

Introduction: Theatre Beyond the Anthro(s)cene: About Spaces, Things, and Views from Afar

At the 2021 International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR) conference “Theatre Ecologies: Environments, Sustainability and Politics” at the National University of Ireland in Galway, Micha Braun, Veronika Darian and Michael Wehren from Leipzig University organized a panel on practices and theorisations of a “Theatre Beyond the Anthropocene”. They wanted to deconstruct from different perspectives the hegemonic Western dispositif of the theatrical stage as a site and mode of representation on which humans observe or hear other humans. Instead, a radically different relationship between the world, nature, and the subject is expected: in place of an anthropocentric position of mastery over the world, a more or less non-hierarchical approach to subjects, objects, things and people emerges. While Braun focuses on theatrical practices from Central Eastern Europe between the historical avant-garde, the neo-avant-garde and the present, which look back from a future beyond human domination, Darian asks about the precarious relationship between people and things since the crisis-ridden times of modernity, where the assembly line dissected bodily movements and societies to the rhythm of machines. Finally, in a close-reading of artistic and theoretical attempts since the 1910s to describe the theatre stage as an *anthropo-scene*, Wehren gives some indications of the anthropocentric paradigm, which was problematic even then, and the remnants of an *ob-scene*—an outside of the scene, the often repressed outside of the stage of humanity and its values. Thus, all three papers attempt to contribute to a renegotiation of established relations between humans, things and nature in general in the specific space and time of the performative event, and to point out gestures and practices of resistance against its anthropocentric paradigms.

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