

Bodies of Work, Bodies at Work

Panel Discussion moderated by Manola Gayatri and Vivien Marcow Speiser

This panel discussion will present a variety of approaches for using performance as a research methodology. Each presenter has used performance as a methodology of exploration and creation and will share the emergent design that evolved from their process. Performance offers innovative pathways towards building resilience and healing, and for integrating cultural and spiritual practices that include and invoke multiple histories, ways of understanding and perceiving as well as other indigenous knowledge systems to theorize and imagine anew. Using embodiment in engaging the creative process allows for a mobilization of resources including emotional, ancestral, ecological, social, spiritual, physical, cognitive, sensual, intuitive, cultural and more. Each discussant will show a short piece of their performance work and will reflect upon their own artistic practices, processes and research trajectory, and the utilization of their practice in responding to psychosocial challenges in a globalized environment.

My body is the earth/the earth is my body: Site-specific performance and an ecology of place

I will share my own work as a performance scholar, dancer and poet in relationship to site-specific performance in the natural world in various sites. I will share how the body/dance has the capacity to open up an intimate and reciprocal relationship with the earth and be an inquiry and portal into inner and outer landscapes. Through an ecology of place I explore how dance and poetics is a space for conversation not only with my hands, feet, but extends to riparian zones between land and sea.

Dr. Celeste Snowber, Simon Fraser University

Panelists

Vivien Marcow Speiser is the Co-Director and Professor Emerita for the Institute for Arts and Health in The Graduate School of Arts and Social Sciences, Lesley University. She is also a Distinguished Research Associate in the Drama for Life Program at the University of the Witwatersrand. She is a licensed mental health counselor, a dancer and dance therapist and an expressive arts therapist and educator. She is coeditor of *The Arts, Education and Social Change: Little Signs of Hope*, and co-author of *The Arts and Social Change: The Lesley University Experience in Israel*.

Dr Manola Gayatri Kumarswamy is an artistic researcher, poet and teacher. She draws from performance studies, feminist philosophy, indigenous knowledge, poetry, embodied research and Jungian practice to inform her current work with ocean cultures and dealing with trauma through eco-somatic- healing practice. She is Research Associate at the Wits School of Arts and offers lectures and PaR based workshops and modules at WSOA, Jawaharlal Nehru University and Ambedkar University for performance students and psychotherapy students. She is former convener of the IFTR Performance as Research Working Group. She is currently based in Bangalore.

Refiloe Lepere, (PhD), is a black feminist playwright, theatre director, drama therapist, journalist and academic. Her areas of specialisation are participatory art, postcolonial trauma, feminist aesthetic practices, and artistic activism. She is a lecturer at the Tshwane University of Technology, South Africa. She is also a Ford Foundation and Think Fellow (Andrew Mellon Funded).

Celeste Snowber, (PhD), is dancer, poet, writer and award-winning educator who is a Professor in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University in Canada. Celeste interweaves multidisciplinary forms in her performances and published works and attention to embodied ways of inquiry has been central to Snowber's scholarly and artistic work for over two decades. Among her books are Embodied prayer and Embodied inquiry: Writing, living and being through the body as well as three collections of poetry. Her most recent book of poetry, The marrow of longing, explores her Armenian identity and has been published with HARP Press in Spring 2021. She can be found dancing between the land and sea or at www.celestesnowber.com.

Giselle Ruzany, Ph.D. LPC is a Brazilian-American dancer descendent of Polish Jews, Catholic Native Indigenous and Afro Brazilians. She has a private practice as a licensed professional counselor presently located in Washington DC. Throughout her journey as a psychotherapist and choreographer, Giselle has been investigating the crossroads between dance and psychology and how the world of somatic informs both. She has a Masters in Somatic Psychology with a concentration in Dance/Movement Therapy from Naropa University, post-graduate certifications in Gestalt Therapy and EMDR, and a Ph.D. in Expressive Arts Therapy from Lesley University. For more information, you can visit her at www.gestaldance.com.

Malika Ndlovu is an internationally published South African poet, playwright, performer and arts project manager. She was a live festival and online curator/ presenter for the Africa Centre's Badilisha Poetry X-Change which pioneered an exclusively African poetry podcasting platform. Originally from Kwa Zulu - Natal she has lived in Cape Town for over 20 years, where her applied arts practice, specifically within the NGO sector and University-associated programmes, has grown wide and deep roots. She features in UCT's Arts and Medicine: Humanizing Healthcare MOOC, which continues to feed into a global conversation on the multiple merits of an interdisciplinary approach using the arts within clinical settings.