Panel 1: Positions of Performance Today

Christof Migone

*Pneumatics: from formless to form and back again*

Performance is a conduit, an in-between, a conversant. Ins, outs, throughput—in and of itself, performance is nothing. Performance's nothing status, its nothingness, should not raise any ire, concern, or anxiety, it's a rich and swarming petri dish. It is a nexus of research which mixes plans with fluxes with chances with obsessions. It circles round and round. It confuses the complex with the simple. It unknows givens, and discovers knowns anew. Every time, it takes a new breath with the same old lungs. It is weary of morals and exigencies. It breathes best when the air flows unfettered. "Ungovernable shoots play out of it", as Walt Whitman would say, "the response likewise ungovernable." The proposition of this presentation is that an unrestricted pulse is the imperative necessity for the flourishing of the *ungovernable performance*.

Antawan Byrd

*Being There/Being Seen: Locality and Afterlife in Jelili Atiku's Agbo Rago*

The emerging cosmopolitan cities defining the West-African region are characterized by a fast-faced, hustle and bustling dynamic, so much that daily life in such spaces has be characterized as a “performance” in its own right. This combined with the reality that, in West-Africa, performance as a genre of contemporary art is still in its infancy invites several critical questions about the nature and possibilities of performance: What are the conditions that govern the translatability of performance as a “global” genre of contemporary art in non-Western regions? How can we define performance in cultures where street interventions are closely linked to masquerade and other cultural traditions? What are the conditions that govern acts of witnessing? And how does this relate to the afterlife of performance practices vis-a-vis publications and archives? This presentation seeks engage these questions by exploring the performance practices of the Lagos-based, Nigerian artist Jelili Atiku, taking his 2009 performance Agbo Rago as a case study.

Swapnaa Tamhane

*What does a name mean and who does the naming?*

The India that has happened in the last 50 years, in the last 2 years, or in the last 3 months, is in a perpetually evolving state that is (possibly) constantly trying to understand itself. Everything from religious celebrations to street life to high society luncheons, is a performance and the ‘performative’ is in a state of becoming. Contemporary artists from India easily adopt established Western art movements; ‘Performance Art’, while still nascent, reaches its pasts and its futures and ultimately, this popular name can not satisfy these reaches. What can this medium be named instead of “Performance Art”? And will it be a curator, art historian, or artist who take the ownership of naming their own movement and writing its history and discourse?

Moderator: Ambereen Siddiqui
Panel 2: Performance not merely as performance

The Torontonians
"How to be a downtown teen"

The Torontonians are a group of 14-16 year olds from Parkdale, Toronto and form part of the Youth Wing of the research-art-atelier Mammalian Diving Reflex. The youth have produced a video titled “How to be a Brown Teen;” interrogated talk-show style a group of young art hipsters; filmed a teen sexual health video; lead a series of night walks with teenagers in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, and host a monthly Dare Night in Toronto hip gallery district. The youth are also involved in a year-long mentorship residency at the Gladstone Hotel, where they are learning the ropes of event production: curating, budgeting, marketing, production management and hospitality. On another level, The Torontonians initiative is a succession plan: they will eventually move into artistic and administrative leadership roles and will have full control of the company in 10-15 years, as they move into their 30s. Their presentation will highlight some of their performance practices and engage in questions about friendship, mentorship, and collaboration.

Vesna Krstich
Action teaching and other ‘happening’ classrooms

What is the difference between a set of instructions performed by an artist or audience and a lesson devised by a teacher for a group of art students? Before Beuys prophetically claimed that ‘teaching is my greatest work of art” in 1969 and before David Askevold’s infamous Project Class of 1971, artist pedagogues of the 60s such as Roy Ascott, John Latham, Allan Kaprow, and Peter Kardia were already re-thinking the interrelation between instruction and action, process and product, often within the framework of higher education. I plan to discuss how their radical instructional strategies gave rise to group experiments, games, random events as well as objects. How might we conceive of these gestures as ‘action’ teaching and what semblance might they bear to happenings and fluxus or other conceptual practices? Where is the line between instruction and art form?

Wanda Nanibush
Performing Indian: From Captivity to Cabaret

A short history of the impact of performing "Indian" by Indigenous artists since contact on contemporary Indigenous performance art. Artists such as Robert Houle, Rebecca Belmore, Adrian Stimson, Lori Blondeau and Bear Witness mine this performance art history for their own practice as well as continuing its tradition of artistic cosmopolitanism. Agency within performance, protesting colonial conformity and captivity, re-enactment, remixing and memorialization are the artistic strategies discussed. All works discussed are in some way embodied without a present live body.
Jimena Ortuzar  
*The Labour of Love*

Locating the role of the female foreign domestic worker at the intersections of affect, labour and biopolitical othering, and in light of Judith Butler’s “performative contradiction” in *Who Sings the Nation-State*, I examine the singing of lullabies as acts of affective labour that connect multiple expressions of intimacy, language and cultural memory. Can the cross-cultural practice of lullaby-singing function as a possible means of coming to terms with the spatial and temporal dislocations inherent in migrant work? I explore this question while taking into account the instability of the labouring body of the migrant woman and its production of affect.

**Moderator: Amish Morrell**

**Panel 3: Institution vs. Public Space**

Stephanie Springgay  
*Performance, publics, and art education*

Increasingly contemporary art has been marked by a turn to education through the adoption of pedagogical and research methods, and a focus on knowledge production and learning. The escalation of discursive events within contemporary art, the curatorialization of education, and education as a form of art making mark an urgency to problematize, interrogate, and examine critical cultural practices against the political rhetoric of culture-as-service, the creative economy, and the standardization of educational outcomes. This presentation works transversally across institutions, disciplines, notions of ‘publics,’ and artistic strategies in an attempt to address what our efforts in the arts in relation to education make possible and for whom. How are contemporary artists engaging with educational formats, concepts, and motifs as spaces for the development of new critical practices, and how might we critically interrogate, examine, and trouble such critical art practices when they are located in collaboration with schools and communities?

Emelie Chhangur  
*Recombinant Practices and Institutional Interruptions*

In this presentation Chhangur discusses the role of performative curatorial practices in the creative transformation of the institutional space of the contemporary art gallery. Using the Art Gallery of York University (AGYU) as the starting point, and discussing two recent collaborative and participatory performance projects *The Centre for Incidental Activisms* (CIA) and Humberto Vélez’s *The Awakening*, she will outline how the gallery uses the principles and strategies of contemporary art (i.e. collaboration and socially engaged participatory methodologies) to reposition itself as an agent of critical engagement not just a site of viewing.

Jess Dobkin  
*Working Inside and Outside of My Bubble*

Dobkin’s presentation will address her experience and practice working within and outside of institutional structures, and also address the diminishing of this dichotomy. She will discuss resources, networks and skills used in various projects and how the privileges and confines of working within/without institutional support impacts the conceptualization and realization of performances.
Jorge Lucero
*We still don’t know how much less ‘nothing’ can be.*

The poignant 1968 proposition of Lucy Lippard and John Chandler that “we still don’t know how much less ‘nothing’ can be” is a challenge that flies in the material/archival face of what it means to make a moment of Live, participatory, or relational art. How many participants, audience members, or instances of documentation does a conceptual work need to have in order for it to mark its existence and consequent validation as a work of art? In a short recounting of two works performed within a university office, Jorge Lucero, examines what it means to make a work that doesn’t get documented, is experienced only by a handful of people, and pretty much appears to have made zero impact.

Moderator: Kim Simon

Canada

Justina M. Barnicke
Gallery