

## Theatre in the Age of Climate Change Convening Participant Biographies

**Chantal Bilodeau (she/her)** is a playwright and translator whose work focuses on the intersection of science, policy, art, and climate change. She is the Artistic Director of The Arctic Cycle—an organization created to support the writing, development and production of eight plays that look at the social and environmental changes taking place in the eight Arctic states, the founder of the blog and international network Artists and Climate Change, and a co-founder of Climate Change Theatre Action. She is a recipient of the Woodward International Playwriting Prize as well as the First Prize in the Earth Matters on Stage Ecodrama Festival and the Uprising National Playwriting Competition. She curates the HowlRound series Theatre in the Age of Climate Change and has written about the intersection of arts and climate change for American Theatre Magazine, the Center for Energy and Environmental Research in the Human Sciences, and the World Policy Institute.

**Catherine Bottrill (she/her)** has been working with Julie's Bicycle since its inception in 2007. She has led strategic arts and environmental projects from carbon footprinting the UK music industry to environmental performance benchmarking. Catherine supports arts and cultural organisations embed environmental and climate change action from the National Theatre, Royal Albert Hall, V&A Museum, Somerset House and Onassis Cultural Centre. She leads Creative Green - an environmental certification designed specifically for arts, entertainment and cultural organisations to demonstrate their commitment, understanding and improvement of environmental impacts across venues, events and offices. In 2017/18 64 certifications were awarded. Catherine holds a Masters from Yale University's School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

**Alison Carey (she/her)** is director of American Revolutions: the United States History Cycle, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival's multi-decade program of commissioning and developing thirty-seven new plays about moments of change in United States history, including Tony and Pulitzer winners and works that explore the history of the relationship between Americans and their environment. Carey is co-founder and former resident playwright of Cornerstone Theater Company, which creates work with and for communities across the United States. Her *California: The Tempest* explored the effects of climate change on the Golden State and her work has been produced at venues nationwide, including Arena Stage, the Public Theater, the Mark Taper Forum, the shuttered mother plant of Bethlehem Steel, and a dirt-floor cattle sale barn. She is working with Amrita Ramanan to nationalize the practice of greenturgy across the field.

**Una Chaudhuri (she/her)** is Collegiate Professor and Professor of English, Drama, and Environmental Studies at New York University. A pioneer in the field of "eco-theatre"—plays and performances that engage with the subjects of ecology and environment—as well as the interdisciplinary field of Animal Studies, in 2014 she published books in both these fields: *Animal Acts: Performing Species Today* (co-edited with Holly Hughes) and *The Ecocide Project: Research Theatre and Climate Change* (co-authored with Shonni Enelow). Her monograph, *The Stage Lives of Animals: Zooësis and Performance*, was published in 2017 by Routledge Press. Professor Chaudhuri participates in collaborative creative projects, including the multi-platform intervention entitled Dear Climate, which has been presented in New York, Santa Barbara, Troy, Dublin, Abu Dhabi, and the Netherlands. She is a founding member of the artist collective CLIMATE LENS.

**Grisha Coleman (she/her)** is a composer and choreographer in performance and experiential media, her work explores relationships among our physiological, technological, and ecological systems. She works as an Associate Professor of Movement, Computation, and Digital Media in the School of Arts, Media and Engineering [AME] and the School of Dance at Arizona State University. Her recent art and scholarly work echo::system is a springboard for re-imagining the environment, environmental change, and environmental justice. Coleman is a New York City native with an MFA in Composition and Integrated Media from the California Institute of the Arts, following which she was awarded a fellowship at the STUDIO for Creative Inquiry at Carnegie Mellon University. Her work has been recognized nationally and internationally including a 2012 National Endowment Arts in Media Grant [NEA], the 2014 Mohr Visiting Artist at Stanford University, and grants from the Rockefeller Fund, and The Creative Capital Foundation.

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**Xavier Cortada (he/him)** serves as Artist-in-Residence at FIU School of Environment, Arts, and Society and the College of Communication, Architecture + The Arts. Cortada often engages scientists in his art-making: At CERN, Cortada and a particle physicist created a permanent digital-art piece to celebrate the Higgs boson discovery. Cortada has worked with scientists at Hubbard Brook LTER on a water cycle visualization project driven by real-time data collected at a watershed in New Hampshire's White Mountains. He has collaborated with a population geneticist to explore our ancestral journeys out of Africa 60,000-years ago, with a molecular biologist to synthesize a DNA strand from a sequence 400 museum visitors randomly generated, and with botanists to develop multi-year participatory eco-art efforts to reforest mangroves, native trees, and wildflowers across Florida. The Miami artist has created environmental installations (North Pole and South Pole) and eco-art (Taiwan, Hawaii and Holland) projects, and painted community murals addressing peace (Cyprus and Northern Ireland), child welfare (Bolivia and Panama), AIDS (Switzerland and South Africa), and juvenile justice (Miami and Philadelphia) concerns.

**Rob Davies (he/him)** is a physicist and educator whose work focuses on synthesizing a broad range of Earth Systems science through a lens of human systems sustainability and planetary boundaries. Over the past decade Rob has developed and delivered hundreds of public lectures on climate change and human sustainability. He is also co-creator of The Crossroads Project, weaving together science, imagery and music, bringing to bear the power of performance art on the topic of human sustainability. His most recent endeavor is a new course for artists "Unveiling the Anthropocene," in which students in Utah State University's Caine College of the Arts are asked to learn the story of the Anthropocene in the voice of science, and then re-tell this story in their own artistic voices. Dr. Davies is Associate Professor of Professional Practice in Utah State University's Dept. of Physics.

**Annalisa Dias (she/her)** is a citizen artist, theatremaker, and community organizer. She is a Producing Playwright and Acting Creative Producer with The Welders, a DC playwright's collective; and is Co-Founder of the DC Coalition for Theatre & Social Justice. Annalisa frequently teaches theatre of the oppressed workshops nationally and internationally and speaks about race, identity, and performance. She is a TCG Rising Leader of Color and also works in diversity and inclusion full-time at the American Political Science Association. Her play, *4380 NIGHTS*, a world premiere new play about detainees at Guantanamo and the historical legacy of global colonialism, is currently running at DC's Signature Theatre as part of the 2nd Women's Voices Theatre Festival. Website: <http://annalisadias.weebly.com/>

**Elizabeth Doud (she/her)** is a Miami-based theatre artist with a background in creative writing and contemporary performance, and twenty years' experience as arts organizer and educator, with an emphasis on international cultural exchange and climate arts. She has worked extensively in Latin America and the Caribbean in the performing arts, and co-created Climakaze Miami with FUNDarte in 2015, an annual climate performance and dialogue platform. She currently leads the Performing Americas Program of the National Performance Network, while pursuing a PhD in Performing Arts at the Federal University of Bahia, Brazil. Since 2014, she has organized various idea forums on cultural collaboration and climate action, and is part of the Climate Lens cohort. She was recently a visiting professor/practitioner at the Rapoport Center for Human Rights at the University of Texas in Austin, and has been awarded a Knight Foundation Challenge Grant for 2018 for her latest eco-performance creation.

**Robert Duffley (he/him)** is Editor and Assistant Dramaturg at the American Repertory Theater. Robert has developed new work with A.R.T., ArtsEmerson, The Orchard Project, Public Arts, The Moscow Art Theatre, Organic Theatre, Boston Theater Marathon, and Boston Circus Guild. Writing includes pieces for Contemporary Theatre Review, Breaking Character, The A.R.T. Guide, The Theatre Times, Six By Eight Press, and DC Theatre Scene. He is Resident Dramaturg for LubDub Theatre Co and Dramaturgy Advisor at Emerson College's Department of Performing Arts.

**Jayeeshia Dutta (she/her)** is a tri-coastal, Bengali-American artist, activist, and strategist, currently serving as lead strategist for StoryShift at Working Films. She is part of the core leadership circle for Another Gulf Is Possible Collaborative, galvanizing the voices and experiences of brown (indigenous,

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latinx, and desi) women from across the Gulf Coast working towards a just transition for our people and the planet. She is communications committee chair on Big Class/826 NOLA's board of directors and visual arts working group chair for Alternate ROOTS. Jayeesha is an avid traveler, home chef, live music aficionado, loves being near (or in) any body of water, and is always down to dance to reggaeton, funk, or hip hop grooves. Jayeesha was born in Mobile, raised in New York, aged in Oakland and is deeply grateful to call New Orleans home.

**Alayna Eagle Shield (she/her)** is a mother of two children and is a proud member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. She currently works as the Tribes Health Education Director. She graduated with a Bachelors in Biology with a minor in chemistry from the University of Mary in 2014 and also received her eminent scholar to teach the Lakota language through Sitting Bull Colleges program LLEAP in 2013. Alayna recently graduated in May 2017 with her Master of Public Health from the North Dakota State University. She also serves on many local boards and committees and fiercely advocates for language and culture as health prevention in her community and surrounding urban areas.

**Georgina Escobar (she/her)** is a NYC based playwright via Ciudad Juárez. Her plays have been seen and developed at INTAR, Dixon Place, The Flea, Lincoln Center, Clubbed Thumb, Governor's Island, Milagro Theatre, Aurora Theatre, Duke City Rep, Marfa Live Arts, The Magic, The Lensic, and others. Professional development includes the Djerassi Playwright's Initiative, MacDowell Colony Fellowship (upcoming), the Fornés Writing Workshop, the Kennedy Center's National Theatre for Young Audiences Award, The Lit Associate gig at the O'Neill, The Brooklyn Generator, and more. She was the finalist for the 2016 National Latino Playwriting Award. Some of her plays include *Bi-(be); The Beacons; Sweep; The Ruin; All Strings Considered; Death and the Tramp; The Unbearable Likeness of Jo, Semity, & Jones; Ash Tree;* and *Bag of Bones*. Collaborations include *A Ribbon About A Bomb; Quixote: On the Conquest of Self; Firerock: Pass the Spark* (formerly known as *Coal*.) [georginaescobar.com](http://georginaescobar.com)

**Lydia Fort (she/her)** is an Assistant Professor at Emory University where she teaches directing, acting, African American Theatre; and is currently developing a course on Eco-Theatre for Fall 2018. Lydia has directed at Diversionary Theatre, Perseverance Theatre, Women's Project Theatre, Women Center Stage, Urban Stages, McCarter Theatre YouthInk! Festival, New Federal Theatre, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Classical Theatre of Harlem, freeFall Theatre, Hangar Theatre, Planet Connections Festivity (where she was honored with the 2103 Best Director and Greener Planet Awards) as well as other festivals including the New Black Fest, 48 Hours in Harlem and the Fire This Time Festival. She was a Time Warner Foundation Fellow of the 2012-2014 Lab at Women's Project Theater, a TCG New Generations Future Leaders Grantee, New York Theatre Workshop Directing Fellow, and Drama League Directing Fellow. Lydia received a BA from New York University and an MFA in Directing from the University of Washington.

**Lanxing Fu (she/her)** is a Chinese-American performer, writer, and director. She is the co-director of Superhero Clubhouse, an New York-based eco-theatre collective, for which she is project director for the *Living Stage*, created in partnership with University Settlement, and a co-creator of *PLUTO* (The Brick) and *JUPITER* (La MaMa). She has collaborated and led interdisciplinary theatre projects about contemporary consumerism, globalization, and the environment in Sri Lanka, Morocco, Turkey, and the United States; and theatre and civic engagement in Appalachia. In 2015, Lani was selected to participate in JACK's "Creating Dangerously" workshop, and was an Orchard Project Core Company alumnus. She holds a BA in Humanities, Science, and Environment and a BA in Theatre Arts from Virginia Tech.

**DeLesslin "Roo" George-Warren (he/him)** is a queer artist, researcher, and activist from Catawba Indian Nation. He has given lectures and performances throughout the east coast including College of Charleston, Vanderbilt University, Ithaca College, and more. His recent projects include indigenous tours of the Smithsonian's Presidential Portrait Gallery which recount how US Presidents promoted colonization and genocide of indigenous peoples ([indigenoudiscovery.com](http://indigenoudiscovery.com)). He is currently working with his community to [revitalize the Catawba Language](#) as part of the 2017 Dreamstarter Grant from Running

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Strong for American Indian Youth. DeLesslin currently has work on display with Honor the Earth's travelling exhibition The Art of Indigenous Resistance.

**MJ Halberstadt (he/him)** is a playwright, educator, and Antarctica enthusiast based just outside Boston. His work seeks humor within social commentary, often as it relates to LGBTQ stories and privilege. He is a 2017-19 Huntington Playwriting Fellow, recipient of the Elliot Norton Award for "Outstanding New Script" (*The Launch Prize*), and affiliated faculty at Emerson College. His work has been produced by Bridge Repertory Theater, Fresh Ink Theatre, the Arctic Group, Boston Teen Acting Troupe, The Survivalists, and Pingree School. Acknowledgements and support from Assets 4 Artists, BCA/Company One PlayLab, Boston University Creative Writing Global Fellowship, KCACTF Region 1, and Last Frontier Theatre Conference. He is a Playmaker Emeritus of Bridge Repertory Theater, and a member of the Dramatists Guild of America, Inc. He holds a BA from Emerson College and MFA from Boston University. Learn more at [mjhalberstadt.com](http://mjhalberstadt.com).

**Marda Kirn (she/her)** is the founding director of EcoArts Connections (EAC), which brings the arts together with science, social justice, and Indigenous ways of knowing to inspire people of all ages to live more sustainably—environmentally, economically, socially/culturally, and personally. EAC commissions, produces, presents, and consults on collaborative activities including performances, exhibits, convenings, youth programs, and other events held in both traditional and non-traditional venues. Previous to EAC, Kirn was the founding director of the Colorado Dance Festival, which was considered one of the top three dance festivals in the US during her fourteen-year tenure (1982-96), bringing artists to Colorado from across the country and the world. She was also a founder and former director of the International Tap Association. Kirn has written for various publications, received numerous awards, and has been a speaker, panelist, and/or consultant for organizations in five continents.

**Julia Levine (she/her)** is a creative collaborator and vegetarian. Originally from St. Louis, Julia is now planted in the New York City downtown theatre realm. As a director, Julia has worked on various projects with companies that consider political and cultural topics, including Theater In Asylum, Honest Accomplice Theatre, and Superhero Clubhouse. She is the Artistic Producer of The Arctic Cycle, is a co-organizer with Climate Change Theatre Action, and writes for the blog series Artists & Climate Change. Julia writes and devises with her performance-based initiative, The Food Plays, to bring questions of food, climate, and justice into everyday life.

**Roberta Levitow (she/her)** Theatre director, dramaturg, producer and teacher Roberta Levitow is a co-founder and director of [Theatre Without Borders](#), a grass-roots all-volunteer network of theatre artists around the world. Theatre Without Borders was a co-initiator of [The Acting Together Project](#) with the Peacebuilding and the Arts Program at Brandeis University and a co-instigator of CLIMATE LENS and the Climate Change Theatre Action in collaboration with NoPassport and The Arctic Cycle. Roberta is the Senior Program Associate/International with the Sundance Institute Theatre Program, now focused on exposure and exchange between the Middle East North Africa, East Africa, and the US. She is a Fulbright Ambassador Emerita with Fulbright grants in Hong Kong, Romania, and Uganda.

**Abhishek Majumdar (he/him)** is a playwright, director, and scenographer based out of Bangalore. He is the founder of Indian Ensemble, and was the artistic director till March 2018. His work has been produced in Asia, Europe, USA, and Latin America. He is the visiting associate professor of Playwriting at NYU Abu Dhabi and Visiting Fellow at Delhi University. He lives in Bangalore with his wife and daughter.

**Dr. April Merleaux (she/her)** is an assistant professor in the School of Critical Social Inquiry at Hampshire College, Amherst, MA. She teaches environmental humanities and the history of US empire and foreign policy. Before joining the Hampshire College faculty, she taught history at Florida International University in Miami, Florida for seven years. In 2016-2017 she was the Project Director for the National Endowment for the Humanities funded Ecohumanities for Cities in Crisis Project, which brought environmental activists, humanities scholars, performance artists, and the general public together for a series of community conversations about sea level rise and climate change in Miami and beyond. She

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currently serves as an advisor for the Humanities Action Lab on its internationally traveling Initiative on Migration, Climate Justice, and Environmental Justice. Merleaux is the author of *Sugar and Civilization: American Empire and the Cultural Politics of Sweetness*, published by the University of North Carolina Press in 2015. The book won the 2016 Myrna Bernath book prize from the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations. She earned a PhD in American Studies from Yale University and an MS in Agriculture, Food, and Environment from the Tufts University Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy. Outside of academia, she has participated in non-violent direct action campaigns focused on climate change and, most recently, on health care policy.

**Teddy Rodger (she/her)** is the Communications and Global Connectivity Manager at The Laboratory for Global Performance and Politics. Prior to joining The Lab, she was Shakespeare Theatre Company's inaugural Associate Director of Audience Development and Promotions, organizing programs that connected STC's work to new audiences, cultural organizations, and museums around D.C. She also designed and launched STC's ticket access program, FREE WILL. Before relocating to DC, Teddy worked for playwrights Charles L. Mee and Michi Barall, most recently serving as the dramaturg for Ms. Barall's 2017 adaptation of *Peer Gynt* at Ma-Yi Theater Company. She was the production manager for the international premiere of *From the Fire* by Elizabeth Swados and Cecilia Rubino at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

**Dr. Alyssa Schmidt (she/her)** is an Assistant Professor teaching Theatre History, Dramatic Literature, and Eco-Performance in the Theater Division of Boston Conservatory at Berklee. She is also a freelance dramaturg and a connectivity associate at Central Square Theater, and serves as a dramaturgy advisor at Emerson College. Her primary areas of interest include education and production dramaturgy concerning issues of ecology and inclusivity and subverting the canon in theatre studies. Starting with the events in association with the CoP in Paris 2015, Schmidt has organized staged readings at the Conservatory for Climate Change Theatre Action, reflecting her abiding interest in cultivating immersive, transdisciplinary learning and creative experiences for her students.

**Dr. Adilson Siqueira (she/her)** currently works at the Department of Literature, Arts, and Culture (DELAC), Federal University of São João del-Rei where he teaches in the Theatre Course and in the Postgraduate Program in Performing Arts. He is also a professor and coordinator of the Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Program in Arts, Urbanities, and Sustainability. Adilson does research in performing arts and it's relation to Sustainability and Climatic Change, Performer Training and Theatre teaching. Their current project is *Ecopoéticas cênicas, performáticas e transdisciplinares*.

**Jessica A. Schwartz (she/her)** is an assistant professor of musicology at UCLA. She explores musical representations and sonic histories of imperial violence and creative dissent. She has published on Marshallese music and gender, politics, diaspora, and displacement. Her book project, *Radiation Sounds: Marshallese Music and Nuclear Silences*, details how Marshallese musically evoke the consequences of US nuclear weapons testing. She co-founded and is cultural programs adviser of the Marshallese Educational Initiative, a nonprofit based in Arkansas.

**Cheryl Sleat (she/her)** is a playwright, filmmaker and educator exploring the intersection of the arts, sustainability and contemplative practice. She is co-executive producer of VisionLA Climate Action Arts, founded to engage the arts community in the sustainability movement. VisionLA's inaugural event was ART MAKES CHANGE, a multidisciplinary environmental festival in support of the Paris Climate Agreement. Current projects include a collaboration with the NRDC to promote environmental education in entertainment. Cheryl's short narrative and documentary films have screened worldwide, been anthologized and distributed on television and online. Her multimedia production company SkyMind served educational and nonprofit clients from 2006-15. Theatre production history includes dozens of award-winning shows as writer, director, producer, as well as extensive experience in non-profit arts management and event production. Recent theatre work includes two site-specific commissions from Seattle University, and in Los Angeles, environmentally-focused performance events in Koreatown and at the LA River.

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**Peterson Toscano (he/him)** Using theatre, comedy, and character-driven one-person shows, Peterson explores LGBTQ issues, privilege, religion, and climate change. Peterson Toscano's unique personal journey led him to performance art. After spending seventeen years and over \$30,000 on three continents attempting to de-gay himself through gay conversion therapy, he came out a quirky queer Quaker concerned with human rights and comedy. At universities, Toscano often presents "performance lectures," hybrids of performance art and scholarly talks. He asks himself and his audiences unusual questions: Who are the gender outlaws in the Bible? What is a queer response to climate change? How can comedy help us better understand our most tragic losses? In 2017 Peterson produced *Transfigurations—Transgressing Gender in the Bible*, a film about gender non-conforming characters. Toscano studied theatre at City College of NY and has authored eleven performance pieces. He is also the host of Citizens' Climate Radio.

**E. San San Wong (she/her)** E. San San Wong leads Barr's Arts & Creativity portfolio. She currently serves on the board of Grantmakers in the Arts, a national leadership and service organization that supports the growth of arts and culture. Prior to joining Barr in 2012, San San served as director of grants at the San Francisco Arts Commission, executive director of the National Performance Network, director of development and special initiatives at Theatre Artaud, and as a performing arts producer and presenter. As an international arts consultant, her clients included the Ford Foundation, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, New England Foundation for the Arts, and Res Artis, among many others.

**Meaza Worku (she/her)** (Ethiopia) is a dramatist best known for her radio, stage, television, and comic book writing. She studied Theatre Arts at the University of Addis Ababa, and has written numerous short radio plays, radio serials, and the economic and political satire radio sitcom Wefekomech. Her stage play *Desperate to Fight* was selected for development by the Sundance Institute East African Theatre program, and has been performed internationally.

**Kyoko Yoshida (she/her)**, Consultant to the US-Japan Connection of National Performance Network and Visual Artists Network (NPN/VAN), is the executive director and founder of US/Japan Cultural Trade Network, Inc. (CTN). Yoshida has served the performing arts field for over thirty years as a presenter, producer and consultant, with a focus on artistic and cultural exchange between the US and Japan. CTN started as an international project of Arts Midwest in 2001 to provide leadership, vision, information, and technical support to enhance cultural trade between the two countries. CTN relocated to San Francisco in 2006 to become an independent nonprofit organization. Since 2011 CTN has been working closely with NPN/VAN to develop its US-Japan Connection and Asia Exchange projects.