

Call for Papers:

Activist Performance in/and Canada

A Graduate Symposium at York University, 12 April 2012.

The First Annual York University Department of Theatre Graduate Symposium on Theatre and Performance in/and Canada:

Activist Performance in/and Canada

Activist actions, while largely studied within the contexts of the social sciences, have remained a relatively untilled field of fertile ground for analysis within theatre and performance studies, particularly within the Canadian context. Analysis of the overlapping aims, contexts, and histories of political theatre, performance art, and activism is particularly relevant now, as groups in theatrical and public domains are increasingly using performative tactics to engender economic, political, social, and environmental change. Examples of such “activist performances” and “performative activism” include the Occupy Movement, street theatre, political graffiti, culture jamming, post-colonial performance, and craftivism.

Through these activist interventions, both overt and intrinsic, we can begin to see that what constitutes activist actions, activist performance, and activism(s) are themselves ripe for reexploration and renegotiation in our increasingly globalized and nationalistic communities.

This one day symposium features a keynote address by Dr. Catherine Graham, Associate Professor of Theatre & Film Studies at McMaster University, and an evening of curated performances that take at their core and impulse, expression, or interrogation of *activism* in/and Canada.

The symposium will be held on 12 April 2012 in Toronto, ON.

We invite papers, curated panels, workshops, and performances that consider the relationship between performance and activism within the Canadian context. Topics to be considered might include but are not limited to:

- How might the term “activism” be reimagined or redefined in relationship to the act of performance?
- What is the role of performance in effecting/affecting political, social, and environmental change?
- How might we imagine performers and activists forging relationships to work collaboratively in effecting/affecting change?
- What are some of the ways in which Canadian performances respond to and address activist issues?
- How does Canada’s colonial legacy affect national activist performances?

- How does Canadian activism differ from activism in other geopolitical contexts?
- How are activists employing theatrical techniques in the staging of their protests?
- What are “activist” audience members? How do activist audiences promote change at particular performances?
- In what ways can particular traditions/movements of performance (e.g. theatre of the oppressed, post-colonial theatre, Aboriginal theatre, sustainable theatre, ecocritical theatre, queer theatre etc.) be taken up in relation of ideas of activism?

Please send proposals of 250-words or less by January 31, 2012 to: activist.performance.york@gmail.com. Please include your full name, email address, and affiliation along with a short (100 word) bio.

For more information visit us at activistperformanceyork.wordpress.com

Dr. Graham’s research centres on the role of activist theatre in building public discourse and encouraging the participation of marginalized social groups in the development of public life. She is currently working on a book project with the working title *Performance as Public Thought*.