

Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory

Call For Papers

Feminist Landscapes

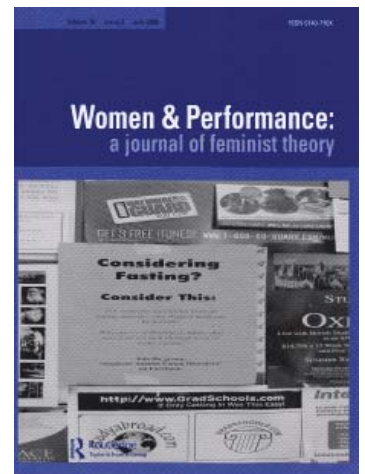
A Themed Issue Guest Edited by
Katie Brewer Ball and Julia Steinmetz

“The cunning Painter... Limning a Land-scape, various, rich, and rare.” Sylvester, 1603.

What would it mean to create a feminist, transfeminist, or queer landscape? What are some attempts that have been made towards this project? This special issue of *Women and Performance* asks for a diverse invocation and interpretation of the ways in which the terms “feminism” and “landscape” can partner to create what we might simply call a “feminist landscape.” This might take the form of an aesthetic play on both the shape and our understanding of the land through feminist ideals, or read as a critique of the orientation of peoples within constrictive spaces; it might be a geographical or visual re-imagination of nation through social experimentation, or a return to a promised home.

The word “landscape” comes into use in the 17th century to describe the art of painting stretches of pastoral countryside. From the beginning the concept of “landscape” was thought in terms of aesthetic depiction, first through drawing and painting and then taking literary forms. Later it came to connote the designation of a particular vista or viewing point, and finally aesthetic intervention into the transformation of the terrain itself. As new art forms have emerged so has the set of aesthetic practices that fall under the rubric of landscape, including land art, photography, sound work, institutional critique, and performance. Today the term “landscape” has moved beyond its origins “to designate both a specific terrain and the general character of that terrain” (J.M. Coetzee). Landscape describes both the aesthetic and topographical composition of the land as well as the ways in which the land orients and is itself oriented by the bodies that move in and through its planes.

Landscapes have continually expressed and influenced aesthetic, political and social values about land, its form and function. Practices of landscape architecture, urban planning, and gardening crystallize these relations. How might we get away from an understanding of landscape as limited to the “European picturesque”? This question of perspective becomes crucial to our interrogation of landscape as a feminist project. Indeed, landscape has been defined by its production and reception from a single, fixed viewpoint. How can we reconsider landscape by encountering it from a multiplicity of perspectives, both visual and social? Expanding beyond just gender proper and into feminism’s necessary attention to race and class, this issue also attends to the ways in which bodies on a certain landscape become oriented by a complicated play that cannot take gender out of the context of race and class-based perspectives. As such, Feminist Landscape as a concept can benefit greatly from an exploration of the ways landscape is performatively produced, and of the performance of place-based social identities.



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Potential contributions to this issue could emerge from the following points of interest:

*The Pastoral and the Sublime: These two landscape genres speak to the impulse to tame the land for human use, and to the equally intense desire to have amazing and terrifying encounters with the wild and raw forces of nature. What are some feminist interventions into these historically gendered and racialized genres?

*Critical utopias: What would it look like to imagine a generative landscape that does not restrict but rather promotes social and cultural multiplicity, i.e. Pilot TV, Queeruption, the VanDykes, Herland and Parable of the Sower? This could include imaginary worlds, utopian spaces, experiments, future leaning imagery, the virtual, and otherworldly land interventions.

*Paradise: From the Garden of Eden to Heaven, Isle of Lesbos to Versailles, what do you imagine Paradise to look like, and what gendered, sexual and racialized valences do these mythic landscapes hold?

* Safe spaces: Landscapes of separatism, safety, exclusion and inclusion including lesbian separatism, transphobia and gendered spaces, racially-restrictive deed covenants, women's and queer temporary lands, racially-marked places of danger, lesbian tourism, taking back the night and the rural hazards to young queers epitomized by Brandon Teena and Matthew Shepard.

*Gardening: Themes of fertility and virility, colonial power and domination, domestic landscapes, intimate encounters between land and body, land art, cultivation and pleasure.

Submission Guidelines

Women & Performance invites critical essays or short performance texts that examine these or other questions relevant to a critical discussion of feminist, transfeminist, and queer landscapes.

Essays should be no more than 10,000 words in length and adhere to the Chicago Manual of Style, 15th Edition.

Abstracts are welcome for review before the final deadline. Complete essays for consideration must be submitted by **January 15th, 2010**.

Please send all work to Julia Steinmetz and Katie Brewer Ball via email (MSWord attachment) or post: **brewerball@nyu.edu** and **steinmetz@nyu.edu**.

Further submission guidelines may be found at: www.womenandperformance.org/submission.html.

Women & Performance is a peer reviewed journal published by Routledge. The journal publishes scholarly essays on performance, dance, film, new media, and the performance of everyday life from interdisciplinary feminist perspectives. We encourage dialogues between varied fields of performance scholarship (i.e., performance studies; theatre, dance, and music history and criticism; ethnography; cinema and cultural studies; as well as queer and post-colonial theory), and explore critiques of race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, technology, and nation.

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