



MAKING/ DOING/ THINKING

METHODS FOR
PERFORMANCE
RESEARCH

EDITED BY
Mark Fleishman
and Alex Halligey

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CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	04
FIGURES LIST	05
AUDIOVISUAL MATERIAL LIST	10
AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES	11
ABSTRACTS	17
INTRODUCTION	26

PART I

SECTION 1: ADVOCATING FOR PRACTICE AS RESEARCH	32
--	----

Knowing performance: performance as knowledge paradigm for Africa by Mark Fleishman	36
---	----

The difference of performance as research by Mark Fleishman	50
--	----

Beyond capture: the indifference of performance as research by Mark Fleishman	60
--	----

Artistic research and the institution: a cautionary tale by Mark Fleishman	69
---	----

SECTION 2: PaR IN RESPONSE TO THE WORLD	78
---	----

Cargo: staging slavery at the Cape by Mark Fleishman	82
---	----

Making space for ideas: the knowledge work of Magnet Theatre by Mark Fleishman	97
--	----

PART II

SECTION 1: CONCEPTUAL	120
-----------------------	-----

Chapter 1: A different stage: from play thinking to research thinking by Juliet Jenkin	121
---	-----

Chapter 2: Dramaturgical methods: migrant attitudes, wayward archives and other proposals for creative research by Mwenya B. Kabwe	128
---	-----

Chapter 3: DBLE: a curatorial approach to practice as research by Khanyisile Mbongwa	138
---	-----

Chapter 4: And Then...: revealing the teachings of the praying mantis by jacki job	146
---	-----

Chapter 5: This image may contain... : a visual and aural articulation of research into notions of speculative indigeneities by heeten bhagat	158
--	-----

Chapter 6: Piecing together a girlhood: using 'girlfriend play' as method to perform memory by Alude Mahali	168
Chapter 7: little did I know... by Myer Taub	178
SECTION 2: METHODS	192
Chapter 8: Ugcwele ukudlala: ways of seeing, learning and knowing through serious play by Noluthando Mpho Sibisi	193
Chapter 9: Breath-body-self: a practice-led journey by Sara Matchett	202
Chapter 10: Practice as research: some insights into developing a theatre-voice based pedagogical praxis by Sarah Woodward	212
Chapter 11: Thinking through micropractice: an embodied interrogation of the archive by Alan Parker	221
Chapter 12: Beyond flailing: redirecting tacit knowledge of methods in design to create a research methodology in visual dramaturgy by Illka Louw	230
Chapter 13: Practice as research in puppetry performance: the making and unmaking of Plot 99 by Aja Marneweck	246
Chapter 14: Practice as research in developing saamtrekking as a performance art practice by Peter Andrew Hamish van Heerden	256
Chapter 15: Exploring autotopography: methods by Rosa Postlethwaite	265
Chapter 16: Practice as research into learning everyday urban place-making through theatre and performance by Alex Halligey	273
SECTION 3: DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS	287
Chapter 17: How RDM could have helped the PaR in my PhD: research data management in a PaR project by Sanjin Muftić	288
Chapter 18: Mohahlaudi-BAHAHLAUDI (Traveller-TRAVELLERS): a case of practice as research by Kabi Thulo	299
Appendix 1: Mohahlaudi-BAHAHLAUDI (Traveller-TRAVELLERS) script	307
Appendix 2: Creative research project 2 devising session excerpt	310

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FIGURES LIST

ABSTRACTS FOR PART II

Abstract: Artwork by Illka Louw 22

PART I

Figure a: Clanwilliam Arts Project, Clanwilliam. Photograph by Mark Wessels 49

Figures b and c: Rain in a Deadman's Footprints, Oude Libertas Amphitheatre, Stellenbosch, 2004. Photograph by Garth Stead 59

Figure d: Jennie Reznek and Mdu Kweyama in Onnest'bo, District Six Homecoming Centre, 2003/2004. Photograph by Mark Wessels 68

Figure e: Clanwilliam Arts Project, Clanwilliam. Photograph by Mark Wessels 77

Figure f: Full company, Cargo, Spier Amphitheatre, Stellenbosch, 2007. Photograph by Garth Stead 81

Figure g: Women's chorus, Cargo, 2007. Photograph by Garth Stead 96

Figure h: Gosekwang Poonyane in 53 Degrees, Grahamstown Power Station, NAF, 2002. Photograph by Garth Stead 103

Figure i: Jennie Reznek in 53 Degrees, Grahamstown Power Station, NAF, 2002. Photograph by Garth Stead 108

PART II

Figure 1.1: Performing Woolworths. Photograph by Peter Bruyns 123

Figure 2.1: A page from PhD research notebook. Photograph by Mwenya Kabwe 136

Figures 3.1; 3.2; 3.3: 2017 MA explication in UCT Drama storage basement as part of the ICA Live Art Festival. Curated/Choreographed by Khanyisile Mbongwa. Demonstrators: Khanyisile Mbongwa, Nicholas Ngimkhethile Sithole, Asanda Muchatuta, Aphiwe Nyezi. Photographs courtesy of the Institute for Creative Arts and the curator 142

Figure 4.1: jacki job in And then... 2018. Photograph by Rob Keith 155

Figure 4.2: jacki job in And then... 2019. Photograph by Rob Keith 156

Figure 4.3: jacki job in And then... 2020. Photograph by Rob Keith 156

Figure 5:1: Fragment of this image may contain poster. Poster design by heeten bhagat	161
Figure 5:2: Compilation of images taken from screenshots of Mr Hoshō's performance. Compiled by heeten bhagat	163
Figures 5.3 and 5.4: Selection of posters. Artwork by Francis Burger	165
Figure 6.1: Alude Mahali (left) and Injairu Kulundu (right) performing the opening scene of Katuntu. Photograph by Karabo Maine	169
Figure 6.2: Injairu Kulundu (left) and Alude Mahali (right) publicity pictures for Katuntu. Photograph by Karabo Maine	170
Figure 6.3: Opening section of Katuntu. Photograph by Karabo Maine	174
Figure 6.4: Alude Mahali, pictured performing in the second performance site. Photograph by Karabo Maine	177
Figure 7.1: Pig in image: performing image as allegory & archive in 'Trasher hunt' Maboneng, Johannesburg, 2014. Photograph created by Myer Taub	184
Figure 7.2: "Pretty woman: Venus on the landfill" Maputo, 2015. Photograph created by Myer Taub along with SLOW (social life of waste art)	187
Figure 8.1: Collage. Artwork by Noluthando Mpho Sibisi	197
Figure 8.2: Photographic self-portrait in the colour yellow by Noluthando Mpho Sibisi	198
Figure 8.3: Photographic self-portrait in the colour red by Noluthando Mpho Sibisi	199
Figure 8.4: Photographic self-portrait in the colour blue by Noluthando Mpho Sibisi	199
Figures 8.5; 8.6; 8.7, 8.8: Noluthando Mpho Sibisi, <i>I Fuck What I Like</i> , ICA Live Art Festival 2022. Photographs by Xolani Tulumani, courtesy Institute for Creative Arts and the artist	200
Figure 9.1: Namisa Mdlalose and Qondiswa James free speaking as part of the main case study project. Photograph by Sara Matchett	202
Figure 9.2: Namisa Mdlalose free-writing as part of the main case study project. Photograph by Sara Matchett	205
Figure 9.3: Nwabisa Plaatjie and Rehane Abrahams making poetry as part of the case study project. Photograph by Sara Matchett	209
Figure 9.4: Collective poem created as part of the main case study project. Photograph by Sara Matchett	210
Figure 10.1: Scan of original notebook. Source: Sarah Woodward	214
Figure 10.2: Scan of original notebook. Source: Sarah Woodward	215

Figure 10.3: Scan of original notebook. Source: Sarah Woodward	218
Figure 11.1: <i>Detritus for one</i> (2015) Dance Umbrella 2017. Photograph by Suzy Bernstein, courtesy of the artist	224
Figure 11.2: <i>Sacre for one</i> (2016) Cape Town Fringe Festival. Photograph by Betalife Productions, courtesy of the artist.	224
Figure 11.3: <i>Ghostdance for one</i> (2017) National Arts Festival. Photograph by Mia van der Merwe, courtesy of the artist.	224
Figure 11.4: Image depicting Deleuze and Guattari's instructions for a micropractice, from Rousell (2016:9).	226
Figure 12.1: Enso. Artwork by Illka Louw	231
Figure 12.2: <i>Flailer</i> . Artwork by Illka Louw	232
Figure 12.3: Visual Map. Artwork by Illka Louw. Image credits still needed	235
Figure 12.4; 12.5; 12.6; 12.7: collages. Artwork by Illka Louw	236
Figure 12.8: Sussie. Artwork by Illka Louw	237
Figure 12.9: Lenie. Artwork by Illka Louw	237
Figure 12.10: Meisie. Artwork by Illka Louw	238
Figure 12.11: Ezmerelda. Artwork by Illka Louw	238
Figure 12.12: Audience blocking. Diagram by Illka Louw	238
Figure 12.13: Front view. Diagram by Illka Louw	239
Figure 12.14: Mixed View. Diagram by Illka Louw	239
Figure 12.15: Mixed view II. Diagram by Illka Louw	239
Figures 12.16; 12.17; 12.18; 12.19; 12.20; 12.21: Storyboard. Artwork by Illka Louw	240
Figure 12.22: <i>Lightroom</i> . Photograph by Rob Keith	240
Figure 12.23: <i>Darkroom</i> . Photograph by Ella van Tonder	240
Figure 12.24: <i>uR</i> Poster. Poster design by Luke Ellenbogen	241
Figures 12.25: Installation groundplan. Drawing by Illka Louw	241
Figures 12.26; 12.27; 12.28: <i>Black Wave</i> . Photographs by Rob Keith	241
Figures 12.29; 12.30; 12.31; 12.32: <i>Fabric Enso</i> . Photographs by Rob Keith	242
Figures 12.33; 12.34; 12.35: <i>Pick-up-sticks #I</i> . Photographs by Rob Keith	242
Figures 12.36; 12.37; 12.38; 12.39: <i>Pick-up-sticks #II</i> . Photographs by Rob Keith	243
Figures 12.40; 12.41; 12.42; 12.43; 12.44: <i>Paper trio</i> . Photographs by Rob Keith	243

Figures 12.45; 12.46; 12.47: <i>Anemone</i> . Photographs by Rob Keith	244
Figure 12.48: <i>Enso</i> . Artwork by Illka Louw	244
Figure 13.1: Julia Raynham performs Patient Number 3, Inanna, in a latex mask and body cast. Photograph by Anthony Strack Van Schyndel	251
Figure 13.2: Nobuhle Ketelo performs with a life size latex puppet. Photograph by Anthony Strack van Schyndel	252
Figure 13.3: A scene from the Dreamspace/Deathscape. Photograph by Anthony Strack Van Schyndel	254
Figure 14.1: Peter van Heerden at the National Arts Festival Grahamstown dressed in costume as a saamtrekker. Photograph by Philip Boltz	256
Figure 14.2: Peter van Heerden, Selwyn, Andrae Laubscher at the National Arts Festival Grahamstown in costume as saamtrekkers. Photograph by Philip Boltz	256
Figure 14.3: The programme and poster for the live art installation, <i>TOTUNDERKUNTUIT</i> , performed at Fort Selwyn for 14 days as part of the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown. Photograph by Anthony Strack van Schyndel	257
Figure 14.4: The uitspan of the ox-wagon and site of the live arts installation, <i>TOTUNDERKUNTUIT</i> , featuring the saamtrekkers Peter Van Heerden, Selwyn and Andrae Laubscher. Photograph by Philip Boltz	258
Figures 14.5 and 14.6: Images of the performance work <i>so is 'n os gemaak</i> performed nightly as part of the live art installation, <i>TOTUNDERKUNTUIT</i> , at the National Arts Festival. Photograph by Philip Boltz	259
Figure 14.7: The ox is born and comes to life. Images of the performance work <i>so is 'n os gemaak</i> performed nightly as part of the live art installation, <i>TOTUNDERKUNTUIT</i> , at the National Arts Festival. Photograph by Philip Boltz	262
Figure 14.8: Images from the performance work <i>Flowers for my Flesh</i> shot at the Castle of Good Hope, Cape Town. The vrou and her mannetjie. Photograph by Anthony Strack Van Schyndel	262
Figure 14.9: Final image of the performance work <i>6 Minutes</i> shot at the FNB Dance Umbrella in Johannesburg. Photograph by Anthony Strack van Schyndel	263
Figure 16.1: Making a Braamfontein soundscape. Left to right: Shameelah Kahn, Nokuthula Mkwanazi, Jenni-Lee Crewe, Nondumiso Msimanga. Photograph by Frances Slabolepszy	279
Figure 16.2: Bridge and Juta Street installation by Jenni-lee Crewe. Photograph by Frances Slabolepszy	279

Figure 16.3: Visual representation of the smell of fire and cooking meat. Photograph by Frances Slabolepszy	279
Figure 16.4: Marie Fricourt mapping her daily journey through Braam on the studio window. Photograph by Frances Slabolepszy	279
Figure 16.5: <i>Opsoek/Descoberta/Finding Pretoria</i> poster made up of layered images from the making process. Poster design by Alex Halligey	280
Figures 16.6 and 16.7: 2015 at Gerald Fitzpatrick House and Nursing Home (left) and Maurice Freeman recreation centre (right). Photographs by Baeletsi Tsatsi	281
Figure 16.8: Bertrams Junior School in July 2016. Photograph by Baeletsi Tsatsi	281
Figure 16.9: Fabric painting ‘home’ with Bienvenu Refugee Shelter women and children, March 2019. Photograph by Alex Halligey	281
Figure 16.10: The audience carrying ‘the sea’ down Thames Street, Bertrams, in a performance of <i>Izithombe 2094</i> in September 2016. Photograph by Baeletsi Tsatsi	283
Figure 16.11: Baeletsi Tsatsi as ‘Sister Bae’, tour guide and storyteller, in a performance of <i>Izithombe 2094</i> in September 2016. Photograph by Alex Halligey	283
Figure 16.12: Toni Morkel (with the umbrella) as ‘Mrs Liebenberg’, fictional City Of Johannesburg official from the 1980s, in a performance of <i>Izithombe 2094</i> in August 2016. Photograph by Baeletsi Tsatsi	283
Figure 16.13: Lindiwe Matshikiza as ‘Sylvie’, fictional Francoophone Bertrams resident, in a performance of <i>Izithombe 2094</i> in August 2016. Photograph by Baeletsi Tsatsi	283
Figure 16.14: Lindiwe Matshikiza (left) as Shaun and Toni Morkel as Battery, in a performance of <i>Izithombe 2094</i> in August 2016. Photograph by Baeletsi Tsatsi	283
Figure 17.1: Data within the PhD project. Table created by Sanjin Muftić	290
Figure 17.2: Sample metadata capture questions/form for a generated performance image. Table created by Sanjin Muftić	293
Figure 17.3: Sample keywords in different categories. Table created by Sanjin Muftić	294
Figure 17.4: Folder structure for project. Table created by Sanjin Muftić	295
Figure 17.5: Sample file names. Table created by Sanjin Muftić	296

AUDIOVISUAL LIST



Video 4.1: *And then...* dance film. Conceived, directed and produced by jacki job – [here](#). Video production by Steve van Zyl productions 155



Video 5.1: *This image may contain video* – [here](#). Video artwork by heeten bhagat 161



Audio 5.2: *This images may contain soundscape* – [here](#). Sound artwork by heeten bhagat 161



Video 11.1: *Detritus for one*, 2015, video recording – [here](#). Videography by Dex Goodman, courtesy of the National Arts Festival 222



Video 11.2: *Sacre for one*, 2016, video recording – [here](#). Videography by Dex Goodman, courtesy of the Cape Town Fringe Festival 222



Video 11.3: *Ghostdance*, 2017, video recording – [here](#). Videography by Dex Goodman, courtesy if the National Arts Festival 222



Video 13.1: *Plot 99:* Full production live at Oude Molen 2011 – [here](#). Videography by Anthony Strack 249



Video 14.1: Edited video version of the performance work so is 'n os gemaak shot in van Heerden's studio at erf 81, Tamboerskloof, Cape Town – [here](#). Videography by Bradshaw Schaffer 263



Video 16.1: Documentary on the playmaking process of *Izithombe 2094* – [here](#). Videography by Palesa Shongwe, video editing by Dominique Little 285

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

heeten bhagat was born in Zimbabwe. Presently, he oscillates between Harare, Cape Town and any place that involves long-distance travel. Currently, his work delves into the emerging terrain of ‘pracademics’ – essentially looking to expand collaborations and design experiments between academia and real-life systems. He approaches this work as a methodologist – bringing pragmatic and provocative programming to support decolonial and diversity-expanding processes in overlooked and underserved environments. His experience across the learning spectrum (rural, community and informal spaces through to established cultural and academic institutions) gives him the ability to interact in these spaces in formations that are looking to engage dissonance as a way to activate pathways towards inspired productivities. This range of work has, most recently, catapulted him into the thickets of transdisciplinarity – a leap that he thoroughly welcomes.

Mark Fleishman is Professor of Theatre in the Centre for Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies at the University of Cape Town. He is also a co-artistic director of Magnet Theatre, an independent theatre company established in 1987. He has created and directed many performance works for the company that have been performed nationally and internationally over the past 37 years and is involved in development projects in urban townships and rural communities using theatre as a tool for social justice and transformation. His articles have appeared in the *South African Theatre Journal*, *Contemporary Theatre Review* and *Theatre Research International* as well as in numerous edited collections, most recently in *The Routledge Companion to Theatre and Politics* (2019), *International Performance Research: The Unconditional Discipline?* (2017), and *Magnet Theatre: Three Decades of Making Space* (2016). He is editor of *Performing Migrancy and Mobility in Africa: Cape of Flows* in the Studies in International Performance series at Palgrave (2015) and also of two special issues of the *South African Theatre Journal* on *Translation & Performance* (2019 & 2020) that emerged from a multi-year collaboration with colleagues in the Netherlands and India. He is currently principal investigator on the project *Re-imagining Tragedy from Africa and the Global South* funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Alex Halligey has a PhD in drama and urban studies through the University of Cape Town’s African Centre for Cities and the Centre for Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies. Her research is concerned with theatre and performance as research tools and conceptual lenses for exploring the relationship between people and the built environment. At the time of writing she is a lecturer at the University Currently Known as Rhodes. Her monograph *Participatory Theatre and the Urban Everyday: Place and Play in Johannesburg* was published by Routledge in 2020, and 2021 saw the publication of a scholarly volume she co-edited with Sara Matchett on the women-lead theatre organisation, The Mothertongue Project: *Collaborative Conversations: Celebrating Twenty-One Years of The Mothertongue Project*. She has an ongoing practice as a theatre-maker and in keeping with her investment

in understanding the relationship between bodies and space, she is also a practicing Alexander Technique teacher.

Juliet Jenkin is a writer, director and researcher. After working in the performing arts for over ten years, she returned to UCT for MA studies in 2016 and her PhD in 2018. Using ensemble performance as an object lesson on social dynamics, pattern and participation, Juliet's research identifies an absence of order in contemporary social life and offers a design-based response to that absence, theorising order as a participatory, embodied, relational practice that may be designed through performance.

jacki job is a dancer and choreographer, theatre-maker and director, producer, and academic researcher at the University of Cape Town. Her predominantly independent performance career has been eclectic, with performances ranging from experimental solo work, to choreographing commercials, directing classical operas and theatre works, as well as hosting television shows. She has created more than 70 productions since the start of her independent career in 1994 and engaged in collaborations with an array of eclectic artists, performing in academic institutions, cultural festivals and theatres in Africa, Asia and Europe. She has been awarded with the David and Elaine Potter Fellowship, the Bunkacho Cultural Fellowship and twice, the National Research Fund's Thuthuka Grant. The academic translations of her performance processes relate to literature on feminist decolonial discourse, soma-aesthetics, philosophy, theatre and Butoh. As a performer she resists humancentric philosophies and conceptualises human-animal configurations in her choreographies. She also draws from details in the everyday world to develop avant-garde notions which contribute new meanings of personhood and transformation in South Africa. She currently serves as a Associate Professor in the Centre for Theatre, Dance & Performance Studies at the University of Cape Town.

Mwenya B. Kabwe is a Zambian-born maker of theatre and performance, a facilitator of creative processes, and a performer, writer, arts educator and scholar. She is currently a Senior Lecturer at the Centre for Theatre Dance & Performance Studies at the University of Cape Town where she received her PhD and MA degrees. She majored in theatre with a minor in African studies and psychology as an undergraduate at Northeastern University in Boston. Her creative practice and research is focused on contemporary African theatre and performance, migration, immersive and site-specific performance work, live art, collaborative and interdisciplinary art-making and re-imagining African futures. She has lectured at the UCT Drama Department, Wits School of Arts division of Theatre & Performance, and the Market Theatre Laboratory. She is a co-curator of the Unrehearsed Futures conversation series <https://dramaschoolmumbai.in/conversations/unrehearsed-futures/> and a project partner on the [OpenScape Network](#), a transnational platform for artistic and curatorial exchange.

Illka Louw has been a set and costume designer for approximately 25 years. She studied set design as a one-year post-graduate diploma at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama,

preceded by a national diploma in fashion design at the Cape Technikon (now CPUT). She was fortunate to bridge from fashion to theatrical costume by first-hand experience in various theatrical wardrobes. Until 2023, she taught design as part of a BA Drama programme at the University Currently Known as Rhodes. Woven within this timeline are Louw's Honours and MA studies at UCT. As a visual dramaturge, she has devised non-text-based scenographic events with cast members as well as pieces where multiple texts were merged and performed in multiple sites, examining how we look at the performance event. She has made immersive and interactive installations with the emphasis on the agency of non-human 'actants' and their effect on the viewer. Her research has involved thinking about the designer's engagement with the materials of her craft and art, and how that engagement becomes tangible for a performer and eventually, an audience member.

Alude Mahali-Bhengu is a Chief Research Specialist in the Equitable Education and Economies programme at the South African Human Sciences Research Council. With a background in the arts, including degrees from Rhodes University and a PhD from the University of Cape Town, Alude has worked in the social sciences over the last 8 years. Alude's research expertise and experience focuses on youth social justice work using innovative visual and participatory methodologies, especially those suited to resource-strained contexts. Alude was recently principal investigator on a project on civic education for youth and another on language policies and practices in South African higher education institutions. She is currently the co-principal investigator on a longitudinal cohort study of African tertiary alumni of the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Programme that investigates how to maximise the impact of young African graduates as agents in the social and economic transformation of Africa. In 2018, she was nationally recognized as one of the *Mail and Guardian's* 200 inspiring young South Africans. She is former editor of the *South African Theatre Journal* and currently honorary lecturer in the School of Arts at the University of KwaZulu Natal.

Aja Marneweck is a puppeteer, educator, theatre-maker and director specialising in puppetry and material performance. She is currently a senior lecturer and convenor of the Laboratory of Kinetic Objects/Puppetry Arts (LoKO) at the Centre for Humanities Research at the University of the Western Cape. She is also the artistic director of the women's puppetry and performance company The Paper Body Collective. Marneweck's work engages the art forms of Puppetry and Visual Theatre as critical contemporary performance praxis and the transformative possibilities they offer for the revisioning of identity, gender, politics and meaning in the 21st Century. Marneweck acknowledges the support of the Centre for Humanities Research at the University of the Western Cape and the NIHSS Humanities Hub grant in the writing of the chapter in this volume.

Sara Matchett is the former Director of the Centre for Theatre, Dance & Performance Studies at the University of Cape Town. She is also a Lead Teacher of Fitzmaurice Voicework®, the Regional Co-ordinator of the Fitzmaurice Institute for Africa, and an Advanced Breathwork

Practitioner with Breathwork Africa. Her teaching profile centres around practical and academic courses that include, voice, acting, performance-making, applied theatre and performance analysis. She is especially interested in transdisciplinary modes of creating. Her research explores the body as a site for generating images for the purpose of performance making and specifically focuses on investigating the relationship between breath and emotion, and breath and image, to make performance that is inspired by a biography of the body. Her interests are in embodied practices that focus on presencing, co-sensing, co-llaborating and co-generating as a way of transforming egosystems to ecosystems. As co-founder and Artistic Director of The Mothertongue Project women's arts collective, Sara has experience in the field of theatre and performance as a performance maker, performer, director and facilitator.

Khanyisile Mbongwa is a Cape Town based independent curator and sociologist who engages with her curatorial practice as Curing & Care, using the creative to instigate spaces for emancipatory practices, joy and play. She is one of the founding members of arts collective Gugulective and Vasiki Creative Citizens. She has curated locally and internationally, such as for *Infecting the City* in Cape Town, *CAT Cologne* in Germany, *Twenty Journey* in South Africa, *Marres* in Netherlands and *Black Gotham* in New York. She has served in advisory and executive capacities for Handspring Trust Puppets, Cape Town Carnival, Obsidian Literature & Arts, and was Adjunct Curator for the Norval Foundation. Mbongwa is a PhD candidate at the Institute for Creative Arts, University of Cape Town and is a Blak C.O.R.E (Care of Radical Energy) Fellow at the University of Melbourne. She is the founding Chief Curator of the Stellenbosch Triennale and was the Curator for the Liverpool Biennial 2023.

Sanjin Muftić is a Bosnian-born Canadian digital scholar and film editor based in Cape Town. He completed his theatre PhD at UCT focusing on the planetary, bricolage and theatrical images and is currently working for UCT Libraries as a Digital Scholarship Specialist. His tasks include implementing and maintaining the university digital collections site (Omeka S), developing advocacy towards practicing research-data management, and helping researchers curate and showcase their digital scholarship projects and collections. He has presented at international conferences of the International Federation for Theatre Research, the International Society for Intermedial Studies, CREATIVATE Digital Arts Festival, Open Repositories and the Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations. His written contributions include articles in the *South African Theatre Journal*, *Research in Drama Education* and *Resources for African Indigenous Languages* and chapters in *Performing Exile: Foreign Bodies* (Ed Judith Rudakoff) and *Performing Migrancy and Mobility in Africa: Cape of Flows* (Ed Mark Fleishman). He has also directed and designed videography for numerous theatrical productions in South Africa, while also having edited two feature films including *Barakat*.

Alan Parker is a choreographer, dramaturg, and researcher based in Makhanda (formerly Grahamstown), where he is employed as a Senior Lecturer in the Drama Department at the University Currently Known as Rhodes. As a lecturer, Alan teaches, coordinates and supervises student learning and research in the fields of physical performance,

choreography and interdisciplinary performance praxis. He holds an MA in drama, specialising in choreography, from Rhodes University as well as a PhD in live art, interdisciplinary and public art, from the University of Cape Town. In 2016 Alan was an ICA Live Art Fellow at the University of Cape Town and, in 2017, served as an ICA Writing Fellow as well. Since 2019, Alan has been the resident dramaturg for the Live Art Arcade, a non-profit company and annual performance platform focused on the mentorship and development of early-career or emerging artists working in the fields of live art and performance art. Alan currently heads the Network for Embodied Research in Africa, a newly-established body-based research and community-building initiative based at Rhodes University.

Rosa Postlethwaite (she/ they) works as a performance artist, dramaturg and facilitator across theatre, live art, dance and socially engaged art. They work collaboratively to make performance, club/ cabaret nights and workshops. Rosa's work is informed and driven by queer, feminist, anti-racist and socialist practices and is interested in the relationship between macrostructures and daily life. Rosa is currently a PhD researcher on the 'Mobilizing Dramaturgy' Co-tutelle Programme within Coventry University's Centre for Dance Research and Aarhus University. Their research is focused on dramaturgy with other-than-human species. They hold an MA in theatre and performance from the University of Cape Town and a BA in drama from Queen Mary University of London. Rosa grew up in Leicester (UK) and currently has home bases in the UK and Denmark.

Noluthando Mpho (Jupiter) Sibisi is an artist who makes use of writing, performance and visual art as modes of complicating, documenting and disseminating South African black women narratives. She is especially interested in developing the archive of black queer women experiences in contemporary performance and the literary canon. Through serious play and a recent preoccupation with breathing she has been long-listed for the 2020 Sol Plaatje European Union Poetry Award and Anthology. Noluthando obtained a Masters degree in Theatre and Performance studies from the University of Cape Town (2021), and in 2022 was nominated as a laureate for the MILL's Beauty Reality Salon.

Myer Taub is a senior lecturer teaching theatre practices in the Department of Theatre and Performance, Wits School of the Arts, where they continue to practice as teacher, academic, multi-disciplinary artist and innovator. Myer's research focus includes Performance as Research, Theatre & Ecology and Urban Dramaturgy. A specific focus that Myer is currently working on is the idea of Wild Zones as kinetic overflows in performance studies with plans to publish in this area.

Kabi Thulo's journey into the world of theatre arts commenced through his undergraduate studies, which he completed in 2004 at the University of the Free State. Thereafter he started his professional career as an Arepp Theatre for Life (Educational Theatre Trust) performer in 2005 and he continues to work as a professional performer primarily in theatre. He worked

for the Free State Department of Arts & Culture as a cultural facilitator from December 2006 to June 2007 before completing his Honours studies at the University of Cape Town in 2007. He also pursued and completed his MA qualification at the University of the Witwatersrand in 2009 and lectured within the university's former Division of Dramatic Arts. Subsequently, he had lecturing tenures at Tshwane University of Technology's Drama and Film Department (2014-18) and Durban University of Technology's Department of Drama and Production Studies (2020-22). Thulo is a traditional healer of Sotho origin who has recently graduated with a PhD from the University of Cape Town's Centre for Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies. Currently, he is an independent scholar and freelance theatre practitioner. In terms of scholarly undertakings and artistic practice, his areas of interest are: the intersections between ritual and theatre, devising performance/ theatre-making, directing and dramaturgy.

Peter Van Heerden is an artist, educator, producer and director. Born in Johannesburg, South Africa, he is based in Westport, Connecticut, USA. . He currently serves as Executive Director of the Quick Center for the Arts at Fairfield University, where he is focused on developing and implementing innovative and dynamic performing arts-based programmes in Fairfield County and the greater surrounding metro area. His cumulative experience in the art, heritage and cultural sector on a national and international level, ensures that core programming areas in visual art, performing art and education generate a profound impact on the community by ensuring that art is accessible, approachable and an enriching part of all participants' lives. As an advocate for arts and education, Van Heerden is driven to establish the Quick Center as a leading force in the field of art and culture in the state of Connecticut. Van Heerden also has an ongoing practice as an independent performance artist.

Sarah Woodward completed an MA at UCT specializing in theatrical voice as part of the Theatre and Performance Coursework MA Programme in 2005. She has written about, taught and directed in voice-centric circles for most of her career. From 2007 to 2016 she worked as an academic at Wits University in Johannesburg where she developed the voice curriculum and taught voice and speech from first years to post-graduate students. She lectured on both the academic courses in radio drama; film, visual and performing arts (FVPA) and the practical courses as a voice lecturer, dialect coach and theatrical voice coach. She has also worked as in the private sector as a professional voice and communications coach, with clients such as Sasol, Absa Capital, RMB, PWC and AmPlat. Currently Sarah is the Director of Tongue Twisters Voice Agency in Cape Town, which she has managed since August 2016. She also works as a freelance voice-over artist.

ABSTRACTS FOR PART II

CHAPTER 1: A DIFFERENT STAGE: FROM PLAY THINKING TO RESEARCH THINKING

By Juliet Jenkin

This paper describes the process of altering my conception of theatre-making from an arts practice to a research practice. Centred on the process of writing and directing a play, the paper begins from my initial struggle to conceive of the purpose of theatre-making in an academic context, and in doing so conceive of a research-based way of practicing theatre. At the outset, I begin working on my play in the same way I would have done in an artistic context and combine this process with a series of theoretical reflections on the practice. Through this simple progression of practice and reflection, familiar theatre-making activities like blocking and note-giving reveal themselves as potential ways of thinking and modes of research. In viewing these practices as a form of embodied logic that are reasoned through the action of the play, I am able to access a mode of thinking that centres theatre-making as both a method of investigation and the theoretical position of the research.

CHAPTER 2: DRAMATURGICAL METHODS: MIGRANT ATTITUDES, WAYWARD ARCHIVES AND OTHER PROPOSALS FOR CREATIVE RESEARCH

By Mwenya B. Kabwe

In this chapter I attempt to trace the development of the PaR framework that I developed for my PhD thesis, titled *Theatres of migritude: towards a dramaturgy of African futures*. The thesis seeks to respond to the question, 'what does it mean to have a migrant attitude for theatre and performance making?' and is an attempt to answer illusive questions that I have about my own work, that are dramaturgical and poetic. The thesis explores an approach that brings migration and Africanfuturism into closer relationship towards a dramaturgical practice mobilised in the direction of possibility, potential and a more hopeful future. In this chapter I map the organic evolution of my research design questions and the process of arriving at my methods of analysis. The thesis aimed to articulate a particular dramaturgical process through the analysis of five play texts which were thematically and aesthetically concerned with migration and which are created by women whose biographies flow through the African continent. Due to the variation in genre, content and form of these case studies, the research-design process required a way of addressing multiple forms of critical interpretation with the aim of developing a pliable dramaturgical framework. This chapter addresses the hunch that I followed in selecting these play texts, the wayward approach I used to create an archive of these works and how I worked dramaturgically to arrive at the compositional focus of each play.

CHAPTER 3: DBLE: A CURATORIAL APPROACH TO PRACTICE AS RESEARCH

By *Khanyisile Mbongwa*

In this short essay, I introduce how I have developed my theory of *Demonstrations and demonstrating: Black lived experience (DBLE)* through practice as research and how I use it as a fundamental research methodology that underpins my research practice. I unpack mapping, tracing and discernment as approaches embedded in *DBLE* and share how my curatorial practice shaped and functions within my research approach.

CHAPTER 4: AND THEN...: REVEALING THE TEACHINGS OF THE PRAYING MANTIS

By *jacki job*

The chapter describes my notion of *philosoembodology* by looking at a set of principles that guide and creatively evolve my practice in dance and choreography. It looks at a series of performances, *And then...*, which enable an articulation of notions of Blackness and power from the molecular proximity of a praying mantis. The trajectory of the works, constructed between 2018-2021, hone new understandings of personhood and transformation in South Africa. The chapter further expands Giorgio Agamben's perception of liminality and re-imagines the potential of identity beyond humancentric configurations. My practice resists Western dance modalities and embodies notions of communion, interpenetration and repetition as phenomenological strategies in developing choreography. In explicating my processes, I propose the detail of everyday life as pivotal to conceiving and realising performance. I point to the significance of engaging with things that are difficult, different, strange and unknown, to reconsider modes of power beyond racial tropes. To place these elements in perpetual dialogue, ripples are created between memories, dreams, philosophies, modalities of dance and choreographic techniques. Finally, the chapter offers a feminist application of Butoh principles to ultimately understand complex nuances of identity, through the body, as a thinking-doing-dreaming organ.

CHAPTER 5: THIS IMAGE MAY CONTAIN ...: A VISUAL AND AURAL ARTICULATION OF RESEARCH INTO NOTIONS OF SPECULATIVE INDIGENEITIES

By *heeten bhagat*

This image may contain... refers to a pivotal element of my PhD dissertation. What began as a somewhat conventional, prosaic even, inquiry into the mechanisms of indigenosity and indigeneity morphed into a multi-media installation that stood in as the concluding

articulation of my doctoral dissertation. My chapter explains this journey in three parts. I begin with a rationale of sorts, contextualising and positioning myself in relation to the enterprise of academic research. I follow this with an overview of my doctoral research project – unpacking the performative logics of indigenisation in present day Zimbabwe. The final section is reflective. It is supported by a film and audio piece that offer a glimpse of the visual elements of the installation as well as what it sounded like. Leaning on the generosity of hindsight, I re-member, quite literally, the processes of making the installation, or artwork, as it has come to be known. I grapple with the quandaries of what it took to extend prose into poetry and how this move nurtures notions of PaR.

CHAPTER 6: PIECING TOGETHER A GIRLHOOD: USING ‘GIRLFRIEND PLAY’ AS METHOD TO PERFORM MEMORY

By Alude Mahali

This chapter discusses *Katuntu (...and you too)*, a work devised and performed by myself and Injairu Kulundu as part of my thesis production in fulfilment of my MA in theatre-making from the University of Cape Town. *Katuntu (...and you too)*, performed at UCT’s Little Theatre in October 2009, was concerned with the playing of memory with reference to narratives of loss: loss of language, place and family caused by an uprooted childhood, resulting in the playing of unnerving memory fragments. *Katuntu (...and you too)* was my attempt to play my own understanding of the consequences of a fragmented memory of myself as a black South African woman with an immigrant past, in hopes that it may resonate with a shared experience of black girlhood. *Katuntu* summoned the voice of memory into being by using song performance in the creation of shared girlfriend memory through incantatory call and response. By using Kevin Quashie’s (2004) ‘girlfriend aesthetic’ as a starting point, this chapter makes suggestions for how one might adopt a practical methodology and begin finding the material to help ‘play memory’. To that end, the chapter outlines the praxis used in the process of creating *Katuntu*.

CHAPTER 7: LITTLE DID I KNOW

Myer Taub

This chapter considers how I have used PaR in terms of my thematic alignments to ideas on such events as *crisis* and *catastrophe*. I have assembled a series of written chronological and non-chronological fragments (like this section as *One: remapping*, currently 2023). The written fragments point to the organisation of my own research as a mediation between crisis and catastrophe through the mechanism of making that I like to call *remapping*. This is a point of rewriting and immersing-in reflection, also reflexive... The chapter includes a series of stylistic interventions in order to provide further meaning, like font choices, footnotes, or the interventions of commentary made by Alex Halligey.

CHAPTER 8: UGCWELE UKUDLALA: WAYS OF SEEING, LEARNING AND KNOWING THROUGH SERIOUS PLAY

By Noluthando Mpho Sibisi

In response to the prompt, 'practice as research', I write this chapter as an exploration of the research strategies and methodology I employed for my MA in Theatre and Performance. In 2021, I completed a mini-dissertation titled *Sexuality and cultural heritage at odds: I Fuck What I Like, an ode to the young queer black woman in South Africa* through the University of Cape Town's Centre for Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies MA programme. The dissertation functioned to complicate what I argued to be an insistent narrative of queer black womanhood as emblematic of abjection by exploring the concept of queer black woman joy. I turned to the work of Koleka Putuma, Zanele Muholi and Athi-Patra Ruga as artistic influences from whom I garnered multivocality, collage, ode and play as research methods. This chapter will function as a documentation of the processes, routes, roots and rituals that informed my readings and replications of the black queer counterculture offered by these artists while unpacking the autoethnographic reflections (writing, performance, visual portraiture) that became integral to my practice, my research, and my use of PaR.

CHAPTER 9: BREATH-BODY-SELF: A PRACTICE-LED JOURNEY

By Sara Matchett

This chapter considers a methodological study that informed my doctoral thesis that set out to explore the body as a site for generating images for purposes of performance making. The study employed various methods, traditions and somatic practices that drew from yoga, Fitzmaurice Voicework®, the Sanskrit system of rasa, body mapping and free writing. The hybrid methodology engaged embodied practices as well as case studies that focused on a series of small experiments that took place over three years and culminated in a workshop process that considered the application of the method in a creative workshop process.

The study employed a practice-led, qualitative research design that drew from ethnographic and autobiographical approaches to research. It made use of grounded theory in that it utilised methods and practices to investigate lived and embodied experiences of the people it engaged. Some of the key qualitative methods that were used in data collection were: interviews, observations, reflexive journaling, focus group discussions, digital documentation and blogging.

CHAPTER 10: PRACTICE AS RESEARCH: SOME INSIGHTS INTO DEVELOPING A THEATRE-VOICE BASED PEDAGOGICAL PRAXIS

By Sarah Woodward

In this chapter I have revisited a few early practice-as-research projects that formed part of my coursework MA in 2004 and 2005 and would lead eventually to both a final practical project and a written dissertation. I explore two key concepts that framed my work, namely 'action is the impetus for motivation' and 'clear and rigorous and unflinching boundaries offer the best framework for creativity'. My research drew on the contemporary subcultural phenomena of rap, slam and freestyle poetry as a way of disrupting a prescriptive approach to theatre voice, while still creating viable coursework that would fulfil academic and pedagogical objectives. Using examples discovered in my original notebooks I have unpacked the process of developing voice exercises in practical sessions, from early hunches to well thought-out practical explorations, in both classwork and in performance. The chapter highlights how important documentation (i.e. video, audio, photography) is to the research practitioner.

CHAPTER 11: THINKING THROUGH MICROPRACTICE: AN EMBODIED INTERROGATION OF THE ARCHIVE

By Alan Parker

The paper introduces the doctoral research project, *Anarchival dance: choreographic archives and the disruption of knowledge* – a practice-led investigation of the archive, explored through the creation of three anarchival performances. Located in the field of archival studies, the project explores the relationship between the body and the archive and between logocentric, document-biased epistemologies and embodied, performative ways of knowing. The paper theorises the anarchival as a creative research methodology that is enacted through the body of the researcher through engagement with various archival remains. Micropractice is then offered as a useful method for decolonial archival praxis and is theorised as a form of deterritorialisation (after Deleuze and Guattari) where the intentions and desires of the researcher are decentred within the research by actively moving away from the subjective or familiar experiences of the researcher towards other pathways and opportunities offered by the practice itself. The paper concludes by framing micropractice as a research method that is closely aligned with performance philosophy, which recognises the capacity of performance to think and produce knowledge beyond the specific intentions of the researcher. As such, the paper argues for the necessity for researchers to critically reflect on and interrogate thinking that is emergent in creative practice through an additional layer of embodied practice – namely writing.

CHAPTER 12: BEYOND FLAILING: REDIRECTING TACIT KNOWLEDGE OF METHODS IN DESIGN TO CREATE A RESEARCH METHODOLOGY IN VISUAL DRAMATURGY.

By Illka Louw

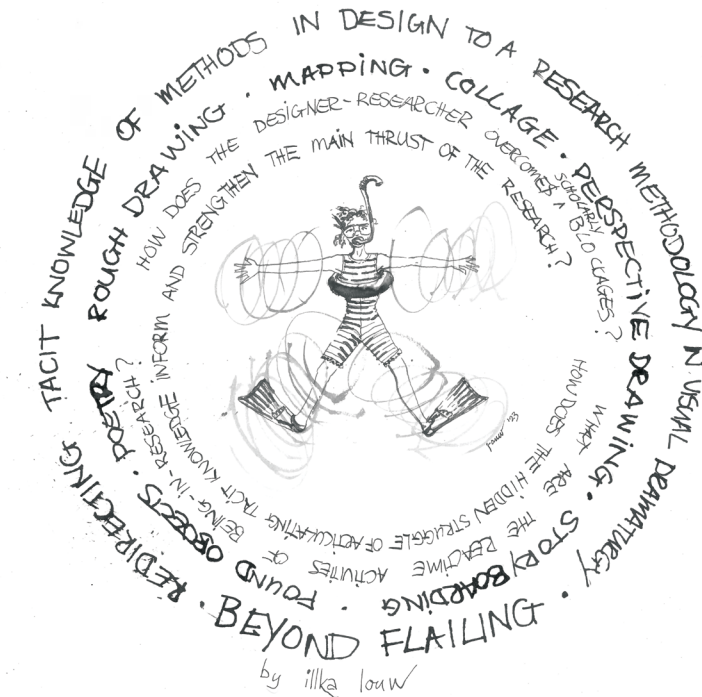


Figure 121: Abstract. Artwork by Illka Louw.

CHAPTER 13: PRACTICE AS RESEARCH IN PUPPETRY PERFORMANCE: THE MAKING AND UNMAKING OF PLOT 99

By Aja Marneweck

The chapter explores how puppetry and visual performance provided a catalyst for the creative and critical methodologies that went into the making and unmaking of meaning and form in my PhD process. Culminating around a central thesis performance entitled *Plot 99*, the PhD was a PaR enquiry into the possibilities of puppetry and visual performance for complex feminine representation in South Africa today. Using various performative, sculptural, filmic, photographic, aesthetic, written and digital outlets, the PhD process was driven by a central enquiry into the possibilities of the forms and concepts of puppetry in critico-creative experimentation and research.

CHAPTER 14: PRACTICE AS RESEARCH IN DEVELOPING SAAMTREKKING AS A PERFORMANCE ART PRACTICE

By Peter Andrew Hamish van Heerden

This chapter considers my performance art practice over the course of my MA in 2001 and 2002 which critically engaged hegemonic white South African, and in particular Afrikaans, masculinity in the context of South Africa's then newly post-apartheid landscape. The chapter considers the primary and secondary historical research I did into Afrikaner nationalist history, particularly in relation to 'The Great Trek' of 1835-1846, where Dutch settlers in the Cape colony migrated into the interior of southern Africa, annexing land from indigenous peoples through threat and intimidation. I then describe how this initial research informed my studio practice to develop durational, ritual performances using my physical and historical whiteness to enact atonements for the gross racist injustices of the past to conceive of the nascent possibilities for a white, South African and Afrikaner identity that might participate constructively and justly in a post-apartheid South Africa.

CHAPTER 15: EXPLORING AUTOTOPOGRAPHY: METHODS

By Rosa Postlethwaite

I am a performance artist and PhD researcher based in the UK and Denmark. In this chapter I describe the artistic process, research methodology and methods I used during my PaR MA at University of Cape Town (2013 - 2014). My MA thesis was titled, *Exploring the field of autotopography through live art practice: The Frieze, The Anatomy Lecture Theatre and The Security Hut*, and as the title suggests I created three live art works as part of my thesis for examination. For each of the three making processes I repeated the task of making autobiographical performance in response to a site, working in different sites within the university campus. I repeatedly used methods of free-writing, returning to the site, reading texts in relation to the site, and reflective writing about the process in discussion with González's (1995), Heddon's (2002), Bal's (2002) and Arlander's (2012) conceptualisations of autotopography. I describe how the methods unfolded in *The Frieze*, in relation to the artistic process and methodology.

CHAPTER 16: PRACTICE AS RESEARCH INTO LEARNING EVERYDAY URBAN PLACE-MAKING THROUGH THEATRE AND PERFORMANCE

By Alex Halligey

My PhD through the University of Cape Town's then Drama Department and the African Centre for Cities used theatre and performance practice as research to explore everyday placemaking activities in an inner city suburb of Johannesburg. In this chapter I consider

the methods I used to build a PaR process from conceptualising my doctoral project to the final thesis write-up and beyond. I divide the full arc of my PhD PaR into four chronological phases, unpacking how each phase emerged from and developed on the previous phase. The chapter offers insights into specific methods and how they served the conceptual, methodological approach of my research concerns. In doing this, the chapter gives ideas for useful PaR methods, but also how to creatively conceive of methods to serve the conceptual and thematic focus of a PaR project. Finally the chapter aims to give a practical sense of how the 'theoretical' work of research (reading and writing) might be integrated throughout a project with the 'practical' work of research (in this case, theatre and performance-making) and how reading and writing are a practice as much as art-making is a way of theorising or thinking through things.

CHAPTER 17: HOW RDM COULD HAVE HELPED THE PAR IN MY PHD: RESEARCH DATA MANAGEMENT IN A PAR PROJECT

By Sanjin Muftić

In 2019 I completed a 7-year PhD journey establishing a poetics of planetary theatre: image and bricolage. The project focused on investigating the building blocks of performance – 'images' – and how they are assembled into complete performances. Over this time, I developed this argument in distinct practical stages through PaR by devising live performance events. As my PhD was by dissertation, I spent a considerable amount of time at the end remembering, re-watching recordings, and writing up the practical findings of rehearsals and performances. Afterwards, I began working at the library of the University of Cape Town, and one of my tasks was to assist researchers with managing their data. Research data management (RDM) is the process of documenting and describing the research project material. During my consultations, I discovered how the very things I was now advocating as good practices were things that I could have used. If I had recognised and managed my research material as data, the PhD experience would have been less frustrating, the write-up more articulate and the journey shorter. In this chapter I re-do my project with the assistance of RDM, sharing practical steps to assist those embarking on their own PaR PhD project.

CHAPTER 18: MOHAHLAUDI-BAHAHLAUDI (TRAVELLER-TRAVELLERS): A CASE OF PRACTICE AS RESEARCH

By Kabi Thulo

This chapter draws from my PhD study, *The [un]knowing director: a critical examination of directing within the context of devising performance*, undertaken from 2011 to 2022 at the University of Cape Town's Centre for Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies. In doing so, the chapter articulates my experiences of employing PaR by addressing (a) how I

went about conducting research, and (b) what the processes and objects of my research were. Mohahlaudi-BAHAHLAUDI (Traveller-TRAVELLERS) is a piece of creative writing included in the thesis to portray my dealings with PaR. Thus, the referred-to piece of writing serves the chapter as its overarching contextual reference that presents the methodology as an acutely emergent and/or non-predeterministic research endeavour realised through a researcher's undertaking of travel-like 'movement(s)' during their research journey. Furthermore, PaR is posited as a methodological enterprise that is fundamentally exploratory while also being reliant on the employment of a researcher's relative, yet specific, research methods referred to as methods in practice. These methods in practice can be decided upon through a researcher's persistent engagement with reflective practice in relation to their artistic practice(s)/ process(s). Essentially, then, this chapter is a contribution speaking to the 'how

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MAKING/ DOING/ THINKING

METHODS FOR
PERFORMANCE
RESEARCH

In recent decades scholars globally have advocated for artistic practice or performance as research (PaR) in higher education institutions as a valuable and innovative way of developing knowledge and knowledge paradigms. PaR has been championed for extending what we know and how we come to learn about it in ways that are embodied, processual and integrate creative and intellectual projects and practices in productive ways. Much of the published discussion about PaR takes the form of overarching philosophies and less attention has been given to the granular processes through which individual PaR projects are realised. Each PaR process is unique to the researcher, their particular artistic practice and their research question. Each successful PaR process is also fundamentally rigorous in its research design. This handbook seeks to give insights into the bespoke sets of methods researchers develop to rigorously support their overall methodology of PaR – a ‘how-to’ in support of the philosophy of PaR.

The book has been made possible by grant funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for the *Reimagining Tragedy in Africa and the Global South* (ReTAGS) project (2019-2024), based in the University of Cape Town’s Centre for Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies. ReTAGS has used PaR as its foundational methodology and seeks to promote PaR in the work of African and global South scholars. Part I of the handbook reproduces Mark Fleishman’s writing on PaR, giving a sense of the key philosophical concerns in this research approach. Part II offers individually authored chapters by scholars who have come through postgraduate programmes at the Centre for Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies (formerly UCT’s Drama Department). The handbook offers inspirations and guiding compasses to scholars embarking on their own, unique PaR journeys.

The **Reimagining Tragedy from Africa and the Global South** (RETAGS) project, funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, is an innovative six-year research project that began in 2019. This project proposes to take a concept – tragedy – from the very beginnings of theatre in its European manifestation and to reimagine it from a perspective in Africa that is directed at the complex challenges of our global postcolonial present and towards our possible futures both inside and outside of the discipline.



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