**Call for Papers**
**Performance and Migration Working Group – IFTR World Congress 2026**

**What Theatre Does**
6–10 July 2026, University of Melbourne

The IFTR 2026 World Congress asks us to reflect on *What Theatre Does* in a world marked by climate change, polarising technologies, forced displacement, and shifting geopolitical power. Theatre, dance, and performance are not only cultural products but *ways of doing*: they make and remake communities, negotiate belonging, and respond to violence and precarity. Yet as scholars and practitioners, we are challenged to ask anew: What do these practices *actually do* in times of migration and exile? Which orthodoxies no longer hold? How might we imagine their efficacy, their failures, and their futures?

The **Performance and Migration Working Group** responds to this call by focusing our 2026 sessions on **practices and dramaturgies of migration**. Performance has long served as a site where lived experience meets artistic form, and in migration contexts, practice is more than the “application” of ideas: it is a process of negotiation, adaptation, and cultural exchange. By foregrounding practice, we aim to illuminate the creative labour, ethical stakes, and collaborative methodologies that shape performance-making in migration contexts, and to consider how these practices intervene in the politics of mobility, belonging, and representation.

In line with our ongoing research and with a special invitation from *Critical Stages* to publish a curated **Essays section on Performance and Migration** (December 2026), we particularly welcome contributions that explore the intersection of practice and scholarship. Possible areas of inquiry include, but are not limited to:

* Reflections on creating or participating in performance projects about migration.
* Analyses of collaborative processes involving migrant, displaced, or refugee communities.
* Considerations of how performance challenges nationalist or exclusionary narratives, and fosters inclusive imaginaries of community and belonging.
* Studies of dramaturgy, aesthetics, and politics in site-specific, community-based, or participatory works.
* Methodological approaches to researching, documenting, and archiving migration-related performance practices.
* Explorations of intersections and tensions between artistic and academic pedagogies, particularly concerning artist-researcher identities.

Our aim is to bring together practitioners, participants, and researchers to propose new interdisciplinary approaches to migration in and through performance, and to demonstrate the role of the arts in shaping public discourse on inclusion, sanctuary, academic freedom, free speech, and citizenship.

The 2026 meeting in Melbourne will be an opportunity not only to present work but also to workshop ideas collectively toward publication. We especially encourage proposals that bridge scholarship and practice, and welcome voices from across geographies, disciplines, and migration experiences.

**Note the submission timeline**

 **1 November:** Abstract submissions open. Abstracts must be submitted to the IFTR conference platform via the IFTR[**webpage**](https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fiftr.us5.list-manage.com%2Ftrack%2Fclick%3Fu%3Df651c81ed9e5babd52f25ee59%26id%3Ddc3bc50d4b%26e%3Ddfba6c6a41&data=05%7C02%7Cymeerzon%40uottawa.ca%7C13d8c048bf1843a9f4e608ddeea54e34%7Cd41fdab17e154cfdb5fa7200e54deb6b%7C1%7C0%7C638929116402545596%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C60000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=6QPHW7gG5Ow7ddo8juUxotTgZxP9NkMLx553TdJsmp0%3D&reserved=0)**.
8 December:** Abstract submissions close**.

Please note that you have to be a member of the IFTR to submit an abstract.** To join or renew your membership, visit the IFTR [webpage](https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fiftr.us5.list-manage.com%2Ftrack%2Fclick%3Fu%3Df651c81ed9e5babd52f25ee59%26id%3D821e3c279a%26e%3Ddfba6c6a41&data=05%7C02%7Cymeerzon%40uottawa.ca%7C13d8c048bf1843a9f4e608ddeea54e34%7Cd41fdab17e154cfdb5fa7200e54deb6b%7C1%7C0%7C638929116402560455%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C60000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=QdXhimDfU5VqmUP8v6p%2FKYQn%2FOwrSwMPu6oEEUAW8m8%3D&reserved=0) from 1 October.

**For inquiries** about the working group, please contact Yana Meerzon, Sheetala Bhat, and Steve Wilmer at: **iftr.performance.migration@gmail.com**