

Guest Editor

Donna Mejia: As a Transnational fusion dance artist, Donna Mejia’s distinctive aesthetic dialogues the secular dances of North Africa and the Arab World with American Hip Hop dance and sub-genres of electronic dance/music culture (Never a dull moment with that constellation of influences. Never.) Donna also teaches the esoteric Brazilian Silvestre Dance Technique and is a lauded representative with over thirty years of practice. In October of 2011 she was selected by the Fulbright Association to present the 2011 Selma Jeanne Cohen Endowed lecture for International Scholarship in Dance, notably for her paper “Digital Diasporas and Transnational Dance Communities: The Effects of Internet Usage on Identity Formation and Collective Cultural Memory.” Donna has been guest artist in residence for eighteen colleges, and received her Master of Fine Arts degree from Smith College on full fellowship. She joined the University of Colorado, Boulder’s Theatre and Dance Department in 2012 as the first Assistant Professor of Transnational fusion dance globally. She is also an affiliate faculty member for the Women and Gender Studies Program, the Ethnic Studies Program and is the Director of graduate studies in dance. Her training as an ethnomusicologist keeps her passionate about the evolution of music, and her enthusiasm for design and sewing is boundless! Donna’s collaborations and solo performances have been shown at the venerable LaMaMa Theatre and Apollo Theatre of New York City, and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington D.C. She balances her time teaching and touring internationally to instruct, lecture, and perform for private sponsors, festivals and community organizations. For more information about her enchanted adventures, scholarly observations, inspired musings, and subversive inclinations, please visit her at <https://donnainthedance.com>

Contributing Authors

Larry Asakawa is an Emmy Award-winning documentary filmmaker based in California and Hawai‘i. As a former marine biologist and dancer, his documentary interests range from whales in the North Pacific to cultural arts and social issues throughout the world. He has collaborated with hundreds of dance companies, choreographers, visual artists, writers, and musicians. His film work has taken him to Russia, former Soviet Georgia, Brazil, Japan, China, Australia, and France. Asakawa’s documentary training includes the PBS Producers Academy at WGBH in Boston, and his work has been supported by grants and commissions from numerous governmental agencies and private foundations.

Naomi P. Bennett is a movement artist, video projection designer, and PhD candidate in the department of Communication Studies at Louisiana State University, focusing on Performance Studies and minoring in Women and Gender Studies. She holds an MFA in Television, Film, and Theatre Production from California State University, Los Angeles, and a BA in Theater from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Bennett’s current research and practice is in the creation of interactive encounters that physically engage the audience through technology, focusing on immersive installation and physical performance that engage senses of touch, sight, and proprioception that challenge perceptions of physical embodiment.

Kate Busselle is a Graduate Instructor at the University of Missouri pursuing her Ph.D. in Theatre and Performance Studies; she also serves as adjunct faculty at Stephens College. Kate researches the performance of violence committed by women on stage, screen, and in other forms of media. Kate is the co-founder and research and resource manager for Theatrical Intimacy Education, a consulting group that teaches artists of all kinds best practices in staging intimacy, nudity, and sexual violence. As a violence and intimacy designer, her work focuses on troubleshooting difficult moments and self-care for artists who have experienced sexual trauma.

Nazlıhan Eda Erçin is a performer, researcher and educator of contemporary performance practices. Her work, specifically the practice-based Ph.D. degree she is completing at the University of Exeter, focuses on artistic, somatic, phenomenological and auto-ethnographic explorations of body, gender, ethnicity and language. Since 2017, she has been a research affiliate at the University of Huddersfield (UK) as a member of the Judaica Project. Most recently, she has undertaken the role of HopKins Black Box Theatre Manager and Instructor of Performance Studies in the Department of Communication Studies at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge (USA).

Vito Evola works with the Performance & Cognition group of ICNOVA at FCSH-Universidade Nova de Lisboa, where he is the postdoc researcher of the Multimodal Communication/Linguistics section of the “BlackBox” project. Previously, he taught and conducted research at RWTH Aachen University, University of Geneva, University of Palermo, Case Western Reserve, and University of California-Berkeley. He investigates language and the body in space from socio-cognitive and ethnographic perspectives. His research lies in the intersection of language, culture, and cognition, focusing on cognitive linguistics, multimodal cognitive semiotics and symbolic systems as well as the socio-anthropological aspects of conceptual integration networks.

Carla Fernandes is an ERC Principal Investigator and Professor at Universidade Nova de Lisboa, where she is head of the “BlackBox – Arts&Cognition Lab”. She co-directs the Performance & Cognition group at ICNOVA – FCSH. Her research focuses on the intersection of multimodal communication, social cognition, new media, and the performing arts, from cognitive and ethnographic perspectives. She has been designing and leading interdisciplinary research projects for over 12 years in the areas of cognitive linguistics, creativity, video annotation, human non-verbal behavior, and the creation of digital platforms to document intangible cultural heritage, such as contemporary dance and performance.

Caroline Gatt has a PhD in anthropology from the University of Aberdeen and is project assistant for *Town Is the Garden*, Deveron Projects, and an honorary research fellow at the University of Aberdeen. Her recent publications include "Correspondences: Sketches for Regenerative Scholarship" (2019) with Joss Allen, the monograph *An Ethnography of Global Environmentalism: Becoming Friends of the Earth* (2018); and the special issue "Collaborative Knowing: Considering Onto/Epistemology on Collaboration" (2018) as guest editor in *Collaborative Anthropologies*. As a Research Fellow on the ERC project Knowing from the Inside (Aberdeen), she explored new collaborative possibilities between

anthropology and theatre for ways in which these may enable paths to decolonising academia.

Stephan Jürgens, Ph.D. in Contemporary Choreography and New Media Technologies, currently works as a core researcher in the BlackBox Arts&Cognition project at FCSH - NOVA University of Lisbon. His research interests concentrate on designing creative strategies for live performance involving interactive systems. He has been teaching movement research, interdisciplinary choreography and interactive system design in many different learning environments and institutions. Stephan has collaborated on several international research projects, all of which investigated the use recent technology in Contemporary Dance and Digital (Live) Performance. As a choreographer, he has presented several works supported by the Portuguese Ministry of Culture.

Filipa Malva is a scenographer and architect. She has a PhD in Art Studies/Theatre from the University of Coimbra, where she teaches Art Studies, and a master's degree in Performance Space from the University of Kent. She is a freelance set and costume designer working with several theatre and music groups—such as O Teatrão and Casa da Esquina—around the Coimbra district. She is a founding member of the APCEN - Portuguese Association of Scenography and a recipient of a Postdoctoral Fellowship from the Foundation for Science and Technology. She is a researcher at the Dance Studies Research Group at INET-md, University of Lisbon.

Agnieszka Mendel graduated from Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology in Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań and The Academy for Theatre Practices in Gardzienice. She is fascinated by the possibilities of the human voice and uses songs from many cultures to search for vocal techniques and emotionality. Poet and composer, co-author and performer of her own music and theater projects, she is the beneficiary of several artistic scholarships and awards for achievements in the arts and the protection and promotion of cultural goods and leader of two music ensembles: Yaron Trio and Tara Gayan. Since 2017, she has been a research affiliate at the University of Huddersfield (UK) as a member of the Judaica Project.

Jhalak Kara Miller is deeply interested in the vibration of silence, forms that heighten awareness to be present in the moment, and acts of listening. A choreographer, dancer, and video artist, her movement research has been presented in Europe, Asia, the Americas, and the Pacific. She is an Associate Professor of Dance and Performance Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Kara is a recipient of the Po'okela Award for choreography and the Jacob K. Javits Arts Fellowship. Kara received a PhD in Performance Studies from the University of California, Davis and is a graduate of The Juilliard School.

Ania Nikulina is a PhD Candidate with the Department of Dance at the University of California, Riverside. Ania's dissertation project explores the history of ballet performances and dance training in state theatres and ballet schools of the former USSR. Prior to entering the PhD program at UCR, Ania earned her Master's degree in Performance Studies from Texas A&M University, focusing on the relationships between

state-sponsored ballet, performance and political processes. Ania is the recipient of the Mellon CLIR Fellowship for Dissertation Research in Original Sources for her work focused on state-sponsored ballet as a site of cultural and political tension.

Jo Pollitt is an interdisciplinary artist; her research in dance and writing is grounded in a twenty-year practice of improvisation. She has recently completed a PhD titled “Writing as Dancing; the dancer in your hands, a novella \diamond”. Jo holds an MA in Creative Arts (2001) and currently lectures in Dance History and Analysis, as well as Improvisation, at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, Edith Cowan University. She works as a dramaturg, dance critic and mentor, has published in journals such as *Brolga* (Aus), *Choreographic Practices* (UK), *PARtake* (US); Jo is the co-Creative Director of *BIG Kids Magazine*.

Ben Spatz is a nonbinary researcher and theorist of embodied practice. They are Senior Lecturer in Drama, Theatre and Performance at the University of Huddersfield, UK; author of *What a Body Can Do: Technique as Knowledge, Practice as Research* (Routledge 2015); and AHRC Leadership Fellow with the project “Judaica: An Embodied Laboratory for Songwork” (2016-2018). Ben is also editor of the videographic *Journal of Embodied Research* from Open Library of Humanities and the Advanced Methods imprint from Punctum Books; co-convener of the Embodied Research Working Group within the International Federation for Theatre Research; and co-investigator on the ESRC project “Research with a Twist: A Somatics Toolkit for Ethnographers” (2018-2019). Ben has more than two decades of experience as a performer and director of contemporary performance, working mainly in New York City from 2001 to 2013, and is currently researching the fragmentation and emergence of sexual and racial identities in experimental practice and audiovisual research.