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of the biotechnological body" (323). Birringer concludes with an appeal to a "biological mindset" in the digital arts: "what is at stake in the processes catalyzed by digital performance is not the dissociation of the psyche and senses, but various forms of reintegration, mindful of the cultural, ethical consequences of the inseparability of technology from life itself" (325).

True to the nature of an introductory volume, one welcome feature of the work is the amount of space Birringer devotes to an overview of other works published in the field. From Adolphe Appia and Walter Benjamin to recent works such as Steve Dixon's "history" of digital performance, Birringer offers a literature review of both critical works and performance reviews, practical articles from various workshops and colloquia, and interviews with performers from a variety of backgrounds. *Performance, Technology, and Science* offers a snapshot of the current landscape of digital performance, identifying its major practitioners and their practices, its critical concepts and literature, and its many avenues that are open to further investigation. Indeed, the only major critique I have of this work is that its very nature—an introduction to an emerging and rapidly evolving new field—dictates that it will quickly become outdated. This is not a text to be bought and stuck on the shelf as a permanent reference. The text ultimately places performance "in a social and cultural context of *human sensory activities*" (xxii, emphasis in original)—a context that is changing as rapidly as the technological advancements these artists incorporate and embrace.

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CLOSER: PERFORMANCE, TECHNOLOGIES, PHENOMENOLOGY. By Susan Kozel. Leonardo Books. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008; pp. xxi + 355. \$37.00 cloth.

For those interested in the intersections of art, science, and technology, the Leonardo Books series from MIT Press has provided many of the essential readings in the field. While a number of major presses have added series that address similar intersections—notably the University of Chicago Press and the University of Minnesota's Electronic Mediations series—the Leonardo series is significant for its broad list of original scholarship at the nexus of art, technology, philosophy, and cultural studies, as well as for its emphasis on artists' own perspectives within theoretical and philosophical contexts. It is in this mode that dancer-theorist Su-

san Kozel situates her critical analysis of (primarily) her own digital performances. Deploying her readings of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and theories of phenomenology to explore the tensions between performance and technology and her own critical position, Kozel effectively juxtaposes theoretical interpretations with detailed analyses of her performances. Others have taken this approach before, such as Johannes Birringer in *Media and Performance: Along the Border* (1998), but Kozel's interweaving of French feminism and phenomenology as a critical arts practice is both fresh and timely.

Her definition of phenomenology as an "embodied approach to the construction of meaning" (2) allows Kozel to consider not only the intentions and ideas at work in her pieces, but also their effect on herself as a fully subjective body. Her use of phenomenology as both an intellectual position and as a way of experiencing the work she creates advances Kozel's central thesis that intersections between technology and performance are not simply simulacrum of real or immaterial spaces, but rather spaces "of radical potential, with scope for existential, artistic, and political transformation" (82). Kozel moves from philosophical overview in chapter 1, "Performing Phenomenology," to a series of criticisms centered on her own performances. Her chapters, like her career, move from her perspective as a dancer to her artistic collaborations, gradually building out from the body itself: "Telematics: Extending Bodies"; "Responsive Architectures: An Embodied Poetics"; "Motion Capture: Performing Alterity"; and "Wearables: The Flesh of Social Computing." In all of these discussions, Kozel uses her readings of Merleau-Ponty, particularly his notions of "flesh" as a means of communication, and her applications of Gilles Deleuze to locate her own position both within performances and as a theorist of them.

She is not unaware of the potential pitfalls of such a position. As she notes in the book, an earlier essay on her own work was angrily dismissed as self-promotion. One might make such a criticism here, but Kozel defends her methodology by situating the specifics of individual performances amid broader theoretical phenomenological readings. Indeed, her readings of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology argue for performance analysis through "the flesh of experience" (15). Given the many questions raised by digital performance—what is "real" in virtual-reality performances, for instance—the phenomenological experience becomes essential as a critical apparatus for Kozel as both dancer and thinker. In her description of a dance performed with her own digital double (a visual echo of her movement via a motion-capture tracking system), Kozel notes that "true to an existential phenomenological approach,

I could not access the thing-in-itself but I could access the thing in its reversible relation with me, both of us dynamic, moving things in the world" (231). For Kozel, it is only through an embodied analysis that she, and her readers, can critically assess the digital being at all.

Much of this book would appear to rely on Kozel's theoretical readings. Each section begins with a critical introduction to key concepts, theories, and occasionally histories and debates within phenomenology as a field; Kozel then follows with a description of a particular performance. Her descriptions are the highlights of the book, both exact and theoretically informed, such that they stand on their own rather than relying on the theoretical sections. While students of philosophy will find much with which to engage and disagree in her theoretical readings (she seems to misread Judith Butler, for example), her analyses of individual performances excellently demonstrate how theoretical positions might be engaged both to describe and to critically assess one's own work. For those looking to position their own performances theoretically, Kozel provides vivid and compelling models.

The book is not without certain limitations. Although one might wish to follow the performance descriptions on their own track throughout the book, the asymmetrical organization precludes this approach. Chapters have between five and seven distinct sections, but none consistently correspond to a particular topic, and some sections include several related projects; also, many of the individual theory sections tend to repeat ideas better expressed in the introduction. There is a history of writing here that does not always cohere to newer work. Kozel often reminds her reader of what she did in previous chapters and, more confusingly, encourages moving forward in the text to explain a current point—for example, a quotation on page 89 refers to page 98 for a relevant example. The visual layout of the book does little to help: chapter titles are difficult to read, and the low-resolution, black-and-white photographs do not clearly refer to the text; many are blurry, indistinguishable forms. While this practice is in keeping with a certain aesthetic tradition of performance documentation in which blurred images suggest the impossibility of reproducing performance, such an aesthetic in the context of digital performance seems out of place and contrived.

Such concerns, however, do not negate the valuable contributions of Kozel's book. Her bibliography alone will be of interest to those charting the relatively new field of digital performance, and her explications of Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger, and Deleuze provide useful points of entry and discussion to

advanced students in dance and performance studies, with clear applications to theatre and media as well. Most valuable is Kozel's integration of theory and performance practice and her approach to an embodied, critical writing practice—no mean feat. This book hopefully will lead to more in a growing field of mediated performance studies.

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PERFORMANCE AND TECHNOLOGY: PRACTICES OF EMBODIMENT AND INTERACTIVITY. Edited by Susan Broadhurst and Josephine Machon. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007; pp. xx + 203. \$90.00 cloth.

Performance studies and technology have had an interesting relationship of late. With performance studies' firm beginnings in ritual and body politics, technology was sometimes seen as an encroachment or nuisance that problematized the activity of performance and the presence (or absence) of the body. The rise of digital technologies (visual, haptic, and aural) for use in screens and projections during the 1970s and 1980s changed this situation drastically, because it allowed the performer and technical crew to position the body in another space of performance: the virtual. Additionally, with technological innovation occurring at a rapid pace due to digital industries such as video games and the Internet, bodies and sites of performance can now feature telepresence—simultaneous activity in the real and the virtual—and a re-imagining of representation itself, spawning a concurrent questioning of identity as semiosis and process.

Performance and Technology is a useful collection that inspects recent experiments, concepts, and technologies. As Susan Broadhurst and Josephine Machon write in their introduction, "Body, Space, and Technology," two key features of the works discussed in the book are, first, "the absolute centrality of the digital," and second, "an emphasis on the corporeal in terms of both performance and perception" (xvi); thus "the readings proffered in this collection stress the emotive, the ludic, and the sensate, since in many art forms the body is primary yet transient" (xvi). Accordingly, this is not a heavily theoretical text that seeks to position itself as a conceptually new assessment of performance and technology; instead, the contributions are largely discussions of recent practical attempts to explore where and how the body is onstage when technology is an essential part of the performance. That said, several