



PQ 2019

Call for Proposals:
PQ TALKS

Call for Applications PQ TALKS

The Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space invites proposals for *PQ TALKS*, a series of lectures, discussions, and presentations that explore contemporary trends in the expanded field of performance design, scenography and performance space architecture that will take place in Prague, 7-15 June 2019. Proposals are accepted from all types of applicants, including established freelance, educational, and emerging artists and theorists.

CURATORS: Barbora Příhodová & Pavel Drábek

DATES:

- Call Published: 30 March 2018
- Deadline for Submission: 31 August 2018
- Official Announcement of Accepted Proposals: 31 October 2018
- 14th Edition of Prague Quadrennial: 6-16 June 2019

TO SUBMIT APPLICATIONS

A link to the application form can be found at: <http://bit.ly/pqtalksapp>

Applications will require:

- Contact Information for Lead Presenter
- List of Additional Collaborators/Presenters
- Abstract of Presentation (1800 Character Limit)
- Proposed Format & Explanation (1000 Character Limit)
- Bio of Lead Collaborator (1500 Character Limit)

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PLEASE NOTE:

While excited to offer a platform for exchange, PQ cannot at this time cover participating presenter's expenses. PQ can provide needed documentation and letters of invitation in support of any grant applications undertaken by participants.

ABOUT PQ:

Organized by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic and realized by the Arts and Theatre Institute, The Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space is the largest international exhibition and festival event dedicated to scenography, performance design and theatre architecture. Since 1967 PQ has been an exchange, networking and educational platform exploring the best works in scenography and design for performance through exhibitions, festivals, workshops, performances, symposia, educational events and residencies.

The last edition of this international performance design event in 2015 was held at more than 30 venues, featured more than 500 live performances with over 180,000 visitors, and was named one of the twelve most trend-setting European festivals in the prestigious EFFE Awards. Individual exhibitions of countries and regions were organized by some of the most important cultural organizations from over 75 countries, including ministries of culture, art and theatre institutions, as well as international festivals, theatre companies and prestigious theatre and visual arts schools.

CURATORS:

Barbora Příhodová, PhD is a researcher, teacher, and curator in theatre studies. Her research focuses on contemporary and historical forms of design and space in performance as they have been practiced in various cultural contexts. She works with theatre artists to document, analyze, and promote contemporary performance and scenographic practices. Her historiographic research looks into scenography in 20th century Czechoslovakia and Josef Svoboda's work in particular. Among her most recent writings is her essay "Modern and Contemporary Czech Theatre Design: Dramatic Spaces of Freedom" in *The Routledge Companion to Scenography* (edited by A. Aronson, 2017). She also co-developed the documentary film *Theatre Svoboda* (2011), edited the book *Scenography Speaks: Conversations of Jarka Burian with Josef Svoboda* (2014, in Czech), and co-curated the exhibition *Shakespeare in Prague: Imagining the Bard in the Heart of Europe* (Columbus Museum of Art, 2017). Recipient of Fulbright Fellowship, Barbora has collaborated with Prague Quadrennial since 2009 as a writer, editor, curator and consultant. She teaches at Villanova University (USA) and is currently working on a digital archive of devised theatre in Philadelphia. www.barboraprihodova.com

Pavel Drábek is Professor of Drama and Theatre Practice at the University of Hull, UK. His research interests are in theatre history and theory, in particular in Shakespeare and early modern European theatre, in historic theatre aesthetics, in drama translation and the theatrical metaphor. He has published a book *České pokusy Shakespeara (Czech Attempts at Shakespeare, 2012)* on Czech translations within a cultural history since the 1770s; a book on Shakespeare's collaborator and successor John Fletcher (*Fletcherian Dramatic Achievement: The Mature Plays of John Fletcher, 2010*); and a number of essays on seventeenth-century English comedy in Germany, on early modern puppet theatre and on theatre structuralism (*Theatre Theory Reader: Prague School Writings, 2017*; gen. ed. David Drozd). He is currently working on a book called *Adapting and Translating for the Stage* and a book project on mixed theatre aesthetics. From 2003 to 2015 he was Artistic Director of the Ensemble Opera Diversa, a professional music and modern opera company based in Brno, CZ. He has written opera librettos, radio plays and dramas, mostly collaborating with composer Ondřej Kyas. He is also an active translator and theatre maker.

The Prague Quadrennial is the world's largest forum for performance design and space, which brings together the best of performance design, scenography and theatre architecture. Spearheaded by its three nominated themes *Imagination–Transformation–Memory*, the PQ 2019 “aims to honor, empower and celebrate the work of the designers, artists and architects as well as inspire and educate our audiences without whom our work wouldn't be valid” and focuses on performance design, scenography, and theatre architecture as essentially *collaborative* art forms – by some thinkers and practitioners subsumed under the single name *scenography*, by others under *design*.

In a seemingly retrograde move, we have chosen to use the term *scenography* as a starting point of our discussion. We do that despite the fact that scenography, recently removed from the official title of PQ in English, was historically used to refer to a particular, rather exclusive type of theatre practice centered around the articulation of stage space. This practice, conditioned by particular types of political systems and their institutions, sprouted from a specific set of aesthetic norms and cultural expectations, and as such produced rather rigid and gendered hierarchic models of labor. However, leading theorists of the discipline, Arnold Aronson, Joslin McKinney, and Philip Butterworth, have recently embraced the term scenography redefining it as the “total visual, spatial, and aural organization of the overall theatrical event” including “the dynamic process of change that occurs throughout the course of a performance” (*The Routledge Companion to Scenography*, 2018: 10) and the “manipulation and orchestration of the performance environment” usually sought by means of “architectonic structures, light, projected images, sound, costume and performance objects and props,” and a “sensory as well as intellectual experience; emotional as well as rational” (*The Cambridge Introduction to Scenography*, 2009: 4). With their emphasis on scenography as a dynamic multilayered set of processes both framing the *performance* and emerging from it, these definitions, exempt scenography, and consequently the scenographer, from the previously imposed limits, bringing into the conversation individuals whose artistic identities, creative initiatives, and ways of making theatre and performance have surpassed the earlier, rather authoritarian concept. Drawing on these critical redefinitions we use scenography as an *umbrella term* in PQ Talks with a positive incentive to include all the *diverse practices and approaches* that have been forming and transforming the PQ community while emphasizing their variety, complexity, and full potential. At the same time, we fully acknowledge and welcome to our forum those who identify differently than scenographers.

Building upon the emphasis of collaboration and open dialogue, PQ Talks welcome a critical debate of what scenography (in its broadest sense) was, has been, is, and could be, and aim to map trends in contemporary scenography by opening up questions around collaboration and artistic processes, their underlying principles, and sources. We envisage a platform dedicated to talking, discussing, questioning, doubting, provoking, analyzing, theorizing, and celebrating the creative, intellectual, and cultural riches that scenography brings or may bring to our world.

continued...

PQ Talks seek to offer a space for diverse ideas within the artistic and academic communities, and to understand the different ways scenography is conceived by different artists, within different cultures and traditions. We welcome talks about important scenographers, artefacts, institutions, and events (current or historic). We also welcome experimental, visionary, and provocative interventions that focus on the unknown and the indeterminate – looking for blind spots, and things that we don't know rather than those that are known; exploring not only the image, the artifact, and the message, but also the unknowns, the possible, the uncertain, the once-to-be, and the playful.

We welcome proposals that discuss, share, and confront, and we encourage diverse formats such as individual presentations, moderated conversations, discussion panels, and flash talks. We also welcome contributions by presenters with a limited command of English. In curating the program, we will do our best to accommodate your proposals and their specifics.

The proposals should include an abstract (max. 1800 characters) and an indication of a particular format of the proposed talk with a brief justification of the format.

We welcome inquiries into the following areas and topics:

IMAGINATION: *What scenography is...*

- Scenography as imagination, and theatre as an open space of freedom.
- How does contemporary scenography create spaces of freedom? How does the performance space enable and facilitate play?
- According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a designer is “a person who makes artistic designs” but also “a person who plans something”. What is the relationship between planning, control, ambition, and creativity?
- What is the role of uncertainty, openness or indeterminacy in designing? How do scenographers collaborate with and allow for other creative contributions to the resulting performance? How does collaboration work?
- How does scenography allow symbiosis (or commensalism) and synergy of different participants (artists, spectators, contingent agents) and embrace the multiplicity of performance?
- With a view to particular cultural tradition, what is the relation between performance and scenography (in its broadest sense)?
- Gaps. What are we missing in talking about scenography? What aspects, elements and creative work have been overlooked?

TRANSFORMATION: *What scenography could be...*

- How is scenography inspired and transformed by other arts, for instance graphic novels, computer design and VR design, body art and body painting, film and TV design, popular and folk art, visual arts, performance art, performance production and management, urbanism, and urban regeneration?
- How is scenography shaped, developed and rejuvenated by theory?
- Can failure give birth to an idea? Can something new emerge from repetition, reproduction, and routine?
- What do we learn about (contemporary) scenography if we look at designs that were never materialized/realized or recognized?
- Reflecting on PQ 2011, Arnold Aronson talks of the dematerialization of the stage. Is that still true? What other trends and transformations is scenography undergoing? How is scenography changing?

MEMORY: *What scenography was...*

- PQ and its rich history are a library of knowledge about scenography. What can we learn from them?
- How can scenography be best preserved, archived, curated, and learned about?
- Material and immaterial remains of scenography. How can we write about scenography? Is there a specific scenographic historiography?

We believe that PQ Talks should reflect the interests of the community and so we encourage participants to propose themes for discussion outside the defined topics that they find significant.

- Barbora Přítodová & Pavel Drábek, Curators



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The Prague Quadrennial strives to present performance design as an art form concerned with the creation of active performance environments, that are far beyond merely decorative or beautiful, but that are emotionally charged; where design can become a quest, a question, an argument, a threat, a resolution, or an agent of positive change...Performance design is a collaborative field where the artists mix, fuse, and blur the lines between various disciplines to search for new approaches and new visions.

This edition of the Prague Quadrennial is inspired by PQ's highest prize, the Golden Triga. Three different forces coming together to pull the chariot driven by Nike, the goddess of victory, stand proudly atop the roof of the National Theatre, reminding all that creating performance is an act of collaboration where all talents combine their strengths to achieve much more than any individual could ever accomplish alone.

The three horses pulling the chariot symbolize the three stages of human life: youth's wild instinct and intuition, the experience of adulthood, and the wisdom of age. We will use the metaphor of the Golden Triga to explore these points of view, three areas connected with the cyclical phases of the creative process:

Imagination, Transformation, Memory.

- Markéta Fantová, Artistic Director PQ2019



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