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Carrie J. Cole (Indiana University of Pennsylvania)

*21st-Century US Theater: Performance and Practice*

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## **BIO**

Dr. Carrie J. Cole is an assistant professor of integrative theatre studies in the Department of Theater and Dance at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. After receiving her PhD from the University of Maryland in Theatre and Performance Studies with a focus on turn of the twentieth century American theatre and performance, she shifted her focus to the turn of the twenty-first century. Her scholarship now focuses on current and future trends in US theatre, performance and popular culture (specifically staging science fiction and the fantastic).

As a theatre artist, Dr. Cole recently devised and directed a production titled *Electriad*, which explored the repercussions of war from the perspective of the warrior, the home front, and the displaced/refugee. Other recent projects include directing Lauren Gunderson's *I and You* and Ray Bradbury's adaptation of his own *Fahrenheit 451*. As an advocate for new plays, Dr. Cole regularly produces and directs "Flash Play Festivals"—readings of ten minute plays written by award-winning authors at both the International Conference of the Fantastic in the Arts and the Other Words Conference. In addition, her own reimagining of H. G. Wells' *War of the Worlds*, which reflected the current exploration of Mars, was staged as part of the Tucson Festival of Books by Arizona Theatre Company.

Dr. Cole has presented her scholarship at US and international conferences, including Stage the Future, The International Conference of the Fantastic in the Arts, Science Fiction Research Association, The Network of Ensemble Theatres, and The Association of Theatre in Higher Education. She was recently invited to launch an academic conference called *Science Fictions, Popular Cultures in Hawaii*.

## **ABSTRACT**

*21st-Century US Theater: Performance and Practice* offers a state of the field examination of theatrical trends leading up to and developing out of the 2008 financial crisis. From crisis, comes opportunity, and this crisis caused a ripple effect throughout the field. In the last decade, many US regional theatre companies have closed or disbanded. However, the loss of these institutions allows opportunities to reconsider theatre-making processes and institutional structures, opening up new modes of production and more access to creative opportunity under different economic models. While the Broadway musical still holds sway over a significant portion of the US theatre scene, we will focus here on how organizations like the Network of Ensemble Theatres, the National New Play Network, Howlround, and The Kilroys are agents of change in theatrical performance and practice in the 21st Century.