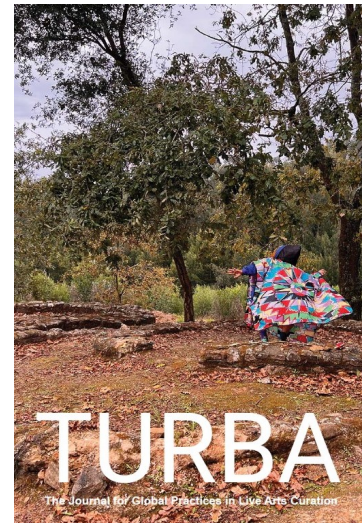


"Exhibiting Liveness"

TURBA:
The Journal for Global Practices
in Live Arts Curation

Call for Papers- 3.1 Spring 2024

Submission deadlines:
for papers, November 5, 2023;
for letters, January 1, 2024



ISSUE EDITOR:

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Throughout history, and across cultures, the live arts have been presented in medium-specific venues. Theater, dance, opera, music, sound art, and the circus arts were performed in amphitheatres, public squares, courts, cabarets, opera houses, concert halls, clubs, bars, arenas, and big top tents, or in site-specific spaces during the context of carnivals, pageants, and festivals. Over time, these spaces—and their accompanying conventions of performance and spectatorship—have transformed in relation to the evolution and expansion of the art forms that they house. Since the turn of the century, and gaining momentum over the past decade, however, there has been an influx of live art in spaces traditionally reserved for visual art. Today, the live arts occupy center “stage” in major museums, galleries, and biennials around the globe. Many leading museums are inaugurating spaces designed exclusively to house installation and performance art, while practitioners of the live arts are taking home major visual art prizes and awards.

The exhibition of liveness in museal contexts may take the form of staging one-off performing arts events, or of organizing retrospective and solo exhibitions of performance artists. We are also witnessing the proliferation of a new, hybrid, durational form of performance that is timed to gallery or museum hours—one which art historian Claire Bishop baptizes the “dance exhibition,” and situates in the “gray zone” that emerges out of the convergence of the black box (theater) and the white cube (gallery).[1] Bishop’s term includes both works authored by visual artists that engage professional dancers, singers, and actors, as well as those in which choreographers adapt stage works for gallery or museum settings. Today’s “eventized museum” showcases works of art characterized by durationality (they are circumscribed by time), corporeality (they feature live, gesturing bodies), and relationality (they foreground the intersubjective exchange). In so doing, such works engender new modes of what curator Nicolas Bourriaud famously baptized “relational aesthetics,” and call into question the very ontology of contemporary “art,” while deconstructing notions of the “collection,” the “archive,” and even the “museum”.[2]

The migration of the live arts into spaces, contexts, and architectures proper to the visual arts is also transforming curatorial practice: in response to the preponderance of live works within their walls, many museums are hiring full-time performance curators. Additionally, artists and curators alike are adopting dramaturgical, choreographic, compositional, and performative strategies in their exhibition of live bodies in spaces traditionally designed to collect and present inanimate objects. In response to this shift, we might venture to ask: what does it mean to “exhibit” and “curate,” as opposed to “program” and “stage,” live art? [3] What phenomenological, perceptual, and participatory experiences are made possible when museum “visitors” are invited to apprehend ephemeral works outside of the temporality and frontality of the black box apparatus? In what ways are artists and curators using new technologies to activate spectators through immersive forms of live art, and how are these works animating and enlivening existing collections of visual art? How are the creation and curation of environmental, bio, or other forms of posthuman art challenging anthropocentric models in face of the climate crisis?

Today, curators must “care” not only for objects, but also for living beings who inhabit bodies that are gendered, sexed, raced, and classed; bodies that breathe, move, need, and desire; bodies that carry their own histories and archives, and inhabit intersections of individual and collective identities. A more cynical analysis of the art world’s current romance with performance might conflate the fetishization of live bodies under spectatorial gaze with their reification and commodification as cultural products. As custodians and guardians of institutions that operate within our contemporary post-Fordist, neoliberal economy, how can curators of live art meet their ethical obligation to provide a safe and comfortable working environment for the material body-minds that they hire to produce immaterial labor?

The exhibition of live art in visual art contexts is, of course, not a new phenomenon. There are important predecessors to this movement that must be acknowledged when attempting to understand and narrate its history. Due to their transgressive nature, early performances by body artists—themselves indebted to the avant-garde artistic movements of the 20th century, including Bauhaus, Futurism, Dada, and Surrealism—were historically marginalized in the global visual art world. The 1960s and 1970s, though, bore witness to some key experimental interdisciplinary collaborations between visual and performance artists, musicians, choreographers, and theater and film directors that were orchestrated in museum settings.

The exhibition of live bodies in museum spaces also has a dark and devastating chapter in its history. Beginning in the late 19th century, and continuing into the mid 20th century, Indigenous and African peoples were “exhibited” as “specimens” in ethnological expositions or “human zoos”. This dehumanizing, racist, colonial “curatorial” practice involved recreating “primitive” people’s “natural” environments, and even staging them beside animals, in the context of international trade fairs across Europe and America. Such “zoos” served to fuel Imperialist, pseudo-scientific theories of human “evolution” and to justify eugenic practices; by constructing an image of the “savage,” they contributed to the “othering” of racialized subjects, as well as to the objectification and hyper-sexualization of racialized women, thereby perpetuating the putative superiority and “civilization” of the white Western subject. How are we to frame this violent, exploitative practice when constructing a narrative of liveness in museums, galleries, and other visual art spaces around the globe? How are international contemporary artists, curators, and institutions incorporating decolonial strategies in their incorporation of live art within museum and gallery walls? How are Indigenous practices of storytelling, dance, and other forms of oral and physical expression being mobilized in these contexts to enact institutional critique?

For Issue 3.1, “Exhibiting Liveness,” *TURBA: The Journal for Global Practices in Live Arts Curation* invites submissions from art historians, curators, performance studies scholars, artists, performers, and others, to reflect on the history, aesthetics, philosophy, ethics, and politics of the institutionalization of liveness in the contemporary visual art world.

SUBMISSIONS POLICY

TURBA invites submissions engaging with any tradition, genre, community, culture, discipline, artistic expression, or aesthetic in the live arts. The journal is particularly interested in featuring compelling, experimental, politically engaged, and transformative content that fosters critique and debate, expands knowledge, and provides socio-cultural and historical context for the evolving practices of live arts curation.

TURBA is open to a wide range of genres and formats. Contributions may include: academic papers, critical essays, historic and reprinted texts with commentary, dialogic exchanges and transcribed group conversations, manifestos, reviews of publications and symposia, analyses of curatorial paradigms and events, poetry, images, notations and graphic representations, etc. They may also interweave such styles and epistemologies if this heterogeneity helps to better illuminate their subject matter.

[1] Claire Bishop, “Black Box, White Cube, Gray Zone: Dance Exhibitions and Audience Attention,” *TDR: The Drama Review*, 62:2 (2018): 24.

[2] See: Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, (Paris: Les Presses du réel, 2002).

[3] This question is inspired by one asked by curator and dance and performance studies scholar, André Lepecki: “What could it mean to exhibit movement rather than to dance it?” See: André Lepecki, “Editor’s Note: Dance in the Museum,” *Dance Research Journal*, 36:3 (2014): 1.

TURBA welcomes writers in any language to submit texts, including texts previously published in other languages. Such texts must be accompanied by an English abstract and the first draft of a translation into English. Should the text be selected for publication, we will, if necessary, work with the author(s) on a final English version.

Academic papers, to be blind peer reviewed, should be a maximum of 5,000 words and accompanied by a 150-word abstract and keywords. Please do not include your name in the article or the document's metadata. Submit a 50-word biography on a separate page with accompanying image(s).

Other submissions may be of any length but not more than 3,000 words and include a 50-word biography in the main document, with accompanying image(s).

"Letter from [name of city, region or country]" is a regular feature written in a casual style. About 500 words long, these should be short reflections, reports, explanations, critical observations on something that is happening or has just happened in the writer's local area—a controversy, a new policy, the opening or closing of a venue, a travelling show or a text that have made waves, the death (or birth) of an influential live arts protagonist, a miracle or a scandal, etc.

All text submissions should be submitted in a Microsoft Word document in 12-point Times New Roman and formatted according to the Chicago Manual of Style (with endnotes, reference list and in-text citations).

All images must be submitted according to the Artwork guidelines on the Berghahn Journals Submissions page: www.berghahnjournals.com/submissions

TURBA appears twice a year both in print and as an e-publication. In addition to two annual calls for specific issues with fixed deadlines, submissions will be accepted on a rolling basis.

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Send your contributions, queries, and questions to Dena Davida at turbajournal@gmail.com