

100

PAJ

A JOURNAL OF PERFORMANCE AND ART



PERFORMANCE
NEW YORK

\$12.00

valued interdisciplinary exploration above all else. I am also an artist of the world-wide diaspora, influenced and marked by a global rather than strictly Eurocentric point of view. So my “contemporary” is worldwide, encompassing global realities, perspectives, aesthetics, and modalities.

My media and methods have endlessly evolved, intersected, and reinvented themselves through the years. They continue to do so in the twenty-first century, remaining always, inevitably, contemporary.

PING CHONG is an internationally acclaimed theatre director, playwright, video, and installation artist. Since 1972, he has created more than seventy multidisciplinary works for the stage at major museums, festivals, and theatres around the world.

JOSEPH V. MELILLO

What makes a work of art contemporary? I find it in that moment of discovery, in the electric intake of the audience’s breath in a dark theatre. BAM’s Next Wave Festival, founded in 1983, was created for those very artists who can uncover something new in the familiar. The artists with whom I work have an amazing transformative talent. Pina Bausch used choreography to reveal the spirit and essence of some of the world’s great cities and cultures, surprising us with Istanbul’s vibrancy and Lisbon’s heartache. Ivo van Hove employs live video feed in his restaging of classic plays and screenplays, giving his works tremendous immediacy and his audiences a new and unexpected perspective. Sufjan Stevens’s glorious multimedia work, *The BQE*, provided us with a score and a triptych of unforgettable images that allow us to rethink the monolithic expressway that cuts through our borough. BAM’s audiences expect this kind of innovative work on our stages, and it is with their support that we are celebrating 150 years.

JOSEPH V. MELILLO, executive producer since 1999, is responsible for the Brooklyn Academic of Music’s artistic direction, overseeing programming for the Howard Gilman Opera House, Harvey Theater, Rose Cinemas, and BAMcafé Live, and previously served as BAM’s producing director after six years as founding director of the Next Wave Festival. Melillo has fostered the work of emerging and established artists, has forged international partnerships such as The Bridge Project, and has received numerous honors, including France’s Chevalier and Great Britain’s OBE.

CADEN MANSON and JEMMA NELSON

Reality is bankrupt. Contemporary global culture has shifted radically in concert with innovations in technology in areas of communication, information, language, image, economy, presence, democracy, and environment. As artists working in the field of contemporary performance, we have a unique opportunity and responsibility

to create aesthetic responses to these issues through the media of liveness, and to create a space for critical thought. Our strategies of transgression, queerness, political engagement, and exploitation of technology allow us to become slippery, ever-changing in form and continuously redefining our state. We are streaming fluctuations in gender, race, and sexuality. We are one-hundred channels at once. We are corrupt code tempting you to connect with the diaspora of bodies without borders and self-defining realness.

CADEN MANSON and JEMMA NELSON founded Big Art Group in 1999, and since then have produced more than a dozen new works. Several of them are characterized by the “Real-Time Film” technique of bringing together live stage acting and live video. The experimental theatre company is a frequent guest at European festivals, and will open *Broke House* in New York in 2012.

FRANK HENTSCHKER

Performing New York

In Weimar Berlin, Bertolt Brecht declared that new times need a new form of theatre. Explorer Brecht created a pleasurable, open theatre for the children of the scientific age, a theatre that aimed to educate and to entertain. He reacted to the invention of the typewriter, the car, the plane, film projection, the phone, and the growing divide between rich and poor, the left and the right, the threat of fascism, and the war of the machines. In New York, almost one hundred years later, for the hundredth edition of *PAJ*, we reflect on the search for new forms of theatre and performance for the children of the digital age. We ask what new aesthetic practices grew in the new millennium, influenced by what Hegel calls the *Weltzustand*, the state of the world. How did artists react to the invention of the computer, the Internet, e-mail, the cell phone, cable TV, GPS, Google, Facebook, the iPad, Twitter, and to the digital military and the growing divide between rich and poor, the left and the right, and the threat of nuclear war and terrorism?

In New York we have a dedicated army of performative explorers, educating and entertaining the digital children of our age. They are providing serious content and true experiment with form. *PAJ*, in its brilliant editorials and articles, will tell future generations all about it, and serve as the most trusted messenger. But still, with all the digital noise, somehow we feel left alone. No divine truth has been uncovered and no dominating new sacred form has emerged. If at all, we look back at the sixties and seventies as the *Âge d'Or* of New York theatre and performance. But perhaps now performance in New York City is a symbol and new form reflecting Hegel's *Weltzustand*. Thousands of theatre companies and performance artists present hundreds of openings each week. The pieces are not meant to last; they come and go, like pop songs. Often produced fast, presented early and in small spaces, the work seems a vehicle for the future, research for the next work, a pit stop for the racing mind of the artist who is already a step ahead. The New York performances we see