

AFFECT THEATER

WITH CRISTIANA GIORDANO & GREG PIEROTTI

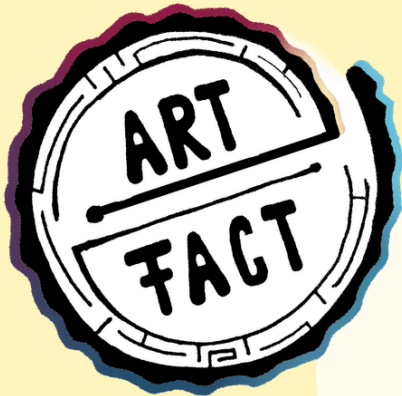


Photo by Jorge Nuñez Vega, 2017

A WORKSHOP BETWEEN ANTHROPOLOGY AND THEATRE

This is the first appointment of a series of bilingual Affect Theater workshops. We will explore research and narrative practices in anthropology and in theatre.

The workshops are part of the ANR funded project **Art-e-Fact - Artistic Approaches to Ethnographic Facts on Institutions**.

 <https://www.cerlis.eu/anr-art-e-fact/>.

It investigates the value of **creative ethnographic practices for the anthropological analysis of institutions**. The project's overarching aim is to transcend the divide between the arts and social sciences and to introduce creative ethnographic practices and performative texts as novel ways of knowledge production.

DATES:

22-26 JUNE 2026

9:30-17:00

LOCATION:

UNIVERSITÉ PARIS CITÉ

BÂTIMENT JACOB, SALLE J238
CAMPUS SAINT-GERMAIN-DES-PRÉS, 45 RUE DES SAINTS-PÈRES, 75006 PARIS

REGISTRATION:

BEFORE 24 APRIL

Check out the workshop description 

Affect Theater practice

This series of **bilingual Affect Theater workshops** (1 week per year for 4 years, english/french - no translation service) explores research and narrative practices in anthropology and theatre. By creating a dialogue between these disciplines in a laboratory format, we pose questions and engage techniques to enrich our relations with anthropological practices and performative productions. **We use theatrical devising to explore empirical and ethnographic material.** The practice of theatrical devising departs from traditional theatre in that a finished script is not the starting point for the staging and direction of a play. Instead, devising is a collaborative process involving the members of a company devising and writing together. **Theatrical devising generates surprising and often more affective ethnographic analyses and relations.**

In the workshops, participants will learn the practice of Affect Theater and devise a short performance. To focus our explorations, we will draw from ethnographic material around the theme of institutions. Depending on the direction the collective work takes, the group may **draw on existing ethnographic materials** from the literature or on research already conducted by the participants, including their own. Participants are therefore encouraged to bring their own questions and field materials.

The workshop will evolve according to the group's collective experimentation. It will lead to a **public performance** in 2030 during the **multimodal conference of the Art-e-Fact project.**

The workshop's trainers

Cristiana Giordano is Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Davis. She received her Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley. Her book, *Migrants in Translation. Caring and the Logics of Difference in Contemporary Italy* (University of California Press, 2014), won the Victor Turner Book Prize for ethnographic writing (2016), and the Boyer Prize in Psychoanalytic Anthropology (2017). Her current research investigates new ways of rendering ethnographic material into artistic forms. She has been collaborating with playwright and director Greg Pierotti on a new methodology at the intersection of the social sciences and performance. They have created *Unstories*, a 50-minute performance around the current "refugee crisis" in Europe, and *Unstories II* (roaming), a 45-minute performance which furthers the reflection about movement and borders.

Greg Pierotti is Associate professor of theater at the University of Arizona. He is a playwright, theater director, and actor. He co-authored the plays *The Laramie Project*, *Laramie: 10 Years Later*, *The People's Temple*, and *Unstories I and II*. He co-authored the book *Moment Work: Tectonic Theater Project's Process of Devising Theater*. His honors as a writer/director/deviseur include a Humanitas Prize, The Will Glickman Award for best new play, and Emmy, Lortel, Drama Desk, and Alpert Award nominations. Since 2015, he and Cristiana Giordano have developed a method for research, writing and theatrical devising called "Affect Theater." Together they have created performances and authored articles that play at the intersection of Anthropology and Theater. Their new book, *Affect Ethnography: Exploring Performance and Narrative in the Creation of Unstories* was published in June 2024 by Bloomsbury.

To find out more about Affect Theater, you can check out:

- The **book** by Cristiana Giordano and Greg Pierotti (2024), *Affect Ethnography. Exploring Performance and Narrative in the Creation of Unstories* (Bloomsbury).
- The **website** affecttheater.com
- The **podcast** *What Does Anthropology Sound Like: Performance* [culanth.org]
- The **video** *Unstories: Disrupting the Narrative Urge* [youtube.com] (by Lisa Stevenson and Alex Krause).
- The **interview** *Between Theater and Anthropology*. Howround Theater Common, The Non Fiction Theater Forum, Interview by Ash Marinaccio, November 25, 2025.
- The **article** by Jeanne Favret-Saada, J. (1990), "About Participation", *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* 14(2): 189-199.
- The **article** by Cristiana Giordano and Greg Pierotti (2020), "Getting Caught: A Collaboration On and Off Stage Between Theater and Anthropology" in *The Drama Review* 64(1): 88-106.

How to attend the workshop

The workshop is free of charge. It is supported by funds from the *Agence Nationale de la Recherche* (Art-e-Fact N°ANR-25-CE41-5941-01). It is open to 25 participants, who can commit to the 5 days of the workshop. Priority is given to participants interested in attending the entire series of 4 workshops (to be held once a year between 2026-2029).

To participate, please fill in the online form by the 24th of April: [Affect Theater Workshops](#).

For any further question, please contact: alice.sarcinelli@u-paris.fr