

RIGHT TO RIGHT TO PERFORM, PERFORM, RESIST

PERFORMING ARTS SHAPING CRISIS

Faculty of Dramatic Arts, Belgrade, Serbia

Organized upon the initiative of the students of the Faculty of Dramatic Arts

20 – 21 October 2025

Over the past nine months, students in Serbia have managed to awaken all layers of society, fighting for fundamental values of contemporary humanity – human rights, the rule of law and the right to resistance. The widespread nature of this movement stems from its struggle against systemic corruption, a problem that permeates every aspect of society and its functioning, including the cultural system. As an integral part of this system, theatre and performing arts stand at a crossroads: on one hand, they can act as accomplices to such mechanisms of power, while on the other hand they can serve as spaces for reclaiming freedom.

Throughout the history of performing arts, it has been shown that theatre has never remained neutral – in times of social crisis, it has continually questioned its capacity for political action. However, it is no longer enough for theatre to merely highlight societal issues. It must also critically examine its role in addressing those issues – strategically, programmatically and in terms of production. It is the principle of the horizontal structure, which has enabled endurance and resilience of the student protests in Serbia, that opens up space for a new reflection on the possibility of theatre functioning according to similar principles. Can artistic production adopt 'bottom-up' decision-making, grounded in collective action and mutual responsibility? Within this framework, it is important to consider whether theatre and performing arts can not only reflect crises, but also radically shape it – whether it holds the transformative potential to generate new forms of community, solidarity and political imagination.

Aware that the socio-political situation in Serbia is but one battleground among many, it is vital to also question the role of collaborative practices, solidarity and (non)institutional action in the context of performing arts globally. Therefore, we invite **experts in the field of theatre and performing arts, cultural and media theorists, students and artists** to engage in interdisciplinary reflection on the political nature of theatre and its role in times of social crisis by proposing paper/project presentations and thematic panel sessions on some of the following themes:

The Right to Resistance: Performance Practices as Political Intervention

Creativity and Resistance In Times of Threat and Surveillance

Theatre as Part of Labor Struggles (Strikes and Workers' Rights)

Staging on the Street: Reclaiming New (Public) Spaces of Performance

Cultural Policy in the Field of Theatre: Challenges and Censorship

Cultural Diplomacy as a Tool of Support and Cooperation within the International Community

Horizontal Governance: New Methods of Organizational and Programmatic Policy-Making

The Performative Nature of Protest: The role of the Body in Resistance

L'art pour l'art – Death or Necessity of Activist Theatre

Programmatic Policy in Theatre as a Social Reflection

Staging of Resistance and Media Representation

The working language of the conference is English.

Please submit your proposal via the Google Form at:

Each submission of the proposal should include an abstract of a maximum of 300 words and a short biography of a maximum of 150 words in English.

Proposals should be submitted by **15 September 2025**.

Notification of acceptance will follow on **1 October 2025**.

The participation in the conference is free of charge.

For any questions or additional information, please contact us at:
right2performconf@gmail.com