



**Call for proposals for academics and artists**

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

**A World in Transition**

**In-between Performative Arts and Migration**

Department of Sociology and Business Law

Department of Arts

ERT Fondazione

**7 March 2019**

**Bologna, Italy**

**Organizing Committee:**

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**OVERVIEW**

In a context of complex transitions, performative arts are physical and symbolic spaces of expression and artistic creation, spaces of resistance, disruption and negotiation. The experiential and relational nature of performative arts is a social and political transformation agent at the level of cultural uses, spatial organizations, identities. Nevertheless, the role of performative arts in shaping new social imageries, new forms of citizenship and new spaces of coexistence is particularly important in relation to migration. In fact, within a general situation where new forms of poverty, exclusion, social desegregation and gender inequalities are emerging, the relation between newcomers and local communities should be problematized and tackled through innovative and critical instruments. Among these, performative arts play a challenging and fundamental role.

The aim of the conference is to study, discuss, engage and co-construct knowledge about the role of performative arts in relation to migration issues. Firstly, performative arts can provide innovative ways to represent migration, challenging conventional narratives and xenophobic rhetoric which depicts migrants as criminals or as mere victims, without any power to speak up. Secondly, artistic projects, intervening both on the socio-political and the aesthetical dimension of the performance,

can promote forms of empowerment, new capabilities, new hybrid identities. Moreover, intercultural forms of performance can have the effect not only in terms of social integration - a highly criticized concept in the last few years - but also in terms of economic and political integration, giving voice to migrants and refugees while promoting intercultural dialogue. From this perspective, performative arts can re-shape daily practices of cohabitation, and promote new forms of politics and practice of citizenship. In particular, when artistic creation involves the concept of 'politicality', it becomes a space of conviviality and positive hybridity, in which people can interact and perform both commonality and diversity and perceive themselves as part of the same symbolic and physical universe. As a result, contemporary performative arts can become challenging spaces of dialogue, alternative representations and multidimensional *transitions*.

The conference is organized within the [‘Atlas of Transitions, New Geographies for a Cross-Cultural Europe’](#). It aims at promoting cross-cultural dialogue in local communities through culture and performing arts, looking at the potentialities arising from contemporary migration and seeking innovative ways of experiencing and interpreting public space as a place of encounter and cohabitation. The [project](#) involves innovative cultural organisations (national theatres, centres for contemporary arts and production, cultural associations and universities) in seven different European countries: Italy, Albania, Belgium, Poland, France, Greece and Sweden. The main objective is to facilitate participatory intercultural projects through performative arts and explore the consequences at the level of social relations and urban transformations thanks to an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary action-research. The added value of the project is the possibility to develop co-construction processes among citizens, artists, migrants, researchers, asylum seekers, students, etc., valorising diverse cultural backgrounds and challenging traditional narrative repertoires and conventional social integration processes.

With the aim to exchange and disseminate knowledge about the function of performative arts in migrant inclusion-related processes, we are interested in investigating different approaches and interventions proposed by both scholars and practitioners, answering these questions: Can artistic practices work as tools to valorise the cultural complexity of our times? Can performative arts weave communities together to inhabit public spaces and create common and collective narratives? Which artistic practices can promote new forms of citizenship, participation, re-appropriation of space and engagement?

The themes of analysis that we would like to explore are, although not limited to, those suggested below:

- **Performative arts, media and alternative narratives on migration**

(e.g.: innovative representations through body techniques, creation of new social imageries on migration, valorisation of diversity and identity through arts, etc.)

- **Political role of performative arts**

(e.g.: participatory arts as acts of citizenship, empowerment and recognition of diversity thorough arts, stimulation of capacity to aspire and voice, artistic production and gender, performative arts and social change in migration dynamics, etc.)

- **Participatory practices, performative arts and community engagement**

(e.g.: local community involvement in migration issues, participatory and intercultural theatre, innovative forms of social coexistence through artistic projects, artistic productions as collective memory in intercultural contexts, etc.)

- **Theatre and urban space**

(e.g.: arts as a right to the city in intercultural contexts, the spatial dimension of artistic projects on migration, the role of performative arts in solving conflicts in urban areas, audience development, etc.)

- **Co-creation between arts and academic research**

(e.g.: arts-based action-research on migration, knowledge co-construction between artists and researchers, innovative methodologies and dissemination tools, etc.)

The conference is hosted within the **Atlas of Transitions Biennale 2019**, a ten-days festival to discuss new ways of perceiving public spaces and cohabitation between European citizens and asylum seekers and refugees.

## **CALL FOR PROPOSALS**

We invite to participate scholars, theatre practitioners, visual artists and performers. Interventions in the conference should last about **15/20 minutes** and can take the shape of traditional presentations or short performances, interactive explorations or video presentations, etc. We also consider the possibility to organize a poster or an exhibition in accordance with the proposals received. All creative, unconventional or innovative modalities to contribute to the conference are welcome!

The conference will be **free of charge** but there is no budget available for the interventions. After the conference, **selected contributions will be invited to publish** within an edited book that aims to engage in a constructive debate with scholars and artists from different fields.

Proposals should be a maximum of 400 words and indicate not only the proposed topic but the kinds of approach, methods and forms of illustration/documentation/data to be employed. The deadline for receipt of proposals is **December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018**. Proposals should be emailed to Melissa Moralli ([melissa.moralli2@unibo.it](mailto:melissa.moralli2@unibo.it)) and Pierluigi Musarò ([pierluigi.musaro@unibo.it](mailto:pierluigi.musaro@unibo.it)). Notification of acceptance will be **January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019**. Selection for invitations to submit the paper for the book will follow the conference. The book is expected to be published in Spring 2020.