

the TV film *Miss Amu and Miss May* (1990), produced by Sistren Theatre Collective', and this resulted in the collective being 'a significant place in my and others' education about women's lives'. From this encounter and her 'early research' on Sistren, Shakes's journey leads her to study the Mothertongue Project from South Africa, and especially the project's *Walk: South Africa* (2014).

There is an extremely high rate of gender-based violence in South Africa, and Shakes provides careful and considered research. She shows an awareness of ethics and a duty of care, and does not simply provide an overview of policy that often centres metrics instead of people. This sensitive research is present in the chapters that focus on Sistren's and Hannah Town Cultural Group's *A Slice of Reality* (2009) and a *Vigil for Roxie* (2015), a play that formed part of *Song for the Beloved: Memory and Renewal at the Margins of Justice* (2015), an 'exhibition and performance' in Kingston, Jamaica. As a reader who is very familiar with the South African context but not Jamaica, I found these chapters informative and helpful, and I was able to work through the complexities of Jamaican society and its history. Without Shakes's detailed work on the West Kingston incursion I would not have been able to understand the importance and urgency of works such as *A Vigil for Roxie*, which put at the forefront the stories of women. As a result, I can understand why a performance work such as this is extremely important, and why, as Shakes argues, 'Justice also means engaging the subjectivities of marginalized people and the communities in which they live'. This is what this type of theatre does; this is activism. Shakes makes links with experiences of women both in Jamaica and South Africa, and how there are similar theatrical strategies in play, but ensures that she is very articulate in the differences, and stresses the importance of recognizing the specificities in play in Africa and the African Diaspora.

In closing this review, I need to turn to Shakes's inclusion of the Olive Tree Theatre. The Olive Tree is an apt example of the importance of place for women's activist theatre. The theatre was based in Alexandra and then Marlboro, both areas with their roots in apartheid segregationist geographical legislation that resulted in forcing Black South Africans to live in townships. These are areas where the legacy of apartheid policy remains present, and therefore the Olive Tree's establishment in 2013 is an act of defiance against the historical marginalization of Black theatre in South Africa, and especially Black South African theatre made by Black South African women for Black South African women. However, like many theatres, the Olive Tree Theatre was closed because of Covid-19's impact. This is a loss that I mourn. I know that those who read Shakes's

monograph will do so too, as the space and place of women's activist theatre has become even more urgent.

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William W. Lewis and Sean Bartley, eds.

**Experiential Theatres: Praxis-Based Approaches to Training 21st Century Theatre Artists**

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The 'experience economy' is increasingly a feature of western late-capitalist life. Buying and selling, previously an exchange of money based on use-value, has been rebranded into sellable experiences, personalized for the individual buyer. In their new edited volume, William W. Lewis and Sean Bartley outline this resurgence in experiential practices in the twenty-first century, arguing that contemporary theatre and performance practice is part of this experience economy, as well as everyday life 'experiences' being increasingly theatricalized.

The authors argue that the growing prevalence of experiential-based contemporary performance practices, which may be categorized within related terms like 'immersive' or 'participatory', necessitates a new set of pedagogies in our theatre training and education systems to prepare students for this shift. The volume offers such pedagogical re-imaginings for teachers, students, and performance scholars, encouraging us to rethink not just our individual classroom content, but whole structures of theatre and performance degree programmes. The authors have, for example, identified an over-focus in US degrees on training the individual artist in a particular discipline. They argue instead for an interdisciplinary training practice to create collaborative ensembles of artists to produce the kind of experiential theatre demanded in contemporary life.

The book offers an incredibly useful codification and categorization of experiential theatre practice, dividing a multitude of work into four clear modalities: immersion (where an audience are *inside* the work); participation (where the audience engage in some level of interactivity); game-play (where the audience have an active decision-making role in the piece); and role-play (like game-play, with the addition that the audience are expected to interact in a role other than themselves). The book also begins to explore how the rapid development of interactive, virtual, and augmented technologies play a role in this performance practice, and how this impacts the audience's 'experience' of performance.

Whilst offering a clear theorization of the rise of experiential theatre, the authors offer a

pedagogical guide for rethinking how we teach theatre and performance, rather than a research-driven volume. At the same time, the innovative structure of this edited collection makes a significant stride forward in how researchers, artists, and teachers draw together scholarship, artistic practice, and pedagogical insight to offer new knowledge to the field. What is most refreshing and exciting about this volume is how the editors have curated and structured the work to reflect their manifesto for theatre and performance pedagogy. Lewis and Bartley present the case that theatre and performance programmes need to expand and restructure, so that training is interdisciplinary (so that we are not just teaching performers, but also designers, technicians, stage managers, and arts managers, for example), and is based on non-hierarchical collaboration

(producing a performance ensemble, rather than individual job roles such as 'the director'); and encourage an ongoing relationship between theory and practice. This is reflected in the book's own format, divided into three clear sections: 'Performance Making and Performing', 'Dramaturgy and Writing', and 'Design and Technology'. Each of these sections have been co-created between artists and scholars, and furthermore contain a mixture of theoretical contextualization, case-study chapters, curated conversations, and reflections on direct pedagogical application of these principles. As a result, we experience ourselves, through reading, what a new pedagogical approach to theatre and performance, based on these principles, might feel like.

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