

movement research

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Movement Research Performance Journal Issue #51 is available now!



Movement Research announces Issue #51 of its semi-annual print publication, the *Movement Research Performance Journal*. Continuing to experiment with approaches to engage contemporary performance through the medium of print, this issue of the *MRPJ* offers original textual explorations of ideas, as well as photo essays and visual experiments that present options for how we consider the place of dance in the contemporary moment.

Functioning as an object that is both form and content, the front and back covers of Issue #51 feature images of Elizabeth Garren, Wendy Perron and Mona Sulzmann dancing *Splang* in Trisha Brown's loft in 1978, taken by Christopher Rauschenberg, son of Robert Rauschenberg,

and a teenager at the time. These beautifully awkward and intimately captured photographs show something of the movement research preceding what is now recognized as Brown's form and language. Framing the issue, these images speak to the intersections between what fills the pages of this volume: a reflective memorial portfolio on Brown's life and work, edited by Iréne Hultman, and a collection of dense and speculative texts edited by Mårten Spångberg that address "movement research" — the topic, rather than the organization.

In his opening essay, Spångberg writes, "There is something urgent about movement research today. We are already in the middle of a new chapter where movement research needs to be reconsidered in respect to the world we live in." This issue considers a topic fundamental to performance practice — movement research — and explicitly brings it into conversation with current philosophical, social and political concerns. Upon the invitation of Spångberg, these essays address ideas such as: what is the body, what does it do, how do we study it — and most importantly, how do we study *with* it? The essays don't propose to define what movement research is or should be. As contributors, Ana Vujanović and Ellen Söderhult observe, "Although *movement research* is a widespread activity among contemporary Western European performing arts makers and students of dance and performance, as a notion there is far from consent about which activities it signifies." Instead, the articles provide specific considerations of how ideas around movement research are circulating in the contemporary moment, suggesting critical re-evaluations of an area of practice that can sometimes be taken for granted. Also unique is this issue's geographic focus. While the *MRPJ*, published in NYC, generally takes a strong NYC and American focus, this issue's contributors are almost entirely based in Western Europe.

Drawing attention to the tension between the content (long form essays) and the medium (a newspaper), the issue's design slices each page of the traditional tabloid format into four smaller pages, approximating the size of an academic book, complete with their own running heads and individuated page numbers. The designers — Yotam Hadar and Sean Yendrys — offer a visual reference to the production method of books ("N-up" printing), with the unique styling of each title suggesting how the individual essays function as independent worlds while remaining in conversation with the other articles in the collection.

Spread across the issue are reading recommendations from choreographer Jennifer Lacey, in the form of snapshot photographs of book covers. Lacey's reading recommendations, ranging from Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Remarks on Colour* to Marjorie Garber's *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety*, serve simultaneously as visual breakpoints and cohesive thread of the issue, pointing to how the present writings are already involved in ongoing conversations of ideas.

The Trisha Brown portfolio is a critical contribution for the dance community to intimately reflect upon one of the most important artists of the 20th century. Given the significance of Brown's work, as well as the influence of her aesthetic on experimental dance of the past 50 years, the need for the present collection is pronounced. The *MRPJ* portfolio centers her impact and influence on dance practice and dance practitioners — her primary artistic form.

The design of the portfolio calls attention to the complex relationship between text and image — and how they both relate to dance and Brown's work in particular. The portfolio separates

text and image, but leaves traces of a relationship between them. Within blocks of text will be empty open spaces, implying room for an image, which later appears on a page surrounded primarily by whitespace, suggesting room for text. The interplay of text and image reference a similar interplay of memory and movement — all the more important as we consider the legacy of Brown and her work after her passing.

The conversations, essays, and reflections assembled serve to recognize Brown's legacy and impact, while also inviting readers to view Brown's practices and work in the vein of this issue's inquiry into the contemporary state of movement research. Particularly when contending with dance's ephemerality, what and how do we remember, define, transcribe, embody, preserve, accumulate, archive, transmit, and reconstruct?

Issue Article Summaries:

I Love Movement Research by Mårten Spångberg

Mårten Spångberg's essay sets up this issue's discourse on movement research—what is movement research? Is it practice or is it art? Can movement research and its practices qualify as art? What is the role of movement research today? He navigates these curiosities by locating shifts in the understanding and treatment of the body and the self with the introduction of identity politics in the beginning of the 1990s, and discusses the potentiality for movement research with the emergence of new forms of thought.

Twelve Rules to Put Thought in Motion by Tristan Garcia

Tristan Garcia offers some ways of orienting, utilizing and engaging with thought to maximize possibility and render transformation possible.

From the Sad Body to the Moving Body by Nina Power

An essay in two parts, Nina Power seeks to provide a critical account of the twenty-first-century body by examining ideas from Hervé Juvin, Franco Bifo Berardi, Giorgio Agamben, and Alenka Zupančič. She then references the work of Adriana Cavarero, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, and George Katsiaficas in writing about the possibilities of the moving body.

The Ceremony of Us in The Legacy of We by Sri Louise

In her essay, Sri Louise examines the ways in which racial amnesia, apathy, and oblivion are lodged in the history and operation of post-modern dance spaces. She confronts her own engagement in somatic practices, and Anna Halprin's 1969 dance piece titled *Ceremony of Us*, challenging the image of the "collective" narrative that has been enmeshed in whiteness and individual narcissism.

Imagining and Feigning by Bojana Cvejić

Bojana Cvejić's text explores elements of contemporary performance poetics through a close

reading of Mette Edvardsen's *Time Has Fallen Asleep in the Afternoon Sunshine* and *No Title*, and Anne Juren's *Somatic Fictions*. Cvejić discusses the concept and role of imagination in these works in relation to an assemblage of ideas from Aristotle, Gaston Bachelard, Spinoza, George Berkeley, René Descartes, Immanuel Kant, and Denis Diderot.

The Moment Before by Mette Edvardsen

Mette Edvardsen's text begins as a stream of consciousness account written from a dressing room after a performance. She writes with detail and precision, describing a somatic practice or choreography of tracing sensations systematically throughout her body. The text and choreography begin to shift with the relocation/reorganization of her awareness and attention.

Learning to Derive: Financial Moves and Attentional Gestures in the Ecocidal Maelström by Yves Citton

Yves Citton approaches a question central to movement research — “in which measure can one say that bodies move, instead of saying that they are moved?”— with Randy Martin's attempt to link forms of financial flows with forms of bodily movements. In reference to Martin's “social logic of the derivative,” Citton's text expounds on etymology of the “derivative,” using driving analogies and a reading of Edgar Allan Poe's “A Descent into the Maelström” to underscore the crucial role the performing arts play in fostering and sharpening a certain art of attention.

Effing the Ineffable by Eleanor Bauer

Following the premise that there are several media of thought through which thinking is made possible, Eleanor Bauer contends with the use of dance-thought and language-thought in a generally logocentric society. She discusses the ways in which dance is mediated by language—for better or worse—and advocates an engagement in movement research that leaves space for finding out what the doing does.

The Bodies in Sade's Dream by Austin Gross

Austin Gross revisits Marquis de Sade's *The 120 Days of Sodom* with Foucault's proposals regarding disciplinary erotics and the Sadean body. What traps do erotic investment in disciplinary power set for dance and choreography?

Relations of Unpredictable Encounters by Nikima Jagudajev

Part diaristic account, part critical reflection, Nikima Jagudajev considers assemblages and ecologies of difference through the lens of her shifting relationship to her family history. Evaluating how and what kinds of bodies take up space, she advocates for social and spatial relations that celebrate disruption as a mechanism for changes in perception.

Never Stop Dancing. Or How to Sabotage Neoliberalism's Biorhythm by Ingrid Luquet-Gad

Ingrid Luquet-Gad investigates the ecosystem of the German club Berghain. The article describes the birthing and regeneration of the living club ecosystem, and the physio-societal effects club-goers experience as they assemble inside the symbolic event-space.

Gravity by Anne Juren

Anne Juren uses her personal practice of the Feldenkrais Method to reframe the 2006 Blockbuster film, *Gravity*. Drawing parallels between the movie's narrative and aspects of the Feldenkrais Method, Juren connects the state of suspension she experiences when given a verbal cue in Feldenkrais with the image of Sandra Bullock's character, Dr. Stone, drifting in space. She uses what Feldenkrais proposes to imagine a fictional reality that gives Dr. Stone new agency.

The Movement as Living Non-Body by Daniel Blanga Gubbay

Blanga Gubbay's article discusses varying ways of removing the ontology of movement from human anatomy. Discussing agency inside and outside of the body, Gubbay references Elizabeth A. Povinelli, Ibn Sīnā, Graham Harman, Domenico da Piacenza, and Emilie Rākete, in order to examine movement isolated from a humanist subjectivity.

Not-Knowing: Mobility as a State of Unrest by Alice Chauchat

Alice Chauchat's article examines movement practices that foster precariousness. Analyzing the movement practices of Zoë Poluch and Stina Nyberg, Deborah Hay, TTT/Teachback program, and her own "dance of companionship," Chauchat considers how such practices affirm uncertainty as a possible motor for movement and can serve to dismantle and transform one's own value systems.

Vibration Spasm Reactivation by Franco Bifo Berardi

Franco Bifo Berardi's essay begins with the concept of chaomose, using acoustic terms like sound, music, harmony, silence, and noise to write about the formation of modern power. Underscoring the neoliberal desire to be busy, and the phenomenon of online dating for the "Snowflake Generation," the essay investigates how this reformatting of the social mind is invading semiotic exchange and cognition itself.

Movement Research as a Performance Practice by Ana Vujanović with Ellen Söderhult

Ana Vujanović and Ellen Söderhult examine the similarities, affinities, proximities, and specificities of the terms "movement research" and "performance practice" in the context of a Western neoliberal society. Referencing ideas from Chrysa Parkinson, Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, and André Lepecki among others, the two authors discuss shifts between the outcomes of process and practice.

Dance and Philosophy by Graham Harman

Graham Harman discusses dance and aesthetics through references to two passages from

Kant's *Critique of Judgment*. Harman introduces his theory of object-oriented ontology, explaining how "Triple O" philosophy operates for art and aesthetics using the notion of sensual objects. He also unpacks Kant's writings on the elemental structures of charm and its relationships to dance.

Trisha Brown Portfolio

The portfolio weaves together contributions from people with varying relationships to Trisha Brown's work and her legacy. Contributors consist of people who have worked with her directly as dancers, friends, curators, archivists, as well as people whom she never met. It is through these intersecting points of view that this memorial considers, in ways that are intimate yet expansive, who Brown was as a person, artist, figure, and choreographic icon. While the conversations, essays, and reflections assembled here serve to recognize Brown's legacy and impact, the portfolio also invites readers to view Brown's practices and work in the vein of this issue's inquiry into the contemporary state of movement research.

Portfolio Article Summaries:

Irène Hultman's essay provides context for the portfolio, raising questions regarding pedagogy and preservation of repertory since Brown did not work from a codified dance vernacular, and did not leave such instructions before her passing. **Cori Olinghouse**, who served as director for the Trisha Brown Archive when it was formed, writes about the central role of embodied experience in the preservation of Brown's work, and the challenge of maintaining a light touch in keeping the material alive.

Company members and alumni constitute the bulk of the portfolio's contributors, with vignettes of their memories with Trisha that stream across the pages of the portfolio. The longer accounts assembled in "Reflections," and a conversation between **Hultman, Susan Rosenberg**, and **Vicky Shick** provide further insight into Brown's working process and some interpretations of her "language-language" and "dance-language."

In a conversation that addresses institutional infrastructure and lineage, **Leslie Cuyjet, Davalois Fearon**, and **Jasmine Hearn** discuss how they see themselves in relationship to Brown's work or legacy, via their participation in Solange's performance at The Guggenheim in May 2017. Along with contributions from **Brenda Dixon-Gottschild** and **Christopher-Rasheem McMillan**, these texts consider the visibility/invisibility of the black dancing body in Brown's work, reflecting on how blackness exists in postmodern structures of whiteness.

Recalling conversations with Brown, **Yvonne Rainer** reflects on the slowly evolving "dance grammar" that her friend was investigating in the 70s. Pieces by **Jean-Marc Adolphe** and **Denise Luccioni** describe their first encounters with this new dance grammar and the epiphanies that came from subsequent and recurring encounters with Brown and her work in France. Writing about the sensory experience of Brown's work from attending Shick's classes, **Ursula**

Eagly foregrounds the somatic dimensions of Brown's work as a defining aspect of her legacy. **Peggy Phelan** contributes an excerpted and edited piece from her essay on *Orfeo*, contemplating the spaces and movement between life and death that Brown's choreography held.

ABOUT THE MOVEMENT RESEARCH PERFORMANCE JOURNAL

Started in 1990, the Performance Journal is a printed forum created by and for artists, fostering the evolution of written and graphic languages that contemplate current issues of dance and performance. Published twice annually, the Performance Journal provides a unique forum for critical rigor and a multi-disciplinary readership. Writings are specifically linked to events, artists, trends, and ideas associated with the current and upcoming performance season in New York, as well as nationally and internationally. The Performance Journal has focused on artists' of-the-moment concerns, with past topics including gender, environments, identity, technology, activism, dance writing and, most recently, an exploration of how contemporary dance negotiates with the larger culture, via a magazine format.

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Movement Research is one of the world's leading laboratories for the investigation of dance and movement-based forms. Valuing the individual artist, their creative process and their vital role within society, Movement Research is dedicated to the creation and implementation of free and low-cost programs that nurture and instigate discourse and experimentation. Movement Research strives to reflect the cultural, political and economic diversity of its moving community, including artists and audiences alike.

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