

## 5 sentences...

**To open the Circus and its Others II conference's closing roundtable on August 29, 2018, its organizers and featured speakers offered five sentences each in response to the conference, in whatever format they wished. Here are those sentences, which launched a free-flowing discussion about the conference and the potential futures of the Circus and its Others inquiry with all attendees.**

### **Charles R. Batson**

1) 3 days later, and the queer, this queer, is still here, recalling a call for the perhaps queer practice of asking questions of our questions, but today, this afternoon, I find myself -- post dancing with some of you amazing colleagues -- sitting not necessarily questioning but sitting in, on, and with things that he was reminded of by and through you amazing colleagues.

2) 3 days of being reminded of importance of making space, as active verb, as active choice, making space for failure, making Space on the bus, making space in the school, making space on stage and press materials, making space for the sissy boy on the trapeze, making space for the woman of color on the Spanish web and in the decision-making, making space for tension, making space for those other stories that have not often been told, making space for radical hospitality, and making space for the amateur, the lover, the act and representation of loving.

3) I have also been reminded, however, that we may speak of moving, transforming, crossing, expanding, exploding, but sometimes in our practices (practices of researching, of producing, of performing) we may ALSO end up reiterating old categories, old boxes.

4) This queer, here, today, this afternoon, is reminded of the soul-nourishment of being in the presence of careful scholarship, accompanied by laughter, by questions, by listening, by confetti.

5) This queer, here, today, this afternoon, also sits, dancing in spirit, having been reminded of the importance of recognizing and attempting to perform acts of visibility -- and in that vein, let me speak, in this my final sentence, of our photographer, of our technicians, of the cleaner who was mopping the floor, this floor when Karen and I arrived on Monday morning of 3 days ago, of the massive hours by the research teams of Performance Matters and CARP, AND, as I close this very long final sentence, of the hours, days, and months spent with our scientific academic team, with the amazing

Veronika, and with my dear colleague and friend Karen, who 3 days ago explicitly asked if Circus and Its Others is a movement, and whose question wants this queer, in this space, here, today, this afternoon, to help make it a movement where we not only explore questions of difference but where we provide networks, teams, publications, exchanges, and communities that give, to that and those differences, explicit and visible space.

### **Karen Fricker**

1. I know it hurts, but from my perspective as someone who was listening to papers at this conference and not delivering one, the 15 minute time limit is really effective in keeping arguments focused and attentions focused on them – and does important work I think in opening up scholarship to an audience beyond scholars.
2. If the Czech Republic does get a circus school, I hope it can build on some of the research and wisdom circulated at this conference about the dangers of homogenization, and will build on and nurture vivacious, adventurous and diverse talents such as we saw in the Czech circus showcase on Monday night including Stephanie N’Duhirahe, Morgane Widmer, and Eva Stara.
3. Running this conference alongside a festival is ideal and we should keep doing it, working in future to integrate discussion of festival productions into the conference programme – through morning critical panels, perhaps (thank you Jakob for this point!).
4. Yesterday’s Access and Ableisms panel is a beautiful example of how presentation modes Other than the traditional academic conference paper – in this case narrative, interrogation, and performance – can be used to amplify the points being made: Brava to you all, Tina, Alisan, Keren, and Erin.
5. This inquiry must become more diverse, and in the spirit of yesterday’s Women in Circus and Its Others panel this is something that we can’t just hope will happen but that we must actively work to make happen.
6. We should all live so long as to work with a colleague as organized, professional, and caring as Veronika Stefanova: thank you for making this conference a huge success.

### **Veronika Štefanová**

The conversion of circus into text – the theorizing of circus – might to some degree be a violation of its true nature. In other words, when we speak about something that is primarily nonverbal, physical and in motion, we are in constant danger of turning it into

something static, we risk enclosing it in boxes it simply does not fit in. To make this process more dynamic, we must avoid normalization. When we talk about circus, we must do so responsibly. Converting circus into text must be guided by a certain dramaturgy – like a theatre, opera, dance or circus dramaturg, we as theorists, must be able to answer a seemingly simple but essential question: why we're doing what we're doing and who are we doing it for and i ma very glad you all took this challenge responsibly!

### **Michael Eigtved**

1. It is enjoyable that the field of research in contemporary circus is relatively new, and also that many young scholars are attracted to it - perhaps the these two are related...
2. It is wonderful that the spirit of this conference has been extremely openminded, and that a strong sense of respect for and appreciation of whatever people are bringing to the table are prevailing.
3. It is pleasurable that so many new ideas about circus - and it's importance- are being articulated
4. It is a great sensation to feel part of a growing project, which joins together so many different backgrounds - united by a genuin interest in exploring and understanding circus and its others.
5. It is promising, that discussions of papers often have ended with people wanting more, suggesting this was not the last Circus and its Other-event!

### **Marie-Andrée Robitaille**

- 1-While observing a diversification of expressions, genres, and aesthetics into the art of circus, the function of circus yet mainly operates as spectacle, there seem to be emerging desires and attempts towards other forms of practice, how do these practices manifest today and are they documented?
- 2-The notion of success and how we situate the event of circus must be discussed further as these notions might be critical factors in the renewal of the art form... can we, should we define what is circus, would a circus ontology be productive instead of too frequently (in my opinion) referring to theater as comparison?

3-Research as a buzzword in circus art- is there a need to clarify the terminology as circus research, creative research, practice-led research, practice-based research, exploratory research, research and development, research and creation, research for mean of production, academic research, artistic research in circus, might be different avenues to generate different types of knowledge in and about circus?

4-While the crucial question of expression has settled as a central concern in the practice of contemporary circus art, could it be so far that it has been to the detriment of other questions related to the types of interaction and the consideration for the «Other»?

5-The scholar is a necessary Other in the understanding of the art form; how can we (the artist and the scholar) merge practices so that not only will we move towards a better understanding of how circus engage, but also enable a transformation from within the very circus practice?

### **Camilla Damkjær**

1. Work for inclusivity from wherever you stand.
2. Help revise circus histories.
3. Keep challenging circus bodies.
4. Remember the fluidity of circus performance formats.
5. Be aware of your own projections onto circus.