

Call for Proposals: Women's Innovations in Theatre, Dance, and Performance
A Bloomsbury Series
Co-edited by Wendy Arons, Melissa Blanco Borelli, and Elizabeth W. Son

Women's Innovations in Theatre, Dance, and Performance aims to capture the innovations women have made to the performing arts in their historical, geographical, and disciplinary diversity. The definitions of both "performance" and "woman" are capacious. The former includes all forms of theatre, dance, opera, performance art, and solo performance. The latter includes cisgender, women-identified, trans, and femme bodies. Our definition of "woman" is also undergirded by Black, Asian, Latinx, Indigenous, and other intersectional feminisms alongside queer theories which trouble the gender construct/binary. Innovation is defined by the context in which it happens. It can be something that disrupts or breaks from conventions; it can create new methods (forms, styles, aesthetics, etc.); it can be something that establishes a strong influence in the development of the field. This series seeks to broaden, celebrate, and recover historical awareness of these performance-based artmakers and their contributions; as such, it showcases innovative, intersectional feminist historiographical approaches along with a history of women's innovation in the field.

The series will consist of four volumes; each volume will focus on processes and practices surrounding roles, broadly conceived. The set will be organized as such: Vol. 1: Performers; Vol. 2: Creators; Vol. 3: Designers & Crafters; and Vol. 4: Leaders. Each volume will showcase how historiographical form and content are interrelated through a framework that seeks to explore relationships across time and space rather than linear narratives that privilege cause and effect. The series editors are Wendy Arons (Carnegie Mellon University), Melissa Blanco Borelli (Northwestern University), and Elizabeth W. Son (Northwestern University).

The primary goals of this series will be to:

- Showcase and recuperate the innovative contributions of women to theatre, dance, and performance from a broad geographical and historical scope;
- Emphasize novel, intersectional feminist historiographical approaches to the writing of women's innovations in theatre, dance, and performance;
- Highlight the necessary relationship between form (the way in which history is written) and content (historical material in the chapter) in the writing of women's performance histories.
- Resist tendencies to canonize while reframing historiography to increase inclusivity, uplift collective artmaking, and counter historio/hagiographies of the individual.

Contributors are invited to consider the cultural, historical, political, and social inflections of women's innovations in their specific context, though transhistorical and comparative analyses are also welcome.

We seek contributions that take on a variety of forms, including (but not limited to):

- Analytical/Critical essay on a proposed topic (or on a type of innovation) (3,000-6,000 words)
- Writing that models historiographic methodologies such as auto-ethnography, performative writing, critical fabulation, creative nonfiction, speculative historiography, feminist historiographies (up to 3,000 words)

- Annotated primary source/ engagement with primary historical source(s) in the form of an "analytical dialogue" consisting of a primary source + commentary (commentary of up to 1000 words; multiple contributors could offer commentary on the same source)
- Interview/ conversation/ "roundtable" format with scholarly engagement/ framing (3,000-4,000 words)
- Manifestos & mission statements (up to 1,000 words)

Calls for each of the individual volumes are below. Contributors are welcome to submit abstracts for more than one volume. Contributors may also request that the same abstract be considered for more than one volume via the submission form. We strongly encourage the submission of contributions from those situated in the Global South and from scholars and artists representing the global majority.

Abstracts may be submitted in languages other than English, although final essays will need to be in English.

Abstracts submitted should be **250 words**, and include a working title and a description of the methodological approach. Potential contributors should also include a brief (150 word) bio. These should be combined into one MS Word document (Times New Roman, 12-pt, single-spaced) for submission.

Read more about the series [HERE](#).

Deadline for submission of abstracts is February 1, 2023. Abstracts should be submitted online through forms found under each volume below.

Volume 1: Performers

Co-edited by Colleen Kim Daniher and Marlis Schweitzer

This volume will focus on innovations by women and femme artists such as dancers, actors, musicians, storytellers, performance artists, and other entertainers who appear in public within an audience context. We are specifically interested in innovations in performance *practices* as a way to uncover new historiographies of women's performance across time and space. How might the way that women performers innovatively use voice, gesture, role/repertory, technologies of appearance, publicity, and social experimentation open up new genealogies of innovation, lines of influence, and contact zones of performance history? Conversely, how might new geographies and temporalities of relation across women's performance practices open up new conceptualizations of both innovation and feminist historiography? Instead of an exceptionalist/individualist account of innovation or a strictly chronological approach to documenting women's innovations in performance across time but not space, we aim to produce a *relational* historiography that spatializes as well as temporalizes women's innovations in performance. Thus, we take our cue from feminist historiographical methods of "connective comparison"—as modeled by *The Modern Girl Around the World* (Duke 2008) project—to track *convergences* of innovations in women's performance across time and space.

The volume consequently embraces a flexible structure focused on performance practices. We seek a range of written submissions that consider a broad history of women’s performance organized around the following themes:

- Innovations in voice
- Innovations in gesture
- Innovations in technologies of appearance
- Innovations in role/repertoire
- Innovations in publicity
- Innovations in social experimentation (both within and outside the immediate site of performance)

We seek contributors who can speak to these recurring themes across multiple languages, geographies, cultures, and time periods. We are particularly interested in centering the voices of IBPOC scholars and contributors across career stages.

Read more about Volume 1: Performers [HERE](#).

Deadline for submission of abstracts is February 1, 2023. Abstracts for Volume 1: Performers should be submitted online [HERE](#).

Volume 2: Creators

Co-edited by Indu Jain, Jill Lane, and Elliot Gordon Mercer

The volume devoted to “Creators” is broadly conceived to include choreographers, playwrights, directors, and dramaturgs, as well as artists who traversed or redefined these categories. We conceptualize creators as those who generate the worlds that are inhabited by performers or materialized by designers and crafters; those who shape such worlds through the realms of texts, bodies, gestures, sounds, scores, frames, communities, ecosystems, archives of feeling, and/or dreamscapes; those who have radically reconsidered the world-building capacities of art.

This volume seeks to engage a feminist historiography across a broad temporal and geographical scope while illuminating the workings of power in the production of history and foregrounding the “intimate” relationality of local and intersectional contexts, both in the Global North and Global South. We eschew canonicity, teleology, and notions of comprehensiveness.

We seek contributions on creative innovations that disrupt or work outside of dominant narratives of feminist/women’s art movements. We aim to situate creators in relation to intersectionality; coloniality or post-coloniality; migrations, diasporas, and transnational circulations; compositional methods and processes; multiplicities and hybridities of genres; genealogies of practice; networks of influence; legacies and lineages; iconoclasm.

We invite contributions that forward critical engagement with: contributions of trans, non-binary, cis, femme, queer, and/or gender nonconforming creators, with special interest in those who worked prior to the 20th century; playwriting, performance texts, choreographies, and dramaturgies whose form or content engages feminist/queer world-making; collective and

ensemble-based working processes, as well as multimodal or solo artmaking processes that elude genre or disciplinary categorization; feminist historiographic approaches, and/or historiography grounded in ephemera, absence, disappearance, embodied repertoires.

Read more about Volume 2: Creators [HERE](#).

Deadline for submission of abstracts is February 1, 2023. Abstracts for Volume 2: Creators should be submitted online [HERE](#).

Volume 3: Designers & Crafters **Co-edited by Greer Crawley and Carolina E. Santo**

This volume will focus on the contributions of women to design and stagecraft in general, and in particular to their innovations in the areas of theatrical and dance costume, scenic, sound, lighting, scenography, and media design. Contributors will be encouraged to define the role of designer and stagecrafter expansively and to include innovations by women from eras and contexts in which design specialization had not yet occurred (e.g., contributions and innovations by performers, managers, directors, dramaturgs, writers, or choreographers to stagecraft and design).

Questions that contributors to this volume should explore include:

- Who are the women who made significant innovations and contributions as designers and stagecrafters, and what were those innovations? What were the social/political/economic conditions under which they worked? How did their status as women affect their ability to define their status in the field and exercise autonomy as artists? What creative endeavors required the naming/claiming and consolidation of the status of designer?
- How has design and innovation intersected in women's stage or performance work, particularly in historical eras or in cultures/theatrical practices in which design, as a subspecialization, did or does not exist? What role have women played in defining design subspecialties or in challenging and changing established conventions? Are there other ways to consider female stagecraft practice beyond the limited constraints on the word and process of creation that upholds a singular, genius model of innovation?
- How did their work help to shape or change the future of theatre or dance as an art form? Why is the recuperation of their legacies important?

We invite critical and creative papers as well as those that present case-studies or deliver in more collaborative formats. Contributions may focus on, but are not limited to, women's involvement and innovations in the development of stagecraft technologies, processes and practices and design methodologies. Designers' and makers' workbooks, notes, and sketches can be cited (or included) to illustrate and articulate the innovative transactions, exchanges, and strategies women have made to design and stagecraft.

Read more about Volume 3: Designers & Crafters [HERE](#).

Deadline for submission of abstracts is February 1, 2023. Abstracts for Volume 3: Designers & Crafters should be submitted online [HERE](#).

Volume 4: Leaders

Co-edited by Eva Aymami-Rene, Anita Gonzalez, and Kimberly Jew

This volume aims to advance scholarship about themes and practices of feminist leadership in theatre, musical theatre, opera, dance, and performance. Recognizing that leadership takes different—and sometimes not fully recognized—forms depending on geographical, historical, and aesthetic contexts, this volume seeks to open up the ways in which women have played leadership roles and re-defined leadership through feminist practices, collaborative work, and adopted—and adapted—to the imposed limitations on their ability to lead through inventive tactics and practices.

Leaders and acts of leadership are broadly defined. Our volume will decentralize knowledge, consider BIPOC and other epistemologies, and reimagine how woman-centered approaches vary across cultural landscapes. Explorations of women's leadership innovations in the Global South are welcome.

Guiding questions include:

- What does it mean to innovate within leadership roles?
- How have historical initiatives of leadership emerged across the globe?
- What are the earliest roots and foundations of women's leadership in the performing arts?
- How have times of crisis, such as the pandemic, affected women's innovations in performance leadership?
- Who are the contemporary leaders setting groundbreaking new forms today?
- How have leaders negotiated different worlds of performance, including Broadway, commercial, regional, non-profit, community, and educational theatre and dance?
- How do women leaders engage issues of gender, race, ability, class, and access inequities in the arts?

We seek reflections in a variety of formats that foreground generative approaches to leadership, and which address non-traditional ways of thinking about women's innovations as artists, practitioners, organizers, influencers, path-makers, and inspirers.

Read more about Volume 4: Leaders [HERE](#).

Deadline for submission of abstracts is February 1, 2023. Abstracts for Volume 4: Leaders should be submitted online [HERE](#).