



Theatre Conference JAMU 2022

**TOUCHING LIMITS / CROSSING
BORDERS OF THEATRE**

10-11 NOVEMBER 2022



**BOOK OF
ABSTRACTS**

TOUCHING LIMITS / CROSSING BORDERS OF THEATRE



The International Theatre Conference organized by the Theatre Faculty of Janáček Academy of Performing Arts is being held for the 11th time this year and is continuously developing. As a result of last year's experience, when only a limited number of participants were able to attend in person due to the pandemic, we made the decision to continue with the chamber format this year as well. Simultaneously, the conference will be streamed online. Individual contributions will be given more time than in previous editions, which will help our meeting to stay even more focused. We need adequate room to cover the issues we will be addressing this year.

This year, we are moving into the turbulent areas on the periphery of the performing arts. We will examine various approaches to coping with them, we will discuss diverse ways of perceiving them, we will share our experiences. The two main concepts we set out to explore are borders—places of transition where one thing transforms into another—and limits—the furthest points that can be reached. The primary distinction between a limit and a border unquestionably depends on our perspective. So let's pose the following question to ourselves: What limitations should we change into borders, and what borders should we uphold as limits?

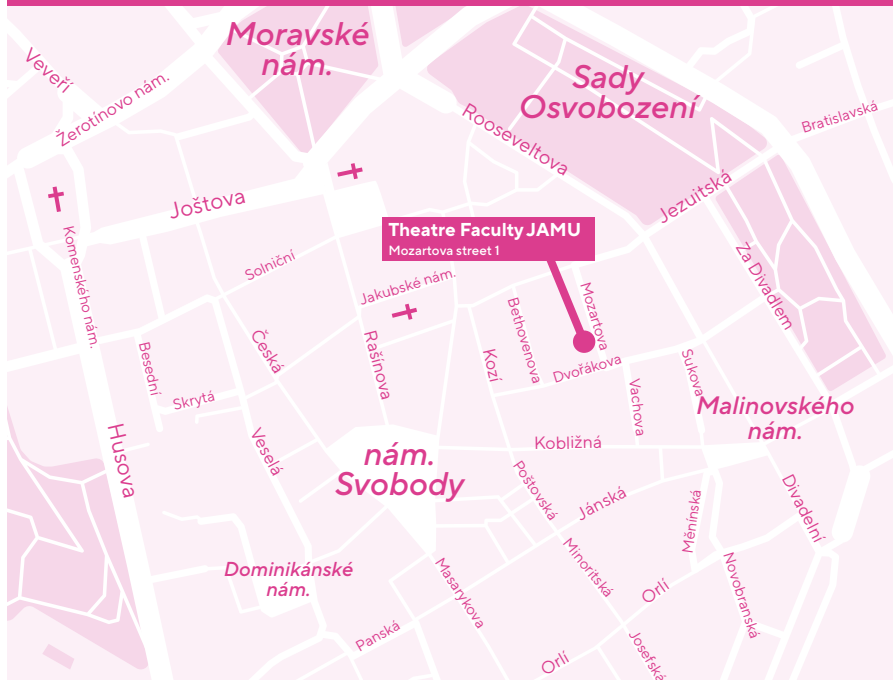
And how can we accomplish this?

On behalf of the organizing team

Šimon Peták

WHERE TO FIND US?

Venue: Theatre Faculty JAMU, Mozartova street 1 (DF)



WATCH US ONLINE!

We will be streaming our conference on our YT channel.



SPEAKERS



ATTILA ANTAL

Documagery: Reality Shifts in Docu-Based Performances

How can you be fictional and stay true to your documentary source material? How can you interpret intensely personal stories/tragedies in theatre without becoming utterly tedious? How can you change the perception of what is known and taken for granted only by shuffling some facts around in an immersive performance?

In this presentation I will talk about and showcase theatre performances that are based on true facts and documentary material and the ways these facts are presented and shifted into fictional imagery and back. I will pinpoint some elements of these performances (narrative techniques, dramaturgy, directorial choices, etc.) that on one hand help distancing the audience from the raw facts in order for them to

be able to feel comfortable with perceiving the oftentimes serious base material, and on the other draw them back into the narratives in an organic, non-intrusive way. In the presentation I will use the examples of the performances of Oliver Frljić and András Urbán to set up the framework for some of the possibilities of this type of theatre, and then dive into a theatre trilogy where through their visual, choregraphic and dramaturgical solutions we can recognise different levels of interwovenness of the real-life and the theatrical, without losing the very personal touch inherent to these performances. I will finish my presentation showcasing an immersive audio-performance, which intensely uses real-life facts and locations to create a fictional world of a hidden city.

BIO

Attila Antal is a theatre, film director and composer currently living in Novi Sad, Serbia. He is interested in a wide range of theatrical expressions from puppet theatre through socially engaged theatre to contemporary dance. He is working on his PhD thesis at the Mozarteum University in Salzburg, Austria, on the topic of the political in postdramatic theatre in the post-socialist Hungary and the former Yugoslavian countries. He has worked on performances and films in Hungary, Serbia, Romania, Croatia, Slovenia, etc. His current work involves expanding the borders of what is considered theatre into virtual realities and site-related immersive performances.

LAURA BRECHMANN, FLORENT GOLFIER

N.A.TO – Nose Assembly for Tomorrow

For two years we have been working collaboratively on the Clown Atlas and its site-specific walks in Europe's inner cities, which thematically move between (climate) activism, intervention and performance. The topic of this lecture is the planning, conception, funding and dramaturgy of the upcoming ATLAS-Project N.A.TO (Nose Assembly for Tomorrow) planned for 2023, which will take place in November as a counter-event to the UN Climate Conference. It will create a meeting space for activists and clowns to discuss real possibilities to confront

social problems (climate justice) and climate change. They will use "radical imagination" to formulate proposals that will then be made available to a wider public. During the talk we will raise the following questions: How can we use a clown to confront climate change and create attention for the need for political and social change? How do we solidify collaborations with non-cultural institutions and individuals from a variety of disciplines? What are expanded possibilities for funding productions that explore the boundaries of theater and so-called reality?

BIO

*Laura Brechmann (*1990, GER) is Performance Artist, Theater Scholar and Project Manager for the PEEK-Project "Navigating Dizziness Together" (21-23) at the University for Applied Arts in Vienna, Austria. She is Dramaturg for ATLAS, initiated by artist Florent Golfier/tYhle since 2021.*

*Florent Golfier (*1990, FR) is a French actor and dancer based in Prague. He studied acting at the Conservatory in Nancy, then integrated these in the Clown and Physical Theatre Department at the JAMU Theatre Academy in Brno. That's where he met Lukáš Karásek, with whom he created the pieces Tešlon a Frkl, Les Fantômes, Pierer and Výš/Higher. After a research residency, in 2014 he created his first solo piece, Umbilicus. With Marie Gourdain, he collaborated on the pieces UN/One and LEGOrytmus in 2015 and 2017. Florent Golfier has also worked with different choreographers and theatre directors, among whom Carlo Locatelli (I), Kitt Johnson (DK) and Vít Neznal (CZ). He is one of the founders of the tYhle collective.*

ANDREA JOCHMANOVÁ

Perform the Imagination...!

Since the first human communities were formed, people have used more powerful means of description than just words (or onomatopoeic sounds). Using the whole body to represent a character (either human or non-human) still stimulates our imagination. We can conduct anthropological research on this just as we can on any other mimetic behavior representing reality. Since ancient Greek-culture, theatre has used a mixture of means to appeal to

the audience's consciousness while re-presenting reality, masking and uncovering the characteristics of society and forcing the audience to engage in reflection.

BIO

Andrea Jochmanová, Ph.D., is a researcher in Czech theatre history who is interested in the connections between theatre and folklore, theatre and gender. She studies cultural anthropology, game theory etc. In 2020, her essay "To Make the Absent Present" was published, wherein she declares that we are more or less going back to the roots of the performative process, searching for good, old-fashioned narration, presented under a much more up-to-date label: storytelling.

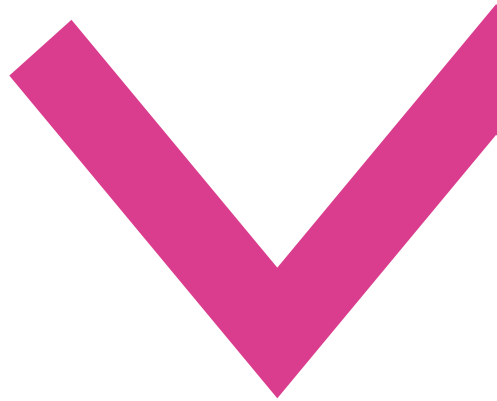


JAN MOTAL

Professional artists and the division of labour, or how not to reproduce inequalities

In late-modern society, art is still a distinct field of human activity, as it developed in the course of the Industrial Revolution along with the diversifying division of labour. Whereas in mass society art could rely on the power of the audience or the support of collective institutions or political parties, today the artist is in the same situation as other precarized industries - like journalists or educators, he or she is undergoing a massive deprofessionalization (expressed in the tabloidization of theatre and media). Artists are therefore seeking the attention and support of the state, which should protect their professional status and recognise their activity as a specific public service. But do we know what this really means? Is it not just a convenient collaboration with the modern state, which is the ultimate manifestation of the modern division of labour that, alongside opportunities, breeds above all - social inequalities? Have not we, as artists, lost our relationship with the people, to whose everyday life all engaged art should be indebted? This anarchistic dialogue between a contemporary engaged artist and

a retired avant-garde socialist of the fin-de-siecle offers a dialectical reflection on the relationship between professionalism, art and social practice that seeks social transformation towards a more just and free society.



BIO

*Jan Motal has been systematically engaged in media and art ethics as a teacher and theorist since 2012, when he began teaching ethics at the Department of Media Studies and Journalism at the Faculty of Social Studies of Masaryk University. His own experience as a director and dramaturge, as well as his interest in hermeneutic philosophy, which he had already explored in his dissertation, led him to this topic. Since 2015, he has been working at the Institute for Theatre and Drama Research at the Theatre Faculty of JAMU, where he continues to deepen his philosophical reflection on art and media with a focus on their role in the culture of dialogue and ecocriticism. As a guest lecturer, he has lectured on ethics for various university and non-profit institutions in the Czech Republic and abroad, and regularly publishes and participates in conferences. He collaborates with professional organizations such as the Foundation for Independent Journalism. In 2016, he published an award-winning monograph *Dialogue through Art* advocating the importance of art for social dialogue. His book *Radical Dramaturgy, an interpretation of Martin Buber and Gustav Landauer's political theory of art in relation to neoliberal society*, will be published in 2022.*

RICHARD PETTIFER

Overcoming Human Limits: Superhumanism and Theatre

The application in the theatre of 'Non-Human Agency' – attribution of agency for entities that fall outside a definition of human – is approached through the tendency for anti-humanist works to reproduce misanthropic outcomes within posthumanist, ecofeminist, and transhumanist thought. Yet the problem of 'decentring' the human remains, and specifically, how to engage that which is outside of the confines of human limits. Can theatre be a useful tool for this endeavour?

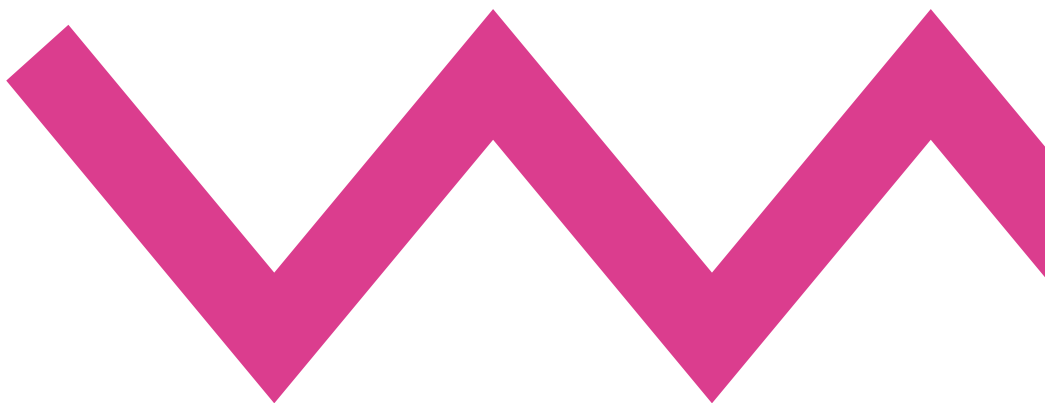
Alternatives to human supremacy suggest a role for theatre in reconciling questions of agency, specifically with reference to Nietzsche's *Also Sprach Zarathustra* and its invention of the *Übermensch*, and with the end goal of overcoming human limits. Considering the advantages of the theatre, the individualist fantasy of transhumanism should be rejected in favour of a different set of questions more focused on collectivity and theatre's capacity for assembly – what collective limits might be overcome through the act of spectatorship?

This paper proposes an answer contained in 'theatrical presence' as defined by Maurice Merleau-Ponty and elaborated on by Suzanne M. Jaeger (2008), a type of attention to being that is specific to the theatre. Extending this into social and political spheres, leading to what is called 'superhumanism' in this paper as a new set of relations for theatrical spectatorship – in close reference to fandom in superhuman films and specific modes of critical viewing discussed by Will Brooker (*Using the Force*, 2002). Modes of playful spectatorship and discursive viewing may lead the spectator into an engaged relationship with text, producing collective identification that goes beyond that based in gender, race, class, or other category.

BIO

Richard Pettifer (GER/AUS) is an Australian theatre director, theorist, and critic based in Berlin.

His work approaches the subject of climate change and technology as key battlegrounds for the ethics of human intervention, seeking a re-centring of 'the human' as a collective social being in a context where misanthropy, individualism, alienation, and cynicism are dominant cultural traits. His work aspires to a global collective theatre that activates spaces for social change through cross-cultural collaboration, research-based approaches, philosophy and art-activism, advocating anti-oppression through culture-building and direct intervention, and emphasising a critical perspective on our complicity with global capitalist systems of exploitation and disempowerment.



ALŽBĚTA TROJANOVÁ

Performative walking: from outer to inner landscape of artist's perception (arts-based research on the phenomenon of walking in the perspective of multi-sited ethnography)

This interdisciplinary research, on the border between teatrology and environmental humanities, brings a unique view of walking and its connection with singing and physical theatre in the urban and natural landscape.

The phenomenon of walking can be examined from different angles – from Thoreau's transcendentalist views (1862) to Horvath's and Szokolczai's sociology of walking (2017). Our perception of the outer environment reflects the inner pictures we form based on our experience and a priori forms. The Czech geologist and philosopher Václav Cílek sets out the concept of the inner landscape as influenced by the spirit of the outer one (2002). The more disorderly the outer environment, the more important our inner landscape. The era of post-globalization accelerates the shift to speed, which has been reflected in art since the 1960s. The environmental artist Robert Smithson referred to perceptive changes in the outer environment in his concept of 'non-site' (1968), later brought into the field of anthropology by Marc Augé's theory of 'non-places' (1995).

Whereas Smithson highlights the disproportionality of sensual perception of space in the context of spatial transformation, and his concept of 'non-sites' relativizes the perception of the temporality of peripheral terrain vague, Augé pinpoints 'non-places' as depersonalized spatial phenomena like supermarkets, airports, hotels, or motorways with no local identity. Smithson's concept, arising from his experience of landscape in post-war America, matches Augé's theses on super-modernity in the late-capitalist era.

The character of walking, a process related to the natural flow of time, can bring many benefits to our awareness of the inner landscape. Artistic and performative involvement in the process of walking can enrich both the performers and the audience, raising alertness and awareness of the deep inner values of each person. Some of these moments and experiences will be reflected in an auto-ethnographic report from walking theatre events with the Polish theatre company Węgałty on the Polish-Lithuanian border (Alilujki, 2009, 2011) and with

Saba Krasoczko and Mieczysław Litwiński in the Prokopské valley in Prague (Edward Stachura's *Missa pagana*, 2014).

Performative walking practice

Let's participate in the multi-sited ethnography (Marcus, 1995; Marcus 1998; Marcus and Fischer 1999) of performative walking as a form of arts-based research (Frayling, 1993). We will explore our inner landscape of the place where we are right now. Through the medium of performative walking, we will follow the change in our perception of a place resulting from a new artistic experience – the influence of the tempo, pace, and rhythm of the walking and the connection between walking and singing. Which places inspire us to act, and which would we rather pass by without any performance? An extra activity for the participants, offered at the end

of the workshop, is to draw a mental map of the environment according to their experience. The concept of mental maps has been developed by Kevin Lynch (1960) and it has been used in many contexts to map the perception of geographical space (Siwek, 2011; Giesecking, 2013; Götz and Holmén, 2021). The narrativity of Lynch's mental maps can be juxtaposed with Robert Smithson's concept of spatial perception and its narratives (Overdijk, 2017). Furthermore, its visual and aesthetic aspects make it a very applicable tool for arts-based research (Shuquair, 2019; Van der Walt, 2020). We can compare the maps in the later discussion. This workshop requires openness to singing and interactive poetry within the group. Any participants who would like to contribute their vocal or instrumental performance, or creative work with a poetic text, are welcome to do so.

BIO

Alžběta Trojanová graduated from Masaryk University with a Master's degree in Environmental Studies. She is currently a Ph.D. student at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague, studying the theory and practice of theatrical art and carrying out arts-based research on walking as a medium in environmental theatre. She has been a member of the alternative physical theatre group "Alternativní pohybová scéna Propast" since the 1990s and has worked with the Polish theatre company Węgały and the Czech theatre company "Ted, nádech a let". She performs vocal and instrumental arrangements of early and folk music on her Celtic harp. She has worked as a teacher and educator in NGOs focused on environmental education as well as in Waldorf schools.

TEREZA TEERINK TURZÍKOVÁ

Becoming m(Other): Ethics of Performing with Animals

With the development of animal rights and scientific knowledge, the role of non-human animals in the world is changing rapidly. While animals can be still seen as mere metaphors for human existence in some artworks, there are already artists actively working with animals as co-creators, performers, or audience. In my paper, I am going to analyze the performative project *Hybrid Family* (2016) by Slovenian artist Maja Smrekar and her two dogs. In this project, Smrekar co-habits a gallery space with her adoptive canine family and acts as their mother, including breastfeeding a puppy. Discussing Smrekar's project, I will argue that including non-human animals in performative events may be seen

from two opposing standpoints. It may either be seen as an example of species domination and animal abuse, OR it may become a potential for animal liberation and disruption of the anthropocentric ideal. Working with concepts from posthuman philosophy of Rosi Braidotti, I will explore the opposing views and problematize ideas such as human subjectivity and evolutionary superiority. In doing so, I would like to propose a possibility of conceptualizing performance as a phenomenon non-exclusive to human cognition and willpower.

BIO

Tereza Turzíkuvá is a doctoral student at the Department of Theatre Studies at Masaryk University, Brno. In her research, she focuses on the development of experimental theater, performance art and drag in post-revolutionary Czech culture, especially in relation to feminism and queer theory. She is a theater lecturer and critic.



SHUNTARO YOSHIDA

How can we sense of other species' choreography?: dissonant / invisible movement / contamination of body

In this presentation, I will show how the recent increase in awareness of environmental issues has expanded the framework for considering areas of dance participation from human to non-human. I call this ecological dance. In expanding the sphere of participation, non-human as well as human participation is important for ecological dance in the context of climate change issues. This practical question is: Can humans sense non-human movement?

Although this research is via the academic discussion of the Anthropocene, it is grounded in a non-human perspective that removes the anthropocentric view through physical experience. The non-human perspective highlights the nuances of the discomfort of other species and confronts the challenges of invisible integration of the real human world.

This research will present case studies of other species' choreography; First Touch (2022), Turn off the house lights (2022), and Soil memory (2022), and the impossibilities of human integration: dissonance of sloth movement,

invisible movement in entangled landscapes and contamination of body in the soil memory. These each works has interaction between human and non-human. The choreography represents the ecological dance between human and non-human. However, these other species choreographies present that the effects of other species' choreography on humans are not yet fully understood.

Agency of other species is considered a scientific problem, but this research has not faced such a problem. The collaboration with other species has historically been viewed ritually and positively, but this presentation shows that suspicion about human integration are important. Three case studies confront Western contemporary dance companies with the challenge of choreographing other species as an experience that mirror the invisible integration of nature that is going on in the real world.

BIO

Dr. Shuntaro Yoshida (b. 1989, Miyagi, Japan) is a dancer, choreographer, and researcher of contemporary dance and performance. He is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Faculty of Sport Sciences, Waseda University. His postdoctoral fellowship is fully funded for three years by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS). He obtained a Ph.D. from Tokyo University of the Arts in September 2020. His Ph.D. thesis titled 'Post-choreography' as choreographic practice in contemporary dance: Clumsy-seeming movement and Jerome Bel's choreography was supported for two years by a JSPS Research Fellowship for Young Scientists. During his Ph.D., he became a Visiting Scholar in the Department of East Asian Studies at New York University (NYU). Since completing his Ph.D., he has been a Visiting Scholar at the Department of Performing Arts at Berlin University of the Arts (UdK).

Shuntaro is a recognized specialist in contemporary dance and performance who conducts practice-based research in areas such as participatory choreographic practice, AI choreography, and other species practice including dance and performance studies, and environmental dance strong investment with an ecological body. His recent articles include "Other Species' Choreography and Its Theoretical Background" (Lichen score, 2022); "How Artificial Intelligence Can Shape Choreography: The Significance of Techno-Performance" (Performance Paradigm 17, 2022 (Accepted)). The book proposal for his monograph titled Post-choreography: Choreographic Practice and Clumsy-seeming Movement has been well-received by Routledge.

Alongside his work in academia, Shuntaro has worked for ten years as a choreographer, performer and dancer, engaging in the artist collective "Mapped to the Closest Address" from 2018. He has collaborated with more than twenty artists internationally on various dance productions and other performances, including We like to watch clumsy-seeming mountain at the Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale in 2022 and Open Forest Launch supported by Saison Foundation in 2021.

Co-website: <https://www.mappedtotheclosestaddress.com>

VIŠNJA ŽUGIĆ

Faction and Space in Site-specific Art

This paper analyses the notion of faction as a creative tool in site-based art, with a specific focus on physical space and the qualities it achieves or generates in this context. Starting from Meta Hočevar's thought on the importance of space in believing the story in theatre (and vice versa), this paper focuses on the relation between space and narrative in different spatially-oriented and site-related artworks. The physical space is understood through its narrative qualities, the textuality, performativity and dramaturgical potentials it carries, arguing that space is never a neutral envelope of an action, but rather can be experienced and used as an active

protagonist of the (performative) event itself.

This active state of space is especially set in motion by creative re-interpretation of facts, which inevitably generates a new spatial layer – temporary quality relying on both facts and fiction. This spatial-textual construct, understood as faction, is seen as a specific spatial quality in site-specific art. The paper analyses performances from the Hidden Cities trilogy, developed as a series of immersive audio-walks realized in Novi Sad (Serbia), Rijeka (Croatia), and Timișoara (Romania), which explore the liminal territory of a possible, alternative city.

BIO

Višnja Žugić, Ph.D. is an architect and a co-founder of Ephemera Collective and BAZA-Spatial Praxis Platform, both non-profit organizations of architects specialized in creative practices, interdisciplinary research and education in the field of Spatial Design.

She is working as an Assistant Professor in Architecture, at the University of Novi Sad, Serbia, in the course lines of Architectural Design and Ephemeral Architecture. Her research interests are oriented towards spatial performativity, site-specific practices and interdisciplinary methods of exploring, understanding and articulation of space.

She has led and executed projects, workshops and educational programs at the relevant international events in Wales, Taiwan, Czech Republic, China, Serbia, Romania, Scotland, Philippines and Finland.



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