

## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

ASSEMBLE

PSi #29

20-23 June 2024

The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama in collaboration LIFT (London International Theatre Festival) invites responses from scholars, practitioners, artists, and culture and performance workers to the call for proposals for the Performance Studies international, PSi #29 conference in June 2024.

This hybrid conference focuses on the main theme of Assemble. To assemble has multiple meanings: to gather in one place for a common purpose or to put together the parts of something. Resonant with infrastructures, politics and processes of assemblage, the conference invites and foregrounds practice research, creative critical interventions, processes of making and their antithesis, un-making. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the climate crisis and global struggles for justice and recognition, we have to reconsider how to assemble, how to come together, to build, to imagine, to co-create in hostile conditions, and, conversely, what we need to disassemble, to take apart, to dismantle, to decenter, to unlearn.

In dialogue with PSi #28, which explored embodied practices as Performance Studies modalities specifically in an Africanist context, centring on IsiZulu word uhambo luyazilawula (loosely translated as 'a journey controls itself'), Assemble extends the invitation towards the performances, politics, poetics, processes, conditions and challenges of collectivity and gathering.

For performance studies, the concept of assemblage serves as a lens through which we can investigate the dynamic interplay of various elements, whether they be objects, individuals or ideas, as well as the forms that create conditions of legibility and encounter. PSi #29 connects the diverse themes of assemblage, assembly, and disassembly as they pertain to performance, shedding light on their potential to shape and transform our understanding of the world. The notion of assemblage can be applied to a collection of things or a group of people or animals. By examining the process of assembly, both as a means of coming together and as a state of being together, we hope to investigate the transformative potential of collective action in, with and through performance. Methodologically, the role of practice research as a mechanism for assembling knowledge, bridging theory and praxis, will form the basis of PSi's collaboration with LIFT.

The conference will engage with the concept of assembling as counterpublics, exploring how performances create alternative spaces for dissent and resistance, and marginalised voices, as well as assembly as a 'space of appearance', contemplating how performance serves as a site where

identities are negotiated and social realities are (re)constructed. Participants might examine how the act of assembly becomes a condition of political action, highlighting its role in fostering social change and advocating for justice. We also hope to explore the process of disassembly, whereby performances can be taken apart and separated into different parts, allowing for critical reflection and deconstruction. The lens of decolonisation exposes the entanglement between assembly and dismantling in relation to colonial and neocolonial regimes, enabling the questioning and reconfiguration of dominant narratives and power structures. We consider London as a global centre and highlight (post)imperial assemblage, in acknowledgement of this space as a focal point of colonial histories, neocolonial power and hostility, as well as grassroots practices of repair and anticolonial imaginaries; we welcome responses to the city's role in shaping performative practices and influencing cultural landscapes.

Additionally, we explore archival assemblages and their construction, investigating how memory and history are assembled and composed through performance. LIFT's development of concept touring offers an opportunity to reflect on new forms of festival assemblies, examining their potential for innovation and transformative experiences. Eco-assemblies and eco-disassemblies shed light on the urgency of environmental sustainability in performance practice, while digital and immersive assemblies demonstrate the expanding boundaries and possibilities of performative spaces.

Scenographies and dramaturgies that take apart or dismantle challenge

conventional notions of performance, pushing the boundaries of audience experience. Experiences of diasporic assembly can reveal how performances become sites for negotiating hybrid identities, cultural memory, and belonging. We invite scholars and artists to also consider processes of co-creation and the potential for horizontal and asymmetrical assembly, promoting collaborative practices in performance. Place-making as assemblage reveals how performance can shape and redefine our relationship with space and environment, while intersectional assemblies highlight the intersections of various social identities and the ways in which they inform performance practices.

Lastly, we investigate the challenges of assembling in hostile environments, exploring the role of performance in resistance, resilience, and survival. Collective politics and assemblies shed light on the mobilising potentials of performance, questioning power dynamics and advocating for social change whilst critically engaging with structural and global politics and the romanticisation and weaponization of assembly that often seeks to erase difference.

Ultimately, PSi #29 aims to critically explore the multifaceted nature of performance assemblage and disassembly, examining its potential to shape and transform our understanding of the world.

Themes to be addressed at the conference include, but are not limited to:

- Assemblage, a collection of things or a group of people or animals
- Assembly, the process of coming together, or the state of being together
- Practice research as assembling
- Assembling as counterpublics
- Assembly as a 'space of appearance'
- To assemble as a condition of political action
- Fugivity and assembly
- Virality, presence and assembly
- Disassemble, to separate into different parts
- Institutionality and assembly
- Abolitionist engagements with assembly
- Decolonisation as assembly and/or dismantling
- London as global centre and (post)imperial assemblage
- Archival assemblages and the manner of their construction
- Memory and history as assembled and composed
- Concept touring and new forms of festival assemblies
- Eco-assemblies and eco-disassemblies
- Late capitalism and assemblies
- Nativism, state-sanctioned assembly and its political deployment
- Digital and immersive assembly
- Scenographies and dramaturgies that take apart or dismantle

- Diasporic assembly
- Processes of co-creation, how to assemble horizontally and asymmetrically
- Place-making as assemblage
- Intersectional assemblies
- Assembly as a space for radical practice
- Assembling in hostile environments
- Anti-coloniality, organising and assemblies
- Collective politics and assemblies
- To assemble or take apart performance time

We invite contributions from a wide range of disciplines and practices, including but not limited to performance studies, theatre, dance, live art, music, visual arts, sociology, cultural studies, philosophy, law, social sciences, and history. We encourage submissions that explore these themes through diverse theoretical, methodological, and creative approaches.

Submission Guidelines:

Please submit your proposal using the [online submission system](#) by **23 October 2023**, which can be found at: [forms.office.com/e/D9LVATnGnM](https://forms.office.com/e/D9LVATnGnM)

You will be asked to provide:

- Title of the presentation
- Abstract (300-500 words)
- Author(s) name(s) and affiliation(s)
- Contact information
- Brief biographical statement (100 words maximum)
- Audiovisual and technical requirements, if applicable
- Indication of attendance online or in person

Central's annual summer school for PhD students dedicated to the Performance Epistemologies of the Global Majority, which focuses on the numerous and alternative ways of knowing that emerge from Black, Global Majority and Indigenous cultures, will be running as part of the PSi conference. Please indicate on the submissions form if you are interested in applying for the summer school. There are a limited number of places and applicants will be required to complete a full application in January.

Accepted presentation formats include:

- Curated panel presentations and roundtables (of 90 mins)
- Individual papers: in-person (15 mins); online (12 - 15 mins)
- Performances and/or installations (20 – 30 mins with minimal to no technical support)

- Laboratory/workshop sessions (90 mins)
- Screenings of practise research or performance documentation (10-15 mins)
- Analogue spaces - there will be several spaces without technology that will be available to curate for conversations, dialogues or other interventions

PSi #29 will be a multi-site conference and we encourage contributors to be creative in how their approach their presentations and offerings. Please note that some spaces will have limited access to technical resources, and as such we encourage applicants to be as specific as possible when detailing technical and logistical requirements.

Important Dates:

- Submission Deadline: **23 October 2023**
- Notification of Acceptance: **24 November 2023**
- Conference Dates: **20-23 June 2024**

We look forward to welcoming you to a vibrant conference that embraces interdisciplinary dialogue, artistic experimentation, and critical engagement.

For further information and updates, our conference website will be available by November 2023. If you have any queries, or require additional access



support to submit your proposal, please contact the conference organisers directly at [\*\*psi29@cssd.ac.uk\*\*](mailto:psi29@cssd.ac.uk).

For questions about becoming an institutional member for PSi or for related programming please contact Serap Erincin at [\*\*seraperincin@gmail.com\*\*](mailto:seraperincin@gmail.com). For more information about PSi, please [\*\*visit www.psi-web.org/\*\*](http://www.psi-web.org/)

We look forward to your submissions!

The PSi #29 Conference Organising Committee