



PERFORMANCE
PHILOSOPHY

EDITORIAL, *PERFORMANCE PHILOSOPHY* VOL. 10 NO. 2

DIANA DAMIAN MARTIN ROYAL CENTRAL SCHOOL OF SPEECH AND DRAMA
EVE KATSOURAKI UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF SCOTLAND
THERON SCHMIDT UTRECHT UNIVERSITY

This second part of our open volume continues the formal and thematic explorations that are enabled by the conjunction of performance and philosophy. Enquiries through and with practice and embodiment, including the practice of lived experience, take the lead here, along with habitations and activations of archives in their various forms: embodied, relational, and resisting erasure.

In “Authenticity in the Performance of Self”, Colleen Conroy and Litza Bixler share findings from a fascinating experiment that will be of interest to anyone working within the field of verbatim theatre, ‘theatre of the real’ (Martin 2013), or ‘theatre of real people’ (Garde and Mumford 2016). Actors previously trained in Stanislavski methods were led through an ‘auto-verbatim’ project, in which they carefully rehearsed in order to be able to re-perform with exacting mimicry their own responses to interview questions on the subject of authenticity. Both the original video recordings of their unprepared responses, and video recordings of their rehearsed re-enactments, were shown to randomly selected viewers, who rated the ‘authenticity’ of the recording they watched, unaware of whether it was the ‘real’ interview or its imitation. After a three-year time gap, the actors also watched their own recordings, similarly unaware of which was the original, and offered their responses in qualitative interviews. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given that they were quite skilled actors, even the actors themselves were unable to distinguish between the original and the

repetition: 'I just feel that the guy in the video is not me,' notes one of the subjects. Just as fascinating are their reflections on the acting process itself, and how questions of authenticity, fidelity to self, and estrangement are matters that they wrestle with in their lives outside the theatrical frame.

A very different form of autobiographical enquiry is undertaken in Aion Arribas and antje nestel's 'The Pluralistic Universe of Neurodiversity: Doing New Stories.' Identifying as neurodivergent bodyminds, Arribas and nestel use both critical and poetic language to convey the multisensory experience of traveling in contexts unfamiliar to them in Japan. In navigating the omnipresent *noren* that obscure the interior view of a shop or restaurant, they experienced a sustained duration of threshold encounter, generatively disrupting the norms of restaurant behaviour with its demands for what Anne Corwin calls fast 'chunking' (Manning 2013, 219) of the environment into fixed categories. And in an encounter with The Site of Reversible Destiny, a fancifully landscaped park designed by architects Arakawa and Gins, they describe a welcoming environment for neurodiverse proprioception: 'The space and body arise with movement rather than being defined prior to their relation,' they write. Their critical autoethnography (Holman Jones and Pruyn 2017) draws on but also expands the relational ontologies of process philosophy of William James, Brian Massumi, Erin Manning, and others, putting them into dialogue with formal experiments in writing by autistic and neurodiverse writers and thinkers, as well as the authors' own participatory workshop design in which the invitation to be a 'participant' is extended beyond and across individual human subjects.

Experiences of decentred and pluralised subjecthood are also considered in Daniela Perazzo's 'Solo dancing and multiple selves in Igor and Moreno's *Beat* (2019): "Smarginatura" as a politics of plurality.' In printmaking, *smarginatura* refers to text that may spill over the margins of a page, and may be cut in the process of assembling a book; novelist Elena Ferrante uses the term in *My Brilliant Friend* (and later in *The Story of the Lost Child*), to describe an experience of 'dissolving boundaries' of the self (Ferrante 2015, 175). Perazzo further adapts this term as an analytical tool in relation to the choreographic work *Beat* by Igor and Moreno, technically a solo performance by Margherita Elliot, but one where, as Perazzo views it, the constant transformation of choreographic images across the continuous flow of the 'solo' generates a pluralised self, which Perazzo reads as a critique of the compulsory flattening of the self that is a feature of neoliberal structures of feeling. Like the actor in Conroy and Bixler's article quoted above, who 'feel[s] that the guy in the video is not me,' Elliot's subjectivity is rendered elusive and unknowable: "it's that sense of feeling that we know who she is and not having a clue", Perazzo quotes Igor as reflecting. Moreover, the article itself plays with *smarginati*, with quoted passages from literary texts and illustrated articles seemingly pulled off the page, overspilling the constraints of the PDF format or the webpage screen, making literal this journal's invitation to explore [Margins].

Júlia Abs's "Body-Archive as a Dialectical Image" develops the concept of the body-archive through Walter Benjamin's dialectical image, asking how the dancing body might function as a site in which historical temporalities, gestures and memories persist and become newly legible. Situated at the intersection of dance studies and performance philosophy, the article understands gesture as a

form of temporal inscription: the body does not simply preserve traces of the past but becomes a medium through which different historical moments encounter and interrupt one another. Through the author's own *Darkland*, Jérôme Bel's *Nom donné par l'auteur* (1994), and the reenactment and activation of Yvonne Rainer's *Trio A* (1966), Abs explores the tensions between modern and conceptual dance and between historical transmission and transformation. Central to the article is the proposition that reenactment does not restore an intact or completed past. Instead, the body-archive activates unrealised possibilities embedded within artworks, allowing them to acquire new forms and meanings in the present. The body-archive thus becomes both a mode of historical consciousness and an anticipatory practice: a site where the afterlives of performance can be reactivated, differentiated, and opened towards what is still to come.

A performative engagement with archives is also the subject of Theo Panagopoulos in 'Deforming Colonial Archives, Performing Palestinian Counternarratives', which describes a project that began with the chance discovery of an archive of colour films made by a Scottish medical missionary in Palestine in the 1930s and 1940s, during the time of the British Mandate and prior to the establishment of Israel. On the one hand, these films offer a rare document of daily life at this time, but as Panagopoulos notes, they are not neutral documents but shaped by colonialist and Orientalist perspectives and a drive toward 'biblification', in which images are sought to verify pre-existing narratives. Sara Ahmed's critique of orientation informs Panagopolous' attention to what has been rendered as background in these archives, both spatially and temporally. To engage with these resources, Panagopoulos, himself of Palestinian heritage, convened interactive workshops in Athens and Glasgow, inviting participants to view, interrogate, and re-frame and re-imagine the films in the archive. Drawing on Georges Bataille's theorization of *l'informe*—the formless or deformed—Panagopolous reflects here on this process of 'deforming' as archival re-orientation, and the collaborative work of constructing counter-narratives in the face of decades of settler colonialist erasure and genocide.

Eleni Kolliopoulou's "Embodying the Paradox: Butoh-fu as a non-representational system of embodied temporality" examines Butoh-fu as a mode of embodied inquiry rather than simply a system of choreographic notation. Emerging from Tatsumi Hijikata's use of poetic language, imagery, and visual collage, Butoh-fu generates experiential states through which performers navigate changing intensities of sensation, perception, and temporal experience. Kolliopoulou consequently approaches Butoh as an evolving epistemology of the body, in which imagination, memory, sensation, and environment converge. Bringing this practice into dialogue with Nishida Kitarō's philosophy, particularly the concepts of *aida* and *basho*, the article considers embodiment as relational and continually transformative rather than self-contained. The dancing body emerges through relations with images, environments, materialities, and human and non-human forms of becoming. Butoh-fu therefore offers a way of thinking temporality through embodied experience rather than abstract measurement or linear progression. Its paradoxical image-worlds become perceptual and temporal practices through which habitual distinctions between self and environment, interior and exterior, presence and transformation can be destabilised.

Finally, two [Margins] pieces extend and expand embodiment into further relation with non- and more-than-human entanglements. In 'Weatherlands for Sky & Bones', Carol Brown and Tia Reihana-Morunga bring Indigenous and settler practices into dialogue with each other, with skies and waters, and with breath and movement. The essay itself breathes: in an inbreath, it gathers in Māori cosmologies and cross-cultural histories that circulate through and with bodies and relations; and in an outbreath, Brown and Reihana-Morunga give breath and voice to the weathers of the body, asking 'How do we conceptualise the body as a means to make sense of the world?' And in 'Covering with Earthworms: A little bit of everything', Emilie Gallier shares pages from the *zine des Minières*, an ongoing collaborative project in which participants engage sensorially with the farm land of Les Minières in Normandy, France, taking guidance, as Gallier describes, from the tactile bodies of earthworms. When other readers meet the zines, they are encouraged to let their eyes become feet, and their feet eyes: *With the eyes closed, I see*, Gallier writes. Informed by processes of ploughing and gleaning, composting and assembling, worm-readers move through the pages as soil. In the digital pages of *Performance Philosophy*, tactile encounter is translated into animated gifs (online version) and cascading combinations of full-page layouts (in the PDF), so that scrolling, too, becomes a kind of shuffling through layers of accumulated gathering.

This, then, is a suiting closing image for the ambitions of the journal as a whole: an open field, where intersecting trajectories pass in proximity, and where visitors are invited to linger, to glean, and to dig furrows of their own.

Works Cited

- Ferrante, Elena. 2015. *The Story of the Lost Child*. Translated by Ann Goldstein. Europa Editions.
- Garde, Ulrike, and Meg Mumford. 2016. *Theatre of Real People: Diverse Encounters from Berlin's Hebbel Am Ufer and Beyond*. Bloomsbury. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781472580252>.
- Holman Jones, Stacy, and Marc Pruyn, eds. 2017. *Creative Selves / Creative Cultures: Critical Autoethnography, Performance, and Pedagogy*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-47527-1>.
- Manning, Erin. 2013. *Always More Than One: Individuation's Dance*. Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822395829>.
- Martin, Carol. 2013. *Theatre of the Real*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137295729>.

© 2025 Diana Damian Martin, Eve Katsouraki, and Theron Schmidt



Except where otherwise noted, this work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).