

Call for Articles

Amfiteater

On Labour in Theatre and Performance

Issue editor: Tomaž Krpič

Deadline for submitting article proposals: 15 September 2024

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Peer review reports due: 1 June 2025

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The special issue of the journal *Amfiteater* (<https://journals.uni-lj.si/amfiteater>) seeks article contributions to reflect critically on labour in theatre and performance.

The recent upsurge of interest in the issue of labour in theatre and performance is driven by deep concern caused by changes in the global economy with profound negative effects on human life. Especially theatre has been confronted with high levels of precariousness among members of its community. Changes in the labour market are reflected in the smaller number of theatre professionals with secure jobs, while the number of those who depend on moving from one project to another has severely increased. Such a status brings many problems unknown to those with permanent jobs, from low social security with bad perspectives for the future to living on the edge or even beyond dissenting human existence, not to mention the evidence of labour exploitation within the theatre economy. This situation was exposed and aggravated by the outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic when theatres were subject to strict sanitary sanctions or even closed. And although the situation has returned to the old normality, many who had previously worked in theatre and performance have not.

As might be expected, theatre artists are responding to the new economic reality. Their reaction is twofold. Firstly, they are trying to (better) organise their own

professional community politically, identifying the main problems and offering possible solutions to draw society's attention to their unique problems and exert pressure on political elites with the intention of improving their position. However, decision-makers have not always complied or even listened to them. In the capitalist economic and social system, where social security depends heavily on the individual's ability to accumulate capital, and with the disappearance of the welfare state, theatre communities gradually become or remain ghettoised within their own social class. Secondly, part of the theatre production has been dedicated to critically addressing the new economic and social reality on stage, like Teja Reba's *Work with Love* to the group Working Theatre. However, by constructing a distinct theatre aesthetic and performance of precariousness, the artists find themselves in a contradictory position; to criticise unjust social and economic relations on stage, they must still produce their artworks within and with the support of the very same unjust system against which they are rebelling in the first place.

While most members of the theatre community are involved in the production of plays and performances, others are (also) involved in the production of knowledge about theatre. The production of a specific theatre community epistemology and the application of knowledge play very important roles in the critical engagement with the new situation in which the theatre community finds itself. While personal stories of theatre workers drive and motivate politically oriented protests against unjust conditions, theatre scholars, on the contrary, strive for rational, objective knowledge. And this is what the theatre community needs to better protect its work and mission, and this is what we are obliged to do.

Assche, Annelies Van. *Labour and Aesthetics in European Contemporary Dance: Dancing Precarity*. London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2020.

Clements Cotton, Brídín, and Natalie Robin. *Theatre Work: Reimagining the Labour of Theatrical Production*. London, Focal Press, 2024.

Kunst, Bojana. *Artist at Work, Proximity of Art and Capitalism*. Winchester and Washington, Zero Books, 2015.

McAvoy, Mari. *Rehearsing Revolutions: The Labour Drama Experiment and Radical Activism in the Early Twentieth Century*. Iowa City, University of Iowa Press, 2019.

Orr, Joey. *A Sourcebook of Performance Labour: Activators, Activists, Archives, All*. London, Routledge, 2024.

Although the editor is open to additional suggestions, the questions that the special issue aims to address may include:

- labour and actor training;
- education for work in theatre and performance;

- professionalism and labour;
- passion and labour in theatre and performance;
- the aesthetics of labour;
- the performing body and labour;
- feminist theory of labour in theatre and performance;
- gender and labour;
- the nature of precarity in theatre and performance;
- exploitation of actors and performers;
- ethical issues;
- neoliberal ideology and labour;
- thematisation of labour in post-Fordist society, including absence;
- resistance to labour;
- laziness in theatre and performance;
- the distribution of labour in theatre and performance;
- social and political control and the maintenance of discipline;
- class consciousness in theatre;
- cultural politics and labour in theatre and performance;
- epistemology of labour in theatre;
- methodological issues;
- the future of labour studies in theatre and performance;
- human rights in theatre and performance;
- work and health in theatre and performance;
- theatre for the working class;
- emotional and/or cognitive labour in theatre;
- psychological aspects of work in theatre and performance.

Authors are invited to submit an abstract of approximately 300 words and a CV of 100 words. Following the review and selection of abstracts, successful authors will be asked to submit draft articles of 5,000 words (including in-text citations, reference list and any footnotes). All proposals, submissions and general enquiries should be sent directly to *Amfiteater* at amfiteater@slogi.si and the Special Issue Editor at tomaz.krpic@guest.arnes.si.