

In Between Subjects

A Critical Genealogy of Queer Performance

This volume is a study of the connected ideas of "queer" and "gender performance" or "performativity" over the past several decades, providing an ambitious history and crucial examination of these concepts while questioning their very bases. Addressing cultural forms from 1960s–70s sociology, performance art, and drag queen balls to more recent queer voguing performances by Pasifika and Maori people from New Zealand and pop culture television shows such as RuPaul's Drag Race, the book traces how and why "queer" and "performativity" seem to belong together in so many discussions around identity, popular modes of gender display, and performance art. Drawing on art history and performance studies but also on feminist, queer, and sexuality studies, and postcolonial, indigenous, and critical race theoretical frameworks, it seeks to denaturalize these assumptions by questioning the US-centrism and white-dominance of discourses around queer performance or performativity. The book's narrative is deliberately recursive, itself articulated in order performatively to demonstrate the specific valence and social context of each concept as it emerged, but also the overlap and interrelation among the terms as they have come to co-constitute one another in popular culture and in performance and visual arts theory, history, and practice. Written from a hybrid art historical and performance studies point of view, this will be essential reading for all those interested in art, performance, and gender, as well as in queer and feminist theory.

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