

Nic Leonhardt

Editorial

An extraordinary year lies behind all of us. Since March 2020, a pandemic has changed our everyday lives, turned our working lives and leisure time behaviour upside down worldwide, and presented people with sometimes existential challenges. The cultural sector lay fallow in most countries, new forms of learning and working, “home schooling” and “home office”, are still also impacting universities, research and teaching. Digitization was both a curse and a blessing in the so-called “new normal”: digital tools and repositories were a blessing for enabling collaboration and scholarly activity, yet they represent a curse in regions where digital access is difficult or even impossible for a variety of reasons. Education and scholarship thrive on exchange and lively discourse - which is possible online, but cannot replace face-to-face encounters.

This issue of the *Journal for Global Theatre History* thus sees the light of day in what is still a memorable time, and it focuses on a memorable topic area of an equally tumultuous time: all chapters refer to the role(s) that the university, the humanities, the academy, and higher education played in and for the Cultural Cold War. After 1945, in a world of emerging nations, the development of academies, curricula, and university institutions was high on the agenda of cultural policy and diplomatic efforts. Educational institutions also proved to be powerful tools of cultural diplomacy and soft power influence.

The papers in this volume are revised presentations from the international symposium, “Cold War University. Humanities and Arts Education as a (Battle)field of Diplomatic Influence and Decolonial Practice”, jointly organized by Judith Rottenburg and Lisa Skwirblies in the context of the ERC project *Developing Theatre* (GA No. 694559). Initially, the symposium was planned to take place at the Center for Advanced Studies (CAS) of LMU Munich. Due to the strict constraints occasioned by the pandemic, the scientific exchange ultimately took place as a one-day online workshop.

The output is impressive: the thematic issue, curated by guest editors Judith Rottenburg and Lisa Skwirblies, provides numerous insightful readings. Each article raises new questions about an entity that is often taken for granted, the university, and shows how teaching and learning are also subject to political and ideological conditions and goals.

On behalf of the editors, I would like to thank you for your interest in our journal and wish you a stimulating read.

Nic Leonhardt, Munich, June 2021