

James Harding

The Invisible Vanguard: Reflections on Political Movements and Contemporary Avant-Garde Formations.

As a point of departure for my talk, I draw attention to the 1991 novel *The Almanac of the Dead* by the Native American writer, Leslie Marmon Silko. In the closing sections of that novel, Silko presents readers with a prophet vision articulated through the character of a Mayan woman who can see into the future: “People should go about their daily routines,” this Mayan woman says, “because already the great shift of human populations on the continents was under way, and there was nothing human beings could do to stop it. [...] No fences or walls, would stop [... those who were coming]; guns and bombs would not stop them. They had no fear of death; they were comfortable with their ancestors’ spirits. They would come by the millions.” (Silko 735–36). They would tax the artificially constructed borders of nation-state, and they would redefine national, political and cultural identity. Some 25 years after the publication of Silko’s novel, this image of mass migration is striking, I argue, not only for its prescient awareness of the population shifts we now see unfolding on a global scale, but also for its recognition of those masses as an unacknowledged and unstoppable political force, indeed as a potent and seemingly invisible vanguard that while not conforming to popular conceptions of revolutionary fervor nonetheless is in the process of radically transforming the American as well as the world political order. So too, I argue in my paper, are those population shifts radically transforming the very notion of an avant-garde as such, and in this respect my paper argues that in the U.S. and elsewhere the most viable artistic avant-gardes are those that ally themselves and their art with the disenfranchised and invisible who are literally at the cutting edge because they are overwhelming borders that refuse to recognize or grant them legitimacy.

James Harding is Associate Professor of Theater and Performance Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park and is currently a research fellow at the Freie Universität, Berlin. His most recent book is entitled *Performance, Transparency and the Cultures of Surveillance*. His previous books include *The Ghosts of the Avant-Garde(s): Exorcising Experimental Theater and Performance* (2013); and, *Cutting Performances: Collage Events, Feminist Artists, and the American Avant-Garde* (2011).

David Savran

From the Wooster Group to Richard Maxwell

Founded in the 1970s, the Wooster Group has proven to be the most influential of all New York experimental theatre companies, both in the United States and abroad. Not only have the individual members become justly famous, but also the company itself has collaborated with countless major performing artists, many of whom got their start working with the Group. Among their

collaborators, Richard Maxwell represents a unique combination of playwright, director, and songwriter who has developed a signature style that can be traced to the Wooster Group. Unlike theirs, however, Maxwell's flattens out character, action, and dialogue, while scintillating with a repressed hyper-theatricality.

David Savran is a specialist in U.S. theatre, musical theatre, and social theory, whose *Highbrow/Lowdown: Theater, Jazz, and the Making of the New Middle Class* was awarded the Joe A. Callaway Prize. He has served as judge for the Obie Awards, Lucille Lortel Awards, and Pulitzer Prize in Drama and is the Vera Mowry Roberts Distinguished Professor of American Theatre at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York.

Jennifer Parker-Starbuck

Intermedial Contexts in "New" American Performance

This talk examines several US artists whose works continue to engage technologies in form and content such as: Daniel Fish, Annie Dorsen, Royal Osiris Karaoke Ensemble, Andrew Schneider, and Michelle Ellsworth. In a time when technologies have been absorbed into what we could call a 'cyborg consciousness' and used ubiquitously in performance and daily life, these artists continue to foreground aspects of media to explore possibilities of how we channel other lives/bodies, re-examine historical sources, question and expand science and sociality, and extend our social and wearable tech in performance.

Professor Jennifer Parker-Starbuck is Head of Department of Drama, Theatre, and Performance at the University of Roehampton, London. She is the co-Editor of *Theatre Journal* and author of *Cyborg Theatre* (Palgrave 2011, 2014), *Performance and Media* (with Bay-Cheng and Saltz, University of Michigan Press, 2015), and co-editor of *Performing Animality* (Palgrave, 2015). Her "Animal Ontologies and Media Representations: Robotics, Puppets, and the Real of War Horse" (*Theatre Journal*, 2013) received ATHE's 2014 Outstanding Article award.

Miriam Felton-Dansky

Choreographic Collisions: Gender, Performance and the Institution

Trajal Harrell engineers the collision of drag ball culture and postmodern dance, while Miguel Gutierrez stages queer, genre-bending choreography in museum spaces. Vanessa Anspaugh choreographs *The End of Men*, featuring an ensemble of male dancers. Erin Markey plays a teenager, in love with a boat that is also a horse—portrayed by trans performer Becca Blackwell—in *A Ride on the Irish Cream*. In New York, in recent years, these and other artists have simultaneously challenged disciplinary and institutional categories, and binaries of gender and sexuality. This talk charts a partial

landscape of such work, exploring the overlapping terrain of gender, performance discipline, and the institution in contemporary American practice.

Miriam Felton–Dansky is assistant professor of theater and performance at Bard College, and a theater critic for the Village Voice. She is a contributing editor of Theater magazine, and her essays have appeared in Theater, Theatre Journal, TDR, PAJ, and The Oxford Handbook of Dance and Theater. She is writing a book about viral performance from modernism to contemporary practice.

Philip Auslander

The Fame: Performance Art and Celebrity Culture

Recent years have seen the incursion of the culture of celebrity into performance art both in the sense that celebrities from other fields such as music and film are undertaking performance works and in the sense that performance art has become a platform for the development of a celebrity identity. I argue that there are certain structural similarities between the respective relationships between celebrities and their public and performance artists and their audiences. These similarities can be organized around the concepts of representation, originality, narrative. Like celebrity, performance art entails a dialectic of presence and representation in which the figures in question are available to their audiences primarily as representations that give rise to a desire to experience their presence.

Philip Auslander is a Professor in the School of Literature, Media, and Communication at the Georgia Institute of Technology, USA. He writes on popular music, performance art, and media culture. His best-known publications include the books *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture* and *Performing Glam Rock: Gender, Theatricality and Popular Music*. He is also a working screen actor.