

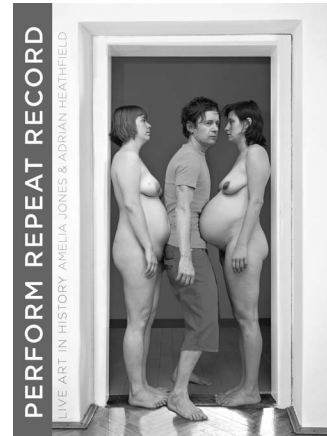
Books

Perform, Repeat, Record: Live Art in History. Edited by Amelia Jones and Adrian Heathfield. Bristol, UK: Intellect, 2012; 652 pp.; illustrations. \$95.00 paper.

In recent years, performance re-creation has become a prevalent concern in theatre and performance studies. In a sense, reperformance is nothing new or unusual. Revivals of plays, remounted dance pieces, and everyday rehearsals all involve the repetition of prior acts of performance. Theatre artists devoted to original historical practices and repetiteurs employed by choreographic trusts have long since institutionalized self-conscious performance re-creation. Yet a distinct phenomenon has appeared in this century: meticulous performance re-creations that pay attention to gestural, material, and other nontextual elements, often with the aid of photographs and other documents. In the past decade for instance, the Wooster Group and the Rude Mechanicals have applied such techniques to both re-create and recontextualize theatrical works by Grotowski's company, Mabou Mines, and the Performance Group.

As Amelia Jones and Adrian Heathfield make clear in their substantial new anthology, such undertakings are best understood alongside recent trends in what is variously called live art or performance art. While they are embedded in the spaces, critical discourses, and consumer economies of visual art, events such as Marina Abramović's recent re-stagings of durational artworks highlight the cognate theoretical and practical challenges that confront artists, curators, repetiteurs, and all those who record and remake prior performances. Given recent investments in spaces for performance-based work by the Tate Modern gallery and Abramović's own Institute for the Preservation of Performance Art, it seems that reperformance is not merely a transient strategy adopted by savvy contemporary artists, but a curatorial practice with a long horizon. The re-creation of performance is also tied to a question that reverberates into every corner of theatre and performance studies: as Jones puts it, "the conundrum of how the live event or ephemeral art work [...] gets written into history" (11).

The volume that Jones and Heathfield have put together deftly approaches this question with transparency, modesty, and an ethos of inclusiveness. The editors emphasize the disciplinary positions—in art history and performance studies, respectively—that bring them to the topic. They acknowledge, too, that they do not exist outside the systems of cultural and capitalist value circulation that enfold works of art—and whose protocols performance artists have endeavored to expose and disrupt. Rather than attempt to define a new subfield of art or performance history with this book, Jones and Heathfield explore a set of theoretical quandaries that arise from ongoing efforts to theorize and enact performance art's various afterlives. Two introductory essays by the editors introduce a range of salient contextualizing ideas for the historiography of live art: the historical conditions that may have fostered the recent resurgence of embodied durational artwork, the culture of re-enactment, as well as glosses of performativity, deconstruction, trauma theory, and Merleau-Ponty's notion of the chiasm.



Containment and temporality, however, emerge as the volume's most potent binding concepts. For Jones, containment is a condition that modern Western aesthetics has imposed upon fine art, which "a consideration of the performative" effectively undoes in part by "reminding us that meaning and value are contingent" (12). Containment is also crucial to Jones's outlook on performing bodies, none of which, she claims, necessarily resist containment or can be fully contained by exertions of power. Time similarly presents paradoxical tensions central to the book. Heathfield notes that performance "bears a temporal paradox: it exists both now and then, it leaves and lasts" (28). Rather than attempting to arbitrate between critical standpoints that see performance as fundamentally disappearing or remaining, Heathfield notes that such divergent views concur that performance transforms into remembered, reiterated, and recorded forms as a matter of course.

Ambivalence toward containment and a spirit of inclusiveness help account for both the size (44 chapters) and quirky organizational strategy of the book. The first section, or "zone," "Theories and Histories," includes important discussions of performance ontology by Christopher Bedford, Rebecca Schneider, Sven Lütticken, and Jane Blocker, and meditations on the function of documentation in contemporary art by Philip Auslander and Boris Groys, interspersed with essays that model "new modes of writing the histories of live and performance art" (43). André Lepecki's account of curating, along with Stephanie Rosenthal, re-creations of Happenings first devised by Allan Kaprow, and Eleanora Fabião's fascinating look at the virtually unknown Afro-Brazilian artist Arthur Bispo do Rosário give a sense of the range of the section's diverse inclusions.

Though the first section veers into numerous documentary accounts of live artworks, the section that follows, "Documents," is dedicated explicitly to various kinds of artifacts of performance and durational art reaching back to the late 1960s. In a gesture toward curatorial methods that, if expanded, would encompass a generous and diverse archive of global performance art, the editors have chosen "a sampling of some key coordinates" from recent decades and continents outside the usual scope of art history (237). This section also demonstrates a variety of means of committing ephemeral occurrences to printed pages. The poem "Waiting," written, recited, and reperformed in recent years by feminist artist Faith Wilding, is followed by pages of full-color reproductions of a 2007 exhibition documenting Lynn Hershman Leeson's work in the persona of Roberta Breitmore, whom she fabricated during the 1970s and redeployed in the 1990s. Helpful introductory notes by Jones precede both the Wilding and Hershman Leeson chapters as well as many others in the section. Along with these documents of American live art, "Documents" also includes a personal archive in the form of text and images (from slides) from a performance lecture by Lebanese artist Rabih Mroué, an extensive and delightful art-historical self-chronology written by Guillermo Gómez-Peña, and Meiling Cheng's annotated fragments of processual artworks by three Chinese artists. Fourteen additional short chapters comprising scripts, lectures, photographs, essays, and a timeline round out this printed archive-in-miniature.

The final section, "Dialogues," includes interviews in a variety of formats conducted by Jones, Heathfield, and a few collaborators with figures including Carolee Schneemann, Tehching Hsieh, Tilda Swinton, Janine Antoni, Ron Athey, Marina Abramović, and Jean-Luc Nancy. Abundant and engaging illustrations and a few short essays of introduction accompany these chapters. Thus, besides opening up a "space for the artists to examine and contest their critical and historical reception" (437), this section also provides brief engagements with some artists who are underrepresented in existing live art scholarship. Many of these conversations—such as the one between Mathilde Monnier and Jean-Luc Nancy—are interesting on their own merits, but hold only loosely to the central announced themes of the anthology. Certainly, as Heathfield notes, dialogue amounts to a "vital dynamic in both the creation and historicization of performance and live art" (435), but under such a pliable rubric, any communication among artists associated with performance art would merit inclusion.

Perform, Repeat, Record collects a wealth of insights, artifacts, and exchanges germane to pressing issues at the nexus of performance and historiography. Scholars will find it essential to navigating emerging currents of thought at the dynamic intersection of visual arts and performance studies, and it will serve as a useful supplement for courses on performance art. Its likely impact on the field is more difficult to assess, in part because of the multiple and loosely affiliated aims that it serves. At once a collection of otherwise dispersed essays on the structures that stitch performance into time, a sampling of diverse historiographical and curatorial procedures, and a survey of the edges and seams that compose the evolving archive of live art, it seems to have absorbed from many of the artists discussed in its pages a tendency to defy definition.

—Pannill Camp

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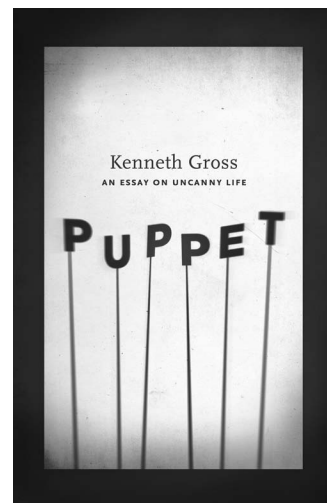
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Puppet: An Essay on Uncanny Life. By Kenneth Gross. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011; 224 pp.; illustrations. \$25.00 cloth, \$15.00 paper, e-book available.

Kenneth Gross's *Puppet: An Essay on Uncanny Life* is a refreshing and grounded response to the apparent mystery of puppet performance. In it we can see Gross, a scholar of Renaissance literature at the University of Rochester, forcing himself to come to terms with the challenges presented by puppets, and above all the particular nature of the object as the center of performance focus.

Modern Western scholarship has generally considered theatre history as equivalent to drama history—a record of literature interpreted onstage by actors. Performance Studies has radically redefined the scope and nature of the field (one need only consider the seismic shift from *The Drama Review* to *TDR: The Journal of Performance Studies* to see this in action), and yet the scholarly study of puppetry is still searching for a consistent and clear identity and a set of theoretical underpinnings.

Performances focused primarily on objects, with humans playing a secondary role (and text in a tertiary position, or not present at all) present particular conceptual challenges. In Western culture, puppetry is generally understood as the primeval roots that theatre happily outgrew on its way to modern drama. Consideration of puppetry in college theatre history textbooks has, until recently, generally been limited to two areas: the first chapter, where it is seen as essential to the primitive rituals of *ür-drama*; and next, a few paragraphs and many centuries later, in the chapter on Asian performance, which might seem to be presented primarily as a 20th-century inspiration for Artaud, Brecht, and other Western modernists.



The result of this intermittent inattention is that when puppets, masks, or performing objects do force us to focus on them (for example, because of the Broadway successes of *War Horse* or *Avenue Q*; the impressive presence of Royal de Luxe's giant marionettes in the streets of European cities; the development of robotics; the persistence of masks, puppets, and objects in political demonstrations or community rituals; or the increasing presence of digital avatars onscreen) the theoretical means for understanding them are hard to find, and critical responses to object performances often treat them as mystifying, unprecedented surprises.

In *Puppet* Kenneth Gross reflects the traditional Western puzzlement with puppetry, but responds to that by fully engaging his fascination with the form in explorations of contemporary and historical instances of puppet performance, with a perspective fully informed by salient studies of puppet and object theatre produced in the West. This is no small feat, because Western analyses of puppetry are hardly cohesive, and instead mark fitful engagement with object theatre from the disciplinary perspectives of folklore, anthropology, phenomenology, semiotics, art history, area studies, and (a tiny bit) theatre history itself.

Gross commits himself to this project with inquisitive joy, and none of the crabbed umbrage that puppeteers often carry with them because of their perceived second-class status (which might be noticed in my piqued paragraphs above). Gross glories in the mystery of puppets as “uncanny,” and at the very outset of his book associates them with “madness.” But, while he accepts the common notion of puppets as unfathomably strange, he persists in attempting to get to the bottom of the puppet’s uncanny nature, doing so with elegance and insight. The “madness of the puppet,” Gross writes on his first page, “is perhaps better called an ecstasy. It lies in the hand’s power and pleasure in giving itself over to the demands of the object, our curious will to make the object into an actor, something capable of gesture and voice.” And he continues: “What strikes me here is the need for a made thing to tell a story, to become a vehicle for a voice, an impulse of character—something very old, and very early. The thing acquires a life” (1). In this initial passage Gross uses the apparent mystery of the puppet to propel his own poetic analysis, in ways that make sense from a puppeteer’s perspective. In other words, Gross gets it, and he is eager to share his understanding with us.

Gross continues his examination of puppetry almost as a travelogue, recounting his visits with actual puppeteers in Italy, Germany, and the US; and to museum exhibitions where he encounters historical puppets, such as those made by Paul Klee in the early 20th century. He also engages with the appearance of puppets in literature, from Plato’s description of shadow figures in *The Republic*; to Don Quixote’s sudden and confused engagement in a battle of puppet Christians and Moors; Kafka’s man/object Odradek in his story “The Cares of a Family Man”; and Philip Roth’s evocation of the puppeteer’s life in his 1995 novel *Sabbath’s Theater*.

Gross’s analysis of puppetry centers on ambiguity, paradox, and contradiction. He continually hedges his conclusions with studied ambivalence, approaching but then stepping away from decisive analysis, as “but” and “yet” become his most persistent conjunctions.

His embrace of the equivocal nature of puppets can thus sometimes lead to confusion for the reader who desires something solid to hold on to. And Gross’s impressive command of the literature on puppetry at times augments this uncertainty. For example, in the course of two paragraphs on Javanese *wayang kulit* shadow theatre, Gross brings up Walt Whitman, T.S. Eliot, Adelbert von Chamisso, E.T.A. Hoffmann, Hans Christian Andersen, Thomas De Quincey, and Krzysztof Kieślowski in a dizzying effort to reinforce the idea of the shadow figure as “the double”—both figurative and literal: a conclusion that ends in paradox.

Gross approaches the nature of puppetry according to subjects that puppets deeply engage: not only ambiguity, the uncanny, and paradox, but also hunger, destruction, death, scale, race, and shadows. Gross wrestles with central global and historical examples of puppet performance, and elucidates the most pertinent aspects of specific puppet forms and performances with grace and insight. His reluctance to articulate an overall theory of puppets and objects beyond

their uncanny nature is at times frustrating, but on the other hand, an overall theory is not his goal. What makes the book notable is Gross's sense of the field of puppetry as central rather than peripheral, and the consistent brilliance of his perceptions about the nature of objects in performance.

—John Bell

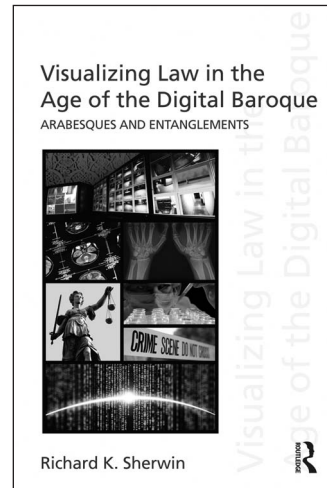
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Visualizing Law in the Age of the Digital Baroque: Arabesques and Entanglements. By Richard K. Sherwin. London: Routledge, 2011; 270 pp. \$135.00 cloth, \$42.95 paper, e-book available.

Richard K. Sherwin's starting premise is that since the 18th-century secularization of law, the cultural paradigm has shifted from text to image and from the rational to the visual. The law that rests on universalizing claims of the age of reason not only becomes anachronistic, but is in danger of losing its legitimacy in a society that is no longer just represented in digital images, but to a large degree structured by them. Sherwin poses the question of what happens to law in a culture awash in visual narratives, many of which depict legal institutions, situations, and stories. He correctly observes that once law migrates to the screen, it becomes prone to assimilate the aesthetic codes that operate in that realm. And vice versa, popular visual culture is hungry for legal narratives. The popularity of TV shows such as *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* and its offshoots points to a new moment in the history of onscreen legal drama: popular imagination is no longer fascinated only by twists, turns, and *coups de théâtre* of courtroom narratives, but also by the science used in legal procedures. And this science increasingly depends on digital images, as evidenced by the ubiquity of fMRI images in mass media, from news reports, to film, television, and the internet. This leads to a paradoxical situation: not only does the law bar images from courtrooms (many states still enforce the prohibition of cameras in courtrooms, as does the Supreme Court), but it also attempts to bar itself from the circuits of images that revolve around it.

Sherwin identifies this paradoxical situation with the digital baroque (or neo-baroque), which he invokes in his book's title. For this central term of his book, he draws not only on recent literature on digital neo-baroque, but on a rich vein of 20th-century literary and visual art criticism that ranges from Walter Benjamin to José Antonio Maravall to Heinrich Wölfflin. So, following Maravall, Sherwin considers baroque not a particular style of art, but a certain set of cultural, social, and political traits that constitute a recognizable pattern that is not



tied to any particular period; and following Benjamin, he recognizes the foreclosing of the future as one of the main traits of this pattern (9). Overabundance, distortion, and irregularity, characteristic of 17th-century visual culture, come up again in the culture of the late 20th and early 21st century. But, this excess of images is just a symptom of a deeper “metaphysical uncertainty” that permeates cultures of postindustrial societies (84). Therefore, the main traits of the baroque are “destabilization, fragmentation, and disorientation” (85). And from this baroque kernel emerges what Sherwin calls “arabesques”: “mere ornament, like an arabesque endlessly unfolding in empty space” (49). They consist of images run riot, separated from any reference point, thus establishing a logic of their own. Swamped by “arabesques” that permeate all aspects of practical everyday life, the “law internalizes the visual mass media logic of desire. When that happens, unconscious screen fantasies may be transformed into legal realities” (64). The most distressing consequence of this fictionalization of legal facts is that it erodes law’s legitimacy. Like images in a neo-baroque hall of mirrors, “law’s forms proliferate in the profusion of rules and principles” (91). Sherwin’s critique of baroque jurisprudence as being removed from its sources of legitimacy is rigorous, sharp, and to the point. Whereas historically, baroque jurisprudence was the result of sovereign — often autocratic — states, neo-baroque culture flourishes in developed democracies. However, the fact of its detachment from sources of legitimacy is undeniable, and it is inseparable from baroque political procedure. For example, the recent debacle of attempts to adopt new gun laws in the United States suggests that any serious student of the modern American political system would benefit more from reading the memoirs of Cardinal de Retz than any modern political theorist.

Sherwin doesn’t see the solution for this fundamental problem of contemporary culture in a romantic return to some ideal condition of authenticity, such as Antonin Scalia’s “textualism” and “originalism.” Quite to the contrary, he argues that a solution would have to reach the very heart of baroque culture. He correctly recognizes that the “challenge of contemporary digital baroque culture is above all an ethical one” (54). The originality of his argument is in his suggestion that any search for new ethical bonds can’t afford to dismiss visual representation as inauthentic and simply fake, but instead should engage it with renewed vigor and confidence. This engagement, argues Sherwin, should strive towards what he calls the “visual sublime”: “through the gaps and slippages between original and representation there arises the possibility of glimpsing that which ultimately remains inexpressible. To make an inexpressible absence present: that is the work of the sublime” (73). According to Sherwin, the visual sublime should be recognized as a way towards an ethical sublime: “the ethical sublime arrests the recession of the real and the ethical from the spectacular landscape of neo-baroque law” (138). In other words, in order to recognize the truth of the image, one needs to learn how to understand the logic of images, their formation, and their place in contemporary culture. In the neo-baroque, as in its historical predecessor, the overabundance of visual representations conceals a carefully maintained economy of images. The realm of the “unseen” and “inexpressible” is not a natural given. Instead, it is the subject of intense negotiation. Like ethics, it is the sphere of tacit agreement; and like certain kinds of politics and economics, it is the sphere of executive order. In short, the visual and the ethical sublime are inseparable from the political “sublime.” To go back to the recent legislative debacle around gun legislation, the filmmaker Michael Moore recognized that the unofficial prohibition of publication of photographs taken inside Sandy Hook Elementary on 14 December 2012 is not only ethical but political in nature. Drawing on examples from the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War, he argues that public access to the gory results of the gun trade in the US will certainly lead to more stringent regulation of this powerful industry. While Moore takes ethical issues around this problem too lightly, it seems that Sherwin’s argument addresses precisely this aspect of the politics of images (Moore 2013).

Open access to that which, in ethical terms, may be seen not only as reprehensible, but also as unrepresentable, is a double-edged sword: it can generate a vulgar curiosity, or it can strengthen the bonds among beholders of these images. The latter comes close to what Sherwin calls “visual entanglement.” Whereas “digital arabesques” are “monadic, self-contained dream

worlds,” entanglements “constitute a social world in which not only are meanings shared, but the meaning-making process itself depends upon open-ended attunement to the demands of others” (190). Sherwin adds new substance to an important idea within legal studies that justice involves an ethical relation with otherness. As Justice Robert Cover has argued, the law “is the bridge—the committed social behavior which constitutes the way a group of people will attempt to get from here to there. Law connects ‘reality’ to alterity constituting a new reality with a bridge built out of committed social behavior” (1992:176). Justice Cover saw this “bridge” resolutely in terms of narrative, that is, of discursivity. Sherwin argues persuasively for the importance and complexity that images bring to this idea of justice. His key point is that a direct relationship between word and image has been irretrievably lost (the cliché that a picture is worth a thousand words makes no sense in an age of the digital manipulability of photography). Pictures don’t lie or tell the truth. They don’t make the bridge slippery any more than words do. In fact, they don’t speak at all. Instead, they complicate the univocal discursive landscape of the courtroom by inserting in it a powerful nondiscursive element. One such element has been there all along: performance. In the same way that judicial procedure depends on the ceremonial and live presence of courtroom performances, it depends on the unique kind of absence carried by images.

Sherwin is very much aware of just how far-reaching his demand is. One of the main targets of his criticism is Cartesian investment in rationality based on a monadic consciousness. In asking for a new “paradigm” he calls for an entirely new field of visual jurisprudence (54). For decades now, critical legal studies have been arguing that legal facts, like literary fictions, are discursive forms, and that the boundaries between them are not only porous, but in fact heavily trafficked; any reading of legal facts is necessarily incomplete if it doesn’t take into consideration bordering fictions. Sherwin is extending this argument from literature to the general field of visual culture that includes film, theatre, painting, and digital art. As to the “what” of his demand, it is up to the field of legal studies to decide its viability. But when it comes to “how,” that is to its method, nontraditional academic disciplines in the humanities, primarily cinema studies and performance studies, will find in Sherwin’s book not only an affirmation, but viable new openings towards new areas of inquiry.

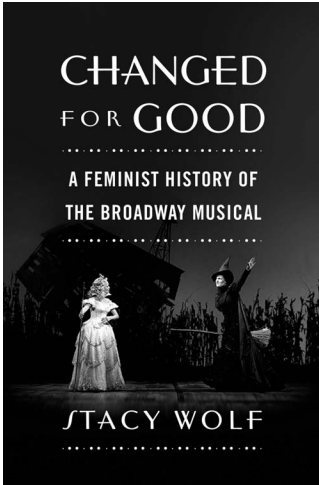
—Branislav Jakovljević

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Changed for Good: A Feminist History of the Broadway Musical. By Stacy Wolf. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. 320 pp.; illustrations. \$99.00 cloth, \$24.95 paper, e-book available.

In the first pages of *Changed for Good*, Stacy Wolf gives the reader a front row seat in the audience of the 2003 hit Broadway musical *Wicked* as she describes in vivid detail the production's act one finale. In doing so, she posits *Wicked* as an exemplary work that both embraces and eschews deeply entrenched conventions of the Broadway musical. Using *Wicked* as the starting and ending points to her study, Wolf visits five decades of musicals, traces the progression of the representation of women onstage, and questions the ways in which women have disrupted the heteronormative conventions of musical theatre. Culminating with an analysis of the Elphaba/Glinda duet "Changed for Good," from which she takes her title, Wolf seeks to discover "how musicals moved from a female duet that *interrupts*

the romance narrative to female duets that *construct* the romantic narrative" (23). A departure from other essential but more general musical theatre histories, *Changed for Good* looks away from the male/female romantic relationship and toward female relationships and their fantastic ability to disrupt and subvert what is expected on the Broadway stage.

Surveying 19 musicals and delving more deeply into one (*Wicked*), Wolf presents a substantial study of Broadway musicals' female relationships. Each of the first five chapters considers a specific decade, from the "golden age" of the 1950s to musicals with a multicultural focus in the 2000s. Associated with each decade is a theatrical stage convention or theme that contextualizes the place of female characters onstage: female duets of the 1950s; the "Single Girl" of the 1960s; ensemble-focused musicals of the 1970s; the relationship of female characters to scenography in megamusicals of the 1980s; and stories of women of color in the 1990s and 2000s. The selected works are accompanied by images of their original Broadway productions, visual reminders of several iconic female-centered moments on Broadway. Wolf pays attention to the context in which these musicals were created by providing a brief but sufficient historical, political, and socioeconomic backdrop for each decade. Several chapters include additional contextualization, such as an overview of the stagecraft and technology used in 1980s megamusicals.

Changed for Good is most provocative in its queer reading of the Elphaba/Glinda relationship in *Wicked*. In this case, Wolf uses "queer" to "reference intense female homosocialities, friendships, intimacies and kinships that are performed in a given musical" (18), and argues that "two women singing together in a duet, their voices intertwined and overlapping, their attention toward one another, can also signify as queer" (18). In this context and within the framework of the heteronormative conventions of musical theatre, Wolf makes a strong argument for a queer relationship between Elphaba and Glinda, whose connection is the most intense and important in the play. Also fascinating is Wolf's analysis of female voices and bodies, particularly in her discussion of the "Single Girl" of the 1960s. It is this solo female performer who subverts the typical "I am/I want" musical number (in which the heroine expresses her hopes and desires for the future) and creates an "I will/I can" number, in which she controls her own destiny and often her sexuality, expressed outwardly through choreography. She focuses on the centerpiece of the musical, its score, and in particular the revelation of female relationships through vocal range, specific harmonies, and the intertwining of voices.

One intriguing way Wolf sets her book apart from other musical theatre histories is in her final chapter, which takes as its subject "Internet Girl Fans." Here, Wolf investigates the impact of *Wicked* and the cult of the musical theatre diva on teen and preteen girls in the United States. With regard to audience reception, Wolf "tak[es] girls seriously as participants in culture" (222).

She draws on internet blogs and fansites (some entries are humorous, others insightful) in which young women discuss and analyze their experiences attending performances of *Wicked*, meeting stars at the stage door, their own female relationships, and the relationship of personal self-image to the characters in the musical. Wolf acknowledges the limitations of these sources as reliable markers of audience reception, but asserts their usefulness in “reveal[ing] some clear patterns of use, engagement, and utterances of feeling” (223). This chapter effectively argues that homosocial relationships among young women are influenced by the community they create as fans of musical theatre. It also gives agency to young women, who are often overlooked as participants in not only the consumption of popular entertainment, but its creation as well.

There are just two places where Wolf quickly touches on topics that beg more attention. Of the carefully selected representative musicals, *Rent* is the one glaring omission, since Wolf offers substantial discussion of race and ethnicity in musicals of the 1990s. In Wolf’s discussion of the ensemble-based nature of musicals in the 1970s, the reader is left longing for a more in-depth look at the women of this decade. Most successful is Wolf’s analysis of Cassie’s individualism versus her place in the ensemble of *A Chorus Line*. The section on *The Wiz* is most exciting in its discussion of race rather than gender, which may cause the reader to lose sight of the foregrounding of gender as this study’s point of departure.

As Wolf reminds the reader in her notes, the scholarly study of American musical theatre is a relatively new pursuit. This book is just the second that analyzes American musical theatre from a feminist perspective, the first being her own *A Problem Like Maria: Gender and Sexuality in the American Musical* (2002), which focuses on four female actors of the 1950s and early 1960s. Equally academic and accessible, *Changed for Good* is a pleasurable read that will prove useful to scholars as well as students and fans of musical theatre. Wolf’s enthusiasm for her subject is infectious and inspires further investigation of feminist stagings of the Broadway musical.

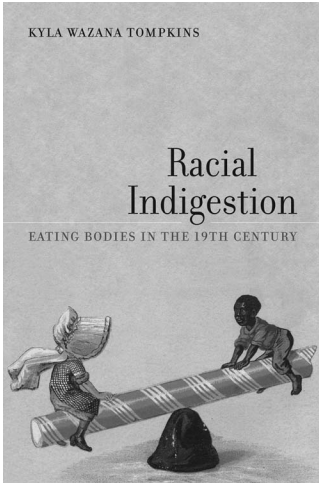
—Colleen Rua

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Racial Indigestion: Eating Bodies in the 19th Century. By Kyla Wazana Tompkins. New York: New York University Press, 2012; 288 pp.; illustrations. \$75.00 cloth, \$24.00 paper, e-book available.

“Critical eating studies” is the framework proposed by Kyla Wazana Tompkins for the interdisciplinary cultural analysis she undertakes in this provocative book. Examining domestic architecture, novels, dietetic tracts, and color advertisements, Tompkins argues that beliefs and practices related to food and its consumption were instrumental in creating ideas about self and nation in 19th- and early 20th-century America. Eat the right foods, become the right kind of citizen is the basic idea she traces in assessing what she calls “the biopolitical life of the nation” (185). It is, as she points out, an idea that is still with us, as “like today’s locavores and food reformers, reform dietetics invited consumers to direct their desire towards virtuous objects, to substitute a hypervigilant digestive life for critical engagement with political and economic processes” (11). The book’s “overarching metaphor” (116) is that of indigestion, as white Americans struggled with notions of how non-whites might be devoured, spit out, badly digested, ejected,



or—in a few instances—comfortably consumed with pleasure. One of the book’s strong points is that the notion of non-white “other” is not reserved for Africans or even Asians. Students of American culture know that until well into the 20th century, groups that today would be called cultures or ethnicities (e.g., the Irish or Jews or Teutons) were seen as distinct races, something that makes interesting appearances in the writings of anxious whites and the colorful advertisements of aggressive marketers.

The first chapter uses short works by Hawthorne and Melville to explore distress about kitchens and the people who inhabit them. Colonial homes had open hearths, and kitchens were not discrete areas. With the advent of the stove, concurrent with the middle-class ideal of separate spheres, came a world in which poorer “others” became the ones responsible for much food preparation and the talk that went with it. The result was partially nostalgia and partially anxiety, both of which show up in literature. The mouth issues gossip and orders; it also ingests food. As Tompkins summarizes, “orality gives the cook her access to power [...]; while her mouth may be subject to middle-class discipline, she has access to her employers’ mouths as well. In fact, the cook’s entire worth hinges on her mouth: it metonymizes her essential value as a cook” (49).

Sylvester Graham is the star of the second chapter, in which the wholesomeness of chemical-free, whole grain bread is positioned as instrumental to the republican project. Improper eating is, according to Graham, linked to “sensualism” and the sort of spicy foods native to “foreign” lands. Wheat, originally imported by Columbus and then by virtually all colonists, was the gold standard of indigenous wholesomeness, so eating it meant ingesting Americanness to produce more of the same. In the book’s central chapter, *The House of the Seven Gables* and *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* are case studies of literature that use “the image of the black body, metaphorized as food, in conjunction with the project of construing—and at times critiquing—the idea of whiteness” (91). Hawthorne’s Jim Crow cookie is part of a spinster’s move into modernity via supporting herself with a bakery; the Irish child who buys the first cookie, though, is figured as a cannibal. Simon Legree’s filthy plantation offers the idea “that slavery as a fundamental injustice gets stuck inside the body politic, rendering it ill with symptoms that were all too familiar in antebellum America, afflicted as it so often was with typhus, diphtheria, and epidemic outbreaks of cholera” (117). In the fourth chapter, Louisa May Alcott’s novels *Eight Cousins* and *Rose in Bloom* figure health in terms of a plain diet favoring oat bread and fresh milk. But Tompkins complicates that picture by pointing out that the books’ wealthy heroine is heir to a fortune built on New England’s late 18th- and early 19th-century trade with China—trade that required the sale of American sugar, coffee, furs, and wood to India and Turkey, where Americans traded for opium. That, in turn, went to China to facilitate the purchase of silk, tea, and other commodities. Rose eats simple bread on a china plate, rendering her—the “pure” American—as much an opium addict as the Chinese man who figures as a joke in Alcott’s narrative.

In the final chapter, Tompkins turns to trade cards, which were small, rectangular cards inserted into packaged goods or handed out at points of sale to advertise all kinds of manufactured items. These enjoyed a heyday between 1870 and 1906, and Tompkins mines 40 of them for what they reveal about eating, energy, and racial anxiety. While many trade cards featured “[t]he common representation of African Americans as eaters as well as food to be eaten up,” she also suggests that African Americans acquired them as consumers. The cards are theatrical, Tompkins notes, not only in their reliance on character types from the popular stage, but also in the scenes and stories they deploy. And, lest one worry that whiteness relentlessly trumped all in

these visual concoctions, Tompkins reminds readers that part of her argument is “that the other will not go down easily but rather bites back” (186–87).

—Dorothy Chansky

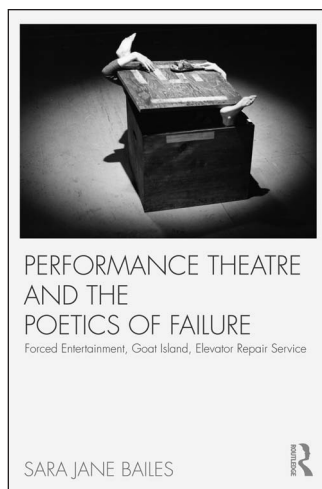
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Performance Theatre and the Poetics of Failure: Forced Entertainment, Goat Island, Elevator Repair Service. By Sara Jane Bailes. London: Routledge, 2010. 256 pp. \$120.00 cloth, \$43.95 paper, e-book available.

Failure has become a key word of our time, and when I say that it is a *key word*, I mean it in the now old-fashioned sense that Raymond Williams articulated in the 1950s—a word in dynamic tension with its cultural context. In art and performance scholarship for instance, it has moved register. Failure as an art topic no longer indicates an interest in the failure of modernism. It is more likely to suggest an interest in the use of failure *within* art making, a strategy at whose feet of sand all kinds of claims are laid, including the idea that what we once saw as failure is not failure at all. Beckett’s “fail again, fail better” is not about the existential condition under which we struggle, but a powerful address to the system of representation itself, a tool that, in its capacity to disrupt unpredictably, loosens our hold on the taken-for-granted reality that we inhabit. However, in everyday life—that is, in the lives of our financial, educational, and political institutions—the heat of failure, with its capacity to burn up the lives of those touched by it, seems hotter than ever. The work it has to do here is to scare us into behaving well, behaving better. Its teeth may have been drawn, but failure still has a toxic sting in its tail.

How the deliberate production of failure works as a performance-making tactic, to unhinge the social construction of reality, is the subject of this intriguing and richly detailed book. Sara Jane Bailes places her discussion within the context of performance theatre, that strand of ensemble, collectively made, devised performance in which she herself worked before becoming an academic. Her subject therefore emerges from the intersection of practice and critical reflection, and her fine writing on the work of three companies—Forced Entertainment, Goat Island, and Elevator Repair Service—patiently investigates a set of questions relating to the typology, place, and purpose of failure in their work. She gives further context to her participant observation—she spent several years in rehearsal with each company as they developed new work—by drawing cultural analogies with social movements and artistic moments in which social norms have been actively challenged by what she sees as the productive work of failure.



Failure operates, she suggests, by putting paid to acceptable outcomes and proposing alternative ways of making or doing. It doesn't so much skew our vision as bring it into focus. There is, we might say, something at stake here, a sense that what she is writing about matters in the world. The labor of theatre does not so much reflect the world as help construct it. In undoing the seams of representation failure skirts catastrophe, the better to make use of its inevitable effects.

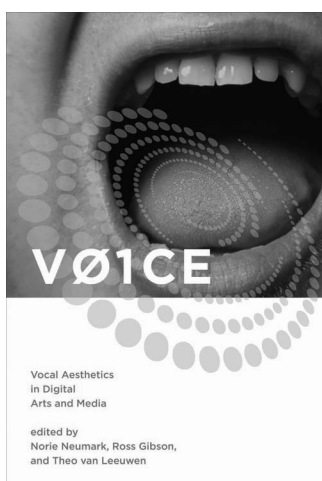
This is an elegant book but not a light book. Bailes is cognizant of the power of failure in the modernist imagination, and she wants us to reimagine it for a contemporary context. If the performance world she excavates and illuminates is determinedly post (post) modern, the critical tools she brings to it—tools developed by, among others, Adorno, Bloch, and, especially, Walter Benjamin—hark back to modernism. It works, this pairing, and it works because the fine-tuning, the detailed argument, and the scholarly texture of the book are matched by a deep understanding of what it means to make performance. Bailes brings modernist perceptions of failure into conversation with the work of the present, drawing failure away from the shameful and the catastrophic in order to release its transformative power as a machine for making a new kind of artistic sense.

To know how to make a performance of failure is not in the end to quite remove the sting in its tail. To fail, as psychoanalysis knows, is to know better how to be mortal. To fail again, and again, and better, and not so well, but at least to keep on failing, is the means in which we keep going. This excellent book is also written in the knowledge that to engage with failure and doubt is to accept the conditions under which we are obliged to live. Human, all too human.

—Claire MacDonald

Claire MacDonald writes widely about art across genres, as well as on artists' books and publishing and on the pedagogy of art and performance. She is a founding editor of the journal Performance Research, and her book Utopia: Three Plays for a Postdramatic Theatre will come out from Intellect in 2014. She is currently working on a cultural history of Dartington, the modernist arts and education foundation. clairemacdonald1@mac.com

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Voice: Vocal Aesthetics in Digital Arts and Media.

Edited by Norie Neumark, Ross Gibson, and Theo van Leeuwen. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010; 440 pp. \$40.00 cloth, e-book available.

Dramatic Theories of Voice in the Twentieth Century.

By Andrew M. Kimbrough. Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2011; 334 pp. \$114.99 cloth, e-book available.

The study of the voice has been on the rise in the academy as the focus of a slew of books, articles, and conference panels. These two books are among the latest that will be of interest to anyone studying voice in performance studies. *Voice: Vocal Aesthetics in Digital Arts and Media* is an edited collection of essays that take up the voice in the context of digital culture. Norie Neumark opens with an introduction that presents the voice as fundamentally paradoxical. Though issuing from the body, vocal sounds are neither simply embodied nor disembodied.

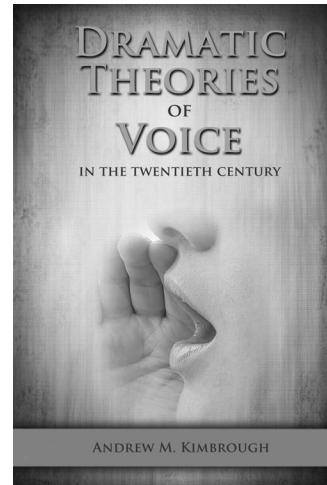
bodied, always acting in excess of the body. Neumark identifies the flawed tendency of sound studies to discuss the technologically mediated voice as only disembodied and offers this anthology as a step toward redirecting the conversation to include the embodied nature of the mediated voice—a task at which the volume is most successful.

The book is divided into four parts. The first, *Capturing Voice*, concentrates on the technological mediation of the human voice in recording and distribution. Theo van Leeuwen contributes a chapter comparing the *vox humana* stops on a pre-digital organ to the voice sounds of the Roland RD300-SX keyboard. Thomas Y. Levin chronicles a concise history of voice mail *before* the development in the early 1990s of the answering machine. Levin's contribution is an exemplary demonstration of Lewis Mumford's thesis, cited in the book's preface, that "'cultural preparation' precedes technological innovation" (ix). The first section also contains essays by Virginia Madsen and John Potts on podcasting and by Martin Thomas on revisiting half-century-old ethnographic recordings of an aboriginal tribe in Australia, with current living tribe members. One of the most exciting features of the volume is an intermixing of scholarly articles with first-person descriptive and performative writing. Theresa M. Senft's piece in the first section makes up for mischaracterizing Alvin Lucier's 1970 *I Am Sitting in a Room* as "a dreadful technical exercise in 1980s sound art" (67) with a fascinating description of being a female consumer of phone sex and using Lucier's groundbreaking piece to examine affective economies of intimacy, space, and sound.

The second section is devoted to performativity and the performing body. It opens with another essay by Neumark, this one focused on the philosophical concept of performativity and spanning a divergent set of vocal examples from machinima to Mark Hansen and Ben Rubin's *Listening Post* (2001), from which she proposes the useful insight that the pre-digital "authenticity effect" (114) of the voice can be seen as performative in examples of digital art. The subsequent exceptional essays by Meredith Morse on the dancer's voice, focusing on works by Simone Forti and Yvonne Rainer, and Brandon LaBelle on sound poetry expertly theorize and elucidate the voice's unique (for the most part silent) context in dance and the changing technological landscape of poetry and orality. The section is rounded out with a piece of performative writing from Mark Amerika and an insightful essay by artist Amanda Stewart about the vocal discoveries she has made by interacting with technology—displaying the substantial benefits of performance as research and the knowledge gained by doing.

Section three focuses on mainstream media with substantial contributions about video and computer games, a tremendous but relatively untouched subject in the academy. Isabelle Arvers contributes an article on machinima; Mark Ward explores the voice in videogames in terms of immersion, focusing on the first-person shooter *BioShock*; and Axel Stockburger further theorizes the voice of the avatar as a "suture of the player into the fictional game universe" (286). The section also includes an essay from Ross Gibson on Jamaican dub and a collaborative essay on film and voice from academic Helen Macallan and professional sound designer Andrew Plain. Particularly illuminating in the latter is the explanation of Michel Chion's influential concept of "vococentrism" (1999:5) as tied to a particular technology and now out-dated for the digital world, which is marked by extensive layering and post-production manipulation of actors' voices.

The final section of the book is basically a catchall for a few extra essays. It starts with a characteristically magical meditation from Michael Taussig on humming, meandering through the vocalizations of renowned figures such as Winnie-the-Pooh and Allen Ginsberg. The



second essay, by Nermin Saybasili, is an interesting exploration of the intersections of haunting and the voice in the figure of the “ghost citizen” as inflected in contemporary digital artworks. The final two rather disappointing articles by Giselle Beiguelman and Philip Brophy are the exceptions in this otherwise excellent collection, and I would recommend the book as a whole to anyone engaged in the study of voice and technology.

Andrew M. Kimbrough’s *Dramatic Theories of Voice in the Twentieth Century* aims to synthesize theoretical innovations involving voice in philosophy, evolutionary science, and linguistics with aesthetics and performance (mostly from theatre directors and playwrights). This is exactly the type of book I needed as an undergraduate when I first was discovering philosophy and wondering how I could relate what I read to my experiences as a vocal performer. Running the gamut from scientific theory to phenomenology to structuralism to deconstruction (unfortunately making no mention of the substantial contributions made in feminist theory), it promises a wealth of information and connections between philosophy and vocal practice. However, while the book delivers concise and not overly complicated introductions to many of the 20th century’s most important theories involving the voice, its discussion is heavily biased towards particular angles on those theories, despite its rhetoric of objectivity, and its claims not fully substantiated. While a vast improvement on Kimbrough’s dissertation (2002), on which it is based, the book lies somewhere between useful introduction and problematic theorization that suffers from too little space for too large a task. In addition, though partly a product of the theories he is synthesizing, Kimbrough’s discussion of voice mostly focuses on language, excluding considerations of musicality, heightened utterance, and paralinguistics, and misses the importance in performance studies of recognizing the knowledge we hold nonlinguistically in our bodies.

The book is divided into seven chapters, in addition to an introduction and a peculiar interlude on Walter Benjamin. The first chapter explores “Vocal Origins” by summarizing research in the natural sciences, particularly paleontology and evolutionary biology, on the evolution of the human vocal mechanism and the various hypotheses comparing speech and gesture in the development of modes of communication. The inclusion of themes in the natural sciences is a welcome addition to the voice scholar’s consideration. However, I was surprised to find the past decade of scientific research unaccounted for, with the exception of the latest in cognitive studies, and pertinent works such as Steven Mithen’s *The Singing Neanderthals: The Origins of Music, Language, Mind, and Body* (2005) absent from the author’s overview.

The second chapter, surveying how the voice is handled in phenomenology, existentialism, and the “linguistic turn,” is coupled with what Kimbrough calls “theatres of presence” in the third chapter, as seen in the work of Antonin Artaud, Jerzy Grotowski, Peter Brook, and Richard Schechner. Without claiming a direct influence of the artworks on the philosophy (or vice versa), he connects the two bodies of thought and action. Theories from linguistics, anthropology, and structuralism dominate the fourth chapter, with a short discussion of ordinary language philosophy. Chapter five looks at the modern literarized voice in the theatre of Bertolt Brecht, Eugene Ionesco, Samuel Beckett, and Peter Handke. Kimbrough groups their work along a common interest in textuality as a vehicle for meaning.

Chapter six is titled “The Poststructural Voice” and explores the ideas of Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault and Jean-François Lyotard (oddly grouped together), and Jean Baudrillard. Placing a theorist like Lacan under the label of poststructuralism is only the first hint of the misleading generalizations made in this chapter—though Kimbrough does do a good job of explaining some of the foundational tenets of poststructuralism in terms of what he has introduced in previous chapters, for the benefit of those discovering these theories for the first time. This last section is underdeveloped and becomes increasingly disappointing. In an unwise move, Kimbrough dismisses the work of Derrida and Lacan as not backed up by scientific literature but makes no attempt to substantiate his argument. The curt comment that a lack of empirical data renders philosophical development useless not only dismisses any theory from

outside the natural sciences but also makes the assumption that theoretical biases do not ever underwrite scientific study. The seventh and final chapter critiques the use of deconstruction in the critical scholarship of postmodern performance, as seen in the work of Robert Wilson, Richard Foreman, Karen Finley, Laurie Anderson, and the Wooster Group.

Kimbrough closes by celebrating that “voices confirm for us, in vital ways, who we are, where we are, and what it is we are going about doing” (264). While this may sometimes be true, in the face of the great body of theory described in the book, it is a naïve and overly simplistic conclusion that ultimately fails to rise to the opportunity afforded by the original premise of Kimbrough’s task: to explore the multitude of ways the voice is conceived in both theory and practice. While the book may be a good jumping off point (and the only one we have of its ambitious breadth) for a look at the voice in philosophy and performance, it is far from the whole story and should most certainly not be given the last word.

—Gelsey Bell

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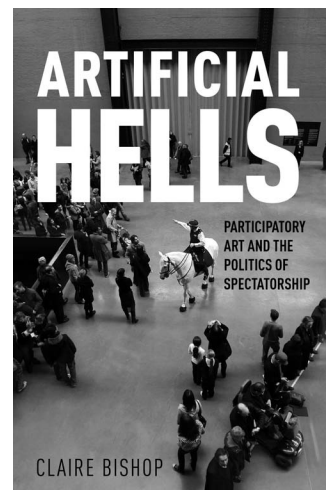
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Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship. By Claire Bishop. London: Verso, 2012. 390 pp. \$29.95 paper, e-book available.

As Claire Bishop’s masterful *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* makes abundantly clear, social performance is perhaps the critical political art form of the current moment. Through its exhaustively researched pages investigating the nature and history of aesthetic approaches that engage the idea of the activated spectator, Bishop issues both a trenchant analysis of the idea of social art as well as a call for a revitalized critical assessment of the form. *Artificial Hells* provides a timely and much needed theorization and critical history of an area of performance that will surely be marked by further experimentation. It seems clear that few practitioners or students of contemporary performance can afford to miss a close reading of what Bishop offers with this volume.

The importance of the book’s subject is manifest even if only considered as a history of collective artistic authorship. Bishop suggests a timeline of those moments of political crisis throughout the 20th century during which artists are compelled to



respond to profound alterations in the body politic with work that mirrors the fluidity of social dynamics. These critical junctures define the rise and fall of an organized left on the world stage: 1917 and the Bolshevik Revolution (coinciding with European movements like Dada and Futurism), the reorganization of progressive politics in the '60s (and its bitter reflection in the military dictatorships in Latin America), and finally the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 and, with it, much of the vigor behind the idea of Communism as a viable countervailing system to Western capitalism. What this trajectory makes clear is the close association between the impulse to reform a “passive” artistic audience and the desire to activate the populace politically. Here Bishop cannily detects one main line of problematic assumptions about participatory art, namely, the tenuous relationship between aesthetic models of democracy and actual forms of democratic civic participation. The confusion between the two—really the assumption that an artistic action can stand in for true collective political reality—is one of the book’s significant contributions to a critique of the form. As history shows, the artistic gesture all too frequently stands in for the lack of democracy in society at large.

Another of Bishop’s theses—that participatory performance is the most vital part of what remains of the avantgarde—is noteworthy for the critical light it sheds on the end point of her timeline. With the reordering of worldwide political lines of allegiance post-1989 and the “triumph” of global neoliberalism, the malaise of the activist Left marks a loss of faith in a common, collectivist political project. This, Bishop asserts, is fertile ground for a diverse series of compensatory aesthetic “projects” that are amply documented in her later chapters. Even the term “project” takes on the connotative force of a socially ameliorative design, a conscious turn to redemptive actions for an age that has lost the ability to mobilize mass political effort towards social and economic justice. What Bishop suggests, however, in the clearest possible terms, is that we abandon facile critical approval of such actions and refocus on aesthetic criteria, not merely the social goals, of such artistic work. Only by looking at how such work challenges both the social field *and* the language of art itself can we begin to approach the work’s nature as, quoting Guattari, “transversal,” militant, undisciplined, creative, and social. Only through this lens can we understand what the best of such experiments offer, such as those by such artists as Tania Bruguera, Paul Chan, Pawel Althamer, and Thomas Hirschhorn.

Throughout her theorization of the power of performance to blur the aesthetic and social realms, rendering coauthorship more complex and productive, Bishop relies on the work of Jacques Rancière, whose *The Emancipated Spectator* has become a standard reference for artists working with human subjects. Rancière’s concepts of dissensus, *partage du sensible*, and the aesthetic regime form a crucial critical basis for Bishop’s call for the necessity of thinking beyond facile binaries: active versus passive, single versus collective authorship, and equality versus inequality.

The book devotes significant chapter sections to surveying the historical avantgarde, beginning with the Italian Futurists’ militant spectacles and, in postrevolutionary Russia, the Proletkult’s experiments with collective creation. The Situationists in France, particularly Guy Debord’s constructed situations, are noteworthy for their influence on the programmatic opposition to capitalist spectacle typical of many later experiments in the West. More disturbingly, artists’ responses to political repression during Argentina’s Dirty War provide examples of how attempts to convey harsh realities went far beyond critiquing consumer capitalism, with artists recycling images and situations redolent of state violence in their performances aimed directly at spectators’ sense of mobility and freedom. Finally, Bishop explores the nature of participation in Eastern Europe under socialist governance, where forced collective ideology produced work marked by a desire for private space for reflection and a place to avoid both state surveillance and the mass spectacle of official Soviet culture. These national examples serve cumulatively to demonstrate how radically differently the shared impulse for collective authorship must be read through historical specificity. Yet Bishop’s main thesis, the necessity to work such experiments

through a critique of artistic form and local political circumstance, remains consistently applicable throughout these chapters.

The tone of the book is sanguine if critical about participatory art. Even those experiments that miss the mark are appraised fairly and fully, the emphasis remaining on interpreting artistic models as art and not merely as ethical gestures or failed political stunts. While more examples from the world of theatre and performance not strictly emanating from the visual art and installation traditions would have been welcome, this is a minor quibble for a volume with so much to offer performance scholars and practitioners of all backgrounds. If Bishop's book can be a guide for future iterations of the form, there is much to look forward to indeed on the horizon.

—Kenn Watt

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More Books

Paul Robeson and the Cold War Performance Complex: Race, Madness, Activism. By Tony Perucci. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012; 232 pp.; illustrations. \$75.00 cloth, \$28.95 paper, e-book available.

Looking specifically at two of Paul Robeson's performances—his 1949 concerts in Peekskill, New York, and his 1956 appearance before the House Un-American Activities Committee—Perucci analyzes how Robeson was vilified and discredited using, among other things, antitheatrical discourse. Robeson, whose international fame as an actor and singer gave him a wide platform, became an outspoken critic of US policies toward Russia and a supporter of organized labor and civil rights. Perucci argues that Cold War culture linked race, madness, and communism, casting Robeson's activism as both insane and unpatriotic. Performances by the state (such as HUAC) and performances of citizenship mobilized to support anticommunist attitudes (such as surveillance and naming names) produced what Perucci calls the Cold War Performance Complex. Deployed to support the US postwar, militarized, and racialized hegemony of global capitalism, the Cold War Performance Complex operates in four ways: (1) it is enacted by the state to enforce the political economic order of Cold War culture; (2) it articulates treason as black, Communist, and mad; (3) it enables the state to repress spectacles of resistance; and (4) it becomes a site of struggle, wherein performance can organize ruptures of the political economic order. The book is not a biography of Robeson, although it contains rich biographical detail where necessary. Scholarship regarding Robeson, according to Perucci, focuses on his early career and eschews his more contested, complicated performances of activism, along with the state and media's response to those performances. Perucci squarely tackles the time period in which Robeson's performances were at their most radical, demonstrating how Robeson imagined collective organization and resistance.

The African American Theatrical Body: Reception, Performance, and the Stage. By Soyica Diggs Colbert. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011; 344 pp.; illustrations. \$103.00 cloth, e-book available.

Drawing from Suzan Lori-Parks's "Rep and Rev" (Repetition and Revision), Colbert undertakes an analysis of literary and theatrical works addressing black subjectivity and materiality. Colbert finds that performance offers a method for repairing some of the historical trauma endured by African Americans. By continually revising history, works ranging from W.E.B. Du Bois's *The Star of Ethiopia* (1915) to Tarell Alvin McCraney's *In the Red and Brown Water* (2008) demonstrate how preaching, dance, music, and theatre provide sites of reparation for the black body. In between these texts, Colbert analyzes Zora Neale Hurston's *Color Struck* (1925), Langston Hughes's *Tambourines to Glory* (1958), James Baldwin's *Blues for Mister Charlie* (1964), Amiri Baraka's *Slave Ship* (1967), August Wilson's *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* (1986), and Parks's *Topdog/Underdog* (2001), finding that African American dramatists have transformed "absence into ways of being present, homelessness into modes of finding a home, and loss into mechanisms of mourning" (8). Rather than approaching these texts as individual works, she reads them as part of a rich tradition, and, by incorporating scholarship on blackness and performance, generates through her book the kind of reparative work she attributes to this body of performance.

Performing Queer Latinidad: Dance, Sexuality, Politics. Ramón H. Rivera-Servera. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012; 272 pp.; illustrations. \$75.00 cloth, \$32.50 paper, e-book available.

In this book, Rivera-Servera traces the connections between performance and the formation of queer latinidad publics. During the 1990s and early 2000s, a time variously called the "Latin Boom" and the "Latin Explosion" when mainstream culture and commercial media popularized Latin superstars such as Ricky Martin, Jennifer Lopez, and Shakira, queer Latino/a cultures used local and everyday performance to generate social networks that resisted commodification. Rivera-Servera argues that collectively, the concepts of home, hope, utopia, and friction combine to create a theory of queer latinidad. His case studies, Arthur Aviles's choreography in New York, the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center in San Antonio, club dancing across the US in the 1990s, and club dancing in Phoenix 10 years later, focus on daily-life interactions and draw from a "localized understanding of grassroots globalization" (39). The book received the 2013 Lambda Book Award in LGBT Studies, the 2013 Book Award from the Latino Studies Section of the Latin American Studies Association, the 2013 Outstanding Publication Award from the Congress on Research in Dance, and a Special Citation for the 2012 de la Torre Bueno Prize from the Society of Dance History Scholars.

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