

## Faculty of Humanities, Utrecht University

Full Professor in *Performing Arts & Society*

### 1. General

The Faculty of Humanities at Utrecht University has a vacancy for a full professor in Performing Arts & Society (1.0 FTE). The chair will play a key role in the development of research, teaching, and public engagement in relation to the performing arts in the broad sense, from the more traditional forms of theatre, dance, opera and music theatre, to the popular, to more experimental forms at the interfaces of theatre/dance, music, visual arts, media, interventions in public space, bottom-up community-driven performances, online performances, and more. Specifically, the chair will study relationships between (developments in) the performing arts and societal transformations.

Within the Faculty, the chair will be expected to assume a prominent role in the Department of Media and Culture Studies, contributing to the shared strategic vision and mission, and strengthening its position within both academic and societal debates and to develop various forms of societal impact. For this, the department invites the chair to develop new research initiatives and encourages a committed effort to attract external funding from Dutch and/or European funding schemes to support these initiatives. The Chair will also invest in supporting and further expanding our network of partnerships and collaborations with the cultural field.

The chair will contribute to Utrecht University's interdisciplinary [strategic themes](#) that include Institutions for Open Societies, Dynamics of Youth, and Pathways to Sustainability, as well as broader movements within the humanities such as urban humanities and creative humanities. The proposed chair also fits in well with the rapidly growing interest in interdisciplinary educational research and the theme of "material and immaterial heritage", as formulated in the Sectorplan theme *Cultural Heritage and Identity*.

Together with the other senior staff at the department, the new chair will be responsible for courses, tracks and programs that deal with the performing arts and society. These include courses and specialization tracks within the BA programs Media and Culture and the MA programs of Contemporary Theatre, Dance and Dramaturgy, and Arts and Society; and the research MA of Media, Art & Performance Studies. Moreover, the chair will contribute to the development of innovative teaching formats and new directions in interdisciplinary teaching, community-engaged learning, and transdisciplinary teaching in the context of continuing education and executive teaching programs.

The Faculty of Humanities is committed to supporting our staff with a variety of backgrounds, skills, and views, and to foster various forms of interdisciplinary collaboration. The new chair will be positioned in the Department of Media and Culture Studies (MCW). In our department, a wide range of media as well as cultural and artistic expressions are studied, also in their intermedial relations. Besides theatre and performance studies, we also develop research and education in the fields of media and screen studies, critical data studies, game studies, musicology, arts & society, and gender and postcolonial studies. We interpret culture as a dynamic combination of

everyday, artistic, and creative practices that people use to shape their identities, and within which social processes, structures and institutions are shaped.

## **2. The Research Field and Profile of the Chair**

The chair focuses on the broad, dynamic, and interdisciplinary field that is the subject of what is internationally called performance studies. Performance Studies brings together insights from theatre and dance studies, anthropology, art studies, social sciences, critical theory, and philosophy. Performance Studies is therefore a connecting factor between education and research in theatre studies, musicology, and arts & society and is characterized by a strong societal orientation. Internationally, Performance Studies plays an important role in debates about the arts, cultural participation, and various societal issues related to the challenges of a rapidly changing world – especially issues around inclusion and exclusion, social and ecological justice, globalization, and cultural diversity, and living and contested heritage.

These societal questions and debates are also strongly present in the performing arts, both in the Netherlands and internationally. Performing arts practice is fundamentally changing, as a result of societal transformations. The performing arts also play an important role in its response to these transformations by reflecting on their cultural and historical significance, by examining their intricacies and implications, or by telling new or forgotten stories, and giving a voice to those who are forgotten or were previously unheard. An example is how non-Western forms of expression are becoming increasingly integrated within our previously Western-dominant field of arts and culture. Such changes of the field itself in response to societal transformations, raise fundamental questions about the canon, about intangible heritage, about our perception of the field of arts and culture, of the (role of) various arts that are part of it, and also about how this field should be documented and studied. Moreover, these questions have direct implications for cultural policy as well as education. There is a great need for new methods and new histories that do justice to the changed, and still changing, field of performing arts – specifically in its response to societal transformations. This need applies to our own academic education, but also to that of the many adjacent institutions that teach new generations of professionals in the cultural field, such as theatre schools, conservatories, and arts academies.

The research topics, methodological expertise, and areas of transdisciplinary partnerships and public engagement that the chair specializes in can include:

- performing arts and societal change;
- new methods for, and histories of, the performing arts;
- performing arts, globalization, and cultural diversity;
- performing arts, social and ecological justice;
- performing arts and intangible, living, and contested heritage;
- performing arts, cultural participation, and community engagement;
- performing arts and transforming institutions.

### **3. International and National Positioning**

Internationally, the field of the performing arts is subject of study of, on the one hand, Theatre Studies (with its roots in literary studies and traditionally more disciplinary and historically oriented) and, on the other hand, Performance Studies (characterized by an interdisciplinary approach and a focus on contemporary phenomena in a broader cultural and societal context). Examples are Theaterwissenschaft at the Freie Universität Berlin, Theaterwissenschaft at LMU München, Performance Studies at NYU, and Performance Studies at Northwestern University.

In the past decades, developments within the field of the performing arts, as well as interdisciplinary developments in academic research and teaching, have resulted in programmes and positions at the intersection of Theatre and Performance Studies, as well as combinations of Theatre and/or Performance studies with Media Studies and with Musicology. Examples are:

- Theatre and Performance Studies – Warwick University
- Theatre and Performance Studies – University of Edinburgh
- Theatre and Performance Studies – Stanford University
- Theatre and Performance Studies – University of Copenhagen
- Theater, Film und Medienwissenschaft – Universität Wien
- Film, Theater, Medien und Kulturwissenschaft – Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz
- Medien, Theater und Populäre Kultur – Universität Hildesheim
- Music and Theatre Studies – University of Bologna

Currently, there are three chairs of Theatre Studies or Performance Studies in the Netherlands:

- Professor of Theatre Studies at UvA, leading a classical disciplinary oriented Theatre Studies department
- Professor of Contemporary Performing Arts at Groningen University, representing Theatre Studies in the Arts, Culture and Media (ACM) cluster (will be appointed soon)
- Professor of Performance, Science and Technology at Utrecht University

The research group in Utrecht is an example of the integration of Theatre Studies and Performance Studies. There is a strong focus on contemporary developments studied from an interdisciplinary perspective and in relation to other media and the broader cultural and societal context. The new position will be distinct from but complementary to that of the adjacent chair in Performance, Science and Technology specializing in relationships between the performing art and (media)technological developments, as well as relationships between performance and science.

### **4. Required Qualifications**

#### **Research**

- Has a disciplinary background in theatre, dance or performance studies, or adjacent fields.

- Has in-depth knowledge of academic debates around the performing arts (in the broad sense as outlined above) in relation to societal transformations;
- Has demonstrated capacity to design an innovative line of research and is internationally recognized as an excellent senior researcher, as evidenced by regular publications in international peer-reviewed journals and books published by prestigious academic publishers;
- Has had demonstrable success in acquiring external research funding and experience with collaborating in international research consortia;
- Has successfully supervised junior researchers and PhD students and is capable of implementing new research programmes that attract PhD candidates.

### **Teaching**

- Has teaching experience at BA, MA and PhD levels;
- Is a very motivating and motivated teacher, who makes use of new and innovative teaching methods;
- Has an interest in and possibly experience with interdisciplinary teaching and community engaged learning and is capable of developing new teaching initiatives for such contexts;
- Is capable of leading interdisciplinary education programmes;
- Is able and willing to teach in Dutch and in English. (Candidates whose command of Dutch is insufficient at the time of appointment are expected to acquire a working knowledge of the Dutch language in two years' time).

### **Collaboration**

- Has ambitions to engage in, and to further develop, collaborations and networks within the department and the faculty, and the wider university– for example within the interdisciplinary Focus Areas and Strategic Themes of Utrecht University;
- Has a strong professional network both in academia and beyond – specifically the professional field of arts and culture;
- Has experience with, and actively looks for opportunities to collaborate with partners outside of academia;

### **Impact and Knowledge Utilization**

- Has the capacity to translate research results into support and advice for non-academic stakeholders and organisations;
- Engages in various forms of outreach activities and public engagement;
- Has expertise and experience in communicating specialized academic research and debates to the broader academic and non-academic world.

### **Management and administration**

- Is a team player with proven managerial and interpersonal skills for collaboration with colleagues in the department as well as in various external partnerships in relation to research, education, and public engagement;

- Is capable of leading, mentoring, and inspiring a diverse team of researchers and educators, in collaboration with other senior colleagues;
- Is willing to share responsibility with other colleagues in the department for the development and implementation of a joint departmental vision for research, teaching, and public engagement;
- Is willing and able to take up a managerial role within the department.

### **Qualification system for teaching and research at UU**

Utrecht University has a system of qualifying diplomas for teaching and research. This means that, in addition to a PhD in a relevant discipline, a senior qualifying diploma for teaching and a senior qualifying diploma for research are required. Candidates who transfer in from another university and do not possess these Dutch qualifications may submit a portfolio for teaching and another for research, on the basis of which the Dean of the Faculty may grant the necessary senior qualifying diplomas prior to the appointment.