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Journal of Consent- Based Performance

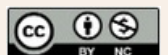
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Consent in Distinctive Contexts

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On the Cover, from Fiona Rose Murphey:

A photograph from the production of *Lost Girl*, this is one of my proudest bits of direction, from the scene in which Slightly wipes fireflies on Wendy's face and Wendy sits in the moment before pulling back. Captured during our invited dress rehearsal.

Abby-Wendy and Emma-Slightly are sitting in front of the window in Wendy's nursery, where Peter first met and took Wendy away as a child. Cardboard packing boxes are scattered about the space. The window's left shutter, on Wendy's side of the bench, is open—at this point in the play, Wendy still hopes Peter will return. Wendy sits facing Slightly, her hands folded on her knee. A small camping lantern full of yellow twinkle lights—our design team's representation of the jar of "fireflies"—sits between them, and between them and the window, on the bench. In a romantic gesture, Slightly gently cradles Wendy's face in her hands, wiping "firefly juice" on Wendy's cheeks as Wendy looks into her eyes.

Abby A. as Wendy Darling, left, and Emma A. as Slightly, right.

Photo credit Kelsey Walker.

Call for Papers

The *Journal of Consent-Based Performance* invites artists, educators, and scholars engaged with consent-based performance—in theory or in practice—to interrogate our existing practices and propose new ideas in pursuit of increasingly more equitable, ethical, anti-oppressive, and effective consent-based practices within our field. In our endeavor to promote the work of all individuals engaged in improving the intimacy specialization fields, we invite authors to submit any writings centered upon consent-based performance practices. We encourage authors to submit essays that do the work of:

- Analyzing or interrogating current or past understandings of and approaches to performed intimacy and consent—in theory or in practice
- Questioning or commenting upon the practices that are currently being used to establish consent within performance, modeling continuous adjustment of artistic praxis
- Introducing or investigating theories related to consent and power imbalances in other fields, contextualizing these theories' potential impact upon the further development of consent-based performance
- Documenting the evolution of consent-based performance and similar intimacy specializations throughout history and our current moment
- Analyzing or responding to artistic productions and writings that engage with simulated intimacy and/or the processes that shape these works.

Table Of Contents

Front Matter

ii *Call For Papers*

Amanda Rose Villarreal

iv *Consent in Distinctive Contexts: Editor's Note*

Notes from the Field

Fiona Rose Murphey

1 *Queering Neverland: A Dramaturgy of Care*

Ky Gaskill

23 *Boundaries Beyond the Bathing Suit: Utilizing Intimacy Choreography Practices to Support VIRTUS Training*

Joshua Richardson

34 *4Intimacy in Improv: An Account of the Use of Consent-Based Practices in Non-Scripted Theatrical Explorations*

Articles

Kelsey Jacobson and Bethany Schaufler-Biback

48 *Participation as Intimate Act: Audience Reflections on Strategies of Consent in Roll Models*

Cody Page

63 *Role-ing the Dice: Identity, Intimacy and Consent in Table-Top Role Playing*

Kristine Koyama

87 *True Women as Sacred Friends: Harriet Jacobs's Model of Consent-Based White Allyship in Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

Consent in Distinctive Contexts: Editor's Note

No two people inhabit the same intersection of identity, education, and experience. Our unique combinations of these inspire us to apply information and tools to distinctive contexts and lead us to draw different conclusions based upon these creative experiments. The Notes from the Field and the Articles selected for this issue consider the application of consent-based practices in such distinctive performance contexts. This is, after all, the *Journal of Consent-Based Performance*, not merely the “Journal of Consent in Theatre.”

This issue follows the work of Diana Taylor, who highlights use of the word *performance* in a broad variety of contexts, stating that “the term is used in the theatre, in anthropology and the visual arts, in business, sports, politics, and science...” to signify “a wide range of social behaviors” (2016, 6), rendering the word difficult to define. Taylor argues that “performance is a practice and an epistemology, a creative doing, a methodological lens, a way of transmitting memory and identity, and a way of understanding the world” (39).

Accepting this understanding that performance is both the act of creative doing and a lens through which we can better learn about, question, and come to understand our world in a variety of contexts, this issue considers what we can all learn from how consent-based practices are used in distinctive contexts—from the work of dramaturgical consideration of texts to Catholic diocesan teaching to improvisation and audience/player participation and the performance of allyship historically and into today.

Fiona Murphey’s “Queering Neverland” opens the issue with documentation of a directing process informed by the philosophical framework “dramaturgy of caring” proposed by Rebecca Groves (2017). Murphey shares how this framework informed and guided their process during a production of Kimberly Belflower’s *Lost Girl*, illustrating how they applied consent and care not only to crafting physical staging, but to interpreting and designing elements of the show. This Note provides an example of how consent-based practices can extend into theatrical processes beyond performance.

Ky Gaskill’s literature review moves away from the realm of fully realized theatrical production, analyzing how two different approaches to teaching consent-based practices, built for very different contexts, complement one another. Gaskill analyzes VIRTUS training and literature developed for use in Catholic educational settings, identifying areas that they perceive to be gaps in practice in that literature. Then, Gaskill introduces concepts from their understanding of Theatrical Intimacy Education workshops and the practices in *Staging Sex* (Pace and Rikard 2020), identifying ways that these theatrical practices both support and align with VIRTUS training. Gaskill’s literature review highlights how consent-based practices from distinctive contexts can inform practitioners across fields as we seek to continue improving.

The final Note from the Field included in this issue moves to the negotiation of consent in improvised and unscripted interactions. “Intimacy in Improv” recounts Joshua Richardson’s integration of consent-forward practices from theatrical intimacy training organizations such as Intimacy Directors and Coordinators and Theatrical Intimacy Education, as well as tools and approaches from research pertaining consent-based and trauma-informed pedagogy. Furthermore, Richardson presents a useful written guide that may support educators in determining whether they are fully prepared to support students in engaging with the material

and content brought to class. Richardson's thoroughly researched practice, as recounted in this Note, offers tools that can translate from improvisational settings with students to broader pedagogical application.

Cody Page's article titled "Role-ing the Dice" enters the context of improvisational performance outside of explicitly theatrical or educational settings by considering consent-based practices for tabletop role-playing games, or TTRPGs. Utilizing a performance-as-research methodology, Page builds on the research from the field of performance studies and the work of game designers, combining these distinct contexts with consent-based practices for theatre to argue that establishing consent-based practices for TTRPG spaces could significantly impact TTRPG players who may otherwise not be exposed to consent-based practices that continue to be employed only within the realm of professional and educational production.

Kelsey Jacobson and Bethany Schaufler-Biback connect the playing of TTRPGs directly to theatrical production in their analysis of the intimate nature of audience engagement in immersive and participatory performances. The authors' qualitative study of audience responses to *Roll Models* provides insight into the efficacy of consent mechanics, onboarding processes, and check-ins utilized in the production while arguing that audience participation is inherently intimate.

In the final article for this issue, Kristine Koyama analyzes historical performances of allyship and the ways in which attempts at allyship falter without consent-based collaboration. Koyama analyzes the literary work *Life of a Slave Girl* and the historical context of its author's performance of allyship to highlight ways in which well-intentioned white individuals who fail to engage with consent thereby fail to become "true" allies. This piece illustrates the ways in which consent-based practices apply to non-theatrical contexts by highlighting the impact of consent both, as Diana Taylor writes, in our practice of political engagement and in our epistemological understandings of identity and allyship.

Amanda Rose Villarreal, PhD
Editor, *The Journal of Consent-Based Performance*

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