

Performance in Historical Paradigms Working Group

Following a successful series of panels on “History and Ideological Tactics: Grouphood and Eventhood” in 2007, and “The Problem of History” at PSi in 2005, the “Performance in Historical Paradigms” working group will convene at the 2008 Copenhagen conference to discuss the theme:

“In Between Disciplines and Interdisciplines: History and Performance Studies”

The conference theme of “Interregnum: In Between States” is particularly apt for those of us who use performance theory to think historically, or who think historically about performance. We invite abstracts for papers that address any of the following questions through direct engagement or through example:

-How can the methods, theoretical influences, and other disciplinary preoccupations of Performance Studies apply to the study of the past?

-How might performance studies expand, change, or challenge the field of history-and vice versa?

- Where does the merging of history and performance studies currently occur most productively, and where is it less so? Are there, or should there be, any limits to the use of performance theory in historical inquiry? What is the current state of scholarship in this “in between” space? And how might that “in between” state change in the future?

-What problems and benefits arise at the merging of a discipline and an interdiscipline?

-What constitutes evidence in the intersection of performance studies and history? How do historically-oriented scholars subject evidence of past performance to rigorous critique?

-How does the ephemerality, elusiveness, or transience of performance constitute problems of historical research, how do they need to be accounted for, and what are the options?

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Conveners: Robin Bernstein (Harvard University) and Ioana Szeman (Roehampton University)

Panel I: Revisitations

Chair: Ioana Szeman (Roehampton University)

Robin Bernstein (Harvard University)
“Scriptive Things”

Uri McMillan (Yale University)
“Staging a Hoax: Joice Heth, P.T. Barnum, and Performances of Antebellum Subterfuge”

Sophie Nield (University of London)
“After the Wall: Ruin Value and Boundary Traces”

Avanthi Meduri (Roehampton University)
“Performance as History and History as Performance”

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Panel II: Genealogies and Diasporas

Chair: Robin Bernstein (Harvard University)

Ioana Szeman (Roehampton University)
“‘Gypsy Music’ Performances, from Balkan Romani Bands to DJ Shantel: Cosmopolitanism, Balkanism and Orientalism”

Nick Salvato (Cornell University)
“Fag Hag Histories”

Julia Fawcett (Yale University)
“Overwriting the Self: The Case of Colley Cibber’s Wig”

Radiclani Clytus (Tufts University)
“Out of Fashion: Clothing, Race, and Historical Continuity”

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Conveners: Robin Bernstein (Harvard University) and Ioana Szeman (Roehampton University)

Panel III: Round Table of Participants

Robin Bernstein (Harvard University), Radiclani Clytus (Tufts University), Julia Fawcett (Yale University), Uri McMillan (Yale University), Avanthi Meduri (Roehampton University), Sophie Nield (University of London), Nick Salvato (Cornell University), Ioana Szeman (Roehampton University).