



International Journal of Taiwan Studies
Topical Section Call for Papers:
**“The Politics and Poetics of Contemporary
Taiwan Theatre”**

Guest Editors: Dr. Fan-Ting Cheng (National Taiwan University) and Dr. Jasmine Yu-Hsing Chen (Utah State University)

What is the role of theatre in the formation of Taiwan as an (dis)identification, at the levels from individual to the state? As a mode of storytelling, performance intermeshes text, performer, and audience. Given the history of martial law in Taiwan it has been the general expectation for decades that theatre, among various literary and artistic productions, serves as political propaganda. Yet, the interest of this topical section is not the direct use of political themes for the primary analysis of the relationships between theatre and politics in the contemporary context. Rather, the proposed topic encourages us to examine how theatre embodies political implications through stage representation. Thus, negotiation with the political teleology of Taiwan should not rely on theatre to highlight explicitly socio-political and historical issues regarding the island. Instead, theatrical performance must further expand its artistic strategies and models of work as subversive elements and the political concerns of agents of performance.

This topical section for the *International Journal of Taiwan Studies (IJTS)* welcomes contributions that enrich discussions on how theatrical performances after the abolition of martial law responded to politicalised experience during the martial law period. We expect the introspection of politics through theatre not only as a historical experience but also as a strategy in form. The aim of the proposed topic is to explore how contemporary theatre (since the lift of martial law in 1987 to the present) has shaped, modelled, interpreted, and represented the cultural significance of Taiwan and Taiwan’s (dis)identification. Taiwanese identity has been inherently problematic and lacerated, and this raises many questions that have become the main concerns of Taiwanese theatre artists. Through examining the role of the artist and artistic practices in contemporary Taiwan, this topical section is driven by some sizable and pressing questions: What are diverse ways to be political? How can these alternative ways resist being co-opted by political hegemonies? How can a poetic style also be a stance of politics? How do different narratives of performance affect the artistic or political messages? How do performance conventions transform from one performance to another, undergoing reinterpretation in both politics and poetics? These specific questions provide a stereoscopic coordinate system, which encourages scholars to rethink the content and form of Taiwan’s theatre toward the local mediation of Asian traditions and Western influences.

The tensions between official theatre standards and popular demand are reflected in contemporary forms of performance practices. Thus, modes of funding and other forms of public and cultural management largely influence potential forms of theatre and their political appeal. This dual-sided dynamic between theatre and politics enables critical thinking on contemporary

theatrical expressions in Taiwan from different angles and perspectives. As Taiwan faces increasing pressures to assimilation with mainland China, the innovative creation of theatre is a statement that Taiwan is a serious player on the international cultural stage. Artists strive to challenge the monolithic hegemony rooted in Confucian morality and to construct a new way to read Taiwan's hybrid identification.

Emphasising the politics and poetics of contemporary Taiwan theatre, we are particularly interested in the analysis of multiply-layered narratives, transformations of performance convention, feminist approaches, queer theory, and postcolonial studies. It is the hope that these new points of orientation will place Taiwan at the heart of the international performing arts scene. **To signal your interest and intent to write an article in this topical section please email an abstract (300-400 words) along with a short bio (50-100 words) to the guest editors: Dr. Fan-Ting Cheng (fantingcheng@ntu.edu.tw) and Dr. Jasmine Yu-Hsing Chen (jasmine.chen@usu.edu) by 31 October 2019.**

Timeline:

By 31 October 2019: Submission of abstract.

By 30 November 2019: Decision by guest editors on invitations for manuscript submission.

By 30 April 2020: Submit manuscript (5000-7000 words) to Dr. Fan-Ting Cheng and Dr. Jasmine Yu-Hsing Chen, for review by editors.

By 31 July 2020: Submit manuscript online to the [IJTS](#) for double-blind peer review.