

Theatre Journal
Special Issue for December 2026
“Staying Put”
Call for Papers

For this special issue on “Staying Put,” *Theatre Journal* invites submissions that engage with “staying put” as a conceptual framework and/or as a foundational aspect of theatre, dance, and performance studies scholarship. This theme is inspired by the resilience performance groups have historically exhibited—and continue to exhibit—in response to challenges such as the pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic, rising rents, lack of funding, and political instability. Many practitioners and companies have resisted displacement, remaining in the spaces where they cultivate their craft, generate new artistic possibilities, and engage with their communities. A notable example is Su Teatro in Denver, Colorado. By mobilizing community support, in 2024 the Latine theatre company successfully paid off its mortgage and even expanded its space in the face of rapid gentrification. In cases such as this, the act of staying put not only ensures the continued presence of the embodied arts in a given locality but also asserts social and cultural significance. Given the increasing presence of conservative discourses across the globe, that any company or artistic collective chooses to stay put is a political and radical act. By choosing to remain, preserving physical and artistic footholds, groups and practitioners reinforce the vital role of the arts in the community.

At the same time, “staying put” invites expansive interpretation, encompassing both durational and ephemeral interventions as strategies of resistance and refusal. Protest actions such as sit-ins, die-ins, and teach-ins exemplify how physical presence can operate as a performative tactic—disrupting dominant narratives and drawing attention to urgent sociopolitical issues. Beyond overt protest, performance artists, dancers, and theatremakers have long explored the concept of staying put through site-specific works, endurance-based practices, and installations that reclaim or reimagine contested spaces. Performances foregrounding slowness, stillness, or repetition often function as aesthetic and political acts of persistence, challenging systems that valorize mobility, speed, and displacement.

“Staying put” also evokes ideas of rootedness or plantedness, inviting reflection on nonhuman agents and their relationship to place and acts of resistance. Additionally, archival and dramaturgical interventions, along with performance practices grounded in ghostly or reenactment-based encounters, offer alternative ways of “staying put”—resurrecting marginalized histories, reclaiming cultural memory, and insisting on the presence of voices that institutions or dominant discourses have attempted to erase. Ultimately, “staying put” invites us to consider what it means to perform remains: to examine the who, what, and where of remaining.

Overarching questions of this special issue include: How does the act of “staying put” function as a form of artistic and political resistance in the face of displacement, gentrification, or systemic oppression? In what ways does “staying put” challenge dominant notions of time, movement, and progress in theatre, dance, and performance? How do theatre, dance, and performance groups sustain themselves in contested or precarious spaces?

This special issue will be edited by *Theatre Journal* Coeditor Christina Baker. We will consider both full-length essays for the print edition (6,000-9,000 words) as well as proposals for short provocations, video and/or photo essays, and other creative, multimedia material for our online platform (500-2,000 words). For information about submission, visit:

<https://jhuptheatre.org/theatre-journal/author-guidelines>.

Article submissions (6,000-9,000 words) should reach us by February 1, 2026. If this deadline is not possible for you due to extenuating circumstances, please contact Christina Baker to inquire about a possible extension. She welcomes questions and inquiries at

christina.baker0001@temple.edu.

The deadline for submissions to the online platform (500-2,000 words) is June 1, 2026. Online Editor Tarryn Chun welcomes questions and inquiries regarding submissions to the online platform at tchun@nd.edu.

Submit via ScholarOne: <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/theatrejournal>.