

The Historic New Orleans Collection

presents
the 28th annual

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS SCHOLARS CONFERENCE

Friday, March 28, 2025

Willams Research Center, 410 Chartres Street, New Orleans

9:00–9:05 a.m. Welcome, Margit Longbrake, The Historic New Orleans Collection

9:05–9:15 a.m. Opening remarks, Bess Rowen, Villanova University

9:15–10:30 a.m.

Experimental Williams: Expect the Unexpected

Emerging scholars from the US and France bring fresh perspectives to Williams's experimental works in discussions of "plastic" acting, the uncanny, and castration as a surprising step toward wholeness in the late plays.

Moderator: Bess Rowen, Villanova University

Panelists:

Matthew Minor, City University of New York, Graduate Center

Jennifer Tsuei, City University of New York, Graduate Center

Anaïs Umano, Université de Lorraine

10:45 a.m. –12:15 p.m.

Queer Continuities

What does the queerness in Williams's texts have to do with the religion of early America, 20th-century Tangier, and a remarkable 21st-century Australian horror film? Join a panel of scholars from the US and Germany as they put a wide range of times, places, and forms in conversation.

Moderator: Annette J. Saddik, Graduate Center and City Tech, City University of New York

Panelists:

Stephen Cedars, City University of New York

Benjamin Gillespie, City University of New York

Bess Rowen, Villanova University

Basil Wiese, Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt

12:15–2:00 p.m.

Lunch (on your own)

2:00–3:30 p.m.

Room to Work: Directors Take on Gaps in the Plays and Prose

Seasoned director-scholars describe problems presented by fragmented source texts and perspectives missing from the plays and their productions—and discuss the opportunities those blanks offer a director’s artistic vision.

Moderator: Mark Charney, Texas Tech University

Panelists:

Lurana Donnels O’Malley, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

Tom Mitchell, University of Illinois, Urbana, emeritus

John “Ray” Proctor, Tulane University

3:45–5:15 p.m.

Staged Reading: Letters from Rose and Tennessee, Edwina’s Diary, and “God in the Free Ward”

Theater director and educator Tom Mitchell and members of the University of Illinois theater company present a staged reading that interweaves HNOC’s newly acquired letters by Tennessee Williams’s beloved and tragic sister, Rose, with diary entries by his mother and excerpts from his letters and his previously unpublished short story “God in the Free Ward.”

HNOC curator and historian Mark Cave and HNOC editor and conference codirector Margit Longbrake join Mitchell in introducing the acquisition of Rose’s letters and the director’s process of combining the texts from various sources.