

30th Annual CDE Conference, Paris, June 23-26, 2022

The German Society for Contemporary Theatre and Drama in English (CDE) is pleased to announce its 30th Annual Conference (June 23-26, 2022), hosted by RADAC in partnership with Avignon Université, Le Mans Université, Université Gustave Eiffel, and Sorbonne Université to be held at the Cité Internationale in Paris.

“Theatre and the City”

As the role of traditional theatre spaces in the city has declined, the city has emerged as a performance space in and of itself. While often facilitating the creative empowerment of entire communities, this conflation of theatre spaces and the enhanced performativity of city life also inevitably implicates theatrical practices in the systemic injustices of urban architectures and their dramaturgies. This conference invites investigations into all aspects of how contemporary Anglophone theatre and performance reflect, resist, and interact with the city.

With the percentage of the world’s urban population soaring past the 50 percent mark, the complexities and inequalities of city ecologies are at the forefront of our social dilemmas. The increasing popularity of the site-specific and the participatory indicates a distinct shift in the politics of theatre, notably in how its urban demographics are constituted. Anglophone theatre, in particular, has witnessed a proliferation of genres and techniques instigating an exodus from the theatre building since the 1960s, with performances invading city roof-tops and other urban spaces to meet their audiences. Yet the city has also re-entered theatre by way of elaborate staging (immersive sets) and dramaturgies. As these practices keep evolving, theatre and the city continue to transform one another (Anne Hamburger’s *En Garde Arts* site-specific productions in New York, or Deborah Warner’s *The Angel Project* throughout London and New York and others; see also the conference website.)

Hybrid forms have thrived by mixing technology with ambulatory theatrical explorations, re-engaging with earlier dramaturgical traditions. Playwrights have explored cities as processes forming a complex urban landscape throughout national territories and have penned the difficulties of urban communities from segregation to the death of the working class while developing new voices to convey these plights.

Tracking all these changes is at the heart of this conference in order to investigate how theatre and the city are productively embroiled and particularly how contemporary Anglophone theatre has redefined the rich and complex meanings of urbanity, blurring borders between centre and periphery, street and stage, performer and spectator. How, then, are urban theatrical communities created today in the context of global and cosmopolitan cities? How do the walls of both cities and theatres rise and fall in today’s theatrical practices?

We invite proposals for 20-minute papers in English – as well as more performative formats experimenting with the conference topic (such as immersive or interactive presentations, etc) in line with the philosophy of the CDE and its intention to promote research and teaching in the area of recent and contemporary theatre and drama in English. In addition, special proposals for a collaborative, 60-minute deambulatory presentation, performance, or workshop as participants walk the 3.7 km distance through the city from the conference site to the Sorbonne are also welcome. Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Urban dramaturgies: from the *flâneur* (Situationism) to the theatrical archiving of cities (spatialization of knowledge and history and the social production of space. Foucault, Lefebvre, Harvey)
- Immersive theater and the blurring of boundaries between stage and street
- Smart cities and stages in the light of environmental crises. Digital theater in the context of Covid: the rise of virtual theater, “extended reality” (XR) and the end of physical space? Or a return to street theatre (Lincoln Center outdoors, Restart Stages program) or a hybrid form (NYC Next)?
- Social change through intersectional representations (Queer practices, Black Lives Matter) and “utopian performatives” (Dolan): cultural and ethnic communities
- Resisting urban politics through theatrical dissenting practices: stand up, street theater, performance art against gentrification (paradoxes of artist and urban renewal, Schulman, Mahmoud)
- Global urbanity (the “new world city”): political theatre and performance: refugee and migrant theater; minority theater; urban accessibility awareness

In accordance with CDE’s constitutional policy, papers should deal exclusively with contemporary (i.e. post-1989) theatre and drama in English.

Abstracts: Abstracts (300 words) for papers or performative lectures should be accompanied by a short biographical note and full address and institutional affiliation.

Deadline: 30 November 2021

Submit your abstract online via the conference website: <https://cde2022paris.sciencesconf.org/>

The organisers Cyrielle Garson, Xavier Lemoine, and Anna Street can be contacted here: cde2022paris@sciencesconf.org

NB: Only paid-up members are eligible to give papers at CDE conferences. Membership subscriptions should be taken out or renewed prior to the conference. For details, please contact CDE’s treasurer Martin Riedelsheimer (martin.riedelsheimer@uni-augsburg.de).