

## **2026 CATR Conference Participant Calls**

### **Call for Papers Performance, Migration, and Nationalism Working Group CATR 2026 conference**

**Inheritances in Transition: Rehearsing Change for Theatre and Performance Futures.  
Time and place for the WG meeting: June 12-13, 2026 (Act II), Online**

*Abstract (250 words) submission deadline: **March 31, 2026***

*CONTACT and SUBMISSION EMAIL: SHEETALA BHAT at [bsheetal@yorku.ca](mailto:bsheetal@yorku.ca)*

*Deadline to share a draft of your conference paper: **May 1, 2026***

The CATR 2026 conference invites us to reflect on the inheritances of our field at a moment of profound political and cultural transition, marked by rise of right-wing nationalisms, climate change, polarizing technologies, forced displacement, and shifting geopolitical power. Theatre, dance, and performance practitioners engaging with questions of migration have long negotiated inherited traditions and national belongings, while simultaneously rehearsing new futures and (re)making communities.

The **CATR WG Performance, Migration and Nationalism** responds to this call by focusing our 2026 sessions on **practices and dramaturgies of migration**. Performance has historically functioned as a space where lived experience intersects with artistic form. In migration contexts, rehearsing for the future becomes a process of embodied negotiation, adaptation, and cultural exchange across borders. By foregrounding the **practice of rehearsal**, we seek to illuminate the creative labour, ethical stakes, and collaborative methodologies that inform performance-making in migration contexts, and to consider how such practices intervene in the politics of mobility, belonging, and representation.

Proposals may address, but are not limited to, the following:

- Reflections on creating or participating in performance projects concerning migration
- Analyses of collaborative processes involving migrant, displaced, or refugee communities
- Considerations of how performance challenges nationalist or exclusionary narratives and fosters inclusive imaginaries of community and belonging
- Studies of dramaturgy, aesthetics, and politics in site-specific, community-based, or participatory works
- Methodological approaches to researching, documenting, and archiving migration-related performance practices
- Explorations of intersections and tensions between artistic and academic pedagogies, particularly with respect to artist-researcher identities.

Our aim is to convene practitioners, participants, and researchers to propose new interdisciplinary approaches to migration in and through performance, and to demonstrate the role of the arts in shaping public discourse on inclusion, sanctuary, academic freedom, free speech, and citizenship.

The 2026 meeting will take place online and will provide an opportunity not only to present work but also to collaboratively workshop ideas toward publication. We particularly encourage proposals that bridge scholarship and practice and welcome contributions from across geographies, disciplines, and migration experiences.

We are looking for your proposals

Sheetala Bhat, Yana Meerzon, Steve Wilmer (co-conveners of the group)

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### **Call for Participants for The Life Statue: A Pedagogical Praxis for Foundational Actor Training and Personal Development**

#### *Session Leader Bio*

Pat Chan is an Assistant Professor with the Drama department of the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Lethbridge, AB, Canada. She is also a scholar-artist whose work integrates physical theatre, performance pedagogy, and cross-cultural training. Initially based in Malaysia, she developed the award-winning Life Statue exercise through seven years of practice-led research on embodiment, presence and ensemble creation. Now at the University of Lethbridge, she extends this method to introduce first-semester drama students to foundational performance principles.

Session description: The total duration of the workshop is 90 minutes.

- 60 minutes guided training session
- 15 minutes public performance
- 15 minutes discussion and feedback session

This sequence provides a focused opportunity to evaluate the method's pedagogical impact, assess participants' experiences, and examine the broader artistic value of the Life Statue exercise.

- Session for six to ten participants
- Little or no prior drama experience required
- Participants required to wear flexible all black attire as the exercise involve extensive movement

- Mask will be provided by the instructor
- Exercise session to be conducted in an indoor studio
- Public Performance can be conducted in a nearby busy indoor public area (observers are welcomed during the public performance).
- No other equipment required

Please feel free to contact me to sign up or should you require any other information or clarification.

Thank you.

Pat Chan  
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Assistant Professor of Drama  
Faculty of Fine Arts  
University of Lethbridge

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**Title:** Audience Legacies: Investigating Inherited Practices and Approaches in Theatre Audience Data

**Organizers:** Kelsey Blair (University of the Fraser Valley), Kelsey Jacobson (Queens University), Signy Lynch (University of Toronto), and Jenny Salisbury (University of Toronto).

The tradition of collecting data from and shared by audiences has been a key factor in the growth and development of audience studies in theatre and performance (Sauter 2019, Snyder-Young and Omasta 2022, Freshwater 2009). And yet, there is still much work to be done, particularly in relation to data collection and interpretation (Sedgman 2019). Consideration of ethics, contexts, biases, and ownership frame and shape the field of theatre audience research—at times in unseen and/or unacknowledged ways. This data, and our disciplinary and methodological inheritances in approaching it, will be the focus of our proposed seminar.

Seminar participants are asked to bring a piece of primary audience data, such as an interview transcript, an observational field note or reflection, survey results, a social media post, etc. During the seminar, participants will discuss their data and the contexts and means of production in order to help surface explicit and implicit inheritances of the field. Our goals are to answer questions such as: How are audience data reflective of histories, identities, and legacies of theatre-making? How can audience data help to surface the

inheritances of our field? What insights or theoretical interventions can audience data offer to long-held ideas around theatre?

Each participant will have 5-10 minutes to share their data pieces, after which we will break off into smaller groups defined by common themes, and then come back together as a larger group discussion and closing. Submissions from both experienced audience researchers and newcomers to the field are welcome.

**To Submit:** Please email [centreforspectatorship@gmail.com](mailto:centreforspectatorship@gmail.com) with a short (two-sentence) description of the work you'd like to share and a brief bio by **April 15 2026**.

### **Works Cited**

Freshwater, Helen. *Theatre and Audience*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

Sauter, Willmar. "What Areas of Spectatorship Need to Be Studied in Contemporary Contexts?" *Performance Matters* 5, no. 2 (2019): 147-149.

Sedgman, Kirsty. "On rigour in theatre audience research." *Contemporary Theatre Review* 29, no. 4 (2019): 462-479.

Snyder-Young, Dani, and Matt Omasta, eds. *Impacting theatre audiences: Methods for studying change*. Routledge, 2022.

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### **Call for Participants – Theatre as Service Seminar**

This discussion-based seminar gathers artists and scholars around the provocation that theatre is a form of service. Inspired by Audre Lorde's assertion that "poetry is not a luxury," and drawing from Alex Sarian's *The Audacity of Relevance: Critical Conversations on the Future of Arts and Culture*, this working group asks: what does theatre *do* within a larger cultural and economic landscape? If arts institutions are to locate their value not only in artistic merit but in community relevance, how might we understand theatre as a form of service?

Understanding "service" broadly, including philanthropic service (volunteerism), labour and hospitality (the service industry), and the position that theatre and the arts plays in a larger sociocultural network (public service), this seminar invites participants to examine the roles theatre plays, or might play, in local and global economies. How have Canadian theatres adapted (or failed to adapt) to shifting conditions shaped by sustainability, affordability, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, and COVID-19? What assumptions about productivity, care, value, and cultural labour underpin our industry, and how might they be challenged?

This call for participants invites short papers, provocations, rants, case studies, performances, editorials, manifestos, and critical reflections that engage with theatre as service in the context of Canadian culture and economy.

If you're interested, **please submit a 250-word abstract and a brief bio to Thea Fitz-James at [thea.fitzjames@usask.ca](mailto:thea.fitzjames@usask.ca) by April 3.** By early May, selected participants will be invited to submit a 3-page statement expanding on their abstract, outlining key themes, theoretical frameworks, and/or case studies in order to shape the seminar discussion around shared concerns.

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### **Training(isms): cross-disciplinary exchanges on practice-based pedagogies**

Round table

Convenors: Christine Mazumdar

“Touch at a Distance: Examining Equity, Agency, and Consent in Virtual Movement-Based Training Practices”, is a postdoctoral SSHRC/Sport Canada funded interdisciplinary project that proposes a systematic examination of coaching pedagogies in Canadian sports and arts-based training practices. My research considers questions surrounding agency and the virtuosic body, consent, and the life-long effects to the physical and emotional well-being of the performer.

Growing up training as a rhythmic gymnast and musician, I could not have imagined some of the physical and emotional scars that would continue to follow me throughout my life from my childhood pursuit of virtuosic/conservatory training. As a gymnastics coach and arts-based educator/scholar countering harmful training practices, my pedagogy has been informed by autotheory, auto/ethnography, and testimonies from former athletes/artists denouncing the toxic culture of silence that has proven prevalent in virtuosic/conservatory training spaces.

My research’s premise implores safe and equitable practices surrounding consent, agency, and touch within these rigorous training disciplines through interdisciplinary exchanges and knowledge mobilisation. As such, I propose this roundtable that brings together cross-disciplinary voices from a variety of sports and arts-based scholars (dance, sport, music, stage).

#### **Some topics to be explored during the round table:**

- Overlaps in training practices in dance, performance studies, circus arts, music, aesthetic sports
- Unique pedagogical considerations for body-centric training
- The systematic breakdown of the virtuosic body
- Consent and virtuosic training

- Training and touch: “Touch at a distance”
- Sustainability, wellness, and the performing body

Please email [christine.mazumdar@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:christine.mazumdar@mail.utoronto.ca) for more information on participating.

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### **Roundtable: Toward a sustainable future for critical dance writing in Canada | CATR member survey**

Over the past few years there has been a dramatic decline in the number of publications dedicated to writing about dance in Canada. Our roundtable will foster discussion on these topics and aim to find ways to fill the gap, toward a sustainable future for dance writing in Canada. Whether or not you plan to join us online for this roundtable, please complete this survey to help guide the discussion and ensure we can draw on the expertise of CATR members.

The survey can be filled out here: <https://www.surveymonkey.ca/r/GF8R2TB>

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### **CALL FOR SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS:**

#### **Seminar: Rehearsing for just futures: labour and justice in precarious times**

Co-organizers: Jenn Boulay (Concordia University), Signy Lynch (UofT Mississauga), Jimena Ortúzar (UNAL)

Emails - [signy.lynch@utoronto.ca](mailto:signy.lynch@utoronto.ca), [jimena@nyu.edu](mailto:jimena@nyu.edu), [jennmoboulay@gmail.com](mailto:jennmoboulay@gmail.com)

Mode of delivery: The seminar will take place across two parts of 90 minutes each, one in-person at the University of Victoria, and the second online. Participants may take part in one or both parts.

The last 50 years have been formative for Canadian theatre and performance studies and CATR. As we contemplate the next 50, we find ourselves facing multiple crises, both within our field and beyond: the increased precarization of work, the threat of funding cuts and attacks on universities, the rise of the anti-EDI movement and the suppression of academic freedom, global advances in authoritarianism, fascism and imperialism, and callous responses to genocides and humanitarian emergencies. The convergence of these crises, each sharpening the edges of the others, prompts us to think about a recent change in

direction: rather than advancing justice and equity, we find ourselves returning to fights thought to have been won, protecting rights thought to have been gained permanently.

Taking a cue from Vanessa Machado de Oliveira's *Hospicing Modernity*, we wonder how we undertake the work of 'hospicing' these crises in preparation for something new to emerge. Keeping in mind that social change is never linear, this seminar asks: What is at stake at this particular juncture? What should be preserved and what should be laid to rest? What might the struggles fought over the past 50 years tell us about setbacks in the fight for justice and equity. What kinds of analytic tools do we need today for understanding the current crises so that we can intervene effectively? And how do we address labour distribution and precarious work in our field and maintain hope as we rehearse for change?

Thinking of what we (as TPS scholars) have inherited from the past 50 years and what we want scholars to inherit from us 50 years from now, we invite short, 5-minute reflections that propose paths forward, including speculative exercises towards more just futures as well as concrete actions that we (with our differing positionalities and privileges) can undertake in our own contexts.

Participants will present their papers in the first part of the seminar, and the group will collectively brainstorm small actions and coordinated responses we can take to address these issues during the second part of the seminar.

We invite participants to reflect on topics including:

- Collectivities – Pushing back against neoliberal individualism (including how it intersects with labour and precarity in the academy) and rapidly escalating authoritarianism and fascism; collective forms of care, interdependence, care webs
- Inheritances - What have scholars inherited from the past 50 years? What do we want scholars 50 years from now to inherit from us? What labour practices from the past or present are recoverable or repairable?
- Cycles - How do we break cycles (including colonial and imperial ones), recognize the non-linearity of change, and invite longer and alternative considerations of time (for example, the Haudenosaunee Seven Generations principle)? Is the work 'non-performative' (Ahmed)?
- Sustainability and effectiveness - How can we find ways of moving forwards that are sustainable and reproducible? This might include environmental sustainability (ex. the energy costs of AI) How do we make academic labour sustainable, and consider and attend to differences across various positions of precarity (graduate students, sessional and unpaid work, etc.)
- Speculation - What speculative exercises can we engage in to open up new paths forward (this might include speculative practice attached to Afro-futurist movements, etc.)?
- Positionality - Who is doing the work of trying to combat these issues? What are allies doing? How are those of us in the imperial core attuned to interconnected,

global struggles? How can those of us with more stable positions support those in more precarious ones?

To apply to participate, please fill out [this Google form](#) by Friday April 3rd. Please contact the organizers if you have issues accessing the form/it is inaccessible for you.