

Missile attack on council building in Kharkiv

BEFORE

# TDR

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

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SHANGHAI THEATRE ACADEMY

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Kharkiv

UKRAINE



AFTER

*articles by*

Peggy Phelan

Diana Taylor

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Meiling Cheng

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Talley Murphy

Nik Wakefield

Emily Goodling

Ana Elena Puga

Joseph Roach

Image credits: Google / Getty Images

BBC



**WAKE**

Provocation by Jay Carlon

*Student Essay Contest Winner*

Kathy Fang

# TDR

TDR is scholarly, accessible, and dynamic. TDR is inclusive and interdisciplinary. Each article is tightly focused—but taken as a whole TDR is global. With its broad range of topics, TDR is at the cutting edge of performance studies. Its writers and editors support progressive political and social movements, art and ideas. Written by and for scholars and artists—and their students—TDR is where leaders and future leaders in the field of performance studies go for performance texts, performative writing, editorials, reviews, interviews, and research articles about the performing arts, performance in everyday life, popular entertainments, sports, business, and politics—the broad spectrum of performance.

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*the journal of performance studies*

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*Above: Mark Zuckerberg in an interview in the Metaverse. Lex Fridman, YouTube, 28 September 2023. See "Zuckerberg's Smile, or Presence in the Age of Digital Technologies" by Diana Taylor. (Screenshot by TDR)*

*Front Cover: Dmytro Oliynyk looks at the results of a bombing in Kharkiv in Sich waffnend gegen eine See von Plagen (To Take Arms against a Sea of Troubles), a project by Stas Zhyrkov and Pavlo Arie. See "Theatre as Refuge: Staging the War in Ukraine at Berlin's Schaubühne" by Emily Goodling. (Photo by Gianmarco Bresadola)*

*Back Cover: Filming Aaji speaking about the Devis in her home. Bihar, 2017. See "Arrival of the Devis' Spirit: Filming Voice and Agentive Entanglement" by Rajat Nayyar. (Photo by Rajat Nayyar)*



# TDR

## PROVOCATION

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*Jay Carlon*

*WAKE* is a queer postcolonial ritual centering grief, healing, and solace through movement within the collective. Created by choreographer Jay Carlon with collaborator and vocalist Micaela Tobin, alongside a live electronic musical score, *WAKE* is a meditative performance imbued with images, sound, and objects derived from Carlon’s Filipinx heritage and dedicated to those born in the wake of US imperialism.

Jay Carlon is a dancer and community organizer whose work sits at the intersection of performance, food, and cultural conversation. The youngest of 12 in a Filipino Catholic agricultural migrant family, Carlon seeks healing through unearthing ancestry and the complex experiences of queer and Filipinx communities in relationship to site and space. [jaycarlon.com](http://jaycarlon.com)

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*Peggy Phelan*

Writers and readers cocreate books. Over time, certain readings, even if they are misreadings, come to summarize the book so thoroughly that the book gets transformed into a chapter, a paragraph, a sentence. While chapter 7 of *Unmarked*, “The Ontology of Performance,” is the most frequently cited, the Afterword’s meditation on misunderstanding may be the most hopeful for future scholarship.

A Second Take: On Performative Writing and Reading. ....11

*Peggy Phelan*

In the 1990s, performative writing and reading attempted to disrupt the rhetorical and ideological structure of scholarly writing. Performative readings helped expose the ways in which scholarly claims to truth-telling—as in Clifford Geertz’s influential essay on the Balinese cockfight—obscured violent or oppressive rhetorical operations. While most performative writing and reading concentrated on the essay form, experiments with public lectures and creative adaptations of scholarly texts were also undertaken. The verve of performative writing and reading tapered off as other issues came to the fore.

Zuckerberg’s Smile, or Presence in the Age of Digital Technologies .....24

*Diana Taylor*

AI and AR do not merely coexist with the archive and repertoire as modes of transmission but profoundly alter them and prove profoundly anti-archival. “Live” transmission from body to body is radically altered by digital technologies that simulate presence. “Feeling truly present with another person,” Mark Zuckerberg stated, “is the ultimate dream of social media.” He aspires to create an avatar that can simulate an emotion that he cannot

express—and make him more human. Are we being led back into Plato’s cave? Artists and humanists must be centrally involved in the epistemic, ontological, and political changes that accompany these new and evolving forms of transmission.

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Aaji, an aging, lower-caste storyteller, singer, spirit medium, and rice farmer from a village in northern India, uses her distinctive voice and vocal traditions to engage with the spirit of the seven Devis (goddesses). The careful cultivation of human, more-than-human, and ethnographic relationships over time reveals what multimodal anthropology might entail when collaborating with more-than-human spirits.

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*Talley Murphy*

Surveillance is *gestic*, in Bertolt Brecht’s sense: it constitutes and is constituted by a set of practices that police and control the social at the level of gestures. In a surveillant *Gestus* of the everyday, gestures conscribe bodies as subjects of surveillance, from the touchscreen scroll that operates Amazon’s Neighbors social network to the hands-over-head posture imaged by airport body scanners. Gestures, not digital devices, watch—and enforce—the bounds of a “criminal” human.

**Environmental Horror and White Extinction: Scenes of Literally Ecological Theatre in *Escaped Alone* by Caryl Churchill and *The Evening* by Richard Maxwell. . . . .112**

*Nik Wakefield*

A literalist ecological approach to performance studies rematerializes theatre beyond a racist anthropocentricity of metaphorical representation and proposes a path to intersectional environmental justice. *Escaped Alone* (2016) by Caryl Churchill presents a horrifically accurate report of ecological harm. *The Evening* (2016) by Richard Maxwell and the New York City Players imagines an extinction of whiteness. Both productions propose new understandings of ecology through reconfiguring the theatrical conditions of representation.

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*Sich waffnend gegen eine See von Plagen* (To Take Arms against a Sea of Troubles, 2022) premiered at Germany’s Schaubühne theatre seven months after the start of the war of aggression in Ukraine. The piece comments on the broader significance of the war within Europe, while also zooming in on the protective potentialities of theatre itself, as institution and praxis.

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Kamisato Yudai’s *Immigrant Ghost Stories* (2022) evokes past generations that suffered violence yet nevertheless haunt the present as gentle spirits, whether as reincarnated animals, reincarnated people, or repeated patterns of physical gesture and movement. Blurring the borders between fiction and documentary, storytelling and physical theatre, the work stages transnationality as both an economic practice and a sociocultural necessity, encouraging us to acknowledge the heterogeneity of Japanese–Latin American and other Japanese transnational identities.

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Exploring diverse strategies of process-focused research from historical reconstructions of period practices to staged intimacy coaching, seven new titles offer a representative but not exhaustive overview of the expanding field of rehearsal studies.