

## **In Between Bert O. States: Phenomenological Criticism and the Body in Performance**

Bert O. States' *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms*, along with books by Stanton Garner and Bruce Wilshire, introduced a mode of performance criticism in the 1980s that strongly influenced a generation of theatre and performance scholars. States' posited that a phenomenological framework derived from Edmund Husserl's thought could account for aspects of spectatorial experience missed by an overly semiotic or cultural approach; phenomenology provided a ready-made critical discourse that helped describe the bodily presence unique to performance events. In the decades that followed the opening of the phenomenological "epoch," however, scholars have drifted away from States' direct application of Husserl's phenomenological reduction. Has the thought of Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Derrida supplanted Husserlian phenomenology in the field, and how might one account for these developments?

This panel brings together scholars of dance and theatre studies in order to take stock of phenomenological performance criticism after the 1980s, with particular attention to the peculiarities of phenomenology's application. Do different methodological challenges arise when applying phenomenological insights to scripted or improvised performances, or to performances with greater or lesser attention paid to the attributes of the body in space and time? Are some performances more "phenomenological" than others? Has the phenomenological paradigm of States et al. passed us by, or are we in between States and a new model of phenomenological writing about performance?

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