

TDR



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PRESENCE, 2019–2022

edited by Kimberly Jannarone,
Elise Morrison & Tavia Nyong'o
Yale University Consortium Issue

TDR

TDR is scholarly, accessible, and dynamic. TDR is inclusive and interdisciplinary. Each article is tightly focused—but taken as a whole TDR is global. With its broad range of topics, TDR is at the cutting edge of performance studies. Its writers and editors support progressive political and social movements, art and ideas. Written by and for scholars and artists—and their students—TDR is where leaders and future leaders in the field of performance studies go for performance texts, performative writing, editorials, reviews, interviews, and research articles about the performing arts, performance in everyday life, popular entertainments, sports, business, and politics—the broad spectrum of performance.

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the journal of performance studies

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Above: Detail of David Garrick as Richard III, 1745 (oil on canvas), by William Hogarth (1697–1764). See “Presence and the Stuff That Isn’t There” by Joseph Roach. (Courtesy National Museums Liverpool, Walker Art Gallery)

Front Cover: Cat Rodríguez in Circle Jerk, Theater Mitu, Brooklyn, NY, 2021. See “Vanity Monitor” by Ariel Sibert and Fake Friends. (Photo by J.J. Darling)

Back Cover: The Triumph of Caesar: The Elephants, c. 1497/1498. Engraving by the workshop of Andrea Mantegna. Andrew W. Mellon Fund, 1976.11.1. See “Global Imaginaries and Elephantine Artifice: Re-Presenting Race and Time in André Valladier’s Labyrinthe Royal de l’Hercule Gaulois triomphant” by Daniel Ruppel. (Courtesy of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC)

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PROVOCATION

liberation study 2

Hope Mohr

Performance offers the chance to break through dead ways of being. Only by harnessing our longing can we unshackle from forms that no longer nourish us. Making performance means creating conditions where we can sense new possibilities for how we show up for our lives. Let the old structures shatter.

Hope Mohr is a choreographer, writer, and advocate. She performed with Lucinda Childs and Trisha Brown. In 2007, she founded Hope Mohr Dance. In 2010, she founded The Bridge Project, now Bridge Live Arts, which creates and supports equity-driven live art that centers artists as agents of change. www.hopemohr.org

TDR COMMENTS

Postpone the Great Game 7

Richard Schechner

The Great Game of the 19th century was the struggle between Russia and the British in Afghanistan to control India. The Ukraine war is a new version of the Great Game. In the 1930s to defeat the Japanese, an existential threat to China, Mao Zedong and Chiang Kai-shek postponed their civil war. Climate change is the world's existential threat. Let's postpone all wars to deal with climate change.

Letter from Moscow, July 2022 17

Theatre Scholar

TDR's correspondent writes about Moscow after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The city is not saturated by military symbols; the main institutions are functioning; there is no mobilization. The new cage is being built smoothly and gradually.

YALE TDR CONSORTIUM ISSUE

Edited by Kimberly Jannarone, Elise Morrison, and Tavia Nyong'o

Presence, 2019–2022: Introduction 22

Kimberly Jannarone, Elise Morrison, and Tavia Nyong'o

Our understanding of “presence” has made an epochal shift in the past three years. The field of performance studies—never settled, always in flux—is shifting as well on this topic, as what we study expands digitally, contracts physically, embraces new paradigms, and unlooses others. While it is impossible to fix an exact time when attitudes about something as ineffable yet entirely real as presence changed permanently, this issue touches down on several key moments.

Unburdening Liveness 28

Tavia Nyong'o

How has presence transformed under recent pandemic conditions and ongoing digital saturation? José Esteban Muñoz's now classic critique of liveness illuminates the works of several contemporary Black performance artists whose work intervenes against the corporeal burdens of our moment.

The Healing of Maseko: Live and A-live Presences, and the Theatre of the Spiritual . . . 37

Abimbola A. Adelokun

Enforced restriction of movement and social distancing regulations during the pandemic pushed a Nigerian-based church with global membership to innovate liveness without co-presence. The church purportedly transcended time-space limits in miracle performances during their *Distance Is Not a Barrier* digital sessions.

Vanity Monitor 56

Ariel Sibert and Fake Friends

The work of Brooklyn-based theatre company Fake Friends, always obsessed with screens, the self, and theatrical presence, gained a new following when they adapted their work for livestream during the Covid-19 pandemic. At the same time these adaptations, which transformed the company's practice from "screens-on-stage" to "staged-for-screen," reinvigorated debates around absence, presence, and alienation in the Zoom era.

Presence and the Stuff That Isn't There 73

Joseph Roach

The current theory of "camera presence" derives from ancient and early modern sources in theology, natural philosophy, rhetoric, and eventually science. As music depends on silence, "presence" in these disciplines depends on absence, and authorities framed their understanding of the expressiveness of actors by analogizing their performances to "electrical fire" based on the reciprocal action of positive and negative charges as effected by "phlogiston," or "the stuff that isn't there."

Global Imaginaries and Elephantine Artifice: Re-Presenting Race and Time in André Valladier's *Labyrinthe Royal de l'Hercule Gaulois triomphant* 83

Daniel J. Ruppel

Labyrinthe Royal de l'Hercule Gaulois triomphant (Avignon, 1601) documents a ceremonial performance that happens more in the time of reading than a historical moment. Focusing on discrepancies between a vivid image of elephants and a description attesting that there were none reveals how this document makes the festival "present" by suspending the reader between allegory and history, representation and performance, and most importantly, the presence and(/as) absence of racialized "Mores" driving the fictitious pachyderms.

A Medium to History: Notes on the Phenomenology of Dyschronia in the Lyric Theatre 109

Kara Reilly

William Hunter, a male midwife, was author of an anatomy atlas that featured pregnant cadavers as specimens. He lived in the building that later became the Lyric Theatre. Through an examination of the Lyric Theatre as a hauntological site, and the experience of psychosis, a proposed paradigm shift for theatre and performance historiography emerges: the phenomenology of dyschronia.

Metered Togetherness: Affective Drifts and Temporal Proximities127

Anna Jayne Kimmel, Diana Damian Martin, and Asher Warren

Moving beyond speculation on immediate and mediated interpretations of presence that saturate our field, we drift toward new orientations regarding presence that capture a metered togetherness: a disjuncted assembly emerging from both localized and networked logistics. Presence is not always signaled by the coterminous junction of shared time and space, but as the multiple trajectories that emerge in its wake.

Back for Good: Heterotopic Memory in Melbourne’s Queer Nightlives.143

Regan Michael Lynch

As venues shuttered across Australia, a fervent queer nightlife dreamed up new relations with virtuality, traversing the unstable terrains of memory and trauma. From reflections of sweaty dance floors to the 2020 Zoom-wave of internet performance, the mutual consideration of presence and lack both complexifies and reifies the stakes in reviving queer nightlife cultures.

Presently in Beds: Re/mediating the Sensible in Argentine Postdictatorship Performance161

Nahuel Telleria

How can we be present yet not physically in person? Three bed performances in Argentina suggest such a possibility. In a country marked by the disappearance of 30,000 citizens, artists and activists have sought to make the absent present. These bed performances reveal that by mediating presence and expanding it beyond the *here* and *now*, what was thought to have disappeared, remains.



Pastoral associates stand in front of huge screens to pray for hundreds of people at the same time. Emmanuel TV Studios, Lagos, Nigeria, 1 June 2021. See “The Healing of Maseko: Live and A-live Presences in the Theatre of the Spiritual” by Abimbola A. Adelokun. (www.youtube.com/watch?v=P1vRT6imV4o; screenshot by TDR)