

# *Climate Theatre*

*Understanding the Relation between Ecology  
and Performance in a Climate Emergency*

6-7 November 2023

The Graduate Center  
City University of New York



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Image: *CONVERSATIONS (at the end of the world)*. Kris Verdonck/A Two Dogs Company.  
Photo: Kurt van der Elst



## About the symposium

*Climate Theatre* explores how the performing arts are responding to the climate emergency and how human interactions with the natural world have been represented historically and in performance in the contemporary era.

Many today argue that sluggish or ineffectual responses to the climate emergency are the result of a cultural crisis, not a lack of scientific or technological know-how. The symposium thus explores how theatre and performance stage cultural attitudes towards the environment, climates, and other nonhuman species. It investigates how theatre condenses overwhelming events, such as environmental catastrophes into salient theatrical images that resonate emotionally with daily life.

The symposium will explore how performance mediates the impacts of ecological concerns including large scale weather events, species endangerment or extinction, pandemics, food, and water insecurity for its audiences over time and to what effect? How does performance give expression to and navigate the range of emotions that accompany such change and loss? What performative techniques are favored by activist performances in public spaces that critique a lack of leadership for climate action?

We look forward to welcoming you to The Graduate Center for two stimulating days of discussion about these pressing issues.

## Convenors

Peter Eckersall (The Graduate Center, CUNY)

Denise Varney (University of Melbourne)

Peta Tait (La Trobe University)

Jen Parker-Starbuck (Royal Holloway, University of London)

Lara Stevens (University of Melbourne)

The convenors acknowledge the generous support the PhD Program in Theater and Performance at The Graduate Center CUNY, The University of Melbourne, La Trobe University, the Australian Research Council, and Art Science Connect.

## Location

William P. Kelly Skylight Room (Level 9, Room 9100), The Graduate Center, CUNY  
365 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY, United States

## Contacts

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# Program

<b>Monday, 6 November 2023</b>		
9:00-9:30	<p>Welcome to The Graduate Center, CUNY Professor James Wilson, Executive Officer of the Theatre and Performance Program</p> <p>An introduction to the symposium and the research project <i>Towards an Australian Ecological Theatre</i> Peter Eckersall (CUNY) and Denise Varney (University of Melbourne)</p>	
9:30-10:30	<p><b>Session 1</b> <b>Keynote address</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Thinking about Ecology” Bonnie Marranca (<i>PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art</i>)</li> </ul> <p>In conversation with Jen Parker-Starbuck (Royal Holloway, University of London)</p>	
10:30-10:40	<i>Session change over</i>	
10:40-11:30	<p><b>Session 2</b> <b>Towards an Australian Ecological Theatre</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Contaminating Atmospheres and Confronting Disaster” Peta Tait (La Trobe University)</li> <li>• “Land Rights and Ecology in Indigenous Theatre” Denise Varney (University of Melbourne)</li> </ul>	Chair: Peter Eckersall
11:30-12:30	<p><b>Session 3</b> <b>Constellating Climate Change: A Performative Lexicon</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A panel presentation featuring Carl Lavery, Dee Heddon and Minty Donald (University of Glasgow)</li> </ul>	Chair: Sarah Lucie
12:30-1:30	<i>Lunch break</i>	

1:30-2:20	<p><b>Session 4</b>  <b>Violence and inequity in rural and urban areas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Slow Violence in Moraga’s <i>Heroes and Saints</i>”  Elin Diamond (Rutgers University)</li> <li>• “Performing Future Cities After Climate Crisis”  Lisa Woynarski (University of Reading)</li> </ul>	Chair: Denise Varney
2:20-2:30	<i>Session change over</i>	
2:30-3:45	<p><b>Session 5</b>  <b>Climate risk, activism &amp; eco-performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Hyphenated Thinking in Performance-Pedagogical Prototypes: Institutional engagement in Maria Lucia Correia’s <i>Flotation Schools</i> and <i>Natural Contract Labs</i>”  Christel Stalpaert (Ghent University)</li> <li>• “The Flood Project: Climate theatre and performance projects in an age of climate crisis”  Linda Hassall (Griffith University)</li> <li>• “Burning Man’s Climate”  Sarah Ann Standing (New York City College of Technology, CUNY)</li> </ul>	Chair: Felipe Cervera
3:45-4:00	<i>Session change over</i>	
4:00-5:45	<p><b>Session 6</b>  <b>Culture, community and survival</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The wisdom is in the story: Australia’s first climate migrants of Saibai Island”  Margaret Harvey (University of Melbourne)</li> <li>• “Changing Climates: Dogsledding, Infrastructure, and Resilience”  Clara Wilch (Harvard University)</li> <li>• “Theatre and drama as a potent tool to address climate change and poor livelihoods in Nigeria: Theatre for development as methodology”</li> </ul>	Chair: Carl Lavery

	<p>Babatunde Allen Bakare (Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The Tacuabé Bow: Surviving through Absence” Maria Litvan (The Graduate Center, CUNY)</li> </ul>	
6:00-7:00	<p><i>Drinks</i></p> <p><i>The Greenroom, Theatre &amp; Performance program.</i> <i>Room 3111.01</i></p>	

<b>Tuesday, 7 November 2023</b>		
9:30-10:30	<p><b>Session 1:</b> <b>Keynote address</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Campus AnthroScenes: Proposing Ecospheric Knowledge Production” Una Chaudhuri (New York University)</li> </ul>	Chair: Peta Tait
10:30-11:00	<i>Coffee break</i>	
11:00-12:15	<p><b>Session 2</b> <b>Theatricalising climates and environments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Staging lunar climates and the biopolitics of outer space” Felipe Cervera (UCLA)</li> <li>• “‘It doesn’t work. Of course it doesn’t work. But it doesn’t matter that it doesn’t work’: David Finnigan’s Dramaturgy of Errors” Milo Harries (University of Cambridge)</li> <li>• “Boundary Water Staging: Wilderness, Solitude, and Community at the End of the Road” Eero Laine (University at Buffalo, State University of New York)</li> </ul>	Chair: Sarah Ann Standing
12:15-1:15	<i>Lunch</i>	

1:15-2:30	<p><b>Session 3</b>  <b>Death, ghosts, and mutancy in Japan and the Gulf</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Performing Fading: Postvisual Dramaturgy in the Time of Durational Catastrophes” Kyoko Iwaki (University of Antwerp)</li> <li>• “Performing Mutancy: Critical Notes on the Gulf’s Petro-Aesthetics” Katia Arfara (NYU Abu Dhabi)</li> <li>• “Wild Life After Life: Choreographies of Mortuary Rituals” Katherine Mezur (UC Davis/UC Berkeley)</li> </ul>	Chair: Dee Heddon
2:30-2:45	<i>Session change over</i>	
2:45-4:00	<p><b>Session 4</b>  <b>Provocations in the Anthropocene</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Shifting Grounds: Climate Change and Permeability in Site-Specific Performance” Lydia Borowicz (University of California, Santa Barbara)</li> <li>• “Extending Eco-spheric Affect in <i>Solo Pour Octopus</i>” Sarah Lucie (New York University)</li> <li>• “Staging Enlightenment Anthropocene in Eighteenth-century Literary Cabinets of Curiosities” Cen Liu (The Graduate Center, CUNY)</li> </ul>	Chair: Jen Parker-Starbuck
4:00-4:15	<i>Session change over</i>	
4:15-5:15	<p><b>Session 5</b>  <b>Kris Verdonck in conversation with Lara Stevens about his latest work, <i>Prey</i> (2023)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kris Verdonck (A Two Dogs Company)</li> <li>• Lara Stevens (University of Melbourne)</li> </ul>	Chair: Peter Eckersall
5:15-5:30	Closing remarks	Chair: symposium convenors

# Abstracts & biographies

## “Thinking about ecology”

### **Bonnie Marranca (*PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art*)**

In a conversation with Jennifer Parker-Starbuck, Bonnie Marranca reflects on the interweaving of her personal and professional life over four decades of writings on landscape, gardens, climate, catastrophe, and environment. Her turn toward these subjects started with working in her own garden, writing about artists whose work demonstrates diverse ecologies (e.g., Chekhov, Robert Wilson, Meredith Monk, Rachel Rosenthal, Caryl Churchill), editing the anthologies *American Garden Writing* and *A Hudson Valley Reader*, and eventually developing a form of arts commentary as “Writing in the Landscape.”

**Bonnie Marranca** is editor and publisher of PAJ Publications and *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art*. Her books include *Timelines: Writings and Conversations* (2021), *Performance Histories* (2007), *Ecologies of Theatre* (1996), *Theatre Writings* (1984), and *Conversations with Meredith Monk* (2014). She has also edited several collections of plays, essays, and interviews: *The Sun on the Tongue* by Etel Adnan (with Klaudia Ruschkowski, 2019), *Conversations on Art and Performance* (1999), *New Europe: Plays from the Continent* (2001), *Plays for the End of the Century* (2005), and *The Theatre of Images* (1977), a seminal work on American Theatre. Bonnie Marranca has received the Leverhulme Trust Visiting Professorship (UK), Asian Cultural Council Fellowship (Japan), Fulbright Award (Free University, Berlin), Anschutz Distinguished Fellowship in American Studies (Princeton University), and Guggenheim Fellowship. Her writings have been translated into more than twenty languages. She has lectured and taught widely in American and European universities. She is Professor Emerita of Theatre at The New School/Eugene Lang College of Liberal Arts.

## “Contaminating Atmospheres and Confronting Disaster”

### **Peta Tait (La Trobe University)**

Anti-nuclear theatre offers insights about emotional responses to a level of ecological destruction that becomes comparable to that of climate change. For example, the ways in which fear might motivate but can also lead to avoidance when disaster seems unbearable. In Australia, theatrical productions about the deadly nuclear contamination that made First Nations lands uninhabitable, begin with Dymphna Cusack’s internationally produced *Pacific Paradise* in 1955, and continue into the twenty-first century in tandem with climate change theatre. These include Scott Rankin and Trevor Jamieson’s 2008 *Ngapartji Ngapartji* about First Nations peoples living through disaster.

Strategies for climate change redress now, controversially, include nuclear power as a carbon-neutral source of electricity, and are accommodated under the rulings of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Challenge (UN COP). Hence, efforts to combat climate change are confronting established anti-nuclear politics in the twenty-first century—overtly in a uranium-exporting country such as Australia that has historic nuclear-power free policies from the 1980s (Arnold and Smith). Yet the framing of an ethical dilemma between either not reducing carbon emissions rapidly enough or increasing contaminating uranium

fuel *ad infinitum* has been complicated by the COVID pandemic. In response to its circumstances, Finegan Kruckemeyer's 2021 *Hibernation*, suggests carbon emissions stop for a year and climate change lessens, in this dramatic instance, by humanity being put to sleep for a year.

**Peta Tait** is professor emeritus at La Trobe University. Peta is an academic and playwright and a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities. She has written over 70 scholarly articles and chapters, and has authored and edited 12 books. Recent work includes *Forms of Emotion: Human to Nonhuman in Drama, Theatre and Performance* (Routledge 2022); *Theory for Theatre Studies: Emotion* (Methuen 2021); *Fighting Nature: Travelling Menageries, Animal Acts and War Shows* (Sydney 2016); the edited volume *Great European Stage Directors: Antoine, Stanislavski and Saint-Denis*, vol. 1 (Bloomsbury, 2018); and the co-edited volume *Feminist Ecologies: Changing Environments in the Anthropocene* (Palgrave 2018). Recent plays include *Eleanor and Mary Alice* (Currency Press 2018), about Eleanor Roosevelt's meetings with Mary Alice (and Doc) Evatt, last staged in 2018 to mark the 70-year anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

## **“Land Rights and Ecology in Indigenous Theatre”**

### **Denise Varney (University of Melbourne)**

‘There are many trees floating in the space. They are as delicate and as wavering as the culture’ (*Yanagai! Yanagai!* p. 15).

Andrea James' *Yanagai! Yanagai!* (2003 Australia, 2006 UK, 2009 US) tells the story of the Yorta Yorta Native Title Claim (1994–2002) by traditional owners. It was written and performed in response to the shock denial of the claim by the Federal Court of Australia (1998) on the grounds that prior occupation of the land had been ‘swept away by the tide of history’. Set on Yorta Yorta country in South-Eastern Australia, the title – ‘Yanagai’ – means ‘Go Away’ with the play explaining its meaning by means of an historical re-enactment of the arrival in the 1840s of British settler, Edmund Curr, who is met with the words by Yorta Yorta people. Aided by superior weaponry, Curr goes on to establish a large sheep station (now derelict in the present of the play) and it was his diary that was used by the court for the ‘tide of history’ judgement over the oral evidence of the Yorta Yorta. This paper argues that *Yanagai! Yanagai!* is a land rights drama that is also deeply ecological. It blends the politics of Native Title with a lasting ecological consciousness of lands, trees and waterways as life forces that are also integrated into human life in all its dimensions. Long after the land rights goal has been achieved (as it was in 2010), the play has much to teach Australians about affirmative relations with land and water, and the part that a touring work of theatre can play in other actions such as climate politics.

**Denise Varney** is professor of theatre studies at the University of Melbourne. From 2013-2021, she was co-director of the Australian Centre with oversight of its contemporary culture stream of research and engagement. Denise's research is primarily in modern and contemporary Australian theatre and performance with interests in ecocriticism, politics, modernism, feminism, history and the archive. Her latest monograph is *Patrick White's Theatre* (2021). Other books include: *Australian Theatre, Modernism and Patrick White: Governing Culture* (with Sandra D'Urso, 2018), *Theatre in the Asia Pacific: Regional Modernities in the Global Era* (co-



authored 2013), *Radical Visions: The Impact of the Sixties on Australian Drama* (2011) and *The Dolls' Revolution: Australian Theatre and Cultural Imagination* (with Rachel Fensham, 2005).

## **“Constellating Climate Change: A Performative Lexicon”**

**Carl Lavery, Dee Heddon and Minty Donald (University of Glasgow)**

Climate change is often regarded an intractable ‘thing’ to represent, an instance of massive formlessness, a kind of negative sublime, a ‘hyperobject’. However, while it may well be impossible to provide a totalising representation that would ‘hold’ or synthesise climate change as a single image, there are nevertheless ways of engaging it - ways, moreover, that are unashamedly aesthetic in their modes of ‘indirect’ or ‘analogical’ representation. Drawing on areas of common research interest from three members of the Ecology, Environment and Heritage Hub in Theatre Studies at the University of Glasgow, this collaborative panel is an attempt to provide a new performative lexicon for climate change – one that takes the shape of a cosmic constellation as both point of reference and dramaturgical device. The beauty of a constellation, as Walter Benjamin realised, is that it is simultaneously planetary and cosmic, able to hold disparate ideas together and constantly on the move. Constellations are geographically and seasonally specific and what you perceive depends on where you are standing. Concepts and ideas that inform our theatrical constellation of climate change revolve around practices touching on flows, territories, temporalities, markings, intensities, legacies, animacies, rhythms, and mappings. The aim of this panel, in which practice and theory ‘come together apart’ according to the logic of the constellation, is not so much to provide a new representation of climate change as it is to shift the way in which climate change is thought, imagined, and practiced.

**Carl Lavery** is Professor of Theatre and Performance at the University of Glasgow. He has published numerous essays and books on theatre, performance and ecology, including *Rethinking the Theatre of the Absurd: Ecology, Environment and the Greening of the Modern Stage* (2015), *Performance and Ecology: What Can Theatre Do* (2017), and *An Idea of a Theatre Ecology* (2023). He is currently working on two new books, *Getting a Taste for Landscape Through Performance: Politics and Ecology* and *Constellations of the Anthropocene*.

**Dee Heddon** holds the James Arnott Chair in Drama at the University of Glasgow. She has an enduring interest in and has published and practiced widely on walking as aesthetic practice. In 2012, she founded, with Professor Misha Myers, the ongoing creative research project, The Walking Library. She is currently leading a funded research project exploring people’s use of creative walking during COVID-19 ([www.walkcreate.org](http://www.walkcreate.org)). Dee is also a co-Investigator on newLEAF, an interdisciplinary project exploring native tree’s capacity to adapt to climate change and the place of uncertainty in landscape decision making.

**Minty Donald** (she/it) is Professor of Contemporary Performance Practice at the University of Glasgow. She/it is an artist-researcher who works with matter or entities often described in Euro-American cultures as other-than-human, most recently rivers and rocks. Minty’s practice-research is an attempt to both face up to and unsettle engrained human exceptionalism and its implication in extractive practices and climate emergency. Minty regularly works with (human) collaborator, Nick Millar. Recent public works include *With*

*These Hands...* (2021), *Erratic Drift* (2019 - ongoing) and *Aguas Ocultas, Aguas Olvidadas* (2018-21).

### **“Slow Violence in Moraga’s *Heroes and Saints*”**

**Elin Diamond (Rutgers University)**

The core of my contribution is a play by Cherríe Moraga, *Heroes and Saints* (1992), based on the pesticide poisoning of agricultural workers over a 10-year period (1978-1988) in California's rich San Joaquin valley. Pregnant field workers passed toxins to developing babies, many of whom were born with horrendous birth defects (bodies without limbs or vital organs). Childhood cancer rates at this time were 400% above normal. Aggregating elements from United Farm Worker struggles (from the first grape strike in the 1960s and 1970s, and the second—and anti-pesticide—strike in the 1980s); from Xicano mythography and Catholic ritual, Moraga’s time-textured play weaves the surreal, the satiric, and the documentary. The limbless protagonist, perched on a table with wheels, discourses in philosophical abstractions even as the play’s dramaturgy speaks a fiercer language of environmental injustice, exposing the violent distortions of food production and consumption in the wake of chemically fueled industrial agriculture.

**Elin Diamond** is Marius Bewley Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Rutgers University. She is the author of *Unmaking Mimesis: Essays on Feminism and Theater* (1997) and *Pinter’s Comic Play* (1985), and editor of *Performance and Cultural Politics* (Routledge 1996) and co-editor of *Performance, Feminism, and Affect in Neoliberal Times* [with D. Varney and C. Amich] (Palgrave, 2017) and *The Cambridge Companion to Caryl Churchill* [with E. Aston] (2009). Her essays on drama, performance and feminist theory have appeared in *Theatre Journal*, *PMLA*, *ELH*, *Discourse*, *TDR*, *Modern Drama* and in anthologies published in the United States, Europe, and India.

### **“Performing Future Cities After Climate Crisis”**

**Lisa Woynarski (University of Reading)**

We are living in the ‘urban century’ (Gaston 2010) as global patterns of urban migration mean that more than half the world’s population now live in cities. They are not mere geographical locations, rather they shape the lives of those who live in and around them – socially, politically and ecologically. They reflect the inequalities of society at large and embody historic nature/culture divides, histories of displacement and dispossession, anthropocentrism and material inequalities. This makes cities essential to thinking about, and addressing, the climate crisis. Through an ecodramaturgical analysis of two indicative performances, this paper takes on the urgent issue of the unequal and unequitable growth cities and climate crisis asking what the role of theatre and performance is in imagining and enacting future possibilities for ecological urban development.

*The Strategy Room* by Fast Familiar (UK 2023) is a participatory work in which audiences are immersed in a fictional future and need to make decisions about their local city. This performance playfully enacts future ecological narratives of the city, imagining possibilities of

a more just future and, asking the audience to make decisions towards net zero. Performance here operates as a way of bringing together people to talk about and imagine how they might live together in a more climate-conscious ways. The second performance, Peter Morin's (Tahltan Nation) *Cultural Graffiti in London* (2013) taps into long (and often hidden) histories of cities, foregrounding how legacies of colonialism are living in the structures of contemporary cities. Decentring Western concepts of time and dreams, this performance centres Indigenous worldviews. Yvette Nolan (Algonquin) writes of Indigenous theatre being used to make medicine, which builds community, negotiates solidarity and performs acts of remembering (2015: 3). Performance is a site where stories are shared, making it a potent place to engage an ecological imagination in ideas of hope, grounded in a nuanced understanding of Indigenous ecologies as relational, complex and pluralistic. Both performances offer new ways of thinking about the future of cities and hope for potential futures based on justice and equality imagined through performance.

**Lisa Woynarski** (she/her) was born on traditional Anishinabewaki territory in Ontario, Canada. She is of white European settler/immigrant ancestry. She is now an immigrant herself as well as Associate Professor in Theatre in the Department of Film, Theatre & Television at the University of Reading. As a performance-maker and scholar, her work connects performance and ecology, from an intersectional lens, foregrounding decolonisation. She is the author of *Ecodramaturgies: Theatre, Performance and Climate Change* (Palgrave, 2020) and the forthcoming *Performing Urban Ecologies* (Cambridge, 2024). She is Co-Investigator on the Arts Council Funded *Work in Progress*, working with artists on developing new work on themes of decolonisation, ecology and landscape.

### **“Hyphenated Thinking in Performance-Pedagogical Prototypes: Institutional engagement in Maria Lucia Correia’s *Flotation Schools* and *Natural Contract Labs*”**

**Christel Stalpaert (Ghent University)**

The Portuguese-Belgian performance artist Maria Lucia Cruz Correia traces ecological matters of concern in her long-term collaborative art projects *Common Dreams – Flotation School* (2017-) and *Natural Contract Lab* (2021-). *Common Dreams — Flotation school* is a survival climate school built on water co-creating and (re)collecting strategies for survival in a floating society. With her subsequent *Natural Contract Labs* Correia constitutes an ecology of care with a multidisciplinary team, aiming at an active and sustained dialogue with bodies of water under deep ecological transformation.

I collaborated with Correia on several occasions in several workshop settings, some of them implemented in a university context. I joined the team for the three-year Zenne river project in Belgium (2023-2026) and we obtained funding for a Natural Contract Lab with California Water: a workshop on Hydrocolonialism and Water (Re)-distribution in Owens Valley and Hetch Hetchy (2024). We could say that Ghent University, as a pedagogical institution, is involved in what Donna Haraway calls an art-science-activist worlding. I call it a hyphenated thinking. Correia's art projects challenge the linear transfer of knowledge in scientific research. They are performance-pedagogical prototypes that activate new modes of knowledge production and generate new modes of activism. It is this hyphenated thinking

that I would like to bring forward, reflecting on the challenges that our world is currently facing.

**Christel Stalpaert** is Professor at the Dept. Art History, Musicology and Theatre Studies at Ghent University (Belgium). She is director of the research centre S:PAM (Studies in Performing Arts and Media) and co-founder of the dance research network CoDa (Cultures of Dance). She published works such as *No Beauty for Me There Where Human Life Is Rare: On Jan Lauwers' Theatre Work with Needcompany* (with Frederik Le Roy and Sigrid Bousset, 2006, Academia Press), *Bastard or Playmate? Adapting Theatre, Mutating Media and the Contemporary Performing Arts* (with Rob Vanderbeeken, 2012, Springer), *The Choreopolitics of Alain Platel's les ballets C de la B: Emotions, Gestures, Politics* (with Guy Cools and Hildegard De Vuyst, 2020, Bloomsbury) and *Performance and Posthumanism: Staging Prototypes of Composite Bodies* (with Kristof van Baarle and Laura Karreman, 2021, Palgrave Macmillan).

### **“The Flood Project: Climate theatre and performance projects in an age of climate crisis”**

**Linda Hassall (Griffith University)**

This paper will discuss how ecological theatre process can be applied as a means for facilitating community renewal post climate disaster event. The Flood Project refers to rich environmental accounts pertaining to the Rocklea flood in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia (2022). The Flood Project departs from the hyperrealist trends of climate change theatre in Australia (Campbell & Hamilton 2017, Carleton 2016, Charles and McGahan 2009, Hassall 2015, Marquet 2018). Anticipated as a site-specific applied theatre research (ATR) project, the development and design dramaturgies situate real life testimonies of a flood-affected community within a suburb described as Ground Zero during the 2022 disaster. The confluence of eco-dramaturgies is crucial to the investigation of site specificity in this context, as ‘place’ itself is the dramatic provocation, a space of disaster, though a space of resistance, response, recovery and renewal.

Drawing on recent research into Australian Climate Gothic analysis (Hassall 2021), and ground-breaking practices in Ecoscenography (Beer 2021) this presentation positions the Flood Project within contemporary ecocritical discourses that are responding to natural disasters and climate catastrophes. The project crucially provides a communal space for Rocklea residents to amplify their voices, reflect on their post-disaster experiences, and cultivate agency and belonging post disaster. Further the experiential dimensions of site-specific ecoscenography provide rich stimulus for investigating ecological practices in theatre that support sustainability as the heart of production process.

**Linda Hassall** has 30 years of experience in the Australian theatre industry, and is an award-winning playwright and director. She is a practice-led performance researcher, and links her artistic practice to ecological perspectives in contemporary performance. While her artistic focus is on developing new work in Australian performance, she further investigates eco-justice programming, practice and policy in the theatre industries. She is an award-winning playwright *Post Office Rose* (2008) and director *Salvation* (2013) and has recently written a book linking her artistic and scholarly practice: *Theatres of Dust: Climate Gothic analysis in contemporary Australian drama and performance landscapes (forthcoming)*. Linda is a Deputy Program Director of

the Bachelor Arts at Griffith University, wherein her roles include field of study coordinator for the Drama Major and Program Director for the Bachelor of Creative Industries.

### **“Burning Man’s Climate”**

**Sarah Ann Standing (New York City College of Technology, CUNY)**

Burning Man—that yearly neo-pagan festival in the Nevada desert—embodies pressures of global climate destabilization in microform: desert scape with howling winds, extreme temperatures, and water-shortage concerns; towering forms of human-constructed entertainment conjoined with a recent shift to Google ownership implying an uneasy alliance with technology. Drawing on Sarah M. Pike’s book *For the Wild: Ritual and Commitment in Radical Eco-Activism* (2017), I note Burning Man’s Dionysian jubilation in all its paradoxical hypocrisy still generating a level of transgressive joy and excitement—making participation an act of devotion and defiance—amidst extreme geo-climate conditions. This essay attempts to unpack the ecological complexity of the Burning Man festival and use it as a gateway into thinking through aspects of the aesthetics and politics of climate performance and climate response.

**Sarah Ann Standing** is Associate Professor of Humanities at New York City College of Technology, CUNY. She is Book Series Editor for Studies in Theatre, Ecology, and Performance (STEP) at Routledge. Sarah has published in *Remembering R. Murray Schafer*, *The Routledge Companion to Theatre and Politics*, *Global Performance Studies* (GPS); *Readings in Performance and Ecology*; *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art*; *Theatre Topics*; *The Eugene O’Neill Review*; *American Theatre*; *Terra Nova*; and *Western European Stages*. She is also an active playwright and director.

### **“The wisdom is in the story: Australia’s first climate migrants of Saibai Island”**

**Margaret Harvey (University of Melbourne)**

Seventy-five years ago, as a newborn, my mother and half the clan groups of Saibai Island in the Torres Strait made the arduous decision to relocate to the mainland of Australia, becoming the first climate migrants of Australia. This was a challenging decision driven by many discussions between clan elders and leaders after rising tides flooded the community, decimating vegetable gardens and fresh drinking sources. The migration was distressing, uprooting families from their homelands where they had lived for thousands of years. Nevertheless, knowledge produced from this migration has been embedded in stories chronicling the changing climate, and shared throughout the generations. Story is the key because the wisdom is in the story. In this paper I address why recounting stories of the migration contributes to building adaption and resilience in a community where sea waters continue to rise. Specifically, I look at three performative stories that speak to the Saibaian migratory experience:

- 1) A good-bye song composed in the late 1800’s when my clan of Ait Koedal (crocodile) left their tiny island of Ait on Saibai for the main village.

- 2) The performative element of a sea almond tree planted that marks the sea level reached in 1947.
- 3) A hybrid video installation I co-created with Saibai Islander Senior Cultural Knowledge Custodian Awa Jeff Aniba-Waia, titled *BAMI (knowledge)* for the Queensland Museum (2021).

**Margaret Harvey** works across the medium of live performance and film, creating and re-creating stories as a researcher, performer, writer, director and producer. She is of Saibai Island blood in the Torres Strait – Ait Koedal and Samu clans – as well as English heritage. Presently Margaret is a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Melbourne, Australia. Her interest lies in interdisciplinary performative storytelling that is inherent in her bloodline and Saibaian animism.

### “Changing Climates: Dogsledding, Infrastructure, and Resilience”

#### **Clara Wilch (Harvard University)**

This talk will elaborate the premise that contemporary climate change and its many cascading consequences create urgent opportunities to reimagine performances of everyday life as praxes of hope. Daily habits have emerged as means to reshape the present environment in ways that might sustain a habitable future. In the Arctic, temperatures have been warming at rates 2-3 times greater than the global average. Arctic communities have been managing significant impacts of rapid warming, including permafrost melt and sea-ice loss, for many years. Focusing on Inuit sled dog (qimmiit) histories within films, literature, museum exhibits, and interviews with contemporary dogsledders in Iqaluit, I demonstrate how this ongoing performance practice helps to instantiate resilient infrastructures that are foundational to decolonial socioenvironmental networks and economic structures of sharing. Sled dogs were foundational to non-capitalist, migratory lifeways based in subsistence hunting that many Nunavummiut practiced until forced settlements of the mid-20th-century. There has been a resurgence in Inuit dogsledding in recent decades, including public races, an increase in qimmiit numbers, and the involvement of new dogsledders. Amidst the decay of contemporary American infrastructures, forms of climatic and cultural resiliency being practiced in Iqaluit point to the potential to construct more just and livable climates.

**Clara Wilch** is a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard’s Mahindra Humanities Center who researches performance-based negotiations of climate change, especially infrastructural and affective forms of climate mitigation and adaptation. Through scholarship and creative collaborations, she strives to weave together methods from the humanities, arts, and sciences to help reconceive and address vital concerns of environmental and multi-species justice. Her current book project focuses on 20th and 21st-century performances set in the predominately Inuit territory of Nunavut, Canada that stage encounters between humans and ice (“icescapes”). She holds a Theater and Performance Studies PhD (UCLA) and Biology BA (Occidental College).

## **“Theatre and drama as a potent tool to address climate change and poor livelihoods in Nigeria: Theatre for development as methodology”**

**Babatunde Allen Bakare (Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria)**

The issues and challenges surrounding climate change and livelihoods in Africa need an urgent and timely attention before the situation gets out of hand. Today, Africans probably fear HIV/AIDS more than the danger that climate change and poor livelihood pose to human existence. By this, our focus and attention seems to exclude the dangers and damages associated with climate change and poor livelihoods in Africa – our already fragile continent. Scientists and technologists around the globe have, over the years, made several staggering discoveries about issues surrounding climate change, global warming as well as poor livelihoods in Africa; highlighting and documenting the imminent risks and dangers they portend. However, little or nothing has been done seriously to improve conditions in Africa because African people have not learnt significantly about catastrophe or its consequences. Also, many African governments appear to have more battles to fight in connection to the social-political and economic situation challenging the administration in their various countries. The interest of this study is therefore, to propagate the issues surrounding climate change, global warming and poor livelihoods in Africa within the practical capabilities of theatre and drama for development, which must involve people of Africa first, and then beyond. Naturally, people easily recognize the need to proffer solutions to their problems when they are actively involved in pinpointing such problems. By means of this logical process, the sensitization and conscientization of the affected group(s) in connection to solving such problems becomes inevitable when the experience is firsthand and practical.

**Babatunde Allen Bakare** has a PhD in Drama and Theatre Studies from Stellenbosch University, South Africa, and an MPhil in Ibsen Studies from the University of Oslo. He has worked as a producer and scriptwriter at African Independent Television, and has taught at Nasarawa State University, Bowen University, and American University of Nigeria. Currently, he is a Lecturer in the Department of Dramatic Arts at Obafemi Awolowo University. His research focuses on Ibsen Drama, African Drama and Theatre, and African Popular Culture.

## **“The Tacuabé Bow: Surviving through Absence”**

**Maria Litvan (The Graduate Center, CUNY)**

The Tacuabé bow is a musical instrument distinctive of the Charrúa, the indigenous peoples of the land now known as Uruguay. Instead of delighting listeners, the Tacuabé bow is designed to take its player into deep meditative states. The Charrúa were declared extinct when Uruguay was established as an independent nation in the early nineteenth century. However, in the 1990s, a few people started to come out as Charrúa and began to reconstitute their indigenous identity and culture. This paper explores the Tacuabé bow and claims that it is through meditative absorption and merging with the environment, rather than building structures and artifacts, that the Charrúa transmitted their culture; through “disappearance,” they safeguarded the possibility for new futures.

**Maria Litvan** is a PhD candidate at The Graduate Center, CUNY. Her research centers on questions of embodiment, memory, and transmission. She is particularly interested in the link between ritual, the sacred, and the political in the indigenous cultures of the Americas. Her dissertation, ‘Absences that Matter: Performative Transmissions in the Americas’, explores the interrelation between presence and absence in transmissions that take place within the context of performance in the Americas. Her work has been published in *Performance Research*, *TDR: The Drama Review*, and *BOMB Art Magazine*.

### **“Campus AnthroScenes: Proposing Ecospheric Knowledge Production”**

**Una Chaudhuri (New York University)**

As words like eco-anxiety and eco-grief pervade the cultural lexicon, the art collective *Dear Climate* continues its decade-long exploration of alternative models and metaphors — such as friendship, diplomacy, and emergency aid — for better relationships between humans and the more-than-human world. Using a campus-wide installation titled *Signs, Wonders, Blunders*, they propose a model of “studentship,” along with a features of a pedagogy-to be that resists fatalism by re-imagining and activating the attitude of *wonder*.

**Una Chaudhuri** is Collegiate Professor in the College of Arts & Science at NYU, and holds appointments in the departments of English and Environmental Studies in Arts & Science as well as in the department of Drama at the Tisch School of the Arts. She was a member of the founding faculty at NYU’s Abu Dhabi campus, and taught there from 2010 to 2018. Most recently, she served as Director of GSAS’s XE: Experimental Humanities & Social Engagement. Una is the author and editor of several books, including *The Stage Lives of Animals: Zoosis and Performance* (2017), *Research Theatre, Climate Change, and the Ecocide Project* (with Shonni Enelow, 2014), and *Animal Acts: The Stage Lives of Animals* (co-edited with Holly Hughes, 2014).

### **“Staging lunar climates and the biopolitics of outer space”**

**Felipe Cervera (UCLA)**

This presentation will revisit how George Méliès staged the lunar climate in his germinal film, *A Trip to the Moon*, and compare this with more contemporary “stagings” of lunar environments – including the springing of the first plant on the Moon in 2018. Despite a strong visual presence of the sky in the film, the climate is strangely inconspicuous for most of the movie except for a moment in which the scientists exploring the Moon are suddenly snowed on. Stunned by this climatological inconvenience, the scientists escape into a cavern that leads them to encounter the selenite king – whom they kill. The presentation will draw from this moment in the film to propose what can be suggested as a performance history of lunar climates. This history is important because of its possible correlation with stage and film scenography and design history. But it is also important because thinking about outer space in terms of the representation of its climates – or lack thereof—can be a productive starting point to map out the colonial biopolitics of “outer” space.



**Felipe Cervera** is an assistant professor of theatre and performance studies at UCLA. He is one of the co-editors of *GPS: Global Performance Studies* and an associate editor of *Performance Research*.

**“It doesn’t work. Of course it doesn’t work. But it doesn’t matter that it doesn’t work’: David Finnigan’s Dramaturgy of Errors”**

**Milo Harries (University of Cambridge)**

This paper will discuss a pattern of pieces that reimagine what it might mean for a piece of climate theatre to ‘work’. The paper will focus on the work of David Finnigan, centring its discussion on 2020’s ‘Remote Socials’, a series of online scratch performances Finnigan created with Tassos Stevens in the early weeks of the UK’s first lockdown. Responding to Carl Lavery (2016, 2022), Peter Eckersall (2023), Tobias Manderson-Galvin and Tom Payne (2022), among others, I will argue that Finnigan’s work represents a comparatively direct form of ‘weak performance’, deploying a provisionality of position as a deliberate strategy – in Finnigan’s reflections on his own failures in *Kill Climate Deniers* and *You’re Safe Til 2024* – and, in the ‘Remote Socials’, as a necessary condition of the works’ performance. In taking an attitude of not-knowing as their motive force, the paper will argue, these pieces reorient their definitions of success, moving away from monodirectional models of impact towards more reciprocal relational forms. These works work, in other words, by not working, making their mistakes in public to open space for solidarity, and repair.

**Milo Harries** is a PhD candidate at the University of Cambridge, funded by a Judith E. Wilson Studentship in the Faculty of English. His doctoral research centres on logics of encounter in the context of the climate crisis. Milo is on the editorial board of *Platform: Journal of Theatre and Performing Arts*, and his writing has been published in *Platform*, *Contemporary Theatre Review*, *Critical Stages/Scènes Critiques*, and the *International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media*. Milo is also an opera singer and coach, and has worked at the Royal Opera House, Glyndebourne, and Opera North.

**“Boundary Water Staging: Wilderness, Solitude, and Community at the End of the Road”**

**Eero Laine (University at Buffalo, State University of New York)**

After decades of debate and activism, the Wilderness Act of 1964 solidified the Boundary Waters Canoe Area in northern Minnesota as a protected wilderness. Free of motors, private residences, and even wayfinding signs and trail markers, the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) is often described and defined by its opportunities for solitude. Like other natural preserves, it is frequently on the forefront of national discussions related to climate change and preservation, especially as devastating wildfires and wind events become increasingly common. This paper considers a nearby piece of theatre about Dorothy Molter, described in the national news as both “the last non-indigenous resident” of the BWCAW and the “loneliest woman in America.” When the area was designated as wilderness and cabins and resorts were closed and sold to the state, Molter refused to move and remained the sole inhabitant of an island on Knife Lake until she died in 1986. In examining the

original site of Molter’s cabin in the wilderness and representations of her life in the woods, we might think through the possibilities of solitude, loneliness, and community amidst ecological collapse at the edges of the wilderness—literally and figuratively the end of the road.

**Eero Laine** is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Theatre and Dance at the University at Buffalo, State University of New York. He is one of the co-editors of *Lateral*, the journal of the Cultural Studies Association.

### **“Performing Fading: Postvisual Dramaturgy in the Time of Durational Catastrophes”**

**Kyoko Iwaki (University of Antwerp)**

Japan and its citizens have cohabited with environmental disasters since the beginning of history, and hence living with their dead others. In contrast to the stark dualism that we see with nature-culture logics in the West and westernized contemporary Japan, in premodern Japan, the land of *myō* (invisible, supernatural, immortal beings) in Buddhist terms has always coexisted alongside the realm of *ken* (visible, tangible, rational). In this paper, I argue how the dialogues with the unknown in the world of *myō* are becoming more prevalent in contemporary Japanese performances, especially through the intermedial ghostly representations of Okada Toshiki’s *Eraser Forest*.

**Kyoko Iwaki** is a tenure-track Lecturer at the University of Antwerp, Belgium. After her career as a theatre journalist, she became a scholar specializing in Asian (specifically Japanese) contemporary theatre and performance who conducts research at the intersection of post-visual dramaturgies, Japanese philosophies, and theatres of catastrophes. Kyoko’s recent publications include: ‘The Politics of the Senses: Takayama Akira’s Atomized Theatre after Fukushima’ in *Fukushima and the Arts: Negotiating Nuclear Disaster* (Routledge, 2016), and ‘On (Not) Being Useful: The Art of Drifting in Asian Contemporary Theatre’ *Studies in Theatre and Performance* (2021). She is the Associate Editor of *Performance Research* journal.

### **“Performing Mutancy: Critical Notes on the Gulf’s Petro-Aesthetics”**

**Katia Arfara (NYU Abu Dhabi)**

Since 2008, Monira Al Qadiri has centered her work on the rapid social and economic change from pearl to petroleum culture in the Gulf and the ruinous effects of colonialism. By juxtaposing the maritime realm of pearl diving with oil’s material manifestations in her performances, sculptures, installations, and videos, Al Qadiri materializes the unsustainability of planet-destabilizing resource extraction and fossil fuel consumption. By appropriating the form of a drill head used to extract oil as her main conceptual motif, she interrogates the entanglement of masculinity and the patriarchal order with fossil fuels by introducing herself as a mutant with multiple origins or belongings — the many homes that have shaped her life, a fluid gender identity, and the shifting multidisciplinary forms of her work. By focusing on the simulations and abstractions in Al Qadiri’s performance and theater works, this lecture aims to introduce a theory of mutational performance as a shared space of constant

transformation and unbounded futurity that can generate a more-than-human agency. Building on Reza Negarestani's call for new lifeforms that engender a new conception of the human, I argue that mutancy can produce speculative performativities of agentic materiality, where the human and nonhuman coexist in a more-than-representational condition.

**Katia Arfara** is Assistant Professor of Theatre, Performance Studies at NYU Abu Dhabi, and a curator. Her research, curatorship and teaching focus on performance and politics in the Global Souths, postcolonial dramaturgies, migration, eco-fictions and public art. As the Artistic Director and Curator of Onassis Stegi Athens (2009-2019), she has curated numerous public programs and interdisciplinary festivals such as the Fast Forward. Her writing has been published in *TDR*, *Theatre Research International*, *Contemporary Theatre Review*, and *Performance Research*. She is the author of *Théâtralités contemporaines*, and the co-editor of *Intermedial Performance and Politics in the Public Sphere*. She is member of the NYUAD Anthropocene Kitchen.

### **“Wild Life After Life: Choreographies of Mortuary Rituals”**

**Katherine Mezur (UC Davis/UC Berkeley)**

What artwork can move us is through devastation and loss to direct empathy with every “thing” that is our planet? What aesthetic experience can directly pierce our hearts, overwhelm our anthropomorphic selfhood? Three Japanese women artists have created works that crack open this relationship of ruin: Shiota Chiharu, Naoko Tanaka, and Kei Takei, create moments of empathetic resonance across human and non-human “personhoods” through animistic logic, which demands a relationship of respect and reciprocity. Drawing on Haruo Shimane and Mayumi Fukunaga's collective research on Japanese destructive/protective eco-cultures, I analyze how immersive kinaesthetic encounters with “ecology of afterlife” arise from performing animistic logics of “personhood.” These works intimately connect the viewer to the wild, destructive side of non-human entities and forces, where loss and death create an invitation to empathetic action between humans and the natural world. The artists choreograph confrontations through subtle rituals of repetition, which draw the viewer and object closer, creating an intimacy of near-touch, leaving kinaesthetic traces through gestural cycles. These traces, from discomfiting stylized gesture, still and moving, become choreographic rituals of relationality through endings, where wild life meets afterlife, everything haunts. Planetary emotionality requires rituals of loss, like these acts that drive us to agentic mourning, painful ecologies of wild afterlife.

**Katherine Mezur** is a Lecturer in the Department of East Asia Languages and Cultures at UC Davis and in Media/Performance at UC Berkeley. Katherine received her PhD in Theatre/Dance/Asian Performance from the University of Hawai'i. Her research encompasses trans-Asia-Pacific performance-studies, new/media, VR, performance/dramaturgy, popular/culture, and gender/women's studies with an Asia-Pacific focus. Katherine is the author of *Beautiful Boys/Outlaw Bodies: Devising Female-likeness in Kabuki, Experimental Women: Performing Sweet/Deviant in/outside Japan* (forthcoming) and co-editor of *Corporeal Politics: Dancing East Asia* (with E. Wilcox). She has published articles and

chapters in *Performance Research*, *Theatre Research International*, *Performance Paradigm*, *Discourses in Dance*, *The Bad Girls of Japan*, *The Dumbtype Workbook*, and *Movements of Interweaving*.

### **“Shifting Grounds: Climate Change and Permeability in Site-Specific Performance”**

**Lydia Borowicz (University of California, Santa Barbara)**

Climate change is urgent and ongoing, local and global, present and anticipatory, certain and speculative, omnipresent yet unequally distributed. The spatial and temporal scales of climate change frame performance sites as shifting, permeable, and vulnerable, prompting a re-evaluation of site-specific performance as a method for fostering embodied understandings of climate change. In the Anthropocene, human activities impact every area of the globe. Climate change underscores the interconnectedness of all locations, entangling site-specificity with universality, and the immediate present with an anticipated future. I explore how performance sites are haunted by potential futures, shaped by quantitative imaginaries and the looming specter of climate change. Performances such as *36.5 / A Durational Performance with the Sea* and *The End* are intimately tied to their performance sites while simultaneously being applicable to sites worldwide by enacting scientifically predicted climate futures. These performances map a site’s projected future onto the present, creating a liminal space. Public art installations such as Olafur Eliasson’s *Ice Watch* and Maya Lin’s *Ghost Forest* emphasize the permeability of sites by transferring physical climate change impacts from their original locations to urban audiences. Here, I highlight the possibilities for site-specific performance to facilitate meaningful encounters with the scalar complexities of climate change.

**Lydia Borowicz** is a doctoral candidate and Chancellor’s Fellow in Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara with an Interdepartmental Ph.D. Emphasis in Environment and Society. She received a B.A. in Theatre from Marlboro College and an M.A. in Theatre Arts from University of Oregon, where she studied theatre as a tool for improving climate change literacy. She examines performances of futurity in the Anthropocene and looks at performance as a site of rehearsal for living in predicted climate-changed futures. Her research interests include ecotheatre/ecodramaturgy, contemporary theatre, environmental humanities, museum studies, VR/AR, and science literacy.

### **“Extending Eco-spheric Affect in *Solo Pour Octopus*”**

**Sarah Lucie (New York University)**

Stefan Kaegi’s *Solo Pour Octopus* (2021) stages an intimate collaboration between octopus and human performer. I analyze the performance in response to Una Chaudhuri and the Climate Lens’s call for “eco-spheric” theatre, which they suggest as a method against anthropocentrism through “theatrical ways of partnering with the more-than-human world” (2020). Kaegi avoids anthropocentric symbols of “animal,” instead presenting it literally and highlighting response-ability. I build upon their call by asking what possibilities arise through digital tools, following the production’s live stream and film adaptation. Is it possible to extend the eco-spheric affect of the original production through time and space?

**Sarah Lucie** is a researcher, lecturer, and dramaturg. Sarah earned her Ph.D. in Theater and Performance from the CUNY Graduate Center. Her research approaches contemporary performance through new materialism, ecocritical theory, and posthumanism. Sarah has contributed articles to *Performance Research*, *Theatre Journal*, *Theatre Topics*, *PAJ*, and *Etcetera*, as well as *The Routledge Companion to Theatre and Politics* (2019) and *Machine Made Silence: The Art of Kris Verdonck* (2020). Sarah is media editor of *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, 4th Edition, and assistant editor of *TDR*. She currently teaches in the theatre departments at NYU and Marymount Manhattan College.

### **“Staging Enlightenment Anthropocene in Eighteenth-century Literary Cabinets of Curiosities”**

**Cen Liu (The Graduate Center, CUNY)**

This presentation investigates visual representations of non-European peoples, animals, and lands in eighteenth-century “literary cabinets of curiosities” – texts that collect accounts of natural and strange phenomena in domestic and distant lands. I focus on the fifth volume of *The Gallery of Nature and Art, a Tour through Creation and Science*, which describes and classifies various plants and animals known to Europe by the eighteenth century. By closely reading the engravings that provide visual references to the text, I show that these engravings “stage” Europeans’ interactions with non-European peoples, animals, and natural landscapes by strategically select, juxtapose, and invent figures of the cultural other. I argue that while these engravings center the natural world, they also reveal the assumptions about the civility and barbarism of the species they represent. Thus, these visual artefacts manifest the epistemic formation of Enlightenment Anthropocene.

**Cen Liu** is a PhD Candidate in Theatre and Performance at The Graduate Center, CUNY. Her research focuses on cabinets of curiosities, the history of science and technology, and theatrical culture in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe. She was Graduate Teaching Fellow in the Department of Theatre and Speech at City College of New York, and worked at the Morgan Library & Museum as a research fellow.

### **“Kris Verdonck in conversation with Lara Stevens about his latest work, *PREY* (2023)”**

**Kris Verdonck (A Two Dogs Company)**

**Lara Stevens (University of Melbourne)**

In 1985, Australian philosopher Val Plumwood narrowly survived an attack by a saltwater crocodile which profoundly influenced the direction of her environmental philosophy. The following year, the film *Crocodile Dundee* was released to global, popular acclaim, cementing the association between macho Australian bushman and dangerous crocodile predator. After her attack, Plumwood advocated for crocodile protection and, in her book, *The Eye of the Crocodile* (2012), used a powerful ecofeminist critique to challenge widespread beliefs about human-croc relations.

In 2022, Kris Verdonck and Kristof van Baarle visited the mountain rainforest and house where Plumwood spent most of her working life. There they formulated the key themes of *PREY*, an exquisite music-theatre work that explores Plumwood's life and philosophy. Through a three-part performance, *PREY* interrogates the humility required for a deep understanding of the precarity of our species in a climate emergency.

<https://www.atwodogscompany.org/en/projects/prey/>

**Kris Verdonck** is a visual artist and theatre maker based in Belgium. His creations are positioned in the transit zone between visual arts and theatre, between installation and performance, between dance and architecture. His work is internationally presented in theatres, museums and festivals. Recent works include *IN VOID* (2016), an installation circuit about human absence, and *Conversations (at the end of the world)*, based on the work of Russian writer Daniil Kharmis. Verdonck created a choreographic performance in collaboration with ICK Amsterdam in 2019, *Something (out of nothing)*, dealing with humanity's spectral existence in an increasingly catastrophic environment. Verdonck's *PREY*, a music theatre production, opened during the 2023 Klarafestival in Brussels.

**Lara Stevens** is a Research Associate at the University of Melbourne. She is author of *Anti-War Theatre After Brecht: Dialectical Aesthetics in the Twenty-First Century* (2016), editor and translator (Fre-Eng) of essays by Hélène Cixous in *Politics, Ethics and Performance: Hélène Cixous and the Théâtre du Soleil* (2016), and coeditor with Peta Tait and Denise Varney of *Feminist Ecologies: Changing Environments in the Anthropocene* (2018).

# Information

## Venue and directions

The symposium will take place in The William P. Kelly Skylight Room (Level 9, Room 9100) of The Graduate Center at 365 Fifth Avenue, New York.

<https://www.gc.cuny.edu/about/mission-vision-and-history/campus-and-location>

The easiest way to get to The Graduate Center is via subway or train. Nearby stations are 34th Street Harold Square (subway lines B, D, F, M, N, Q, R and W); 33rd Street (line 6); Penn Station (longer distance trains and subway lines 1, 2, 3, A, C and E), Grand Central Station (longer distance trains and subway lines 4, 5, 6, 7, and S), and 33rd Street PATH trains to Hoboken and Jersey City.

Please find information at <https://new.mta.info/> and for PATH trains at <https://www.panynj.gov/path/en/index.html>

Please ensure that you bring photo ID to enter the building. CUNY security will check you off a list of attendees.

## Registration

There is no registration fee for the symposium. However, please ensure you have confirmed your attendance by registering at <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/climate-theatre-symposium-registration-tickets-622214920577>

## Audio-visual facilities

If you would like to show something on the projector during your presentation (e.g. a PowerPoint presentation, a video file, etc.) please bring it along on a USB drive on the day.

## Catering

We regret that we are unable to offer any catering for the symposium. Coffee and lunch breaks will need to be outside The Graduate Center at your own expense. The Graduate Center (GC) is in midtown and is surrounded by many food and coffee options.

Some suggested options include:

- The Café at the Morgan Library, 225 Madison Ave. A nice place for lunch and a rare quiet setting.
- ETC Eatery, 349 Fifth Ave. A classic NYC style food hall, lots of affordable options.
- Le Pain Quotidien, 400 Fifth Ave. Nice coffee and lunch place.
- Korea town. Lots of options along 32<sup>nd</sup> St and Fifth Ave, and 35<sup>th</sup> St and Fifth Ave.
- Franchia Vegan Café, 12 Park Avenue.
- Bourke Steet Bakery, 15 East 28<sup>th</sup> St, in case you want a Melbourne style coffee.

- Eatery, 200 Fifth Ave. Italian food emporium, restaurants, takeaway, and grocery. Best coffee.
- Little India. Rows of Indian restaurants along Lexington Ave, approx. between 23<sup>rd</sup> St and 30<sup>th</sup> St.
- Murray Hill Diner, 222 Lexington Ave. Closest ‘old school’ diner to the GC (hamburgers, pancakes, sandwiches, etc.).

There are many more restaurants and cafes nearby, so take your pick.

## **Dinner**

We will make a booking for a group dinner for symposium presenters at a nearby restaurant following drinks at the end of Day 1 of the symposium (Monday 6 November). Please note this will be self-funded. In order to confirm numbers and find somewhere suitable, please let us know if you would like to come along by emailing [ecological-theatre@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:ecological-theatre@unimelb.edu.au).

## **Visas and insurance**

Those of you travelling to the United States from elsewhere should ensure you have the appropriate visa to enter the country.

In addition, you should also arrange appropriate health or travel insurance for your time in the United States.

## **Covid-19**

Whilst CUNY no longer has any mask or vaccination requirements, we will be providing masks and sanitizer for use. CUNY buildings are all equipped with air ventilation devices to improve air quality. For further information, please see New York’s current COVID-19 guidelines: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-main.page>

## **Exhibition**

An exhibition that symposium attendees may be interested in is currently on display at MOMA, the Museum of Modern Art, titled *Emerging Ecologies: Architecture and the Rise of Environmentalism*. Please see details at <https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/5609>