



## **32<sup>nd</sup> Annual CDE Conference, Innsbruck (Austria), 2-5 May 2024**

The German Society for Contemporary Theatre and Drama in English (CDE) is pleased to announce its 32<sup>nd</sup> annual conference (2-5 May 2024). It is organized by the Department of English at the University of Innsbruck and will be held as a residential conference at 'Tiroler Bildungsinstitut Grillhof' in Innsbruck.

### **Theatre in the Digital Age**

At unprecedented speed, digital technologies have, during the course of our own life times, transformed everyday routines and entered all spheres, from the political to the most intimate. The ways in which we relate to each other, educate ourselves, partake in social processes, and consume and participate in culture are all informed by digitalization.

Our conference asks how the theatre - which has always developed alongside, in conjunction with, or against the odds of technological developments - is affected by and has responded to these profound changes. It aims to take stock of the urgency and creativity with which the transformations have been taken up in contemporary Anglophone playwriting and performance. Playwrights have responded to these technological developments in various ways. Some have incorporated the internet and social media in their plays, for example, by mimicking digital formats (e.g. dialogue as tweets in Jasmine Lee-Jones's *seven methods of killing kylie jenner*), employing digital affordances (e.g. writing whole plays on Twitter in David Greig's *Yes/No Plays*) or using virtual technologies as part of their dramaturgy (Tim Crouch's *Truth's a Dog Must to Kennel*). At the same time, these and other plays have not only themselves employed the digital, but also use this very incorporation to reflect critically on the impact of digitalization.

The emergence of "viral theatre" (Liedke/Pietrzak-Franger) and "theater of lockdown" (Fuchs) shows with particular force how theatrical and dramatic practices themselves may be fundamentally transformed by digitalization processes, as illustrated by the case of the Creation Theatre company, which has specialised in digital performance since 2020. Such entanglements with the digital pose questions about the very nature of the theatre. They also call for reflections on the role the theatre can (or should) play in the newly emerging media environment.

We invite papers that explore how, in the context of contemporary Anglophone theatre, playwrights, theatre practitioners, and cultural institutions are engaging with the opportunities provided as well as the problems posed by the digital. Possible topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Reflections on digitalization as a socio-political phenomenon in contemporary plays
- Intersections of the digital with issues of gender and race
- Role of social media, virtual reality, and artificial intelligence (as issues raised by the plays, as forms and strategies deployed in the writing and staging processes)
- Impact of digitalization on spectatorship; creation of new audiences; accessibility
- Incorporation of digital technologies on stage
- The impact of the digital on form, dramaturgies, and techniques of writing and acting as well as on critical methodologies
- The affordances, politics and poetics of viral or lockdown theatre
- Challenges and opportunities posed by the digital for theatrical institutions (resource, promotion, source of income); live broadcasts; theatre on demand

- Opportunities offered to research by Digital Humanities: experiences with DH methods in researching contemporary theatre
- Bodily co-presence and virtuality; the digital and the question of authenticity

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

Please send your **abstract** (max. 300 words) for **20-minute papers** as well as a short biographical note, full address and institutional affiliation to [cde2024@uibk.ac.at](mailto:cde2024@uibk.ac.at). **Deadline: 2 October 2023**

CDE encourages contributions by **emerging scholars**. Scholars who work on a PhD in the field of contemporary theatre and drama (even if the PhD topic is not related to the conference topic) may apply to the **CDE PhD Forum**, which will take place on 2 May at the conference venue. For further information please see <http://contemporarydrama.de/phd-forum/>

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 see <https://contemporarydrama.de/membership/>

Selected papers will be published in a special issue of the *Journal of Contemporary Drama in English (JCDE)*.

#### **Organising team:**

Department of English at the University of Innsbruck  
Dorothee Birke, Anja Hartl, Ulrich Pallua, Christoph Singer  
Support: Ines Gstrein, Francesca Nicotra

#### **Further Reading:**

- Blake, Bill. *Theatre and the Digital*. London et al.: Bloomsbury, Methuen Drama, 2014.
- Boiko, Tetiana, et al. "Digital Tools in Contemporary Theatre Practice." *Journal on Computing and Cultural Heritage*, vol. 16, no. 2, 2023, pp. 1–9.
- Causey, Matthew. *Theatre and Performance in Digital Culture: From Simulation to Embeddedness*. London et al.: Routledge, 2006.
- Crossley, Mark, editor. *Intermedial Theatre: Principles and Practice*. London et al.: Bloomsbury, Methuen Drama, 2019.
- Fuchs, Barbara. *Theater of Lockdown: Digital and Distanced Performance in a Time of Pandemic*. London et al.: Bloomsbury, Methuen Drama, 2021.
- Ilter, Seda. *Mediatized Dramaturgy: The Evolution of Plays in the Media Age*. London et al.: Bloomsbury, Methuen Drama, 2021.
- Liedke, Heidi, and Monika Pietrzak-Franger. "Viral Theatre: Preliminary Thoughts on the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Online Theatre." *Journal of Contemporary Drama in English*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2021, pp. 128–144.
- Oliszewski, Alex, et al. *Digital Media, Projection Design, and Technology for Theatre*. New York et al.: Routledge, 2018.
- Radosavljević, Duška. *Aural/Oral Dramaturgies: Theatre in the Digital Age*. London et al.: Routledge, 2023.
- Varela, Miguel Escobar. *Theatre as Data: Computational Journeys into Theater Research*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2021.