

Attrell, Amanda

“Impulse and Immediacy”: The Role of the Theatre Community in Linda Griffiths’ *The Last Dog of War*”

In 2006, Linda Griffiths decided to attend the Last Reunion of her father’s WWII RAF squadron with him, searching for inspiration. Their trip was to become a one-woman show written and performed by Griffiths, but was also “an experiment in process” energized by her improvisational roots in collective creations guided by Paul Thompson. *The Last Dog of War* first came into being improvised for Daniel MacIvor and a few other members of the theatre community immediately after Griffiths returned from England. It developed into a text during performances across Canada from Nova Scotia to Theatre Passe Muraille, Winnipeg, Alberta Theatre Projects, and Vancouver. The play tells the story of their trip and Griffiths’ relationship with her father, as well as dramatizing ideas regarding war, Canadian theatre, and the creative process.

It became a play about the theatre community on multiple levels, relying “on the primal relationship between actor and audience.” This paper seeks to understand *The Last Dog of War* both on the level of this distinct creative process, as well as how these themes transformed from Griffiths’ experiences into a solo performance. It works with multiple drafts of the script, documents on the process and development, as well as articles by Griffiths reflecting on her own process and relationship with theatre. Differing from her other works, she not only puts herself centre stage as playwright and actor, but also as subject, bringing the audience into her life. The play begins with her inviting the audience to become part of her family, offering the exit and a refund as an alternative. Financial concerns, funding hopes, the worry of an unpopular run, and writing her next play, she turns to her audience about these issues, telling us: “I’ve always taken my dilemmas to the theatre.” This paper examines how Griffiths’ improvisational methods, reliance upon the audience, and role as playwright and actor on Canadian stages each affected the creation of *The Last Dog of War* and are performed within the text.

Bio

Amanda Attrell is in her third year of studies as a PhD Candidate in the Department of English at York University. She is in the early stages of her dissertation on the work of Linda Griffiths.

Batchelor, Brian

“Looking for New Connections: Performance, Community and Neoliberal Ties between Canada and Chiapas”

On November 27, 2009, Mariano Abarca Roblero was shot outside his house in the town of Chicomuselo, Chiapas, Mexico. Abarca was a prominent indigenous community activist and member of the Mexican Network of Communities Affected by Mining (REMA). At the time, he opposed a nearby barite¹ mine owned and operated by Calgary-based Blackfire Exploration.² On December 9, Michaëlle Jean, then Canada’s Governor General, visited San Cristóbal de las Casas as part of a trip to Chiapas celebrating projects supported by the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI). Jean attended *Buscando nuevos caminos* (Looking for New Paths), a play dealing with indigenous migration to the United States, performed by *Fortaleza de la Mujer Maya* (FOMMA)—one of the fund’s beneficiaries. There, she was met with REMA protesters shouting, “Canada get out!”

This paper triangulates these interconnected events to interrogate notions of community within the context of Canadian-Mexican relations. Examining these events as performances in/at the neoliberal blockades (Wickstrom), I argue that community becomes an unbound and multilayered local-global space of inquiry in which Canada and Chiapas are intertwined (Madison; Gupta and Ferguson). Firstly, *Buscando nuevos caminos* deals with the post-NAFTA conditions in Chiapanecan indigenous communities that Canada is partner in creating. Secondly, Jean’s tour—a performance of the State—focused on indigenous cultural survival through international development. The protesters, however, demonstrated a rejection of Jean’s rhetoric. These performances point to the complex ways that Canada’s actions implicitly and explicitly impact Chiapanecan communities: through governmental project support, NAFTA, and the conduct of Canadian-owned mines.

¹ Barite is a mineral extensively used for petroleum extraction. ² In 2011, three men with ties to Blackfire (one current and two former employees) were arrested and found guilty in relation to the murder (they have since been released). In 2015, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police cleared Blackfire of any criminal charges (“Mexican Network”).

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Bennett, Melanie

“Setting Fire to the Settler Dream in Heather Benning’s *The Dollhouse*”

In 2007, while working as an artist-in-residence in Redvers, Saskatchewan, visual artist Heather Benning transformed an abandoned farmhouse into a life-sized dollhouse. Aptly named *The Dollhouse*, Benning restored the derelict home to the mid-1960s era in which it was abandoned. Once she was finished the restoration, she removed the North wall of the structure, replacing it with plexiglass in order to emulate the view experienced with toy dollhouses. Staged meticulously with vintage knickknacks, domestic effects, dated newspapers, and period furniture, the installation permeated nostalgia and a sense of place. The absence of human presence and the viewers’ inability to access the inner contents of the house, made the affective enchantment that much more haunting. The final act of the 7-year project took place during the winter of 2014, when Benning burned the installation down.

The Dollhouse appeals to our longing for and loss of community and connectivity. Most of Benning’s work, like *The Dollhouse*, is an interrogation of space and time, as well as a contemplation of how globalization and migration has altered the physical and communal landscape of the Prairies. As small rural communities vanish due to the expansion of corporate farming, *The Dollhouse* is a reminder of the cost of progress. This paper will look at the ways site-specific projects like *The Dollhouse* paradoxically re-enforce a Western nostalgic capitalistic quest for home and belonging, while showing the failure of that colonialist settler myth. This paper will also explore how decayed, abandoned, and disused sites can serve as alternative memorials to the official monuments and places of commemoration.

Chang, Eury Colin

"*Ga Ting* ("Family"): Staging "Tragic Communitas" Across Cultural Divides"

Playwright Minh Ly's *Ga Ting* ("Family"), co-produced by the frank theatre company and Vancouver Asian Canadian Theatre, attempts to build a critical community of interest across commonly articulated differences of age, gender, sexual proclivities and cultural heritage.¹ In this article, I argue that death becomes a catalyst for tragic communitas, a term I use to describe the bond that results when those living must confront their collective responsibility and response to those deceased. In the production, two Asian parents and a Caucasian boyfriend (Matthew)—juxtaposed with the literal absence of a queer son (Kevin)—provides audiences with a complex, intersectional viewpoint into the emotional impacts of losing family and the subsequent necessity of building community. *Ga Ting* ("Family") ingeniously invites audiences into a world where characters must confront the death of a figurative protagonist named Kevin, and together they must find a way to reconcile each others' deep sense of loss and sadness.²

In order to construct a concept of tragic communitas, I first revisit theories of phallogocentrism (Derrida, Butler) intertwined with those surrounding abjection (Kristeva, Shimakawa) to best understand how patriarchal forces infuse queer death with fragments of shame and denial.³ Further, I suggest that any formation of tragic communitas, far from being peaceful, is often full of tension, lingering contempt and blame. The production of *Ga Ting* ("Family") reveals how characters of seemingly different backgrounds work through the circuitous process of grief in order to create a community of interest founded upon larger goals such as healing and reconciliation.

Bio Eury Colin Chang is a doctoral student, teaching and research assistant at UBC. His research on Asian Canadian Theatre has been funded by SSHRC. His article, "Towards Reconciliation" was published in *Theatre Research in Canada* (Fall 2015, Vol 36.2), guest edited by Yana Meerzon. His chapter on Kokoro Dance Theatre be published in *Contemporary Directions in Asian American Dance Studies* (UWP, May 2016), edited by Yutian Wong.

¹ *Ga Ting* ("Family") had a workshop production at the Richmond Cultural Centre with Michael Antonakos as Matthew, BC Lee as Hong and Alanna Ong as Mai. The Vancouver East Cultural Centre presents the professional premiere of the show, scheduled for March 8-19, 2016, as part of the mainstage season program.

² Kevin is the son of Mai and Hong, and also the ex-boyfriend of Matthew. In the play, audiences learn that Kevin is deceased; as such, he is never seen onstage and much of the story unfolds in his absence. For this reason, I refer to him as the unseen "figurative protagonist," but for all intensive purposes, the journey of the parents and boyfriend are key to the unfolding of the narrative. As the only three characters that audiences see onstage, they share relative importance and the role of visible protagonists of the play.

³ By using the term "communitas," I acknowledge the Latin roots of the noun as well as Victor and Edith Turner's notion that spontaneous communities often arise when dealing with rites of passage. In this article, my proposed and parallel concept of *tragic communitas* refers specifically to the bonds, processes, and interactions that result when people of seemingly different backgrounds must endure the aftermath and tragedy surrounding death and loss of family members and loved ones from their close circle or community.

Chavez Guerra, Lidoly

“Remapping the Americas from the stage: Ondinnok and the indigenous geopoetic”

Since its origin in 1985, the Quebec troupe Ondinnok has succeeded in incorporating First Nations into the vortex of the professional theatrical practice, but above all, their work has made claim for an alternative cartography of the Americas from an indigenous perspective. Ondinnok has turned the stage into a parchment where it is possible to draw a map that questions the colonial boundaries of the continent. By adapting several milestones of the Latin American cultural tradition, such as the 16th century General History of the Things of New Spain by the friar Bernardino de Sahagun, the Mayan seminal texts Rabinal Achi and Chilam Balam, as well as some recreations of the carnival of Zinacantan and the colonization of Tierra del Fuego, Ondinnok launches a transnational outlook, which is as geopoetic as it is geopolitical. Theater is in this sense a privileged realm for translating cultural and historical connections between aboriginal communities across the Americas, and at the same time, a reflection of the responsibility of the intellectual in the reconstruction of the identity and common cause of culturally marginalized peoples in North, Central and South America. Not by chance the most outstanding work of the troupe can be read in a wider spotlight of indigenous struggles that have been seen as a continuity. These struggles include the uprisings of Oka (1990) and Chiapas (1994), the lack of reaction concerning missing and murdered Canadian Aboriginal women which share many of the same problems observable with Mexican women from Ciudad Juarez, and finally resistance movements made against corporations by First Nations which are often met with apathy by governments.

Chrystian, Tonya Rae

“RelationshipCRIPs with Dramaturgy: The Intervention of Dramaturgy in Devised CRIP Theatre”

“What is a dramaturge?” is a question that can take all day to answer, attempting to grasp the immaterial fluidity and constant shape shifting the title requires. “The best dramaturges are careful listeners and observers. They are also curious and efficient researchers, able to identify and pursue information that is most useful to a process or to a particular question” (Stroich 237). However, dramaturgy always operates within a normative standard of practice and professionalism imposed on artistic processes, even in the face of the inherent negotiability, sensitivity, and flexibility of dramaturgy. These standard artistic *modus operandi* often demand capacities that exclude disabled and CRIP performers who seek to make devised, social justice theatre, therefore it becomes vital to identify the multifarious dramaturgical interventions possible - to CRIP dramaturgy.

The role of the dramaturge in devised CRIP theatre becomes to invest in a theatre that challenges dominant social narratives by deconstructing traditional, top-down creative processes, by propagating community language, by adopting anti-linear and anti-normative temporalities, and by integrating the lived, biographical experiences of CRIP community members to manifest theatre that is radical, intuitive, and speaks back to institutional oppression. For dramaturgy to achieve such a transformative social location “this would entail an expansion of the definition of dramaturgy to include the articulation of a broadened institutional vision, so that the shaping and running of a theatre or cultural center itself becomes a dramaturgical practice” (Lester 225). The arguments challenged in this paper will be supported with material taken from the collaborative production of *Love in the Margins* that was part of the *Canoe Fest 2016* series and was the first professional presentation of CRIP theatre in Edmonton. This paper will also explore topics such as the role of playwriting and dramaturgy in devised, experiential, and social-justice theatre, how the word “professional” can be inclusively re-defined, and the problems, processes, and ethical questions of journeying from devised community theatre to professional theatre through the lens of disability studies.

Both citations are taken from the *Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy*. Ed. Romanska, Magda. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2015. Web.

Bio

Tonya Rae Chrystian is a dramatist trained at the University of Alberta and l'École internationale de théâtre Jacques Lecoq in Paris, France; she is co-founder of *mindhive* collective and works in all facets of theatre and drama including academia, directing, performing, and dramaturgy. With a particular interest in theatre as a meeting place of language, knowledge, and bodies, Tonya approaches her discipline as a medium to confront silence and address fear, but one that requires a ceaseless desire to search: what is it about? How can it go further?

Christie, Sheila

“Community Trans/Formation: Performing Transgender Children’s Narratives in Gendered and Non-Gendered Spaces”

In the fall of 2015, I worked with a colleague in sociology and a team of local artists to adapt and stage two transgender children’s stories for performance in the gendered spaces of the YMCA locker rooms during a festival that promotes art in “unconventional spaces.” We used the structure of a bridging event (the Lumière festival) to connect marginalized and mainstream communities, making the often invisible everyday realities and needs of the trans community visible in the very spaces that reinforce their marginality. For us, “energizing communities” meant transforming community members’ experiences of familiar, gendered spaces, motivating awareness and acceptance of transgender people, and affirming the experiences of transgender audience members and their allies. Altering the audiences’ experience of the space laid the groundwork for shifting their conceptions of gender that those spaces assumed. Moreover, the development process for the production also served to energize multiple communities: an intentionally diverse community of scholars and artists who came together across disciplines and demographics to create the production, a transgender support group that allowed an invited dress rehearsal to take place during one of their meetings, and the attendees of a gay-straight alliance conference who saw the production in a traditional theatre space as part of their closing activities. This paper will discuss the development of this production in more detail and present ideas about the relationship between performance venue, text, and audience, and the kinds of energy these relationships can inspire.

Conde-Jahnel, Natasha

“The Community Glare Versus the Queer Gays: Theatre Outré’s Resistance to Normativity in Lethbridge, Alberta”

Queer theatre is always already being created against an assumed normative narrative as it is being developed ‘for and by’ a marginalized community that seeks to represent itself in difference. However, the privileged place of ‘for and by’ is becoming narrower as the idea of queerness expands to encompass not only what is fundamentally queer but that which is deemed as having ‘queer values.’ The shift toward a less definitional quality of queer is problematic as it threatens to dismiss from mind queer culture’s iconoclastic roots in difference and resistance. The large umbrella of ‘queer values’ pressurizes the desexualization of an overtly gay aesthetic. In order to maintain a meaningful space and place for gay difference it is “important to keep being little, doing little things, valuing the opinion of a few who don’t fit in, of tiny communities” (Gilbert 262).

One such tiny community includes the theatregoers and performers at Theatre Outré in Lethbridge, Alberta. While the theatre itself only seats approximately 50 people, the impact it has had on the community has certainly not been small. On January 29th, 2014, nearly ten years after steadfast conservatives within the Alberta government expressed intolerance toward the staging of *Angels in America* at the Alberta Theatre Projects, Theatre Outré was in danger of being shut down before the doors of its new location even had the chance to open. An article in the Huffington Post Alberta entitled “Theatre Outré In Lethbridge Says Homophobic Emails, Petition Forced Them To Close Their Doors” chronicled the events that lead the theatre’s organizers to believe they were under attack.

The other tenants of the building with whom the theatre shared a space had indeed put together a petition in an effort to oust Outré. Their letters to City Counselor, Jeff Carlson, expressed concern that children could potentially be exposed to the ‘indecencies of homosexual lifestyles,’ particularly because music school students would share an entrance, hallway and bathroom with the theatre’s performers and patrons. Richie Wilcox, co-founder of Theatre Outré, confided in me that the letters demonstrated concern on the part of fellow tenants that the music school children, through the use of these shared spaces, might come in contact with AIDS.

While these blatantly ignorant beliefs were certainly disheartening to the theatre’s founders Jay Whitehead, Richie Wilcox and Aaron Collier, instead of attempting to appease their resisters, they responded through a *résistance* of their own. This paper will discuss how Theatre Outré has successfully managed to create a gay theatre community through difference and resistance, all the while maintaining an influential position in the very community that has asked them to close the door on their way Outré.

Day, Moira

"Gwen Pharis Ringwood and Elsie Park Gowan: "Making place" 1933 – 1979"

"You get wife, have son. You feel part of earth then. Like tree with roots. You have place" ("The Road Runs North." Gwen Pharis Ringwood 33).

In 1933, irked by the apparent suggestion of British adjudicator, Malcolm Morley, that Canadian playwriting should mimic, if not Shakespeare, then at least the best of British drawing-room comedy, Elsie Park Gowan argued that a "distinctively Canadian" drama instead needed to rise dynamically from the "experiences of those close to its prairies and forests and mountains" and "the impact of those forces on the spirit of man" (Gowan, "Another" 8). While Gowan spoke for the Canadian playwright in general, her own voice was characteristically regional. Along with her great contemporary, Gwen Pharis Ringwood, she was to help define a distinctive school of interwar prairie playwriting that drew strongly on American and Irish folk play models to explore the tension between the frontier as a "field of dreams" supporting new human communities of unique character and potential - and the grim reality of a land now too sickened by drought and Depression to sustain either the fields or the dreams built upon it.

By 1992, Gowan was willing to concede Morley's point about the limitations of the folk tragedy – but she nonetheless felt he never really had understood "those wide open spaces" (Morley 12), and what constituted "the main problem in Canada. Land" (Day, Hungry 42). This paper suggests that while Gowan and Ringwood had both left the folk tragedy behind as a genre by the late 1940s, their pre-occupation with the construction of land and community, if anything, had deepened with their awareness that the advent of Leduc No. 1 in 1949 not only signalled a significant "change in the landscape, a change in the sky" (Gowan, Who 43), but ironically ushered in an unexpected prosperity that was potentially as destructive to land and community as the earlier deprivation of the Depression had been.

By the 1950s, both women seemed poised to become the first significant playwrights of the new urban, professional theatre starting to emerge in Alberta's cities. Instead, their stage writing over the 1950s and 1960s while innovative, paradoxically led them back into the wilderness rather than into the new professional theatre structures, and into writing large, epic community dramas where the community itself was the protagonist, the dramaturgy a mix of song, words and dance – and the land an interactive presence in its multiplicity. In doing so, both women recognized in a way that Morley likely never did, the need for theatre not just to comment on a geographical reality, but to "make place" or allow people to "have place" in an environment where the form and meaning

of those "wide open spaces" and the communities on them was in an increasingly complicated and rapidly-changing state of flux, transformation, disintegration and re-negotiation.

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Bio

Moira Day is a Professor of Drama, Adjunct Professor in the Women's and Gender Studies program and associate of the Classical, Medieval and Renaissance Studies unit at the University of Saskatchewan. She has published and edited extensively in the area of Canadian Theatre. A former co-editor of *Theatre Research in Canada* (1998-2001) she has also edited two scholarly play anthologies featuring the work of pioneering and contemporary Western Canadian playwrights, and a book of essays on contemporary Western Canadian Theatre and playwriting. She has also co-edited two special issues of *Theatre Research in Canada: Canadian Theatre Within the Context of World Theatre* (with Don Perkins, University of Alberta), and *Theatre and Religion in Canada* with Mary Ann Beavis of St. Thomas More College. She also recently co-edited a special issue of *Canadian Theatre Review, The New Saskatchewan*, with Mary Blackstone of the University of Regina.

Franks, Aaron and Rebecca Benson

“Working in *The Hours That Remain*: challenging the erasure of young Indigenous women within the settler-colonial university through performance work”

This paper shares a process in which a group of young Indigenous student/performers and settler-allies asserted an alternative autonomous space of co-learning through performance. Through the leadership of the Queen’s Native Students Association (QNSA) and with theatre-maker Rebecca Benson, in the Spring of 2016 this group rehearsed and performed Keith Barker’s (Métis) *The Hours That Remain*, a play that approaches the violent loss of over 1100 murdered and missing Indigenous women in an intimate and affective way. In engaging with the absence of these sisters in an embodied way, QNSA participants explored their own gendered and racialized visibility/invisibility in a settler-colonial university setting, and were also able to make space for embodied theory-making in a way commensurate with some central Indigenous (e.g. Anishnaabek) knowledge-power practices (Simpson, 2014).

Recent engagements with Indigenous theatre practice in settler-colonial societies emphasize the ways Indigenous writers, performers, designers and other creators assert varied Indigenous space-times (Dawes and Maufort; Nolan). These include non-linear, interwoven and fragmented temporalities, co-existing but still material spaces, and the presence of non-human subjects amidst more recognizable ‘characters’. Barker’s *The Hours That Remain* shares some of these elements. In this paper we also ask how settler communities might engage with such “irreconcilable spaces of aboriginality” (Garneau), while also working toward the “Eighth Fire” teaching of First Nations-settler collaborative futures (Nolan).

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Esling, Natalia

“Listening in the Dark: The Singular Communal Experience of Ghost River Theatre’s Production, *Tomorrow’s Child*”

The aesthetic claim of Calgary-based company Ghost River Theatre is “the total theatre experience.” *Tomorrow’s Child* (an adaptation of Ray Bradbury’s 1948 short story “The Shape of Things,” re-published under the new name in his 1969 collection) certainly seems to fulfill this declaration. And yet, the experience is a curious journey, on the one hand evoking familiar traditions such as radio plays and, on the other hand, drawing our attention so far into the story that the mechanics behind its telling appear confused and perhaps even contradictory.

After convening in the lobby, each audience member is blindfolded, led into an unknown space, and seated independently on swivel chairs. Without visual confirmation or group affirmation, the possibilities of the space and of who else might be there extend beyond logic. Voices and sounds enchant you, play with your perception, bring you close yet keep you at a distance. At once a performance of coming together and of being alone, *Tomorrow’s Child* gestures to both the wholeness of community and the distinctness of its members, and to the offering and accepting of trust involved therein.

My paper will focus on this apparent dichotomy, evaluating the production based on my personal experience and my meeting with the show’s director. Using a phenomenological approach, I will further the idea that specific mechanical and dramaturgical aspects of this show, some revealed only at the end, enhance our auditory perception (O’Callaghan 2010) and, ultimately, create a sense of communal delight and gratification, thereby prompting a unique post-show engagement between audience-member strangers.

Bio

Natalia Esling is a doctoral candidate at the University of Toronto’s Centre for Drama, Theatre, and Performance Studies. Her Practice-Based Research project focuses on audience perception, evaluating the effects of sensory modification on attention and psychophysical experience in contemporary immersive, interactive, and one-to-one performance. She has published work on dance archiving in *Canadian Theatre Review*, presented at conferences in Canada, the US, and the UK, and is the recipient of three Ontario Government Scholarship awards. She holds a Master’s in European Theatre from the University of Edinburgh and a BA (Hons) in English and French from the University of Victoria. Trained as a dancer, her research interests include theories and practices of embodiment, perception, spectatorship, sensory studies, and contemporary dramaturgy.

Fernandez, Stephen

“The Mortal Community: Embracing Finitude in Jérôme Bel and Theater HORA’s Disabled Theater”

At the March 2015 presentation of Disabled Theater in Toronto, eleven performers with intellectual and physical disabilities took to the stage to perform a series of dance solos set to popular music. The performance was directed by the French choreographer Jérôme Bel and produced by the Zurich-based Theater HORA, a professional theatre company that is fully comprised of performers with intellectual and physical disabilities. As an able-bodied choreographer, Bel had little difficulty articulating his artistic vision, thus lending credence to his position as the “brains” behind Theater HORA’s performance of Disabled Theater. As such, it seems as though the performers were simply executing Bel’s artistic ideas through the embodied materiality of their dance performances. This apparent divide between Bel’s credibility as an established artist and the performers’ relatively nascent capacities as dancers appears to be reinforced by the tension between the performers’ desire to be seen as proper artists and the proclivity of the audience members to privilege an ableist interpretation of the dance solos. In turn, the incongruity between how the performers identify themselves as professional actors and the spectators’ inclination towards a normative model of physical and cognitive ability presents a challenge for performers with disabilities to establish a sense of community with the able-bodied members of the audience. What constitutes community, as the philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy elucidates, is neither a fusion of individual subjectivities towards a collective “Subject” nor a consequence of interpersonal “social ties” (1991: 15). Instead, community exposes the limits of human existence and the finitude that is shared by all mortal beings. Drawing on Nancy’s theorization of community as well as the work of Rosemarie Garland-Thomson and Eugenio Barba on the topics of disability and performance, I argue that what binds the performers and audience members in Disabled Theater is a shared experience of vulnerability and mortality, such that any sense of community that might emerge in the performance is contingent on the willingness of the performers, the choreographer, and the audience members to embrace their common finitude.

Bio

Stephen Fernandez is a PhD candidate at the University of Waterloo. Working at the intersection of performance, philosophy, and digital media, Stephen’s research has appeared in *Technoculture Journal* and the *International Journal of Performance Art and Digital Media*. He has also written a book chapter about disability and performance practice.

Gerecke, Alana

“Legislated Choreography and Sidewalk Design”

Reading the city as a built structure and a legislative entity designed to choreograph its users raises questions about the routes, pathways, and passages at the core of our everyday navigations of public spaces. Proposing a theory of “pedestrianism,” legal geographer Nicholas Blomley maintains the design North American city sidewalks mandates perpetual movement. If, to civil engineers and those who regulate city sidewalks, “What is important about the body is whether (rather than why) it is in motion or static” (2011: 9), then how might a choreographed and choreographic attention intervene in the discussion to retune our understandings of passage in and through city spaces? For, indeed, as various strains of dance scholarship have convincingly argued, the imperative to move and to move on is, itself, both contentious and political (Martin 1998; Lepecki 2006). Drawing from Lepecki’s notion of “choreopolitics” (2013), Susan Leigh Foster’s attention to walking as a “choreographic tactic” (1998), official municipal neighbourhood plans, Fiona Wilkie’s notion of “making passage” (2015), Keren Zaiontz’s understanding of how audiences “derive pleasure from taking orders” (2014: 407), Kate Elswit’s exploration of “extended choreographies” (2012: 135), and Danielle Goldman’s understanding of “tight spaces” (2010), I insist on the relevance of a dance studies lens to an understanding of the political and ethical effects of the pedestrianism and its regulation of movement in and through city spaces.

I ground my study in *Lives Were Around Me* (2009), a walking tour of Vancouver’s notorious Downtown Eastside (DTES) conceived and directed by Battery Opera Performance’s David McIntosh (Vancouver). McIntosh’s choreography of the audience’s route, led by a dramaturgy of the tour, and his conscription of the audiencing body as site of an intimate micro-dance of sensation relies on an aesthetic of uncertainty. A feeling of missing something, or of being consciously led astray, characterises the work. A dancer in some of the company’s other works, I knew McIntosh; and yet, as I followed him through the dark, wet streets, I remember thinking: I don’t know where I’m going (and I’m not convinced that my guide knows where we’re going), but I know I should continue to go, to keep moving. In the existing performance footage—shot covertly from a distance—a physical sense of confusion (if not dull panic) translates into catch-steps, stutter-steps, double-takes, and jolted starts as audience members attempt to follow an alternately tentative, cryptic, and changeable guide. *Lives* fails—pointedly and intentionally fails—to offer its audience the comfort or security of a clear and tangible structure, of intelligible theatrical content, or even of a sure-footed route. It is this off-balance choreography of audience movement that opens to questions of a “politics of disorientation” (24), as articulated by Sara Ahmed. If, as Ahmed claims,

"Directions are instructions about 'where,' but they are also about 'how' and 'what'" (16), then how might McIntosh's micro-dance of ambivalence challenge the ways in which the sidewalk choreographs movement through the city?

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Gillespie, Benjamin

“(Re)Mediating Voyeuristic Communities: Participatory Reenactment in Gob Squad’s *Western Society*”

Taking its source material from an obscure YouTube video, the Gob Squad’s *Western Society* (HAU Germany, 2013; Skirball, New York, 2015) reenacts the scene of an anonymous family gathered in their living room for a karaoke party. In performance, this humorously mundane, private function is restaged for public audiences as we watch actors deconstruct the three-minute video, role playing as the “characters” in the video and inserting themselves into a larger theatrical framework that celebrates and simultaneously critiques the intermediated reality of contemporary western society. Audience members are also randomly selected to participate by acting out the video while others are encouraged to take pictures and post them online in situ, implicating the entire audience as a community of voyeurs as they filter the initial videographic representation into multiple and diverse mediums and networks. By pushing audience members to first witness and then reenact, *Western Society* mimics the tendencies of social media to cast its users as participatory voyeurs in the lives of others. In a culture consumed with being “plugged in” via social media platforms, the Gob Squad cleverly stages these performative, voyeuristic tendencies in their overly-accessorized *mise en scène*, questioning the role these online forums play in the construction of our identities and the political and aesthetic communities to which we belong. “What are we doing here?” they ask us repeatedly, positioning their voyeuristic dramaturgy as a communal ritual.

In this paper, I will explore how the Gob Squad’s *Western Society* scripts acts of performative voyeurism as it simultaneously enacts a participatory community through ritualistic surveillance and re-presentation. How does the Gob Squad’s use of technological virtuosity trouble and manipulate the contemporary concept of community through their particular intermediated theatrical style? How do their participatory methods challenge the supposed immediacy of the “participatory” that other kinds of immersive theatre events do not?

Bio

Benjamin Gillespie is a Ph.D. candidate in theatre at The Graduate Center, CUNY in New York. His articles and reviews have appeared in such journals as *Theatre Journal*, *Theatre Survey*, *Theatre Research in Canada*, and *Canadian Theatre Review*, and he has also contributed articles to a number of anthologies. His dissertation explores the interpretation and critique of late style in work by theatre and performance artists of advanced age, considering how preconceived notions of embodiment, temporality, and the life stages of the artist are complicated in contemporary performance through the aesthetics of catastrophe.

Graham, Catherine

"Communities and Counterpublics in Activist Performance"

Local activist performance often appeals to notions of community to explain its work, but recent developments in both Queer and feminist theory suggest the importance of a more nuanced understanding of the differences and connections between "communities" and "counterpublics." Any discussion of "community" in theatre research has to start by confronting the many different phenomena the term has been used to describe. A nationalist discourse that relied on a sense of "imagined community" to argue for support for the production of Canadian plays by Canadian artists was a critical factor to the founding of what are now Canada's most institutionalized theatres. Ironically, the term "community theatre" now most often describes theatre created outside of those very institutions. For activist performers, the notion of doing "community-based" work is often a way to distinguish their work from that of a vanguard politics that tries to "show the way" to the masses, who are presumed to need the leadership of artists to escape the "false consciousness" of their everyday lives. The common use of the term "community," however, leads to an uncomfortable association with local "community theatres" whose goal is to provide recreational activities and light entertainment.

This confusion of referents points to the value of the more performative approach suggested by Raymond Williams in his 1989 essay "On the Importance of Community." Williams effectively proposes that rather than asking what a community is, we ask what is happening when the term is evoked and suggests that it is generally used to "represent certain kinds of direct and directly responsible relationships as against a centre of power and display" (Williams 112). Elizabeth Frazer and Nicola Lacey, in *The Politics of Community: A Feminist Critique of the Liberal - Communitarian Debate*, make a similar move, suggesting that the evocation of community points to a concern with "the social nature of life, identity, relationships and institutions," the "embedded and embodied status of the individual person," and an emphasis on the "value of specifically communal practices" (2).

It is easy to see why activists who want to explore these themes would turn to a relatively contingent and embodied art form like dramatic performance, but the nature of public performance, which, as Michael Warner reminds us in *Publics and Counterpublics*, is defined by an address to strangers that does not so much reflect a public as create it, might seem to contradict the values the term "community" evokes. This paper will explore the ways in which the idea of the counterpublic, which does not appeal to all strangers, but only to strangers who appreciate its style of public presentation, gives us tools to discuss the complex relationship between the themes evoked by "community" and the formal choices involved in the attempts of different

community-based activist performances to move from directly responsible relationships among embodied and embedded social subjects to the appeal to strangers that constitutes public performance.

Henderson, Julia

“Resisting Dominant Ideologies of Aging: Sally Clark’s *Moo* and *Ten Ways To Abuse An Old Woman*”

Communities are energized by mutual respect and fair treatment of their members. A prominent discussion in recent years is theatre’s potential to influence understandings of gender, race, ethnicity, and propel us toward mutual respect. Less considered is theatre’s role in constructing narratives of aging and old age. While attitudes, opinions and beliefs about the elderly have varied over time, the decline narrative has played a prominent role for centuries in shaping Western theatrical understandings of what it means to age and be old. Today, aging communities in Canada and worldwide are expanding rapidly. Increased numbers of older theatregoers seek stories relevant to their multi-faceted (and not just loss-based) lives. Theatre has a responsibility to energize the wider community by representing a range of experiences with aging, rather than merely reanimating a narrative of decline.

Theatre makers should reconsider ways to critique and subvert dominant age ideology, to energize a positive sense of value for aging and old age in the wider community. I turn to award-winning Canadian playwright Sally Clark, whose work can be a model for ways to theatricalize aging and old age that are complex, nuanced and challenge the decline narrative. I analyze Clark’s two plays that feature central female characters in old age: *Moo* and *Ten Ways to Abuse an Old Woman*. Although Clark is not always successful, I argue that in both plays she resists fixed, stereotypical framings of old age, to highlight the ambiguities and incongruities of old age identity. I contend that Clark’s use of achronicity, disruption of rising conflict, intratextual polyvocality, ambiguous endings, and humour results in constructions of female aging and old age that highlight performativity and disrupt the simplistic association between aging and loss.

Bio

Julia Henderson is a Ph.D. candidate and adjunct faculty member in the Department of Theatre and Film Studies at the University of British Columbia. Her thesis research explores ways in which contemporary North American and British plays express and, in particular, resist ageist narratives, especially the narrative of decline.

Houston, Andrew

"Co-Appearance as a Means of Energizing and Exploring Community at City Hall: The Staging of *Voicemale* in the Heritage Room"

Voicemale is an intermedia performance about a First Nations woman who lives in Kitchener, Ontario. Staged as part of the IMPACT '13 Theatre Festival, the performance conveyed significant relationships that this woman has shared with eight men. Part auto-ethnography, part intimate confessional, this work explored the struggle to define identity in a formal, civic space. Audience members were invited to listen, to interact, and to understand through a series of unique invitations that explored how we relate to an other in the various places we occupy – public transit, the street, work place, the bar, next door, and within ourselves.

In *The Inoperative Community*, Jean-Luc Nancy seeks to revitalize an understanding of community as a source of radical political vision. But in his reappraisal, he insists on an ontology of community that is conceived as neither the coming together of distinctly subjectivated individuals, nor the expression of any transcendental spirit of the people. Nancy characterizes both of these as based on a kind of "immanentism", a dangerous ideology that tends, in the end, towards totalitarianism. Instead, Nancy is interested in an idea of political community that is built from the ground up on the basis of selves (or "singularities") that are defined by their finitude, rather than their autonomy, and which always presents itself as being-in-common. In place of ideas of wholeness, completion or communion, Nancy proposes an idea of Being whose very Being-ness exists through its exposure to others, an exposure through spectacle which he describes as "compearance" or "co-appearance".

In this paper I want to examine how the performance of *Voicemale* offered an example of Nancy's concept of co-appearance, and how this was an invitation to re-vision the political landscape of the City of Kitchener. The theme of the IMPACT '13 Festival was "Occupy". *Voicemale* was staged in the Heritage Room of the Kitchener City Hall; a space that contains historical furnishings from previous City Halls; that is, it is a civic space decorated with the furniture of the city's forefathers. *Voicemale* offered an exploration of the unrepresented reality of a particular citizen within this landscape, and within this space of civic, colonial paternalism.

Bio

Andrew Houston is an artist-researcher in site-specific and intermedia performance, and an associate professor of theatre and performance at the University of Waterloo. For more information, please see <http://andyhouston.net/>.

Johnston, Kirsty

"Republicans, Hackers and Knights: Working for Inclusion in Contemporary Canadian Professional Theatre"

Can targeted inclusion initiatives press Canada's professional theatre community to tap the vast reserve of disabled people left out by its current practices? In 2015, several professional institutions dedicated to fostering Canadian theatre and performance pursued this strategy. In this paper I compare the forms, aesthetics and political impulses of three such initiatives. The first, entitled, "The Republic of Inclusion," was part of the PROGRESS International Festival of Performance Ideas at The Theatre Centre (Toronto) and was co-sponsored by the National Arts Centre English Theatre. Co-curators Alex Bulmer and Sarah Garton Stanley organized the one-day event as a call for "a rigorous and provocative discussion about the state of inclusion in our theatre community." The second is Vancouver-based Playwright's Theatre Centre's "ACK Lab: a hacker approach to inclusion." As a test case for this initiative, the PTC, mentored by Jan Derbyshire, converted its annual Writer's Colony program to experiment with inclusive design and feature 3 disabled playwrights. The third is Newworld Theatre's collaboration with the Luminato Festival, the National Arts Centre English Theatre, Banff Playwrights Colony, and the Down Syndrome Research Foundation of British Columbia, to develop *King Arthur and his Knights*, a play involving Marcus Youssef, Niall McNeil, James Long and Veda Hille that explicitly aims to challenge professional collaborative theatre traditions in pursuit of a more inclusive approach. What common impulses do these initiatives share, why are they happening now, what is their relationship to Canada's disability arts and culture movement and how does each seek to re-energize Canadian professional theatre by including disabled people?

Bio

Kirsty Johnston is an associate professor in the Dept. of Theatre and Film at UBC. Her book *Stage Turns: Canadian Disability Theatre* (MQUP 2012) received the 2012 award for "Best Book in Canadian Studies" from the Canadian Studies Network-Réseau d'études canadiennes. Her book *Disability Theatre and Modern Drama: Recasting Modernism* is forthcoming with Methuen Press.

Julien, Martin

“Singing with Strangers: Nightswimming’s Why We Are Here! And the Pop-up Community Choir”

Start with a simple provocation: Is it possible to spontaneously assemble and create a community choir with neither a ‘community’ nor a ‘repertoire’ to draw upon? This is the question that I and my colleague Brian Quirt, artistic director of Toronto’s Nightswimming Theatre, asked ourselves in 2009, following a successful three-year collaboration on the inter-medial piece *Blue Note*, a study of loss and grief within a fictitious vocal ensemble. (<http://nightswimmingtheatre.com/>) As interdisciplinary artists who work primarily within a theatrical context, we have been long intrigued by the notion that an audience creates a temporary community of disparate individuals only for the short length of a play’s presentation. Was there a way we could exploit this tendency towards creating a collective subjectivity by bonding people even closer together through singing? Moreover, was it possible to create a richer experience by facilitating an encounter where the ‘audience’ also becomes the ‘players’ in an evening that draws them together as a choir for one night?

The resultant experiment in singing and community is the ongoing collaborative event called *Why We Are Here!*, which launched a fourth ‘season’ in the spring of 2015. Utilizing diverse artists and conductors in a continually changing number of unorthodox urban locations, (including a condo sales office, Kensington Market’s Videofag, the Aga Khan Museum, Toronto Island’s St. Andrew by-the-lake Anglican Church, and City Hall), this evolving exploration of people, voice, and place has attracted upwards of seventy-five people a night over twenty-five sessions. New iterations of the project are currently being negotiated with sponsor companies in Calgary, Vancouver, and Victoria. For this conference, I would like to examine how a collective narrative is actualised, embraced, and shared through the risk, engagement, and pleasure of spontaneous choral singing. A brief history and analysis regarding the trajectory of *Why We Are Here!* Will be a component of the presentation.

Kulkarni, Rohan

“Bridging Communities: Staging “Tribes” in Edmonton”

The May 2015 production of *Tribes* by Nina Raine at the University of Alberta’s Studio Theatre became a cultural event in Edmonton. The play, mounted as part of MFA Directing candidate Amanda Bergen’s thesis project, was an exercise in bridging communities and promoting visibility for a minority culture, namely Deaf culture. *Tribes* is the story of a young Deaf man, Billy, raised in a hearing family that denies him access to Sign Language of any kind throughout his upbringing. When he finally discovers American Sign Language, a whole new world of communication opens up for Billy, much to the disappointment of his family. The play explores the conflict inherent in Deaf identity- how can a Deaf person navigate the expression of Deaf culture without alienating oneself from the larger hearing world that expects them to assimilate?

The Studio Theatre production of *Tribes* aimed to extend this conversation beyond the four walls of the theatre, opting instead to create a conversation about Deaf culture in the Edmonton community, with the show serving as its cornerstone. The collaborative dramaturgy on *Tribes* ensured that the conversation began weeks and months ahead of the show through social media, outreach to the Deaf community, presence in print and digital media, etc. as a means of exposing Edmonton audiences to Deaf culture. A very specific narrative was shaped, centered on using proper language and terms when speaking about Deaf individuals, and illuminating the importance of American Sign Language. I will explore the various methods used by those involved in *Tribes* to bridge communities and craft a dialogue that became a socio-cultural event in Edmonton. I will further emphasize the usefulness of such storytelling for theatre that addresses political, social, and cultural issues, which hopes to engage ongoing conversation in the community where it is performed.

Bio

Rohan Kulkarni is currently a Master’s student at the University of Alberta’s department of Drama. He works primarily as a dramaturg in theatre, and has been a part of several productions within the Drama department and the Edmonton community. His research is focused on negotiating intercultural narratives on the Canadian stage, emphasizing the political aspects of staging ethno-cultural conflicts in Canada. Rohan is in the process of completing his Master’s thesis, which is an exploration of Indo-Canadian playwright Rahul Varma’s seminal works *Bhopal* and *Counter Offence*.

Levin, Laura

"Following #daddytrudeau: Performance, Soft Power, and the Postnational State"

As several performance theorists argue, contemporary political culture is characterized by the carefully crafted and highly mediatized self-stagings of political leaders—performances that enable audiences to engage with particular facets of their public persona. At the same time, the success of politicians' careers depends upon a calculated disavowal of the theatrical in order to communicate authenticity and accessibility. When the theatrical becomes legible within a political figure's public actions, the offending individual is maligned as a "mere" performer, as all style and no substance.

What happens, then, when we encounter the inversion of this convention in the political arena—when politicians aim not to erase the traces of the theatrical in their performances but rather to embrace the visibility of their staging's theatrical contours? What happens when the theatrical is no longer repressed, but instead celebrated as the site through which political actors secure their power and authenticity? In my paper, I think through these questions in relation to the recent and overtly theatrical self-stagings of Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, a leader whose political success has been significantly shaped through an unabashed and media-savvy embrace of theatricality. No doubt ghosted by the image-making practices of his father Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Trudeau's frequent publicity stunts draw on the language of theatre in such a way as to claim that style cannot in fact be pried apart from substance, and that their co-imbrication is of supreme political importance. So too, I want to suggest that in their insistent theatricality, his public actions propose a set of medium-specific tools that are essential for defining a new vision of Canada, and one specifically tied to Trudeau's conception of Canada as a "postnational state." As part of my argument, I will explore how Trudeau's theatrical postnationalism depends upon the circulation of his performances within diverse global networks—performances that perhaps offer an alternative way of thinking about the Congress theme "Energizing Communities" by drawing upon erotically and optimistically charged Prime Ministerial selfies to mobilize voters and promote alternative visions of national belonging. In doing so, they work in and through a specific kind of political commentary (reframing journalism as theatre criticism), as well as the affective engagement of transnational online communities.

Bio

Laura Levin is Associate Professor and Director of York University's MA/PhD Program in Theatre & Performance Studies, and a Board Member of the Canadian Consortium for Performance and Politics in the Americas. Her research focuses on performing gender and sexuality, site-specific/urban intervention, and political performance. She is former

Editor in Chief of *Canadian Theatre Review*; Editor of *Theatre and Performance in Toronto* and *Conversations Across Borders*; and author of *Performing Ground: Space, Camouflage, and the Art of Blending In* (winner of the Canadian Association for Theatre Research's 2015 Anne Saddlemyer Book Award).

McAskill, Ashley

“The Atypique Approach: Working in the Classroom with Les Muses de Montréal”

All too often, disabled actors are perceived as being unable to “keep up” with conventional performing arts programs. Such practices of exclusion are the true disabling factor as to why disabled artists are perceived as artistically limited. Les Muses, located in Montréal, Québec, is one of Canada's only professional performance training programs for developmentally disabled artists. Over the course of the last 6-8 months, I have worked with Les Muses, participating in their acting, dancing, and singing classes, to explore the complexities of this creative training. My interest in this process is two way: a) in what ways disability is being presented as aesthetically productive and b) the kind of artistic legacies students from Les Muses are leaving. The core of this paper will discuss how disabled artists in Québec (specifically members of Les Muses) are demonstrating the ethical and aesthetical rich value of unconventional artists—or as in Québec are known as “les artistes atypiques”. Giving detailed accounts of some their exercises, I will discuss how disability is introduced as a creative and meaningful tool in the classroom. I will call this analysis an “atypique approach”—a creative practice that extends the effort to include all artists in the fullest and most meaningful way possible, despite cognitive or physical differences. My intention is to call to attention how Les Muses not only mobilizes conversations of accessibility and inclusivity in professional art programs, but also makes ethical and social reflections on how we understand disability and theatre-making in Canada.

Bio

Ashley McAskill is a PhD candidate in Communication Studies at Concordia University in Montréal, Québec. She has experience working in/with the disability community and over the past 10 years has been a theatre practitioner. For her doctoral work, Ashley has brought both these experiences together to explore the current state of “disability theatre” (a name that she also questions) in Canada. Ashley’s main question is: How is the creative work of artists who identify as having disabilities and/or mental illness being recognized, developed and encouraged in Canada?

McCurdy, Erin Joelle

“Re-choreographing Arts Communities: Performance Dance in the Art Gallery”

Over a two-day period in May 2015, Tate Modern became the site of a dance takeover as approximately 90 dancers and choreographers claimed territory within the museum. Occupying transitional spaces and galleries alike, participants investigated the following question (which also served as the ‘exhibition’ title): “If Tate Modern was Musée de Danse?” Visitors witnessed professional dance performances and were also given opportunities to join in on the movement as Tate Modern was temporarily transformed into a hybridized institution, incorporating elements of the museum, studio, theatre, and discotheque. On a surface level, the event, organized by choreographer Boris Charmatz, was representative of the heightened visibility dance is currently receiving in the visual art world. However, its reinterpretation of the museum through the prism of dance also provides an entry point to a pertinent question: what is at stake through collaborations between the dance and museum communities?

Communities are ubiquitous in the art world. It is common to refer to the ‘art community’ at large, which, in turn, is subdivided into specialized communities organized around different media, artistic movements and institutions, as well as the identity politics of artists. Communities privilege unity, cohesion, and common concerns, often emphasizing affinity within a particular group at the price of heterogeneity, complexity, or contradiction. This presentation examines the migration of performance dance into the art gallery as a mutually beneficial collaboration between two historically distinct arts communities. It will be argued that the seeming antagonism between the museal practices of collection and preservation and the ephemerality of the body-based art of dance has the potential to disrupt, complicate, and ultimately enrich these communities as they each contribute something the other is lacking.

McWilliams, Ian

“Arts Ecology and Community – A View from Saskatchewan”

Artists and their communities are at the heart of the work of the Saskatchewan Partnership for Arts Research (SPAR). Its current project, “Understanding the Arts Ecology of Saskatchewan,” researches the creative work and lives of Saskatchewan artists within the larger discourses of arts and cultural “ecologies.” While artists are a vital, energizing part of their communities, precious little artist-centered research exists into the ways creative workers function within formal and informal networks and the extent to which they construct and facilitate linkages across their communities. In the spring of 2014, SPAR launched the first comprehensive survey of Saskatchewan artists. SPAR was formed by the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance, the Saskatchewan Arts Board and SaskCulture with the mandate to undertake research that will inform evidence-based policy-making and programming across the province. Artist-centered research is necessarily intricate, even messy. Lines blur between boundaries of discipline, practice, and work patterns when investigating the complex connections/intersections between artists, arts funding bodies, specific artistic practices, academic institutions, and diverse local stakeholders. Artists, including a substantial number theatre artists, responded enthusiastically to SPAR’s survey, providing extensive and important information about how established formal and informal cross-disciplinary networks have created a vibrant cultural ecology. Artists’ responses also reveal ways in which such networks are in transition. Significant gaps and weakness reveal the need for changes to programming and approaches to policy-making if communities or arts organizations want to work through existing networks to strengthen them.

Find out more about SPAR at: www2.uregina.ca/spar

Bios

Ian McWilliams (presenting) completed an Interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Canadian Plains Studies at the University of Regina in 2014 and is currently a post-doctoral fellow with the Saskatchewan Partnership for Arts Research as well as the Research Officer for the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance. Apart from his work on the current arts ecology of Saskatchewan, his research also focuses on Town Hall Opera Houses and related performative events within late nineteenth and early twentieth century prairie communities as catalysts and vehicles for place-making and the development of social cohesion in the Canadian west. For the past decade, he has been variously employed as an actor, broadcaster, student, and educator. McWilliams earned both his B.F.A. and M.A. at the University of Saskatchewan.

Mary Blackstone is Director of the Saskatchewan Partnership for Arts Research and Professor Emerita of Theatre at the University of Regina. She is also a practicing

dramaturg who works with award winning dramatic writers in the development of new work. Formerly the first Dean of Fine Arts at the University of Regina and board member for numerous arts organizations, she has published in the fields of cultural policy as well as early modern cultural history and ethics in creative research. She is the recipient of several research grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and Heritage Canada including a current Partnership Development Grant for the research project, Understanding the Arts Ecology of Saskatchewan.

Sam Hage is a PhD Candidate in Sociology at the University of Regina and a research assistant with the Saskatchewan Partnership for Arts Research. His research focuses on Social Behaviour in the context of Global Change, Complex Systems, Risk, and Uncertainty. Other related areas of interest are Research Methodology and Statistics, Survey Design, Social and Cultural Capital, and the Sociology of Knowledge and Education.

Monaghan, Liam

“Blasts from the Past: Unpredictable Feminisms in Linda Griffiths’ *Age of Arousal*”

Griffiths’ play offers a flamboyant dramatization of the British women’s suffrage movement at the turn of the twentieth century. Although it portrays the lives of women in the late Victorian era and is inspired by George Gissing’s 1892 novel, *The Odd Women*, *Age of Arousal* is a decidedly contemporary play. As such, my paper will explore how Griffiths utilizes non-naturalistic theatrical devices—including a non-linear timeline, the innovative “thoughtspeak,” and the metaphor of childbirth—to make not only an explicit critique of the Victorians’ repressive social mores, but also an implicit and related critique of their aesthetic conventions, which, over the time since Gissing published his novel, have become almost as limiting.

Griffiths depicts late Victorian feminism as a contradictory and dynamic movement. In doing so, she challenges our preconceived notions of the ideals of “public versus private” and “repression versus arousal” that played out in the Victorian age. Moreover, by resisting tired appeals to the conventions of naturalism, yet simultaneously addressing the very modern concerns that naturalism also addresses, Griffiths writes the unpredictable feminisms of yesterday into an equally surprising theatrical work of today.

My reading of *Age of Arousal* has much to contribute with respect to Congress’ 2016 theme, “Energizing Communities,” as it examines not only Griffiths’ dramatization of the proto-feminist, Victorian suffrage movement, but also inquires into the nature of contemporary feminism and the utility, for present-day feminists, of following Griffiths’ example in learning “to thread fantasy through a political eye” (“Playwright’s” 11).

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Ndejuru, Lisa and Rachael Van Fossen

“Beyond Community ‘Lite’ : Relationship across Difference in the Rencontres/Encounters project”

Public scholar Arlene Goldbard has pointed to the gentrification of community arts, problematizing the current trendiness of works deemed ‘Social Practice’ art. She critiques works for which artists utilize tools and techniques developed by long-time community engaged artists, without a commitment to social change and social justice. Instead, artists create conceptual containers within which audience are invited to engage, interact, and perform without sharing in the complex collaborative critical decision-making involved in community engaged art making as it was once understood, and without addressing ethical dilemmas around authorship, shared authority, voice, and representation. Ben Davis gives the label “radical chic” to much social practice art (Davis 2016), and Claire Bishop critiques the ways in which social inclusion as a fundamental principle of community-engaged arts actually serves “to conceal social inequality, rendering it cosmetic rather than structural.” (Bishop 2012, 13)

In this context of current, more sophisticated thinking about, and questioning of, performance that intends to engage with “community,” this paper will critically examine the research creation work of Rencontres/Encounters (R/E), a field study led by Co-Investigator Rachael Van Fossen as part of the SSHRC funded national research project *Art for Social Change* (ASC!) Over the last two years, R/E has brought together a diverse and committed ensemble of actors who have experimented with performance of ‘Self’ and ‘Other’ as a means to build relationships across real and perceived chasms of differences. People who would be unlikely to meet in their usual social spheres engage with each others’ vastly different values and life experiences through performance. R/E’s process foregrounds what Ric Knowles terms “inter-culturalism” or “the contested, unsettling, and often unequal spaces between cultures, spaces that can function as performative sites of negotiation”. (Knowles 2009)

R/E’s period of studio experimentation culminates in public production this coming January 20-23rd in the gallery venue at the MAI (Montréal, arts interculturels.) *Tracks et déraillements* is an immersive experience staged on a Montreal Metro car of another reality, where people (actors and audience) from a variety of cultural, socio-economic and racialized backgrounds, with different experiences of gender, family, faith, and sexuality, convene and interact. The show blends public text from pop culture, philosophy, and gender theory with verbatim dialogue drawn from the research process using dialogue, poetic intervention, movement, song and intermedial performance strategies.

In a role that blurs the insider-outsider binary, PhD candidate Lisa Ndejuru brings critical questions to the idealism of this work. R/E is predicated on notions that relationship and community are positive values. What do we mean by relationship? How do we talk about it? How do we sustain it? Should we? How do we reflect upon or discuss levels of engagement, when the categories of artist and community member are blurred? What are ethical and aesthetic implications? What does it mean for the work to “realize its full potential”?

Through a dialogic and somewhat performative presentation, our talk will engage the questions of whom the work serves? How? Who is participant? Who has engaged?

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O'Hara, Meghan

"Against the Romance of Art Crawl: Space, Place, and Community in Canada and Abroad"

Community, particularly in urban centres, is intimately linked to place—homes, streets, and neighbourhoods develop shared identities and narratives. This paper discusses Graeme Miller's East London audio walk *Linked*, Toronto's collective audio walk project, [murmur], as well as Nuit Blanche, and Hamilton's James St. North Art Crawl, all of which combine storytelling, art, and city walking in order to perform an idealized "community". In *Against the Romance of Community*, Miranda Joseph argues that the utopic image of community "elides the material processes that have transformed social relations" (9). This paper therefore responds to Joseph by addressing the structuring material conditions that comprise the spatial "sub-text" of community-oriented performances and events, discussing how public performance narratologically and spatially situates bodies. The narratives of the places I discuss in this paper have been increasingly defined by rising capitalist stakes (e.g. gentrification, and urban renewal), and the public's movement through, and occupation of these spaces is necessarily shaped by these economic realities. Though city walking seems a liberating activity (cf. de Certeau, Benjamin, Debord), I argue that these works exert physical and spatial control over their audiences, positioning spectators as (re)performers of the social apparatuses responsible for urban organization of space; ultimately, spaces and bodies are made to perform a strictly regulated image of community. I draw on existing scholarship on city performance (Hopkins, Orr, & Solga 2009; Whybrow 2010; Hopkins & Solga 2013), as well as Marc Augé's theorization of "non-places", to suggest that urban subjects—always already positioned by regulatory political and economic forces—are continually written into predetermined narratives of utopic community, and positioned within a decidedly late capitalist geography.

Bio

Meghan O'Hara is a PhD candidate in the Department of English and Writing Studies at Western University, where she is also co-director of the Performance Studies Research Group. Her research focuses on immersive theatre, and contemporary British performance, and her dissertation studies the relationship between liveness and affect.

Owen, David

“Thrills and Chills: Embodying the Fiction at Fan Expos, in Cosplay, and through Intermedial Performance”

This paper will focus on the thrill (or chill) of crossing the line between the virtual fiction and the corporeal real. The affect of being part of the narrative and having it *happen to me* is being sought by audiences and attendees of emerging forms of performance and novel models of audience reception. Specifically, I will investigate the phenomenon of fan expos as an example of (comic book, videogames, horror, cosplay) communities performing their identity through consumerism, cosplay as a performance of ownership/embodiment as well as an act of conscious commodification, and intermedial performance as an exploded theatrical response to seeking experiences that blur the real and the virtual through physical embodiment.

I will start with the example of videogame collectibles (using my *BioShock* skyhook as a prop) making the virtual embodiment of the player tangible. From there I will move into the growing phenomenon of cosplay at not only fan expos but at movie premieres like *Star Wars* and cross-media events like *Murdock Mysteries: The Infernal Machine*. In cosplay the fiction is not merely consumed but the cosplayer also presents herself as an object to be consumed. The cosplayer is aligned with an established fiction but becomes part of the greater experience for those in attendance. At this point, I will turn to recent examples of embodied participation in more theatrical settings like the (fake) blood coated white shirts as proof of being in the splash-zones of *Evil Dead: The Musical*, or the affect of being caught up in the fiction as in Vancouver's *Zombie Syndrome* series or *ZedTO* in Toronto. I will finish with examples of intermedial and site-specific work that skirts the line of real and fiction causing the affect of uneasiness or fear in the participant like Blast Theory's *A Machine to See With*, and *Sleep No More*.

This paper fits the conference theme of “energizing communities” in that fan expos are gatherings of communities finding expression through frenzies of consumption, cosplay is an corporeal expression of community defined by the characters embodied, and intermedial performance made by the groups above is creating work that speaks to the needs and expectations of emerging (video) game and technology savvy audiences.

Bio

David Owen recently completed a doctorate in theatre studies from York University and is a contract instructor at the University of Alberta. He is a scholar, award-winning playwright, director, actor, gamer, and member of the Playwright's Guild of Canada (PGC). His current research interest focuses on the intersection of the real and the virtual, especially in terms of intermedial performance and videogames. He curated

a panel titled "Long Live the New Flesh: The Influence of Digital Technologies on Performance and Audience" at last year's CATR conference in Ottawa, and has presented papers at past CATR conferences like "The Comedy of Loss: The Plays of Morris Panych" (in Victoria, 2013) and "Performing a Historical Narrative to Sell a Sense of Place: Making a Site Specific" (in Fredericton, 2011). This last example received the Honourable Mention for the Robert Lawrence Prize for best paper.

Prescott-Brown, Marci

"Brown's Canada: The Performance of Canadian Space in William Wells Brown's play *The Escape; or, A Leap For Freedom* (1858)"

In his groundbreaking 2015 monograph *The Black Atlantic Reconsidered: Black Canadian Writing, Cultural History, and the Presence of the Past*, Winfried Siemerling locates the work of William Wells Brown as a product of the Black Canadian Renaissance. Citing Brown's activities assisting fugitive slaves to freedom in Canada, his creation of Canada-focused drama, and his relocation to Canada for a time, Siemerling identifies a figure historically considered purely American as part of "a nineteenth-century effervescence of black writing and testimony that was transnational but written and rooted in Canada" (98) that followed the relocation of leading black intellectuals to Canada following the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 and the *Dred Scott* Supreme Court decision of 1857. I argue that this accurate positioning of Brown's work has the potential to transform our discussions about Brown, the range of his influence, and how we perceive the range of histories his work addressed. This paper will therefore present a revisionist re-reading of Brown's important work that locates him within dominant Canadian literary communities.

Brown's play, *The Escape; or, A Leap For Freedom*, one of the few abolitionist plays of the day, reveals a vision of Canada at odds with popular nineteenth century understandings of Canada as primarily a refuge for those in need of liberation. Brown had attained his own freedom in Canada and helped approximately 69 fugitives between May and December of 1842 cross into Canada. Yet his portrayal of escaping to Canada as a "leap for freedom" in *The Escape* exposes deep reservations about the variety of freedom on offer here. I propose that Brown's subtle critique of Canadian freedom might be read intertextually with Brown's own life experiences in Canada. Brown's drama has been hailed as a "landmark in American literature" (Eric Gardner), but contemporary researchers whose work is considered central to Brown scholarship, discussing the play, do not discuss Brown's revisionist conceptualization of Canada. I argue that this is a significant oversight. Brown's characters - Glen, Cato, and Melinda - have often sung of Canada as a vision of the Christian heaven, yet the drama closes as they leap into a boat bound for Canada. After this "leap" the audience has no assurance that these characters actually arrive in Canada. In comparison to other abolitionist drama and prose of the day which often provided evidence that those escaping did indeed reach Canada and, upon touching her soil, simultaneously experience freedom and relief borne of safety, such a scene of joy is withheld from the audience. Because a significant strand of Brown's argument in *The Escape* undermines the equality and boundless liberty often associated with the Christian heaven, this reserved conclusion to his drama causes the audience to contemplate whether or not it

is truly possible for Canada to live up to popular conceptions of utopic freedom. Thus, Brown's revisionist narrative addresses abolitionist literature that often portrayed Canada as the ideal location for the slave to become free. This paper argues Brown's work makes dynamic contributions to the Canadian drama community and literary history at large.

Ratsoy, Ginny

"The Songs of the Land Project: Transcending Time through Indigenous Collective Creation"

I propose draw on the performance theories of Richard Schechner and Floyd Favel to examine a performance series in progress: British Columbia playwright and actor Kevin Loring is guiding a project that will include five performances of N'lakap'amux songs and stories based on digital copies of wax cylinder recordings made by ethnographer James Teit in the early years of the twentieth century.

Songs of the Land has an efficacious purpose above all: to involve the contemporary N'lakap'amux community in the process of hearing, discussing, examining, performing and witnessing their traditional stories – which illustrate their historical world view and which, until recently, have been suppressed by the Canadian government and Christianity. Thus, the project functions, as Loring stated in interview, "as an act of cultural reconciliation."

To date, two of these performances, "The Words of our Chiefs" (2013) and "Battle of the Birds" (2015) have been produced – significantly, premiering in the towns from which their material originated, Spences Bridge and Lytton, BC respectively. Employing code switching, involving both professional actors and community members, and relying on the counsel of elders regarding cultural protocol, these works, I will argue, deepen and widen conventional Western concepts of collective creation.

Reynolds, Alix

"Kaleidography and Design-based Narrative Artistic Fraud of Newfoundland's *Under Wraps: A Spoke Opera*"

"The show that Canada Council said 'couldn't be done', starring our usual cast of thousands"

-1996 Poster for *Under Wraps: A Spoke Opera*

Kaleidography and Design-based Narrative is a process-based analysis of Artistic Fraud's 1997 memory play *Under Wraps: A Spoke Opera*. The paper presentation analyzes the techniques and processes of realizing design-based dramaturgy, for this show and company, to answer the question "how does visual inspiration motivate theatrical narrative?" Primary sources such as personal history interviews from creators Robert Chafe and Jillian Keiley, as well as extensive archival information from Memorial University's Performing Arts Archives have been consulted in the writing of this paper. These sources include reviews and posters of the original production, eye-witness account of the 2013 remount, and documents from all stages of the creation process. Artistic Fraud of Newfoundland has presented innovative work since their onset in 1994, energizing a community of theatre creators and audiences in and around St. John's for more than twenty years. This presentation argues that design-based narrative, regardless of specific processes, hinges on documented notation and visualization.

Bio

Alix Reynolds is the current MFA candidate in Theatre Directing at UVic from St. John's, Newfoundland. Holds a B.A English and Diploma in Performance from MUN. Founder and Artistic Director of Joint Productions in St. John's where she has directed, designed, and produced numerous shows including: Albee's *The Goat*, and four Maclvor scripts.

Richards, Kimberley

“Canada’s “Great Criminal” and the Asylum of Community: Omar Khadr, Dennis Edney, and Transitional Justice”

The problem of “what should be done with Omar Khadr?” has long had Canadian opinion divided. Harper’s government resisted calls for Khadr’s repatriation, even when Khadr’s sentence and conviction were widely denounced by civil rights groups and human rights organizations. This paper examines the widely-circulated video of Khadr’s first public appearance following his release from jail on bail on May 7, 2015 to examine how Khadr’s lawyer, Dennis Edney, welcomes Khadr into his Edmonton home, costumes him as his son, and stage manages the press conference to facilitate Khadr’s transition from his exceptional status as a “great criminal” into a member of the community. While truth and reconciliation commissions are increasingly deemed the appropriate response to extraordinary legal violence, transitional justice, in this instance, takes a very different performance form. Justice entails the retreat from spectacle and invisibilization into community. In this paper, I detail the restrictions the court orders upon Khadr’s body, and the performance he stages outside Edney’s house, before analyzing the scathing eighteen-minute critique of the event offered by Ezra Levant, conservative political activist and critic of the Alberta Human Rights Commission. In so doing, I reveal what behaviors and performances are legally prescribed, deemed strategic, and judged to be compulsory when a subject is transitioning from one state (criminal) to its other (lawful, good citizen). Doing so reveals existing assumptions about how citizens should behave as members of community in Canadian civil society. Ultimately, Khadr’s reception tests Canada’s constitutional liberalism against Alberta’s social and political conservatism.

Bio

Kimberly Richards obtained her BA and MA in English at the University of Calgary before pursuing a PhD in Performance Studies at the University of California-Berkeley. Her SSHRC funded-research examines dramatic conflicts linked to Big Oil and its environmental and human rights abuses. She received the International Research Award from CATR in 2012.

Samur, Sebastian

“The Invisible Tug of War: The Legacies of Etienne Decroux and Marcel Marceau in Contemporary Canadian Theatre Schools”

The art of mime has existed since the earliest days of performance, though it may not always have been referred to as such. Mime simply refers to performance through physical movement, but from the second half of the 20th century, the term became more narrowly associated with the art of two key figures: Etienne Decroux, who practiced and theorized on the art of mime; and Marcel Marceau, a pupil of Decroux', who performed and taught mime extensively throughout Europe and North America.

In Canada, the legacies of these two figures can roughly be traced along French and English cultural and linguistic lines. As Decroux remained primarily in Paris, his art and teaching was transmitted to Canada predominantly through two of his students, Jean Asselin and Denise Boulanger, who went on to found Mime Omnibus in Montreal. While simultaneously creating their own independent works, Mime Omnibus also teaches mime following Decroux' school. Company members and former students also teach mime in Quebec theatre schools following the same approach. Marceau, on the other hand, devised his own method of teaching, which was based principally on realistic (rather than abstract) movements. He traveled extensively throughout North America (including a 1958 performance at the Stratford Festival), and thus his work became known throughout both English and French Canada. Perhaps because of Marceau's iconic status, or because his method was mostly limited to realistic exercises, 'mime' in English is often associated with a style of performance, rather than a training technique. It is thus less often taught in theatre schools, which favour instead more general physical theatre or movement classes.

This paper will examine the current state of physical and movement training in major theatre schools across Canada, with a focus on if and how mime technique is taught. In the 21st century, it is easier for students and teachers to access international and historical performance practices. Who are the key figures that influence current movement training today, and to what extent are Decroux and Marceau's legacies still traced along cultural and linguistic lines?

Schaefer, Kerrie

“Enacting Community, whatever that is: a case study of acta Community Theatre”

Community is an ambiguous and contested term. While a lack of precise definition may have been useful to a 1960s counter-cultural movement seeking to storm the citadels of high art and restore the means of cultural production to the many rather than the few, critics have pointed out that the lack of a coherent political programme for community arts led to a situation in which the practice was perceived as “something with the status of ameliorative social work for what are pejoratively called disadvantaged groups” (Watt 1991: 56). Subsequently, Kelly (1984) sought to ground the concept of community in a British socialist tradition of thought articulating the dynamic process of (working) class formation and self-determination. As part of a collective known as the Shelton Trust (1986), he went on to define the core principle of community arts as cultural democracy, after Gramsci’s critique of ‘cultural hegemony’. Did these ideas stick then, and what remains of this political programme today? I aim to interrogate the critical meaning of ‘community’ in relation to the work of acta Community Theatre, based in Bristol, UK. Prompted, in no small part, by acta’s 30th birthday celebrations in 2015 I ask what we might learn from the study of a community theatre practice that has flourished in and through turbulent times. Has the work shape shifted to fit political exigencies, has it been steadfastly guided by fixed or deep-rooted political convictions, or is it the product of practical pragmatism? And, what can we then learn from such a theatre practice about community and its enactment?

Bio

Dr Kerrie Schaefer is a Senior Lecturer in Drama at the University of Exeter, UK. This case study of acta Community Theatre is part of a larger, international study of the theory and practice of community performance (forthcoming with Palgrave Macmillan) funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the Leverhulme Trust and the National Arts Council of Singapore.

Scholte, Tom

“Reconciling Semiotics And The Cognitive Turn in the Theatre Studies Community:
The “Middle Way” Of Cybersemiotics”

Passages in Ric Knowles' recent monograph, *HOW THEATRE MEANS*, can, arguably, be read as the latest salvo in a kind of “culture war” within the Theatre Studies community that simmered in the background for one or two decades before bursting into open flame in the early part of the new century. One contesting camp can be loosely characterized as the Semioticians, many of whom share some degree of post-modern epistemology, and who, in Phillip Auslander's words, reject the notion that “the actor's self precedes and grounds her performance and that it is the presence of this self in performance that provides the audience with access to human truths.” Instead, they assert that “[t]he act of signification produces its own significance” and that there is “no presence behind the sign lending it authority.” The opposing camp can be thought of as the Embodied Cognitivists who appeal to the “empirical” findings of recent cognitive science and insist, in Naomi Rokotnitz' words that “[e]mbodied modes of reception and perception are those that do not require logical analysis for their verification; their presence and effects are made manifest in the body” and that this bodily apprehension and confirmation provides us with “truths of which we may be sufficiently satisfied in order to trust with confidence.” Pushing back against what he characterizes as the “proselytizing [...] excesses of [the Cognitive Turn's] still early days”, Knowles declares the phenomenological “lack of mediation” it vouches for to be “a theoretical ideal rather than a practical possibility.” Interestingly, Knowles' defense of semiotic concepts characterized by the Embodied Cognitivists as “unscientific errors” gestures towards its integration with “biological structuring” in the work of ethologist Jakob von Uexküll; a scientist whose work has also played a pivotal role in Danish philosopher and information scientist Søren Brier's formulation of cybersemiotics. Seizing upon the opening presented by Knowles' invocation of von Uexkull, this paper will outline the ways in which the little known and underappreciated cybersemiotic epistemology, which denies neither the influence of culturally constructed language games nor bioconstructive couplings between embodied cognitive agents and certain invariant (but only indirectly accessible) aspects of their environment, can help theatre scholars begin to tease out the complex interplay between “biological and social level” semiosis in a manner free of the fundamentalist excesses of both totalizing cognitive-scientific objectivism and paralyzing postmodern skepticism providing great potential benefit to scholars and practitioners on both sides of this theoretical divide. In helping to close this rift, the “middle way” of cybersemiotics can play a pivotal role in re-energizing the community of Theatre Studies itself.

Schwartz, Shira

“Jewish Objects and the Bodies that Enact them: an In-depth Analysis of the Passover Seder”

In this paper I attempt to deconstruct how objects become Jewish in the Passover Seder. How do objects perform Jewish(ly) and orthodox(ly) in/ through the Passover display? How do objects indeed produce the bodies that enact them? How can ritual props function as sites of meaning-making and intentionality and ultimately as sources of pleasure for orthodox Jewish individuals and communities? I argue in this paper that the very structure of the Passover Seder is set up to fail. The body's inability to comply fully with the laws of Passover is what renders the halacha (Jewish law) personal and meaningful and marks the ontology of Jewish performance indeed. The complicated dance between the enactment of the Passover law – in real space with real bodies and real objects – and the striving toward an abstract ideal of the “Passover Seder” produces a clumsy alignment indeed; the very messiness of this display – the *misalignment* – steeps it in sincerity and intent, thus rendering it the *halachic* (Jewish legal) ideal despite not being structurally sound. The very fact that the mechanics of this process are *imperfect* indeed defines its *halachic* efficacy.

I first draw from Butler's concept of materialization to theorize the material objects involved in the Seder and the gender roles they inform. I then analyze the *matzah* (unleavened bread) object in depth, using object theory from Alice Rayner and Robin Bernstein to frame this discussion. I consider how thing theory and phenomenology can help methodologically to deconstruct what/how objects *do* at the Pesach Seder and to understand their cultural thickness. Finally, I draw from Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's analysis of display to conduct two original readings of objects at a Passover Seder: one that supports a patriarchal structure and one that challenges a patriarchal structure.

My aim in this paper is to contextualize *Seder* objects within a particular sociopolitical context and illuminate their function as both (hetero)normative and subversive agents. I argue that, as agents of subversive activity, objects learn their Jewishness by compelling their own transgression. Quite simply, they compel women to act in subversive ways; the wine glass, for example, prescribes women to consume alcohol, resulting in a table full of tipsy women. Moreover, on a fundamental level, the complicated dance between bodies and objects involved in Seder ritual compels messiness when executed. This messiness makes it impossible to “get it exactly right.” In the past we have understood performance as bodily enactment: singing songs, wearing clothes, etc. At the Seder, though, we see that objects produce meaning more than bodies. Objects produce the bodies that enact them. The chapter looks at the *is-ness* of Jewish performance at the Seder, contesting a concept of performance that operates purely in bodily terms.

Stephenson, Jenn

“Producing Insecurity through Postdramatic Encounters with Strangers in Olivier Choinière’s *Polyglotte*”

“Productive insecurity,” a concept coined by Ulrike Garde and Meg Mumford, describes points of rupture in reality-based performances where ontologically unstable phenomena are created that cause the audience’s perception of the representation to oscillate uncertainly between fiction and reality. This effect of acute indecidability is generated in Olivier Choinière’s recent production *Polyglotte*. Presented at Festival TransAmériques in 2015, *Polyglotte* uncomfortably stages nine prospective Canadian citizens—embodied by nine non-actors, actual recent immigrants, who are actually seeking citizenship—being screened in a faux and somewhat Kafka-esque citizenship test. This paper will apply Mumford and Garde’s productive insecurity to *Polyglotte*; first, to pinpoint the strategies at work that generate a sense of ontological and epistemological ungraspability, and second, to offer insight into how this situation might be productive both in how it recalibrates our theatrical engagement with postdramatic performance and our real-world encounters with immigrant-strangers to Canada who constitute the play’s creative ensemble. Ultimately, the play illuminates the means whereby these two groups of strangers—the audience and the non-actor cast, Canadians and not-yet-Canadians—are both subject to various kinds of insecurity, insecurity generated by postdramatic techniques and real-world insecurity arising from an uncertain economic future under austerity. Even though we are brought into proximate encounter through autobiographical postdramatic performance, the product of our communal insecurities is a reflexive awareness of those insecurities, of all the things we cannot know or control. But rather than create a shared experience of not knowing together, *Polyglotte* suggests that despite increased exposure strangers remain strange. And, that Canadianness—even for those born within its borders—remains elusive.

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Bio

Jenn Stephenson is Associate Professor in the School of Drama and Music at Queen’s University. Her book *Performing Autobiography: Contemporary Canadian Drama* (U of Toronto P, 2013) received the Ann Saddlemyer Award from CATR. Recent articles have

appeared in *Theatre Journal*, *Theatre Research in Canada*, *New Theatre Quarterly*, and *English Studies in Canada*.

Taucar, Jacqueline

“The Recipe as Script/Cooking as Performance: Enacting “Caribbean-ness” through Trinidadian Corn Soup at Toronto’s Caribbean Carnival”

In working with the Reyes family in Mas Camp during the *Scotiabank Toronto Caribbean Carnival*, the matriarch of the family Dianne (Dee) brings traditional Trinidadian foods to sustain us as we work long hours on the Queen Mas costume for her daughter Michelle. For me, Dee’s corn soup has become inextricable from my experience of Carnival in Toronto. Warm and spicy, hearty and sustaining for the long nights spent constructing and decorating the costume, and always served with a “side” of stories from “Back Home” and from Carnivals past. For diasporic communities, regional food items, food stores, recipes and traditional dishes perform on a number of different, but interconnected, levels, enacting community/national narratives and family/personal histories. I see a striking similarity between staging a script, which subtly changes each and every time it is enacted reflecting the conditions in which it is performed, and making a “traditional” recipe in the diaspora, which, in its enactment, improvisation, and variation each time it is made and consumed, performs a third space that brings together “home” and “host” country. Using the concept of the recipe as a script, I read Dee’s performance of making corn soup as an embodied performance marked by nostalgia and longing for people and places, and, in many ways, reveals the way food can become a fetishistic object in the diaspora in dealing with the loss and dislocation from “home.” Making and serving traditional dishes, such as corn soup, are socially and affectively tied to family and community, history and the nation(s). Moreover, dramaturgically analysing the production and consumption of Dee’s corn soup can provide insights into how “traditional” cuisines perform into the discursive construction of communities, and reveal beliefs about multiculturalism in Canada in Toronto’s ethno-cultural festivals.

Walker, Craig

“Fixations”

On a damp and chilly Sunday in November 2013, Pyotr Pavlensky walked into Moscow’s Red Square, stripped himself naked, sat down, and nailed his scrotum to the cobblestones. Once his unknown accomplice had departed with clothes and hammer, there Pavlensky remained: alone, silent, and motionless. It was lunchtime, so there were plenty of tourists and other passersby in Red Square to stare down in horror at this spectacle. Pavlensky, in turn, stared down expressionlessly at what he had done, waiting patiently for the authorities to respond. After a time, several police officers arrived, one of whom covered Pavlensky with a bed sheet, effectively dropping the curtain on his performance. For, performance it was; on a website, Pavlensky disclosed its title: “Fixation.”

This paper will consider “Fixation” as a work of dramatic theatre, in which character, conflict and dramatic action are all in play. Interesting aspects of Pavlensky’s performance emerge when we consider the work’s themes in relation to its implied community. For in this respect, “Fixation” bears comparison with Anton Chekhov’s *The Cherry Orchard*, Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot*, and Annie Baker’s *Flick*. Each of these works dramatizes a particular crisis of human identity in which a sense of community has been eroded and individuals feel bereft of the agency to affect social direction.

Wessels, Anne and Kelsey Laine Jacobson

"Casting the Talkback: The Performance of Community Building"

In her 2014 article in *Comparative Drama*, Elizabeth Sakellaridou writes that "The twentieth century has been most radical in its search for the revitalization of the dead relationship between the stage and its audience" (14). As a part of this attempt to develop and enliven a theatre community that encompasses both stage and auditorium, she goes on to say, the most recent trend "upgrades the creative role of the spectator" (15). Post performance talkbacks, for instance, in which audience members respond to the production they've just witnessed, are now ubiquitous. The prevalence of such a practice reflects a drive for audience engagement and the impulse to cultivate theatres as vibrant places of community dialogue.

This paper presentation discusses complex questions regarding the power dynamics both within the audience itself and with respect to the role the audience is expected to play by the theatre's moderator/facilitators: a role which may range from critic, to consumer, to student, to fellow artist, to citizen. Documenting talkbacks during the most recent season of eight plays at Tarragon Theatre in Toronto, and drawing from interviews with two artistic directors, this paper presentation analyzes the practice for both the tensions and potential within it as a means to develop productive and energetic 'community'. We conclude by suggesting that the talkback roles of moderator, artist, and audience although, at times, tightly prescribed, can be reimagined through active redefinition and reassessment of their community-building intentions and their implementation as a kind of complementary artistic practice.

Bios

Kelsey Laine Jacobson (B.A.H. Queen's University, M.A. with Distinction Queen Mary, University of London) is a current PhD student in the Centre for Drama, Theatre, and Performance Studies at the University of Toronto. Her research interests include audience perception and cognition, metatheatre, and theatre of the real.

Anne Wessels' doctoral research analyzed youth performances of the suburb. She won the 2015 Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies Dissertation Award and the ARTS Doctoral Graduate Research Award. She has published in *Theatre Research in Canada*; *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*; and *Youth Theatre Journal*. A graduate of the National Theatre School, Anne now works as the Education Director at Tarragon Theatre.

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Whittaker, Robin

“Nonprofessionalizing Practices and Contested Communities: (Re)Collecting The English-Language Premiere of Anne Hébert’s *Le Temps Sauvage* at Alumnae Theatre Company”

A critical paradox, the term “community” draws people together at the exclusion of others. Bell and Newby observe that “community” is treated as a “God word” in front of which we abase ourselves,⁴ conjuring nostalgic feelings for a past, utopian “organic solidarity” and a “good life” that may in fact never have existed. Its two broad uses reflect this yearning: territorial boundaries such as neighbourhoods or nations, and relational categories in which similar peoples are grouped together (literally or figuratively) such as professionals or amateurs.

But in what ways do nonprofessionalizing theatre practices operate within, and without, professionalizing practices? As an occupation “approaches the pole of professionalization,” observes William J. Goode, “it begins to take on the traits of a community.”⁵ In theatre studies, “community” is a highly contested term referring to either the geographical area in which, or for which, a group of artists practice; a generally heterogeneous group of artists (“the theatre community”); or to one of many forms of theatre practice (e.g. community theatre, community-based theatre). The ways in which theatre companies represent their communities have become fundamental matters of debate, particularly with regard to programming and funding.

This paper considers one aspect of the groundbreaking work of an overlooked community theatre. It suggests that in the 1970s, during the era of professionalizing alternative theatres, Toronto’s Alumnae Theatre Company operated both outside of and within an emerging professional “community.” It takes as its archive-based case study Alumnae’s English-language premiere of Anne Hébert’s *Le Temps Sauvage*, directed by John Van Burek and translated by Alumnae’s Elizabeth Mascall. The production is significant in part because it occurred just ten days after Tarragon Theatre opened the English-language premiere of Michel Tremblay’s *Forever Yours, Marie-Lou*, translated by Van Burek. It is also significant because it was a Francophone play by a woman, translated by a woman, produced in 1970s Toronto.

Set in the context of six months in which van Burek alone was involved in five English premieres of Francophone plays (“an inconceivable pitch of activity,” said to Urjo Kareda⁶), and a decade that saw forty Francophone plays produced in English,⁷

⁴ Bell, Colin, and Howard Newby. *Community Studies: An Introduction to the Sociology of the Local Community*. London: Allen, 1989. 15, 22, 23. Print.

⁵ Goode, William. “Community Within a Community: The Professions.” *The Concept of Community: Readings with Interpretations*. Eds. David W. Minar and Scott Greer. Chicago: Aldine, 1969. 152-62. 154. Print.

⁶ Kareda, Urjo. “Giving a French accent to theatre in Toronto.” *Toronto Star*. 11 Nov 1972. Print.

this paper revisits inherited histories to raise several questions: What types of work, at what times, find production only by nonprofessionalizing theatres? What is the value of distinguishing between “professional” and “amateur” (impulses and assumptions)? And, more broadly, what is the place of community theatres in the so-called Canadian “theatre community”?

⁷ Ladouceur, Louise. *Dramatic Licence: Translating Theatre from One Official Language to the Other in Canada*. Trans. Richard Lebeau. U Alberta P, 2012. 188. Print.

Wilmink, Melanie

“Doorways to an Urban Mirage: Examining Public Encounters with Mobilized Cinema Spaces”

Examining mobilized cinematic architectures as a means to construct unexpected public encounters, this paper will focus on two of my past curatorial initiatives: *Urbanity on Film* (Calgary, 2009) and the *Situated Cinema Project* (Toronto, 2015). A mirage is an optical phenomenon of refracted light, which makes a real object seem displaced from the physical environment (as if it is floating on a pool of water or air) or distorted from its actual shape. Changing continually as time passes, a mirage alters the presumed dimensions of time and space to create an experience that is at once thrilling, puzzling, thought-provoking, and magical. These temporary apparitions hold great power as zones of in-between that enable encounters between spectatorial bodies and the imaginary, and provide an appropriate metaphor through which to examine the event-ness of art spectatorship.

With this in mind, my paper will draw on phenomenology, performance theory, and cinematic spectatorship theory to examine the affective possibilities within the *Urbanity on Film* and *Situated Cinema* projects. I posit that these in-between zones of interdisciplinarity, temporary situations, and liminal architectures provide a performative oscillation between criticality and embodiment that engages spectators in an active and reciprocal encounter. Exhibited in outdoor urban contexts for peripatetic audiences, both installations created liminal zones—not quite cinema, not quite gallery, not quite public space—where viewers could engage in a playful and tactile experience of art, temporarily creating conversations and experiences where their bodies overlaid with projected images, constructed architectures, and the ritual of spectatorship. In taking over places normally reserved for transit, or other aspects of public life (such as streets, sidewalks, and plazas) the mobile cinemas disrupted the usual flow of life, provoking new directions and interactions.

This intervention calls to mind the work of the Situationist International Movement, which posited that Situations might intervene in our expectations of urban experiences, blurring the boundaries between art and life, and enacting cultural revolutions. Similarly, these mobile art encounters aim to engage a broader public that may not normally access gallery or cinema spaces, or regularly consider the role of art within daily life. In this way, the art objects act as focal points to bring people, objects, and ideas together into unusual conversations where the individual subjectivities of spectators overlap with the artist's intentions, execution of the artwork, site of exhibition, and interactions with other viewers. Layered here though both space and time, the in-between zones created by these works activate ideas that resonate with philosopher Brian Massumi's explanations of the phenomenology of experience, drawing on the duration of being as a way to explain the event-ness or presence that

occurs in certain artistic experiences. This focus on personal moments of encounter enables a rejection of conventional ideas around architecture, cinema, urban space and the role of the passer-by, to reinvent the cinema as temporary and mobile, and revitalize spectatorship as active and performative.

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Bio

Melanie Wilmlink is a doctoral student in Art History and Visual Culture at York University and a recipient of the 2014 York University Elia Scholars Award and 2015 SSHRC Doctoral Fellowship. She completed her Masters in Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of Regina, where she examined the qualities of liminal spaces in Art/Cinema installations. Her current research examines the inter-connectivity between spectatorial experience and exhibition spaces, and aims to determine how public art situations act as vehicles for metaphoric and physical transportation. Her ongoing research was developed through her experience as Programming Coordinator for the Calgary Society of Independent Filmmakers and its \$100 Film Festival (an avant-garde Super 8 and 16mm event established in 1992), and her current curatorial work through the Toronto-based Pleasure Dome media arts exhibition collective.

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Wright, Kailin

“Failed Community: Performing Lost Pregnancy in Merrill Denison’s *Marsh Hay*”

Merrill Denison’s *Marsh Hay* culminates with the “piercing scream” of a pregnant woman as she intentionally miscarries. Originally published in 1923, the play did not see the stage until over fifty years later. This unique delay in production was likely due to the play’s sensitive themes, namely pregnancy out of wedlock and abortion. While most critics focus on *Marsh Hay*’s bleak dramatization of rural poverty, theatre reviewers and scholars tend to overlook the climactic abortion. I argue that the play’s dramatizations of rural poverty and lost pregnancy are mutually constitutive because the abortion functions as a symbol and symptom of the family’s failed futurity. I use the term futurity to mean the possibility and quality of a future, following Lee Edelman’s theories in *No Future*. *Marsh Hay* uses lost pregnancy to foretell the future demise not only of an archetypal rural family but also of a rural Canadian community if onstage characters and real audiences do not accept pregnancy out of wedlock.

Denison’s play is only one example of Canadian theatre’s unexamined fascination with abortion. Throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Canadian drama uses lost pregnancy to perform the failed futurity of a community and sometimes even the nation. Denison’s *Marsh Hay*, however, stands out because it not only dramatizes lost pregnancy as a failure of the family and the rural community to accept unwed mothers, but it also contains a metacritical commentary on the damaging effects of pregnancy as a symbol of failure. *Marsh Hay* ultimately critiques the characters’ and community’s use of Sarilin’s pregnancy as a vehicle for their own agenda.

After a miscarriage or abortion, psychologists such as Norman Brier attribute the woman’s feelings of self-loss to the absence of “public acknowledgement” and “rituals to structure mourning and gain support” (451). A re-consideration of *Marsh Hay*’s dramatizations of abortion, as a result, has the potential to provide a rare public acknowledgement of lost pregnancy and to facilitate a much-needed critical discourse for an issue that affects more than twenty percent of women in Canada.