



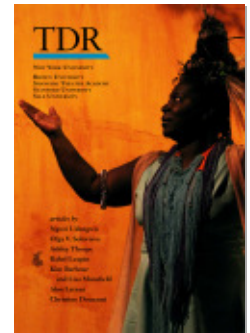
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Postcolonial studies scholars also will find a wealth of data from which they can theorize about the politics of performance and the performance of politics in postindependent Africa in these two important scholarly works from 2015.

—John Thabiti Willis

John Thabiti Willis is Associate Professor of African history at Carleton College. He specializes in the history of Yoruba ritual performance and its relationship to political, economic, and social changes occasioned by the rise and fall of the slave trade and colonial rule. jwillis@carleton.edu

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Diversión: Play and Popular Culture in Cuban America. By Albert Sergio Laguna. New York: New York University Press, 2017; 269 pp.; illustrations. \$89.00 cloth, \$30.00 paper, e-book available.

For Albert Sergio Laguna, it is laughter that shapes diasporic structures of belonging in Cuban Miami-Dade Hialeah. Tracing what he terms *momentos de diversión*—sonic, gestural, and linguistic moments of collective play in the malleable sense of diasporic Cuban-ness, i.e., *cubanía*—Laguna performs a shift in diasporic affect studies. Humor as an object of study moves him from the privileged analytic registers of melancholic exile (anger, loss, and pain) to ways that “ludic sociability” performs Cuban belonging in, against, and sometimes with US-American whiteness, antiblack racism, and heteronormativity. Multiple sites of kinship and identity emerge throughout the book’s transdisciplinary pedagogies. Loosely following the migratory waves of Cubans to the United States (from the Cuban Revolution’s Freedom Flights [1965–1973] to the *balseo* [rafter] crisis of 1994), Laguna argues that Cuban-diasporic belonging is itself workable: performatively available for quotidian-collective reshaping through objects of popular culture. Comedic performance facilitates contact and exchange on and off the island, finding shape, velocity, and texture in the shared pleasures of stand-up, morning radio, political satire, comedic theatre, prank phone calls, and comic strips. Throughout, the first wave’s stand-up icon Guillermo Álvarez Guedes cedes and indelibly marks popular contemporary public radio; economies of sentiment structuring the Miami festival known as Club Nostalgia touch and warp under population shifts and changing labor economies in Hialeah; and all tangle in the diasporic, where what *feels* Cuban is playfully rearranged—and shared.

The Art of Civil Action: Political Space and Cultural Dissent. Edited and introduced by Philipp Dietachmair and Pascal Gielen. Amsterdam: Valiz, 2018; 304 pp.; illustrations. \$25.00 paper.

The touchstones for Philipp Dietachmair and Pascal Gielen’s collection of conversations and essays on the art of civil action are familiar: Occupy Wall Street, the Zapatistas, Pussy Riot, the occupations of Maagdenhuis and the Teatro Valle Occupato, and refugee initiatives in Greece and Germany. And yet the lines of flight drawn primarily from the academic chairs, full profes-

sors, researchers, and artists that compose the collection *often miss* the ways social justice movements refuse the vector of “civility” in contesting state imposition. That slippage—from the civil to the civilizing—becomes the foci of only one essay of note: Max Haiven’s “Beyond the Violence of Colonial Civility: Examining the Art of Raven Davis.” Taking the performance-based work of this Anishinaabe artist and activist, Haiven describes how notions of “civility” and “civil space” are always already coded as white and available for sanctioning: not simply excluding indigenous and black presence from the “civil,” but also policing and surveilling the distinction. To ground one’s work in Indigenous studies is to know that civilization is *ontologically* uncivil: that is, genocidal. If forms of civility beyond the (white) settler colonial are possible, Haiven asks that we first reckon “with what, precisely, society, community, and civility might mean on stolen lands” (131). This is a question adequately asked by only one author in the collection (itself comprised of nearly all white men), speaking volumes to the way “civil action,” defined on European terms, cannot sustain the movements it hopes to attend.

Emergency Index: An Annual Document of Performance Practice, Vol. 6.

Edited by Yelena Gluzman, Sophia Cleary, and Katie Gaydos. Brooklyn, NY: Ugly Duckling Presse, 2017; 608 pp.; illustrations. \$25.00 paper.

An impossible invitation to “all the people who made performances” in 2016, *Emergency Index* is itself an incongruous, albeit surprising crowd-sourced document of performance documents (vii). Counter to our usual modes of experiencing performance or its documentation—wherein we participate in those circuits of friendship and exchange structuring whose performances we see and when, *Emergency Index* annually (since 2012) introduces us to the impossible demands of hundreds of strangers (artists). Each is presented as a photo spread, including some perfunctory information: date, name, and time. There, the artists grow garlic in their front yards, suffuse the social in fugitive collective improvisation, wrestle in sci-fi futures, experiment with the proximity of strangers, and sing coke-fueled a cappella versions of Pearl Jam’s “Jeremy.” Though the editors organize the performances chronologically (from 1 January to 31 December 2016), it’s best to read performatively, that is, experientially. Turned pages—purposeful skimming, casual browsing, partial-immersive reading—beget returned encounters in equal parts absorption and boredom. It is an assembly to dizzying effect: the playful, serious promise of a democracy of volunteers, an unknowable community born of improvisation, knowable through the incongruity of their copresence in time.

Time Slips: Queer Temporalities, Contemporary Performance, and the Hole of History.

By Jaelyn I. Pryor. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2017; 184 pp.; illustrations. \$99.95 cloth, \$34.95 paper, e-book available.

For those well versed in performance studies—and its requisite conversations in historical memory and political redress, traumatic inscription and forced erasure—this book will read as queer kin. As influenced by the Jewish-mystic concept of repair (*tikkun*) as they are with the promise of radical pedagogy, Pryor deftly weaves arguments in queer temporality with decades of literature on performance as an indispensable site of return. Their (our) politics of temporality: one that resists the heteronormative and settler colonial promise that time moves chronologically toward a natural future of extraction, exploitation, and control. Instead, argues Pryor, time slips to proliferate as-yet unfinished pasts, presents, and futures resist. There (here), time will “move backward, lunge forward, loop, jump, stack, stop, pulse, linger, elongate, pulsate, slip” with past touching present to promise a future haunted by a queer capacity to transform (9). Repetition touching reparation. And where Pryor’s archive will not seem unfamiliar—less so to those of us who teach, talk, and perform in their wake—they affirm the queer import of writing

about our colleagues, friends, and lovers: a methodologically intimate summoning to sites of incandescent return. Pryor analyzes the performances of Cheyenne and First Nations artists Mary Ellen Strom and Ann Carlson (*Geysers Land*, 2003), Peggy Shaw's intergenerational acts of trans/butch transfer (*MUST: The Inside Story*, 2011), the author's own multisite-specific *floodlines* (2004–2010), and failures and promises of radical performance pedagogy in the thick of settler colonial and white structural claims to space, time, and gendered bathrooms. Pryor's promise is that performance remains there to repeat, rehearse, and repair.

Haunted City: Three Centuries of Racial Impersonation in Philadelphia.

By Christian DuComb. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017; 187 pp.; illustrations. \$70.00 cloth, \$24.95 paper, e-book available.

Haunted City lays the historical and cultural framework for the Mummers Parade: an annual Philadelphia-specific New Year's folk festival long critiqued for its permissive attitude toward blackface. Christian DuComb finds multiple sites of origin for the parade's production and celebration of racial and ethnic impersonation. Combining his personal experiences in the parade (as a member of the Vaudevillian's Brigade) with an extensively culled archive of city history, including newspaper articles, illustrations, paintings, and first-person accounts of fancy party dress, *Haunted City* forwards "haunting" as a productive vector through which to think of community revelry as a nexus in transnational geographies and trans-Atlantic histories. Through Mummers, the 18th- and 19th-century specters of white, working-class comic street performances act with the urban circulation of multimedia racist caricatures. Then, as now, whiteness draws its circle tight through the production of deviant dance, speech, and dress in the parade's string bands, elaborate costume design, burlesque performance, and theatrical choreography. DuComb's contribution to the history of blackface minstrelsy, street performance, public sphere theory, and parade ethnographies promises that "local ghosts" still haunt the parade's linear march toward City Hall—however celebratory.

Collective Situations: Readings in Contemporary Latin American Art, 1995–2010.

Edited by Bill Kelley Jr. and Grant H. Kester. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017; 448 pp.; illustrations. \$104.95 cloth, \$29.95 paper, e-book available.

As neoliberal economic policies found particular force and speed in the governments of Latin America, triggering a set of debt crises, monetary devaluations, and structural adjustments, the artists and activists therein shifted strategy. And so this book—the first of its kind for English-speaking audiences—finds ground, not simply in the failed promise of liberal democracy, but the potential of collective life in its wake. Featuring the manifestos, interviews, articles, illustrations, cartographies, and personal accounts of community-based actions and socially engaged art projects in Latin America between 1995–2010, *Collective Situations* traces a set of emergent aesthetic practices held in the particularities of experimental performance. The collection is divided into six convergent streams: "Un(Civil) Disobedience," which hones the poetics of political action and community organizing; "Urbanism," a study of the racializing and militarizing effects of gentrification, housing shortages, and privatization; "Memory," which preserves a future of redress and reconciliation with violent political pasts; "Indigeneity," a map of collaborative aesthetic practice through ancestral relation to land and spirituality; "Migrations," which resists national boundaries to hybridize, technologize, and collectivize Latin American cultural identities; and "Institutional Critique," which navigates the public knowledges produced in and around the state—particularly the prison. Each section is laden with artists, activists, and collectives that cannot live—or live well—in the constraints not only of settler colonial continu-

ity, but also of Western art history. Instead, they catalyze, experiment, and pre-figure collectivity in the interstices of the situated—as a mode of critique and aesthetic method—to create lives worth sharing.

—Sarah Richter

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