**Federation for International Theatre Research (IFTR) 2026 World Congress**

**Working Group Report: Performance and Migration**

**Conveners: Yana Meerzon (University of Ottawa) & Sheetala Bhat (York University)**

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**At a Glance**

- **The Working Group received 40 proposals and organized two Open Panels and six Working Groups. Due to financial constraints and visa restrictions, 26 participants attended the Congress in Melbourne.**
- **Discussions focused on five major research areas, examining how contemporary theatre functions as a site of cultural memory, political critique, identity formation, and resistance.**
- **A recurring theme was the shift from monumental, history-centred narratives of migration toward everyday, lived, and embodied experiences.**

**Main Themes**

**1. Historical Perspectives on Exilic Theatre**

**Participants examined the development of exilic theatre companies from the mid-twentieth century to the present, considering changing understandings of exile, migration, and cultural memory.**

**2. Political Theatre and Diasporic Nationalisms**

**Presentations explored the relationship between migration, nationalism, and contemporary political theatre, with particular attention to the impact of far-right movements and long-distance nationalism on migrant communities.**

**3. Dramaturgies of Care, Hybridity, and Autofiction**

**This strand brought together practice-based research, dramaturgy, and performance analysis to investigate embodied experiences of migration, hybrid identities, and autobiographical performance.**

**4. Multilingualism and Performance**

**Participants discussed multilingual performance practices, the role of technology in contemporary theatre, and the tensions between multilingual societies and predominantly monolingual theatre institutions.**

**Future Directions**

**The group agreed to organize a series of online meetings during Autumn 2026 to develop case studies into a collaborative edited collection for the Palgrave Studies in Performance and Migration series. The Working Group at IFTR 2027 will continue developing this project.**

**Recommendations for the IFTR 2027 Call for Papers**

**The group recommended that the conveners:**

- **Include a thematic focus connected to the conference location, recognizing Greece as both a historical and contemporary site of migration.**
- **Invite submissions that engage with methodologies for researching migration, theatre, and performance.**
- **Encourage a broad range of methodological approaches with the long-term goal of producing an edited collection in the *Palgrave Studies in Performance and Migration* series.**
- **Clarify that Working Group presentations should consist of a 10-minute presentation summarizing the paper rather than reading it in full.**

**Recommendations for Abstract Submissions**

**The group suggested that future abstracts include:**

- **Paper title and institutional affiliation.**
- **A clear statement of methodology.**
- **The interdisciplinary dimensions of the research, where relevant.**
- **Educational or pedagogical implications, where appropriate.**
- **The geographical, historical, cultural, and political context of the research.**
- **The participant's preferred presentation format (Working Group or Open Panel), where applicable.**

**Recommendations Following Proposal Acceptance**

**The conveners were encouraged to:**

- **Provide presenters with guidance on the recommended format for a 10-minute Working Group presentation.**
- **Reintroduce pre-conference peer review by organizing participants into small discussion groups that exchange papers before the conference.**
- **Invite volunteers to coordinate these groups by facilitating communication, organizing paper exchanges, encouraging advance feedback, and chairing subgroup discussions during the conference.**

**Suggestions for the Working Group Format**

**Presentation Format**

**Members suggested that the conveners consider:**

- **Discussing each paper individually rather than grouping multiple presentations together.**
- **Allowing approximately 20 minutes per paper, including presentation and discussion, depending on the size of the Working Group.**
- **Encouraging presenters to provide sufficient historical, geographical, and political context within their presentations.**

**Discussion Format**

**Members expressed different preferences regarding discussion. Some favoured structured feedback, while others preferred a more open conversation. The conveners may wish to consider a hybrid format that combines both approaches.**