

Call for Papers

Political Performances Working Group at IFTR

The International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR) World Congress

Melbourne, Australia; 06th – 10th July 2026

What Theatre Does

Deadline for submission of abstracts: 08 December 2025

In an age of heightened political polarisation, decolonial resistance, and the radical reimagining of identity, citizenship, and sovereignty; we come back to the idea of *what does theatre do?* with a sense of urgency.

This call for papers invites proposals that explore the active and affective potentiality (and limitations) of theatre and performance to engage with structures of power and forms of antagonism – be it political, ideological, or otherwise – as a mode of resistance, rupture, and/or survival.

The Political Performances Working Group therefore invites proposals for papers on the following topics:

(A) Epistemologies

Theatre and performance in relation to shifting understanding of political and antagonistic action; engagement with structures of change; radical thinking; challenges to ideological and hegemonic frameworks; disrupting colonial and settler power structures; conceptions of survivance beyond victimhood; indigenous sovereignty; queering the political; critical conceptions of race and identity; social, political and democratic forms of engagement.

(B) Place

Theatre and performance in relation to sites of political and social struggle; change and revolutionary acts; spaces and places of resistance; communities of solidarity; reclamation of land, place or space; displacement and forms of dispossession; sites of neo-colonialism and decolonial interventions.

(C) Temporalities

Theatre and performance in relation to historical manifestations of political theatre and performance; contested histories, embodied memories and futurity; frameworks of imperialism and settler colonialism; political forms of transformation and change; stages of resistance, and resurgence in performance; temporal dislocation of dominant narratives.

Working Methods

The Working Group pre-circulates work-in-progress/paper drafts in advance of each conference in order to enhance discussion within a multi-lingual context. Pre-circulated texts should normally be between 2500 – 3000 words. Presentation length will be confirmed nearer the conference but is expected to be 15 minutes.

The work of the group relies on the exchange of ideas building over the course of the week, so we therefore expect participants to attend **all** PPWG meetings at the conference. We aim to make reasonable adjustments for members whose circumstances do not allow this level of commitment but recommend that colleagues unable to attend the majority of WG sessions apply to the General Panels.

Abstract Submission

Abstracts should be 200 – 250 words long

→ you will also be asked to provide a short bio

Please indicate in your abstract how you will address the themes of the PPWG's Call for Papers.

In order to submit your abstract, you will first need to be a member of IFTR. Membership renewal will open October 1st 2025, accessible via the following link:

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/membership/iftr>

Please submit abstracts chiefly to the IFTR conference platform, which can be accessed via the IFTR [webpage](https://iftr.org/) (iftr.org/)

When you submit your abstract, please make sure to indicate you are submitting to the '**Political Performances Working Group**'.

Note the submission timeline:

- 1 November: Abstract submissions open.
- 8 December: Abstract submissions close.
- You will be notified of your acceptance in January 2026.

Deadline for [bursary](https://iftr.org/about/bursaries/) (https://iftr.org/about/bursaries/) applications: 30 November 2025

→ this call opens 1st November 2026

We look forward to working with you in Melbourne!

Working Group Convenors:

Komita Dhanda: Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

Dr Amanda Stuart Fisher: Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, London

Professor Julia Boll: Paris Lodron University of Salzburg

If you have any questions, you can contact the working group: iftrpolperf@gmail.com