Bodies in Difference:
Race and Performance in and Beyond North America

20-22 April 2017
McGill University
Montréal
CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, 20 APRIL 2017

12.30 – 1.00pm, Wirth A-832
Welcome & opening remarks by co-organizers Katherine Zien, Myrna Wyatt Selkirk, & Fiona Ritchie

1.00pm – 3.00pm, Wirth A-832
PANEL I: HISTORIOGRAPHIES OF RACE, AESTHETICS, & PERFORMANCE
Moderator: Philip Howard, McGill University
Jenna Gibbs, Florida International University
“Radical Re-Imaginings of Racial Performance: Tom and Jerry; or, Life in London at the African Theatre in New York”
Stephen Johnson, University of Toronto
“Jim Crow and the Fugitive Slave Refugee Crisis in 19th Century Toronto”
Charmaine Nelson, McGill University
“Unfree (Im)mobility: Reading Travel as Resistance in Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth-Century Slave Advertisements of Nova Scotia and Quebec”
Douglas A. Jones, Rutgers University
“Black Sprezzatura and the Advent of Performative Writing in (African) American Letters”

3.00pm – 3.30pm, Wirth A-832
Coffee Break & Performance Interlude 1
Corridor Conversations with Tristen Sutherland, Kaho Koda, Sijia Li, & Nikita Bala

3.30pm – 5.00pm, Wirth A-832
PLENARY I: “BLACK LIVES MATTER IN PERFORMANCE”
Harvey Young, Northwestern University
Introduction: Katherine Zien, McGill University

7.30pm, Players Theatre (SSMU Building)
MAINSTAGE PERFORMANCE:
Monstrous
Written by Sarah Waisvisz
Directed by Eleanor Crowder
FRIDAY, 21 APRIL 2017

9.30 – 11.00am, Wirth Opera Studio
PANEL 2: INDIGENEITY & PERFORMANCE
Moderator: Denis Salter, McGill University
  Jill Carter, University of Toronto
    “Anthem for a Young Nation: The Re-imagination of Self, the Performative Utterance, and the Genesis of Conciliation”
  Selena Couture, University of Alberta
    “Bodies of Knowledge: Teaching Indigenous Theatre and Performance Theories”
  Andrew Houston, University of Waterloo
    “The Embodied Archive in the Mush Hole Project”

11.00 – 11.30am, Wirth Opera Studio
Coffee Break & Performance Interlude 2
  Viewpoints with live music by Yves Abanda & Anurag Choudhury

11.30am – 1.00pm, Wirth Opera Studio
PLENARY 2: “TRANSINDIGENOUS COSMOPOLITANISM”
  Helen Gilbert, Royal Holloway, University of London
    Introduction: Fiona Ritchie, McGill University

1.00 – 2.30pm
Lunch Break

2.30 – 3.30pm, Wirth A-832
PANEL 3: BLACK QUEER FEMINIST LOOKS
Moderator: Sheetal Lodhia, McGill University
  Naila Keleta-Mae, University of Waterloo
    “Beyoncé: Performing Black Feminism”
  Ayanna Dozier, McGill University
    “Bound in Body, Gagged by the Present: The Politics of Re-Mixing the Archive in Juliana Huxtable’s There Are Certain Facts that Can Not Be Disputed”

3.30 – 4.00pm, Wirth A-832
Coffee Break & Performance Interlude 3
  “Breakup Letter” with Charlene Sutherland-Lewis

4.30 – 6.30pm,
TNC Theatre (Morrice Hall)
FEATURED STUDENT PERFORMANCE:
Love Painted Brown
By Shanti Gonzales
Introduction: Myrna Wyatt Selkirk, McGill University
SATURDAY, 22 APRIL 2017

10.00 – 11.30am, Wirth A-832
PLENARY 3: “RACE, GENRE, & THE AFTERLIFE OF HISTORICAL TRAUMA: SCENES FROM SEAMLESS”
Dorinne Kondo, University of Southern California
Introduction: Myrna Wyatt Selkirk, McGill University

11.30 – 12.00pm, Wirth A-832
Coffee Break & Performance Interlude 4
Reynolds Atelier Presentation: Warona Setshwaelo (Black Theatre Workshop)—Reynolds Workshop leader, Asha Bittenbender, Munyaradzi Guramatunhu, Sofia Reidbord, Tristen Sutherland, Jedidah Nabwangu, Katie Wattam

12.00 – 1.00pm, Wirth A-832
PANEL 4: DRAMATURGIES OF DIFFERENCE
Moderator: Michelle Cho, McGill University
Colleen Kim Daniher, Brown University
“On Teaching Kim’s Convenience and Twilight Los Angeles in the Asian American Theatre and Performance Studies Classroom”
Christine Mok, University of Cincinnati
“Is Everybody Still Kung-Fu Fighting?”

1.00 – 2.30pm, Wirth A-832
PANEL 5: ROUNDTABLE WITH LOCAL ARTISTS
Moderator: Luis Sotelo Castro, Concordia University
Featured artists to include:
Julie Tamiko Manning
Lucinda Davis
Mike Payette
Deena Aziz
Papy Mbwiti

2.30 – 2.45pm, Wirth A-832
Closing words & acknowledgments

3.00 – 6.00pm, Studio Mange Mes Pieds
OPTIONAL WORKSHOP WITH SARAH WAISVISZ & ELEANOR CROWDER
*Free of charge & open to the public
*Pre-registration required

Theatre for Dangerous Territory

Devising from personal material. Risks, Benefits. Strategies for success. Participants are invited to bring a personal source with them: journal entries, writing, self-recordings, photo information. We will work solo & in groups to explore your hands-on creation. Bring a means to write during the workshop. Eleanor & Sarah will expose some of our own experiments. Your questions & experience will direct our themes.
Jill Carter (Anishinaabe/Ashkenazi) is a theatre practitioner & Assistant Professor at the University of Toronto. Her research & praxis engage story creation (devising & dramaturgy) & performative writing. She has worked with Turtle Gals Performance Ensemble (Assistant Dramaturge & Actor), the Chocolate Woman Collective (Researcher, Assistant Director), & the Omuskego Cree Water Stories Project (Workshop Director). In Fall 2014, she directed Gloria Miguel’s Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed, Something Blue at Native Earth Performing Arts Centre. Recent publications include “Discarding Sympathy, Disrupting Catharsis” (Theatre Journal, 2015), “The Physics of the Mola” (Modern Drama, 2016; Awarded Best Essay Prize by the Canadian Association for Theatre Research). She is a board member of Indigenous community performance group First Story Toronto & the Indigenous Performing Arts Alliance (IPAA).

Selena Couture is Assistant Professor of Drama at the University of Alberta & an expert in Canadian Indigenous theatre. Her work examines intersections of performance & Indigeneity, particularly regarding uses of Indigenous performance as a way to tell Indigenous histories eroded by colonialism. Her PhD Dissertation, titled “χwayχway and Stanley Park: Performing History and Land,” focuses on theatrical, cultural, & tourist performances as means of cultural continuation & historiography & explores how hənəqəminəm language, thought, & place names give access to Indigenous histories obscured by the colonial archive. Her Master’s thesis investigated the performance, administrative, & mentorship work of Margo Kane, Cree/Saulteaux senior artist in Canadian Indigenous theatre.

Ayanna Dozier is a PhD Candidate in Art History & Communications Studies, McGill University. Her dissertation focuses on race, gender, sexuality, & performance & visual culture. She has received the Graduate Excellence Award & the Abner Kingman Fellowship (McGill University). Her publications include: “Feeling Blue While Black: Aberrations of Affect in Black Experimental Short Films” (Feminist Media Studies); “Affect and the ‘Fluidity’ of the Black Gendered Body in Water Ritual #1” (Liquid Blackness). She has organized several conferences & curated art installations in New York. Dozier is also a performer who has created work based on the performances of Adrian Piper.


Helen Gilbert is an expert on race, colonialism, & global theatre. Professor of Theatre at Royal Holloway, University of London, Gilbert has co-authored several books, including: Performance and Cosmopolitics: Cross-Cultural Transactions in Australasia (2007) & Postcolonial Drama (1996). From 2009-14, she led a transnational, interdisciplinary European Research Council project focusing on indigenous performance in the Americas, the Pacific, Australia, & South Africa. She has directed experimental performance work in universities, explored curatorial practices & curated a major exhibition of performance-based arts at Bargehouse on London’s Southbank. Her recent co-edited books include In the Balance: Indigeneity, Performance, Globalization (forthcoming 2017) & Recasting Commodity and Spectacle in the Indigenous Americas (2014). In 2015, she won a Humboldt Prize for accumulated achievements in international theatre & performance studies & is currently the visiting fellow at the Rachel Carson Centre for Environment and Society in Munich.

Shanti Gonzales, an Indian-Mexican-American woman, is an actor, director, writer, & theatre-maker. She makes art by putting (her) public face on the secrets of brownness that formed her, & by engaging with the idea of being, in a manner of speaking, afraid of the dark. She hopes to demystify the self-
ANDREW HOUSTON is an artist-researcher in intermedia & site-specific performance, & Associate Professor of Theatre & Performance at the University of Waterloo. Over the last 19 years, he has directed & dramaturged several large-scale, site-specific intermedia productions. His latest work, Mush Hole Project (2016), is a multimedia, site-specific art installation that engages with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s 94 recommendations on the legacies of residential schools. In support of the Save the Evidence campaign, the performance was held at the site of the first residential school in Canada. Houston directed & dramaturged Voicemate (2013) a multimedia, site-specific performance exploring a First Nations woman’s struggle to define her identity. He has edited a Canadian Theatre Review issue on site-specific performance & authored: “Dis-ing the Main Drag and Walking toward the Public Good in Here Be Dragons: Mapping Queer, Asian-Canadian Identity in Kitchener, Ontario.”

STEPHEN JOHNSON is a Professor in English & Theatre Studies at the University of Toronto. He has published widely on race & performance history, creating digital humanities sites including the Juba Project & the Theatre Documentation and Reconstruction Project. Johnson is the author of Burnt Cork: Origins and Traditions of Blackface Minstrelsy (2013). He is also PI on the multimedia project Cross-Border Blackface: Traditions and Legacies of American Minstrelsy in Ontario. This project examines Canadians’ historical roles in blackface performance & is part of the ongoing Fringes of Show Business: Touring and Resident Performance in Southern Ontario from 1860-1892, a database & analytical study of performance culture in pre- and post-confederation ‘Canada West,’ & both are sections of the research group “On the Road Again: A Digital Forum on the History of Entertainment and Culture.”

DOUGLAS A. JONES is an Assistant Professor of English at Rutgers University, where he studies & teaches (African) American literature of the long nineteenth century, democratic theory, & the cultural history of slavery. He is author of The Captive Stage: Performance and the Proslavery Imagination of the Antebellum North (Michigan University Press, 2014), & is at work on a new book on slave culture & American political theory (especially Emerson & democratic individuality). He has published in a wide range of journals & edited collections; a new article, “Evangelicalism, Orature, and the Beginning of African American Writing,” is forthcoming in Early American Literature (2018).

NAILA KELETA-MAE is an Assistant Professor of Theatre & Performance at the University of Waterloo. Her research areas are race, gender, & performance. A leading expert on Beyoncé’s artistic and media influence, Keleta-Mae has been a guest critic for the BBC, CBC, CTV, The Canadian Press, The National Post, The Toronto Star, The Globe and Mail, Vice, & The Fader. She is currently writing a book on Beyoncé for Between the Lines Press. Keleta-Mae’s scholarship appears in academic publications (including Theatre Research In Canada & Atlantis), & the volume In Defence of Theatre and Performance Studies in Canada. Her awards include the Lois Claxton Humanities & Social Sciences Award (University of Waterloo), New Scholars’ Prize (International Federation for Theatre Research), Mary McCowan Award for feminist scholarship (York University), Abella Scholarship for Studies in Equity (York University), & a SSHRC Graduate Scholarship.

COLLEEN KIM DANIEHER is a Presidential Postdoctoral Fellow in Theatre Arts & Performance Studies at Brown University. Her teaching & research focus on critical race studies, visual culture, & Asian diasporic performance. Her manuscript, Obdurate Sights: Performing Racial Ambiguity in American Visual Culture, investigates racial ambiguity as an aesthetic strategy & a performative mode of sight in twentieth-century US performance & visual culture. Recent & forthcoming publications include: “The Pose as Interventionist Gesture” (e-misférica) & “Looking at Pauline Johnson: Indigeneity, Race, and Delsartism’s Visual Culture.” Kim Daniher has received fellowships from the American Society for Theatre Research & the Social Sciences & Research Council of Canada. As an actor, vocalist, &
DORINNE KONDO is a playwright, actor, dramaturge, & Professor of Anthropology, American Studies, & Ethnicity at the University of Southern California. She is a leading expert on US & international racial politics, theatre, & performance. Kondo, best known as the dramaturge for artist Anna Deavere Smith (working on *Twilight: Los Angeles 1992; House Arrest; & Let Me Down Easy*), has dramaturged for several other theatre companies. Her play *Seamless* treats Japanese-American feminist identities. Her book *About Face: Performing ‘Race’ in Fashion and Theatre* (1997) won the Asian American Studies Book Award. Her current monograph, *The Work of Creativity and the Politics of Aesthetics: Staging Race, (Re)making Worlds*, is under contract with Duke University Press. The recipient of a dozen major prizes, she is a Getty Scholar & Martha Sutton Weeks Fellow (Stanford Humanities Center).

CHRISTINE MOK is an Assistant Professor of Drama & Performance at the University of Cincinnati. She is Director of the Helen Weinberger Center for the Study of Drama & Playwriting. She is a founding member of the theatre design collective Wingspace. Her research focuses on Asian American performance, Black/Asian intersections, & ethnic and racial formations in US visual culture & performance history. Publications include: “East West Players and After: Acting and Activism” (*Theatre Survey*, 2016); “Memoirs of a Kisaeng: Transnational Choreographies of Becoming” (*Theatre Survey*, 2013). She teaches on race, racism, & performance; anti-realist drama; & Black/Asian theatre. Contributing to her research on racial masquerade, she has designed costumes for nine main-stage performances, including Marcus Gardley’s *The Road Weeps, The Well Runs Dry* (2015).

CHARMAINE NELSON is a Professor of Art History at McGill University & a member of the Royal Society of Canada (2016-23). Nelson is the author of several fundamental works on Black Canadian & African Diaspora art history & visual cultural studies, including: *Slavery, Geography, and Empire in Nineteenth-Century Marine Landscapes of Montreal and Jamaica* (2016); *Representing the Black Female Subject in Western Art* (2010); & *The Color of Stone: Sculpting the Black Female Subject in Nineteenth-Century America* (2007). Nelson has received numerous SSHRC awards to research Black representation in visual art & culture in Canada & the Caribbean, & she has edited works & organized conferences on African-Canadian art history, African diaspora creolization & the visual culture of slavery. She created the online resource Black Canadian Studies.

SARAH WAISVISZ is co-founder & Artistic Director of Calalou Theatre Company, Associate Editor at *Alt.theatre Journal*, & recipient of grants from the Ontario Arts Council. She is trained in classical ballet, West African & contemporary dance, stilt walking & acrobatics, puppetry, physical theatre, & devised creation. Her scholarship & art treat slavery, Black Atlantic literature, the African diaspora, creolization, human rights, mixed-race identities, postcoloniality, & performances of otherness. Recent work includes: solo performances *Monstrous* (2016); *I Love Oranges and Hate the Port* (2014); & *Occupy Me!* (2013). Future works are: *Griot!; Strange Bedfellows; & Heartlines*. She has performed in over a dozen plays. She is also a scholar (PhD dissertation: “Dissident Diasporas: Genres of Maroon Witness in Anglophone and Francophone Caribbean Literature”), the recipient of a Bombardier Doctoral Scholarship, & a Playwright in Residence at the Great Canadian Theatre Company.

HARVEY YOUNG is a Professor of Theatre at Northwestern University & President of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education. Young has published 7 books on race & performance, including *Embodying Black Experience: Stillness, Critical Memory, and the Black Body* (2010), which won Best Book Awards at the National Communication Association & the American Society for Theatre Research. Other contributions include: *Theatre & Race* (2013); *Black Theatre is Black Life* (2014), & compendiums & interviews on playwrights Suzan-Lori Parks & Lorraine Hansberry. A former Fellow at Harvard & Stanford & Editor of *Theatre Survey*, he is currently writing a monograph, *Virtually Black: Race in New Media*, which examines the digital representation of Black lives. Forthcoming work includes “Pessimism and the ‘Age of Obama’” (*American Literary History*). Young writes for *Al Jazeera*, the *Chicago Sun-Times*, & theatre-focused public media outlets.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Bodies in Difference has been made possible by the enthusiasm, labour, and support of a large number of people. We are particularly grateful to our speakers, who made time in their busy schedules to travel to Montréal and whose expertise in race and performance will be crucial in shaping our conversation. Special thanks are due to the performers and all involved in the shows staged as part of this event, including the students who staged the conference’s performance interludes.

We are also indebted to:

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Dean of Arts Development Fund, McGill University

GUIDE TO EVENT LOCATIONS:

Wirth A-832: 8th floor, Elizabeth Wirth Music Building, 527 Sherbrooke Street West
Wirth Opera Studio: Level-2, Elizabeth Wirth Music Building, 527 Sherbrooke Street West
TNC Theatre: 1st floor of Morrice Hall (turn left when entering), 3485 McTavish Street
Players Theatre: 3rd Floor, Student Society of McGill University (SSMU): 3480 McTavish Street
Studio Mange Mes Pieds, 10 Avenue Des Pins, #214 (corner of Des Pins and St. Laurent), 2nd floor