

## PEER REVIEWED BOOK PROJECT: CALL FOR CHAPTERS

### “Emerging Performance Theories in Postliberation Africa: Projections, Trajectories and Paradigms”

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Performance practice provides key entry points into the generation of theories in performance studies. Performance practice and training in postcolonial Africa are sites through which contemporary experiences and African ways of seeing and experiencing are expressed. However, the manner in which performance and performance studies have been framed, taught and presented in Africa postliberation is problematic. The history of theatre in Africa largely remains defined and presented from a colonial vantage point enabling the dominant western paradigm to relegate African indigenous theatre practices to a state of ‘foundness’ (Mackintosh 1999; Kamlongera 1989). Consequently, African performance theorists and practitioners have been forced to continuously adapt, appropriate and transform its social relations and practices as mechanisms for remaining relevant.

What is performance? Auslander (2008: 1) observes that “any response to this question constitutes a *defacto* theory of performance.” A performance theory is a “conceptual lens, a pair of spectacles, which you use to frame and focus what you’re looking at” (Auslander 2008: 1). Furthermore Auslander notes that a performance theory is a tool for discerning, deciphering and making sense of paradigms in performance practice” (2008: 1). This nexus between performance practice and performance theory especially in Africa necessitates that every innovative practical approach in performance preparation, presentation and training leads to a theory of performance. Performance studies are therefore always in a search of new theories that might open up new ways of seeing and interpreting performance.

This book project seeks to document, conceptualise and theorise the ways in which African practitioners creatively work and perform in contemporary Africa. This approach is important for “avoiding, or rather reversing the imbrication of [performance studies] in academic imperialism” (Wright 1998:39). This book intends to expose the dominant exclusivity and Anglocentrism in performance critical pedagogies in Africa through problematizing the “taken-for-grantedness” of the accepted ways in which performance and theory have been conceptualised. In other terms, this book seeks to consolidate the ways in which African performance is made and understood by African practitioners and theorists. Commenting on post-apartheid South African theatre 20 years ago, Temple Hauptfleisch (1997: 159) observes;

The theatre practice of the period seems to have undergone radical changes, not only in the kind of plays being put on, but also as regards the themes chosen, the venues being used, the professional stature of performers, the nature and preferences of the audiences and even, surprisingly, the critical reactions of commentators and reviews.

Clearly emerging from the above observation is that in post-independence Africa new ways of training, performing, producing, spectating and designing begun to define the performance industry. This new performance culture developed into conventions and philosophies responded to particular needs and contexts in Africa's creative industry. Yet there remains little consolidated documentation of these transformations and transmutations in African performance postliberation.

Put differently, Africa has managed to build a dynamic performance movement using heterogeneous variety of traditions and styles available to practitioners of all backgrounds (Plastow 1996: 256). Through this book, we aim to bring together a body of distinguished theoreticians, practitioners and researchers on African performance as it manifests today. This book will serve as a useful critical African performance theory reference for students, lectures, teachers and researchers in the creative arts studies.

We are therefore calling for book chapters that *reimagine*, *rearticulate* and *redefine* performance practice and performance theory discourse in postliberation Africa under the following categories.

### **1. (Reimagining) Performance**

- Story telling
- Acting
- Embodied performance art
- Music, dance and spirituality
- Devising, playmaking and directing

### **2. Training and Development**

- Actor training methods
- dance and somatic approaches
- voice training
- choreography and directing

### **3. African Performance Aesthetics**

- African Performance aesthetics
- Audio production and design
- Costume and Material design
- Space and performance
- Lighting design
- Musicology

- Music notation and narration

#### **4. Arts/ Cultural Management**

- Social media arts marketing
- Arts admin
- Marketing and publicity
- Heritage management
- Visual arts management
- Events and festival management
- Advertising
- Cultural tourism

#### **5. Politics of/ and Performance**

- African paradigm and performance.
- African theatre concepts and function
- Community theatre
- Theatre for development
- Disability theatre
- Panic theatre
- Hit-an-run theatre
- Heritage and arts practice
- Visual arts practice

#### **Projected Timelines:**

Call for papers:	09 October 2017
Submission of abstracts:	08 December 2017
Acceptance of abstracts:	15 January 2018
Completed draft chapters:	01 June 2018
Expected date of publication:	December 2018-April 2019
Length: illustrations welcome)	5,000-7,000 words maximum (Pictures and

Please send your abstracts to Nkululeko Sibanda: [nkusibanda@lsu.ac.za](mailto:nkusibanda@lsu.ac.za) and **Dr. Miranda Young-Jahangeer:** [youngm1@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:youngm1@ukzn.ac.za).