



Schedule at a Glance

February 12, 2025
Hershey Hall
9am-9pm

9:00-9:30am

Salon: Registration & Coffee

9:30-9:45am

Salon: Opening remarks by Felipe Cervera (Director the Center for Performance Studies), and the Conference Planning Team (Patty Gone, Janine Sun Rogers, & Sophia Weltman)

9:45-11:15am

Salon: Panel 1: Experimental Corporealities

Moderator: Monica Geraffo (UCLA)

Jose Nateras (UCLA) “Genetic Emancipation’ — Flesh, Screens, and Autonomy in *Repo! The Genetic Opera*”
Meredith Cabaniss (UCSB) “The Grotesque as Feminist Aesthetic: Embodiment, Resistance, and Subversion in Weimar Dance and Cabaret”

Sophie Capobianco (UCLA) “Space, Power, and Vulnerability: The Corporeal Politics of Student Protest”

Elaina Marino (UCLA) “Postdramatic Playground: Trans Agency in the Plays of Jackie Curtis”

Seminar Room: Panel 2: Experimental Aesthetics

Moderator: Lenessa Hickman Haynes (UCLA)

William Martin (Harvard) “Black Atlantic Riddims and Rhythms: Jayne Cortez, Linton Kwesi Johnson, and the Transcultural Impulse of Late-70s Experimental Poetry”

Davora Lindner (UC Irvine) “Pictures of You that are not you: Writing on The Cure, Pain has turned the threshold to stone”

Patricia Gomes (UC Berkeley) “Experimentations in Land Demarcation: The Performances of Glicéria Tupinambá”

11:30-1pm

Salon: Keynote address by Aimee Bahng (Pomona College)

Moderator: Janine Sun Rogers (UCLA)

1-2pm

Courtyard: Lunch

*All *Gender Stalls*, an installation by Carlina Perna (UCLA), will be exhibited in the first floor restrooms and available to view throughout the day.

2-3:30pm

Salon: Panel 3: Experimental Apparatuses

Moderator: Qianxiong Yang (UCLA)

Tarik Garrett (Harvard) “‘Make the camera an organ’: Performing the camera in the embodied cinema of Ramell Ross”

Elmira Mohebali (UC Davis) “Veiling/Unveiling as Experimental Resistance: Historical Contexts and Contemporary Acts of Defiance in Iran”

Paul Kim (UCSB) “Locating Performativity in the Algorithm”

Sam Hunter (UCLA) “PlanetOut’s Experiments with Queer Relations and Digital Subsumption”

Seminar Room: Panel 4: Sensory Experiments

Moderator: Sophia Weltman (UCLA)

Josh Widera (USC) “One Part Water, Two Parts Starch: Performing oobleck as political resistance”

Sophia Weltman (UCLA) “To Sense Doubly Across Distance”

Laila Espinoza (UC Berkeley) “The Color Magenta: Counter-mapping Femicidio in the Borderlands and the Altarization of a City”

Courtyard: Performance Workshop: *Diary as Score: Embodied Writing Experiments* by Erika Tsimbrovsky (UC Davis)

3:45-5pm

Salon: Panel 5: Experiments in Presentation

Moderator: Cora Miller Laszlo (UCLA)

Lena Chen (UC Berkeley) “Refusing Reparation: Risk, Complicity, and Consent in Academic Research”

Wesleigh Gates (UCLA) “Experimenting with Trans Form(alism)”

Iliya Giyahchi (UC Davis) “V62.4: Dramaturgy of Absence”

Seminar Room: Panel 6: Experiments in Method

Moderator: Maya Sinha (UCLA)

Aydin Quach (USC) “‘Speaking Nearby’ in an Uber (Or Other Quirky Places): Theorizing Gay Habits of Mind in Research”

Allen Zheng (UCR) “Theorizing from the Booth: Perspectivizing Performance and Production”

Yiwen Wu (U Chicago) “The Problem of the Spectators”

5-6:30pm

Courtyard: Dinner, with address by Black Pot Supper Club

6:30-8pm

Salon: Curator Conversation: Experimental, Now

Katy Dammers (REDCAT)

Chloë Flores (homeLA)

Edgar Miramontes (CAP UCLA)

Selene Preciado (LACE)

Samuel Vasquez (Performance Art Museum)

Moderator: Patty Gone (UCLA)

Toast to the 20th Anniversary of the Center for Performance Studies by Chon Noriega (Interim Dean, UCLA School of Theater, Film, and Television) & Michelle Liu Carriger (Chair, UCLA Theater Department)

8-9pm

Courtyard: Reception



Abstracts

Panel 1: Experimental Corporealities

Jose Nateras (UCLA) “‘Genetic Emancipation’ — Flesh, Screens, and Autonomy in Repo! The Genetic Opera”

Darren Smith and Terrance Zdunich’s 2008 film, "Repo! The Genetic Opera" (an adaptation of their sci-fi/horror stage musical of the same name) centralizes issues of the corporeal. The film presents a future where corporations own the very flesh of citizens, dismantling bodies to repossess unfinanced organ transplants, and masses self-medicate through street drugs derived from corpses as well as media consumed through endless arrays of screens. It additionally utilizes live performances within the narrative, particularly opera, exemplifying what scholar Rachel Joseph describes in her book *Screened Stages* as “a desire for corporeal presences of the kind that the live provides.” (11) This desire, revealed through cinema’s depiction of the stage, particularly its renderings of musical theater, is doubly present considering *Repo! The Genetic Opera*’s origins as a stage musical. This paper considers questions the film raises concerning corporeality, flesh, monstrosity, and autonomy in a capitalistic society.

Meredith Cabaniss (UCSB) “The Grotesque as Feminist Aesthetic: Embodiment, Resistance, and Subversion in Weimar Dance and Cabaret”

What does it mean to experiment when the body itself becomes the site of deviation? This presentation takes inspiration from interwar European cabaret as an experimental performance practice that challenged prevailing notions of art, identity, and cultural hierarchies through grotesque aesthetics and feminine excess. Rooted in feminist critiques of modernism, the grotesque, and abjection, this project repositions cabaret’s spectacle of unruly bodies as a radical experiment in dismantling patriarchal, colonial, and neo-classical norms during a period of geopolitical upheaval and as a call to action for us now, a century later.

Cabaret’s “low” status as mass entertainment rendered it suspect in high modernist circles, yet its experiments with form, content, and method—erotic spectacle, violent imagery, and abject embodiment—blurred boundaries between art and politics. Performers like Anita Berber defied the elitist delusions of the avant-garde by embodying grotesque subjectivities that deconstructed normative constructions of gender, race, and sexuality. Their performances embraced the chaos of “low” baroque excess, destabilizing experimental art’s alignment with whiteness and masculinity while anticipating postmodern critiques of the subject.

This analysis probes cabaret's experimental relationship to identity and form in light of current performance studies debates. How can cabaret's grotesque aesthetics inform contemporary understandings of experimentation that navigate the intersection of form and identity? Can experimentation in performance resist institutional co-optation while remaining legible as political critique? By situating cabaret in relation to its historical avant-garde counterparts, this presentation interrogates the contradictions of labeling the grotesque experimental while revealing its enduring potential as a site of revolutionary practice.

Sophie Capobianco (UCLA) "Space, Power, and Vulnerability: The Corporeal Politics of Student Protest"

This paper reads the student protester body as a staging ground for negotiations of power and vulnerability throughout the April-May 2024 UCLA Palestinian Solidarity Encampment and its afterlives. Considering the grassroots assembly and violent repression of student protesters as embodied political contestations, this piece centers the corporeal implications of political expression within institutional structures at UCLA. This study spans the vulnerability of bodies and the spaces they occupy, including their susceptibility to criminalization, physical harm, economic precarity, commodification, weaponization, and policing. Conversely, it explores the potency of the student protester body as a site of political power, considering practices of reclamation, militancy and anonymization, and empowerment through trust in one's body. This analysis posits the student protester body as essentially collectivizing, in that the "student body" is constructed as a cohesive class within the university system, and the individual student protester is subsumed by the generic form of the collectively anonymized body. The student protester politics of identity are essentially experimental in their balancing of subjective agency and militant collectivity, marking the body as a literal and metaphorical battleground for political power. The performativity of these protest scenes is best located in their embodied experiments which structure the social space of the encampment at UCLA. This reading of experimentation is essential for understanding the ramifications of these highly improvisatory, collective political forms, as student protesters continue to fend off criminal prosecution, negotiate reactionary policies limiting free speech and anonymous action, document university spending on police and security forces, and organize creatively for Palestinian liberation.

Elaina Marino (UCLA) "Postdramatic Playground: Trans Agency in the Plays of Jackie Curtis"

My paper will be focused on genderqueer playwright and performer Jackie Curtis, particularly her run of experimental, Off-Off Broadway plays from 1968 to 1970. I argue that her writing and performance process (which included hormone experimentation, proto-postdramatic techniques, collage, and continuous changing of her scripts up to and during shows) was an embracing of illegibility as a trans artist. Her abhorrence of labels and expectations of trans women at the time can be read today as a radical rejection of assimilation and legibility on the stage. Within her own plays, Curtis used her own body to perform a different way of being, and her process can be embraced today as a way for trans artists to reclaim agency, fight against the perils of visibility, and discover new ways to play and discover their Selves.

Panel 2: Experimental Aesthetics

William Martin (Harvard) "Black Atlantic Riddims and Rhythms: Jayne Cortez, Linton Kwesi Johnson, and the Transcultural Impulse of Late-70s Experimental Poetry"

For some, their first introduction to Linton Kwesi Johnson and Jayne Cortez were performances on stage rather than poems on the page. Consider a 1992 flier from the Apples and Snakes arts organization that advertised a late-February performance from Johnson and Cortez in London. Here, event-goers would have enjoyed what the flier designates as "dub poetry" from Johnson and "jazz poetry" from Cortez. Mervyn Morris defines "dub poetry"

as incorporating a musical beat, written for performance, and infusing informal language. Jazz poetry exemplifies qualities that Art Lange and Nathaniel Mackey outline in their anthology, *Moment's Notice: Jazz in Poetry & Prose*, including invention and unconventional literary forms. A consequence of extant scholarship on these experimental poetics, however, stems from a preoccupation with defining the categorically-defiant. This preoccupation deters investigations of experimental poetics interested in what they achieve—not what they are. Shifting our focus, this paper explores the transcultural elements of Johnson and Cortez' experimental poetry which illuminate its black atlantic properties and possibilities. The juxtaposition of Johnson and Cortez' poetry reveals a multitude of minglings: formal (music/poetry), cultural (African American/Black Londoner), and representational (script/performance). This paper first identifies the driver of these minglings as the 60s avant-garde movements in the US (Black Arts Movement) and UK (Caribbean Artists Movement) which produced aesthetic paradigms that circumscribed what constituted black art and blackness. The paper then turns to the performance poetry of Johnson and Cortez, expanding our conception of experimentation as a practice that not only breaks tradition—but builds it.

Davora Lindner (UC Irvine) “*Pictures of You that are not you: Writing on The Cure, Pain has turned the threshold to stone*”

This paper examines a 74-minute durational performance work that places The Cure's 1989 album "Disintegration" as both soundtrack and theoretical object for exploring temporal rifts in cultural memory and embodied experience. Through close analysis of a performance first set at UC Irvine in November 2023, the research investigates how popular music in the durational form of an album, has served as a vehicle for examining personal and collective histories while engaging with critical discourse on postmodern appropriation, decolonial aesthetics, and care practices.

Drawing on metabolic theory, "The Mind is a Muscle," scholarship on "care webs" and the Japanese genre of the I-Novel, this study positions the performed act of listening to "Disintegration" as a site where temporalities and narratives converge as meaningful form. The performance situates a residential kitchen inside an arts institution as an intersection of personal grief, material culture, and temporal suspension through engagement with everyday objects and sound. The work embodies what Hans-Georg Gadamer termed "Double Mimesis" to bridge past and present experiences, using intrinsic and mimetic gestures and dissociative presence to reveal the hidden forms engendered by popular music that address personal and political grief.

The piece engages with questions of experimental form by incorporating elements of anthemic acoustics, architectural, adaptive reuse, and durational experience. Working with objects that contain pre-, during-, and post-relationship histories, the performance creates what might be termed a "material psychology of loss" – one that resists traditional narrative resolution while highlighting the role of everyday objects in archiving emotional experience.

Patricia Gomes (UC Berkeley) “*Experimentations in Land Demarcation: The Performances of Glicéria Tupinambá*”

At the 60th Venice Biennale Arissana Pataxó, Denilson Baniwa, and Gustavo Caboco Wapichana retitled the Brazil Pavilion to Hãhãwpuá Pavilion, meaning “land” in the Pataxó language. This was the first time that Indigenous artists represented Brazil in the Biennale. The exhibition was titled Ka'a Pûera: we are walking birds, where one of the meanings of the title refers to the capoeira bird that is of great significance to the Tupinambá people. They are small birds that live in dense forests with brown, orange, and gray feathers that provide them with the ability to camouflage into the surroundings.

The curators propose the “resistance of Indigenous people peoples as humans-birds-memory-nature is for us to remember those who are on the margins, dispossessed, invisibilized, imprisoned, and whose rights have been violated, because even in apparently infertile soil, there is always possibility of resurgence and resistance.” this paper thinks with the performances of Gliceria Tupinamba, specifically those in which she is wearing Tupinamba mantles or sacred capes. Her work in reviving the practice of making Tupinamba mantles - through research and instructions delivered through dreams and ancestral relationships - and the practice of creating them has led to what she calls a modern mantle. In *Manto em Movimento* or *Manto in Movement*, Tupinamba walks and dances through her territory using the mantle - made of over 4,000 feathers given by birds of her territory - but here is translating the Tupi’s relationship with the mantle to support current efforts towards land demarcation.

Panel 3: Experimental Apparatuses

Tarik Garrett (Harvard) “‘Make the camera an organ’: Performing the camera in the embodied cinema of Ramell Ross”

Although the idea of the apparatus of the camera becoming an extension of the human has its roots in the beginnings of cinema and 20th-century modernity, this paper seeks to problematize Ross’s experimentations with a cinematic avant-garde by situating his work within the genealogy of black American traditions— from Frederick Douglass’s analysis of pictures at the advent of photographic technology to the embodied praxis of black artist and intellectuals of the mid 20th century. Ramell Ross situates the camera not as a passive recorder of events but as an active participant in shaping sensory and social realities—the camera has performative capacities to construct intersubjective relations that blur the divisions between subjects, makers, and viewers. Three works inhabiting the space between fiction and non-fiction, *Nickel Boys*, *Return to Origin*, and *Hale County This Morning, This Evening*, experiment with cinematography integrating tactile temporality and spatial intimacy. In *Nickel Boys*, Ross interrogates the entanglement of fiction, history, and memory, using poetic imagery, archival footage, and fractured storytelling to collapse the distance between past and present. Made over nearly eight years, during which Ross became a part of the fabric of a community as a teacher and basketball coach, *Hale County This Morning, This Evening* centers on quotidian black life. His presence behind the camera sets an intersubjective relationship that allows the camera to foreground gestures, textures, and the sensory rhythm rather than narrative. In *Return to Origin*, Ross uses performance as a mode of inquiry, shipping himself from Providence, Rhode Island, to Hale County, Alabama, referencing Henry Browns, an enslaved man who mailed himself to freedom. Ross installed a camera to document his 59-hour journey as he drank water bottles, refilled them with his urine, slept, read, and wrote a “black dictionary ” on the crate’s walls. As part of the crate, the camera observes him in an intimate yet objectifying view, enclosing him in an embodied signifying system of “thingafication.” By negotiating the role of the camera, Ross seeks an experimental embodied approach to visuality that this paper will argue is rooted in the traditions of black American intellectual, cultural, and spiritual traditions that think ontology and epistemology as co-constitutive.

Elmira Mohebali (UC Davis) “Veiling/Unveiling as Experimental Resistance: Historical Contexts and Contemporary Acts of Defiance in Iran”

This essay explores archiving, animating, and reproducing for the camera the experimental and performative resistance of Iranian girls who publicly remove their government-mandated hijabs, challenging both legal and cultural frameworks of control. Situating this act within broader feminist and resistance theories, it examines the symbolism of unveiling as a radical assertion of autonomy and defiance against systemic oppression. These

acts are analyzed as a form of "everyday resistance," blending physical vulnerability with social rebellion to reclaim agency in a heavily surveilled society.

Through drawing on the intersection of performance studies and activism, the essay argues that these public unveilings are not merely personal choices or immediate and emotional reactions but deliberate experiments. These embodied performances disrupt the authoritarian regime's narrative. These acts also leverage social media to amplify visibility, transforming intimate gestures of dissent into global calls for solidarity. Through this experimental resistance, Iranian girls reimagine the boundaries of protest, courageously negotiating between personal risk and collective liberation in the face of gendered authoritarianism. The essay suggests representing and achieving the profound impact of these actions on Iranian society and recommends a new critical discourse regarding cultural and personal agency, emphasizing the power of performative defiance in oppressive contexts.

Paul Kim (UCSB) "Locating Performativity in the Algorithm"

This paper considers the contemporary recommender system in an effort to modify existing critiques of race and algorithm. The existing scholarship at the intersection of critical race and AI studies usefully demonstrates the historical sociotechnical co-productions of race, the inhering political economy of race in technology, and the histories of eugenic thought and logic in our contemporary implementation of machine learning, ultimately presenting race as fundamentally contingent and thus requiring technological enforcement to have a continuous, coherent afterlife. Recommender systems, the algorithms that sort and suggest content on sites such as YouTube and Netflix, are not exempt from this critique; one notable example is the case of Cambridge Analytica in the 2016 election that served targeted and divisive advertisements to users based on an inference of race. This paper does not disagree with this presentation of race and/in the algorithm, but undergoes a technological excavation in order to suggest a different sort of contingency of race: its performative aspect. By exploring a portion of the mathematical process of automated recommendation, this paper argues that contemporary automated recommendation does not necessarily have or need an idea of race, and in fact, what the algorithm understands as social category cannot align with human understanding of social category. Rather than champion AI as post-racial technology, this paper positions how recommendation categorizes humans as a function of digitally captured/translated human behavior; as such, algorithmic critique on racial grounds should focus on the structures of racialized digital performance.

Sam Hunter (UCLA) "PlanetOut's Experiments with Queer Relations and Digital Subsumption"

Experiments are not only undertaken by radicals; hegemonic actors also experiment through efforts to accumulate and maintain wealth and power. This paper considers a historical moment of queer experimentation—the rise and fall of the queer-themed social network and media conglomerate PlanetOut in the 1990s and 2000s—as an example of digital subsumption, a process by which the dot-com era capitalist firm experimented with different methods for capturing surplus value. I frame the actions and experiences of PlanetOut's users and operators as simultaneous but divergent experiments with emergent technologies. PlanetOut's features supported experiments in queer living for users but were also mechanisms for the platform's Silicon Valley founders and investors to experiment with how to make money online. This paper is particularly attentive to how the performed act of the user's embodied engagement with the screen was variously conceived as a value-producing site across different experimental attempts at digitally subsuming queerness. Although PlanetOut failed as a corporate venture, I show how PlanetOut's early experiments in subsuming queer actions and experiences through cyber-capitalist logics anticipated strategies later used by "straight" digital media such as Facebook or Google as well as contemporary queer digital media such as Grindr to maximize the production of surplus value from using digital media, queerly or otherwise.

Panel 4: Sensory Experiments

Josh Widera (USC) “One Part Water, Two Parts Starch: Performing oobleck as political resistance”

Oobleck is two things: a non-Newtonian fluid, a mixture of cornstarch and water showing properties of both a liquid and a solid; and an invention by Dr. Seuss, an odd green weather occurrence whose fluid, adhesive, and elastic attributes manage to threaten the entire state apparatus of the “Kingdom of Didd.”

Re-viewing the children’s book *Bartholomew and the Oobleck*, as well as its starch-and-water namesake, I argue that we can learn an insurrective strategy of political resistance from oobleck’s performativity.

This paper looks at recent ways of protest that function on the one hand through interdependence, malleability, solidarity, and vulnerability (Butler, 2015; Haraway, 2016; Lorey, 2015) and on the other through resistance, shutting down, and making inoperable (Agamben, 2014; Malabou, 2008; Marder, 2012). It turns to the oobleck as our more-than-human, physical-fictional interlocutor, who provides us with a revolutionary recipe for political performativity, as force is met with force, care is met with malleability, and entire kingdoms can be petrified in its wake.

Sophia Weltman (UCLA) “To Sense Doubly Across Distance”

As Franz Fanon concludes *Black Skins, White Masks* he follows his call to cease the subjugation of man by man with a series of questions. It is here he asks, “Superiority? Inferiority? Why not simply try to touch the other, feel the other, discover each other?” Fanon presents touch as a mode of encountering the other outside of the hierarchies of being that have come to define Western civilization. But what does it mean to touch or be touched by the other, especially in the figurative sense? The double sensation that is touch, the simultaneously active and passive quality of the sense acknowledged by early phenomenologists, is seemingly absent from figurative uses of the term. The single directionality implied by “touching a nerve,” “getting in touch with,” “being touched by kindness,” reveals the non-literal touch’s betrayal of the doubleness that defines the haptic sensation of the same name. In this discrepancy language corroborates the notion of bounded subjectivity. To heed Fanon’s call, this paper troubles the single-directionality of figurative touch in an experimental effort to complicate the notion of a singular self and the validity of a self/other divide foundational to the subjugation of man by man. By calling on Kara Keeling’s notes on Hortense Spillers use of vestibularity this paper hypothesizes ways of maintaining touch’s double sensation across distance in an effort to forge solidarity.

Laila Espinoza (UC Berkeley) “The Color Magenta: Counter-mapping Femicidio in the Borderlands and the Altarization of a City”

This project centers on the extra-spectral color magenta as a set of visual intensities that I locate throughout land-based performances by impacted community and artists, including myself, to shed light to femicide in Ciudad Juárez and across borders south and north in the Americas. The extra-spectral quality of magenta as an in-between color and a spectrum ranging from intense pink, soft pink, purplish-red, to crimson allows us to reach across time and space in order to trace practices of healing that I consider hybrid/experimental, spiritual-religio-aesthetic responses of protest rooted from the raw viscosity of survival and demand to a life of dignity. Significantly as well, the color magenta bears the meaning of spectral, from spirit or ghostly. According to color science we don’t really see the color magenta — and yet we do. There is no place for this color’s wavelength in the visible light spectrum, instead, our brain creates it when it receives signals from red and blue light. For this reason, magenta is also considered a “survival color”, because our brain created it in order to find sustenance in nature. In Indigenous Mesoamerican cosmologies, red is considered to be the only color that

ancestors can see. The color magenta then, is the space where the Dead, the Living and those caught in-between, the missing, can convene.

Panel 5: Experiments in Presentation

Lena Chen (UC Berkeley) “Refusing Reparation: Risk, Complicity, and Consent in Academic Research”

Taking up Avgi Saketopoulou’s concept of “traumatophilia” – or what she calls “our attraction to the site of the traumatic,” this paper examines the relationship between academia and the spectacle of marginalized bodies and subcultural practice. As a case study, I present my experience of Living Document, a performance in which I cut into the body of MJ Tom, an Asian American artist, leatherdyke, and prodomme who is also a subject of my research. Rather than critiquing academic extractivism or healing its wounds, our performance considers how such a wound might be a productive space of ethical experimentation.

Utilizing the queer leathersex practice of cutting and scarification, Tom’s Living Document (2021-present) is an ongoing love poem to her partner, another Asian sex worker. The work is carved line by line into the bodies of herself, her friends, lovers, and clients with a scalpel in an ongoing piece that explores queer love through a syntax of poetry and violence. As an Asian American scholar and former sex worker myself, I have been writing about Tom’s work since 2020. I commissioned a performance of Living Document at UC Berkeley in September 2023 and performed Living Document with Tom in Baltimore at the Annual Meeting of the American Studies Association in November 2024.

Taking on the persona of the Researcher, while Tom performed as the Subject, I cut into her body under her instruction, slapped the bleeding wound, and treated it with my breast milk. By involving myself in the very queer Asian performance practice I study and doing so at a conference before an audience of colleagues, this performance lured me to the ethical limits of embodied scholarship, opening up questions of complicity and reciprocity in academic research. If IRB processes lack the nuance to capture libidinal and psychic entanglements, how might scholars instead hold ourselves accountable to the communities that comprise our work? How can power exchange offer a framework for thinking through consent and agency in research? By situating itself within the academy, which is rooted in violent, racist, and colonial histories, this performance illustrates new possibilities of intimacy from a wound’s engagement.

Wesleigh Gates (UCLA) “Experimenting with Trans Form(alism)”

“Experiment” is a fraught word for trans communities, evoking the clinical apparatus that seeks to maintain authority over our gendered becomings, as well as the harmful perception that trans identification might be simply a passing phase. Yet gender transition might be considered precisely as a series of experiments. To find ourselves, we tinker not only with preferred modes of dress and address, but with our corporeal form, from comportment to hormones to surgeries.

Following this last thread, this presentation takes up the relationship between experimentation and the notion of trans form. I ask what it might mean to center form, rather than identity-based content, in considerations of trans artworks and trans bodies; then, drawing on the “radical formalism” of theorist Eugenie Brinkema (2022), I experiment with a formalist reading of gender transition. Further, I situate this reading as a specifically performance studies approach that follows from the field’s investment in what bodies, language, and artworks do in the world, while reciprocally suggesting that radical formalism might push the field to consider new shapes of analysis.

The presentation itself questions what constitutes research and the forms in which that research might be shared. Confining myself to the duration of a typical paper presentation, I weave this standard(ized) container

together with elements of choreography, lecture performance, and participatory performance, in order to find a shape that can accommodate my scholarship, my artistic practice, and my experimental trans body. Can 15-20 minutes hold all this? Is that, actually, the experiment?

Ilya Giyahchi (UC Davis) “V62.4: Dramaturgy of Absence”

I frame my research and practice as an experimental response to my contemporary condition; whether it is the socio-political realities of my homeland or my experience of displacement in the diaspora. Rooted in the underground scene of Iranian activists, my work engaged with cyberactivism and performative dissent, drawing on internet culture’s strategies of anonymity (Stryker) and obfuscation (Brunton & Nissenbaum) as well as the aesthetics of Iranian women’s protests creating modular actions (Tarrow)—which I link to avant-garde event-scores (Nyman), I created artworks that leverage new-media to bypass institutional constraints, forming distributed networks (Barn) that challenge the conventional ‘here and now’ of performance to resist regime’s oppression by redistributing agency through intermediality and networked structures.

This approach deepened after relocating to the U.S., where I explored themes of nostalgia, displacement, and exile through a practice-as-research project. Collaborating with a diaspora-based collective, called CyberShakespeare, I developed V62.4, an immersive performance designed for private homes, bridging personal immigration narratives with digital humanities and the fragmented self (Haraway; Hayles), questioning how culture and identity are mediated through the immigrant experience. V62.4’s modular format fosters community-building among participants, aligning with the Future Stage manifesto’s emphasis on accessibility and decentralization, creating evolving, participant-driven performances.

In this workshop, I will perform V62.4 and discuss its theoretical implications, particularly its ability to create intimate publics (Berlant) and challenge hegemonic structures. By adapting artistic practice to contemporary socio-political conditions, this work highlights how performance art can operate as a transformative medium in the digital age.

Panel 6: Experiments in Method

Aydin Quach (USC) “‘Speaking Nearby’ in an Uber (Or Other Quirky Places): Theorizing Gay Habits of Mind in Research”

This paper explores methods in conducting research in Asian American, performance, and nightlife studies by examining an oral history project with a gay Asian (gaysian) American on the nature of identity in social spaces. Employing a mix of symbiotic autoethnography coupled with nonrepresentative methods of engagement (walking, meandering, pushing), I take stock of all aspects of the interview (pre and post interview inclusive) to better illustrate a silhouette of a gaysian theory to life informed by the performance of the immigrant, diasporic body of both interviewer and interviewee in nightlife spaces.

I offer an expansion of Trĩnh Thĩ Minh Hà’s theorization of “speaking nearby” by examining how post-interview practices of checking-in with my informant in Uber rides might constitute a method of creating a more dynamic ethnographic practice informed by Black feminist theory. I also explore my personal research notes around a gaysian/queer performance of Lisa Lowe’s “unregulated speech” that may take place in Uber rides in relation to the passengers, the driver, and the theorized others that may exist in rideshare situations. (i.e. self-driving cars like Waymo).

Allen Zheng (UCR) “Theorizing from the Booth: Perspectivizing Performance and Production”

My paper reflects on my ethnographic involvements while researching contemporary Cambodian performance from 2022 to 2023 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. While conducting participant-observation, I assisted with the production of two performance showcases with works from these events contributing significantly to my scholarship. Inspired by Dorinne Kondo's journey into producing her own plays, I develop "theorizing from the booth" as an ethnographic method from understanding research from the black box, sublimating the boundaries between theory and method as well as performance and production. I discuss my involvement as a lighting and sound technician, amateur audio engineer, and assistant event organizer, conceptualizing how my relationship to artistic production is inextricable from my scholarship and articulating a politics of engaged research rooted in decolonial methods. Theorizing from the booth, in turn, offers a model for conducting ethnographic research in the realms of music, dance, and performance studies where the ethnographer is closely involved with and invested in the production process despite not being an active performer in the scene. Rather than focusing on the ethnographer as performer or ethnographer as observer, theorizing from the booth promotes a perspective that engages performance analysis from the lens of production, considering the interplay and dimensions of performance and production while inverting researcher-community power dynamics. I argue that involvement with the technical production resituates power with the artists and community to serve the broader goals of creating performance art.

Yiwen Wu (U Chicago) "The Problem of the Spectators"

Arts practice, in the field of performance studies and beyond, has now been established as a way of research where scholars get to prioritize processes and methodologies exploration over traditional academic publication. This paper calls our attention to the significance of spectators in practice-as-research, a component that is often overlooked in current theories around performance-as-research even though performance does not exist without the participation of spectators. By reflecting on my own experience staging my artistic-scholarly project, an experimental performance called Sattva, for a rather conservative group of audience members, the paper explores how an awareness of audience members can bring new insights and even push us to expand our current understanding of research and practice-as-research. The production of Sattva embraces plurality in its form and content, exploring a state of gender fluidity by utilizing shadow play and animation to construct a more open space for bodily experimentation—a choice that is intellectually stimulating for the creators but conceptually disorienting for the public that we were reaching. In particular, I will look into how this experiment challenged our audience members' generic expectation for performance, and how our consideration of the audiences ended up forcing us to find a balance between articulation and openness in our creative process.

Workshop

Erika Tsimbrovsky (UC Davis) *Diary as Score: Embodied Writing Experiments*

I am offering an inquiry into an embodied experimental writing practice in combination with art dance, presented as a collective interactive score, *Living Open Diary*. This practice focuses on intimacy, differences, and overlaps of times, materials, and bodies, emphasizing shared space as an actant that brings its structural particularities into a continual intimate immediacy of authentic conversations with materials and bodies. We will somatically explore diary-like bodily writing with paper and twigs, challenging oppressive linguistic power and bringing the potential of nongrammatical aspects of language/s.

The *Living Open Diary* project is part of my choreographic research, which examines the relationships of dance, visual art, and text through the emerging-shifting concept of dance-installation, "site-particular" dance, and work invested in healing and ritual that call on longer genealogies of embodied knowledge-tradition. I focus on dance

artists' diaries and the practices of dance thinkers-practitioners who challenge conventional forms of both dancemaking and text-making. Central to my inquiry are bodily explorations of new languages and modes of communication created by entities muted or unrecognized by society.

This research explores the concept of a/semic as a quality of the intersection of movement, art, and text in diary-like performances. The a/semic refers to cultural ways of knowing that do not have clear semiotic meaning within empowered systems. The a/semic, by definition, makes space for all those whose voices have not been heard. I create dance events using interdisciplinary and multimedia-embodied experiments with audience placements in space and time to examine new forms of relationships as generative of meaning-creating conversations with society.

Installation

Carlina Perna (UCLA) - All Gender Stalls

All Gender Stalls is an experiment in erasure poetry, which serves to trouble the US government's troubling efforts to erase and control trans people through legislation. Using language from bills passed and proposed by US states to define gender and sex as well as control access to spaces like bathrooms, locker rooms, and sports teams, I have written and installed a series of erasure poems on the walls of the first floor Hershey Hall bathroom stalls where conference attendees will frequent throughout the day. In exploring the performativity of erasure poetry, I ask: How can erasure trouble the anti-trans myths that people turn into laws? How can erasure poetry be used to reclaim feelings of rest in bathrooms where I, and others, often feel deep unrest? How can the visibility of language inside bathroom stalls displace the body as object of the gaze and transform energy used to decipher bodies in space into actions that build a better world?



Presenter Bios

Alphabetical by last name

Aimee Bahng is Associate Professor and Chair of Gender and Women's Studies as well as American Studies at Pomona College. Author of the award-winning book [*Migrant Futures: Decolonizing Speculation in Financial Times*](#) (Duke University Press, 2018), she has also co-edited the [*Keywords for Gender and Sexuality Studies*](#) volume, with the Feminist Keywords Collective, as well as a special issue of *Journal of Asian American Studies* on [*Transpacific Futurities*](#) with Christine Mok. Her current book project, *Settler Environmentalism and Pacific Resurgence*, engages environmental law's settler colonial history and points to alternative models of planetary accountability that highlight ongoing Native Pacific environmental movements.

Meredith Cabaniss is a multi-disciplinary artist, choreographer, and dance scholar. She holds an M.F.A. in Dance from Hollins University and is a current Ph.D. student at University of California, Santa Barbara. In addition to her scholarly work, she is the Director of Education at State Street Ballet. As the founder and artistic director of Selah Dance Collective, she has presented works across the U.S. and internationally. Her research focuses on the historiography of the body in early 20th-century dance, emphasizing the grotesque, spectacle, and feminine excess in cabaret and mass culture.

Lena Chen: I am a Chinese American artist and scholar currently pursuing a PhD in Performance Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. My dissertation examines how contemporary Asian American women and queer sex workers, artists, and community organizers use performances of race and gender to reject representational politics and complicity with carceral, capitalist, and patriarchal notions of national belonging. Against the backdrop of surging anti-Asian violence, I explore whether performance can act as a speculative site for resolving the psychic wounds of racism and imagining abolitionist, queer, feminist futures. I hold a B.A. in sociology from Harvard University and a MFA from Carnegie Mellon School of Art.

Katy Dammers is the Deputy Director and Chief Curator, Performing Arts at REDCAT, CalArts' center for the visual and performing arts in Los Angeles. Her curatorial practice presents, organizes, and contextualizes contemporary art in performance commissions, exhibitions, festivals, site-specific installations, and publications. She has held past leadership positions at The Kitchen, FringeArts, and Jacob's Pillow. Dammers has also worked as a creative administrator, and was the General Manager for choreographers Rashaun Mitchell + Silas Riener from 2014-2022, in addition to organizing projects with Jennifer Monson, Donna Uchizono, and Tere O'Connor. A writing fellow at the US National Center for Choreography, her essays about dance have been

published in The Brooklyn Rail, Motor Dance Journal, and MOLD as well as edited volumes by University of Akron Press and Princeton University Press. Dammers was a member of the Inland Academy and holds degrees from Goldsmiths College and Princeton University.

Laila Espinoza: I am the daughter of a Roma mother and Mexican father, raised by my grandmother and aunties in Ciudad Juárez. I am a performance artist and scholar whose work focuses on altars and ritual. I live in Oakland, CA. with my son and visit my family at the U.S/Mexico border every year. I worked as a self-taught artist for ten years before my BFA from the California College of the Arts and my MA in Theater, Dance and Performance Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, where I am currently a PhD Candidate.

Chloë Flores is a Latinx Yaqui Native curator and arts writer, producer, and administrator whose work centers on body-based, performative, and site-specific practices and the production of culture in public space. She is the Executive and Artistic Director of homeLA, a LA-based performance organization and platform for experimental and site-specific dance, performance, and art. Flores founded and directed GuestHaus Residency (2011-2023), was Programs Director at Heidi Duckler Dance (2021-22), and co-founded the Los Angeles Dance Worker Coalition (LADWC) that developed/launched the first dance-specific grant program for the Los Angeles' DCA Performing Arts Division (2022). Flores has worked in the arts in Los Angeles since 1999, co-founded/co-directed enView Gallery in Long Beach from 2005-2008, and received her MA in Curatorial Practices in 2011 from USC. Over the years, she has worked on exhibitions, programs and texts for the following organizations: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The J. Paul Getty Museum, The Orange County Museum of Art, The Office, The Armory Center for the Arts, Dance Resource Center, Monte Vista Projects, Cypress College, The Sweeney Art Gallery at UC Riverside, Anthony Greaney, Sierra Nevada College, the MAK Center for Art and Architecture at the Schindler House and at the Mackey Garage Top, Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE), and The Box.

Tarik Garrett is an artist working between Los Angeles and Cambridge, MA. His work interrogates his research, focusing on embodied epistemology rooted in African diasporic cultural traditions in the Americas. Garrett works in sculpture, photo writing, video, printmaking, and audio. He is particularly interested in how we think, what we believe, and what bearings our answers to these questions have on our being. In this way, Garrett's practice is rooted in the immanent critique that typifies the Black Radical Tradition. Currently pursuing a PhD in Film and Visual Studies at Harvard, with a secondary field in Critical Media Practice, Garrett holds an MFA in Studio Art from UC Irvine (2021) and a BFA from Cooper Union (2013).

Wesleigh Gates is an artist and PhD candidate in Culture and Performance at UCLA, researching trans corporeality and subjectivity. Her dissertation project investigates the importance of collective movement practices in trans and travesti communities across the Americas. She is a recipient of the Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Award, and has been published in PARTake: The Journal of Performance as Research, Gulf Coast Journal, and a special issue of Media-N on trans new media art. Wesleigh holds an MFA from Carnegie Mellon University and is currently making a performance interrogating the body horror of transition.

Iliya Giyahchi is a Ph.D. student in Performance Studies with a Designated Emphasis on Science and Technology Studies at UC Davis. His research focuses on the performativity of protests, the transformation of public spheres in the digital age, and the women's rights movement in Iran, analyzing its cyberactivism,

networked structures, and posthumanist elements. He integrates these frameworks into new media art and performances. With affiliations to ModLab at UC Davis and leading Iranian theater centers, Giyahchi's interdisciplinary practice includes alternate reality games inspired by investigative journalism and collaborations on acclaimed projects like *Danger of a Cluster Bomb* and *Zugzwang*.

Patty Gone is a poet, performer, artist, and a PhD candidate in Performance Studies at UCLA. She is the author of *Love Life* (Mount Analogue, 2019) and her art and cultural criticism have appeared in publications including *The Believer*, *Art Papers*, *Hyperallergic*, *Boston Review*, and *jubilat*. She has performed or exhibited work at the Queens Museum, The Poetry Project, Smack Mellon, Human Resources, REDCAT, and Porn Film Festival Berlin, and she has received funding and support from NYU, Mass MoCA, Northampton Open Media, and Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts. She holds an MFA in Poetry from UMass-Amherst, and her dissertation traces, from a historiographical perspective, how the gravitational pull of straight cultural norms has influenced and shaped the trajectory of aesthetic theory and practice, from Camp to Surrealism.

Paul Kim is a PhD candidate in the Film and Media Studies department at UC Santa Barbara. He works broadly at the intersection of critical AI studies, critical race studies, and visual studies. His dissertation considers recommender systems and racial affect. He is a graduate researcher for the intercampus project AI Forensics, funded by the VolkswagenStiftung Artificial Intelligence and the Society of the Future grant.

William Martin is a PhD candidate in English at Harvard University. His research investigates the aftermath of late 60s avant-garde movements focusing on how African American, Black British, and Caribbean writers escaped aesthetic constraints of nationalism, instead turning to experimental poetry as a lens through which to think diasporically about black aesthetics and ontology. He currently works as a Pedagogy Fellow for the Bok Center providing consultations to teaching fellows. He is also a Literary Fellow for the Student Center at the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences serving as co-editor for the Graduate Review, Harvard's oldest graduate school journal.

Edgar Miramontes (he/him/his) is the Executive and Artistic Director of the Center for the Art of Performance at UCLA (CAP UCLA), an internationally recognized public arts organization dedicated to the advancement of the contemporary performing arts by leading artists from around the world in all disciplines—dance, music, spoken word and theater, as well as emerging digital, collaborative and cross-platforms. He is an arts leader with broad experience as a curator of contemporary performance, producer, lecturer, administrator, fundraiser and festival organizer. He previously served as the Deputy Executive Director and Curator of REDCAT (Roy and Enda Disney/CalArts Theater), a multidisciplinary center for innovative visual, performing and media arts founded by California Institute of the Arts in the Walt Disney concert Hall complex in downtown Los Angeles. In this role, he was responsible for the international, national, and regional programming and management with an emphasis in dance, theater, and performance. During this time, he also served as co-curator and co-producer of the Getty-led Pacific Standard Time Festival: Live Art LA/LA, an international celebration of art and performance, with more than 200 Latin American and Latinx artists supported by a major grant from the Getty Foundation.

Elmira Moheballi is a PhD student in the Performance Studies program at UC Davis, where her research focuses on the intersection of performance for the camera, Iranian-Islamic magic, and fairy tales. Her work explores how these narratives shape and define women's roles within Iranian society and its broader cultural worldview. By examining the performative dimensions of these stories, Moheballi highlights their enduring

influence on gender roles, societal expectations, and collective identity. Her interdisciplinary approach combines performance studies, cultural analysis, and visual media to uncover the ways in which myth and folklore continue to inform contemporary Iranian conceptions of womanhood and agency.

Jose Nateras (he/him) is a PhD student at UCLA in Theater & Performance Studies. His research concerns the performance of horror in relation to marginalized identities. Jose has his BA in Theatre from Loyola University Chicago and his MFA in Writing from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC). Alongside experience teaching (SAIC, Truman College), Jose is a published novelist, playwright, accomplished screenwriter/filmmaker, and a career actor on both stage and screen (SAG-AFTRA/AEA). Jose looks to bring an interdisciplinary and cross-genre approach to examining how horror performs as a tool for Queer and BIPOC survival.

Selene Preciado (she/her) is the Curator and Director of Programs at LACE (Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions). Prior to this post, she was a Program Associate at the Getty Foundation, where she supported museum and professional development initiatives through Pacific Standard Time and the Getty Marrow Undergraduate Internship program. Preciado has also worked at The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), the Museum of Latin American Art (MOLAA), Centro Cultural Tijuana, the San Diego Museum of Art, and inSite_05. Preciado's curatorial practice is research- and history-based, approaching topics such as memory, language, place/diaspora, ritual, and popular culture through experimental perspectives.

Selected curatorial projects include ABUNDANCE, a performance series co-curated with Juan Silverio, presented by LACE at L.A. Dance Project (April 24–26, 2024), Collidoscope: A de la Torre Brothers Retro-Perspective, at The Cheech Marin Center for Chicano Art and Culture, organized in conjunction with the National Museum of the American Latino (2022–2023, ongoing national tour); Ser todo es ser parte/To be Whole is to be Part, LACE (2020); Desecho, a performance project by Regina José Galindo for Zona Maco, Mexico City (2017), Customizing Language, the inaugural exhibition of the Emerging Curators Program at LACE co-curated with Idurre Alonso (2016); and José Montoya's Abundant Harvest: Works on Paper/Works on Life, co-curated with Richard Montoya at the Fowler Museum at UCLA.

Raised in Tijuana, Mexico, Preciado obtained a BA in Visual Arts from the University of California, San Diego (UCSD), and holds an MA in Art and Curatorial Practices in the Public Sphere from the University of Southern California (USC).

Aydin Quach (he/they) is a Ph.D. student at the University of Southern California, a scholar, and artist specializing in Asian North American Studies, Queer Studies, Performance Studies, Ethnomusicology, and Transpacific Studies. Their research deals primarily with sex, gender, race, and sexuality in the transpacific, with a particular focus on the queer Asian diaspora, queer nightlife, and sound studies/ethnomusicology. This work is guided by transnational pleasurable objects of analysis (music festivals, fetish wear, sex[uality], video games, karaoke) and an illustration of a queer Asian or "Gaysian" lifeworlds/soundscapes in diaspora across the Transpacific.

Janine Sun Rogers is a PhD candidate in Theater and Performance Studies in the UCLA School of Theater, Film, and Television. Her dissertation project considers agencies and animacies of canned goods and ecologies of militarization across Asian American and Pacific Islander performance. She has presented research through the American Society for Theatre Research, Performance Studies International, the Association for Asian

American Studies, and the UCLA AAPI Policy Summit. Her writing can be found in Theatre Journal, AAPI Nexus, Theatre Bay Area, The Documentarian, Westwind Journal, and Variable West. She is a contributor to the forthcoming volume *Staging Visitation: Tourism as Geographic Performance* (University of Michigan Press), edited by Bryan Schmidt and Weston Twardowski.

Erika Tsimbrovsky: A Ph.D. candidate in Performance Studies at UC Davis, I am a choreographer/multidisciplinary artist and cofounder/artistic director of Avy K Productions (SF). My choreographic art research highlights multimedia art dance installations, dance, visual art, and text interplay, and new relationships for the artist-performer-audience. Diaries of choreographic artists and the notion of the 'multimedia body' inspire my ongoing "living open diary" explorations, a continuation of The Book's multimedia story-sharing (2010-11).

Samuel Vasquez is Director of the Performance Art Museum, a new nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing the visibility, legacy, and scholarship of artists working in performance. Most recently, Vasquez served as Deputy Director, Advancement at The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) and helped to establish the museum's performance program, Wonmi's Warehouse Programs, and the Environmental Council, a first of its kind in the U.S. He managed the opening of the Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (ICA LA) in 2017, formerly the Santa Monica Museum of Art, and introduced new fundraising approaches centered around community building, social inclusion, and mission-driven programming. He served in a leadership role at the Hammer Museum during the launch of Made in L.A. 2012 and Free Admission, and previously at MOCA, where he oversaw the success of its 30th-anniversary gala, the largest fundraising event in its history. This followed his experience as co-founder of the collective-run performance art space eighteen-thirty. He received his BA in Political Science from UCLA, sits on the Board of HomeLA and JOAN, and is the founding co-chair of El Comité de Arte.

Élizabeth VR is an interdisciplinary studio practice predicated on durational performance in a sculptural tradition. The production of works utilizes techniques of radical appropriation that provoke engagement with concepts of authorship and translation in ephemeral presentations. An ongoing series of affective readings of theoretical texts and rehearsals of dialogue by unidentified people or groups, connect a series of projects developed and presented in studios, domestic, and public spaces. The organization is intended to foster artistic processes and methods of realizing works for small and evolving communities. A catalyst for artworks that are collectively held, concealed, and shared through ongoing dialogue.

Sophia Weltman's research concerns the relationship between refuse and subject formation under global capitalism. Through the examination of cultural productions characterized by the employment of waste matter, Sophia seeks alternative ways of conceiving the human, history, and speculative futures by catastrophizing dominant epistemologies and value systems predicated on fixedness. Sophia's work is indebted to questions of presence and a belief in the generative potential of negation. Sophia is pursuing a PhD in theater and performance studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. Sophia received her MFA in theater design from UCLA in 2023 and her BA in human geography from the University of California, Berkeley.

Josh Widera is a founding member of The Doing Group, an international collaborative performance group concerned with the process of 'doing.' Josh graduated from the University of Glasgow with an MA in Politics and Theatre Studies and from the California Institute of the Arts with an MA in Aesthetics & Politics. He is currently

pursuing a PhD at USC Annenberg. His work has been published in *Performance Philosophy* and the *International Journal of Communication* and he has been supported by the Fulbright Commission, the Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes, and California Humanities.

Yiwen Wu is a scholar-artist. She is currently a PhD candidate in the joint program between Theater and Performance Studies and East Asian Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago. As a scholar, Yiwen focuses her studies in the performance history of Chinese opera, especially in the transitional period from the imperial nineteenth century through the iconoclastic twentieth century. As an artist, Yiwen finds her passion in amplifying Asian voices on contemporary stages, from modern revivals of East Asian traditions to new works that explore what it means to be Asian in modern America. Her original directorial and playwriting work, *Sattva*, recently won the Special Recognition Award at the 11th Wuzhen Theatre Festival. She's also a professional dramaturg, who has served as dramaturg for five productions and six new play workshops in Chicago and Shanghai.

Allan Zheng is a PhD candidate in ethnomusicology at UC Riverside and lecturer in Asian and Asian American Studies at Loyola Marymount University. His research focuses on expressions of identity and societal issues in the contemporary Cambodian performing arts. Allan's work has been supported by the Center for Khmer Studies, Society for Asian Music, and UC Riverside Center for Ideas and Society. His scholarly work has been recognized by the Society for Ethnomusicology through the Clara Henderson Award and Ki Mantle Hood Prize.