

**WSD '25
RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM
SCENOGRAPHIC HERITAGE, DESIGN FUTURES, &
SUSTAINABILITY**

Book of Abstracts

**October 20, 2025
Sharjah, UAE**



**WORLD STAGE DESIGN
SHARJAH 2025**

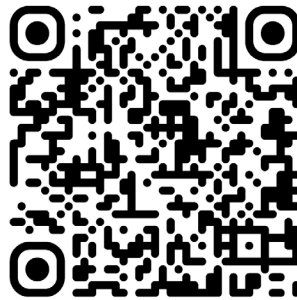


Overview

About the Symposium

The World Stage Design 2025 Research Symposium offered a platform to showcase global perspectives on theatre and performance design, architecture, and technology research. This event featured a wide-ranging discussion on the symposium themes: **Scenographic Heritage, Design Futures, & Sustainability**. Across this one-day event, presenters from over 20 countries and regions shared academic presentations, flashtalks and poster presentations. Topics spanned questions of scenographic identities; sustainable and eco-conscious approaches to design; the influence, impact and potential of new technologies; and performance design education and knowledge sharing, across all design disciplines from costume to lighting.

Alongside the in-person event, The Symposium Convenors curated a special Digital Collection of presentations for attendees. These presentations come from researchers, educators and practitioners around the world who were no longer able to attend the Symposium in person. The Digital Collection can be found online.



[Learn more at the Symposium webpage here.](#)

The Symposium Convenors were proud to partner with Routledge to sponsor three awards as part of the Symposium: *Best Academic Presentation, Best Flash Talk and Best Poster Presentation*. Thank you to Routledge for your support of this event, and for celebrating international performance research.

Finally, the Convenors wish to acknowledge and thank the support of OISTAT Headquarters, World Stage Design 2025, and the Sharjah Performing Arts Academy.

Symposium Convenors

Tessa Rixon

Chair of the OISTAT Research Commission. Senior Lecturer in Scenography
Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Tessa Rixon is a practitioner-researcher in digital scenography & Australian performance design. Tessa's work promotes new modes of integrating established and emergent technologies into live performance; exploring the potentiality of authenticity within digital scenography; and showcasing Australian performance design practice and histories. Her research into digital scenographies, ecoscenographic practice and pedagogy, and Australian performance design has been published in leading publications including the *International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media*, and *Theatre and Performance Design* and featured in numerous international conferences. She has been invited to deliver keynote presentations on digital performance and scenography in both Taiwan (2024) and Austria (2025). Tessa serves as the inaugural Chair of ScenoLab Australia (Australia's National OISTAT Centre), and Chair of the Research Commission for the International Organisation of Theatre Designers, Architects and Technicians. She has served as the National Secretary for the Australasian Association for Theatre, Drama and Performance Studies, and in 2023 curated the Australian Hub for the International Theatre Engineering and Architecture Conference. In 2021, Tessa guest-edited the first special edition in over a decade to highlight Australian scenography (*Scene Journal* (Intellect)). Tessa works as Senior Lecturer in Scenography at Queensland University of Technology, Australia.

Sladana Milićević

Vice-Chair of the OISTAT Research Commission. Assistant Professor & Head of the Chair of Arts,
University of Novi Sad, Serbia

Dr Sladana Milićević is an Assistant Professor and Head of the Chair of Arts at the Sub-Department of Art and Design at the Faculty of Technical Sciences, University of Novi Sad. She graduated in architecture at the Faculty of Technical Sciences in 2008. She received her PhD in architecture from the same faculty with a thesis "Dissociative Space of Modernity: Discourse of Emptiness in Architecture and Visual Arts of the 20th and Early 21st Century". In 2018 she received an outstanding doctoral thesis award "Milorad Macura" from the Institute of Architecture and Urban Planning of Serbia for the work in the field of architecture and urbanism. Her field of professional interest is focused on an interdisciplinary area of architecture, theatre, and visual arts, but with a focus on space theory, architecture theory, theory of scene architecture, and phenomenology of scene design. As an architect, she worked in two architectural studios in Novi Sad, participated in international architectural competitions, and exhibited her artwork at several group national and international exhibitions. As a team member, she was involved in the design-build of a scene architectural design project with interior design for the Youth Cultural District, a project implemented within the 'Novi Sad European Capital of Culture 2022' project. As a member of a program committee, she participated in planning and organization of the symposium "Scene Design Practices: Towards a New Biennale" in 2020, followed by the "Biennale of Scene Design" in 2022 and 2024. She was a member of the organization committee of an international conference "Radical Space in Between Disciplines" (2015) and "Life is Serious; Art Serene: Architectural-Scenic Research" (2024), which took place in Novi Sad. She was a moderator and exhibitor at scientific conferences, a reviewer of scientific papers, and numerous exhibitions in the field of architecture and scene design.

WSD'25 Research Symposium - Symposium Convenors

Kathleen Bell

Lead Tutor - Research and Singing, Sharjah Performing Arts Academy, United Arab Emirates

Kathleen Mary Bell is a highly qualified voice educator, currently serving as the Lead Tutor of Research and Singing. She holds a BM and MM in Vocal Performance, along with a Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA) in Voice Pedagogy, reflecting her extensive academic background in voice science and vocal pedagogy. Kathleen has earned a DMA in Voice Pedagogy and is certified in Vocology, as well as certified in all three levels of Somatic Voice Work. Her areas of expertise include vocology, vocal health, voice science, and both contemporary and classical singing styles. She is deeply interested in practice-based research, arts in practice, and teaching adult learners, with a focus on higher education teaching styles. Kathleen is an internationally recognised faculty presenter with various voice organisations, including the International Congress of Voice Teachers, Music Theatre Educators Alliance, Pan American Vocology Association, and The Voice Foundation. She is also a trained vocologist by the National Center for Voice and Speech. Her expertise in vocal pedagogy has led her to present at numerous prestigious events worldwide. Kathleen has presented papers and workshops at prominent international conferences. Kathleen has also contributed to numerous workshops and presentations on vocal health and pedagogical practices, including topics related to Laryngopharyngeal Reflux (LPR) and its effects on singers.

Michelle Bohn

Programme Supervisor - Performance Design - Set & Costume MFA, Sharjah Performing Arts Academy, United Arab Emirates

Michelle Bohn is an experienced scenographer and costume designer with over 20 years of international design experience across stage and screen. She holds an M.F.A. in Costume Design & Technology from the University of Missouri - Kansas City and a B.F.A. in Design for the Theatre from Concordia University in Montréal, Québec. Michelle's areas of expertise include scenography, costume design, set design, fashion history, and architectural history. Her extensive career has spanned multiple countries, with her work showcased in the United States, Canada, and England. Michelle spent eight seasons at the Stratford Festival, the largest classical repertory theatre in North America, where she designed costumes for notable productions such as *Cymbeline*, *Les Belles-Soeurs*, *King Lear*, and *Hamlet*. She also designed both the set and costumes for *All's Well That Ends Well* and *I Am William* at the Stratford Festival. In addition to her work in Canada, Michelle has contributed to Off-Broadway productions, including the set and costume designs for *A Four-Letter Word* at the Classic Stage Company, which also toured the UK. Her design credits extend to various regional theatres across the USA and Canada, and she has worked extensively in television, designing costumes for the CBC Gem series *Save Me* and *For the Record*. Michelle's body of work reflects her broad range of talents in both set and costume design, and her commitment to bringing visually compelling, historically informed, and narratively rich designs to life across diverse performance mediums.

Acknowledgements

The convenors wish to thank the following:



WORLD STAGE DESIGN
SHARJAH 2025



Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Symposium Program

10am Welcome and Keynote presentation

Aris Pretelin | From Mexico to the World: Ecoscenographic actions for an unusual practice in educational research

10:40am Session 1 Costume practice, technologies, sustainable strategies and studies of labour

Flashtalks:

Dorota Kuźniarska | Recycled Narratives: Sustainable Costumes in a Cross-Cultural Dialogue at Gwalior Fort

Sofia Pantouvaki and Suzanne Osmond | Costume Workers: Researching the invisible labour of costume, hair and makeup professionals in the stage and screen industries

Academic Presentations:

Maarit Kalmakurki | Digital technologies in sustainable costume creation
Soledad Sanchez Valdez | Embodied Scenography: Navigating the past for future sustainable design practices

Qin Wenbao | Abstract Painting and Costume Design

12:30pm Break

1:30pm Session 2 Sharing performance design knowledges, pedagogy and sustainable practice

Academic presentations:

Jane Collins | Theatre and Performance Design: A Journal of Scenography. The First Ten Years

Dinesh Yadav | Performative Environmental Lighting: Integrating Theatrical Design with Childcare Environments

Franklin Pyokpung Zaure | Eco-Scenography and Sustainable Theatre Practice in Nigeria: Staging Ahmed Yerima's Mojagbe at ABU Studio Theatre

Flashtalks:

Michael Budmani | What is Tertiary Theatre Production Education (TPE) in the Post Humanist Digital World? Understanding the needs of stakeholders in the evolving theatre-making industry

Pamela Eliecer Badallo Hernández | Proyecto Tejidos: How to Face the Global Socio Ecological Emergency as a Performing Artist?

Paula Adriano Martins | Exploring the application of the Theatre Green Book to Ecoscenography in São Paulo, Brazil

3:30pm Break

4pm – Session 3 Digital practices, disruption and Artificial Intelligence

Academic presentations:

Ian Garrett and Vanesa Kelly | Tri-Nominal Futures: Performing AI, Nature, and Heritage in Symbiolene —A Response to *Old McDonald Had a Farm: 01000101 01001001 01000101 0100100101001111*

Murat Şevke | Artificial Intelligence and the Human Collaborative Creative Process: An Analysis Through Theatre

Flashtalks:

Dicle Yılmaz | From Analog Innovations to Digital Realities: Josef Svoboda's Technological Vision and its Influence on Contemporary Digital Theatre Design

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Iulia Gherghescu | Scenography in Transition: Evaluating the Relevance of Designers in the Era of Artificial Intelligence

Mahatma Ordaz Domínguez | The value of archiving in the context of climate change:
Case study *El viaje a la Luna o Viaje a la X (De la Luna a la Tierra)*

5:50pm – Concluding remarks

Digital Collection Information

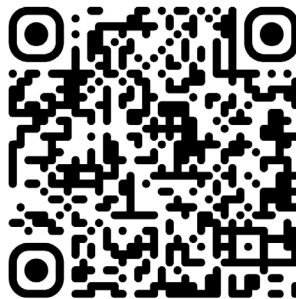
Alongside the in-person event, The Symposium Convenors have curated a special Digital Collection of presentations for attendees. These presentations come from researchers, educators and practitioners around the world who were no longer able to attend the Symposium.

Presenters include (in alphabetical order)

- Paige Borak | Adapting Lighting Designs for Sensory-Inclusive Performances
- Szu-Feng Chen | The Transformative Potential of Ecological Thinking in Theatre Design Education
- Tochukwu Emeh | Experimental encounter of indigenous scenic morgue using cultural revivalism and natural synthesis for scenic arts in a university-based theatre
- Renee Garcia | Beyond Fast Fashion: Unravelling the Environmental Impact and Sustainability in Costume Design
- Sol Kellan | Reimagining Orizaba's Son Jarocho Attire through Upcycling: A Design Research on Traditional Mexican Folk Costume and Aesthetic Transformation
- Saranrat Sangchai and Nattaporn Thappararat | *"Theatre To Go x Lab 5 Soundworks Beyond the Experience: Sound Visualizes urban in Street Food Theatre"*
- Lilia Voloshyna | *Decolonisation processes of contemporary Ukrainian theatre scenography*
- Lu Wang | *Performing Silk: Costume-centric Performance, Embodiment, and More-than-Human Design Futures*

[You can access the Digital Collection online here](#)

Or via this QR code



(Videos will be released on October 19th, 2025)

Academic Presentations

Abstract Painting and Costume Design

Qin Wenbao 秦文宝

The National Academy of Chinese Theatre Arts, China

Abstract: For stage costume design, in the past, most of the costume design was based on the description of the character's occupation and personality. The traditional character costume modeling image will solidify our imagination and cognition, and the performance will become more and more stereotyped. In contemporary drama creation, stage art designers create based on the unique interpretation of the play, extract the concept of expressing the spiritual core of the work from the script, and stimulate the designer's creativity. When stage costume design expresses the contemporary human life dilemma, the inner world of the characters, and the psychological expression of the characters more than the traditional drama narrative, the previous design methods become helpless for the spiritual expression of the drama. In recent years, I have combined the artistic expression of abstract painting with character costume design, conducted creative practice research in character costume design, and proposed a creative concept combining abstract painting with performance, which is challenging for the collaborators of drama creation and can stimulate the creativity of actors' performances. The wonderful combination of painting action, color and abstract art in costume creation and performance is a dance of body, spirit and emotion. Therefore, abstract visual forms interact with performance and drama text, and the performance is unique.

Abstract painting is a medium, pigments have great potential, and the fusion of colors creates a tone that contributes to the artistic expression of the characters. The painting process can perhaps be explained as a projection of my inner self onto the character, which is my spiritual feeling towards colors and character performance.

Keywords: Abstract Painting, Stage Costume Design, Color, Role Performance, Ink, Costume, Drama

Presenter Biography: Qin Wenbao is a practitioner and researcher dedicated to exploring the profound integration of abstract art with contemporary theatrical costume. As a Professor at the National Academy of Chinese Theatre Arts, Qin focuses on innovative approaches in costume design. Taking “the corporeal translation of abstract art in theatre” as his conceptual foundation, he approaches costume as an “abstract canvas”. His theatrical practice and research encompass two dimensions: first, the “dynamic manifestation” of abstract art within theatrical space; second, the transformation of Eastern ink wash art into perceptible theatrical language, achieving “embodied calligraphy” through dynamic performance. As a theatre designer and educator, his design work has been selected for consecutive of the World Stage Design and he served as a juror in 2022. His work has been featured at international theatre platforms including the USITT conference, Prague Quadrennial, Critical Costume and World Costume in Action. In 2018, he presented award-winning costume design in the USITT Seminar, also as the Student Ambassador to hold the Q&A session. In 2025, he was invited by president of Russian OISTAT to conduct a masterclass in Moscow. He continuously shares insights into the creative process and artistic practice with theatre professionals and emerging designers worldwide.

Eco-Scenography and Sustainable Theatre Practice in Nigeria: Staging Ahmed Yerima's Mojagbe at ABU Studio Theatre

Franklin Pyokpung Zaure

Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria

Abstract: Sustainability today is the order of the day, as experts, practitioners, activists, academics amongst many others in diverse fields of the world are contributing to a sustainable future for the next generation. The increased global climate crisis urges practitioners and experts in all areas of life to take into consideration the kind of contribution their work brings to the climate system, as it is crucial that ecological consciousness guides our thinking while we go about our day-to-day activities. Theatre is not left out in the quest for a sustainable future as play-texts and stage performances advocate by engaging audience on climate action. Though the practice of ecological design is popular today in some parts of the world, many fields and practices in other parts of the world are yet to fully embrace ecological thinking into their practices. There are so many examples to be shared from specific fields and practices like theatrical design in the African spaces that have been rarely explored especially in the academic fields. It is important that specific practices, as they relate to different cultural and environmental factors, are also experienced on the global stage. The study seeks to propose alternative materials as against the popular exploitation of trees in Nigeria, due to the total dependents on woods and timbers for theatrical design and construction in Nigerian theatre and film practices by the exploration of eco-scenography practice in the staging of Ahmed Yerima's *Mojagbe*, at the ABU Studio Theatre, Nigeria. The research proposes alternative mediums by experimenting with alternative materials; natural and environmentally friendly materials and approaches to reduce the ecological impact of theatrical and film productions in Nigeria.

Keywords: Eco-scenography, performance, theatre, ecological-consciousness, alternative-materials

Presenter Biography: Franklin Pyokpung Zaure is a Lecturer of Theatre and Performing Arts department, Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria with a research focus on performance design and environmental sustainability (Eco-scenography). He teaches drawing, painting, theatrical design, dance amongst other courses. He is a Fellow — Fulbright Visiting Researcher, University of New Hampshire, US; Fellow — Rise-Up Leadership Accelerator Program; Fellow — African Impact and Research Network (Researching Indigenous Knowledge of climate adaption through Creative Art forms). He is a transdisciplinary artist and researcher, a climate change and human rights advocate/activist and the founder of the Creative Arts for Development Center—a grassroots organisation that leverages on creativity for social change. He had his undergraduate studies in Theatre and Performing Arts, Master's in Industrial Design (Graphics and Multimedia Section) and about rounding up his PhD in Theatre and Performing Arts where he is researching eco-scenography in the Nigerian theatre space. Email: fpzaure.design@gmail.com, or fpzaure@abu.edu.ng call: +2349077100159.

Artificial Intelligence and the Human Collaborative Creative Process: An Analysis Through Theatre

Murat Şevke

Kocaeli University, Turkey

Abstract: In recent years, the role of artificial intelligence in the arts has sparked increasing debate. Traditionally viewed as a uniquely human trait, creativity is now being shared with machines. This shift raises fundamental questions about whether AI can be regarded not just as a tool, but as a creative partner. For a playwright or director, working with AI can open up new dimensions of the creative process. From character development to narrative structure, AI can expand artistic possibilities and offer fresh perspectives. However, this also brings certain uncertainties. When AI suggests an idea, how can we be sure it's original and not indirectly borrowed from another artist across the globe? This ambiguity raises concerns about authenticity and ownership. This partnership goes beyond technical assistance; AI's unexpected proposals may challenge the artist's habits and reshape their creative vision. Yet, emotional intuition remains a distinctly human quality that AI cannot replicate. Ultimately, the interaction between artist and machine transforms our understanding of creativity. It invites us to reconsider authorship and inspiration in a new light. AI, rather than simply being a tool, may evolve into a collaborator that questions, expands, and redefines the creative boundaries of the human artist. The role of artificial intelligence in artistic production is increasingly transforming human-centered creative processes. This presentation approaches AI not merely as a technical tool but as a dramaturgical collaborator, examining its potential and limitations in the textual analysis of theatre plays. The presentation will focus on a dramaturgical analysis process conducted on the contemporary theatre play "The Golden Dragon" by Roland Schimmelpfennig. In this process, AI-supported interpretations of the play's thematic structure, character dynamics, staging possibilities, and subtextual meanings were explored. The case study highlights AI's contributions to dramaturgy, such as offering alternative readings, prompting multi-layered perspectives, and challenging conventional analytical approaches. The core contributions of the presentation include: Providing a practical example of how AI can function within dramaturgical processes. Critically examining the creative and ethical implications of AI-generated interpretations in theatre. Reconsidering concepts of inspiration, authorship, and originality within AI-assisted artistic collaboration. This study proposes a redefinition of the relationship between creativity, dramaturgy, and artificial intelligence—framing AI as a dynamic partner that expands the intellectual scope of the theatre-maker.

Keywords: Digitalization in Theatre, Creativity, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Artistic Collaboration, Authenticity, Ethical Inquiry

Presenter Biography: Murat Şevke is a writer, dramaturg, and director based in Istanbul. He holds a BA in Turkish Language and Literature and recently completed a second degree in Dramaturgy and Playwriting at Kocaeli University. His play Ket was staged for two seasons and received the Encouragement Award from Yeni Tiyatro Magazine Awards in 2023. He adapted Dostoevsky's The Crocodile for the stage and wrote and directed original plays such as Elde Var Umutand Gizdüşüm. He also worked as assistant director for Yangın Duası by Berkun Oya and İçinden Tramvay Geçen Şarkıby Ferhan Şensoy. Murat

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received a directing scholarship from GalataPerform's New Text Festival and co-founded the independent theatre company Soyut Sahne in 2023, where he continues to work as a director and dramaturg. In addition to his theatre work, he has appeared in film, television, and advertising projects since 2020. His artistic interests include modern and classical dramaturgy, adaptation for the stage, and critical theory in theatre.

Performative Environmental Lighting: Integrating Theatrical Design with Childcare Environments

Dinesh Yadav

Texas A&M University, United States of America

Abstract: Lighting design in the theater has long been recognized for its ability to influence mood, perception, and engagement. However, recent research suggests that theatrical lighting principles can also profoundly affect real-world environments, including educational and childcare settings. This presentation examines existing literature on the intersection of theatrical lighting design and its impact on human behavior, particularly within circadian rhythms and learning environments.

Drawing from studies on circadian lighting and cognitive performance, I explore how the dynamic use of light—specifically the timing, intensity, and color temperature of light—can affect the well-being and learning behaviors of school-ready children in childcare centers. By comparing the effects of circadian lighting systems with traditional fluorescent lighting, this research highlights the potential for theatrical lighting techniques, such as color manipulation and gradual transitions, to improve focus, reduce stress, and enhance cognitive function in children.

This presentation explores theatrical and scientific literature to demonstrate how the creative strategies employed in theater design — rooted in an understanding of human emotional and psychological responses — can be effectively applied to research in environmental psychology and educational settings. Ultimately, this work suggests that theatrical lighting, often seen as an art form for the stage, has untapped potential as a tool for fostering optimal learning environments and improving human performance in non-theatrical spaces.

Keywords: Theatrical Lighting Design, Circadian Lighting, Learning Environments, Human Behavior, Cognitive Performance

Presenter Biography: Dr. Dinesh Yadav is an interdisciplinary researcher, educator, and performance artist specializing in theatrical design. His expertise traverses various realms, including theatre, installations, events, museums, and media, merging arts, technology, humanities, and health to delve into the intricacies of performance politics. Dr. Yadav's creations adorn global theatres, galleries, and public spaces and are featured prominently in festivals, exhibitions, and events worldwide. He has created over twenty performances and designed for more than one hundred. He has curated for the Prague Quadrennial and World Stage Design, serving as a juror for the latter. He has authored a book alongside over twenty conference papers and has been invited as a workshop leader and masterclass instructor across India, the USA, Canada, Mexico, and the UK. He is the Chair of the Performance Design Commission of OISTAT and the General Editor for Theatre Quarterly TD&T. He co-founded the non-profit Swayambhu Foundation, led its repertory company, and enriched the arts landscape with original research and performance projects. Dr. Yadav is an associate professor of theatre at Texas A&M University, Texas USA.

Digital technologies in sustainable costume creation

Maarit Kalmakurki

South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences – Xamk, Finland

Abstract: "Time for (S)heroes" is a Creative Europe-funded project for early career costume designers, with a focus on sustainability aligned with a digital design approach. The project enables designers to co-create both digital and tangible costumes. The term "(S)hero" refers to the reinterpretation of typical hero narratives within the framework of sustainable design, inclusion, and diversity. This paper presents a specific aspect of the (S)heroes project that involves digital costume design, motion capture technology, and holographic projection.

Hologram technology in live performances utilizes projection techniques to create three-dimensional, lifelike images in space. Typically, this technology is employed by projecting video-recorded materials of people and scenes onto a transparent Pepper's Ghost screen, creating the illusion of realistic three-dimensional figures. In the (S)heroes project, we enhance this effect further by using Rokoko Smartsuit motion capture performance and digital costume-making technologies for projection on the screen. The Rokoko Smartsuit links movement tracking to a digital character, allowing the actor to simultaneously see the digital version of themselves performing. Through a practice-led research methodology, I illuminate the process of creating digital costumes for a character projected on the hologram screen, performed by an actor wearing the Rokoko Smartsuit. Additionally, I employ the actors' oral testimonies to discuss their experiences performing as digital characters and the effects of wearing the Rokoko suit compared to traditional costumes on their performance.

This paper aligns with the symposium theme, "Scenographic Heritage, Design Futures, & Sustainability," by exploring the processes involved in digital costume creation, the embodied experience of motion capture acting, and the effects of digital characters on stage. Practices in digital costume making and holographic projection contribute to sustainability by minimizing material waste and embedding innovative technologies. The paper showcases how costume designers can contribute to the green shift also by creating digital costumes for live performances.

Keywords: Digital Costume, Motion Capture, Hologram, Embodied Experience, Practice-Led Research

Presenter Biography: Dr. Maarit Kalmakurki is a scenographer and academic, specialised in digital costume design. She works as a Principal Lecturer in Design and is the head of Digital and Performance Costume- degree program at Xamk – South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences. At Xamk, she also leads the digital costume design part in a Creative Europe funded project Time for (S)heroes (2024–28). Maarit's doctoral thesis (Aalto University, 2021) investigated digital character costume design in computer-animated feature films. This pioneering work has been recognised by the industry and media, such as The Walt Disney Animation and The New York Times. She has digitally constructed historical clothing in international, multidisciplinary research projects Refashioning the Renaissance and Visualising Lost Theatres. Maarit has received the Herbert D. Greggs Honor Award from the USITT editorial staff and the TD&T Publications Committee for her article studying performance costumes in Stockholm during the Gustavian era.

Embodied Scenography: Navigating the past for future sustainable design practices

Soledad Cecilia Sanchez Valdez

The University of Alabama Department of Theatre and Dance, OISTAT, USITT, USA

Abstract: Starting with my sculpture work, for more than 30 years my creative practice has explored themes around the embodiment of the space the physical body inhabits and connects us to the environing world. This phenomenological work reflects upon preservation of eco-sustainable scenographic forms of knowledge that might otherwise be lost or marginalized. I call these physical experiences “territories”, since the result, and most likely the reason for making these connections, emerges from a need for building a space to place ourselves in the world.

I will present a series of 4 slides with small drawings and photographs of realized performance design work made between 2010 and 2024. These show the exploration of costumes, set, sound, and lighting design components with a holistic approach that “questions the validity, sustainability, and purpose of design practice/research/education in general, either within the academy/institutions or professional 'industry'.”

Slides:

1. Drawings from my BFA Sculpture thesis project
2. Mistura WSD 2022
3. Territories 1 WSD 2021
4. Terreno Tejido de Piel Interdisciplinary Performance 2024

I believe these four combined design works match well together and match the core themes of the symposium: scenographic materials past and future, keeping and curating performance design knowledge, decolonizing ways of design knowledge, and sustainability of design careers including the notions of sustaining physical and mental well-being through design(ing).

With the presentation of my work at the conference, I am hoping to contribute with possible answers to the questions about the role of research, the ways in which research can inform and evolve in relationship with design practice and education, and the ways that research can further our understanding of theatre and performance design, architecture, and technology, as well as document the diverse range of cultural and creative approaches to performance design, architecture, and technology around the world.

Keywords: Sustainability, Decolonization, Performance Design Knowledge, Past and Future, Physical and Mental Wellbeing

Presenter Biography: Soledad Sanchez Valdez is a scenic designer, visual artist, and educator originally from Lima, Peru. With a background in sculpture, her designs for the stage seek to integrate space, form, and color within the social meanings of performance arts production. She has conducted collaborative design workshops and participated in numerous panel discussions about interdisciplinary work in the US, Canada, and Czech Republic. Soledad is Assistant Professor of Scenic Design, at the Department of Theatre and Dance and a Research Fellow from the Collaborative Arts Research Initiative at The University of Alabama, USA.

She was a member of the curatorial team for the United States National Exhibition at the 15th edition of the Prague Quadrennial of design in 2023.

Theatre and Performance Design: A Journal of Scenography. The First Ten Years

Jane Collins

Wimbledon College of Arts, University of the Arts, United Kingdom

Abstract: The Routledge journal Theatre and Performance Design was launched by founding editors Arnold Aronson and Jane Collins at PQ 2015 and the journal now averages over 22,000 downloads annually and this is building year on year. The field has changed radically in the 10 years since the launch of the journal with scenographic practice and research expanding internationally both within and beyond theatre buildings, merging analogue and digital worlds to incorporate a broad spectrum of disciplines that engage with the social, the environmental and the political. In their first editorial Aronson and Collins expressed 'a concern to foreground the reciprocity between practice and theory' and that remains a guiding principle of the journal in this rapidly expanding field. In this paper Jane Collins will reflect on the past ten years of the journal citing some key articles that exemplify this reciprocity. How the discourse they generated has not only contributed to the advancement of knowledge in the field but also crucially shaped the way that knowledge is produced. She will also reflect on the limitations of the journal, the problems of access for artists and practitioners outside of academia and looking forward, how it might become more inclusive and expand its international reach.

Keywords: Practice, Theory, Inclusivity, International, Knowledge Sharing

Presenter Biography: Jane Collins is Professor of Theatre and Performance at Wimbledon College of Art. She is a writer, director and theatre-maker who has worked all over the UK, including the Royal Court Theatre in London. Internationally she has strong links with the continent of Africa with projects in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania and with the Market Theatre in Johannesburg. She co-edited Theatre and Performance Design: a Reader in Scenography, published by Routledge in March 2010. In 2014 she was awarded an AHRC network grant, Performing Romani Identities: Strategy and Critique. A chapter on this project appears in Scenography Expanded, an introduction to contemporary performance design, Bloomsbury 2017. Recent published works include, 'Playing with materials: performing effect on the indoor Jacobean stage' in the Routledge Companion to Scenography (2018) and a journal article, 'Against a hierarchy of Expressive means; arguments for new pedagogies in performer education in India and the UK' in Studies in Theatre and Performance, 2019. In 2020 with the theatre department at Hyderabad University in India she secured an AHRC networking grant Cultural Heritage and Representation: (Mis)readings between India and the Indian Diaspora. She is the founding editor and currently co-editor of the journal Theatre and Performance Design.

Tri-Nominal Futures: Performing AI, Nature, and Heritage in Symbiolene — A Response to *Old McDonald Had a Farm*: 01000101 01001001 01000101 01001001 01001111

Ian Garrett and Vanesa Kelly

York University, Canada and V-KIND Arts & Theatre, Venue 13, United Kingdom

Abstract: This presentation is based on *Old McDonald Had a Farm*: 01000101 01001001 01000101 01001001 01001111, recently published in Canadian Theatre Review, which argues for a “tri-nominal” approach—reframing the relationships among humans, technology, and nature through ecoscenography. The paper critiques how AI development and industrial agriculture share extractive logics and proposes ecoscenography’s relational principles—co-creation, celebration, and circulation—as a model for imagining more sustainable futures. Extending the essay’s call for performance as a site for modeling alternative futures, this presentation introduces develop of *Symbiolene*, a series of performance projects engaging the Green Man—a recurring folkloric icon in which a human face is intertwined with foliage—as European symbols of cyclical ecological relationships. Rather than applying, or appropriating, North American Indigenous models of land stewardship to European contexts, *Symbiolene* draws from Europe’s own embedded relational traditions to explore how cultural heritage might inform design practices attuned to sustainability and non-human agency. Blending live and mixed-reality performance, *Symbiolene* explores how AI on the ANI/AGI spectrum might be aligned with ecological care instead of extraction, materializing speculative futures where humans, technology, and nature collaborate. The presentation will reflect on how *Symbiolene* embodies the essay’s provocations through scenographic research and creative practice, offering a vision for how design heritage, technology, and sustainability intersect in performance.

Keywords: Ecoscenography, AI Alignment, Intractable Climate Change, Hybrid Performance

Presenter Biography: Ian Garrett is Associate Professor of Ecological Design for Performance at York University (Toronto), a designer, producer, and researcher working at the intersection of performance, sustainability, and technology. He is founding director of the Centre for Sustainable Practice in the Arts (CSPA), and a producer with Toasterlab, a collective focused on mixed reality and ecologically engaged performance. His recent scholarly work includes “Old McDonald Had a Farm: 01000101 01001001 01000101 01001001 01001111 – Ecoscenography for an Intractable Future Past” (Canadian Theatre Review, 2024), “Distributed Performance as Systems of Mutual Care” (Palgrave, 2024), and “Ethical Scenography in the North American Cluster Programme at the Prague Quadrennial” (Theatralia, 2024). His ongoing project *Symbiolene* explores AI, ecological futures, and the European foliate head as scenographic heritage. Garrett regularly presents internationally, including World Stage Design, Prague Quadrennial, and Performance Studies International. He co-organized the North American Cluster at PQ 2019 and 2023 and was Co-chair for WSD 2022.

Vanesa Kelly is a Scottish-based communications strategist, playwright, producer, and visual artist working across public relations, cultural production, and sustainable creative practice. She is the founder of V-KIND, an arts and theatre consultancy specialising in production, curation, and PR for inclusive and environmentally engaged projects; Venue Manager and Producer for Venue 13 in Edinburgh; and a communications consultant with experience spanning renewable technology and cultural sectors. Her creative practice explores the intersections of folklore, immersive storytelling, and ecological reflection through live performance, XR, and visual arts. Her work engages with folklore and landscape through both digital and material forms, often incorporating foraging, craft, and site-specific research. An active member of the Glasgow Art Club and a practising watercolourist, Kelly’s practice reflects a commitment to reimagining how stories of place and environment are experienced and shared.

Flash Talks

Costume Workers: Researching the invisible labour of costume, hair and makeup professionals in the stage and screen industries

Sofia Pantouvaki and Suzanne Osmond

Aalto University, Finland and National Institute of Dramatic Art, Australia

Abstract: This research-in-progress, part of a forthcoming publication project, explores the labour and collaborative processes of backstage costume workers in theatre, film, and television. Approaching costume production as an ecosystem, the project traces the inventive and creative contributions of those whose roles are typically defined as technical or supportive. The term 'ecosystem' captures the responsiveness, interdependence, and vitality of collaborative work within costume departments. A core proposition is that costumes are not simply mechanical realizations of a designer's vision but are shaped incrementally through collective processes. These rely on the interpretive skill and innovation of costume workers – who, despite their crucial contributions, are rarely acknowledged as 'creative' professionals. The project focuses on the roles of makers, dyers, textile artists, milliners, wigmakers, makeup artists, hairdressers, show jewellers, feather workers, accessory and mask makers, shoemakers, costume supervisors, dressers, wardrobe personnel, buyers, and stock controllers. A key strength of the project lies in its international scope. Contributions come from practitioner-researchers and designers across a wide range of geographical and cultural contexts, including Australia, Canada, China, Egypt, Finland, Greece, Hong Kong, India, Italy, Slovenia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. This global perspective allows the project to account for local and regional specificities while identifying shared concerns and practices in the field. By highlighting the nuanced work and extraordinary know-how of costume professionals worldwide, this project aims to enrich current discourse on scenographic collaboration and bring overdue recognition to the global community of costume practitioners.

Keywords: Costume Ecosystem, Design Realisation, Designers and Makers, Invisible Labour

Presenter Biographies: Dr Sofia Pantouvaki is a scenographer and Professor of Costume Design at Aalto University, Finland. She is an awarded practising designer with approx. 100 design credits for theatre, opera, film and dance productions in major European venues. She has curated/co-curated many international projects, including the Finnish Student exhibits at PQ2015 (Gold Medal) and PQ2023 (awarded 'Most Imaginative and Inventive Design'). She holds a PhD in Scenography from University of the Arts London and has specialised in design for opera and ballet at La Scala, Milan. She is the Chair of Critical Costume, a founding editor of Studies in Costume and Performance, Vice President of the Hellenic Costume Society, and OISTAT Executive Committee member. Dr Pantouvaki led the research project 'Costume Methodologies' (Academy of Finland, 2014-2018) and is lead editor of Performance Costume: New Perspectives and Methods (Bloomsbury, 2021). Her research focuses on performance costume theory and practice, and clothing in World War Two concentration camps. She actively designs, lectures, and publishes internationally.

Dr Suzanne Osmond is an experienced educator, arts practitioner, curriculum developer and researcher. She is the head of academic development and research at the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) in Sydney. She has professional industry experience as a costume supervisor for the Asian Games in Doha, the Sydney Olympics Opening Ceremony, The Lion King (Disney), Love Never Dies (Really Useful Company), and numerous other

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performance and film projects, including *The Matrix Reloaded*, *The Matrix Revolutions* (2003) and *Disgrace* (2008). She holds a Ph.D. from the University of Technology Sydney, for her research in the relationship between costume design and cultural identity and a master's in education focused on digital pedagogy and leadership. Dr Osmond has an international research profile focusing on the historical and sociocultural aspects of performance costume. She co-edits the peer-reviewed journal *Studies in Costume and Performance* (Intellect) and has contributed a chapter on design communication to the book, *Performance Costume: New Perspectives and Methods* (Bloomsbury, 2021). She was a postdoctoral research fellowship recipient within an Academy of Finland-funded research project at Aalto University and is currently engaged in research into performing arts pedagogies.

Exploring the application of the Theatre Green Book to Escoscenography in São Paulo, Brazil

Paula Adriano Martins

University of São Paulo, Brazil

Abstract: How can we evaluate sustainable artistic practices in São Paulo when no specific Portuguese manual or guide is available? This was the first question that arose when I planned my PhD research in Escoscenography. Guides and manuals developed abroad in different contexts have points of analysis that reflect the realities, communities, and materials available in their places of origin. This raises new questions: What would be the most appropriate procedure for evaluating sustainable artistic practices in São Paulo? To what extent do international guidelines apply to the local context? Especially as each region has its particularities, practices, and challenges.

In São Paulo, the materials and methods that shape the local *modus operandi* are essential for understanding escoscenography in complex and diverse urban settings. My research question explored adapting foreign guidelines, identifying practices typical of São Paulo, and consider their effectiveness to the local context. I assessed the current state of ecological and sustainable practices in São Paulo's performing arts sector, and compiled a literature review focusing on materials that integrate stage design with sustainability strategies.

The Theatre Green Book was chosen as the central reference and used to explore current sustainable goals and practices. Examining various global initiatives and their different approaches allowed for a broad understanding of international efforts aimed at implementing sustainability measures in the cultural sector. It highlighted the diversity of strategies and perspectives.

This paper explores how The Theatre Green Book can be adapted to the Brazilian context, while ensuring that local escoscenography practices are meaningfully captured and accurately reflect the reality of theatre production in the country.

Keywords: Theatre Green Book, Escoscenography, Artistic Practices, São Paulo Brazil

Presenter Biography: Paula Martins is a visual artist, set and costume designer, and a PhD candidate in the Postgraduate Program in Performing Arts at the School of Communications and Arts of the University of São Paulo (ECA-USP), currently doing an internship at Performance + Ecology Research Lab (P+ERL), Griffith University, Australia with funding from the São Paulo State Research Foundation (FAPESP), process no. 2024/16084-3. A member of USP's Center for Stage Costume, Clothing, and Technology research group, her research focuses on the intersection between sustainability and performance art, emphasizing costume and set design. With support from the São Paulo State Research Foundation (FAPESP), process n. 2023/11066-4, investigates how ecological philosophy can influence and enrich stage design and contemporary artistic practices.

From Analog Innovations to Digital Realities: Josef Svoboda's Technological Vision and its Influence on Contemporary Digital Theatre Design

Dicle Yılmaz

Maltepe University, Türkiye

Abstract: This study analyzes Josef Svoboda's technology-driven staging vision and examines its influence on contemporary digital theatre practices. The techniques of lighting, projection, and kinetic scenography developed within his concept of the "psycho-plastic stage" are recognized as historical predecessors of methods used in scenography today.

The research explores Svoboda's innovative approaches from the analog era in dialogue with current digital scenographic practices. The multimedia-based narratives of Katie Mitchell, the interactive documentary-performances of Rimini Protokoll, and William Kentridge's scenographic compositions that integrate light and shadow are evaluated as contemporary reinterpretations of Svoboda's theoretical legacy.

In addition, although not a scenographer in the traditional sense, Refik Anadol's data-driven, AI-generated spatial installations are considered among the interdisciplinary productions that extend the psycho-plastic stage into the perceptual experiences of the digital age. Anadol's visual environments, constructed through projection and dynamic surfaces, present inspiring potentials for contemporary performance aesthetics.

In this context, the study offers a perspective on the aesthetic and technical transformation of digital performance, addressing the reshaping of theatrical space in the digital era through a lens of historical continuity.

Keywords: Josef Svoboda, Scenography, Psycho-Plastic Stage, Technology and Performance

Presenter Biography: Dicle Yılmaz is a scenographer and research assistant based in Istanbul. Her academic interests focus on the history of stage design and the integration of digital media into theatrical aesthetics and practice. Her master's degree level research investigates the relationship between Josef Svoboda's scenographic philosophy and contemporary digital theatre design practices. As the founder of the alternative theatre collective Soyut Sahne, she develops and stages experimental and interdisciplinary performances.

Proyecto Tejidos: How to Face the Global Socio-Ecological Emergency as a Performing Artist?

Pamela Eliecer Badallo Hernández

México

Abstract: As a Mexican performer-researcher, I explore horizontal, decolonial, participatory, and sustainable stage creation. This paper shares reflections and strategies from my experience in Proyecto Tejidos within the Scenofest "Community Engagement" activity at WSD2022, Calgary.

Proyecto Tejidos is a participatory ecoscenographic performance addressing socio-ecological and political issues affecting urban green areas and their non-human inhabitants. Over a week, we activated three actions at "Containr" space, engaging the local and international community in dialogues and reflections on urban green spaces' neglect and extinction, fostering collective proposals for action.

Based on the collective dialogues shared during the performance, I develop the following points:

1. Politics in "community engagement": Applying performing arts strategies such as interaction and fiction opens up spaces for political action, where local communities can voice needs and seek for possible solutions that involve them directly in the transformation of its spaces and social dynamics.
2. Seek for new strategies for scenic creation, so that everything that was designated as "not worthy" of life can have relevance, be seen, and heard: Conversations highlighted the urgency of rethinking how we create performances to challenge dominant structures around the world that define what is valuable, visible, and valid. "Community engagement" expands scenic creation by dissolving disciplinary boundaries, fostering horizontal exchanges, and integrating diverse perspectives, allowing for new aesthetics and narratives that resist colonial and hierarchical impositions.
3. Recognizing privilege and systemic domination: Understanding "otherness" beyond white, heterosexual, human male perspectives helps us question complicity in exclusionary practices and embrace diverse worldviews.
4. "Useless-daily" actions as resistance: Simple acts like knitting, cooking, or playing counteract automation's speed, creating spaces for contemplation and dialogue. These interactions not only expose problems but also generate concrete ideas and actions against the socio-ecological crisis.

Keywords: Ecoscenography, Community Engagement, Interdisciplinary Collaboration, Socio-Ecological Crisis, Non-Human Beings

Presenter Biography: Performer-researcher and educator, Pamela Eliecer Badallo Hernández explores horizontal, participatory, and sustainable stage creation. She holds a BA in Acting from the National School of Theatrical Art, National Institute of Fine Arts, Mexico (2015). Since 2013, she has collaborated as a performer with various independent creation companies. She is a founding member of LAS REDRAINCOTS.lab (2018), where she conducts research and participates in PROYECTO TEJIDOS. This project was part of the Cultural Community Collectives program in Mexico City (2019 and 2021), participated in Prague's Quadrennial of Performance Stage and Design (2019 and 2023), and was featured in Scenofest at World Stage Design (2022) in Calgary, Canada.

From 2016 to 2022, she coordinated the Theater Group at the National School of Social Work, UNAM, exploring the potential of scenic arts as a means of social intervention and transformation.

From 2020 to 2024, she collaborated in the PAPIIT IV-300220 project at UNAM, "Strategies for socio-family and community intervention in response to the social impact of the COVID-19 pandemic from a gender perspective in Mexico City," which involved a participatory, interdisciplinary social intervention process with professionals from the National School of Social Work, UNAM.

Recycled Narratives: Sustainable Costumes in a Cross-Cultural Dialogue at Gwalior Fort

Dorota Kuźniarska

Magdalena Abakanowicz University of the Arts in Poznań, Faculty of Interior Architecture and Scenography, Department of Clothing Design, Poland

Abstract: This flash talk explores the intersection of sustainability, cultural heritage, and contemporary performance through costume design for "A Street Cart Named Desire", an interdisciplinary in-situ performance directed by Sarah Singh (Patiala Royal Family) and staged at the historic Gwalior Fort, India as part of the art festival Panorama Editions vol. 4. This production brought together 23 international and 25 local artists, with support from 12 embassies and cultural institutions, including UNESCO and the Polish Institute in New Delhi. The production was a dialogue between sustainability, cultural heritage, and storytelling through costume, explored themes of desire and transformation.

As part of this creative exchange, I designed costumes for renowned Greek opera singers Theodora Baka and Maria Kostraki, incorporating recycled garments such as jeans, shirts, and jackets. Using techniques of deconstruction, patchwork, and hand-finishing, the costumes became a metaphor for cultural transformation and reinvention, blending elements of both Hollywood film aesthetics and Indian craftsmanship.

Following the performance, the costumes were showcased in a post-performance exhibition at Jai Vilas Palace until November 23rd, before traveling to Purana Quila in New Delhi (December 5–10th). Supported by MP Government Ministries of Tourism and Culture, UNESCO, ICCR, and Jai Vilas Palace, the project highlights the evolving role of costume as a bridge between tradition, sustainability, and contemporary performance.

Keywords: Sustainable Costume Design, Cultural Heritage, Interdisciplinary Performance Art, Recycled Fashion & Upcycling, Cultural Storytelling Through Costume, Cross-Cultural Dialogue

Presenter Biography: Dorota Kuźniarska is an interdisciplinary artist, designer, and costume creator, working at the intersection of fashion, costume, textiles, painting, performance art, and new media. She explores the relationships between identity and image, reality and fiction, and the body and its digital extension. Her practice is deeply rooted in the concepts of the post-human, the avatar, and skins as layers shaping identity. A lecturer at the Magdalena Abakanowicz University of the Arts in Poznań (Poland) and the Fashion School in Poznań. A member of The International Organisation of Scenographers, Theatre Architects, and Technicians (OISTAT) and the Polish Filmmakers Association. She has been awarded scholarships from the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, the Minister of Science and Higher Education, and the Adam Mickiewicz Institute ("Polish Culture Worldwide" 2024). Her projects have been presented in over 40 exhibitions worldwide, including World Costume in Action (Bucharest, Romania), PQ+ (Prague, Czech Republic), Critical Costume (UCLA, Los Angeles, USA), and Panorama Editions (Gwalior, India). In 2025, she was nominated by the Editorial Board of "Kurier Lubelski" for the "Personality of the Year 2024" award in the Culture category for "promoting Polish art internationally".

Scenography in Transition: Evaluating the Relevance of Designers in the Era of Artificial Intelligence

Iulia Gherghescu

UNATC IL Caragiale, Romania

Abstract: Performance designers in Romania operate within a challenging professional landscape marked by financial instability, short-term contracts, and limited institutional support. Frequently involved in multiple low-budget projects under intense time constraints, many designers experience burnout and emotional fatigue. This paper investigates how Romanian performance designers navigate these conditions, sustain their well-being, and maintain artistic integrity, while also exploring what structural changes are necessary to create a more equitable and sustainable career path. By incorporating in-depth interviews with local practitioners, the research captures firsthand experiences, strategies of resilience, and reflections on the evolving demands of the field.

At the same time, the rise of AI and digital tools is reshaping the landscape of performance design. While these technologies offer cost-cutting solutions, and new creative possibilities, they also raise concerns about the erosion of traditional methods and the devaluation of human creativity. This study examines how Romanian designers perceive AI—whether as a threat, a tool, or a collaborator—and how such perceptions influence their willingness to integrate or resist these innovations. It questions whether AI can serve as a meaningful creative partner or if its widespread use risks undermining the uniqueness of live, human-centered design.

Given that research on the condition of performance designers in Romania is rare and often overlooked, this paper seeks to fill a critical gap in the discourse. By combining qualitative interviews with critical analysis, the study highlights the urgent need for systemic reform, including fair compensation, mental health resources, mentorship programs, and collaborative working models. It calls for a paradigm shift in which sustainability is understood not only in material terms but also in relation to human dignity, creative autonomy, and ethical engagement with emerging technologies. Ultimately, this research advocates for a future in which Romanian performance designers can thrive artistically and professionally within an increasingly technological and rapidly changing cultural landscape.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), Artistic & Professional Sustainability, Artistic Integrity, Human vs. Machine Creativity, Resilience Strategies

Presenter Biography: Iulia Gherghescu is a Romanian set and costume designer, scenographer, and academic researcher whose work bridges performance, technology, and cultural memory. She is a member of OISTAT Romania and currently serves as the head of its Research Subcommission. With a background in design and anthropology, she earned an MFA from Tulane University and, in 2015, completed a PhD in Theatre Studies at the National University of Theatre and Film in Bucharest. Her doctoral research focused on the integration of new technologies and contemporary design methodologies in scenography.

Since 2017, she has been a researcher at the International Center for Research and Education in Innovative and Creative Technologies (CINETic), where she investigates the intersections between visual design, immersive media, and performative space. Her professional practice spans a wide range of projects in theatre, television, film, and event

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design, often marked by interdisciplinary approaches and a commitment to sustainability and innovation. Iulia's scenographic language combines material experimentation with conceptual depth, weaving together traditional motifs and contemporary aesthetics to create meaningful, sensory-driven environments.

The value of archiving in the context of climate change: Case study *El viaje a la Luna o Viaje a la X (De la Luna a la Tierra)*

Mahatma Ordaz Domínguez

Asociación Mexicana de Investigación Teatral and freelance researcher, México

Abstract: The paper reflects on the 'archival value' acquired by the creative processes recorded by stage designers throughout their careers. These processes are defined as indexical archives, because they generate indications of the existence of certain practices and processes, of the emergence of new paradigms and the future of stage design.

To address these questions, I took as a point of reference the research I carried out in 2022 on the scenographic design of the dance production *El viaje a la Luna* or *Viaje a la X* (From the Moon to the Earth), designed by the Mexican set designer Alejandro Luna and premiered in 2002. Based on this research, I am interested in reconsidering the theoretical contributions of creative processes to art history, as well as the value of archiving in the imminent context of climate change. To reflect on this, I pose the following questions: What is the artistic value of archiving? is digital archiving a viable medium for the preservation of creative processes?

Keywords: Scenography, Creative Processes, Indexical Archive, Digital Archive, Climate Change

Presenter Biography: Scenic designer and theatre researcher, with a degree in History of Art and a Masters in Aesthetics and Art. Between 2016 and 2018 I worked as an editorial assistant at Colección La Fuente, MEYA, FFyL-BUAP, Puebla. From 2019 to 2021 I taught theatre and dance at the Centro Morelense de las Artes. From 2022 to March 2025, I was Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Mexican Association of Theatre Research. Member of the research group Teatro de Fronteras de México. I have exhibited my designs and researches in different countries. I have worked in film as a costume assistant and in television series as a set designer, assistant scenographer and art director. In the technical field I have worked as a coordinator for festivals and independent theatres and as a lighting technician on tours. I am currently working as a costume designer in the wardrobe department of the show *Joyà, Cirque du Soleil*, in Mexico.

**What is Tertiary Theatre Production Education (TPE) in the Post-Humanist Digital World?
Understanding the needs of stakeholders in the evolving theatre-making industry**

Michael Budmani

Lasalle College of the Arts (University of the Arts), Singapore

Abstract: Shulman (2005,54-55) defines signature pedagogies as those which sit within programmes that prepare students for careers within specific and often highly vocational professions. Signature pedagogies have expectations on curriculum design and delivery, learning environment, and faculty profile.

The recognised signature pedagogies of theatre production education (TPE) are of a production-facing, intense, and heavy contact hour learning environment that mirrors recognised theatre industry processes and practices. Ubiquitous faculty profile are of 'practitioner-turned-academics', engaged largely due to the extent of their industry profiles.

Contemporary TPE cohorts largely consist of Generation Z students. Generation Z are the inaugural digital native posthumanist tertiary learners—living and operating within a society where their integration with technology informs their habits, preferences and skills. Logic would suggest that they would bring their posthumanist tendencies to their learning. This presentation will examine the closed cycle of pedagogy that the researcher has determined within TPE, and challenge the continuing currency of existing TPE signature pedagogies within the post-pandemic digital revolution.

This presentation will also examine the impact of the pandemic on wellness, and whether both TPE signature pedagogies and accepted working practices in the theatre industry now need to have a more holistic, softer and kinder approach.

This presentation will conclude with some thoughts as to how all these challenges can be drawn together to offer a renewal of TPE signature pedagogies, a future-proofing which would fully reflect the contemporary realities in which learners are now studying.

Research for this presentation is drawn from a series of primary research interviews with educators across the global TPE sector.

Keywords: Production, Signature Pedagogies, Renewal, Wellness, Gen Z

Presenter Biography: Michael Budmani is a professional stage manager, production manager, educator, and life coach with over 30 years of industry experience. His areas of expertise include stage management, production management, technical management, professionalisation, coaching, and mentoring. A UK national, he has worked internationally and with some of the very best talent in British theatre, both onstage and backstage. Key engagements include Stage Manager for the Royal Shakespeare Company, Head of Stage Management for Scottish Opera, and latterly Head of Technical for Scottish Opera. Michael was also Chair and Director of the Stage Management Association of the United Kingdom. Michael is particularly interested in new pedagogies in theatre production, and the interface between technology and theatre production. This is the focus of his current PhD studies. Michael is Programme Leader of the Diploma in Theatre Production and Management at Lasalle College of the Arts (University of the Arts), Singapore.

Posters

Culture for Climate: Harnessing Eco-creativity to transition Australia's performing arts to environmental sustainability

Tanja Beer

Griffith University, Australia

Abstract: This poster presentation explores some initial outcomes of the Performance + Ecology Research Lab's Australian Research Council Grant 'Culture for Climate' (2025-2028) which examines how performing arts organisations in Australia are responding to the climate crisis using creative sustainability approaches. It highlights how the project's five case studies are generating new knowledge and strategies to support the leadership role that performing arts organisations can play in transitioning to a climate changed future.

'Culture for Climate' is the first in-depth investigation into the design of new sustainability practices and values for the Australian performing arts sector. It employs a staged approach that prioritises co-development, exploration and validation of ideas where case study participants act as collaborators and equal contributors to identify the challenges and opportunities of sustainability. This poster presentation will share insights from our case study research, including results from our ideation and brainstorming sessions and eco-literacy workshops that have led to develop innovative concepts in response to identified issues. It will also reveal the findings from our sector wide Culture for Climate National Survey.

At the centre of this research is the notion of 'eco-creativity' to reframe the problem of greening the performing arts sector as one of opportunity, innovation and leadership. Eco-creativity seeks to develop innovative sustainability practices and policies that unlock and empower new ways of thinking, organising, and creating, moving beyond mitigation or 'eco-efficient' practices. Eco-creativity is a core component of ecoscenography and this presentation will demonstrate how strategies for ecological design for performance can be upscaled and applied to broader cultural practices.

Keywords: Eco-creativity, Environmental Sustainability, Australia, Performing Arts

Presenter Biography: Dr Tanja Beer is an ecological designer and community artist who is passionate about co-creating social spaces that accentuate the interconnectedness of the more-than-human world. She is a Senior Lecturer at the Queensland College of Art and Design and the Co-Director of the Performance and Ecology Research Lab (P+ERL) at Griffith University. Tanja's extensive career is based on over 20 years of theatre practice in Australia, Europe and the UK. Her concept of Ecoscenography has been featured in numerous programs, exhibitions, articles and platforms around the world. She is the author of *Ecoscenography: An Introduction to Ecological Design for Performance* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021) and Lead Investigator on the Australian Research Council Linkage Project, Culture for Climate: Harnessing Eco-Creativity to Transition Australia's Performing Arts to Environmental Sustainability (2025-2028).

From Analog Innovations to Digital Realities: Josef Svoboda's Vision and Its Echo in Contemporary Theatre Design

Dicle Yılmaz

Maltepe University, Türkiye

Abstract: This study explores Josef Svoboda's technology-driven staging vision and its influence on today's digital theatre practices. His concept of the "psycho-plastic stage" — with innovations in lighting, projection, and kinetic scenography — is examined as a historical foundation for many contemporary approaches in scenographic design.

By drawing parallels between Svoboda's analog methods and current digital aesthetics, this poster investigates how modern practitioners carry his legacy forward. The multimedia narratives of Katie Mitchell, the interactive performances of Rimini Protokoll, and William Kentridge's poetic use of light and shadow are presented as reinterpretations of Svoboda's principles.

Moreover, Refik Anadol's AI-generated, data-driven installations—though outside conventional scenography—are discussed as spatial experiences that resonate with the psycho-plastic stage, offering new potentials for digital performance environments.

This poster aims to visually map a line of aesthetic and technological continuity from Svoboda's experimental theatre to today's digitally enhanced performance spaces.

Keywords: Josef Svoboda, Scenography, Psycho-Plastic Stage, Technology and Performance

Presenter Biography: Dicle Yılmaz is a scenographer and research assistant based in Istanbul. She currently works at Maltepe University, Faculty of Fine Arts, Department of Performing Arts. Her academic interests focus on the conceptual background of stage design in theatre and its contemporary reflections, along with the integration of digital media into theatrical aesthetics and practice. Her graduate-level research investigates the relationship between Josef Svoboda's scenographic philosophy and contemporary digital theatre design practices. As the founder of the alternative theatre collective Soyut Sahne, she develops and stages experimental and interdisciplinary performances.

Incorporating Ecological Thinking in Design Practice

Szu-Feng Chen

University of New Hampshire, United States of America

Abstract: This poster presentation explores various integrations of ecological thinking within contemporary scenographic practice. It examines how traditional production settings can evolve by adopting sustainable methodologies, bridging past design knowledge with future-oriented practices. Drawing upon personal projects, the presentation demonstrates the practical application of eco-conscious principles in scene design. The poster will include:

- The creative use of found and recycled materials to deepen narrative connection, transforming discarded objects into compelling visual storytelling elements, therefore reevaluating the lifespan and potential of scenery elements.
- A multilingual interactive performance that celebrates Singapore's multicultural heritage. The project adopted a sustainable approach by reimagining existing, decade-old scenery. The design process focused on retaining the materials' aged characteristics, demonstrating how respect for heritage can inform and enhance eco-friendly design practices.
- Experimentation with natural dyes for eco-friendly scenic painting, and the potential for minimizing environmental impact in traditional production processes.

By showcasing these practical applications, this presentation aims to contribute to a broader discussion on the feasibility and necessity of sustainable practices within the global performance design community.

Keywords: Ecological Thinking, Scene Design, Sustainable Materials, Sustainable Design Practice

Presenter Biography: Szu-Feng Chen is an artist, designer, and educator from Taiwan, where she received Bachelor of Fine Arts in Scene Design from Taipei National University of the Arts. Her interest in integrating unconventional materials in her artistry has led her to a passion for sustainable practices in visual storytelling and EcoScenography. Szu-Feng has collaborated with artists around the world for over a hundred theatrical productions. Her design works and research were presented at the Prague Quadrennial (2023, 2007, 2003), World Stage Design in Canada (2022), South Korea (2009), and Canada (2005), Chinese-American Art Faculty Symposium (2019), the United States Institute of Theatre Technology (2023, 2015, 2014, 2010), and Beijing Annual Theater Art Exhibition (2002). She received the Gold Sustainability Award (2021), the Outstanding Assistant Professor Award (2014) at UNH, and the Outstanding Alumna of the School of Theatre from Taipei National University of the Arts (2012). Szu-Feng holds a Master of Fine Arts in Theatrical Design from The University of Texas at Austin and serves as the Chair and the Director of Design and Theatre Technology for the Department of Theatre and Dance at the University of New Hampshire. <http://www.szufengchen.com/>

Scenic Art, A Pedagogy in Practice; Documentary as Case Study, Archive, and Artistic Process

Andrea Heilman

United States of America

Abstract: Scenic Art: A Pedagogy in Practice is a four-part documentary series that explores the labor, legacy, and love of professional scenic artists working across the United States. Each part profiles a different master painter:

- Rachel Keebler (painting on black velour)
- Claire Dana (foam carving)
- Karen Maness (landscape with sky)
- Susan Crabtree (Trompe l'oeil)
-

Through rich interviews and immersive studio footage, the series captures how these artists pass on traditional scenic techniques while adapting to contemporary practices and challenges. The artists reflect on material histories, evolving production economies, mentorship, aging bodies, and the mental and physical demands of their craft.

This project speaks directly to key symposium themes:

- Keeping and curating performance design knowledge through documentation of
- endangered analog practices and one-on-one mentorship traditions.
- Sustainability of design practice and education by foregrounding how artists
- manage shifts in industry expectations, teaching models, and materials.
- Mental and physical sustainability by confronting the realities of long careers in scenic painting, including bodily wear, neurodiversity, and invisible labor.

Unlike many documentaries, this series was constructed using a subject-centered model. The artists shaped the narrative and thematic structure, making space for their lived experiences to guide the form. This approach mirrors qualitative research methods like case study and narrative inquiry, offering a layered, grounded lens into the world of scenic artistry.

Keywords: Scenic Artistry, Mentorship, Process-Based Practice, Scenographic Sustainability, Living Archive, Cultural Preservation

Presenter Biography: Andrea Heilman (she/they) is a scenic and lighting designer, educator, and creative systems strategist whose work bridges stage, studio, and screen. With over 15 years of experience in professional theater, live performance, and event production, Andrea creates visually rich, collaborative designs that center story, space, and the people who bring it to life.

In addition to design, Andrea is an experienced production manager and education leader. They have developed and implemented department-wide systems that support mentorship, artistic rigor, and team wellbeing, always through a trauma-informed and equity-centered lens. Their consulting work focuses on sustainable program structures, inclusive curricula, and strategic leadership in the arts.

Whether consulting on education systems, crafting a design for a new production, or developing story-driven films, Andrea brings clarity, warmth, and an artist's eye. They are available for design commissions, production and education consulting, and creative collaborations.

What is Tertiary Theatre Production Education (TPE) in the Post-Humanist Digital World? How Might It Meet the Needs of Stakeholders in the Evolving Theatre-Making Industry?

Michael Budmani

Lasalle College of the Arts, Singapore

Abstract: Shulman (2005,54-55) defines signature pedagogies as those which sit within programmes that prepare students for careers within specific and often highly vocational professions. Signature pedagogies have expectations on curriculum design and delivery, learning environment, and faculty profile. The recognised signature pedagogies of theatre production education (TPE) are of a production-facing, intense, and heavy contact hour learning environment that mirrors recognised theatre industry processes and practices. Ubiquitous faculty profile are of 'practitioner-turned academics', engaged largely due to the extent of their industry profiles. Contemporary TPE cohorts largely consist of Generation Z students. Generation Z are the inaugural digital native posthumanist tertiary learners—living and operating within a society where their integration with technology informs their habits, preferences and skills. Logic would suggest that they would bring their posthumanist tendencies to their learning. The research project that is represented by this poster is examining the closed cycle of pedagogy that the researcher has determined within TPE, and challenge the continuing currency of existing TPE signature pedagogies within the post-pandemic digital revolution. The research project that is represented by this poster is also examining the impact of the pandemic on wellness, and as to whether both TPE signature pedagogies and accepted working practices in the theatre industry now need to have a more holistic, softer and kinder approach. The research project that is represented by this poster will consider as to how all these challenges can be drawn together to offer a renewal of TPE signature pedagogies, and a future-proofing which would fully reflect the contemporary realities in which learners are now studying and living.

Keywords: signature pedagogies, digital post-humanism, closed cycle of theatre production pedagogy, future-proofing of TPE signature pedagogies

Presenter Biography: Michael Budmani is a professional stage manager, production manager educator and life coach with over 35 years of professional experience. His areas of expertise include stage management, production management, technical management, professionalisation, coaching and mentoring. Prior to joining LASALLE in 2016, Michael was Subject Leader for Theatre Production at Bath Spa University, UK. A UK national, he has worked internationally and with some of the very best talent in British theatre, both onstage and backstage. Key engagements include Stage Manager for the Royal Shakespeare Company, Head of Stage Management for Scottish Opera, and latterly Head of Technical for Scottish Opera. Michael was also Chair and Director of the Stage Management Association of United Kingdom. Michael is particularly interested in renewing and refreshing signature pedagogies in theatre production, and the interface between technology and theatre production. In this regard, he has been actively working on new stage management and show calling systems that can facilitate new and path-breaking ways of learning technical theatre. Michael's current scholarship is a PhD in Education at Bath Spa University, UK.

Digital Academic Presentations

Beyond Fast Fashion: Unraveling the Environmental Impact and Sustainability in Costume Design

Renee Garcia

Webster University, United States of America

Abstract: Clothing has increasingly become a disposable commodity, driven by the fast fashion model, which perpetually releases new inventory and abandons traditional seasonal cycles. This approach prioritizes speed and low cost over quality, leading to mass production, overconsumption, and significant environmental harm. The clothing and textile industry has become the second-largest global polluter, contributing heavily to ecological degradation with harmful chemicals, unsustainable fibers, and the enormous amounts of textile waste it generates.

In costume design, budget constraints and time pressures often push designers toward fast fashion solutions, turning to retailers like Amazon or large chain stores such as Target and Walmart for quick access to affordable items. While these options offer convenience, they also perpetuate the very cycle of fast fashion that damages the environment.

This presentation explores the environmental consequences of fast fashion and its impact on sustainability, particularly within the realm of costume design. By analyzing the ecological toll of mass-produced clothing, we will investigate how these practices affect costume design choices, materials, and overall sustainability in the theatre industry. The aim is to highlight the urgent need for sustainable, eco-friendly approaches in costume design, advocating for a shift away from the harmful practices of fast fashion and toward an industry that values creativity, sustainability, and environmental responsibility.

Keywords: Fast Fashion, Sustainability in Theatre and Costume Design, Smart Shopping, Mass Production, Environmental Impact

Presenter Biography: Renee Garcia is an award-winning costume designer (Local USA 829) with over forty theatre, dance, and film productions to her credit. She has designed for The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Metro Theater Company, Lake Dillon Theatre Company, The Riverside Theatre Shakespeare Festival, The Unicorn Theatre, the Coterie Theatre, and many others, including the independent film Burning Man. Her work has been showcased in prestigious exhibits like the 2015 USITT-USA National Exhibit at the Prague Quadrennial, the 2022 Vestuario a Escena MX Scenic Costume Design exhibit in Mexico City, and the 2024 OISTAT World Costume in Action exhibit in Bucharest. Ms. Garcia's costume designs for As You Like It earned her both the USITT Ezekiel Board Choice Winner and the USITT Ezekiel Award for Outstanding Achievement. Currently, Ms. Garcia is an Assistant Professor of Theatre at Webster University's Sargent Conservatory of Theatre Arts. She holds an M.F.A. in Theatre Design and Technology from the University of Missouri-Kansas City and a B.A. in Theatre from Florida State University.

Decolonisation processes of contemporary Ukrainian theatre scenography

Lilia Voloshyna (Danyleiko)

Department. I.K. Karpenko-Karyi Kyiv National Theater Cinema and Television University, Ukraine

Abstract: Climate change, which came to Ukraine with the full-scale war that the Russian Federation launched against us, has demonstrated global problems in all areas, including the performing arts and art education.

In the new Strategy for the Development of Culture in Ukraine for 2025-2030 *strategiya_25.01.2025.pdf* strategic goal 1. sounds like “Strengthening human capital through cultural practices”, and among the goals is “Decolonization, overcoming imperial narratives and practices of silencing in culture. Tasks: implementation of initiatives for the decolonization and deimperialization of the cultural context; decolonization of museum funds; rethinking the culture of memory as a participatory practice; forming a public dialogue around the contradictory memory of the imperial and Soviet periods; creating conditions for the development of contemporary art that contributes to the rethinking of history”.

This is not just a definition, it is actually a serious call to build a nation-building society, which should first and foremost be oriented towards itself. After all, Ukraine’s long existence as someone’s colony (the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union) and the continued orientation towards the Russian Federation after the declaration of Ukraine’s Independence in 1991 led to a certain loss of self-identification and awareness of inferiority. Until 2014, when hostilities had already begun in Donbas and the annexation of Crimea took place, Ukraine supported the imperial narrative, including through cultural ties, and voted for Russian theater with purchased tickets when leading Russian theaters or enterprises toured. Until 2022, before the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation into Ukraine, state theaters of Russian drama operated in our country, and in the leading institution of artistic education, the Karpenko-Karyi Kyiv National University of Theater, Cinema and Television, there were entire workshops that trained actors in the Russian language, on the one hand focusing on our Russian drama theaters, and on the other, focusing on the possibility of traveling to the Russian Federation, including.

Keywords: Cultural Decolonization, National Identity, Ukrainian Theatre, Art Education, Theatre Practices

Presenter Biography: Lilia Voloshyna (PhD of Art History, Ukraine, Kyiv) is the Head of the NGO “THEATRICAL SPACES”, a curator of art projects, lecturer in Theater Studies Department I. K. Karpenko-Karyi Kyiv National University of Theater, Cinema and Television, and an author and teacher of courses including *History of Ukrainian Theater*, *Experimental trends in theatre* and *History of Scenography*. Her dissertation entitled “Role of Set Designer in the Creation of an artistic-spatial model of the dramatic play (Last Quarter of 20th – Early 21st Centuries)” was completed in 2019 for a PhD in the specialty “Theory and History of Culture” from the Rylsky Institute of Art History, Folklore and Ethnology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Kyiv. Lilia has authored over thirty scientific articles and has worked for the Maly Theatre, the National Union of Theatre Artists of Ukraine, the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation, and headed the Maria Zankovetska Museum. She has taught at both the Kyiv Academy of Arts (2021-2023, *History of Performing Arts* course), and as Associate Professor of the Department of Acting and Directing at the Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts (2022 -2025), where she was author and teacher of the course *History and Theory of Scenography*.

Experimental encounter of indigenous scenic morgue using cultural revivalism and natural synthesis for scenic arts in a University based theatre

Tochukwu Emeh

Federal University of Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria

Abstract: Experimental encounter of indigenous scenic morgue using cultural revivalism and natural synthesis for scenic arts in a University based theatre.

In Afrocentric theatre productions, scenic artists are poised to engaging in labyrinths of designs obtained from encyclopedic scenic morgue for the reimagining and recreating indigenous African motifs for theatrical performances. This paper argues that the notion of the African scenic designer creating his decolonized folkloric icons for stage performances by rigidly experimenting on indigenous motifs could be termed as cultural revivalism and natural synthesis as well as a filial duty. It also discusses the experimental encounters in an ongoing scenic practice within a University based theatre where the scenic artist has been engaged in futuristic art approaches with local visual idioms presenting a number of specific examples from mainstream subsaharan African cultures along with ideas of creativity as clearly articulated by the scenic artist and in those cultures. It notes too that the scenic morgue which is a self made collection of indigenous images of the scenic artist has an ever more complex effect in stemming hegemony and a wide range of internal indoctrination on students who are continually confronted not with a few but by a pluralistic evangelism of African symbols. Also, there are documented photographs, scenic art workshop images from various experimental encounters and training programs which has birthed changing media, new art products and new motifs as African indigenous icons along with other world cultures have been subjected to evolving.

Keywords: Natural Synthesis, Cultural Revivalism, Scenic Morgue, Scenic Art, Culture

Presenter Biography: Tochukwu Emeh is an art historian and scenic artist with a focus in reimagining indigenous cultural symbols used as visual idioms and motifs on murals for stage performances. His aim is to document encyclopedic scenic morgues and scenic designs by creating images of material objects serving as social identity through the ages. He is interested in Nigerian modern art, hair sculptures and art photography. He is currently an Art fellow in the Department of Media and Theartre Arts, Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti state, Nigeria.
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Reimagining Orizaba's Son Jarocho Attire through Upcycling: A Design Research on Traditional Mexican Folk Costume and Aesthetic Transformation

Sol Kellan

Costume Designer and Makeup Artist, México

Abstract: This research project explores the intersection of traditional Mexican folk costume and sustainable design by reimagining Orizaba's Son Jarocho attire through upcycling practices. Rooted in Veracruz's vibrant musical tradition, Son Jarocho is characterized by its rich blend of cultural influences—indigenous, African, and Spanish—and its distinctive costumes that play a vital role in shaping the visual identity of performances. By applying upcycling as a design strategy, this study investigates how sustainability can serve not only as an ecological imperative but also as a creative force within the performing arts.

Working within the context of La Bruja, a Son Jarocho production in Orizaba, this design research examines the sourcing of discarded and surplus materials—such as lace remnants, cotton scraps, or even egg cartons—as a basis for costume creation. The process involved close collaboration with local directors and performers, integrating traditional iconography, legends, and visual codes into reimagined garments. In doing so, the project ensures cultural authenticity while opening space for innovation in form, material, and meaning.

Upcycled costumes enhance the *mise en scène* by introducing layered visual textures and symbolic dimensions. Materials imbued with past lives embody themes of transformation and resilience, reinforcing the narrative structure and emotional tone of the performance. Additionally, the use of sustainable methods fosters community awareness and encourages deeper audience engagement with environmental and cultural narratives.

Ultimately, this project demonstrates how merging upcycling with traditional costume design offers a viable pathway to cultural preservation, creative experimentation, and environmental responsibility. It positions the act of dressing performers not merely as visual adornment but as a participatory gesture of memory, identity, and ecological care—recasting costume design as a dynamic, ethical, and transformative practice.

Keywords: Traditional Mexican Folk Costume, Upcycling, Artisan Collaboration, Local Directors and Artists, Design Collaborative Research

Presenter Biography: Sol Kellan (Mexico City, 1987) is a costume designer and makeup artist whose work spans theater, circus, music, and dance. She studied Textile and Fashion Design at CENTRO and holds a Master's degree in Industrial Design from UNAM. In 2016, she received a grant from the Young Creators program in the theater costume discipline. Her collaboration with Gilles Ste-Croix, co-founder of Cirque du Soleil, led her to design makeup for Circo de los Niños and the show Savia. She has worked with artists like Gabriela Muñoz and Natalia Lafourcade in Limbo (2015), and designed for photographer Joel-Peter Witkin. In 2017, she created Lacuna, el circo de todos, a clown show that won ENARTES and toured theaters in Mexico City. Notable costume design credits include Jesus Christ Superstar (2019), Hoy No Me Puedo Levantar (2020), and the International Day of the Dead Parade (2021), for which she created over 500 costumes. The project Hoy No Me Puedo Levantar was selected as an emerging finalist at World Stage Design 2022. In 2023, she premiered LEO, El espacio onhírico—a ballet inspired by the sculptures of Leonora Carrington—at the Palace of Fine Arts; the piece became a finalist in World Stage Design 2025. Her work has also gained international recognition through the prestigious World of Wearable Art in New Zealand, where she was a finalist in 2024, solidifying her position as a key figure in contemporary stage design in Mexico.

The Transformative Potential of Ecological Thinking in Theatre Design Education

Szu-Feng Chen

The University of New Hampshire, United States of America

Abstract: This presentation explores incorporating sustainable practices and ecoscenography in my course design, highlighting the transformative potential of ecological thinking in theatre design education. Using my class as a case study, I will examine how ecological principles can be embedded in the curriculum to foster a deeper understanding of sustainability among students. The class projects are designed to encourage students to consider the environmental impact of their design choices, promoting the use of sustainable materials, energy-efficient technologies, and innovative approaches to reduce waste.

The introduction project challenges students to draw inspiration from artists of their choice and design a concert production. Through this project, students learn to balance aesthetic considerations with ecological responsibility, exploring using recycled materials, renewable energy sources, and low-impact construction techniques. Additionally, students use their designs to speak for environmental issues such as the California wildfires. These projects highlight the impact of climate change and environmental degradation.

Aiming to collaborate with the Sustainability Institute at my institution, The Earth Day project further introduces ecoscenography principles by creating a performance design that celebrates the campus community and reflects on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. This project emphasizes the importance of storytelling in promoting ecological consciousness, encouraging students to think collaboratively about the role of theatre in advocating for sustainability and its impact on the community.

By integrating these projects into the curriculum, I aim to cultivate a new generation of theatre artists who are not only skilled in their craft but also committed to sustainability. This presentation will demonstrate how ecological thinking can be seamlessly woven into the theatre design creative process, inspiring students to become advocates for a more sustainable future.

Keywords: Ecological Thinking, EcoScenography, Performance Design + “Earth Day”, Theatre Pedagogy, Storytelling

Presenter Biography: Szu-Feng Chen is an artist, designer, and educator from Taiwan, where she received Bachelor of Fine Arts in Scene Design from Taipei National University of the Arts. Her interest in integrating unconventional materials in her artistry has led her to a passion for sustainable practices in visual storytelling and EcoScenography. Szu-Feng has collaborated with artists around the world for over a hundred theatrical productions. Her design works and research were presented at the Prague Quadrennial (2023, 2007, 2003), World Stage Design in Canada (2022), South Korea (2009), and Canada (2005), Chinese-American Art Faculty Symposium (2019), the United States Institute of Theatre Technology (2023, 2015, 2014, 2010), and Beijing Annual Theater Art Exhibition (2002). She received the Gold Sustainability Award (2021), the Outstanding Assistant Professor Award (2014) at UNH, and the Outstanding Alumna of the School of Theatre from Taipei National University of the Arts (2012). Szu-Feng holds a Master of Fine Arts in Theatrical Design from The University of Texas at Austin and serves as the Chair and the Director of Design and Theatre Technology for the Department of Theatre and Dance at the University of New Hampshire. <http://szufengchen.com>

Theatre To Go x Lab 5 Soundworks Beyond the Experience: Sound Visualizes urban in Street Food Theatre

Saranrat Sangchai and Nattaporn Thapparat
Faculty of Music, Silpakorn University, Thailand

Abstract: Theatre To Go (TTG), born during Thailand's COVID-19 lockdowns, reimagines traditional theatre through digital innovation. Using Web AR, it transforms physical space into immersive virtual stages allowing artists to transcend time and geography. Audiences engage with performances not as passive viewers, but through interactive scenographic model boxes viewed via AR, activating personal spaces as stages. Post-PQ2023, TTG emerges not as a pandemic relic, but a catalyst for the performing arts—advocating for Thai artists and designers, connecting them globally, and protecting intellectual property in the creative economy. With Street Food Theatre, TTG expands sensory engagement beyond sight and sound that audiences can taste the story. It turns Bangkok's alleys into aromatic, performative spaces where food carts become stages and performances are shaped by local flavors and communities. Art blends with everyday life, uniting strangers through songs, stories, and shared meals. Rooted in sustainability, the project responds to the climate crisis and urban change, reactivating heritage spaces through collaborative, inclusive storytelling. Sound design anchors these experiences, mapping memory into space, flavor into narrative, making performance a part of daily life and local culture.

Keywords: Acousmatic Composition, Immersive Acousmatic Composition, Immersive Experience, Street Food Theatre

Presenter Biography: Saranrat Sangchai is a sound artist and media composer who is driven by the creative aspects of sonic expression and exploration. During her undergraduate studies, her interest in electroacoustic techniques led her to develop an immersive soundscapes exploring the development of hearing perception in early stages of human development and created her first sound installation named "In A Womb". Saranrat has been active in commercial music for media, particularly theatre, since completing her studies. She co-founded "Lab 5 Soundworks," a group that combines artistic and commercial output with Parkpume Charoenwiriya, and she also works as a media composer for 28 Productions. Her works have been performed in a variety of fields, including 'Land and Skin' at WSD 2017, 'Land Skin and Memory' at PQ 2019, 'Dissonance of Charoenkrung' at Ted X Charoenkrung 2019, 'Deception' at PGVIM's PULSE: Uncovering the Future Through Sound 2022, and "Theatre To Go; Watch from Home" PQ 2023. Saranrat is a Ph.D. candidate in Music Research and Development at Silpakorn University, her studies focus on immersive acousmatic composition. She also works as a lecturer in the Commercial Music Department at Silpakorn University's Faculty of Music in Thailand.

Digital Flash Talks

Adapting Lighting Designs for Sensory-Inclusive Performances

Paige Borak

University of Nevada - Las Vegas, United States of America

Abstract: Audiences with sensory sensitivities have been historically overlooked in theatrical programming, causing an entire demographic of art lovers to be excluded from our craft. While more production companies are adding sensory-friendly performances into their seasons, resources educating lighting designers on how to best serve this population are still scarce. This research proposes sensory-inclusive stage lighting design principles based on a multidisciplinary meta-analysis spanning psychology, neurology, theatre, and architecture. The research strives to create guidelines for lighting designers who must design a sensory-inclusive production or adapt their preexisting design for a sensory-friendly performance. The practical suggestions center around three core concepts: maintaining theatrical norms, mindful usage of special effects, and mitigating contrast in movement and intensity. By developing and spreading this information, lighting designers will be better equipped to tackle accessible shows in a way that serves and honors the Highly Sensitive People in our audiences, moving our art form towards a more accessible future.

Keywords: Sensory Friendly, Lighting Design, Highly Sensitive Audiences, Inclusive Programming, Adapting Designs

Presenter Biography: Paige Borak, MFA is a Las Vegas-based lighting designer with experience in both theatrical and psychological research spanning over a decade. Her fascination with sensory-inclusive lighting design began with her personal research on how to navigate her Epilepsy diagnosis. Since then, she has designed lights for sensory-inclusive performances around Las Vegas and guided lighting designers on adapting preexisting designs for Highly Sensitive Audiences. In addition to freelancing as a theatrical lighting designer around the nation, she is a lecturer at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and creates sensory-friendly lighting for productions through the City of Las Vegas's Rainbow Theatre Company.

Performing Silk: Costume-centric Performance, Embodiment, and More-than-Human Design Futures

Lu Wang

London College of Fashion, UAL, United Kingdom

Abstract: This flash talk shares my PhD work-in-progress, which explores how costume-centric performance can help us reimagine alternative design futures by engaging with more-than-human entities and relationships. The project focuses on the silk practices of the Jiangnan region of China and considers how sericulture, silkworms, and silk crafts carry forms of knowledge that challenge extractivist, colonial, and anthropocentric ideas of design.

Drawing on Daoist cosmology, Qi philosophy, and aspects of post-humanist theory, I approach costume not as an ornamental surface or identity marker, but as part of a relational process of transformation, a site where body, material, and environment come together in acts of becoming. My research combines ethnographic study and practice-led methods, including silk cocoon construction, bamboo weaving, and projection experiments, explored through costume-centric performance.

These methods help me consider how the work of silkworms, the care of female workers and artisans, and the rhythm of materials might encourage us to listen to, learn from, and think differently about performance design, as something ecological, slow, and attentive to relationships between human and more-than-human worlds. My project aims to honour the knowledge embedded in animals, materials, and labour within traditional silk practices, while contributing to wider conversations in performance design about how we might create with care and reciprocity.

By weaving together non-Western cosmologies and silk-based heritage, this research opens new possibilities for ethical, creative, and materially engaged design practice.

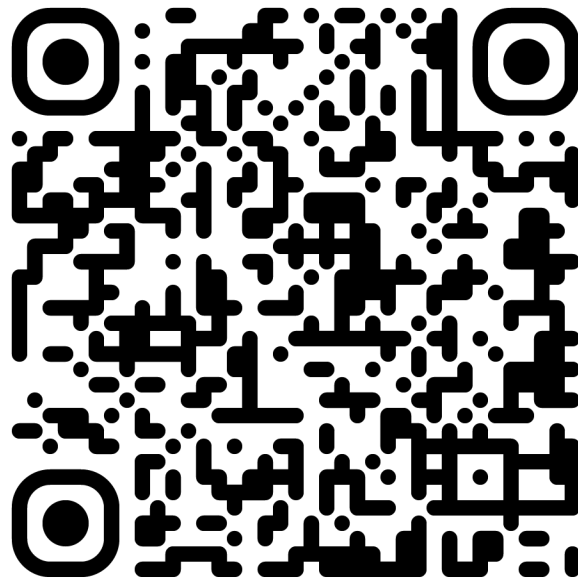
Keywords: Sericulture, More-Than-Human, Eco-Scenography, Costume-Centric Performance, Daoist Philosophy, Post-Humanism

Presenter Biography: I am a PhD researcher at the London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London. My practice-based research explores the interactions between costume-centric performance, Chinese femininity, material culture, and eco-criticism. Through a socio-cultural critique of the hyper-aestheticisation and objectification of Asian women, my work seeks to uncover the emotional expressions, ways of living, and social dimensions embedded in the relationships between traditional silk crafts and the lived experiences of Chinese women.

During my PhD, I have presented at the Doctoral School Summer Symposium (Cultural Ecologies in Chinese Sericulture through Costume-Centric Performance, 2025) and the IFTR Scenography Working Group (Costume, Carnival, and Decolonization, 2025). I have led practice-based workshops, including Patterns of the Unseen: Weaving Qi, Casting Intention (Catalyst Fund, UAL Doctoral School, 2025), where I explored Daoist concepts through material practice. My ongoing projects include collaborative performance-making, costume-led practice with digital media, and exploring material-based dancing healing workshops addressing social anxiety.

With over a decade of experience in the theatre and performance industries, I bring together artistic expertise, multimedia practice, and strategic thinking to produce impactful, interdisciplinary work.

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