

Representations of Crisis in Contemporary North American Theater and Performance

Organizers:

Dr. Diana Benea, University of Bucharest, diana.benea@lts.unibuc.ro

Dr. Ludmila Martanovschi, Ovidius University, Constanța,
ludmila.martanovschi@gmail.com

In the last two decades, the field of global theatre production has witnessed the consolidation of an increasingly diverse and nuanced repertoire of representations of contemporary crises. Informed by the growing body of research dedicated to this phenomenon (Jeffers, 2012; Angelaki, 2017; Balestrini et al., 2020), our panel aims to examine the ethical, political, and aesthetic stakes of responding to ongoing conditions of crisis (climate change; the COVID-19 pandemic; the refugee and migrant crisis etc.) in contemporary North American and British theatre.

Some of the central questions to be explored in this panel are: How does theatre participate in performing and shaping critical reflection on the broad array of current crisis formations? How can theatre represent states of continued insecurity, precariousness, and vulnerability – or, in Rob Nixon’s words, processes of “slow violence” – in a way that makes full use of the medium’s strengths while acknowledging its inherent limitations? How is crisis filtered through specific gendered, ethno-racial, or class lenses? What are the broader ecologies underlying the development, production, and reception of theatres of crisis? What are the representational modes and aesthetic strategies employed in the performance of crisis? How are such representations shaped by specific theatrical formats (scripted plays, documentary theatre, community-based practices, applied theatre etc.)?

The workshop will take place online via Zoom. Authors are invited to submit a 250-word abstract and short bio to the panel organizers.

References

Angelaki, Viki. *Social and Political Theatre in Twenty-First Century Britain: Staging Crisis*. Bloomsbury, 2017.

Balestrini, Nassim Winnie, Lippert, Leopold and Löschnigg, Maria (eds.). *Theater of Crisis: Contemporary Aesthetic / Responses to a Cross-Sectional Condition*, special issue of *Journal of Contemporary Drama in English*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2020.

Jeffers, Alison. *Refugees, Theatre and Crisis: Performing Global Identities*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Nixon, Rob. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Harvard UP, 2011.