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*the journal of performance studies*

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*Above: Chauvet Cave Skull Chamber with tiers of “risers” and a bear skull on a block, lower right. See “The Skull Chamber in the Chauvet Cave: En Route Towards a Theatre” by Yann-Pierre Montelle. (Photo courtesy of Jean-Michel Geneste/Ministère de la Culture)*

*Front Cover: Police preemptively arrest artist Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara on the steps of the Capitolio Nacional, 10 July 2018. See “When Doves Cry: Tania Bruguera’s Untimely Practice” by Candice Amich. (Artistas Cubanxs en Contra del Decreto 349; screenshot courtesy of Candice Amich)*

*Back Cover: Jaamil Olawale Kosoko performs a scene inspired by Sun Ra in the filming of Chameleon (A Visual Album). See “Chameleonic Survivalism: Jaamil Olawale Kosoko’s Adaptive Strategies and Ways of Being in the World” by Ashley Ferro-Murray. (Photo by Sara Griffith; courtesy of Jaamil Olawale Kosoko and EMPAC)*

# TDR

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*articles by*

Candice Amich

Caro Novella

Carla Taban

Alexandra Kolb

Ashley Ferro-Murray

Rashna Darius Nicholson

Cameron Crookston

Dani Snyder-Young

Yann-Pierre Montelle

Peggy Kyoungwon Lee

Molly Flynn

*Provocation*

by Asher Hartman

*Remembering*

Lee Breuer and

Jim O'Quinn

# TDR

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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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# TDR

## PROVOCATION

### **Female Hallucinations, Folk Horses, and Gaunt Motherfuckers . . . . . 2**

*Asher Hartman*

This autobiographical-fantastical work-in-progress animation is about a girl who eats people. Kay Whale, a lovable force composed of many beings, is growing malevolent. Absurdist and depraved, *Female Hallucinations* is as much about possession as it is about the ways our unexamined traumas can turn into weapons against the world. It is a personal examination of the effects of misogyny, racist privilege, multiplicity, violence, and loss.

Asher Hartman is a transgender writer, director, and maker of live performances. His work combines strategies of theatre and performance art to grapple with social and political issues in an era of chronic crisis. A great deal of Hartman’s theatrical work was developed with the support of Machine Project, Los Angeles, from 2010–2017. His first book of plays, *Mad Clot on a Holy Bone* (2020), is published by X Artists’ Books. [www.gawdaffulnationaltheater.company](http://www.gawdaffulnationaltheater.company)

## IN MEMORY

### **Jim O’Quinn and Lee Breuer . . . . . 7**

*Richard Schechner*

## ARTICLES

### **The Skull Chamber in the Chauvet Cave: En Route Towards a Theatre . . . . . 10**

*Yann-Pierre Montelle*

A cave bear skull from the Upper Paleolithic is carefully positioned on a modified block in the Skull Chamber of Chauvet Cave. The Skull Chamber, as the culmination of a speleological *parcours*, has apparently been strategically modified in order to increase its performative potential—an early architectural attempt to reconfigure a space en route towards a theatre.

### **When Doves Cry: Tania Bruguera’s Untimely Practice . . . . . 27**

*Candice Amich*

Through bold political performance acts, Cuban artist Tania Bruguera accesses an untimely variant of utopia whose surplus exceeds Cold War binaries of revolution and exile. Bruguera’s democratic action works build collective self-esteem and challenge the official utopianism of the communist state. In free-speech performances that confront the Cuban state’s censorship apparatus, Bruguera models for her fellow Cuban citizens an inimitable practice of democratic dissensus.

### **The Alpha Orient: Lisa Park and Yoko Ono . . . . . 45**

*Peggy Kyoungwon Lee*

The alpha brain wave sonification inaugurated by Alvin Lucier in *Music for Solo Performer* (1965) ushered in biofeedback as a new possibility for art *and* a racialized fantasy of the “Orient.” The “Alpha Orient” encompasses sonic methods equating alpha brain waves with the supposed exceptional “composure” and “silence” of the East. *Eunoia* (2013–2014) by Lisa Park and Yoko Ono’s 1964 *Cut Piece* and 1965 *Sky Piece for Jesus Christ* expose the Alpha Orient as an ableist fantasy of the Asian woman in the remarkable soundness of her self-control.

**Kentridge's Beckett** . . . . .60

*Carla Taban*

The Centre for the Less Good Idea, founded by William Kentridge in Johannesburg, inaugurated its first season with four short plays by Samuel Beckett. Beckett is a productive point of reference for Kentridge, especially in his lecture-performances that reflect on the activity of making art in the studio.

**Do's, Don'ts, and the Rhythms of the Urban Everyday** . . . . .81

*Alexandra Kolb*

Rimini Protokoll's *Do's and Don'ts* (2018) takes spectators on tours through cities in a disused truck to observe contemporary urban life. Commentary from nonprofessional (yet "expert") performers and video interludes dissect and challenge the rules and norms of the 21st-century metropolis. Lucinda Childs's 1964 *Street Dance* frames and historically contextualizes the discussion of performance "in" and "of" the city.

**What Are We Waiting For?: Rehearsal as Arousal Politics in oncogrrrls** . . . . .101

*Caro Novella*

Current debates in the field of socially engaged art dwell on the relational versus antagonist potentiality of performance for social change, while disability scholars and cancer activists call for performance that activates relationalities beyond individual/medical models. oncogrrrls proposes rehearsal as a liquid space for the joint creation of new cancer relations.

**Chameleonic Survivalism: Jaamil Olawale Kosoko's "Adaptive Strategies and Ways of Being in the World"** . . . . .115

*Ashley Ferro-Murray*

Jaamil Olawale Kosoko's work focuses on adaptability and survival. Kosoko's April 2020 *Chameleon (The Living Installments)* exemplifies the importance of an individual artist's responses to the Covid-19 moment, the historical imperative for hybrid in-person/online performance, how 21st-century liveness functions in performance, as well as political awareness of artist-centered approaches to curatorial practice.

**What's Live Got to Do with It?: Digital Drag in the Time of Covid-19** . . . . .131

*Cameron Crookston*

With Covid-19 closure of performance spaces, drag performers were in a unique position due to the historic relationship between queer performance and recorded media, and the history of LGBTQ2+ community building through social media. Rather than—or perhaps in addition to—constituting a moment of rupture, the sudden phenomenon of digital drag presents a vital moment for revealing the relationship among liveness, media, and citational reproduction in drag's history.

**Procedurally Authored Performances of Mindful Practice: Theatre-for-One, Audience Labor, and Self-Optimization.** . . . . .147

*Dani Snyder-Young*

Relaxation, when produced by participating in a theatre-for-one piece, requires work. From March to May 2020, with much of the world under a stay-at-home advisory to mitigate the spread of Covid-19, three performances carved out restorative spaces. These theatre-for-one pieces give participants rules to follow to ostensibly resist the neoliberal drive to productivity; yet those same rules structure acts of rest as productive under neoliberalism.

**Banal Profundity and Profound Banality: Three Exercises in Reading Hong Kong. . . . .** 158

*Rashna Darius Nicholson*

Focusing on performance that functions outside explicitly theatrical frames, art installations staged in Hong Kong between June and October 2020 progress a broader view of Hong Kong’s complex development as global financial center, creative hub, and meeting point between “East” and “West.” Artists Mark Chung, Nadim Abbas, and Christopher Ho interrogate Hong Kong at a historically definitive moment, allowing audiences to study what constitutes “home” beyond what conventional academic analyses, traditional publishing outlets, and social media allow.

**CRITICAL ACTS**

**The Dark Master, Kuro Tanino: Onsite VR Contemporary Theatre . . . . .** 174

*Peter Eckersall*

In Kuro Tanino’s play *The Dark Master (Daaku Masudaa)*, a person arrives at a rundown restaurant (*yōshokuya*) in working-class Osaka and orders typical Japanese comfort food from a crochety old “master.” Kuro’s 2020 VR theatre version of the play, *Daaku Masudaa VR*, reanimates the atmospheric setting of the restaurant and heightens its grotesque sensibilities. Using the extreme disorientation and intimacy of VR goggles and headphones, he creates threatening feelings of immersion.

**BOOKS**

*Performing Flight: From the Barnstormers to Space Tourism* by Scott Magelssen

*Henry Bial* . . . . . 179

*Yeats on Theatre* by Christopher Morash

*James Moran* . . . . . 181

*Neoliberalism, Theatre and Performance* edited by Andy Lavender

*Hamid Karimian*. . . . . 182

*Institutional Theatrics: Performing Arts Policy in Post-Wall Berlin* by Brandon Woolf

*Theatre of Anger: Radical Transnational Performance in Contemporary Berlin*

by Olivia Landry

*Jonathan Kalb* . . . . . 184

**More Books**

*Cristina Tadeo* . . . . . 188

**TDR CONTINUED...**

Go to <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1054204322000442>

**“Class Act: East-West”**

Youth Theatre and the Making of Meaning in Postrevolutionary Ukraine. . . . . 191

*Molly Flynn*

In the years between Ukraine’s Euromaidan Revolution (2013–14) and Russia’s full-scale invasion in February 2022, Ukraine witnessed an incredible boom in socially engaged performance. One of the most impactful was Class Act: East-West, a series of playwriting workshops for teenagers.