Call for Papers

Performing Care and Carelessness

An interdisciplinary hybrid conference hosted by The Performance of the Real Research Theme
at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand, 14th – 16th February 2024

Keynotes:

Amanda Stuart-Fisher is Reader in Contemporary Performance at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London. Her research areas include applied theatre, theatre as testimony and the performance of narratives that deal with real events of trauma. Stuart-Fisher 's most recent book is *Performing Care: New perspectives on socially engaged theatre* co-edited with James Thompson (Manchester: University of Manchester Press).

Ruth Fitzgerald is a Professor of Anthropology at the University of Otago. Her research interests are in the disciplinary subfield of medical anthropology, in which she takes a sociocultural approach. Her work draws its inspiration from a deep commitment to the study of health and illness in its social and political context.

Shilot Groot is an Associate Professor in Community and Applied Social Psychology at the University of Auckland. She is an interdisciplinary social scientist who works in the domains of Māori/cultural worldviews and wellbeing; resistance and resilience; sexuality and sex work; relational health and health inequalities; homelessness and urban poverty.

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Care is a topic of enormous complexity that is relevant to all of us. In a turbulent era, scholars from many different fields are returning again and again to consider care, or a lack of care, in political spheres, in relation to the environment, in a globalised world, in everyday life, amidst health crises, and in our mediatised and digital lives.

Care is both an affective orientation (I.e. 'caring about') and a practice (I.e. 'caring for', or 'taking care of'). As such, it is something that is both performed, and performative; attached to embodied subjectivities, in which it takes on polysemic potential as a communicative and symbolic as well as relational act. As intimate and everyday as it can be, it is also recognised as being both political and politicised; entangled with systems of power at both macro and micro/everyday levels. As James Thompson observes, while

care was once considered the province of the household, it is now 'a crucial issue within public policy' (2020: 41–2). This is perhaps especially true given that 21st century care politics have been deeply concerned with aims such as unmaking racial capitalism, cisheteropatriarchy, the carceral state, and the colonial present (Woodly et al. 2021: 891).

A lack of care - or a carelessness - can also become routinely embedded in many social institutions. As we acknowledge structures that represent barriers to care/ing, we can also acknowledge that caring despite these can stand as a form of resistance; an articulation of particular ethical commitments, an expression of collective identity, or an act of political imagination. As such, amidst shifting and challenging contemporary contexts, we consider how a call to care (for marginalised groups, for the natural world, for the people around us, and for distant others) can generate tensions and dilemmas. We focus on how both care and carelessness are performed, negotiated, and communicated, in both public and private settings, in response.

We encourage contributions relating (but not limited) to the following aspects of the performance and performativity of care:

- **Landscapes, geographies, and architectures of care:** how ways of using and/or designing spaces might express care or carelessness, through inclusion and inclusion, enabling or disabling; care of environment in the context of climate change; multispecies relations of care in a more-than-human world
- **Mediatisation and visualisation of care and carelessness:** in local and global information circuits; aesthetic, affective, and iconic qualities of images associated with NGOs, news media, or political parties; empathy and response-ability through communication technologies, including screens; performance of group- and self-identity in an era of 'culture wars' and the rise of the alt right; ways of responding to hate speech or dangerous speech online; solidarity and collective memorialisation online in responses to major events
- **Health/care, and cyborg care infrastructures:** The role of technologies and materialities in extending or reconfiguring relations of care, both within and between bodies; the link between health technologies, digital technologies, media technologies, and contemporary biopolitics; formal and informal networks of care, in families and communities, online and offline
- **Care practices and the 'Care Turn' in the arts:** how care is expressed and performed in and through theatre and other art forms; how representations and practices of embodied care within theatre and other art forms can affirm the value of care, reveal and critique carelessness and unmake inequity; the lack of care for the wellbeing of performing artists within the industry; the unequal power relations within and without the performing arts which dictate whom has the ability and right to create artwork that purports 'care about' and 'take care of' important issues in society; issues of care when representing real people and events in performance and art
- **Workers, institutions, and professional care (and self-care):** Institutions performing care or carelessness through specific language, discourse, structures or politics (including educational institutions, academic institutions, healthcare institutions, and other public institutions); care amidst precarity and precariousness; caring identities and professions, how care is performed

both 'front stage' and 'backstage' in institutions; care that occurs within the margins of prescribed roles or practices; commodification and individualisation of notions of care including 'self-care' as part of neoliberal frames for responsibilised citizenship; care as radical political act amidst capitalism; political and politicised dimensions of care in recent social movements (e.g. BLM, Climate protests)

- **Care and respect for indigenous peoples, knowledge and culture:** the slow move to decolonisation and recognition for the carelessness with which indigenous peoples and their culture knowledge and artefacts have been treated; decolonisation as caring practice; the transformative power of indigenous models of ethical care relations between people, and with the environment

- **Multiple, competing, and pluralistic ethics of care:** A variety of frameworks exist to lay out ethical obligations; religious frameworks, feminist frameworks, bioethical frameworks, policy frameworks. Developed in different historical contexts, how are these negotiated, applied and performed as part of the 'ordinary ethics' of people's everyday lives? As part of social institutions and/or forms of governance? As part of academic practice?

Conference and Paper Format:

This will be a hybrid conference that allows people placed in Aotearoa New Zealand and nearby to attend in person, and for internationals - if they cannot travel - to attend online via Zoom.

In addition to conventional 20-minute papers, we also invite presentations with a performance or creative or workshop component.

Submitting an Abstract:

Please submit a 200-250 word abstract of your contribution and a 100-word biography for each presenter by **31st October 2023.** Please send us your abstract and bio as one Word document with your surname in the document title. Please clearly indicate the title of your presentation, whether you will be presenting in person or virtually, the nature and timing of your presentation e.g. 20 minute spoken paper with PowerPoint, as well as your full name (first name, surname) and institutional affiliation (if relevant). Please send your abstracts or any enquiries to the Theme administrator at performance.real@otago.ac.nz. In your email, please if you intend to present online, please indicate your time zone as of February 2024.

Accepted delegates must confirm their attendance by completing registration and payment by **15th December, 2023**.

Travel bursaries for Postgraduate Students:

There are also a limited number of small travel bursaries available for attending the conference. Please contact the Theme administrator at performance.real@otago.ac.nz for more details.

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About the Performance of the Real Research Theme

The Performance of the Real is a University of Otago funded interdisciplinary Research Theme. The project investigates what it is about representations and performances of the real that make them particularly compelling and pervasive in our current age. At its core is the study of how performance/performativity, in its many cultural, aesthetic, political and social forms and discourses, represents, critiques, stages, and constructs/reconstructs the real, as well as the ethical, social, and form-related issues involved in such acts.

Website: http://www.otago.ac.nz/performance-of-the-real

Journal: http://www.performancereal.org

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