial injustice, mass displacement, occupation, climate change, and other looming contemporary issues?
• How does performance studies ask us to revise how we do theatre history? For example, can we reimagine different historiographical approaches and unexpected connections between geographic/temporal locations? How do performance studies historiographical methods enable us to tell the stories that are still not heard enough or have long been silent?
• How might PS enable a reimagining or revisioning of the embodied demands of performance practices? How might PS help us acknowledge the dynamic nature of embodiment itself and negotiate capitalism’s (and our field’s) demands on our bodies and minds to produce within normative timeframes?
• As we reflect on our field, it is important to acknowledge the communities and bodyminds who are historically overlooked during the process of creation. When we imagine a more equitable, inclusive, and innovative future, can we, for example, center modes of knowing beyond the visual? Instead of (or in addition to) re-visioning, can we re-touch, re-figure, or re-embody theatre and performance studies?
• In recent decades, there has been a movement led by disabled artists that reconsiders relationships with audiences to center their access needs. In this way, disability becomes a methodology and a source of innovation. Dance Company Kinetic Light’s founder and artistic director Alice Sheppard posits “access as an ethic, as an aesthetic, as a practice, as a promise, as a relationship with the audience.” Like the crip innovation of access aesthetics and ethics, what other ways can we reimagine performance and scholarship that takes into account the differential bodyminds of the audience, students, and readers?
• As we revision the story, how does a performance studies approach enable us to think broadly about what we mean by “story,” “scripts,” “(non)narratives,” etc.?

Resources


How to Submit Your Proposal:

1. **ATHER will have two rounds of submissions. The First Round are Due January 16th, 2024.** This round of submissions is for “fully formed sessions.” Each submitted proposal should be helmed by a session coordinator, have at least three presenters, a title, and a description of the session. (Presentation titles for each participant are optional). All session proposals must be submitted directly to ATHER via their website, www.ATHER.org. This year, session coordinators can "opt in" or "opt out" of opening up their session to the “Second Round of Submissions.” For example, if you have an excellent idea for a roundtable and are only able to gather a few colleagues before the submission deadline, you can submit your roundtable and opt in to the “Second Round of Submissions” in order to include more people later in the process. Session Coordinators will have the opportunity to review the individual submissions and determine if they are a good fit for their session. ATHER will explain the logistics of this process at a later date.

2. **March 4, 2024 is the deadline for the Second Round of Submissions.** At that time, ATHER will release a list of all of the sessions from the “First Round of Submissions” that opted in to the “Second Round of Submissions.” This is not a time to propose a new session. This submission process is to open up individual participation, whether they are paper presentation or to be added to roundtables, etc., to the already accepted sessions. If you are an individual member, this will give you an opportunity to find a session that you would like to join. If you are a session coordinator, this will give you an opportunity to have more presenters included in your session that you, perhaps, were not able to gather prior to the initial December deadline. This is an ideal way to fill out a roundtable, poster session, gallery walk, workshop, or/and other large format session. Session Coordinators will have the opportunity to review the individual submissions and determine if they are a good fit for their session. ATHER will explain the logistics of this process at a later date.

3. With an eye toward helping promote networking opportunities via PSFG, especially amongst new ATHER members, we are working to improve the individual-paper submission process. If you are looking for co-panelists, we are happy to assist in three ways:

   **Visit our Brainstorming Google Doc** to pitch your panel idea and connect with other scholars looking for co-panelists. No sign up necessary! Just click this link: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1golytH8gKSJkHiTpghjCVC0iadyxZI
Join us for a virtual event to meet other PSFG folks and brainstorm panels. The happy hour will be held on Friday, December 22nd at 1-2:30pm Eastern / 10-11:30am Pacific. Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85330653698?pwd=K2gwY2ZkcW5WSDZyVFZVbWdCa3prdz09. Password: 868539.

You can also submit individual paper proposals or incomplete panel proposals in search of additional panelists to PSFG Conference Planner Krista Miranda (Krista.miranda@gmail.com) by January 2nd. Individual paper proposals should include a title, an abstract of 250 words, contact information and affiliation if applicable, and a brief bio. Incomplete panel proposals should include a session title and session abstract of 250 words, in addition to the components listed above for each contributing panelist (title, paper abstract, contact info and affiliation, bio). The Focus Group Conference Planner will work with these submissions to curate panels, matching up related papers, and then put those authors in touch with one another so that they can craft their own session proposal by the January 16th deadline.

4. Please indicate A/V needs in your session proposal. If you do request audio or visual aids—particularly an LCD Screen and/or sound equipment—please be aware of the following: in order to schedule as many excellent Focus Group sessions as possible, your session may be scheduled in a room without any audio or visual aids available. You will need to confirm in the proposal whether or not you would be willing to present this session if the requested audio-visual is not available. Please understand that, if you say you are unwilling to present without audio-visual aids, the odds of your proposal acceptance may be negatively affected. See additional information about A/V requests here. You may request one piece of A/V equipment for free (see previous link for list of equipment). If you need more than one piece of A/V equipment, please remember to apply for the appropriate grant to cover the cost of A/V support at the time that you submit your session proposal. The grant must be requested separately from the submission of your proposal.

5. Notifications for accepted and rejected sessions are typically announced by mid-March.

6. **Attention Contingent Faculty and Independent Scholars:** The Performance Studies Focus Group will be awarding one $500 travel grant to a Contingent Faculty or Independent Scholar presenting work at the 2024 ATHE Conference in Atlanta, conditions permitting. The travel grant application will circulate in early 2024 via the ATHE and PSFG listservs. The application will not be labor
intensive and will include a CV, a brief description of your ATHE goals and its importance to your professional development, and an attachment with your paper or panel acceptance into the PSFG stream for ATHE 2024. If you have any questions about eligibility or logistics, please contact PSFG Conference Planner, Krista Miranda: krista.miranda@gmail.com.

7. PSFG will also be launching its annual Emerging Scholars competition in early 2024. Graduate students and early career scholars and artists who have not previously presented at ATHE will be encouraged to submit complete papers and works; selected winners will receive an honorarium, mentorship from established scholars, and free registration for the PSFG pre- or post-conference. If you have any questions, please direct them to PSFG Graduate Student Rep Ryan Hung ryanhung@wustl.edu.

Join our PSFG listserv to receive emails related to the Performance Studies Focus Group at ATHE. Follow the link and click "Join Group" in the upper left corner. Join the Google Group: https://groups.google.com/a/athe.org/g/PSFG?pli=1.

If you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact:

Krista Miranda
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Independent Artist/Scholar