

perhaps a sign of the academic times that this modest and intelligent project has to claim to be so much more.

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Theatre & Museums. By Susan Bennett. Theatre&. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013; pp. vii + 88. \$11 paper.

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Repeatedly, museums in the twenty-first century are being transformed from collections of valuable art to interactive exhibitions, changing their focus from the collection to the visitors' experience. One way to mark this shift from curated repositories to visitor engagement is the degree to which the museums incorporate attributes of the theatre, or more specifically, performance art. Susan Bennett's *Theatre & Museums* offers thoughtful analytical methods drawn from performance studies to explore this new public interface occurring within museums. Bennett's book—or more accurately, long essay—is part of a larger series that introduces a general audience to the pervasive nature of theatre and includes titles such as *Theatre & Sexuality* and *Theatre & Prison*. Each work in the series is meant to raise provocative ideas in a single sitting, and this one fulfills its task of exploring “crossover” issues of “presentation and engagement, authenticity and re-presentation, and liveness and memory” (7). Bennett's argument considers two ways in which theatre and museums intersect: the first being the challenge of archiving the ephemeral nature of performance, and the second being the trend to incorporate more performative attributes. Bennett finds that as museums move from collections that emphasize a particular nationalist or historical point of view to ones where participants create meaning through their own collaborative efforts, the significance behind the collection becomes more democratic and, at the same time, more challenging to control.

Bennett provides some unique examples of museums that curate performance, such as the MoMA retrospective of Marina Abramović's performance career, which involved playing videotapes of her earlier performance pieces while live actors concurrently staged “re-performances” (24) of the same piece. In this way, the exhibit involved both archival presentation of past, curated material and live enactment in the present moment. The Abramović exhibit demonstrated how it is possible to preserve the ephemeral nature of live performance (theatre, music, or dance) through the means of a “museum-as-archive” (29). By contrast, the London Theatre Museum, which featured theatrical programs, playbills, and newspaper cuttings, was not successful at exhibiting the tangible residue of theatrical history. Upon reopening in the Theatre and Performance Galleries of the Victoria and Albert Museum, it incorporated hands-on theatrical activities such as visitors trying on costumes or making stage effects. However, the problem remains whether we can make the enduring but static matter of the performing arts (e.g., Michael Jackson's gloves or Jimi Hendrix's guitar) dynamic enough to stand

in for the performance itself. Trying to bring to life a performance artifact requires recontextualizing it within its performed script, a failure Bennett notes with the V&A's display of Brian Eno's "feather collar" (37) costume. Because the costume lacked historical or cultural indices, a viewer uneducated in the singer's popular impact, his music, or his relationship with the costume designer was unable to derive meaning from the display. The Experience Music Project (EMP) in Seattle, however, fittingly demonstrates how to represent performance arts by requiring participatory accountability of its spectators. Through interactive sites that allow visitors to play a guitar onstage before a simulated audience or mix music in a sound lab, visitors bear witness to the history of rock and roll, specifically regional artists from the Northwest Passage.

In the same experiential category of the EMP, though different in purpose, Bennett places museums oriented toward social engagement, such as the Museum of Tolerance (Los Angeles) or the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (Washington, DC), as well as museums that exhibit the culture and history of native people, such as the National Museum of the American Indian (DC). Thus in the second half of the book, Bennett analyzes through a performative schema how museums create experiences for the visitor, chiefly through architectural iconography, choreographed movement of visitors, the use of props, and conferring upon visitors the identities of historical individuals. For example, the Holocaust Memorial Museum creates claustrophobia by funneling people through narrow passages, gives visitors passport cards, each with the identity of a Holocaust victim, and displays a pile of disintegrating shoes to signify the bodies of the victims. Likewise, the Heard Museum (Phoenix, AZ) conveys the trauma of the Indian "Boarding School Experience" through an interactive display of a barber's chair, a soundtrack of incessant clipping shears, and photographs of former students whose hair was cut short. Another interactive task asks visitors to fill out their "new" non-Indian name in a blue assignment book and to adopt this Western identity, witnessing, albeit passingly, the Indian child's lived experience. Bennett argues that museums use performative devices not only to teach a moral stance, but also to construct memories of the past within these nonparticipants.

Bennett touches briefly on the debates surrounding performance-oriented museums, such as the difficulty of influencing spectator interpretation, the mindless trend toward interaction as entertainment, or the ethics of prioritizing the visitor's experience at the expense of the people who are represented. As much as the performance lens can elucidate the mechanism behind the experiential museum, one cannot determine the meaning—if any—the spectator-participant perceives. Bennett herself is an astute observer of how place, culture, and history intersect, but a nonacademic visitor might not benefit in the same way. In one example, Bennett describes negotiating the terrain surrounding the Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park (BHCP) museum near Calgary, Alberta, where she was encouraged through a "deliberatively meditative experience" (71) to consider the landscape as part of the historical narrative. It is doubtful, however, whether this awareness of relationship to land, dependent on what Bennett calls the visitor's "culturally constituted horizon of expectations" (19) would be accessible to someone without such knowledge.

Comparing museums and theatre makes sense due to the shifting functions of both spaces: both are forms of spectatorship that can be enhanced by engaging with visitors at a visceral level, using strategies of performance art. While at times the theoretical discussion felt foreshortened in the interest of providing case studies of museums, overall the book serves as a useful starting place for theatre and museums practitioners, especially those who wish to inquire into each other's fields.

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Adapting Chekhov: The Text and Its Mutations. Edited by J. Douglas Clayton and Yana Meerzon. Routledge Advances in Theatre & Performance Studies. London and New York: Routledge, 2013; pp. xviii + 317. \$140 cloth, \$140 e-book.

Dramatic Revisions of Myths, Fairy Tales and Legends: Essays on Recent Plays. Edited by Verna A. Foster. Jefferson, NC, and London: McFarland, 2012; pp viii + 252. \$40 paper, \$24.99 e-book.

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Two collections—one surveying contemporary revisions of dozens of myths, fairy tales, and legends from around the world; the other focused on dozens of “mutations” of only a few sources by one writer—represent the robustness of critical approaches in adaptation studies. Of the twenty-nine contributors combined, several consider performativity inseparable from narrative, while all provide sociopolitical and aesthetic contexts—vital, since no reader will have knowledge about all the material considered and because many adaptations are unpublished or untranslated. This is especially true for *Adapting Chekhov*, although the essayists compensate generously by attending to noteworthy productions. Although *Dramatic Revisions of Myths, Fairy Tales and Legends* is focused more squarely on dramaturgy, Verna A. Foster problematizes her subject in that many of the plays considered do not have single literary sources, making it more difficult to explore “specific intercultural and intertemporal dialogue between texts” (4). Both collections are admirable for their global reach and theoretical scope, helped along by the editors, who pitch useful guideposts in their introductions and closing essays.

Foster sets boundaries differentiating fairy tales from legends, and both from myth, which “possesses the creative freedom of fairy tale but also the geographical and historical specificity and credibility of legend” (8). Miriam Chirico’s “Hellenic Women Revisited,” the first of several essays dealing with the classics, helpfully applies Gérard Genette’s typology of adaptations to works by female playwrights. Chirico shows how Karen Hartman’s *Troy Women* (1997) and Caridad Svitch’s *Iphigenia Crash Land Falls on the Neon Shell That Was Once Her Heart (A Rave Fable)* (2004) exemplify linguistic–diegetic transpositions in