



Theatre Conference JAMU 2026

ANALOGUE vs. DIGITAL HUMAN feat. ART

26–27 February 2026

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

WHERE TO FIND US?

Memory of Nations Institute Brno (main venue), 10 Radnická St.
Cinema CIT, 4 Radnická St.



Press the Button – in an Analogue Way

Perhaps all spiritual traditions lead people to encounter mystery. They remind us that our lives are directly connected to something we did not make, something we cannot control, but of which we are nevertheless a part. The task of a human is then to find the right relationship – how to be part of it ‘correctly’?

The era of ever-accelerating technological sprint remarkably and paradoxically multiplies this situation. Every year, our lives are increasingly connected to technologies that we (humanity) have created, but even the greatest optimists have abandoned the idea that we are able to control them. We use and are used by a huge number of tools provided by this expanding technological mystery. Therefore, we find ourselves in unfamiliar situations, but one question remains the same – how to be part of all of this, and how to be part of it ‘correctly’?

The discussion about the digitization of human life is intense today. The discussion about AI in the creative and artistic sphere is almost ubiquitous. The JAMU Theatre Conference aims to contribute to these discussions not out of a pure interest in technology, but out of an interest in humanity. If we want to act humanely, does that mean something different or the same in the digital and analog worlds? And how can an artwork, its sharing, and reflection contribute to this question? How can creativity help people be part of our hybrid present ‘correctly’?

The subtitle of this year’s conference issue is known from the buttons of online communication apps: *Join the conversation*. It is a pleasant paradox that almost all speakers have managed to ‘press’ this button in an analogue way and are attending the conference in person. Although we will be dealing with avatars, social media as a stage, and generative results of large language models, these two days, we will do so standing on the same floor and breathing air of the same room. Let’s just do it!

Šimon Peták
The Conference Board

SPEAKERS

FIRDOZE BULBULIA

Memory Is a Weapon

This project examines the Fordsburg Women's Group (FWG) of 1980s South Africa through the lens of analogue and digital modalities, exploring how art functions as a strategy to preserve humanity in mediated temporalities. The FWG's activism, rooted in Indian women's political and cultural organising, demonstrates how everyday resistance, storytelling, and community networks sustain human connection and agency under systemic erasure (Motala 2019; Cachalia 2021).

Through the devised performance piece *Memory Is a Weapon* and a visual documentary derived from it, this project juxtaposes analogue, embodied enactment with digital mediation, interrogating how different modes of representation shape experience, affect, and memory. The live performance foregrounds corporeal presence, relationality, and affective engagement, while the

documentary translates these qualities into a digital format, creating new temporalities and pathways for reflection. Together, they exemplify how art mediates between immediate, human experience and digitally archived memory, recalibrating the relationship between analogue and digital modalities.

The work challenges assumptions about linear archival time and highlights the capacity of art to preserve humanity amidst technological acceleration. By situating performative and visual practices as complementary modes, the project investigates how memory, affect, and embodied histories can persist in both analogue and digital registers. It demonstrates that art, as a performative and transmedial practice, is a powerful strategy for negotiating presence, absence, and historical erasure, sustaining human connection across temporal, material, and technological divides.

BIO

Firdoze Bulbulia is an internationally acclaimed film producer, director, and educator working across film, documentary, animation, and theatre. She holds an MA in African Studies from Ohio University (USA), a BA Honours in Dramatic Arts from WITS University (South Africa), and a Licentiate in Drama from Trinity College (UK); she is currently pursuing a PhD in Art, Design, and Architecture. Her filmography is extensive and genre-diverse, comprising six feature films and numerous documentaries, including Mandela's Africa, dedicated to the legacy of Nelson Mandela, and the feature-length documentary A Song for Refugees, which was presented in the Pavillion Afriques section at the Cannes Film Festival in 2023. She has held major international leadership roles in the field of children's and youth film, including serving as President of CIFEJ and as Festival Director of The Nelson Mandela Children's Film Festival. Her work consistently integrates film practice with Pan-African perspectives and strong social engagement.

Guy Dolev

Cow Park

Cow Park is a video-based lecture-performance that examines how one place replaces another. Crossing ethnic, national, and social boundaries in a segregated city, the work explores how layered histories operate within an ongoing civil struggle.

After becoming acquainted with Save the ArQ, an activist group within the Armenian community in the Old City of Jerusalem, I was deeply moved by their juridical and community-based resistance to the leasing of their historical land: the Cow Garden. An open field where cows grazed and Armenian pilgrims and refugees pitched their tents at the beginning of the 20th century, the site is now a parking lot; should the lease proceed, a hotel will be built there.

Drawn to both the group's political urgency and the site's temporal density, I began researching around this parking lot by filming its surface, objects, people – while moving through it in reverse. Using my car's rear camera as a choreo-

graphic-documentary device, I extended a functional automotive image into a critical lens: a technology designed to eliminate blind spots became a tool for historical vision.

The contested land is captured from a low, distorted perspective, imagined as belonging to a historical cow – one of the site's former inhabitants – who witnessed waves of pilgrims and refugees in the aftermath of the 1915–1916 Armenian Genocide. Together with the contemporary activists, historical scenes are reenacted before the backward-moving cow/car: a tent is erected in a parking spot, a historical photograph is carried on screen. Through the work's materials – cows, tents, refugees, cars, activists, and theatre spectators – I seek to draw the theatrical encounter into the work as both testimony and intervention, revealing not only how places are erased but how they persist beneath the surfaces imposed upon them. Moving further into the present political moment, the work uses this conflict to approach Israel/Palestine as

a shared terrain hosting three peoples shaped by genocidal histories, inviting reflection on interethnic resonances within an unequal socio-political order.

BIO

Guy Dolev is an artist, researcher, and teacher working in performance, video, and text. Based in West Jerusalem, his practice employs critical choreographic inquiry into the city's history and politics, navigating the violent logics of Israel/Palestine to imagine cracks for escape from within: transcendence through immersion. A graduate of the danceWEB scholarship programme at the ImPulsTanz Festival in Vienna, Guy holds an MA in Cultural Studies from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and a BA in History and Humanities from Tel Aviv University. He teaches in the interdisciplinary arts programme at the Thelma Yellin High School of the Arts and physical theatre at the community centre in Umm al-Khair.

Elisabeth Eitelberger and Bello Benischauer

Live and Embodied

As artists, we are compelled to investigate the potential of AI as a constructive ally in the creative process, especially during the visualisation and planning phases of performance work. This includes tasks such as refining foreign language texts and generating images for conceptual presentations. We also acknowledge the growing concerns surrounding AI's use, whether as a deliberate, subconscious, or hidden tool. Our focus is on how AI can support conceptual development while preserving the distinct contributions of artists, performers, and human creators. Our latest project, titled *Human Error*, delves into the significant effects of artificial intelligence on human thought and behaviour. Nonetheless, an over-reliance on AI may unintentionally diminish our ability to engage in reflection and critical thinking, which are vital aspects of human intelligence. We encourage participants to explore this complexity through an experiential Masterclass centred on embodiment, empha-

sising human connection through non-verbal communication rather than solely intellectual discourse.

This masterclass offers a 90-minute immersive experience including a 30-minute discussion at the end, led by an Australian performance art collective that critically explores embodied processes within contemporary art, often situated at the periphery of mainstream practices. Drawing inspiration from works like Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and Goethe's *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, the session investigates how the unknown influences individuals and how embodied expression can deepen our comprehension of human existence. The aim is to uncover how AI can assist in refining creative ideas while preserving the essence of the artistic process, which is inherently linked to human imagination. This imaginative faculty connects us to our collective consciousness, fostering profound engagement with ourselves, others, and our surroundings – an engagement that AI has yet to replicate.

Participants will be invited to respond to sound through movement and dramatisation, utilising lines developed by the artists with AI's assistance for their project, *Human Error*, which examines the intricate dynamics of individuals in a trans-cultural society amid the growing impact of AI. The chance to delve into this project by experimenting with the concept will give participants space to culture-specific perspectives, delving into the complexities of connection and isolation experienced both individually and collectively. Through evocative imagery conveyed through dance, movement, and sound, this process will stimulate conversations about self-empowerment and the influence of AI on personal identity.

"And so, I immerse myself in embracing the uncertainties and contradictions, finding solace in the journey itself. I catch a glimpse of the elusive truths that lie at the core of this existence, transcending the boundaries of time and space, and touching the very essence of what it means to be human." (The Butterfly Catcher (personified AI) in *Human Error*, Existence Theatre/AUS)

Additional Notes:

Participants can view the concept of *Human Error* [here](#). Text lines will be provided onsite, comfortable clothes are recommended for participation

BIO

Elisabeth Eitelberger is an Australian performance artist, born and raised in Austria. She is a clinically registered psychotherapist and arts therapist, holding an MA in Philosophy along with studies in Art History and Theatre Studies from the University of Vienna. Furthering her education, she earned a Clinical MA in Creative Arts Therapies from Murdoch University in Perth based on psychodynamic/psychoanalytic training. Elisabeth has engaged in various artistic disciplines, including performance, live art, theatre, movement, and visual art. She has served as a performer, mentor, and performance trainer for ensemble members and participants of the Existence Theatre, contributing to projects and social art collaborations both in Australia and internationally. Alongside her artistic endeavours, she is dedicated to her work as a mental health professional, specialising in complex and transgenerational trauma.

Bello Benischauer is an interdisciplinary Australian artist with Austrian roots, artistic director, sound composer and performer. He creates works ranging from video poetry, audio-visual installations, public interventions, performance lectures, sound compositions to innovative theatre productions that deliver impactful socio-cultural commentary with a surreal touch. He develops projects on both national and international scale through artist residencies, festival commissions, conference presentations, and independent works. Over the years, Bello has concentrated on contemporary performative methods which seek to break down the conventional barriers between performer and audience while refining his distinctive approach known as Existence Theatre. For over twenty years, he has partnered with artist Elisabeth Eitelberger, whose contributions have been essential to their artistic endeavours and theoretical explorations. Together, they established ART IN PROCESS, a collective based in Perth, Australia, dedicated to participatory performance concepts.

Maria Luigia Giofrè

A Performative Investigation on Choreographing Patterns from TikTok Contents

The intervention presents a critical reflection and visual inquiry on a practice-based research developed through rehearsals and workshops, investigating how contents circulating on Tik Tok – namely short-form video-reels – can be translated and transfigured into embodied, live, three-dimensional, and human-performed choreographies on stage. By performing modes of attentiveness that emerge from scrolling as a cultural posture rooted on the fruition of social media, the research articulates performative

scores informed by personalised algorithmic feeds, with the objective to materialize emerging aesthetics for choreographing which intertwine the embedded theatricality with sociological and philosophical perspectives of techno-affection as posture of becoming-subject. Lastly, by proposing live embodied performances through a semiotic of movements derived from social media screens, the interventions do inquiry negotiations between mediations, liveness and immediacy.

BIO

*Maria Luigia Giofrè is an artist and PhD candidate (2024–2027) at Accademia Nazionale d'Arte Drammatica Silvio d'Amico in Rome, Italy, with a fellowship co-founded by Accademia Albertina Belle Arti di Torino and Teatro Stabile di Torino – National Theatre. She holds an MA in Contemporary Photography: Practices and Philosophies at Central Saint Martins, University of Arts London, where she graduated in 2017 with a thesis entitled *Selfie: the Uncanny Glitch of the Other Self*. Her research questions anthropologies and technologies of self-exposure within intimate and commercial arenas (i.e. social media) and how they inform expanded definitions of theatricality, live art practices, cultures of affects. Her work and research has been presented in independent and institutional programs, included: Henry Moore Foundation (2026); Museo Nazionale della Scienza e Tecnologia (2025); *Contested Desires – Creative Europe* (2024–2026); *Primavera dei Teatri* (2024); *Biennale di Venezia – Biennale Teatro, Theatre Direction u35* (2023); *Santarcangelo dei Teatri – KRAKK* (2022). She is founder and performance curator of the art residency platform *In-ruins*.*

Martyna Groth

William Kentridge: Analogue Resistance to “Pure” Digitality

The lecture addresses the experience of encountering technologically mediated performance that resists digital smoothness and acceleration. It focuses on the embodied, temporal, and affective experience generated by William Kentridge’s theatre works and animations, in which hand-drawn images, erasure, projection, and visible technical apparatuses shape perception. Rather than immersive or seamless digital environments, these works offer experiences marked by slowness, material resistance, and the persistent trace of human labour.

The presentation considers how such experiences accumulate memory, historical trauma, and political responsibility, particularly in relation to colonial and postcolonial histories. At the same time, it examines how shared spectatorship – through projection, live performance, and collective viewing – produces forms of solidarity and communal reflection. The experience discussed is thus one of negotiated proximity: between analogue and digital, individual perception and collective witnessing, technological mediation and human presence.

BIO

Martyna Groth holds PhD in the Humanities. She is a researcher and lecturer specialising in visual and puppetry theatre, new media art, multimedia practices, exhibition-making, modern and contemporary art, history of stage design and the European avant-garde. As an experienced exhibition curator and author of educational projects, actively engaged in both academic research and artistic practice, she develops interdisciplinary projects at the intersection of art and technology. She is a posthumanist and futurologist.

Kateřina Hejnarová

Empathy as a Key Tool for Creating an Authorial Dramaturgical Approach Based on Archival Materials

In my research, I have long been working towards the goal of creating an authorial dramaturgical approach based on the creative methods of František (Frank) Daniel, the Czech-American screenwriter and influential screenwriting professor of Czechoslovak New Wave, active at AFI, USC or Sundance Institute, that would reflect the unique challenges that emerging Central European screenwriters may encounter today. At first glance, it seems that the digitization of Daniel’s lectures at USC, which I am continuously analyzing, could not have come at a better time: material that previously resisted being grasped can now be easily processed by artificial intelligence tools. And yet, especially through the time spent with this archive, I am becoming increasingly aware that I need to move beyond the digital boundaries.

There are very few screenwriting problems that Frank Daniel wouldn’t have addressed in the four decades of his teaching practice. And it can be easy for researchers to

believe in the existence of a specific “Daniel’s method,” which could be just transposed into today’s thinking with the help of available archives, rationally grasped, and used for creative writing. Based on my analysis of the USC archive, however, I conclude that Daniel’s success in a film environment that may not always be kind to its debutants did not grow as much out of clearly formulated recipes, but rather the ability to establish a unique kind of safe yet stimulating environment.

The longer I work in an era where technology dominates the art of the instant, the more I feel the need to examine the value of permanence. If an algorithm can mimic technical mastery, where does the essence of artistic expression lie? In the flood of creative prompts that a machine could instantly generate based on a single lecture, what is the inherent value of the fragile, elusive space where teacher and student meet? Through the time I spent with Daniel’s lectures, I try to understand the rhythm of a human encounter that slowly transforms the student

into an artist and a researcher into a companion. In my lecture, I therefore attempt to explain, from both a philosophical and practical perspective, why empathy – in the most analogue sense possible – is essential to my work with the digitized archive.

BIO

Kateřina Hejnarová is a screenwriter, researcher, and radio author. She graduated from the Radio and Television Dramaturgy and Screenwriting Department at JAMU, where she now teaches while pursuing her PhD degree. As a researcher she is intrigued by the matters of narration, the possibilities of composing a dramatic story and its potential within the framework of intrapersonal and intergenerational dialogue. In her doctoral research, she investigates these matters within the framework of the legacy of Czech-American screenwriter Frank Daniel. As an author, she is interested in non-fictional themes, their (re)interpretation and the search for out-of-time layers in them. She feels close to the francophone environment, having published the results of her research in the Belgian film periodicals Humbug and Snapshots and completed internships at the Théâtre National de Bretagne in Rennes and the Théâtre de la Massue in Nice. Aside from JAMU, she collaborates with Czech Radio as a scriptwriter and cultural journalist.

Franziska Hiller and Hannah Baumann (Godot Komplex Collective)

Let's Play: Connection Loading – Insight Into a Hybrid Concert Format at the Vienna Konzerthaus

What happens to performance when presence is no longer defined by shared space, but by a shared decision? The lecture performance on *Let's Play: Connection Loading* examines how closeness, intimacy, and perception emerge when analogue and digital realities are no longer separate spheres but mutually dependent stages of experience. The project proposes a shift: connection is not a technical condition, but a performative act.

At its core is a hybrid concert performance in which two audiences coexist and co-create the event: one physically present, the other navigating as avatars in a *gather.town* environment. Mobile backdrops, green screens, handheld cameras, and live chats continuously destabilize perspective. The analogue audience shapes digital vision; digital movement reframes analogue

action. Rather than simulating proximity, the performance exposes the mechanisms through which presence is constructed.

The musical dramaturgy sharpens this inquiry. Beethoven's *An die ferne Geliebte* stages longing across distance. Vasks' *Pieskarieni* reflects touch as both physical and metaphysical gesture. Poulenc's *La voix humaine* reveals communication collapsing under technological mediation. Together, these works form an emotional and conceptual field in which desire, contact, and failure become audible.

Developed during the pandemic from an entirely digital conceptual process, the project is grounded in collective research, interdisciplinary collaboration, and experimental dramaturgy. The lecture performance combines reflection and

performative demonstration, offering insight into spatial design, audience disposition, and collaborative decision making in hybrid formats.

Let's Play: Connection Loading is the winning entry of the Let's Get Digital competition, organized by the mdw – University of Music and

Performing Arts Vienna and the Wiener Konzerthaus. The presentation invites discussion on a central question for contemporary theatre: If presence can be technologically extended, what remains irreducibly human in the act of performing together?

Václav Janošík

Hardly Playing – The Contemporary Need for Allegories, Dystopias, Tragedy, and Games

BIO

In 2020, Hannah Baumann, Johannes Worms, and Franziska Hiller founded the collective Godot Komplex. In the midst of the pandemic, it became their creative incubator. Godot Komplex combines musical and conceptual expertise from the field of classical music. The collective designs aesthetically mediating music events and sees itself as a think tank for new stage formats and participatory spaces of experience. The collective has received several awards and has realized projects for, among others, the German Federal Cultural Foundation, the Vienna Konzerthaus, the Junge Deutsche Philharmonie, the mdw – University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, the Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy University of Music and Theater Leipzig, TONALi (Germany), and the Hidalgo Festival (Germany).

I would like to offer three claims. First, that we are living through an allegorical turn, in which the old liberal language – once able to lubricate consensus – has ceased to function effectively. This crisis includes realist cultural forms, such as cinema, whose representational logic no longer seems sufficient to grasp systemic conditions (bring enough voters to electio and viewers to cinemas). Second, I argue that digital games have become the emblematic forms of these contemporary allegories. Games do not simply depict systems; they operationalize them, allowing players to move within structures of constraint, agency, and failure. Third, I suggest that dystopia remains the dominant content of these allegories. However, rather than reading dystopian worlds solely through the lens of the “there is no alternative” future (as described by Mark

Fisher), I will attempt to reconsider them as more positive allegorical battlefields – ambivalent spaces where conflict, decision, world-building and positioning become thinkable again.

The paper will not unfold in a strictly linear argument, but through a series of encounters. After introducing the allegorical turn, I will outline a brief media-history of *Empire* and its transformation into contemporary infrastructural forms. I will then address the linkage of art and philosophy in terms of allegory; the slow cancellation of the future within the liberal paradigm – the end of the “end of history”; the dark forest theory of the internet; artwalks as a topical genre shared by contemporary art and gaming; and finally the dichotomy of hellscapes and pastoral gardens as a basic structure of game world-building.

BIO

Václav Janošík is a theorist, professor and curator, focusing on pop-philosophy, vernacular (popular) ontologies, speculative history, democratization of contemporary art or thinking, political ecology (of affects), philosophy of technics and media, and gaming. He works at the Faculty of Art and Design of UJEP, UMRUM Prague, The New Centre, and the University of New Haven. In his pedagogical, curatorial, philosophical, and artistic practice, he connects contemporary philosophy, visual art, and popular culture. One of his aims is to bridge the critical legacy of art and philosophy with broader culture and topical issues of today such as identity politics, technology or affective ecologies.

Maria Oiva

Who Gets to Be Repeated? Performing Queer Presence with Artificial Intelligence

This lecture approaches artificial intelligence as a mimetic system that reorganizes our understandings of humanity, agency, and consciousness. It opens a body of work that unfolds the friction between AI-generated world models and corporality, a tension that becomes visible in live performance.

The lecture draws from artistic practice, with particular attention to *A Perfect Actor*, a stage work-in-progress in which we are developing a performance method where the asymmetric interaction between a human and an AI generates stage language. The actor works with linguistic impulses given by the AI and investigates what their body does under these conditions. It is an encounter that is both embodied and ritualistic: a conversation between the mortal and the immortal that does not settle into existing forms. The work focuses on the relationship between artificial intelligence and the performing body, particularly from the position of a non-normative, queer body.

The work engages with what happens when AI-based language models operate within live performance situations and how this presence shapes a queer performer's negotiation of visibility, vulnerability, and agency. This becomes especially tangible in performance, where lived, embodied experience resists statistical generalization. For queer, non-normative performers, this tension is not abstract but physical: safety, legibility, and acceptance are negotiated under the gaze of both audiences and systems optimized around normativity. Grounded in artistic practice, the lecture includes concrete examples from ongoing stage work, situating reflection within live performance thinking. Rather than defining what artificial intelligence is, the work foregrounds what its use does on stage. Without proposing solutions, the lecture presents a performance as a framed site where the limits of algorithmic mimesis are tested through flesh, risk, and presence.

BIO

Maria Oiva is a performance artist and theatre director whose work explores spectatorship, power, and embodied experience in contemporary performance. For over two decades, she has developed performances often placing the spectator's body and perception at the centre of the work. In recent years, her practice has focused on examining how artificial intelligence and digital systems operate as performative agents on stage. As a founding member of the #digiteatteri collective, she has created works in which algorithmic systems, language technologies, and networked media actively shape dramaturgy, presence, and interaction. For this pioneering work at the intersection of theatre and technology, she received the TINFO Award in 2019. At the core of Oiva's artistic practice are questions of power, gender, and sexuality, and how these are performed, constructed, and destabilised in live situations. Her site-sensitive and durational works create conditions in which normative structures become visible and open to questioning.

Šimon Peták, Paulína Petáková and Daniel Echeverri

Dotykáče: Making Smartphones Act

"What if your phone came to life and wanted to discuss your relationship?"

Adolescents often describe their mobile phones as both a "refuge" (providing comfort) and a "burden" (causing stress). We call this phenomenon 'a phone paradox'. Multiple studies confirm that high screen time is consistently linked to lower well-being, while current digital literacy often lacks an experiential component to address deep emotional attachments. To address this topic, we developed an artistic-educational program for teenagers at primary and secondary schools (age 14–18) named *Dotykáče*. The aim of the program is to provide teenagers with space for reflecting upon their relationship to their phones and to raise their awareness of their habits with the device. In 2025, *Dotykáče* was tested with four testing groups (in total approx. 75 teenagers) in Czechia.

The program consists of a digital storytelling web app and a subsequent workshop programme. Inviting teenagers to use their own devices and earphones, the app personifies the phone as a character employing various methods (which include chat, audio, video, and gaming elements) to develop user interaction with both the device and classmates. Borrowing from the performative format known as autoteatro, the app facilitates a self-reflective experience that serves as an artefact for the subsequent workshop. The workshop, grounded in the Montessori pedagogical system and Erikson's developmental psychology, uses creative teaching approaches (theatre education games, discussion based upon visual materials gained through the app) to deepen both individual and collective understanding of the experience.

BIO

Šimon Peták is a theatre dramaturge, lecturer at JAMU in Brno, scriptwriter, and poet. Currently, he is in the process of finishing doctoral studies at his alma mater. His research focuses on models of teaching theatre dramaturgy at universities in Europe.

Paulína Petáková is a theatre educator and director. She graduated from JAMU with an MA degree in Theatre Pedagogy and continues her doctoral studies there. Her pedagogical experience covers age groups from preschool to adults, state schools and elementary art schools. In her artistic work, she most often focuses on theatre for children.

Daniel Echeverri is a graphic designer and assistant professor at Masaryk University in Brno specialising in interaction design and emerging technologies. With teaching and professional experience in America, Asia, and Europe, his research explores digital and tangible interactive narratives and experiences.

Alyssa Ridder

Investigating Agency and Meaning-Making Through Virtual Costume Design

Virtual reality technology offers innovative and transformative ways to experience costume design. Participants can now ‘wear’ virtual costumes made from 3D digital materials, immersing themselves in a first-person, embodied perspective of the character. My artistic research investigates the agency and meaning-making potential of this emerging medium, conceptualizing what it means for participants to “put on” a virtual costume and play as someone else.

In the current phase of my research, I am focusing on how participants can embody digital costumes in virtual reality, how these costumes can serve as agents for play, and how this play can transform ways of thinking about identity and difference. My questions are theoretically framed by the concept of costume thinking (Pantouvaki, 2020), which positions costume practice as a tool for critically understanding human presence; and by the concept of

insubordinate costume (Marshall, 2024), which proposes costume as an agent for performance. By applying these concepts to virtual reality, I am considering how playing in a virtual costume can transform the participant’s own sense of identity (Tanenbaum and Tanenbaum, 2015).

Preliminary findings from studio practice demonstrate virtual costume’s potential as an agent for embodied meaning-making. This work-in-progress presentation aims to engage conference attendees in a dialogue about how these technologically-enabled experiences can deepen our understanding of human presence. As virtual technology becomes increasingly present in daily life, it is crucial to discuss new theoretical insights from practice. When we know how virtual costume can shape critical thought, practitioners and researchers can design more ethical and meaningful participant experiences.

BIO

Alyssa Ridder is a freelance costume designer and doctoral researcher at Aalto University in Helsinki, Finland. Her research investigates digital costume design in real time virtual reality performance. Alyssa's virtual costume design praxis is rooted in 15 years of experience in costume design and production for live performance. She is an advocate for ethical design approaches and an industry leader in integrating digital tools with traditional costume techniques for more accessible and sustainable production workflows. Alyssa previously served as a lecturer at the Faculty of Costume Design and Technology at Metropolitan State University of Denver and holds an MFA in costume design from The Pennsylvania State University.

Zoë Svendsen and Roman Senkl

Story.glitch and the Politics of Interactivity

Inspired by stories of transit across Europe before and during World War II, *TRANSIT* explores how hostile bureaucratic systems shape and distort lives past, present and on into climate-stressed futures.

TRANSIT is an audio-visual cityscape interactive app-based performance work that plays out in your home, on the streets and in cafés and hotel bars. It is built on the new interactive story.glitch platform. This 'work-in-progress' presentation will share the early-stage practice-led research behind this new hybrid performance

that brings together the digital (chatbots, online forms that mutate, audio-visual storytelling via a smartphone interface) with the analogue (letters, suitcases, spaces of limbo: cafés, hotel bars, waiting rooms) to ask: What is the relationship between the chimera of agency in gamification and the feeling of being caught in a bureaucratic web of increasingly sticky opacity? How can we develop an uncanny resonance – and counterpoint – between analogue and digital to thematise politics of participation? When does observation become surveillance?

BIO

Zoë Svendsen is a director, dramaturg, writer, researcher making participatory theatre performances and installations exploring ecological crisis and capitalism, including: Ness, a digital/sonic immersive landscape performance adapted from the poem by Robert Macfarlane (HighTide/Metal Culture); Wild Dress by Kate Fletcher (Hawkwood Centre for Future Thinking); Love Letters to a Liveable Future (Cambridge Junction); video installation Factory of the Future (Oslo Architecture Triennale); Artsadmin Green Commission, WE KNOW NOT WHAT WE MAY BE (Barbican); Tipping Point commission, 3rd Ring Out. Zoë is an associate artist at Cambridge Junction and lectures on dramaturgy and performance at the University of Cambridge, undertaking practice-led research. Through artistic associations with HighTide and the Donmar Warehouse, Zoë developed the concept/ethos of climate dramaturgy, running workshops both nationally and internationally. Zoë is a founding member of the pan-European network, the Naked Theatre.

Roman Senkl is a Berlin and Vienna-based theatre director/writer with a focus on digital and hybrid theater since 2008. His pioneering works include stage and multimedia productions, mixed reality performances (AR, VR – including the world's largest VR environment in Mozilla Hubs with Ars Electronica), holographic projections, as well as apps for interactive storytelling and artificial intelligence. Roman was co-founder of the Academy for Theater and Digitality in Dortmund, Head of the Digital Arts Laboratory at the Berliner Festspiele/Theatertreffen, as well as Head of the Department of Digital Art at Theater Dortmund. He is a founding member of the Naked Theatre, a pan-European theatre network initiated by Belgian theatre director, Luk Perceval. His production of Stanislaw Lem's Solaris will premiere at Burgtheater Wien, in June.

Cèlia Tort Pujol and Myrthe Bokelmann

Assume Calibration Pose: This Breath Isn't Mine

Assume Calibration Pose: This Breath Isn't mine uses a feedback loop in which the signals from a dancer provide input for a musician. This allows a musician to feel the movement of a dancer and react to it, creating an interplay between digital signals and physical sensations, resulting in a responsive tactile system. On Thursday 24 October 2024, we performed the piece at Sint Lucas Antwerpen. As the audience sat down, the devices that we relied on weren't sending out any signals, and our only option was to perform

without a working set-up. When the system crashed, there was a necessity for us to acknowledge its flawed ness. Rather than focusing on the frustration of a system "not working", we redirected our attention to sharpening our listening skills and spatial awareness. After this experience, we realised how the somatic experience of collaborating with technological devices made us feel present with each other and our surroundings, as well as understanding the imprint technology has in our bodies.

BIO

Cèlia Tort Pujol is an oboist, performer and researcher currently based in Antwerp. She graduated cum laude from her music MA degree in June 2020 at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam. Cèlia explores new contexts of music creation and interdisciplinary collaboration where to bring the oboe along. She also leads workshops around collective creation and improvisation, using both music and theatre. She has performed in Catalonia, Spain, Andorra, Italy, The Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Slovenia, Slovakia, Latvia, Estonia, England, the US and the UAE. Apart from playing with contemporary music ensembles and making music through free improvisation, her practice nowadays focuses on performative AI in the context of the Flemish research group the Algorithmic Gaze.

Myrthe Bokelmann is a dance maker, dance performer and researcher based in Antwerp. They work in interdisciplinary collaborations as a freelancer and within the research group the Algorithmic Gaze at Sint Lucas. Their interest goes towards bodily perception and expression of sound, movement and tactility, as well as finding common languages to create in across disciplines. Myrthe has worked with choreographers such as Claudia Bosse, Eilit Marom, ashleyho+domeniknaue and LeineRoebana, and has created together with other artists in "notthecenter" collective, Guterstoff Festival, Jenna Vergeynst and CUSK collective. Within the context of The Algorithmic Gaze, together with their colleagues they set up RAIVE, an interdisciplinary summer school for young makers. Myrthe hopes to create art that is as honest and playful as possible.

Žilvinas Vingelis

Directing Presence and Absence: Media Montage Strategies for Creating Hybrid Bodies and Images

This lecture is grounded in a four-year doctoral artistic research project, *Media Montage in Visual Theatre: Directing Presence and Absence*, which develops media montage as a directorial method through the practical and conceptual lens of a theatre maker. The research investigates how presence and absence function as dramaturgical forces in constructing hybrid bodies, hybrid images, and intermedial scenic space.

Drawing on three directed performances (*Dilettante*, *Orpheus*, *Kafka Insomnia*), the study shows that hybrid embodiment in theatre does not arise from the fusion of media, but from the tension between the actor's physical body and the mediated forms that surround, extend, or transform it. This aligns with Eisenstein's idea that meaning emerges in the interval between components and with Goebbels's "aesthetics of absence," where significance is produced through gaps the spectator must imaginatively fill.

In interactive media, where code becomes reactive rather than static, montage operates as a real-time negotiation in which performer and system continually influence one another. By contrast, fixed and pre-recorded media impose predetermined temporal and semantic structures that the actor must adapt to, animating the technology through corporeal precision and the illusion of liveness. In both cases, the resulting configurations of presence and absence produce hybrid embodiments that neither the apparatus nor the performer could generate independently, each involving a negotiation with what Flusser defines as the programmed constraints of the apparatus.

A key focus is the construction of hybrid bodies – practically demonstrated across the performances directed during the research – in which the performer moves through metamorphoses of physical body, shadow, projection, cinematic image, and puppet, maintaining identity across media layers.

The lecture also presents four intermedial space strategies – copy machine, panorama, assemblage, collage – conceptually refined during rehearsal, defining how media reshape and reorganize the stage. These strategies reveal intermedial space as a dramaturgical apparatus producing hybrid scenic

realities that require the spectator's active imaginative participation. Ultimately, directing presence and absence through media montage enables theatre to generate hybrid embodiments in which physical bodies, technologies, and space form a single dramaturgical organism.

BIO

Žilvinas Vingelis is a Lithuanian theatre director, an assistant professor, artistic researcher, and head of the Department of Acting and Directing at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, and co-founder and artistic director of the visual theatre company Kosmos Theatre. He has created around fifteen stage productions across drama, puppetry, opera, and visual theatre, exploring how bodies, images, and technologies interact on stage. His practice spans both text-based, conventional drama productions and textless, post-dramatic works in visual theatre, as well as interdisciplinary projects and installations, VR-based theatrical developments, and collaborations with technicians, programmers, media artists, and composers. In 2025, these practices culminated in the successful defence of his doctoral artistic research project, Media Montage in Visual Theatre: Directing Presence and Absence (honorary member of the defence committee prof. Heiner Goebbels). Internationally, he has participated in festivals, lectured at theatre schools, and presented at conferences on visual theatre and technology–performance relations across more than six countries and over twenty events.



Conference Community

Since 2025, the conference has also included a **Community Platform**, which offers a dedicated and autonomous space connected to the conference programme while remaining open to free exploration and sharing. Over the course of three days, the artists involved in the community will jointly explore the posed questions in a collaborative and creative environment. To reflect on the conference themes, they will employ methods such as situational interactions, interpersonal dialogue, shared experiences, and artistic expression – approaching the topics in new and meaningful ways.

Members of the Community Platform in 2026 are:

- Attila Antal (Institute for New Theatre in Novi Sad)
- Krystian Biłko (Aleksander Zelwerowicz National Academy of Dramatic Art in Warsaw)
- Rodrigo de Freitas Cordeiro (Research Institute in Art, Design and Society, Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Porto)
- Richie Lux Kramár (Janáček Academy of Performing Arts in Brno)
- Orkun Türkmen (freelancer, performer)



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