

THURSDAY, MAY 27, 2021

13:30 - 15:00 (EDT)

# EARTHLY THEATRES

PANEL



INTER  
LOCUTORS

**Frédérique Aït-Touati**

Paris, Zone Critique

**Andrew Todd**

Studio Andrew Todd, Paris/Cluny

**Lisa Landrum**

(moderator) University of Manitoba

## Earthly Theatres Moving Ground, Suffusing Airs, Sentient Enclosures

In the theatre of the world, Earth is not only a shared stage, but a primary performer – acting and interacting, striving and suffering. What are the consequences of reimagining Earth more as protagonist than platform? What are Earth’s agencies in the drama of life? What is the substance of Earth’s character? – its ambitions and vulnerabilities?

Manifold crises of our era – including climate change and the collapse of biodiversity – have pushed the suffering of Earth to center stage and magnified the tragedy of environmental injustice. The symbiotic well-being of all living entities is precariously intertwined. Theatre is a privileged heuristic forum to both rehearse and distill such complicated dramas. Like architecture, theatre integrates storied struggles of diverse actors and spectators, flora and fauna, enveloping atmospheres and surrounding horizons, microbials and macrocosmic rhythms. Merging science and scenic innovation, cartography and cosmography, philosophy and architecture, this session explores fundamental questions concerning earth, enclosure, air and atmosphere, with examples from recent representations of global crises on stage and integrations of biomaterials in theatre buildings.



**Frédérique Aït-Touati** is a historian of science and literature, a theatre director, and a CNRS Research Fellow in Paris at l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales. Her interests include early modern literature, astronomy, and the sciences of the Earth, from the seventeenth through the twenty first centuries, including cartography, cosmography, and ecology/environmentalism. She has published *Fictions of the Cosmos* (Chicago, 2011, MLA Prize), *Contes de la Lune, essai sur la fiction et la science modernes* (Gallimard, 2011), *Histoires et savoirs* (2012), *Le Monde en images* (2015), [Terra Forma, manuel de cartographies potentielles](#) (2019) and *Le Cri de Gaïa, Penser la terre avec Bruno Latour* (2021). Before joining the CNRS, she was a Fellow at the University of Oxford (2007-2014) and is the current director of the Experimental Programme in Political Arts (SPEAP) at Sciences Po Paris. With Bruno Latour and her theatre company [Zone Critique](#) she has created plays and performances, including *Gaïa Global Circus* (2013-2016), *The Theatre of Negotiations* (2015), *INSIDE* (2016-2018), *Moving Earths* (2019-2020), and *VIRAL* (2021), which have been on tour around the world.



**Andrew Todd** opened his eponymous architectural practice, [Studio Andrew Todd](#), after a period of collaboration with the director Peter Brook - a collaboration resulting in the book *The Open Circle: Peter Brook's Theatre Environments* (Faber & Faber, 2003). Specialising in the live arts, Todd has built, as architect and theatre consultant, several works, including the CQS Old Vic and Young Vic Theatres in London, Le Silo auditorium in Marseille, and the Théâtre Elisabethain du Château d'Hardelot (named best wooden building in the world in 2018). He is author of two further books, *Common Sense* (RightAngle, 2016) and *The Clearing*, the latter concerning the culture of wood. He writes for *The Guardian*, mostly concerning theatre in France, and in particular the Avignon Festival. With Bruno Latour and Frédérique Aït-Touati he has adapted two of their playtexts into English (*Moving Earths* and *Inside*). Based in Paris and near Cluny, Andrew Todd is Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres.

Moderator:

**Lisa Landrum**, Associate Professor & Associate Dean Research, University of Manitoba ([bio link](#))