

## The Location and Theory of Looking

John Freeman

Art is what happens when you take an object out of context and give it a new thought. -Marcel Duchamp<sup>1</sup>

Is this (1917) definition of art still relevant? Still resonant? Has critical theory taken us closer to an understanding of the nature of art? Are answers possible? Does the dissemination of the findings (the probings) of investigation reveal the research or the researcher? Can that which seeks to challenge convention be dissected according to the conventional schema it strives to corrupt? Can the term "skills-based" refer as readily to conceptualization, innovation, and presentation as to technique, repetition, and representation? Why does the artist make art? Damien Hirst has said, "I sometimes feel as if I have nothing to say, I often want to communicate this" (Lee 6-8). Chris Burden says, "I don't think art should have any purpose" (18). Are these positions at odds or in line with contemporary views on the artist's role? When Picabia drew a picture, which Breton immediately erased, did (does) the 'power' of the work reside in the collaborative ephemerality of the action or in the residuum of a loaded absence of lines (Mann 108)? In the event or in the object? Have notions of creativity (since Duchamp?) been rendered obsolete in a world where selective eclecticism seems to make plagiarism its ploy? Where concepts of philistinism collapse and self-destruct? Where the million dollar copy is as 'real' as the chintz original?

A number of different aesthetic theories have been proposed with the aim of discovering what it is that all works of art (all works of theatre? all works of performance?) share: the general consensus seems to be that these common elements are imitation, expression or form (Sheppard). The relationship of performance to these ostensibly vitally linked phenomena will form the core of this paper . . . a paper wherein the concern is not so much with an appraisal of the (in)accuracy of taxonomical distinction, as an exploration of the contemporary performative event within and against a framework of existing criteria.

We might, during the course of this essay, reasonably ask ourselves what sorts of judgement we make when we critique works of theatre, works of art. We might further consider whether the watcher's interpretation can be valued above the intentions of the watched . . . explore the instability of the basis, the always unfixed ground, on which we say, with the well-rehearsed rhetoric of scholarly 'expertise,' that our critical interpretations are justified and justifiable. We might question whether or not we feel that the artist has certain obligations and whether

the audience is similarly 'obliged.' If, during the process of self-reflection, we are willing to accept that our perceptions of theatre (of all art) are based on a mixture of experience and expectation, does it follow that the notion, the old academic bedrock, of 'objectivity' is in any way possible and/or desirable? Do we feel that the view of culture contained within postmodern sensibility has led to such an irrevocable pluralism that any and all notions of the 'authoritative view' are discredited? In what sense, if any, we need to ask ourselves, can a work of theatre either have 'meaning' or convey 'truth'? Picasso called art "the lie that tells the truth": can a 'lie' be 'truthful'? Is all performative presentation intrinsically representational, in as much as the body is always 'representative' of something else: of gender, of age, of 'type'?

Who defines the object or event as 'art'? Is it the maker or the receiver? If I choose to view 'life' as 'art' does the application of the word ('art') serve as its own definition? Can everyday activity be 'theatre' without any applied theatricality? Can 'life' become 'art' with no applied 'art-ness'? Can the unlicensed and non-negotiated gaze transform that which (that who) it rests upon, without the compliance, or even the knowledge, of the recipient of the gaze? If theatre involves an implicit relationship with convention, with tradition, to what extent is it possible to step beyond accepted (acceptable) practice and still be seen as 'theatre'?

Performance has continually addressed (and had addressed for it) the question of what it is. Moreover, the specific forms within performance: Theatre, Performance Art, Happenings, and certain Installations, have been subject to the same attempt to secure and establish their own genre-specific boundaries—a feat made more complex (not to say self-defeating) by the notion of marginality and slippage as (un)stated aims. Attempts to erect and maintain harmonious justifications as to what differentiates 'art' from 'non-art,' 'theatre' from 'performance' and 'performance' from 'life' will always be insecure, and, indeed, will become increasingly less stable, as long as a working with(in) the slip of stability remains one of the identifiable elements that helps mark out and separate the contemporary (the progressive) from the mainstream (the repetitive).

To what extent do notions of morality determine, or intrude upon, our perceptions of what is and what is not (acceptable) art? For example, Joseph (John) Merrick, the so-called 'Elephant-Man,' was presented, quite legally, to the paying public. Was this (simply) as Merrick's manager claimed, a "demonstration of the wonders of nature" (Altick, R.D.); an act of glorification; or an artistically framed presentation? In countries where executions are legal, does the public nature of the act (and the attendant crowd) create what might quite logically be termed a 'dramatic presentation'? Robert Wilson presented a two-person show, *Dialog Curious George*, with Christopher Knowles (in a theatre and

to a paying audience) into a series of responses. Does the context, the theatre, the audience, etc. (to say nothing of Wilson's directorial *intention*) legitimize the activity as art? Schechner writes:

Knowles was an elephant bowing at the circus . . . whatever his remarks meant to members of the audience they meant, or were, something else to Knowles. Because Knowles couldn't lie, he couldn't be an actor . . . he could only be *situated and displayed as if he were an actor* inside Wilson's show (38).

Does this 'lack of knowing(ness)' on the part of the 'performer' prevent the work from being 'theatre'? Do moral objections have any place in discussions of art? If Orlan chooses to alter her appearance through cosmetic surgery as art (making herself 'ugly' rather than more 'beautiful') can we (should we) separate issues of morality and aesthetics? Choosing to disregard Wittgenstein's theory that doubt is a requisite of knowledge, Roger Kimball, the author of *Tenured Radicals: How Politics Has Corrupted Our Higher Education*, is emphatic in the certainty of his assertion that "raids on the fringes of extremity have helped to transform the art world into a moral cesspool" (*Guardian* 27), continuing in this vein to claim that "the relationship between freedom of expression and the limits of acceptable behavior . . . are not necessarily the same" (27), that the legal right to make certain kinds of art should not hold sway over the (potential) impact of its moral unpleasantness. Kimball's position raises the question of the extent to which 'morality' itself is defined by taste (and its flipside, prejudice), alongside the wide-ranging implications on an art (on a theatre) that denies, or is denied, certain subjects. The suggestion that a performance is 'morally bad' usually carries with it the implication that the presentation will somehow corrupt its audience. We hear this argument more often applied to cinema than to theatre . . . though there are noted (notorious?) examples to the contrary, such as Edward Bond's *Saved* (1965) and Howard Brenton's *Romans in Britain* (1980). The argument that art can corrupt is not a new one . . . in 1851, *The Edinburgh Review* contained the following section:

One powerful agent for depraving the boyish classes of our population in our towns and cities is to be found in the cheap concerts, shows and theatres . . . when our fear of interfering with personal and public liberty allows these shows and theatres to be training schools of the coarsest and most open vice and filthiness—it is not to be wondered at, that the boy who is led on to haunt them becomes rapidly corrupted and demoralized,

and seeks to be the doer of the infamies which have interested him as a spectator (Barker and Petley 68-69).

Are suggestions that films (such as *Reservoir Dogs*, *Taxi Driver* and the *Child's Play* trilogy) are potentially corrupting, or de-sensitizing, whereas plays (such as *King Lear*, *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Medea*) are generally not, concerned with issues of graphic 'realism' or cultural elitism? It is useful to remember that Charles Manson claimed to have been guided by certain Beatles tracks (played backwards); after shooting John Lennon, Mark Chapman sat down next to the body and read a copy of *Catcher in the Rye*; whilst Peter Sutcliffe was 'inspired' to his killing spree by repeated readings of *The Bible*.

Britain was later than almost every country in the west to grant a general release to the David Cronenberg film, *Crash*, for fear that it would "deprave and corrupt" (B.B.F.C.); a number of councils have acted independently in banning the film from their screens . . . a film which one must be an adult to view, whilst the book is on sale in those same cities to anyone with £6.99. Is this just? Is this protection of the 'moral majority' or prejudice that favors literature over 'popular art'? It might be argued that in making decisions of censorship based entirely on one's own ethical convictions, the maker of the decision (the censor) is implicitly proposing a negative view of the dissenting 'other' as a morally inferior being. This notion is embodied in "The Government Green Paper on Broadcasting, 1988," in its decree that nothing shall be shown "which offends against good taste." If the function of art "is to extend and deepen our perception, experience and understanding of the world" (Watson 5) and also to "propose radically new forms for making sense of (that) world" (Watson 5), then censorship based on issues of 'taste' becomes a contradiction in terms. Who defines 'taste,' and by what criterion is one's taste recognizably 'good'? Why will broadcasters show a body shot dead in the same frame that they replace the word 'fuck' with 'frig'? Why are representations of murder (an illegal act) readily available, when representations of sex (a legal act) are not?

Writing in 1990, Bruce Wilshire, Professor of Philosophy at Rutgers University, argued that "if an alleged theatrical . . . activity extends into the ethical domain, and it is clearly bad morally, we are beyond theatrical categories of description and evaluation" (Wilshire T122). But, not least within the assumed 'freedom' of artistic endeavor, who among us can define the act as "clearly bad"? Is the Marcus Harvey portrait of convicted killer, Myra Hindley—made up of a four year old child's hand prints—'immoral art' or art that depicts immorality? Does the 'guilt' of the nature depicted so infect the reflection in the mirror of art that we are unable to discern any distinction between the two? To separate the barbarity of the murders from art that serves, in the manner of the making and the

scale of the made, as a shocking reminder? Criminal law divides offences into *malum en se*—those which are wrong in themselves—and *malum prohibita*—those which context and intention contrive to define. If Kimball's dismissively hysterical description of a great swathe of artists as "knaves, charlatans (and) eager hucksters" (he cites, amongst others, the "grotesque" Karen Finley, the "sloganeering (and) incomprehensible" Cindy Sherman and the "pathetic" Chris Burden) condemns the aesthetically displeasing to the ranks of the inherently evil, then Wilshire's more measured prose is ultimately no less damning.

Certainly, art has the capacity to alter the emotional state of the receiver, whether by explicit design, in the case of pornography or generic advertising, for example, or by association, witnessed in certain types of music, from film soundtracks a la *Psycho* to the Muzak of the elevator and the shopping mall; but to suggest that overtly 'created' art has a power that is denied to the documentary seems bizarre: if watching *Rambo* can de-sensitize us to aggression, why wouldn't watching Alain Prost make us drive more quickly? If watching Jean Claude Van Damme suggests violence as a solution to problems, why wouldn't this same 'truth' apply when the camera shows one 'sportsman' punching another on the field of play, when we see one country invading another?

Hirst says that his art "opens a path for the viewer into areas of experience which are not anti-moral or amoral, but extra-moral. We take a holiday from our ethics into a world created from death and violence about which we are invited not to care—a world where bad taste is driven to the point of elegance, and disgust filtered into delight" (Burns). To what extent can Hirst's thoughts be said to exemplify contemporary views? Are they acceptable? How is a line drawn between Hirst and the 1988 Green Paper comments on 'good taste'? Between the artist and the state? Between expression and repression? Does the act of imitation offer up its own defense? Is it the reality of Harvey's borrowed hand prints that offends? Does 'pretense' incite less virulent passion than a 'presence' which exceeds its frame? We are aware that imitation was one of the earliest theoretical views on art: we know that Plato believed in ideal qualities, ideal forms, and felt that it was the job of art to imitate these qualities. Plato's view places an intrinsically diminishing value on art, in as much as art, by its nature, is always inferior to life. Richard Schechner says a similar thing . . . namely that experience is raw and art is cooked . . . *ergo* the one must always follow the other and never *vice versa*.

If we accord to theories of imitation, does it follow that the most highly regarded art is that which most accurately (most closely) imitates 'life' (the Platonic ideal)? The answer is almost certainly 'no.' For example, waxworks at Madame Tussaud's are (generally) not highly regarded as 'art' (Searle 14-15). In principle, works of art are not valued just because they are imitative.

Certainly, we know that works which are not imitative at all may be valued highly: not just abstract art (in its broadest sense), but almost all music, for instance. Imitation does not fully (perhaps not at all!) explain why it is that we create spaces in society for art to exist, or indeed to what state 'it' is that art aspires.

Total illusion is rare in theatre. Invisible theatre may be the closest we get to the phenomenon. With naturalism or realism, even at their most extreme (the paradigm of rehearsal to the point of seeming spontaneity) we are unlikely to 'believe' the events on stage. Suspension of disbelief is not the same thing as belief: we adhere to the convention of taking the on-stage world for the 'real world' at the same time as we know all the time that it is not. A very similar thing happens to actors working within a naturalistic convention. Whereas 'reality' is identified by its irreversibility, by its once-only-ness, 'realism' is defined by its rehearsed ability to be repeated and rephrased *ad infinitum*. The two are antithetical in the extreme, for the one thing that realism can never achieve is the reality it strives so hard to depict. One could go further and suggest that the greater the success of this searching for mimetic authenticity, the further one travels from the source. The adherence to a naturalist/ realist mode demands that the essence of performance is that which is being performed rather than s/he who is performing, and that "the performer's prime function is to reduce her or his own self in order to act as a transmitter for an intentionality which is contained within the otherness of character" (Freeman, J); to "conceal those traits of character which would otherwise distinguish the representor from the represented" (Freeman, J). If the craft of realism is the pursuit of representation which denies itself by virtue of its own *raison d'être*, then the world of absurdity looms somewhat closer than disciples of the method school might like to think.

It is fair to say at this stage that we can anticipate serious flaws in representation-as-convention as a benchmark for an appreciation of performance when we start to attend to the work of those: Acconci, Burden, Orlan, Gray, Abramovic *et al*, who present themselves (or, more accurately, their performative or performatized selves) as both artist and art-object. Conversely, if it emerges that the notion of 'pure' presentation is no more than an impossible and, ironically enough, self-denying myth, making representation an inevitable consequence of the process (or even the description) of display, then the *attempt* at 'presenting the real' (the bicycle wheel, the gunshot wound, the pentagram carved into the flesh) stands as a doubly powerful method of conveying the complexity at the crux of art through the simplicity of the otherwise unmediated self.

Whatever the specific rationale, many contemporary artists are demonstrating a desire to locate the body (often, though not always, the artist's

own) as that which provide material for their practice. Bill Viola has written that "The larger struggle we are witnessing today is not between conflicting moral beliefs, between the legal system and individual freedom, between nature and technology; it is between our inner and outer lives, and our bodies are the area where this belief is being played out" (Viola 132). The work of art (the performance) is now directing the receiver towards the artists themselves, so that the performance (the art) becomes an illustration of the fact(s) of the performer(s). The performance is thus inclined towards the transparency, which, in *lieu* of artifice, inclines our understanding to the maker *via* the made. This is not to suggest that the 'work,' in this case, the performer's body, functions as an unmediated object, rather, to use Julia Kristeva's terminology, the use of the body is made 'abject,' in as much as it is "neither subject nor object . . . when one is in a state of abjection, the borders between the object and the subject cannot be maintained" (Penwarden 22). The body as representation of the self draws clearly on the ready-mades of Duchamp, on a desire for 'authentic' expression by means other than mimetic transformation, tracing a line through a century of art and an inheritance of conceptual practice. The 'ready-made body' is intrinsically transformative: it recognizes itself (and asks the viewer to recognize it) as an artificial construction at the same time as it blurs the edge between the **as** and the **as if**; in this way, the "text/object confrontation . . . the clash of the literal and the metaphoric (and) the irony of artistic creation through reiteration of the already used" (James 277) foregrounds the play of the here and now in the place of the there and then.

If we are unable to articulate a coherent distinction between aesthetics and ethics, between the copy and the source, between 'art' and 'life,' how unstable are distinctions between forms? The edges can blur in even the most mainstream of work: Frederick Church offered an early example of content being radically redefined by context, when his landscape, *Heart of the Andes*, toured major US cities and was subsequently 'staged' in halls, surrounded by soft lights and framed with live greenery, inviting the spectator to view the painted mountains as if from a glade. The spectators were further invited to view the painting through opera glasses, allowing the eye to explore the view section by section. As a type of compensation for the immobility of the presentation, the spectator was encouraged to take an overtly 'active' role: to animate the painting through imaginative performance: to turn the art (object) into an (art) event. Certainly, we know that distinctions within the performing arts are relatively recent. As Bernard Beckerman points out:

Traditional performance, whether in Africa, the Orient, or Ancient Greece, did not separate vocal music, speech, dance

and instrumental music as rigidly as we do. Even the theatre of the eighteenth century combined music, dance and drama on one bill (12-13).

Changes occur in art, and, subsequently, in the way we view and receive art, by the deliberate exploitation of conventions. Is it form that changes art or is it content? Can we divorce the two? If we take the view that art is imitation to mean that all art is representational are we wrong? In the context of performance, can we distinguish between representation and presentation in terms, at least, of intent? Is the presentation of the self intrinsically representational, in as much as in making myself (my 'self') public I am engaging in an intrinsically representational (re)presentational process? (Lewis 13). Most music is not representational, most abstract painting is not representational . . . almost all theatre is. Does this mean that 'art' cannot be judged generically? Are there different 'rules' for different forms?

Progressive performance continues to demonstrate a marked disinclination to engage in representation as the pursuit of the illusionary 'other.' We could say that a feature of this work is its aspiration to foreground its own practice, to represent above all else its own processes of representation. Paradoxically, in accepting (in literally 'applauding') this move away from mimetic representation, alongside a generic distrust of the processes through which art might be seen to (seek to) create a version of reality *via* universal truth, one is making a space for this essentially postmodernist position to constitute the clear holding up of a mirror to (human) nature. For if 'reality' is increasingly deemed to be a thing unfixed and unrealizable, then it follows that an art which is mimetic, in the truest sense, will have no real option but to adhere to this increasingly fragmented world-view. If 'reality' has lost the objective currency (the closure) of the authoritative, then postmodern practice is at its most mimetic in exactly those moments when it emphatically resists the urge towards conclusion *via* fixity; when it holds the mirror of art up to the representational structures that define the 'it' of art as the 'it' of life. 'Performance,' like 'life,' is exposed as an endless construction . . . in the same way, postmodern performance might be most fruitfully understood as the representational mimesis of a postmodern world.

That the subversion of performance cannot be established except by performative means is a given; in this way, postmodernism utilizes the innovations of modernism at the same time as it offers a rejection of modernism's very ideologies and beliefs. In this plundering of previous forms, alongside a very real disinclination to locate that which is taken within its original frame, postmodernism demonstrates its own perspective on the past as another world: as history stripped of its chronology, status and attendant authenticating power.



Consequently, a recurring feature of postmodern performance is an intrinsically theoretical self-consciousness, a self-referentiality which encompasses the 'self' of the artist and, no less centrally, the 'self' of art. In deploying the style and denying the context, the re-located form is given not only distance but irony. By the same token, postmodernism advertises both its 'newness' and its 'knowing' through its ransacking of a selective back-catalogue, through its refusal to engage, on any other than its own eclectic terms, with the past that so patently sustains it.

Naturally, not every theorist/practitioner regards the specific peculiarity of the present time as being unique enough (gradations of unique?) to bring into serious question, and still more serious doubt, the efficacy of previous forms. In ignoring the phenomenon of postmodernism (if one doesn't look at it, it doesn't exist?) one can maintain a faith in the models that worked in earlier times. In denying society the descriptor 'postmodern,' one is highly unlikely to regard postmodern performance as anything other than the formulaic application of pointless 'trends'; of vacuous content and cynical form; of the dysfunctional expression of a functional world.

Expression itself forms only one aspect of art and some works of art are more overtly expressive than others . . . does this make them 'better'? With representational, mimetic, performance, we are generally given the situation and asked to imagine feeling the emotion . . . to empathize. With other types of work we might be presented with a stimulus to certain emotions without being given a contextualising situation. Narrative, for example, provides a situation, a frame, which allows the spectator to 'make sense' of the emotions engendered. The work often demonstrates a sort of self-reliance. It creates its own world ('the world of the play'), within which certain emotional states are located. With some work, with Chekhov and also with Brecht, both of whom explored narrative structures, the product is often possessed of complexity and depth. Whilst Chekhovian drama tends towards empathy, Brechtian drama asks that we question that which we see. It would be a crude and inaccurate distinction to say that the one makes us feel and the other makes us think. For our purposes, it is enough (here) to say that the frame, the narrative form, whether domestic or epic, linear or episodic, contextualizes that which is expressed. Performance art tends not to do this; an absence or fragmentation of narrative structure tends not to do this; certain processes intrinsic to views of postmodernism and deconstruction tend to disrupt this. If expression is not contextualized within the art-event itself, how do we assess it? Do we need to know the artist of the artist's intentions in order to know the art?

Deconstruction, the exposing of the internal contradictions in texts, demonstrates a concern with the formal features at work within the narratological frame. Rather than being antithetical to authorial structure *per se*, the echoing

infamy (sic) of "The Death of the Author," deconstruction can be seen as a process towards a "better understanding of the fundamental structures of narrative . . . (an approach that offers) extremely accurate models for understanding the contemporary experience of the world as a construction, an artifice, a web of interdependent semiotic systems" (Waugh 9). There is an increasingly widely held view that works are identified by the forms and structures that make them and that the study of art, naturally, amounts to the study of form. We might say that content is what is done, whilst form is the way it is carried out. Any study which concentrates on the art itself, rather than the artist or the audience, will inevitably be concerned with formal features: in this way, questions of how the art-work is constructed become absolutely central (Kirby).

Analysis of this type has been overtaken somewhat by critical responses to text in performance (or performance texts) which regard the written text as an incomplete and largely inaccurate aspect of the performative whole. Formalist analysis remains, however, a useful means of analyzing intention through authorial manipulation . . . if only to understand more fully the ways in which this original intent is subject to the inevitability of change. Nothing that is framed by or as 'art' can ever be said to speak for itself and the process of selection (the position from which we choose to view, the duration of the gaze, the most stridently 'objective' reading of the work) is never divorced from interpretation.

Structuralism, itself an influential type of formalist criticism, places great stress on the relationship between different elements in a work of art. Formalist criticism not only draws attention to the relationship between the different elements at work in (within) an art-object or event, it will often regard the coherence of those elements into a unified whole as a supreme virtue. Formalism by itself cannot really cope with the diversity of art (which happens when form is applied at random, as in certain 'Happenings,' for instance? (Sandford). Or when formal elements are deliberately and disconcertingly juxtaposed? Not all works of art that we might regard as 'successful' succeed because of the unified ordering of their elements and works of art, in the final analysis, are not independent of their makers. Can we read or in any way 'receive' Shakespeare's work without having our reception shaped by our mythologizing of the man and our canonizing of his work? Without filtering our responses through the Arnoldsque assertion that the 'high' art of Shakespeare is a civilizing agent, comprised—in some non-contestable way—of the "best that has been thought and said in the world" (Arnold)?

Interpretation takes the place of meaning. One could argue that the discussion or notion of 'meaning' might be best (only ever) reserved for those works of (performance) art where a precise correlation between the signifier and that which is signified is in attendance . . . and these, if they exist at all as other

than a nostalgic faith in clarity, are in an extreme minority. In general, we might more safely say, that even with the most seemingly 'obvious' works, the maker's creative and intellectual faculties are brought to bear in order to show 'how things might be,' rather than in the transmission of specific 'meaning.' Even when a theatrical work has the transmission of meaning as its avowed intention, it is almost certainly true to say that the subsequent reception of that meaning is determined by a variety of factors, many of which are beyond the control of the artist. Current perspectives function through a recognition that performance is mediated by a vast array of meaning-making phenomena, each of which is subject to its own value-system. Not only can the complicated manner of the showing never be fully divorced from that which is shown, but the receiver of the art has to filter the artist's intention (itself a sometimes elusive term) through her or his own mood, intention, experience, state of receptivity, politics, prejudices, intelligence, desires, etc. (the list of 'factors' in our processes of understanding is vast).

An ability to critique a work of art allows us not so much to uncover a single, exclusive meaning (mono-interpretation) as to arrive at (academically?) justifiable ways of articulating our responses . . . which are themselves arrived at with a recognition that alternative views are not so much acceptable as inevitable.

The late Michael Kirby preferred to speak of 'Referential' and 'Non-Referential' theatre rather than the overtly valuable 'meaningful' and the intrinsically pejorative 'meaningless.' For Kirby, there could be work without meaning, but there could never be work without significance . . . the example he used is the now-famous Rorschach ink-blot: the Rorschach test exists as a near-perfect example of interpretation, of significance without meaning. Although no 'message' is sent (in as much as the ink-blot is formed by chance) the 'created' image is open to a multiplicity of interpretations, each of which is, by definition, justifiable. Whilst not all theatre aspires to this state of absolute non-referentiality, certain examples do. In theatre, as in art generally (generically) the absence of an overt or simplistic 'meaning' is no indication that the work is without 'significance.'

Does this mean that performance is an appropriate site for work which is either 'private,' 'non-emotional' or 'anti-mimetic'? Do any definitions of performance exist which satisfy even the brief criteria contained in this paper? Is Boal wrong when he demands passion rather than banality? (Boal, A). Is Barba wrong when he specifies the application of extra-daily technique? (Barba and Savarese). Is Schechner wrong in his analogy of the raw and the cooked?

The word 'Theatre' originates from the Greek 'Theatron,' meaning, literally, 'where you view.' 'Theory' comes from the same source. It meant then, and means now, contemplation, looking at, investigation.

Theatre is and always has been the location and the theory of looking. Theory and theatre are not merely the mutually compatible areas of Patrice Pavis' non-hierarchical relationship between 'doing' and 'thinking' (Pavis), any more than they can be said to exist at Marjorie Perloff's point wherein "to talk about art becomes equivalent to making it" (Perloff 90), they are one and the same phenomenon, inseparable, indivisible. Theatre is at once both the location (the site) and the act (the sight) of theoretical encounter. Whilst no one theory can lay claim to anything approaching the universal appeal for validity of those 'movements' aligned to the long-defunct avant-garde, to speak now of a theatre beyond theory, or, more perversely, to theorize about the 'theory-death' of performance, is to enter into an acute engagement with precisely that which the words themselves are seeking so resolutely to resist. Theatre is a discursive act and the 'frame' around the performance is always already as much a frame of mind as a frame of space or time.

The slip of stability. The breaking and re-making of the frame. The expansion of performance beyond the limits of convention. Progressive performance is the theatricalization of theory, the showing of thinking through the showing of show . . . no longer an act of creation, held up to theoretical interrogation, but an act of theoretical interrogation in itself. An act of theory. An act of looking.

*University College, Chester*  
*University of Liverpool*

## Note

1. Tomkins, Calvin. *Duchamp*. Chatto and Windus, 1997. 576.

## Works Cited

- Altick, R.D. *The Shows of London*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1978.
- Arnold, Matthew. *Culture and Anarchy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1869.
- Barba, E., and Nicola Savarese. *Ill-Effects*. London: Routledge, 1991.
- Barker, M., and Julian Petley. *Ill-Effects*. London: Routledge, 1997.

- Beckerman, Bernard. *Theatrical Presentation*. London: Routledge, 1990.
- Boal, Augusto. *The Rainbow of Desire: The Boal Method of Theatre and Therapy*. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Burden, Chris. *Performance*. Issue 10. 1991
- Burn, Gordon. "Hirst World." *The Guardian*. August 31, 1996.
- Freeman, John. *Performance Practice*. Vol. 2. 1996.
- James, Carol P. *An Original Revolutionary: or What Became of Readymades. The Definitely Unfinished Marcel Duchamp*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991.
- Kimball, Roger. "Taboo or not Taboo, That is the Question." *The Guardian*. April 27, 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Tenured Radicals: How Politics Corrupted Our Higher Education*. London: Harper-Collins, 1996.
- Kirby, Michael. *A Formalist Theatre*. University Center: Pennsylvania University Press, 1987.
- Lee, David. "Damien Hirst in Profile." *Art Review*. 1995.
- Lewis, A. "Me, Me, Me, Me." *The Guardian*. April 22, 1997.
- Mann, Paul. *The Theory Death of the Avant-Garde*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991.
- Pavis, Patrice. *Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1991.
- Penwarden, Charles. "Of Word and Flesh: An Interview with Julia Kristeva," *Rites of Passage*. London: Methuen, 1995.
- Perloff, Marjorie. *The Futurist Movement: Avant-Garde, Avant-Guerre, and the Language of Rupture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986.
- Sandford, Mariellen R. *Happenings and Other Acts*. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Searle, Adrian. "It's the Real Thing. Not." *The Guardian*. April 15, 1997.
- Schechner, Richard, and Willa Appel. *By Means of Performance*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990.
- Sheppard, Anne. *Aesthetics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Tomkins, Calvin. *Duchamp*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1997.
- Viola, Bill. "The Body Asleep: Pour la suite du monde." *Rites of Passage: art for the end of the century*. London: Tate Gallery Publications, 1992.
- Watson, Gray. *Performance* 65/66, 1992.
- Waugh, Patricia. "Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction." London: Routledge, 1984.
- Wilshire, Bruce. "The Concept of the Paratheatrical." *The Drama Review* 34.4 (T122), 1990.

## EMPIRICAL STUDIES OF THE ARTS

Executive Editor: Colin Martindale  
IAEA Newsletter Editor: Holger Höge

### Advisory Editors

Irvin L. Child  
Gerald Cupchik  
Robert Francés  
Holger Höge  
Morris Holbrook  
Pavel Machotka

### Editorial Board

Richard Bailey  
Barron Brainard  
Robert De Beaugrande  
Howard Becker  
Frans Boselie  
W. Ray Crozier  
Hans J. Eysenck  
Robert Faulkner  
Howard Gardner  
László Halász  
Ravenna Helson  
Nathan Kogan  
Shulamith Kreidler  
George Kubler  
Peng Lixun  
Evan Maurer  
Charls Pearson  
Richard A. Peterson  
Vladimir Petrov  
Gerald Prince  
Donald Ross  
Thomas A. Sebeok  
Valentin Semenov  
Dean Keith Simonton  
John B. Smith  
Reuren Tsur  
Will Van Peer  
Frank Willett

### Aims & Scope:

A rigorously peer-refereed journal for those professionals interested in any aspect of art, music, or literature, *Empirical Studies of the Arts* will be indispensable to their work.

Dedicated subject editors serve the fields of anthropology, applied aesthetics, psychology, sociology, and computational stylistics.

### Abstracted and Indexed in:

A.P.A.-Psychinfo Database; A.P.A.-Psychological Abstracts; Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts; Social Planning/Policy & Development Abstracts; and Sociological Abstracts.

### Subscription Information:

ISSN: 0276-2374 Price per volume—2 issues yearly  
Institutional Rate: \$95.00 Individual Rate: \$34.00  
Postage & handling: \$4.00 U.S. & Canada, \$8.50 elsewhere  
*Complimentary sample issue available upon request*

Baywood Publishing Company, Inc.

26 Austin Avenue, Amityville, NY 11701

Call (516) 691-1270 Fax (516) 691-1770 Call Toll-free (800) 638-7819

e-mail: baywood@baywood.com • web site: <http://baywood.com>