



## Theatre, globalisation and illiberal regimes after 1989

### A workshop at *global dis:connect*, 7-8 September 2023

The two-day workshop hosted by *global dis:connect* intends to explore the relationship between the global trajectories of illiberal regimes and their theatre cultures following the Cold War. The war in the Ukraine has accentuated the globalising propensities of states such as Russia, China and Iran. In the past year, we have seen Cold War alliances and networks resurface and soft-power strategies employed to receive support in international fora. There is a strong sense that alternative, illiberal, global interconnections are being (re)forged.

We invite participants to debate and map various cases from the illiberal spectrum – from one-party states to theocracies and various forms of authoritarianism (competitive or one-person rule) to elaborate commonalities of illiberal engagement with globalisation via theatre. The workshop's aim is to conceptually frame the role of theatre in illiberal regimes' international relations as a global, post-Cold War phenomenon.

Recent scholarship on the Cold War emphasises the spatial and conceptual diversity of illiberal interconnections in the realm of cultural diplomacy under the term of 'alternative globalisations'. However, patterns of the late-Cold War have carried over into the post-1989 period, as Western-guided globalisation has hardly been 'the only game in town' in recent decades. This phenomenon raises the question of how to approach theatre history and non-Western-centric interconnectedness after 1989. The workshop will address this central question by proposing the post-Cold War as a period in which new polarities have emerged. These novel alignments and their impact on theatre have yet to be comprehensively studied.

Globalisation has pushed many illiberal states to venture into market economics, sometimes radically changing the landscape of subsidised cultural production and its international distribution. The new synthesis of market and command economies has affected national theatre communities, engendering new partnerships between states and artists as well as new modes of resistance. While independent and private theatre initiatives may persist alongside state-led engagement with the international theatre community, governmental involvement remains crucial in illiberal regimes. It shapes the careers of local practitioners and influences choices about performance production, international tours and participation in festivals.

The workshop will focus on the following questions:

- What are the characteristics of illiberal cultural diplomacy in the post-Cold War period, and what role does theatre play?
- Upon what institutional and organisational scaffolding do illiberal states globalise their theatre cultures?
- How do illiberal global dynamics affect local theatre communities? How does it affect theatre practice and reception?

Participants are welcome to suggest other related topics.

The workshop will be held in Munich at *global dis:connect*, a Käte Hamburger research centre, on 7-8 September 2023. Abstracts of no more than 400 words and short CVs of no more than 200 words should be sent by **30 April** to: [theatreglobalization@gmail.com](mailto:theatreglobalization@gmail.com)

Papers are to be submitted to the organiser, Viviana Iacob, a fellow at *global dis:connect*, by 24 August for review by Christopher Balme, the keynote speaker, and the other participants. Short presentations of no more than 10 minutes will allow for extensive discussion in each panel.

Accommodation and meals during the workshop will be covered. Some financial support for travel costs is available, but we ask participants to explore and exhaust other funding sources.