

Conference Report

“Poetry Off the Page, Around the Globe” (PoPAG)

Vienna, 13–14 June 2025

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On 13 and 14 June 2025, the research project *Poetry Off the Page* (ERC/FWF), based at the University of Vienna, hosted the final conference of its five-year programme. Titled “Poetry Off the Page, Around the Globe: Advances in Poetry Performance Research” (PoPAG), the two-day event was held at Literaturhaus Wien and the University of Vienna’s Department of English and American Studies, and brought together scholars and practitioners to explore contemporary poetry performance and spoken word poetry in a global context.

PoPAG aimed to create an international forum for new research in the growing field of poetry performance studies. Over the course of two days, 27 presenters from 18 countries contributed to a vibrant dialogue about the forms, politics, and aesthetics of spoken word. The conference featured two keynote lectures by Cornelia Gräbner (UK) and Shantanu Anand (IN), an online gallery of 16 additional academic contributions in multimedia formats (poster, video, blog, and audio), and an evening of live performances, headlined by Anand (IN), Liz Breslin (NZ), Raphael d’Abdon (ZA), and Katharina Wenty (AT), alongside an open mic session.

The conference welcomed 52 online participants and 86 on-site attendees in Vienna.

The event opened with welcome remarks from *Poetry Off the Page* PI Assoc.-Prof. Julia Lajta-Novak, along with co-convenors Shefali Banerji and Dr. Rachel Bolle-Debessay. A minute of silence was held in memory of the victims of the tragic shooting in Graz on 10 June 2025, remembering the place and role that arts can have in the wider socio-political context in which the conference was taking place.

The opening day, hosted at Literaturhaus Wien, powerfully affirmed the literary status of poetry performance. The setting itself was a statement that poetry performance plays a vital role in contemporary literary cultures.

The first panel, ‘Communities, Mentorship, and Poetic Ecosystems’, chaired by Prof. Martina Pfeiler, examined spoken word communities through the lens of mentorship, collaboration, and poetic ecosystems. A shared theme across the three papers was the recognition of poetry performance as a deeply relational and collective practice.

Prof. Will May and Joanna Nissel (GB) delivered a joint presentation on poetry mentoring as a communal and generative process. Drawing on three UK-based case studies—The Complete Works, SLAMBassadors, and the Arvon/Jerwood mentoring scheme—they highlighted the mentor’s role not as a top-down guide but as a co-creator and peer. The paper considered how live poetry performs the mentor, and how the increasingly visible role of this absent-presence on stage shapes our understanding of the poet, and the collective practice of poetry performance itself.

Diana Maria Talida Izdrăilă (RO) offered a comparative study of spoken word communities in Romania and the U.S., focusing on their divergent origins and sociopolitical functions. While U.S. spoken word emerged from protest cultures, Romanian scenes began more experimentally. Drawing on interviews with members of the Poethree Collective and interviews with group members and participant observation at the Transylvania International Spoken Word Festival, Izdrăilă provided an overview of the group's history and its aesthetic, examining how political and grassroots values shaped their political strategies.

The poet and scholar liz breslin (NZ) began their presentation in te reo Māori, foregrounding the ethical and cultural relations at the heart of their research. Their paper interrogated the complex entanglements between funding structures (e.g., Creative New Zealand) and the embodied labour of long-form spoken word shows. Addressing the limitations of conventional funding categories (such as spoken word, theatre, literature), breslin argued that institutional frameworks shape and sometimes constrain poetic expression, particularly for marginalised voices within settler-colonial contexts.

The second panel, chaired by Prof. Claudia Benthien, brought together three compelling presentations that explored the relationship between poetry, technology, and perception. The shared thematic thread was the role of media and digital technologies in shaping how poetry is produced, performed, and received.

The panel opened with a presentation by poet Prof. Lucy English (GB), who discussed her recent project *Cancer Alley*, a poetry film that explores environmental destruction in the heavily industrialised corridor of Louisiana known as “Cancer Alley.” This immersive poetry film was not only an artistic response to ecological injustice but also tied in with a research-led intervention into audience engagement. By employing hologram technology and conducting interviews with viewers, English analysed the emotional and ethical responses provoked by the immersive medium. Her presentation raised important questions about how technological innovation can be used to deepen affective engagement and promote environmental awareness. The project acts as both warning and wake-up call, urging UK audiences to reflect on their own environmental futures through poetic immersion.

Dr. Henrik Wehmeier (DE) followed with a theoretical reflection on the effects of mediatization in poetry performance. His talk examined how audiovisual technologies influence the perception of embodiment and poetic performance. In particular, Wehmeier explored the “situatedness” of poetry performances as they circulate across various platforms, questioning how technological interfaces shape the tactile and emotional experience of the audience. He argued that devices used to record or broadcast poetry blur the boundaries between medium and performance, raising ethical and interpretive concerns about the framing of the poet's body and voice. The presentation underscored how platform-specific formatting processes—such as compression, algorithmic curation, and visual framing—reshape the aesthetic and political reception of live poetry.

The final presentation of this panel was given by Camille Dasseleer (BE), who offered a critical analysis of the paradoxes that emerge when spoken word poetry enters the

digital realm. Reflecting on her own shift from print-based poetry research to digital and performance-based inquiry—driven by political and environmental anxieties—Dasseleer examined how technological infrastructures mediate the counter-hegemonic aspirations of politically engaged poetry. Focusing on the work of Mexican poet and media artist Pilar Rodríguez Aranda, Dasseleer explored how global digital platforms—though seemingly accessible—often reproduce Western-centric power structures and economic inequalities. While digital tools offer visibility and creative potential (including through AI experimentation), they also impose constraints, surveillance, and algorithmic biases. Dasseleer provocatively questioned whether politically engaged poetry might, in some cases, find greater freedom in returning to print, where legal frameworks and publishing control can provide a different kind of safety for counter-discourse. Her paper encouraged a reevaluation of digital platforms not only as spaces of expression but also as contested arenas where resistance may be both enabled and constrained.

The third panel of the day, chaired by Dr. Kevin Potter, foregrounded poetry as a site of resistance, with a particular emphasis on alternative temporalities and counter-hegemonic strategies enacted through performance. Each speaker approached performance not simply as aesthetic expression but as an intervention in the lived experience of time, embodiment, and social structure.

Prof. Andrea Brady (GB) opened the session with a powerful exploration of stuttering not as a disability to be overcome, but as a vital poetics of resistance. Focusing on the work of the poet JJJJJerome Ellis, Brady framed dysfluency as a form of disobedience against normative, "policed" language—described as a kind of linguistic maroonage. Discussing Ellis's Black freedom practices, the presentation positioned the stutter within the longer history of the voice and proposed to hear the stutter as a spirit to be honoured, not erased. In Ellis's performances, *the clearing*—a conceptual and musical tour de force that weaves together jazz, experimental electronics, and the narratives of enslaved Africans and Black rebellion—emerges as a space of inclusion and rest, a moment suspended outside capitalist, ableist, and colonial temporalities. Brady's analysis invited the audience to rethink their own listening practices, encouraging us to embrace non-normative speech rhythms as transformative aesthetic and political acts.

Prof. Deirdre Osborne (GB) then shifted the discussion to the poetics of First Nations writers in (so-called) Australia, analysing the multi-modal works of Yankunytjatjara poet Ali Cobby Eckermann and Fitzroy Blak poet Tony Birch. Osborne highlighted how both poets use a range of aesthetic strategies—from typographic play to ekphrasis and book-form architectonics—to unsettle settler-colonial narratives and their enduring violence. The paper traced how these poets fracture and reconfigure dominant temporalities and readerly expectations, foregrounding Indigenous ways of knowing and storytelling. Osborne's paper laid the groundwork for a compelling argument about how multimodality itself can act as a form of poetic resistance—one that refuses settler legibility and insists on deeper, slower engagement.

The panel concluded with Prof. Daniela Silva De Freitas (BR), whose presentation interrogated the colonial logics embedded in the categorisation of poetry itself, particularly within university discourses. Using the Afro-Brazilian deity Eshu as an example to introduce her conceptual guide—Eshu who disrupts binaries like good/evil,

seen/unseen—Freitas proposed a third way of understanding slam poetry: not in opposition to the page or stage, but as a dynamic, genre-crossing force. Focusing on the Brazilian slam scene, she examined how slam poetry circulates fluidly—from oral performance to print publication to theatre—and questioned how critical vocabularies might evolve to better reflect this fluidity. Freitas emphasised that slam’s radical potential lies not only in its content but in the circuits it creates, and asked how scholars can support slam’s anti-colonial stance by resisting overly rigid frameworks. Her talk challenged the academy to develop a more flexible, responsive vocabulary.

Day 1 concluded with the first keynote of the conference, delivered by Shantanu Anand (IN), poet, performer, and co-founder of India’s Airplane Poetry Movement, who was introduced by Shefali Banerji. With warmth and sincerity, Anand began his address by expressing genuine gratitude for being part of such a diverse and engaged gathering of scholars, artists, and poetry enthusiasts. His tone immediately set the keynote apart—not as a lecture from a podium, but as a conversation with the room. From the outset, he posed a deceptively simple question that has long preoccupied him: How to be a person?

In tracing this question, Anand offered a deeply human meditation on what it means to be a poet—and more specifically, a poet off the page. Drawing on two anecdotes from his experiences within the Indian spoken word scene, he reflected on the ephemerality of performance and the emotional and social labour that underpins poetic gatherings. These stories were less about grand narratives than small, resonant moments that revealed poetry’s capacity to shape communities, hold contradictions, and offer fleeting but powerful gestures of connection. Throughout the talk, Anand acknowledged how the themes explored across the day’s panels—media, embodiment, resistance—had echoed one another in unexpected ways. He reminded us that poetry and its research is often about saying the same thing again and again, but differently, showing a deep connection and continuity across linguistic, geographic and historical boundaries. His favourite quote—“History doesn’t repeat itself, but it often rhymes”—became a thread running through his keynote, underscoring the cyclical, recursive nature of poetic thought and the histories it seeks to address. Anand offered a candid reflection on the rise of Indian slam poetry (a term commonly used to denote spoken word poetry in the Indian context). Spoken word has become a vital outlet for youth and marginalised voices, especially during moments of national protest and unrest. As one of the pioneers of the Indian spoken word scene—through the Airplane Poetry Movement and the Spoken Fest—Anand spoke with both pride and cautious optimism, recognising the scene’s immense potential while also critiquing its institutionalisation. The keynote concluded, fittingly, with a poem—a direct response to a critique he once received, accusing him of “killing poetry” through his work with national slam circuits. The poem became a defence of slam as art. He demonstrated precisely what he had spent the last hour describing: the poet’s task is not to preserve poetry in amber, but to let it live—messily, urgently, and in communion with others.

The keynote lecture was followed by a short reception, which offered attendees time to unwind, relax and transition into the next segment of the conference, which was the evening programme.

Verse On - An Evening of International Poetry, hosted by Claire Palzer and Shefali Banerji, opened with four headliners: Shantanu Anand (IN), Raphael D’Abdon (ZA), liz

breslin (NZ) and Katharina Wenty (AT) who demonstrated the power of poetry performance through their verse. The headliner performances were followed by an open mic section which also featured four international poets: Klara du Plessis (CA), Talida Izdrăilă (RO), Šárka Masárová (CZ) and Damjana Vidicheska (MK), who also performed powerful poems, and Vidicheska screened her poetry film titled “Red”. The event revealed the significance of poetry performance as an art form and added an invaluable finishing touch to the first day of the conference.

The second day of PoPAG opened with a warm welcome from Dr. Rachel Bolle-Debessay, who introduced the day’s keynote speaker: Dr. Cornelia Gräbner (GB). Gräbner, a long-standing scholar and advocate of politically engaged and embodied poetry, offered a keynote that was both reflective and incisive, grounded in decades of critical engagement with poetry-in-performance.

Gräbner began on a personal note, sharing how she entered this field and what continues to draw her to it—particularly the concept of attunement, that is, the experience of being ‘in tune’ with the elements of a live performance. For Gräbner, poetry-in-performance is not merely about technique or style, but about the embodied experience of voicing, hearing, and responding—especially when the performance channels forms of being and knowing that have historically been oppressed or marginalised. The keynote unfolded as a dual movement: first, a critical mapping of poetry-in-performance (and the hyphen here is intentional) as a field of study, and second, a proposal for how to approach its analysis in ways that remain attentive to its plurality. Drawing on both Anglophone and Hispanophone contexts, Gräbner invited attendees to think across traditions, geographies, and epistemologies when considering the diverse practices that fall under the umbrella of poetry-in-performance. This resonated perfectly with the global scope of the conference. In the second part, the keynote turned to methodology. Gräbner called for a comparative and relational analytical approach—one that remains open to embodied knowledge, sensory perception, and the non- and anti-colonial modes of thought often embedded in the performances themselves. She urged scholars to resist reductive categorisations and instead to cultivate theoretical and institutional practices that are as pluralistic and flexible as the poetry they seek to understand.

The fourth panel of the conference, chaired by Dr. Helen Thomas, featuring two speakers, examined the intersections of sound, text, and archival practice, with a focus on how poetry is preserved, edited, and transmitted across media forms.

Dr. Thomas Antonic (AT) introduced a new FWF (Austrian Science Fund) research project dedicated to creating a critical hybrid edition of the complete works of Ruth Weiss (1928–2020), a Beat poet whose output includes 20 volumes of poetry and over 200 uncollected poems. The talk provided biographical context on Weiss and made rich use of archival audio and performance recordings. Antonic’s approach foregrounded the challenges of editing for both textual and sonic legacies.

Eunice Lee (US), presenting online, focused on the tensions between text and sound in the live poetry album *Poets Read Their Contemporary Poetry: Before Columbus Foundation* (Folkways Records, 1980). Her presentation asked: Can a poetry reading or its recording function as an anthology of a multicultural literary community? Through close listening and reading of the album’s recordings alongside its liner notes, visual

materials, and related archival sources, she traced how sound both destabilises and redefines the text. Eunice argued that the record embodies the fraught shift from grassroots multiculturalism to institutional visibility, with sound archives preserving discrepancies between spoken and written versions of the poems, thereby raising questions about how media may shape the politics of poetry and poetry performances.

The fifth panel, also a two-speaker panel, chaired by Dr. Katharina Wiedlack and originally centred on sign Language and orality, had a spontaneous change in theme and panel speakers. Due to unforeseen circumstances, Dr. Bartosz Wójcik (PL), who intended to talk on “Interventions in Signs, Inventions in Sound. Raymond Antrobus as an *Audio Writer*” had to withdraw from the conference. The panel proceeded to have invigorating discussions around sign language poetry as well as not-listening as a tool of resistance.

Our waitlisted presenter and conference gallery contributor Dr. Klara du Plessis (CA) stepped in and opened the panel with her paper titled “Not Pressing Play: Resisting Access to the Writing Thru Race Conference”. The talk centred on the historical 1994 gathering of racialised writers in Vancouver, Canada at the Writing Thru Race conference. The paper navigated the questions of ethics of white scholars listening to audio recordings of the conference – a conference which survived media uproar and near cancellation due to its exclusion of white audiences. Du Plessis, considering her own positionality and those of other white scholars like her, formulated her own mode of expanded listening that renounces auditory access to audio recordings of the conference and instead studies public-facing recordings and press clippings, organisational documents, published transcripts of panels, and descriptions of performances.

The panel proceeded with Clara Cosima (DE) Wolff’s talk on the interplay of performance style and publication format in sign language poetry. The talk applied the aesthetics of access approach from theatre studies to explore sign language in poetic practice, using two case studies: “Musica” (1998), a solo performance by Italian artist Giuseppe Giuranna, and *Imaginations* (2022), a collaborative poetry film created by six Deaf poets from the Kitchen’s Light Collective together with filmmaker Anja Hiddinga. Examining the interplay between performance style and publication format in these two case studies, Wolff demonstrated how sign language poetry not only challenges dominant notions of literature and authorship, but also interrogates conventional literary categories and re-imagines access as an aesthetic and cultural practice.

The sixth panel focused on multilingualism in poetry performance and was chaired by Assoc. Prof. Julia Lajta-Novak, in lieu of Dr. Bartosz Wójcik. The thread of creative and affective potential of multilingual poetry performance informed all three presentations and the ensuing discussions.

Dr. Sonja Faaren Ruud (BE) opened the panel with a talk on multilingual poetry performance and (non)translation in the Brussels scene, which centred on the possibilities poetry performances open for creating social and affective bonds between people who don’t speak the same language(s), possibilities lost while reading an untranslated poem. Ruud drew her observations from ethnographic research in Brussels. Ruud suggested listening to poetry in languages one does not understand can have the effect of “letting go”, allowing for other ways of knowing more rooted in

the body and emotions, enabling different layers of “understanding”, while also resisting colonial demands of knowability.

The second talk of the panel by poet and scholar Eleonora Fisco (IT/CH) focused on translation through performance. Based on her ongoing research on translation in poetry performance, Fisco, explored how tempo, rhythm, sound and relationship is conveyed through translation beyond its lexical meaning. Using the example of poetry slam pioneer Marc Smith’s *One Poetic Voice*, where two ensembles of poets of different nationalities are employed to perform the text in two languages complementarily, Fisco examined the process and layers of translation through performance. Fisco also analysed Giuliano Logos and Jesko Habert’s bilingual (Italian-German) poem “Girasoli-Sonnenblumen”, demonstrating the linguistic play involved in the performance, concluding that translation through performance cannot be separated from the physical presence of the performing poet, that the process is live and alive, and is co-created through collaborative work, and that rhythm and sound are as important as lexical meaning.

Finally, Prof. Deirdre C. Byrne and Dr. Raphael D’Abdon (both ZA) co-presented a paper on translanguaging in school learners’ poetry performances, where Dr. D’Abdon was present on-site, while Prof. Byrne joined us online. Dr. D’Abdon, a founding member of the South African Poetry Project (ZAPP), introduced the research and activist poetry project, established in 2013, and exploring how the concept of translanguaging shaped the work of ZAPP by attempting to decolonise poetry and education as a material practice of transformation, through practical interventions. Prof. Byrne presented a case study from ZAPP’s visit to Makhandla in April 2025, where the team conducted poetry workshops with 6 facilitators and 40 learners from 4 schools in the area for 2 days, and which culminated in a 2.5-hour poetry showcase in English and isiXhosa on the second day. Prof. Byrne concluded that performances in English were stilted and contrived; the performers were shy, whereas performances in isiXhosa were full of energy, movement, passion and vibrancy, demonstrating that learners were more expressive, comfortable and self-assured performing in their home language.

Panel seven, chaired by Dr. Elisabeth Knittelfelder, explored how spoken word poetry functions as a mode of cultural resistance, focusing on language, identity, and memory across diverse contexts.

Prof. Tyler Hoffman (US) opened his talk with a contextualisation of Louise Bennett-Coverley, also known as Miss Lou, role and work in transnational poetics between Britain and Jamaica. Through her show *Yes M’Dear*, followed in the form of the LP, Bennett wove poetry, folk songs, and storytelling to critique the cultural tensions between “home” and “abroad.” The paper highlighted how sentimentality and political activism worked together in the performance of her poetics to navigate transnational Caribbean identity. Infused with a counter and disrupt dominant ideologies, and enacted with a poetics of nostalgia to inspire her diaspora audience, her performances of poetry an important intervention in early 1980s Thatcherite Britain and participate in the formation of transnational Caribbean identities.

Cara Ow (GB) followed with a powerful personal introduction in Papiiah Kristang, a creole from the Kristang community, underscoring the unfamiliarity and marginalisation

of the language and its fragility within the global linguistic system where languages die forthnightly. Ow proposed that spoken word poetry offers a vital path for language revitalisation, especially within the context of SingLit, which has experimented with creole language on the page but not yet fully embraced its performative potential. Spoken word, Ow argued, is the next necessary stage in this cultural evolution against quiet death of marginalised languages. This presentation explored how contemporary spoken word can indeed be a viable pathway for creole poets creating within the context of language revitalisation.

In the final paper, Kalliopi Konstantinopoulou (GR) turned to María Rivera's *Los Muertos* (The Dead), examining it as a paradigm of political memory poetry emerging from Mexico's Drug War. The presentation analysed Rivera's use of collective witnessing, melodramatic aesthetics, and ritualised public performance as tools of mourning and protest. The paper emphasised the emotional and political resonance of Rivera's work in confronting violence and preserving cultural memory across both local and transnational spaces.

Lunch Break - Participants enjoyed a delicious lunch provided by Canapeschmiede on the university campus—a nice opportunity to pause, reflect, and connect in the warm early-summer atmosphere of the city.

Panel eight, chaired by Prof. Andrea Brady, explored the relationship between poetry and the spaces in which it is performed, addressing how venue, form, and community shape poetic meaning and reception.

Prof. Peter Howarth (GB) opened the panel with a presentation on transnational poetry off the page reflecting on the interplay between internal poetic form and external social form. He examined how poetry performance navigates the cultural shift from sacred to secular settings, tracing how communal structures are mirrored in poetic practices. He observed how the formal tensions which inform the poem on the page relocate themselves in the spaces they are read in, further examining the tensions inherent in the performance of a transnational poet through the example of Bhanu Kapil's readings of extracts from *How to Wash a Heart*. He briefly also traced the longer history of transnational poets of reading and performing, stating that the modernist revival of the poet reading and performing has a national and transnational strand, further noting that transnational oral performance is at the beginning of modernist innovation, it is not an antithesis. The presentation was followed by a lively discussion around coloniality and the power imbalance between modernist readings by transnational poets.

Prof. Jamie Callison (NO) presented on "Performing the Sacred: Live Reading between Circuit and Synagogue in the Long 1960s", focusing on the repositioning of poetry within sacred Jewish spaces. Drawing from archival research, he analysed a series of experimental liturgies developed by laypeople and Rabbis in the Liberal and Reform Jewish movements, particularly those incorporating the poetry of Muriel Rukeyser. Callison illustrated how poetry in these contexts articulated solidarities across Jewish and African-American histories of oppression, prompting attendees to consider how performance is shaped not only by the poem but by its venue and audience.

Assoc. Prof. Karen Simecek (GB) closed the panel with a talk titled “Creating Community through Performance Poetry.” She wove together recurring themes from across the panel to emphasise how the presentations across the conference talked to each other, and especially the emphasis on audience-performer relationships in her own research. Drawing on philosophical work on joint attention and shared experience, Simecek argued that spoken word poetry fosters a nuanced awareness of relationality, allowing for fleeting yet powerful moments of connection. Using varied examples, she explored how the performance space becomes a site for community formation, even amidst differences and discontinuities.

The ninth panel of the conference revolved around feminist staging of poetry in three cultural contexts and was chaired by Mag. Claire Palzer. The panel was connected by the common theme of women poets responding to contemporary political currents in their respective scenes, which the speakers engaged with using postcolonial and feminist analytical frameworks.

The panel opened with Dr. Sheena Baharudin’s (MY) talk on the significance of spoken word poetry as a tool for cultural preservation and identity formation in the contemporary Malaysian scene, focusing on the 2014 and 2015 *Pontianak* ensemble performances. Featuring an all-female cast of spoken word poets, which also included Baharudin, these productions adapted local ghost stories and folklore—including the titular female vampire—into spoken word poems. Baharudin argued that through reimagining folklore and critiquing traditional narratives, *Pontianak* marks a dynamic shift in Malaysian spoken word poetry.

Prof. Yueqin Zhai’s (CN) talk focused on the works of four women creatives: poet Zhai Yongming, writer and director Chen Si’an, poet Zhou Zan and director Cao Kefei (the latter two also being founders of the Ladybird Theatre Company), their collaborations and contributions to perform feminist verse on the contemporary Chinese theatre stage. Focusing on three case studies: *Women Attempting to Destroy Rituals* (2010), *Flying into the Future on a Roller Coaster* (2011) and *Following Huang Gong Wang, Visiting Fuchun Mountains* (2014), Zhai shed light on how these women’s work bring the personal to the public theatre space and how cross-arts experimentations featuring poetry, theatre and other art forms help relay stories of women and their relationship with society in China.

Assoc. Prof. Lucy Collin’s (IE) talk centered on poet Julie Morrissy’s work, which finds expression through a variety of written and performance modes, and is concerned with questions of gender equality and bodily autonomy in Ireland. Collin’s noted Morrissy’s foregrounding of women’s place within Irish political and legal structures in her poetry and introduced the poet’s project *Certain Individual Women* (2021), that has multiple medial manifestations such as performance, poetry film and installation, among others, which contribute significantly to public discourses around gender, within their various medial contexts.

The conference concluded with closing remarks from the convenors. They took the opportunity to highlight the various achievements of the PoP project’s sub-projects and to share news of forthcoming publications. Attendees were also invited to stay involved through the PoP network on H-NET and the project’s newsletter. The session ended with warm thanks extended to all contributors, as well as to the administrative

team who supported the organisation and smooth running of the conference behind the scenes.

The conference brought together a rich and diverse array of voices, perspectives, and methodologies that illuminated the evolving relationship between poetry and performance across cultures, languages, and geographies. Across the panels and keynotes, a number of shared themes emerged: the social and political force of poetry performance, its ability to build community, challenge dominant narratives, and navigate urgent questions around identity and representation. These lines of inquiry stimulated conversations at the conference that will resonate beyond the event.