

Laura Vorweg is a visiting lecturer and doctoral researcher at Royal Holloway, University of London and has previously worked as a director, assistant director, and staff producer in opera and theatre. Her research explores the relationship between performer training and interdisciplinary performance practice within theatre and opera and seeks to examine the ways in which embodied physical skills are taught, learnt, maintained, and adapted within professional practice. Laura has contributed chapters to *Interdisciplinary Arts: Contemporary Perspectives*, published by the University of Malta Press, and *Time and Performer Training*, published by Routledge.

Editorial

Chris Green and Jon Berry

What happens to political thought, practice, and imagination when it loses hold on 'the future'? It goes into crisis. The analytic, psychological, and libidinal structures of 20th century revolutionary politics were beholden to the temporal form of the future – it even gave the name to the first movement of the avant-garde: Futurism. The future was on the side of the revolution. It was a great and empowering myth, but few believe it any longer: the future is over. Its last vestiges were squandered in the schemes of a heavily futurized financial capitalism. (Berardi 3)

It could be said that we are living in the end times. Though this is not the end of history, as Francis Fukuyama once infamously stated at the end of the 20th century. Instead, this is *an* end of history, a curtain call for the myth of the saviour of humanity, Neoliberal Capitalism. Instead of delivering on its promise of growth without end via the sage of the free market, humanity has engendered a system of devastation. Through its desire for more, Neoliberal Capitalism has created monumental wealth for the few and destitution for the many (monumental wealth disparity), ecological disaster for the planet, and a highly destructive logic of casualisation/privatisation which threatens our most precious of public services. Our present of over-financialization and growth could be seen to be the source of what philosopher Jean Baudrillard describes as the melancholia of systems, a 'brutal disaffection that characterises our saturated systems'. (Baudrillard 162)

However, it is in this ending that we could find hope. Performance and art are in a uniquely privileged position to create space to open the imagination to be able to access what we need to bring into being a better world. As Vienne Chan notes, 'art benefits the art maker because it lets us

imagine something else. And it creates a desire for change. Art may not create change itself, but without this desire, there will be no transformation (in a democratic society)' (Chan). It is this potential for imagining and re-imagining that we hope to open up onto in this issue of Platform. While the future prescribed to many today is bleak, we hope to identify the necessary potentialities that performance and art can help to bring forth.

It would be remiss of us not to mention the sheer concentration of violence that pervades society at time of writing. The UK is in the midst of one of the worst cost of living crises in recent history, spurred on by a reckless economic plans enacted by an unelected Prime Minister; amongst numerous devastating wars happening across the world, Russia's invasion of Ukraine continues to cause devastation; Israel's bombardment and ground invasion of Gaza and other Palestinian territories in response to the Hamas attacks has brought death and devastation to an already tense region. Yet it is in the face of these tragedies that we are seeing renewed calls for change: calls for an immediate ceasefire grow from all sides of the political and identity spectrum, notably with Jewish communities organising with Jewish Voice for Peace to take over Grand Central Station to demand an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, wearing t-shirts emblazoned with anti-war slogans that mirrored the Act Up demonstrations of the 1990s. However, we are alarmed to hear of artists, curators, producers, and actors, are losing their jobs, being uninvited from speaking engagements and even having their security put at risk for participating in calls for action against war. Yet, even in the face of structural and state violence, calls for peace continue, driven by an imagination of a future founded in the possibility of peace (and hope) for all.

The authors in this issue of Platform are comprised of artists, researchers, practitioners, makers, and people in the world. Their essays and creative contributions in this issue explore a diverse range of subjects that seek to address a variety of possible ways that we might begin to reimagine the

future, through queer structural critique, performance responses, embodied experiences of performance, experiencing art installations, and explorations of different models of finance. We are happy to present these contributions with you and wish to invite you to think alongside them to re-imagine the future that we want to bring into being for ourselves and for each other.

Aura da Fonseca's paper explores the poetic experiences of transitioning as a transfeminine person, explored through their solo performance *7=8* (2012), the text is brought together in a stylistic way that is divided into seven parts. The analysis of the performance offers the reader a way to think about what it is to transition and is an embodied understanding of moving towards the future where the live performance is reperformed through the text, where reader becomes audience and witness to the work.

Marley Treloar's illustrated essay speculates the possibilities of alternative economic models that would allow galleries the means to embed social practices within their spaces. The essay highlights the difficulties facing the cultural sectors and the barriers to funding that are being faced by arts organisations because of relentless cuts and the damage caused by Covid-19. However, Treloar offers fresh insights for alternative models of funding and of the structures that arts organisations operate, and to maximise on the means they have available to them—one example is to rethink how Artsadmin use their café space at Toynbee studios. In rethinking these infrastructures Treloar draws on social, and community engaged arts practices from the 1960s to 1990s to rethink future economies.

Sebastian Mylly's contribution offers a reflection on the recent resurgence of industrial action as a 'performance of striking' and reflects on the goals and functions of these strikes. Mylly argues that the purpose of these strikes has shifted away from being solely about having an economic impact and are now instead more focused on the societal impacts, the space of the picket line they suggest has become a space where other forms of relational

activities take place. The article frames these protests through the lens of performance studies, in so doing the actions are able to be read as performance, in so doing building an argument about the 'use' of striking and its connection to current socio-economic issues and inequalities.

Chris Green's article explores concepts of post-work theory and spare time as possible ways to re-imagine our relationship to labour, Green offers engagement with art as a possible way to use our time. This is done through two examples, the first is their embodied engagement and experiences of seeing *After Work* (2022), an exhibition held at South London Gallery that included work by Céline Condorelli with Ben Rivers and Jay Bernard where Condorelli was invited to make a playground in a nearby housing estate. The exhibition includes a film and some play-like sculptures, the second example discussed is the group show *In the Meantime Mid-day Comes Around* held at Kunsthalle Wien in Vienna which explored our relationships with work.

Rob Fellman's contribution is a piece of performative writing that exists somewhere between a game, a set of rules or provocations, and critical writing that takes the twenty-eight-year career of the contemporary performance company Third Angel as its subject to explore the ever-increasing precarity of artists and theatre companies. The article draws on a range of Third Angel's approaches to making to reflect on wider socio-economic conditions that are impacting the wider arts and cultural sector, pointing forward towards possible tactics for survival of performance companies, that could take the form of the rules of the game laid out by Fellman.

Laura Moreton-Griffiths' short story *Earth* acts as a grounding for the next section of the journal. Set in a future overrun by techno-neco-capital, Moreton-Griffiths imagines the challenges emerging from the interplay between technics and society. Crafting a sense of wireloom claustrophobia, the story searches for a line of flight, a way of responding that might liber-

ate those still in the mire, or at least show a way to attempt an escape from the clutches of an uncertain past.

Mixing reflective critical essay and poetry, Katsilerou engages with the difficult questions around cultivating the intangible. Drawing upon direction from the World Health Organisation, theories of improvisation, and choreography, Katsilerou puts together an interrogation of concepts such as resilience, embodiment, and interconnection, outlining ways in which improvisation can be fertile ground for developing skills to be used in non-creative spheres.

Taking cues from crip theory, feminist theory and lived experience, Helen Stratford's 'Incline Decline' utilises reclaimed diagrams to open up new paradigms of spatiality. Focusing on the material conditions of producing academic work, Stratford generates depictions of life living with chronic pain which exceed the forces that seek to reduce it to symptoms or scales. Seeking to resituate ideas of disability through crippling one's experience of space-time, Stratford's artists' pages outline new normativities of spatio-temporal being, opening up potentials for rethinking the world around us and our relationship to it.

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