

EDITORIAL

Being Here—*PAJ* at 100

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As I write this preface to the 100th issue of *PAJ*, Occupy Wall Street has already been influential enough for the movement to spread across the U.S., violently at times, as more and more citizens are drawn into its message of social justice. Similar interventions have broken out in cities on several continents, protesting the corruption of democracy by powerful financial interests. Someone dressed as Jesus, holding a sign that declared, “I Threw The Money Lenders Out for a Reason,” was seen demonstrating in front of St. Paul’s Cathedral in London, in a throwback to what used to be called guerrilla theatre, adding a moral dimension to the outrage. In the cradle of civilization, our biblical garden of Eden, the U.S. is mired in the longest wars and occupations of its history. By now several months have passed since the “Arab Spring” has brought massive upheaval to the Middle East, its revolution streamed by the new social networks that horizontalize the globe. On the continent the Euro crisis threatens the long-held dream of a European Union.

What should I, an editor of an arts journal, do in this world with the means at my disposal? How should I act in the world, and upon it?

It is within this steady disenchantment of contemporary life worldwide that several months ago I began to conceive an editorial approach for *PAJ* 100 that would reflect uniquely personal perspectives on the ecology of a community: where we are now, how we have gotten here, and how we may go forward. Under the title “Performance New York,” this special volume was organized around four central themes to which several generations of artists, critics, curators, and producers were asked to respond. Everyone was assigned an individual topic: Belief, Being Contemporary, Performance and Science, Writing and Performance. What moves me in reading the statements of contributors is their origination from a contemplated reserve of individual conviction. Taken together, they outline a measure of the responders’ worldliness in the face of a global crisis in biopolitics through the choice to remain faithful to all that embodies their most profound values: the *work* of art.

Turning from the statements to the conversational form, three dialogues open up perspectives on the conditions of making art now, acknowledging the economic struggle that characterizes being an artist in New York City. Their subtexts circulate around the influence of legacy and tradition, essential subjects for art forms adjusting

to the writing of performance history in the present tense. In between the commentaries, portfolios of several artists highlight the intersections of performance and visual art that characterize the American arts. In effect, *PAJ* 100 is a polyphony of one hundred voices, offering a half-century of artistic thought and life experience by those who have created the histories of contemporary performance and others exploring the world they are now entering.

What is fascinating to hear in *PAJ* 100 are the voices of some of the same artists first featured in the journal decades ago as young artists, and now still prominent, as they speak from years of working lives. No irony, no posing, no self-promotion. Just the eloquence of honesty. Already enshrined in the history books, they are the ones who have helped to create the post-war experiments in performance, film, video, theatre, and dance that can now be seen as an avant-garde tradition. We are dealing with their legacies more than three decades later, in an illuminating perspective on the history of performance knowledge. In recent years, exhibits and festivals have focused on the performance, dance, and art worlds of the sixties and seventies, especially in New York and in London, highlighting the interest in this period as the context of the work-in-progress that is performance history. The younger artists in this issue confront the traditions of the forms in which they work, generating insightful responses to contemporary imperatives. In turn, the artists looking back over decades of achievement open up worldviews inflected by the many phases of time and process.

In the long view, the thirty-five-year history of *PAJ* is also the history of the arts downtown, as well as a contribution to its cultural history. The year 1976, our beginning, welcomed important works such as the Robert Wilson-Philip Glass opera *Einstein on the Beach*, Meredith Monk's *Quarry*, Carolee Schneemann's *Up to and Including Her Limits*, *Music for 18 Musicians* by Steve Reich, and *The Juniper Tree* by Joan Jonas, all of which have remained performance standards since that time. If our starting point ranges forward by a few more years to that list can be added *Rumstick Road*, an early Wooster Group work, and the influential *Perfect Lives* by Robert Ashley, Trisha Brown's iconic *Watermotor*, Sam Shepard's Pulitzer-Prize-winning *Buried Child*, Maria Irene Fornes's beloved *Fefu and Her Friends*, and Laurie Anderson's start of her U.S. commentaries, *Americans on the Move*, to name only a few remarkable works of the period that come to mind. *PAJ*'s two young founding editors, Gautam Dasgupta and I, could be seen participating in a Fluxus tour in a much shabbier SoHo, accompanied by George Maciunas and Nam June Paik. Downtown was then populated by the creators of the Judson Dance Theater, Fluxus, Happenings, contemporary music, experimental film, performance art, video art, sound art, and avant-garde theatre, whose newest proponents I was to call "the theatre of images."

Still feeding off the energy of the sixties (a lot of the sixties happened in the seventies), this was an era when, in the world of the arts *PAJ* entered, everywhere downtown new performance spaces and theatre and dance companies and music ensembles and arts publications and non-profit organizations were being created. At times I've wondered if sending a man into space had so captivated this arts community

that someone was led to invent the term performance “space.” Our present world of limited horizons and resources finds a metaphor in the shutting down of the space shuttle program last summer. On a fundamental level, that action is related to the present-day absence of social space for dreaming and imagining oneself in an unknown cosmos, then planning how to get there.

PAJ started out as a theatre periodical (originally called *Performing Arts Journal*), with an added interest in dance, music, and performance art. Its writers were caught up in the fervor then to invent new vocabularies for the groundbreaking art downtown. In those days what constituted a theatre journal was a home for commentary on American and European plays, experimental theatre, and the great European directors and their companies. It was a wonderful time for critics and criticism in many fields, supported by a discriminating public that no longer exists, and soon after its disappearance, any semblance of bohemian life in New York City. Reviews of the new biography of Pauline Kael and her Library of America collection of film writings have rightly emphasized the attention she and other critics were paid by devoted audiences. Memoirs by James Walcott and Michael Lindsay-Hogg, and Patti Smith’s wildly successful *Just Kids*, have all turned the spotlight on the seventies arts scene, whose galvanizing passions for many New Yorkers were making art and writing and talking about it. A single essay could have immediate impact, like Susan Sontag’s “Fascinating Fascism,” her dissection of the aesthetics of Leni Riefenstahl, published by the *New York Review of Books* in 1974. Even still, New York City in those days was crime-ridden, dangerous, and bankrupt.

Into that world came *PAJ*, one fine May day, the dream of two doctoral students, who sometime in the mid-seventies were smoking and drinking cappuccino in a Greenwich Village café and talking about starting a theatre journal. The first issue focused on American theatre, featuring essays on Gertrude Stein, Robert Wilson, Richard Foreman, Mabou Mines, and The Performance Group, and a play by Rochelle Owens. The editorial stated that the journal was “dedicated to the contemporary spirit in drama and theatre . . . Perhaps we can rethink what is considered ‘classical’ and ‘avant-garde,’ and how artists and their art forms have influenced one another in the 20th century.” To be honest, the journal has not wavered from that commitment. A continuity of vision is at the heart of *PAJ*’s identity as a journal, one that has always put the artwork up front and emphasized the independent voice and experience of the critic.

From where we stand today, it is easy to lose sight of the state of theatre in 1976, when the journal began publication, because many of the artists who fill its pages are by now so well established. University curriculums are much more inclusive of vanguard thought on culture and art, and the museums and theatres more accepting of kinds of art we now take for granted. But looking back through old *PAJ* issues I am reminded how much American intellectual life and culture has expanded in the intervening years. Only a few decades ago, many of the writings of influential European authors hadn’t yet been available in English. Not only did we publish for the first time texts by Artaud and Ionesco, and many less well-known playwrights from Eastern and Central Europe and the Soviet Union, but also intellectuals like

Adorno, now central to modern thought, whose “On Commitment” was translated for *PAJ* only in 1978. Several of the important historians whose scholarship added to comprehensive theatre histories contributed to *PAJ* in our early years, such as John Willett, who chronicled the activities of Erwin Piscator at The New School, and John Bowlt, who explored the world of Russian Constructivism. And what would we have done without a generation of scholars who helped build the foundation of what we know of as modern theatre and drama, including Daniel Gerould, Harold Segel, Rosette Lamont, Bettina Knapp, Jadwiga Kosicka, Martin Esslin, Carl Weber, and later Gitta Honegger and Philippa Wehle, all of whose tireless essays and translations of European writers brought their work into English for the first time in the journal. This was also an era before “the contemporary” played so dominant a role in scholarship.

I mention these names to underscore the vastly different universe of theatre, and the groundwork that needed to be done in the early years of our publishing, before the period of interculturalism and the internationalization of critical thought. Today, scholars from Europe, Asia, Canada, and Australia are more than likely to be writing in U.S. journals. At the same time *PAJ* has turned its attention to the Middle East in its recent publication of Iraqi and Iranian plays, and in a special feature on *Lysistrata* on Arabic stages, edited by Greek scholar Marina Kotzamani. Scholars on several continents now draw from the same bibliographic and artistic sources, and the journal’s subscribers are now in 112 countries.

PAJ has had the opportunity to feature interviews and dialogues with several figures who shaped the fields of music, theatre, dance, and film—as artists, critics, or teachers—namely John Cage, Edwin Denby, Harold Clurman, Stanley Kauffmann, Bessie Schoenberg, Herbert Blau, Allan Kaprow. Others were towering intellectuals in the American landscape, such as Susan Sontag and Edward Said, cultural critics who provided many of the terms of debate in American arts and letters and politics. Acting as an extension through the twentieth century from the beginnings of the idea of the modern, they have certainly influenced my thinking, as I have navigated between the contemporary arts and legacies of modernism that have been so much a part of the intellectual landscape of New York, its publications and public events. My own life as a writer and editor based in New York over four decades is tied to this axis that informs my education, writing, and editing, and early on reflecting in *PAJ* the generational influences of its editors’ New York-based artistic and intellectual roots.

Sadly, besides the loss of Sontag and Said, many of the most influential figures are no longer with us. We mourn the recent deaths of Merce Cunningham and Pina Bausch, Ellen Stewart, and Harold Pinter, whose work brought great value to the definition of creative life. I recall sometime in the eighties writing a letter for one of the alternative papers downtown on behalf of Ellen Stewart, perhaps it was *Other Stages*, whose funding for La MaMa had been cut by the National Endowment for the Arts because her theatre was doing too much “foreign” work. And, in another context, in my Preface to *Conversations on Art and Performance*, a collection of *PAJ* interviews published more than a dozen years ago, I wrote:

Who cannot smile and yet wince hearing John Cage tell of running his finger through the pages of a phone book, determined, at age fifty, to find a publisher for his music? And is it really so long ago that an immigrant named Bessie Schoenberg marched downtown to her bank in Eugene, Oregon, to demand five-hundred dollars to go to New York and become a dancer?

Preparations are already underway for 2012 on several continents to celebrate the centenary of the birth of John Cage, who stands as one of the great artistic minds of his century. And what became of Bessie Schoenberg? This valuable teacher of generations of American dancers gave her name to the “Bessies,” the dance world’s tribute to the best work of the year, whose most recent installment I attended at the Apollo Theatre only a few weeks ago, when Trisha Brown received its first Lifetime Achievement Award.

The era I am sketching above was engaged in the early struggles of American artists to break away from the influence of Europe and its modernisms, political and artistic, in an effort to create a new American art and way of thinking, and for artists and social groups outside the mainstream to foreground their identities in a challenge to existing institutions. This was a period before the ascendance of continental theory, before postmodernism, when feminism had already become a powerful influence on performance and visual art. Jobs, housing, funding, resources—and cultures of invention and individuality—were more plentiful. It was years away from the AIDS crisis that devastated the arts community, depriving the culture of artists whose loss is still felt decades later. Then, numerous publications created a lively scene of criticism and artists’ writings, including *Avalanche*, *Art-Rite*, *The Fox*, and *Heresies*. The downtown newspaper of note was the *Soho Weekly News*, which was known to feature an entire tabloid-size page, without any advertising, on a single artist’s work, such as the one I wrote on Richard Foreman’s *Rhoda in Potatoland* in 1975. I was a theatre critic there in the years around the founding of *PAJ*, and before that, for *Changes*, another arts and politics downtown paper, edited from the Greenwich Village apartment of Sue Graham, the wife of jazz genius Charles Mingus. Uptown there was Richard Burgin’s *New York Arts Journal*. Several of us who continue to write books and articles on performance, film, or visual art wrote for those papers in our early years.

SoHo was still a rather dark, gritty home of light industry, bales of fabric often lining the curbsides, but artists had fought successfully for more than a decade to live in its loft spaces, after the groundwork laid by Fluxus artist George Maciunas, who first envisioned artists’ co-ops there. In *PAJ*’s early days artists were still offering performances in their own SoHo lofts or nearby in the rundown Tribeca area. SoHo in the seventies was home to the newly founded New Museum and The Kitchen and Creative Time and (further south) Franklin Furnace, Printed Matter, The Idea Warehouse, and P.S. 1. Supporting this new arts culture were numerous groups of artists protesting the exclusivities of the museums uptown and seeking public funds for their work outside this system, groups such as Art & Language, Artists Space, Colab, and A.I.R. Gallery, who included in their ranks many important artists with views shaped by conceptual art, feminism, and radical politics. There was even an

artist-run restaurant, called Food, which opened for a few years in SoHo. The Performance Group had moved into a former Fluxus building, the Performing Garage on Wooster Street, and Robert Wilson's Byrd Hoffman School of Byrds had taken over the old Open Theatre space on Spring Street. The reigning ethos of the era in which *PAJ* came into being was defined by a community founded on models of collaboration and interdependence that fostered artist-run "alternative" spaces and organizations, and a commitment to "avant-garde" values.

The East Village extending to the Lower East Side was already a center of theatres and clubs and cafés overflowing with conversation about books, film, and performance, as well as being the place where many artists lived and performed. Some of the places that sprung up in this same period were the Pyramid, Club 57, Anthology Film Archives, Nuyorican Poets Cafe, and Danspace Project. For a few years *PAJ* was housed at St. Marks Place, a block away from W. H. Auden's old apartment, the same building in which Trotsky once edited a newspaper. Nearby, the St. Mark's Bookshop opened its doors. Fourth Avenue was then lined with used bookstores that also sold old prints. Just above 14th Street Max's Kansas City and Warhol's Factory dominated the scene. Before long the Bowery's CBGB became the musical home of punk culture, and, in Tribeca, the Mudd Club showcased the new underground music and performance. Independent art galleries of young curators appeared in storefronts, and a school was transformed into Performance Space 122. Then along came gentrification and higher rents in the eighties.

There was so much new work going on in those days that we even started a new magazine, *Performance Art* (later called *Live*, 1979–1982, edited by art critic John Howell) to cover the unabashedly identified avant-garde performance, dance, music, and video of this downtown culture before moving *PAJ* itself further in that direction. In 1979, a book division was established to publish the many volumes of plays and of essays that would influence contemporary work and scholarship by being absorbed into the academic curriculum and the theatrical repertoire, nearly 150 to date.

What was everyone in *PAJ* writing and talking about in the first half of our existence? Chief preoccupations seem to have been consciousness and process, experimentation, the blurring of art and commerce, writing strategies, the modernist heritage and postmodernism, deconstruction. Over the years attention turned from originality to appropriation, from group to solo, from play to fragment, from live to mediated, from authenticity to social construction; and, from ritual to genocide, from pleasure to trauma, from borders to globalization. Violence, gender, race, identity, culture wars, the decline of the avant-garde, and the critiques of presence, the image, and the canon were the new themes. The rose of conservatism in political life went head-to-head with an equally forceful pluralism, the incompatibility of these views creating the parallel and conflicting political universes that now characterize American society.

The mainstay of the journal—the essay—helped to define *PAJ*, and there were many of them (here I am singling out mainly those by contributors not in this current issue): Daryl Chin on the politics of culture, Andrzej Wirth on iconophilia and interculturalism, Eric Bentley on drama and political theatre, Robert C. Morgan on international art, Antonio Attisani on Franciscan performance, Moira Roth on

California artists, and Aleks Sierz on British playwriting. Johannes Birringer wrote on performance and science and Michael Rush on new media. Frantisek Deak's essay on the concept of Kalaprosopia and the art of personality received the first ATHE Award for a scholarly essay in 1991, later forming a chapter in *The Symbolist Theatre*, his PAJ volume. Likewise, Alvin Goldfarb's early research on "Theatre in Nazi Concentration Camps" was eventually included in our title *Theatrical Performance During the Holocaust*. Dick Higgins outlined the "new" humanism, Richard Kostelanetz catalogued text-sound art, and Patrice Pavis offered his research on semiology, while Victor Turner wrote on "Body, Brain, and Culture" and Roger Copeland on "Cunningham, Collage, and the Computer." Several essays in PAJ that became well-known are the controversial review of Peter Brook's *Mahabharata*, by Gautam Dasgupta, and Richard Schechner's "The Decline and Fall of the (American) Avant-Garde," and those on deconstruction heralded by Gerald Rabkin's "The Play of Misreading" and Elinor Fuchs's "Presence and the Revenge of Writing." One of PAJ's most widely read essays remains "The Performativity of Performance Documentation," by Philip Auslander.

From time to time PAJ produced wide-ranging collections of essays on American theatre, as in special issues such as PAJ 10/11 (1979), "The American Imagination," and PAJ 26/27 (1985), "The American Theatre Condition," as a way of assessing the current state of theatre. One of our major theme journals, "The Interculturalism Issue," PAJ 33/34 (1991), gathered together important new perspectives on theatre, anthropology, and culture from diverse national traditions and art forms. Later expanded into a PAJ title, it was to become a foundational text in the field. More recently, one of our special issues focused on "Art and the Spiritual," PAJ 91 (2009), as part of an ongoing series on this subject. One of the most challenging editing jobs came one autumn when, in the midst of preparing a new issue, the Berlin Wall fell, in November 1989. We stopped everything we were doing and within a few months created a double issue with additional material, titled "New Europe" as PAJ 35/36 (1990), featuring texts by Vaclav Havel, Heiner Müller, and Krzysztof Zanussi, to frame a dialogue around revolution and culture on the continent. A decade later we would produce an entire issue on Berlin (PAJ 65, in 2000), as the first in a new direction for the journal that spotlighted cities, in more recent years others being Barcelona (PAJ 79), London (PAJ 81), and Athens (PAJ 92).

Artists' writings have always been essential to the journal, those mentioned here more representative of variety than any attempt to be inclusive: the diary notes of Tadeusz Kantor on memory and theatre, Richard Foreman's classic, "How to Write a Play," and Mac Wellman's much-quoted "The Theatre of Good Intentions," Sławomir Mrożek on middle Europe, and Spalding Gray on working with kids. Arnold Wesker wrote on meaning and interpretation, Stanislaw Baranczak on translating Shakespeare and Peter Zadek on directing Shakespeare. Other contributions featured the Vietnam journal of Theodora Skipitares, Mike Kelley on cross-gender, Elizabeth Streb on dance, and Slater Bradley on images. Artists writing on other artists has been a constant feature: Czeslaw Milosz on Witold Gombrowicz, Richard Nonas on Robert Morris, Jean-Claude van Itallie on Joseph Chaikin, Leslie Satin on Sally Gross, Judith Malina on Jackson Mac Low, Kenneth King on Reza Abdoh, Jane Philbrick on Eija-Liisa Ahtila. Besides the writing of artists, there were drawings

by Bill Viola, Dawn Clements, Gary Hill, Diane Thater, Peter Campus. *PAJ* also published Augusto Boal reflecting on politics and poetics, Philip Glass's "Notes on *Einstein on the Beach*," and Hans Jürgen Syberberg's "*Our Hitler* as Visual Politics." Other issues brought to readers Pier Paolo Pasolini's "Manifesto for a New Theatre" and Tadashi Suzuki's "Culture is in the Body." Interviews and dialogues have been featured extensively in the issues, with figures such as Robert Jay Lifton on art and the imagery of extinction; John Ashbery on poetry and theatre and William Kentridge on film and theatre; Deborah Hay on dance and Buddhism and Peter Sellars on performance and ethics. Other extended conversations added to our ongoing series on Art, Spirituality, and Religion.

The list of published journals encompasses several thematic issues that offer a panorama of many artists' perspectives in a single volume, perhaps the most popular of them, "Ages of the Avant-garde," in *PAJ* 46 (1992), which sought out those who participated in creating the experimental tradition in performance, and who had turned fifty or older since we began publishing their writings or interviews, and essays on them. This issue addressed aging and the avant-garde, as well as the taboo of aging and the performing body. In the preface to this special section I wrote about our solicitation of responses from the (mainly) downtown community who had conceived its alternative spaces, organizations, publications, and new modes of producing:

Our inquiry carried a double theme—the obvious one of time and its implications, biologically, for the performing body, and philosophically, its impact on subject matter and artists' relations to real materials; in a larger sense, there remained the idea of history, within the context of personal history, and the history of an art form or movement, to consider . . .

For the rest of the century we are likely to see the beginnings of a history of American performance of the last fifty years, publications of collected writings of artists involved in the making of the American avant-garde, and the recuperation and re-evaluation of artists, movements, and styles of performance.

Twenty years later *PAJ* 100, on the occasion of this celebration of "Performance New York," confirms that many of those projects are now underway.

The period of the 1990s marked one of the major turns for *PAJ*. In 1998, with *PAJ* 58, the journal changed its name from *Performing Arts Journal* to *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art*, signaling a growing interest in art-world activities that circulated around performance, media, and installations shown in museums, galleries, and art events. That direction had also been evolving when Daryl Chin and Larry Qualls were invited to become assistant editors of *PAJ* (1994–2005), bringing in more of this editorial content due to their interest in visual arts culture. At the same time, in a 1998 keynote conference address at the Institute for Theatre Studies in Berlin, I had articulated what I understood as the problem of creating a performance history, emphasizing "it is time that the two different histories of performance that now exist—one in the art world and the other in the theatre—are brought together

for a more comprehensive view of performance history, so that in time the concept of performance can take its place in the history of ideas.” The creation in 1997, of our Art + Performance series of books on Gary Hill, Bruce Nauman, Yvonne Rainer, Mary Lucier, Meredith Monk, and others emphasized this more inclusive approach to performance, bringing together theatre, dance, media, and visual art. PAJ Publications’ newest title, *Transmission Arts: Artists and Airwaves*, is an addition to this series, which will be a significant direction in the coming years.

The focus on media and new technologies was spotlighted in the special issue *PAJ* 70 (2001), titled “Intelligent Stages: Digital Art and Media,” that initiated an association with the MIT Press journals division. (It may be hard to believe now but, surveying the scene then, I observed in the editorial that media had very little impact on theatre.) By this time *PAJ* had already been appearing since 1996 in a digitized version as part of the database Project Muse, set up with funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and housed at Johns Hopkins University Press, which the journal had been associated with for a decade before moving to MIT Press. The world of journal publishing had changed so much by then that it was no longer possible two decades ago to continue running a journal and book division from a small office. By the late 1980s the cultural politics affecting the NEA, and the turn away from experimental work in the funding world, created precarious conditions for an independent press.

Increasingly, publishing required online and digital services and a worldwide communications network. Now, more than two decades later, and with the resources of the MIT Press journals division, *PAJ* is available in color online, also offering a Website that features podcasts, audio and video clips, and extensive information on interviews and plays/performance texts that have appeared in the issues. The archiving of journal interviews and transfer of them to mp3 files for the Website is an ongoing project. *PAJ*’s entire backlist has been digitized and is available through the digital archive JSTOR. The journal has subscribers in 112 countries. *PAJ* remains the only American journal of its kind that is not owned by a university or other institution.

The evolution of the press, which includes *PAJ*, the now defunct *Live*, and the ongoing book division, PAJ Publications, reflects a long involvement with the complicated relationship of theatre and performance (admittedly, the term “performance” is often confusing to different audiences). One fascinating case study of the various contexts these separate but intertwined art forms expose was emphasized for me in the installation last year of visual artist Paul Chan’s 2007 *Waiting for Godot in New Orleans: a play in two acts, a project in three parts* at the Museum of Modern Art, which had purchased the entire archive of the project it was now exhibiting. Chan’s dramaturgical research, business correspondence, newspaper clippings, funding documentation, teaching syllabus, and community notes were displayed on two walls; a video of the performance, with the Classical Theatre of Harlem as collaborator, was on view, and in the floor space objects used in it were gathered in a shopping cart.

Chan’s project, which involved living in and helping to rebuild the devastated community, teaching classes, participating in panels and meetings and dinners, was funded by Creative Time, a non-profit organization supporting artists involved

mainly with visual art-identified activities. His concept brought together an expansive view of the artist as citizen, of public art and site-specific art, of theatre, community building, and education. I cannot recall another visual artist, or a theatre artist, ever having had such attention in a museum for a single performance-oriented work (in its broadest meaning). It deserves to be understood in the same category of a response to catastrophe—art as a gesture of cultural value—that characterized Susan Sontag’s staging of Beckett in the war zone that was Yugoslavia, which she wrote about as “Waiting for Godot in Sarajevo,” in 1994, in the pages of *PAJ*, some of which were pasted on the MoMA walls. It is fascinating to see Chan’s exceptional project conceptualized and contextualized in the forms of museum curation and documentation. This recognition prophesies a compelling direction for performance and the museum in the future.

The turn to performance in the museum can only be greeted by both theatre and art spectators as evidence of the acceptance of performance as a serious contemporary art form. Even more so, theatre itself is entering the museum through visual art-trained performers who use theatrical rehearsal or acting techniques or working processes. This development poses challenging questions. How to treat the work of theatre artists? Which ones? From a historical point of view, the evolution of performance (including actions, events, and scores) over many decades follows an intriguing trajectory. In the seventies, it was performance art that first influenced theatre, whereas now it seems to be theatre that is influencing visual artists who create performance. We’ve reached a point that is increasingly blurring the differences between what were formerly considered distinctly different kinds of performance. (What is theatre? What is performance art? —these questions have been asked throughout the entire existence of *PAJ*.) In addition, performance art is now heavily influenced by pop culture and mass media forms, moving farther away from its origins. In her recent assessment of Performa 11, *New York Times* critic Roberta Smith pointed to the theatrical nature of so many of the performances, wondering how the lines of demarcation between theatre and performance art are being drawn. Still, theatre artists were nowhere to be seen in the biennial. Museums and theatre spaces have little contact or co-sponsorship though theatre, dance, and performance artists often negotiate between these spaces. The venues, funding, fellowships, and critics that define the visual arts culture in New York are not without an element of disdain for the theatrical. In addition, despite lip service to interdisciplinarity in the university, the respective academic departments remain staunchly Art and Theatre specializations, lagging behind a half-century model of art practice in this country.

What I see as a distinct problem is the construction of performance history dominated by the narrative of art history, which is characterized by scant knowledge of the highly developed history of theatre theory and production beyond a smattering of Brecht, Soviet experiments, and, more recently, Augusto Boal. European exhibits present a much more fluid relationship between performance ideas deriving both from theatre and visual art, as the 2007 *A Theater Without Theater* exhibit at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Barcelona demonstrated, by including such theatre artists as Meyerhold, Grotowski, Artaud, Beckett, The Living Theatre, and Kantor, alongside the historical avant-garde and contemporary performance.

We are now at a juncture in which scholars, curators, and institutions representing the fields of theatre and art, and where appropriate, dance and film, should take this opportunity to enlarge their separate histories. Here is an example of what I mean. In the current Grey Art Gallery/NYU exhibition, *Fluxus and the Essential Questions of Life*, there is an astute attempt to bring the abstract lines of painters Agnes Martin and Frank Stella, and the notation of composer Earle Brown, into the Fluxus constellation of the non-intentional and task-based gesture. Also featured in the exhibit are programs and photographs of dances by James Waring that involved Yvonne Rainer, Fred Herko, and others, as well as John Herbert MacDowell, who had worked Off-Off-Broadway with Waring at Caffe Cino. Seeing this ephemera suggests that simultaneous histories from art, theatre, and dance could be threaded through more wide-ranging segments of downtown performance by putting Waring's flamboyant theatrical interests side by side with the Ridiculous theatre aesthetic of the mid-sixties, which would draw in Ronald Tavel, who was a screen writer for Andy Warhol, as well as a founder of the Play-House of the Ridiculous, and (according to her) an influence on Yvonne Rainer. If not in this exhibit, then another one—the connections are long overdue.

As I have noted, for some time it has been an editorial direction to welcome more visual art thinking into the journal and books. Besides the essays and interviews dealing with crossover issues, and the Art + Performance series, which attempts to bridge this gap, in 2008 *PAJ* also began to publish Performance Drawings portfolios. Artists who work in diverse forms of performance that is informed by drawing, as studies for a performance or as drawing in the performance, such as Robert Wilson and Trisha Brown, have contributed their work. Likewise, unique scores and notations by the musicians William Hellermann and Joseph Diebes have also been included in the portfolios. *PAJ* 100 features six portfolios of drawings and other visual art related to performance, opera, music, and dance.

The interest in bringing together performance and visual art is an ongoing field of exploration in *PAJ*. However, the lack of attention by art curators and institutions to the kind of interrelationships I am outlining is regrettable. It seems timely now to question the exclusivity of visual arts' institutional contextualization of performance history out of art history. Admittedly, theatre critics have been slow to address this tendency and to generate the substantial dialogue and debate that it warrants. There is much to admire in what constitutes visual art activity; for example, the sophistication of many artists' writings, which theatre has all too little of, and the attempts now to grapple with art writing, value judgment, and definitions of the contemporary. Art critics demonstrate significant attention to the art object while many who write serious essays on theatre too often concern themselves with theories about performance rather than the performance as a work of art.

Nonetheless, through all the focus on performance, *PAJ* Publications never abandoned the dramatic text, even though a changing theatre culture and the rise of Performance Studies have contributed to the slow erosion of interest in drama in recent decades. It is disconcerting to watch the move away from dramatic literature and its heritage, the more apparent when one is able to see a superb realization of a

great play. Not surprisingly, drama's current decline coincides with the diminishing role of the voice in everyday personal communication. Against the background of more and more text messaging, people seem to have lost interest in the sound of the human voice. That used to be a significant reason for telephoning someone. In the past friends said to one another, "It's so good to hear your voice." I wonder, too, if this move away from drama has also to do with the fact that drama it is often based on secrets, and we live in an age when the public is valued over the private life of an individual. Perhaps this condition is the equivalent of visual artists' turn away from painting. In any case, art forms live their own lives in the world, and go away and return throughout history.

It is impossible to say how long the current use of interviews, lectures, fragments, and non-dramatic material will influence narrative in theatre, and what their lasting effect will be. For, while certain forms of drama have moved to the background, there is a noticeable interest in text-making and writing experiments. This is also true in contemporary dance, which includes many variations of text and voice. (Theatre itself has been invigorated by the inclusion of dance as an added element.) The current directions in writing suggest that a new poetics may be slowly emerging, which I hope will bring a much-needed innovative phase to theatre. Energies seem to have sprung more out of poetry, the novel, and creative prose than plays, pointing to a suggestive development. In the meanwhile, we continue to publish plays and performance texts, by now more than 1000, translated from twenty languages. A PAJ title planned for spring 2012 is *Heiner Müller/Shakespeare*, which includes the author's *Macbeth* and *Anatomy Titus Fall of Rome*. Along with a wide diversity of writers who include Maria Irene Fornes, John Jesurun, Richard Maxwell, Charles L. Mee, Jawad Al Assadi, Ronald Tavel, R.W. Fassbinder, and Erik Ehn, many of our published authors are literary figures not widely known for their plays, such as Marguerite Duras, Isak Dinesen, Walter Benjamin, Marguerite Yourcenar, Fernando Pessoa, Kathy Acker, Tadeusz Rosewicz, Joseph Brodsky. Writing is what matters. Writers will find their own way in the world today, and we will always be there for them.

What concerns me now as a writer, editor, and educator is that, in contrast to the art and dance fields' support of many exhibitions and festivals devoted to legacies of the 1960s and 1970s, the theatre community has largely abandoned those of theatre and drama in the same period. In the theatre community there is nothing comparable to the attention given to the recent histories of dance and performance art. In "Performance, a Personal History" (2008), I had pointed out that the academic interest in theory has left the theatre field bereft of important books on directors, writers, theatre companies, theatre spaces, and organizations. This research gap has also deprived at least two generations of artists of the tools and theatre knowledge necessary for their work. The impact of Performance Studies partly accounts for this situation, though no one can deny that the new scholarship has expanded the intellectual landscape of theatre and performance. Still, perhaps it is time for the proportions to be adjusted.

In reference to legacies, it would not be correct to say that the current interest in "re-performance" in the visual arts, a topic of discussion that continues to be addressed

in the pages of *PAJ*, is comparable to establishing the dramatic repertoire in theatre. One important difference concerns the role of performance rights, which has no development of legal or financial precedent for performance artists while that of theatre artists is well established. To be honest, I am not very attached to the idea of re-performance. Performance by visual artists by definition is not a virtuosic form; for example, it is not thought of in terms of technique or style or representation. Aside from historical interest it does not seem necessary to see a work re-performed because there is little pleasure in seeing someone perform another artist's piece that has been so conceptually, even existentially, linked to a singular performer. Since re-performance precludes reinterpretation and critique there would need to be certain performance standards in order to create a repertoire worth revisiting, in any artistic and critical sense. The kinds of pieces that do best as re-performances are the neutral Fluxus pieces because they are tasks or instructions.

Performance by visual artists is problematic because it has never fully evolved a substantial critical vocabulary, unlike the development of theatre writing in a comparable period since the sixties. From its beginnings there has been very little substantive change in reviews and surveys of performance art over the years, which largely consist of description. Too often art critics have repeated the artist's intentionality or provided documentation as a substitute for any independent critical view. I think this has to do with their lack of sophistication in performance ideas, in addition to the limitation of art history narratives. Increasingly, methodologies of art history are influencing essays on performance, too. Re-performance calls for new forms of art writing, and, I am suggesting, critical standards of value and comparison. Otherwise, the entire enterprise is reductive, as well as becoming publicly challenged by the proliferation of performance and spectatorship in mass culture. To the degree that performance art continues its move toward theatre it may come to be viewed in the context of theatre standards, by theatre critics if not by art critics. In time there may also be the need to adopt some of theatre's economic practices as well.

What would the new commentaries consist of? Would they be based on comparing the historical contexts and eras of a particular piece at different times? Would they be seen in terms of a performance history that incorporates the history of theatre? Would a repertoire of any single performance develop and various performers be compared? It is difficult to evaluate an art form that has no apparent standards or criteria. I continue to believe that it is worthwhile knowing why any one piece is more important than another one, what its artistic values are, and how an individual piece creates a relationship to the artist's own body of work, or to the history of its form. Performance in the art world remains the only "live" art that by nature eschews the idea of skill, which is a fascinating predicament on the face of it.

For much of its existence *PAJ* has charted the development of performance in everyday life as American culture became so defined by spectacle, and its self-transforming citizens by their desire to inhabit what I have elsewhere referred to as the "performance marvelous." With the presence of YouTube a global audience now participates in the democratization of performance. This shift in mass culture is bound to alter the way we think of performance in the years to come. We have reached a point in

cultural history when ordinary people want to be more like artists, and artists want to be less like them. It is worth thinking about where we are now in relation to one of the pervasive ideas of the last one hundred years: the blurring of boundaries between art and life. Even more so, for both scholars and the public, the time has come for a more serious understanding, even questioning, of the excesses of self-exhibition and the will to perform, instead of rationalizing the many questionable actions that go by the name of “performance,” and their often dubious claims of subversion. Performance art may well have entered a decadent phase.

I look forward to *PAJ* writers contributing to the ongoing, provocative dialogue, and taking it to another level where perceptiveness keeps company with sobriety, while honoring invention. Our difficult times call for the wisdom of independent thinkers who can rehumanize contemporary thought and action through the poetry of critical intelligence. The pages of this journal have always been open to all kinds of texts, many of which have been the strongest gestures of rebellion against orthodoxies, whether constructed by the state, the academy, or society. The new century invites cultural commentaries to generate alternative ways of speaking and thinking about the world and what we do in it, as a resistance against the debased vocabularies of politics and public life. We need more unique works of the imagination, and the writing about them, to envision new models of human existence.

More than once over the years it has happened that in the midst of preparing a journal or book to go to press, an important political event would occur, such as the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, or the Gulf War, which began and ended in the time it took me to write the introduction to *Interculturalism and Performance*, in 1991. Once again, politics has altered the normal course of events through the determination of the Occupy Wall Street movement. As an editor I feel energized by the hope that the printed word can have a lasting impact as a record of our era. If, like everyone else, I experience the sense of time and space collapsed in the velocity of communications, part of me is also a devotee of the Slow philosophy that resists the compulsive flood of information. That swift rhythm belongs to the Internet. A journal is a Slow technology whose form is purposefully designed as a place to set down well considered thoughts in unhurried sentences that open out to fields of paragraphs.

I cannot say what the world will be like, in January 2012, when this issue is scheduled for publication. What I do know is that there is a sense we are on the verge of enormous change, at once local and global, that will in a profound way transform social, economic, political, and artistic values. Now is a time for new visions and deeply felt purpose, a time to contemplate the necessities of life. It remains to be seen how we will take the measure of this moment in history.

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