



**Call for a Special Issue of Organizational Aesthetics:  
Performing performance, embodying bodies, and bridging bridges:  
When workplace and theatre innovate together for organizational  
sustainability**

This volume encourages contributions worldwide and aims at exploring the relationship between theatre and organisations. This special issue explores possible bridgings between contemporary workplace performance and theatre performance in terms of embodied learning and innovation for sustainability. We aim at inquiring how performing bodies of theatrical performance can meet and dance together with performing bodies at various contemporary workplaces, especially of knowledge workers, to facilitate embodied learning and participatory innovations to improve the sustainability of workplaces and organizations/societies. How do such encounters develop overtime to bridge multiple stakeholders of workplace by allowing them to share their ideas in their languages? (Harmaakorpi, Melkas, and Uotila, 2017). How do they liberate and empower diverse communities of knowledge-intensive practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991) in and around organizations, and thus improve increasing knowledge workers' quality-of-working-life (QOWL) in terms of workplace communication, stress-coping, and "work-life balance"? We especially hope to explore the bridgings of workplace performance and theatre performance that bridge different social levels ranging from workplace practice level through organizational level to societal level.

In these cross-level inquiries, we also focus on the roles of resonating human bodies as performing artefacts both in workplace and theatre. While modern organizations as "engines of civilization" are expected to supply good water, air, food, and cloths as well as quiet and sheltered space to re-create and sustain human bodies, they also "create" and "consume" human bodies as another type of "natural" resource (inner nature) to sustain themselves and the civilization. (Hassard et. al., 2000) Many have emphasized the importance of embodied knowledge such as tacit/implicit knowing, skills, expertise, and non-verbal communication in the process of innovation for organizational sustainability (Varela, Rosch, and Thompson, 1992; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995; McGilchrist, 2009). They have argued that modern organizations can create new ways to re-create and sustain themselves, the civilization, and the nature if they succeed in re-creating and consuming these intellectual resources embodied in the workplaces.

Keeping in mind such paradoxical "instrumentalization" (Habermas, 1984; 1987) of human bodies as estrangement/alienation (Brecht, 2014) in the exploration of bridging performance of theatre and workplace and innovation for organizational/societal sustainability, we intend to develop, and go beyond, the metaphor of "organization as theatrical performance", which envisions theatre as space of action based learning in organizational contexts (e.g. Pässilä and Oikarinen, 2014; Pässilä, Owens, and Pulkki, 2016). The metaphor especially highlights such dynamic and emergent theatrical forms as Epic Theatre (Brecht, 2014), Forum Theatre (Boal, 1985), theatre laboratory (Barba, 1995; Schino, 2009; Chemi, 2018), and improvisations (Johnstone, 1981), which all go far beyond the classic/static metaphor of

"organization as role-playing/taking" leading to such forms as Research based theatre (Pässila, Oikarinen and Harmaakorpi, 2015). Such a metaphorical inquiry (Morgan, 1997) may lead to richer understandings of workplace and organizational learning that bridge diverse research streams including: field theory (Lewin, 1997), process philosophy (Whitehead, 1978) that has been informing from the social construction of self (Mead, 1934) to recent knowledge creating "Ba" (Nonaka, Toyama, and Hirata, 2008, Pässila, Uotila and Melkas, 2013), emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995) and multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1994), phenomenologies of "intercorporeality" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) and relational-self (Levinas, 1991), as well as post-structuralist notions of complexity theory (e.g. Stacey, 1996), "narrative/storytelling" (e.g. Boje, 2008), "polyphony" and "Heteroglossia" (Bakhtin, 1981), and "body without organs" and "plane of immanence" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983).

Contributions to the special issue can be in such diverse formats as papers, performances, installations, improvisation, video-clip/film, exercises/games, etc.

- Deadline for submission to the special issue is March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- Submit electronically at <http://www.organizationalaesthetics.org>
- All submissions should conform to the OA style guide:  
<https://digitalcommons.wpi.edu/oa/policies.html#formatting>

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