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Editorial
Douglas Rosenberg and Claudia Kappenberg

The art world of the twentieth century was driven by movements and manifestos. It was also a space in which artists generated copious amounts of texts: words on paper that described the nuanced progression of art practice and of new possibilities across the arts. In theory, it seemed as if any serious movement required manifestos, textual references to the existence of such a movement. In practice, such texts offer us a map of the new world that was constantly in the process of discovery throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first century. These textual spaces for contemplation were most often the product of group-think, of cooperative and shared responsibility, of vision, and of a passion for a particular approach to art-making, usually at the edge of the cultural moment. Such spaces mapped the overlaps and collisions of multiple and disparate media as the latter attempted to simultaneously occupy spaces previously the purview of mono-disciplinary practices.

Throughout the twentieth century, art took a number of turns both toward and away from the intermingling of disciplines. However, by the end of the century, artists working in film, video, and dance had reconnected in ways that mirrored a number of other previous significant historical moments. For example, the interdisciplinary turn manifested similarly in the early 1900s in Dada via the work of René Clair and his colleagues; later at The Bauhaus; and again in mid-century at Black Mountain College and in the Happenings and theatrical collaborations of Allan Kaprow, Carolee Schneeman, Eleanor Antin, as well as in the work of Argentine filmmaker Narcisa Hirsch and others. We saw it again in the 1970s and 80s in work by artists such as Mary Lucier and Nam Jun Paik in the United States and David Hall in England, as well as a host of other film and video artists. Later the thread continued in work by Merce Cunningham and Charles Atlas, followed by Elliot Caplan; or in Belgium in the work of Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker and Thierry de May. By the start of the new millennium, such co-mingling of disciplines became a normative practice rather than the exception and in dance this was evident in both live and mediated work.

Screendance, as often discussed in the pages of this journal, is decidedly interdisciplinary. It is also decidedly feminist; even a cursory indexing of the selections at international screendance festivals will reinforce this idea. Further, the pages of this journal and the editorial board also reflect a strong feminist voice, as does the gender breakout of scholars who have contributed books specifically honed toward establishing theories relating to dance on screen. Perhaps this is simply a post-modern condition, or perhaps it is something more.

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Professor George Leonard, writing about the art historian Henry Sayre's ground-breaking book, *The Object of Performance*, notes that Sayre codes postmodernism itself as female. Leonard notes:

> Sayre … chronicles how, excluded from painting, women artists found, in the late 1960s, an outlet in performance art forms. Building outward from a foothold in expressive dance, such women as Yvonne Rainer, Eleanor Antin, Carolee Schneemann, Laurie Anderson and Cindy Sherman began incorporating poetry, music, narrative, film and still photography into ever more interdisciplinary and unclassifiable works…. [however] this "new feminist avant-garde" was institutionally invisible.[1]

As we know, Yvonne Rainer was instrumental in blurring boundaries between live and mediated dance in such early works as *Hand Movie* (1966), and other later cinematic projects. Art historian Sayre forcefully pulls Rainer into his narrative about postmodern feminist art practice and the prevailing art world, as Leonard explains:

> One of the first of these performances, Sayre tells us, was Rainer's "Ordinary Dance," performed July 6, 1962, "a collage of pure dance movements and observed behavior." Instead of music, Rainer spoke "an autobiographical narrative" as she danced. Her "dance" was itself often a mimicking of everyday motions, even facial expressions that she'd observed in the subway.[2]

While in general, historians have elided dance as a part of the art historical canon, Sayre (along with such writers as RoseLee Goldberg) identifies dance as a significant force in eroding disciplinary boundaries. Such erosions lead ultimately to post-modernism, to interdisciplinary art practice, to the re-gendering of the art world, and to screendance.

Fast-forward to 2014, however, and the landscape of screendance looks quite different from Rainer's era. Of course the entire culture has remarkably changed, that is a given; dance and media have followed accordingly. This issue features a piece by Priscilla Guy, a choreographer/filmmaker and theorist from Montreal who offers a feminist reading of the recent project by director Mike Figgis, *The Co(te)lette Film*. The film, a cinematographic adaptation of a live performance by Dutch choreographer Ann Van den Broek, is perhaps the perfect catalyst for a discussion about the current state of the art form. Garnering much attention but little push back for its overt carnality, *The Co(te)lette Film* is either the coming of age of screendance or the end of the form, depending on the viewer's position vis-à-vis the politics of gender and the sexualisation of bodies on screen, or simply the proclivity of screendance to titillate its audience via the reproduction of clichéd representation. On the other end of the spectrum in current screendance productions is the collaboration between Siobhan Davies and David Hinton, *All this Can Happen*. Reviewed by Kyra Norman, the film

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reaches back to the photographic experiments of Étienne-Jules Marey and Eadweard Muybridge and, as Norman articulates in her essay, provides a counterpoint to the glossy *surfacing* of bodies on screen that we have come to see at many festivals and elsewhere in mediated depictions of dance and performance in general. Both Guy and Norman theorize from a holistic notion of what dance on screen means as a practice: that as a practice it is to be held accountable for its own affairs, its images and its transgressions. Art, to be taken seriously, must also take responsibility for the wake it creates from its own gestures.

As we swerve from traditional notions of *separation* in the art world, of cognition and creation as individuated undertakings, we arrive at the overlap of theory and practice. Such overlaps are the focus of this decidedly eclectic issue, the title of which, "Theory into Practice," may also be read as "Practice into Theory." The intent here is to suggest that the two words are end points on either side of a spectrum of interdisciplinary work for the screen, and that each is a point of attraction for the other. Indeed, such attractions are foregrounded in this issue; the reader will see that there are conversations taking place across texts as writers approach similar problems from opposites ends of the spectrum. The often-oppositional encampments of theory and practice co-mingle across many of the texts herein and do so at times in very gestural ways. The reader should have the impression that the writers in this issue are looking very deeply at the films they are addressing, as well as the concepts and ideas they raise: indeed they are. Our field has the benefit of a community of participants who care deeply about the form. We hold each other accountable as any community should and especially as a community involved with such powerful tools as those that produce cultural tropes and icons focused on bodies on screen.

No longer tied to conversations about *technê*, apps, conveniently smarter hardware, and software programs have made the *doing* of technology much simpler. In a way, this phenomenon restates Walter Benjamin's ideas about how mechanical reproduction freed the art object from the domain of tradition, allowing issues of esthetics to become more sharply defined. When the maker is less encumbered by the mechanics of making, other aspects of creative practice rise to the surface, including those related to theory and conceptual rigor.

It has long been the practice of those involved with screendance to contribute ideas and observations about the field that go beyond the objectification of dance into the moving image. Makers of screendance have also been writers and theorists of screendance. This issue comes at a time when there is an increasing fluidity between theory and practice; when those who "make" are also those who think beyond the edges of practice, and whose contributions to the field are often sharply defined by language and by manifesto-like statements of purpose. This is an era in which technologies of representation and of communication have become one in the same. In other words, the tools that "makers" use are the same ones that theorists use; digital technologies collapse difference into pools of knowledge production and

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contemporary culture encourages such fluidity. In other words, when we no longer need to know how to build an engine, we can turn our attention to the poetics of the automobile and the theater of its performance.

This issue is filled with conversations and provocation. In "Cutting Across the Century: An Investigation of the Close-Up and the Long-Shot in 'Cine-Choreography' Since the Invention of the Camera," Katy Pendlebury speaks across the page to Sherril Dodds and Colleen Hooper, who focus on the camera's proclivity for intimacy in "Krumping, Choreography and Close-Ups: A Deleuzian Critique of *So You Think You Can Dance*." Dianne Reid and Ami Skånberg Dahlstedt offer POV texts that bring the viewer into the internal dialog of the choreographer/performer/director, exposing the process of making as they go in "Fleshing the Interface" and "Paradigms of Movement Composition," respectively. Sophie Walon, in "Poetic Phenomenology in Thierry De May's Open Corporealities, Responsive Spaces and Carnal Experience," and Rosemary Candelario in "Bodies, Site, Screen: Eiko and Koma's Dances for Camera," focus on bodies and carnality, writing/theorizing sensuality on the page. Priscilla Guy, Kyra Norman, and Cristiane Bouger reflect on recent works for the screen from widely divergent methodologies, while, in an interview conducted by Douglas Rosenberg in 2007, Katrina McPherson speaks to the future of screendance and to her own ideas about theory and practice from the Open Source VideoDance Symposium. Marc Boucher asks us to consider where we *are* in relation to screendance: he challenges the reader with a densely packed and highly theoretical reading of proprioception and affect as generated by images of bodies on screens. Finally, to bring us back to the discussion of Yvonne Rainer and *Hand Dance*, Anna Heighway expands the reader's ideas about the nature of dance onscreen in "Understanding the 'Dance' in Radical Screendance."

The philosopher G.W.F. Hegel noted, "Art invites us to intellectual consideration, and that not for the purpose of creating art again, but for knowing philosophically what art is."[3] The function of art is no longer mimesis, nor should screendance be mimetic. Invention, risk, and even failure are what drive an artform toward its potential. These essays and artist's pages, reviews and conversations, are intended to fulfill the function that Hegel posits: to incite curiosity and debate about the very nature of the art form.

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Notes

1. George J. Leonard, "Why Postmodernism Is Female: THE OBJECT OF PERFORMANCE The American Avant-Garde Since 1970," *Los Angeles Times*, July 16, 1989, http://articles.latimes.com/1989-07-16/books/bk-5674_1_performance-art.

2. Joshua Wolf Shenk, "The End of 'Genius,'" *New York Times*, July 19, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/20/opinion/sunday/the-end-of-genius.html?_r=0.

3. Quoted in Jean-Marie Schaeffer, *Art of the Modern Age: Philosophy of Art from Kant to Heidegger*, trans. Steven Rendall (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), xi.

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