



Performance Studies international

A message from the president

Los Angeles 5 September 2017

Dear PSi members,

Greetings! I hope this missive finds you well. I write to inaugurate a periodic update and announcement about board activities and ways you can further your involvement with the organization.

First, I again thank the hosts of PSi#23: Overflow in Hamburg for their diligent work and gracious hospitality this past June. Since the conclusion of that event, they have put together a succinct video about the conference: <https://youtu.be/Bichn5RGWaM>. On behalf of the board, I express our deep appreciation to all of the organizers (especially chair Gabriele Klein, Ewelina Benbenek, Amelie Deuflhard, Uta Lambertz, Jonas Leifert, Navina Neverla, Martin Jörg Schäfer, Wolfgang Sting, and Marc Wagenbach), volunteers, and participants (from panel chairs to speakers to performers). Overall, the conference and the Theater der Welt Festival with which we overlapped offered us provocative ways to engage and advance performance studies.

At this year's AGM (annual general meeting), we discussed a proposal brought from the membership and crafted the following statement, which was vetted and unanimously approved by everyone who attended the AGM:

Performance Studies international (PSi) reasserts its commitment to the freedom of artistic and academic expression and the free circulation of knowledge and people. Such principles should not need to be restated, but, given recent events, the organization feels compelled to do so. Performance studies, both as a field and within this organization, has always contested borders and bordering practices, and the small "i" in PSi has always attended to the subtlety and complexity of international relations. In issuing this statement we reassert international solidarity and community as core values.

We also welcomed new board members Matthew Moore (Treasurer), Eero Laine (Secretary), Bruce Barton (in a new position, Artist Relations Officer) and announced the creation of a Digital Communications Officer, which was advertised and has now been filled by João Florêncio. Thanks to these individuals for volunteering their service! In order to smooth transitions when vacancies occur on the board, I have asked some folks to serve as mentors for their successors for a year. In this vein, outgoing Treasurer Lindsey Mantoan will work with her successor in his new role; I will do the same for the secretary. My sincerest gratitude goes to Heike Roms, who did double duty as Secretary and as Archivist this past year when I became president. Stay tuned for announcements about upcoming openings on the board.

During the past several years, the board has developed, and we have now launched a new website and a new membership model. I realize there were a few hiccups this past year with the website. We have been troubleshooting, and I think the new website is going to work as a valuable interface for the membership. In a related vein, our new online, open access journal, *GPS*, has launched its first issue; please peruse the articles and consider contributing: <http://gps.psi-web.org/issue-1-1/>

We have also watched the Future Advisory Board (FAB) take shape from within PSi as a growing community of junior and emerging scholars and artists. As one highlight of its activities, FAB piloted a summer school in Hamburg; given the success of this program, we hope to continue this project in the coming years. Participation is by application; the new cycle will be announced in the coming months.

For her leadership in all of these endeavors, I thank my presidential predecessor, Maaike Bleeker, and all of the board members past and present that have served PSi and its members.

Coming Up

The board is currently in preparation for PSi#24 in Daegu, Korea. Details are forthcoming as we work with the organizers to develop what promises to be another stimulating adventure.

In my first year as president I have been humbled and moved by the breadth and depth of significant projects in which our artists and scholars are engaged. What drew me to PSi was the sense that this group has much to contribute to the world and to teach me. My desire is that PSi remains a place to foster talent and hone thinking, to offer site specific as well as more transient dialogues and interventions in which the membership may participate. Following from my experience, I would urge you to consider becoming involved with PSi in new ways. I would like to emphasize that this organization is you and, perhaps, still others who do not yet know they want to join us. You will have opportunities to help shape the direction of our efforts as several board members complete their service in the coming year. In the spirit of encouraging participation, I would move toward closure of this first newsletter by explaining a little bit about how I see the board functioning.

I elaborate this line of thinking from Heike Roms, who said something when I first assumed my new role on the board in Melbourne. During Performing Climates' opening night plenary, she offered a critical inquiry into Bruno Latour's notion of preenactment that has shaped my own approach to the concept and the work of PSi. Preenactment might be a useful term to understand what the board does and could do.

We strive to construct certain conditions of possibility for everyone to imagine and engage performance as broadly as possible. We strive to offer a platform for theorists and practitioners to think outside of disciplinary, linguistic, national, and regional boundaries in ways that might avoid reproducing, for example, sedimented investments in theatre histories and heavily European and American-inflected versions of performance theory. We strive to rethink and/or un-think some of these deep investments by creating new networks responsive to sites around the globe.

The future is ours to preenact. I am enthusiastic about the directions PSi is moving and look forward to facilitating your imagination and materializing your vision of how we inhabit the future.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I may answer any questions. Many thanks for your time and commitment!

Best regards,



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