



EDITORIAL

Emerging, urgent, and complex, gender studies drawing on theater studies (and vice versa, as these disciplines are mixed, blended, merged, and contrasted) are finally beginning to gain momentum. Their status, however, remains fragile and constantly threatened by the vagaries of politics. They are also threatened by a permanent tension between research intended for an academic elite and a democratization made superficial by the needs of capitalism. A wave of young researchers (in master's and doctoral programs), however, is working to use the tools and notions of gender studies to analyze a changing artistic landscape or to reinterpret past aesthetic trends. Their goal seems to be to revalorize and make visible creative practices, at first perceived as marginal but now more accessible, based on theory. Still on the edge of "cancel culture" which directly affects the spaces of artistic and academic expression, the queer question inflames the debates and revives binary oppositions, accentuating the tension between "Islamist-leftists" ("*islamo-gauchisme*") and "right-wing reactionaries". In this context, how can we disrupt this binarity, both socio-political and gendered? Faced with this question, we have opted for a hybrid response to building a bridge between research and creation, between academic and artistic practices.

So, queer or cis-straight? Writing or performance? Research or creation? Doing away with gender or multiplying genders? We are hurried to choose a side and to define ourselves, to determine what our positions are, what our bodies say about us, and what our words perform. Whether we are artists, researchers, or spectators (or all three at the same time!) these questions are addressed to us, both in our creative practices and in our daily lives.

Dualism and the question of its overcoming are a constant of the Western culture. And to speak about the body, under the influence of gender studies, is also to wonder about the strategies to set up against the statism and the Manicheism of a binary mode of thought which flattens the reflection. What we wish to propose is of the order of the flow, the exchange, the detour, the parody, or the transformation.

In the field of theater, the question is raised both in terms of writing and staging. We can think about it in a historical way but also in tune with the burning topicality of the works of today. And finally, we can study it both as part of research and creative activities. Once again, this proves to be a very binary structure, which we will try to question by proposing in this issue academic articles (some of them written by researchers as well as practitioners) which enter in dialogue with interviews with artists (authors, directors, performers) and extracts from dramatic texts questioning binarity. A slightly hybrid form, halfway through, is also proposed in the form of a dialogue around the representation of bisexuality. A discreet heir to a Platonic tradition, this dialogue aims above all to open a debate at the crossroads of research and creation.

The texts that run through this volume are inspired by a first stage of our work, the study day "Theater and Genders: Writings, Representations and Performativities that Counter Binarity on Stage", organized by Pablo Dubott and Mélissa Bertrand in January 2021. From this meeting were born fruitful exchanges which, themselves, gave rise to the desire to go further. We have thus created, during the year 2021, "Scènes & Genres" (Stage & Gender), a research group whose activities intersect gender studies and performance or theater studies. It also explores the hybridity between research and creation. Scènes & Genres is characterized by



a diversity of profiles, some members wearing the double-hat of practitioner and researcher: various research specialties (writing, performance, staging, dance, history, or contemporary corpora, etc.), artistic practices ranging from writing to performing, people of different origins. *Scènes & Genres* aims to weave a network of research-creation on a French and European scale but also to initiate archival work. To reach these objectives, several means are envisaged, ranging from the organization of research-creation events to publication.

Thus, this special issue is an opportunity for us to participate in the encounter between gender studies and performing arts studies. It is also an occasion to test our approach, in the form of a laboratory. It is a first step that will allow us to dig into the "queer aesthetic grammar" of contemporary performing arts that In Vivo wishes to explore. In Vivo's desire to include a section dedicated to DIALOGUE(s) in its publications echoed our desire to give artists a voice as well. This is how this issue takes on the hybrid character to which we aspire and allows us to explore formats that are more protean, stranger and queer.

Mélissa BERTRAND and Pablo DUBOTT