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### Gender and Performance: Theatre / Dance / Technology

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## Gender and Performance.

Theatre / Dance / Technology

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**Editorial (by Guest Editor Anna Furse):** [Gender and Performance. Theatre/Dance/Technology](#)

**Deirdre Osborne and Mojisola Adebayo:** [Missing in Action. Fathers Making a Quick Exit in Mojisola Adebayo's \*Muhammad Ali and Me\*](#)

**Abstract:** Set in an English foster home in the mid 1970's, *Muhammad Ali and Me* tells the story of Mojito, a child who is abandoned by her father and grows up in care. The space her father leaves is filled through a fantastical friendship with athlete and activist, boxer and dancer, pugilist and poet, hero and hate figure, sportsman and disabled man, Muslim and magician, the legendary, Muhammad Ali. *Muhammad Ali and Me* follows the parallel lives of this gay girl child and a Black male hero, tracing their struggle for survival and self definition in a system set against them. The play invites the audience to consider the complex relationship between children, absent fathers and father figures; the establishment, war and Islamic masculinity; the Black community and gay identity; the USA and urban Britain today, through what Adebayo describes as an 'Afri-Queer' multi-media accessible storytelling style. Deirdre Osborne provides an introduction which examines Adebayo's work by investigating representations of sport in plays by Black writers; Black, Mixed and 'trans' racial identity and the experience of the care system in performance; Black male heroism and the marginalisation of Black women writers on the British stage.

**Author's Bio:** Playwright and performer Mojisola Adebayo shares previously unpublished extracts of her play, *Muhammad Ali and Me*, first produced at Oval House Theatre in 2008 by Mojisola Adebayo and the Ali Collective. The play extracts are introduced by scholar of Black British writing, Dr Deirdre Osborne, Senior Lecturer in Drama at Goldsmiths, University of London.

**Katharine E. Low:** [Risk Taking in Sexual Health Communication and Applied Theatre Practice: What Can Happen?](#)

**Abstract:** This article argues that risk-taking can be an essential part of applied theatre practice as when it is coupled with a dialogical approach, it can result in a situation where people "encounter risks on their own terms" and engage with discussions around sensitive and controversial subjects such as non-consensual sex. With reference to Beck's notion of a risk-sharing community, it suggests that in the process of partaking in discussions on such issues, such a community can be established, whereby people take risks by challenging different views as well as taking action by discussing the subject outside of the performance space.

**Author's Bio:** Katharine E. Low is a practice-based PhD student in the Centre for Applied Theatre Research at the University of Manchester, supervised by James Thompson and Jenny Hughes.

Through her research project, *Our Place, Our Stage*, she explored the role of applied theatre in sexual and reproductive health communication in the Nyanga township in South Africa, focusing on concepts of space, risk-taking and subtle resistance.

#### **Jane Bacon:** *Sitting / Walking / Practice. Reflections on a Woman's Creative Process*

**Abstract:** This article is a “musing on the processes of practice-as research in performance and screen when ‘self’ is the source of creative inspiration” and is a poetic attempt to give form, in word and image, to creative process. The writing is informed by and emerges out of experiences of Authentic Movement, Focusing, Jungian dreamwork, walking and photography. The aim is to articulate something of my creative processes when engaged in an explicitly subjective practice-led research process. This article embraces the imaginal and the somatic in an attempt to bring together symbolic material generated from a uniquely woman’s experience.

**Author's Bio:** Jane Bacon is Reader and Divisional Leader in Performance Studies at The University of Northampton, Director of The Choreographic Lab and Joint Editor of *Choreographic Practices Journal*. Her research in ‘self as creative source’ for practice-led research in performance has taken her on a journey from improvised dance and screen work to auto-ethnography and now incorporates Jung’s “active imagination” and Gendlin’s *Focusing as well as mindfulness and notions of the spirit*. She is also a Jungian analyst in training, an Authentic Movement practitioner and Focusing Trainer.

#### **Maria Chatzichristodoulou [aka Maria X]:** *Annie Abrahams's Experiments in Intimacy*

**Abstract:** This article explores the work of French-based pioneer of networked performance art, Annie Abrahams, in relation to notions of intimacy in mediated performance practice. Specifically, it explores two of Abrahams’s pieces *Shared Still Life / Nature Morte Partagée* (2010) and *L’Un La Poupée de L’Autre (One the Puppet of the Other)* (2007). The article suggests that, unlike a plethora of other technologised practices, Abrahams’s works resist the celebration of utopic notions of technologies of connectivity and interactivity. Instead their focus is on the broken links, the miscommunications, in short, the failures of both technological and human connectivity. The article argues that the acceptance of failure as an element that is embedded in the make-up of the networks is what renders Abrahams’s Internet embodied and visceral, “an Internet of emotions.” (Catlow *Intimate Collaborations* n/p). It further argues in favour of a “banality” that characterises Abrahams’s work –this banality is not the safe zone of intimacy that Johnson has identified, but a far more troubling manifestation of it (n/p). Finally, the article proposes that Abrahams belongs to a generation of female artists who, as Morse has suggested, seek to challenge their very artistic medium (16-33).

**Author's Bio:** Maria Chatzichristodoulou [aka Maria X] is a cultural practitioner (curator, performer, producer, writer). She is Director of Postgraduate Studies and Lecturer in Theatre & Performance at the School of Arts and New Media, University of Hull. Maria completed her PhD at Goldsmiths Digital Studios, University of London in 2010, on *Cybertheatres*. She is co-editor of the volume *Interfaces of Performance* (Ashgate, 2009) and of the forthcoming volume *Intimacy: Across Digital and Visceral Performance* (Palgrave Macmillan). In 2007 Maria initiated, co-directed and produced the festival and symposium *Intimacy* in London (Goldsmiths, Laban, Home London) and online. In the past she worked as a community officer (*The Albany*) and taught at Goldsmiths, Birkbeck, Queen Mary (all University of London Colleges) and Richmond the International American University, as well as in Further Education. She also was the co-founder and co-director of the *International Medi@terra Media Arts Festival* as well as *Fornos Centre of Digital Culture* (Athens, Greece). A regular contributor to *Furtherfield* and *Digimag*, Maria also sits on the Board of the *Body, Space and Technology Journal* and is member of the Programming Committee of the *Digital Resources in Humanities and the Arts (DRHA)* conference, as well as the *Thursday Club* (Goldsmiths). She has lectured and published widely.

#### **Anna Furse:** *Don Juan. Who? / Don Juan.Kdo? From Cyber Space to Theatre Space*

**Abstract:** This article traces the genealogy of the production *Don Juan. Who?/Don Juan.Kdo?* by Anna Furse. This was a co-production between my company *Athletes of the Heart UK* and *Mladinsko*

*Gledalisce, Ljubljana. The emergence of the production concept and its development by writing anonymously in cyberspace over eighteen months prior to live rehearsals is contextualised in consideration of the Don Juan archetype as he appears in historical and contemporary culture. The article is accompanied by a brief background to Don Juan in the culture in various media and the Production Programme.*

**Author's Bio:** *Anna Furse is an award-winning theatre director and published writer who has worked with feminist themes and approaches to devised and text-based works throughout her career, driven by here continuous research into issue of the body and physical training and approaches to performance making. Reader in Theatre and Performance at Goldsmiths, University of London, she directs the MA in Performance Making and curates and chairs The Performance Research Forum alongside teaching undergraduate courses and supervising PhDs. Her company Athletes of the Heart produces new works for the stage and the Athletes of the Heart Laboratory company, comprising international graduates of her MA programme, perform and present researches into physical theatre ([www.athetesoftheheart.org](http://www.athetesoftheheart.org)). Don Juan. Who? / Don Juan.Kdo will be published by Methuen in a new anthology Theatre in Pieces in 2011. A video of the production is available in the ArtsArchives catalogue ([www.arts-archives.org](http://www.arts-archives.org))*

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