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alt.theatre: cultural diversity and the stage is Canada's only professional journal examining intersections between politics, cultural plurality, social activism, and the stage.

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"Change the World, One Play at a Time"

COVER PHOTO
© Andrée Lanthier. Billy Merasty in Black Theatre Workshop and urban ink productions' *Sal Capone: The Lamentable Tragedy of*. Written by Omari Newton, directed by Diane Roberts.

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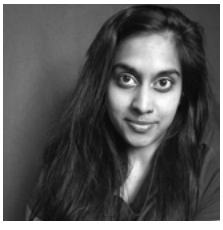

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ARTICLES

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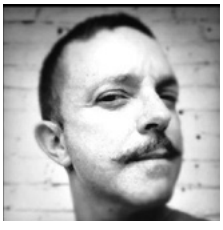

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Editorial

Community, Engagement, Theatre

BY NIKKI SHAFFEEULLAH

Community-based creation. Community arts. Artists in communities. If I had a nickel for every time I said, read, or wrote the word "community," I could fund a community-engaged research project to develop an apt synonym. As someone who moves between artistic, activist and academic circles, I have as matter of professional necessity learned to differentiate the different buzzes of this term: *community*.

A friend and fellow Christopher Guest fan jokes that my work comes to mind when he watches the comedic film *Waiting for Guffman*. Guest's mockumentaries invite the viewer to gape at people who are heavily invested in niche interest circles, where emotions run high though real-world stakes remain low: dog groomers in competition, folk bands reuniting, and community theatre entourages in rehearsal. *Waiting for Guffman* is about an amateur theatre troupe that mounts a rather parochial musical about the history of their tiny town. My friend jokes, "That's what Nikki does, right? *Community theatre*."

We laugh; it's a joke, after all. He's an educator working adjacent to drama-in-education projects and I'm a theatre artist working with community-engaged methods, so we're "in the know." Community theatre and community-based theatre are discreet categories, and it's a joke because he's deliberately conflating them. *Community theatre* is a group of amateurs putting on a show, while *community-engaged theatre* is professional artists facilitating (non-professional) communities in artistic projects toward some kind of social goal, presumably a progressive one. The language around community-engaged theatre was brought into being by facilitators of community arts who came before me and who worked to create institutionally supported spaces where artists could collaborate with communities and bring participatory, activist methods into the work. This contemporary history of community-engaged artistic practice means that artists like myself can apply for arts funding dedicated to community-engaged work, can explore the intersections of their craft through formalized academic programs and advanced degrees, and can explain at dinner parties what they do with only minimal confusion in response.

As I have been told, thirty, forty, fifty years ago, when professional theatre in this land called Canada was still itself an emergent phenomenon, it was important for artists to make the practical, theoretical, and political distinctions between models of (amateur) community theatre, community-engaged theatre, and conventional professional theatre. But for myself, as a still-emerging artist lucky enough to be working in a professional climate where the category of community-engaged arts has been (almost?) normalized, the need for these distinctions does not seem urgent. It often feels limiting.

Theatre *is* community. Other forms of art are not necessarily, but theatre *is* bodies together in a room. Theatre is live. Theatre is ephemeral. Theatre is collaborative. Is the contemporary Western enthusiasm for "community-engaged theatre" not a recently popularized stream of practice but in fact a return to the roots of the craft? Victor Ukaegbu notes that what is currently called community-engaged or "applied" theatre in the West was in fact a part of the earliest performance rituals in Africa. He argues, "What is needed is not a new concept or definition but the reintroduction of production strategies and collective concerns that created the traditional practices that audiences attended as participants instead of as detached spectators" (Ukaegbu in Ackroyd, 6).

Might the field of community-engaged art evolve to a point of comfort that we don't feel the knee-jerk need to distance ourselves from the *Waiting for Guffman*s of the world? I have time and again heard colleagues, classmates, and myself quickly correct a naïve outsider about what makes what we do different from the Guest-esque folly of amateur houses. But what is community theatre but a group of geographically connected people coming together to create performance, simply for their own joy and as a creative offering to family, friends, and neighbours? Is that not collective community development, capacity building, and many of the other things that community-*engaged* theatre strive to be?

Similarly, is there not a wealth of potential in blurring the boundaries between community-engaged theatre creation and "conventional" theatre? I have reflected on this many times over the past months while facilitating a community-engaged theatre project with Undercurrent Theatre. This group is an outgrowth of my MFA thesis work, which was an experiment in creating theatre with women of colour using performance methodologies rooted in decolonial and anti-racist feminist theory. That project culminated in a devised one-act play entitled *(un)earthed*, and the community response to the project, along with the collaborators' own experiences, prompted us to continue. For this, our second undertaking, I have been facilitating last year's participants and others in an arts-based analysis of gender-based violence in culturally diverse communities. The fruits of this project have become a week-long performing arts festival entitled *Escape Velocity*, featuring a headline collective creation of the same name; a series of performance shorts; installation art; and public workshops. The project has involved many participants: people whose expertise lies in their lived experiences and energy to affect social change; performers with many years experience fusing artistic creation and activism; activists with strong backgrounds in creative popular education; and others looking to access ways of meaning-making that are relevant to their identities. Most of the participants are women-identified people of colour, and thus are part of the implicated "community." Very few of the participants are full-time artists or arts workers, though some have varying degrees of training and experience. I am the project's lead artist, but am not external to the community, as I am also a woman of colour with an urge to create work about the particular ways in which racism, misogyny, and violence intersect. As is the case in many "community-engaged theatre projects," it is difficult to cleanly delineate who is "artist" and who is "community," though the language of grant applications and other industry spaces recommends we make these distinctions. The

Escape Velocity festival and the work leading up to it is community-engaged art, but it's also simply art. To echo Ukaegbu's call, how can community-engaged methods inform and enrich other modes of creation, performance, and production?

I see tremendous potential in community-engaged dramaturgy. Throughout the *Escape Velocity* process, the Undercurrent Theatre ensemble held community forums and open rehearsals: we actively outreached to our own cultural communities, as well as to organizations and individuals working against racism and gender-based violence. These open sessions were devised as a measure by which we could hold our creation process accountable to people affected by gender-based violence and racism who were interested in the process but not regularly in the room. The result was a kind of community-engaged dramaturgy. Our guests did not have to be trained writers or experienced dramaturges for their feedback to be valuable: their personal and professional insights into the themes, tropes, stereotypes, and archetypes brought a plurality of perspectives into the rehearsal room and deepened our analysis.

The *Escape Velocity* project has also been an experiment in community-engaged program development. When crafting a collectively devised theatre creation, it is inevitable that some ideas, themes, characters, and storylines will not make it into the final show. This is sufficiently difficult in solo creation: writers use that crude turn of phrase "killing your babies" to describe the painful task of cutting ideas from an in-development work. It becomes a markedly more complicated task when working on a collective creation, where the babies are not necessarily (just) your own. As a majority-rule democratic society must find ways to recognize the needs of minorities, a collective, community-engaged creation process should task itself to account for those ideas the group as a whole cannot navigate in a single project even though they are still valuable. From the onset of our process, I put aside resources and programmed blank spots in the festival for to-be-determined performance shorts. As the long and slow process of devising the headline show unfolded, I encouraged ensemble members to nurture those ideas that didn't make it into the headline show and turn them into an independent, smaller work. For these shorter pieces, they recruited, from outside the main ensemble, community collaborators with interest in and connection to the given themes. The result of this community-engaged programming process is a slow-cooked festival line-up with performance pieces of many forms, representing a variety of intersectional identities and exploring issues contiguous with the broader themes of gender-based violence and anti-racism.

At the front of every arts producer's mind is audience development. Here, community-engaged methods are not merely tools but propose an altogether alternative framework to the conventional art-maker/art-consumer relationship. Doug Borwick compares traditional audience development with community engagement: While audience development is a "short term marketing strategy to increase the number of people who visit your organization," community engagement is instead about building "community ownership, participation, relationships, and support for your organization." Community-engaged models of performance encourage us to reimagine audience development as something more comprehensive and longer-term. Through *Escape Velocity*'s open rehearsals, workshops, and forums, we have for months been developing for our ad-hoc festival an audience that is invested in our work and to whom we feel we are accountable.

This issue of *alt.theatre* sees artists across Canada and beyond exploring community-engaged methods for participants around the artistic round table. Daniel Brunet, Producing Artistic Director of English Theatre Berlin, recounts the process creating *ECHTER BERLINER !!!! IHR NICHT FUCK YOU*, a documentary theatre piece exploring the social rules that allow some to be called "real" Berliners, others "ex-pats," and the rest "immigrants." This conversation is most apt at English Theatre Berlin, a theatre whose name betrays its linguistic predilections and connection to non-German-born people residing in the capital. The theater's regular audiences are necessarily connected to the show's conversation: Brunet discusses how the performance design consciously strove to implicate audience members: "Upon purchasing a ticket, audience members were asked to identify the country that issued their passport'" and were subsequently given a colour-coded ticket and seating section that corresponded to the categories by which the Berlin *Ausländerbehörde* (Foreigners Registration Office) regarded their country of citizenship. The performance structure mandated the audience to locate themselves, their communities, and any privilege carried by their nationality and ethnicity, within the shoe's themes.

In Crystal Chan's reflection on urban ink productions and Black Theatre Workshop's co-production of Omair Newton's *Sal Capone: The Lamentable Tragedy of* , she provides insight on how the playwright hoped to bridge connections between the communities implicated in the show's hybrid hip-hop theatre form. She quotes Newton's affirmation that that what he really wanted "was for this play to spark intergenerational dialogue": "He describes two ideal audiences: one is older, mainstream—they're being introduced to youth hip-hop culture; the second is teenaged, familiar with hip-hop culture—they'll be introduced to theatre." Newton's show blurs artistic forms in an attempt to collapse barriers between audience communities.

In "Anthony Walsh and My Personal Journey of "Decolonization," Matthew Gusul points to the fact that no matter how old community-engaged methods of artistic creation are, they still possess transformative potential for present participants: "All the projects I worked on felt ground-breaking, as if I were the first non-Indigenous man in Canada to admit to being racist and to work to 'unlearn' my racism through encountering First Nations people. Of course, I realize this was not the case, but with each project there was a feeling that I was engaging in a unique endeavour." Gusul compares Walsh's work with the beginnings of his own relationship with arts and activism, serving as a reminder that the histories of community-engaged theatre are ones well worth repeating.

Community (engaged) art is as old as art itself. The process of finding ways to transform society and shift the status quo requires imagination, passion, and emotional energy: indeed, activist art is simply art because *activism is itself an art*. "Community-engaged theatre" is simply theatre because *theatre is community*.

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ALTER YOUR EGO – LESSONS FROM A HIP-HOP PLAY

BY CRYSTAL CHAN

© Andrée Lanthier. Letitia Brookes, Tristan D. Lalla, and Kim Villagante in Black Theatre Workshop and urban ink productions' production of Omari Newton's Sal Capone: *The Lamentable Tragedy of*

Omari Newton was in Clinton, British Columbia, when he heard about Fredy Villanueva. Sitting in his hotel room, he perked up his ears at the mention of his hometown, Montreal, on the television. A policeman had shot Villaneuva, aged eighteen.

It was the summer of 2008, and Newton was in town as an extra in *Shooter*, a film starring Mark Wahlberg. "I think it was sixty of us black actors who were doing extra work on it because the opening scene took place in Africa," Newton remembered. "In a predominantly white town in a movie where all the extras were black and the lead was a white guy and the majority of the cast was white, the idea of race and privilege and all that was already on my mind. And then this shooting came up."

Deeply moved, Newton started writing a play. The result was *Sal Capone: The Lamentable Tragedy of*, which premiered in Montreal five years later, in October 2013. *Sal Capone* doesn't tell Villaneuva's story, but it was inspired by it. In an interview several days after opening night, Newton described to me how he had shared with Diane Roberts, artistic director of Vancouver's urban ink productions, the impact the shooting had on him. Roberts ended up directing the premiere of *Sal Capone*, and it was co-produced by the company that hired Newton for his first professional acting gig—Montreal's Black Theatre Workshop (BTW).

Sal Capone is a hip-hop play. Newton categorizes the show's musical style as "backpacker rap"; hip-hop culture references pepper the show. Now thirty-four, Newton wrote his first rap in the third grade. In addition to acting and, now, playwriting, he's an MC and slam poet, performing with acts like the now-retired jazz fusion ensemble, Kobayashi. "Hip-hop culture was responsible for shaping my politics and my artistic and cultural taste," he explained. For example, after listening to the music of Public Enemy, "I asked my dad, 'Who's Malcolm X? I heard Chuck D talk about this guy.' And my dad suggested that I read Alex Haley's autobiography of Malcolm X."

Fredy Villaneuva wasn't a hip-hop artist (not one performing publicly, at least). He also wasn't black. Newton first created the play as a one-man show for himself, and beyond the first name, his protagonist has more in common with Newton than Villaneuva. Sal Capone is the hip-hop moniker of Freddy Salazar Jr. (played by Tristan D. Lalla), a Trinidadian-Canadian teenaged MC—like Newton was back in the day. Freddy and his hip-hop crew mates, Jewel, a.k.a. Jey (Kim Villagante), and Chase (Jordan Waunch), are shocked when a police officer shoots their DJ, Sam (Letitia Brookes, whose main role is Freddy's younger sister, Naomi). Our narrator, the theatrical MC, is a drag queen named Shaneney (Billy Merasty). These players are all frustrated underdogs who've attempted to remodel themselves in different ways.

They argue and reflect, each atop their soapbox. The topic is discrimination: racism, sexism, homophobia. When this becomes relentless and repetitive, the plot fights to push through; story and nuance are not the play's strong suits. But *Sal Capone* is powerful, propped up by its grand theme and structure. Built, as its title suggests, as a capital-"T" Tragedy, the characters' struggles with guilt and revenge are drawn large-scale and bold, like the graffiti behind them. Coming of age often means feeling powerless in the face of authority. But *Sal Capone* is more *Hamlet* than *Degrassi*: the stakes are high—life and death—and you'll learn less about the personal trials of these teens than the society they live in. Fittingly, the showstopper is a monologue, one that doesn't illuminate the personality or motives of the speaker, Shaneyney, so much as crystallize the play's whole message: "Bang!" she yells, over and over, creating a rhythm with pretend gunshots. "If you listen to any rhythm long enough, you dance to it."

BUT Sal Capone IS MORE Hamlet THAN Degrassi: THE STAKES ARE HIGH—LIFE AND DEATH—AND YOU'LL LEARN LESS ABOUT THE PERSONAL TRIALS OF THESE TEENS THAN THE SOCIETY THEY LIVE IN.

The action of *Sal Capone* takes place in "Real City, Canada." Its universe reflects Newton's. He told me,

> I am actually more shocked when I see plays in Canada with an all-white cast, all-black cast or all-Asian cast because that's not a reality that exists in the Canada I know. At least not in major city centres. I know that there are places in Canada that are predominantly white, but if you're from Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, or Winnipeg and you're writing a play that reflects everyday life, and there are no characters of colour, you really need to check yourself.

In the play, Shaneyney is Cree; Freddy and his younger sister, Naomi, are black; and as Chase explains to Freddy—who's just insulted him by calling him white—"I'm Sicilian!" Finally, the character Jey is of Filipino descent, like Villagante—although the role was originally written for a Korean male.

Actors Villagante and Waunch are real-life MCs (in fact, Villagante had never acted before this production). They helped write some of the verse used in the show. Newton describes the play as "a love letter to hip hop," hoping that it will, like hip hop, prevent violence through storytelling. In the play, Freddy Salazar reminds us that "words are important"—and they are, especially for playwrights and hip-hop artists (among whom "word" is often a term of affirmation). Young, poor, and black men[1] first created hip hop to express their urge for justice through violence, often diffusing that urge in the process. *Sal Capone*, too, turns bullets into beats. When Freddy tells Sam to "drop that beat!" Sam plays a gunshot sample, abstracting the sound like Shaneyney does in her monologue. But nowadays, hip hop is more often seen as something that incites violence than as an artistic outlet for rage, anger-in-poetry. This, Freddy thinks, is unfair. He compares rappers to filmmakers: "Do you think Martin Scorsese is responsible for the Italian mafia because he writes mafia movies?"

There's a tendency to homogenize hip-hop cultures into one stereotype. One reviewer compared the play's hip-hopper Chase to Vanilla Ice (presumably because Chase is white and not because he's phony, as Vanilla Ice is widely regarded by the hip-hop community). "I find that kind of absurd," said Newton, "because I don't think Chase has any relation to Vanilla Ice." This ignorance is common regardless of race. Roberts, who is black, writes in her director's notes: "Omari always likes to tell the story that I hated hip hop before collaborating with him on *Sal Capone* ... I didn't understand how significant a movement it is and continues to be for minoritized youth." Newton explained, "What was surprising to me is the variance between responses from people of colour, from young people and from older people ... how big those gaps are."

This play tries to bridge the gap by offering the victim's perspective. Sam is only one victim. As narrator/MC Shaneney states in the play, "This is the story of many." "When I started writing the play," said Newton, "I thought: 'By the time we get it produced, these themes may no longer be relevant.' And unfortunately, the longer it took to write, the more ammunition and the more fuel we had to put in the play because these [shootings] keep happening over and over again." In the play, Jey tags, on a wall, "Trayvon / Youth of colour." Trayvon Martin, an African-American teenager, was fatally shot by a neighbourhood watch coordinator in 2012. The names of other Montreal police shooting casualties are also sprayed on the wall: Fredy Villaneuva, Anthony Griffin, and Marcellus Francois. Black Theatre Workshop quotes a report that the Montreal police force has killed more than sixty people since 1987.

A RAP ABOUT KILLING COPS GOT THE BIGGEST CHEERS. WHEN JEY PULLED OUT A GUN, SHE WAS GREETED WITH, "YOU TELL HIM, GIRL!" AND "THAT'S DOPE!"

But the police are not Newton's target. He even re-wrote the play to tone down police criticism. Newton wanted to portray "the anger that you feel sometimes as a youth of colour [. . .]. There are people who feel so powerless that they have these wild fantasies based on rage." It's a cycle: youth express their frustration through hip hop, hip hop is criminalized because of its angry lyrics, youth are even more frustrated. Newton states, "What I really wanted was for this play to spark intergenerational dialogue." He describes two ideal audiences: one is older, mainstream—they're being introduced to youth hip hop culture; the second is teenaged, familiar with hip-hop culture—they'll be introduced to theatre.

When I saw the production on opening night, I was a member of a typical, mainstream, theatre audience. But I saw it a second time among high school students at a weekday matinée (where I was one of a only a few, as, ironically, the show was given a parental advisory, which lessened school group attendance). The play engaged the teenagers; they even responded to rhetorical questions posed by the script. But the discontent and cynicism Newton described was sadly obvious. A rap about killing cops got the biggest cheers. When Jey pulled out a gun, she was greeted with, "You tell him, girl!" and "That's dope!"

After the show, BTW held a talkback. Most students said they liked the play. A few said they'd buy the album if Sal Capone was a real group. BTW Artistic Director Quincy Armorer asked what they thought would happen to Naomi, Freddy's pre-teen sister, when she grew up? "Gets shot." "Prostitute." Armorer suggested more positive possibilities: activist, lawyer. But the teens had picked up on the production's depiction of the cycle of violence. A video in the production shows Sam, then Freddy, then Naomi pulling the hood of a black sweater up over their heads, eyes defiant and locked on the audience. Let's not forget: this is a Tragedy.

Merasty is proud the play portrays people of colour and others who are "invisible." Unfortunately, it's worse than that; often ignored when it counts, visible minorities are, on the other hand, called so because they can't blend in like chameleons. *Sal Capone*'s characters are visible, but they can't be heard. Sam has a stutter and communicates through DJ samples; the ensemble's business manager, Chase, has no say on stage; Jey is cut off air while rapping on a radio show; and the plot hinges on Shaneney being "no snitch," a phrase Jey also uses to describe herself.

"Snitch" is just a derogatory term for "witness." Shaneyney begins the play by coming out to the lobby. She flirts and mocks us, then ushers us in, introducing herself as the narrator. She'll never leave the stage, only momentarily retreat. "I see everything on the street," she explains. By recounting the story behind Sam's shooting to us, Shaneyney acts like someone on a witness stand. But, unwilling to "snitch," she only speaks to us, an audience in her imagination. Her mutterings to us bewilder the others.

So will there be "no justice for" Sam? Sadly, with Shaneyney as witness and the audience as her ghost jury, maybe *Sal Capone* is the closest we often get to justice: a re-trial, played out by the community when formal courts fail to deliver. A chance to hear the victim's families and friends.

Here's the bit of hope: the play prompts us to be more than jurists. We're the only ones, for example, to see when Shaneyney herself falls victim to violence. As Lalla told the teenaged audience after the show, "Now you're a witness." In the performance of *Sal Capone*, the distinction between audience, bystander, and witness is blurred. Freddy wants concert-goers to record the show on their cell phones so that when they upload videos on YouTube, they'll instantly spread the band's anti-police shooting message. Perhaps bearing witness is as useful as prevention or intervention. Or rather, as in many cases, that's all one is capable of. Shaneyney can't talk, but she hopes we will: "If you listen to any rhythm long enough, you dance to it," she says. In other words: Notice the music, don't tune it out as noise. This is a hip-hop mantra, applied to life: if you can't hear the beat, you're screwed.

...THESE TEENS CASUALLY DROP PHRASES LIKE "YOU FAGGOTS" OR "NO HOMO!" JEY, SPORTING A T-SHIRT WITH A GROWLING DOG ON IT, INSISTS SHE'LL STOP SAYING "NIGGA" SINCE SHE'S NOT BLACK WHEN GUYS STOP SAYING "BITCH." THE IRONY, OF COURSE, IS THAT HIP HOP WAS CREATED IN PART TO GIVE VOICE TO POWERLESS VICTIMS OF PREJUDICE.

© Andrée Lanthier. Kim Villagante, Tristan D. Lalla, and Jordan Waunch in Black Theatre Workshop and urban ink productions' *Sal Capone: The Lamentable* Tragedy of.

© Andrée Lanthier. Billy Merasty, Letitia Brookes, Kim Villagante, Tristan D. Lalla, and Jordan Waunch in Black Theatre Workshop and urban ink productions' production of Omari Newton's *Sal Capone: The Lamentable Tragedy of.*

At one point, Jey shouts, "We ain't in no gay ass theatre!" This irony received some snickers from the audience. Life and theatre; justice and revenge; gangsters and police; hip-hop heads and First Nations peoples; polar bears and blacks; thunder and gunshots: Newton mixes them all up. Who takes action to ensure safety? Whom does this snippet of dialogue refer to: "If these punks want to act like savages, we'll treat them like savages. Our land, our rules"? Which is an "endangered species"? What's the origin of a Big Bang?

The characters also mix life and theatre, adopting alter egos that have nothing in common with themselves. The suburban teens take on tough-talking hip-hop personas; Jey "hates herself for not being a six-foot black man with dreads"; and Shaneyney, whose given name is Burnum and male name is Mac, "wants to be," according to Newton, "this fierce, sassy, tough-talking black woman because to him that represents the toughest person you can be." Likewise, police officers step into their uniforms and adopt an air of power. Alter egos, like acting roles, allow us to zip into another's skin and act with new authority.

Amidst all the identity swapping, it's the trans prostitute who's actually keepin' it real. Shaneyney heralds us as "tourists!" She insists, "I could've been prime minister of your country, but I chose to be the queen of the night!" She's talking about "street people" versus us "regular folks," of course. We're tourists in our own towns when we slink around the dumpsters of the inner city. But, as we see, that's how Sal Capone's members, all from immigrant families, report feeling a lot of the time: tourists in their own town. And to Shaneyney, who is First Nations, aren't we all visitors? Isn't she the one doing what a beat cop should've done—patrolling the streets? Isn't she the one living an actual hip-hop life, hustlin' on the streets?

That's how the problem starts. In our eagerness to swap identities to fit into adopted communities and countries, we don't always "keep it real" to ourselves. It's not only Stephen Harper, Pauline Marois, or bigoted cops who are criticized in this play. Disturbingly, we see how intolerance can pass as hip-hop bravado, even among these multicultural, suburban Canadian teens. *Sal Capone* might be multicultural, but you sense there's more than one reason why the white boy is relegated to the non-artistic end of things. And these teens casually drop phrases like "you faggots" or "no homo!" Jey, sporting a t-shirt with a growling dog on it, insists she'll stop saying "nigga" since she's not black when guys stop saying "bitch." The irony, of course, is that hip hop was created in part to give voice to powerless victims of prejudice.

So what about us? Naomi stands in for most of us. She's the only character who doesn't emphasize race. While Freddy, mimicking his hip-hop heroes, brushes his 'fro, wears a large African continent necklace, and sounds "like an extra from *The Wire*" to Naomi, she describes real life as a post-racial world where all can unite over love of David Suzuki, hatred of Stephen Harper, and good grammar. She tells Jey that a popular girl at her school is Asian and therefore Jey's attitude, and not her race, is why she's often disliked. Contrary to her brother, who claims Sam was targeted for WWB (walking while black), she says, "I like police," only days after the shooting, since her friend's father is a nice policeman. She seems to speak as the voice of reason, but eventually seems naive, even insensitive.

So, is the post-racial world in which most left-wing Canadians live a product of their imagination? If we can point to popular Asians at school or black CEOs, does it mean racial profiling is over? If cops are nice people like us, why would they kill? Like Naomi, most of us prize non-violence and understanding. *Sal Capone* doesn't criticize the police so much as the audience. How do we fail victims of discrimination? What's the difference between promoting equality and promoting conformity?

Freddy recites a poem to Naomi that reminds her that a fish is happiest when it doesn't try to live on land. He recites it in the Trinidadian accent of his family. Alter egos are useless without an altering of one's ego; they're dangerous when they fully suppress your true identity.

Shaneyney tells us, "Our countries are close. They share a border." Theatre and reality are also bordering countries. Who is the customs officer? Who wishes to cross over, and where are their passports?

NOTE

1 Black Theatre Workshop made a music video portraying "the history of hip hop as a social protest and cultural movement among culturally and economically marginalized youth": http://vimeo.com/49701946

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The photo in question above Dance Collection Danse director/co-founder Miriam Adams' desk, George Street, Toronto.

When lost in the frenzied high of archival research, we are often sternly focused on the search for something in particular. Sometimes, fortune has it that a search is being done in a bricks-and-mortar archive, as opposed to working with an e-database. In such instances, we comb through inventories, flip through file folders, and gently turn the pages of ephemera before us, hoping for a lucky break. Time is an issue for everyone, and if discipline is in place, blinders help to block out all of the interesting but seemingly unnecessary information that flashes before us as we search for what we think we need.

But what are we missing in these fits of controlled research? Earlier this year an archival puzzle was brought to my attention. Much to my surprise, I had walked past it for years. As I began to help to put the puzzle pieces together, I was confronted with a host of issues that have become preoccupations of their own. My efforts to identify an unknown performer raised questions about the ethics of assumption; race, photography, and archives; and contextualizing doubt.

The Puzzle

For seven years I worked between three and five days a week at Canada's Dance Collection Danse (DCD) Archives and Press/es. Until the summer of 2013, DCD was located in a relatively small row house in the St. Lawrence district of Toronto[1] and the home of its co-founders, Miriam Adams and her late husband Lawrence Adams. All of the rooms, save for

Portia, Is That You?
Contextualizing Doubt in Archival Research

BY SEIKA BOYE

Miriam's bedroom, were dedicated in some way to the operation: mailing and packaging in the kitchen, office in the dining room, desks and computers in the upstairs bedroom and open landing, vintage printing press in the basement, and idea making, problem solving, brainstorming, eating, and laughing in the living room. There were archives housed in every available corner, and artifacts, paintings, and kitsch decorating all of the walls. It was dreamy—a museum and home for Canada's theatrical dance history.

Last spring I popped by DCD for a visit. Barely in the door, I was already in full conversation with Miriam and the brilliant director of research, Amy Bowring. Somehow it quickly came up that poet and scholar George Elliott Clarke is on my dissertation committee at the University of Toronto. In listing his various attributes, I included that he is the great-nephew of the internationally renowned contralto Portia White. Upon the mention of White's name, Amy and Miriam pounced on me with great excitement. Miriam took me by the shoulders, guided me to her desk and pointed to the photo above it. There hung a 20X20 black and white photograph depicting four dancers dancing behind a fifth, seated performer. Though I had looked at this photo for seven years, I had failed to notice something of great significance about the image. The seated figure is a black woman on a professional Toronto stage[2] with four Caucasian dancers in a photo taken circa the early 1940s (see photo). Due to the racial politics of this era, this was a rare, if not unheard of, occurrence. The other dancers in the photo—Don Gilles, Janet Baldwin, Dorothy Dennenay, and Bill Diver—were named and identified as members of the Volkoff Canadian Ballet by the photograph's donor Jim Bolsby, the first general manager of the National Ballet of Canada, when he brought it to DCD in the early 1980s. Miriam and Lawrence hung it behind the desk in those early days of the archives as a reminder of the work to be done, of the questions to be answered. What piece was this? Where was it performed? Who are the dancers? Taped to the back of the frame is a piece of paper with notes in both Miriam's and Lawrence's handwriting, an indication that perhaps details were gathered over time and not immediately. In the place of the mystery performer is a question mark.

Though I had looked at this photo for seven years, I had failed to notice something of great significance about the image. The seated figure is a black woman on a professional Toronto stage with four Caucasian dancers in a photo taken circa the early 1940s.

When Bowring was going through a scrapbook belonging to ballet dancer Natalia Butko, she happened upon a program for a performance at Massey Hall, on April 17, 1946. White's name was on the cover. The bill was shared with the Volkoff Canadian Ballet[3] and presented by the Anglo-Jewish monthly magazine *Today*. She very quickly realized that she might have found the identity of the mystery performer. When I arrived at the door that day, she and Miriam were still trying to confirm their suspicions.

A number of historical facts support that the unnamed woman was Portia White. She was in Toronto during this era.[4] She shared more than one program with the Volkoff company, although the program from this performance does not match details of the photograph in question—specifically, the costumes do not match the choreographic works listed, nor do the dancers depicted match the ones listed. When I sent the image to Clarke (White's great-nephew), he admitted a strong resemblance but could not confirm her identity. He also questioned her position on the floor and suggested that she was not trained as a dancer. I assured him that the position could be achieved with brief direction and coaching, unlike the more active, complex, in-motion position of the dancers surrounding her. I urged him to look again. He eventually conceded that her prominent front teeth were indeed a family trait, but still he could not comfortably confirm her identity.[5] Finally, within the DCD archives there is no other image, record, or anecdotal story of a black, female concert dancer in Toronto from this time period.[6] White is the only known black woman, amongst a group of historians, whose talent could have found her on this stage despite racial boundaries.[7] All of the aforementioned leads to the question: who else could it be? Is this enough to assume an identity? And what is at stake if the assumption is wrong?

Almost immediately, I resisted the temptation to inscribe the identity of a famous black body onto an unknown one. Without confirmation of the performer's identity, the opportunity to illuminate a small piece of African-Canadian history could result in the possible erasure of this, as of yet, unknown black woman. It could also contribute to the homogenization of blackness that ultimately results in the dangerous erasure of an actual person's existence. Harvey Young explores the commonness of this occurrence in *Embodying Black Experience: Stillness, Critical Memory and the Black Body* by examining the "ways in which an *idea* of the black body has been and continues to be projected across actual physical bodies [and how] misrecognition of individuated bodies as "the black body" creates similar experiences" (4). The insistence to properly identify this woman is not only an insistence by DCD researchers to be thorough in their verification, but is also an act that prevents this woman from being as interchangeable with any other black woman as she is with Portia White.

The mystery woman's blackness also highlights the lack of accessible material about African-Canadian amateur and professional performance during this era available for reference. I had already failed to see this photo for years, despite it being a reflection of myself, as a mixed-race, first generation African Canadian.[8] My current research was in large part inspired by the near void of images of black performers in the archives and the slim selection of resources pertaining to dance in the lives of blacks in Canada.[9] While my instinct was to zoom in on the photo—onto the woman's face, or her teeth for that matter—pulling back to question the relationship between race, photography, and archives has helped me to see the complexities of this enigmatic photo more clearly.

Race and Photography

Identity is only one of many questions that come to mind when looking at this photograph. The singular black figure surrounded by four white performers in 1940s Canada could be interpreted in any number of ways. However, there is no air of tension or conflict—the performers look to be enjoying themselves equally. In fact, race does not appear to be an issue at all in this photograph, which gives rise to more questions than if it were a central theme. This photo could be considered unique in that the only apparent difference between the mystery performer and the other dancers is her position. Why is it so unsettling to confront this photograph as an exception?

In *Photography on the Color Line: W. E. B. Du Bois, Race and Visual Culture*, Shawn Michelle-Smith explores African-American scholar Du Bois' award-winning presentation of 363 uncaptioned photographs at the Paris Exposition Universelle in 1900, which had been arranged into albums, titled *Types of American Negroes, Georgia, USA (vol. 1-3)* and *Negro Life in Georgia, USA*. During the exposition, Du Bois also introduced his "prophetic pronouncement: 'The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line'" (Michelle-Smith 2). In his work, Michelle-Smith "aims to recover the *visual* meanings of the color line, to excavate from Du Bois' initial conception the visual theater of racist projection and inscription, as well as antiracist resistance, which, for Du Bois, structures the process of racial identification" (1). One of the ways Du Bois challenged racist inscription was through showing photographs of middle-class, professional, urban African Americans. In other words, he provided an alternative to pervasive propagandistic images of African Americans as an inferior race.

The mystery performer in the photograph and the context of the photograph itself provide such an image, something other than what we are used to seeing. The point DuBois and Michelle-Smith are making about visual culture and race is both applicable and useful here. It is thought that the photo was taken circa the early 1940s in Toronto and so depicts a time when legislation allowed private business owners to discriminate on the grounds of race, resulting in a legally semi-segregated society.[10] The presence of this black performer amongst white performers is significant in its particular placement of the colour-line. If the performer is Portia White, there is at least a known context explaining her presence on the stage: her talent and emerging fame created an exceptional situation and possibly a profitable situation for the production company. If it is not White, then this stage space or company—as opposed to the performer—becomes exceptional and warrants further investigation within the context of race and performance in Canada.

While the missing identity may not have anything to do with race, it is in essence an absence and so eventually a possible erasure from dance history, performance history, Canadian history, and African-Canadian history. In the archive inventory, her name will be recorded as "unknown" amongst a list of known identities. She is not "searchable" and so not "findable."

What investigations into circumstances of training and artistic practice and inter-racial interaction would help to explain the depicted scenario? While the focus is on identifying an unknown person, the photograph is not only of the performers but also of a time and space that can only be contextualized so far as the observer of the photograph's knowledge. Even with the mixed expertise of those informing the reading of this photograph there is a missing link. A wrong assumption could create a dangerously misleading picture about a pivotal time in Canada's history of race relations.

Race and Archives

In her essay "A Daughter's Journey," scholar and film maker Sylvia Hamilton (2004) questions how her aunt, Portia White, would even have conceived of dreaming to be a professional contralto singer without the example of another black woman having accomplished the same. She further questions how to "tell the life of an African-descended woman in Canada who chose, at a very tumultuous time in world history, to lead a very unconventional life? How do you understand a woman who chose to move past the strict societal boundaries prescribed for Black women?" (11). These questions highlight the importance of specificity in identifying this, and all "mystery performers." In the context of race, insistence upon specificity works against assumptions (conscious or not) of homogeneity in appearance or character and allows for the details of individuality to guide research into unknown corners, instead of re-inscribing what we think we already know about race relations or the scope of experience and inclusion or exclusion based on race. It would also ensure a proper understanding of the document in question and the context of the time and space it represents.

In the instance of this photograph, fame makes the scenario presented in the photograph understandable—to an extent. It tells us that she was present on this stage, but it does not tell us what the *experience of presence* was like. Hamilton further reflects on the challenges of making her film, *Portia White: Think on Me*, and of trying to piece together her aunt's history: "[i]n spite of her fame at a point in our national cultural history, no biography (either print or film) existed; she left no autobiography." The other missing link is a body of work that explores African-Canadian performance in the first half of the twentieth century that would allow us to further contextualize and understand this photo. One of the dangers of the current situation of this woman being unidentified is that no one even knows she is there in the photo waiting to be identified. Databases do not track "unknowns" or their specifics.

In the photograph, all of the performers were identified except for the black one. This may simply have been that the

donor did not know or remember the woman. If this performer is Portia White, she and the dancers worked in different disciplines and simply may not have crossed paths very often. Bolsby, the donor of the photograph, only trained with Volkoff and very likely never even met this performer, especially if she is not a dancer. While the missing identity may not have anything to do with race, it is in essence an absence and so eventually a possible erasure from dance history, performance history, Canadian history, and African-Canadian history. In the archive inventory, her name will be recorded as "unknown" amongst a list of known identities. She is not "searchable" and so not "findable." The caption will not read "unknown black woman" because that would likely raise a few eyebrows (What would it mean to differentiate people this way?) and it is not the practice to provide specifics for unknown facts, be they people, places, or things. But there is something important to the history of race and performance in Canada to be gleaned from this image. And so the search to identify must continue in order to properly understand and in the future represent this performer, company, choreographer, performance venue, and the many other unconsidered and unknown components of this image.

When I began working at DCD, my first task was to update over five hundred fonds in the collection. It took over three years to do my part (this is a perpetual task in archives) and was an education I could not have received otherwise. It made me acutely aware of the biases of indexing: the holes left by the many details that simply are not known, or that are not of particular interest to (or an area of expertise of) the cataloguer. The practical reality is that there is not time to chase down the identities of every unknown person in every photograph. Questions are answered when they are raised, when a researcher wants to know, or when a researcher happens to know. Many questions go unasked and unanswered.

In June 2013 I presented my puzzle as a part of a seminar on the Ethical Challenges of Performance History organized by theatre scholar Stephen Johnson at the Canadian Association for Theatre Research Conference in Victoria, BC. The people who were involved in the seminar[11] blogged prior to meeting, and the discussion online and in person with my colleagues was invaluable in helping me look at this issue from many unconsidered angles. Theatre scholar Rhona Justice-Malloy raised the issue that our searches are becoming more and more dependent upon computerized systems and databases, and as a result are dependent on key words, names, and other details that we do not always have at the *beginning* of our research. The majority of the details that make this puzzle interesting and nuanced (not to mention possible) came from Miriam and Amy—and there have been at least a dozen conversations. Details about White came from her great-nephew, whose own knowledge was passed down from other family members. Much of what they have told me is not recorded anywhere. What we miss out on as we sit at home and search from our computers are the "archival footnotes" that can only be provided by the archive personnel. Kathryn Harvey, Head of Archival and Special Collection at the University of Guelph, sat in with our group discussion and talked about work she did with the Dalhousie archival collection to make women in the archives more visible. In a later e-interview she commented:

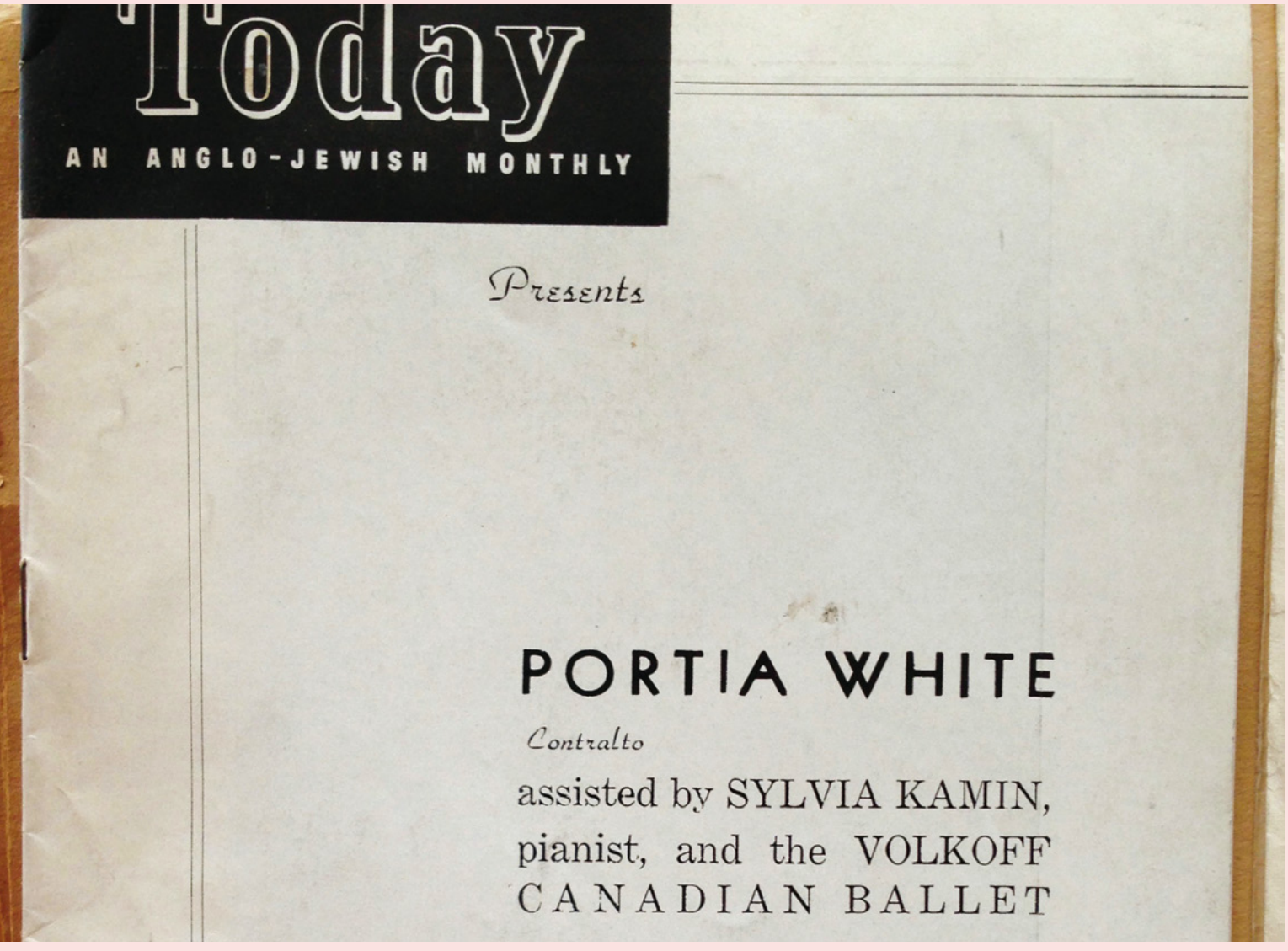
> What had struck me when I first started working at Dalhousie was the apparent paucity of records of significance to the study of women's lives and work. My assumption that there was little information in that area was dispelled when I actually looked more closely at the content, particularly of the holdings of men's archival fonds. In several cases these fonds contained large runs of women's diaries, for instance. As well, in some cases the fact that fonds had been misnamed (with the name of the donor rather than by the fonds' provenance) confused matters as well. My project to sort out these confusions and eccentricities in the description of archival records really drove home the fact that how we describe archival materials plays a critical role on whether those records can ever be found—or will ever be identified as useful for a particular line of inquiry.[12]

A level of consideration needs to be given to the frames of reference present when databases are being built. While this article addresses race, and Kathryn Harvey's re-visioning was around gender, as a dance scholar I am ever aware of the absence of dance from social or cultural histories and the resources that have informed the writing of these histories, such as archives. I am constantly "looking elsewhere" for traces of dance.

"Portia, is that you?" —Contextualizing Doubt

Like the project to re-contextualize an archive, what I gleaned from this puzzle—beyond the discussion of race, photography and archives—is the need to find frameworks for contextualizing our doubt. Many of the ethical issues raised in the Ethical Challenges in Performance History seminar were centred on how to deal with what cannot be confirmed. What are the specifics of our unknowns and are there missing infrastructures prohibiting us from learning more? While one tangent of this project will pursue confirming the identity of the mystery performer in the photograph, the larger question here that preceded "Who is it?" is "How can we be sure it is her?"—because we must be sure. A wrong ID could incorrectly alter her and any number of historical trajectories. A lack of insistence denies the corporeal subject of the photograph her *actual* existence and unique experience. My own discomfort with this puzzle and with my failure to see the woman in this photo is no doubt a fear of being misidentified, unseen, or erased myself. In either instance, we all lose something. For now, the search continues.

The author would like to thank Miriam Adams, Amy Bowring, George Elliott Clarke, Kathryn Harvey and members of her working group for the Ethical Challenges of Performance History seminar: Moira Day, Steve Espey, Rhona Justice-Malloy, Jessica Riley, Grace Smith and organizer/moderator Stephen Johnson.



Front cover and inside of program from a scrapbook in the Evelyn Geary Collection, Dance Collection Danse Archives and Press/es, Toronto, Ontario.

NOTES

1 In 2013, DCD was transferred to a commercial building on Church Street in Toronto, which includes an exhibition and office space, in addition to room for current and future archival holdings.

2 According to dance historian Amy Bowring, the stage would have been professional but the Volkoff dancers themselves would not have been considered professional at this approximate date.

3 The Volkoff Canadian Ballet was founded and directed by Russian-born Boris Volkoff—a pioneer in Canadian dance. He founded a Toronto based school in 1931 and officially formed a company in 1938, the Volkoff Canadian Ballet, with a group of dancers that he took to the 1936 Berlin Olympics to perform. The Volkoff Ballet preceded the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and the National Ballet of Canada. The National Ballet eventually overshadowed the company however, and in 1973 Volkoff closed his school after a fire destroyed his studio.

4 White was born and raised in Halifax, Nova Scotia. She made her professional debut in 1941 in Toronto, and in 1944 performed at the prestigious Town Hall in New York City, which was considered to be the height of her career. She had almost ceased performing by the late 1940s, but resumed teaching and performing occasionally after resettling in Toronto in 1952. She died in 1958.

5 Clarke suggested I contact his aunt, Sylvia Hamilton, who has written about and directed a documentary about White. Attempts by Bowring and myself have gone unanswered to date.

6 Dance Collection Danse is a theatrical/concert dance history archives and does not include social or folk dancing. The archive houses files belonging to artists of diverse backgrounds and dance forms. Diversity broadens in scope from the 1970s and onwards, certainly in part a reflection of changes to immigration laws.

7 In the same program there is an advertisement for a concert featuring Paul Robeson which serves as an example of a famous Black performer appearing on a Canadian stage.

8 My maternal heritage is Kiwi, (from New Zealand) of Scottish-German descent and my paternal is Ghanaian (West Africa).

9 Articles and documentaries that focus on black dancers and dancing in Canada prior to the 1960s include: Grant Greschuk's documentary *Jeni Legon: Living in a Great Big Way* (1999); director Meilan Lam's documentary *Show Girls: Celebrating Montreal's Legendary Black Jazz Scene* (1998); Allana Lindgren's articles "Leonard Gibson: A Portrait" and "Bamboula Turns 50" (2004); Ruth Ann Shadd's *Breaking Loose: A History of African-Canadian Dance in South-western Ontario, 1900-1955* (1995); and Lys Stevens' article "Ethel Bruneau: Montreal's Rhythm Tap Legend" (2011).

10 In 1946 the Toronto City Council created an ordinance that a business could not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, colour, or religion, after a West Indian teenager was denied access to a skating rink because of his colour (Gairey).

11 Moira Day, Steve Espey, Rhona Justice-Malloy, Jessica Riley, Grace Smith, and organizer/moderator Stephen Johnson.

12 The finding aid—a document listing the details of an archival collection—that Harvey worked on can be found at http://www.library.dal.ca/DUASC/FindingAids/

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© 1. Manuela Schauerhammer. Murat Dikenci, Daniel Brunet, Ariel Nil Levy, Lynn Femme & Lara-Sophie Milagro in English Theatre Berlin's *ECHTER BERLINER !!!! IHR NICHT FUCK YOU* / 2 and 3. Daniel Brunet / 4. Pedro Pina Vasconcelos. English Theatre Berlin's *ECHTER BERLINER !!!! IHR NICHT FUCK YOU.*

ECHTER BERLINER !!!! IHR NICHT FUCK YOU–

Graffiti as *Gesamtkunstwerk* at English Theatre Berlin | International Performing Arts Center

BY DANIEL BRUNET

It's completely understandable that visitors to Berlin may feel like they're receiving mixed signals. After all, meter-high graffiti proclaiming, "FUCK YOU TOURISTS," "NO MORE ROLL-KOFFER" (rolling suitcases), "TOURISTEN FISTEN" (literally, fist tourists, a sentiment that conjures up both the threat of sexual violence and Berlin's reputation as an "anything goes" city), and stickers on every traffic light informing the reader that "Berlin ❤ U" can certainly be off-putting. They illustrate the cognitive dissonance at work in the German capital as it and its citizens come to terms with Berlin's dizzying transformation from ground zero of the Cold War to the "capital of coolness"—as it is referred to by Burkhard Kieker, chief executive of visit-Berlin (the brand name used by city's official worldwide tourism marketing organization, Berlin Tourism & Kongress GmbH) (Laudenbach 24).

As the twenty-fifth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall approaches on November 9, 2014, Berlin has become the fastest-growing tourist destination in Europe. It recently surpassed Rome to take third place behind London and Paris with 25 million overnight stays in 2012. In 2013 alone, 25 hotels and hostels will have opened, adding more than 5,500 rooms (Laudenbach 21) to the city's already expansive offerings. A historically poor city—over 60 billion euros in debt and with very little industry due to the unique nature of its twentieth-century history—Berlin's economy is powered by tourism; on any given day, an estimated 500,000 tourists (Laudenbach 14) are underway in this metropolis of 3.2 million.

The effects of this development make themselves evident in a myriad of ways. New businesses have opened up in all of Berlin's central districts that cater to tourists rather than locals, offering goods and services beyond the means (and often the interest) of the traditional inhabitants. At the same time, a polyglot of English, Spanish, French, Hebrew, Italian, and other languages have replaced German and—in the traditional West Berlin guest-worker neighbourhoods of Wedding, Kreuzberg, and Neukölln—Turkish as the sound of the streets (and subways). Advertisements and event posters now appear wholly in English, and, of course, there is a new and growing international population.

This has resulted in wholesale demographic transformations of entire districts fueled by rapidly rising rents and exacerbated by many local government decisions that have stripped Berliners of several of their protections as tenants. The repeal of the *Zweckentfremdungsgesetz* (a form of zoning law) in 2002, allowing apartments in residential buildings to be used for purposes other than permanently housing families—such as holiday apartments, offices, and spaces for creative work—is a perfect example of this. As a result, this city, which boasted a vacancy rate of nearly 20% two decades ago, now features one of approximately 2.7%, creating a severe housing crunch in all of Berlin's central districts. This pressure has led to a clear tourist backlash, ranging from the graffiti mentioned above to signs outside bars announcing, "No Spanish allowed" and "No hipsters from the US!"

I have lived in Berlin for twelve years, since September 2001. I moved to Germany at the age of twenty-one, directly after receiving my BA in theatre arts and film studies, expecting to remain for ten months on a grant and then return to the United States to continue my career. I have watched the city evolve and transform first-hand. I have heard the German language, once ubiquitous throughout the city, replaced by other tongues. Most of all, I have been fascinated by the increasing prevalence of English-language graffiti in the German capital.

In the summer of 2011, I set myself the task of combing every street within Berlin's *Ringbahn* (a light rail track that surrounds the central districts) to create a photo series of interesting English-language graffiti. One message in particular, combining both languages, caught my attention: *ECHTER BERLINER !!!! IHR NICHT FUCK YOU*. Roughly translated (as befits the rough sentiment) it means: "Real Berliners !!!! / Not You / Fuck You." Although I knew the image wasn't appropriate for the photo series, I found myself compelled to document it, fascinated by the questions of who were the "echter Berliners," who were

not, and who had the power to make this designation. After all, in a city that lost the majority of its inhabitants between 1939 and 1945, was cut in half by a wall from 1961 to 1989, and then lost a large portion of the population of the former East Berlin when the wall finally came down, what allows one to make the claim "real Berliner"? Was I, after twelve years and having learned German, a "real Berliner" or was I something else—an "immigrant," an "expatriate," a "*Dauertourist*" (permanent tourist), or simply an "*Ausländer*" (foreigner)?

At the same time that I was working on the photo series, I began to conceive of what would eventually become a documentary theatre piece examining the diverging and converging experiences of so-called expats and so-called immigrants in Berlin. After all, as someone moving to Germany from a comparably rich country (the US), I found it quite easy to obtain a residency permit and working permission. Despite the fact that I spoke almost no German upon my arrival, my college degree meant that I was exempt from the obligation to attend an *Integrationskurs* (integration course, focusing primarily on the German language and culture), which is imposed upon those who move to Germany from many other parts of the world. As the years passed, I met more and more people from countries like France, Spain, or Italy, especially those involved in creative fields, who found it more professionally rewarding to learn English in Berlin than German. At the same time, having lived for a decade in one of Berlin's traditional "immigrant" districts, Kreuzberg, I had ample time to observe and interact with my neighbours, many of whom are first, second, or third generation immigrants from Turkey. With a constituency of well over 300,000, Berlin has the largest constituency of Turks outside of Turkey, one that makes up close to ten percent of Berlin's total population.

Germany, one of the few Western nations to become an "immigrant nation" in the second half of the twentieth century (it ranks third in the United Nations report, *Trends in International Migration Stock: The 2013 Revision*, a study analyzing immigrants as percentage of national population), is continuing to come to terms with its new-found diversity. Notions of who or what is "German" are being turned on their heads. Along with this comes the transformation of Berlin: the gentrification, the changing cityscape, and the creation of a truly global city made up of inhabitants from nearly every country in the world.

From my uniquely privileged position as a theatre artist and native English speaker, I asked myself if all immigrants were created equal or if some immigrants were more equal than others. I receive professional advantages as an immigrant precisely *because of* my native language, as opposed to the ubiquitous tale of those who are doctors or engineers in their country of origin being forced to work as menial laborers in their country of immigration. This was one of the primary questions I sought to pose in the documentary theatre project that ultimately took its name from that striking piece of graffiti: *ECHTER BERLINER !!!! IHR NICHT FUCK YOU*.

When I was appointed Producing Artistic Director of English Theatre Berlin in late 2012, this project also became the first full production since re-envisioning the institution as an international performing arts center. Both the show's form and its subject matter made it the perfect candidate to introduce our new artistic concept. In-house productions, part of our *Producing Series—Made in Berlin*, now have a specific focus on issues relating to Berlin's past, present, or future, as well as on the use of English as a *working* language (as opposed to a *native* language) and a conscious use of the one-of-a-kind mixture of international theatrical forms, traditions, and artists available in contemporary Berlin.

A documentary theatre approach seemed the only appropriate one from the very beginning given that one of the primary goals of the project was to examine the real-life experiences of individuals moving to Berlin from other places. Instead of employing a writer to research and then theatricalize and fictionalize these experiences, I decided to let these subjects speak for themselves and tell their own stories.

My first step was to create an international ensemble of six professional performers composed equally of "expats" and "immigrants," representing as diverse a mixture as possible, each with a unique point of access to a specific community. The "expats" were represented by Lara Babalola, a woman born and raised in Saskatchewan to a Canadian mother and a Nigerian father; Ariel Nil Levy, a naturalized German citizen who was born and raised in Israel; and myself, a citizen of the United States. The "immigrants" were represented by Lynn Femme, born in Vietnam but raised in Germany as the daughter of a Vietnamese guest worker; Lara-Sophie Milagro, a German woman born in Berlin and raised in Bremen to a German mother and Guyanese father; and Murat Dikenci, the grandson of Turkish guest workers, born and raised in Hanover.

Each of us conducted ten interviews with members of our respective communities, attempting to capture as broad a range of experiences as possible. Each interview was recorded and transcribed (and in many cases translated from Hebrew, German, or Turkish), resulting in over 250 pages of primary source material. The interview itself consisted of 25 questions within six thematic blocks: living in Berlin; the German language; identity; work, housing, public authorities; migration, integration, multicultural society; and personal outlook. We also interviewed each other.

We began our seven-week rehearsal process on August 5, 2013, by reading each interview aloud, followed by a thorough discussion. One of the first things we learned was that our categories of examination were missing two essential groups: citizens of the European Union, subject to different regulations than any other group of non-Germans in terms of rights of residency and working permission; and Germans of colour, often deemed foreigners on sight and treated as such by their fellow citizens. Indeed, we quickly realized the implications a seemingly innocuous and open question like "Where are you from?" can have based upon who is asking whom and what information the interlocutor is trying to glean.

My conception of this performance as documentary theatre was based on two underlying principles, one concerning the performance text and the other related to the actual performance of this text. The first was that everything said on stage must be taken verbatim from the interview transcripts. The second principle concerned the performance modality: I envisioned the six performers acting as proxies for our

Notions of who or what is "German" are being turned on their heads. Along with this comes the transformation of Berlin: the gentrification, the changing cityscape, and the creation of a truly global city made up of inhabitants from nearly every country in the world.

sixty subjects, speaking their words but performing as ourselves, eschewing the idea of "characters" and "roles" for this work.

The documentary process itself became a primary consideration and reference in all design elements as a conceptual framework. Indeed, even the name of the piece was derived from real-life photo documentation of the current turf war in Berlin. The result was a production where every design discipline consciously and deliberately reflected the reality of the documentary process. Graffiti served as the inspiration for a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the phrase made famous by Richard Wagner referring to a "synthesis of the arts" to create a unified work.

The project's schedule represented a special challenge. Called upon to develop the performance text from our wealth of material while simultaneously devising and directing the physical production, I worked extensively with the design team before the beginning of rehearsals to develop and elaborate all design elements as well as the overall arc of the performance.

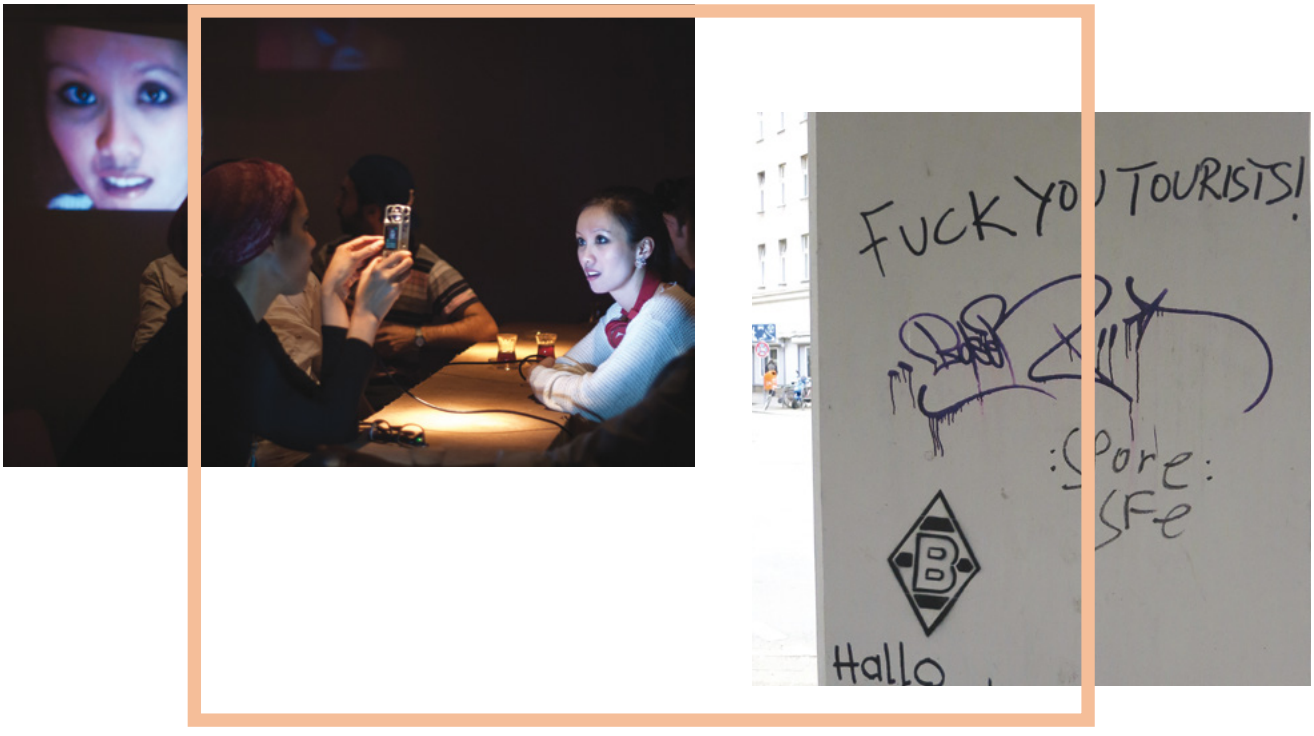
Josephine Landertinger Forero's video design consisted of the actual recordings of the interview subjects as well as onstage video generated by the same devices we used to record our subjects. All sound elements were composed by Natalia Lincoln from the sound on tape of the interviews, while Christian Maith's lighting design consciously refrained from the use of theatrical colour filters and employed practical fluorescent lights taken from the theatre's administrative offices, identical to those used in the offices of German public authorities.

Tamar Ginati's set and costume design physically expressed the performance's desire to explore individual realities beyond the generalities of stereotypes. Building upon the notion of each performer representing a specific community, Tamar interviewed us extensively to create a set of costumes for each ensemble member taken primarily from our own wardrobes. These began in stereotype based upon our respective origins, with each of us dressing in "typical" garb: Ariel, for example, wore a yarmulke, and Lynn a dress with "Asian" patterns. Over the course of the performance, we changed into our own "real life" clothing—placing our stories and ourselves on stage as well.

The set, beginning as something we referred to as "a place of waiting," not dissimilar to the *Ausländerbehörde* (Registration Office for Foreigners)—the authority with the power to issue residency permits and working permission to non-Germans—also transformed radically over the course of the performance. Initially consisting of six identical chairs and six wall units varying in height between 1.5 and 3.5 meters, these walls were removed in various ways, revealing abstract versions of scenic elements (a table, two frames, two boxes, and a house-like container) that were used to illuminate the personal realities of the performers in conjunction with these costume changes. By the end of the performance, every scenic element had been shifted from a perpendicular relationship with the audience to a parallel one, creating an undeniable change of perspective.

In selecting and arranging the texts, I proceeded with two underlying rules. The first was that each speech spoken by a performer had to come from a single response from a single subject. A very small number of internal cuts were allowed for the purposes of flow and clarity; otherwise everything was taken verbatim from the transcripts. The second rule was that performers could be freely assigned text, regardless of whether they had conducted the interview in question or were a member of that specific community. This resulted in a constant tension between what was seen and what was heard, such as a speech made by (Canadian-Nigerian) Lara Babalola about the difficulties of being a German woman born to Laotian parents. In order to prevent the spectators from drawing their own conclusions about the origins of the performers based upon our appearance, programs were not given to the audience until after the performance.

To speak briefly about our rehearsal process: while I functioned as the final decision-maker throughout the process, the other performers played



a significant role in the shaping of the performance text as well as the physical production. I began the rehearsal of each movement by bringing in a "kitchen sink" of possible material from the transcripts related to the respective theme. Sometimes I had already assigned a specific text to a specific performer and sometimes the texts were unassigned. After reading through these various texts a few times and asking the performers if they had suggestions for additional text, we would begin to work through the material on our feet, improvising the physical components of each movement. At the next rehearsal, I provided something that much more closely resembled a script, with text and action assigned to individual performers.

Given the sensitive and highly autobiographical nature of the project, the responses of the other performers to the performance text were of special importance to me. We discussed portrayals of identity at great length and took care to ensure we were responsibly representing our subjects and their respective points of view. I devised a performance in seven thematic movements: *Einlass* (admission), waiting, identity, discrimination, Berlin, integration, and individuals.

The performance began the moment the members of the audience entered the foyer of English Theatre Berlin | International Performing Arts Center. Upon purchasing a ticket, audience members were asked to identify the country that issued their passport. Based upon the answer, they were given one of six different coloured tickets. They were not told why they received this specific colour. The six groups roughly corresponded to the *Zuständigkeitsgebiete* (areas of jurisdiction) of the *Ausländerbehörde*, slightly modified to suit our needs (we compressed nine groups into six and had to add Germans as well as EU citizens). Each group was then called according to colour, escorted from the foyer to a waiting area outside of the side entrance to the theatre, and eventually allowed to take their seats within a specific section of the auditorium corresponding to the colour of their ticket. After the final group of audience members had been seated, five of the six performers (Ariel Nil Levy began the performance on stage) entered, also from outside, and took their seats on stage.

The waiting movement, by far the most naturalistic, began with the six performers seated in chairs, ostensibly waiting for their numbers to be called to discuss their individual cases with the unseen clerks. Small talk and an exchange of experiences with public authorities ensued until the first wall came crashing down, prompted by Ariel saying "*ni hao*" (Mandarin for "hello") to Lynn, assuming she is Chinese (as opposed to Vietnamese—or German).

Over the next four movements, the physical environment—as well as the stereotypes—was relentlessly deconstructed. Once the final scenic element had been shifted from perpendicular to parallel, the entire stage was covered by four large white pieces of muslin, erasing the final barriers and separations, covering up the deconstructed stage like a field of new snow. The ensemble sat down together on pillows on the bare stage to watch video projections of the self-interviews we conducted at the beginning of the rehearsal process. Beginning with the very first interview question—"Where were you born and where did you grow up?"—each of our responses in our respective native languages were projected in turn until Lara-Sophie, the last of us, appeared.

Here, the ultimate solution to ending the performance was quite different from my original idea. I had thought at the beginning of the process that the final movement would also be composed from interview transcripts, with the caveat that these would be taken exclusively from our self-interviews and that each performer could speak only their own text. Attempting to conclude the performance using this approach, however, was quickly ruled out in the rehearsal studio. None of the performers felt adequately represented by the statements they had made in the self-interviews conducted nearly six weeks earlier. None of us felt that the contrast between the responses of our interviewees and the responses we had personally provided was strong enough to appropriately end the performance.

After lengthy discussion, we collectively decided to complete the process of thwarting stereotypes and breaking barriers by interacting directly with the audience. Lara-Sophie interrupted her own response on video after revealing that she was actually born in Berlin, saying, "I know where I was born and I know where I grew up. It's nobody's business." In response to Lara Babalola's observation, "But you're the only *echter Berliner* out of all us!" Lara-Sophie asks, "What is that supposed to mean?" During the first four performances, Ariel and Murat provided whimsical, Berlin-specific responses. Then I, on stage as myself and thus both the director of the performance and Producing Artistic Director of English Theatre Berlin, asked the audience how many *echter Berliner* it took to screw in a light bulb: "Three point two million: one to do it and everyone else to roll their eyes and say how much cooler Berlin was fifteen years ago." I then thanked the other performers, gave them their call time for tomorrow, and exited the stage via the double doors at the back of the auditorium. I extended this ending for the final six performances, creating a longer sequence of back-and-forth, purposefully silly responses between the performers to the question, "What is an *echter Berliner?*" After the final exchange, Lara-Sophie turned to the audience and asked them: "How about you? What is an *echter Berliner*?" By the final two performances, we were successful in initiating this conversation with the audience and eliciting responses from them.

My colleagues and I had the happy occasion to see the performance and the approach meet with the interest and approval of both our audience and the press. Both of the post-performance discussions we offered were well-attended with passionate participation, and the run was nearly sold-out, setting new box office and attendance records. This has encouraged us to continue to produce work that takes our shared city as a subject and point of departure to pose questions about the world we live in and to examine the role and utility of live art—theatre and performance—in the twenty-first century.

Then I, on stage as myself and thus both the director of the performance and Producing Artistic Director of English Theatre Berlin, asked the audience how many echter Berliner ***it took to screw in a light bulb: "Three point two million: one to do it and everyone else to roll their eyes and say how much cooler Berlin was fifteen years ago."***

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© Matthew Gusul. «As part of my PhD research, I am working with HelpAge India in Cuddalore, Tamil Nadu, India as a consultant to the creation of an intergenerational theatre company.»
© Matthew Gusul. "As an undergraduate student, I travelled to Cuernavaca and San Andres de la Cal, Mexico through a program entitled Rural Development Exchange (RDX)."

The British Columbia Archives contains notes from a speech given by Anthony Walsh in a Montreal university classroom about his time as a teacher at the Inkameep Day School on the Nk'Mip Reserve (1932-1942) in the Okanagan Valley of BC.

Anthony Walsh and My Personal Journey of "De-colonization"

BY MATTHEW GUSUL

His concluding words urge, "I hope that you leave this theatre determined to assist in molding public opinion to the [sic] need of native people to be treated as equals" (Walsh, Papers). Walsh, who received the Order of Canada in 1990 and died in 1994, was a non-Indigenous man whose goals were to gain equality for Canada's Indigenous population and to influence other Canadians to join him. I am inspired by Walsh and thankful that his work with the Inkameep children can stand as an example for other non-Indigenous people.

In Paulette Regan's *Unsettling the Settlers Within*, she calls upon all Canadians to undergo a process of decolonization, urging non-Indigenous people "to take responsibility for decolonizing themselves and their country" (Regan x). I have taken up the process of decolonization after living in Mexico for one year, from 2004 to 2005, when I had the opportunity to live amongst the Aztec people in Tepoztlan. During my time there, I learned a bit of the Indigenous language, *Nahuatl*, grew close to a couple of elders, and developed a life-long friendship with a community historian. Through these relationships, I learned about the tortures that colonialism inflicted upon the Aztec people, culture, and language, and about the *conquistadores* and their legacy. I left Mexico feeling close to the Indigenous people's culture, and that I was an ally in their fight to maintain Aztec culture and *Nahuatl* language.

Upon arriving back in Canada, I wanted to continue my decolonization process in my home province of Alberta. The reason was clear in my mind. As a non-Indigenous man growing up in rural Alberta, I was racist. I had roots in Canada's colonial past, but I was ready to begin "unlearning" the mainstream narrative of Canadian history and to start unpacking the privilege history has provided me. Until that time, in 2005, my direct exchanges with Indigenous people, while minimal, had had a negative connotation. This was mainly due to my experiences playing hockey. Like many who played hockey in rural Alberta, my teams travelled for games to Hobbema,[1] a community in Alberta located on Highway 2A between four First Nations reserves. Hobbema, now Maskwacis, was and continues to be a community that regularly hits the national news due to its high crime rates and gang-related activities. Playing hockey there was always a difficult experience. Often the games would end in fights that were fuelled by racial hatred. I remember my teammates yelling terrible racial slurs at the other team. I don't remember yelling any myself—but possibly this is due to selective memory, protecting the sensible adult version of myself.

In 2005, I started using theatre to bridge the gap between myself and the Native community in Alberta. Working as an artist/educator, I used theatre to open a dialogue with Native groups in ventures that included storytelling circles with Native Friendship Centres, engaging Metis youth in a mural project, working in the Edmonton Young Offenders Centre, and acting as dramaturge in the University of Alberta Drama Department's staging of Yvette Nolan's *Annie Mae's Movement*. Throughout all these projects, I was learning about Canada's Indigenous people. I remember, for example, a pancake breakfast on June 21, 2007, on National Aboriginal Day. My friend, a Cree Elder, and I went to the event together. We sat with three *Kokums* (Grandmas). They laughed at having breakfast with a "white boy." My friend explained my desire to learn about their culture and to face the past between our people. They told me of their experience in residential schools. At times they would switch between Cree and English, checking with each other how much information they should divulge about the horrors of their memories.

In 2011, I left Alberta to attend the University of Victoria. When I reflect upon my experience in Alberta, my emotions are very mixed. All the projects I worked on felt ground-breaking, as if I were the first non-Indigenous man in Canada to admit to being racist and to work to "unlearn" my racism through encountering First Nations people. Of course, I realize this was not the case, but with each project there was a feeling that I was engaging in a unique endeavour. I approached these projects with my best judgment, but there was an undetected difficulty—one that I only came to recognize after encountering Anthony Walsh.

As a component of an assignment during my PhD course work, I visited the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, where I was fortunate to discover Anthony Walsh's work with the Inkameep School. The archive contains records of performances, stories, paintings, plays, and drawings created by the Inkameep children. Initially,

I was struck by the simple beauty in the art. The stories were charmingly written, and the drawings were technically adept. My attention was drawn to a playscript titled *An Indian Nativity Play*. At first, I was concerned about what I was reading. My thoughts were, "Oh no, not another example of oppression between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Canadians." I was reminded of my breakfast with the residential school survivors, and the recounting of their terrible experiences.

As I flipped through the pages, though, I realized I was seeing something unique. This was not a story forced upon the Inkameep children. The script opens with the following statement:

> This play is based on a Nativity Tale which has been written by the children of the Inkameep Day School in the Okanagan Valley, British Columbia. The Tale which was recently published, depicts the Nativity as seen through the eyes of Indian Children. Instead of the events taking place in Palestine, they occur in the Okanagan Valley, and the rabbits, deer, and chick-a-dees take the place of the ox and the ass. (Walsh, Papers)

As I read this passage and the pages that followed it, I realized I was seeing a special moment in Canadian history. The story is neither an Indigenous folk tale nor a biblical text. It is a new, shared memory. The script is a shared cultural enunciation between the Christian nativity and the spiritually significant land and animals of the Inkameep people. In this re-conceptualized work, each religion is simultaneously risking being tainted by an outside force while opening itself to gain a new perspective on their stories and sacred images. What occurs in this artwork is a look at the nativity that opens a dialogue between Indigenous spirituality and Christianity. This is the dialogue that I sought to open up between myself—a non-Indigenous person—and the Indigenous people. In conducting this research, I have been shown a moment in Canadian history where meaningful dialogue occurred between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. It is because of the nature of this play and the other artwork by the Inkameep children that Anthony Walsh, an Irish Catholic man, will be remembered as an ally of Canada's Indigenous people.

When Anthony Walsh arrived in 1932, the Nk'Mip people already had a rich art tradition. Europeans coming to the Okanagan Valley discovered cave paintings scattered throughout the valley, and the history of the First Nations people included costumed storytellers performing "animated stories" to teach people about "morals, values and beliefs" (Walsh, Audio Recording). These traditions stopped when the Indigenous people were forced to attend residential schools and laws were created forbidding the practice of Indigenous culture. The Indigenous children in the Okanagan Valley went either to the Kamloops Indian Residential School (1890-1978) or to St. Eugene's (1898-1970) in Cranbrook, BC ("Theatre").

The Inkameep Day School was established because Chief Baptiste wanted his children to be educated on their reserve. Day schools were distinct from residential schools in that there were fewer students and often the teacher was the only non-Indigenous person in the community. This gave the teacher freedom to educate the students in a way that made sense based upon the conditions of the area. Also, day school teachers were not required to regularly report to church leaders, and the educational programming of the schools was not a duty of the church (Smith 27-28, 32, 37).

Anthony Walsh was hired by Chief Baptiste to teach in September 1932. Walsh was offered the job because of his experience teaching at Six Mile Creek Indian Day School and his teaching training from the University of Alberta in 1930-1931.[2] It was also important that Walsh was Catholic. Technically, the school fell under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Victoria and it was preferred that day school teachers were Catholic (Smith 40). Upon being hired, Walsh wrote, "The Chief just wished one thing, that his children be equipped to be able to hold their own in a white man's world, for he sensed clouds ahead foretelling of storms" (Walsh, Papers). Walsh was also required to teach the children the provincial curriculum. This was particularly difficult for Walsh because none of his students could speak English when he arrived (Smith 36).

In the ten years Walsh taught at Inkameep Day School, he took full advantage of the freedom he was given. Much of his teaching centred on the children participating in art projects. He encouraged the children to speak in their own language and to know the Indigenous history of their people (Andrea Walsh 12). Walsh was able to recognize the talents of the children very early on. He writes, "Within about three weeks time, I realized that these Indian children were a creative and talented people" (Walsh, Papers). Walsh recounts: "Once I tried to illustrate a point by drawing on the blackboard, and they howled with ridicule at my clumsiness. I invited volunteers to come forward to show what they could do. Their originality was startling" (Walsh, qtd. in Smith 41).

The Chief and other adults knew how difficult it was to find a teacher who was willing to live in the poverty of an Indian reserve, and because of this they welcomed Walsh with open arms. However, the children in the school were not as easily won over, as he stated, "It took about two years for the children to fully accept me. For though I appeared friendly, I was still a white man" (Walsh, Audio Recording). Walsh had his breakthrough with the children in an unusual way. In notes contained by the BC Archives, for what seems to have been an unfinished autobiography, Walsh describes the following scene:

> Christmas was approaching when I brought up a suggestion. Would they like to make some sketches for Christmas cards. There was very great excitement. The suggestion was . . . If the Nativity had taken place in the lower Okanagan Valley, what would have been the setting?

© Matthew Gusul. "Through Canada World Youth and Change for Children, I spent time in Tuktoyuktuk & Inuvik, NWT as a global education specialist. I taught a series of workshops in theatrical storytelling and Theatre of the Oppressed."

It took about two years for the children to fully accept me. For though I appeared friendly, I was still a white man.

> There would have been no stable, but there were caves on the Reserve. There would be no ox or ass, but there would be deer and coyotes and rabbits.
>
> The boards every available space on the blackboards was made use of. Tremendous concentration and much erasing of chalk lines. There eventually emerged a teepee made of bull rushes. The child laced in a brilliantly decorated papoose board. A deer an owl and a coyote, and an Indian boy and girl in buckskin. [Sic] (Walsh, Papers)

All of the excitement from this simple idea led to an outpouring of creative work by the Inkameep children.

The output of artwork from the Inkameep Day School from 1932 to 1942 was prolific. In the early years, the children worked on drawing and painting. In 1934, the school submitted their first entry into the Royal Drawing Society Annual Exhibition, and two sheets of "Decorative Composition" submitted by Edward Baptiste received commendations from the judges. In 1935, the children released a series of Christmas cards based upon the nativity (Walsh, Papers). In 1936, Francis Baptiste, who at this time changed his name to the traditional Indigenous name Sis-hu-lk, recreated one of the Christmas cards designed by the Inkameep children as a painting on a large piece of buckskin. This piece was submitted to the Royal Drawing Society Annual Exhibition and was put on display in London, England. The painting was awarded the bronze star. Also in 1936, the children became members of the Canadian Red Cross, which allowed their art to be viewed in Ottawa, Toronto, and Montreal. In 1937, Sis-hu-lk submitted another painting on buckskin—*St. Francis and the Birds*—to the Royal Drawing Society Annual Exhibition and won a silver star, and in the same year there was an exhibition of the children's work at the Cizek Juvenile Art Centre in Vienna, Austria, led by world-renowned children's art authority Franz Cizek. In 1938, Sis-hu-lk's picture *Indian Boys in Training* was taken to Buckingham Palace for the King and Queen to view. The picture was acquired by the Royal Drawing Society's permanent collection, making it the first Canadian picture in their collection (Walsh, Papers). Also in 1938, Walsh assembled an exhibit of the children's work and toured it throughout Europe to London, Paris, Dublin, and Glasgow. The drawings and paintings continued until 1942, when Walsh left the school.

In the years 1939-1942, Walsh also introduced music, dancing, and theatre into his curriculum. In the summer of 1939, he attended the Banff School of Fine Arts in an effort to develop the plays of the Inkameep children. In December 1939, two stories told by the Inkameep children were published in *The Carolina Playbook* titled "Why the Chipmunk's Coat is Striped" and "Why the Ant's Waist is Small" (Walsh, Papers). Starting in 1940, Walsh ran a mock radio station called INK Radio, where for seven minutes every day the children would take turns as announcer and perform songs they learned from parents and elders of their communities. In 1940, the Can-Oos-Sez Skay-Loo Players, the Inkameep children's drama troupe, was formed. They performed and won at the Oskenonton Challenge Cup every year from 1940 to 1942. In this

three-year period, the Can-Oos-Sez Skay-Loo Players also performed throughout British Columbia—the highlight of these performances was a presentation of three plays, including the *Nativity Play*, at the opening of Thunderbird Park in Victoria in 1941.

Chief Baptiste made intelligent decisions with regard to how and where the Inkameep children would be educated. Anthony Walsh's relationship with the community and the egalitarian conditions that led to the artwork existed only because of the Chief's decision to educate the children on the Nk'Mip Reserve. Because they were close to their homes, it was easier for them to retain their language and culture. Also, the fact that the school was a day school meant that there was minimal influence from the Catholic Church, unlike the residential schools. Chief Baptiste was also a pragmatist in his vision for the young people: he knew that it was important to be educated in the ways of mainstream Canadian culture. It is important to point out that if these children had been placed in residential schools, they would not have worked with Walsh and been educated in this atmosphere.

Another key element in this history was Walsh's dedication. He stayed with the community for ten years, despite the fact that the community was poor and he could have chosen a wealthier place to live. He made this sacrifice because of his love for the children and his knowledge of how the Indigenous people were viewed by non-Indigenous people in the Okanagan Valley. He wanted to expose non-Indigenous Canadians and Europeans to Indigenous people's lives. On discovering the children's artistic talent, he used it as catalyst for a dialogue between the cultural groups.

Walsh was able to work with the children in an egalitarian way. He had the children identify with their Indigenous culture whenever possible, using their own language, engaging with elders, and looking at the hieroglyphic art in the caves of the valley for inspiration. Walsh allowed the children to lead the pedagogy that he implemented. He responded to the children's talents, using art as a way of educating only because the children were skilled at creating art: he did not enter the community with an idea of using art.

Through his years living with and educating Indigenous people, Walsh became their ally. He exposed many non-Indigenous people to the Inkameep children's art, which acts today as an example of dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians. This article provides only a snapshot of the entire historical account of Walsh and the Inkameep Children: an example in Canadian history when non-Indigenous and Indigenous people worked together in a productive, respectful, and beautiful way, where one side did not dominate the other.

* * *

Attention must be paid.

– Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman*

One of my mentors would often quote this passage from Miller's play when referencing the importance of creating theatre with various community groups. People need to be recognized and represented in their community, with their stories, history, and culture visible. "Attention must be paid" to the Indigenous people of Canada. I echo the sentiment of Paulette Regan in urging non-Indigenous Canadians to begin a process of decolonization and "unlearning" and to pay attention to their own role as well of that of Indigenous Canadians in this process. It will go a long way towards building a stronger nation and achieving social justice in Canada.

I echo the sentiment of Paulette Regan in urging non-Indigenous Canadians to begin a process of decolonization and "unlearning" and to pay attention to their own role as well of that of Indigenous Canadians in this process.

In considering the work of Anthony Walsh, I see the contrast between my experiences in Mexico and Canada. In Mexico, I spent a full year in the community, taking significant time with the people to learn their customs, struggles, victories, and develop a love for their culture. This happened in one year because they were quick to adopt me. They did not see me as a *Conquistador*. One year was sufficient time to join their struggle and become an ally. In Canada, I have engaged in years of work with Indigenous people. But my cultural position as a non-Indigenous Canadian makes the work a difficult proposition, becoming, as I phrased it earlier, the undetected difficulty. Nonetheless, I will continue my efforts as a theatre practitioner and hope that one day I can be remembered as a non-Indigenous ally of Canada's Indigenous people.

THE INKAMEEP DAY SCHOOL AND VIRTUAL WEBSITE COMMUNITY PARTNERS INCLUDE:

Ms. Leslie Plaskett
President of the Osoyoos Museum Society
www4.vip.net/osoyoosmuseum/index2.html

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NOTES

1 Effective January 1, 2014, Hobbema is now legally recognized as Maskwacis, a Cree word meaning "Bear Hills."

2 Unless otherwise noted, facts about the Inkameep Day School are taken from the virtual museum website, *Drawing on Identity: Inkameep Day School and Art Collection*, at: www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Inkameep/english/index.php

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DISPATCH

INVERTED ENCOUNTERS OF THE AMERICAN KIND

June 2007, Buenos Aires

My awakening was unexpected and challenging.

Considering myself a queer political artist, I understood myself to be actively searching for elegant modalities of expression that might, as I have stated elsewhere, "liberate, irritate and activate the oppressed within and among us."[1] But having travelled from Montreal and arriving far away in Buenos Aires, I felt a profound sense of destabilization, a questioning of this professed identity. Indoctrinated as I was into the East/West paradigm that binds my home country together and formed by the colonial perspective valuing European artistic constructs above Canadian creation, I had never truly been confronted by the plight of the workers, the land, and the cultures of the South. This monolithic city of contradictions overwhelmed me, a place as synonymous with military coups as with the mythic glamour of Eva Peron and the tango, an economic catastrophe zone that also doubled as a playground for the rich. It did not start as a comfortable or reassuring engagement.

In almost twenty years of working as a touring performance artist, I had never been south of the US border. It is hard to imagine that this could be true, but it was. I had come across the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics' open call for their biennial hybrid conference/performance festival, the Encuentro, and submitted *Zona Pellucida*, a performance by 2boys.tv, my collaboration with Aaron Pollard. The project was selected and we found ourselves in Buenos Aires surrounded by an established interdisciplinary network of artists, scholars, and activists. This event brought them together to investigate "Corpolíticas: The politics of the body, political bodies, bodies politic" for ten days of workshops, discussions, presentations, screenings, exhibitions, performances, and public interventions. Some of the most *famous* political artists and art academics of the American Hemispheres—only peripherally known to me at the time, if at all—were gathered there: Jesusa Rodriguez; Diana Taylor; Guillermo Goméz-Peña; Mapa Teatro; Diamela Eltit; Rossana Reguilo, Liliana Felipe; Coco Fusco; the Revered Billy. It was a thrilling and disorienting trip; my Northern ways were both laid bare and celebrated within this peculiar pop-up meeting place. I discovered affinities and forged friendships, met future colleagues, and engaged with political struggles. I drank bottles and bottles of incredible Malbec. (I even got married, dressed in a bridal gown, in a public matrimonial art photo shoot to a suave Chilean woman whom—to this day—I still call "mi marido"—but that's another story.)

I was hooked on the Encuentro, hooked on this sense of communion we had tapped into. My destiny was now intrinsically linked to the activities of the Hemispheric Institute and their satellites. 2boys.tv travelled to Chile the following year, taking part in a performance biennial in Santiago and Valdivia and developing stronger bonds with Chilean colleagues we had met in Buenos Aires. Our involvement with the Encuentro led to invitations to work in Mexico City and San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas—in places and with people that have marked our hearts and shifted our perspective.

© Moysés Zúñiga Santiago. Claudia Sofia in the Hemispheric Institute Art & Resistance Course, Chiapas, Mexico, 2010.

We participated in the 2009 Encuentro in Bogota, swept in a wave of student political activity that would have global mirrors in Egypt, Turkey, and Montreal. And in 2013, we had the opportunity to mount a work in São Paolo in collaboration with local performers, resulting in a procession / fashion show / drag cabaret in Spanish, Portuguese, and English.

June 2014, Montreal

This year, some seven hundred people, the vast majority "Americanos," will gather in Montreal for the 9th Hemispheric Institute Encuentro. It is to be the first time the event will take place in Canada, the first time French is incorporated as an official language. For this, my fourth Encuentro, I graduate to the role of Producer, with activities housed within Concordia University, the institutional partner for the event. The theme—"MANIFEST! Choreographing Social Movements in the Americas"—will act as a stepping-off point for discussions, presentations, celebrations, and debate.

My adopted home of Montreal is a vibrant location for the manifestos, manifestations, and fiestas that will be created during the Encuentro. The difficult history here of political struggle continues to challenge the impossibilities of our collective sense of identity. Despite the population's weariness in the face of rampant political corruption and the regeneration of divisive identity politics, Montreal is still prone to eruptions of quasi-ecstatic optimism. In the spring of 2012, *le printemps érable*, the city streets were resonant with the spontaneous clamouring of pots and pans, rag-tag parades, and mass occupations—since made illegal—of public spaces. It is this optimism that keeps me anchored here, an optimism that I believe all Hemisexuals (as artists, academics and activists connected by the Hemispheric Institute affectionately call themselves) will recognize.

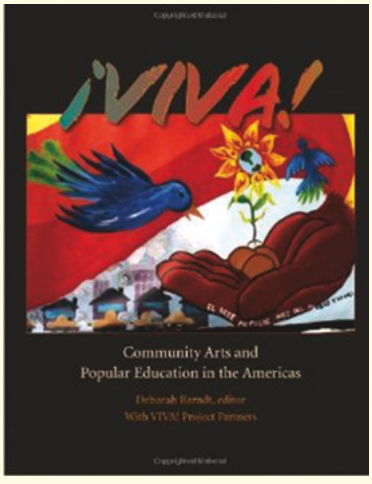
The Hemispheric Institute often uses an "inverted" image of the Americas, with the South above the North, to visually display a key ethos of their work. Until we are obliged to look at *how* we look and, by necessity, reorient our gaze, our actions cannot lead to change. This is a crucial practice, fundamental to the creation of political artworks, allowing room to learn through the expression of our diversity and multifaceted affinities.

I hope, with Encuentro #9, that through this expressive optimism, dreaming, reorientation, and action we can continue to turn our world upside down—or right side up, depending on your perspective.

Stephen Lawson

NOTE

1 www.2boystv.tv website, May 2007.



¡VIVA! Community Arts and Popular Education in the Americas.

EDITED BY DEBORAH BARNDT, WITH ¡VIVA! PROJECT PARTNERS. ALBANY: STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK PRESS; TORONTO: BETWEEN THE LINES, 2011. 168 PP.

Book review

BY ANNIE SMITH

¡VIVA!, Community Arts and Popular Education in the Americas is a vibrant book. Its vibrancy comes from the voices of the people who share their stories and insights over ten years of community arts projects, through photographs, testimonials, theoretical ponderings, stories, and video documentary. An accompanying DVD brings to life the different community arts projects chronicled and celebrated in the text. The usefulness, coherence, and clarity of the book are due to the careful and conscientious efforts of the editor, Deborah Barndt, who is the initiator of the ¡VIVA! project and also the coordinator of York University's Community Arts Practices Program (a joint certificate program of the Faculties of Environmental Science and Fine Arts).

¡VIVA! goes beyond chronicling or merely retelling these community arts practices; it combines in-depth project descriptions with discussions of major twenty-first-century issues and social movements affecting populations living in the Americas. The volume's approach reflects a hermeneutic exploration that embodies Paolo Freire's "conscientization," a form of praxis that is an exchange inward and outward between the work of the artist/educator and the theoretical understandings that grow through the work (11).[1] The articulate, intellectual, heartfelt, and urgent contributions of many voices from two continents have the ability to challenge and inform community arts practitioners, students, educators, activists, and academics.

¡Viva! is a transnational exchange and collaborative research project with eight partners that include community organizations, NGOs, and universities in Panama, Nicaragua, Mexico, the United States, and Canada:

- The Mexican Institute for Community Development (IMDEC), Guadalajara—*Tianguis Cultural*;
- The Panamanian Social Education and Action Centre (DEASPA)—*The Kuna Children's Art Workshops*;
- *The Personal Legacy Project*, Vancouver, Canada;
- Jumblies Theatre, Toronto—*Bridge of One Hair Project*;
- Catalyst Centre, Toronto—*Training Artists to Engage with Communities*;
- Metropolitan Autonomous University (UAM), Mexico City—*Participatory Community Mural Production*;
- UCLA ArtsBridge, Los Angeles—*Linking Schools and Universities through the Arts*;
- URACCAN, Bilwi, Nicaragua—*Bilwi-Vision, A Community Television Channel*.

The local initiatives upon which the book is based were born out of four transnational exchanges from 2003 to 2006, which enabled the project facilitators to conceive, launch, share, and systematize the projects, and finally to pursue collective analysis and to draw together the components of the book and videos. While the book is rich in history, stories, photographs, and contexts, it is the analysis and theorizing that make the volume so valuable for researchers, teachers, activists, and artists. So often, creative projects are described but not discussed in depth; this book offers a critical treatment of popular education in both North and Central America, with a particular focus on decolonization, both in a historical sense and in contemporary contexts.

¡VIVA! has been published in both English and Spanish, and the DVD contains subtitles in each language. The meanings of "¡viva!" in both English and Spanish are congruent: "Long live!" is a cry that has been used historically to rally resistance against oppression; it is a rallying cry today for artists and community activists.

The book begins with five pages of acknowledgements, naming the hundreds of participants in all of the community arts projects in the ¡VIVA! project. This challenges the traditional form of publication of scholarly research. There are no first, second, or third writers. ¡VIVA! includes every participant's voice in as many ways as possible—through testimonials, stories, images, live interviews, and critical analysis. In reading the text and watching the DVD, I was struck by how articulate and grounded the theoretical analysis is in the Indigenous projects and Indigenous partners compared to the accounts from the North American projects. In the Indigenous projects, theory is lived and practised in the field; it is not applied afterwards. Barndt's approach as editor has ensured that the diversity and contradictions of the many voices and experiences are foregrounded.

The introduction follows the acknowledgements, explaining clearly the underlying principles and ideology of the projects and the agendas of the contributors. The book provides the space to include the diversity of thought and action in the different projects. Each community has different contexts and histories, but the necessity of decolonization is common to all: "The central ideas driving the ¡VIVA! project can be seen within a circle that acknowledges our colonial history and aims to decolonize our practice as educators, artists, and activists" (1). For all the participants, this decolonization is personal, social, and political, and must address educational and economic systems and institutions. The naming of the participants as simultaneously "educators, artists, and activists" (11) is, in itself, a decolonizing act. As Checo Valdez points out, "Our concepts of art come from Europe; the term 'art' itself is colonized" (6). Barndt is aware of the historical and contemporary power structures at work and puts the issue of decolonization at the forefront in her introduction:

> How do we decolonize the ¡VIVA! project itself when it has been initiated in the North, funded by Western academic monies, and coordinated by me, a white Anglo university professor? Every meeting, every written document, every

> artistic product emerging from this project bears the traces of colonization. How can we alert the reader of our book to look critically for those contradictions within these pages? (6-7)

For the reader, the tyranny of the text is challenged by the voices and images on the DVD. These are produced by participants in each project and do not privilege the Western academics. Spanish is used equally with English, and the participants' voices—of all ages, ethnicities, and genders—are represented equally.

The book's organizing motif is a quartered sphere, orienting the projects presented and analyzed. The quarters represent *Place*: Decolonization; *Politics*: Popular Education; *Passion*: Community Arts; and *Praxis*: Participatory Action Research.

The first component addresses the different understandings and experiences of colonization in the different locales in which the projects take place. The exercise that facilitates this discussion is the reference to the statue of Christopher Columbus in Lima, Peru. This iconic sculpture presents the "Heroic Explorer," looking to Heaven with "the Native" sitting at his feet. The Native is represented by an Aboriginal woman, naked but for a scanty cloth over part of her legs, reaching up to touch the cross held in Columbus's hand. She has dropped her arrow and looks to the cross and its representative with hope for salvation. A diversity of responses to this image from the different locations of the project partners stretch from historical struggles to contemporary challenges of "globalization." Two of the project facilitators, Margarita Antonio from Nicaragua and Rebeca Santiago from Mexico, highlight these challenges. Antonio states, "[W]e have internalized this colonized view of ourselves, so we reproduce in our community television station how others see us, for example, focusing on barely clad women dancing"(4). And Santiago observes, "We as Mexicans have a continuous colonial process with North America, through its food, its fashion ... We call this 'cultural hybridity' in which our culture is subjugated by the colonial culture, by the dominating culture" (5).

Barndt cites a number of theorists—among them Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith, performance theorist Diana Taylor, and Santa Clara Pueblo educator Gregory Cajete—to challenge Western models of art and education with Indigenous ways of knowing, embodied practices, and art and education as community expression in a diversity of performative practices. But the focus is always forward, fusing historical forms with new technologies, challenging the stereotypes of Aboriginal peoples. Jose Coleman, from Panama, states, "We don't see ourselves as shaping ourselves only as Indigenous people ... we are forming ourselves ... as Indigenous people in order to project ourselves in the broader world" (9).

The second component—Politics: Popular Education—is the political root of the eight projects. Particularly useful is Barndt's explication of the term "popular education." She draws on Freire's principle of conscientization and Antonio Gramsci's analysis of hegemony and counter-hegemony to ground the discussion of this dialectical component of the organizing sphere motif. The application of popular education methodologies in the ¡VIVA! project operates both locally, using participatory action research, and transnationally, through the exchange of practices and theories. Barndt foregrounds the different understandings of popular education as this theory/practice has migrated north from its beginnings in Central and South America. In the north, while participatory techniques are embraced, the political edge has often been blunted.

The third component—Passion: Community Arts—is the common strategy of the projects. The thrust of community arts is to bridge and heal the separation of "art" from "community." It challenges the commodification of art as much as the commodification of knowledge. In a Latin American context, community arts or "popular communications" have been integral to the social and political movements of the 1960s and 1970s against military dictatorships: for example, the protest songs known as *La Nueva Canción*, or The New Song. "Popular" or community arts have been used to identify and challenge oppression through collective and participatory inquiry that is both analytical and passionate. Community arts projects work on multiple fronts: they educate, inspire, and mobilize; they nurture and heal; and they build community capacity.

Praxis: Participatory Action Research refers to the shared methodology of the projects. Participatory research is integral to popular education, "engaging learners in an investigation of their own lives in order to more deeply understand the power relations that limit them so they can become more conscious and active agents of change" (16). The project participants and leaders are actively aware and critically reflexive of the tensions inherent to a Western research model, including the dynamics of power between researcher and subjects, and of gender and racial inequality. The Latin American collaborators in the ¡Viva! project chose to utilize and adapt their own process of "sistematizacion"—a critical reflection of shared experiences—when outside facilitators were not needed. The differences in these two approaches are reflected in the text and video documentaries, where some chapters are highly collaborative and others are more "expert"-focused.

Once the theoretical groundwork is laid for the community arts projects that are part of the ¡Viva! collaboration, the individual projects are organized thematically in three parts. Part one, "Recovering Cultural Histories," includes the accounts of the Kuna Children's Art Workshops in Panama and Recovering Memory—The Personal Legacy Project in British Columbia. Within this overarching theme, the discussion in these accounts addresses five dialectics in the decolonization process: process/product, aesthetics/ethics, cultural reclamation / cultural reinvention, spiritual/political, and body/earth.

The Kuna Art project operated for four years, offering workshops in four communities and sponsoring an annual arts festival where children presented themselves as art—visually, musically—through theatre and dance. Facilitators were trained as part of the process so that the youth were teaching the children, who carry the culture. The Kuna belief that the community is connected to the land and that the artist is connected to the people undergirds this project, which also addresses the two worlds in which the Kuna live: the city and their traditional island territories. The Personal Legacy Project, developed and facilitated by theatre artist Diane Roberts, explored ancestral memory through embodying an ancestor from two generations in the past in a compelling moment from their life. The impetus for this project came from the disconnection of theatre students of colour from their own lives as they train in Western theatre forms. The guiding philosophy of this exploration comes from Montreal philosopher and dancer Zab Mboungou: "You have to carry your

own weight because if you don't carry your own weight you have no sense of your power" (accompanying DVD).

Part two, "Transforming Urban Spaces," includes the accounts of the Bridge of One Hair Project, Toronto; Telling our Stories: Training Artists to Engage with Communities, also in Toronto; and the Mexican Tianguis Cultural de Guadalajara. The analytical framework devised for these projects is two interrelated spirals. One spiral is focused on the transformation of processes of ethical representation and artistic creation, of historical and cultural reclamation, and of popular art and education for social change. The other spiral looks at methodologies that address the creative tensions of intergenerational participants; the integration of body, mind, spirit; transdisciplinary creation; ecological awareness; and geographic, ethnic and political diversity.

Crossing "a bridge of one hair" became the metaphor for the four-year project in the Mabelle community housing project in Toronto. The crossing of difference in the immigrant communities living in Mabelle was facilitated through the sharing of memories in a collaborative theatrical process that became a part of everyday life. Within the other Toronto project—Telling Our Stories—professional artists were trained as community mobilizers, sharing their performative art forms as a way to develop a common language, thus empowering people who could be perceived as ghettoized in Toronto. Social justice is the impetus behind the different initiatives of this project, which included community performances of song, dance, rap, theatre, and spoken word.

In Guadalajara, Tianguis Cultural is a space of resistance. It is a public marketplace where, for over a decade, Indigenous artists have sold their art, crafts, instruments, books, and recordings, and hosted live performances of local artists. The city of Guadalajara has worked to shut down this alternative forum for urban youth culture, but the collective energy of the participants keeps the square alive. In active resistance, over 10,000 visitors attend the market every week.

The third part of the book, "Community–University Collaborations," reflects the emerging trend to blur the boundaries between universities and communities. The collaborations operate both locally and transnationally. The project accounts in this section are Participatory Community Mural Production; Linking Schools and Universities through the Arts; and BilwiVision: A Community Television Channel. These also contend with other emerging trends in the neoliberal university: private and corporate funding of research; the prioritizing of science, technology, and business over arts, humanities, and social sciences; and market-driven curriculums.

The Participatory Community Mural Program in Chiapas—Painting by Listening—developed three teams of facilitators who used group exercises to create community murals in a number of communities, symbolically illustrating their histories, concerns, and values. In the years since this project, all the team participants have gone on to create their own projects in their home communities. The UCLA ArtsBridge Project, Linking Schools and Universities through the Arts, grew out of the loss of arts funding to the public schools in Los Angeles, particularly in a neighbourhood adjacent to the Wedgewood Campus. Pre-service teachers, dubbed "ArtsBridge Scholars," took their own arts practices to a middle school in the Watts neighbourhood and became role models and conduits for the students to develop their own creativity. BilwiVision is a community television station in Nicaragua. The impetus of this initiative is for the people of the community to see themselves as newsworthy, to express their own interests, and to explore social issues. The television broadcasts are in the local native languages and celebrate local cultures. The venture is also building technical, economic, and social capacity for young professionals.

Barndt concludes *¡VIVA!* with cautious optimism in her epilogue, "Critical Hope." She draws attention to two initiatives that have grown out of the original partnerships. One is the launching, by York University, of a program in Community Arts Practice. The other is the 2010 *Encentro* (the fourth encounter of ¡Viva! partners), hosted by URACCAN and attended by five of the original partner groups and one hundred poets, artists, students, and educators from all areas of Nicaragua. A highlight of *Encentro* was the launch of the Spanish edition of the ¡VIVA! book. Barndt's cautious optimism comes from the three-day meeting of over forty faculty members at the URACCAN campus where an action plan was developed to integrate arts and culture into curriculum, research, and community work. The "critical hope" is an acknowledgement of political, economic, and social tensions that are nevertheless balanced by our greatest resources: human commitment, creativity, and imagination.

NOTE

1 Freire's seminal work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, was first published by Herder and Herder in English in 1970 and has had a foundational influence in community arts and education theory and practice on every continent.

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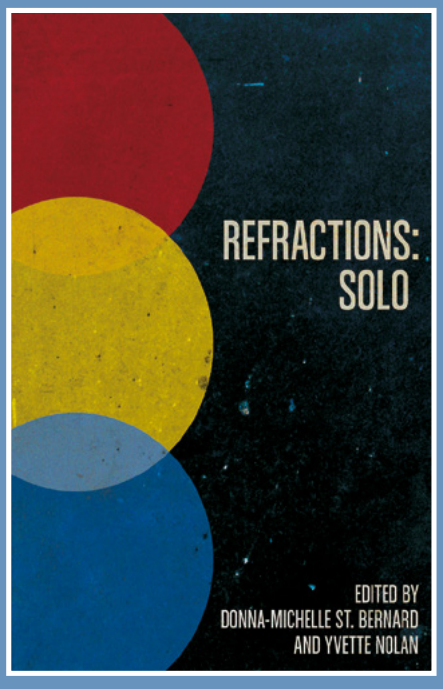
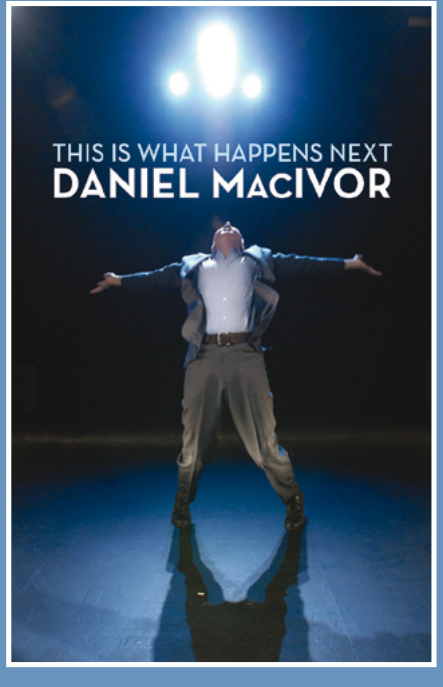


REFRACTIONS: SOLO
EDITED BY DONNA-MICHELLE ST. BERNARD AND YVETTE NOLAN

TWO-SPIRIT ACTS: QUEER INDIGENOUS PERFORMANCES
EDITED BY JEAN O'HARA

HEAVENS
BY WAJDI MOUAWAD, TRANSLATED BY LINDA GABORIAU



THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS NEXT
BY DANIEL MacIVOR

AGE OF MINORITY: 3 SOLO PLAYS
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