

## **CFP Special Issue: Carcerality, Theatre, Rights**

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### **Research in Drama Education**

#### **Schedule:**

Abstract due: 30 September 2019.

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This special issue on Carcerality, Theatre, Rights invites submissions exploring the role of theatre and performance in challenging and resisting incarceration in its various forms. In particular, this issue is interested in practice and scholarship that engages with rights discourse in order to highlight the role of theatre and performance in resisting pervasive logics and technologies of carcerality. What role can theatre and performance play in highlighting the rights of those experiencing state sponsored marginalisation, control and imprisonment? And what role can theatre and performance play in challenging the exclusionary structures of carcerality?

#### **Carcerality**

Within the context of mass incarceration and surveillance, carcerality is becoming an increasingly urgent interdisciplinary field of research and praxis. With etymological origins to the Latin 'carcer' for 'prison', carcerality today covers a wide range of 'spaces', from missions, reserves and residential schools established to contain Indigenous peoples, to immigration detention centres, and the use of 'black sites' or secret prison facilities used to detain enemy combatants in the global war on terror. Carcerality also involves considering how surveillance and incarceration are connected to issues of race, class and gender. Currently more than 10.35 million people are held in penal institutions throughout the world, and since 2000 the world prison population has grown by almost 20% (Walmsley, 2016). This global trend, coupled with the increasing privatisation of justice, raises concerns about the potential negative impact of commercial interests on prison populations as well as concerns about the long-term sustainability of prison institutions and facilities (Jacobson, Heard, & Fair, 2017). Moreover, the colonial legacy of disadvantage, over-policing and over-incarceration continues to disproportionately affect Indigenous peoples in settler-colonial nations such as Canada, the USA, Australia, and New Zealand (Cunneen & Tauri, 2016; Webb, 2011). From the world's largest open-air prisons of Gaza and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, to the refugee camps in Europe and the Pacific, to the immigration detention centres in the US, we are locking up and controlling more people than ever before.

## **Theatre and Incarceration**

The ability of theatre to imagine new futures for incarcerated communities was documented in James Thompson's seminal publication *Prison Theatre* (1998). Michael Balfour's *Theatre in Prison: Theory and Practice* (2004) recorded developments in the field since Thompson's publication. Certain recurring themes are present within this field: how practitioners frame theatre projects with incarcerated communities; the privileging of transferrable skills and therapeutic benefits that come from participating in performance; and the need for critical and methodological models to help evaluate these benefits to promote the use of theatre and performance within criminal justice. It is now 20 years since Thompson's publication first questioned whether theatre in prisons is about humanising the system or about transforming it (Thompson, 1998, p. 16). Yet much scholarship and practice is still preoccupied with notions of utility. While this special issue does not seek to question the validity or benefits of theatre and creativity to incarcerated communities, we seek contributions that shift the discussion from considerations of 'use' to arguments that highlight the importance of art as a fundamental human right, and a potent form of resistance. We seek contributions exploring forms of socially engaged performance that are informed by activism and rights discourse. We also welcome contributions that embrace Indigenous, non-Western or de-colonising approaches to theorising the practice.

## **Rights**

Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) states that "everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits" (UN General Assembly, 1948). Cultural rights are inseparable from human rights, as recognized in Article 5 of the 2001 UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity, and can be defined as the right of access to, participation in and enjoyment of culture (UNESCO, 2001). Moreover, the rights of Indigenous peoples to their culture and intellectual and cultural property has been recognised by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (UN General Assembly, 2007). Despite their recognition within international law, individuals, groups and communities continue to be denied their cultural and artistic rights. Moreover, a recent report assessing the global state of artistic freedom warns of the emergence of a new global culture of silencing others (Freemuse 2018). According to this report, in 2017, on average one person every week was prosecuted for expressing themselves artistically, while thousands of pieces of visual art, music, theatre, dance and literature were censored, vandalised or destroyed (Freemuse, 2018, p.6). Further, authorities might silence cultural expression within sites of confinement as a strategy for removing identity and agency, or use access to arts experiences as a form of leverage to encourage good behaviour and impose discipline.

We invite artists, scholars, activists and community workers to submit abstracts for proposed articles that engage with the three key terms of this special issue: 'carcerality', 'theatre', and 'rights'. We are particularly keen to hear from practitioners and scholars exploring theatre in prison. Possible areas of focus include:

- Theatre and decolonising corrections.
- Performance, incarceration, control and disobedience.
- Performance and arrest as civil disobedience.
- Theatre, incarceration and structures of exclusion.
- Theatre, incarceration, participation and inclusion.
- Performance, incarceration and the ethics of representation.
- Performance in confined spaces and notions of immersive theatre.
- Theatre and performance that resist cultures of mass incarceration.
- Theatre and performance that resist cultures of surveillance and control.

This special issue will be co-edited by Dr. Rand Hazou (Massey University) and Dr. Sarah Woodland (Griffith University). Initial abstracts of 250 words should be submitted via email to Rand and Sarah by 30 September 2019.

**Dr. Rand T. Hazou – Senior Lecturer in Theatre**

Email: [r.t.hazou@massey.ac.nz](mailto:r.t.hazou@massey.ac.nz)

*School of English and Media Studies, Massey University.*

Rand is a theatre academic and facilitator with experience working across a variety of creative and community contexts. In 2004, he was commissioned by the UNDP to travel to the Occupied Territories in Palestine to work as a theatre consultant running workshops for Palestinian youths. He is currently a Senior Lecturer in Theatre in the School of English and Media Studies at Massey University. His research explores theatre that engages with issues of social justice. His research on Asylum Seeker and Refugee Theatre has been published in a series of international journal articles. In Aotearoa he has recently led teaching and creative projects engaging with both prison and aged-care communities.

**Dr Sarah Woodland- Research Fellow**

Email: [s.woodland@griffith.edu.au](mailto:s.woodland@griffith.edu.au)

*Queensland Conservatorium Research Centre, Griffith University*

Sarah is a researcher, practitioner and educator in arts, theatre and performance, with over 20 years' experience in the arts and cultural sectors in Australia and the UK. Sarah has facilitated projects with a number of community groups, including *Daughters of the Floating Brothel* (Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre 2015), a participatory radio drama exploring the history of female incarceration in Australia. Sarah is currently leading the project *Listening to Country*, a collaboration with incarcerated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to create an immersive audio work for the purpose of stress relief and cultural connection. Sarah's research interests are in Participatory Arts, Socially Engaged Arts, Community Arts and Cultural Development, Applied Theatre, and Prison Theatre.

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