



## The Night of Ideas/La Nuit des Idées 2021

Centered around the theme “*Proches/Nearness*”  
“Physical Distance; Spiritual Closeness”

Norfolk, VA hosted by Old Dominion University  
Dept of World Languages and Cultures

On Zoom: [https://vs.prod.odu.edu/events/night\\_of\\_ideas/index.php](https://vs.prod.odu.edu/events/night_of_ideas/index.php)  
Thursday Jan 28<sup>th</sup> from 7:00-10:00

As the world adjusts to an all-encompassing pandemic, the theme of this year’s virtual and restrained Night of Ideas probes the question: how can we get closer to one another despite the physical constraints imposed by a brutal and highly contagious virus? How can the pandemic situation help us in fact appreciate what makes our local treasures so valuable to us (as they continue to disappear or face untold hardships); how can theater thrive despite the impossibility of in person audiences and how can it be used as a healing agent in times of anxiety and trauma? How can looking at the stars and planets help us feel more at home on earth despite their colossal distance? How can one reach out and exchange with cultures so different and far from our own? How can we connect with faraway lands through poetry as our evening comes to a close and theirs is just beginning? Through 6 engaging speakers from the hyper local to the extreme distant, this evening will help us highlight our interconnectedness despite seemingly impossible challenges and separations.

1. Introduction Dr. Peter Schulman. Each session will include a Q and A section.
2. 7:10-7:40: “Treasuring the Local Before It Disappears,” Robin Paez, director of the acclaimed documentary *I Found it at the Video Store* on the now closed Naro Video Store, the plight of small local businesses and the power of community.
3. 7:40-8:10: “Inventive and Healing Theater in the Time of a Pandemic,” Marie Ayotte, Artistic Director of *Le Théâtre Déchainés* in Montreal and author/director of the recent *Planetarium 2.0* and *Tantôt demain peut-être* among many avant-garde and experimental plays.
4. 8:10-8:40: “Looking at the Stars, Looking Within: The Effect of ‘Awe’ on People’s Behaviors and Convictions”; Justin Mason, Director of the Pretlow Planetarium, Old Dominion University
5. 8:40-9:10: “Overcoming distance in the Nunavik region of Northern Quebec; “Juliana Lévellé-Trudel live from Montreal will discuss her bestselling novel *Nirliit* and her experiences as an educator in a remote Inuit village, the harshness of Inuit life but also the beauty of the land.
6. 9:10-9:25: A poetry reading and discussion from India by award-winning Calcutta poet Somrita Urni Ganguly
7. 9:25-9:40: Buddhist prayers and a small concert on the sanshin from Japan by Kossan, the Head Priest of Hōshō-ji Temple in Hachioji, a bit outside of Tokyo
8. Concluding thoughts Dr. Peter Schulman



Norfolk will be joined by similar events that day in:

- Washington • San Francisco • New York City • Paris • Singapore • Sidney
- Madrid • Prague • Amsterdam • and many other cities around the globe

