

much alive. Cooperating so fully with Westcott on this biography is a strategy that should be considered alongside, for instance, Abramović's re-performance of her own work and that of others in *Seven Easy Pieces* at the Guggenheim in 2005, or the recent establishment of her institute for the preservation of performance art in Hudson, New York. Moreover, it is not simply that, as Westcott notes in his Epilogue, having reached her sixties, 'Abramović is managing her legacy in advance' (p. 309). The story he tells is of a woman who has always carefully constructed, documented and refined her life/career for public consumption. For example, very early in the first chapter – which establishes Abramović's childhood sense of neglect by her war-hero parents in Yugoslavia – Westcott notes that she often conflates the histories of her great-uncle and grandfather in order to position the latter as a martyred patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church. It is also significant that the majority of the photographs, even of her family, in this nicely illustrated book are published courtesy of the 'Abramović archive' rather than the artist herself. Westcott discusses how the iconic video of *Art Must Be Beautiful/Artist Must Be Beautiful* (1975) was made without an audience, immediately after its original public performance (which had also been filmed) at a festival in Copenhagen. Abramović was unhappy with the lack of precision of the original footage and repeated the savage performance in full and straight away, in future using the second version 'exclusively to represent the performance' (p. 95). Interestingly, Westcott warns against 'orthodox feminist' readings of this piece which position both its title and action as primarily ironic, noting that Abramović rarely identifies with 'Western-style feminism' and that her art occasionally does work through her own lack of self-esteem. The boundaries between 'performance' and 'life' are hazy for Abramović and it is no surprise that this biography comprises detailed and illuminating descriptions of her works as an artist. Indeed, Westcott believes that it is only in performance, in public, that she 'can access the authentic Marina Abramović' (p. 307). He quotes the curator Klaus Biesenbach (p. 307) as saying, 'I think she saw herself as an institution from the very beginning. I think she doesn't see herself that much as a person'. If there is a weakness in this meticulously researched book, it is that occasionally interpretations and opinions are not attributed and are presented as 'fact', thus making it unclear on whose authority and understandings they are based. Still, Westcott has almost certainly produced what will be considered Abramović's definitive biography, at least of her first sixty-five years. There is likely much more to come.

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***Further On, Nothing: Tadeusz Kantor's Theatre.* By Michal Kobialka.**

Minneapolis, MN, and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010. Pp. 552.

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Michal Kobialka, perhaps Tadeusz Kantor's most prolific English-language critic, opens his latest book with a broken promise. After his major publications on Kantor's theatre – *A Journey through Other Spaces* (1993) and 'Forget Kantor' (1994) – Kobialka repudiates

the forgetting of his latter title with an explanation: 'In this age of global wars and globalization by liberal capitalism, it is necessary to revitalize the debate on the nature of political theatre' (p. viii). What follows is a compelling, if also at times overwhelming, collection of Kantor's theoretical writings, collected, translated and framed by Kobialka's own critical essays, many of which focus on the efficacy of political, avant-garde theatre. Beginning with Kantor's late-career retrospective essay 'My Work – My Journey' (1988), Kobialka returns to Kantor's origins and presents his writing more or less chronologically, organizing the book into five thematic sections: 'Topography of Representation', 'Spatial Historiography: *The Dead Class*', 'Theatre of Similitude', 'Spatial Historiography: *Silent Night*' and 'The Space of *Khora*'.

For the reader already familiar with Kantor's theatre, Kobialka's book is a richly detailed chronicle of Kantor's thinking. One can trace the evolution of his theories from the Cricot 2 Theatre and Emballage to his Happenings and later ruminations on *l'object prêt*, most compellingly conveyed in his final performances structured around his own home and room. The original writings (some of which are newly translated by Kobialka) include Kantor's impressionistic essays, production notes and other ruminations as a wide-ranging and personal account of his productions. Due to the highly personal nature of these writings, Kobialka's critical essays provide an essential frame as he both defines the terminology and situates Kantor's aims within a larger scope of late twentieth-century French critical theory, most notably the historiography of Lyotard, Foucault, Deleuze and de Certeau. Although Kobialka includes several major productions and his critical essays, his analysis centres on the meanings that underlie and inform the stage images, which may leave an unfamiliar reader potentially puzzled as to the images on stage. The dark black-and-white images do little to ameliorate this and images of Kantor's vibrant paintings and sketches, so critical to his theatrical vision, are all too few.

What Kobialka does convey is the significance of Kantor's ambition to propel the avant-garde beyond its modernist politics, as familiarly rehearsed in the work of Piscator, Brecht and Boal. He effectively communicates Kantor's lifelong commitment to integrate his material political reality within his theatrical and performance aesthetics. The juxtaposition of Kantor's personal writing and Kobialka's astute theoretical framing assures that if there is nothing further on, there is still much to be gleaned from what is behind.

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The Theatre of the Bauhaus: The Modern and Postmodern Stage of Oskar

Schlemmer. By **Melissa Trimmingham.** New York: Routledge, 2011. Pp. xvi + 214.

\$132/£85 Hb.

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This full-length investigation of the Bauhaus stage workshop and Schlemmer's contribution to it is not, as claimed on the first page, the first ever. However, it is a major study with a methodological approach substantially different from previous books by Eric Michaud (*Théâtre au Bauhaus, 1919–1929* (1978)) and Dirk Scheper (*Oskar*