Theatre and Performance Design Education Network

The inaugural international conference of The Theatre & Performance Design Education Network will bring together teachers and researchers from a range of international institutions engaged with the teaching of theatre and performance design and its affiliated fields. It will facilitate the sharing of current best practice, strategize for the future and provide a discursive forum for interrogating the efficacy of different pedagogical approaches.

The following themes, Collaboration, Digital Technologies, Space & Architecture, Interdisciplinarity, Drawing & Performance, Costume, and Scenography Unbound, will provide critical lenses to explore key questions such as: how are we equipping theatre and performance design students with the requisite skills, knowledge and understanding to not only work in the creative industries as they are now but to shape those industries in the future?

Conference presentation proposals have been received from Canada, USA, New Zealand, Norway, Italy, Serbia, Hungary and the UK. These presentations will be a significant contribution to the discourse on the pedagogical challenges facing the fields of scenography and theatre and performance design and how teaching practitioners, researchers, and academics are developing new and innovative teaching strategies to overcome them.

We are delighted to announce Rolf Hughes are the conference key-note speaker.

Rolf Hughes is Professor of Artistic Research at Stockholm University of the Arts, a prose poet, essayist, epistemologist and researcher of innovative forms of artistic and transdisciplinary practices over more than twenty years. He is co-founder of Radical Circus (2016), a group dedicated to radical experiments in artistic research and contemporary circus arts. Alongside Rachel Armstrong, he is exploring the contribution of poetry, choreography, and performing arts to the field of experimental architecture.

Others to be confirmed.

Conference Calls for Papers

Theatre and Performance Design Education Network

Theatre and Performance Design Pedagogy: best practice now and strategies for the future

'[W]ith every generation of graduates we are in danger of legitimising and setting in stone the prevailing understanding of the artistic disciplines, as they are represented by the institutions.'

Heiner Goebbels, Aesthetics of Absence 2015[1]

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How are we equipping theatre and performance design students with the requisite skills, knowledge and understanding to not only work in the creative industries as they are now but to shape those industries in the future?

The conference organizers have welcomed papers, presentations and demonstration/ workshops from those engaged in teaching and those engaged in pedagogical research in theatre and performance design, concerned with, but not limited to, the following areas and related questions:

*Digital technologie*s: what are the implications for teaching and learning of the incorporation of digital technologies into scenographic working processes? For instance, in order to maximize their creative engagement with digital technology how are we enabling students to utilise or adapt digital software programmes? Does this extend to design students needing to understand digital code?

Drawing as design tool and drawing as performance practice: As a means of making ideas concrete and as a discursive tool drawing is instrumental in theatre, costume and performance design, spatial design and architecture. What kind of tools, including the digital, do student designers use to draw? An expanded notion of drawing, where the haptic and the digital coalesce is now common in performance practice. What is the potential of drawing as performance for theatre and performance design?

Engaging with archives: What is the role of archives in the teaching of theatre and performance design? Are there creative approaches to looking at theatre and performance design archives and dynamic ways of responding to them?

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[1] Goebbels, H., *Aesthetics of Absence*, Collins, J., ed., Roesner D., and Lagao C.M., trans. Routledge, London 2015, p77

First published in German as *Ästhetik der Abwesenheit* by Theater der Zeit 2012

Blended Learning: Information gathering now happens across media and in small bites. Cognitive science tells us this is changing the way the brain functions. Blending learning as a mode of delivery plays into this accessibility of information. What are its current usages and future possibilities in terms of developing technical, analytical, critical and inter-personal skills?

MOOCs: What is the value of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in theatre and performance teaching and learning? Who is using them? How are they working?

Scenography: Scenography as a practice and as an analytical tool encompasses a broad range of theatre and performance, including opera, music theatre, site-specific, immersive and virtual theatres, and community based performance, spatial design and architecture. How do we prepare students with the requisite skills to work creatively across this rapidly expanding field? What is the role of the written text within it?

Collaborative practice: Is it axiomatic that theatre and performance design is a collaborative practice and if so how is this reflected in teaching and learning? Where do we position wider collaborations outside the discipline? How are students being encouraged to work with other disciplinary fields? E.g. the Sciences

Critical and Analytical skills: There is now a substantial body of theoretical work engaged with the practice of theatre and performance design and related fields. How is this being incorporated in the education of young designers?   How do we engage students with this critical language as an analytical tool, as a means of catalyzing innovation in their artistic practice and developing their own aesthetics?