ON ESSAYISM

Programme

24. 6. 2026

Dvorana Concert Hall
The Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava

Zochova 1

9:00

Opening Remarks

9:10 – 11:00

Keynote Lecture: Isolde Vanhee & Tom Van Imschoot

On Essayism as a Practice of Receptivity. Converging Research and Education in the Arts

Chair: Katarína Mišíková

Essayism is often associated with subjectivity, speculation, and open-ended forms of inquiry. This keynote approaches it more specifically as a practice of receptivity: a way of thinking-through-making shaped by affinity, resonance, and attention to fragments and connections. Rather than presenting knowledge as fixed or complete, essayistic practices often emerge through citation, juxtaposition, wandering, and dialogue, opening unexpected relations between images, histories, materials, and disciplines. In this sense, the essay can be understood less as a closed form than as a particular way of paying attention: one that allows artistic research to remain open to uncertainty, coincidence, fascination, and encounter.

Starting from examples in contemporary visual and performative arts, the keynote explores how essayistic methods create spaces in which artistic inquiry becomes inseparable from processes of looking, listening, collecting, connecting, and responding. Works by artists such as Tacita Dean, Francis Alÿs, Patrick Van Caeckenbergh, and Jan Martens demonstrate how essayistic strategies unfold through fragments, echoes, archival traces, embodied gestures, and affinities across time and disciplines.

The keynote further reflects on how such practices may offer productive models for artistic research today. In times increasingly marked what has been described as “disordered attention,” essayism may create moments of shared attention and receptivity, temporarily suspending productivity in order to sharpen sensitivity, critical reflection, and openness toward the world. As such, essayistic methods not only help bridge theory and practice, but also offer students and researchers ways to articulate and communicate the experiential and process-based dimensions of artistic inquiry.

Isolde Vanhee is a senior lecturer and researcher at LUCA School of Arts. She is Chair of Art Cinema OFFoff, a platform for experimental cinema and audiovisual art in Gent. In her writings, she often focuses on films and artworks that harbor a certain contrariness, relating those to questions on (auto) fiction, inspiration, affinity, love, family, the everyday, and also and especially the tension between more aesthetic or ethical perspectives on artistry and authorship. Her research pays special attention to pictorial, narrative and tactile exchanges between cinema and painting. Finally, she has a strong interest in the passages between word and image, reading and looking, writing and imagining.

Tom Van Imschoot is a literary scholar, senior researcher and former head of research at LUCA School of Arts, Ghent, where he currently coordinates a team of experts on art, imagination and language. His work explores the associative logic between words and images, focusing on essayism, author-reader-interaction, fiction and artistic reflexivity. Van Imschoot investigates affective phenomena – fascination, intuition, illusion-building, identification, resonance… -`at the crossroads of imagination and embodiment. His research bridges literature, visual arts, and performance, examining how artistic processes communicate through verbal and tactile modes. Outside academia, he chairs the board of Kunsthal Gent, a centre for in visual arts in Ghent, and 019, an experimental platform for visual arts, graphic design and architecture, and he is a member of the board of arts centre CAMPO.

11:10 – 12:10

Panel A: Essaying the Self

Chair: Žofia Ščuroková

Katja Dreyer
LUCA School of Arts / KU Leuven
PhD candidate Theatre

I ESSAY-DO YOU ESSAY, TOO? CAN I ESSAY WITH YOU? A LECTURE PERFORMANCE.

I essay wants to be experienced as an embodied essay. Theatre and the essay are transdisciplinary in their natures. Both follow an embodied thinking process and are not interested in being investigated as what they are, but as what they do. This embodied essay works with the traces of the creation of the auto theoretical performance Slovakia -What's the story, Mum? practising 'writing as thinking',' performing as rewriting', the body as a vessel and the presence of agency in the Intervals of now.

An attempt to decolonize our bodies from their involuntary habits and find access to our lives' trash and treasures through writing, stopping, hesitating and listening. Embracing the psychic need to be present in through times and acknowledge the notion of 'haunting ' as a notifier of "something to be done" (Avery M. Gordon). **I essay**, in its function as an embodied essay facilitates the experience of a shared inquiry on essayism, through all our faculties and is an attempt to make this shared experience palpable (Isolde Vanhee). It is a tool to forge a space open for fragments and notions of genealogical narratives to emerge, co-exist and reconfigure, to 'mine the present' for undetonated energies from past revolutions with the help of gravity, anatomy and thought.



Katja Dreyer is a Researcher (LUCA Drama/KULeuven), Theatre Maker, Performer, Somatic practitioner and teaches Writing for Performance and Body & Space at LUCA Drama. Her research contains auto theory, writing as an embodied practice, performance as an embodied encounter and finding ways to connect to the ghost of past, present and future through hesitation, inhibition and the gap. She follows Avery M. Gordon in her "desire to reanimate the Utopian" and Walter Benjamin in his description of materialistic historiography. Embracing the' psychic need' to understand the 'intervals of now' (Rebecca Schneider) she looks for (accidental) methodologies to access the trash and treasures of our shared and individual histories using principles like Inhibition from Alexander Technique and performative formats like the Impossible Conversation.

Mario Homolka
The Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava
Film and Television Faculty, Department of Documentary Film Directing

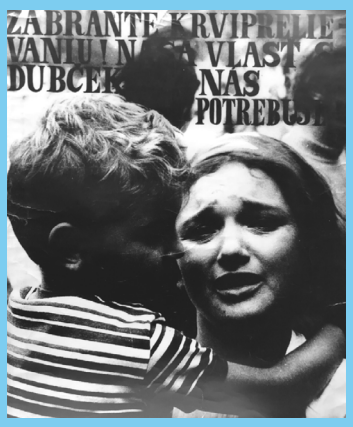
ESSAYISM AS A METHOD OF RESEARCH AND CREATIVE SELF-DISCOVERY

$(2 \text{ in } 1)^2$
"two in one" = genealogical research as creation
"squared" = self-discovery as socio-cultural knowledge of society

The subjectivism of examining one's own lineage and the objectivism of placing it in broader historical contexts. Individual reflexivity on general historical events.

A textual-visual method of essayistic exploration of fundamental questions:
who am I, where do I come from, what ancestors do I carry within me, what generations are written in my genes...?

In 2025, the terms "national identity" and "cultural-ethical issues" were added to the Slovak Constitution. Such terms of unclear meaning are referred to in law as indefinite legal terms that don't have a precisely defined, fixed content. Their meaning is not explicitly stated in the law, therefore their meaning must be interpreted in each individual case by the person applying the law...
Their individual appeal lies in interpretative volatility, but also in their political exploitability, which will prevail if a critical mass of individual interpretations do not stem from knowledge of their own ancestral roots, but only from romantic mythology and the "pissed-off nationalism" of the 19th century.
Memory is generally our traditional deficit.
Let's start an integrating process of self-discovery through our own ancestors.
Factual research as a creative story.
Through family memory to community memory.
Through personal integrity to social integrity.





I remember my mother holding me in her arms as she cried and screamed at the Russian occupiers in tanks in August 1968. There was even a poster of it on the streets of Bratislava.

Mario Homolka is a Slovak documentary filmmaker, producer, and teacher. He graduated from the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava and throughout his career, he has combined creative filmmaking, television management, film production, and academic work. Homolka served as Editor-in-Chief of Documentary and Journalism Programming at Slovak Television. He is currently a partner and manager at LEON Productions and has been affiliated with the Film and Television Faculty of VŠMU since 2022 as an assistant teacher, while pursuing his PhD studies since 2023. As a director, his filmography includes the graduation film *Konina* (1989), as well as *Rodáci* (1997), *Akcent* No. 3 (1992), and *Expedition Monar* (1994). As a producer, he has collaborated on numerous acclaimed documentary films, including *My Zdes* (2005, Jaro Vojtek) and *Hranica* (2009, Jaro Vojtek), *Od Fica do Fica* (2012, Zuzana Piussi), *Milan Čorba* (2014, Martin Šulík), *Skutok sa stal* (2019, Barbora Berezňáková), *Turnaj snov* (2022, Adina Popescu and Iulian Manuel Ghervas), and many more.

13:20 – 14:20

Panel B: Non-Linear Temporalities: Essayism and Time-Based Practice

Chair: Katja Dreyer

Miglė Bereikaitė-Djordjevic
Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre
PhD Candidate in Theatre

THINKING THROUGH PLACE AS A NON-LINEAR METHOD IN ARTISTIC RESEARCH

This presentation reflects on non-linear, site-responsive modes of thinking emerging from artistic research practice. It is grounded in my ongoing PhD research in directing at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, developed through long-term site-specific and site-responsive artistic practices in the rural landscape of the Suvalkija region (Lithuania).

My research unfolds through what I define as *site-embedding dramaturgy*—a methodological approach in which dramaturgy functions not as narrative structure but as an organising principle for heterogeneous materials, including embodied experience, ethnographic encounters, visual analysis, spatial composition, theoretical reflection, and artistic production. Knowledge emerges through fragments, repetitions, pauses, and situated observations rather than through linear argumentation.

Working between theatre and visual art, I combine ethnographic methods with performative and installation-based practices. These processes result in site-specific works where artistic elements function not as illustrations of theory but as active generators of situated and embodied knowledge.

Although essayism is not the explicit subject of my research, the project shares essayistic qualities: openness, partiality, and resistance to closure. Slowness, attention, and non- linearity operate as epistemological strategies through which meaning emerges relationally and over time. Essayism thus serves as a conceptual reference for articulating artistic research practices where place acts as a co-author of knowledge and thinking remains provisional, embodied, and materially grounded.



Miglė Bereikaitė is a theatre director, performer, and PhD candidate in Artistic Research at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre. She holds degrees in Acting, Art History and Criticism, and Theatre Directing. Alongside her artistic practice, she lectures in acting and site-specific theatre, and supervises practical and theoretical artistic research projects. Her work operates at the intersection of theatre and visual art, combining performative, spatial, and installation-based practices with artistic research. She is interested in embodied and situated forms of knowledge, and in the ways place shapes perception, experience, and dramaturgy. Her current research explores rural landscapes and site-responsive artistic practices, focusing on thinking-through-making as a mode of knowledge production within artistic research.

Darius Rabašauskas
Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre
Department of Acting and Directing

UNPRODUCTIVE TIME: ESSAYISM AS A TEMPORAL PRACTICE IN THEATRE

This presentation discusses an ongoing artistic research project in the field of theatre, which treats time not as a structure in which a performance takes place, but as an active element of its content. Moving away from event-oriented models, the research questions the assumption that meaning emerges primarily through accumulation, transformation or dramatic resolution. Instead, it explores how a performance changes through interruptions, repetitions, suspensions and disruptions of linear action.

The project is based on an artistic laboratory with actors and develops rehearsal strategies that consciously disrupt linear temporality and resist the demand for productivity. Central to the research is an experimental imagination-based model in which actors operate in two parallel temporal streams: performance time and real time. As actors migrate between these temporal streams, moments of instability or "reality disruptions" arise that disrupt the continuity of action and create ontologically new forms of being and performativity. These unstable states become sites of inquiry and examples of "thinking through doing."

The research combines artistic practice with philosophical approaches to time, especially the ideas of Henri Bergson and Gilles Deleuze, and also Mircea Eliade's concept of cyclical renewal and Byung-Chul Han's critique of productivity and the disappearance of rituals. In this context, rehearsal is explored as a form of unproductive duration, where essayistic strategies enable a process-based methodology connecting theory and practice. The research proposes theatre as a space for temporal experimentation, renewal, and embodied reflection beyond result-oriented models of creation.



Darius Rabašauskas is a theatre director, lecturer, and doctoral researcher. He currently teaches and studies at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, while also directing productions as a freelance artist. He has created nearly thirty theatre performances, both in state theaters and independent groups. The performances have won various prizes and nominations in Lithuania (nomination for best directing for a young artist, prize for best interpretation of contemporary drama, prize for best work of an acting team, etc.). As a researcher and lecturer, Darius has also completed internships in Finland, Estonia, and Germany. His research and practice focus on directing strategies, the director–actor collaboration, theatre pedagogy, question of time within the performance, ontology of time and performativity in theatre.

14:30 – 16:10

Panel C: Affective Landscapes

Chair: Zuzana Goleinová

Konstanza Kapsali
LUCA School of Arts – Research unit Image
PhD candidate in Visual Arts

THE POTENTIAL STORED IN ORDINARY THINGS: ON ESSAYISM AND THE LIMITS OF NARRATIVE RECONSTRUCTION

This lecture and film screening approaches essayism as a mode of artistic research: a way of thinking through practice that brings theoretical reflection into contact with the materials, processes, and embodied dimensions of filmmaking. It reflects how essayistic thinking can articulate relations between cultural memory and history, storytelling, and object biographies.

Taking as its point of departure Judith Halberstam's proposition that "we can never put the past back together again in the way that memory promises," the presentation explores how essayistic thinking can disrupt the desire for narrative coherence through fragmentation, failure, doubt, and the refusal of fixed meanings. Insisting on incompleteness as a mode of curiosity and inquiry, the productive potential of trying, failing, and remaining with uncertainty will be discussed.

Situated on a small Greek island and moving between glimpses of personal stories around death and images of public rituals, museum artefacts and relics, the film *The Potential Stored in Ordinary Things* traces an affective landscape shaping cultural memory and the understanding of local and national history. Rather than treating storytelling only as the transmission of information, the presentation examines rhythm, silence, humor, gesture, and material presence as forms of knowledge.



Konstanza Kapsali is a filmmaker and researcher. She completed her studies in Archaeology and Heritage Studies (BA – Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, MA – Leiden University) and went on to study Visual Anthropology and later Documentary Filmmaking (MA – University of the Aegean). Her debut short film Girls in Flower was screened at international festivals in Greece and abroad and was awarded at the 18th Signos da Noite International Festival in Lisbon. Her work has been showcased at the Thessaloniki Documentary Festival, the Goethe Institute (Dublin), the Archaeological Museum of Zagreb, Crespo Haus (Frankfurt), the Contemporary Greek Art Institute and the Benaki Museum, among others. She has been awarded the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Artist Fellowship by ARTWORKS (2021). She is currently a PhD candidate at LUCA School of Arts.

Dervla Baker
MTU Cork
TU RISE Research to Impact

THE POETIC ESSAY FILM AS AFFECTIVE INQUIRY

The essay film is a useful tool for thinking through crisis: It's "protean" structure (Rascaroli, *The Essay Film*, 25) can explore multiple lines of inquiry, resist generic form, ask open ended questions and sustain contradiction. Heretical in form, its resists definition, even in attempts to theorise it's genre (25). For Philip Lopate "an essay-film must have words, in the form of a text, either spoken, subtitled, or intertitled" (Lopate 112; Rascaroli 31), while others place less emphasis on traditional forms of 'text' (Rascaroli 32; Arthur 164). Laura Rascaroli pushes this further, proposing that it may be possible to essay "by purely visual means […] if the enunciator is able to convey an argument and enter into a dialogue with the spectator through images unaccompanied by commentary" (37). This presentation responds to this statement by exploring the other formalistic qualities of the essay film (image, sound, montage, disjuncture) for their ability to produce meaning, provoking the question: Is it possible to essay without words?

Drawing on literary and theoretical frameworks that seek to define and contest the essay film; Deleuze's theory of "the affection-image" and "the readable"(*Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, 29) or "thinking image" (23); Vertov's "interval" (Rascaroli, *How the Essay Film Thinks*, 9), and Laura U. Marks' method of "Affective Analysis" ("From your Body to the Cosmos", 2026); in dialogue with my own creative practice, I will explore how the poetic essay framework meets, is tested, complicated, or refused by the practical work of developing a formal and affective essay film.



Dervla Baker, "The Blue Clock Tower" (still image), field, 2023



Dervla Baker, "Why do you love it?" (still image), field, 2023

Dervla Baker is an artist, filmmaker and researcher based in Cork City, Ireland. Her practice explores environmental issues and community collaboration through artist moving image practices. She is currently a TU RISE Research to Impact Scholar and a practice-led PhD candidate at MTU Cork. She holds an MA in Film in Screen Media from University College Cork and a BA (Hons) Degree in Fine Art from Crawford College of Art and Design, MTU Cork. Recent films include: "Black Gold" (2026), made with INGENIUM alliance, MTU Cork and XAMK, Finland; "Calling the Bird Ancestors" (2025), made with visual artist, Marilyn Lennon, and sound artist, Andy Ingamells; "field" (2023), made with researcher Jennifer Ahern; and ongoing collaborations with choreographer Siobhán Ní Dhunnín, "Bád Shiobhán" (2021-2023) and "Gearrscannáin" (2018-2023). Recent exhibitions include Still, We Gather (group show) at The Galway Arts Centre, Dec 12th, 2025 to Feb 8th, 2026; and Gabháil Mhóna at Ionad Cultúrtha an Phiarsaigh, Connemara, May – July 2023.

Constantinos Taliotis
Assistant Professor, University of Nicosia
PhD candidate, Royal College of Art, London

NICOSIA: FROM ESSAYISTIC ENCOUNTERS TO THE ESSAY INSTALLATION

The old part of Nicosia south of the Buffer Zone has long been pathologized as a place in need of repair. This 2 km² area, semi-encircled by the Venetian walls and the dividing line separating the Greek-speaking south from the Turkish-speaking north, has undergone successive landscape interventions, river diversions, militarized infrastructures, territorializations, and large-scale restoration schemes. Shaped by war, nationalism, and neoliberal urbanism, the area remains structured by enduring formations of coloniality that seek to reinscribe homogenized identities through exclusionary spatial practices and heritage-driven redevelopment.

Yet these processes leave behind their imperial debris: residual landscapes of empty plots, ruins, interstitial spaces, informal urbanism, and subnature ecologies that resist fixed narratives of identity and place.

Drawing on literature that examines the essay's open-ended and polyphonic form, as well as its situated engagement with place, this presentation explores essayism as a spatial and site-specific artistic practice. Presenting research from an ongoing PhD-by-practice, the paper examines how peripatetic essayism may foreground obscured stories, ecologies, and subjectivities within Nicosia's liminal landscapes, while simultaneously expanding the essay installation beyond its predominantly multiple screen-based lineage toward a broader spatial and installation-based format.

Constantinos Taliotis is an artist and Assistant Professor at the University of Nicosia. His practice is rooted in situated and procedural practices and engages with liminal stories from the fields of popular culture, architecture and ecology. Selected solo exhibitions include: *Appendix,* Porcino, Berlin, 2019; *The Pavilion,* Point Centre for Contemporary Art, Nicosia, 2019; *FORMS*, L'Œil de Poisson, Quebec City, 2018; *Paradise Productions*, Pilot Gallery, Istanbul, 2017; *Casting Modernist Architecture*, Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, 2012. Selected group exhibitions include: *Agropoetics*, Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Nicosia, 2026; *Reality Check II: Inner Sanctum*, Athens, 2022; *Here not here*, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, 2019; *6th Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art*, 2017; *Forum Expanded*, Akademie der Künste, Berlin, 2016. In 2013 he co-represented the Republic of Cyprus at the 55th Venice Biennial, receiving the Special Mention Award. Taliotis is a PhD candidate at the Royal College of Art, London (2020 – today).

16:20 – 17:40

Panel D: Essayism as a Research Method

Chair: Konstanza Kapsali

Ahmet Toğaç
Doctoral Student in the Cinema Department
at Marmara University
Research Assistant at Istanbul Okan University

AFTER BIRTH: INTERTEXTUAL REFRAMINGS OF THE BIRTH OF A NATION (1915) IN CINEMA

The Birth of a Nation (D. W. Griffith, 1915) is widely recognized as a foundational text in film history. While initially canonized for its formal innovations, its white supremacist narrative has positioned it at the absolute center of racial debates in cinema. Although the film claims historical veracity, its patterned, accusatory representations of Blackness reveal how a dominant ideology that exculpates whiteness is disseminated through cinematic form.

This hybrid study investigates how the film persists, haunts, and reappears across cinema, exploring how it is reframed, reinterpreted, and contested in subsequent works through intertextual reference. The intertextual relations between *The Birth of a Nation* and subsequent films are established through both explicit and implicit references. By tracing these narrative echoes, the study asks: can intertextual reuse genuinely detach a source text from its original ideological framework, or, when the *The Birth of a Nation* is mobilized within new narratives, does it inadvertently reproduce its violence?

The study expands discourse analysis regarding historical influence by placing it in direct dialogue with a non-linear, essayistic methodology that thinks directly through audiovisual montage. Through the presentation of a hybrid video essay, this practice-based approach, the essay reflects on how cinematic images carry historical memory, demonstrating that *The Birth of a Nation* persists not merely as an isolated film, but as an active visual and ideological structure.





Ahmet Toğaç was born in Turkey in 1995. He began his career writing for various magazines and later worked as an archive researcher at the Turkish Cinema Studies (TSA). His second short film, Home Cooking (2024), had its world premiere at the 38th Cinekid Festival and was subsequently selected for the 31st Sarajevo Film Festival. Since 2022, he has served on the national short film advisory committee of the Istanbul Film Festival. He is currently pursuing a PhD in the Department of Cinema at Marmara University. He works as a research assistant in the Department of Cinema and Television at Istanbul Okan University. His doctoral research focuses on TRT's international co-productions, examining global arthouse cinema, cultural diplomacy, and transnationalism. He is also working on articles about the cross-cultural adaptation of The Handmaiden (2016) and whiteness narrative, representational practices, and the audience in The Birth of a Nation (1915).

Zuzana Goleinová
Slovak of Academy of Science
Institute of Theatre and Film Research

&

Žofia Ščuroková
The Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava
Department of Film Studies

THINKING ESSAY, WRITING THEORY: ESSAYISTIC METHOD IN FILM STUDIES DOCTORAL RESEARCH

The essayistic method is indisputably subjective and usually perceived as incompatible with scientific practice. However, if, in its etymological sense, an essay is defined as an "attempt", then the our present attempt is to search for the essayistic method within research in the field of film theory and historiography, and to prove that in many cases it is already (maybe unconsciously) imbedded even in such a seemingly strict discipline. The essay itself is a mode of thinking, mode of reflection, that we believe is applicable, especially, within the research of art. Through our separate doctoral research paths, we document not only the results of our investigations but also the organic thought processes that unfold primarily on the basis of personal associations and intuitions. This methodological approach subverts the conventional researcher-as-authoritative position, instead positioning them as a questioner, being able to voice and admit to hesitation or doubt. Despite the apparently rigid and unchanging form of written theoretical research in the arts, such work can be digressive and exploratory, and the final, definitive nature of the output is only apparent. Mapping traces of the essayistic method in theoretical research will help us uncover the background and mechanisms of how we construct knowledge, turn our attention to the author as the subject of inquiry, and disrupt the traditional modes of thinking on academic writing.

Zuzana Goleinová is a second-year PhD student at the Institute of Theatre and Film Studies of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. In her dissertation she explores the aesthetic dimensions of documentary non-places in contemporary Slovak hybrid and essay films. She is a member of a research team for a scientific grant VEGA "Dystopian narrative in film" and has published various articles on documentary film, essay film and mountain film.

Žofia Ščuroková is a PhD student at the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava, where she is researching contemporary archival practices within higher film education institutions. In 2021, she completed an internship at the curatorial organization Are in Prague, working on the digitization of Ester Krumbachová's private archive. This experience sparked her interest in working with archival materials and the preservation of audiovisual heritage. Her theoretical research spans these areas, as well as the institutionalization of cinema at various levels.

Juan Fernando Duque
LUCA School of Arts / KU Leuven

THE MANY VOICES IN ME

Drawing on feminist artistic practice, the literary genre 'authotheoria – authohistoria', and 'Sociology of the image' (Alzandua, Lugones, Rivera Cusicanqui, Fourier), I would like to present an assemblage of autobiographical texts entangled with academic concepts and ideas, images, performance scores, and participants' voices and gestures, generated through the progression of my current doctoral practice-based research in the arts, titled *Rethinking Situated Artistic Practices. Towards Collective Places for Imagination.* Through a performative reading and image assemblage, I will introduce three positions corresponding to the different states of the self I have embodied as a researcher: A first-person 'I' that theorises through acts of self-narration; A plural 'I' as a somatic, embodied writing position; A 'we' in co-implication with other voices and gestures. My intention is to offer reflections on 'the distance' between object-subject relations while researching in and through the arts, showing that it is a complex scaling of intertwined subjectivities, where experiencing proximity, speaking through, and resonating with become the positioning from which researchers intertwine processes of thinking, doing, and feeling.

My name is **Juan Duque**. I am a Colombian-born, Brussels-based architect, visual artist, and independent researcher with an interest in critical curatorial practices, currently pursuing a self-funded, practice-based PhD in arts at LUCA/KU Leuven in Ghent, Belgium. I am in my fourth year of five, and my head supervisors are Prof. Dr Anja Veirman, Prof. Dr Bart Geerts and Prof. Dr Rolando Vazquez from Amsterdam University. Drawing on my own practice in performance and site-specific installation, my investigation aims to bridge discourses and practices across visual arts, performance studies, phenomenology, and decolonial methodologies. Looking to expand ecologies of knowledge, as a self-funded researcher, I have already completed the international seminar 'Sociology of the Image', led by Prof. Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, La Paz, Bolivia 2025; a short-term guest researcher programme at Universidad Veracruzana, Xalapa, Mexico 2026; and, more recently, the intensive workshop on essayistic literary genres at Bard College Berlin, Scaling the Self, 2026.

17:40
Closing remarks

19:00 – 20:15
Slovakia – What's the story, Mum? Performance by Katja Dreyer & Peter Šavel

Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava
Svoradova 4

This collaboration between theatre maker and researcher Katja Dreyer, and Slovak choreographer and dancer Peter Šavel is situated at the crossroads of theatre, dance and performance. The performance follows the personal story of the artist's mother leaving Czechoslovakia after the Soviet invasion in 1968. The piece interweaves fragments of family memory with historical events and questions of identity, language and heritage, raising the universal question of what we pass on to future generations. For the presentation in the frame of ON ESSAYISM, the performance will be delivered in its "essay" version, without theatrical lighting, offering a more intimate and direct encounter with the work.

The work has been presented at various international venues and festivals (including in Belgium, Slovakia and the Czech Republic) and has received positive acclaim for its original form and its sensitive exploration of memory, migration and intergenerational dialogue.

The performance will be presented mainly in English (with some Slovak) and has an approximate duration of 70 minutes.





Peter Šavel
After his BA in Dance Pedagogy from the Academy of Music and Performing Arts in Bratislava, he graduated at P.A.R.T.S. in 2010. He is based in Brussels where he is active as a dancer, teacher, choreographer and coach. He works in close connection with Studio Alta in Prague and creates his own work in Belgium and abroad. Currently he tours with the performance called "TETSU" in collaboration with the Slovak company mimoOs and a project in collaboration with the Czech UFFTENZIVOT company entitled "Whoman". His work is dedicated to the expansion of physical and mental potential of individuals and communities, transformative somatic practices and creative anthropological research.