

Performing Oceanic Solidarities #1
Sept. 7, 2022

Welcome (before Listening session)

Laura:

Hello everybody. And welcome to this event, *Performing Oceanic Solidarities*.

It's really great to all be gathered here today – bringing together the 1st and 2nd years of our 3 Masters programs in Theatre (show of hands), Choreography and Creative Producing.

As you can imagine, it can be quite hard to schedule a day and time when all of you are free – so we're really happy to at least have this moment to meet one another.

Introducing me + the Lectorate

For those of you who I haven't had a chance to meet yet, my name is Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca and I am the Head of the DAS Graduate School, but also what they call the “Lector”: which is the name given to research Professors in universities of the Arts in the Netherlands.

In this role – which I started two years ago - I lead the Lectorate which is also known as “DAS Research” and we are based in the office behind me.

Within the Lectorate we have a number of different groups and programs including the 3rd cycle program called THIRD – which is a 2 year post-Masters program for artists and producers who want to continue with their practice research and consider applying for a PhD.

We have 5 new Fellows starting on the program in October. And I hope that you will come to the a public event called the THIRD Annual Forum on October 27-30 which is being curated by the Cohort who are graduating from the program this year.

So, before we get started with the activities of the day, I wanted to offer a few words of introduction to give you some context for the program and how this day has come, I will then hand you over the Marilix to talk you through some practicalities and housekeeping matters, and then finally to Rajni and to Carly Rose who will explain our first activity: the listening sessions.

Laura: Introduction to the day

So – this event, *Performing Oceanic Solidarities* was first of all conceived as a joint event for all of you as the current participants of the 3 Masters programs at DAS.

The day is basically in 3 parts: the listening sessions led by Rajni and Carly Rose this morning, the pod sessions with *Undrowned* by Alexis Pauline Gumbs after lunch led by our guest pod hosts, and then the 2 performances – first the sound installation *dissolution / dis*

solution by Joy Mariama Smith and then the performance of the *Whale Whispering* project by Michaela Harrison who is joining us from Brazil via zoom.

I'm aware that many of you will already have had a pretty full-on week – and that perhaps especially for those of you who are just starting your 1st year, you may well already be a bit overwhelmed with input.

So I wanted to start by saying that we are really thinking of this day together as a *first encounter*:

Both as a first encounter with each other

But also, as a first encounter with the 'content' if you like...

A first collective point of contact with the themes and questions raised by the practices and texts we are engaging with today, which might include: *performance, oceans, solidarity, listening, climate crisis, imagination, sea-level rise, marine mammals, whales, survival, racism, coloniality, speciesism, blackness, healing, ritual, transformation, water, ancestry, sound and song, justice.*

It's a lot.

And we want to be attentive to the fact that we are encountering each other and encountering these questions from very different places and positionalities.

So, rather than launching straight in to the 'content' as it were, we have tried to take care with *how* we are encountering these questions together and to give space to the act of noticing the differences of experience and perspective that we bring to the practices and texts we gathering around today.

This is necessarily a slow process, so we're imagining that if this is a first encounter, then there might be others in future – or maybe it's that we're hoping that this event might allow for some first moments of echolocation – a first sounding out of ourselves, a first call to which responses might come back in the months and years to come.

A second frame that I also want to mention is that this event is also part of a bigger, 2-year research project called *Climate Imaginaries at Sea* (2023-2025) that the ATD Lectorate / DAS Research is a partner on.

We got the funding to run this event as a pilot for that project – which is officially starting in January and you will hear more about when we get up and running.

The other partners on the project are the Lectorates of the Hogeschool van Amsterdam – the Visual Methodologies Collective - and the Lectorate of the Rietveld Academy, together with the Sound and Vision Archive, Tolhuistuin, and Villa Zapakara which is a children's museum in Paramaribo, Suriname.

The main aim of the project is to explore what artistic research can do for how we relate and respond to the inevitable increase in the level of the world's oceans due to climate change.

Estimates of potential sea level rise vary, but some experts suggest it could be around 1 - 2 feet in the next 30 years, 10 feet by 2100.

For the ATD Lectorate contribution to the project, we are exploring how to think about how the arts respond to climate emergency and rising sea levels with an explicit awareness of the ways in which that topic cannot be addressed separately from discourses around racism, coloniality, and speciesism.

The core activities of the project for us are 2 artistic research studios – one with the Chilean-Mexican choreographer Amanda Piña who decolonial aesthetics and one with a Surinamese artist who will be nominated by Villa Zapakara. Creative Producing students will also particularly hear about this project – because it is also tied to your *Collective Research* project which you are doing from September-January – which will also take climate change and sea level rise as their theme.

Right now, we are really just at the beginning of this project and I for one am very much undertaking it in order to learn. But our starting point is an attempt to acknowledge that while living with sea-level rise may still be in the future or in the imagination in some parts of the world, it is already present in others – including in Suriname. Villages have flooded, electricity goes out, daily lives are affected. Meanwhile, in Chile, extractivist industries such as mining threaten the extinction of marine life, poison the drinking water of local populations and risk the destruction of ancestral cultures that have been living in a sustainable relation to water environments for centuries. So, through our partners, we're really hoping to put perspectives from the global north and south in dialogue with one another.

I will say more about the focus on nonhuman animals and the interspecies perspective of our work today in the Introduction to the afternoon session with *Undrowned*, but for now I want to hand over to Marilix on the practical matters.

Marilix: Practicalities

Rajni + Carly Rose: Introduction to Listening sessions.