

Editorial: Expanded Screendance

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This issue marks the 10th anniversary of the International Journal of Screendance. Our first journal appeared in the Spring of 2010 and was entitled “Screendance has not yet been invented.” It both looked at historical precedents and contested limited definitions of ‘screens’ or ‘dance’, opening a space for the discussion of past, present and future thoughts that might shape this field of practice. The title of our second issue, “Scaffolding the Medium” gave a clear sense of purpose as a publication, to create, or make visible, structures that support screendance practice. Each issue since has defined its own parameters and established its own identity: alongside the desire to scaffold, lives the desire to shake things up.

For the past decade an annual issue has been a labour of love, largely curated by the original members of the Screendance Network who created the journal and committed themselves to peopling the volunteer Editorial Board. When we began to imagine the call for this issue of the journal in summer 2019, it was motivated by a desire to open this project up in various practical and theoretical ways: decentralising discussions, making room for other voices, and listening out for the different kinds of questions currently being asked through this form: to look beyond borders, whether those are borders between art forms, genres or geographical locations. What questions are artists / curators / activists asking through their screendance work?

The seismic events of 2020 so far have been key factors in shaping the content of this issue. Writers and editors have worked in a shifting landscape to negotiate emotional, financial and practical challenges, to balance the needs of family, friends and work at this time. Ariadne Mikou and Elisa Frasson, writing from Italy at the beginning of the Covid19 crisis, consider the social, economic and political systems and mechanisms through which screendance is made, in the northern Mediterranean area. They highlight different ways in which curatorial, production and commissioning practices interface with local, as well as global, communities and concerns. Doug Rosenberg reflects on the possibilities for allyship in screendance, reporting from *Regards Hybrides*, a festival that he describes as defining a ‘new wave’ in screendance, through an intersectional curation by Priscilla Guy and Emilie Morin. A desire to extend conversations begun at this event, and to discuss ways of evolving the field toward a more egalitarian space, drives a subsequent conversation between Rosenberg, Cara Hagan and Naomi Macalalad Bragin. Both women are artists and scholars who are finding ways to creatively make change happen across the field. Hagan’s ongoing curatorial project at American Dance Festival is opening up screendance to many new practices and makers, whilst Bragin’s writing and activism shine light on the work of artists and communities who have been historically marginalised. Anna Macdonald’s reflective writing, *Witness*, responds to the work

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of Marlene Millar, which Macdonald saw in the context of a full retrospective of Millar's work curated by Iliyana Nedkova and produced by Horsecross Arts for Threshold artspace, Perth.

Reading these articles side by side in late 2020, it is poignant to reflect on the role of festivals in bringing together artists, practitioners, writers and curators, and the thinking and actions such events can prompt. Gathering at such events can offer a sense of unity and solidarity, as well as challenging one's own thinking and inspiring new individual approaches. As a field, we must keep finding meaningful ways to connect. Sharing these texts alongside one another here is intended to open up a space for further exchange and connection, keeping the conversations circulating. Each of these articles also foregrounds the time it takes for the patient activity of paying attention: to a work, to a conversation, to one another, to a significant point in time. Continuing this trajectory, in her article, filmmaker Katrina McPherson attends to her shifting sense of her surroundings and reflects on the validity of artistic practice at this time from lockdown in Edinburgh, Scotland.

In a pair of in-depth analyses, two dancers and scholars, Jo Read and Sandhiya Kalyanasundaram, propose perspectives on, respectively, the relationships between film histories, live dance, musicality and animation, and the work of Tamil film director Shankar Shanmugam, seen through a screendance lens. Read constructs a detailed analysis of a recording of a live performance by Isaac 'Turbo' Baptiste, drawing on Disney's '12 Principles of Animation' as a framework, and argues for further discussion and scholarship around the ways in which screen media histories, apparatus and techniques shape current live dance practices. In her article, Kalyanasundaram draws on contemporary screendance practice and theory to introduce, challenge, and enrich our viewing of a series of song videos from Shankar's celebrated Kollywood hits.

Finally, and bringing us up to the present, Jaleea Price reviews Harmony Bench's newly released book, *Perpetual Motion: Dance, Digital Cultures, and the Common* (2020). Returning to the theme of the activity of attention: in her book, Bench "attends to shifts in dance performance, reception, dissemination, and circulation brought about by popular digital media technologies"¹, focusing on the period 1996 – 2016, while in her review Price reflects on the 'virtual time capsule' that this offers the present reader, and how these works, and Bench's vivid analysis, influence our experiences of screen space as collective commons today.

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Statement from the Editorial Board

An annual journal is in a sense inevitably a retrospective project: a reflection on activities over the past year. But it also offers an opportunity to propose ways forward. What is missing from this issue of the journal also has much to tell us about these times, and the realities for us all, and our field of enquiry, right now. Little did we know, when planning this issue, the devastating impact a global pandemic would have on nations, cultural life and individuals around the world. And, in this moment of suspension of so many aspects of our lives, the

impact of George Floyd's death and the urgency around Black Lives Matter protests in the US and beyond have brought us to a moment of critical introspection. Over the past four months, the Editorial Board has taken the opportunity to reflect on the potential of this publication, and how we might move forward in the face of so much change and uncertainty. As part of this process, we have begun to examine the ways in which systemic racism has, in fact, operated within our own Board. Our being a small group, and our internalized biases and friendship groups, have limited who is in the (currently, Zoom) room with us, and we want to acknowledge this. As an Editorial Board we continue to have fruitful, sometimes difficult, debates on this and other topics that pertain to the ways in which we move forward as a publication: we are united in our desire to expand not only definitions of screendance, our pool of contributors and our readership, but also more specifically the membership of our Editorial Board – to look beyond the borders of our own racial myopia. If you would be interested in being involved in the work of the Journal and have time and energy to commit to bi-monthly (online) meetings and shaping our direction as we move forward, then contact us. We want to hear from you.

Our next issue (Issue 12) will respond to a provocation from guest editors Harmony Bench and Alexandra Harlig: *This Is Where We Dance Now: COVID-19 and the New and Next in Dance Onscreen*. The scope of this enquiry extends across multiple dance practices, platforms, and screens. We understand that some dance artists have long viewed the Internet as a primary platform for sharing their work within vibrant online communities, while others are grappling with sudden and radical changes to their practices. Although IJSD is an English-language publication, COVID-19 is global, and this volume seeks to represent a wide range of perspectives from around the world and across disciplines.

Issue 13 will be open-themed, and we invite submissions for this on a rolling basis. We are currently considering a series of sub-sections within this and future issues, around pedagogies, and concerning the interrelation of sound and image in screendance. Discussions around translations and potential collaborations with publications in other languages are ongoing, and we welcome suggestions, proposals and advice in this area.

We leave this editorial thanking Ohio State University for their strong support and ongoing commitment to IJSD's digital platform and distribution, and thanking the contributors to this issue for working with us in difficult and rapidly shifting conditions and for inviting us to join them in processes of questioning, reflecting and reimagining, in what in his article Doug Rosenberg proposes as 'a series of awakenings'. These processes are ongoing.

Notes

¹ Bench, 187