



AfTA 2025 Conference – 10-12 July 2025

University of Stuttgart, Germany

African and Afrodiasporic Theatre in the Digital Age

In the new millennium internet access has increased considerably in African countries. Recently, the pandemic has led to a widespread use of videoconferencing technologies such as Zoom and increased the number of online streaming services. This has also influenced the way people use these media for theatre and in performances, both in person and online, including digital technologies. Digital technologies therefore may have an impact on the self-presentation of theatres in the way they reach their audiences, and how artists produce theatre, and research and rehearse. It also determines what kind of technology they use on stage, and how these technologies are used for effect. Collaborative projects that theatre groups and artists commit to are facilitated by these new technologies and may influence how they create new productions. New technologies also raise new questions with respect to the use of multilingualism in performances. Yet digital technologies might also enter fields such as applied performance and lead to new ways of production and distribution. Finally, the use of AI on stage might change performative interactions; its use along the production process, e.g. for the devising of scripts or project plans, might create new forms of standardization and needs to be inquired further.

The conference proposes to start a discussion on how digital technologies are used in contemporary African, Afrodiasporic and collaborative theatre and on how and if what is being produced is influenced by the use of these technologies. Which possibilities are opened up through the use of new technologies and which are the fields that are intentionally kept or keep out of the way of new technologies? How do aesthetics, accessibility and power shape productions and collaborations?

Suggested areas of investigation:

1. Theatre and public relations: How do theatre companies use the internet, notably social media, to reach their audience?

2. Theatre and the archive: How do theatre companies use digital technologies to archive their work?
3. Theatre and production: How do digital technologies influence ways of production and of collaboration nationally and internationally? How does the use of digital media change the production process? How does it change the aesthetics of theatre?
4. Accessibility, inclusion: How do digital technologies influence the accessibility of productions? How accessible are digital technologies and the funds they require?
5. Networking and collaboration: How do digital technologies influence and enhance transnational communication between theatre practitioners?
6. Visibility: How do digital technologies help to create visibility? How do they bring about vulnerability? How do artists and theatres deal with vulnerability?
7. Colonialism: How does the artistic discussion of colonialism profit from new technologies?
8. AI: How does AI influence the artistic process before and during the production?
9. AI: what is the impact of AI on creative writing and playwriting?
10. Gender: What are the relations between digital technologies and gender?

Areas of investigation might intersect.

Abstracts for individual papers, panels, workshops and performances are welcome. Please specify the technical requirements in your abstract in case you propose a workshop or performance. The conference will take place in English and French.

Please send a 300-word abstract and a short 100-word bio by February 28, 2025 to contact: Annette.buehler-dietrich@ilw.uni-stuttgart.de or conferences@african-theatre.org

Conference Convenors

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